

His help. He has the power to turn their sorrow into joy, and they are sure that He loves them. Nothing more is needed than the simple statement that Lazarus is sick. Of course, they think, He who has shown Himself ready to heal any poor beggar by the roadside, He whose tender compassion and untiring service are poured out, like God's free sunshine, on the evil and on the good, will press eagerly to the assistance of those who have long proved themselves His tried and loyal friends.

But Christ's friendship is mysterious in its methods of working, going far beneath the surface. If these trustful suppliants had not been tried friends, possibly He might have instantly healed their brother, as was His usual custom. But they were special friends of the Good Physician. "Therefore . . . He abode two days still in the same place where He was," allowing Lazarus to die and be buried. How He must have trusted these loyal friends! How sure He must have been that they could stand a severe test, that they could trust Him through apparent unkindness! And they stood the test well. They could not understand His apparent coldness, but their love and trust were strong as ever. And, having strengthened their love and trust by exercise, enriched their own characters and learned the great truth that God can help to the uttermost after all apparent possibility of help has been swept away, then their wonderful Friend proved that His love was like the sunlight which shines always the same, though sometimes we fail to see it, because of black clouds—clouds which will surely pass away.

Are you quite sure that your friendship with Jesus is real and true? Then be sure of the fact that everything He allows to come into your life is a proof of His wise and tender love. You thank Him for the sunshine of prosperity, don't forget to thank Him also for the bracing times of adversity. You thank Him for the sweetness of health, be sure to thank Him also for the bitter tonic of sickness. Do you never thank a doctor for bitter medicine which builds up your strength, or for his skillful use of a sharp knife, which may cause you agony, but seems a kind purpose in cutting off that which would poison every drop of your blood? You trust a surgeon's kindness, even when he deliberately cuts away a piece of your body, you know he is trying to help you, even when he hurts you most, or—what is often harder to bear—when he is hurting one you love. And the soul is far more precious than the body, so we ought to be willing to sacrifice some present ease, if only in that way can spiritual strength be won. The voice of history and of personal experience, declares that richest spiritual gain is often the outcome of bodily weakness or pain, or of times of trouble.

One of Christ's beloved friends is sick. The Master apparently pays no attention to the earnest entreaties of His devoted disciples. He is trusting them to believe in His love, though they cannot see His face. He is treating them as fruitful branches of the True Vine, which must be "purged" that they "may bring forth more fruit." He is refining away the dross, so that His own Beauty may be seen by a wondering world reflected in their shining, beautiful lives. If He strains their patience and loyal trust almost to the breaking point, it is not capriciously, but because that is the only way of making it strong. We can only learn how to do anything difficult by doing it again and again until "practice makes perfect", and we cannot possibly learn "patience" except by enduring patiently, nor "trust" except by trusting loyally, when we do not understand the reason for our pain of mind or body. These lessons are too priceless to be learned quickly or easily, but the Good Physician is too tender to hurt a soul more than is absolutely necessary for His perfecting in the beauty of holiness.

Pain is often terribly hard to endure, but it is a great help, if we remember, as Bishop Ingram says, that "there is Someone who is tempering the flame, who is not letting one single throb of agony be too much or too great, that this is not a matter left to mad chance, or to the spirit of some devil—it is this which takes away the bitterness from pain. He still in the furnace, if the kind face of God is looking down on you; lie still

in the furnace, because the moment the silver is so bright as to perfectly reflect the face bent over it, that moment it will be taken from the furnace."

If the friends of Christ find pain hard to bear, though His loving desire to make them beautiful, at all costs, meets with their full approval, how much harder it must be for those who have to suffer without knowing that their spiritual diseases are being skillfully treated by the Good Physician. Seek that greatest of all friendships while you are well, for it is far harder to see through earthly mists to the Sun of Righteousness when the brain is clouded by sickness, or when bodily pain crowds out every other consideration. A friend of mine says she can never pray when she is ill, and she always knows she is getting better when the power to concentrate the thoughts in prayer returns to her. If the Great Friend expects His friends to trust Him when He does not give any outward expression of His ceaseless love, so also we may safely expect Him to trust us, and our love, when we find it almost impossible to pray in any connected fashion. We can lie back in weary-trustfulness on the Great Heart of Love, knowing that He understands perfectly the desires of our hearts, and is pledged to fulfil them in the best possible way, if we leave the ordering of our lives to Him.

I think the Book of Psalms was intended by God as a special gift for His sick friends; it is so full of sweet and tender sayings, almost like the caressing touch of a dear hand which charms away the pain, or at least makes it bearable. Indeed, it is no fancy to say that God is not only the Physician, but also the watchful and considerate Friend, giving trained and tender nursing to His dear children, both by day and by night. In Psalm 42, we read that when a man has been considerate and kind to the poor or sick (see margin), "the LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing. Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." In the margin it is given "turn" his bed, so even that homely duty of a nurse is undertaken by the King of Kings when one of His friends is sick. And one who feels that marvellous tendance may not be able to pray in words, and yet his heart may really be reaching out in sweet communion:



A Tasteful Living-room.

The walls of this room are of plaster, tinted yellow. Note the sash-curtains and mission furniture.

The feeble hands and helpless, reaching blindly Through the darkness, Touch God's Right Hand in that darkness And are lifted up and strengthened."

Just one thought more—for I must not take up more than my just allowance of space—the friends of Christ, in times of pain and sickness, must strive to reflect His beautiful considerateness. All through His last day of mental and bodily agony there was no trace of complaint, and only one request for a service in that cry, "I thirst," which shows Him to be near of kin to us, though so far above us in heroic self-forgetful endur-

ance. His pain was intensified by taunts and unspeakable insults, instead of being soothed by the ministrations and sympathy of friends; and yet He reached out in watchful kindness to the disloyal disciple, to the weeping women, to ignorant soldiers, and repentant robber, to His loved disciple and holy mother, not forgetting to commend His departing Spirit at last into His Father's waiting Hands. Not one word of pain, after the victory in Gethsemane, except one appeal to man's sympathy, which showed that He was not stoically and coldly independent.



Interior Window-Door.

Placed to admit light into a room otherwise insufficiently lighted.

and one cry to His Father, when a black cloud hid His Face for a moment.

How that wonderful unselfishness rebukes and inspires us! How ashamed we feel of our impatient groaning and grumbling, of our want of consideration for others, of our way of magnifying our own troubles and thinking of no one but ourselves! Those who claim to be friends of Christ must prove their claim by showing some likeness to Him.

HOPE.

The Ingle Nook.

Some Suggestions on Houses.

With the appearance of spring, the usual time for renovation, for introducing new things, and doing away with those that have worn out, the thoughts of the average woman naturally turn to the garden and the house. How shall she arrange her garden this year? What kind of paper shall she put in this room or that? What sort of carpet shall she buy to replace the old one which has had

hard work to keep its threads together through the winter?

Or, just possibly, a new house is to be built, and then there are hosts of questions to be answered.

In this paper, I will try to tell you a few of the things that are considered convenient and tasteful by those who have made a specialty of knowing about such things; then you may select an "idea" here or there if you choose, at your own sweet will.

Treatment of Walls.—Very distinctly figured or flowered wall papers are considered in bad taste. An indistinct pattern in two tones of a quiet color may be used, although plain walls are in high favor, and are always "safe." Plain ingrain paper is considered very good, but it must be well put on, else the wrinkles will show. Alabastine, or paint, may be used, but are less popular, while a new idea which is rapidly gaining favor is to use neither paper, paint, nor alabastine, but to incorporate the coloring matter desired in the plaster. In making the plaster, very coarse sand is used, and, although the surface is carefully smoothed over, no putty coat is used. This finish is considered particularly good for dining-rooms, living-rooms, and libraries. For drawing-rooms and bedrooms, paper is almost universally used, although for bedrooms paint is sometimes preferred as being more sanitary.

As regards the color for walls, all the soft colors—olive or sage greens, cream-warm gray, or stone shades, tans, dull yellows, and old blues (the last for hot, bright rooms, only)—are considered in good taste, a frieze to harmonize being sometimes added to give a touch of color. For bedrooms, however, many still prefer a besprinkling of prettily-tinted flowers over the walls, as in a very pretty bedroom finished recently, which had a drop-ceiling of ivory-white moire, and a trellised sweet-pea pattern on the lower two-thirds of the wall. Between the moire and the flowered paper a narrow moulding, painted ivory-white, was placed. . . . As a rule, the ceiling paper should harmonize exactly with the ground color of the paper, but may be of a lighter shade. Deep cream and light yellow are, however, very frequently used.

Floors.—Year by year carpets decrease, while inlaid floors, or ordinary floors, treated with "floor finish" gain in favor. Several small rugs, or one large one, may be used, and should, as a rule, be of the same tone as the wall paper, although somewhat darker in shade. Occasionally, however, a totally different color (although it must harmonize) is ventured upon with entirely satisfactory results. The main consideration is to see that if the wall paper is plain, the carpet shall be figured, or vice versa.

Woodwork.—Woodwork may be left in the natural finish, with a light "natural wood" stain, or it may be painted or stained to match the general tone of the room. Occasionally, in drawing-rooms and bedrooms, pure white paint is used, especially if the lighting is not of the best.

Curtains.—These should invariably be made sash-length, unless in drawing-rooms, where curtains to the floor are permissible. For long drawing-room curtains, fine "lace" is still in order, but for all other windows, net, scrim, or even cheesecloth, tinted or stencilled, is preferred. Usually these sash curtains are supplemented by inside curtains, and a short valance across the top, of some darker curtain-stuff, matching the wall in tone. Pongee silk, casement cloth, art muslin, dyed scrim or cheesecloth, or Madras, are all suitable for this purpose.

If a new house is to be built, it is well to bear in mind that wall cupboards, "built in," if possible, are conveniences that must be owned to be appreciated. Large ones are now placed in the library, or living-room, to serve as book-cases, and in the dining-room, to serve instead of a buffet or sideboard; small ones appear in the drawing-room for the disposal of bric-a-brac, and in the bedroom as a nook wherein to stow away toilet articles; while in many kitchens an entire side or end of the wall may be given up to an immense cupboard, with "pot-holes" below, so that a pantry is no longer necessary.

Among other "wrinkles" may be mentioned the interior window, placed to admit light into rooms which might otherwise be gloomy. For outside windows,