

Storm Country Polly

by Grace Miller White

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CHAPTER XVI—Continued.

She stooped and smoothed back the hair from Evelyn's wet brow.

"Now, while I'm gone you just lay quiet-like, askin' Jesus every minute that your man'll be hikin' here faster'n a crow can fly."

Evelyn raised her head.

"Kiss me, Polly dear," she begged, with streaming eyes.

"All right!" murmured the squatter girl. "Kisses're mighty comfortin', ain't they?"

She stooped and laid her lips on Evelyn's and, turning swiftly, left the room. Evelyn heard her snuffing the candles outside and then heard the latch click as Pollyop closed the door behind her.

Bounding out into the snow, Pollyop raced through the road toward Bishop's hut, for she had decided to speak to him before going on. She lifted the latch and peeped in.

Larry sat by the stove, puffing his pipe. He gave her but a glance then dropped his head mournfully.

"Where's Lya, Larry?" Polly asked in a hissing whisper.

"Gone home," came in a grunt.

"She's sick to his stummock, an' so be I. I'm most froze, too."

With her hand on the latch of the door which she had closed against the storm, the girl stood in shivering indecision. She felt intuitively the inner emotions going on inside the stolid speaker. She wanted to throw her arms about him and tell him all that had passed in her home during the last hour. But if she did, Larry would take the blame of the crime on himself. Of course he would! Polly Hopkins knew the heart of Larry Bishop as if she had made it herself from God's own clay. If the person in her shack had been Old Marc, he would have had no compunction in putting him out of the way, but a woman—

"I don't want you for anything tonight, Larry Bishop," she broke out, fumbling with the latch. "An', mind you, dearie, never tell nobody you an' Lya swiped Old Marc's woman. That's a promise, Larry, ain't it?"

"Yep," replied Bishop, nauseated.

"Then go to bed an' sleep!" returned Pollyop. "You'll get warm, an'—an'—I'll see you tomorrow—mebbe, I won't be needin' you in my shanty tonight."

Then she went swiftly out, slammed the door and was away like a winter bird, before the squatter could question her.

Swiftly she ran on, her hair almost on end because, to save her friends, she must face the haughty MacKenzie himself. It had been her cruelty that had prompted their act, and now, besides saving Evelyn, she must shield them. The nearer she came to the MacKenzie house, the harder her heart pounded, with dread at the task before her.

In the meantime Marcus MacKenzie and his wife's mother were together, the lady stretched out on the divan, and Marcus pacing the floor. Since MacKenzie had left the Hopkins shack, he had ridden madly over the hills, urging every man available to help him find his wife. Secretly he had wept tears such as never had poured from his eyes before in all his supercilious days.

Having set in motion what aid he could summon from town and country, he had come back home to the hysterical mother. He had no comforting assurances to give her, or any to allay the burning grief within himself. Evelyn had disappeared as if the ground had opened and swallowed her up. He paused in front of Mrs. Robertson, his dark, handsome face working painfully.

"You're very sure she was feeling well just before she went out?" he inquired. "She didn't act as if she had anything to worry over?"

Mrs. Robertson used her handkerchief before she answered.

"I can't think of anything," she hesitated, "unless it was about Bob. Lately he's been so different. I asked Eve one day—"

"She broke off and dissolved in tears.

"Yes, you asked her one day—what?" MacKenzie urged.

"It was about Bob," continued the weeping lady. "Eve thought he was suffering over—over—"

"Well!" snapped Marcus.

Would the woman never cease her everlasting crying and give him a clue if she had one?

"Well!" he goded her on more furiously.

"Polly Hopkins!" she sobbed. "Eve said your continual pounding at the squatters had about broken the boy's spirit."

"Rubbish!" exclaimed MacKenzie. "Eve wouldn't waste her time worrying over such rats. Bob's a fool, I've discovered!—Where is he?"

"I don't know," answered Mrs. Robertson. "He goes away for days at a time without saying a word to Eve or me. And he looks perfectly dreadful. I think Evelyn's grieved over him."

"Why didn't you tell me so before?" cried the man, turning on her swiftly. "I'd have soon made my young gentleman put on a smile, at least when he's home. It's a shame my poor

wife had to be tormented like that!"

That he had started the rumpus and done his full half of the quarreling never occurred to him. He was determined to find some one to blame for his wife's disappearance.

"Well, there's one thing certain," he ejaculated, after measuring the room several times with long strides. "I can't stay here, but good God! I don't know where to go."

A deep groan fell from his lips, and he began with heavy tread to walk up and down again.

"Can't you think of any place she might have gone?" he begged. "You know all her friends. Where would she go if she had determined to leave home?"

"Leave home?" gasped Mrs. Robertson, her jaw dropping.

"Yes!" faltered Marcus. "I don't know whether she told you or not, but we had some words before I started for Cortland."

"Of course she didn't tell me," came from behind the lady's handkerchief. "She never tells me anything, but I heard it. You were quarreling over the squatters, and in Eve's condition, I think you might spare her a little. —She's not strong! So much wrangling makes her sick!—I wish Bob were home. Oh, dear, I can't stand it."

"It's Bob that's made all this trouble," snarled Marcus. "He's spent several months trying to circumvent me about the squatters, and Eve and I would have had no quarrels at all if he had attended to his own affairs."

He spoke moodily, conscious that he had treated his wife harshly, yet unwilling to admit it.

Mrs. Robertson, touched with the same feeling, sat up, wiping her face

was losing his mind. Polly thought by the blank expression of his face that his wits had gone completely. Ignoring the woman whom she detested, she went rapidly to MacKenzie's side.

"I had her roped up in the bed when you was there tonight, mister," she told him, the words tumbling over each other in the haste of confession. "I were gon' to chop her head off to get even with you. But—but—my dead Granny Hope, an' the Biggest Mammy in All the Worl'd wouldn't let me."

It seemed an eternity to the quaking young speaker before Marcus threw up his head and took a long breath.

"She—she's alive?" he demanded hoarsely. "You're very sure she isn't dead? Girl," he bounded up and grasped Pollyop's arm, "if you lie to me—"

"I ain't lyin' to you, mister," interrupted Polly dully. "You don't need to be scared for Miss Eve, but now you'd best come along to my hut an' get her. She's mournin' for you in Granny Hope's coop-hole, covered up with blankets."

Something like a huge fist struck MacKenzie. The conviction that the squatter girl's words were true lifted him immediately from the bottom depths of hopelessness. The sudden inrush of joyous relief brought with it a mental illumination, and he saw himself as others had seen him. The terrible, blighting uncertainty he had borne for a few maddening hours the girl before him had known for months. If she were to blame for his suffering, what was the measure of his own responsibility?

He turned swiftly to his mother-in-law and said huskily:

"Call some one to get this child some dry clothes. Take anything of Eve's you can find that will keep her warm, and for God's sake, take those ragged boots off her feet!" He sprang to the bell. "I'll order the team."

When he had given his orders to the servant who appeared at the door, he sank back into a chair, and Mrs. Robertson went swiftly out.

Utterly oblivious of the squatter girl's presence, Marcus MacKenzie buried his face in his hands. The new Pollyop, the Polly of the Sun, crept forward and touched him.

"Your woman's all right," she said huskily. "Don't cry! She told me about—the little kid a-comin' in the summer, an' she howled like mad to come along with me. But I says to her she couldn't walk all this way to you without dyin'."

The soft tones vibrated sympathetically as she voiced the assurances, MacKenzie thrust up his hand and clutched the slim brown fingers.

"Tell me something about it while we're alone," he whispered.

Pollyop shuddered.

"Well, sir," she began, so low that MacKenzie had to raise his head to hear, "all the squatters hate you, but none of 'em was wicked like me. I said, I did, that you couldn't be hurt no way only through your woman, an'—an'—I was gon' to cut her head off with the ax an' then sling 'er in the lake. I s'pose I'm gon' to get sent up for years, but I just had to come and tell you."

Before MacKenzie, agast at the danger his dear one had faced, could answer, Mrs. Robertson entered, followed by Evelyn's maid.

"I'll get my coat," exclaimed Marcus, jumping up. "Dress the girl warm and send along Evelyn's fur motor coat."

A furtive smile curled the maid's lips as she helped pull off Jeremiah's heavy coat, and then grew broader as Pollyop slipped out of Daddy's great boots. Yet the woman admitted to herself as she dried the wet feet and attired the squatter girl in her mistress' beautiful clothes that she was pretty, even prettier than Mrs. MacKenzie.

When the robing process was finished, Mrs. Robertson glanced over the little figure and grudgingly acknowledged to herself that there was something of elegance in the girl's bearing, even if she were a squatter.

"Come here!" she said. A haughty gesture indicated the spot. "Right here before me."

Polly's shaking legs carried her within a few inches of the august presence.

"You're very sure, girl," asked Mrs. Robertson, "that my daughter's safe in your shack? How did she come there?"

Polly remembered Larry Bishop and Lya Braeger. She had been instrumental in bringing them within the prison shadows, and if any one suffered from the deed done that night, it must not be her friends. She alone must take the blame!

"I wheedled 'er there, ma'am," she replied humbly. "I'm gon' to tell her man all about it."

Marcus entered and started back as he caught sight of Polly. How beautiful she was, bedecked in his wife's clothes! Then it came to him that even in her rags she had had a distinctive loveliness. Both Bob and Evelyn— As that precious name went

through his mind, his thoughts flew to the squatter's hut where his frail young wife awaited him.

"Come along quickly," he said, going directly to Polly.

How changed he seemed, how gentle he was as he took hold of her arm and led her away; and so preoccupied was she with this thought that the beauty of the clothes which she wore made no impression upon her. She wondered dully when MacKenzie lifted her bodily into the sleigh and the coachman chirruped to the horses, just what he intended to do with her tomorrow.

She looked back upon the time the authorities had sent Meg Williams to a reform school and also recalled the girl's home-coming after her term had been served. Now that she, herself, was in danger of the like treatment, Pollyop searched her mind for the details that Meg had given of the horrible place.

As the horses trotted along the boulevard, Pollyop's chin sank into the warm fur about her neck, and until they turned into the narrow lane from the road, no one spoke a word.

"Go straight to the lake, Hank," ordered MacKenzie, and at the sound of his deep voice, Pollyop felt another shock of surprise. She had heard it so often in strident abuse! Now it was actually pleasant to listen to!

Down the hill through the furry flakes of snow the strong horses picked their way. Once the cutter nearly turned on its side but righted itself. The Hopkins but was dark when they drove up before it. Marcus jumped into the snow, picked Polly out of the cutter as if she had been a kitten, and waded through the drift to the narrow path leading into the house.

He put the girl down before the door, and turning, called to the coachman:

"Drive the team down the road, Hank, out of the wind! I'll call you when I want you!"

It was Pollyop's trembling hand that unlatched the shanty door. It was she who struck a match and touched it to the candle. Then she pointed to Granny Hope's room.

"She's in there, mister," she said, trembling like an aspen leaf.

Then because she was about to face an outraged wife in the presence of a powerful husband, she sat down, shaking with fear from head to foot.

CHAPTER XVII

In the meanwhile a covered carriage containing two men and a little boy was making slow progress along the drifted boulevard. About two miles from Ithaca a double cutter, with sleigh bells ringing, dashed by them, the little light on the back of it glowing like a steady red eye until a sharp curve in the road blotted it from sight.

"Somebody else out, if 'tis a bad night," commented the older man, who held the box.

"They went awful fast, too, Daddy Hopkins," murmured the child. "Didn't 'um, darlin'?"

"Yep, son," was the reply. "Sleights go over the snow better'n wagons."

The words hardly penetrated the younger man's reverie. His thoughts were busy with a squatter girl who would have a real Thanksgiving the next day. Her joy he could picture, but he could not join it. All his thoughts of her were marred by another vision that poisoned his every moment. Never since he had found Oscar Bennett dying in Polly's bed had he known a peaceful instant.

When the vehicle came to the corner where MacKenzie's magnificent turnout had swung into the lane leading to the row of squatter shacks at the lakeside, Robert Percival opened the carriage door and thrust his head out.

"This is where we turn," he shouted to the driver. "Go slow! The drifts are deep all the way down."

When he settled again into his seat, he remarked:

"It's a bad night, Hopkins. Perhaps it would have been better to have waited until morning, after all."

The other man bent over the boy's head and laid his face against it.

"'Twould had to be something more'n a snowstorm to keep me in Ithaca all night," he returned. "Where my pretty brat is, I want to be."

"Of course, of course," sighed Robert.

But he did not utter aloud the thought which flung to his lips that he was tortured by the same wish, too. What he did say was:

"Your daughter will be asleep, I've no doubt."

"Mebbe," Hopkins answered. "But Pollyop'll be glad to hop out of bed for her daddy an' Jerry baby!"

Then he coughed as if trying to add something else.

"I been wantin' to tell you all day, Mr. Percival," he said awkwardly, "how grateful I be to you. It's kinda hard to say it in words."

"There's no need, I assure you," returned Robert. "The only thing I regret is that you should have been compelled to stay in prison so long."

"But we're home now!" was the happy answer. "An' I'm thankin' you for me an' my brats too."

"Pollyop," squealed the child, wriggling. "Daddy, Wee Jerry wants Pollyop."

"Hush, Jerry," soothed his father. "We're a-comin' near home now.— There! Here we be."

As they descended from the carriage, the baby hid his face in his big father's shoulder.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



"Why Didn't You Tell Me So Before?" Cried the Man, Turning on Her Swiftly.

The KITCHEN CABINET

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"The cuckoo drinks the celestial juice of the mango tree and is not proud; the frog drinks the swamp-water and quacks with conceit."

WHAT TO EAT

Here are two unusual soups that you will like to try:



Crumbs Cream Soup.—Boil one quart of water on a half hour with one carrot, one stalk of celery, one onion, one-half a parsnip, all to be finely chopped. Strain; add one tablespoonful of salt, one teaspoonful of white pepper, one cupful of finely sifted crumbs, and two tablespoonfuls each of butter and flour, blended. Stir over the fire until the soup boils, then add three cupfuls of this cream, and two well-beaten eggs, continue cooking with careful stirring until the eggs are set.

Flemish Soup.—Cook two ounces of minced raw ham in one-half cupful of olive oil or butter; add three onions, three stalks of celery, and six potatoes, all sliced; and let cook until the vegetables begin to brown. Turn the whole into a soup kettle containing one quart of stock, and continue to cook until the potatoes are boiled to a mush. Strain, return the liquid to the kettle, thicken with three tablespoonfuls of flour, rubbed smooth with a little water. Add one-half teaspoonful of poultry seasoning and salt and pepper to taste. Just before serving, add one cupful of cream and two well-beaten eggs; stir until the eggs are set, and serve immediately.

Fruit Rolls.—Take one cupful each of raisins and walnuts and one-fourth of a cupful of candied ginger, all chopped fine. Add shredded coconut and powdered sugar, knead and roll in a long roll. Coat with coconut and set in a cold place until firm.

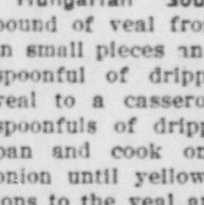
Prune Souffle.—Let soak over night one-half pound of prunes in cold water. In the morning cook in the same water until tender, sift through a colander and sweeten with one-half cupful of sugar. Beat the whites of two eggs until very stiff, add the prune pulp, beating from the bottom up with a wire beater. Pour into a greased pudding dish and bake 20 to 30 minutes. Serve with a custard made by using the yolks of the eggs, one cupful of milk and two tablespoonfuls of sugar. Use four whites, if a larger amount is needed, as the egg adds the bulk to the dish.

"Trust him little who praises all, him less who censures all, and him least who is indifferent to all."

"Self-conquest is the greatest of victories."

GOOD EATING

A good goulash is a dish not to be despised. The simplest of foods may be most appetizing if carefully prepared and seasoned. The most complex and extravagant food may be spoiled by the handling.



Hungarian Goulash.—Take one pound of veal from the shoulder, cut in small pieces and brown in a tablespoonful of drippings. Remove the veal to a casserole, add four tablespoonfuls of drippings to the frying pan and cook one cupful of diced onion until yellow, then add the onions to the veal and three tablespoonfuls of flour to the drippings and reserve to add for the gravy. To the veal and onions add 1½ cupfuls of boiling water, cover and cook slowly for three hours; an hour before serving add two cupfuls of diced potatoes and one of diced turnips. Cook until tender, add the fat and flour to the casserole and serve from the casserole.

Melt four tablespoonfuls of fat, add one tablespoonful of minced onion, and cook until soft; add four tablespoonfuls flour, seasoning to taste, and three cupfuls of tomato; cook, stirring constantly until smooth and thick. Cook five minutes, then add one cupful of grated cheese and the spaghetti, mixing with a fork lightly. Pile in the center of a hot platter, garnish with strips of boiled ham.

Veal Soup.—Take two pounds of the knuckle of veal, cover with water and cook until the veal is tender. There should be five or six cupfuls of stock. Add two cupfuls of diced potatoes to the stock and cook until tender. Cut the meat in small cubes, add them to the cooked potatoes, 1½ tablespoonfuls of mushroom catchup, one-half teaspoonful of salt and pepper to season. Thicken slightly with a tablespoonful of flour mixed with one tablespoonful of butter, and when well cooked, to the meat and stock. Chop one hard-cooked egg and pour the meat and vegetables over it. Lay one-half lemon, thinly sliced, over the meat and serve hot.

Honey Caraway Loaf Cake.—Cream one-half cupful of butter, add one-half cupful each of sugar and honey, two well-beaten eggs, two cupfuls of sifted flour with two teaspoonfuls of baking powder and one teaspoonful of caraway seeds. Pour into a buttered shallow pan and bake twenty-five minutes.

Nellie Maxwell

SCIENCE ON FARM

Agriculturist of Today Must Know Business Thoroughly.

Canadian Tillers of the Soil Have Proved That Old Days of Haphazard Methods Have Gone.

Agriculture in Canada has the status of a profession which both its high standard of operation and the prime place it occupies in national life justify. The days when land was casually filed on and farmed without any intelligent understanding of agricultural processes are going with the dwindling availability of the land, and rapidly passing is the epoch of the destruction of soil values, and the abandonment of farms which have been rendered unproductive. Clearer and clearer has become the realization that farming is a specialized profession requiring special training, and in the place of this spoliation there is an intelligent system of crop rotation, preservation of the virtue of the land, a discovery of the nobility of the farmer's calling and a determination to secure and achieve the best possible in everything.

The Education of the Farmer.

Agricultural colleges, experimental farms, government literature, railway propaganda, all in an appreciation of the national benefits which accrue, contribute to the education of the farmer who, if he starts out in ignorance, speedily discovers the futility and profitlessness of continuing in this state. It is only of comparatively recent years that farming in Canada has become the comprehensive and exhaustive study it is and its tenets been so widely absorbed, and older farmers who have followed haphazard methods or systems scientifically unsound are gradually forced from necessity into an intelligent study and application of their profession.

This brings us to the city man who is anxious to leave his old life for the greater freedom of the country and take a farm for himself, and the foregoing holding good, he need not follow far behind the older farmer if he take up the study of his work seriously, bring energy and intelligence to bear upon a following out of the systems of experienced and successful agriculturists, and utilize the results of the expert investigation and research the Dominion places at his disposal. The whole country is working for him and the novice has almost an equal opportunity with the farmer of a lifetime.

A census of Canadian farmers would probably show that fully one-half are not farmers' sons and were not brought up to the life of the farm. Yet none would criticize Canada's farmers on the score of poor farming methods in general, the excellency of their crops with international honors and the universal demand for their live-stock products refuting this effectively. Significant is it, too, that practically all the farmers who have achieved the most signal honors at international farming competitions have not been lifelong farmers, but city men who, taking to the land after reaching maturity without the remotest previous knowledge of agricultural activities, have through intelligent study and close application of the best farming methods surpassed the efforts of those agriculturists who have continued doing things on the farm in the way their fathers used to do them.

For further particulars, pamphlets regarding Canada, railway rates, etc., apply to F. A. Harrison, 210 N. Third St., Harrisburg, Pa.—Advertisement.

Protection.

Ambassador George Harvey on formal occasions bears himself with a great air of dignity. Among his friends, however, he is very jolly.

A foreign correspondent told the other day of an intimate dinner in a Pall Mall club where Mr. Harvey appeared through some accident with a very shabby umbrella. He explained: "I always carry a green cotton umbrella in London so that Englishmen won't think it worth stealing."

CAN NOW WALK AS WELL AS EVER

Esteemed Lincoln Resident Declares Tanlac Has Made a Clean Sweep of Her Rheumatism and Other Troubles.

"I couldn't believe all they said about Tanlac until I tried it myself, and now I never doubt what I read about it," said Mrs. Anna B. Crawford, 2500 N. 23rd St., Lincoln, Neb., wife of a well-known retired business man.

"I got into a badly run-down condition," she continued, "and suffered greatly from indigestion. I had headache for days at a time, slept poorly and woke up mornings so weak and dizzy I could hardly get up. Then rheumatism set in and made walking difficult and I could scarcely use my arms for the pain.

"But Tanlac has made a clean sweep of my troubles, brought back my appetite and enabled me to gain much weight. It is a pleasure to make a statement in praise of this great medicine."

Tanlac is sold by all good druggists.

Little Room for Criticism. There are so many Jay walkers and so many Jay drivers that it hardly behooves any driver to talk about Jay walkers, or any walker to mention Jay drivers.—Seattle Post-Intelligencer.