

## A BURDEN-BEARER.

**T**HOSE who went often to the market-place in Bogota, learned to know the face of Juan Diaz and his little Juanita. Hardly a market day passed without bringing Juan down from his mountain home, bearing some huge load on his broad, strong back. In that country, where roads are rough and steep, and the people are poor, men are often their own beasts of burden. When the day was bright, those who watched for Juan were almost sure to see Juanita too, for her tough little bare feet found little trouble in keeping up with her heavily laden father's longer steps.

Juan loved his little brown maid dearly, and the way to the city seemed to be only half as long when she trotted by his side. Sometimes they would stop and kneel beside a wayside cross to murmur a prayer such as the priest had taught them. Sometimes this would set Juanita to asking questions, and her father would tell her some wonderful stories of the care that the Virgin would surely give to all that put their trust in her. One of these stories Juanita never tired of hearing.

In the town where Juan lived when a boy, there was a gambler who every night went to the church to pray to the Virgin, and to leave a lighted candle before the great picture of the Virgin and Child. For a while he won every game and bid fair to grow rich. But then came a change of luck. A whole week he had nothing but losses. At last he grew angry at the Virgin, and rushed to the church in a fury. He took out his dagger and plunged it into the pictured face of the Virgin, and was aiming a blow at the Christ child, when the Virgin mother put up her hand and received the cut, and at once the great drops of blood began to flow from the Virgin's hand and face.

"And did you see it father?" Juanita would ask, lifting her great black eyes to his face.

"I have seen the church and the picture many times," Juan would answer, "and the priest himself told me the story. It must be true."

The little Juanita would trudge along, thinking deeply of many things, and wondering if she should ever see a miracle in the church at Bogota, where she and her father often went to pray after he had gotten rid of his load.

But one day Juanita had something new to think of. As she went along she heard voices singing, and very sweet they were, so that she stopped to listen. But Juan drew her quickly, making the sign of the cross as he

went. "Those are the heretics; don't even listen to their voices," he said.

Juanita had heard many dreadful things of the heretics, and was glad enough to run away from the dangerous neighborhood, but as they turned the corner, they almost ran over a sweet faced lady, who smiled kindly in answer to Juan's apology, and gave a little picture book to the little girl, who was too shy to look up into the kind eyes as they smiled down into hers.

As soon as they were well out of the town, the father and daughter sat down and began to read this story. Juan had learned to read when he was a boy, and still remembered enough about it to spell out the words slowly. There was something very sweet about the story that told how Jesus bears the burdens of His people. Juanita looked up into her father's tired face, and a great pity came into her heart as she wondered whether there were any way of finding this Jesus and asking Him to help her father with his heavy loads. She never once thought that it was the same Jesus whose image stood in the great church. Even Juan, who boasted of his strength, thought that such a friend would be good to turn to in times when the roads seemed longest and steepest; and then they went their way to the mountain village where there was no one to tell them the rest of the truth that had come so near to them.

Some day, perhaps they may meet the sweet-faced lady again; then they will ask her to explain the story. Even shy little Juanita thinks she will not be afraid to ask, for her loving eyes see that her father is not so well able to bear his burdens alone as he once was. And so, day after day, Juan and Juanita, and thousands like them, are waiting to hear the rest of the story of Him who bears our burdens, and we have the story and are keeping it to ourselves.—*Children's Work.*

## FINDING YOUR MISSION.

To find your mission you have but to be faithful wherever God puts you for the present. The humbler things he gives in the earlier years are for your training, that you may be ready at length for the larger and particular service for which you were born. Do these smaller, humbler things well, and they will prove steps in the stairs up to the loftier heights where your mission waits. To spurn these plainer duties and tasks and to neglect them is to miss your mission itself in the end, for there is no way to it but by these ladder-rounds of common-place things which you disdain. You must build your own ladder day by day in the common fidelities.—*Rev. F. R. Miller.*