

POLLY'S PENSION PLANS

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Polly's Pension Plans by Marian Lawrence Peabody

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MARIAN LAWRENCE PEABODY

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PENSION PLANS**



POLLY

W.C. ...
6-13-1911

POLLY'S PENSION PLANS

By
MARIAN LAWRENCE PEABODY

BOSTON
The North Hill Press
SAMUEL USHER

1917

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This story was written with the hope that it might be of some assistance in helping to raise the Five Million Dollars for the Church Pension Fund.

POLLY'S PENSION PLANS

CHAPTER I

"It is so sad to outlive one's usefulness!"

The speaker had been told that the old clergyman was deaf, so she took no particular care to modulate her rather penetrating voice. A slight frown appeared on her hostess's forehead as she gently guided her companion to a more distant part of the room, at the same time glancing towards the old man. She noticed that his hand trembled as he took his cup of tea from her daughter, and Polly Wentworth's pretty face flushed while she hastily engaged him in conversation.

Mrs. Wentworth had only a few moments previously introduced her old friend and rector to the lady of the too penetrating voice, and indeed it was chiefly for this very object that she had called a few neighbors together for tea on

this rainy afternoon of early spring. Studying her guest now, it seemed to Mrs. Wentworth that everything about Mrs. Lancaster was designed to penetrate, — from her nose to the points of her patent leather shoes, — while her brilliant and elaborate plumage and her vivacious and elaborate manner fully carried out this theory of successful penetration. The wife of a rich manufacturer, she had spent the last dozen years of her life first in an up-state city and then in New York, penetrating into heretofore unattainable precincts. Now, after many years, John Lancaster had had the whim to return to the part of Berkshire County in which he had passed his early days and laid the foundation of his colossal fortune, to build himself a country home; and this spring, for the first time, he and his family were passing a season in the palatial new villa in the hills, which overlooked the river and the town of Woodbridge and the mills where his father had put him to work as a boy.

Mrs. Wentworth, the wife of the leading physician of the town, was a devoted churchwoman. To work for St. Stephen's and help to ease the cares and cheer the way of her dear rector, the Rev. John Alexander, was the great interest of her life, after her home duties, and in the ad-

vent of the Lancasters she thought she might find valuable aid. She knew that in New York they had attended one of the large Episcopal churches, and she also knew how very much Mr. Alexander would dread the obvious duty of calling on them; and so in the kindness of her heart she had called at the new house and had invited Mrs. Lancaster to tea to meet a few of her neighbors, while visions of a much-needed new carpet for the church, new painting and upholstering and large contributions to the missionary apportionment all floated hopefully through her mind.

And now the tea party was taking place, and somehow it had been a difficult occasion. Things had gone wrong with it from the beginning. Her husband had been called away to the next town on a case; one of her two maids was ill in bed; it was a wretched day, and Mrs. Lancaster had not seemed interested in affairs of the town or very much in the people asked to meet her. Mrs. Wentworth and Polly had worked hard and were tired, and therefore had no regrets when they saw Mrs. Lancaster's motor come splashing to a standstill at their gate. One person, however, had appreciated her hospitality. Always courteous and gentle, as he thanked her for a pleasant afternoon she saw by his look that her old rector