



BREAKFAST FOR TWO.

(By Joanna H. Matthews.)

CHAPTER V.—Continued.

Thrusting his ticket—the price of so much to him—into the hand of the astonished girl, he said, hurriedly:

“There, take this, and go along to him, hurry, now, you hav’n’t no time to lose!” and, putting baby and bundle into her arms, he shoved her out of the door-way; the door was closed with a bang by the surly man, and his chance was lost!

He looked through a side window of the waiting-room, saw the girl hustled, with her incumbrances, into a car by a brakeman, the last whistle sounded, the train moved forward and steamed out of the depot, lost to sight in a moment; and Bill turned away, hardly knowing whether or no he regretted what he had done.

“I say,” he said, not able to refrain from a parting shot at the surly railway official, “ain’t you a nice set of fellers? Goin’ an’ smashin’ up fathers onter yer ole railway, an’ not a-lettin’ their gals on to see ‘em. ‘Spect yer done it a-purpose!”

The man retorted by calling him a fool for givin’ away his ticket; and, after a few more compliments of a kindred nature had been exchanged, the boy left the depot with a sort of lost, homeless feeling, which he had never felt, even when he had been a stranger to his late life. He kept fast hold of the precious satchel; but what he was to do with it or himself, where was he to find food and an abiding place until his master’s return, was a question he was not able to solve. And O! Oakridge, Jim,

and the Fourth of July rejoicings! How much he had resigned! How was he to wear away the time?

It must be confessed that Bill almost forgot his disappointment in the excitement of that night, while witnessing all the brilliant display with which the nation’s Centennial birthday was ushered in; and he doubtless lent his full quota to the noise and acclamations; but, faithful to his trust, he would not mix in with the thickest of the crowd, where the safety of his master’s satchel would be endangered. Still, he enjoyed it heartily; and daylight was breaking when he sought the shelter of the stoop of our own closed and deserted house; and, satchel beneath his weary head, courted a little rest.

But sleep did not come to him; excitement, fatigue, and hunger—for he had eaten nothing since the middle of the day before—and uneasiness respecting his valuable charge, kept him awake. Hunger was no novel sensation to Bill, it is true; but he had, of late, been so well fed, that it made more impression upon him than it would have done some months ago; and where was he to find a meal or the means to procure one? He had not a penny; house and his master’s office were both closed for some days to come; and although the want of shelter did not trouble him much, for the weather was warm, and he could “sleep ‘round anywhere,” the care of the satchel was a great weight upon his mind, and kept him awake, while, in any case, that empty, hungry void would have prevented slumber. And Bill’s soul had risen far above his former dishonest and

precarious ways of procuring wherewith to satisfy his hunger.

The day of the Fourth was dull and flat, for there was little going on—patriotism and enthusiasm having expended themselves before sunrise—and O, the thought of all that was going on at Oakridge, lost to him now! But our weary, faint and disappointed little hero did not regret his self-sacrifice.

“No, I ain’t sorry I done it,” he said to himself, as he sat wearily beneath the portico almost indifferent to the fact that there was no “sojering,” or other diversion to occupy his eyes and thoughts. “I ain’t sorry I done it, not if I do have to sit ‘roun’ doin’ nothin’ all the week a-long of this bag, an’ got nothin’ to eat, an’ am a-missin’ all the fun up to the country. Maybe she got there a-fore he died, that gal what her father was so hurt; an’, anyhow, it was worth somethin’ to see her face, when I poked her out that door right afore that old chap, with the ticket in her hand. When I gets to be one of them railway directors”—Bill’s aspirations were not so soaring as Jim’s—“I’ll give leave to everybody to go on ‘thout a ticket, when their folks gets smashed up onto my railway. No, I ain’t sorry! But it’s awful dull here, and wouldn’t some dinner taste good! I wonder can I hold out till the boss comes back. Think I’ll have to go to cold victuallin’ a bit, if I can’t; and won’t folks stare to see such a decent lookin’ feller as me a-beggin’ cold victuals. Never thought I’d come to that again; but times is awful sudden—yer can’t never tell what’ll turn up nex’. What would Miss Milly say, I wonder! What’ll they all think has become of me? Maybe they’ll think I got blowed up or somethin’ last night. Hallo! Maybe they’ll think I’ve run away. ‘Twouldn’t be surprisin’ if they did.”

Now this was exactly what the most of us did think, for the faith of the majority of the family in these proteges of Milly and Edward, was, by no means so strong as that of those two young persons, although we were obliged to allow that a vast improvement had taken place, and that the boys bid fair to become decent, well-behaved members of society.

When the boy did not make his appearance by the six o’clock train, on the evening of the third, it was believed that he had missed it, and no suspicion attached to him, although we were very sorry that he should be disappointed, especially Jim, who was loud and profuse in his lamentations over the non-arrival of his chum; but, as the hours wore on, on the morning of the Fourth, and train after train came in without bringing him, an uneasy feeling of doubt resolved itself into a settled belief that temptation and the force of old habits had proved too strong for him, and that he had run away with the satchel, which he knew to contain articles of value.

“I shall go to town by the four o’clock train, and hunt him up,” said Edward, as the family were discussing the matter; Milly’s face told how pained and disappointed she was.

“O, Edward, and spoil your holiday!” we expostulated, while Daisy turned and clung to him, as if her small strength could detain him.

“My holiday is already spoiled; I must find him, if possible,” answered Edward, gravely, laying his hand caressingly on the little sunny head. And he was not to be dissuaded, but set forth at the appointed time, followed by the regrets of the whole family; most of whom thought this quest a hopeless one, Milly alone insisting on sharing Jim’s belief that Bill would yet “turn up all right.”

“He ain’t gone back on yer now, Miss Milly, yer kin jest set yer mind on that,” he repeated again and again.

Bill had fallen into an uneasy doze, beneath the shadow of the stoop, the precious bag behind him, screened by his person from the observation of any who might come upon him there, when he was roused by a touch upon his shoulder; and, looking up with a start, he saw his master’s kindly face bending over him.

A few moments sufficed to explain matters, and Edward felt sure that the story was true; for Bill’s jealous watch over the satchel, and the delight he showed at seeing his master, made it quite evident that he had not intended to run away, and that he had no bad purpose in view.

“Make haste, now,” said Edward, when

he was satisfied of this. “We have just time to catch the last train up, and you shall have a good time for the rest of your holiday, if you have missed the most of the Fourth.”

“I say, Mr. Edward,” said Bill, as they were approaching their destination, turning round from the seat in front of his master, “I say, Mr. Edward, when folks does good Thanksgivin’s, bein’ glad with folks, an’ givin’ to them what ain’t so well off; so they can be some glad, too, ain’t it ‘cause they want to show they’re givin’ thanks for what they got good themselves?”

“Yes,” answered Edward, who had been wondering what the boy was pondering as he sat gazing thoughtfully out of the window, at the ever-changing scene, as they were rapidly whirled along; “it is because they are giving thanks to God for all the mercies which he has sent to them, and wish to show their love and gratitude by letting others have a share of them.”

Bill was silent again for a moment or two, his gaze once more turned without; then, his whole face in a glow as he turned around again, he broke forth with:

“I did get a whole lot of good done to me an’ Jim, this summer, more nor I could ever ha’ counted on; an’ so givin’ her—that ere gal—the ticket, an’ stayin’ back myself, was showin’ I wanted to be thanksgivin’, wasn’t it, Mr. Edward?”

“It was, Bill, and showed a grateful heart for the mercies shown to you,” said his master.

“An’ tain’t no odds that it wer warm weather ‘stead of cold, Fourth of July ‘stead of Krismas, a kinder summer Thanksgivin’ ‘stead of a winter one, wer it? It wer just as first-rate in me, weren’t it?” asked poor Bill overcome with a sense of his own merits, and anxious to have them recognized.

One could hardly blame him for that. The sensation of doing good and helping others, was a new thing to him, although it was perhaps more want of opportunity and means than want of will, for Bill was developing a generous soul, anxious to share with others the better fortune which a kind providence had brought to him. And Edward praised and encouraged him, even at the risk of petting a little self-appreciation; and a happier or more self-satisfied boy than Bill, it would have been hard to find, when the train stopped at our station; and he sprang out and greeted Jim, who had wandered down to meet him, half-hopeful, half-fearful on the subject of his comrade “turning up all right” with:

“I say, Jim, oh, didn’t I make it a real summer Thanksgivin’, though! an’ all by myself, too; an’ Mr. Edward says ‘tain’t no odds if ‘tisn’t freezin’ up weather, it was a good kind of a Thanksgivin’, all the same. An’ I hung on to that bag all safe with Miss Milly’s present.”

And then, dismissing all thoughts of past disappointments and tribulations, he launched into a glowing description of the public rejoicings of the previous evening, making Jim doubt which of the two had—up to the early morning—had the better of it, himself or the narrator.

Of the rest of Bill’s holiday, and the zest with which it was enjoyed, what need is there to speak? There was a “summer Thanksgivin’” in more than one heart that night, that, after all our doubts and anxieties, Milly’s sheep had not wilfully strayed, and had not only proved faithful to his trust, but had shown an example of generosity and self-sacrifice hardly to be expected from him.

Truly the seed sown upon ground, which we, in our blindness, had pronounced hard and stony, was bringing forth fruit meet for the harvest.

(To be Continued.)

WHEN THE FOUR SURVIVORS of the Jeanesville mine horror were found after their entombment of twenty days, they were too feeble to be brought at once to the top of the shaft. But the superintendent and the rescuers came up about midnight, and surrounded by the cheering crowds, they marched down town. In front of the company’s office they halted, and suddenly the rescuers, standing baredheaded amid the crowd, now swollen to two thousand people, struck up the familiar hymn, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.” It was taken up by two thousand voices, and the silence of the night was broken by the grandest chorus ever heard on these hills.