



Two Mothers

ONE MOTHER sits in the easy-chair,
 Baby Boy in her close embrace,
 And she softly sings a soothing air,
 With the fire-light on her face.
 She hushes the baby on her breast,
 And thinks, while her blue eyes shine,
 "Was ever mother so richly blessed,
 Was there ever a boy like mine?"
 Pussy lies where the fire-light falls,
 And views, with a mother's pride,
 Three little roly-poly balls,
 That are cuddled close to her side.
 And through Pussy's mind some proud thoughts steal,
 And in satisfaction she purrs:
 "How ashamed that other mother must feel
 To compare my children with hers!"
 "When that hateful Gray chased my little Muff
 From the darling growled and spit!
 But Baby Boy wouldn't know enough
 To put up his back at it.
 Even, Giny under his very eyes
 Will take his favorite toy,
 And roll it away, while he sits and cries,
 That wonderful Baby Boy!"

When Gab saw a mouse the other day
 How she started, the little pet!
 Her paws are short and it got away,
 But she'll be successful yet.
 Today she was hunting through the house,
 What Baby Boy I believe
 Would hardly be able to catch a mouse,
 If it ran right up his sleeve."

So the two mothers sit in the fire-light's glow,
 One sings in her easy-chair,
 And the other purrs on the rug below,
 With her darlings nestled there.
 Each mother looks with a tender pride
 In the blessings Heaven has sent,
 Each plying all the world beside,
 And each with her own content.

BREAKFAST FOR TWO.

(By Joanna H. Matthews.)

CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

The following evening saw us settled at Oakridge, where the only thing which interfered with our complete satisfaction was the absence of Edward. Jim's delight, too, was somewhat dampened by the want of his constant chum and companion. Failing him, he seemed rather inclined to cultivate the society of little Allie and Daisy. With the freemasonry of childhood, they were not indisposed to forget class distinctions; and now that he was decently clothed, and was ordinarily to be seen with clean hands and face, they were not averse to accepting little attentions and care at his hands. Their old Mammy, whose great, warm, motherly heart opened to every living thing, and who had, from the first, shown herself well disposed toward the objects of Milly's benevolence, gave some encouragement to these, mingling with it, now and then, a little moral suasion on the subject of low language and rude ways; and we were surprised to see the effect that this produced. Her chief argument on these occasions was, that he "would never get to be president," unless he learned to speak correctly, and took heed to his manners: and this being the object of his ambition, it had great weight with him. Nor were the admonitions of Allie and Daisy without their effect. When Allie pursed her lips, or raised her little head with a reproving air, Jim knew well enough that he had offended her aristocratic prejudices,

and would hasten to inquire what he had been "a-doin' or a-sayin' of?" and if Daisy informed him that he did not "p'nomnce p'operly," he would beg her to repeat the word until he could follow according to her ideas.

He, and Bill also, on his occasional visits, were extremely anxious to be allowed to have sole charge of the children, in some of their walks, or while playing about the place; but of course mother could not listen to this. Even Milly did not ask this much, for, over-zealous in such things, as some of us considered her, she was not without a proper sense of the fitness of things, and would have shrunk from exposing our petted little sisters to close companionship with these untutored objects of her care.

But the time was not far distant when we felt, one and all, as if we would trust Jim with anything and everything.

"Come down to the gate, and see the rascaliest lookin' dog yer ever see, Miss Allie and Miss Daisy," he said one day, rushing up to the children, as they sat playing happily with dolls and doll's belongings, on the terrace in front of the house.

I heard the invitation, and would have interfered, for "the rascaliest lookin' dog," did not conjure up visions of either safety or expediency, in making such an acquaintance. But I could not make the juveniles hear; my toilette was not in a condition to admit of running down-stairs and out of doors after them; and they were away with Jim before I had summoned a servant,

upon his haunches in the dusty road, ready for a fresh start, in case he saw fit occasion.

"Ain't he awful shabby lookin' though?" said Jim, regarding the creature with a critical eye. "Ain't he awful shabby an' starved lookin'? Miss Allie an' Miss Daisy. I've got a kind of a hankerin' to him, 'cause he puts me in mind of myself an' Bill, 'fore Missy Milly took a-hold on us, an' give us a good home."

"Gave us a good home," responded Allie, still mindful, in spite of her interest in the dog, of her self-imposed task of teacher of the English language.

But she and Daisy both thought this a very touching and praiseworthy sentiment in Jim.

"O, such a poor, ragged doggie!" said Daisy. "Jim, you're gettin' very nice and pious. But I 'spect that doggie is hungry; he looks as he was. See his bones all stickin' out out! I don't believe he's had any bekfus."

"Let's give him the cakes Judith gave us to play tea with," said Allie. "They are hard sugar cakes, so maybe he'll think they are sweet bones. O, isn't he thin, though! Why, I don't 'spect he's had anything to eat for 'most a year. Jim, please go bring us those cakes you'll find with our doll's tea-set, and we'll give them to him."

Jim readily complied, and presently returned with the cakes; and Daisy came down from her perch, so that he might open the gate, while she and Allie broke the cakes into bits. Doggie never told whether or no he believed the sugar cakes to be

whom I sent to Mammy with a request that she would see after her charges. Mammy found them both peering over the gate, Jim beside them, while without was the miserable looking creature which he had brought them to see. He had paused in the melancholy trot he was taking down the road, and turned his head suspiciously towards them, at the call from two gentle, pitying little voices. He was not used to kind words, that was plainly to be seen; he hardly knew what they meant, or, at least, did not believe it possible that they could be addressed to him. Still, he did stop, and take a view of the situation.

There were two pairs of bright eyes looking at him over the top of the gate—to bring them so high, the little owners had to mount upon the cross rail—two pairs of pimpled hands grasping the posts; a sunny, and a dark curly head; white dresses peeping here and there through the bars. Nothing very alarming in these; but beside them was another head, another pair of eyes. These last two looked kindly at him, it was true; but they belonged to the species boy; and the poor fellow had had hard measure meted out to him, and was on his guard, even when appearances were fair.

But it was hard, even for a suspicious dog, to resist those coaxing voices; and this one gave that shabby tail of his a feeble wag in response, and sat down ready for a fresh start, in case he saw fit occasion.

sweet bones, or if it were starvation which led him to snap up so eagerly the morsels thrown to him by the children. Perhaps he had a taste for cakes; different varieties of puppies have; but, however that was, he now seemed to believe that the little ones were friendly to him. Slowly he came on, greedily catching up the bits of cake, until he was within the gate, which Jim immediately shut.

But here Mammy entered a protest: "No, no, this will never do," she said. "What are you going to do with him now, my honeys? Don't you know that your mamma can't abide dogs, and never will? There's no use bringin' him in, for ye can't keep him, an' it's just to turn him out again to shift for himself!"

"Is he somebody's dog, do you think?" asked Daisy.

"Yes, every dog has to be somebody's, you know," said Allie.

"Then why don't his somebody take care of him?" asked Daisy.

"'Cause he's a horrid old thing, who ought to be served right, I 'spect!" said Allie, indignantly. "Going and lettin' his poor dog grow starved and starved all the time. He ought to be put in prison!"

"Aw! There's lots of 'em gits worse use nor this dog's had," said Jim. "Some yer wouldn't believe how they gits treated. Never could see how a feller could hurt a dog. Poor feller."

Jim certainly did show a love for and tenderness towards all animals, quite remarkable in a street boy.

"Maybe this doggie didn't be anybody's, only God's doggie," said Daisy, shaking her head, as if she found it almost impossible to believe in such cruelty.

"O, Daisy," said Allie, "what a clever child you are! You are wiser than me, if you are not so old, 'cause you found that out, and I never did. I just believe he is, and that God sent him here for us to take care of, and be kind to. God knows how to take care of his animals a great deal better than their horrid old masters do. But then, Daisy, how can we do it, when mother don't like him? I never saw anyone can't bear dogs the way she can't. You needn't any of you tell anyone I said so, but it's a little tiny bit foolish to be afraid of dogs."

"O!" said Daisy, shocked at such heresy, "Mother wouldn't be foolish."

"Yes, she would," said Allie. "Everybody has to be foolish about something. They can't help it, they are born so; and I s'pose being afraid of dogs is mother's foolishness."

Even this piece of wisdom could not reconcile Daisy to the idea that all mother said, did, or thought was not wisest and best. Still, she could not but confess that there was room for improvement in the matter of dogs, now that she wished to keep this poor animal, and feared that mother's objections would prove an insuperable obstacle.

He lay upon the grass now, having eaten the whole of both cakes, submitting gratefully to the caresses of Jim, who had thrown himself down beside him, and looking up at the children with wistful, beseeching eyes, as if he were glad of rest in this quiet spot, and he hoped he need not be driven from it. Jim, too, was evidently waiting with anxiety to hear sentence pronounced; but Mammy's face, spite of her pity for the creature, and her wish to humor her pets, was unpromising. She knew too well that mother had a rooted and chronic objection to all dogs; and certainly this specimen was not one to obtain favor in prejudiced eyes.

(To be Continued.)

THE MOST IMPORTANT YEARS.

"Live as long as you may, the first twenty years form the greater part of your life. They appear so while they are passing, they seem to have been so when we look back to them, and they take up more room in our memory than all the years which succeed them." If this be so, how important that they should be passed in planting good principles, cultivating good tastes, strengthening good habits, and fleeing all those pleasures which lay up bitterness and sorrow for time to come! Take good care of the first twenty years of your life, and you may hope that the last twenty will take good care of you.—The Observer.