

Six girls, and I the youngest. Dresses were handed down from one to another till they were all worn out. My gowns were mostly made of two or three put together. The children used to call me "Patchwork Quilt."

'I remember one dress in particular,' she went on smilingly. 'I can see just how it looked. The skirt was stripes, the waist was in spots, and the sleeves were kind of flowered all over. You see it was made out of Ellen's, and Jane's, and Sarah's. Mother was real proud of having made me so neat and comfortable, but I was just mean enough to be ashamed. It makes me feel sorry when I think how hard mother worked for us, and we not half appreciating it.'

'Didn't they ever buy you anything new?' exclaimed Florence. 'I think they were unkind.'

'No, no, dear child! You don't understand. There wasn't much money to spend on clothes, I can tell you. I remember one apron—'tires,' we called them—that was bought on purpose for me, and I was proud as Punch till it was made up. It was real pretty, white with a narrow blue stripe, but being a remnant there wasn't enough to get it all out. So mother put it on a yoke made of a piece of an old dress of hers—dark brown calico with a yellow figure. Somehow they didn't go together very well.'

'But since you've grown up, Miss Ferry, you must have had new dresses.'

'No, Miss Florence, never. I'm forty years old, and I've never had a new dress. Jane got married, and so did Sarah. Well, Sarah died and left me all her clothes. Her husband was pretty well off, and there was some real good things amongst them. Then the other three died here at home, and of course, I got all their things, except what I gave to Jane. Jane was a hard time; her husband's a dreadful ailing man. Well, I've been wearing out the clothes ever since, and they ain't all worn out yet.'

'It's been lucky for me getting all those clothes—me having so much sickness and not being able to earn right along. But once in a time I get real ungrateful, and think it would be kind of nice to get something new all over—not any scraps of pieces. There, you must think I'm awful complaining!'

'Complaining, Miss Ferry! But why don't you buy yourself a real pretty dress without waiting to use up all those old things?'

'No, dear,' said Miss Ferry, gently, 'I need the money for—other things. There is bonnets, too,' resumed the little woman, biting off a needleful of twist. 'I guess there are enough bonnets and trimmings to get me through my natural life.'

'Sometimes I think most everything in this world is a patch or a make-over,' she proceeded. 'If it ain't done-over meat it's warmed-over potatoes, and if it ain't them it's a little mess of beans and a dab of hash to be got out of the way together. There's always leavings-over! I don't even work at anything real good and steady. Sometimes its mending and sometimes its nursing, and again its button-holes. But it's always something, thank the Lord! Leavings-overs are a heap sight better than fallings-short!'

'Miss Ferry, you said you couldn't afford to lose a whole day's work. Don't you ever take a holiday?'

'Bless you, Miss Florence! I don't remember ever being idle a day. I was going to, though; I was going to the Baptist picnic last week. You know they went to Oak Grove, a real sightly place, they tell me, and right by the lake. I got all ready, and if Mrs. White didn't go and sprain her ankle!'

'Why did that keep you? She has a daughter, hasn't she?'

'Oh, yes, but Rose is young, and, of course, wanted her good time. I saw she was terribly disappointed, so I said, "I'll stay with your mother, Rose," and you never saw anybody more tickled. There, Miss Florence, there's the jacket, and tell your ma I hope it will suit. It's been a real refreshment to see you, and I hope you won't think I'm cross and ungrateful complaining as I have!'

Florence stooped over the little woman with a sudden impulse. 'There's a whole kiss, all for yourself,' she said.

Miss Ferry's thin cheek flushed under the unwonted caress. 'Bless her kind heart!' she said, as she watched the girl's light figure go down the path. 'I declare I'm fairly ashamed of having run on so about myself. It was real grumbling. I don't believe I'd have done it if I hadn't been so worn out sitting up, and then being disappointed about that Henrietta. Well, Jane needs the money more than I do the dress—poor girl.'

Florence Heath walked slowly along the elm-shaded street thinking of Miss Ferry. The sun was high and hot, and the road dusty. Colonel Heath's lawn stretched smooth and inviting. As Florence turned toward the house, one of her little brothers came rattling down the broad drive in his shining cart behind his pony.

The big mansion which stood back on the top of the slope looked cool and restful with its wide piazzas and gay awnings.

'Never anything new or whole, and I never have anything else!' thought the girl.

Florence found her mother on one of the piazzas, swinging to and fro in a willow chair.

'What is it, dear? You look tired. It was too warm a walk for you. You should have let James drive you down.'

'Mamma, I have everything and Miss Ferry has nothing. Why is it?' said Florence, as she threw herself into a hammock.

'That's a pretty hard question to answer all at once,' responded Mrs. Heath with a smile. 'Tell me about it, dear.'

Florence told her story. 'I don't think I ever knew,' she concluded, 'just the difference there is between my life and some other people's. Oh, I suppose I knew, but I never saw it so clearly. It doesn't seem right at all!'

Mrs. Heath watched her daughter's face. 'One can always share,' she suggested.

Florence was silent a moment, then she said: 'I'd like to give Miss Ferry one good, whole day!'

'Miss Ferry might have whole things if she didn't share, Florence. She has a shiftless sort of a sister in Greenville whom she helps a great deal. I suspect most of her earnings go there. She helped those poor Larkinses and made clothes for the children, and she is always going where there is sickness. I don't know of any one who does so much good in a quiet way and with so little means, as Miss Ferry.'

Florence sprang out of the hammock, scattering the soft pillows right and left, went over to her mother and kissed her.

'I think I'll try a little of the sharing business myself!' she said, and went into the house.

The phoebe-bird uttered its plaintive note in the horse-chestnut tree close to the window, and woke Miss Ferry from a sound morning nap.

'Five o'clock!' she exclaimed, as she looked at the loud-ticking timepiece which adorned her mantel-shelf. 'I'm getting a dreadful habit of sleeping late. It's mortal lazy, and a shameful waste of time, but somehow I ain't so spry as I used to be.'

She flung open the green blinds and let in the radiance of the early morning. The

sun had risen in a blue and cloudless sky. The feathery tree-tops stirred in the gentle breeze, and flower-scents and bird-voices filled the air. It was just the morning to fill one's heart with a pleasant premonition of coming good.

'I feel as if something nice was goin' to happen!' said Miss Ferry to herself, as she looked into the beautiful, fresh world. 'But there! What am I thinking of! It'll be button-holes, or maybe Jane'll want me to tend Willie through one of his colic spells!'

Breakfast over, Miss Ferry sat down in her little sewing-chair and took up her work; but, for some reason, the needle would not go, and her thoughts would wander far from the little garment she was fashioning.

She was gazing at the swaying elm-tops, and her work had fallen from her hands, when a rousing rap at the door startled her into the consciousness of the present.

'What's come?' she exclaimed, springing up, to find that it was only Colonel Heath's coachman with a bundle.

'The work Mrs. Heath promised me,' thought Miss Ferry as she laid the big parcel on the old lounge. 'I don't believe I'll open it now; somehow I don't want to see more work to-day.'

In a moment, however, she changed her mind. 'Mrs. Heath's real good to me, maybe it's something she wants done right up'; and she proceeded to undo the numerous wrappings.

'Seems to me it's done up might careful for just being sent down here. What is it anyway?' she said aloud, as she took off the cover of the long pasteboard box and unfolded a pretty dark blue dress, all made and finished.

'Something Miss Florence wants altered, I guess. It's too small for Mrs. Heath. Here's the directions,' she continued as an envelope fell from the folds of the skirt.

As she read her thin face flushed and she laid the note down with a gasp. 'Oh, I can't! After all I've said to her!' she whispered. Then she read it again.

Dear Miss Ferry,—I was in the city yesterday, and saw this dress which made me think of you. I thought that as you were so busy taking stitches for other people, perhaps it might be a little help to have something all made up, and I think it will fit you. Will you accept it with my love! Please don't mind my sending it, dear Miss Ferry, for you share so much with others you must let others share with you sometimes.

Mamma wishes me to ask you if you will come and spend this beautiful day with us. We are going to drive in the afternoon to Pine Point, and it will give us so much pleasure to have you with us. Please come and wear the new dress. James will call for you at eleven. Yours very truly,

FLORENCE W. HEATH.

'The good Lord bless her!' said Miss Ferry, with a little sob. 'It seems as if I couldn't take so much from anyone, but it would be downright ungrateful not to.' And then the joy of possession entered her soul.

She examined the dress with the appreciation of a skilled seamstress. 'Just see those silk facings; and it's finished elegantly. I never expected to live to see this day. And after all my complaining too! I ain't deserving! I ain't deserving!' But, oh, even Miss Florence can't know what it means to me to have a new dress!'

Promptly at eleven, James, impressive in dark blue livery and shining buttons, helped the fluttering little woman, in her trim new suit, into the soft-cushioned carriage.

I am not going to describe the welcome Miss Ferry received at the Heath's, nor the long day of delight she passed in that beautiful home