

THE MAJESTY OF THE MOTHER'S LOVE

Newspaper readers are quite familiar with the details of a recent divorce suit between a couple conspicuous in the social life of the United States army. Charges and counter charges were made, and the result was that the husband was given the decree with the possession of the two children.

Among the black stories that emanated from that court room, there was one bright tale. Among the deeply interested participants there was one stalwart figure. The figure was the twelve year old lad of the divorced couple, and the tale relates to the fidelity he displayed toward the woman who gave him birth.

Given into the custody of his father this manly lad, upon the adjournment of the court, boldly and roundly denounced him for the charges he had made against the mother. Stoutly maintaining his faith in his mother's innocence, he publicly condemned the father for alleged brutalities, and, forced to accompany his father, he announced his determination to rejoin his mother at the earliest opportunity.

That was at once a pathetic and a splendid scene. Some may imagine, but none can describe, the emotions that rocked the tender heart of this boy. In addition to being deprived of a home where the mother is "the sweet rallying point round which affection and obedience and a thousand tender endeavors to please concentrate," he was required to witness a foul stain upon the fair name of his first and best friend.

"I KNOW NOT, I ASK NOT"

In this view, the guilt or innocence of the woman need not be considered. Guilty or innocent, the boy's faith was superb. Innocent or guilty, the boy's fidelity was magnificent. He may have heard things which he could not understand; he may have listened to indictments which he could not explain. The central fact with him was that she was his mother, and to him and to his boyish innocence and faith "a mother is a mother still, the holiest thing alive." Whether his fine devotion was due more to love than to faith, he might have joined with Tom Moore in that sentiment which Poe said "embodies the all in all of the divine passion of love—a sentiment which, perhaps, has found its echo in more, and in more passionate, human hearts than any other single sentiment ever embodied in words."

"Here still is the smile that no cloud can o'ercast,
And a heart and a hand all thy own to the last.

Oh! what was love made for, if 'tis not the same
Through joy and through torment, through glory
and shame?

I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart,
I know that I love thee, whatever thou art.

Thou has called me thy Angel in moments of
bliss

And thy Angel I'll be 'mid the horrors of this—
Through the furnace, unshrinking, thy steps to
pursue,

And shield thee, and save thee—or perish there
too!"

If devotion such as this be shown for one
whose name has, at least, been tarnished, what
words may be used to describe the loyalty due
one whose name is a synonym for purity?

THE WORLD'S BURDEN-BEARERS

It will not do this world a bit of harm for its men—and its boys, too—to be frequently reminded of the great debt they owe their mothers. From the beginning to the end of her own life as mother, from the beginning to the end of her children's lives, she is the burden bearer of burden bearers, and the wonder of it all is that in her delicate construction there is strength to carry the loads.

The secret of her love and sacrifice was told by one who wrote: "Her first ministrations for her infant is to enter, as it were, the valley of the shadow of death and win its life at the peril of her own. How different must an affection thus founded be from all others!"

And how different, indeed, from all others, is the mother's affection for her children!

The majesty of a mother's love is indescribable. In the language of another, "it shrinks not where man cowers, and grows stronger where man faints; and from the wastes of worldly for-

tune sends the radiance of its quenchless fidelity like a star in heaven."

But it is not alone in the tragedies of life that the mother love is felt; it manifests itself all along the line; and the routine life of the mother is one continual round of self-sacrifice, of attentions great and small—the greatest consequential to the child's future and the smallest indispensable to its present day happiness.

"Who ran to help me when I fell
And would some pretty story tell,
Or kiss the place to make it well?
My mother."

A VERITABLE SHERLOCK HOLMES

Did you ever think of the endless and various little duties confronting the mother every day of the year? One hour devoted to the discharge of these duties to the children would drive the average man stark mad. From morning until night, and in cases of sickness or of fretfulness sometimes from night until morning, this heroine of the hearthstone keeps ever at her task. With all of the boundless attention required by her little ones a large share of her notice must be given to the little necessities of the father who, in many cases, is the greatest baby of them all. What a wonderful amount of work she is able to accomplish! How many things she seems to do all at the same time! At one moment she is preparing the father for his daily journey to the business district—and in most cases this is no mean task, either—and between steps, as it were, she is preparing the children for school. In locating missing articles essential to the dress she is a veritable Sherlock Holmes. Did it ever occur to you that the boy's cap or the girl's scarlet hood has a mysterious way of hiding itself? And did it ever occur to you, also, that through some mysterious power the mother is always able to locate the missing article? In such a search the combined efforts of the father, the children and the domestic would be unavailing, even though they extended over a considerable period of time, while the mother, who in the first place can not possibly have any idea as to the headgear's location, seems instinctively drawn to its hiding place. This provides but a meagre description of the wonderful capabilities of the mother in the little things in household affairs. But these things are familiar to every man who remembers the kind offices of his own good mother, and to every husband who stands uncovered in the presence of his good wife's ministrations to his own little ones.

SOME FAMILIAR SCENES

Did you ever notice the large difficulties under which a great, powerful man struggles when he escorts two or three children to a circus or a county fair? In the parlance of the street, he is "sweating blood," and you have no difficulty in imagining that under his breath he is singing "A charge to keep I have." And did you ever notice how deftly a mother, perhaps already worn and weary from her household work, handles, on similar occasions, half a dozen nervous, impatient little ones? Perhaps she is carrying one of them in a tired arm, and holding another with a weary hand, while all the time she is keeping a watchful eye on the balance of the group; and all the time without a sign of weariness and without a display of impatience.

How intimately a mother's sympathies and sentiments are linked with those of the child! The boy can not enter his home so late at night, nor so stealthily, as to avoid his mother's notice; and the innocent inquiry, "Is that you, Will?" is as familiar to the boys of today as to the boys of forty years ago. She may be in a far away room and yet during the dead of night when a little one who has, perhaps, taken a cold sneezes she can, though the mother of half a dozen, immediately distinguish the owner of the sneeze. She may be sitting in a room several rooms away from the cookery, and yet she seems able to tell instinctively just when the hand of a healthy boy has been thrust into the cookie jar. She can detect the falsehood where the father would see nothing but truth. She can recognize as correct a statement which the father might question. She knows the weakness of every child, and to that extent knows just how much should be forgiven. She accomplishes so

much, loves so much and sacrifices so much that the father, conscious of his own shortcomings, must oftentimes stand abashed in her presence.

One of the prettiest stories ever told relates to the devotion shown by a distinguished Nebraskan to the memory of his boys' mother. This gentleman caused to be erected over that mother's grave a stone upon which his own name as husband, and the names of his boys as sons of that good woman, were inscribed. After the stone had been put in place, he took his four boys to the cemetery, and kneeling at that grave, directed their attention to the fact that their names had been highly honored by being written on that slab of marble. Then, paying a high and deserved tribute to the fine character of that mother, the father said: "Boys, if any one of you ever does anything to dishonor this memory, I will have his name chisled from this stone."

It would be a great benefit to all the boys of the world if the love and devotion shown for them by their mothers could be ever impressed upon them. If the boys would be ever careful lest they do something that, if known, would bring pain and sorrow to the mother heart, the future of the world would be secure.

A BOY AND HIS SWEET HEART

Many years ago one of the best of mothers fell "asleep at the gates of light." All of her children, of course, revered her memory; but one of them was the babe of war-time birth, and owing to the anxieties and excitements of the period, and the continued absence of the father, extraordinary affection and devotion was, doubtless, lavished upon him.

Perhaps it was because of this that after the mother's death, and for many years, this boy never retired for the night without placing at his bedside a chair, under the childish impression that his mother would occupy it and watch him to sleep.

When other boys would write or sand or carve on trees the names of sweethearts dear, this lad would trace with knife or stick the name of his sweet heart—his mother's name.

When but a boy he chose his sweet heart's name as one to be given to his own daughter; and when in later years he wrote some tales of love and life, his heroine, good and true, bore with signal honor and renown the name he loved so well. So, through boyhood's days this precious memory was enshrined within his heart; the purity, the devotion, the sacrifices, the sorrows of this patient, God loving and God serving woman was ever before him, often deterring him from evil and sometimes inspiring him for good.

"Happy he with such a mother! Faith in womankind beats with his blood, and trust in all things high comes easy to him."

MEMORIES THAT BLESS—AND BURN

There are living today many such mothers. If the boys could only appreciate their loving kindness while they live, life would be sweeter to them. If those who now have the companionship of the boy's best friend could only know all they will lose when that companionship ends, the pathway of the mothers of the world would today be strewn with roses.

The regrets for thoughtless acts and indifference to admonitions now felt and expressed by many living sons of dead mothers will, in time, be felt and expressed by the living sons of living mothers. The boys of today who do not understand the value of the mother's companionship will yet sing—with those who already know—this song of tribute and regret:

"The hours I spent with thee, dear heart,
Are as a string of pearls to me;
I count them over, every one apart,
My rosary.

Each hour a pearl, each pearl a prayer,
To still a heart in absence wrung;
I tell each bead unto the end, and there
A cross is hung.

O memories that bless—and burn!
Oh mighty gain and bitter loss!
I kiss each bead and strive at last to learn
To kiss the cross,
Sweet heart,
To kiss the cross."

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