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Pink Pearls For Polly

Or, What Became of Her Birthday Gift

By CLARISSA MACKIE

"It is to be my birthday present," bubbled Polly Newton as she paused with young Dr. Mills before the jeweler's window. "Father allowed me to select what I wanted, and I chose the pearls. 'Aren't they lovely?'"

Frank Mills looked long and earnestly at the string of delicate pink pearls, perfectly matched, lying on a bed of white velvet. He was not a judge of gems, but it happened that these particular pearls were famous, and he had heard their value discussed at his club, where it was said they were worth \$10,000.

To a physician whose heart was wrenched with the bitter needs of the suffering poor in a great city it was a sinful price to pay for jewels.

"I shall wear them at my birthday party," went on Polly as they turned away from the window. "You are coming, Dr. Frank?"

"With pleasure, unless something happens. I may have a call. You know, Miss Newton, that my evenings are at the disposal of my poor people. Somebody has to look out for them."

"Oh, yes," said Polly, vaguely conscious that a filmy gray veil had dropped over the rosy happiness of the moment. "I suppose Dr. Rudd takes care of them occasionally."

"Dr. Rudd is very busy just now,

and I try not to call on him to help me out with these evening cases."

"Ah, but you are busy, too," she cried impulsively. "Father says you are the hardest worked man in New York, and yet you sacrifice your precious evenings to them."

"It is not such a sacrifice as you think. They need my help." He smiled down at her.

"I suppose they do," murmured Polly in a troubled tone.

When Dr. Mills left her at the door of the great house where she lived Polly had a sudden presentiment that something would happen to keep Dr. Frank away from her birthday party.

Some dark eyed foreign born baby would be attacked by croup, and away Dr. Frank would go and forget all about her! She could not down the fear that clutched at her heart, the terror that perhaps he did not care for her at all and that never could she swerve him from his allegiance to his poor people.

Of course Polly was in love with Dr. Frank or she would never have cared a jot whether he came to her party or not, and she had surmised in a vague, delicious way that the earnest young

physician had lost his heart to her.

There had been nothing said, no question asked or answered, no promise given, but there was a sweet, uncertain understanding between them. Benjamin Newton liked the young doctor and, poor though he was, would have sanctioned the match.

Yet the specter of the poor people came between them, and Polly felt instinctively that Dr. Frank would always be loyal to his patients in the profession he had chosen, and pretty spoiled Polly hated to think that she would not be omnipotent in her husband's esteem.

Two days later came Polly's birthday and with it the wonderful string of pink pearls. During the day there arrived many other gifts, among them a huge box of flowers from Dr. Mills. These Polly placed in a tall cut glass vase in her own room.

"I do hope he will come," fluttered Polly's heart as she dressed for the occasion.

But Dr. Frank did not come. All through the gay evening Polly watched the door for a glimpse of his fine head and broad shoulders above the crowd of dancers, but hours passed, and still he did not come. Somebody murmured of a great fire down on the east side, and Polly guessed at once that her doctor was down there.

The thought did not bring any warmth of feeling just then. She felt angry with him and jealous of his poor people, who always stood between them.

Polly's bright spirits flagged. She was looking lovely in her simple white satin gown, with the string of pink pearls about her throat and one of Frank's pink roses tucked in her dark hair.

Other suitors might whisper how charming she appeared; other girls might regard her with envy; even her parents might tell her that never had she looked so nice. Polly yearned for the quick light of appreciation in Dr. Frank's eyes.

When the guests had all departed and Polly had kissed her father and mother and assured them that she had had the loveliest time of her life she was left alone in the great drawing room.

On every side gold framed mirrors repeated the reflection of her charming person until she appeared to be the center of a bevy of lovely girls gowned in white satin and wearing pink pearls.

"But he didn't come," whispered Polly to herself with quivering lips. "He didn't care enough. He would rather go to his poor people. I don't believe he cares for pink pearls or any other kind of jewels. He seems to like just people. I suppose he would like me just as well if I wore pink glass beads."

It was a very thoughtful Polly that lay awake with wide eyes the next morning. She wondered what was the need of these poor people that they had such a hold upon Frank Mills.

They were confessedly poor, but her father could help them. He gave thousands to help the poor. Just then there came half forgotten words to Polly's recollection:

"I was sick and in prison, and ye comforted me not."

Polly sat up in bed.

"It is the personal touch that helps almost as much as the money." If we don't visit them how can we know their needs? Dr. Frank knows their sufferings, and it is breaking his heart because he cannot help them. He does the best he can. But what am I doing?

With this question Polly Newton hopped out of bed and dressed in a whirl of enthusiasm.

After breakfast she found her father alone in his study.

"Father, dear, I just love the pink pearls, and I know I chose them for my birthday, but do you care if I sell them and do something else with the money?"

Mr. Newton looked at her blushing downcast face, on which was his first troubled expression, and his indulgent heart took fire at once.

"What is it, Polly, girl? Keep your pearls and let me write a check for whatever you want." He dipped a pen in the ink.

Polly's fingers covered his. "No, father, it's something I want to do with the pink pearls. I want to sacrifice them for something. You don't care?"

"Not in the least, darling. I only

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"Not in the least, darling. I only

want you to be happy."

"I am so grateful, father, dear," and Polly kissed him soberly, and went away.

That afternoon found her at Dr. Mills' shabby office. He came radiant to meet her, looking tired about the eyes and drawn about the mouth, but glad—glad to see her.

Polly sat down in a worn old chair and looked contentedly around at the book lined walls and the desk littered with papers, index files, boxes and bottles.

"It smells awfully druggy," she wrinkled her pretty nose at him; then, as if suddenly recollecting her errand, Polly drew out a leather case and laid it on the cluttered desk.

"Please give those to your poor people," she said gravely.

"Miss Newton—Polly—I can't! It is sweet of you, but they are yours and"—Polly's hand went out in an appealing gesture.

"Ah, please, please, Dr. Frank! I never knew before, and I've been thinking a lot about it. Won't you show me how to feel just as you do toward them? I am missing something out of life, something more than pearls."

A glad light came into the doctor's eyes. His first impulse was to give the jewels back to her, for he knew their great value, and he knew that they gave Polly happiness, and he loved her. His second impulse was to drop the case into the inner pocket of his coat.

"I cannot thank you for this generous gift, Polly," he said gravely, "but will it make you happy to know that the pearls will help to build a vacation home for little children and their mothers? Do you realize that your gift will save hundreds of lives and make others happy and influence still others for lasting good?"

"Do you know that hundreds of mothers and sickly children, who have never seen the real country, never tasted the joys of country life and freedom from the sickening city streets, will be happy and bless you for your gift?" His voice broke suddenly.

Polly was crying softly. "I want you to tell me all about it," she quavered presently.

"I will," said Dr. Frank. And he did. But first he told her an old, old story, and he added that the pink pearls had been a barrier between them.

"Now I am on the other side of the barrier with you and your poor people," murmured Polly contentedly.

"Our poor people, dear," he corrected.

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Different Viewpoints.

Duncan Macpherson was playing golf. Going out he drove brilliantly over a stream in a hollow. "My, but you wish a fine drive over the bonny wee burn!" he remarked to his caddy. Coming home he had to play over this same "burn" for another hole and drove right into it. "Gang ye an' fish th' ba' oot o' yon dirty sewer!" he growled.—Argonaut.

Use For His Head.

Old Gotrox (to his fashionable son)—You and your set thoroughly disgust me. You could get along as well without an head on your shoulders as with one. Algy—Aw, fawther, how weddulous! Why, wheeah would a fellow weah his hat?—Puck.

His Delicate Touch.

"That Muller is a peach at borrowing. At the dance last night he put me the straight, and when he had finished I was 100 marks poorer."—Fliegende Blätter.

Next to acquiring good friends the best acquisition is that of good books.

—Colton.

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