

of mountains which were known to postal authorities by a different designation.

When the train stopped and Mrs. Wynch prepared to leave the carriage Fan said nothing, but fixed a pair of earnest, questioning eyes upon her. They were not begging eyes, but only seemed to ask eagerly whether she was going to help her further or not. For, once out of her direst difficulty, Fan's spirit of adventure had returned, and she was ready to accept her position and start upon her solitary way once more.

"You come with me," said Mrs. Wynch; and Fan limped out after her, offering to carry her cloak, and not at all understanding the doubtful look that was cast on her by her benefactress at the request, nor the tightened grasp with which the good woman kept hold of her own property.

"I do want a cup of tea so badly," thought Mrs. Wynch, as she walked along the platform, "and the nearest workhouse is such a way off! It couldn't do much harm to take the creature in for an hour or two. I can watch her all the time, and never let her out of my sight."

They got into a cab, and as they travelled through London streets Fan asked timidly, "What is a workhouse?"

Mrs. Wynch's heart was more tender than she chose to acknowledge to herself, and this question gave her troublesome thoughts. How sad that the little one should ever have her inquiry answered by experience. If she belonged to honest folk she would probably be none the better for her sojourn in such a place.

"Do they give people work, and pay them for it?" continued Fan.

"Not exactly," said Mrs. Wynch; and then, as she looked at the small, anxious specimen of "people" wanting work, the lines of her mouth relaxed, and she added: "But you are coming home with me to have some breakfast first."

"Am I?" said Fan. "You are good." And then she dropped back into her corner with a sigh of exhaustion and contentment.

The cab stopped at a small bric-a-brac shop not more than ten minutes' walk from the street where Mr. Must did his business in old books. A few pieces of old china, brass, jewellery, and bronze stood in the narrow window, and Fan's eyes were caught by the twinkle of other beautiful things glimmering out of the twilight within the doorway. Mrs. Wynch groaned interiorly several times as she guided the little untidy waif of humanity across her threshold and into her cosy sitting-room where the charwoman was preparing her breakfast.

"Mamzelle had to go out, and left me in charge," began the latter. "But, lor! ma'am, wherever did you pick up such a h'object as that?"

Poor Fan's stockings were splashed with mud, and her worn and broken shoes were hanging off; she had on the old ragged frock which the gipsies made her wear when not dressed up for performance, and her curly hair was in a wild tangle round her face.

"It's a long story, Betsy; bring the tea," said Mrs. Wynch, querulously. "Let her have something to eat first, and then give her a good washing, will you?"

"Not so easy," grumbled Betsy. "They do kick and scratch when they are not used to it."

"Please may I have the washing first?" asked Fan, when they had reached the kitchen.

"Come now, that's not so bad," said Betsy; "indeed you shall." And Fan was literally put under the pump in the wash-house, with many exhortations from the charwoman not to holler or struggle, for it had got to be done.

But Fan was quiet and enjoyed her bath.

"It was delightful!" cried the child, when all was done. "I haven't had such a wash since they took me!" And she threw her arms round the women's neck and kissed her.

"Well, you are pretty behaved for a young tramp

like you," said Betsy, smiling, and began combing the tangled curls on the wet little head.

"But I'm not a tramp," said Fan, "not when I can help it. What would you have done if you had been stolen away from your home when you were a little girl? I want to earn money, and get back to my people."

"Well, I never!" exclaimed Betsy. "There now! If we had some decent clothes to put you into, you'd look only too good for what's a waitin' on you."

Fan sat at the fire wondering what it was that was waiting on her, till the warmth and quiet, and sense of refreshment overpowered her, and she fell from her chair, fast asleep. Then the two women stood over her pityingly, and carried her into the parlor, and laid her on the sofa, to sleep as long as she would.

When she opened her eyes again, it was quite dark, and two figures sat at the fire, in the little room, Mrs. Wynch and another person. While only half awake, Fan heard their voices talking.

"You see I am a poor woman," Mrs. Wynch was saying, "and no one could expect me to support a strange child, even for a month. If I keep her as long as that, I may be expected to keep her altogether. Not but what I agree with all you say about the workhouse. It's a bad place, if better could be had; and she do talk so much about wanting to work."

"Poor thing!" murmured the other voice, a very soft, cooing little voice.

"Still you see, Mamzelle, if these folks of hers in Ireland should never look to her, or if it should be all a lie—I must say again I can't undertake to provide for her."

Here a tinkle from the shop bell called the proprietress away to attend to a customer, and Mamzelle also rose from her chair, and casting a glance at the sofa, quietly left the room.

Fan opened her eyes wide, and thought busily over all she had heard. Was this workhouse, then, a bad place, and was she going to be shut up in it? Fan had heard at home about the poorhouse, and she supposed this workhouse must be something like it, only worse. Why should she go to it when she could earn money? Mrs. Wynch had called herself a poor woman, and perhaps this house and shop did not belong to her at all.

"But maybe she would take care of me," thought Fan, "if I could bring her money. I could sing in the streets, and work for her all the rest of the time."

The child lay and reflected, and at last a brilliant idea sprang up in her little mind. She rose from the sofa and peeped through the window of the door into the shop. Mrs. Wynch was busy with a gentleman, who was examining a jar. How pretty the lighted shop looked, with all the beautiful things around! Fan opened the other door into the hall, and listened. The house was dark and still. Her own little black cloak hung on a stand in the hall; she seized it, and threw it over her head. "As it is dark," she thought, "the people will not notice that I am not gaily dressed." Then she opened the hall door into the street softly, closed it as quietly, and flew down the street.

An hour later Mrs. Wynch, having wound up her business affairs for the evening, came back into the parlor, stepping lightly and wondering to herself, "My, how that tired child do sleep, to be sure!" She came to the sofa, bent over it, and felt for the little girl's head with her hand. There was no one there. The creature was gone.

"Perhaps Mamzelle has taken her upstairs," thought the worthy woman, after a moment of surprise, and she mounted the narrow staircase to the first floor, where her friendly lodger was to be found.

(To be continued.)

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