

Vacation Time is Over.

THE 17th of September is a date that, for weeks past, has loomed with large and ever-increasing importance before the mental consciousness of the children of Portland. It is the fateful day that marks the close of vacation, the beginning of school—a day dreaded by many, welcomed by few, and regarded by all with a certain degree of respect.

nevertheless, regarded with a certain sense of satisfaction, forming, as they do, a reliable middle ground, and filling, conveniently and comfortably, the extensive territory between the brilliant scholars and the dullards. Then, too, there are those who consider it a privilege to be permitted to attend school, who have been looking forward with pleasure and hopefulness to that important tomorrow—the portentous Monday morning that will set the school bells ringing on the stroke of 8.

A Unit on One Point. But if there is a difference of opinion regarding the opening of school, the youthful mind is a unit when it comes to vacation. Whether spent at the seashore, in the mountains, on the farm, or at home, the months of the Summer just ending have been full of the joy of life and living for the children. The days do not drag when one is dancing in the sunlit, flowery meadows, in one's early youth; the hours in their flight are then

impressions, often unconsciously received, are retained through life. Nature will tutor her offspring. In the wisdom of wood and wild, she speaks in the trill of a songbird. To the heart of the listening child. The winds and the waves are teachers, and they chant in a mystical key. The glory of things created. The beauty of things that be. Romance of the Sea. Speaking of bonfires on the beach, there is nothing more suggestive of the romance and mystery of the sea than a fire built of driftwood. Who knows from what climate the flaming tapers have come, or by what strange ocean currents the wave-whitened logs have been borne—upon what far-off, alien shores they have touched, in their long journeyings to and fro, ere they stranded here, to roam no more forever? This squared timber? Perhaps it is a beam from some golden galleon, founded centuries since, in mid-ocean. That battered, deck-worn plank may have floored the dock of a pirate ship, and those dark stains that sun and wind have alike been unable

vacation season. I am never so well or so happy as when I am teaching. "But you enjoyed your vacation?" "Oh, yes; I took up a course in history and rubbed up on English Literature and one or two other things that I may be called upon to teach some day. Yes, I enjoyed it." But this, you see, was not exactly resting. It was simply a change of work. Still she seemed to regard it in the nature of recreation, and she is only one of many whose legitimate playtime is turned to stern account. The ambitious teacher is not content unless she is acquiring knowledge, extending her range of mental activity, and, in short, keeping up with the times. At Chautauqua. Chautauqua, which meets at Oregon City, and whose prosperous existence is largely due to the efforts of Eva Emery Dye and her husband, claims the attention of a goodly number of Portland teachers every year, and the attendance is not altogether for pleasure. The children



Home again.



"Do you think the children are glad when school opens?" The question was asked of a little girl in the sixth grade of one of the city schools. "No," came the prompt reply; "they are sorry." Then she added, thoughtfully: "There are some who do not care much about it either way, and I suppose there are a few who really like to go to school, but I don't know any of them." Another View of It. "I wish there wasn't any such thing as school," complained another, an exceptionally bright 10-year-old, who always escapes examinations, on account of the unflinching excellence of her recitations and standing. When questioned further she admitted that she would not be willing to remain away from the hated institution. "For," as she naively expressed it, "I don't want the other children to get ahead of me." Clearly it is ambition rather than love of study that impels her in her pursuit of knowledge. And this, to be frank, is the incentive which the majority of pupils in the grammar grades confess to—that is to say, those who have a repu-

pupils in the North End, to whom school, as they know it, is a beautiful dream—a brightness that enlivens for them the otherwise dull gray of daily existence. But for lack of funds all the kindergartens would have been kept open through the Summer; the need for them never knows a vacation. One school, however, in the North End has held right along, not missing a week since its organization in the early Spring, and it has proven a delight to the 30 little ones who find, in the hours spent in the cool and quiet of their small picture-lined school-room, an ever-increasing profit. The young teacher who gives her time and services freely and for love of the children, is looked upon by her tiny pupils as a bright, particular spirit. But to add to it all, there have been several red-letter days in the Summer history of the school. Street-car rides, and picnics in the woods, to which the tired mothers were invited, have not been wanting. One woman's loving kindness has made the three months now ended a joy to be remembered by both mothers and children. The long, warm Summer days are gone, with all their dear delights. The golden floods of sun—the moon That glorified the nights; The Summer stars—great blazing gems— Long lingering in the dawn, Their radiance reflected back From dewdrop sprinkled lawns— These have grown paler now. And in The soft September air, Across the hills fair Autumn comes, With red leaves in her hair. —Lillian M. Miller.



tation among their fellows for cleverness and studiousness. Occasionally, it is true, you find children who love school for school's sake, who study for love of study, and who are, in all respects, models of youthful loveliness and circumspection, almost too angelic for contact with the common world, but they are the exception rather than the rule. There are a few who, as the first-mentioned little girl said, do not care much about it either way. Others, and they make up the healthy majority, go to school because they are sent, and study because they must. Though they average well, they are neither enthusiastic workers, nor yet sluggards, but just happy, wholesome, normal youngsters, who take life as it comes, and will grow up to swell the bulk of the solid, substantial and necessary human commonplace. They are quite as frequently girls as boys, and although their teachers never wax extravagant in praise of them, they are,

bright and light and beautiful as butterfly wings. The nights are gown with stars, and the dreams of children when, wearied with play, they sink to sleep at the deepening of the purple dusk, are like tangled rainbows, smothered in a mist of moonbeams and set to fairy music. Happy, indeed, is the lot of the boy or girl who has a month or even a fortnight at the seaside, to remember. The wading, the bathing, the sand forts and villages, built in the lee of some sheltering rock; the exciting pursuit of clams that have the faculty of too often eluding the inexperienced digger—above all, the bonfires on the beach, reflecting the lingering after-glow of matchless sunsets—these are delights that enrich the experiences of fortunate childhood. Children are far more susceptible to the influence of the beautiful and the mysterious than their elders, and early

to efface may be blood marks. Who knows? The sea has countless secrets and holds them fast against human questioning, and leaping flame and booming surf but deepen the mystery of it all. Though vacation at the seashore is perhaps the richest in experience, still the city-bred child who has an opportunity to become acquainted with farm life, in its Summer aspect, adds largely to his fund of useful and practical knowledge. And even to the child who remains at home vacation is a time of rest and play and progress, blessed in its results and quite as important in its way as the long season of work in the schoolroom which will begin tomorrow morning. A little 6-year-old lad whose experience in the schoolroom has thus far been limited to observation merely, but who is to be duly enrolled as a working pupil Monday, was asked if he thought he would like it. With the spirit of a true philosopher he said he supposed he would have to go whether he liked it or not. It was all in a lifetime anyway, and to be accepted and borne stoically like whippings, and the toothache and other disagreeable and unavoidable things.

The Teachers. But not alone to the children is the 17th of September a date of import, to be regarded with dread or with pleasant anticipation, as the case may be. To the teacher—among the hardest worked of all who earn their daily bread by mental exertion—the close of the Summer vacation and the opening of school is an event that marks an epoch. "Like my work and enjoy teaching—when once I am fairly launched upon the tide of schoolroom duties; but, oh! I do dread the beginning," said one lovely young woman who has taught for several years, and who has won an enviable reputation for competence and ability. "This vacation," she continued, "has been a season of absolute rest, both mentally and physically. I am always worn out when school closes in June, and it takes me a good three months to recuperate. This year I have staid quietly at home, read nothing but novels, made over my old gowns and forgotten, without trying, the fact that I would have to go to work again this Fall. I would gladly postpone the opening of school another fortnight if I could." "And I," replied her companion, a woman of long experience in her chosen vocation, "would willingly shorten the

falls somewhere short of enough, will all confess, if they are inclined to frankness, that it is a relief to get back to the city. And though many a fetter may have been forged during the golden months, by the magic influence of wind and wave and woodland shadow, yet it is the Winter that really tests the strength and endurance of the bond. And so, as gladly and as eagerly as it departed, in the dawn of the glorious Summer, society rushes back to town and proceeds to provide itself with new clothes and to prepare itself generally for an active campaign. Lovers of Nature. Society, of course, is expected to amuse itself at fashionable Summer resorts, and it generally does so. But society, by no manner of means, monopolizes the delights of the seashore, or the pleasures of the mountains and the country. Indeed, it is a question whether the devotees of fashion really know how to extract the genuine joy of life by the sea or the mountain top. It is the man with little leisure who makes the most of what he has. He who loves Nature for herself alone finds her most generous and kind, although Nature's lover is not always the favorite of fortune. The tired clerk, the tradesman, the weary shop-girl, or even the laundress may have a far keener appreciation of the beautiful than the millionaire or the leader of fashion. And in this part of the world, everybody, even to the butcher's apprentice and the messenger boys, who are supposed to need it least of all, takes a vacation. Expeditious by wheel, camping trips, fishing and prospecting outings of every sort, have been in vogue during the Summer. The beach, the woods and the mountains are so easily accessible that no one in Portland is compelled to live far from the beauties of Nature. A thousand limpid trout streams thread the nearby forests and flash through sunlit glades, in a maddened rush to the sea. There are secluded glens and cool retreats, in numberless variety and indescribable loveliness, within a radius of 25 miles of the city. And there is the lovely Columbia whose shores, from the Willamette to the Cascades, are crowded with grandeur and beauty that invite and woo the toil-worn traveler to rest and contemplation. But the Summer is ended, and from

the four quarters of the globe rest-seekers and the pleasure-seekers alike have gathered to take up the temporarily suspended duties of every-day life. Already there is a new vigor and enthusiasm noticeable in the different avenues of life. The city is pervaded with a spirit of activity, an awakening power that is beginning to make itself felt. The pulse of trade beats stronger and more healthfully, and the local world is better, to all appearances, for its brief season of rest and change. The Magic Secret. Change of scene! That is the magic secret of vacation time. The monotony of the round of daily duties, whether arduous or light; listening to the same voices, however sweet; looking upon the same faces, however dear, day after day, week after week and month after month—all this wears upon one's nerves and deadens one's mental consciousness until life becomes a burden. Even the society of angels would cease to charm, if one were compelled to endure it constantly and uninterruptedly, year after year. I am quite sure that in the next world, where we will be unhampered by mortality, it will be permitted us, occasionally, to seek the seclusion of some distant sphere and meditate upon the wonders of eternity, undisturbed by even the presence of our dearest companion spirits. Change of scene is at times an imperative need of much-tried human nature and fagged-out human patience. But to go back to the schools which open tomorrow morning throughout the city, there are one or two interesting facts in connection with the subject that may be of interest to the general reader. One of them is of no less importance than this: The public school system of Portland is one of the most efficient on the Pacific Slope. There are, according to the latest official report, 20,463 children making up the school population of the city. Of these, 15,004 are entitled to school privileges. Two hundred and forty-nine teachers are employed; only 25 of whom are men. Among these teachers are several who have gained more than a local reputation through the excellence of their work in the schoolroom. Pleased Kindergartners. There is one class of children who hail the opening of school with unalloyed delight. They are the free kindergarten

"JIM," THE CAT.

Clever Animal That Can Do Almost Anything but Talk. Not the least important dweller in the house of the pastor of a popular and fashionable up-town church is a Maltese cat, beautifully marked and of rare breed, which shall be called Jim, says the New York Herald. That is not the real name of this household pet, who would probably scorn so common a one as Jim, but there are reasons why he should not be too closely identified. Jim is no common cat. He knows his friends among the callers at the home of the minister, and those to whom he does not take a fancy are pretty apt to find it out. He knows the "at home" day as well as any member of the family, and on that day takes a prominent place on a divan, ready to receive the attentions of those of the callers whom he numbers among his friends, and purr his satisfaction when they fondle him. The minister had occasion to move his residence a short time ago, and, of course, Jim moved with the family. He did not seem to like the new place. He went from room to room, looked carefully at the wall papers, seemed to sniff at them as though they did not meet his approval, and then he disappeared. An hour later he appeared again, somewhat battered and bruised, took another look at the wall decorations, and seemed to decide that, unsatisfactory as they were, it was better to endure them than the perils to be encountered abroad. Next door to the old home of the minister lived a woman who was very fond of "Jims," and who regretted the circumstances that brought about the change of residence. She wrote a letter the other day and addressed it to "Jim." This letter was placed by a maid on the hatrack in the hall, along with other letters delivered at the same time. "Jim" seemed to know this letter was intended for him, because when a member of the family came down stairs that morning he was found trying to tear open the envelope. Strangely enough, he had never taken such a liberty with a letter before that time, and has not disturbed any other letter since. Although "Jim" has lived all his life in the home of a minister, he does not always show that humility which would naturally be expected. He likes to make visits, but no other cat is allowed on his premises. Next door to "Jim's" home is a house he loves to visit. He will roam all through it and play with the cat which lives there, but the other day when the neighbor cat came, as if to return a call, "Jim" met him at the door, bit him on the side of the head with a paw and marched proudly up the stairs, as though he felt he had done something worthy the pet of a minister's household.