

and fell asleep; but the moon, looking in to kiss the blooming face upon the pillow, knew that three good spirits had come to help little Marjorie from that day forth, and their names were Industry Cheerfulness, and Love.

IX.

PATTY'S PLACE.

I.

HOW SHE FOUND IT.

PATTY stood at one of the windows of the Asylum, looking thoughtfully down into the yard, where twenty girls were playing.

All had cropped heads, all wore brown gowns and blue aprons, and all were orphans like herself. Some were pretty and some plain, some rosy and gay, some pale and feeble, but all seemed happy and having a good time in spite of many drawbacks.

More than once one of them nodded and beckoned to Patty, but she shook her head decidedly, and still stood, listlessly watching them, and thinking to herself with a child's impatient spirit, —

“Oh, if some one would only come and take me away! I'm so tired of living here I don't think I *can* bear it much longer.”

Poor Patty might well wish for a change; for she had been in the Asylum ever since she could remem-

ber; but though every one was kind to her, she was heartily tired of the place, and longed to find a home as many of the girls did.

The children were nursed and taught until old enough to help themselves, then were adopted by people or went out to service. Now and then some forlorn child was claimed by relatives who had discovered it, and once the relatives of a little girl proved to be rich and generous people, who came for Katy in a fine carriage, treated all the other girls in honor of the happy day, and from time to time let Katy visit them with hands full of gifts for her former playmates and friends.

This event had made a great stir in the Asylum, and the children were never tired of talking it over and telling it to new comers as a modern sort of fairy tale. For a time, each hoped to be claimed in the same way, and stories of what they would do when their turn came was one of the favorite amusements of the house.

By and by Katy ceased to come, and gradually new girls took the place of those that left, and her good fortune was forgotten by all but Patty. To her it always remained a splendid possibility, and she comforted her loneliness by visions of the

day when her "folks" would come for her, and bear her away to a future of luxury and pleasure, rest and love.

But no one came, and year after year Patty worked and waited, saw others chosen and herself left to the many duties and few pleasures of her dull life. The reason why she was not taken was because of her pale face, her short figure, with one shoulder higher than the other, and her shy ways. She was not ill now, but looked so, and was a sober, quiet little woman at thirteen.

People who came for pets chose the pretty little ones; and those who wanted servants took the tall, strong, merry-faced girls, who spoke up brightly and promised to learn and do any thing required of them.

The good matron often recommended Patty as a neat, capable, gentle little person, but no one seemed to want her, and after every failure her heart grew heavier and her face sadder, for the thought of spending her life there was unbearable.

Nobody guessed what a world of hopes and thoughts and feelings was hidden under that blue pinafore, what dreams the solitary child enjoyed, or what a hungry, aspiring young soul lived in that crooked little body.

But God knew; and when the time came He remembered Patty and sent her the help best fitted for her needs. Sometimes, when we least expect it, a small cross proves a lovely crown, a seemingly unimportant event becomes a life-long experience, or a stranger changes into a friend.

It happened so now; for as Patty said aloud with a great sigh, "I don't think I *can* bear it any longer!" a hand touched her shoulder, and a voice said, gently,—

"Bear what, my child?"

The touch was so light and the voice so kind that Patty answered before she had time to feel shy.

"Living here, ma'am, and never being chosen out like the other girls are."

"Tell me all about it, dear. I'm waiting for a friend, and I'd like to hear your troubles," sitting down in the window-seat and drawing Patty beside her.

She was not young, nor pretty, nor finely dressed, only a gray-haired woman in plain black; but her face was so motherly, her eyes so cheerful, and her voice so soothing, that Patty felt at ease in a minute, and nestled up to her as she told her little woes in a few simple words.

"You don't know any thing about your parents?" asked the lady.

"No, ma'am; I was left here a baby without even a name pinned to me, and no one has come to find me. But I shouldn't wonder if they did yet, so I keep ready all the time and learn as hard as I can, so they won't be ashamed of me, for I guess my folks is respectable," and Patty lifted her head with an air of pride that made the lady ask, with a smile,—

"What makes you think so?"

"Well, I heard the matron tell a lady who chose Nelly Brian that she always thought *I* came of high folks because I was so different from the others, and my ways was nice, and my feet so small,—see if they ain't,"—and, slipping them out of the rough shoes she wore, Patty held up two slender little feet with the arched insteps that tell of good birth.

Miss Murry laughed right out at the innocent vanity of the poor child, and said, heartily, "They *are* small, and so are your hands in spite of work, and your hair is fine, and your eyes are soft and clear, and you are a good child I'm sure, which is best of all."

Pleased and touched by the praise that is so pleasant to us all, yet half ashamed of herself, Patty

blushed and smiled, put on her shoes, and said, with unusual animation, —

"I'm pretty good, I believe, and I know I'd be much better if I only could get out. I do so long to see trees and grass, and sit in the sun and hear birds. I'd work real hard and be happy if I could live in the country."

"What can you do?" asked Miss Murry, stroking the smooth head and looking down into the wistful eyes fixed upon her.

Modestly, but with a flutter of hope at her heart, Patty told over her domestic accomplishments, a good list for a thirteen-year-old, but Patty had been drilling so long she was unusually clever at all sorts of house-work as well as needle-work.

As she ended, she asked, timidly, —

"Did you come for a girl, ma'am?"

"My sister did; but she has found one she likes, and is going to take her on trial," was the answer that made the light fade out of Patty's eyes and the hope die in her heart.

"Who is it, please?"

"Lizzie Brown, a tall, nice-looking girl of fourteen."

"You won't like her I know, for Lizzie is a real

——;" there Patty stopped short, turned red, and looked down, as if ashamed to meet the keen, kind eyes fixed on her.

"A real what?"

"Please, ma'am, don't ask; it was mean of me to say that, and I mustn't go on. Lizzie can't help being good with you, and I am glad she's got a chance to go away."

Miss Murry asked no more questions; but she liked the little glimpse of character, and tried to brighten Patty's face again by talking of something she liked.

"Suppose your 'folks,' as you say, never come for you, and you never find your fortune, as some girls do, can't you make friends and fortune for yourself?"

"How can I?" questioned Patty, wonderingly.

"By taking cheerfully whatever comes, by being helpful and affectionate to all, and wasting no time in dreaming about what may happen, but bravely making each day a comfort and a pleasure to yourself and others. Can you do that?"

"I can try, ma'am," answered Patty, meekly.

"I wish you would; and when I come again you can tell me how you get on. I think you will succeed; and when you do, you will have found a fine

fortune, and be sure of friends. Now I must go; cheer up, deary, your turn must come some day."

With a kiss that won Patty's heart, Miss Murry went away, casting more than one look of pity at the little figure in the window-seat, sobbing, with a blue pinafore over its face.

This disappointment was doubly hard to Patty; because Lizzie was not a good girl, and deserved nothing, and Patty had taken a great fancy to the lady who spoke so kindly to her.

For a week after this she went about her work with a sad face, and all her day-dreams were of living with Miss Murry in the country.

Monday afternoon, as she stood sprinkling clothes, one of the girls burst in, saying, all in a breath, —

"Somebody's come for you, and you are to go right up to the parlor. It's Mrs. Murry, and she's brought Liz back, 'cause she told fibs, and was lazy, and Liz is as mad as hops, for it is a real nice place, with cows, and pigs, and children; and the work ain't hard and she wanted to stay. Do hurry, and don't stand staring at me that way."

"It can't be me — no one ever wants me — it's some mistake" — stammered Patty, so startled and excited, she did not know what to say or do.

"No, it isn't. Mrs. Murry won't have any one but *you*, and the matron says you are to come right up. Go along; I'll finish here. I'm *so* glad you have got a chance at last;" and with a good-natured hug, the girl pushed Patty out of the kitchen.

In a few minutes Patty came flying back, all in a twitter of delight, to report that she was going at once, and must say good-by all round. Every one was pleased, and when the flurry was over, the carriage drove away with the happiest little girl ever seen inside, for at last some one *did* want her, and Patty *had* found a place.

II.

HOW SHE FILLED IT.

FOR a year Patty lived with the Murrys, industrious, docile, and faithful, but not yet happy, because she had not found all she expected. They were kind to her, as far as plenty of food and not too much work went. They clothed her comfortably, let her go to church, and did not scold her very often. But no one showed that they loved her, no one praised her efforts, no one seemed

to think that she had any hope or wish beyond her daily work, and no one saw in the shy, quiet little maid-servant, a lonely, tender-hearted girl longing for a crumb of the love so freely given to the children of the house.

The Murrys were busy people; the farm was large, and the master and his eldest son were hard at it all summer. Mrs. Murry was a brisk, smart housewife, who "flew round" herself, and expected others to do likewise. Pretty Ella, the daughter, was about Patty's age, and busy with her school, her little pleasures, and all the bright plans young girls love and live in. Two or three small lads rioted about the house, making much work, and doing very little.

One of these boys was lame, and this fact seemed to establish a sort of friendly understanding between him and Patty, for he was the only one who ever expressed any regard for her. She was very good to him, always ready to help him, always patient with his fretfulness, and always quick to understand his sensitive nature.

'She's only a servant, a charity girl who works for her board, and wears my old duds. She's good enough in her place, but of course she can't

expect to be like one of us," Ella said to a young friend once, and Patty heard her.

"Only a servant"—that was the hard part, and it never occurred to any one to make it softer; so Patty plodded on, still hoping and dreaming about friends and fortune.

If it had not been for Miss Murry I fear the child would not have got on at all. But Aunt Jane never forgot her, though she lived twenty miles away, and seldom came to the farm. She wrote once a month, and always put in a little note to Patty, which she expected to have answered.

So Patty wrote a neat reply, very stiff and short at first; but after a time she quite poured out her heart to this one friend who sent her encouraging words, cheered her with praise now and then, and made her anxious to be all Miss Jane seemed to expect. No one took much notice of this correspondence, for Aunt Jane was odd, and Patty used to post her replies herself, being kindly provided with stamps by her friend.

This was Patty's anchor in her little sea of troubles, and she clung to it, hoping that some time, when she had earned such a beautiful reward, she would go and live with Miss Murry.

Christmas was coming, and great fun was expected; for the family were to pass the day before a Aunt Jane's, and bring her home for the dinner and dance next day. For a week beforehand, Mrs. Murry flew round with more than her accustomed speed, and Patty trotted from morning till night, lending a hand at all the least agreeable jobs. Ella did the light, pretty work, and spent much time over her new dress, and the gifts she was making for the boys.

Every thing was done at last, and Mrs. Murry declared that she should drop if she had another thing to do but go to Jane's and rest.

Patty had lived on the hope of going with them; but nothing was said about it, and they all trooped gayly away to the station, leaving her to take care of the house, and see that the cat did not touch one of the dozen pies stored away in the pantry.

Patty kept up bravely till they were gone; then she sat down like Cinderella, and cried, and cried until she couldn't cry any more, for it did seem as if she never was to have any fun, and no fairy god-mother came to help her. The shower did her good, and she went about her work with a meek, patient face that would have touched a heart of stone.

All the morning she finished up the odd jobs left her to do, and in the afternoon, as the only approach to a holiday she dared venture, she sat at the parlor window and watched other people go to and fro, intent on merry-makings in which she had no part.

One pleasant little task she had, and that was arranging gifts for the small boys. Miss Jane had given her a bit of money now and then, and out of her meagre store the affectionate child had made presents for the lads; poor ones, but full of good-will and the desire to win some in return.

The evening was very long, for the family did not return as early as they expected to do, so Patty got out her treasure-box, and, sitting on the warm kitchen hearth, tried to amuse herself, while the wind howled outside and snow fell fast.

There we must leave her for a little while, quite unconscious of the happy surprise that was being prepared for her.

When Aunt Jane welcomed the family, her first word, as she emerged from a chaos of small boys' arms and legs, was "Why, where is Patty?"

"At home, of course; where should she be?" answered Mrs. Murry.