

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Strachwitz Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Gibbon Tschchow
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus Moltke
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht
Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz
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Patchwork A Story of 'The Plain People'

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*To my Mother and Father
this book is lovingly inscribed*



THIS—AND THIS!"

"OH, LOOK AT

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Patchwork

CHAPTER I

CALICO PATCHWORK

The gorgeous sunshine of a perfect June morning invited to the great outdoors. Exquisite perfume from myriad blossoms tempted lovers of nature to get away from cramped, man-made buildings, out under the blue roof of heaven, and revel in the lavish splendor of the day.

This call of the Junetide came loudly and insistently to a little girl as she sat in the sitting-room of a prosperous farmhouse in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and sewed gaily-colored pieces of red and green calico into patchwork.

"Ach, my!" she sighed, with all the dreariness which a ten-year-old is capable of feeling, "why must I patch when it's so nice out? I just ain't goin' to sew no more to-day!"

She rose, folded her work and laid it in her plaited rush sewing-basket. Then she stood for a moment, irresolute, and listened to the sounds issuing from the next room. She could hear her Aunt Maria bustle about the big kitchen. [14]

"Ach, I ain't afraid!"

The child opened the door and entered the kitchen, where the odor of boiling strawberry preserves proclaimed the cause of the aunt's activity.

Maria Metz was, at fifty, robust and comely, with black hair very slightly streaked with gray, cheeks that retained traces of the rosy coloring of her girlhood, and flashing black eyes meeting squarely the looks of all with whom she came in contact. She was a member of the Church of the Brethren and wore the quaint garb adopted by the women of that sect. Her dress of black calico was perfectly plain. The tight waist was half concealed by a long, pointed cape which fell over her shoulders and touched the waistline back and front,

where a full apron of blue and white checked gingham was tied securely. Her dark hair was parted and smoothly drawn under a cap of white lawn. She was a picturesque figure but totally unconscious of it, for the section of Pennsylvania in which she lived has been for generations the home of a multitude of women similarly garbed—members of the plain sects, as the Mennonites, Amish, Brethren in Christ, and Church of the Brethren, are commonly called in the communities in which they flourish.

As the child appeared in the doorway her aunt turned.

"So," the woman said pleasantly, "you worked vonderful quick to-day once, Phœbe. Why, you got your patches done soon—did you make little stitches like I told you?" [15]

"I ain't got 'em done!" The child stood erect, a defiant little figure, her blue eyes grown dark with the moment's tenseness. "I ain't goin' to sew no more when it's so nice out! I want to be out in the yard, that's what I want. I just hate this here patchin' to-day, that's what I do!"

Maria Metz carefully wiped the strawberry juice from her fingers, then she stood before the little girl like a veritable tower of amazement and strength.

"Phœbe," she said after a moment's struggle to control her wrath, "you ain't big enough nor old enough yet to tell me what you ain't goin' to do! How many patches did you make?"

"Three."

"And you know I said you shall make four every day still so you get the quilt done this summer yet and ready to quilt. You go and finish them."

"I don't want to." Phœbe shook her head stubbornly. "I want to play out in the yard."

"When you're done with the patches, not before! You know you must learn to sew. Why, Phœbe," the woman changed her tactics, "you used to like to sew still. When you was just five years old you cried for goods and needle and I pinned the patches on the little sewing-bird that belonged to Granny Metz still and screwed the bird on the table and you sewed that nice! And now you don't want

to do no more patches—how will you ever get your big chest full of nice quilts if you don't patch?"

But the child was too thoroughly possessed with the desire to be outdoors to be won by any pleading or [16] praise. She pulled savagely at the two long braids which hung over her shoulders and cried, "I don't want no quilts! I don't want no chests! I don't like red and green quilts, anyhow—never, never! I wish my pop would come in; he wouldn't make me sew patches, he"—she began to sob—"I wish, I just wish I had a mom! She wouldn't make me sew calico when—when I want to play."

Something in the utter unhappiness of the little girl, together with the words of yearning for the dead mother, filled the woman with a strange tenderness. Though she never allowed sentiment to sway her from doing what she considered her duty she did yield to its influence and spoke gently to the agitated child.

"I wish, too, your mom was here yet, Phœbe. But I guess if she was she'd want you to learn to sew. Ach, it's just that you like to be out, out all the time that makes you so contrary, I guess. You're like your pop, if you can just be out! Mebbe when you're old as I once and had your back near broke often as I had with hoein' and weed-in' and plantin' in the garden you'll be glad when you can set in the house and sew. Ach, now, stop your cryin' and go finish your patchin' and when you're done I'll leave you go in to Greenwald for me to the store and to Granny Hogendobler."

"Oh"—the child lifted her tear-stained face—"and dare I really go to Greenwald when I'm done?"

"Yes. I need some sugar yet and you dare order it. And you can get me some thread and then stop at Granny Hogendobler's and ask her to come out to-morrow and help with the strawberry jelly. I got so [17] much to make and it comes good to Granny if she gets away for a little change."

"Then I'll patch quick!" Phœbe said. The world was a good place again for the child as she went back to the sitting-room and resumed her sewing.

She was so eager to finish the unpleasant task that she forgot one of Aunt Maria's rules, as inexorable as the law of the Medes and

Persians—the door between the kitchen and the sitting-room *must* be closed.

"Here, Phoebe," the woman called sharply, "make that door shut! Abody'd think you was born in a sawmill! The strawberry smell gets all over the house."

Phoebe turned alertly and closed the door. Then she soliloquized, "I don't see why there has to be doors on the inside of houses. I like to smell the good things all over the house, but then it's Aunt Maria's boss, not me."

Maria Metz shook her head as she returned to her berries. "If it don't beat all and if I won't have my hands full yet with that girl 'fore she's growed up! That stubborn she is, like her pop—ach, like all of us Metz's, I guess. Anyhow, it ain't easy raising somebody else's child. If only her mom would have lived, and so young she was to die, too."

Her thoughts went back to the time when her brother Jacob brought to the old Metz farmhouse his gentle, sweet-faced bride. Then the joint persuasions of Jacob and his wife induced Maria Metz to continue her residence in the old homestead. She relieved the bride of all the brunt of manual labor of the farm and [18] in her capable way proved a worthy sister to the new mistress of the old Metz place. When, several years later, the gentle wife died and left Jacob the legacy of a helpless babe, it was Maria Metz who took up the task of mothering the motherless child. If she bungled at times in the performance of the mother's unfinished task it was not from lack of love, for she loved the fair little Phoebe with a passion that was almost abnormal, a passion which burned the more fiercely because there was seldom any outlet in demonstrative affection.

As soon as the child was old enough Aunt Maria began to teach her the doctrines of the plain church and to warn her against the evils of vanity, frivolity and all forms of worldliness.

Maria Metz was richly endowed with that admirable love of industry which is characteristic of the Pennsylvania Dutch. In accordance with her acceptance of the command, "Six days shalt thou labor," she swept, scrubbed, and toiled from early morning to evening with Herculean persistence. The farmhouse was spotless from cellar

to attic, the wooden walks and porches scrubbed clean and smooth. Flower beds, vegetable gardens and lawns were kept neat and without weeds. Aunt Maria was, as she expressed it, "not afraid of work." Naturally she considered it her duty to teach little Phœbe to be industrious, to sew neatly, to help with light tasks about the house and gardens.

Like many other good foster-mothers Maria Metz tried conscientiously to care for the child's spiritual and physical well-being, but in spite of her best en [19] deavors there were times when she despaired of the tremendous task she had undertaken. Phœbe's spirit tingled with the divine, poetic appreciation of all things beautiful. A vivid imagination carried the child into realms where the stolid aunt could not follow, realms of whose existence the older woman never dreamed.

But what troubled Maria Metz most was the child's frank avowal of vanity. Every new dress was a source of intense joy to Phœbe. Every new ribbon for her hair, no matter how narrow and dull of color, sent her face smiling. The golden hair, which sprang into long curls as Aunt Maria combed it, was invariably braided into two thick, tight braids, but there were always little wisps that curled about the ears and forehead. These wisps were at once the woman's despair and the child's freely expressed delight. However, through all the rigid discipline the little girl retained her natural buoyancy of childhood, the spontaneous interestedness, the cheerfulness and animation, which were a part of her goodly heritage.

That June morning the world was changed suddenly from a dismal vale of patchwork to a glorious garden of delight. She was still a child and the promised walk to Greenwald changed the entire world for her.

She paused once in her sewing to look about the sitting-room. "Ach, I vonder now why this room is so ugly to me to-day. I guess it's because it's so pretty out. Why, mostly always I think this is a vunderful nice room."

The sitting-room of the Metz farm was attractive [20] in its old-fashioned furnishing. It was large and well lighted. The gray rag carpet—woven from rags sewed by Aunt Maria and Phœbe—was decorated with wide stripes of green. Upon the carpet were spread

numerous rugs, some made of braided rags coiled into large circles, others were hooked rugs gaily ornamented with birds and flowers and graceful scroll designs. The low-backed chairs were painted dull green and each bore upon the four inch panel of its back a hand-painted floral design. On the haircloth sofa were several crazy-work cushions. Two deep rocking-chairs matched the antique low-backed chairs. A spindle-legged cherry table bore an old vase filled with pink and red straw flowers. The large square table, covered with a red and green cloth, held a glass lamp, the old Metz Bible, several hymn-books and the papers read in that home,—a weekly religious paper, the weekly town paper, and a well-known farm journal. A low walnut organ which Phœbe's mother brought to the farm and a tall walnut grandfather clock, the most cherished heirloom of the Metz family, occupied places of honor in the room. Not a single article of modern design could be found in the entire room, yet it was an interesting and habitable place. Most of the Metz furniture had stood in the old homestead for several generations and so long as any piece served its purpose and continued to look respectable Aunt Maria would have considered it gross extravagance, even a sacrilege, to discard it for one of newer design. She was satisfied with her house, her brother Jacob was well pleased with the way she kept it—it never occurred to her that Phœbe might ever desire new things, and least of all did she dream that the girl sometimes spent an interesting hour refurnishing, in imagination, the same old sitting-room.

"Yes," Phœbe was saying to herself, "sometimes this room is wonderful to me. Only I wished the organ was a piano, like the one Mary Warner got to play on. But, ach, I must hurry once and make this patch done. Funny thing patchin' is, cuttin' up big pieces of good calico in little ones and then sewin' them up in big ones again! I don't like it"—she spoke very softly for she knew her aunt disapproved of the habit of talking to one's self—"I don't like patchin' and I for certain don't like red and green quilts! I got one on my bed now and it hurts my eyes still in the morning when I get awake. I'd like a pretty blue and white one for my bed. Mebbe Aunt Maria will leave me make one when I get this one sewed. But now my patch is done and I dare to go to Greenwald. That's a vonderful nice walk."

A moment later she stood again in the big kitchen.

"See," she said, "now I got them all done. And little stitches, too, so nobody won't catch their toes in 'em when they sleep, like you used to tell me still when I first begun to sew."

The woman smiled. "Now you're a good girl, Phœbe. Put your patches away nice and you dare go to Greenwald."

"Where all shall I go?"

"Go first to Granny Hogendobler; that's right on the way to the store. You ask her to come out to- [22] morrow morning early if she wants to help with the berries."

"Dare I stay a little?"

"If you want. But don't you go bringin' any more slips of flowers to plant or any seeds. The flower beds are that full now abody can hardly get in to weed 'em still."

"All right, I won't. But I think it's nice to have lots and lots of flowers. When I have a garden once I'll have it full -- "

"Talk of that some other day," said her aunt. "Get ready now for town once. You go to the store and ask 'em to send out twenty pounds of granulated sugar. Jonas, one of the clerks, comes out this way still when he goes home and he can just as good fetch it along on his home road. Your pop is too busy to hitch up and go in for it and I have no time neither to-day and I want it early in the morning, and what I have is almost all. And then you can buy three spools of white thread number fifty. And when you're done you dare look around a little in the store if you don't touch nothing. On the home road you better stop in the post-office and ask if there's anything. Nobody was in yesterday."

"All right -- and -- Aunt Maria, dare I wear my hat?"

"Ach, no. Abody don't wear Sunday clothes on a Wednesday just to go to Greenwald to the store. Only when you go to Lancaster and on a Sunday you wear your hat. You're dressed good enough; just get your sunbonnet, for it's sunny on the road." [23]

Phœbe took a small ruffled sunbonnet of blue checked gingham from a hook behind the kitchen door and pressed it lightly on her head.

"Ach, bonnets are vonderful hot things!" she exclaimed. "A nice parasol like Mary Warner's got would be lots nicer. Where's the money?" she asked as she saw a shadow of displeasure on her aunt's face.

"Here it is, enough for the sugar and the thread. Don't lose the pocketbook, and be sure to count the change so they don't make no mistake."

"Yes."

"And don't touch things in the store."

"No." The child walked to the door, impatient to be off.

"And be careful crossin' over the streets. If a horse comes, or a bicycle, wait till it's past, or an automobile — —"

"Ach, yes, I'll be careful," Phœbe answered.

A moment later she went down the boardwalk that led through the yard to the little green gate at the country road. There she paused and looked back at the farm with its old-fashioned house, her birthplace and home.

The Metz homestead, erected in the days of home-grown flax and spinning-wheels, was plain and unpretentious. Built of gray, rough-hewn quarry stone it hid like a demure Quakeress behind tall ever-green trees whose branches touched and interlaced in so many places that the traveler on the country road caught but mere glimpses of the big gray house. [24]

The old home stood facing the road that led northward to the little town of Greenwald. Southward the road curved and wound itself about a steep hill, sent its branches right and left to numerous farms while it, still twisting and turning, went on to the nearest city, Lancaster, ten miles distant.

The Metz farm was just outside the southern limits of the town of Greenwald. The spacious red barn stood on the very bank of Chicques Creek, the boundary line.

"It's awful pretty here to-day," Phœbe said aloud as she looked from the house with its sheltering trees to the flower garden with its roses, larkspur and other old-fashioned flowers, then to the back-

ground of undulating fields and hills. "It's just vonderful pretty here to-day. But, ach, I guess it's pretty most anywheres on a day like this—but not in the house. Ugh, that patchin'! I want to forget it."

As she closed the gate and entered the country road she caught sight of a familiar figure just ahead.

"Hello," she called. "Wait once, David! Is that you?"

"No, it ain't me, it's my shadow!" came the answer as a boy, several years older than Phœbe, turned and waited for her.

"Ach, David Eby," she giggled, "you're just like Aunt Maria says still you are—always cuttin' up and talkin' so abody don't know if you mean it or what. Goin' in to town, too, once?"

"Um-uh. Say, Phœbe, you want a rose to pin [25] on?" he asked, turning to her with a pink damask rose.

"Why, be sure I do! I just like them roses vonderful much. We got 'em too, big bushes of 'em, but Aunt Maria won't let me pull none off. Where'd you get yourn?"

"We got lots. Mom lets me pull off all I want. You pin it on and be decorated for Greenwald. Where all you going, Phœbe?"

"And I say thanks, too, David, for the rose," she said as she pinned the rose to her dress. "Um, it smells good! Where am I goin'?" she remembered his question. "Why, to the store and to Gran-y Hogendobler and the post-office — —"

"Jimminy Crickets!" The boy stood still. "That's where I'm to go! Me and mom both forgot about it. Mom wants a money order and said I'm to get it the first time I go to town and here I am without the money. It's home up the hill again for me."

"Ach, David, don't you know that it's vonderful bad luck to go back for something when you got started once?"

The boy laughed. "It *is* bad luck to have to climb that hill again. But mom'll say what I ain't got in my head I got to have in my feet. They're big enough to hold a lot, too, Phœbe, ain't they?"

She giggled, then laughed merrily. "Ach," she said, "you say funny things. You just make me laugh all the time. But it's mean, now, that you are so dumb to forget and have to go back. I thought [26]

I'd have nice company all the ways in, but mebbe I'll see you in Greenwald."

"Mebbe. Goo'bye," said the boy and turned to the hill again.

Phoebe stood a moment and looked after him. "My," she said to herself, "but David Eby is a vonderful nice boy!" Then she started down the road, a quaint, interesting little figure in her brown chambray dress with its full, gathered skirt and its short, plain waist. But the face that looked out from the blue sunbonnet was even more interesting. The blue eyes, golden hair and fair coloring of the cheeks held promise of an abiding beauty, but more than mere beauty was bounded by the ruffled sunbonnet. There was an eagerness of expression, an alert understanding in the deep eyes, a tender fluttering of the long lashes, an ever varying animation in the child face, as though she were standing on tiptoe to catch all the sunshine and glory of the great, beautiful world about her.

Phoebe went decorously down the road, across the wooden bridge over the Chicques, then she began to skip. Her full skirt fluttered in the light wind, her sunbonnet slipped back from her head and flapped as she hopped along the half mile stretch of country road bordered by green fields and meadows.

"There's no houses here so I dare skip," she panted gleefully. "Aunt Maria don't think it looks nice for girls to skip, but I like to do it. I could just skip and skip and skip — —"

She stopped suddenly. In a meadow to her right a tangle of bulrushes edged a small pond and, perched [27] on a swaying reed, a red-winged blackbird was calling his clear, "Conqueree, conqueree."

"Oh, you pretty thing!" Phoebe cried as she leaned on the fence and watched the bird. "You're just the prettiest thing with them red and yellow spots on your wings. And you ain't afraid of me, not a bit. I guess mebbe you know you got wings and I ain't. Such pretty wings you got, too, and the rest of you is all black as coal. Mebbe God made you black all over like a crow and then got sorry for you and put some pretty spots on your wings. I wonder now" — her face sobered — "I just wonder now why Aunt Maria says still that it's bad to fix up pretty with curls and things like that and to wear fancy dresses. Why, many of the birds are vonderful fine in gay feathers