

# POLLY of the CIRCUS

BY MARGARET MAYO

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(Continued.)

Synopsis Chapter I—Polly, a child of the circus, is brought up by Toby, a clown, and by a boss canvasser called "Muvver Jim." She learns to ride Bingo, a circus horse, and grows to womanhood knowing no life except that of the circus.

Chapter II—A church near the circus lot interests Polly. Jim reproves her for her reckless riding.

Chapter III—Polly urges Bingo to unprecedented speed and falls. Toby and Jim carry the injured girl to the parsonage nearby.

Chapter IV—The Rev. John Douglas, much to Deacon Elverson's disgust, takes Polly into the parsonage. Toby and "Muvver Jim" are received kindly by Douglas, who has placed Polly in charge of his colored servant, Mandy. Douglas promises to care for the girl until she is well.

Chapter V—When Polly becomes conscious she declares that she must rejoin the circus at once. "Are you a sky pilot?" she asks the minister. Her mother was killed riding a circus horse, and her father "got his'n in a lion's cage." The minister reads to her about Ruth and Naomi, and Polly says "I guess I'd like to hear you spiel."

Chapter VI—Douglas offends Deacon Strong by defending boys who play baseball on Sunday.

Chapter VII—Polly recovers her health, but is saddened by the death of Toby. Jim sends the news and promises to keep in touch with her.

Chapter VIII—Polly recovers from the blow dealt her by Toby's death. She has ceased using slang and is educating herself under Douglas' guidance. She endeavors to improve Mandy's grammar.

Chapter IX—Deacons Strong and Elverson reprove the pastor for harboring the circus girl. Douglas declares that he is merely doing his duty. Strong declares that the girl must go. Douglas defies him.

Chapter X—Douglas suggests to Polly that she go to a seminary. Her quotation "And Ruth said, 'Entreat me not to leave thee,'" reveals to both the fact that they love each other. Douglas takes her in his arms and tells her that she is never to leave him.

CHAPTER XI.

"I 's goin' into de Sunday school room to take off dat 'ere widow's finshin' touches," said Mandy as she came down the steps.

"All right!" called Douglas. "Take these with you. Perhaps they may help." He gathered up the gariands which Polly had left on the ground. His eyes were shining. He looked younger than Mandy had ever seen him.

Polly had turned her back at the sound of Mandy's voice and crossed to the elm tree, drying her tears of happiness and trying to control her newly awakened emotions. Douglas felt intuitively that she needed this moment for recovery, so he piled the leaves and gariands high in Mandy's arms, then ran into the house with the light step of a boy.

"I got the set—sit—settin' room all tidled up," said Mandy as she shot a sly glance at Polly.

"That's good," Polly answered, facing Mandy at last and dimpling and blushing guiltily.

"Mos' de sociable folks will mos' likely be hangin' roun' de parsonage tonight, 'stead ob stayin' in de Sunday school room, whar dey belongs. Las' time dat 'ere Widow Willoughby done set roun' all ebenin' a-tellin' de parson as how folks could jes' eat off'n her kitchen floor, an' I ups an' tells her as how folks could pick up a good squar' meal off'n Mandy's floor too. Guess she'll be mighty careful what she says afore Mandy tonight." She chuckled as she disappeared down the walk to the Sunday school room.

Polly stood motionless where Mandy had left her. She hardly knew which way to turn. She was happy, yet afraid. She felt like sinking upon her knees and begging God to be good to her, to help her. She who had once been so independent, so self-reliant, now felt the need of direction from above. She was no longer master of her own soul. Something had gone

from her, something that would never, never come again. While she hesitated Hasty came through the gate, looking anxiously over his shoulder.

"Well, Hasty?" she said, for it was apparent that Hasty had something important on his mind.

"It's de big one from de circus," he whispered excitedly.

"The big one?"

"You know—de one whar brung you."

"You don't mean?"—Polly's question was answered by Jim himself, who had followed Hasty quickly through the gate. Their arms were instantly about each other. Jim forgot Hasty and every one in the world except Polly, and neither of them noticed the horrified Miss Perkins and the Widow Willoughby, who had been crossing the yard on their way from the Sunday school room with Julia.

"You're just as big as ever," said Polly when she could let go of Jim long enough to look at him. "You haven't changed a bit."

"You've changed enough for both of us." He looked at the unfamiliar long skirts and the new way of doing her hair. "You're bigger, Poll, more grown-up like."

"Oh, Jim!" She glanced admiringly at the new brown suit, the rather startling tie and the neat little pony in Jim's buttonhole.

"The fellows said I'd have to slick up a bit if I was a-comin' to see you, so as not to make you ashamed of me. Do you like 'em?" he asked, looking down approvingly at his new brown clothes.

"Very much." For the first time Jim noticed the unfamiliar manner of her speech. He began to feel self-con-



"You mean that you ain't never comin' back?"

scious. A year ago she would have said "You bet!" He looked at her awkwardly. She hurried on: "Hasty told me you were showing in Wakefield. I knew you'd come to see me. How's Barker and all the boys?" She stopped with a catch in her throat and added more slowly, "I suppose everything's different now that Toby is gone."

"He'd 'a' liked to seen you afore he cashed in," Jim answered, "but maybe it was just as well he didn't. You'd hardly 'a' knowed him toward the last, he got so thin an' peeked like. He wasn't the same after we lost you—nobody was, not even Bingo."

"Have you still got Bingo?" she asked, through her tears.

"Yep, we got him," drawled Jim, "but he ain't much good no more. None of the other riders can get used to his gait like you was. There ain't nobody with the show what can touch you ridin'; there never will be. Say, mebbe you think Barker won't let out a yell when he sees you comin' back."

Jim was jubilant now, and he let out a little yell of his own at the mere thought of her return. He was too excited to notice the look on Polly's face. "Toby had a notion before he died that you was never a-comin' back, but I told him I'd change all that once I seen you, an' when Barker sent me over here today to look arter the advertisin' he said he guessed you'd had all you wanted o' church folks. Jes' you bring her along to Wakefield," he said, "an' tell her that her place is waitin' for her; an' I will too." He turned upon Polly with sudden decision. "Why, I feel jes' like pickin' you up in my arms an' carryin' you right off now."

"Wait, Jim!" She put one tiny hand on his arm to restrain him.

"I don't mean—not—today—mebbe," he stammered uncertainly, "but we'll be back here a-showin' next month."

"Don't look at me now," Polly answered as the doglike eyes searched her face, "because I have to say something that is going to hurt you, Jim."

"You're comin', ain't you, Poll?" The big face was wrinkled and careworn with trouble.

"No, Jim," she replied in a tone so low that he could scarcely hear her.

"You mean that you ain't never comin' back?" He tried to realize what such a decision might mean to him.

"No, Jim," she answered tenderly, for she dreaded the pain that she must cause the great, good-hearted fellow. "You mustn't care like that," she pleaded, seeing the blank desolation that had come into his face. "It isn't because I don't love you just the same, and it was good of Barker to keep my place for me, but I can't go back."

He turned away. She clung to the rough brown sleeve. "Why, Jim, when I lie in my little room up there at night"—she glanced toward the window above them—"and everything is peaceful and still I think how it used to be in the old days, the awful noise and the rush of it all, the cheerless wagons, the mob in the tent, the ring with its blazing lights, the whirling round and round on Bingo and the hoops, always the hoops, till my head got dizzy and my eyes all dim, and then the hurry after the show, and the heat and the dust or the mud and the rain, and the rumble of the wheels in the plains at night, and the shrieks of the animals, and then the parade, the awful, awful parade, and I riding through the streets in tights, Jim-tights!" She covered her face to shut out the memory. "I couldn't go back to it, Jim! I just couldn't!" She turned away, her face still hidden in her hands. He looked at her a long while in silence.

"I didn't know how you'd come to feel about it," he said doggedly.

"You aren't angry, Jim?" She turned to him anxiously, her eyes pleading for his forgiveness.

"Angry?" he echoed, almost bitterly. "I guess it couldn't ever come to that between you an' me. I'll be all right."

He shrugged his great shoulders. "It's just kinder sudden, that's all. You see, I never figured on givin' you up, an' when you said you wasn't comin' back it kinder seemed as though I couldn't see nothin' all my life but long, dusty roads an' nobody in 'em. But it's all right now, an' I'll just be gettin' along to the wagon."

(To be continued.)

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Mr. Gilbertson is now engaged in preparing plans for the proposed improvement of the Southern Pacific's park grounds between the passenger and freight stations in Ashland and surrounding the local exhibit building. He proposes the planting of Oregon evergreen trees, fir, cedar, laurel, etc., to mark the outlines of the park, with a liberal planting of the choice roses that bloom so luxuriantly and beautiful in this favored climate, with shrubbery and grass to make a combination that will be not only attractive but educational to travelers in the way of showing native trees and flowers.

The Key Under the Door.

"It is customary for the back door key to be put halfway under the door so that I can reach it when coming off duty late at night," remarked an artist to a London Tit-Bits writer. "The other morning at breakfast my landlady said to me, 'Do you know, I had an awful fright last night. I put the key halfway under the door, as usual, when, to my horror, I saw it drawn slowly out of sight. I of course thought some one had got the key and would unlock the door and come in, so I quickly bolted it and shouted through the keyhole, 'My word, if you don't bring that key back!' Not daring to retire to rest, I sat quietly listening for a time. Then I got a table knife and pushed it under the door to see if the key had really been taken right away and to my surprise drew the key back again. So, very cautiously, I unlocked and unbolted the door, looked out and found not a burglar, but our own wicked cat, who, while sitting on the doorstep and seeing the key pushed under the door, must have drawn the key out of sight with her paws, thinking I was playing with her.'"

And All With Company There.

"Now, children," said the mother as a whole roomful of company had come in, "suppose you run off and play by yourselves."

"All right, mother," replied Edith. "Can we go up and play Hamlet and Ophelia?"

"Certainly," smiled the mother, while her guests looked on at the tableau.

"Goody," replied Edith. Then, turning to her sister, she said, "Now, Maude, you run up to mamma's room and get all her false hair that you can find."—Ladies' Home Journal.

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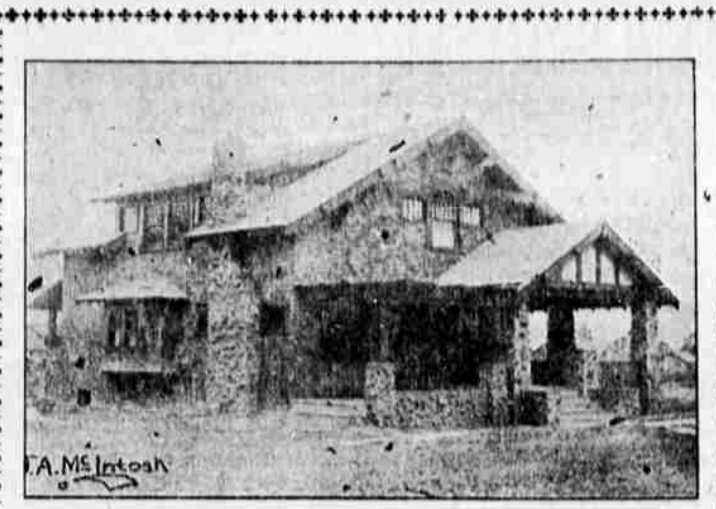
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