

VISITING THE SICK.

BY THE EDITOR.

The practice of visiting the sick is *not* neglected in Canada, particularly in the country districts. If any one is reported to be seriously ill, battling with disease, and striving against the last enemy, immediately the neighbours of the country side call to inquire for them, and sit in the room around the invalid till the apartment is almost stifling, and the invalid can hardly draw a breath. Medical men often complain of the evils of the practice, and clergymen often find that they cannot have a spiritual conversation with the individual who is unwell, except in the presence of curious onlookers.

Our attention has been directed to this subject recently, and we give our readers the practical advice which results from observation and reflection:

(1.) Those who attend upon the sick ought to know by experience, or learn by enquiry, whether it is good for the sick one to be visited by all who choose to come, or only by those who have a right to come; and they should without fear or favour act out their duty in the matter.

(2.) Those who visit who are not relatives, nor very particular friends, should not take up the very absurd notion that because they have taken the trouble to call and enquire for the invalid, that therefore they should be admitted into the sick chamber and have a conversation with him. That should be determined by the guardian of the invalid, whose decision should be satisfactory. If you are allowed to see them and speak to them, do not weary them out, as if they had as much strength to answer questions as you have to ask. If you do make any observations, make them to some profitable point. If you cannot say anything appropriate, say nothing.

(3.) If you are a Christian friend, who are allowed to see them, do not occupy their time with an injudicious harangue on religion. A great deal of harm is done in this way by well-meaning people. If a dozen of them visit on the same day, they seem all to feel as if necessity was laid upon them to speak to the invalid, especially if the invalid be a Christian, on the gospel. Some favourite line of thought, on which they are prosy, they preach upon till even a healthy individual would get tired. Now this might be tolerated if only one such instance occurred in a day; but when these are numerous, to which are added the proper pastoral visitations, and the family worship, the matter becomes serious, and a sacrifice to the invalid. No harm is intended, but harm is done, and the invalid is the sufferer.

(3.) When your visit is made then leave. Do not sit around the room, looking and gaping and talking, unless you have some business. The invalid needs repose, needs fresh air, needs to be as much alone as possible.

(4.) After you leave, meditate on the lessons of the sick chamber. If you are healthy and strong now, your time of trouble and sickness may come. If you are prepared to die you will be less afraid to face it. If you are not prepared to die, then do not wait for the sick bed. You may not have a sick bed; but if you have, you will find that it is a poor place to prepare to meet your God. The time is now. Prepare therefore for the worst without delay.

A sullen silence is both a sin and a punishment. There is a generation among us who, when they are under the afflicting hand of God, have no mouths to plead with God, no lips to praise God, no tongues to justify God; these are possessed with a dumb devil; they wrong many at once, God and Christ, bodies and souls.—*Brooks.*