

THY ROD AND THY STAFF THEY COMFORT ME.

Psalm xxxiii. 4.

By John McNeill.

My sweetest memory is to remember lying awake at night on my bed in my little room, hearing the voice of my dear mother, who for twenty-five years had never a night without pain, and never a night with two hours unbroken sleep and through all that quarter of a century this light shone, till it brought in the everlasting day. My earliest and tenderest memory is lying awake and hearing her, not singing, but trying to forget her pains by reading in the silence of the night, with all the house, as she thought, sleeping around her, though I was awake. And I can hear her in her woman's voice—and all memories hover over it, for the sweetest voice that can fall on a man's ear is that of his mother—"Yet, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me!" Sweet mother! May your child rise up some day and bear a like testimony for you.

IN THE SHADOW.

We must all go there sometimes. The glare of the daylight is too brilliant, our eyes become injured and unable to discern the delicate shades of color or appreciate neutral tints—the shadowed chamber of sickness, the shadowed house of mourning, the shadowed life from which the sunlight has gone, but fear not, it is the shadow of God's hand. He is leading thee. There are lessons which can be learned only there. The photograph of His face can be only fixed in the dark chamber; but do not suppose that He has cast thee aside. Thou art still in His quiver; He has not flung thee away as a worthless thing. He is only keeping thee close till the moment comes when He can send thee most swiftly and surely on some errand in which He will be glorified. O shadowed solitary one! Remember how closely the quiver is bound to the warrior, within easy reach of the hand, and guarded jealously.—F. B. Meyer.

THE STORY OF ONE BIBLE.

While the following incident had no connection with the organized home department work, it splendidly illustrates what the home department is constantly doing.

Some months ago, a woman whose days were spent in a factory united with the church. One of the Sunday-school visitors employed by the church learning that she was without a Bible, gave her a cheap copy. The recipient, unable to read herself, asked her husband to read to her. He was not a Christian, and was not in sympathy with his wife's new life, but for love of his wife he read to her a chapter each day. As he read, the listener prayed for his salvation. It was not long till her prayers were answered. The Holy Spirit convicted the husband of sin, and now he has taken his place by the side of his wife as a member of the church.

But that is not the end of the tale of a Bible. A physician, a frequent caller in the home, learned of the Christian profession of his patient and made sport of her belief. She talked with him earnestly. Her words were used by the Spirit. Very soon the scoffer asked the loan of his patient's Bible. He spent hours poring over its pages. Then he fell on his knees. When he returned the volume he said he had become a Christian.—The Rev. John T. Faris.

THE JOY OF AGE.

It is a comfort for some people who do not feel that their usefulness has entirely left them though their hair be gray and their forehead wrinkled, to turn to one of the wisest and sanest of their college classics and to read what Cicero says in his "De Senectute" concerning old age and its characteristics. He supposes a conversation with Cato the censor, a man of eighty-four years, who is apologizing for old age. Cato was the most in-

telligent, the most active, the man most jealous of his authority and the triumph of his ideas of any whom the Roman world of Cicero's time remembered. His latest years had been devoted to the study of Greek letters, for which he had earlier shown great contempt, and in him were gracefully mingled the gravity of Roman manners and the teachings of the Socratic philosophy. A talk goes on between Cato, Scipio and his friend Laelius upon the manner in which Cato bears his old age, after the examples of Plato, Isocrates of Gorgias and Ennius, who have borne a charming old age, free from disappointment with life, and tranquil as the close of a fair autumn day.

Cato meets some of the objections which are urged against old age, and finds that there are four chief things which make it seem miserable. The first inconvenience is that it withdraws a man from active life, from business which demands youthful strength of body. But, he asks, is there no work peculiar to old age, which the mind and soul alone direct, in spite of physical feebleness? Did Fabius Maximus do nothing, or Paulus Emilius, and the other old men, Fabricius and Curius? Appius Claudius was old and blind, and yet the senate listened to his words and obeyed them. But the memory of the aged fails. Yes, if it is not exercised or if it is naturally lazy. Cato tells his hearers that he remembers not only the names of his fellow-citizens, but also those of their fathers and grandfathers, and that no old man ever forgets where he hides his money. A man can always remember things that interest him.

In replying to the objection that old age diminishes the strength of the mind Cato says that he does not envy the force which youth possesses, as in his youth he did not desire the strength of a bull or an elephant. The wise man uses his strength according to what he has, no one can refuse to find in him the force necessary to instruct youth in the way of duty. Does old age deprive a man of pleasure? It is an admirable privilege to be able to despise many of the pleasures of youth and instead of reproaches age is worthy of eulogy if it has for a foundation the virtue of a well spent youth. Neither white hairs nor wrinkles can give to age authority, but only as they accompany a life rounded out in honor and virtue.

These are only a few of the arguments which Cicero pleads in favor of old age; and though suicide was common in the Rome of his time, we never find old age given as an excuse for it.—Providence Journal.

How happy home might generally be made but for foolish quarrels or mis-understandings, as they are well named! It is our own fault if we are querulous or ill-humored; nor need we, though this be less easy, allow ourselves to be made unhappy by the querulousness or ill-humor of others.—Sir John Lubbock.

Let us hear, oh, let us hear today, the Shepherd's voice, and as he knows us in our sin, so let us go after him in his sacrifice. Let us claim that inspiration that ennobled confidence, that comes of being truly with him. Folded thus in his personal care, and led by the calling of his voice, for which we always listen, let us take his promise and follow, going in and out and finding pasture.

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