BY JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS.

From The Century:

She was too excited either to rea son or to calculate. Gathering her skirts in her hands as she rose to the level of the clearing, Polly rushed across it toward the little cabin, tore open the frail little gate, and flung herself against the door with a force that shook the house.

Old Mrs. Spurlock was spinning, while Israel carded the rolls for her. The noise that Polly made against the door startled them both. The thread broke in Mrs. Spurlock's hand, and one part of it curled it. indignantly. "I hope you don't self on the end of the broach with a buzz that whirled it into a fantastically tangled mass. The cards dropped from Israel's hands with a clatter that added to his mother's excitement.

"Did anybody ever hear the beat of that?" she exclaimed. "Run now," said Polly. Israel, an' see what it is that's a tryin' to tear the roof off'n the house!"

Israel did not need to be told, nor did Mrs. Spurlock wait for him to go. They reached the door togeth er, and when Israel threw it open they caw Polly Powers standing there, pale, trembling and dripping.

"Polly!" cried Israel, taking her by the arm. He could say no more.

"In the name er the Lord!" ex claimed Mrs. Spurlock, "whar 'd you drop from? You look more like a drowned ghost than you does like folks Come right in here an' dry yourse'f. What in the name of mercy brung you out in such weather? Who's dead or a-d rin'? Why, look at the gal!" Mrs. Spur lock went on in a louder tone, seeing that Polly stood staring at them with wide-open eyes, her face pale as death.

"Have they come?" gasped Polly. "Listen at 'er Iserl! I b'lieve in my soul she's gone an' run ravin' deestracted. Shake 'er, Isrel, shake

For answer Polly dropped for ward into Mrs. Spurlock's arms, all wet as she was, and there fell to crying in a way that was quite alarming to Israel, who was not fa milliar with feminine peculiarities Mrs. Spurlock soothed Polly as she she would have soothed a baby, and half carried half led her to the fireplace. Israel, who was standing around embarassed and perplexed. was driven from the room, and soon Polly was decked out in dry clothes. These "dads," as Mrs. Spurlock called them, were ill-fitting and ungraceful, but in Isra'l's eyes the girl was just as beautiful as ever She was even more beautiful when, fully recovered from her excitsment, she told with sparkling eyes and heightened color the story she had to tell.

Mrs. Spurlock listened with the keenest interest, and with many an exclaimation of indignation. while Israel heard it with undisguised admiration for the girl. He seemed to enjoy the whole proceeding, and when Polly in the ardor and excitement of her narration betraved an attack within cor wombs. almost passionate interest in his probable fate, he rubbed his hands slowly together and laughed softly great benefit to me; it has had the desired effect by stopping the fits. to himself.

"An' jest to think," exclaimed Polly, when she had finished her story, "that that there goodfornothin' Wesley Lovejoy had the imperdence to ast me to have him no longer 'n last year, an' he's been a flyin' round me constant."

"I seed him a-droppin' his wing." said Israel, laughing. "I reckon that's the reason he's after me so hot. But never you mind, mammy; you thes look after the gal that gwine to be your daughter-inlaw, an' I'll look after your son."

"Go off, you goose!" cried Polly, blushing and smiling "Ef they hang you, whose daughter-in-law will I be then ?"

"The Lord knows!" exclaimed Israel, with mock seriousness. "They tell me that Lovejoy is an

"You must be crazy." cried Polly think I'd marry that creetur. I wouldn't look at him if he was the last man. You better be thinkin' about your own goozle."

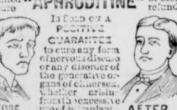
"It's ketchin' befo' hangin'," said Israel.

"They've mighty nigh got you

[To be Continued.]

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