

For the Giver.

WHAT for the Giver, giant tree,
"Fair gifts of gold and red—
These have I guarded patiently—
Behold my fruit outspread!
From fragile buds it slowly grow,
Fed from his hands with crystal dew;
To thank him, at his feet I strew
My gifts of gold and red."

What for the Giver, happy bird?
"A heart's pure grateful song;
I know it will not pass unheard,
Amid a loftier throng.
Have I not reared my little brood?
Who sheltered me in solitude,
Deep in the tangled, wind-swept wood?
My gift, this grateful song."

What for the Giver, gentle flower?
"My last look his shall be;
Has he not kept me, hour by hour—
Watched o'er me tenderly?
In gratitude for rain and shine,
And all the grace and beauty mine,
How could I fade and leave no sign?
My last look it shall be."

What for the Giver, little one?
"Are there no gifts from thee?
Behold! the year is almost done,
Must God still waiting be?
What deeds of kindness, flower-like, sweet?
What words, like songs to ears they greet?
What heart-fruits to lay at his feet?
Are there no gifts from thee?"

LOST IN LONDON

By the Author of "The Man Trap."

CHAPTER XI.

AN AWAKENED CONSCIENCE.

MR. SHAFTO could not sleep that night. Generally his sleep was sound and long, lasting far into the morning, after his wife had been up for an hour or two, and was busy with her sewing. But to night he heard the clock strike again and again; yet his brain would not rest. Neither would his conscience, for it kept filling his brain with accusing and tormenting thoughts. He saw himself as he had never done before, worthless, indolent, and selfish; depending for the very bread that kept him alive upon the woman whom he had once professed to love. The memory of his children came back to him; how unloving he had been to them; how peevish when they were noisy; how indifferent when they were ill; and how he had been almost glad to know they would need no more provision made for them save a coffin and a grave. All Johnny's life seemed to pass before him, so full of pain, and empty of all boyish pleasures; but full also of love and patience, and quiet trust in God, and empty of selfishness and repining, as if he had been sent into the world to be a complete contrast to his father. Then the thought of Sandy came to reproach him; and he had picked out of the gutter, who knew not a word about God and the love of Jesus Christ; yet this boy had a love in him deeper than all his ignorance and wickedness, which proved him to be a truer child of the heavenly Father than he was, with all his learning. How could he sleep when he did not know where Sandy was sheltering; when a small still voice was saying to him, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to him, ye did it not to me?"

He could scarcely wait for the fire to be kindled the next morning, but was downstairs before John and Mrs. Shafto had begun their breakfast. He felt awkward, and his face grew red, as John made haste to quit his easy-chair, in the warmest corner, the chair had been kept for him ever since John could remember.

"Sit still, Johnny, sit still," he said; "another chair will do for me."

He took a seat by the table, on a hard, straight-backed chair, such as his wife was used to sit upon. There was an embarrassing silence among them, which was broken by Mrs. Shafto, who spoke in a forced tone.

"Is there anything the matter with you, Mr. Shafto?" she inquired. He liked her to call him Mr. Shafto; it sounded more respectful; but he wished she had said John to him just then.

"No, my dear, no," he answered, "nothing that you can set right."

"Are you ready for your breakfast?" she asked, "shall I do a little rasher of bacon for you?"

"I'll have what you are having," he said.

He saw the next moment that it was dry bread she was eating, though Johnny had a little butter upon his. He took a crust of bread, and ate it; every morsel threatening to choke him. He had never trouble himself to ask what sort of a meal his wife and boy had, an hour or two before he took his own comfortable and tasty breakfast, at which he had so often grumbled. He could not look much about him, for he was afraid of meeting the eyes of either of them, and all the three were very quiet, scarcely speaking a word to one another.

"Mary," he said, as soon as breakfast was over, "I think as there is nothing for me to do, I'll go and see if I can find Sandy, and look about a bit for Gip."

Mrs. Shafto could not believe she had heard him aright. It was so long since he had cared to go out into the streets, except on a Sunday, when he had his black suit on, and went to chapel, that she felt sure she was mistaking what he said. She stood at the table, with his empty cup in her hand, gazing at him in bewilderment; and as he happened to look up, once more his face grew red.

"I have been thinking of Sandy all night," he said; "and as there's nothing for me to do at home, I'll go and see if I can meet with the boy about the Mansion House or any one of the stations. Don't soil your hands with my boots, Mary; I'll brush them myself."

Again Mrs. Shafto could not trust her own ears. She had cleaned her husband's boots for him every day ever since they were married, and he had never offered to brush them before. Now she saw him carrying them away into the little scullery behind the kitchen, and presently he returned with them on his feet. He held himself more upright than usual, and there was a light in his eyes, as if they really saw what was lying before them.

"You're sure there's nothing amiss with you, Mr. Shafto?" she said again, with more anxiety than before.

"Nothing that you can set right," he answered, "but, please God, it will come right by and bye. Good morning, my dear, don't expect me to dinner. Good-bye, Johnny."

They followed him to the shop door, and watched him cross the grave-yard with a firmer and brisker step than John Shafto could ever remember in his father. But Mr. Shafto felt almost dazed when he turned into the bustling working-day streets. He had remained so long indolently at home, except on a Sunday, that it was altogether a new thing to be pushed and jostled about as he threaded his way slowly along the crowded pavement. More than once he felt that he must give up his purpose, and go back to his quiet corner and his easy arm-chair, where he could stretch his tired legs across the hearth and be warm and comfortable. The noise and hurry wearied him, and his head ached with the constant rattle and roll of wheels along the streets. What he was doing would be of no benefit to himself, or any one belonging to him. A strong temptation came over him to return. What was Sandy, or what was little Gip to him, after all?

"What were you to Christ?" asked the still small voice that haunted him; "what were you to him, that he should seek after you? Was it any benefit to him that you should be found and brought back to God? Did he leave nothing, give up nothing, to save you? Was all the world pleasant and smooth to him whilst he sought you? Go home to your own ease and comfort, if you will; but do not think he will own you as one of his. Remember what he said, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"

Mr. Shafto plodded on through the noisy and dirty streets, in spite of his weary limbs and aching head. He pursued his way resolutely amid the throngs of people and conveyances, looking carefully through his short-sighted, dim eyes at every boy that was selling flowers, and ask-

ing one now and then if he knew anything of Sandy Carroll. None of them knew Sandy Carroll, though, if he had inquired for "Carrots," many would have given him the information he wanted. There seemed to him a vast army of fustian boys and newspaper boys, who quickly caught his eye turned upon them, and pursued him instantly as a possible customer. He felt badgered and worried, but he would not give up his search. He turned at last towards the neighbourhood where Sandy had lived, and wound his way in and out among the back slums and alleys, asking many questions of the terrible looking women dawdling about them. There was something in his solemn face and voice which impressed them, as if they thought him some important personage going about in disguise, and they were most eager to tell him all they knew and suspected of Nancy Carroll. There was not much doubt among them that she had made away with Gipsey, perhaps in a drunken fit, scarcely knowing what she was about. But she had quite disappeared from her old haunts, and Sandy had not been seen since Sunday evening. The policeman on that beat knew nothing more than the neighbours; for since Sandy had positively sworn that the murdered child was not his sister, the inquiry after his mother had ceased. "There was no chance," he said, "of finding the missing child now that more than a week had passed by with no news of her. She was dead, without doubt, by this time, whether she was murdered or no."

It was quite late in the afternoon when Mr. Shafto reached home again, so worn out with his unusual exertions that he could scarcely drag one foot before the other. Heart-sore, as well as foot-sore, he was. He had seen strange sights that day—women lying drunk upon the pavement, unable to reach their own miserable homes, and hide there; children shivering with cold, and starved almost to skeletons. Once when he had sat down, he, Mr. Shafto, on a doorstep, too weary to go farther without resting for a few minutes, a child had called to him through a broken cellar window, begging for a morsel of bread. He had made a pilgrimage through some of the dreariest places in the great city, and he went home forgetting himself in the thought of the sin and misery seething about him.

He was very quiet as he sat in his arm-chair, watching Mrs. Shafto get ready for tea. Both she and John guessed he had no good news about Sandy, and they did not venture to ask him where he had been looking for him, lest he should answer in a vexed and angry manner. But he did not stretch out his tired legs so as to take up all the hearth, and he smiled faintly, as if it were a difficult thing to smile, at his wife's attention to him.

"Johnny," he said, "don't you hear a little noise in the chapel yard?"

John Shafto had heard a slight, very slight sound about the shop window, as if a dog were prowling round it. But, until his father spoke, he did not like to move, lest it should disturb him. Now he drew his crutches to him with readiness, and started off to see what this unusual noise might mean.

He returned in a few minutes, his face glowing with pleasure, but with a little hesitation in his manner. Mr. Shafto had just begun his tea, but he put down his knife and fork, as though he would not listen to John's intelligence whilst he was eating. His wife could not understand what this change might mean.

"It's Sandy, father," said John, "he won't come in."

"But he must come in!" exclaimed Mr. Shafto, eagerly. "Mary, my love, do you go and make him come in. Perhaps he would give me the slip if I went, and I could never catch him if he took to running. We must have him."

Mrs. Shafto had not wanted to hear all he said, but was already at the shop door, with her hand on Sandy's arm, urging him to come inside, and not listening to any objections from the boy. Not that he wished to make any objection, for he had been longing to have a look at John Shafto and a word with him all day. He followed her with timid steps and hanging head into the kitchen, where Mr. Shafto was sitting.

"Come up to the fire, my boy," said Mr. Shafto, cordially; "there's plenty of

room for us all. And, Mary, pour him out a cup of tea to warm him. He's welcome to it. Johnny, sit down to the table; and let us all be comfortable together."

Sandy hardly knew what to do, but at a quiet sign from Mrs. Shafto he sat down on a stool near the fire, and took a large cupful of tea from her, without a word. All this was quite different from what he had expected when he had stolon across the grave-yard and scratched against the window, and whined like a dog, in the hope that John Shafto would come out; ready, if Mr. Shafto appeared, to hide behind one of the tall headstones. It was so different, too, from hanging about the baker's shop windows till they were closed, and then going to sleep in a cask. So different! He wished it could only last.

"Sandy," said Mr. Shafto, when tea was over, "I've been searching for you all day to tell you that it is all true what my Mary and Johnny believe. It is true that God sees and hears all, and that he loves you as much as he loves the Queen upon her throne. It is true that the Lord Jesus Christ is seeking to save you, and your mother, and little Gip, as much as if you were as rich and learned as anybody in London. He's been seeking me many and many a long year, and I've been keeping back from him, I did not want him to find me out in my selfishness and idleness. But he has found me to-day, and shown me what I am; and I believe he sent you here to help me to find myself out. It is not much that we can do for you at any rate, till I can get some work, but what we have we will give to you; and please God, Sandy, we'll help you to find both Christ and little Gip."

Mrs. Shafto was wiping away her tears quietly; and John pressed close to his father's side, and slipped his thin hand into his. It was one of the happiest evenings they had ever known, whilst they discussed ways and means of how Sandy could be clothed, and taught, and put into some way of getting his living, less uncertain than selling fuses.

"Mary, my love," said Mr. Shafto, as bed-time drew near, "would it do for Sandy's mattress to go into Johnny's room, beside his bed? For we are not going to let him live in the streets again. I'll come upstairs with you, and see what can be done."

That night Sandy slept in a corner between John's bed and the wall, where the low roof slanted over him. If John lay awake in the night, he would never again feel lonely; and if Sandy roused up out of his sound slumbers, he would know that John was close beside him. Both the boys were delighted with this arrangement; but it was John who, during the sleepless and painful hours of the night, thanked God again and again for having given him Sandy for a companion and friend.

(To be continued.)

MOTHER'S COUNSEL.

ONE of the serious mistakes made by mothers in training their children is in supposing that careful habits can be cultivated in careless surroundings. A ragged or worn carpet, so little valued by the mother that grease or ink spots can be left on it without causing comment, may become a moral calamity. Tying the child up in a bib, and giving it the liberty to spill its food when eating, is responsible for bad table habits in the men and women we meet. A child who is made to eat its food carefully, in a room where the furnishings are respected, where a penalty will follow carelessness, naturally acquires careful, refined manners. Many a mother spends more time repairing damages—the results of careless habits, due largely to the furnishings in the dining-room—than she would need to spend in setting a table carefully and keeping the room in order, so that its order and neatness commanded the respect of the children. The ounce of prevention is worth several pounds of cure in the training of children, and it is a pity that the ounce of prevention is not administered in the infinitesimal doses necessary in early childhood, rather than in the radical doses necessary to overcome neglect in matters that are never minor, for manners and habits mark the man.