

## BREAKFAST FOR TWO.

(By Joanna H. Matthews.)

## CHAPTER II.—Continued.

She greeted them pleasantly—Bessie and I had ensconced ourselves in the store-room, which had a small window looking into the front basement, from which point of vantage we could overlook and overhear proceedings, and be at hand to come to the rescue, if need were, and Milly found her menagerie too much for her—and opened the old piano, which had been discarded for family use, although it was still in fairly good tone and tune.

For an hour she devoted herself to the entertainment of her guests. She played and sang for them herself, choosing "Captain Jinks" and other kindred effusions, likely to be appreciated by gentry of their stamp; and after their first awkwardness had worn off, Bill and Jim joined in some of these, while the others listened with an interest which was at times diversified by staring about the room, and taking note of everything therein.

"Noticing the window fastenings, and posting themselves generally as to the means of entrance," I whispered apprehensively to Bessie, receiving in reply an unsympathetic "Oh, you goosey!"

As soon as they were sufficiently at their ease to do so, Milly encouraged the boys to sing alone, accompanying them with the piano, and they were applauded with much and violent stamping of feet and clapping of hands.

Meanwhile Bessie and I were not the only listeners, for the household had gathered, one after another, upon the basement stairs, entranced by the wonderful power and sweetness of Bill's voice, which rose, clear and birdlike, above those of his fellows.

"Yer couldn't let a feller tech it, I s'pose, could yer?" said Bill, in a pause between two of the songs. "The pianner, I mean. I'd just like to see what kind of a noise it would make under my fingers. They wouldn't make it sound like yourn, 'cause they dunno where to go; but I'd just like to make it speak a bit, fur ter say I'd played the pianner."

"I will tell you," said Milly, glancing at the grimy digits held up entreatingly, "would you like to come again, and have me play for you?"

The reply was more forcible than elegant, but evinced the heartiest desire to accept of her invitation.

"I shall be glad to see you, then," said Milly, "and perhaps you would wash your hands; and then you may try my piano."

Bill turned over the unsightly members, and scrutinized them narrowly, as if this were the first time he had ever entertained any suspicion that they were anything but clean, or that the process of washing might be beneficial.

"Well, I reckon I don't care if I do," he answered. "Maybe they ain't fit to put on them shiny white things that make the music when you touch 'em; an' if you'll let me play the pianner nex' time, I'll wash 'em."

"Very well," said Milly.

"Kin all of 'em come?" asked Bill. "The other fellers ain't as much on the singin' as me and Jim, but they like it fust-rate, an' your pianner playin', too."

"You may all come," said Milly; and then bidding them wait a moment, she left the room.

Bessie and I kept a closer watch than ever on their movements, and were rather astonished to see that, when left to their own devices, they attempted no mischief, did not even touch a single thing about the room. But Jim, having wandered to the window—not to inspect the fastenings, but for a glance at the outlook, it seemed—suddenly threw light on the incident of the previous morning, and discovered himself and Bill to be the partakers of the improvised breakfast.

"O, I say, Bill!" he exclaimed, "come take a peek out here. Do you see what diggin' we're come to?"

"So it is! it's our dairy out there," said Bill, as his eye followed the direction of the other's finger.

"Yer what?" queried one of the other boys.

"Oh, me an' Bill got a frustrate breakfas' right out here," said Jim, lowering his voice, but not so that the listeners in the closet did not catch every word, an' I do

believe, Bill, it's just near the house where we got the rolls. Yer see, fellers, there was a basket full er bread an' rolls, an' he set it down outside a house along near here, an' me an' Bill just got the chance on a couple er rolls apiece, an' over to that house with the gratings, hadn't they been so perlite—the gooneys—as to set a pail of milk convenient, an' though it wasn't so handy dippin' it out that way, I reckon they found their breakfas' short when they took it in."

And he laughed loud and long at the remembrance, Bill joining in the merriment.

But they subsided again as Milly came back, followed by old Thomas, lofty still, but somewhat mollified by the comparatively reasonable behavior of the boys, bearing a tray, on which were set forth various delicacies, likely to be appreciated by their youthful tastes. They were not to be allowed to partake of these within doors, however; and Milly, having filled their hands with apples, cakes, and almonds and raisins, dismissed them, telling them once more that they might all come on Saturday.

And come they did, more eager, more zealous than they had been the first time; and not only Bill, but the other three also, with hands and faces, I will not say clean, but which had evidently been subjected to an unaccustomed bath. The faces were streaky, and showed different shades of color, as did the hands; but at least the first coating had been removed, and the hair of all four had been "slicked," and fastened down with an over-plus of dampness. They all evidently considered these sacrifices to the prejudices of society to constitute a claim upon Milly, which was only to be satisfied by each one being in turn allowed "to play the pianner."

This they were allowed to do, waking the most unearthly sounds, as they grew bold by degrees, until Milly was obliged to interfere, out of respect to the feelings of the family and neighbors, as well as regard for the result to the piano, which, although it was past its palmy days, was still useful in its way, and in this case had proved a bait, the attractions of which even Milly had not anticipated.

But presently, to the astonishment of Milly, to the triumph and delight of his companions, and to his own exceeding glorification, Bill, who had at his earnest entreaty been allowed to "try once more," picked out slowly, note by note, but still correctly, the air of "Champagne Charlie." This musical achievement was accompanied by the other boys with expressions of admiration and encouragement, more emphatic and appreciative than elegant, and completed by himself with a somersault expressive of his own intense delight in his performance.

After this it came to be an understood thing that these four boys were to come every Wednesday and Saturday morning for an hour of music; and Milly attempted nothing further, save that, after a time, hymns came to form a part of the exercises. It was literally a "service of song," and it was through this and the "pianner," through the love of sweet sounds, which held captive their rough natures, that she gained a firm hold upon their hearts which, later, led to most unlooked-for results.

## CHAPTER III.—MILLY'S ALLIES.

Daisy was coming down-stairs, bringing each foot down beside its fellow before taking the succeeding step, after the manner of her age and size, and also with a deliberate caution of movement peculiar to herself, when Edward, descending more rapidly, overtook her, caught her up, and, enthroning her upon his shoulder, brought her in triumph into the breakfast room.

"Don't put me down," she said, as he made a movement to do so, "I want to ride some more, and brefix isn't ready yet."

"I have not time, pet; I am in great haste to be off this morning," answered her brother, as he placed her on her feet; then, turning to me, "Amy, will you ring, and order Thomas to bring whatever may be ready; I will have some bread and coffee, if that is all."

"What is the urgent hurry?" I asked, in some surprise, when I had complied with the request, and been assured by Thomas that breakfast would be on the table in a moment; for brother Edward's morning avocations did not usually demand such haste, and he was wont to linger over his

breakfast and papers with leisurely enjoyment of both.

"I have no office boy this morning," he answered. "Donald, who has been behaving very badly for some time, took himself off yesterday, for the reason that I ventured on a mild expostulation because he had stayed an hour and a half, when sent on an errand which need not have taken over ten minutes. I have heard of another boy, and must go and see about him before I go down town; but I doubt if he will answer, and it will possibly be only lost time."

"Take Bill—Milly's Bill—for your offits boy," suggested Daisy, on whom Bill's voice and musical genius has made a great impression. "He doesn't have any offits or any-thing to do, and Milly wants to find some-thing for him to do, and for all of 'em."

The "all of 'em" referred, of course, to the other three boys, Bill's companions, for all four had become a weight upon Milly's mind and heart. What more was she to do with them? what farther steps to rescue them from the life of degradation and misery to which they were sunken? She pondered over this so much that it was evidently wearing upon her; and mother reproached herself that she had over given permission to have the boys brought into the house, or to allow Milly to have anything to do with them.

"Take Bill! take him, brofer!" repeated Daisy.

"I should be among the Philistines, then," said Edward, laughing, as he took his seat at the table, and I poured out his cup of coffee. Daisy pondered this for a moment; and then, with that quiet gravity which often sat so well upon her, she said; "Oughtn't we to do as we would be done by, to the Philistines?"

"O, ho! little Mentor!" said Ned, "so you think it would only be to do as I would be done by, if I took Bill into my office, do you?"

"Yes, I do," answered solemn Daisy, "very do as would be done by to Bill and to sister Milly."

"Augh!" exclaimed Allie, with her little nose elevated at an angle of forty-five degrees, "just as if brother Ned would have that dirty fellow in his office! It might have consequences! Daisy, you must be rather crazy."

Allie and I were of accord upon this matter, but Edward had sympathized with Milly in her undertaking more than any other member of the family; and as he sat, thoughtfully serving a broiled chicken, I saw that Daisy's suggestion had taken hold upon him, and might have "consequences."

"Ned will do something quixotic about that boy Bill, you see if he does not," was my comment to Bessie, a little later. "I should not be surprised if he did try Bill in his office."

A prophecy which was verified that evening.

"Milly," called Ned, from the library door, as we were on our way up-stairs, "I want to speak to you."

I pinched Bessie's arm as we passed by; and, looking down over the banister, saw Edward draw Milly in, and close the door.



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our girlish confidences well into the small hours.

Ten minutes later Milly came up, with shining eyes, and cheeks all aglow.

"Edward is going to take Bill into his office as errand boy;" she said. "Was there ever such a dear fellow?"

"If he'll go," I said to myself; but I would not damp Milly's enthusiasm by expressing any doubts.

"The boys will be here to-morrow morning, you know," she said, her voice quivering with the excitement of hope and pleasure; "and Ned says he will see Bill and propose it to him."

"The blessed creature!" I whispered to Bessie, as Milly went into the closet in search of her wrapper. "Just think how she will be disappointed."

(To be Continued.)

## A WORD TO BOYS.

Make yourself indispensable to your employers; that is the golden path to success. Be so industrious, so prompt, that if you are absent one hour of the usual time, you will be missed, and he in whose service you are shall say: "I did not dream Charles was so useful." Make your employer your friend, performing with minuteness whatever task he sets before you, and, above all, be not too nice to lend a hand, however repelling to your sense of neatness it may be. The success of your business in after life depends upon how you deport yourself now; if you are really good for anything, you are for a great deal. Be energetic; look as well as act, with alacrity. Appear to feel an interest; make your employer's success your own, if you have an honest one. Let your eye light up at his request and your feet be nimble. There are some who look so dull and heavy, and go with so slow and dull a pace that it is irksome to ask what it is your right to demand of them. Be not one of these.

Dr. KINGSTON FOX said: "When a physician is called to a patient who is struck down by an acute disease, one of the main points to which he devotes special attention is this: Has he been accustomed to take alcohol? because we know by sad experience that those who have had their 'nips' of spirits or wine during the day, in the way that is common in the business of life of this great city, show very much less power of resistance to, and a much less power of recovery from, such diseases."