



BREAKFAST FOR TWO.

(By Joanna H. Matthews.)

CHAPTER III.—Continued.

Ensconced in our former retreat—let me state that upon both occasions Milly knew of our whereabouts, and that we were spying, and did not seriously object thereto—Bessie and I watched the interview between my philanthropic brother and Milly's waifs. The boys edged together, and doubtfully surveyed the representative of the sterner sex, as he entered the room. They were accustomed to Milly now, but rather resented any innovation upon the established order of things.

"Good morning," said Edward, cheerily, a greeting that was responded to in as many different manners as there were boys.

"Mornin'," said Jim, in a tone half defiant, half sulky, and eying the gentleman with suspicion.

"Mornin', sir," said Bill, a shade more respectful, but still on his guard against traps and snares tending Sunday-schoolwards.

Mike pulled his hair, and scraped one bare foot upon the carpet, but uttered no word; and Sam only stared stupidly.

"I want a boy in my office down town," said Edward, entering at once upon the business. "Bill, would you like the place? You are Bill, are you not?" For the boy had been singing when he came in, and his voice betrayed his identity.

"Me an' Jim, do you mean?" asked Bill.

"Not Jim, no; I only want one boy."

"Me an' Jim is chums, an' we allers goes halves," said Bill, linking his arm in that of the "chum." "If he gets a job, I does half, and takes half the pay, an' same way if I gets one."

"I only need one boy in my office," said Edward; "but," looking at Jim, "I will find something else for Jim to do if he wishes work."

"What sort?" asked Jim.

"Well, I have not thought about it yet," answered the gentleman; "but I can find something for you to do, I am quite sure."

"If it was alongside of her," nodding his head toward Milly, who had stood by, silently, "I wouldn't mind. I like her, lots, I do, an' I'd just as love work round her while Bill was tendin' on you, mister. I kin go errands frustrate, an' sech like, yer know."

Now the fact was, that both Bill and Jim had occasionally, during these last few weeks, been employed in various odd jobs, by which they might earn a little, at our house, such as putting in coal or wood, sweeping the sidewalk, and the like. Even Thomas, despite his former prejudices, had come to employ them now and then to go on such errands as they could be trusted to perform, or to save him some little bit of work, which his old bones found wearisome. Nay, more; even Mary Jane had been known to bribe them to bring up a scuttle of coal, or to carry out the ashes. They had both been found to be willing,

ready and obliging; but—Jim especially—very full of pranks, which sometimes were extremely provoking. But steady work, or at least a share of it, something which might give them a feeling of manliness and responsibility, was now Milly's aim; but until the present time there had seemed to be no prospect of this. At the first mention of any asylum or institution, these lawless spirits would have rebelled, and probably cut short their intercourse with our household; and who would care to take into employ such reckless, impudent, ignorant waifs? Only one of these boys had—or knew himself to have—living parents; and Sam had confessed to Milly that he had long since run away from his intemperate father, and the boy still bore about him the marks of the cruel usage he had received, in the shape of a painful limp, and more than one cruel scar.

"Yer'd better go along of him," continued Jim, addressing Bill, who still hesitated over Edward's offer. "Look at his boots, and the studs and sleeve buttons of him! Yer might come to git the like of them if yer was took inter the business. Yer can't never tell what yer'll come to in one of them offices down town. An' if yer gets a lift, I know yer'll gimme one, Bill, ole feller. Yer'd better go along of him; he's a real swell, he is. Go, Bill, but fust make him tell what he'll give."

Edward made his offer, which was considered satisfactory; and Bill, having accepted of it, seemed to be regarded from this time by his companions with a mixture of envy and pity. He had resigned his free uncontrolled life, and made himself amenable to decency, order and the commands of a master; but then he had acquired thereby a position, plenty for half starvation, a comfortable home, decent clothes, and wages, to them, appeared riches.

"Now, see here mister," said Jim, "I s'pose yer know lots of other fellers what's got offices, don't yer?"

"I do," answered Edward.

"Well, yer git me a chance among some on 'em, like yer give Bill, an' yer'll see if I make yer ashamed of me. I'd like to keep alongside of Bill."

"I shall see what can be done for you," said the gentleman, with a half doubtful glance at the boy, who was evidently the most irrepressible of the tribe and the ring-leader of the others; and telling Bill to be at the house that evening, he bade them good-by, and left them to Milly.

The question of Bill's advancement and Jim's aspirations was much discussed at the dinner table, that evening; and Ned stated that such inquiries as he had made that day, on the latter's behalf, had been fruitless. The truth was that few business men, even had they been in need of an office boy, would have cared to choose one of these young Arabs; and we all, except Milly, thought Edward's benevolence more than Quixotic.

parents; she transmitting her orders through us to the servants, and allowing us to give out such things as were needed from the store-room, and so forth.

Milly, upon whom the duties lay this week, had occasion to go down to the store-room and kitchen after dinner; and, as she was about leaving the latter, was detained by Thomas, who begged her to let him have speech with her for a moment.

Now, in Thomas' eyes, Milly was about as much of a saint as she was in mother's—we accused both mistress and servant of undue partiality—and, after the first morning, he had looked with a more favorable eye than any of the household, save Ned, upon her experiment. Indeed, it had been principally through his contrivance and arrangement that those odd jobs, I have spoken of, had been thrown into the boys' hands; and he showed increasing interest in them, at least in Bill and Jim.

He was always grandiloquent of speech, and dignified of mien, but faithful, true, and devoted to the family welfare as if we were all his own. He had carried us all in his arms, in our turns, and we, as well as himself, would have considered it next to impossible that the household economy could go on without him.

"Miss Milly," he said, with a backward wave of his hand to Mary Jane, who stood listening, "we're advancing in years; that is to say, growin' old, Mary Jane and me."

At this Mary Jane bristled. Her weak point was her age, which seemed especially ridiculous in her, for she was scrawny, ungainly and ill-favored, and really of an age which made such sensitiveness exceptionally absurd. She had long been obliged to wear glasses, as we were all aware; but she would not allow anyone to see her wearing them; and if caught sewing or reading with them, would whip them off and hide them beneath her apron. Thomas, who had a certain dry humor about him, was fond of giving an occasional thrust to his old fellow-servant; and this extremely vulnerable point gave him considerable advantage over her.

"Spake for yerself, if ye plazo," she said sharply. "I'll not have it flung at me that I'm growing old."

But Thomas continued, without heeding the interruption.

"An' there's many a step that younger feet might save us, many a little odd job and lift as would be a great help to our backs, and—hem—legs—savin' your presence, Miss. Mary Jane don't confess to no limbs—"

"No, I don't Miss," again broke in the testy old woman; "legs is good enough for me."

Again Thomas went on with imperturbable composure:

"And I was thinkin', Miss Milly, if you'd a mind to take that boy Jim, and the mistress was willin', I'd undertake the trainin' of him; and who knows what he might turn out with surroundin' circumstances. I'd not trust him among the silver or nothin' valyable, till he'd come to be christianized like, and a sense of responsibility; but cleanin' knives, and sweepin' cellar and sidewalk, and goin' of errands, I've tried him on already, and he's not so bad, if you're a bit patient with him. Mary Jane, there, she'd find him special convenient."

Milly's after account of this interview was irresistible, as she painted the horror, indignation and contempt of Mary Jane's expression at this suggestion. But Thomas did not allow her to put in a word edgewise, but went on as rapidly as the sense of his own dignity allowed.

"Now, Miss, as I say, if you and the mistress is agreeable, I'll face the undertakin' of makin' a good servant of him. He's good pints; and for all his pranks and mischievous ways, he's that obligin' and light-hearted that there is not one of us in the kitchen but likes him. He's ready to do a good turn for all, barrin' he don't treat Mary Jane's years with all the respect that he might."

This was a tempting offer for Milly, yearning for some opportunity to put her *protege* under restraint, and such tuition as might put him in the way of procuring an honest living; but there were serious objections to Thomas's plans.

"But it would be putting the boy in the way of such temptation, Thomas," she said, hesitatingly. "I am not so sure of the perfect trustworthiness of these poor children if they are not watched, and there are many things here which it is impossible to keep always under lock and key—"

Milly paused, not for lack of words, but because checked by the expression of Mary Jane's face, which wore a look of triumph, exasperating even to St. Milly.

"There's many a boy, an' man too, been saved, just by bein' trusted, Miss Milly," said her blessed old coadjutor. "I'll keep the boy under my own eye, all I can, and not put too much in his power. Give him the chance, Miss Milly, dear, give him the chance, and it may be the savin' of him. He comes here an' has his music with ye, an' goes away all softened and civilized like, to be just hardened back again by his bad ways, and the hard dalin's of the world to him. There's good in him as well as in t'other one, with his merry eye and jokin' ways; and maybe he'll be showin' it yet if he but gets in with respectable folks and belongin's. Let me try me hand at him, dear lady."

(To be Continued.)

BABY LEE'S RIDE ON THE PLOUGH.

Baby Lee lived on a farm, five miles from the village. One spring day her papa was busy ploughing the potato-piece; so he asked mamma Lee to go to the village to buy some necessary articles. He promised to take care of the baby while she was gone.

Mamma started for the village and papa took baby out to the woodshed with him. He found a large box in which she could sit. This he nailed to the plough-beam. Having tucked baby in nicely, he hitched the horse to the plough.

Away went Baby Lee, across the field and back again, to her intense delight, till the whole field was ploughed. The little puppy, baby's playmate, capered after her, as if he understood what a fine time she was having. Part of the time papa let brother Georgie take the reins, and hold the plough, while he led the horse by the bridle across places not to be ploughed.

When mamma came home, and learned of papa's novel method of taking care of baby, she laughed heartily. She told him she should remember it next spring if she had shopping to do.—Virginia C. Hollis.

