

Who Bids for the Children?

BY L. L. ORRAN.

Not children of colour; in slave-days
These grouped by the auctioneer's stand,
But children of every nation,—
Children of every land
"Who bids? who bids for the children?
The world will soon be their own.
Free the labourer who digs in the ditches,
The monarch who sits on the throne,
None but will give place to the children
As he lays by his shovel or crown."

Then a man in his Maker's image
Rose up with a brimming bowl,
Announced, "I bid for the children—
Bid for them body and soul;
In the hall of Satan's kingdom,
With its stains and guilt, and crime,
I will lead them into the darkness,
Through lanes of sin and slime."

Then up rose Temperance workers:
A man with a kingly air;
And each bearing a glass of water—
A woman sweet and fair.
"We bid! we bid for the children!
In behalf of the kingdom of Light.
From the siren snare of the tempter
We will lead them out from the night."

"By paths full of life's sweetness,
By rivers deep and broad,
They shall walk in ways of honour,
By the arch-foe's never trod.
And when we rest from labour,
And the world becomes their own,
They who fought as temperance children
Shall cast down Bacchus' throne."

LOST IN LONDON

By the Author of "The Man Trap."

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. SHAFTO.

SANDY had no desire to slip away from the friendly guardianship of Mrs. Shafto. Her words had strengthened the new hope in his heart, that the grave was not the end of those children he had seen buried in it, and he wished to learn more about this strange and good news. He kept close beside her, though she seemed less inclined to talk to him than when they were going to look for his mother. She could not trust herself to speak, for her heart was full of the sad and terrible sight she had just left.

Mrs. Shafto was also a little anxious about Sandy, who followed her so closely, as closely as a stray and homeless dog might have done, and for whom she had undertaken a kind of responsibility. Though they were not as miserable and degraded as the people she had been seeing, they were very poor, she and her husband; so poor that, but for her own hard and incessant work as a needlewoman, they would often have to go without sufficient bread to eat. What was she to do with this great, growing lad out of the streets, as wild and ignorant as a young savage; a thief very probably; with no spark of good in him, except his love for his little sister? She knew very well that her husband would grudge any help given to Sandy if it deprived him of the least comfort, or demanded of him any self-denial. But she could not endure the thought of thrusting him away, uncomfoted and unhelped, into the open street, with no sort of home to find refuge in. She could not treat a dog so; and how much more worth was this boy than a dog! Besides, it was Johnny who had found him first, and brought him home—her lame lad, who seemed to know so well what Christ would have him do, and how to tread gladly in his Lord's steps. She could not go back to the house, and tell him she had cast off Sandy, and left him in the great wilderness of London.

On went Mrs. Shafto, still sadly and in silence, across the square grave-yard, and through the gloomy shop, with its small coffin open on the counter—a coffin that would have just fitted the baby she had kissed. Sandy followed her, his bare feet making no sound upon the floor; but he stopped at the door of the kitchen, for there was a strange person there—not his new friend, Johnny Shafto.

This person was a tall lanky man, about forty-five years old, whose thin long legs were stretched quite across the hearth, as

though no one else needed to sit by the fire. He was lolling in the comfortable padded chair in the best corner, his hands hanging idly from his wrists, and his arms from his shoulders, as if he never had done or never could do one hearty task of work. His face was narrow and gloomy, with straight hair falling over it; and his head drooped, as if he found it too much trouble to hold it upright. He looked up lazily as Mrs. Shafto went in, and spoke to her with a fretful voice.

"What a time you've been," he said, "gadding about on a Sunday evening on other people's business, and I've been wanting my tea this half-hour. Nobody asked me to stay at the school; I suppose they think nothing of me for being an undertaker, without any business either. If I had a thriving trade, and kept a mourning coach or two, it would be a different thing. They never seem to think that I'm a Shafto, and my grandfather was their minister in his time. If my father had done his duty by me, they would have been ready enough, every one of them, to invite me to tea. Where have you been to, Mary?"

She was hastily taking off her bonnet and shawl before getting the tea ready, and now both her face and voice quivered as she answered.

"I've been seeing a sad sight," she said; "Johnny will have told you about the poor boy that has lost his sister? Well, him and me have been to a police station—a place I was never in before, and we've seen a poor dead dear little creature, no bigger than my Mary when she was taken from me; a poor murdered baby, and I cannot get the sight out of my head."

"You're got such a poor head," said Mr. Shafto, "always running on other folks. I dare say you never thought of mentioning that your husband was an undertaker, and had a coffin he could sell cheaply, and would bury it as reasonable as anybody in London; now did you?"

"I never thought of it," she answered. "That's just what I say," he continued, triumphantly; "you never do remember things useful, when we've a child's coffin in stock. Why don't you shut that door?"

Mrs. Shafto stepped back to the doorway, and whispered to Sandy to sit down in the dark shop for a few minutes, till tea was ready. Then she shut him out of the bright little kitchen, and went softly up to her husband, speaking in a voice lower and unsteadier than usual. "Dear John," she said, coaxingly, "it was our Johnny that brought yonder poor lad to our house. He's taken such a fancy to him, it would grieve him sorely if we turned our backs upon him. Maybe Johnny won't be spared to us much longer; and I could never forgive myself if I'd hurt him about anything. Besides, don't you remember, John—you that are such a scholar yourself, and your grandfather minister at the chapel—how the King says, when the Last Day is come, that he counts all we do for these poor creatures of his as if it were done to him? It looks as if God had brought this boy and Johnny together, and we must not set ourselves against anything he does."

"Where is the boy?" inquired Mr. Shafto.

"He's in the shop, in the dark. I'd light the gas, and give him something to eat there, if you think he's not fit company for us. But it's not pleasant to eat among coffins and plumes. And, dear! how ever shall we be fit company for angels? Though my Johnny'll be fit for them, I know; only I'm afraid I shall never be."

"I suppose you'll have your own way," grumbled Mr. Shafto.

"But I want it to be your way too, my dear, fully and freely," she continued, patiently. "I want you to feel, when Sandy's eating our morsel of bread, that he's here in the place of the Lord Jesus. I'm sorry I never thought to say my husband was an undertaker, and would bury the baby reasonably. I know I'd have made it a pretty shroud, poor thing! But that's past and gone; and you must forgive me, John. Why, that's rhyme I've made, you hear. Ah! you're a great scholar, and I don't mind you laughing at me. I may call Sandy in, and put him in a corner where you need not see him, if you like, for Johnny's sake, you know?"

"Well, he may come in," said Mr. Shafto, drooping down his head again, and stretching out his legs still farther across the warm hearth.

Mrs. Shafto opened the door quietly and called Sandy in a whisper, placing a chair for him in a corner, as much as possible out of sight of her husband, who did not appear to take any notice of the boy. But he groaned aloud several times, causing Sandy to start nervously, for his mind had been over-strained, and his body was faint with excitement and fatigue. Mr. Shafto's groans seemed to betoken some now and dreadful calamity, and Sandy could scarcely keep himself from bursting into a vehement fit of crying.

But it was not long before tea was ready, and Mrs. Shafto went to the foot of a staircase, which wound like a corkscrew, up to the two long rooms in the roof. She called "Johnny!" and the next moment the tap, tap of a pair of crutches sounded on the crooked staircase slowly and laboriously, till he reached the last step, and his pale face and dazzling eyes peered in at them from the darkness. It was a radiant face, unlike any that Sandy had ever seen, with a happy smile upon it, as though he had learned some great secret, and could never more be overwhelmed by sorrow.

"Where is Sandy?" he asked, for his eyes could not see him in the sudden light; "have you found little Gip, mother?"

"Not yet, Johnny," she answered, cheerfully; "there's Sandy. Go and sit by him, dear heart; and he'll tell you about what we've been doing."

John Shafto sat down by Sandy, with his hand through his arm, ready to listen eagerly to all he could tell him, asking him questions, and talking about little Gip in his low pleasant voice; until Sandy felt that, even if little Gip were lost, he would have another friend who would love him, and whom he could love. They whispered together till bed time, forming plans for seeking and finding poor lost Gip.

That night, after Mr. Shafto had gone to bed, Mrs. Shafto made up a place for Sandy to sleep on the kitchen hearth, with an old mattress and a brown moth-eaten velvet pall out of the shop, which had not been in use for years. It made so grand and magnificent a bed, that Sandy was almost afraid to lie down upon it, and could scarcely believe it was not all a dream. Once when he awoke, before the fire had quite burned out, and saw the polished warming-pan twinkling, and the steel balls glittering in the dim light, he sat up to rouse himself, and think where he could be. Then the remembrance of the lame boy's tender face and pleasant voice came back to him, and he went to sleep again with a strange sense of peace at the thought of the new friend he had found.

(To be continued.)

A LION PAINTER.

It is probable that you have seen—ever if you did not know it,—a celebrated print of a lion's head, by Rosa Bonheur. It is perhaps the finest ever painted; and the life of the woman who could produce such a strange masterpiece is full of interest.

Rosa Bonheur, the greatest animal painter of her time, is sixty-seven years old, yet she says she has still work enough in her mind to fill two lifetimes. In 1850 she bought an old house in the little village of Br., on the banks of the Seine, not far from the forest of Fontainebleau. There she has lived and wrought ever since. She has added stables and a studio to her house. In the stable and grounds she has had from time to time a veritable menagerie of animals, including lions, chamois, bears, gazelles, and an elk. It is refreshing to read that her studio contains not an article of bric-a-brac and scarcely anything that is not needed in the work of the great artist. She has been always an early riser. She says the morning is the best time for work. She spends much time outdoors, walking or riding in a little carriage which she herself drives. At her work and outdoors she wears a man's clothing, with a peasant blouse. Her life has been devoted to her art, pure and simple, and rich has been her reward. There are some wrinkles in her face now, but neither her marvellous mental nor physical powers are weakened one whit. Her enthusiasm keeps her always young.

MOVE ON.

"Move on," said a policeman the other day to a group of idlers who were standing on the pavement; "move on and allow the people to pass." "Move on," said the master of a shop to one of his apprentices whom he had caught gazing into a window, when he should have been going on an errand. "Now, move on. What do you think the world would come to if every one, like you, kept standing still and never moved forward?"

"Dear me," said a schoolmaster to a pupil, "how could you be so stupid? Look here; you have got 6 from 9-3. When will you know better? For the last three months you have been trying to learn subtraction, and now do not know any more about it than when you first began. Instead of progressing you are at a stand-still. Why don't you move on?"

"Look, Bill, look at Jim yonder, he must be getting on—new coat, new trousers. Why, I declare! a new suit altogether. Where can he get his money from? He has no more wages than we have, but he looks much more respectable. How is it? It puzzles me."

"Why, just this, Dick; when we're spending our money at the 'Black Bear,' he is 'moving on.' His garden is full of fruit, ours are full of weeds; he is happy, we are miserable; and I, from this time, mean to try to 'move on.'"

"Move on," said a minister to his hearers; "move on in religion, faith, and charity. 'Move on;' let it not be said that you are behind hand in religion; keep faithful to the end; and although ever moving, be ever firm, so that when you arrive at the appointed resting place, you will be ready to exchange mortality for immortality."

OUR SUMMER BOARDERS.

ONE spring a little brown bird built her nest in the honey-suckle beside the dining-room window, and became, almost from the first, a pensioner of the family. Sometimes grandma would lay a long thread on the window-sill, and again a horse-hair or a wisp of straw, and all these donations were quietly and no doubt thankfully received, to be woven into the nest.

The little home was finished, at length, and very soon the eggs appeared. Then Mother Bird began her patient sitting upon them, and now it was that her friendship with the human family became an established fact.

One day when she had flown away for a few minutes' rest, grandma tied a tiny pasteboard box to the side of the nest. The bird returned, circled about in alarm for a short interval, and then settled cautiously into her place. Assured by experiment that the box was no trap, she put her head daintily within it, and drew forth the bit of worm that canny grandma had placed there.

Next day grandma came cautiously to a window, and ventured to drop some bits of boiled egg into the little manger. The bird looked startled but did not move, and when the charitable hand was withdrawn she put her head forward and pecked up the welcome food.

Day by day the same programme was carried out, and surely never was bird more daintily fed. Berries, meat, and crumbs found their way regularly to her ladder, and there can be little doubt that she contented the Father Bird that this was the promised land, and her benefactor a grand old angel.

"I fancy she'd eat out of a spoon now," said grandma, one morning, and though Uncle Will begged her not to destroy the fine fabric of the bird's trust in her by trying it too far, she persisted, and held a tempting spoonful of food under the little beak. Peck, peck! Of course Mrs. Bird liked it, and of course she ate it all up, and twittered for more.

Daily did she take her meals from the spoon, and grandma promised herself the pleasure of teaching the little birds equal confidence and self-possession. Alas! she never did. Perhaps only two creatures know exactly why Tom Tigercat, who lives next door, and the mourning mother, who, for days after they were hatched and had disappeared, sat chirping sadly in a tree near by.—Youth's Companion.