



POLLY'S MISTAKE.

"Now, which one?" asked Polly, and she stood on tiptoe that she might determine the point.

She was a plump Polly.

She was a short Polly and the mantel-piece was a high one, so that there was no other thing to do than to stand on tiptoe while she gazed at two faces and wondered, "Which one?"

They were not female faces, but Polly, though young, was old enough to take a very positive interest in masculine faces. She had already decided which one she would like to marry, and would she have been surprised if some day, out of that surface of paper on the mantel-piece, had broken a voice, "Polly, my dear, as I love you, will you marry me?"

But he had maintained a grave silence because only a picture, for which reason nobody could claim credit for unusual discretion of speech for a man. Yes, dumb, dumb, and that gave Polly's warm affection a chill. Then he was her "first cousin Joe," and a kind of brother, was he not? That gave her marrying fever a still colder chill. This young man was very handsome. His eyes were as expressive as Polly's, and that is saying a good deal. Her eyes were black, soft and loving. Any one that had eyes as handsome as Polly Ricker's, owned an excellent piece of property. His features were very regular. The lines of his mouth showed firmness, yet tenderness, and Polly, first looking round to see if Aunt Nabby were "peekin'," had kissed the picture the very day of our story. Aunt Nabby was not given, though, to "peekin'." That very moment she was frying doughnuts because Polly liked them. The other picture on the mantel-piece was that of an honest, reliable soul; but Polly had no affection for him. She was a visitor under the roof, and in the two weeks that her visit had stretched across, she had not learned very much about the history of beings whose only presence was that of pictures. Had not Aunt Nabby said that this plain sensible face belonged to a sailor, a young captain?

"Oh, the other is a seaman only; but I had rather marry a handsome sailor than a homely, stiff captain," was Polly's opinion.

She sighed.

She was thinking that the handsome sailor was only Cousin Joe. She hesitated a moment, kissed the photograph again and then went downstairs to look out of a window fronting the sea and to pity sailors.

Everybody in the neighborhood had something to do with the sea, which was only a bit of a way off and kept pounding night and day on the rocks, making all the fuss it could to attract as much attention as possible. To keep this unruly sea in any kind of subjection every one must do something. Uncle Ronald Ricker was the keeper of the yellow life-saving station on the rim of the gray sands.

Uncle Ronald was a big, burly, good-natured kind of a fellow. Aunt Nabby was a slim, slender woman, whose thoughts were quick-moving, darting out like swallows' wings, and her eye sparkled like a run of brook water the day the spring has lifted the lid of ice covering it.

Said Uncle Ronald to Aunt Nabby in the hearing of Polly at the window: "I'd like to have you, Nabby, clean up at the station, if you will, sweep round and so on. Nothin' doin' there in summer, but I want to keep things sort of slicked up, and I'll 'low you pay for it. I've got to be off to my tater-patch t'other side of the back pastur'."

"I will, Ronald."

Ronald Ricker left the room.

"Polly, soon as I have finished these ere doughnuts—then—come on!" cried Aunt Nabby. "We will run that life-savin' station this forenoon. They shall have a female crew today. You get the brooms ready. It is a worn-out thing down at the station. We'll be lively and start soon."

A smart but sprightly broom-brigade soon charged on the station and captured it without difficulty. Windows were thrown up, the brooms set to whisking, and the dust routed.

The living-room below, the men's headquarters by day, speedily was swept. The boat-room, with its apparatus of surf-boat and breeches-buoy, life-car and Lyle gun, rockets and signals, received prompt attention, and this floor also was thoroughly swept. Aunt Nabby remained to do some "cleanin' out" behind the door where one of the other but less particular crew had left a heap of dirt. Polly, singing away, went upstairs hopping like a robin from step to step, landing on the threshold of the masculine crew's quarters by night.

"The beds look all right," said Polly, eyeing six iron beds, neatly covered with bedding and set in two prim rows along the northern and southern walls of the room. "Yes, they look all right, but I know those men didn't sweep under the beds. No, before I sweep I'll take a look off from the look-out on the roof."

This was a platform on the roof, railed about, and supporting a flag-staff. Here on clear days a watch was kept by the surfmen. If need be, a signal could be run up to the top of the staff, and any needy craft on the water promptly instructed.

"Guess women's eyes can see as quick as men's," murmured Polly, "and we will have it so today."

On her way up a short flight of steps to the lookout she halted in a little recess and examined the box of signals kept there. Since her arrival she had been very much interested in the signal department, and, instructed by Uncle Ronald, felt that she could now handle those signals as readily as the keeper himself.

"Don't I wish that Cousin Joe, whom I never saw only in his picture, were off on the water and needed some signaling from the shore!"

If she had allowed the promptings of her heart and the signal vocabulary permitted, she would have at once signaled, "I love thee, Joseph." But he was just Cousin Joe, and repressing any demonstrations of special interest, she lifted the scuttle in the roof, threw it back, climbed upon the platform, and looked off.

Her heart started up and began to beat like a thresher's flail, for there was a schooner flying a signal. She knew what it meant. Was it Cousin Joe off there? Whoever it was, a signal of "distress" was fluttering above the vessel. Should Polly run down to get Uncle Ronald? When in summer, during the season of closed doors and vacant rooms at the station, any disaster might happen on the water, the proper procedure was to run for the keeper and notify him. At the head of as many of the old crews he could gather from cornfields and fish-houses the keeper hurried to the station, operating as might be advisable. Uncle Ronald, though, was off on a "tater-patch," a mile away. In the mean time the whole United States navy, ducking their heads one after the other, could sink off this very station.

"Wasn't a female crew running this station today?" soliloquized Polly, "I'll answer that signal myself."

The schooner was so near the shore that if her sails had been set the appropriate signal would have been the JD of the international code of signals, "You are standing in to danger," but this vessel had dropped her canvas, as if meaning to halt anyway, and then she had a suspicious look, as if sinking.

"I'll let them know they are recognized, and that they may expect

help," thought Polly, working swiftly. Turning away from the staff, at whose head now fluttered this signal like a tongue of cheering speech, Polly ran down the short stairway into the crew's night-quarters, then down the stairs, dropping to the kitchen, and cried, in jerks:

"Oh—oh! Auntie—quick! Danger!"

"What!"

"Quick!"

She was now darting through the outer door.

"Get your uncle, Polly!"

"Too—too—far off! Come!"

And Nabby sprang after Polly.

"Let's—take—uncle's—boat, Aunt Nabby!"

"We go off?"

"Yes—yes! You can row; so can I."

"Good for ye!" cried Aunt Nabby.

"I am with ye."

They rushed uncle's boat down to the firm, shelving sands. They pulled it through the low-running surf, and soon were alongside the schooner in distress.

"Quick—quick!" said a sailor, bringing a box to the vessel's rail. "We run on the rock in the night, lost our boat, though we got off the rock, started a leak, and have been settin' ever since—there, I'll go back with ye. Then I'll pull off and get another load. Cap'n is in the cabin getting things up. You are good to come off—women, too. Ready? Hump—now? All together. Pull!"

The boat was rowed ashore, the box, precious with papers and money, carried up the sands, and then the sailor said:

"Lemme go back alone. I will make more room for the next load, with cap'n or any one that comes."

"I won't marry that captain, running on a rock," thought Polly. "He must be stupid and homely. Give me a handsome sailor."

She thought of Cousin Joe and the homely captain perched in state on the mantel-piece at the house.

As if looking behind and discovering her thoughts the sailor remarked:

"It wa'n't the fault of our cap'n that we were on that rock, or nary-body's. Things will happen, you know."

"I wouldn't marry him anyway," silently resolved Polly.

As the boat was rustling through the surf, Aunt Nabby said:

"Now, Polly, we are the crew today you know, and must do just as a crew does to the shipwrecked. I'll start a fire in the kitchen stove in the station. I saw some coffee and sugar there in the pantry, and I'll git some milk and cake and biskit. We'll fix 'em. You watch by the 'stuff, as it comes. Rest of the crew is agoin' to the station."

Load after load was safely brought from the schooner, which all this time was settling. With the last boat-load came the captain. Polly started when she saw him step on the sands. Why hadn't she seen it while he was in the boat nearing the land? If Cousin Joe's picture had left the mantel-piece, and, turning up, had stepped out of the boat, she could not have been more surprised. This was Cousin Joe himself. She sprang forward.

"Why, Cousin Joe, is it you?" she cried, flying up to him, reaching as high as she could and throwing her arms about him.

"I—I—I—" stammered the young man, blushing, though not displeased. "I—I—thank you with my whole heart for helping us so nobly, but I am not your Cousin Joe, sorry to say!"

Not Polly's Cousin Joe?

"Why, why!" she murmured, in confusion, starting back.

Another voice, though, was speaking—somebody from the station—and laughing heartily. "Dick Warner, I do declare—ha, ha! Glad to see ye hum! Polly, Polly, dear, come here! This is Dick Warner."

"I thought it was Cousin Joe—that picture on the mantel-piece," said Polly, blushing and hanging low her head.

"No, no," screamed Aunt Nabby, "You made a mistake. Cousin Joe is t'other picture—ha, ha! He'll be hum soon!"

Yes, the real Cousin Joe came home soon, and just in time to hear of the engagement between a certain young female surfman and Captain Richard Warner.—New York Ledger.

"GATCHING."

Most Agonizing Torture Ever Conceived by Man.

Innocent Persons Buried Alive in Fresh Plaster.

American lawmakers, judges and chief executives might learn many things by studying the methods in vogue in Persia. For instance, they might learn how not to execute criminals, and they might study the advantage, or lack of it, of executing an innocent man as a warning to the guilty.

Five men were recently buried alive in plaster of Paris in the province of Shiraz, Persia, as a warning to highway robbers who had been committing depredations on the road between Bushire and Isfahan. Shortly after the murder of the Shah a succession of robberies occurred, and it was estimated that property worth half a million changed hands within a week. Almost every day travelers were stopped, robbed even of their clothes and then beaten with sticks.

H. R. H. Ruhkn-ed-Dowleh, Governor of Shiraz, concluded that steps must be taken to stop the robberies. He could not catch them, but he already had five men in prison for refusing to pay taxes. He concluded to execute the five innocent tax-dodgers in order to frighten the guilty highwaymen.

One of the most horrible modes of execution in vogue in Persia is known as "Gatching." A hole is dug in the ground to a depth of three or four feet. A hollow pillar is erected above this. The victim is then placed in the hole and plaster of Paris poured in around him and water added.

This mortar, known as gatch, soon hardens, swells and obstructs the circulation of the blood. The suffering of the victim is awful—words cannot picture it. Death does not afford a welcome relief for hours and each minute the agony grows more intense.

A correspondent of the London Graphic witnessed the execution. Not knowing the fate in store for them the men walked to the place of execution without fear, surrounded by a howling mob. The mob was kept back from the torture place by a cordon of soldiers.

"They were taken into a high-walled garden, a guard being placed at the entrance," writes the correspondent, "and in a short time the first to be executed was brought out. Round his neck was a steel collar with a chain, which his guard held tightly in his hand. Some one offered him a pitcher of water, from which he eagerly drank, and then, not knowing to what awful death he was doomed, he walked calmly and without a word to his well. It took nearly an hour to fill the well with gatch, during all which time the sticks of the soldiers were in use to keep the crowd from pressing too close and hampering the movements of those employed with the gatch.

"When the gatch became solid and tightened on the poor prisoner, his yells were frightful to listen to, and as they were carried over the walled garden, those waiting their turn realized that the death to which they were doomed, so far from being the painless one they had hoped for, was instead of a terrible nature. When, three days later, I passed along the road, I found capitals had been added to the pillars, covering the heads of the poor men, who had thus horribly been done to death."

The correspondent says that the Governorship of a state is held by the man who makes the largest present to the Shah. As the Governor collects the taxes and must force the amount of this present, from the people as well as a substantial sum for himself, the condition of the people is pitiable. Unless they struggle to raise the amounts demanded they are liable to be thrown into prison or they may be executed at the pleasure of the Governor who has bought this office.

A Moderate Price.

"Isn't my wheel a beauty. It cost \$300."

"Why, I didn't know bicycles ever cost that much."

"Ob, it cost only \$50, but I spent the rest in repairs."

The Girl and Her Vocation.

"Before any girl determines upon outside training for outside work would she not do well to weigh and measure strictly her capacity, opportunity, need, and be relatively sure of all?" inquires Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney in the Ladies' Home Journal. "Are you capable, in any marked and special degree, for one particular pursuit and use? Is it right and feasible, in the apparent providential ordering, that you should take time and money to fit and equip yourself for it, and then can you reasonably expect chance and scope to do your chosen errand? Is there need of others to meet, need of your own to supply? Answer truly. Do not resolve to be this or that because you think it a pretty thing to be, or because some one else has succeeded in it. It may have been her work, and yet not be yours. A young girl once wrote me, 'I have set my heart on being an authoress. If I cannot be one my life will be a failure.' Her letter and the specimens of authorship inclosed, were themselves argument for, at least, very patient study and practice. She needed, also, to live longer and deeper before she would find a true message to deliver. I told her so, in the solicited answer. I tell them so; for this was only one appeal of many. * * To you others, who only have a little more time than money, and would like something to busy you and help fill your portemonnaie, there are different things to say. Compare your need with that of others before you take up occupation that may be their livelihood. To intrude into a crowded rank of workers only to add a pleasure or an elegance to your comforts would be extreme fracture of the eighth commandment. Forbearance from this might leave many a chance open to real necessity, which now is barred or neutralized by cheapening competition. Make conscience of this, as you would make conscience against robbery direct."

A Remarkable Conscience.

"I'll tell you the queerest thing you ever heard," said Chief Dickinson of the fire department the other day, "and it is a true story at that. In 1864, toward the end of the war, I was at Fort Lincoln, at Washington, the leader of the band of the 150th Ohio Regiment. The war was hot, and, of course, we were all intensely interested in the very latest we could get about it. Newspapers were scarce and when we managed to get hold of one we regarded it as a treasure.

"One day I was fortunate enough to get hold of a copy of the Philadelphia Inquirer, which contained a lot of war news. After I had read it I handed it around among the boys, and finally loaned it to a man named Breymer. Yesterday who should walk into my office but Breymer, who returned the paper with thanks. He was looking over his old papers to get information to assist the widow of an old comrade in getting a pension and ran across the Inquirer. What do you think of the conscience of a man who would return a paper after all that time?"—Cleveland Leader.

Not Inviting More Collisions.

"No, sir," said the man who had wavered; "I won't learn to ride a bicycle. I had thoughts of trying it, but I have just heard of a peculiar trait in the machine that caused me to change my mind."

"What's that?"

"I understand that when you first try to ride, if you see anything you especially wish to avoid, you're almost certain to run into it."

"There's a good deal of truth in it."

"Well, that settles the wheel for me. I have enough trouble with bill collectors as it is."—Washington Star.

Wide Rings as Swell Jewelry.

Rings that cover the finger from the knuckle to the joint above are the latest designs in the matter of swell jewelry. Their only disadvantage lies in the fact that the number worn must necessarily be limited by the size of one's finger. Moderate sized diamonds surrounding some single large stone, or set just above it in a pear-shaped group, form the usual setting.

Germany had 29,700 university students last term, the law students outnumbering those studying in any other faculty.