

The Reproach of Ingratitude.—There is an ancient story of a city which decided that ingratitude was the blackest of crimes. The people of the city were practical, and set up a bell in an open but desolate spot to be rung by any who should experience ingratitude. Time passed by and the bell was forgotten, perhaps because people were on the watch against this offence. But one day the bell rang out, and the whole city rushed to see who had a complaint to make of an ungrateful fellow-citizen. An ass had caught the rope with his foot, and as he moved about in search of the miserable herbage that grew on the spot, the bell pealed out. At first people laughed; but when they looked at the poor ass and found him a wretched object, almost too feeble to stand, they looked at one another and said, "Whose ass is this?" Inquiry produced the owner, who was forced to confess that his ass, having served him well for many years, became at last too old for his work, so he turned the poor creature out to live as it could. The people decided that the ass had acted according to law in ringing the bell; and the mean man paid the penalty, which included the good keeping of the ass, with what grace he could. To make use of other people, to serve ourselves of them, is the sin of ingratitude. The grateful man has a good memory and a quick eye to see where those who have served need service in their turn. Especially does he cherish the memory of those who have served him in childhood and in youth, and he watches for opportunities to serve them. Gratitude spreads his feast of joy and thanksgiving for gifts that come to him without any special thought of him on the part of the giver, who indeed may himself have gone from the world hundreds of years

ago. Thus he says his grace for a delightful or helpful book, for a great picture, for a glorious day, for the face of a little child, for happy work, for pleasant places. According to the saying of Jeremy Taylor, he is quick to "taste the deliciousness of his employment." He is thankful for all the good that comes to him. The poor soul who believes that life yields him nothing beyond his deserts, that it would be, in fact, impossible to give him more than he pays for, whether in coin or merit, is to be pitied for all the joy he loses, as well as blamed for the pain and irritation his progress through life must cause. "Yea, a joyful and a pleasant thing it is to be thankful!"