

Pollyanna: The Glad Book

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By
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SYNOPSIS

Pollyanna Whittier, daughter of a home missionary, on the death of her father, comes to make her home with her maternal aunt, Miss Polly Harrington, a wealthy, but stern and severe-faced woman of forty. Pollyanna has no welcome waiting for her, and only the bare little attic room at the top of the old mansion. Miss Polly plans to bring Pollyanna up with a strict adherence to "duty," Nancy and Mrs. Snow learn to play "the game." Miss Polly allows Pollyanna to adopt a stray dog and kitten and gives her a lovely room—all very much against her will. Pollyanna is now trying to find among her friends a real home for Jimmie Bean, a boy from a nearby orphanage, Miss Polly having refused to take him in. John Pendleton, one of Pollyanna's new friends breaks his leg, and Pollyanna finds a friend in Dr. Chilton. Pollyanna persuades Miss Polly to let her dress her hair, put a rose in it, and drape a lace shawl around her shoulders; but becomes angry when Dr. Chilton drives up and sees them. John Pendleton asks Pollyanna to make her home with him, and, being prompted by Nancy, Pollyanna seeks to bring about a reconciliation between Pendleton and Miss Polly, thinking they are estranged lovers. He tells her that it was her mother he loved, but Pollyanna, being convinced that her aunt loves and needs her, refuses to go to Pendleton Hall to live.

CHAPTER XXII—(Continued)

"OH, YES," nodded Pollyanna, emphatically. "He said he felt better right away, the first day he thought to count 'em. He said if God took the trouble to tell us eight hundred times to be glad and rejoice, He must want us to do it—some. And father felt ashamed that he hadn't done it more. After that, they got to be such a comfort to him, you know, when things went wrong; when the Ladies' Aiders got to fight—I mean, when they didn't agree about something," corrected Pollyanna, hastily. "Why, it was those texts, too, father said, that made him think of the game—he began with me on the crutches—but he said 'twas the rejoicing texts that started him on it."

"And what game might that be?" asked the minister.

"About finding something in everything to be glad about, you know. As I said, he began with me on the crutches." And once more Pollyanna told her story—this time to a man who listened with tender eyes and understanding ears.

A little later Pollyanna and the minister descended the hill, hand in hand. Pollyanna's face was radiant. Pollyanna loved to talk, and she had

been talking now for some time: there seemed to be so many, many things about the game, her father, and the old home life that the minister wanted to know.

At the foot of the hill their ways parted, and Pollyanna down one road, and the minister down another, walked alone.

In the Rev. Paul Ford's study that evening the minister sat thinking. Near him on the desk lay a few loose sheets of paper—his sermon notes. Under the suspended pencil in his fingers lay other sheets of paper, blank—his sermon to be. But the minister was not thinking either of what he had written, or of what he intended to write. In his imagination he was far away in a little Western town with a missionary minister who was poor, sick, worried, and almost alone in the world—but who was poring over the Bible to find how many times his Lord and Master had told him to "rejoice and be glad."

After a time, with a long sigh, the Rev. Paul Ford roused himself, came back from the far Western town, and adjusted the sheets of paper under his hand.

"Matthew twenty-third; 13—14 and 23," he wrote; then, with a gesture of impatience, he dropped his pencil and pulled toward him a magazine left on the desk by his wife a few minutes before. Listlessly his tired eyes turned from paragraph to paragraph until these words arrested them:

"A father one day said to his son, Tom, who, he knew, had refused to fill his mother's woodbox that morning: 'Tom, I'm sure you'll be glad to go and bring in some wood for your mother.' And without a word Tom went. Why? Just because his father showed so plainly that he expected him to do the right thing. Suppose he had said: 'Tom, I overheard what you said to your mother this morning and I'm ashamed of you. Go at once and fill that woodbox! I'll warrant that woodbox would be empty yet, so far as Tom was concerned!'"

On and on read the minister—a word here, a line there, a paragraph

somewhere else.

"What men and women need is encouragement. Their natural resisting powers should be strengthened, not weakened. . . Instead of always harping on a man's faults, tell him of his virtues. Try to pull him out of his rut of bad habits. Hold up to him his better self, his real self that can dare and do and win out! . . . The influence of a beautiful, helpful, hopeful character is contagious, and may revolutionize a whole town. . . People radiate what is in their minds and in their hearts. If a man feels kindly and obliging, his neighbors will feel that way, too, before long. But if he scolds and scowls and criticises—his neighbors will return scowl for scowl, and add interest! . . . When you look for the bad, expecting it, you will get it. When you know you will find the good—you will get that. . . Tell your son Tom you know he'll be glad to fill that woodbox—then watch him start, alert and interested!"

The minister dropped the paper and lifted his chin. In a moment he was on his feet, tramping the narrow room back and forth, back and forth. Later, some time later, he drew a long breath, and dropped himself in the chair at his desk.

"God helping me, I'll do it!" he cried softly. "I'll tell all my Toms I know they'll be glad to fill that woodbox! I'll give them work to do, and I'll make them so full of the very joy of doing it that they won't have time to look at their neighbors' woodboxes!" And he picked up his sermon notes, tore straight through the sheets, and cast them from him, so that on one side of his chair lay "But woe unto you," and the other, "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" while across the smooth white paper before him his pencil fairly flew—after first drawing one black line through "Matthew twenty-third; 13—14 and 23."

Thus it happened that the Rev. Paul Ford's sermon the next Sunday was a veritable bugle-call to the best that was in every man and woman and child that heard it; and its text was one of Pollyanna's shining eight hundred:

"Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart."

CHAPTER XXIII

An Accident

AT MRS. SNOW'S request, Pollyanna went one day to Dr. Chilton's office to get the name of a medicine which Mrs. Snow had forgotten. As it chanced, Pollyanna had never before seen the inside of Dr. Chilton's office.

"I've never been to your home before! This is your home, isn't it?" she said, looking interestedly about her.

The doctor smiled a little sadly.

"Yes—such as 'tis," he answered, as he wrote something on the pad of paper in his hand; "but it's a pretty poor apology for a home, Pollyanna. They're just rooms, that's all—not a home."

Pollyanna nodded her head wisely. Her eyes glowed with sympathetic understanding.

"I know. It takes a woman's hand and heart or a child's presence to make a home," she said.

"Eh?" The doctor wheeled about abruptly.

"Mr. Pendleton told me," nodded Pollyanna, again; "about the woman's hand and heart, or the child's presence, you know. Why don't you get a woman's hand and heart, Dr. Chilton? Or maybe you'd take Jimmy Bean—if Mr. Pendleton doesn't want him."

Dr. Chilton laughed a little constrainedly.

"So Mr. Pendleton says it takes a woman's hand and heart to make a home, does he?" he asked evasively.

"Yes. He says his is just a house, too. Why don't you, Dr. Chilton?"

"Why don't I—what?" The doctor had turned back to his desk.

"Get a woman's hand and heart. Oh—and I forgot." Pollyanna's face

showed suddenly a painful color. "I suppose I ought to tell you. It wasn't Aunt Polly that Mr. Pendleton loved long ago; and so we—we aren't going there to live. You see, I told you it was—but I made a mistake. I hope you didn't tell any one," she finished anxiously.

"No—I didn't tell anyone, Pollyanna," replied the doctor, a little queerly.

"Oh, that's all right, then," sighed Pollyanna in relief. "You see you're the only one I told, and I thought Mr. Pendleton looked sort of funny when I said I'd told you."

"Did he?" The doctor's lips twitched.

"Yes. And of course he wouldn't want many people to know it—when 'twasn't true. But why don't you get a woman's hand and heart, Dr. Chilton?"

There was a moment's silence; then very gravely the doctor said:

"They're not always to be had for the asking, little girl."

Pollyanna frowned thoughtfully.

"But I should think you could get 'em," she argued. The flattering emphasis was unmistakable.

"Thank you," laughed the doctor, with unlifted eyebrows. Then, gravely again: "I'm afraid some of your older sisters would not be quite so confident. At least, they—they haven't shown themselves to be so—obliging," he observed.

Pollyanna frowned again. Then her eyes widened in surprise.

"Why, Dr. Chilton, you don't mean—you didn't try to get somebody's hand and heart once, like Mr. Pendleton, and—couldn't, did you?"

The doctor got to his feet a little abruptly.

"There, there, Pollyanna, never mind about that now. Don't let other people's troubles worry your little head. Suppose you run back now to Mrs. Snow. I've written down the name of the medicine and the directions how she is to take it. Was there anything else?"

Pollyanna shook her head.

"No, sir; thank you, sir," she murmured soberly, as she turned toward the door. From the little hallway she called back, her face suddenly alight; "Anyhow, I'm glad 'twasn't my mother's hand and heart that you wanted and couldn't get, Dr. Chilton. Good-bye!"

It was on the last day of October that the accident occurred. Pollyanna, hurrying home from school, crossed the road at an apparently safe distance in front of a swiftly approaching motor car.

Just what happened no one could seem to tell afterward. Neither was there anyone found who could tell why it happened or who was to blame that it did happen. Pollyanna, however, at five o'clock, was borne limp and unconscious, into the little room that was so dear to her. There, by a white-faced Aunt Polly and a weeping Nancy she was undressed tenderly and put to bed, while from the village, hastily summoned by telephone, Dr. Warren was hurrying as fast as another motor car could bring him.

"And ye didn't need ter more'n look at her aunt's face," Nancy was sobbing to Old Tom in the garden, after the doctor had arrived and was closeted in the hushed room; "ye didn't need ter more'n look at her aunt's face ter see that 'twasn't no duty that was eatin' her. Yer hands don't shake, and yer eyes don't look as if ye was tryin' ter hold back the Angel o' death himself, when you're jest doin' yer duty, Mr. Tom—they don't, they don't!"

"Is she hurt—bad?" The old man's voice shook.

"There ain't no tellin'," sobbed Nancy. "She lay back that white an' still she might easy be dead; but Miss Polly said she wa'n't dead—an' Miss Polly had oughter know, if any one would—she kept up such a listenin' an' a feelin' for her heartbeats an' her breath!"

(Continued next week)

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