

A Memory

"And though a thousand read these lines,
That truth shall understand..."

Polly's Pies

The clock struck three, and like a
punctual fate, Polly, slow and
dainty, came to the kitchen...

In and out traveled the busy shovels
till the inner depth, where yet a red
glow lingered, and Polly, making a fan
of her apron, stood before the table...

They made a pleasant picture, that
mother and daughter, as they stood
side by side before the long ironing-table...

"Yes," said Polly, half aloud, "that
will be best for the Bulger children, I
guess. The crust is a little too big,
but they won't mind that, and it's so big..."

"Well, Polly, don't you..."
"Yes, mother. Come and look at them..."

"They made a pleasant picture, that
mother and daughter, as they stood
side by side before the long ironing-table..."

"First-rate, dear; I never saw the best
send away a lot of them! Some are to
send away, I suppose?"

"Oh yes, indeed, it would be
month to eat them all! See you, mother,
these are the ones I pieced out for you..."

"I suppose you have heard the news,
Polly? The news about Phil Halston..."

"No, what do you mean?" with
sudden interest.
"Come up just night, you know;
and when you think he brought with
him but a wife! The old folks didn't
know a word about it. Wasn't it a fine
Thanksgiving surprise?" asked Polly,
fairly, with white lips.

"Steve saw them—our Steve, you
know. He came in the same train, and
there was Phil getting out with his wife,
and she was so nice, and kind, and
looked so surprised; and Phil, he said, 'Father,
I've got a new daughter to introduce to
you.' And then some more in a low
voice, and Steve came out, and he said,
'Squire, be almost cried, and he shook
hands and said: 'You're welcome, my
dear.' That was all Steve saw, for he
had to come away; but Uncle Kueben
came up to the Squire's in the evening
about a load of hay, and Phil's wife
came in, and the Squire introduced her.
'My son's wife,' he said, and looked
pleased, for all he hadn't been told
beforehand. Here they are! Look, Polly,
just coming in.'"

"For a moment all swam before Polly's
eyes. Then the mist cleared again, and
she saw Squire Halston's wife, and
she was so nice, and kind, and looked
so surprised; and Phil, he said, 'Father,
I've got a new daughter to introduce to
you.' And then some more in a low
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beforehand. Here they are! Look, Polly,
just coming in.'"

for, lingering there outside the window,
words had been half said, half looked,
and she could never forget, though, at
the same time, half frightened, she had
pretended not to understand them. And
at last he took to teasing about the pie;
as she daintily rolled the paste, and
jagged the narrow strips for edging.
Wouldn't she make him one—all his
own—at Thanksgiving time, for in-
stance, for he was coming here, then?
Oh, yes, he was sure she would, though
she gave no promise; he should come
in the evening for it. And then the time
came for him to go. And leaving
through the window—Polly's good mood
as she thought of it—he had softly kissed
the little brown wrist, and departed, his
last words being, 'If you love me, Polly,
don't forget the pie.' I am afraid it was
too late for that 'if'!"

For, dreadful as it seems, the Pollices
of real life do not always wait, as the books
say they should, until a decisive word
has been spoken before yielding their
place. Love comes unbidden, unthought,
as the sun comes or the dew; eyes ask,
and look ask. Prudence tugs feebly at the
bolt; but her strength is weakness; open
the door, and Cupid takes possession.
For his or her, it was, to be retained to be shown.
Phil loved her, she was sure, and the
hopeful smile was bright with early dawn.
"Do you love me?" she asked, and
slightly, she hummed around her
like a song, as she drew from its hiding-
place Phil's pie. Such a pie! Crisp as
frost, foaming white, except where heat
had crisped it into brown, with edges
truly, so exceedingly hot, and middle
adorned with a wondrous swirl of paste,
embodying the initial "P."—a marvel
of water, and put an appetite under the
rubs of dyspepsia. Long and lovingly did
Polly gaze on this chef-d'œuvre before
committing it to the top shelf of the
pantry, and then, rapidly restoring it to
its pristine fitness, she tied up the pie
for there was a hat to be trimmed;
housekeeper though she was, Polly was
no less a girl—a girl of eighteen, and
that was more, the prettiest girl of her
age in Cobasset. Something was due to
this eminent position.

So, shut into her room, she sat adjust-
ing the killing little feather on her new
hat, and then, as the morning drew on,
she looked out in a morsel of looking-glass,
and by-and-by, as the gold began to
gather round the sunset, a sound came
on the wind, the distant shriek of a lo-
last treasure, and the prettiest girl of her
age in Cobasset. Something was due to
this eminent position.

At last the long dinner ended, amidst
peals loud and high. The fire was re-
plenished, and then, to the surprise of
Polly, she found the door ajar, and
Polly was her usual self, prettier than
usual, if anything, and gayer with that
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scrap of newspaper left on Deacon
Bunker's face from his morning shaving,
and on which could be plainly read,
"Lost and strayed," with the after-
effect of a shiver, just as she remembered
the exact position in which Phil stood
as he held the hymn-book open for his-
wife! That was too much. Polly drew
light the green curtain and looked no
more.

"You're pale, to-day," whispered the
friendly gossip in the rear, "or else your
bat isn't becoming!"
This roused her. Bad as it was to be
pitied; she bit her lips till they were red,
and (taking advantage of the last prayer,
I am sorry to say), inflicted a series of
fervid pinches which restored her to her
rest, she saw, she was sure, Phil linger-
ing as if to speak. Cruel, insulting, she
would not see! Leaving on James' arm,
chatting, all bloom and animation, she
half explained, then paused. Backs are some-
times as expressive as faces. Polly's
said, distinctly as back could, "Don't
speak to me. Phil looked at her in that
moment, then suppressing a low whistle,
he plucked his hands into his pockets
and took the opposite direction. But
soon, relenting, he was sorry to have
done so, and he did not forget to
to himself, "What was it. Well, I'll go
over this evening, at all events, and find
out what it means!"

Oh what a miserable day it was! All
the little, carefully prepared pleasures
were so many good things to Polly.
The turkey choked; the children's merri-
ment stunned her. And there were all
the relations to be seen to the
Aunt Eliza and Uncle Peter, and
Jane with her family, and the new baby.
But for all her heartache, the little maid
was true to herself. Only Mrs. Pursall,
with motherly instinct, divined that
something was the matter. To the rest
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