

WHERE HAPPINESS WAS SEEN.

Memory's chamber has two companion pictures, one new-hung, the other soft-tinted with the mellowing of a score and a half of years. The backgrounds are different, the pictures the same.

In college days one of the Theological students went out one winter Sabbath to preach to a few colored people several miles back of Halifax, and I went with him for company. The day was dull and grey. There were several inches of new fallen snow, or rather hail. The track was unbroken. The walking was heavy. But the country, the pure bracing air, made it a joy after the week of city and class-room and books and study.

We reached the little settlement, a few scattered huts in the bush. Word was sent around. The key of the tiny shell called the church, used also for school when there was one, was found, a fire made and with the few people a service held.

At its close we were told of a sick woman and went to visit her. The house was perhaps 12 x 16 feet, one single room. The walls were boards, innocent of shingles outside or plaster inside and their edges far from friendly, while another ventilator gaped wide beneath the door. There was no furniture. A little straw in one corner with a rag of quilt had served for a bed. A little box stove stood in the centre with a small fire of green wood making but feeble fight against the cold, and lying on the floor beside it trying to get a little warmth, wit! nothing under her but a thin hard mat and but scanty covering lay the poor colored woman, wasted, dying. There were two or three little children and all were practically dependent upon the kindness of neighbors, also poor. So far as the outward was concerned I have scarcely ever seen such complete poverty and absence of all comfort.

But rarely have I witnessed such happiness and peace. She was not merely willing to go, she had attained far higher. "Whatever is de good Lord's will I'se willin' to do. If He wants me to go I'se glad to go. If He wants me to stay a while longer I'se willin' to stay." There was a radiant peace, a joy, that the world and all it contains could never give and that no hardship or want or suffering could take away. These could only affect the body. The woman herself was beyond their power to harm. Her Saviour gave the peace that was there. It was a sight never to be forgotten.

We reached home in the glooming evening well repaid for the day's travel. We, more than the people of Beechhill, had received benefit. They had heard the Gospel, we had seen it. Their sermon had been very ordinary, a simple talk on Gospel truth. The sermon we received was a treat rich as rare. It was a real transfiguration scene, the Divine shining through the human, a faint and far-off copy, such as earth sometimes enjoys, of that mountain scene in Palestine in the long ago.

Years have passed, with opportunities for witnessing the triumphs of faith that a pastor's life supplies; and while I have been privileged to see many such triumphs in the intervening years I do not know that I ever till recently had a companion picture to the above, the contrast so marked, so dark a background with happiness so serene and complete.

But the picture is no longer alone. A few weeks since I was privileged to visit a lady crippled with rheumatism, the poor joints twisted and knotted, and most of them nearly rigid. She was almost entirely helpless, partly lying when laid down, sitting on the bedside when raised, a very slight movement of some of the fingers of the right hand permitting the use of the pen with which, wonderful to say she keeps up an active correspondence.

How long? Thirty years in that condition. It began when that other saint lay waiting the home call a generation ago.

The setting of this picture was very different from that of the former, there a retired lonely settlement in the bush, here a busy street in Canada's commercial metropolis; there poverty gaunt and bare, here every comfort that loving care can provide; there comparative ignorance, here education and culture and keen intelligence; there the illness and weakness of nearing death, here long, long, helplessness and pain. But the picture is the same, the same refinement of the true gentlewoman, the soul shining through; the same peace and happiness that earth's changes cannot touch.

Such pictures are the world's most precious possessions, choice samples that the Great Husbandman leaves to ripen more fully, to shew to men what can be the fruit of the spirit that can be grown on earth, to shew something of what heaven is,—without the sickness and pain, faint foregleams of when we shall see Him as He is and be like Him.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.