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The Pledging of Polly

A Farce in Two Acts

By ABBY BULLOCK

and

MARGARET CURRIER LYON

Author of "The Visit of Obadiah," etc.

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CHARACTERS

(As originally produced by the "Upsilon Sigma," Providence, R. I., June 3, 1909.)

- NAN CARRINGTON, *hostess of the Nu Pi House Party, gay, impulsive, irresponsible; tries to make people have a good time, but always does and says the wrong thing* Faith Hull.
- ELEANOR WOOD, *President of Nu Pi, practical, unobtrusive, always around when wanted* Elizabeth Saunders.
- PATTY SWIFT, *slangy, athletic girl* Maud Tucker.
- MINERVA CABOT, *the "grind"; nose always in a book* Bertha Buffington.
- CHARLOTTE MASON, *sarcastic; blasé* Arline Field.
- GRACE BROWNELL, *the "goat"; fresh, awkward, meddling* Agnes Jonas.
- DOROTHY EMERSON, *sentimental and insipid* Anna Godding.
- PEGGY LEFFINGWELL, *graceful and artistic* Beatrice Harris.
- HARRIETTE HARRINGTON { *U. Psi Twins*
HENRIETTE HARRINGTON { *unsophisticated and inseparable* Ruth Homer.
Marion Luther.
- MARY WHITTIER, *of Western, with a keen sense of honor; devoted to Mary Whittaker* Martha Spink.
- MARY WHITTAKER, *Assistant Instructor of English at Western, young and attractive, with a keen sense of humor* Margaret Westcott.

Any number of extra Nu Pi girls may be introduced as non-speaking parts.



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The Pledging of Polly

ACT I

SCENE.—*Kitchen of the Nu Pi house. Door at L., leads directly outdoors. Door at R., to front of house. Sink R. front. Stove R. C. back. Table L. C. back. Table L. front. Chair near sink. Chair near table, L. Chair near table back. Chair L. back. Plates on back of stove. Supplies piled on both tables. Nu Pi banner conspicuous on table back. Uncooked roast on shelf above sink. Package of sausages on table, L.*

(*When curtain goes up, NAN is at the stove with griddle in her hand. BROWNIE at table back, rummaging among supplies. CHARLOTTE in chair, L., doing nothing.*)

NAN. Brownie, quick, come out of that cake box! Hurry and help me with this griddle cake. It's so heavy I can't turn it!

BROWNIE (*turning quickly and knocking saucer off on floor. Goes toward stove saying with mouth full*). Good cake. Too bad won't be enough to go round. I'll eat the rest myself after supper.

CHARLOTTE. It's a pity you didn't think to butter the griddle. It's too late now.

NAN (*burns hand scraping griddle cake off on dish at back of stove. Crosses to sink, and BROWNIE instantly starts to eat griddle cake*). Ow! I've burned my hand. How can I cook anything more?

CHAR. Don't cook any dinner for Brownie. She's having hers!

NAN (*at sink, running water over burned hand, sees the uncooked roast on shelf*). Oh, girls, we've forgotten to put in the roast, and they've nearly finished the soup already!

(*Crosses with roast to stove.*)

Enter ELEANOR, R.

ELEANOR. How about the rest of the dinner? You can hear the animals roaring now. (*Sees NAN just putting roast in oven.*) Nan Carrington! it's no use putting that in now, it's half-past soup time.

CHAR. It's a bit too late to cook anything. Let's follow that charming Japanese custom and serve them with raw fish.

NAN (*searching on table*). There isn't a fish among the supplies. Not even an eel!

EL. I have it! Just the thing! Quick, Brownie, bring me that package. (*Points table.*) No, the big one! Nan, put the griddle back on the stove. (*Undoes package and holds up long string of sausages.*) There, we'll give them ground-hog!

(*NAN cooks sausages with EL.'s help.*)

CHAR. We can be thankful that our guest of honor hasn't yet come. Nice impression she'd have, and a lot she'd see the advantages of being a Nu Pi.

EL. Why do you suppose she hasn't come?

CHAR. It may be so much the better for us if she never appears. (*Meaningly.*) Does any one know why she left Western?

BROWNIE. Hooray! a scandal!

EL. Be still, Brownie. If she sees the error of her ways and comes to Eastern, she is all right anyway. And besides, you know what a record for scholarship she has made at Western during the three years she has been there. If she will have us, we will have her.

NAN. Good for you, Eleanor!

CHAR. It's quite like the Nu Pis to vote a girl in before they even see her, and I must say that a girl with any brain power wouldn't be exactly—congenial—?

NAN. Why, Charlotte, the only reason we want her is to bring up our scholarship average a little. We had our second warning from the faculty only a week ago that if the Nu Pi standards weren't raised before exam time, our chapter would be taken away. Don't you see that we must take in somebody with brains whether we want her or not?

(*Gesticulates with sausage on fork.*)

BROWNIE (*licking her fingers*). What's her name? I forget.

NAN. Mary Whittier—isn't that cute? We will call her Polly, and —

CHAR. And—there is something burning!

EL. The potatoes, probably. Nan put them in as soon as we came this morning, didn't she?

(*Takes them out and puts them in dish, BROWNIE helping her.*)

CHAR. The motto for those potatoes should be "Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well."

GIRLS (*shouting in unison from off stage*). We—want—our—dinner!

NAN (*hurriedly*). Brownie, bring me the platter; they're done as much as there's time for.

EL. Put a couple on this plate, and we'll leave it in the oven to keep hot for the little stranger.

(*Exeunt, R., NAN with platter of sausages, EL. with potatoes and loaf of bread, CHAR. with hands behind her back.*)

BROWNIE (*at oven*). Polly What's-her-name may not come till the eight o'clock train. This would be dried up by then; I'll eat it myself and save all waste and anxiety. Me for a quiet corner! [Exit, R.]

Enter L., MARY WHITTAKER, rain coat dripping, umbrella, etc.
Cheer from dining-room: "Ki-yi! Ki-yi! Ki-yi!
Ground-hog!"

POLLY (*looking around, sees Nu Pi banner*). This is the Nu Pi house party all right. I don't like to interrupt them at dinner, but the sooner I get hold of Mary Whittier the better! She must have been here all the afternoon, and goodness knows whether or not I can persuade her now to come back to Western with me. (*Looks at letter which she has had in her hand.*) Her letter sounds so decisive, too. (*Reads envelope.*) "Miss Mary Whittaker, Assistant in English Department, Western." (*Opens and reads letter, sitting in chair.*) "Dearest Polly: I can't bear to say good-bye to you in person, so I am writing this note to tell you that I have decided to leave Western. I have always felt the lack of sororities here, but this has been impressed so forcibly upon me of late that I am leaving for Eastern where the comradeship among the girls through the

sororities is an essential part of the college life. If you want to make things a little easier for me, send me a word or two of forgiveness, and say that you understand my position. My address will be care of the Nu Pi House Party, Greenville. Yours as always, Mary Whittier." Why couldn't she have waited and talked it over with me instead of rushing off this way? (*Gets up from chair and walks around.*) I must see her and persuade her to come back to Western with me. Cunning little Mary, how I should miss her! Oh, I *must* see her before she pledges herself! (*Starts toward R.*)

GIRLS (*shouting off stage*). Brownie, you glutton! come back with Polly's dinner!

Enter R., BROWNIE, in haste, with half empty plate, followed by all the girls except PATTY. Collides with POLLY, jumps at conclusion that she is the expected guest, and says coolly.

BROWNIE. Don't make such a row. Can't you see I'm taking her dinner to her? Here she is!

(*Girls surround POLLY, taking off her wet things and talking all together.*)

EL. } We're so glad you're here at last!

PEGGY. } Why were you late?

DOROTHY. } We thought you'd never come!

CHAR. } Didn't Patty meet you at the station?

BROWNIE } (*offering plate*). Aren't you nearly starved?

NAN (*shaking hands*). Indeed, we are glad to see you, Polly. You don't mind our calling you that, do you? We decided to before you came, and it's so much easier now we've seen you. (*Steps back to look her over.*) Why, you don't look the least bit clever!

POLLY. You didn't expect me, did you?

NAN. Yes, we did! Charlotte was saying just before you came that she knew you'd be sure to turn up (*girls all nod assent*) because we never yet had a nice cozy house party without any outsiders—oh, dear! (*Girls pull her back.*) I mean —

EL. (*coming to rescue*). Where can Patty be? It's strange she missed you at the station. If she doesn't hurry she won't have any dinner.

POLLY. And what about *Mary*?

EL. That's so, you poor child! *You* haven't had anything

to eat. Come right into the dining-room this instant and we'll look out for little Mary!

POLLY. I must explain—you don't understand.

NAN. No explanations from a starving woman; eat first—we'll talk later.

CHAR. Has Brownie left anything?

EL. We'll go and find out. Come on, girls.

(Leads POLLY reluctantly to door.)

(Exeunt all except NAN, DOT and MINERVA, the latter in chair reading intently.)

DOT *(arm around NAN, drawling)*. Oh, Nan, isn't she just too perfectly sweet? If she doesn't join Nu Pi I shall simply curl up in a corner and gently pass away.

NAN. Dot, we must pledge her to-night. If U. Psi get their eyes on her before she is pledged to us, who knows but they may work some trick and take her away from us under our very noses as they did Madge Newcome.

DOT. But they wouldn't make any hit with Polly; they are such awful grinds.

NAN. That's just it. She is such a splendid student that they will—*(draws long breath)*—make a strong appeal to her intellectual side.

DOT. Oh, Nan, what perfectly grand things you do say!

NAN. Yes, I always manage to say the right thing at the wrong time. It's a little way I have.

DOT. No, you don't, you old dear, boo-boo —

(Kisses her.)

NAN *(pulling away)*. As for you, Dot, you never said a sensible thing in your life. Polly won't be the least impressed with either of us.

DOT. But Minerva will impress her awfully.

NAN *(looking at MIN.)*. That's so! Minerva may be uninteresting and all that, but there isn't a U. Psi girl who has such a brain full of Latin. *(Runs over to MIN.)* I never before saw why you were a Nu Pi, but this is simply providential. Now is a chance to show what Latin is good for. We've never pulled you out of your corner in rushing season before, but perhaps for once you may be of some use.

MIN. *(realizing suddenly that something is happening,*

stammers). I beg your pardon, Nancy. Were you addressing me?

DOT. Oh, Minerva, you wonderful old duck. Say you'll be a dear sweet obliging pet and twine around Polly's heart.

MIN. I commence to perceive the trend of your conversation. While I do not excel in knowledge of the intricacies of what is termed rushing, still as I have just finished my exhaustive reading of Juvenal, and before I begin on Terence, I have a little time to put at your disposal.

DOT (*embracing her*). I knew you'd be a love and do it for us!

Enter L., PATTY SWIFT, stamping and shaking off wet.

PAT. The next time I wait around an hour and a half in that moth-eaten station for a mythical stranger, you'd better believe will be never! Why, I don't think there is such a person, and I'm sure there was no train and —

(Throws off coat, hat and rubbers as she speaks, flinging them about.)

DOT (*interrupting; throwing her arms around PAT.'s neck*). Oh, but there is, and she's here already, darling!

PAT. (*disgusted, pushing DOT off*). When you feel that way, take it outdoors! Where is she? the villain!

NAN. She isn't a villain, and you'll be crazy about her. Before you came in we were thinking up a grand plan to make her into a Nu Pi in no time. Minerva is to be our cat's paw — I mean our figure head.

MIN. (*looking up quickly*). Oh, if it's anything to do with figures, I am afraid I would not be of much use. My specialty is the classics.

NAN. That will do quite as well as any. You know Polly is an awfully brilliant sort, and Minerva is the only one of us who has intellectual as-pi-rations.

DOT. Oh, Nan, you use such lovely language!

NAN (*ignoring her*). So we must star Minerva and give her every possible chance to make an impression.

PAT. I'm on, and I can see plainly it's up to me to keep myself and my slang in the background.

DOT (*embracing her*). You don't mind, dear, do you?

PAT. (*pushing her off*). Mind? Well, not so you'd notice

it! Come, Minerva, give me some hint what sort of game it's to be.

MIN. I've just been carefully considering the matter and have concluded to give a lecture of three or four hours on the literature of the Augustan period, reading selections by way of illustration. (*Waxes enthusiastic.*) You must all be present, and then Miss Whittier will not be embarrassed because she will not know the trouble has been taken for her especial benefit.

(*During this speech NAN and DOT sink in chairs, PAT. collapses on floor.*)

NAN (*hurriedly*). But I'm afraid that would be altogether too elaborate. We don't want to scare her, you know.

PAT. Yes, be more informal. Talk Latin casually, and we'll look as intelligent as Nature permits. Don't you know any Latin jokes or conundrums or anything? You could tell us the answers beforehand.

MIN. That also might partake too much of the formal, the prearranged. Let us rely solely on the inspiration of the moment. Observe me closely and follow my intellectual lead.

PAT. Where are you keeping the victim now?

MIN. Ah! Victim indeed. Dorothea, hasten hence, and if she has finished her repast, lead the fair victim hither, to the altar.

(*Sits impressively in chair L. and opens her book.*)

DOT. All right, Minnie darling! [*Exit R., DOT.*]

PAT. Say, girls, I had a great old walk in the rain. The shower is almost over now. Oh, and you know when I was pattering along past the U. Psi house party, those greasy grinds were dancing and shouting ragtime at the tops of their lungs! I almost paused and entered, it sounded so like home. What do you guess has hit them?

NAN. They are probably trying to entertain some poor candidate. No telling what girls will do in rushing season, even grinds!

MIN. Whatever we do or do not do, one thing must be understood. As the poet says, "Nihil est quod tam decept separe constantiam"—or to translate freely, Let there be no frivolity to-day among the Nu Pis.

Enter R., DOT with her arm around POLLY, followed by the other girls.

DOT. I've told the girls about the plot, darlings (EL. *tries to stop her*), and they all say they don't know a word of —

NAN (*interrupting*). Oh, Patty, you must meet Mary Whittier, the new senior.

POLLY (*determinedly*). But that isn't my name.

DOT (*arm around her neck*). Of course not, you sweet thing; you are Polly to us.

POLLY. But —

MIN. (*rising and coming toward her with great dignity, with right hand upraised in the Roman form of salutation*). Si tu vales, bene est; ego quoque valeo.

POLLY (*starting back surprised, quickly brings her heels together and gives military salute*). Pardon me, I didn't know —

MIN. See, sisters, how delighted she is at our scholarly congeniality. As the poet says, "Ratio et oratio conciliant inter se homines," or to interpret his message personally, We meet you on your own level.

NAN (*eagerly*). Yes, we stoop to conquer!

EL. (*pulling NAN back impatiently*). We mustn't spend time talking now, with the dinner dishes to wash. It's so late, let's all do them together, and then we can have time to talk later.

(Girls tie aprons on each other.)

POLLY. Do let me wash!

NAN. We can't have our guest working the first night. Sit right down in that chair (*leads her to chair, L.*), and rest while we go in the other room and stack the dishes.

(All the girls exeunt R., during this speech, NAN and MIN. last to leave.)

POLLY. Oh, but please let me —

MIN. (*at door, meaningly*). "Tempori cedere semper sapientis est habitum." [Exit MIN., R.]

POLLY (*sinking back in chair, dismayed*). If only I were Mary Whittier, as they think I am, I'd have some idea what she said about me. Well, Mary is sure to arrive sooner or later, and I must wait here for her; so I might as well con-

tinue to play her part till she comes, and with her help I can explain the masquerade. Besides, if they knew I were here only to take Mary back to Western they wouldn't let me stay a minute. As for names that Minerva calls me, they won't trouble me, for I don't understand them.

Enter, R., all but BROWNIE, with dishes, and pile them in sink.

MIN. (*to POLLY, gesticulating with dish*). "Longa mora est nobis omnis quæ gaudia differt." (*To girls.*) Why does not Brownie make haste?

CHAR. She'll be here as soon as she can finish eating all that was left on the table.

Enter BROWNIE, R., hurrying, trying to carry pile of plates in one hand while she eats cake with other. Tumbles and smashes dishes, but calmly sits up and finishes cake.

MIN. Carthago deleta est!

EL. Never mind, girls, let's get to work —

CHAR. Are there enough dishes left to wash?

NAN. It doesn't seem worth while, does it? Let's not bother to do them.

(Gets dust-pan and brush and girls help sweep up the pieces.)

MIN. "Vita brevis est, longa ars." Which teaches us that menial duties should be subordinate to art. (*Pedantically.*) In the Roman household, after the banquet came the dance. Let us even so make merry, but in a classic manner.

NAN. Just the thing! Girls, Peggy has been learning the prettiest new dance!

PAT. Let's have it.

DOT. You will dance for us, won't you, Peggy sweetheart?

PEG. I'd be glad to, if you'll wait until I get into my costume.

PAT. Well, rather! Run along.

DOT (*following her to door*). Oh, Peggy, you sweet, obliging dear!

[*Exit PEG., R.*]

MIN. Tempus fugit. We must improve the shining moments. I am sure some of my sisters must have something of value to impart in the line of the classics.

(PAT. crawls under table.)

BROWNIE. I know a poem that's as classic as Julius Cæsar. (*Oratorically.*) Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears —

“Boyibus kissibus sweet girlorum,
 Girlibus likibus, want somemorum,
 Fathibus comibus down the stairum
 Taka the boyibus by the hairum.”

(*Grabs at MIN.'s hair.*)

MIN. (*chagrined*). Miss Whittier, I pray you, pardon her frivolity. Consider her youth! “Teneris, heu, lubrica moribus ætas.” Alas, the slippery nature of youth. But we are monopolizing the classics. The laws of hospitality demand an equal division of food for mind, as well as for body. If Miss Whittier would but —

CHAR. We've been longing for some time to have Miss Whittier amuse us in Latin. Some can talk (*looks at MIN.*), but few can be entertaining in that language.

POLLY. I may as well explain now, that —

CHAR. Don't try to be modest. We've heard how clever you are —

NAN (*irrelevantly*). You certainly must be clever, Polly. Why, girls, do you know I've just remembered that in the letter I wrote to tell her how to get here, I completely forgot to tell her which house it was, and she might have blundered into the U. Psi house party by mistake. Now, wasn't it clever of her to find us?

MIN. (*severely*). “Ingenii vis præceptis alitura,” or, as I might put it, Clever in one thing, clever in all things.

CHAR. We are eagerly waiting, Miss Whittier, to hear how you have improved your classical opportunities at Western.

POLLY (*protesting*). But you —

DOT. Polly, dear, you can't think what it would mean to us to hear —

POLLY (*desperately*). Please let me —

PAT. (*coming out from under table*). You're in for it, Polly, so you may as well fire away and get it over.

NAN. Yes, do hurry and get it over.

POLLY (*submitting to the inevitable*). I don't like to show off my knowledge, but I can give you an idea of how our Latin department at Western makes the classics real to us.

NAN (*innocently*). Can you give the idea without showing off your knowledge?

CHAR. No doubt!

POLLY. Professor Jacobus's Objective Method is what I want to show you. It is quite unique, and I must have help from you all to make it clear.

BROWNIE. What's objective?

PAT. Let her go; you can count me in.

MIN. I should be most proud if you would call upon me to assist you in your exposition.

POLLY. Indeed I shall call on you. But now I must explain to you the method. Professor Jacobus has us act out the classic myths and stories that we may absorb through every sense the beauty and vitality of the classics.

DOT. What a cute idea!

POLLY. For instance, one of his favorites is Atalanta's Race.

MIN. Ah, yes, I know the story. Atalanta was a beautiful maiden who challenged all her suitors to a foot race. Those who lost were put to death, and none was successful until Hippomenes —

BROWNIE. I know the rest. He dropped apples, and she stopped to eat 'em!

MIN. (*calmly*). Until Hippomenes, as he raced, threw before her the three golden apples given him by Venus, and Atalanta pausing to pick them up, seriatim, was overtaken and vanquished, thus being won by Hippomenes as his bride.

POLLY. That's all very well, but there mere book knowledge falls short. You may know it in words, but we know it in action. Shall I go on and illustrate Professor Jacobus's method to you?

MIN. } Pray do.

NAN. } Do go on.

PAT. } I'm from Missouri!

BROWNIE. } What comes next?

POLLY (*to MIN.*). You know the story. I will give you the part of Atalanta. You (*to BROWNIE*) know about the apples. You shall be Hippomenes. You two (*to CHAR. and EL.*) shall be two suitors, vanquished and slain. Lie down there. (*They do so unwillingly.*) Three of those doughnuts on the table will do nicely for the golden apples. Atalanta (*pulling down her hair unexpectedly*), let down your flowing locks. Wait till I find the toga. This will do. (*Drapes pennant over her.*) Now, we are ready! Imagine this room the circular race course and start when I count one, two, three in Latin, Atalanta first, Hippomenes following directly. Now

let us witness your interpretation of this beautiful old myth. Unus! Duo! Tres!

(MIN. and BROWNIE run around the stage, BROWNIE drops a doughnut on two rounds as she passes front C. MIN. picks them up. On third round BROWNIE cannot bear to drop doughnut and taking bite, she starts for exit, L.)

MIN. (*stopping suddenly*). The other apple, Hippomenes!
BROWNIE (*at door L.*). Come and get it!

[*Exit BROWNIE, L.*]

(*All start to follow BROWNIE, but give up the chase as PEG. in costume enters R.*)

DOT. Peggy, dear, what a love of a costume, and how frightfully becoming.

PEG. What has been happening here?

POLLY (*laughing and relieved*). We've had a proof that Professor Jacobus's methods, however original, will never work at Eastern. Do let us have the dance and forget the fate of the third golden apple.

(BROWNIE sneaks in L. finishing doughnut, unnoticed by girls who group themselves to watch the dance, some seated on floor. PEG. dances and exits R., as girls applaud.)

NAN. You see, Polly, we Nu Pis can be clever at some things.

DOT (*embracing her*). You do like us a little, don't you, dearie?

EL. We hope that you will consider us very favorably when you are thinking of joining a sorority at Eastern. We know there are no sororities as yet at Western —

NAN. So we hope you'll let the Nu Pis try to make up to you for what you have missed during your three years at Western.

DOT. Oh, Polly, you'd make the sweetest kind of Nu Pi.

(*Knock at door L.*)

ALL. Sh-h-h!!

(PAT. *tramps across and opens door.*)

Enter TWINS carrying a small tin pail between them.

TWINS (*speaking together, spasmodically*). Please, may we have some molasses?

NAN (*aside to POLLY*). It's the U. Psi twins. What can be going on?

BROWNIE. What do you want it for?

TWINS (*as if reciting lesson*). We hope you can spare it. We need it so much, we were sure you wouldn't mind.

BROWNIE. I said—what's it for?

TWINS (*looking at each other*). We're going to make candy. We have a guest.

NAN. U. Psi girls having a candy pull!

TWINS. Our guest likes candy. We like our guest!

CHAR. Guest, I suppose, is short for candidate.

TWINS (*looking conscious*). We hope she'll be a U. Psi soon. We know her gaiety will brighten up our chapter.

NAN. That would be nice, but is she strong? Do you think she can do it?

TWINS. We think she can do anything. She's so jolly and bright. You've no idea!

BROWNIE. What's her name?

TWINS. We call her Polly. Her name is Mary.

BROWNIE. How queer! Our new —

(EL. covers BROWNIE'S mouth.)

HENRIETTE. Madge says she —

HARRIETTE (*taking up sentence*). She's heaps funnier than —

TWINS. Than any of you Nu Pis.

CHAR. She is, is she?

TWINS (*ingenuously*). Madge says we must pledge her to-night.

HEN. She says, goodness knows what —

HAR. What would happen —

TWINS (*shaking fingers reproachfully*). If you naughty Nu Pis ever caught sight of her.

NAN (*who has been gradually getting excited, now presses the molasses jug into TWINS' hands and hurries them out amid protests*). Hurry out quick! I hear somebody coming. Hustle now, you'll be much too late!

TWINS. Whatever is the matter —

[*Exeunt, L.*

PAT. } Snappy work.

EL. } Don't break the jug.

BROWNIE. } Why didn't you give them just a cup full?
} That's all they need.

CHAR. (*drawling*). Perhaps now you wouldn't mind explaining why you've been making this hideous confusion.

NAN (*taking no notice of her*). I've the grandest plan! It's fun, and it's revenge. You know how those catty U. Psis got cute old Madge Newcome away from us in that mean, under-handed way, just as we were going to pledge her. Doesn't it make you furious every time you think of it, even now? Well, I say —

MIN. (*interrupting breathlessly*). Nancy, aren't you forgetting that we are not exactly alone? Of course Miss Whittier is —

POLLY (*misunderstanding*). I'd love to help, particularly if it's going to be a lark.

NAN (*impulsively*). She is almost one of us already, aren't you, Polly dear? (*Squeezes POLLY's hand.*) And I know she'd love to help us pay back those horrid U. Psis. As I was saying when you interrupted me (*glaring at MIN.*), let's make a regular expedition against those smarties and pay back the Madge business by carrying off this wonderful candidate before their very eyes. (*Excitedly.*) What do you say? Can't we do it? Please let's! I've quite set my heart on it. And think how mad and surprised every one will be!

EL. } (*matter-of-fact*). Is it practicable?

PAT. } Let's do it anyhow.

POLLY } (*eagerly*). Can't I do something? They don't know me. I can —

NAN. } Of course you can. Will you? I know just the thing. Couldn't you manage to see that candidate, and come back and tell us if she is attractive enough for us to risk a desperate kidnapping to get her? You could sneak right up to the house and look through the window, you know. If the twins *should* see you, they wouldn't recognize you with your hat and coat on. *Please say you'll do it!*

(*Seizes POLLY's hands impetuously.*)

POLLY. Surely. It'll be the best fun I've had since I was a senior at college.

EL. (*puzzled*). Since you were a senior?

POLLY (*quickly*). Since I've *been* a senior, of course, I mean.

PAT. How are you going to do the trick?

POLLY. Just leave that to me.

CHAR. This is leaving a great deal to a girl who's not even pledged to us.

EL. Couldn't we talk over the pledging matter now? You see, Polly —

NAN. Let's not bother about that at present; it can wait; that is, I mean —

POLLY (*anxiously*). I think too that I'd better hurry off. (*Significantly*.) I am awfully anxious to get a look at this other Polly right away.

(NAN, EL. and PAT. rush for POLLY'S clothes and all help dress her. Great deal of confusion.)

NAN. You'll hurry as fast as ever you can, won't you? It's late now, and we've such a lot to do and plan before the U. Psis get to pledging *their* Polly.

POLLY. Don't call her *their* Polly, for if all goes well she may turn out to be *my* Polly.

ALL. Our Pollies—our Pollies!

(*As POLLY goes out L., half walking, half pushed, cries of "Good luck! Hurry back! Be very careful! Don't let yourself be seen! Good-bye! Good-bye!"*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Outside the U. Psi house. Time, half an hour later. A pretty outdoor scene. Trees and grass. House across right side of stage, with door and window which can be opened. Garden bench L. front.*

(As curtain goes up, NAN, MIN. and BROWNIE are stealthily tiptoeing toward house from L. back.)

MIN. "Omnium rerum vicissitudo est"—or, as I might say, the house appears deserted—abandoned.

NAN. All the U. Psi girls gone, and not a sign of Polly! I don't understand it!

BROWNIE. They've had their candy pull and gone off, and I don't suppose they've left a piece of candy in the house. We should have come sooner!

NAN. I told you we should. If we hadn't been so patient and waited half an hour for Polly to come back, we shouldn't have to play Sherlock Holmes now.

MIN. "Vivere, militare est." Sisters, I fear Polly has been captured and borne away.

NAN. It's awful, girls, and the worst of it is that Polly isn't pledged (*wails*), though maybe she is by this time—to U. Psi.

BROWNIE. Nonsense, she wouldn't be that ungrateful after all we gave her to eat.

(Enter PAT., R., past house.)

PAT. (*sitting on steps and shouting*). I've walked all around the house and grounds twice, and I dare any one to find a sign of life with a microscope. I left Eleanor out by the back door. She's going home across lots.

GIRLS. Sh-h-h.

NAN. Don't talk so loud!

PAT. What's the difference? I have a very good idea that they are all off on the river. There wasn't a canoe at the float when I sauntered past.

NAN. We'd better explore the house, then, for who knows but Polly may be inside bound hand and foot.

BROWNIE. Or they may have left some candy. Come on. Let's go in.

MIN. Permit me to enter first. Ego vos defendam.

(As they all approach door, it is suddenly opened and they start back confused as HAR. and HEN. come out. HAR. carries the molasses jug, and HEN. a letter.)

TWINS. How you surprised us!

HEN. We were just coming ——

HAR. To your house ——

TWINS. To return the jug. Madge told us to, and then we can go on the picnic with the others.

(HEN. locks door and soon after drops key near window.)

BROWNIE. We were going by so we stopped in to see if you had left any of our molasses. We can take it back for you.

(Takes jug.)

TWINS. We have a letter for Nan, besides.

NAN. Letter for me? How odd. (Holds back.)

PAT. Why don't you take it? 'Twon't bite!

NAN. Thank you. (Reluctantly takes letter.)

MIN. "Dimidium scientiæ prudens quæstio." Here is an opportunity which must not be neglected. (To TWINS, who have started to go.) Leave us not so soon. Let us converse one with another.

NAN. Do tell us if you've seen Pol ——

PAT. (artificially, cutting her short). I was just saying to Nan how odd it is that there are so many strangers in town today. Have you noticed any during the last hour?

TWINS. We haven't seen any stranger since Polly came to us so unexpectedly. (All gasp.)

BROWNIE (rising to the occasion). What Polly?

TWINS. Why, you know, Polly Whittier, of course. The note to Nan is from her.

(TWINS titter.)

HEN. Well, we must be going ——

HAR. Now we've done our errand.

TWINS. Madge says ——

(*Chorus of "Good-bye" cuts them short. TWINS exeunt L. back. Girls collapse on bench and grass, and finally NAN, with nervous fingers, opens the letter and reads aloud, BROWNIE looking over her shoulder.*)

NAN. I had a presentiment it was something dreadful. (*Reads.*) "Dear Miss Carrington." (*In despair.*) She doesn't even call me Nan!

BROWNIE (*going on with letter*). "By this time you will realize that something must have happened to change my plans." It was that candy pull!

PAT. (*taking letter*). "I stopped at this house to inquire my way, not knowing it to be the U. Psi house party." Oh, why didn't we give her directions! (*Drops letter.*)

MIN. (*picking it up*). "And though at first detained against my will, I have been persuaded to remain." Oh, mores! Oh, tempora! (*Drops letter.*)

NAN (*picking it up*). "While I appreciate the great kindness shown me by Nu Pi, I have been so welcomed and made to feel at home here, that I must after all refuse your invitation. My only regret is that one cannot join two sororities. Very sincerely, Mary Whittier."

(*NAN bursts into tears.*)

BROWNIE. The hog!

NAN (*tearing up letter and sobbing*). I can't believe it of her. She seemed so splendid.

PAT. It is some U. Psi trick. Polly isn't any common or garden traitor!

MIN. Sisters, I fear for our chapter. I had hoped for Polly's assistance in raising our scholarship. Remember the faculty warning. I cannot hold up our average alone. The blow may fall at any moment.

NAN (*still tearful*). Why couldn't we have been satisfied with just one Polly? She was almost pledged to us. It's all my fault that we lost her and started on a wild goose chase after the other Polly. I hate myself!

MIN. Sisters, let us return whence we came and discuss the matter with Eleanor. She is so resourceful that she can doubtless advise us to some advantage.

NAN. That would be better than doing nothing.

PAT. We'll get the crowd together and then U. Psi may just look out. Come on.

(*They go off L. back, except BROWNIE.*)

NAN. Aren't you coming, Brownie?

BROWNIE. I'll be along soon. Don't wait for me. (*Exeunt NAN, MIN., and PAT. BROWNIE goes to door, tries to open it and finds it locked.*) There! that proves it. They wouldn't have locked the door if they hadn't left candy, maybe a whole panful, in the house. It was our molasses and I have a right to what they made of it. (*Tries window, and manages to open it.*) Ah! up she goes. This is almost too easy.

(*Climbs in, chuckling.*)

Enter POLLY, R. front.

POLLY. I hope this is the right place at last. What a search I've had. The old lady said it was the U. Psi house party, but how quiet it all is. Not much like the Nu Pi party. (*Looks off L. back.*) Goodness! Here come the twins. What a chance to find out about Mary, if they don't recognize me. (*Enter TWINS, L. back, in great agitation, and looking on the ground; almost run into POLLY before they see her.*) Excuse me, have you lost something?

TWINS (*startled*). Thank you; yes, indeed!

POLLY. I'm so sorry; can't I help you? What was it?

HEN. We locked the door —

HAR. And lost the key.

TWINS. And we don't know what Madge will say.

POLLY. It may be in the yard here. Let's make a good search.

TWINS. It's so kind of you to help.

HEN. We appreciate it —

HAR. Especially from a stranger.

POLLY. When did you lose it?

TWINS. Only a few minutes ago.

HEN. We were just going to meet the girls —

HAR. At the picnic.

TWINS. And help pledge Polly.

POLLY. Who is Polly?

TWINS. How silly, of course you don't know.

HEN. She's Mary Whittier —

HAR. The new senior.

TWINS. From Western.

POLLY. Mary Whittier! From Western! You don't

mean it! Why she's the very girl the faculty at Western is looking for everywhere!

TWINS (*excited, forgetting key*). The faculty!

HEN. Why?

HAR. What for?

POLLY. I can't tell you all about it because it is Mary Whittier's private affair, and anyway (*confidentially*), you know it's as well to keep some things quiet. But I know the faculty wants her (*impressively*), about a letter which ought never to have been written!

TWINS (*scandalized*). What will Madge say?

HEN. Polly seemed very nice —

HAR. We all liked her.

TWINS. And the faculty is after her!

POLLY. It's never safe to take too much for granted, and to jump at conclusions.

TWINS. We'll tell Madge so.

HEN. How lucky we met you —

HAR. Before it was too late.

TWINS. Just think if we'd pledged Polly. Oh! we must tell Madge! (*Start to go off L.*)

POLLY. It will be hard for you to tell her, won't it? A mistake like that is so awkward.

TWINS (*coming back*). You're so good and kind, won't you please come and help explain?

POLLY. I tell you what I'll do. I'll go with you and take Mary off, while you explain to the others.

(TWINS *put their arms around POLLY and lead her off L. back.*)

HEN. Just the thing!

HAR. Awfully sweet of you!

TWINS. Madge will be so pleased.

(*Exeunt L. back. Just as they go off, BROWNIE starts to climb out window, and losing her balance falls out. Sits up and catches sight of POLLY and TWINS in distance.*)

BROWNIE. Will you look at that! I came out just too late. (*Sucks candy.*) Whee! Wouldn't the girls like to be here now? (*Picks up the TWINS' key absently and puts it in her pocket.*) I'm not going after Polly alone and get into a mess. I'll just shout for help and see what happens. Oh, Nan! Oh, Dot! Oh, Eleanor! (*Climax.*) Oh, Min-er-va!

Enter, L., all Nu Pi girls except PAT., running.

NAN. What have you done now?

PEG. Anything the matter?

EL. Why did you call us?

MIN. (*pulling BROWNIE to her feet*). Child! Get up from the damp ground!

BROWNIE. You wouldn't care for a little thing like damp ground if you knew what I've seen.

NAN (*shaking her*). Tell us quickly!

BROWNIE (*nettled*). You needn't shake me all up. I won't tell till I get ready!

MIN. (*severely*). Grace Brownell. Don't be absurd. Cease your obstinacy.

BROWNIE (*interrupting*). If you talk to me that way, I'll —

PEG. Oh, Brownie, I could *eat* you. You are so exasperating. Every minute probably counts!

BROWNIE (*grimly*). It does!

EL. Brownie, if it is important, you must tell us at once.

BROWNIE. Don't you boss me 'round!

DOT. You always *are* such a duck. Don't be provoking now, just when you have something important to tell us.

CHAR. Can't be important, or Brownie wouldn't know it.

BROWNIE. Not important! What do you say to this? I saw Polly go by with the twins, so now!

PAT. Which way?

BROWNIE. Down toward the river.

EL. Didn't you try to stop them?

BROWNIE. What? Me—alone? What do you take me for? Do you want me to tackle all U. Psi single handed?

Enter PAT., hurriedly, L. back.

PAT. (*much excited*). Great news! We're saved! We have another chance!

NAN. What is it?

BROWNIE. Do *you* know something, too?

EL. How did you find out?

PAT. I don't know where to begin, I'm so excited! There are three parts to it and all of them are tremendous!

PEG. Begin at the beginning.

NAN. We'll all be quiet if you'll only hurry.

PAT. Well, things were in such a frightful mess that I decided to do a little detective work on my own hook.

DOT. How brave and noble!

PAT. When I got to the picnic I found all the U. Psis in the most awful state. It would have done you good to see them. (*Roars.*)

EL. Stop laughing and finish.

PAT. Minerva, you've saved us. You old brick! Your beastly Latin has done it! Your last exams were all perfect, and they've given our average such a boost that the faculty can't touch us now. Isn't it great?

MIN. Gaudeamus!

PAT. You see, it's been between us and U. Psi all the time—our scholarship lower—their sorority the newest at Eastern, and we've won out! Oh—aren't you happy?

(*Embraces MIN.*)

NAN. What about U. Psi?

PAT. (*turning, one arm still around MIN.'s neck*). They're down and out! That's the joke. (*Puts other arm around MIN.'s neck and does a few dance steps.*) They have just got their notice from the faculty. That's what the row was all about. They are down and out. Hooray! Hooray!

MIN. (*bursting into Latin, carried away with joy*).

“Quod optanti divum promittere meno
Auderet, volvenda dies en attulit ultro.”

PAT. (*interrupting*). Let up! Save it! There's more news coming, and this part is a perfect scream. (*Girls crowd around PAT.*) Give me air—give me air. (*Sweeps them aside.*) What do you think those fantastic idiotic U. Psis did before the faculty ended their futile existence?

ALL. What?

PAT. Why, their last brilliant act was to kick Polly out—simply turn her away. Our perfectly good Polly!

NAN (*indignantly*). What for?

BROWNIE (*pugnaciously*). I'd like to know why!

PAT. They heard some fairy tale about why she left Western, and would have nothing more to do with her. Their fussiness is what Nan would call “strangely mis-di-rected.” Eh?

NAN. Then maybe we can get our Polly back, after all!

PAT. Of course ; that's the jolliest part of the whole racket.

CHAR. What ! take *that* girl into Nu Pi when even what was once U. Psi refused her ?

NAN. She's still our Polly.

ALL. } That's right.
 } Of course !
 } Our Polly !

CHAR. (*cuttingly*). Come now, take the other Polly instead. She's not damaged goods, at any rate.

PEG. I say, let's get both if we can.

CHAR. Kindly recall that "your Polly" has turned us down once in a letter which was —

NAN (*interrupting*). Never mind the letter. It doesn't count, for I tore it up immediately.

PAT. She's probably been sorry twenty times that she wrote it.

EL. Anybody makes mistakes.

BROWNIE. I'll bet she didn't write it, in the first place. Sounded like the U. Psis.

MIN. When we find her, sisters, she will doubtless be able to explain about it satisfactorily.

NAN. Let's hurry up, find both Pollies, and pledge them before anything else happens.

CHAR. Do you even know where they are ?

PAT. They're not with the U. Psis at any rate.

EL. Did you look carefully ?

PAT. I saw every one who was at the picnic. The twins had disappeared too.

EL. We must organize searching parties. Some of you go down by the river, others toward the station, and the rest through the woods. In ten minutes we'll all meet here and some of us must bring the Pollies back. Nan, Minerva and Brownie would better stay here in case they come back to the house for their things.

(*All but NAN, MIN. and BROWNIE divide into parties and go off L., back, C. and front. NAN and MIN. sit on bench ; BROWNIE on ground.*)

MIN. When you saw Polly go off with the twins, you didn't foresee such an extraordinary development of affairs, did you, Brownie ?

BROWNIE. How do you know I didn't ?

NAN. Girls, I wish our Polly liked us as well as we like her.

MIN. I feel certain she must remember our Latin with pleasure. One could see it made a great impression on her!

BROWNIE. I'll bet our dinner was better'n their old candy pull.

(Takes more candy out of pocket and sucks it. During BROWNIE'S speech TWINS have come in L. and catching sight of girls are about to steal away.)

NAN. If we ever get her again——

BROWNIE *(seeing TWINS and beckoning to them with candy)*. Oh, come on. We won't hurt you, and we know all about it.

(TWINS come back, looking limp and sad.)

HEN. Who told you?

HAR. How did you know?

NAN. Twins, we're so sorry for you. It was even worse luck than you deserved.

(TWINS sit on steps of house.)

HEN. It's all over now.

HAR. And we've only been in college one month!

TWINS. Our hearts are broken—we're going away.

NAN. It wasn't your fault, poor things; you couldn't spoil anything. U. Psi was hopeless. It deserved to be ended.

MIN. Nihil de mortibus nisi bonum. Nancy, speak not harshly of the departed.

BROWNIE. You never did seem like U. Psis. What made you join them?

TWINS. We had to join. It was our only invitation.

NAN. Why were you in such a hurry? We were going to ask you to be Nu Pis, but you pledged U. Psi the very first week.

BROWNIE. Don't you want to be Nu Pis now? It's never too late to do a good thing.

TWINS. We wanted from the first to be Nu Pis.

HEN. But it is too late now.

HAR. It is too painful here.

TWINS. We must leave Eastern.

MIN. Ah! The association would be too harrowing for your sensitive souls.

HEN. We'd love to be Nu Pis.

HAR. It was always our ambition.

TWINS. But we're going to Western.

NAN. That's where Polly came from!

TWINS (*in pained tone*). Don't speak to us of Polly.

BROWNIE (*angrily*). You were nice ones, you were!
(*Pause and change of manner.*) What did you hear about her, anyhow?

HEN. She wrote a letter——

HAR. One she shouldn't have.

TWINS. And the faculty at Western is looking for her.

NAN (*scornfully*). Did you send Polly away for a little thing like that?

TWINS (*on the defensive*). But Madge said——

MIN. It is incomprehensible to me why you did not investigate the matter more thoroughly. Did you not proceed rather hastily and unadvisedly?

NAN. Even if she had done something awful, why didn't you stand by her? What are sororities for, I'd like to know!

BROWNIE. Who told you the faculty was looking for her?

TWINS. A stranger—we didn't know her.

NAN. Did you take the word of some one you didn't even know without so much as giving Polly a chance?

HEN. Why were we so hasty?

HAR. We never thought of it that way before.

TWINS. But we'll live a different life at Western.

NAN. Are you going right away?

HEN. As soon as we can get packed.

HAR. We are in such a hurry.

TWINS. For we never want to see Madge again.

(*TWINS get up from steps.*)

NAN. Where is Polly now; can't you tell us?

HEN. She went off with the stranger——

HAR. The girl who told us about her.

TWINS. But she'll have to come here for her things. We must find the key. (*Look around on ground.*)

BROWNIE. Here's your old key. I lighted on it when I fell out the window. (*Throws it to them.*)

TWINS (*amazed*). Fell—out—our—window!

BROWNIE (*mocking them*). Yes—fell—out—your—window!

MIN. (*hastily*). Here come the girls,

Enter all but the two POLLIES at L. in more or less confusion.

NAN. Where are the Pollies?

PAT. Aren't they here with the twins?

EL. We thought they'd be together.

TWINS. Is there more than one Polly?

PAT. There's the Polly you had first.

BROWNIE. And the Polly you took away from us.

Enter the two POLLIES R., past house. TWINS rush to MARY, rest to POLLY.

TWINS (*to MARY*). Polly.

REST (*to POLLY*). Polly.

(*Divide into two camps; TWINS and MARY at R. Nu Pi and POLLY at L.*)

EL. Let's have some introductions.

TWINS (*leading MARY forward*). } This is Mary Whittier.

NAN (*leading POLLY forward*). }

(*Every one astonished. TWINS and NAN take another step forward, still leading the POLLIES.*)

TWINS } (*determinedly*). This is Mary Whittier!

NAN }

(*POLLY and MARY giggle.*)

TWINS. You are introducing the stranger. (*Insistently.*)
This is Mary Whittier.

BROWNIE. Guess again. We know Polly!

POLLY. Girls, you must let me explain now what you wouldn't before. I am Polly, but not Mary Whittier.

CHAR. Something just as good, perhaps?

POLLY. Very nearly; I am Mary Whittaker.

NAN. Then you didn't write that letter to me?

POLLY. The other Polly has done all the letter writing that has been done lately, and I've done all the talking. Come, Polly, speak for yourself.

MARY. You are Nan Carrington, aren't you? I wrote that letter to say I couldn't come to your house party. I sincerely wish I'd never written it, and had not stayed when U. Psi urged me.

ALL. So do we.

TWINS. You have suffered at the hands of U. Psi too, haven't you?

MARY. It has been hard for us all. I've been suspected of all sorts of things, and now I'm going back to Western.

TWINS. We are going too.

(*Each take one of MARY's hands.*)

MARY. I've tried sorority friendship, and it has proved false.

TWINS. It has betrayed us, too.

MARY. I thought sorority girls were loyal.

POLLY. You'll find it depends on the sorority. I've had a different experience with Nu Pi.

NAN. There, hear that!

PAT. You must all stay here.

EL. And join Nu Pi.

PEG. Polly says Nu Pi is all right.

MIN. Let us all be sisters!

MARY. Thank you, your cordiality does me good, but Polly has made me see how impossible it will be for me to leave Western after three years there.

TWINS. We can't stay here where we've been so unhappy, even to be Nu Pis.

NAN. Oh, dear! We can't have the Twins, and we can't have the real Mary Whittier.

DOT (*embracing POLLY*). But *our* Polly——

CHAR. That reminds me—who is this imitation of Mary Whittier, and why did she come to our party uninvited?

POLLY. I am glad of a chance to explain at last. I've tried before, but you wouldn't listen.

BROWNIE. That's so; you've been trying to explain ever since you came.

DOT. Go on; we love to hear you talk.

CHAR. Does any proof come with your explanation?

NAN. Don't mind Charlotte. She isn't ever very anti-septic.

POLLY. I came to Greenville from Western because I had received a letter of farewell from this Polly, and wanted to find out what was the matter and take her back to Western.

NAN. She told you she was coming to our party?

POLLY. Yes, and when you saw me and took it for granted that I was Mary, I tried to explain, but finally gave it up as I knew Mary must arrive soon and tell you who I was. Mary's identification comes late, but she will tell you now.

NAN. We know who you are. You're Mary Whittaker,

CHAR. What's in a name?

MARY. She is Mary Whittaker, instructor on the faculty at Western.

ALL. } Instructor!
 } Faculty!

POLLY. And I must thank you for entertaining me unawares, and leave on the next train.

MIN. (*inspired*). Sisters, we must keep Miss Whittaker with us. You recall there is a vacancy on the Eastern faculty which no doubt she could fill. The Latin department——

POLLY. I don't know three words of Latin. I'm only an instructor in literature!

MIN. (*amazed*). Veritatem dies aperit!

NAN (*gleefully*). After all you weren't a bit more clever than you looked!

(BROWNIE commences to sob noisily. The girls try to find out the trouble and she finally bewails.)

BROWNIE. They are all going away, and now we can't have any initiation *banquet*.

POLLY. Come, Mary; come, Twins; get your things and we'll start for the station.

(TWINs and MARY go toward house.)

EL. Wait a moment! I have something to tell you. It was to have been a secret till to-morrow, but under the circumstances I feel it will be better to tell you now.

(All face toward EL.)

PEG. Why, Eleanor!

NAN. Is it anything dreadful?

EL. No, it's good news, and I think it will resign us to letting the Western girls leave us.

DOT. Nothing could do that!

EL. Wait till you hear. As president of Nu Pi, I have had word from the Grand Lodge, very important word.

NAN. What does that matter now?

EL. Another chapter of Nu Pi is to be founded.

BROWNIE. Who cares?

PAT. That doesn't make this any better!

NAN. Is *that* all?

EL. Not all. The new chapter is to be at Western, and don't you see——

NAN. We can pledge Polly after all !

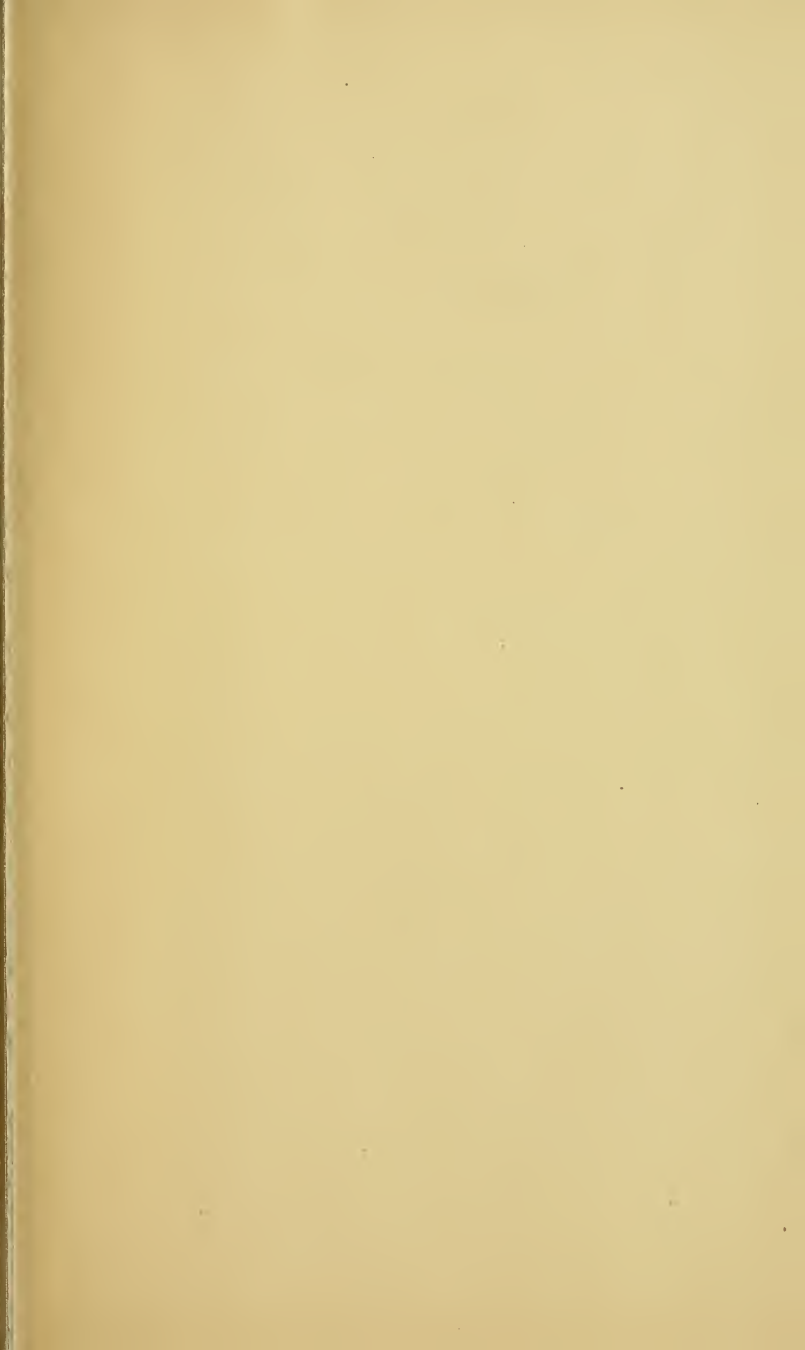
ALL. Both Pollies.

(All group around the POLLIES and TWINS, joining hands in a half circle, as curtain falls, singing the sorority song.)

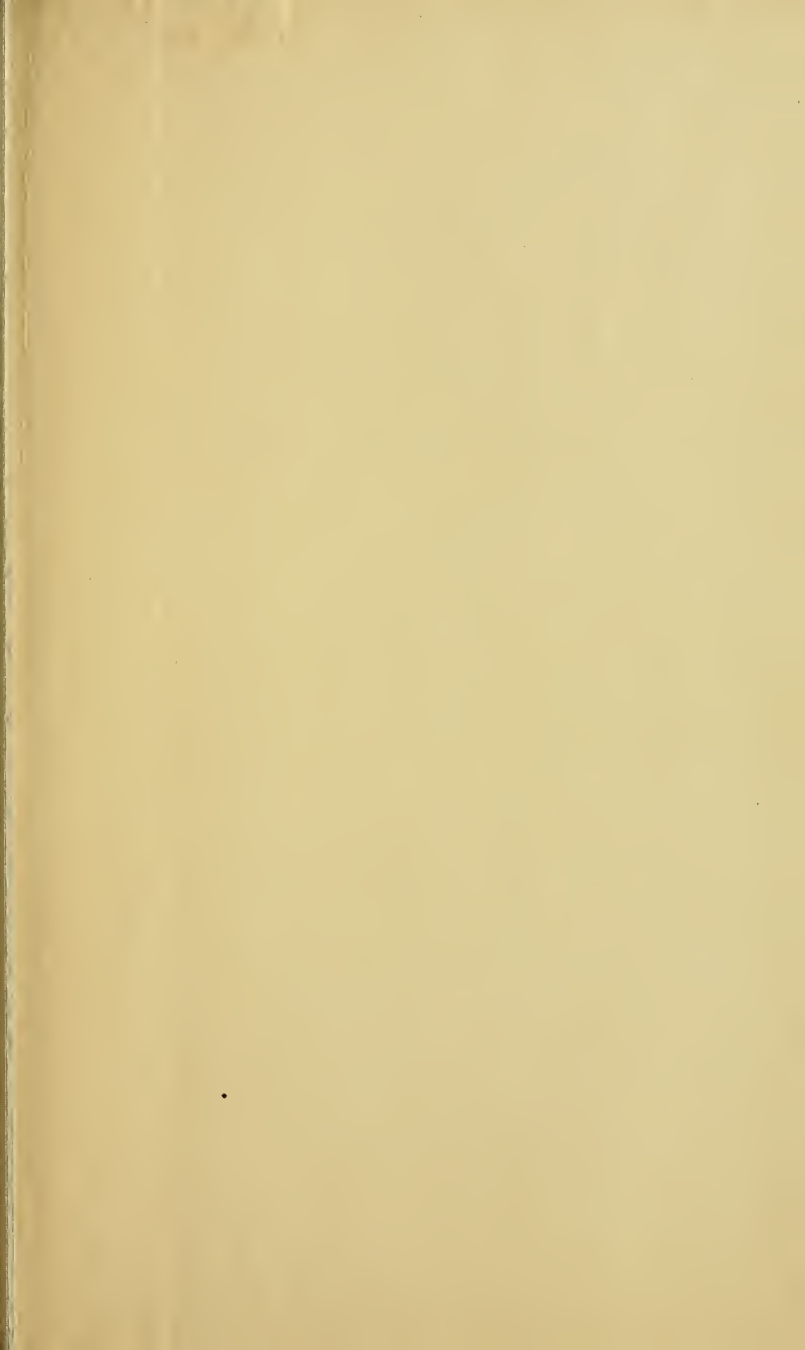
Nu Pi - nu Pi for - ev - er - nu Pi - nu Pi . . .

CURTAIN









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