

**TOILERS OF
BABYLON; IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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Toilers of Babylon; In Three Volumes, Vol. II by B. L. Farjeon

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BY

B. L. FARJEON,

AUTHOR OF "BLADE-O'-GRASS," "GRIEF," "THE TRAGEDY OF FEATHERSTONE,"
"IN A SILVER SEA," ETC.

For life the prologue is to death,
And love its sweetest flower ;
And death is as the spring of life,
And love its richest dower.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

London :

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TOILERS OF BABYLON.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN Mr. Loveday, the bookseller in Church Alley, heard of his brother's death in a letter which Nansie wrote to him, he fell to reproaching himself for the small grief he experienced at the news. The intelligence did not, indeed, create within him any profound impression. He and his brother had been separated for a great many years, and the bond of love which had united them in their childhood had become weaker and weaker till it scarcely held together. It is true that death strengthened it somewhat, but it could never again be what it once was.

The humanly selfish cares of life are so engrossing that love which is not in evidence dies gradually away. That "absence makes the heart grow fonder" is as false as are nine out of ten of other sentimental proverbs.

"Timothy," said Mr. Loveday to his new assistant, who was proving himself a perfect treasure, "when little Teddy died you were very sorry."

"I was more than sorry, sir," said Timothy, becoming instantly grave; "I was almost heart-broken."

"Have you got over it?" asked Mr. Loveday.

"I shall never get over it," replied Timothy.

"Do you think that will be true all your life long?"

"I am certain it will be, sir."

"And yet you were not related to him."

"No, sir; but I could not have loved a brother more."

Mr. Loveday winced.

“You regard that as a very strong tie, Timothy.”

“A brother’s love, sir?”

“Yes.”

“I can hardly imagine a stronger. If I had a brother I should so love him that I think I should be ready to die for him.”

“Ah!” mused Mr. Loveday, “perhaps, if my brother had died when we were boys together, I should not be reproaching myself now for not feeling his death more keenly.”

As a penance, he inflicted a punishment upon himself. Since he had taken Timothy into his service his life had been easier and more agreeable than it had been for a considerable time past. He was no longer tormented by small worries, which, after a long recurrence of them, become, in certain stages of mental irritation, veritable mountains of evil. Timothy had more than one rare gift,

and not one more precious and beneficial in its effect upon others than the gift of thoughtfulness. This, extending to the most trivial matter where his own interests were not involved, was invariably displayed by Timothy when opportunity offered, and it was natural, therefore, that in his new and important position in Mr. Loveday's business and household, it should come into play with greater force. The result was that not a day passed without Mr. Loveday being made aware that he had enlisted in his service a lad who seemed bent upon making everything go on smoothly around him. Heaven only knows where Timothy picked up all he knew; it was likely the outcome of a willing, cheerful, practical spirit, and of one who knew how to profit by observation; but Timothy, who had never learnt how to cook, could cook a chop and a steak and a potato to perfection, and before long could prepare more ambitious dishes in a manner to satisfy his