

Vacation Song:

I have closed my books and hidden my slate,
And thrown my satchel across the gate;
My school is out for a season of rest,
And how for the schoolroom I love the best!

My schoolroom lies on the meadow wide,
Where under the clover the sunbeams hide—
Where the long vines cling to the mossy bars,
And the daisies twinkle like fallen stars,

Where the daisies of buttercups gild the scene
Like showers of gold-dust thrown over the green,
And the wind's flying footsteps are traced as they pass
By the dance of the sorrel and dip of the grass.

My lessons have written in clouds and trees,
And no one whispers except the breeze,
Who sometimes blows, from a secret place,
A stray sweet blossom against my face.

My school-bell rings in the rippling stream,
Which hides itself, like a school-boy's dream,
Under a shadow at a touch of sight,
But laughing still for its own delight.

My classmates there are the birds and bees,
And the saucy squirrel, less wise than these,
For he only learns in all the weeks
How many chestnuts will fill his cheeks.

My teacher is patient, and never yet
A lesson of hers did I once forget;
For womanly love do her lips impart,
And all her lessons are learned by heart.

Oh, come! oh, come! or we shall be late,
And down will fasten the golden gate.
Of all the schoolrooms in east or west,
The school of Nature I love the best.

a crust of mouldy bread or the rind of an orange: the strongest always gaining the victory over those younger or weaker. He heard little children, who could hardly speak, stammering out bad words, which had no meaning for them, but which showed what the sin was of those about them. Now and then a baby looked at him over the shoulder of a drunken mother, who was entering or leaving a ginnapalace. Because his heart was full of little Gip he saw all these things as he had never seen them before. Two or three times he had called to a child moping alone, as if it were an entire stranger to the other children about it, but none of them had answered to the name of Gip. At length he went home, heartsick and very sorrowful.

Mrs. Shafto had been sewing away busily whilst Johnny was absent, fretted by her husband's persistent fears that Sandy had carried something off with him, and by her slow, lazy search through all the shelves and drawers which the boy might have rifled. Several times he fancied something was missing, and would not let her rest until she put down her work, and found what he was searching over as gone. She was in very low spirits herself. It was so odd of the boy, she thought; he had seemed to cling so much to her last night. Could it be that he was afraid of her promise at the police-station, that she would keep her eye upon him? Did he suppose she meant to make a sort of prisoner of him? If Sandy tried to keep out of their way, there was very little chance that either she or Johnny would come across him again. London was too wide a place for that.

It was growing quite dusk in the quiet grave-yard, and the tall headstones looked taller and blacker than in the daytime, the gas was lit, though it was turned very low, in the gloomy shop, not for the chance of any customers coming to Mr. Shafto, but for the sake of the persons who employed his wife to sew for them. John was lingering about the grave yard, hardly caring to carry his sad face into his mother's presence, and feeling that his father's fretful speeches would be too hard for him to bear, when a shrill, low whistle behind him made him start as if he were frightened. It was still light enough for him to see Sandy, whose bare feet had made no sound at all upon the flagged pathway.

"Oh! Sandy! Sandy!" he cried, "how could you run away from us? I'm so glad you've come back."

"Why, I didn't run away," answered Sandy, "I crept away early this mornin', because I don't want nothing of you but to come and see you at odd times. The master, he don't like me bein' here, he don't. So I crept away quiet; and one of my pals lent me a pair of fuses, and I were in luck to-day, and sold 'em sharp, and bought some more; and now I've got fourpence halfpenny, besides a meat pie I've bought. Oh! I wish little Gip were here."

He could not bear to think of little Gip's delight, if she could only see the meat pie, and go with him to spend the money, which was safely tied in a corner of his ragged pocket with a bit of string.

"Sandy," said John, "I've been searching for little Gip all day."

"Ah!" sighed Sandy, "but you'd never know her if you saw her. I'd know her miles and miles away. I s'pose Jesus 'ud know her, wouldn't he? or it's no use me askin' him to look out for her."

"To be sure he knows her," answered John earnestly. "He knows us all by our names, and he's sure to know all the little children when he's so fond of them; every one of them. Don't doubt that, Sandy. He's sure to take care of Gip. Don't you know that once he lived in heaven with his Father, but when he saw how lost and miserable we were, and how we should never, never find the way to heaven ourselves, he came down into this world, and lived like we do, and was always seeking those that were lost?"

"It were very good of him," said Sandy; "but I never heard tell of it afore."

"Sandy," continued John Shafto, his voice growing more and more earnest, "I don't think I could bear to live if I didn't know all that. Sometimes when I'm in great pain at nights, till I can hardly keep from crying out—and I don't like to wake

mother, she has to work so hard—I feel as if I heard him speak to me. Sometimes he says, 'John, lovest thou me?' And I say, 'halt ahead, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.' Then he says, 'Bear this a little while, for my sake. And I remember what pain he bore for me; and all my pain seems as nothing. Sandy, if you could hear him say, 'I am taking care of little Gip, and if you love me, some day you shall have her again,' that would help you to bear it, wouldn't it?"

"Ah!" answered Sandy, with a deep sigh, "but how am I to know it?"

"I will tell you the very words Jesus said himself," replied John. "listen: 'For the Son of man, that a himself, you know; the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye! if a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine, and go into the mountains, and seek that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety and nine that went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.' Not one of them, Sandy, not one of the hundreds and thousands of little children in London. He is looking after them all, every one; and he knows little Gip as well as you do. I thought of that when I saw such lots and lots of them, and I was afraid one might be little Gip, and me not know her. 'Lord,' I said, 'Thou knowest her quite well. Take care of her for Sandy, and bring her back some day.' I think he will perhaps before I die."

"Or Johnny," said Sandy, in a frightened voice, "you're not goin' to die, are you?"

"I—and-by, Sandy," he answered quietly; "the doctor says there's no hope for me, and mother and me have talked about it; and we are going to be as happy as we can till the time comes, and she's to wear her blue ribbons in her cap, because I like it so. It's harder for poor mother than me, because she'll have to wait, and now she has nobody but me."

"But you'll be put into a coffin," said Sandy, "and buried deep down in the ground."

"That's not much," replied John Shafto, "that's only my body; but I shall go to the other children. Mother says all this world is like one large room to God; and he is among us, like a mother is with her children when she sits at work in the same room with them, seeing all they do, and hearing all they say, but perhaps not seeming to take much notice of them. And to die is only like going into the next room; where we shall see him and hear his voice, and be no longer like little children at play, but be more like his grown up sons and daughters; and he will talk to us more, and teach us harder things than whilst we are so little. I shall be glad to be called into the next room for everything, save leaving mother."

"I don't know nothink about it," answered Sandy; "only we'd two babies as died, and were nailed up in coffins, and buried. Are they gone into that next room?"

"To be sure they are," said John Shafto.

"And if mother's killed little Gip—" began Sandy, but he could not finish the sentence.

"She's there too," said John, "safe and happy. God's little girl, you know. Where else could little children go to, save to him, straight to him? But, Sandy, you don't think she's been killed?"

"Not quite," whispered Sandy; "but ever since I see that dead baby I've been scared."

"There was no time to say any more, for Mrs. Shafto had opened the shop door, and was looking out anxiously across the dark grave yard.

"Sandy's come back mother!" shouted John, joyfully. "make her come in. I want to talk to her." "Hundreds and hundreds of things he doesn't know. Make him say all night again, mother. I'll go in and see her." "To let him?"

John disappeared, but he was not long, and he returned to Sandy to urge him to go. "Mrs. Shafto had called at him through the door, and his eyes and muttered some words. But the other two made up for his going, and Sandy was not in a mood to take offence readily. It was

too good fortune for him to sit in the clean cosy room, with John Shafto to talk to him, that he should throw it away for a trifle. He kept as far back as he could, and did not lift his voice above a whisper, but he felt happier than he had ever been in his life, except at a few rare times with little Gip.

(To be continued.)

READING BOOKS.

"Do you call that a big lake?" asked a half-witted lad. "Why I can pour all its water into this basket, and yet have room for two more lakes."

"Of course you can," was the reply. "the water would leak out as fast as it was poured in."

That is the way with some readers; they pour into their mind a great amount of reading, but it soon leaks out. For a short time they may remember what they read, but after a while they can recall little more than the title of the book. Such reading points them little more than does the water the basket through which it runs. To be able to read with profit, we must know what and how to read.

Select your books; select such as are worthy of careful reading; select those that present what you need to know, and in such a way that you can understand and remember; select those suited to you rather than to some one else. You may judge by what others say of the books, and by the titles and tables of contents and introduction. If, after beginning to read, you find the book hardly worth finishing, stop reading; rather lose the time already spent than waste more for the sake of finishing what you have begun. You are not reading to get through, but to get good. Having the right kind of book, make a business of reading it. Give your attention to that as a work that must be well done. Begin at the beginning; read slowly. It is not the last page you are after, but the good the book has in it; get that and all of it, if possible. If you do not understand a chapter or paragraph, read it over slowly, stopping to think now and then. When it is understood, then try to fix it in the memory. Have it so fixed that you will not only remember, but be able to tell it to others or act on the lessons yourself. Do not skip unless you are reading for some special object. Read everything carefully, and stop to think of the writer's meaning. If he does not teach what you believe, consider why you differ. This may be a slow way of reading, but by it you will become master of the book, and will be better rewarded than if you had read a dozen books hastily. When a book is finished, fix the whole in your mind by thinking how you would tell it to others and what you are to do now that you have new facts and lessons.

ANECDOTE OF GORDON.

WHILE everybody was discussing his late the other day, I heard a story of General Gordon which shows the peculiar religious nature of the man who held Khartoum for nearly a year against the Mahdi. Gordon was dining in London one day with several club men, one of whom, when the wine had circulated freely and the party had reached the stage of extreme good fellowship and familiarity, accused the General of looting a bottle of wine, and in proof of his assertion he pointed to the bulging side of the warrior's coat. "That is very quick to seize the idea, and without even questioning the General began to bet on the brand of wine he was supposed to have secreted. The wagers were freely made, and won the referee in a half hour, wholly peculiar way, clapped the General on the shoulder and ordered him to produce the bottle. "Chinese" Gordon rose to his feet, and, putting his hand into his bosom, drew out a Church of England prayer book.

"Gentlemen," he said, in a tone of undisguised indignation, "this little book has been my companion for years, and I sincerely trust that you all may find a comforter and supporter in the trials of life that will prove as true to you as this has been to me," and with these words he left the room. A collection of apologies went to him next day.

LOST IN LONDON

By the Author of "The Man Trap."

CHAPTER IX.

SEEKING THE LOST.

BUT when the morning came, and Mrs. Shafto went to rouse Sandy, and kindle the kitchen fire, what was her surprise and disappointment to find that he was gone! The mattress had been dragged into a corner, and the pall roughly folded up, and laid upon it, but there was no other trace of the guest who had been made so comfortable by her last night. John looked exceedingly grave and troubled, though he did not put his anxiety into words. Only Mr. Shafto, when he came down to a late breakfast after the fire had burned up well, and the room was warm, displaying some triumph, and declared, with more energy than was usual to him, that the lad was a rogue and a thief, no doubt, and they would not have had him go off without carrying some plunder with him. Nothing, however, was missing from the kitchen, and there was no plunder in the shop, except a few rusty plumes, and the hatchment, with its faded painting, in the window.

Yet it was a sad day, for John Shafto and his mother, though Sandy was not proved to be a thief. Their hearts had warmed so to the desolate boy, and they had felt so keen a sympathy with him about little Gip, that this desertion pained them to the quick. John Shafto, as he lay awake all the early part of the night, had pondered over every possible means of tracing the lost child, and had prayed to God, with intense earnestness, that she might be found. He had felt so comforted by these prayers and ponderings, that he had made haste to get up in the morning to talk to Sandy; and not only to talk, but to set off in search himself upon his truttles, as soon as he could learn anything by which he might know little Gip if he saw her. Now all this was over. Sandy was gone, without a word to his new friend. A great blank fell upon John Shafto, as though all his life had been thrown back upon him carelessly and ungratefully.

Very slowly the hours of that autumn day passed by. John Shafto limped along some of the back streets near his own home, gazing with fresh interest and attention at the stunted and puny children playing about the doors and in the gutters. There had never seemed such swarms of them before, nor so much sadness in their lives. He saw them fighting with one another for