

[Continued] CHAPTER XII.

NELY days followed Polly's desertion of the parsonage. Mandy went about her duties very quietly, feeling that the little comments which once amused the pastor had now become an interruption to thoughts in which she had no part, He would sit for hours with his head in his hands, taking no notice of what passed before him. She tried to think of new dishes to tempt his appetite and shook her head sadly as she bore the untasted food back to the kitchen

She sometimes found a portfolio of drawings lying open upon his study ta-She remembered the zeal with which he had planned to remodel the church and parsonage when he first came to them, how his enthusiasm had gradually died for lack of encouragement and how he had at last put his books in a cupboard, where they grew dusty from long neglect. She marveled at their reappearance now, but something in his set, faraway look made her afraid to inquire. Thus she went on from day to day, growing more impatient with Hasty and more silent with the pastor.

Mandy needed humor and companionship to oil the wheels of her humdrum life. There was no more laughter in the house, and she began to droop.

Polly had been away from the parson age a month when the complacency of the village was again upset by the arrival of the "Great American Circus."

There were many callers at the parsonage that day, for speculation was now at fever heat about the pastor. "Will he try to see her?" "Has he for-gotten her?" and "What did he ever find in her?" were a few of the many questions that the women were asking each other. Now that the cause of their envy was removed they would gladly have reinstated the pastor as their idol, for, like all truly feminine souls, they could not bear to see a man unhappy without wishing to comfort him, nor happy unless they were the direct cause of his state. "How dare any man be happy without me?" has been the cry of each woman since Eve was created to mate with Adam.

Douglas had held himself more and more aloof from the day of Polly's disappearance. He expressed no opinion about the deacons or their recent disapproval of him. He avoided meeting them oftener than duty required, and Strong felt so uncomfortable and tongue tied in his presence that he, too, was glad to make their talks as few as possible."

Nothing was said about the pastor's plans for the future or about his continued connection with the church, and the inquisitive sisterhood was on the point of exploding from an overaccumulation of unanswered questions.

He delivered his sarmons conscientiously, called upon his poor, listened to the sorrows, real and fancied, of his parishioners and shut himself up with his books or walked alone on the hill behind the church. - wiek

He had been absent all day when Mandy looked out on the circus lot for the dozenth time and saw that the afternoon performance was closing. It had driven her to desperation to learn

like a gemmen, comed out wild a whip in his hand an' says as how he's 'bliged to 'nounce anudder gal in Miss Polly's place. An' den he says as how de udder gal was jes' as good, an' den ever body look disappointed like, an' den out comes de udder gal on a boss an' do tricks, an' I ain't heard no more

'bout Miss Polly." "She's sick, dat's what I says," Mandy declared excitedly, "an' somebody's got to do somethin'!"

"I done all I knowed," drawled Hasty, fearing that Mandy was regretting her twenty-five cent investment.

"Go 'long out an' fix up dat 'ere kitchen fire," was Mandy's impatient "I got to keep dem vittels reply. warm for Massa John."

She wished to be alone, so that she could think of some way to get hold of Polly. "Dat baby faced mornin" glory done got Mandy all wobbly 'bout de heart," she declared to herself as she crossed to the window for a sight of the pastor.

It was nearly dark when she saw him coming slowly down the path from the hill. She lighted the study



"She's sick, dat's what I says." lamp, rearranged the cushions and tried to make the room look cheery for his entrance.

"I's 'fraid yo's mighty tired," she said

"Oh, no," answered Douglas absently "Mebbe yo'd like Mandy to be sarvin' your supper in here tonight. It's more cheerfuler."

He crossed to the window and looked out upon the circus lot. The flare of the torches and the red fire came up to meet his pale, tense face. "How like the picture of thirteen months he thought, and old Toby's words ago!' came back to him-"The show has got to go on."

He longed to have done with dreams and speculation, to feel something tangible, warm and real within his grasp. "I can't go on like this!" he cried. "I can't!" He turned from the window and walked hurrledly up and down the Indoors or out, he found no room. rest.

He threw himself in the armchair near the table and sat buried in thought. Mandy came softly into the room.

She was followed by Hasty, who car-ried a tray laden with things that good as a sick cat since she come back. ought to have tempted any man. She motioned for Hasty to put the tray on the table and then began arranging that Miss Polly was not in the parade that morning and to know that the the dishes. Hasty stole to the window pastor had made no effort to find out and peeped out at the tempting flare of red fire. When Douglas discovered the presence of his two "faithfuls" he was touched with momentary contrition. "Have you had a hard day with the new gravel walk?" he asked Hasty, remembering that he had been laying a fresh path to the Sunday school room. "Jes' yo' come eat yo' supper," Manan abomination to Mandy, so finally dy called to Douglas. "Don' yo' worry your head 'bout dat lazy husban' ob mine. He ain't goin' ter work 'nuff to hurt hisself." For an instant she had been tempted to let the pastor know how Hasty had gone to the cir-She was anxiously waiting for him cus and seen nothing of Polly, but her when Deacon Strong knocked at the motherly instinct won the day, and motherly instinct won the day, and she urged him to eat before disturbing him with her own anxieties. It was no use. He only toxed with his food; he was clearly ill at ease and eager to

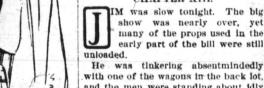
Hasty came down from the window and tried to put one arm about Mandy's shoulders.

"Leab me alone, yo' nigger!" she exclaimed, trying to cover her tears with a show of anger that she did not feel; then she rushed from the room, followed by Hasty.

The band was playing loudly. The din of the night performance was increasing: Douglas' nerves were strained to the point of breaking. He would not let himself go near the window. He stood by the side of the table, his fists clinched, and tried to beat back the impulse that was pulling him toward the door. Again and again he set his teeth.

It was uncertainty that gnawed at him so. Was she ill? Could she need him? Was she sorry for having left him? Would she be glad if he went for her and brought her back with him? He recalled the hysterical note in her behavior the day that she went away-how she had pleaded, only a few moments before Jim came, never to be separated from him. Had she really cared for Jim and for the old life? Why had she never written? Was she ashamed? Was she sorry for what she had done? What could it mean? He threw his hands above his head with a gesture of despair. A moment later he passed out into the night.

CHAPTER XIII.



and the men were standing about idly waiting for orders when Barker came out of the main tent and called to him sharply:

"Hey, there, Jim! What's your excuse tonight?" "Excuse for what?" Jim crossed

slowly to Barker. "The cook tent was started half an hour late, and the sideshow top ain't

foaded yet." "Your wagons is on the bum; that's what! No. 38 carries the cook tent,

an' the blacksmith has been tinkerin' with it all day. Ask him what shape it's in.' "You're always stallin'," was Bar-

ker's sullen complaint. "It's the wagons or the blacksmiths or anything but the truth. I know what's the matter, all right."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Jim sharply.

"I mean that all your time's took up a-carryin' and a-fetchin' for that girl what calls you 'Muvver Jim.' "

"What have you got to say about her?" Jim eyed him with a threatening look "I got a-plenty," said Barker as he turned to snap his whip at the small to

boys who had stolen into the back lot peek under the rear edge of the big top. "She's been about as much You saw her act last night."



looked at him blankly. "If she would only complain," he said to himself "If she would only get mad, anything anything to wake her." But she did not complain. She went through her daily routine very humbly and quietly. complain. She went through her She sometimes wondered how Jim could talk so much about her work but before she could answer the ques tion her mind drifted back to othe days, to a garden and flowers, and Jim stole away unmissed and left her with folded hand and wide, staring eyes gazing into the distance. The memory of these times made

Jim helpless tonight. He had gone on hoping from day to day that Barker might not notice the "let down" in her work, and now the blow had fallen How could he tell her? One of the acts came tumbling out

of the main tent. There was a moment's confusion as clowns, acrobats and animals passed each other on their way to and from the ring; then the lot cleared again, and Polly came slowly She looked from the dressing tent.

very different from the little gir whom Jim had led away from the parson's garden in a simple white frock one month before. Her thin, pensive face contrasted oddly with her glittering attire. Her hair was knotted high on her head and intertwined with flowers and jewels. Her slender neck seemed scarcely able to support its

cut bodice were ablaze with white

and colored stones. "What's on, Jim?" she asked. "The leap o' death.' You got plenty of time."

Polly's mind went back to the girl who answered that call a year ago Her spirit seemed very near tonight The band stopped playing. Barker made his grandiloquent announcement about the wonderful act about to be een, and her eyes wandered to the distant church steeple. The moonlight seemed to shun it tonight. It looked cold and grim and dark. She won dered whether the solemn bell that once called its flock to worship had become as mute as her own dead heart. She did not hear the whir of the great machine inside the tent as it plunged through sprce with its girl occupant. These things were a part of the daily routine, part of the strange, vague dream through which she must stum ble for the rest of her life.

Jim watched her in silence. Her face was turned from him. She had forgotten his presence.

"Star gazin', Poll?" he asked at length, dreading to disturb her reverle "I guess I was, Hm." She turned to

him with a little, forced smile. He

"You was changin' It," he answered savagely. "You was gettin' Jes' like them people. It was me what took you away an' spolled it all. You oughtn't come. What made you after you said you wouldn't?"

She did not answer. Strange things vere going through the mind of the slow witted Jim. He braced himself for a difficult question, "Will you answer me somethin' straight?" he asked.

"Why, of course," she said as she met his gaze.

"Do you love the parson, Poll?" She started. "Is that it?"

Her lids fluttered and closed; she caught her breath quickly, her lips apart, then looked far into the distance

"Yes, Jim, I'm afraid that's it." The little figure drooped, and she stood before him with lowered eyes, unarmed. Jim looked at her helplessly, then shook his big, stupid head.

"Ain't that h-1?" It seemed such a short time to Jim since he had picked her up, a cooing babe, at her dead mother's side. He watched the tender, averted face. Things had turned out so differently from what he had planned.

"An' he don't care about yo that?" he a ked after a pause. "No, not in that way." She w he don't care about you-like She was anx-

ious to defend the pastor from even the thought of such a thing. "He was good and kind always, but he didn't care that way. He's not like that." "I guess I'll have a talk with him," said Jim, and he turned to go.

"Talk!" she cried.

He stopped and looked at her in astonishment. It was the first time that he had ever heard that sharp note in her voice. Her tiny figure was stiffened with decision. Her eyes were blazing.

"If you ever dare to speak to himabout me, you'll never see me again." Jim was perplexed.

"I mean it, Jim. Eve made my choice, and I've come back to you. If you ever try to fix up things between him and me, I'll run away-really and truly away-and you'll never, never get me back.

He shuffled awkwardly to her side and reached apologetically for the little clinched fist. He held it in his big Jim caught her firmly by the wrist. rough hand, toying nervously with the tiny fingers.

"I wouldn't do nothin' that you wasn't a-wantin', Poll. I was just a-tryin' to help you, only F-I never seem to know how." She turned to him with tear dimmed eyes and rested her hands on his great,

broad shoulders, and he saw the place burden. Her short, full skirt and low! where he dweit in her heart.

here. First thing you know you'll be out all round. "Out?"

"Sure. You don't think I'm goin' to head my bill with a 'dead one.' do you?'

"I am not a 'dead one,' " she answer-ed excitedly. "I'm the best rider you've had since mother died. You've said so yourself."

"That was afore you got in with them church cranks. You talk about your mother! Why, she'd be ashamed to own you.

"She wouldn't!" cried Polly. Her eyes were flashing; her face was scarlet. The pride of hundreds of years of ancestry was quivering with indigna-tion. "I can ride as well as I ever could, and I'll do it too. I'll do it to-Elorrow."

"Tomorrow?" echoed Barker. "What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that I can't go into that ring tonight," she declared, "and I won't." She was desperate now and trading

upon a strength beyond her own. He looked at her with momentary indecision. She was a good rider, the best since her mother, as he had often told her. He could see this meant an He felt she would be on her issue. mettle tomorrow, as far as her work was concerned, if he let her alone tonight.

"All right," he said sullenly. "You can stay off tonight. I got the crowd in there anyway, and I got their money. I'll let Eloise do a turn on Barbarian, but tomorrow you'd better show me your old act."

"I'll show you!" she cried. "I'll show you!"

"Well, see that you do." He crossed into the ring

Polly stood where Barker had left her, white and tense. Jim came toward her from the direction of the wagons. He glanced at her uneasily. "What's he been a-sayin' to you?"

"He says I can't ride any more." Her lips closed tightly. She stared straight ahead of her. "He says I was no good to the people that took me in and I'm no use here."

"It's not so!" thundered Jim "No, it's not!" she cried. "I'll show

him, Jim! I'll show him-tomorrow!" She turned toward the dressing tent.

"Wait, Poll! You ain't ever goin' into the ring a-feelin' that way." Her eyes met his defiantly.

"What's the difference? What's the difference?" She wrenched her wrist quickly from him and ran into the dressing tent, laughing hysterically.

"An' I brung her back to it," mumbled Jim as he turned to give orders to the property men.



about her. For weeks both she and Hasty had hoped that the return of the circus might bring Polly back to them, but now it was nearly night and there had been no word from her. Why didn't she come running in to see them, as Mandy had felt so sure she would? Why had the pastor stayed away on the hills all day?

Unanswered questions were always she drew a quarter from the knotted gingham rag that held her small wad of savings and told Hasty to "go 'long to de show an' find out 'bout Miss Polly.'

23

door for the second time that afternoon

"Is Mr. Douglas back yet?" he asked.

"No, sah, he ain't," said Mandy very shortly. She felt that Strong and Elverson had been "a-tryin' to spy on de parson all day," and she resented their visits more than she usually did.

"What time are you expectin' him?" "I don't nebber spec' Massa Douglas till I sees him."

Strong grunted uncivilly and went window that he met Elverson in front zically, while Hasty, convinced that of the church.

"Dey sure am a-meanin' trouble," she mumbled.

The band had stopped playing; the

down the street. She opened the door and stood on the porch; the house eemed to suffocate her. What was keeping Hasty?

He came at last, but Mandy could tell from his gait that he brought unwelcome knews.

"Ain't she dar?" "She's a-trabbelin' wid 'em, Mandy, but she didn't done ride.

"See heah, Hasty Jones, is dat ere chile sick?"

"I don' rightly know," said Hasty. las, in an agony of suspense. "A great big man, what wored clothes "Dat's what I don' know, sah." buttle free.

be alone. She gave up trying to tempt his appetite and began to lead up in a roundabout way to the things which she wished to ask.

"Dar's quite some racket out dar in de lot tonight," she said. Douglas did not answer. After a moment she went on, "Hasty didn't work on no walk down the steps. She saw from the today." Douglas looked at her quiz-

for reasons of her own she was going to get him into trouble, was making lived 100,000 years ago, when life frantic motions. "He done gone ter de circus," she blurted out. Douglas' face beasts. To day the danger, as became suddenly grave. Mandy saw shown by A. W. Brown of Alexlast of the audience had straggled became suddenly grave. Mandy saw that she had touched an open wound. "I jes' couldn't stan' it, Massa John. I had ter find out 'bout dat angel chile." There was a pause. She felt that he was waiting for her to go on.

"She didn't done ride, today."

gemmen in de show didn't tell nobody | Colds, obstinate Conghs, and prewhy-jes' speaked 'bout de udder gal takin' her place."

"Yes," answered Jim doggedly. "Wasn't it punk? She didn't show at all this afternoon; said she was sick. And me with all them people inside what knowed her waltin' to see her!" "Give her a little time," Jim pleaded. "She ain't rode for a year."

"Time!" shouted Barker. "How much does she want? She's been back a month, and instead of bracin' up she's a-gettin' worse. There's only one thing for me to do."

"What's that?" asked Jim uneasily. "I'm goin' to call her, and call her hard."

"Look here, Barker," and Jim squared his shoulders as he looked steadily at the other man, "you're boss here, and I takes orders from you, but if I catches you abusin' Poll your bein' boss won't make no difference." "You can't bluff me!" shouted Barker.

"I ain't bluffin'. I'm only tellin' you," said Jim very quietly.

"Well, you tell her to get on to her job. If she don't, she quits; that's all." He hurried into the ring. Jim took one step to follow him.

then stopped and gazed at the ground with thoughtful eyes. He, too; had seen the change in Polly. He had tried to rouse her. It was no use. She had

Life 100,000 Years.

Scientists have found in a cave in Switzerland bones of men, who was in constant danger from wild ander, Me., is largely from deadly disease. "If it had not been for Dr. King's New Discovery, which cured me, I could not have lived, he writes, "suffering as I did from He looked up with the eyes of a a severe lung trouble and stubborn dumb, persecuted animal. "And de cough." To cure Sore Lungs, vent Pneumonia, it's the best med-"Why didn't she ride?" cried Doug-icine on earth. 50c and \$1.00. Guaranteed by all druggists. Trial

onged to threatened rebuke. "How you feelin' tonight?"

"I'm all right," she answered cheer fully.

"Anything you want?"

"Want?" She turned upon him with startled eyes. There was so much that she wanted that the mere mention of the word had opened a well of pain in her heart.

"I mean can I do anything for you?" "Oh, of course not." She remembered how little any one could do.

"What is it, Poll?" he begged, but she only turned away and shook her head with a sigh. He followed her with anxious eyes. "What made you cut out the show today? Was it be cause you didn't want to ride afore folks what knowed you-ride afore

him mebbe?" "Him?" Her face was white. Jin feared she might swoon. "You don' mean that he was"-

"Oh, no," he answered quickly, "o course not. Parsons don't come to places like this one. I was only figurin' that you didn't want other folks to see an' to tell him how you was rid in"." She did not answer.

"Was that it, Poll?" he urged. "I don't know." She stared into space "Was it?" "I guess it was," she said after a

long time. "I knowed it!" he cried. "I was a fool to 'a' brung you back! You don't belong with us no more." "Oh, don't, Jim! Don't! Don't make me feel I'm in the way here too!" "Here too?" He looked at her in as-onlshment. "You wasn't in his way, tonishment

was you, Poll?" "Yes, Jim." She saw his look of unbelief and continued hurriedly: "Oh, 1

tried not to be! I tried so hard. He used to read me verses out of a Bible about my way being his way and my people his people, but it isn't so, Jim. Your way is the way you are born, and your people are the people you are

born with, and you can't change it Jim, no matter how hatd you try."

"YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR MOTHER! WHY, SHE'D BE ASHAMED TO OWN YOU!

CHAPTER XIV. HE "leap of death" implements

were being carried from the ring, and Jim turned away to superintend their loading. Performers again rushed by each other on their way to and from the main tent.

Polly stood in the center of the lot. frowning and anxious. The mere mention of the pastor's name had made it seem impossibles for her to ride tonight. For hours she had been whipping herself up to the point of doing it, and now her courage failed her. She followed Barker as he came from

the ring. "Mr. Barker, please!" He turned upon her sharply. "Well, what is it now?"

"I want to ask you to let me off again tonight." She spoke in a short, jerky, desperate way.

the ring, with all them people inside of Rugless, Ky., "when all doctors what's paid their money because they knowed you?"

can't!"

"You're gettin' too tony!" Barker sneered. "That's the trouble with you. You ain't been good for nothin' since Salt Rheum, Corns. 25c.-Guaranyou was at that parson's house. You teed by all druggists. didn't star there, and rou're no use

Most of the "ITSI half props" were loaded, and some of the men were asleep under the wagons. The lot was clear. Suddenly he felt some one approaching from the back of the inclosure. ' He turned and found himself face to face with the stern, solitary figure of the pastor, wrapped in his long black cloak. The moonlight slipped through a' rift in the clouds and fell into a circle around them.

"What made you come here?" was all Jim said.

"I heard that Miss Polly didn't ride today. I was afraid she might be ill."

(Continued on page 8)

Tortured On A Horse.

"For ten years I couldn't ride a horse without being in tortue "What!" he shrieked. "Not go into from piles," writes L. S. Napier, and other remedies failed Buck-"That's it!" she cried. "I can't! I len's Arnica Salve cured me." Infallible for Piles, Burns, Scalds, Cuts, Boils, Fever Sores, Eczema,