

utterly lacking in artistic effect. Polly undoubtedly was 'provincial,' but she was so entirely unconscious of her clothes that everybody else speedily forgot them, too, while her lovable disposition and merry ways at once made her popular with all the young friends of Madge and Mabel.

With that unflinching tact which is born of love and sympathy, Polly immediately identified herself with the interests of the household of which, for a few weeks, she was to be a part, and over and above all with the work which Madge and Mabel were doing for the Christmas sale.

The beautiful embroidery and the pictures in water color which were being evolved under the touch of Polly's two talented cousins were marvellous in the sight of the little maid from Nova Scotia.

'I wish I had a talent!' sighed Polly. 'How I should like to help. What else do they have to sell at the Exchange besides pictures and embroidery?'

'Oh! decorated china, infants' wardrobes, jellies, pickles, bonbons, and anything that destitute gentlewomen can make.'

'Oh, dear!' again sighed Polly.

But if Polly had not talent she had unbounded enthusiasm, and it was she who kept up the spirits of the other girls whose hope and courage often flagged before the task which they had set for themselves was accomplished.

At last the work was completed. There were two embroidered centrepieces for the tea table. One was wrought with a design of wild roses in pale pink, and the other, over which Polly went into raptures, was decorated with tiny forget-me-nots, buttercups, and daisies, apparently scattered at random upon the dainty white groundwork.

The water colors were originally drawings by Madge—bits of rocky pasture land, a group of white birches overhanging a transparent brook, and a hillside orchard with some gnarled old apple trees against a sunset sky.

They were all carefully packed and sent by express to the Woman's Exchange. Then the three girls waited anxiously. Polly was sure that the work would be accepted and that Madge and Mabel would be speedily overwhelmed with orders.

At last, after a week of feverish expectation, the long-looked-for letter came. Mabel opened it with trembling fingers and a throbbing heart. She read a few words, then, flinging the letter upon the floor, she burst into tears and buried her face in the sofa pillows.

Madge picked up the letter.

'Oh, Mother!' she gasped.

'Read it, my daughter,' said Mrs. Ingraham, while Polly gazed sympathetically from one to the other.

'I will!' exclaimed Madge. 'Just listen to this, after all our work and wild ambitions!'

"We very much regret that we are obliged to return the water colors which you have so kindly submitted for our consideration. The pictures show some originality and merit, but the touch of the amateur is still apparent, and we fear, with the great number of pictures by recognized artists now on the market, that it would be impossible to find a sale for these water colors. We are also very sorry to return the embroidery. The work is remarkably well done; but there is no demand this year for table decorations in colored silks. Everything is done in solid white. We shall be pleased at some future time to see more of your work."

'More of our work,' interrupted Mabel, scornfully. 'I will never send them another thing; neither shall Madge! "Amateur's touch," indeed! I just wish you could have

seen the design for a magazine cover for which Mrs. Aldrich says a young friend of hers received one hundred dollars!'

'What was it?' asked Polly, with wide-open eyes.

'It was just a horrid splash of pink and chocolate color, with a limp girl in pale green, hanging over a fence, and looking exactly as though she had been washed and hung out to dry.'

'Only think of these dear little landscapes, as true to nature as they can be!' exclaimed provincial Polly.

'Oh, I wouldn't care a bit for myself and my poor little despised pasture lots,' said Madge; 'but when I think of all the time and expense which Mabel has put into those two centre-pieces, I do feel woefully disappointed. We did need the money so much. But we have just failed and that's the end of it.'

At this moment a sudden light flashed in Polly's blue eyes.

'No!' she exclaimed emphatically, 'this is not the end of it.'

The next morning Polly resolutely declined an invitation to spend a few days with Madge and Mabel at the home of one of their young friends, and the sisters on their return found Polly just delivering a mysterious package to the expressman at the door.

It was addressed to the Woman's Exchange.

'Oh, what is it? what is it?' cried the two girls, dancing round Polly with uncontrollable curiosity.

No questions or coaxing, however, could extort from Polly her well-guarded secret.

'But, Polly,' expostulated Madge, 'you solemnly asserted that you hadn't any talent. Now we know that you have told a fib.'

'Do I look like an "amphibious" animal?' Polly's eyes twinkled. 'Just be patient till my letter comes,' she said.

Fortunately they had not long to wait. In a very few days the fateful missive came. It began:

'Miss Pauline Atherton.

'Dear Madam:'

'Well!' exclaimed Polly, 'they think I'm an ancient spinster, about sixty-five.'

'Oh, read on, Polly!' implored the girls.

'Very well, then, listen.

"Miss Pauline Atherton.

'Dear Madam.—Your very excellent old English Christmas pudding'—

'Oh, Polly!' shouted both girls.

Polly began again, remorselessly.

"Your very excellent, old English Christmas pudding was submitted to the members of the Board of Management who dined at the Exchange yesterday, and it was pronounced superior to anything which we have received in this line. We have especially desired a pudding of this kind for which there is a great demand at the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. We are, therefore, authorized to send you an order for as many as you can furnish during the weeks preceding Christmas and New Year's."

'Oh, Polly!' interrupted Mabel, 'how did you ever happen to think of old English Christmas pudding?'

'And how did you know how to make it?' said Madge.

'Why, it is my Christmas inheritance,' replied Polly. 'The recipe has been in the Anderson family for more than two hundred years. Every daughter of the house receives the precious legacy on her fourteenth birthday, and as my birthday comes on Christmas, Grandmother, who brought the recipe herself from England, calls it my "Christmas inheritance." I've helped her make the pud-

ding a good many times, for I am the only daughter of my father's house, you know!'

'Well, Madam Pauline Atherton,' said Madge, 'you will be very busy if you are going to fill this order for an unlimited number of puddings before Christmas.'

'I?' exclaimed Polly, 'I am not going to make the puddings. It is you and Mabel who will make them. You will put in raisins and currants and citron and candied orange peel and spices, and a few other things of which I shall tell you; and presto! when we open the pudding mold out will come gloves and laces, and ostrich feathers, and silk blouses, and opal pins, and belt buckles, and all those other things you were both sighing for when we were in town the other day.'

'But, Polly, we know that the success of your pudding is in the secret charm of its concoction, which has been bequeathed to you'—

'Are you not daughters of the house of Anderson?'—interrupted Polly. 'The inheritance is yours as well as mine!'

Thus it was that in the Ingraham household for the few weeks preceding Christmas, there was much stoning of raisins, beating of eggs, chopping of suet, mixing of spices and other ingredients which gave Polly's Christmas pudding its fine and distinctive flavor.

The result was what Polly's exuberant imagination had predicted, a goodly, and, moreover, a well-earned sum of money, which enabled Madge and Mabel to relieve their mother of a part of the burden of the winter's expenses, and an opening for a future income from the same source. As for Polly, she was made unspeakably happy on her arrival at home, to find among her Christmas packages the three rejected 'pasture lots' in water color, and the table covers embroidered with wild roses, buttercups, daisies, and forget-me-nots, which provincial Polly to this day cherishes as triumphs of decorative art.

I Pack My Trunk.

(Amos R. Wells, in 'Christian World'.)

What shall I pack up to carry
From the old year to the new?
I'll leave out the frets that harry,
Thoughts unjust, and doubts untrue.

Angry words—ah, how I rue them!
Selfish deeds and choices blind—
Anyone is welcome to them!
I shall leave them all behind.

Plans? the trunk would need be double,
Hopes? they'd burst the stoutest lid.
Sharp ambitions? Last year's stubble!
Take them, old year! Keep them hid!

All my fears shall be forsaken,
All my failures manifold;
Nothing gloomy shall be taken
To the new year from the old.

But I'll pack the sweet remembrance
Of dear friendship's least delight;
All my jokes—I'll carry them hence;
All my stores of fancies bright;

My contentment—would 'twere greater!
All the courage I possess;
All my trust—there's not much weight there!
All my faith, or more, or less;

All my tasks—I'll not abandon
One of these, my pride, my health;
Every trivial or grand one
Is a noble mine of wealth.

And I'll pack my choicest treasures,
Smiles I've seen and praises heard;
Memories of unselfish pleasures,
Cheery looks, the kindly word.

Ah, my riches silence cavil!
To my rags I bid adieu!
Like a Croesus I shall travel
From the old year to the new!