

treasured hoard is as nothing in comparison with the riches that lie hidden in the depths before us. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know—hereafter." Waiting for that hereafter of full knowledge, let us pick up as we may such fragments—delicate, opal-tinted shells cast up by the storm—as God in His goodness permits.

There are illnesses that can only be cured by acid medicines; it is the bitter tonic that brings the flush of health to the wan cheek; so there are diseases of the soul that can be healed only by the discipline of suffering; the heavenly Physician, who "giveth medicine to heal their sickness," makes no mistakes. Affliction is curative; like the knife in the surgeon's hand, it wounds to heal. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes." In the wearisome days and nights of suffering, the Christian calls his own ways to remembrance. Undetected sins and shortcomings, self-deceivings and half-unconscious dalliance with pleasant evils, neglect of known duties, and spiritual somnambulism in dangerous places, natural gifts that masqueraded as heavenly graces, and indolence that folded away its talents—like some deadly secret written with invisible ink they have been inscribed on the pages of the soul, unseen by human eye, but when the acids of affliction touch the page the hideous secret comes into open vision, and the soul sees itself as God sees it. It is the sharp pain, telling of hideous disease, that drives the patient to seek the doctor's care; so the Christian, when suffering reveals to him the plague-spots on his soul, flies to the Good Physician, and soon is able to exclaim, "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, Who healeth all thy diseases." The bitterness of affliction is a tonic. It is not in the lap of luxury that soldiers are trained; the racers and wrestlers in the ring at Olympia did not win their laurels without pain; our noblest workers and thinkers are not those who live an easy, pleasant life.

In the battle against evil, in the race of life, Christ's soldiers and wrestlers are trained through suffering, and braced by pain. What sick man ever grew strong on sugared draughts? Ease, luxury, a life that has all the hard corners padded, these are not the things that bring out the best that is in a man. As with the physical and moral parts of our nature, so with the spiritual. When David was at ease in Jerusalem he weakly fell, but in adversity he was strong to resist evil. "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept Thy word," is not the confession of the Psalmist alone. How many souls have seen behind the veil of sorrow the shining face of an angel from heaven strengthening them! Is there not more than a suggestion of this idea in the cheery words of St. Paul addressed to the afflicted: "Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees?" There is a height of spiritual joy to be attained by the Christian through suffering, to which no ladder but that of pain can reach. "To know the fellowship of His suffering." Of earthly happiness the Saviour tasted little, but there is not a depth nor shoal of sorrow that he has not sounded, and when He calls His own to cross that sea, "He goeth before them." We can only touch on this thought, leaving each to think it out for himself. Too weak to pray, too suffering to think, let the soul cling to the Man of Sorrows, and in that mysterious "fellowship," then only to be realized, will be felt that secret sustaining joy which "B.M." pictures in one of her poems—"Only heaven itself is sweeter than to walk with Him upon the sea of sorrow."

But affliction has a wider range. Suffering has a power, and pain a ministry, far outside the little circle of the sufferer's own personality. The soul that thinks only of its own cure, its own strengthening, its own hidden fellowship, will grow morbid, and lose much of its pain-bought good. Fanny Bickersteth, in the midst of a very furnace-fire of agony, was yet a missionary to all around. Little Ernest von Willick, lying on his bed of sickness, never dreamt that his trustful words—

When the Lord me sorrow sends,  
Let me bear it patiently—

would have power to soothe an emperor's heart. A clergyman once declared that he believed more good to have been wrought in his parish by the prayers of those imprisoned in sick rooms, who, in their time of fellowship hand in hand with Christ, had spoken to the Most High, than by all the labors of a well-trained band of workers. Who can sympathize like one who has endured the same loss? Who can comfort like one who has sorrowed with the same sorrow? Who can intercede like one who has borne the same burden? "What I tell you in darkness that speak ye in light." Those whom God has "trusted with pain" have a glorious priesthood—to minister to hearts distressed—to touch with tender hand the spirit's wounds. Let those whose lips have tasted the water of Marah remember that they have a service to offer which none save they can render, a ministry for which God Himself has ordained them. If we consider our Lord's life we see that that which has influenced men most was not His doing, but His suffering. His life was lovely and helpful, but the power of it was in his agony

and death. So in the day when the Books are opened it will be found, we doubt not, that many of the greatest victories of the Christian Church have been won by wounded soldiers, many of her grandest enterprises carried through not by the workers' zeal, but by the folded trembling hands of unknown sufferers; and heads that have long meekly bowed beneath a crown of thorns shall at last be diademed with gems.

### The Pleasures of the Clergy.

We have a feeling that we would like to tell people who have a superficial idea that the clerical life is a monotonous round of dullness, something of the joys of its experiences; says the *New York Observer* and we may presume that ministers will not object to reading a summary of their satisfactions set in order. Some men of the world, whose conception of pleasure rests on a basis of wine, cards, theatres and dissipation, have a vague idea that the clergyman leads a colorless existence. The money makers often have an idea that the clergyman having missed what is to them the chief end of existence can have little if any real zest in life; while to those lower down, gamblers, habitues of race courses and of prize fighting resorts, it seems as if one had better be dead than to drag through the world as a minister. Still other people of many classes, in fact some of nearly every class, imagine the minister to lead an inanimate, uninteresting existence poised between two worlds and belonging to neither.

It may be worth while to summarize some of the joys of the clerical life therefore, and to show that while these various classes spoken of have very different conceptions as to the things in which the satisfactions of life consist, the clerical ones are such as have a rational basis. We would not be understood to intimate that these joys, or at least all of them, are objects set before this class as incentives, or that the epicurean view of pleasure is a main motive in clerical life; but there are certain satisfactions and permitted pleasures that fall to the lot of the minister that add a human interest to his life when known to other men, or rather impressed upon their attention.

We will begin at the temporal and human end in order to work forward to the more important things. Sharing with most men—with the exception of the priesthood of the Church whose ministry is compulsorily celibate—the opportunities for domestic joys, the clergyman has to a greater extent than most men the opportunities of friendship. He is brought into close companionship with a whole congregation, in many cases with a whole community. They know him and he knows them more intimately and sympathetically than almost any other person in the community. He belongs to the people, and lives with and for them. For humane and men-loving natures, which have a horror of isolation, loneliness and the coldness of merely ambitious and money-making lives, this warm, close touch with humanity brings constant joy and stimulus. Multitudes of business men live isolated, frozen lives, away from the hearts of their neighbors. But the minister has this distinct advantage in a respect that adds immensely to the satisfaction of living. Hosts of people are at home in his house, and he is at home in their domestic circle. Since man is a social creature and finds a great part of his comfort in the company of his fellow beings, this satisfying of the social nature by sympathetic contact with the minds and hearts of many people must be set down as one of the great pleasures of the clerical life.

The clergyman shares with all readers and scholars the great perennial, inexhaustible joy of books. He too can daily chant the praises of the library in which the soul of the world still breathes and throbs, of the new book in which the living brain shares its fresh thought with all buyers. Books which have been the joy of philosophers, kings, scholars, all ranks in all places, the minister has his share in. He has the joy not only of mere reading but of growing mastery of the study to which he has set himself. He also reads in several tongues; he familiarizes himself with the thought of all nations and times; he listens to the songs of the great poets. "What great times I have here in my library!" exclaimed one noted divine; and voiced the feelings of hundreds of others of his class. The minister has also open to him, to a degree limited only by his other work, the field of writing. A large number do write for the press, and there seems to be no good reason why the odd moments of the year should not be so occupied.

The minister shares with other men the pleasures of travel. In the course of a life time he manages to see a good deal of his own country, possibly something of foreign places. If change of scene brings pleasure to other people, not the less does it to the clergyman. Possibly it brings more pleasure to the man whose life is confined for a great part of the year to his parish, than to the rich who are always moving over the face of the earth, and so deaden the sensation of novelty.

The minister is no less alive than other people to the delights