

**AN INVALID'S DAY,
THOUGHTS ON
INVALID LIFE**

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An invalid's day, thoughts on invalid life by Various

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Thoughts on Invalid Life.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Sunshine in Sickness," "Sunshine in Sorrow," etc.

"There is a blessed peace in looking for nothing but our daily task, and our portion of Christ's cross, between this day and the appointed time when we shall fall asleep in Him."—BISHOP WILBERFORCE.

*"Lord! hast Thou work
Even for me?
Small things—which others, hurrying on
In Thy blest service, swift and strong,
Might never see?"*

M. E. T.



LONDON:

MOZLEY AND SMITH, 6, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1877.

141. m. 587.

AN INVALID'S DAY.

THOUGHTS ON INVALID LIFE.

“To enter into the mystery of a soul, it is necessary to consider its special vocation . . . Each one is ordained to accomplish some one distinct purpose of God.”—REV. T. T. CARTER.

If every soul sent into this world has its especial vocation of God, it follows that those who are incapacitated from taking part in the active life of it, must be called to fulfil some special duties belonging to their peculiar condition. Some of these duties are self-evident, or rather the exercise of certain virtues, such as patience, resignation, unselfishness, etc., which naturally come before the mind as peculiarly needed by sick people, because without them they

would soon become intolerable to themselves and their neighbours.

Their neighbours often make great mistakes about them, be it observed ; probably because they consider their own feelings and judge of their condition by reference to them : for instance, those who are very bright and joyous, full of life and strength, and who thoroughly " enjoy life," consider how they would feel if suddenly deprived of health and strength, and if they are very compassionate and sympathetic, their hearts will be very full of pity for those whose lives seem to them to be destitute of every element of joyousness. Others, less accustomed to putting themselves in imagination in the place of their fellow creatures, think and speak half contemptuously of invalids, as poor creatures wrapt up in their own sufferings, wanting the *capacity* to enjoy ; as if they were a class set apart with only half their faculties alive, and they make their visits to them

irksome by the supposition that they cannot care for anything but their own ailments, which causes them to originate no conversation except upon these, catechising the invalid mercilessly about all her symptoms and drawing from her details of suffering, by questions difficult to set aside courteously, which it would be much better for her not to be forced to dwell upon. Others, and these are of necessity the good and holy, consider sick people as especially honoured of God; as bearing a part of the cross of their Lord, and speak of them, and frequently to them, as if they were of the company of saints, and must be very good, very much above the follies and frailties of the world. All these notions are very one-sided, and although all have a measure of truth in them, if acted upon, like all truths carried to extremes, they are productive of harm or pain to the object of them.

To consider the first opinion,—in many

respects it is quite true that the sick lose much pleasure. Nature gives enjoyment to the act of living, when the subject is full of strength and vigour, but the very absence of this strength and vigour is a boon to the habitual invalid; the desire for activity fades under the languor of illness: the confinement is not so great a trial as it would be to the strong and energetic. As regards the second verdict,—of course some sick people are engrossed in their own ailments, but as a general rule they can be drawn out of them, and induced to take pleasure in other matters, if treated with sympathy and rational kindness; if their sympathy is sought and thankfully accepted, and they are encouraged to take part in what is going on, many an hour of pain may be brightened by descriptions of any beautiful scenery, or wonderful work of art that others have seen and enjoyed. And even if they are not able to appreciate

these, their attention will generally be held by allusions to others' sorrows or sufferings, and they may be led to take interest in other sick people, and to join in any scheme for helping those who are poor as well as sick.

The third notion of invalids, though founded on truth, as to the blessedness of their condition, because appointed by God, and borne out by the words "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth," is erroneous as regards its *necessary* effects. Of course they may become all that they are supposed to be, by the grace of God, but it is a great mistake that sickness *naturally* makes them more saintly and devout; the bodily weakness so constantly tells upon the spirit, that the effort to concentrate thought, and to soar above the trammels of the flesh, is far greater in sickness than in health, and though there are many temptations from which sick people are shielded, there are many of a different