

THE TOOTHACHE.

Good and bad thoughts are the seeds of good and bad words and deeds: they multiply, also, our joys and our sorrows.—Every day has its shine and its shade; and the same remark may be made of all our joys and all our griefs. Our pleasures are not exempt from inconvenience, nor are our pains unaccompanied with advantage. This ought to be borne in mind more constantly than it is.

No! no! It is not all shadow when we have the tooth-ache. Think of the luxurious feeling when the warm handkerchief, so wishfully regarded, as it hung airing at the fire, comes, at last, to be laid across your cheek, and tied in a becoming bow under your ear! Think of the liberty you enjoy, the cessation from all employment, the exemption from all complaints but your own, and the kind attention you receive.—No one requires from you the smallest service: while one stirs the fire to make the room warm, another runs to fetch a pillow; and a third toasts the bread for your gruel; and a fourth asks if anything can be done to make you better? Then how tenderly every one in the house speaks to you, and in what a subdued and soft tone of voice are you asked every ten minutes "How are you now?"

Say what you will of the tooth-ache, but these concomitants, these gentle alleviations, are dear to us all. We soon find the difference in our position when we get well again; and we know this, and are not always in haste to proclaim our convalescence. No sooner is it known that our malady has subsided, than the handkerchief is withdrawn, and we must set to work again.—No one assists us; no one speaks gently to us; and hardly any one takes notice of us. It is true that our tooth-ache is gone; but it is equally true that with it have disappeared a hundred sources of comfort and complacency.

Let us apply this to our afflictions generally, looking less at our bodily ailments, and more at the spiritual advantages that attend them. God's mercy can make even His judgments a blessing; and by wounding the body He can heal the soul: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment," may lay a weight of gloom on

our minds; but yet it may, by the blessing of our heavenly Father, "work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—2 Cor. iv. 17.—*Old Humphrey.*

Busy Hands and Holy Hearts.

It is a great fault to suppose that attention to one duty is an excuse for neglecting another. People who have their families or their business to attend to are very apt to say, "I am so busy, I have no time to think about religion." Sure enough, worldly business does sometimes put good thoughts out of our mind; and yet, if we try sincerely, we may generally find room to think of something good, without forgetting our common duties: indeed, plenty of work is a fine cure for idle and mischievous thoughts. One evil thought hinders religion more than ten busy thoughts.

A good old writer says, "The grand secret to prevent bad thoughts, is to have plenty of employment; an empty house is everybody's property; all the vagrants in the country will take up their quarters in it: always, therefore, have something to do, and then you will have something to think of." Besides, there are some things which we may do well, and quickly, without giving them all our thoughts. A weaver in his loom, a carpenter at his bench, a mother with her babe in her arms, or while sewing or knitting, will often sing a song without hindering their work.—Now the words of that song might as well express some sense as nonsense; and had much better be those of praise to God, than of profanity or indecency.

I knew a good shepherd who said he had always learned by heart a verse of the Bible at breakfast-time, which served him through the day; and so rich was the treasure thus laid up in his mind in the course of a long life, that the neighbours used to call him a walking Bible. One could scarcely name a passage of scripture but he could take it up, and go on with what followed, and that in such a way as proved that he not only recollected the words, but likewise he relished their sweetness.—In like manner, I knew a pious weaver who used to have a hymn-book or a Testament lying open on his loom, which afforded him many a refreshing thought. A poor shoemaker I have often with plea-