

THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

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GRAHAM, N. C., THURSDAY, MAY 27, 1909.

NO. 15

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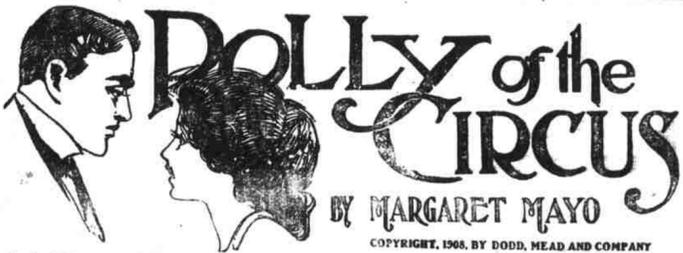
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Polly of the Circus

BY MARGARET MAYO

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"Sure 's back" answered Hasty good naturedly as he sank upon an empty box that had held some things for the social and pretended to wipe the perspiration from his forehead.

"Massa John done send yo' to de postoffice two hours ago," said Mandy as she took the letters and papers from his hand. "Five minutes is plenty ob time for any nigger to do dat job."

"I done been detained," Hasty drawled.

"Youse always 'tained when dar's any work a'goin' on," Mandy snarped at him.

"What's Miss Polly?" Hasty asked, ignoring Mandy's reference to work.

"Nebber yo' mind 'bout Miss Polly. She don't want yo'. Jes' yo' done fetch dat stepladder into de Sunday school room."

"But I wants her," Hasty insisted. "It's been on very 'ticular business what she ought to know 'bout."

"Business?" she repeated. "What kind ob business?"

"I got to fix de Sunday school room," said Hasty as he perceived her growing curiosity.

"You come heah, nigger!" Mandy called, determined that none of the village doings should escape her. "Out wid it!"

"Well, it's 'bout de circus," Hasty answered, seating himself again on the box. "De 's showin' in Wakefield to-night, an' next month day's comin' here."

"Dat same circus what Miss Polly used to be wid?" Mandy's eyes grew large with curiosity.

"De very same," and Hasty nodded mysteriously.

"How yo' know dat?" Mandy was uncertain whether to believe him.

"Cause da's a big red wagon down town wid de name ob de show painted on it. It's de advertisin' one what

spring on de sleeve. 'Tere was muen waiting when Willie passed de tag to little Jennie, de smallest girl in de crowd.

"I won't play no more," she sobbed, "cause it's always it."

To comfort her Polly began to sing an old circus song that the children had learned about her, and the little ones huddled about her in a circle to hear the wonderful "An Amberg" who used to "walk right into de lion's cage and put his head in de lion's mouth." The children were in a state of nerves that did credit to Polly as an entertainer when Hasty broke in upon the song.

"When yo' get a minute I want ter tell yo' somethin'."

"I have one right now." And, turning to the eager mites at her side, Polly told them to run along into the grove and that she'd come pretty soon to teach them a new game.

The youngsters went screaming and laughing on their way, and she breathed a sigh of relief as she threw herself down on the rustic seat that encircled the elm tree.

"What is it, Hasty?" she asked, suspecting that he was in trouble with Mandy.

"It's 'bout de circus," Hasty informed her bluntly.

"The circus?" She rose and crossed to him quickly.

"It's in Wakefield—an' nex' month here."

"Here?" Polly gasped.

"I thought yo'd want ter know," said Hasty, a little surprised at her lack of enthusiasm.

"Yes, of course." She turned away and pretended to look at the flowers.

"Don't you tell Mandy I been talkin' 'bout dat circus," said Hasty uneasily. He was beginning to fear that he had made a mistake, but before Polly could

"These are my do'ts," Polly confided as she pointed enthusiastically to warring pages of finely written notes.

"Youse what, chile?"

"The things I mustn't do or say."

"An' youse been loein' yosh beauty sleep for dem 'tings?" Mandy looked incredulous.

"I don't want Mr. John to see frownyed ob me," she said, with growing pride.

"Well, yo'd catch Mandy a-settin' up for."

"Oh, oh! What did I tell you, Mandy?" Polly pointed reproachfully to the reminder in the little red book. It was a fortunate thing that Willie interrupted the lesson at this point, for Mandy's temper was becoming very uncertain. The children had grown weary waiting for Polly, and Willie had been sent to fetch her. Polly offered but Willie won the day, and she was running away hand in hand with him when Douglas came out of the house.

"Wait a minute!" he called. "My how fine you look!" He turned Polly about and surveyed the new gown admiringly.

"He did see it! He did see it!" cried Polly gleefully.

"Of course I did. I always notice everything. You can't 'earn' Mandy!"

"Yo' snub an' improv'in' since Miss Polly come," Mandy granted.

"Come, Willie!" called the girl and ran out laughing through the trees.

"What's this?" Douglas took the



SHE HAD BEEN TAUGHT BY TOBY NEVER TO WHIMPER.

goes ahead wid all de pictures what lay pasted up."

"An' yo' been hangin' round dat wagon?"

"I done thought Miss Polly might want to know."

"See here, lasy nigger, don't yo' go puttin' no circus notions into Miss Polly's head. She don't care no more 'bout dem 'tings since her Uncle Toby done die. She done been satisfied right whar she an. Jes' yo' let her be."

"I ain't do no nothin'," Hasty protested.

"Nebber do do nothin'," growled Mandy. "Go 'long now an' get a-work."



"Top, you're it!" Polly cried.

Moss & o'clock an' dat Sunday school room ain't ready yet."

Hasty picked up the empty box and the stepladder and went out through the gate. He had barely disappeared when a peal of laughter was heard from the millside, and before Mandy could get out of the way the youngsters came tumbling down the path again.

"Lawsy, lawsy!" she gasped as Polly circled around her, dodging the children. "Youse cheeks is red as pinus honey."

"Yes; you're it!" Polly cried as she touched the widow's suborn hatred-off-



"LORDY SAKES! I DIDN'T KNOW DAT."

small book from Mandy's awkward fingers and began to read "Hens set—"

"Oh, den's jes' Miss Polly's 'do'ts,'" interrupted Mandy disgustedly.

"Her 'do'ts'?"

"She done been set—settin' up nights tryin' ter learn what yo' done to her," stammered Mandy.

"Dear little Polly," he murmured, then closed the book and put it into his pocket.

CHAPTER IX.

DOUGLAS was turning toward the house when the widow Willoughby came through the wicker gate to the left of the

parsonage, carrying bunting for the social. She was followed by Miss Perkins with a bucket of pickles, which Mandy promptly placed on top of Mrs. Elverson's ice cream. The women explained that they had come to put the finishing touches to the decorations. If anything was needed to increase Mandy's dislike of the widow it was this announcement.

Mrs. Willoughby was greatly worried because her children had not been home since the afternoon school session. Upon hearing that they were with Polly she plainly showed her displeasure, and Douglas dispatched Mandy for them. She saw that her implied distrust of Polly had annoyed him, and she was about to apologize when two of the deacons arrived on the scene, also carrying baskets and parcels for the way. He always led the way and always told Elverson what to think. They had been talking excitedly as they neared the parsonage, for Strong disapproved of the recent changes which the pastor had made in the church service. He and Douglas had clashed more than once since the baseball argument, and the deacon had realized more and more that he had met a will quite as strong as his own. His failure to bend the parson to his way of thinking was making him irritable and taking his mind from his business.

"Can you beat that!" he would exclaim as he turned away from some disagreement with Douglas, his temper ruffled for the day.

Polly was utterly unconscious of the unfriendly glances cast in her direction as she came running into the garden leading the widow's two children.

She nodded gayly to Julia Strong, who was coming through the gate, then hurried to Mrs. Willoughby, begging that the children be allowed to remain a little longer. She was making up a new game, she said, and needed Willie and Jennie for the set.

"My children do not play in promiscuous games," said the widow firmly.

"Oh, but this isn't pro-pro-pro—"

Polly stammered. "It's a new game. You put two here, and two here, and—"

"I don't care to know," the widow turned away and pretended to talk to Julia.

"Oh!" gasped Polly, stunned by the widow's refusal.

She stood with bowed head in the center of the circle. The blood drew from her cheeks; then she turned to go. Douglas stepped quickly to her side.

"Wait a minute," he said. She paused. All eyes were turned upon them. "Is this a game that grownups can play?"

"Why, yes, of course."

"Good! Then I'll make up your set. I need a little amusement just now. Excuse me," he added, turning to the deacons. Then he ran with her out through the trees.

The deacons and the women stared at each other, aghast.

"Well, what do you think of that?" said Mrs. Willoughby as the flying skirts of the girl and the black figure of the man disappeared up the path.

"I think it's scandalous, if you are talking to me," said Miss Perkins.

"The idea of a full grown parson a-runnin' off to play children's games with a circus ridin' girl!"

"She isn't such a child," sneered Julia.

"It's enough to make folks talk," put in Mrs. Willoughby, with a sly look at the deacons.

"An' me awaitin' to discuss the new church service," bellowed Strong.

"And me awaitin' to give him Mrs. Elverson's message," piped Elverson.

"The church bore all this in silence so long as dat girl was sick," snapped Miss Perkins. "But now she's perfectly well and still a-hangin' on. No wonder folks are talking."

"Who's talkin'?" thundered Strong.

"Didn't you know?" stammered Mrs. Willoughby, not knowing herself nor

page. The little deacon at his side coughed nervously. Strong's pent-up wrath exploded. "Why didn't you tell me, Elverson, that people was a-talkin'?" he roared in the frightened man's ear.

Elverson sputtered and stammered, but nothing definite came of the sounds; so Strong again turned to Miss Perkins:

"What is goin' on?" he demanded.

The spinner shrugged her shoulders and lifted her eyes heavenward, knowing that nothing could soadden the deacon as this mysterious inference of things too terrible to mention. She was right. Strong uttered a desperate "Bah!" and began pacing up and down the garden with reckless strides.

Mrs. Willoughby watched him with secret delight, and when he came to a halt she wriggled to his side with smirking sweetness.

"What could folks say?" she asked.

"A minister and a young circus girl livin' here like this with no one to—"

She found no words at this point, and Strong, now thoroughly roused, declared that the congregation should have no further cause for gossip and went out quickly in search of Douglas.

When Strong was gone Elverson looked at the set faces of the women and attempted a weak apology for the pastor. "I dare say the young man was very lonely—very—before she came."

"Lonely?" snapped Miss Perkins. "Well, if he was lonely I didn't know it."

The deacon excused himself nervously and went to join Strong.

The women gathered up their bunnings and retired with bland smiles to the Sunday school room, feeling that they had accomplished enough for the time being.

Strong and Elverson crossed the yard, still in search of the pastor. They turned at the sound of fluttering leaves and beheld Douglas, hatless, tearing down the path. Strong called to him, but Douglas darted quickly behind the hedge.

The deacons looked at one another in speechless astonishment. Presently the silence was broken by the distant voice of Polly counting from one to a hundred. The secret was out! The pastor, a leader of the church, was playing hide and seek!

"Mr. Douglas!" shouted Strong when his breath had returned.

"Hush, hush!" whispered Douglas, looking over the hedge. He peeped cautiously about him, then came toward the men with a sigh of relief.

"It's all right. She has gone the other way."

"It'll be a good thing for you if she never comes back," said Strong, and Douglas's quick ear caught an unpleasant meaning in his tone.

"What's that?" the pastor asked in a low, steady voice.

"We don't like some of the things that are goin' on here, and I want to talk to you about 'em."

"Very well, but see if you can't talk in a lower key."

"Never mind about the key!" shouted Strong angrily.

"But I do mind." Something in his eyes made the deacon lower his voice.

"We want to know how much longer that girl is goin' to stay here."

"Indeed! And why?" The color was leaving Douglas's face and his jaw was becoming very square.

"Because she's been here long enough."

"I don't agree with you there."

"Well, it don't make no difference whether you do or not. She's got to go."

"Go?" echoed Douglas.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

New Jersey Liquor Dealers to Take Down Their Signs.

Jersey City Dispatch.

By July 4 next there will have been removed from the exterior of every saloon, restaurant and hotel in New Jersey the hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of signs advertising various makes of beer and ale and brands of whiskey and other liquors, in compliance with a law passed at the recent session of the New Jersey Legislature.

In Trenton, while the bill was under consideration by the Legislature it was freely said the brewers were behind the bill. The retail liquor interests were wildly opposed to it, but no serious clash resulted.

The sign building had reached such a point, owing to the competition among brewers and liquor dealers, as well as among retailers, that it meant an annual outlay of thousands of dollars by the wholesale interests, which were invariably called upon to pay the bills. It is said the signs now in existence in New Jersey represents an expenditure of more than \$200,000 by the brewers. Having had the bill enacted into law, the New Jersey State Brewers' Association has now adopted resolutions declaring its intent to comply with it.

The National Meal.

London Chronicle.

It is not only in Scotland that breakfast is the characteristic national meal. Travel where you may, the first meal of the day is the one that strikes the foreign note, luncheon and dinner having gradually absorbed cosmopolitan qualities that are not even confined to hotels. But you never feel so much of an Englishman as when Switzerland gives you rolls and butter and honey, and nothing more, with your coffee; or when France makes this into one exquisite crumbling "croissant," with an inch or two from a yard loaf, or when Denmark adds cream instead of milk to the coffee and dangerous piece of pastry to the black bread and round white roll.

Yet our English breakfast became an institution only in the eighteenth century. Before that only royalty breakfasted of meats bread and cheese and ale. The commoner, such as Peppy, took merely a draught of buttered ale.

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