

Storm Country Polly

by Grace Miller White

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CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

"So you're here, young man," he snarled. "Well, muddling in this business won't do you any good. Didn't I tell you yesterday what I intended to do; and you had the nerve to upset my wife about it. You're making yourself the laughing stock of the whole town! Now you'd better go if you don't want to witness a little comedy that'll stick in your memory for many a long day."

The speaker turned to Pollyop. "Where's that boy?" he demanded. Involuntarily Polly looked toward the cot where Wee Jerry lay asleep. "You mean the baby—Oh, you don't mean Jerry?" she questioned dully.

He held out a paper which the squatter girl took as if she had been in a stupor. She held it up, tried to make out what was printed on it, then dropped her hand hopelessly to her side.

With an exclamation of pity, Robert went to her and took the fingers that clutched the paper.

"Polly," he said swiftly, "you'll have to give Jerry up for a little while. Just a little while—"

She snatched her hand away, the document fluttering to the floor. In a



Pollyop Struggled Madly, and the Child Shrieked and Clung to His Sister With All the Puny Strength He Had.

moment she had picked up the child from the cot and hugged him to her breast.

"Old Marc ain't come for the baby, has he?" she shrieked, her tone high-pitched and strained. "He's mine, Jerry is. I'm goin' to keep 'im here till Daddy comes home; so you might as well all scoot."

In the stillness that fell as her voice broke, each man was impressed with the martyrdom she was passing through. Robert had never imagined a person could go so white and still be alive. With an ejaculation, hoarse and defiant, he sprang to her side.

"Polly," he cried, "My God, don't look that way! Listen to me!"

"Can he take the baby?" fell monotonously from her blue lips.

"That's just what he can do, Miss Hopkins," thrust in MacKenzie. "The law says a child can't stay in a place like this. You'd have seen that if you'd taken the pains to read the paper. Put some wraps on the child, Miss!"

Polly stood with Jerry gripped tightly against her; and, frightened, the little boy began to cry.

"I want my Daddy Hopkins, Pollyop," he whimpered brokenly.

Polly looked so dreadful that for a moment MacKenzie was silent. Her eyes had an expression of such hate and deadly determination in their singular brown depths that for a moment he held his breath.

"If you take him," she spoke at last,—"why, d-n you, I'll kill you!"

At first MacKenzie eyed her contemptuously. What did such a girl's threats mean to him? Then he laughed. And that laugh stung the sensitive girl more than if he had struck her.

"You took our Daddy Hopkins," she told him, drooping a little at the telling. "but Jerry—He's my baby, an' I keep him in the shanty till his pappy comes home. You hear, the hull of you, don't you?"

Her eyes were roving from one to another, but her voice lowered on each word, because in the steady gaze of Old Marc and his deputies she saw no relenting.

"I'd rather he'd die," she screamed. "I'd rather he'd be next to Granny Hope in the graveyard!—Get out of here, I say."

The scene was even more nerve-racking than MacKenzie had expected. "Take him away from her, Bowers," he ordered, turning to one of the men.

The man spoken to stepped forward in evident unwillingness; but a shout from MacKenzie made him grab for

the child. With one hand the frenzied girl beat at him with all her energy, but he struck down her slim young fingers as if they had been twigs. Thrusting one arm around her, he caught Wee Jerry by the shoulders. But to disengage the boy's clutch from the chestnut curls called forth all the quickness the man possessed. Polly shrieked madly, and the child shrieked and clung to his sister with all the puny strength he had.

"Keep away, Percival," snapped MacKenzie, pushing Robert backward. "If you lay one finger on my men, I'll take the girl along to jail."

To save the girl he loved, Robert compelled himself to stand by while the boy was torn bodily from her. He saw one of the men drag a blanket from the bed and throw it around Wee Jerry.

Then he snatched at the girl, but she quickly eluded his grasp. How awfully her eyes glowed, and how her face twitched!

"Get out with him before she cuts up any more," growled Marcus, as Polly bounded forward only to be met by the speaker's outstretched arms.

"If you make another scene, my lady," he rapped out, "I'll have you arrested for obstructing the law. And remember this, huzzy, I'm going to get you next."

His threat against herself meant nothing to Polly Hopkins. But the word "law"! It struck at her brain like a hammer. She suddenly felt as if a tidal wave, strong and relentless, had broken over her. It was the same law taking Jerry that had imprisoned Daddy Hopkins, that had carried away Larry Bishop from his woman. The thought brought her up with a sharp gasp. She did not care what they did with her, but little Jerry, Wee Baby Jerry!

"What you goin' to do with him, mister?" she begged, wringing her hands. "Tell me that! I can't let 'im go till you do!"

She caught at his arm, and the strong brown fingers dug deep into his flesh.

"Look into the paper there and you'll see where I'm going to take him," answered MacKenzie. "Let go of my arm! There!" He wrenched himself free. Then, enraged and with eyes flashing, he shouted, "Get out with the kid, you men, and start off!"

Glad to be gone, the officials stepped into the open, one of them carrying the writhing Jerry. Then Polly Hopkins stood upright in the middle of the shanty, grief, consternation, and then an expression of insanity passing over her face.

Robert Percival was near her, not daring to utter a word; her deep-set agony was too terrible for sympathy. All at once she started forward; and he made a desperate effort to stop her.

"Pollyop," he pleaded. As she raced through the doorway, he called: "Wait—wait—"

In an instant he was out beside her, speaking her name softly, imploringly. She paid no heed to him, but flung up her arms. And then she laughed! Marcus MacKenzie was standing beside his horse, and on beyond in the lane a carriage was rolling away, from which came piteous screams from Jerry.

"Pollyop," entreated Robert.

But Polly had bounded from him toward the man and the horse.

"I hope," she shrieked at MacKenzie, "I hope your hands'll wither off; I'm wishin' all you love'll die before your eyes, an' every day I'll be askin' 'Granny Hope's lovin' God to d-n you till you drop rot'in' in your grave."

Marcus had halted with his foot in the stirrup. He had heard every word she had uttered; and drops of cold sweat gathered on his brow. Then, with an oath, he vaulted into the saddle, put the spurs to his horse and galloped up the hill after the retreating carriage.

Robert was leaning limply against the side of the shanty when Polly Hopkins turned swiftly back. He spoke to her; and she looked dazedly at him. Then she laughed again, directly into his face; and the young man, almost as distraught as she, tried to take hold of her.

"You scoot, too," she said to him; "get out, an' stay out; an'—an' tell your billy-livered cousin, I say, I hope if she ever has a baby it won't have no eyes to see 'er with, nor no mouth to kiss 'er with—I hope—"

"Oh, God!" groaned Robert.

Before he could get back his wits, she had rushed past him into the shack, slammed the door and barred it against him.

For more than two hours Polly Hopkins lay face down on her cot. During that time her loving heart had broken and died within her. She had no longer an incentive to live, no more a desire to look forward to Daddy's home-coming.

When at length she crawled to the floor, all signs of tears had disappeared, leaving the once glowing eyes dull and expressionless. There was no one left to love save the billy goat, and to him she gave no heed.

In her aimless wandering about the shanty she paused before the reproduction of "The Greatest Mother in the World." Polly did not care for

her any more either. Deliberately she

took an old coat and hung it carefully over the glorious solemn face. She never wanted to look upon it again—Never—Never!

Then, taking the ax, she went out and, as deliberately as she had hidden from view the picture, so did she hack from above the door the welcoming sign.

When it lay at her feet, battered and partly broken, she muttered over the words, "If your heart is loving and kind come right in. If it ain't scoot off."

She had learned her lesson at last. Hearts were not loving and kind, after all. Then, with powerful strokes of the ax, she split the slab in pieces. Unfathomable depths of hate and revenge had swallowed her soul! Polly Hopkins was done with love forever!

CHAPTER XIV.

"God-Amighty, Polly brat!" exclaimed Larry Bishop one evening, "what made you come out a night like this, huh?"

The girl went to the stove and in silence extended her hands over its top.

"What's up, Pollyop?" the man demanded again, curiously, dropping into a chair. "You look something awful!"

And so she did! The long-lashed eyes had gathered and held an indefinable expression of hatred. The fair, lovely face knew tender sympathy no more. She was no longer Polly of the Sun. For her that orb had become merely a ball in the sky, hot like the stove and bright like the candle flame, only more so. Nor did the pale winter moon ever catch her dazzling smiles. The winking stars had forgotten weeks ago that once a squatter girl had stolen out nightly to throw upward a kiss, begging them to deliver it to the crucified one there beyond them—the good Jesus who sat on the golden throne and who had sent her the message by Granny Hope that "Love were strong, er'n hate any day."

As usual her feet were in Jeremiah's boots, and as usual she wore his coat. Her curls were covered with snow, and as she studied the dark-faced man she shook drops of water from them.

She advanced toward him, choking with emotion. Since Wee Jerry had gone, her hours, spent in planning revenge, had completely exhausted her. She was so tired that when she reached Larry she crouched before him on the floor and turned a pale, beseeching face up to him.

"I've come, Larry Bishop," she began gravely, "to ask you to help me to even up a little with Old Marc."

The squatter's head went up, and a startled expression shot into his fierce eyes. Then he sank lower in his chair, and the fire died out of his countenance.

"Who can get even with that d-n brute?" he muttered after a while. "Squatters can't! We'd all go to Auburn if we muss up him or his'n."

A white young face shoved so close to his that Bishop drew back.

"Who cares a d-n about Auburn?" Pollyop exclaimed roughly. "We won't go there till we've tore Old Marc's heart to pieces an' made it hurt like yours does, Larry, like mine does for Jerry an' Daddy Hopkins. Wouldn't you be willin' to spend a few years in jail if you could make him howl an' go almost mad like me an' you have, Larry?"

Bishop looked beyond her head into a dark corner. It was in that spot he often imagined he saw the wrath of his woman. His unsteady regard settled; and the ghost woman rose mistily, gazing at him with unearthly eyes. Then the pale, unsmiling phantom extended her arms and within them appeared a frail infant.

"God!" burst from his lips like a shot from a gun.

Pollyop glanced backward, over her shoulder. But the shudder that ran over him brought her haggard face back to his.

"Ain't your heart hurtin' something awful for your Betty woman an' your brat now, this very minute?" she queried abruptly, as if she, too, had seen the ghastly thing in the corner.

"God, yes!" he shivered, taking firm hold of his chin to hide the tremble of it.

She seized his arm viselike, the grip drawing a groan from the squatter.

"An' wouldn't you just love to see Old Marc twist an' squirm like a stepped-on baby snake, huh?" came in one long, sobbing breath.

Again the shifty look of the tortured man came to rest on the gloom beyond.

"I'd die for it, so I would, Pollyop," he cried. "Out with what you got in your bean, Polly; an' I'll listen, so help me God!"

Pollyop leaned heavily against him, panting. She was making an effort to tell him her plan. With a swift upward motion of her head, she began to talk in broken tones; and as she proceeded, Larry Bishop raised straighter in his chair.

Polly's voice trailed into silence; and Larry sent one hasty look over her head. The wrath smiled sadly at him and was gone. He shook himself and struggled to his feet. Then a broad, wicked grin spread his lips apart, and he laughed aloud. Pollyop, still on the floor, laughed, too, hysterical sobs catching at her throat, and a desire to

scream forcing her hands to her mouth. Such awful sounds were unusual in the Silent City, where even honest mirth was no longer heard because the men and women scarcely dared breathe for fear an enemy from Illaca would suddenly appear.

"Glory be to God!" ejaculated the man, hoarsely, "that's the how of it, brat! It'll be a whack for my dead woman, an'—"

"An' a good whack for the Hopkins tribe, too," cried Polly, scrambling up. "It'll be a black Thanksgiving for Old Marc, huh, Larry?—I'm goin' back home now."

She turned to the door, but halted with her hand on the latch.

"You promised I could do it, Larry," she reminded him. "You'll tell Lye Braeger that, too, won't you?"

Sinking limply into his chair, Bishop wiped his wet lips.

"Yep, lass," he assented with a groan. "You can turn the trick; I promise you that."

If Jeremiah Hopkins had seen his girl, his Polly of the Sun, when she went home that night, he would not have recognized her. Her face was crafty, pitiless, and as white as the snow under her feet.

Then she waited stoically day after day, feeding the billy goat but absently, asking no questions of Larry or Lye Braeger how soon her idea could be carried out. She believed that they would leave no stone unturned to even up with Marcus MacKenzie.

Early one evening Larry Bishop burst into the Hopkins hut without the formality of a knock. He looked years older than he had but yesterday; and Pollyop got up, locking and interlocking her fingers.

"Well?" she asked from between chattering teeth.

"It's done, by God!" he hissed, almost strangling behind a shaking hand. "It was most awful, Polly. If I'd stuck a hog in the gizzard, the squeal-in' couldn't 'a' been worse."

The speaker's tones, his half-bent figure, his shifty glances, brought a grim from the girl.

"An' you're gettin' sorry by the minute, Larry Bishop, I can see that," she returned, giving him a smart rap. "Stand up, Larry man. Once—"

A sudden rush of emotion thrust into her throat such an ache that for several seconds she was unable to conclude.

"Once," she repeated, after clearing away the huskiness with a hacking cough, "I thought love were the greatest thing in the world. But it ain't, Larry Bishop, it ain't!"

Bishop fidgeted with his cap, turning it around and around by its brim. When he looked up, the burning glow had died from the depths of his eyes.

"It's a sickenin' thing to see a woman suffer that bad," he muttered. "God, brat!—Nope! Don't say nothin' till I tell you what me an' Lye did!"

At the memory of it, the speaker wiped drops of sweat from his face.

"She bellered about lovin' her man," droned Bishop, "an' the way she hol-



She Turned to the Door but Halted With Her Hand on the Latch.

tered in my hut for her man was something scandalous."

"Like your Betty died a-howlin' for you, I s'pose, Larry," came back the girl promptly. "An' I been thinkin' all day how Granny Hope tucked your dead brat alongside his mammy in the coffin. Some awful thinkin', Larry man!"

The squatter's sudden grayness and swallowing hard as if something had stuck in his windpipe was the only evidence he gave that he had heard the cruel words.

"We got 'er just after dark," he continued, wearily. "She's been tied up in my shack ever since."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Nearly half of the Presidents of the United States have been of Scotch descent.

DAIRY THE DAIRY

CLEAN PACKAGE FOR BUTTER

Carefully Packed Product Gives More Enjoyment to Consumer Than Slip-Shod Parcel.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

For the same reason that a man prefers to eat his meals from a clean tablecloth he prefers to get the butter he eats in a clean and attractive package—it helps him to get more enjoyment from his food and that means he really gets more value out of it, even though carelessly packed products may contain just as much food value as those that are put up carefully.

The package into which butter is put is of more importance than most



Working Butter Before Putting in Package.

food packages, because the product which it holds is extremely sensitive to outside influences, especially odors. Men who have made a business of studying market conditions and methods have long given attention to the package problem and they are still at it. This year at the National Dairy show, held in St. Paul, Minn., October 8 to 15, the United States Department of Agriculture had an unusual show of butter packages that proved of as much interest as a lot of curios. The department has collected packages from the various countries of the world that make butter in considerable quantities, and they were shown in comparison with packages that are used in our own country. In addition there were examples of good and of poor packing.

After remaining in storage for one year, samples of sweet-cream butter recently inspected at Norfolk, Va., scored higher than the highest score for butter quoted on the New York market. These samples, which received scores averaging 93.47, were representative of 1,000,000 pounds of butter packed for the United States navy under the supervision of the United States Department of Agriculture. The scoring was done by a specialist from the dairy division and a representative of a commercial butter firm in New York city.

"This butter, which was made for the navy last year," said the inspectors, "was of such fine quality that we cannot neglect the opportunity to comment upon the comparatively small amount of extra work required to produce a product of this quality as compared with the average butter found on the large markets."

This butter was made from a perfectly sweet cream, with a comparatively high salt content and low moisture. The moisture content did not exceed 13.5 per cent. After one year in storage only one sample scored as low as 92½. Of the other 50 samples, 24 scored 94, two scored 93½ and 24 scored 93.

Consumers who are accustomed to a pronounced flavor in butter do not at first show favor to sweet-cream butter as it is somewhat lacking in this respect when fresh. A demand for sweet-cream butter, however, is growing steadily, according to butter dealers handling this product. On being held in storage the flavor becomes more pronounced, and for this reason sweet-cream butter is often scored higher after storage than when fresh. For storage purposes such a butter is far superior to the ordinary butter, which usually loses in quality during the storage period.

High-Priced Sire.

Any sire is high priced that will not pass on to his offspring the characters which go to make them desirable from the market standpoint.

Signs of Tuberculosis.

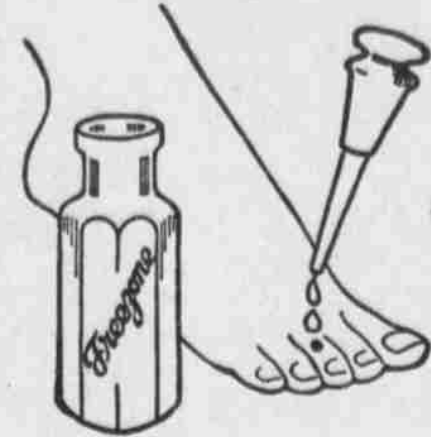
A cow that stays thin in spite of good feed and has a cough shows pretty sure signs of tuberculosis. Let a veterinarian test her.

Producers Not Boarders.

The cows on a successful dairy farm must be producers and not boarders.

CORNS

Lift Off with Fingers



Doesn't hurt a bit! Drop a little "Freezone" on an aching corn, instantly that corn stops hurting, then shortly you lift it right off with fingers. Truly! Your druggist sells a tiny bottle of "Freezone" for a few cents, sufficient to remove every hard corn, soft corn, or corn between the toes, and the calluses, without soreness or irritation.

All He Got.

Two tramps approached a likely looking dwelling on the country road and tossed up with their last half-penny which of the two should call there and solicit alms.

One waited at the entrance gate, and the other walked up the drive toward the hall door. In a few seconds the latter reappeared.

"Well, did he give you anything?" asked his expectant companion eagerly.

"Oh, yes," was the reply. "He had a bulldog by the hand, and he gave me one minute to leave his garden. And here I am."—Scotsman.

MOTHER! CLEAN

CHILD'S BOWELS WITH

CALIFORNIA FIG SYRUP

Even a sick child loves the "fruity" taste of "California Fig Syrup." If the little tongue is coated, or if your child is listless, cross, feverish, full of cold, or has colic, give a teaspoonful to cleanse the liver and bowels. In a few hours you can see for yourself how thoroughly it works all the constipation poison, sour bile and waste out of the bowels, and you have a well, playful child again.

Millions of mothers keep "California Fig Syrup" handy. They know a teaspoonful today saves a sick child tomorrow. Ask your druggist for genuine "California Fig Syrup" which has directions for babies and children of all ages printed on bottle. Mother! You must say "California" or you may get an imitation fig syrup.—Advertisement.

Rare Indeed.

In a recently published story occurs the following: "Having thrust a New Testament into his pocket before starting he now took it out and read the Twenty-third Psalm." This must have been a rare copy of the Testament, unknown to any person other than the author and his character.

Hens in Trouble.

Lucile was sent to a neighbor to get some eggs. The neighbor informed her that the hens were molting, and she could not let her have any.

When she reached home Lucile said: "Mamma, Mrs. T. can't let us have any eggs because her hens are molting."

The Wool Combers.

In the Latin quarter of Paris one often sees groups of bareheaded women, sitting in some quiet corner of the street, perhaps within a church door, picking and combing the wool of their mattresses. No matter how poor a French peasant may be, he almost always possesses a comfortable bed with a wool mattress.

The "Strike" Is On.

The customer called the waiter. "There's a chunk of wood in my sausage," said he. "I expect to be served with the dog, but I'll be hanged if I'll eat the kennel, too."

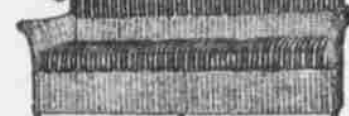
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