

## A LESSON FROM A SICK-ROOM: THANKFULNESS.

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EVERY ONE who has visited the sick must have found from time to time how much such visiting teaches of the problems of life, and the sufficiency of Christ's religion to meet the spiritual needs of men. There are lessons of many kinds to be learned in the sick-room, and some are more striking than others.

Thankfulness is a duty acknowledged by all Christians, but practised much by very few. One of the most striking instances of thankfulness with which I ever met was that of an old bed-ridden woman, whose discomforts were many and pains frequent. Whenever I went upstairs into her small room, with its cheerless outlook on a small backyard and a grate empty on even the coldest day, there was always a smile and a cheery voice to welcome the visitor. And if ever the conversation turned upon her ailments or discomforts, it was sure to end on her part with the remark, "But oh! how much I have to thank God for! How thankful I ought to be! How good He is to me!—is He not good?"

The secret of this genuine gratitude and constant cheerfulness was not far to seek. It was the consciousness of God's Presence, and the expectation of the life of Heaven.

One day I was sitting with her, when she told me the story of how this hope began to kindle in her heart—a story which I have often repeated since:—

"Long ago I was living with my father and mother in a cottage at a village called S—. Upon Sunday evenings they went to church, and left my elder sister to take care of me. She used to teach me the Scripture lesson to be said the next day at school. One such evening the passage was from Isaiah, 'Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.'

"I learned the lesson; said it the next day; and then, as I should have declared, I completely forgot it.

"Years after I was taken ill. I was getting much worse; and the doctor thought very seriously of me. I felt very bad, and it seemed I was going to die. I said to myself; 'If I die, I shall not go to Heaven; for I have been living without God. I have not been to His House, nor studied His Word, nor prayed to Him; but just lived for my family, to do my work, and earn my living.' I was very wretched. Then, all at once, the words that I had learned long, long ago occurred

to me, 'Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given'; my heart leapt for joy, and I said, 'Then it was for me too'; so I prayed God to save me, for Christ's sake.

"When I first had to take to my bed, and was told I must stay there for a week or two, I said I could not. Now I have been here seventeen years! But all the time I have been happy, because I trust and hope in the Saviour Who was born as a little Child for me!"

Day by day she read her Church services, morning and evening, and all the religious books which were lent or given to her. At her last days she lost her eyesight, and could read no more; but she retained her cheerfulness, and said, "I cannot read now, but I must think. God has blessed me with a good memory, and I can say over to myself what I remember."

Not in activity, but in inactivity; not in stir, but in quietness, she preached her religion and glorified her Lord. Who could visit such a servant of God without being the better for it, without being shamed into some gratitude for the enjoyment of so many blessings where she possessed so few?

"They also serve who only stand and wait."

PRAYER-BOOK KALENDAR.—August 1, Lammas Day; 4, 9th Sunday after Trinity; 6, Transfiguration; 7, Name of Jesus; 10, St. Laurence, Martyr; 11, 10th Sunday after Trinity; 18, 11th Sunday after Trinity; 24, St. Bartholomew, Apostle and Martyr; 25, 12th Sunday after Trinity; 28, Augustine, Bishop; 29, St. John Baptist Beheaded.

# Jesus said: "Be of good cheer."

St. JOHN xvi. 33.