

How inconstant we are, especially when weak from sickness. We need to be reminded of our redemption, and God's love again and again, particularly in sickness. Thus our service does so in the versicles and prayers which follow: "Be unto him, O Lord, a strong tower," etc. "Look upon him with the eyes of Thy mercy." These versicles and prayers should remind the sick man that though he is weak, God is strong and powerful; they should teach him to "abide in Christ," to "rest quietly" in Him. The second prayer is one for the special blessings of sickness, the deepening of repentance and quickening of faith, that whatever remains of life may be given to God's glory, or should the sickness end in death, that the sick man attain to everlasting life.

III. THE CHURCH'S EXHORTATION.

1. Sickness is God's visitation. God is ever with us, but in sickness He is speaking to us. He stands by the bedside. It is a Father's hand which holds the rod.

(a) To try our faith and patience. (St. James i. 2, 3.) When all goes smoothly with us, our faith is not tried. When trial comes, we can show like Abraham what our faith is like (Gen. xxii. 1).

(b) To correct what is evil in us. Sickness often leads men to "consider their ways," and many can say with the Psalmist "Before I was afflicted," etc. (Ps. cxix. 67).

2. Conditions upon which sickness may be profitable.

(a) Repentance. There can be no true peace without it (Acts v. 31).

(b) Patient bearing of sickness. Because it is a loving Father who afflicts, and because Jesus showed us how to suffer.

(c) Thanksgiving. (1 St. Pet. iv. 12; Phil. iv. 4.)

The passage of Scripture to be read speaks to us of God's chastening and of its profitable character. And then the sick are reminded that our Blessed Lord "went not up to glory till first He suffered pain," nor can we expect to wear the crown if we carry not first the cross.

The exhortation next reminds us of our baptismal covenant and the need for self-examination of our state both towards God and man, that we may rest our hope upon eternal realities; the minister is directed to put the Apostle's Creed to the sick man in the form of a question. What an opportunity this presents for clearing up of doubt in any portion of "the faith once delivered to the saints."

Summer Weakness

And that tired feeling, loss of appetite and nervous prostration are driven away by Hood's Sarsaparilla like mist before the morning sun. To realize the benefit of this great medicine, give it a trial and you will join the army of enthusiastic admirers of Hood's Sarsaparilla.

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A Few Sprays.

Crosses are as necessary to the development of the soul as food to the body.

There can be no perfect human character without discipline. Behold the shapeless marble as placed in the hand of the sculptor. Every blow of the hammer upon the chisel develops new beauties, until at length after weary days of toil, the artist folds his hands and in silent admiration views his work complete, pronouncing it very good.

So the great immortal sculptor is daily moulding the souls of his children for eternal perfection, inflicting oftentimes cruel blows and bitter strokes, but at length they who are His own shall stand complete in their transformation from the seemingly worthless clay in which they were enshrined upon earth, fitted to grace the garden of eternity and bask in the sunlight of immortal love.

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Bird Songs.

Birds in the nest! birds in the nest!
They sung me a song so rare.
That my heart kept time to the merry tune,
While I listened there in that sunny June,
Abroad in the dreamy air.

Many a time! many a time!
When spring came down to earth,
I had heard the far-off mystical chime
Of songs that seemed in my heart to rhyme,
As the bright birds gave them birth.

With a gentle tread! with a gentle tread!
My childhood wandered by;
The thoughts that so oft were left unsaid
Are laid away with the buried dead,
But the bird-songs never die.

Still the summers come! the summers go!
But the song I heard that day,
Standing and watching the river's flow,
As it danced in the light far down below,
And silently drifted away.

Ever and ever, when day is over,
Comes with a happy dream,
While Faith, and Hope, and Love once more
Lift their glad wings to the water's roar,
And toss back its dewy gleam.

Family Reading.

Love's Mastery: Or the Gower Family.

NUMBER 4—CONTINUED.

Stella awoke, the next morning, with a full determination to see Dr. Argyle for herself, and gain from him—that is, if he chose to give it—his plain opinion of her little brother's case.

Lady Trevannion's and the nurse's words on the previous evening, the increased languor that she herself had observed for some days past, and those terribly restless nights, all tended to heighten the fears which her anxious imagination was always picturing, and made her conceive it possible that Tracy's state was more precarious than she had ever suffered herself to believe, and that the frail life might be hanging by a yet more tender thread than she had dared to contemplate. At all events she would like to know the worst.

She gained a short interview with the child after her breakfast, which passed just as usual, her brother and sister taking no notice whatever of yesterday's disgrace, and talking between themselves of matters which had no particular interest to Stella. Tracy did not seem quite in his usual spirits, rather dreamy and absent. Stella fancied when she first came to him—the effect, nurse knew, of his nightly medicine, which would pass off as the day went on; and certainly he did cheer up wonderfully during the brief half-hour that Stella was able to pass at his bedside. The arrangements for the equipment of the little fleet were discussed and agreed upon, nurse promising to begin her part as soon as ever she had put things straight, and was able to sit down to work. And then the sure promise that really this evening there was nothing in the way, no company, Lora going out; and that Stella would come and make his tea, and sit with him all the evening, brought such a flush of colour and animation to the little pale languid face, that Stella began to think that, after all, her increase of fear might be ungrounded.

Nevertheless, she determined to see Dr. Argyle; and, when the loud knock which came so regularly about one o'clock was heard, she begged Madame Petit to pardon her for a few minutes, and, going up towards Tracy's room, stationed herself on the landing, that she might detain the physician when he made his exit. He was certainly longer than usual; and Stella's face grew paler, and her heart beat more quickly than before with the dread that something serious might be detaining him. At last the door of the apartment was opened quickly, and she caught the few parting words to the child, spoken in the physician's usual cherry fashion. His face, too, looked anything but serious; and Stella felt all of a sudden somewhat abashed and nervous, as though she were doing a very uncalled for and unnecessary thing. But her anxiety for Tracy emboldened her.

"Dr. Argyle, I want to speak to you for a minute or two, if you can spare it," she said; for he

was looking at his watch as though he had already lingered too long, and she knew those morning hours were very precious.

But he turned at once into an adjoining-room, and closed the door.

"Well, and what is it, Miss Stella? Are you not well? You are trying to live too fast, I think. Take more riding lessons, and a few less Greek and Latin ones; that is the best advice I can give you."

"I am quite well, thank you," answered Stella, dreading least Dr. Argyle should be in one of his humorous, or what was worse still, one of his satirical moods, which would swamp her altogether. "I don't want to speak to you about myself, but about Tracy."

"Well, and what of him? Has he been a naughty boy, and you want my advice to help keep him in order?"

Poor Stella! Would no one be serious with her, no one see her anxieties and heart-longings as she saw them, and answer them accordingly?

"O, Dr. Argyle," she said bitterly, "if you only knew how I feel about him, and how I long for him to be better, you would not speak so, but would tell me truly and honestly just what you think!"

Tears forced themselves to her eyes as she spoke; but she dashed them almost angrily away. The physician's tone and manner changed instantly.

"Poor child!" he said, laying his hand upon her shoulder. "Do not think me hard: it is almost necessary sometimes to assume a little of what we do not feel. Ask me anything you like about your little brother."

Stella looked up with one of her sweetest smiles amid her tears; and her face bespoke her thanks.

"Is he much worse? Do you think he is going to die?" she asked, bringing out the dreaded question first, but with a trembling utterance.

"Die? O no," replied the physician. "My dear Miss Stella, what has made you think it?"

"O, only my fears, and seeing him look more delicate, and hearing of his bad nights; that is all, Dr. Argyle. No one has said a thing to me of such a thing; but I felt it would be such a relief to ask you and know just what you think."

"Tracy's illness," said the physician kindly, yet gravely, "is not one likely to terminate suddenly at any time, nor to assume any very decided phase for many months, perhaps years to come. He is very delicate, very fragile, the great centre of weakness being, as you know, in the spine, which has been very seriously affected. Still, there is so much in his favour, the immense amount of precaution and alleviation we are able to command, his age, his sweet even temper, and careful nursing such as not one in a thousand gets."

"Then there is hope?" interrupted Stella eagerly.

"More than hope: there is every reason for encouragement. And as for these little fluctuations, these accesses of debility and restless nights, which will occur, you must not let them cast you down, my child, indeed you must not. I don't despair, I tell you honestly, of seeing Tracy a strong active boy some day."

Stella's eyes kindled. "O, Dr. Argyle!"

"Yes; but you must bear the intervening years bravely and patiently, as he does. There will be a long time of tedious waiting and lying still first: that I know to a certainty. And you must help him bear it."

"O, I do. I do indeed try to, Dr. Argyle, as much as—" Here she stopped.

"As much as you can. Yes, I know you do. I am always hearing your praises, and thanking you accordingly. A cheerful nurse is a treasure to a doctor. do you know, Miss Stella. And now I must be gone. Do you feel better?"

"O, yes; and so much obliged to you, Dr. Argyle."

The physician laid his hand again upon her shoulder, looked for a moment rather searchingly at the lovely face which was flushed with a bright colour now, and then took his leave without another word.

What appeared almost a new life seemed imparted to Stella: her light footsteps sped as it were unconsciously down the long flights of stairs, and she entered the study with a countenance absolutely "ray-onnante de joie," as Madame Petit expressed it. She could not but marvel at the wondrous change those few moments had wrought on her