

BEDTIME.

BY LULU.

The little ones have gone to bed— I hear no other sound.

The little clothes are folded up— And laid upon the chair;

The little weaver in the crib, With sleepy golden curls,

And while I gaze with loving pride, On each fair, golden tress,

And warmly still my heart goes out To little darlings sleeping,

Ab, many a mother thinks, at night, With nothing but a head,

Far from the loving mother arms; For from her bosom sheltering nest,

Yet, grieving mothers, not so warm, Nor safe, their earthly bed,

THE HEAVY BURDEN.

"Rather a heavy burden, isn't it, my boy?" Clarence Spencer to whom the words had been addressed, turned from his ledger, and looked toward the speaker.

"A heavy burden, isn't it, Clarence?" the merchant repeated. And still the young man was silent.

"My dear boy, the burden is not only heavy now, but it will grow heavier and heavier the longer you carry it."

"Mr. Wardle, I do not comprehend you," said Clarence.

"I certainly do not," said Clarence.

"Dian't I call at your house for you this morning?" Clarence nodded assent.

"And didn't I hear and see enough to reveal to me the burden that you took with you when you left? You must remember, my boy, that I am older than you are, and that I have been through the mill."

"And then Clarence Spencer understood; and the morning's scene was present with him, as it had been present with him since leaving home."

"Honestly, Clarence, isn't it a heavy and thankless burden?"

"The book-keeper knew that his employer was his friend, and that he was a true-hearted Christian man, and after a brief pause he answered—

"Yes, Mr. Wardle, it is a heavy burden."

"The merchant smiled, and sat down. His face beamed with goodness, and an earnest light was in his calm blue eye."

"My boy, I am going to venture upon a bit of fatherly counsel. I hope I shall not offend."

"Not at all," said Clarence. He winced a little, as though the probing gave him now pain.

"In the first place," pursued the old man, with a quiver of emotion in his voice, "you love your wife?"

"Love her?"

"That is enough. I know you love her."

"O Mr. Wardle, I—"

"You love her as well as you did when you married her?"

"Better! better! I love her more and more."

"And do you think she loves you in return?"

"Loves me in return?"

"Aye, what do you think about it?"

"I don't think anything about it—I know!"

"You know she loves you?"

"Yes!"

"And you know that deep down in her heart she holds your love as most sacred treasure?"

"Yes, I know it."

"Then you must admit that the trouble of this morning came from no ill-feeling at heart?"

"Of course not, but I—"

"It was but a surface squall, for which you, at least, are very sorry?"

The young man bowed his head as he murmured an affirmative.

"Because," the merchant added, with a touch of parental sternness in his tone, "you are resolved to carry it there?"

"Charlotte looked up in surprise.

"—I carry it?"

"Aye, you have the burden in your heart, and you mean to carry it home—remember, my boy, I have been there, and I know all about it; I have suffered, I suffered until I discovered my folly, and then I resolved that I would suffer no more."

"Upon looking the matter squarely and honestly in the face I found that the burdens which had so galled me had been self-imposed. Of course such burdens can be thrown off."

"You have resolved that you will go home to your dinner with a heavy heart and a dark face. You have no hope that your wife will meet you with a smile, and why?—because you know that she has no particular cause for smiling."

"You know that her heart is burdened with the same affliction which gives you so much unrest. And so, you are fully assured that you are to find your home shrouded in gloom. And, furthermore, you don't know when that gloom will depart, and when the blessed sunshine of love will burst in again. And why don't you know?—because it is not now in your heart to sweep the clouds away. You say to yourself, 'I can bear it as long as she can'—Am I not right?"

Clarence did not answer in words.

"I know I am right," pursued the merchant; "and very likely your wife is saying to herself the same thing. So your hope of sunshine does not rest upon the willingness to forgive, but upon the inability to bear the burden. By and by it will happen, as it has happened before, that one of the two will surrender from exhaustion; and it will be likely to be the weaker party. Then there will be a collapse, and a reconciliation. Generally the wife falls first beneath the galling burden, because her love is keenest and most sensitive. The husband, in such case, acts the part of a coward. When he might, with a breath, blow the cloud away, he cringes and covers until the wife is forced to let the sunlight in through her breaking heart."

Clarence listened, and was troubled. He saw the truth, and he felt its weight. He was not a fool, nor was he a liar. During the silence that followed he reflected upon the past, and he called to mind scenes just such as Mr. Wardle had depicted. And this brought him to the remembrance of how he had seen his wife weep when she had fallen and sank beneath the heavy burden, and how often she had sobbed upon his bosom in grief for the error.

The merchant read the young man's thoughts; and after a time he arose and touched him upon the shoulder.

"Clarence, suppose you were to put on your hat and go home now. Suppose you should think, on your way, only of the love and blessing that might be; and, with this thought, you should enter your cottage with a smile upon your face; and you should put your arms around your wife's neck, and kiss her, and softly say to her, '—My darling, I have come home to throw down the burden I took away with me this morning. It is greater than I can bear.'—Suppose you were to do this, would your wife repulse you?"

"Repulse me?"

"Ah, my boy, you echo my words with an amazement which shows that you understand me. Now, sir,—have you the courage to try the experiment? Dare you be so much of a man? Dare you thus try to imitate your Divine Teacher? Or, do you fear to let your dear wife know how much you love her? Do you fear that she would respect and esteem you less for the deed?—Tell me,—Do you think the cloud of unhappiness might thus be banished? O, Clarence, if you would but try?"

Sarah Spencer had finished her work in the kitchen, and in the chambers, and had sat down with her sewing in her lap. Her heart was heavy and sad, and tears were in her eyes.

Presently she heard the front door open, and a step in the hall. Certainly she knew that step! Yes—her husband entered. And a smile upon his face. She saw it through her gathering tears, and her heavy heart leaped up. And he came and put his arms around her neck, and kissed her,—and he said to her, in broken accents,—

"Darling, I have come home to throw down the burden I took away with me this morning. It is greater than I can bear!"

And she, trying to speak, pillowed her head upon his bosom, and sobbed and wept like a child. O! could he forgive her? His coming with the blessed offering had thrown the whole burden of reproach back upon herself. She saw him noble and generous, and she worshipped him.

But Clarence would not allow her to take all the blame. He must share that.

"We will share it as evenly," he said, "that its weight shall be felt no more. And now, my darling, we will be happy?"

"Always!"

Mr. Wardle had no need, when Clarence returned to the store, to ask the result. He could read it in the young man's brimming eye, and in his joy-bright face.

"It was a year after this—and Clarence Spencer had become a partner in the house—that Mr. Wardle, by accident referred to the events of that gloomy morning."

"Ah!" said Clarence, with a swelling bosom, "that was the most blessed lesson I ever received. My wife knows who gave it to me."

"And it serves you yet, my boy?"

"Aye,—and it will serve us while we live. We have none of those old burdens of anger to bear now. They cannot find lodgment with us. The flash and the jar may come, as in the other days—for we are but human, you know,—but the heart which has firmly resolved not to give an abiding-place to the ill-feeling, will not be enticed upon to entertain it. Sometimes we are foolish; but we laugh at our folly when we see it, and throw it off;—we do not nurse it till it becomes a burden."

The Queensland papers report the marriage of two South Sea Islanders with English women; the first marriages of the kind which have yet occurred. The ladies who have thus broken through the bonds of custom are the Misses Innes and Gifford, and Miss Sims. The former is native of Watford, in the county of Essex, and is aged twenty-five. The latter is one year younger, and her home is in Somersetshire, a village in the district of Taunton, and her birthplace. The bridegrooms are natives of the island of Lifu, and intend to return to their island home immediately, carrying their wives with them.

Their wives are only late arrivals in the colony, having come out by the *Indus* on her last trip. If the idea once gains ground in this country that Christian South Sea Islanders, or even South Sea Islanders who may become Christians, and under domestic influences, are looking out for English wives in Queensland, the *Indus* on her next trip will not lack a fair cargo of passengers.

INDIVIDUALITY IN DREAMS.

Men of consummate activity, even when imaginative, are sound and heavy sleepers, such as Napoleon was; and in sound and heavy sleep there is no dreaming. But in the imaginative, as such, sleep is so light that nothing but a slight stimulus from the outer world, and in light sleep, dreaming never for an instant intermitted. The life of the imaginative is a full-time, a disengagement, a sterile idealism. It is well that sleep should bring them in dreams of sundry compensations. Not that the dreaming of the imaginative in their brief and feverish slumbers is joyous—far from it; but it satisfies their hunger for movement. A morbid consciousness is continually an accompaniment of the imaginative temperament, and there is one sin which men of imagination conceive themselves in dreams to be always committing—divulging some secret, some hidden deed in the sanctuary of their souls. In dreams, likewise—and in dreams exclusively—they feel the utmost bitterness of remorse. There are few more striking features of dreams than that dreams, while reproducing the past, restore the feelings which we had in connection with any particular phase or event of the past. If we dream of our childhood, we have the feelings of our childhood; if of our youth, we have the feelings of our youth. Awake, we can recall the past by memory, but not by feeling; so that, in truth, we cannot, awake, be said to renew to ourselves that season of enchantment at all. Asleep, we roll the years back, and have again, when dreaming of days long gone by, the emotions of youth or of childhood. It looks as if there were a profounder, more potent memory than the memory of the mind, and as if the soul never forgot what it had once felt, though the mind and many of its faculties should have surveyed with the keenest attention. As related to the great question of immortality, this point is of supreme importance. We are inclined to pride ourselves on our intellect, its treasures, its achievements—to boast of our reason as our divine prerogative. But our intellect decays, and our reason grows feeble and confused. Our soul, however, in dreams, has an undying, unimpaired freshness, as if over its sympathetic communion with the invisible, which is its kingdom, and its home. Dreams, therefore, and their aspects oppose psychical identity in its most various aspects to vulgar Materialism. Frequent is the debate whether dreams have any bearing on the immediate future—whether they have a prophetic significance, and whether in the fulfillment of seeming prognostics there is more than mere coincidence. Assuredly it is not foolish to deem dreams prophetic because we may err in interpreting them, and to talk of coincidences is merely to employ a meaningless word. Let us dream of our home. Dreams, therefore, are the prelude of the immediate future or not, they do not—and that is better—a holy and consoling ray into the remotest futurity. We know from our psychical identity in dreams, and from its countless transmutations, that we shall be divinely and for ever awake when the dreams of earth are no more. Doth God sleep? Doth God dream? If God sleeps not, dreams not, could the universe be so rich in beauty, or could there be grander and grander mysteries? The German, Schopenhauer, has written an interesting work on "The Symbolism of Dreams," which ventures into a region that English authors seldom approach. In the works of Richter, also, there are many suggestive hints on the subject of dreams—a subject well suited to Richter's singular genius.—*Freightlight.*

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