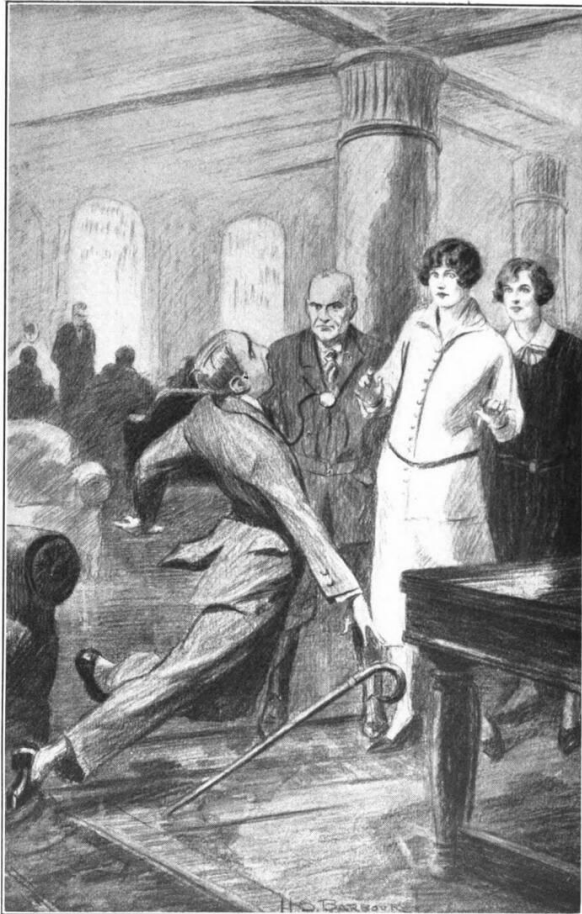


POLLY IN THE SOUTHWEST

BY

LILLIAN ELIZABETH ROY



ALGY MEASURED HIS FULL LENGTH UPON THE FLOOR.

CONTENTS

- I NEWS FROM DODO
- II OLD FRIENDS ONCE MORE
- III DODO JOINS THE RANKS
- IV JACK AND ALGY ENTERTAIN
- V IMPROMPTU AMUSEMENTS
- VI ALBUQUERQUE FESTIVITIES
- VII JACK'S VALET DUTIES
- VIII MR. ALEXANDER'S RUSE
- IX SURPRISES ALL AROUND
- X HOLD-UPS ALONG THE WAY
- XI WHAT HAPPENED ON HUMPHREY'S PEAK
- XII TWO WEEKS LATER
- XIII DALKY'S STORY
- XIV LETTERS EAST AND WEST
- XV DALKY TAKES A VACATION
- XVI ARRIVALS IN LOS ANGELES

POLLY IN THE SOUTHWEST

CHAPTER I

NEWS FROM DODO

Mr. Dalken's southern cruise had come to an end, much to Polly's and Eleanor's regret. Though there had been discomforts and many unlooked for incidents throughout the voyage to the West Indies, and to both coasts of South America, the entire yachting party had thoroughly enjoyed the long pleasure trip.

Now they were back in prosaic, old New York, with its eternal clatter and bang of hustling affairs, and the crush and rush of the mobs of strangers or the workers at recess hours; but they seemed to be tense and nervous at such metropolitan confusion. Mr. Dalken laughed, as he escorted his party from the *White Crest*, upon its arrival at the dock of the Yacht Club—every one seemed irritable and displeased with the city.

“What an awful din!” exclaimed Eleanor, closing her ears with her forefingers.

“I only wish we were back in Buenos Aires—they never make such a deafening racket there,” added Jack, frowning, as a pushcart owner bawled his wares directly back of the young dandy's ear.

Jack's friends laughed appreciatively at the foreigner's timely shout, and Jack scowled at the unconscious offender. Then, as if to provide still more amusement for the members of the party,—excepting Jack, of course,—the Italian tried to avoid a mud-puddle in the asphalt, just as the young New Yorker sprang lightly over it. The result was Jack collided with the rickety cart, which was filled with over-ripe bananas and lemons.

The unexpected blow from the corner of the cart sent Jack sprawling upon the street, and the pyramid of fruit descended instantaneously upon him, then bounced in every direction, giving the ever-present street urchins an unusual treat.

Eleanor, the irrepressible, began to sing: “Yes, we have no bananas,” but this ridiculous ditty failed to calm Jack’s annoyance. The laughter from not only his friends, but from every one who had witnessed the funny episode, made him turn upon the outraged vendor.

“What do you mean, by running me down like that?” demanded Jack, glaring at the still petrified foreigner. As though this demand loosed the pent-up torrent of the man’s grief, he deluged the cosmos with his heart-wrung lamentations. Mr. Dalken and Mrs. Courtney understood Italian, and they could sympathize with the poor man, whose tale of woe might have melted a stone image. Even Jack could not cope with the volubility of the peddler.

Finally, Mr. Dalken stepped over and took out his wallet. Instantly, the bereaved man’s face changed its expression, and his voice died down to a murmur of anticipation.

“Here’s a ten dollar bill, my man. See to it that your eleven children, now dependent upon your fruit-sales, are comfortably fed to-day. You say they have had nothing to eat for three days—not even such bad fruit as you have on sale—so I am sending this to them.” As he handed the money to the vendor, the Italian broke forth in a new strain—one of heaping blessings upon the great monseigneur, the bounteous gentleman!

“I just know he will pick up every lemon and black banana he can find the moment we are out of sight!” declared Nancy Fabian, smiling as she touched upon the truth.

“I wouldn’t have been so easy, Dalky,” grumbled Jack, trying to remove some of the dirt from his coat.

“I wasn’t spending my money, Jack—don’t worry over that! I thought, seeing that you caused the trouble, that I would apply a part of your quarterly income to assuage the misery of the father of eleven little New Americans,” explained Mr. Dalken.

The blank look of disgust upon Jack’s face brought forth another ripple of laughter at his expense.

Thus teasing the young man in the party, and laughing or talking eagerly of everything they saw, the four girls followed their elders to the subway station.

But I anticipate: perhaps you are not acquainted with these happy young friends, who just came from the beautiful private yacht, the *White Crest*! In order to introduce you, before the girls proceed to Mr. Dalken’s apartment where they were to have luncheon that day, I will leave them for a short time during their ride on the subway.

Polly Brewster, the favorite in Mr. Dalken’s group of young friends, had been born and raised in Colorado. Her home, a great ranch located in the crater of an extinct volcano known upon the map as “The Devil’s Grave,” had been renamed by Rancher Brewster, “Pebbly Pit,” because of the marvelous Rainbow Cliffs which formed one of the boundary walls of the crater. These cliffs were composed of great masses of colored stones, which were readily broken from the towering wall. All about the foot of the

cliffs were scattered tons of these shining pebbles. At the back of the wall ran the queer formations of lava which took grotesque forms, such as statues of men and animals. This undulating stretch of hardened lava became known to the surrounding ranchers as “The Imps” and the “Devil’s Causeway.”

Since Polly had left her western home to study a course of interior decorating in New York City, the Rainbow Cliffs and the mass of hardened lava which extended far back of the colored, pebbly wall had been transformed by modern machinery set up on the grounds, to cut the lava-jewels into marketable gems. This work, started after the group of wide-awake financiers headed by Mr. Dalken had seen the great possibilities in the stones, now provided most of the income by which Polly, as well as some of her friends, found it possible to travel luxuriously wherever inclination invited them.

This powerful company might never have been formed, had not circumstances developed from that first meeting of Eleanor Maynard and Polly Brewster, at the Colorado ranch where Eleanor went to spend the summer. But, then, you must read that story called “Polly of Pebbly Pit,” if you would know how Anne Stewart, the teacher, took Eleanor and her sister Barbara out of their society atmosphere in Chicago, and suddenly transported them to the simple but wholesome life of a ranch. And then, how Polly took her new friends for a trip to Grizzly Slide, where they encountered the terrific blizzard which was instrumental in leading them willy-nilly into a gold-mine.

The gold-mine, so thrillingly discovered, eventually founded the beginning of Polly and Eleanor’s introduction to the world—a world of New York adventures, European travels, business experiences, and touring or cruising with their millionaire, self-

appointed guardian, “Dalky,” in company with other chosen friends.

The last tour Mr. Dalke had planned and carried out very successfully was the Southern Cruise, with the Fabians, the Ashbys, John Baxter,—always called “Jack”—and the two girls, Polly and Eleanor, with their intimate friend and chaperon, Mrs. Courtney. Nancy Fabian and Ruth Ashby had been members of Polly and Eleanor’s party in Europe, hence they seemed very much like girls in one family—so intimately acquainted had they all become with each other.

We left Polly and her circle of friends on board the *White Crest*, just after it had resumed its homeward voyage from Cayenne, and now, in this present book of adventures, we meet the girls after landing in New York City. They may have been glad to get home, to replenish a limited wardrobe such as they had been advised to take on board the yacht, when she sailed from New York for the South American tour; but they also felt poignant regret at having to say good-by to the good times they had had.

Consequently, the four girls, to say nothing of Jack, sat about Mr. Dalke’s large dining-table, after their elders had left the room to discuss politics and current events of New York City. They were wondering whether Dalky would feel disposed to invite them again on board his yacht, should he return to Colombia, in company with Mr. Fuzzier, to inspect the plans of the great railroad and canal system which the group of financiers had developed during their voyage between Cayenne and New York.

“Well, now, girls,” ventured Jack Baxter, “I’ll promise you this much—if Dalky will consent to my sharing an interest in this new

project of his, I will move heaven and earth to include you in the prospecting party. But there must be no frills or furbelows, understand? In fact, I'm sure you'll have to travel minus cold cream and beauty make-up, on such a tramp to the interior—it will mean riding-breeches and such, to facilitate progress through the Amazon jungle, no doubt.”

Since no one took Jack seriously, the girls now laughed at his grave expression and businesslike tone. It was not compatible with their knowledge of Jack, to believe him in earnest about this new mining scheme of the group of capitalists—a scheme that meant hard work and many sacrifices of luxuries and comforts. Jack had never been known to give up his lazy self-indulgences, hence the girls' laughter.

A short time after the older members in the party had left the luncheon table, Mr. Dalken returned with a great sheaf of letters in his hand. In the other hand he held an open sheet of paper, which he had been reading just before entering the dining-room.

“Well, children, here's news, all right! I had my mail for the past week held here to await my return to the city; and now, with other letters which had not been forwarded since we left Cayenne, I find a letter from Ebenezer Alexander—Dodo's father, you know.”

“Oh, yes!” was the chorus to this announcement, and the four girls, as well as Jack, expressed eager interest in the contents of the letter.

“He writes me a few personal bits of information regarding certain mining interests we have in common in Arizona, and then he goes on to report favorably on the gold mine at Choko's Find. He seems to have solved the problem of getting at the vein without starting a landslide every time one winks at the peak. He is enthusiastic and

tremendously interested in the possible outcome of his investigations and makes expert miner's suggestions to John Brewster and Tom Latimer. If the tests he now has under way, prove to be reliable experiments, our troubles over the Lost Claim may be buried and forgotten. That leaves us free for new troubles."

Mr. Dalken smiled as he explained this much of the letter, and, finding his audience about to storm him with questions, he held up a hand for silence, and anticipated some of the queries about to be made.

"I know—you all want to know about Dodo! Is she with her Dad at the ranch in Colorado? or is she home with her mother? Is she as enthusiastic over interior decorating as ever—or has she deserted the ranks, for a beau? Is she willing to join an expedition to the North Pole, or will she prefer to spend her millions in eating bon bons and growing obese like her mother? All of which I cannot answer, but which you girls may have the opportunity to ask personally very soon, provided you can be induced to turn your backs upon New York's charm, and give your enlivening company to a sear, old man like me."

"What do you mean, Dalky?" demanded Nancy Fabian.

"Is this an invitation to go somewhere?" asked Ruth Ashby.

"Dalky—are we off for another adventure?" exclaimed Eleanor Maynard, eagerly.

"Oh! Dalky is going west to inspect the mines, and he wants us to go with him!" declared Polly, clasping her hands, anxiously.

Jack said nothing, because he knew he would learn sooner by keeping quiet. And he was right in his surmise.

“Polly comes nearer the truth than you realize; but I’m sure she has Choko’s Find and the Rainbow Cliffs in mind, when she refers to the ‘mines’; but I have the mines of Southern Arizona mentioned here in this letter—and those are the ones I will have to visit without loss of time. In fact, I should have joined Alexander more than three weeks before this, but I failed to receive his cable which was sent to Rio de Janeiro. Possibly we had just left there before it arrived. Now, however, there is no excuse for my dallying in New York when tremendous interests depend upon my personal visit to certain holdings out west. You all know of the plans on foot, to incorporate a land company to exploit and open up the interior of the northern section of South America, and as stock-holders in that company organized on board the *White Crest*, you appreciate the necessity of unlimited capital. Mr. Alexander’s letter offers me a remarkable method of securing necessary funds for the work that Mr. Fuzzier and I hope to launch very shortly. Hence, my haste in saying farewell to New York again, and taking my little kit-bag and starting west. How I should long to have agreeable company with me—provided such friends could be prevailed upon to pass up a shopping season in New York. I shall bear no grudge against the attractive shops, however, should my feminine contingent decide in favor of new styles and ravishing gewgaws.”

“Oh, Dalky!” rebuked Nancy Fabian.

“You know better than that, Dalky!” remonstrated Ruth.

“I’m ready to start west on the Twentieth Century—leaves at twenty,” declared Eleanor, positively, causing all to laugh at her.

“How fortunate, Dalky, that your plans fit in so nicely with my own,” remarked Polly, a twinkle in her eyes. “I am about to go

home to visit my family, and to judge for myself how the climate of Arizona agrees with Dodo.”

Mr. Dalcken laughed outright. Then Jack cleared his throat and murmured: “Yes; Polly was speaking to me confidentially, not two minutes before you joined us, of the pleasure it would give her if I would use my persuasive powers in inducing you to consider our invitation to visit Pebbly Pit.”

The stares from the girls made Mr. Dalcken laugh again, but he hastened to reply to his ward’s invitation. “Fine, Jack! I always try to save a dollar, in order to have the more to spend upon other things; now I shall gladly avail myself of this agreeable and convenient invitation, thereby saving all the expense of a western journey. But you do not say how far nor how long this invitation is to last me. Am I to infer that you propose paying all my expenses throughout the western trip?”

Jack was equal to his guardian’s question. “The invitation we had in mind to extend to you is for a visit to Pebbly Pit. Nothing was said about expenses of getting there, or of getting back again. It is immaterial to the host and hostess how their guests arrive—by air, rail or afoot. Therefore I would advise you to take enough carfare to insure you a seat in a train, in case your cross-country walking grows too fatiguing.”

The girls now laughed in their turn, and Mr. Dalcken added: “Who will pay your fare—you have overdrawn your quarterly account, you know, by running down that poor fruit peddler.”

“I have a plan which will provide for all my needs during the next few months, and render the greatest service to a friend, at the same time,” was Jack’s surprising news.

“Indeed! May I ask what that plan is?” asked his guardian.

“You may, since you are the friend I hope to serve.”

“I may be the friend, but I doubt whether your services are very helpful to me—I judge entirely by past services, understand?” retorted Mr. Dalken, gazing quizzically at the young man.

Jack tilted back in his chair, and thrust his hand down into his trousers pockets; then he glanced impishly up at his guardian. “Why, I’ve discovered how necessary a valet is to your comfort and decent appearance in public, and I have applied for and accepted the position as valet to your respected self. That engagement includes all traveling expenses of mine, and leaves you ample time and leisure to enjoy your journey with these young ladies. It is an ideal combination.”

Jack’s plans, inspired upon the moment’s demand, provided fun and laughter for some time thereafter. Mr. Dalken had to sit down, he laughed so heartily at the very idea of his ward doing any kind of service for another. But Polly, by her remark, put Jack on his mettle.

“If I were Dalky, I’d make you live up to that agreement—there are four witnesses to what was said, and you ought to prove what stuff is in you, then you can win Dalky’s consent to your going to South America with our other boys, when Mr. Fuzzier is ready to launch his land-operations.”

“Of course I meant what I just said, Dalky,” insisted Jack. And to his utter amazement his guardian took him at his word.

“Done, Jack! You go west with me, to attend to my wants and to receive for your valet services all expenses and a hundred dollars a

month. For that, I shall expect you to look after my comforts, the traveling accommodations, hotel suites, autos, and what-not. You may have every other Sunday off for yourself, and an evening once a week. All your other time belongs to me—not even a chance for a little flirtation with a pretty girl on the train, or out on the deserts of Arizona.”

“And how about the girls you take with you—any chance for Jack to say a word to them, now or then?” laughed Eleanor.

“That depends! If such words do not conflict with my own, I may overlook the unusual behavior on the part of a valet.”

Mrs. Courtney now entered the room, and wanted to know what could be so absorbing that no one at the table had heard the summons from those in the living-room. Before she could quite conclude her questioning, an avalanche of explanations overwhelmed her. In the confusion of voices, she could not get the drift of what it meant, so Mr. Dalken led her back to the other room and there he explained to his friends what he had told the girls—and he added, he had secured five companions for his western journey. It would develop, as soon as he had outlined his trip, how many more wished to accompany him.

In another moment, he was the center of interest, and all was hushed in anticipation of what was about to be revealed.

CHAPTER II

OLD FRIENDS ONCE MORE

In spite of persuasions, threats, and prophecies of good times to be missed, the Ashbys and Fabians could not be induced to join the proposed party to the Southwest. Mr. Ashby declared that he would have to attend strictly to business after his long vacation, or Polly and Eleanor would have the opportunity for which they said they were waiting—the chance to succeed Mr. Ashby in his enviable shops. Naturally, learning that her husband would not think of leaving the city, Mrs. Ashby was firm in the decision to remain home, too. Ruth did not wish to leave her mother, so that eliminated the three Ashbys from Mr. Dalcken's list.

The Fabians were not to be cajoled into going west with the rest of their friends, because they maintained that New York, being their home, was the place for them to recuperate after the delightful though lazy life on board the yacht. Mr. Fabian said that laziness was a disease which must be cured by hard work for a time, if his family hoped to live during the approaching winter. Nancy found keen enjoyment in being with her old friends again, and so she preferred to remain in the city.

Consequently Mr. Dalcken's party consisted of Polly and Eleanor, with Mrs. Courtney as chaperon, and Jack Baxter. Mr. Dalcken, of course, since he was the prime leader on this tour. Where they would eventually find themselves, no one knew, because that had not yet been revealed to any one.

“All we now know is this,” laughed Mr. Dalke, the last night the friends met at his apartment to bid the travelers good-by, “that we are on our way, and that way may criss-cross the country many times before we reach California.”

“But you promised us that we should see California, Dalke, because there is where we are dying to go,” exclaimed Eleanor.

“California is a great state, my child,” declared Jack, paternally; “and Hollywood is but one small section of it. I should not blame poor Dalke, in the least, if he led you three aspirants for the screen *away* from Hollywood, instead of *to* it.”

This was in the light of a revelation. “Ah!” laughed Mr. Dalke, “now I understand why this intense eagerness to visit California for an extended time. But let me warn you, fair ones—I shall see to it that I am not deprived of my traveling companions just at the time I shall have leisure to enjoy their society. Forewarned is forearmed, you know.”

“Yes,” retorted Polly, “that adage is as good for us as for you, Dalke.”

“Besides,” added Mrs. Courtney, shaking an accusing finger at Jack, “it was that valet’s own proposition that we remain in Hollywood long enough to have a fling at a movie! He thinks his handsome person may find fame and fortune in posing before the cameras.”

The laugh now turned upon Jack, and he had no denial ready. Thus, laughing and joking, the little group passed a merry evening, until the Ashbys said it was time to say good-by and start for home.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

