Storm Country Polly

by Grace Miller White

Illustrated by R. H. Livingstone.

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This morning, while Daddy Hopkins was in Ithaca, Pollyop started out with her many loves for a walk. On her shoulder perched Wee Jerry; at her side, in stately dignity, stalked the billy goat, and tied to one of her arms by a small rope gamboled Nannie Lamb Hopkins.

Through the Silent City she wandered, helping people here and there to see the sunny side of things. Beyond the row of shacks was the fence Marcus MacKenzie had erected to

Then She Went Closer to the Fence and Spelled Out the Words Under the Picture: "The Greatest Mother in the World."

keep the squatters from trespassing on his woodland, and in front of it Polly Hopkins stood. A bill poster had passed and left on the fence a picture that caught her attention.

It was a beautiful woman, her eyes saddened with tears, and she looked straight out of exquisite coloring at the wide-eyed squatter girl. In her arms was a withered, sick, little man, and Pollyop knew that somewhere over the ocean an enemy, perhaps a man like Old Marc, had hurt him. The woman held him close as she looked at Polly, and for a moment the girl's eyes stung with tears. Then she went closer to the fence and spelled out the words under the picture: "The Greatest Mother in the World."

Ah! So she was, this protector of the hurt and the sick! The Red Cross poster carried its wondrous message to the very bottom of the squatter girl's heart.

A sound, close at hand, caused her to turn swiftly. A man on horseback had drawn up on the side of the road. The blood came in swift leaps to Polly's face. There was the "beautiful angel" looking down upon her! What could she do but stare back at him? In another instant he had dismounted and was coming toward her.

Jerry slid from her shoulders to the ground. Pollyop's hand clasped his; but she did not speak. What had happened to her "angel?" He looked different; more like the other men she occasionally saw on horseback. That was it! He was not wearing the olive-drab uniform! To add to her confusion Robert Percival was smiling at her in the most friendly way. Then he glanced up at the picture, his fine face saddening.

"The Greatest Mother in the World, little girl," he said, and he smiled again.

"The Greatest Mother in the World," repeated Pollyop, in awed tones. "Does that mean she's mother to the squatter kids what was hurt in the war, mister?"

"Yes," he replied after a short pause. "Yes, it means that, and more. She's mother to every hurt boy and brings comfort to every one on earth that needs help."

"Golly, she's some mother, ain't she?" breathed Polly soberly. "She's beautiful too. Squatter mammies has too many kids to stay handsome like her." She made a backward motion with her thumb toward the fence and searched his face gravely.

A choking sensation in Robert's throat made him cough. The girl's statement was like a charcoal drawing in which a few broad lines tell the whole story. He felt his interest in her increase. She was the quaintest, prettiest and most solemn child he had ever seen. Yes, he knew she was an inhabitant of the Silent City by the clothes she wore, and the thin, bow-legged child, to say nothing of the bewhiskered goat and woolly lamb that were with her.

"What's your name?" he

"Just Pollyop," was the answer. "Polly Hopkins. My daddy is Jeremiah Hopkins, the mayor of this settlement."

Surely! Robert remembered very well MacKenzie speaking of Hopkins, and he remembered too the painted invitation over a hut door as if it were before his eyes. Looking Pollyop over from the top of her curly head to the tips of her bare feet, he decided that she had written it.

Question after question he flung at her, and answer after answer came from Polly's lips. She told him where she lived, and how she cooked the beans, bacon and fish Daddy Hopkins provided; how cold it was in the shanty when the cruel north wind swept up the lake; and how wet it was when the rain fell and clammy fogs shrouded the world in gray; how Granny Hope was sick with pains. She gave him an inside view of life in the Silent City. Long before she had finished her recital, Percival's courtesy had put her at her ease, and she was chattering like a magpie.

"Can I do something for you, Polly Hopkins?" queried Robert, as she finished telling about life in the squatters' city.

She flung out both hands in a comprehensive gesture as much as to say he could see for himself how much she needed.

"Sure, sure you can," she said with fierce emphasis. "You can make Old Marc leave us squatters be. You're bigger'n he is! The squatters need you awful bad."

Her voice broke. Robert took a long breath. Of course he could help this girl and her people. He would, too! As far as money gave power, he could equal and surpass Marcus MacKenzie.

"I did try to talk sense into Mr. MacKenzie's head," he returned presently, "but now I will make him leave you alone."

In spite of the curved lips about which a smile lurked, there was apprehension in her voice when she asked:

"Can you lick 'im to a finish, mister?"

"Yes, I think I could," laughed Robert; "but it won't be necessary."

"Then I see us Silent City folks bein' happy again," sighed Polly. "We got a awful lot of things an' folks to take care of here."

Robert made a sweep with his arm that encompassed the group before him.

"You have, evidently!" he laughed.

"An' I got more home," interjected Polly. "I got Daddy Hopkins an' Granny Hope—an' this brat is my brother, an' this goat is Billy Hopkins an' this lamb's Nannyop. Oh, sure, sir, I've got a hull lot to love in this good old city."

Polly made an upward motion with her hand toward the picture on the fence.

"She's got a bunch to love, too," she said softly. "Ain't she?"

He walked to her side and contemplated with her the pictured woman, making her silent appeal to them for the wounded boy in her arms.

"Of course she has," answered Percival reverently. "She's the Greatest Mother in the World, Polly Hopkins, and—and—" his gaze dropped upon her, and he continued, "and you're the littlest mother in the world."

A glad smile widened the girl's lips. All the fear that had been as a ton weight upon her had fallen away. She wanted to pay him the highest compliment she knew. When he had mounted, she told him gently:

"Some day you'll be the biggest an' most beautifulest daddy in the world. Good-by."

CHAPTER VII.

To describe Oscar Bennett's rage when he left the two girls in Granny Hope's shack would indeed be a task.

Of late Evelyn had ceased to attract him. In the excitement of the courtship he had put his best foot forward, and for a time after the marriage he had found a great satisfaction in the thought that she was his. When the glamor of their secret honeymoon-time had worn off, and the farmer's crude, cruel nature had been disclosed, Evelyn's mad infatuation had disappeared in terror-stricken horror.

As Evelyn was finding in Marcus MacKenzie a mate more to her taste, Bennett's primitive passions had burst into a sudden flame for Polly Hopkins. The squatter girl's scorn of him, her drawling ridicule, only made him desire her the more.

A couple of days after the night scene with the girls, he left his house and took his way to the lake. He crossed his fodder lot and plunged into the MacKenzie forest which lay between the railroad tracks and the water. In his pocket he had a letter for Evelyn. He intended to kill two birds with one stone. If he could find Polly Hopkins alone, he would tell her the decision he had come to and give her the note to deliver.

Oscar did not relish entering the Silent City by the highway. The squatters hated him as much as he did them, more, in all probability; and it was his habit to give the settlement a wide berth. If he discovered any of them on his land, with the exception of Polly Hopkins, he drove them away furiously. Oscar was one of those who would rather have produced rot on his land than give it to the needy.

Before vaulting the MacKenzie fence, the sound of people talking on the other side halted him. Pollyop's voice came distinctly to him, and another voice, a man's, answered her. The deep well-bred tones Bennett was sure did not belong to a squatter. He listened carefully to pick up the import of the conversation. The bass voice mumbled something about a

"What Do You Want?" She Asked Sullenly, Frowning at Him.

mother. In response, the squatter girl's tones fell upon his ear: "Some day you'll be the biggest an' most beautifulest daddy in the world." Then followed the rush of departing hoofs.

Jealousy tore at the eavesdropper. It did not take him long to get to the top of the fence.

Some sound he made brought the squatter girl's head around sharply from her survey of the picture.

"What do you want?" she asked sullenly, frowning at him.

Oscar jumped to the ground.

"I come down to see you, Pollyop," he rejoined, coming forward. "Who were you talking to?"

The only safe way to get along with the farmer, Polly had concluded, was to have nothing to do with him.

Oscar jumped to the ground.

"Leave me be, Oscar Bennett!" she shrilled. "I don't want nothin' to do with you. I'm goin' home."

To cut off her retreat, Oscar needed to take but a couple of strides, and he promptly took them.

"Jeminy crickets!" he expostulated, "Don't be so confounded short, Pollyop! You needn't be mad because I swatted you one. You aren't my woman yet, but you're going to be just as soon as I can get shut of my lady Robertson." Observing no signs of softening in the girl's face, he switched his attack. "Say, where'd you get that lamb?"

This query unfolded new terrors for Polly. She had not thought of the lamb belonging to anyone but herself. Had she not found him dying in the water and loved and fed him ever since? She looked first at the man, then down at the lamb.

"He's mine, Oscar," she hesitated. "I've had him two hull days now."

Oscar laughed.

"A likely story!" he jeered. "How long since squatters raised sheep? Where'd you get him?"

"Found him," she answered, putting her hand on the little animal.

"Then he isn't yours," he retorted, "and he can't be anybody's but mine. I thought I was missing some lambs."

Polly's eyes filled with alarm. She was trying to frame an argument in favor of herself and the creature she loved.

"When you find a thing dyin' in a creek, Oscar," she faltered at length, "you can take him home an' love him, now can't you?"

The man's loud guffaw brought a deep flush to the girl's face. She placed herself directly between him and the lamb.

"He's mine," she insisted. "He'd drowned sure if I hadn't jumped into the drink an' pulled him out."

Her words made the farmer certain where the creature came from.

"Dead or alive, he's mine!" he exclaimed.

Besides coveting the lamb, he hated the squatter girl's way of fondling animals. When he got her, he determined, he would take all of that kind of nonsense out of her.

With one sweep of his mighty hand, he thrust her aside, and, whipping out his knife, he cut the rope that held Nanny Hopkins to Polly's arm. Then, in spite of the girl's frantic cries and her desperate fighting against it, Os-

A SEVENTY-YEAR OLD COUPLE

Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Carpenter, Harrisburg, Pa., s[illegible] kidney trouble. He s[illegible] and I suffered from k[illegible] and had rheumatic pains all through the body. The first few dose[illegible] Kidney Pills relieved us [illegible] surely cured us. Although [illegible] the seventies, we are [illegible] we were thirty years.

Glenn E. Wortley and H. J. Connell

for that COUGH! KEMP'S BALSAM Pleasant to take Children like it

car picked up the lamb.

Pollyop screamed frantically, for from the look on his evil face, she saw instantly what he intended to do. He was going to kill Nannyop! Again she flew at him, but he was tall and strong and held the lamb aloft in the air, high out of her reach. With a rough oath he pushed the girl from him so roughly that she fell. When Polly scrambled up, he had the lamb in one hand and a large stone in the other.

"Oscar!" she shrieked.

She dropped to her knees, clasped Wee Jerry in her arms, and shrouded his face and her own in her curls. When she dared look up again, Oscar had thrown the dead lamb on the ground.

"There," he gritted, "that's to teach you a lesson, Miss Poll Hopkins. And now I'll open your eyes to something else."

As he crossed to her, she tried to struggle to her feet; but her legs were weak, and she was sick over the quivering body there in the road. In another minute Oscar had snatched her into his arms.

She shrieked again and again; and Jerry's loud cries followed, as she fought desperately with the burly farmer.

Once out of sight of the Red Cross poster and the little group in front of it, Percival checked his horse. Bay Dexter shook his head and champed his bit in disapproval. He was accustomed to mad, harum-scarum gallops, and he loved them; but this morning, especially since the pause by the fence corner, he had been compelled to mog along like a worn-out, old nag.

His master was thinking, really and seriously thinking. Happily born and the heir to an immense fortune, his way through life so far had been marked out for him. He had gone to war carelessly, in a mood of hot patriotism and because it was the thing to do. Over there he had done his share and gained, especially from his French comrades, an inkling of life's vital purpose. He had decided that, when he returned, he would do something worth while, something to make the world a little better because he had lived in it.

Now he was home; and almost the first day had come to him this appeal. He smiled ruefully at the recollection of Pollyop's plea. He had promised to help the squatters, and he meant to do it. Suppose it did bring him into conflict with Marcus MacKenzie! He knew how to fight, and a good fight was not bad fun.

Faintly from the direction he had ridden, the sound of cries came to his ears. Idly he wondered what the row was. Some squatter man disciplining his wife, he decided; but he could not stand to have a woman beaten!

He vaulted into the saddle and raced back over the road. It was not long before he located the place where the screams came from. Then Bay Dexter had an opportunity to show all the speed he had.

The sight of Pollyop writhing in the strong arms of a man he did not recognize made Percival see red. He was off his horse with one leap, and two long strides took him to Oscar's side.

One blow from his powerful knuckles in the farmer's face staggered Bennett and freed Polly so quickly that she fell to the ground. Instinctively she crawled out of the way of the battling men. The blow that had released her had done no damage to Bennett except to aggravate his rage. He recovered himself and confronted his assailant, dripping oaths like rain from a cloudburst.

Bennett took the offensive, his fists flying like flails. He wanted to get his arms around the other fellow, to trip him and make the fight a rough and tumble on the ground, but Percival avoided the rush, and struck as Bennett went by. Again and again Bennett tried to come to close quarters. But he could not; neither could he hit his elusive opponent. At length he hesitated, distressed as much by his own efforts as the blows he had received.

Then Percival stepped in, and quickly it was all over. Two well-planted thumps laid Bennett like a log on the ground.

Robert dusted off his hands, picked Wee Jerry up, and handed him to his sister.

"Did he hurt you, Polly?" he queried, and her answer was positively gleeful:

"Nary a bit, sir, an' I reckon the big lummox's got a plenty this time."

Robert brushed off his clothes slowly. The farmer still lay on the ground.

"Get up," ordered Percival scornfully, touching the prostrate man with the toe of his boot. "Get up and make off if you don't want me to lick you again."

Oscar rolled over and crawled slowly to his hands and knees.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Has New Position

Clark (Duke) M. Sawyer, late reporter for the Banner-News has recently received a position as clerk at Harlan's confectionery and ice cream parlor.

Grattan Grange

The next regular meeting of the Grattan Grange will be March 23, with the following program: Song, Grange melodies; Roll call, Men respond by naming some particular vegetable they would like to have grown in the garden this year and ladies to tell some particular flower they would like to have grown in the flower garden; Solo, Johnny Jakeway Debate, Resolved that it is better to marry than to remain single—affirmative, Elmer Weller and Tom Bookey negative, Frank Carpenter and Myron McNaughton; Instrumental duet, Vivian Byrnes and Vivian Jakeway; orchestra music; Easter supper to be served. All Grangers come with plenty of eggs and good things to go with them. Don't miss a meeting as you are liable to miss something worth while.

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BOARD OF EDUCATION

(OFFICIAL)

Regular meeting of Board of Education held March 8, 1922.

Called to order at 7:00 p. m. by Pres. Lloyd.

Present: Lloyd, Driese, Berry, Hall Brown and Supt. Skinner.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and approved.

Secretary read the folowing bills:

Belding Gas Works, gas	$2 01
Spencer E. L. & Power Co., lights, power and supplies	45.07
Citizens Light Co., Lights, power	15.26
Am. Railway Ex. Co., express	3.35
M. L. Willoughby, clock repairs	2.75
Haight Bros., supplies	13.29
Belding Lumber Co., supplies	27.28
Belding Hdw. Co., supplies	5.10
Citizens Telephone Co., tolls	2.10
Herald Pub. Co., supplies,	25.15
Glenn E. Wortley, supplies	4.89
Central Scientific Co., supplies	8.39
Gregg Pub. Co., supplies	1.41
E. W. A. Rowles Co., supplies	3.63
A. Flanagan Co., supplies	4.07
Frederich Music House, records	4.50
Gross Hdw. & Supply Co., supplies for Manual Training	3.28
C. C. Birchard & Co., supplies	1.20
Perry Mason Co., Sup. Reading	14.40

Motion made by Driese seconded by Hall that the bills as read be paid.

Yes: Lloyd, Driese, Berry, Hall, Brown.

The third letter from the Dept. of Public Instruction in regard to Physical instruction was read.

A motion was made by Hall, seconded by Berry that we make arrangements to employ a teacher for Physical Training for the next school year.

Yes: Lloyd, Driese, Berry, Hall, Brown.

A general discussion of building projects followed and a motion was made by Driese seconded by Brown that we engage Frank P. Allen & Sons as architects and to supervise such building as we may decide to undertake this year.

Yes: Lloyd, Driese, Berry, Hall, Brown.

Teachers salaries for next year were discussed in a general way, the matter being finally left for a special meeting for that purpose alone.

On motion the meeting adjourned.

B. F. Brown, Sec.

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

(OFFICIAL.)

Council Chambers, March 3, 1922.

Meeting called to order by Mayor Washburn.

Roll call: Present: Ald. Benedict, Friedly, McCue, Washburn. Present 4. Absent, Ald. Kane, Absent 1.

Minutes of the previous meeting was read and approved.

The following communication:

The Honorable Councilmen,
City of Belding.
Gentlemen:

At a meeting of the Board of Commerce held on Wednesday night, resolutions were passed by unanimous vote commending the city council in its plans for additional fire equipment. Following the installation of the new equipment the Board will attempt to bring about a downward revision of the insurance rate to which we are entitled.

It was also voted as the opinion of all present, that the city should take some action on the garbage question either by garbage disposal or at least through regulating ordinance with teeth in it, that will compel property owners to clean up where they now seem to have absolutely no respect for the public health. Particular reference was made to the condition of our alleys at nearly all times adorned with garbage heaps, mud holes and filthy water.

It was further voted that the matter of telephone rates is of sufficient importance to all our people, that the city should be represented by its legal advisor, the City Attorney, at the hearing to be held in Lansing at an early date. The general idea being that even if we expected little in our favor, we could expect much less if the telephone people alone were represented.

All of which is respectfully submittted.

Yours truly,
B. F. Brown, Sec.

Moved by Ald. Benedict, seconded by Ald. Friedly that the communication from B. F. Brown, Sec. of Bd. of Commerce be received and placed on file.

Yeas: Ald. Benedict, Friedly, McCue, Washburn. Yeas, 4. Nays, 0.

CITY BILLS:

Spencer Lt. Co., lights for city hall for Feb., 1922	18.22
Lights for City of Belding	351.59
Belding Banner Pub. Co., Feb. bill	57.44
Carrie Sullivan, 7 days care of Mr. and Mrs. Bennett	21.00
Community Hospital, care of Mrs. Mary Gardner, 3 weeks 3 days	85.00
C. N. Wilson, M. A. Reed, Extra help, auditing City Books for year of 1921	225.00
Belding Hardware Co., Mdse	.53
Belding Coal & Ice Co., coal and wood for city poor	37.38
Corner Drug Store, fumigators and anticeptic	16.80
Ed. Covert,, repairing lock on office door	.25
CITY LIBRARY:	
Spencer Light & Power Co., lights at Library	12.96
RIVER RIDGE:	
Wm. Smith, 2 days labor at River Ridge	6.00
STREET BILLS:	
Belding Gas and Oil Co., gas and oil	7.33
E. Anderson, 1 casing	7.00
Roy Knight, timer and labor	2.55

Moved by Ald. Benedict, seconded by Ald. Friedly that the City Bills be allowed and paid.

Yeas: Ald. Benedict, Friedly, McCue. Washburn. Yeas, 4. Nays, 0.

WATER WORKS—Labor Bills:

Delbert Bradshaw, 11 days at $3.33	36.63
E. Eggleston, 7 days at $3.33	23 31
Chas. Johnson, Feb. Sal.	125.00
E. J. Oberlin, Feb. Sal.	125.00
Waite & Webster, supplies	1.00
P. A. Frederick, bill for merchandise	2.52
P. A. Frederick, Ft. paid on fire clay	2.55
Spencer Lt. Co., Feb. bill for lights	4.72
Belding Gas and Oil Co., gas and oil	14.82
Unger's Garage, 2 wrenches	1.40
H. V. Wood, shipment from Grand Rapids	5.43
Belding-Hall Co., Inv. for 26 Ga. Galv. Iron	2.58
Belding Bros. & Co., Machinist labor making pump rods for city water works	40.50
Crandall Pkg. Co., Inv. 2|28|22	28.29
Furnace Lining Materials Co., Inv. 1|11|22	18.00
P. M. R. R. Co., Ft. on coal	172.17
Crane Co, Inv. 2|1|22	.90
Leitelt Iron Works. Inv. 2|8|22	24.00

Moved by Ald. Friedly, seconded by Ald. Benedict. that the Water Works bills be allowed and paid.

Yeas: Ald. Benedict, Friedly, McCue. Washburn. Yeas, 4. Nays, 0.

Moved by Ald. McCue, seconded by Ald. McCue that we do now adjourn.

Yeas: Ald. Benedict, Friedly, McCue, Washburn. Yeas, 4. Nays, 0.

C. S. Hoover, Clerk.

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Special Notice

Commencing March 6th, the Greenville, Belding & Ionia Bus Schedule will be as follows:

Read Down							Read Up			
p m	p m	a m	a m				a m	a m	p m	p m
4:00	1:30	10:00	7:30	Lv.	Greenville	Ar.	8:30	11:30	2:30	5:30
4:30	2:00	10:30	8:00		Belding		8:00	11:00	2:00	5:00
4:55	2:35	10:55	8:25		Orleans		7:35	10:35	1:35	4:35
5:30	3:00	11:30	9:00	Ar.	Ionia	Lv.	7:00	10:00	1:00	4:00

Sunday Schedule Same as Usual

Close connections at Ionia for Portland, Grand Ledge, Lansing, Lyons, Pewamo, St Johns, Owosso

For Information call—Citz. phone 469

E. C. HIGGINS, Greenville, Mich.

Cars can be chartered at any time, place or occasion.

SPECIAL

For Friday and Saturday

10 lb can Red Label Syrup, per can	49c
10 lb can Blue Label Syrup, per can	44c
5 lb can Red Label Syrup, per can	29c
5 lb can Blue Label Syrup, per can	24c
5 lb can Maple Flavor Syrup, per can	34c

REGULAR SELLING PRICES

No. 1 Dairy Butter, per lb	36c
Fresh Eggs, per doz.	22c

GOOD VALUES

15 oz. pkg. Sun-Maid Seedless Raisins, pk.	24c
15 oz. pkg. Sun-Maid Seeded Raisins, pkg.	22c
None Such Mince Meat, pkg.	15c

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