

who lived in the house. She was a distant cousin of Mr. Parker's, a great invalid and never able to go into company.

There were two girls and two boys—the eldest being eight, and the youngest two. Augusta, Laura, Edwin and John. The latter won Esther's heart at once, by coming readily to her; he was a pretty little fellow, with curly hair and laughing eyes, and just beginning to talk and amuse people.

Augusta too was a pretty child, and had a pleasant manner; she immediately made friends with Esther brought her dolls and books to her, and chatted away as if she had always known her.

Mrs. Parker was out when Esther arrived; but Fleet, the lady's maid, showed her into the nursery, telling her her dinner would soon be sent up, and that she was expected to take her meals with the children, which Esther felt glad of.

When she was gone, Esther turned to the children and tried to please them; and in an hour's time Mrs. Parker herself came in, all dressed out for a party. She spoke kindly to Esther, and repeated some things she had said when she first engaged her—told her to keep the children amused and when she wanted to go for water or their tea she must get Miss Marston or Fleet to look after them.

Esther thought it was a pity for the poor children not to be enjoying the fine evening, and asked if there was no garden. "O no, only a yard," said Augusta, "where we may sometimes play, and where we draw about the cart. We walk out every morning."

As it began to grow dark, Laura and Edwin grew uneasy, and fretted for Lucy, which was the name of their former nurse. Edwin cried bitterly, and Esther tried in vain to pacify him.

Esther left the room. She was not a timid or shy girl, but she certainly did feel very lonely and heart-sick, as she went down the long flight of stairs, and passed the dreary looking hall and by the empty parlours. How comfortable and snug seemed the recollection of the little cottage where her mother Margaret and Anne were.

(To be continued.)

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