

CHAPTER VII.—1835-1858.

VACATIONS—PUPILS WHO ENJOY AND PUPILS WHO DO NOT ENJOY THEM—AWAITED EACH TIME BY MOTHER AND SISTERS—CANDY AND FLOWERS SAVED UP—EXCURSIONS—SWEET INQUISITIVENESS—AN ENTHUSIASTIC AUDIENCE—SISTERS STILL SPARED.

AMONG pleasant school-memories, the vacations are likely to bear a prominent part. However well a student may love the studies and the discipline of scholastic life, occasional seasons of rest are generally anticipated with keen relish.

I say "generally", because, alas! there are always more or less in every school, who have no pleasant homes to which they can go. Few students are so to be pitied, as are these: others' delight, contrasted with their own loneliness, makes their lot peculiarly hard to bear.

It is one of the numerous blessings which our dear Lord has showered upon me, that I have the most beautiful and winsome of vacation-recollections. Not only my dear and

Vacation-Delights.

precious mother, but two younger sisters always awaited me with many expressions and other manifestations of delight, and made the occasional home-comings trebly pleasant.

At the coming of vacation, I always hastened home as soon as possible: and invariably found that a royal reception had been reserved and kept in readiness for "Sister Fan." It was touching to know that the dear little tots had been exercising their ingenuity to its fullest extent, to make their "big sister" *feel* the deliciousness of the home that she could not see. Sundry bits of candy that had been resolutely saved up for many weeks were slipped into my hand; flowers of every kind were brought me, with their fine velvety blossoms and rich delicate fragrance. Excursions were planned, to the shadiest of nooks and the most delightful of forests; and often to the homes of dear friends, who received us with unaffected kindness.

And the questions that I had to answer! Each little sister had a set entirely of her own, and all had to be duly considered and faithfully answered, before the little cross-examiners were satisfied. Of course it was a pleasure to tell everything to such attentive and appreciative listeners: and I fully availed myself of the chance.

Fanny Crosby's Life-Story.

Every pupil in the school had to be duly described; the teachers, with their various peculiarities, all came in for a share of the examination. Then there were the distinguished visitors that had favored our Institution with their calls: these all had to be reviewed in due course. How often do I remember that small family-group: the two little sisters snuggling up to me and clinging to my hands, and my mother sitting close by, and listening to it all with an indulgent smile, which I could feel though I could not see!

Of course every poem that I had composed since I saw them before, had to be duly recited, and subjected to their criticism. This, however, I am bound to say, was generally favorable, to a degree that bordered on enthusiasm; and it would not have been exactly comfortable for any one rash enough to have intimated to them that their big sister was not the greatest poet of ancient and modern times!

Of course I knew that they would know better, when they became older; but their sweet childish partiality still lingers in my memory, like the fragrance of sweetest flowers.

It has been my blessed privilege to have these sisters spared to me: one of them, Mrs. Carrie W. Rider, is now my daily companion,

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and loving protector; while the other, Mrs. Julia Athington, is a near neighbor to us.

I also have several nephews and nieces, at whose homes I am always welcome: and many sweet little vacations are still spent with them.

While nearly all humanity, so far as I have met it, has treated me as a dear sister, there is yet a peculiar and intense pleasure, in feeling that my own near relatives are so loving and congenial.

I am sure the reader will pardon this little digression into family matters: they are a part of me, and necessarily form a portion of my autobiography.