



BREAKFAST FOR TWO.

(By Joanna H. Matthews.)

CHAPTER IX.—THE ESCAPE.

There must have been a special Providence about us in these days, as in more ways than one "the bread cast upon the waters"—so almost unconsciously, and often reluctantly—was returned to us in "full measure, pressed down and running over."

It was not long after the picnic, that day of adventures and mishaps, and yet of so much for which we had cause for gratitude, that father came back one morning after he had started on his daily round of inspection about the place, and, putting his head in at the door of the library, where Milly and I were sitting, said:

"Girls, tell your mother not to let the children go outside of the gates to-day. Peter has just told me that that bull of Forman's has broken loose and is roving about. He is very fierce and wild, and until he is caught and locked up it will not be safe for the little ones to go upon the road, even with their nurses. Keep your wild Bedouins out of this, too, Milly, if you can, for if they fall in with him, they will chase him and may come to mischief."

There was not the least desire in the heart of any of the family to venture beyond the supposed safe enclosure of our own grounds after hearing this, least of all within those of Allie and Daisy. "That bull of Forman's" was a terror to every child and woman in the neighborhood, and all took care to keep out of his way. He had been complained of more than once as a dangerous, mischievous brute, and his owner had been compelled to confine him, not only out of consideration for the public safety—I do not know that that had much weight with Forman, who was about as ill-conditioned a creature as the animal himself—but also out of regard for the security of his own property, as many and various threats had been made by those who had been injured or terrified by the bull.

Allie and Daisy were in mortal fear of him, and since the early summer, when they had heard of some of his exploits, it had been almost impossible to persuade them to walk past the barn where he was kept, and whence his angry bellowing could be heard for a long distance. Therefore a walk on the road or anywhere beyond what they considered a safe distance from home, had no charms for them when they heard he was abroad; and with dolls, books and toys they went, a contented, happy little pair, to spend the morning in the garden, secure, as they and we thought, from all

possibility of harm. Wand, as usual, bearing them company.

Wand had continued to grow in favor, not only with these his first and firm friends, but even with those who had formerly been opposed to him. Bill and Jim, of course, were devoted to him; and when he could not be with the little girls, whose society he preferred to all others, he was usually to be found with them. They had taught him numerous droll tricks, and although, when in more select society, he was a sedate, decorous, gentlemanly dog, he became, when with them, the wildest of romps. Still, he never lost his innate sense of propriety. "Sounds of revelry by night" had disturbed the family on the preceding evening, proceeding from the attic room, occupied by the boys; and, on investigation into the source of the uproar, it was found that they had decoyed Wand into the house

—a thing never allowed—and up into their room where they were indulging in all manner of wild antics, and striving to incite Wand to join in them. But, lying close to the floor, with his head upon his paws, Wand declined any participation therein, as was discovered by Edward, when he came upon the scene unheard and unseen, and looked in upon the antics of the boys. Wand lay like a stone, apparently conscious that he was upon forbidden ground, and that the boys were inciting him to unlawful sport, and watching them with disapproving eyes. The dog was, of course, the first to discover the presence of the intruder; and rising, he walked up to him with an air of conscious virtue, as one who should say:

"There! you see, I have resisted temptation, and have fulfilled the duties of my station."

His claim was acknowledged, and he was praised; while the boys were reprimanded, and bidden to remember that the house was not the place for such proceedings.

The dog was therefore in high favor this morning with the little girls, and was petted and carressed accordingly.

"What shall we have Wand for, this morning?" said Daisy. "He ought to be something partic'lar nice, 'cause he was so very good last night."

"Let's play that he's a gentleman come to see us, and that he has so much thinking to do he hardly ever has time to speak a word;" answered Allie, looking at the dog, who sat up preternaturally grave and wise, and as if he were indeed engaged in deep and profitable meditation.

"O yes, that will be very real and nice," said Daisy, approvingly. "Gentlemen who do that way never give any trouble to their wives or the people they go to see. They are a great deal better than gentlemen who have too much to say."

Wand, himself, made no objection to this arrangement, but passively assumed the character assigned to him, albeit it was an unobtrusive one; and for a long time the play went happily on, the little girls "making believe family," while the gentleman who was to do so much thinking, sat contentedly watching them, and adding his share to the entertainment.

As the morning passed on, the air, which had been cool in the earlier hours of the day, grew rather oppressively warm.

"O how warm I am! I'm just roasted, and I'm going to take off my jacket!" said Daisy, by-and-by; at the same time pulling off her little saquee, and throwing it from her upon the grass.

But this did not at all meet the views of

Allie, who was a remarkably neat and orderly child, particular in all her ways.

"O don't throw your jacket on the grass, it might be hurt; besides, it don't look so very nice in our house. It might make people think we did not housekeep very well," she said.

"Let's give it to Mr. Wanderer to take to the house for us. He'll understand if we tell him, and he's a very obliging gentleman, pretend, and always likes to do errands for the ladies he goes to see."

So this very accommodating visitor was requested to carry the little jacket to the house; and, as Allie had said he would do, understanding very well, he walked solemnly away with it.

He had been gone but a moment when a strange noise was heard by the children, who with one accord dropped their toys, startled and wondering, and turned to look inquiringly at one another. There was a noise as of shouting and calling by many voices; but, above all this, there was borne to their ears another sound, a low but deep and distinct roar. They had never heard the like before, and could not tell what it was; but it alarmed them very much, it was so terrible, and, even to their unaccustomed ears, so threatening.

"Run, run! let's run, Daisy!" said Allie, seizing her little sister by the hand, and trying to draw her on. "Let's run to the house and tell mother as quick as we can."

But Daisy was too frightened to stir. She stood like one paralyzed, and Allie could not move her. And really neither knew which way it would be best to run; the whole air seemed to be filled with that strange, deep grumble. So they stood still, clinging to one another, trembling and pale, as the uproar came nearer and nearer.

It was close at hand now, that deep, angry bellow, the shouts of pursuing men and boys; and suddenly, with a louder, more furious roar, a great bull, Forman's bull—even in the midst of their terror the poor babies recognized the creature—goaded to fury by the chase, and seeking some victim on which he might wreak his vengeance, leaped the hedge which separated our lawn from the public road and stood within the enclosure, facing the trembling little children.

He stood one instant looking about him with glaring, angry eyes, foaming mouth, and lashing tail; pawing the ground as he stood, and tearing up the smoothly shaven lawn, while he looked around for something on which to vent his rage. Then his blood-shot eyes fell upon the two terrified, helpless little ones.

God's angels watch and guard them now, for no human help is at hand! No, although loving eyes have spied the danger, although feet that feel as though weights are tied to them are now speeding to the spot.

For the noise had been heard within the house—all the mingled uproar of shouts, cries and curses; and to us, too, had come that deep, muttering bellow, unmistakable to any who have once heard the voice of an angry bull; and the first thought which crossed the mind of one and all had been the children.

Allie and Daisy—where were they? There was no fear that they had wandered beyond the proscribed limits, for they were never disobedient, or, at least, not to an extent that would have incited them to transgress such a direct command; and we knew also that their own fears would have prevented this. The gates, too, had been, by father's orders, kept shut all the morning; but, even so, were our darlings safe?

Books, work and music were cast aside in haste, as the different members of the family rushed to the windows and piazza, whence they saw the enraged animal coming down the road, the crowd in pursuit; he every now and then facing about and charging with lowered head, the crowd scattering in every direction; then turning and rushing forward again, when his pursuers would close behind him once more with renewed threats and yells.

Then, before any one had time to go and bring in the children, whom we saw standing terror-stricken, the fierce creature made a rush towards our hedge, and with one bound cleared it, and was close upon our darlings. The next instant he stood ready for a charge.

Where could help come from ere it was too late?

But God's messengers are sometimes the despised things of earth; those to whom we would least look for help.

There was a rush, a sharp, short bark, and, passing all who were hastening to the rescue, swift as the wind came poor Wand, his eyes, too, seeing the danger, his loving, grateful heart, with no fear for himself, eager only to defend his little friends, those who had befriended him in his hour of need.

In one instant he had passed them; and, as the bull made his rush, he was between him and the little ones. With a spring he fastened upon the nose of the furious creature, checking his advance, and bringing him to his knees, through the intense pain of the grip; and desperately he held on, despite the frantic efforts of his enemy to shake him off, until a man had leaped the hedge, and with a well directed pistol shot, stretched the bull dead upon the ground.

Who could tell of mother's thanksgiving as she held her darlings safe and unharmed, saved as by a miracle, through the courage and devotion of the poor waif so kindly cared for, but once so unwelcome? Who could describe the petting and tenderness and sweet words lavished by little hands, and baby voices upon faithful, courageous Wand? Who tell of the praises bestowed upon him by the elder members of the family, the triumph of Bill and Jim, that their four-footed companion had acquitted himself so well? Who need tell of the care with which his broken leg was set, and his bleeding wounds bound up? For he had not escaped unhurt in the encounter, and still bears the marks of the fray, honorable scars, which are pointed out to strangers as proofs of his valor and self-devotion.

Did not mother herself, "dreadful dog disliker" though she was, as Daisy says, forgetting all that dislike in her gratitude to him, insist that he should be brought into the house, and there make much of him, patting and tending and caressing him; and when he was able to limp about once more, making him her own special pet, letting him come and go as he would, free at all times to all places?

"Bread cast upon the waters!" the care and kindness shown to the poor vagabond puppy had truly been gathered "after many days," by grateful hearts, and not forgotten when the harvest was past.

(To be Continued.)

FOUND FRIENDS.

Not long ago I stood by the death-bed of a little girl. From the first she had been afraid of death. Every fibre of her body and soul recoiled from the thought of it. "Don't let me die," she said; "don't let me die! Hold me fast! O, I can't go!"

"Jennie," I said, "you have two little brothers in the other world, and there are thousands of tender-hearted people there who will love you and take care of you."

But she cried out despairingly—"Don't let me go; they are strangers over there."

She was a little country girl, strong limbed, fleet of foot, tanned in the face. She was raised on the frontier; the fields were her home. In vain we tried to reconcile her to the death which was inevitable. "Hold me fast," she cried; "don't let me go."

But even as she was pleading, her little hands relaxed their clinging hold from my waist, and lifted themselves eagerly aloft, with such a straining effort that they lifted the wasted little body from its reclining position among the pillows. Her face was turned upward, but it was her eyes that told the story. They were filled with the light of Divine recognition. They saw something plainly that we did not see; and they grew brighter and brighter, and her little hand trembled in eagerness to go where strange portals had opened upon her astonished vision. But even in that supreme moment she did not forget to leave a word of comfort for those who would gladly have died in her place.

"Mamma," she was saying, "mamma, they are not strangers; I'm not afraid."

And every instant the light burned more gloriously in her blue eyes, till at last it seemed as if her soul leaped forth upon its radiant waves, and in that moment her trembling form relaxed among the pillows, and she was gone!—Mrs. Helen Williams.