

**LITTLE
POLLY PRENTISS**

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Little Polly Prentiss by Elizabeth Lincoln Gould

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ELIZABETH LINCOLN GOULD

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THE KITTENS CLAMBERED TO HER SHOULDER

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3/19/26 '27

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ELIZABETH LINCOLN GOULD

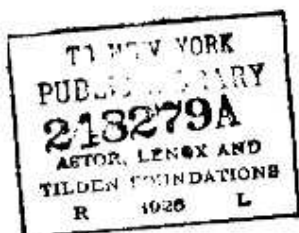
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Little Polly Frontias

CHAPTER II

GETTING READY

It seemed to Polly that no days before ever flew so fast as the ones between that rainy Thursday afternoon in April and the next Thursday morning. To be sure Polly was not accustomed to having new clothes especially made for her, and the hours spent in being fitted and re-fitted were just a waste of precious time, in her eyes.

Aunty Peebles was the best dressmaker at Manser Farm. Her fingers were old, and sometimes they trembled, but in her day she had been a famous seamstress and even now, she could hem a ruffle much better than Mrs. Manser.

"I don't know just what the reason is my work looks better than some," said Aunty Peebles flushing with delight one morning when Polly had said, "Oh what beeyu-tiful even, little bits of stitches you do make?"

"It's experience, that's all it is," said Mrs. Manser dejectedly, as she sat gathering the top

of a pink gingham sleeve, "if I'd been brought up to it instead of all the education I had that's no good to me now, I should be thankful, I'm sure."

"She'd never be thankful for anything," whispered Mrs. Ramsdell, who was ripping out bastings and constantly encountering knots which had been "machined in," and did not soothe her temper; "'taint in her, and you know it, Miss Peebles, well as I do."

"Mary," said Mrs. Manser fretfully, "don't sit there doing nothing. Let me see how you're getting on with that patchwork. My back's almost broken, and I've got chills. You go tell Father Manser to bring in some wood, and then you thread me up some needles, and fill the pin-cushion, and I've got some basting for you to do. What a looking square you've made of that last one! Well, I don't believe Miss Hetty'll keep you more than just the month, and all this sewing and these two nice ginghams will go for nothing."

"I'll try to behave so she'll keep me," said Polly with a flushed face, as she hurried out to Father Manser. She returned with him after a moment. He was a thin little man, who had a kind word for everybody, but spoke in a husky tone, which Mrs. Ramsdell claimed Mrs. Manser

had "frightened him into with her education when she first married him." However that might be, Father Manser never made a statement in his wife's presence without an appealing glance toward her for approval.

"Fill up the stove," said Mrs. Manser in her most dismal tone, "and see if you can take the chill off this room, Father. I presume, though, it's in my bones and won't come out; I notice the others are warm enough, for, of course, I'd have heard complaints if they weren't. Then you might as well oil the machine and get ready to run up the seams of those aprons if your mother ever gets them done."

"I declare it riles me to see a man doing woman's work," said Mrs. Ramsdell, tugging at a vicious knot, "and doing it all hodge-podge into the bargain!"

Father Manser, all unconscious of her unfavorable criticism, filled up the stove, and then set about oiling the sewing-machine. By the time he had finished, Grandma Manser had put the last careful basting in the last apron seam, and his work was ready for him.

"Now don' make your feet go so fast," cautioned Mrs. Mauser, "and stop off carefully, so

you won't break the needles the way you did yesterday ; and do keep by the bastings. Are your specs on ? No, they aren't. You put them on, this minute."

"Yes'm," said Father Manser meekly, and when his spectacles were astride his nose he was allowed to put his feet on the treadles and start on his first seam.

"He likes to run the machine," said Auntie Peebles to Polly. "Seems as if he thought he'd got his foot in the stirrups and was riding, bold and free.

There were many such times for Father Manser during this dressmaking 'season, and he enjoyed them, though he knew how much he would miss Polly when she had gone.

In spite of hours spent in the house instead of out in the sweet spring weather, in spite of unwonted tasks, and many serious rebukes from Mrs. Manser, the days flew by instead of dragging slowly along as little Polly wished they would.

"Auntie" Peebles, who had never had a real niece ; "Grandma" Manser, who had no grandchildren ; even poor Mrs. Ramsdell, with her sharp tongue, who had "known all sorts of trials and seen better days"—all were friends to Polly, the