CHEAP REPOSITORY.

SUNDAY READING.

Bear ye one another's Burthens;

OR, THE

VALLEY OF TEARS:

A VISION.

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[*Entered at Stationers Hall.*]

Bear ye one another's Burdens.

ONCE upon a time methought I ſet out upon a long journey, and the place through which I travelled appeared to be a dark Valley which was called the Valley of Tears. It had obtained this name not only on account of the many ſorrowful adventures which poor paſſengers commonly meet with in their journey through it; but alſo becauſe moſt of theſe Travellers entered it weeping and crying, and left it in very great pain and anguiſh. This vaſt valley was full of people of all colours, ages, ſizes, and deſcriptions. But whether white or black, or tawney, all were travelling the ſame road; or rather they were taking different little paths which all led to the ſame common end.

Now it was remarkable that notwithſtanding the different complexions, ages, and tempers of this vaſt variety of people, yet all reſembled each other in this one reſpect, that each had a burthen on his back which he was deſtined to carry through the toil and heat of the day, until he ſhould arrive by a longer or ſhorter courſe at his journey's end. Theſe burthens would in general have made the pilgrimage quite intolerable, had not the Lord of the Valley, out of his great compaſſion for theſe poor Pilgrims, provided among other things, the following means for their relief.

In their full view over the entrance of the Valley, there were written in great letters the following words,

Bear ye one another's Burthens.

Now I ſaw in my viſion that many of the Travellers hurried on without ſtopping to read this inſtruction, and others, though they had once read it, yet paid little or no attention to it. A third ſort thought it very good advice for other people, but very ſeldom applied it to themſelves. In ſhort I ſaw that too many of thoſe people were of opinion that they had burthens enough of their own, and that there was therefore no occaſion to take upon them thoſe of others; ſo each tried to make his own load as light, and his own journey as pleaſant as he could, without ſo much as once caſting a thought on a poor over-loaded neighbour. Here however I have to make a rather ſingular remark, by which I ſhall plainly ſhew the folly of theſe ſelfiſh people. It was ſo ordered and contrived by the Lord of this valley, that if any one ſtretched out his hand to lighten a neighbour's burthen, in fact he never failed to find that he at that moment alſo lightened his own. Beſides, the obligation to help each other, and the benefit of doing ſo were mutual. If a man helped his neighbour it commonly happened that ſome other neighbour came by and by and helped him in his turn; for there was no ſuch thing as what we call *independence* in the whole Valley. Not one of all theſe Travellers, however ſtout and ſtrong, could move on comfortably without aſſiſtance, for ſo the Lord of the Valley, whoſe laws were all of them kind and good, had expreſsly ordained.

I ſtood ſtill to watch the progreſs of theſe poor way-faring people, who moved ſlowly on, like ſo many Ticket-porters, with burthens of various

kinds on their backs; of which ſome were heavier, and ſome were lighter, but from a burthen of one kind or other, not one Traveller was entirely free.

The Widow.

A ſorrowful Widow, oppreſſed with the burthen of grief for the loſs of an affectionate huſband, would have been bowed down by her heavy load, had not the ſurviving children with great alacrity ſtepped forward and ſupported her. Their kindneſs, after a while, ſo much lightened the load which threatened at firſt to be intolerable, that ſhe even went on her way with chearfulneſs.

The Huſband.

I next ſaw a poor old man tottering under a burthen ſo heavy, that I expected him every moment to ſink under it. I peeped into his pack, and ſaw it was made up of many ſad articles; there was poverty, oppreſſion, ſickneſs, debt, and what made by far the heavieſt part, undutiful children. I was wondering how it was that he got on even ſo well as he did, till I ſpied his wife, a kind, meek, Chriſtian woman, who was doing her utmoſt to aſſiſt him. She quietly got behind, gently laid her ſhoulder to the burthen, and carried a much larger proportion of it than appeared to me when I was at a diſtance. She not only ſuſtained him by her ſtrength, but cheered him by her counſels. "She told him that through much tribulation we muſt enter into reſt," that "he that overcometh ſhall inherit all things." In ſhort, ſhe ſo ſupported his fainting ſpirit, that he was enabled to "run with patience the race that was ſet before him."

The kind Neighbour.

An infirm blind woman was creeping forward with a very heavy burthen, in which were packed ſickneſs and want, with numberleſs other of thoſe raw materials, out of which human miſery is worked up. She was ſo weak that ſhe could not have got on at all, had it not been for the kind aſſiſtance of another woman almoſt as poor as herſelf; who, though ſhe had no light burthen of her own, cheerfully lent an helping hand to a fellow traveller who was ſtill more heavily laden. This friend had indeed little or nothing to give, but the very voice of kindneſs is ſoothing to the weary. And I remarked in many other caſes, that it was not ſo much the degree of the help afforded, as the manner of helping that lightened the burthens. Some had a coarſe, rough clumſy way of aſſiſting a neighbour, which, though in fact it might be of real uſe, yet ſeemed, by galling the Travellers, to add to the load it was intended to lighten; while I obſerved in others that ſo cheap a kindneſs as a mild word, or even an affectionate look made a poor burthened wretch move on cheerily. The bare feeling that ſome human being cared for him, ſeemed to lighten the load. But to return to this kind neighbour. She had a little old book in her hand, the covers of which were worn out by much uſe. When ſhe ſaw the blind woman ready to faint, ſhe would read her a few words out of this book, ſuch as the following—"Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted." "I will never leave thee nor forſake thee." "For our light affliction, which is but

for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The Clergyman.

A pious Miniſter, ſinking under the weight of a diſtreſſed pariſh, whoſe worldly wants he was totally unable to bear, was ſuddenly relieved by a good widow, who come up and took all the ſick and hungry on her own ſhoulders. The burthen of the pariſh thus divided became tolerable. The Miniſter, being no longer bowed down by the temporal diſtreſſes of his people, applied himſelf chearfully to his own part of the weight. And it was pleaſant to ſee how thoſe two perſons, neither of them very ſtrong, or rich, or healthy, by thus kindly uniting together, were enabled to bear the weight of a whole pariſh; though ſingly, either of them muſt have ſunk under the attempt. And I remember one great grief I felt during my whole journey was, that I did not ſee more of this union and concurring kindneſs, by which all the burthens might have been ſo eaſily divided. It troubled me to obſerve, that of all the laws of the Valley there was not one more frequently broken than *the law of kindneſs.*

The Negroes.

I now ſpied a ſwarm of poor black men, women, and children, a multitude which no man could number; theſe groaned, and toiled, and ſweated, and bled under far heavier loads than I had yet ſeen. But for a while no man helped them; at length a few White travellers were touched with the ſorrowful ſighing of thoſe millions, and very heartily did they put their hands to the burthens; but

their number was not quite equal to the work they had undertaken. I perceived, however, that they never loſt ſight of thoſe poor heavy-laden wretches; and as the number of theſe generous helpers encreaſed, I felt a comfortable hope, that before all the blacks got out of the Valley, the whites would fairly divide the burthen, and the loads would be effectually lightened.

Among the travellers, I had occaſion to remark, that thoſe who moſt kicked and ſtruggled under their burthens, only made them ſo much the heavier; for their ſhoulders became extremely galled by thoſe vain ſtruggles. The load, if borne patiently, would in the end have turned even to the advantage of the bearers (for ſo the Lord of the Valley had kindly decreed) but as to theſe grumblers they had all the ſmart and none of the benefit. But the thing which made all theſe burthens ſeem ſo very heavy was, that in every one without exception, there was a certain *inner pacquet*, which moſt of the Travellers took pains to conceal, and carefully wrap up; and while they were forward enough to complain of the other part of their burthens, few ſaid a word about this; though in truth it was the preſſing weight of this *ſecret pacquet* which ſerved to render the general burthen ſo intolerable. In ſpite of all their caution, I contrived to get a peep at it, I found in each that this pacquet had the ſame label; the word SIN was written on all as a general title, and in ink ſo black that they could not waſh it out. I obſerved that moſt of them took no ſmall pains to hide the writing; but I was ſurprized to ſee that they did not try to get rid of the load but the label. If any kind friend who aſſiſted theſe people in bearing their burthens,

did but ſo much as hint at the *ſecret pacquet*, or adviſe them to get rid of it, they took fire at once, and commonly denied they had any ſuch article in their portmanteau; and it was thoſe whoſe *ſecret pacquet* ſwelled to the moſt enormous ſize, who moſt ſtoutly denied they had any.

I ſaw with pleaſure, however, that ſome who had long laboured heartily to get rid of this inward pacquet at length found it much diminiſhed, and the more this pacquet ſhrunk in ſize, the lighter was the other part of their burthens alſo.

Then, methought, all at once, I heard a voice as it had been the voice of an angel, crying out and ſaying, "Ye unhappy Pilgrims, why are ye troubled about the burthen which ye are doomed to bear through this Valley of Tears? Know ye not that as ſoon as ye ſhall have eſcaped out of this Valley, the whole burthen ſhall drop off, provided ye neglect not to remove that inward weight of SIN which principally oppreſſes you? Study then the whole Will of the Lord of this Valley. Learn from him how this heavy part of your burthens may now be leſſened, and how at laſt it ſhall be removed for ever. Be comforted. Faith and Hope may cheer you even in this Valley. The paſſage, though it ſeems long to weary Travellers, is comparatively ſhort; for beyond it there is a Land of everlaſting Reſt, where ye ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more, where ye ſhall be led by living fountains of waters, and all tears ſhall be wiped away from your eyes. Z.

THE END.

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