

ought to be sound long before we are launched into active life.

If girls, for example, were better instructed, grown-up women would not be such bargain-hunters. They would know how at a great pennyworth one should pause awhile, and how many have been ultimately ruined by losing their heads in this direction.

But there are so many ways for common-sense to show itself that now we have begun to speak about them it is difficult to know where to make an end. It is not a little bit of our conduct that is to be regulated by it, but the whole; indeed, every day and hour of our lives its wise rules are of service.

A friend once told us of a plan she adopted early in life in hopes to improve her character and give her the sagacious old head on young shoulders which we often hear about, but seldom see. "It came," she said, "of a hint I picked up when reading the life of Benjamin Franklin, the American philosopher. I was in the habit of doing many stupid things, but had a great wish to

improve, so I thought over all my weak points and by way of counteracting them, and as a continual reminder of duty, I made out a series of rules of conduct which I pasted inside the lid of my writing-desk. They were such as these:—

"Keep your temper. Look for the bright side. Have a place for everything and everything in its place. Know yourself, rule yourself and be yourself. Expect to reap as you sow. Search for merits rather than faults. Shun subjects of irritation and people who irritate. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. It is difficult to make other people perfect; make yourself so."

"They were maxims whose wisdom appeared on the surface, common-sense signposts by which those who wish to succeed must be guided to the end of the chapter. They were not easy for all that, but, as an old writer has it, 'There is nothing really difficult in the world, the only fear is that people will be lacking in perseverance.' I used to read and re-read them, going over

them very carefully at least once a week, taking note how I often stumbled and failed, but always trying to have fewer and fewer accidents of the kind."

The happy result was that our friend in the days of her girlhood was, as we remember well, admired, respected and beloved, and her course of self-education and self-improvement was the means of her being what she is to-day, the distinguished head of a remarkable home.

What she has done every girl can do. Everyone will have her own set of maxims, for not all have the same weaknesses and stupidities. This would be a fine scheme for the introduction of universal common-sense, after which there would be no need for the phrase "Don't be a fool!" with which we started. The name, in fact, would hardly be understood, for whims, crochets, animosities, tempers and sillinesses of all kinds would be only matters of ancient history; everybody's head would then be well ordered and well balanced, and what is right would be done on every possible occasion.

## INKLINGS TO INVALIDS.

By AN INVALID.

THERE are three grades in the school of affliction; in the first the scholars study the lesson of patience, in the second that of contentment, in the third that of gratitude. The first task is the most difficult, but when once it has been mastered the others can be acquired with comparative ease. Yet very many students spend a whole lifetime in the first grade, and never reach the standard which is necessary before they can pass into the second, for it is impossible to be contented until you know how to be patient, and thankfulness is a step beyond contentment. Then there are others who do possess their souls in patience, but are so pleased with this attainment that they do not think of striving to become anything better; they take great credit to themselves that they do not grumble and complain, and forget that they have learned only the rudiments of their life's lesson.

"Dear Mary is so patient, not a single murmur crosses her lips."

You often hear such a remark as this in reference to a sufferer, but seldom "she is quite contented," or "she is thankful"; yet God desires us to exercise all three graces.

What! must I be thankful for the pain that keeps me awake at night? Grateful for the accident that made me a cripple for life? Contented with a curved spine, an aching head, a useless right hand? Yes, certainly. Listen to what Ruskin says in his charming "Letter to Young Girls," which I would advise every reader of this magazine to procure.

"Receive everything that is provoking or disagreeable to you as coming directly from Christ's hand; and the more it is like to provoke you, thank Him for it the more, as a young soldier would his general for trusting him with a hard place to hold on the rampart."

The question is whether you believe that God orders all the events of your life or not. If you do, then it is your duty to thank Him for what He sends, even though the medicine be bitter, or the pruning-knife be sharp.

"Come snow or rain, come cloud or storm,  
'What matter?' may you say;  
My life is hidden with the Lord  
Beyond all change of day;  
If light arise, I praise His will,  
If darkness, then I praise Him still."

This is not merely a matter of sentiment, it is intensely practical; it touches the smallest details of our daily life. There is a certain amount of self-satisfaction in bearing large burdens bravely and well; but very often a person who would have courage to walk up to the mouth of a cannon, will be routed by a pea-shooter. Satan knows only too well how to aim for the joints in our armour. Invalids are prone to attach too much importance to trifles, and to become impatient if every wish is not immediately acceded to by their relatives and friends. I know by experience how hard it is to avoid growing self-centred when you are confined to one or two rooms for weeks and months together, when the principal event of the day is dinner, and the chief recreation that of watching the sparrows in the garden. Under these circumstances a draught from the window is liable to blow away resignation; a smoky chimney to dim the brightness of our Christian profession; or a badly-cooked meal to upset not only our physical but our spiritual equilibrium. To quote Ruskin again, the only remedy is to "remember, it does not in the least matter what happens to you . . . . The one thing needful is that none of these things should vex you."

May I give you a few practical hints which may prove conducive to your comfort and peace of mind and that of those around you?

Do not expect to have someone at your beck and call every minute of the day. This specially applies to chronic invalids. In a short illness all in the house naturally do what they can to help and comfort the sufferer, but when the disease is confirmed and there is little or no danger, the most loving friends will weary of giving continual attention.

Learn to rely on yourself both mentally and physically, and never be dependent on others except when absolutely necessary. Still, when it is needful for you to accept another's service, do so graciously and lovingly, as a privilege, not as a right.

Do not dwell on your aches and pains and weariness, either when alone or with others. It will not ease either mind or body to do so. Resolutely turn your thoughts into another channel; and, believe me, however sympathetic your friends may appear, they do not take the same interest in your woes that you do. "Never tell people how you are," said a

shrewd old woman of the world, "they don't want to know."

Try to keep in touch with outside life. Don't vegetate. Some of the most useful women who have ever lived have been chronic invalids all their days. God often chooses weak and feeble instruments for some special service; it is the gold that has been tried in the fire that is fashioned into a vessel meet for the Master's use. I cannot tell what your particular talent may be, but I am very certain that so long as God leaves you here He has some work for you to perform. It may be to cheer your mother with the brightness of your smile; to knit or sew some simple garment for one of Christ's little ones; to write a loving, helpful letter to a friend in trouble; or by the ministry of prayer to uphold the hands of those actively engaged in the great harvest field. The daisy in the meadow, the heather on the hillside, the lark above the clouds, the sea-anemone in its rocky bed, all fulfil the purpose for which they were created, and shall not you?

"These die in loneliness, and yet completeness  
Pervades their lives nor do they live  
in vain;  
God's holy gifts of beauty, joy and  
sweetness,  
They give again."

Finally, always look on the bright side. There is a bright side if you desire to find it. Do not indulge in vain regrets for the past, nor idle fears for the future; "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Some people are not even content with meeting trouble half-way; they take a telescope to look for it in the distance; a little internal pain is sure to be a cancer, a touch of rheumatism will develop into rheumatic fever, a slight cough into consumption. Does your previous experience of God's loving-kindness and tender mercy warrant such gloomy anticipations? Would it not be better to sing with Whittier, "No harm from Him can come to me on ocean or on shore?"

If there be any reality in your faith, any sincerity in your religion, the day of adversity is the time to prove it; and you can glorify God more in weakness and suffering than you could ever do in the days of health and strength.

NORA C. USHER.