

RICH IN FAITH; OR, PATTY QUICK'S STORY.

BY MRS. EMMA RAYMOND FITMAN.

"YES, Miss Joynson, I'm a lonely woman, as you see, but I'm far from miserable. My cat knows that even. Indeed, I'm much of the good minister's opinion, who said that even a man's cat should be the better for his religion. My Tibby talks to me like a Christian almost; true, she hasn't got the gift of speech, but she understands like a Christian all I say to her, and she answers me back quite sensible. No, Miss Joynson; I was never dull; how could I be, with such a good God above, and so many kind friends about me?"

"I didn't know you had so many friends, Patty," I said. "Heaps on 'em, Miss! Why, the sight o' your good young face, so fresh like and cheerful, does my heart good. Your calls here do me more good than you can imagine. The old woman of seventy-five doesn't see so many bright young faces in her poor little room that she can afford to slight yours, I assure you, my dear. Depend upon it, what I say is true."

And the old woman winked and nodded at me from behind her spectacles, until I felt fairly amused and interested. I should like to describe to you Patty Quick's *personnel*, but I almost despair of doing so. Fancy to yourself a little, antique, toothless, dwarfed, faded, yet dapper old lady—not much over four feet high, destitute of an eye, and always wearing an old black bonnet and a pair of blue spectacles. Being lame, from an unfortunate accident, she hobbled about on two crutches, while Tibby the cat accompanied her, purring an accompaniment to her mistress's ever-rippling chatter in a way which testified to the perfect understanding which existed between them. "The Retreat," as I had laughingly named her neat little room, was all the world like herself. Neat, yet quaint; old-fashioned, yet prim; full of oddities, yet all in the most decorous order; a single glance revealed to you the character of its occupant. Her room was "parlour, kitchen, bedroom, and all," like that of the famed cobbler, and contained the sole possessions of Patty Quick. On a small round table in one corner were the relics of past days, in the shape of china shepherdesses, dogs, and fanciful knicknacks of the time of the Georges, which relics were reverently dusted and arranged in the quaintest fashion every morning. On the white dimity curtains of the bed were sewn pieces of coloured paper and cambric, so as to form patterns, of which the like was never seen, either on or under the earth. The kettle on the hob, the plump, white cat, winking quietly at her mistress, as she reposed in her high-backed, old-fashioned oak chair, with her crutches beside her; the quaint china images, and the gaudily adorned dimity curtains, all made up a picture not easily to be effaced from one's recollection. And when you heard her story, you could not help acknowledging that Patty Quick was one of God's heroines, that in the midst of this unique setting there gleamed a jewel, bright and glorious in its lowliness, which should one day adorn the coronet of the Redeemer. Patty Quick was one of the Lord's own hidden ones.

"But you do me good, more good than you can imagine," I said. "My work has almost overcome me to-day, and I feel so depressed that I am come to you for help; and your cheery words and unfading faith help me far more than you can even think."

I was a governess, far from home and friends. Occasionally, even in the midst of the most congenial work, depression finds us out and broods over us, as if it will not be banished. This was the case with me that day; and in a fitful, moody, sorrowful spirit, I had bent my steps to the "Retreat."

"Yet, my dear, I had to learn cheerfulness and trust through trial. My faith came only to me bit by bit—a bit at a time, my dear. God doesn't make saints of us all at once. He gives us a little grace at first, then He tries it; then more grace, then that is tried. And so He goes on. Ah! my dear, I could tell you a story!"

And as the quaint little woman winked her one eye, and nodded at me, she folded her hands and pursed up her mouth in such a way that I felt sure that a story was coming. And Patty Quick's stories were always good. One could not but learn valuable lessons from them. So I waited quietly, and sure enough the story came.

"My dear, if you had been led along such a stony path as I was, I'm thinking that you'd have learnt many of the

lessons which I had to learn. I never heard my mother speak. No, she was not dead! I don't mean that. But she was dumb—think of that! I lived with my mother until her death, which happened when I was forty years of age, but all that time I never heard her speak one word. Ah! my dear, that was a denial, for sure!"

"Our family was very poor, and as soon as I could sit on a bench, or hold a needle, I was put out to learn a trade. And what trade do you think they chose for me? Why, shoe-binding! I was apprenticed to a man who was a very hard master—a very hard master. I had to work about fourteen hours a day for my food and clothing; not one penny of wages crossed my hand during the whole of my apprenticeship. Not one penny, my dear. It has always seemed to me that the Lord saw it wouldn't do to trust me with money, so He graciously kept me poor by one means or another. I might have got proud, or heady, or highminded; or I might have neglected prayer, and so brought darkness into my soul and dishonour upon His holy name."

"Well, after I was out of my apprenticeship, I continued to work for this man, and I worked for him for eighteen years longer, for the same remuneration. Think of that, my dear! I had not one penny of wages for twenty-five years; and pleased and proud was I when my mother could spare me a sixpence. Not much waste or squandering—if any—shall I have to answer for, seeing that I never had the chance. And people used to cry shame upon my master for being so hard, but what was I to do, my dear? I was a poor, friendless dwarf, my only friend being my poor, dumb, widowed mother, and she had only her parish allowance. I could not go out to service because of my low stature, and my soul rebelled sadly against the workhouse. So I deemed it wisest to do the work which offered itself to me."

"When I was thirty-five years of age, my mother married again. It was a bad day's work for her, I can tell you, and for me, too, but I stuck to her, through joy and sorrow. And sorrow formed the largest portion of her lot at that time, for the man she married was drunken, wicked, and violent, and would vent his vile temper upon us both. Many a time, my dear, I have had my limbs covered with bruises, because I used to defend my mother from his violence. And, little by little, he sold our furniture, till we hadn't even a bed to lie upon. Then he started off, leaving us in our destitution, and I had to get another home, as best I could. Knowing it was not safe for my mother to attempt this, because of the risk of her husband's return, when possibly he would sell it all again. I just told the Lord all about it, and asked Him to help me to get another home together. Somehow, I seemed comforted, after I had prayed about it; and, going out into the town, I began to try those who had known me, for help. The master for whom I had worked so many years gave me a bedstead and mattress, and other friends gave me other little things, so that, at least, my dear, we had what the prophet had, 'a bed, a table, and a chair.' By-and-bye, I found I could get other little comforts together, as I earned wages now, and by dint of very hard work, my earnings, united to my mother's parish allowance, kept us comfortably, in a plain, homely fashion. And when the days were darkest, my dear, and matters looked worst, there was still the promise left, 'My God shall supply all your need.' Mark you, 'all your need,' not all your *wants*. And I have always had my need supplied; though I must confess that I have longed for a great many *needs* in my time; but God was too good, and too kind, to give them to me. Yes, 'bread shall be given, and water shall be sure,' to those who trust in the Lord of Hosts."

"After a few years spent in this way, my mother died. It was a great comfort to me, that I was able to soothe her declining days with my care, for who could understand her wishes and her wants like myself? Well, I closed her eyes in the full assurance that my poor dumb mother was gone home to be with Jesus. There, we will talk over the trials and the difficulties of the way, I'm thinking; for who will praise Him louder or sweeter than she who was dumb all her days here? Ah! my dear, heaven will be a wonderful place for compensations! And I sometimes wonder what it will be like to us, who have been deprived of physical gifts and graces, when we get these gifts. The loss of speech was a great trial to my mother. Many and many a time has she looked down on me, when a child, so wistfully, and sometimes painfully, because she could not talk to me. And when she saw other women talking to their children, for she could not hear much, being partially deaf, too, the big tears would roll down her face, as she remembered her inability to speak sweet