

And she looked meaningly at Polly Ann, who said nothing. The children had been pulling at the girl's skirts, and suddenly she made a dash at them. They scattered, screaming with delight, and she after them.

"Howdy, Mr. Ripley?" said the woman, smiling a little.

"Howdy, Mis' McChesney?" said the old man, shortly.

So this was the mother of Tom, of whom I had heard so much. She was, in truth, a motherly-looking person, her fleshy face creased with strong character.

"Who hev ye brought with ye?" she asked, glancing at me.

"A lad Polly Ann took a shine to in the settlements," said the old man. "Polly Ann! Polly Ann!" he cried sharply, "we'll hev to be gittin' home." And then, as though an afterthought (which it really was not), he added, "How be ye for salt, Mis' McChesney?"

"So-so," said she.

"Wal, I reckon a little might come handy," said he. And to the girl who stood panting beside him, "Polly, give Mis' McChesney some salt."

Polly Ann did, and generously,—the salt they had carried with so much labor threescore and ten miles from the settlements. Then we took our departure, the girl turning for one last look at Tom's mother, and at the cabin where he had dwelt. We were all silent the rest of the way, climbing the slender trail through the forest over the gap into the next valley. For I was jealous of Tom. I am not ashamed to own it now.

In the smoky haze that rises just before night lets her curtain fall, we descended the farther slope, and came to Mr. Ripley's cabin.

CHAPTER VII

IN SIGHT OF THE BLUE WALL ONCE MORE

POLLY ANN lived alone with her grandfather, her father and mother having been killed by Indians some years before. There was that bond between us, had we needed one. Her father had built the cabin, a large one with a loft and a ladder climbing to it, and a sleeping room and a kitchen. The cabin stood on a terrace that nature had levelled, looking across a swift and shallow stream towards the mountains. There was the truck patch, with its yellow squashes and melons, and cabbages and beans, where Polly Ann and I worked through the hot mornings; and the corn patch, with the great stumps of the primeval trees standing in it. All around us the silent forest threw its encircling arms, spreading up the slopes, higher and higher, to crown the crests with the little pines and hemlocks and balsam fir.

There had been no meat save bacon since the McChesneys had left, for of late game had become scarce, and old Mr. Ripley was too feeble to go on the long hunts. So one day, when Polly Ann was gone across the ridge, I took down the long rifle from the buckhorns over the hearth, and the hunting knife and powder-horn and pouch beside it, and trudged up the slope to a game trail I discovered. All day I waited, until the forest light grew gray, when a buck came and stood over the water, raising his head and stamping from time to time. I took aim in the notch of a sapling, brought him down, cleaned and skinned and dragged him into the water, and triumphantly hauled one of his hams down the trail. Polly Ann gave a cry of joy when she saw me.

"Davy," she exclaimed, "little Davy, I reckoned you

was gone away from us. Gran'pa, here is Davy back, and he has shot a deer."

"You don't say?" replied Mr. Ripley, surveying me and my booty with a grim smile.

"How could you, Gran'pa?" said Polly Ann, reproachfully.

"Wal," said Mr. Ripley, "the gun was gone, an' Davy. I reckon he ain't sich a little rascal after all."

Polly Ann and I went up the next day, and brought the rest of the buck merrily homeward. After that I became the hunter of the family; but oftener than not I returned tired and empty-handed, and ravenously hungry. Indeed, our chief game was rattlesnakes, which we killed by the dozens in the corn and truck patches.

As Polly Ann and I went about our daily chores, we would talk of Tom McChesney. Often she would sit idle at the hand-mill, a light in her eyes that I would have given kingdoms for. One ever memorable morning, early in the crisp autumn, a grizzled man strode up the trail, and Polly Ann dropped the ear of corn she was husking and stood still, her bosom heaving. It was Mr. McChesney, Tom's father — alone.

"No, Polly Ann," he cried, "there ain't nuthin' happened. We've laid out the hill towns. But the Virginy men wanted a guide, and Tom volunteered, and so he ain't come back with Rutherford's boys."

Polly Ann seized him by the shoulders, and looked him in the face.

"Be you tellin' the truth, Warner McChesney?" she said in a hard voice.

"As God hears me," said Warner McChesney, solemnly. "He sent ye this."

He drew from the bosom of his hunting shirt a soiled piece of birch bark, scrawled over with rude writing. Polly seized it, and flew into the house.

The hickories turned a flaunting yellow, the oaks a copper-red, the leaves crackled on the Catawba vines, and still Tom McChesney did not come. The Cherokees were homeless and houseless and subdued, — their hill towns

burned, their corn destroyed, their squaws and children wanderers. One by one the men of the Grape Vine settlement returned to save what they might of their crops, and plough for the next year — Burrs, O'Haras, Williamsons, and Winns. Yes, Tom had gone to guide the Virginia boys. All had tales to tell of his prowess, and how he had saved Rutherford's men from ambush at the risk of his life. To all of which Polly Ann listened with conscious pride, and replied with sallies.

"I reckon I don't care if he never comes back," she would cry. "If he likes the Virginy boys more than me, there be others here I fancy more than him."

Whereupon the informant, if he were not bound in matrimony, would begin to make eyes at Polly Ann. Or, if he were bolder, and went at the wooing in the more demonstrative fashion of the backwoods — Polly Ann had a way of hitting him behind the ear with most surprising effect.

One windy morning when the leaves were kiting over the valley we were getting ready for pounding hominy, when a figure appeared on the trail. Steadying the hood of her sunbonnet with her hand, the girl gazed long and earnestly, and a lump came into my throat at the thought that the comer might be Tom McChesney. Polly Ann sat down at the block again in disgust.

"It's only Chauncey Dike," she said.

"Who's Chauncey Dike?" I asked.

"He reckons he's a buck," was all that Polly Ann vouchsafed.

Chauncey drew near with a strut. He had very long black hair, a new coonskin cap with a long tassel, and a new blue-fringed hunting shirt. What first caught my eye was a couple of withered Indian scalps that hung by their long locks from his girdle. Chauncey Dike was certainly handsome.

"Wal, Polly Ann, are ye tired of hanging out fer Tom?" he cried, when a dozen paces away.

"I wouldn't be if you was the only one left ter choose," Polly Ann retorted.

Chauncey Dike stopped in his tracks and haw-hawed with laughter. But I could see that he was not very much pleased.

"Wal," said he, "I 'low ye won't see Tom very soon. He's gone to Kaintuckee."

"Has he?" said Polly Ann, with brave indifference.

"He met a gal on the trail—a blazin' fine gal," said Chauncey Dike. "She was goin' to Kaintuckee. And Tom—he 'lowed he'd go 'long."

Polly Ann laughed, and fingered the withered pieces of skin at Chauncey's girdle.

"Did Tom give you them sculps?" she asked innocently.

Chauncey drew up stiffly.

"Who? Tom McChesney? I reckon he ain't got none to give. This here's from a big brave at Noewee, whar the Virginny boys was surprised." And he held up the one with the longest tuft. "He'd liked to tomakawked me out'n the briers, but I throwed him fust."

"Shucks," said Polly Ann, pounding the corn, "I reckon you found him dead."

But that night, as we sat before the fading red of the backlog, the old man dozing in his chair, Polly Ann put her hand on mine.

"Davy," she said softly, "do you reckon he's gone to Kaintuckee?"

How could I tell?

The days passed. The wind grew colder, and one subdued dawn we awoke to find that the pines had fantastic white arms, and the stream ran black between white banks. All that day, and for many days after, the snow added silently to the thickness of its blanket, and winter was upon us. It was a long winter and a rare one. Polly Ann sat by the little window of the cabin, spinning the flax into linsey-woolsey. And she made a hunting shirt for her grandfather, and another little one for me which she fitted with careful fingers. But as she spun, her wheel made the only music—for Polly Ann sang no more. Once I came on her as she was thrusting the tattered piece of birch

bark into her gown, but she never spoke to me more of Tom McChesney. When, from time to time, the snow melted on the hillsides, I sometimes surprised a deer there and shot him with the heavy rifle. And so the months wore on till spring.

The buds reddened and popped, and the briers grew pink and white. Through the lengthening days we toiled in the truck patch, but always as I bent to my work Polly Ann's face saddened me—it had once been so bright, and it should have been so at this season. Old Mr. Ripley grew querulous and savage and hard to please. In the evening, when my work was done, I often lay on the banks of the stream staring at the high ridge (its ragged edges the setting sun burned a molten gold), and the thought grew on me that I might make my way over the mountains into that land beyond, and find Tom for Polly Ann. I even climbed the watershed to the east as far as the O'Hara farm, to sound that big Irishman about the trail. For he had once gone to Kentucky, to come back with his scalp and little besides. O'Hara, with his brogue, gave me such a terrifying notion of the horrors of the Wilderness Trail that I threw up all thought of following it alone, and so I resolved to wait until I heard of some settlers going over it. But none went from the Grape Vine settlement that spring.

War was a-waging in Kentucky. The great Indian nations were making a frantic effort to drive from their hunting grounds the little bands of settlers there, and these were in sore straits.

So I waited, and gave Polly Ann no hint of my intention.

Sometimes she herself would slip away across the notch to see Mrs. McChesney and the children. She never took me with her on these journeys, but nearly always when she came back at nightfall her eyes would be red, and I knew the two women had been weeping together. There came a certain hot Sunday in July when she went on this errand, and Grandpa Ripley having gone to spend the day at old man Winn's, I was left alone. I remember I sat on the squared log of the door-step, wondering whether,

if I were to make my way to Salisbury, I could fall in with a party going across the mountains into Kentucky. And wondering, likewise, what Polly Ann would do without me. I was cleaning the long rifle, — a labor I loved, — when suddenly I looked up, startled to see a man standing in front of me. How he got there I know not. I stared at him. He was a young man, very spare and very burned, with bright red hair and blue eyes that had a kind of laughter in them, and yet were sober. His buckskin hunting shirt was old and stained and frayed by the briars, and his leggins and moccasins were wet from fording the stream. He leaned his chin on the muzzle of his gun.

"Folks live here, sonny?" said he.

I nodded.

"Whar be they?"

"Out," said I.

"Comin' back?" he asked.

"To-night," said I, and began to rub the lock.

"Be they good folks?" said he.

"Yes," I answered.

"Wal," said he, making a move to pass me, "I reckon I'll slip in and take what I've a mind to, and move on."

Now I liked the man's looks very much, but I did not know what he would do. So I got in his way and clutched the gun. It was loaded, but not primed, and I emptied a little powder from the flask in the pan. At that he grinned.

"You're a good boy, sonny," he said. "Do you reckon you could hit me if you shot?"

"Yes," I said. But I knew I could scarcely hold the gun out straight without a rest.

"And do you reckon I could hit you fust?" he asked. At that I laughed, and he laughed.

"What's your name?"

I told him.

"Who do you love best in all the world?" said he.

It was a queer question. But I told him Polly Ann Ripley.

"Oh!" said he, after a pause. "And what's *she* like?"

"She's beautiful," I said; "she's been very kind to me. She took me home with her from the settlements when I had no place to go. She's good."

"And a sharp tongue, I reckon," said he.

"When people need it," I answered.

"Oh!" said he. And presently, "She's very merry, I'll warrant."

"She used to be, but that's gone by," I said.

"Gone by!" said he, his voice falling, "is she sick?"

"No," said I, "she's not sick, she's sad."

"Sad?" said he. It was then I noticed that he had a cut across his temple, red and barely healed. "Do you reckon your Polly Ann would give me a little mite to eat?"

This time I jumped up, ran into the house, and got down some corn-pone and a leg of turkey. For that was the rule of the border. He took them in great bites, but slowly, and he picked the bones clean.

"I had breakfast yesterday morning," said he, "about forty mile from here."

"And nothing since?" said I, in astonishment.

"Fresh air and water and exercise," said he, and sat down on the grass. He was silent for a long while, and so was I. For a notion had struck me, though I hardly dared to give it voice.

"Are you going away?" I asked at last.

He laughed.

"Why?" said he.

"If you were going to Kaintuckee —" I began, and faltered. For he stared at me very hard.

"Kaintuckee!" he said. "There's a country! But it's full of blood and Injun varmints now. Would you leave Polly Ann and go to Kaintuckee?"

"Are you going?" I said.

"I reckon I am," he said, "as soon as I kin."

"Will you take me?" I asked, breathless. "I — I won't be in your way, and I can walk — and — shoot game."

At that he bent back his head and laughed, which made me redden with anger. Then he turned and looked at me more soberly.

"You're a queer little piece," said he. "Why do you want to go thar?"

"I want to find Tom McChesney for Polly Ann," I said.

He turned away his face.

"A good-for-nothing scamp," said he.

"I have long thought so," I said.

He laughed again. It was a laugh that made me want to join him, had I not been irritated.

"And he's a scamp, you say. And why?"

"Else he would be coming back to Polly Ann."

"Mayhap he couldn't," said the stranger.

"Chauncey Dike said he went off with another girl, into Kaintuckee."

"And what did Polly Ann say to that?" the stranger demanded.

"She asked Chauncey if Tom McChesney gave him the scalps he had on his belt."

At that he laughed in good earnest, and slapped his breech-clouts repeatedly. All at once he stopped, and stared up the ridge.

"Is that Polly Ann?" said he.

I looked, and far up the trail was a speck.

"I reckon it is," I answered, and wondered at his eyesight. "She travels over to see Tom McChesney's Ma once in a while."

He looked at me queerly.

"I reckon I'll go here and sit down, Davy," said he, "so's not to be in the way." And he walked around the corner of the house.

Polly Ann sauntered down the trail slowly, as was her wont after such an occasion. And the man behind the house twice whispered with extreme caution, "How near is she?" before she came up the path.

"Have you been lonesome, Davy?" she said.

"No," said I, "I've had a visitor."

"It's not Chauncey Dike again?" she said. "He doesn't dare show his face here."

"No, it wasn't Chauncey. This man would like to have seen you, Polly Ann. He—" here I braced myself,—"he knew Tom McChesney. He called him a good-for-nothing scamp."

"He did—did he!" said Polly Ann, very low. "I reckon it was good for him I wasn't here."

I grinned.

"What are you laughing at, you little monkey," said Polly Ann, crossly. "'Pon my soul, sometimes I reckon you are a witch."

"Polly Ann," I said, "did I ever do anything but good to you?"

She made a dive at me, and before I could escape caught me in her strong young arms and hugged me.

"You're the best friend I have, little Davy," she cried.

"I reckon that's so," said the stranger, who had risen and was standing at the corner.

Polly Ann looked at him like a frightened doe. And as she stared, uncertain whether to stay or fly, the color surged into her cheeks and mounted to her fair forehead.

"Tom!" she faltered.

"I've come back, Polly Ann," said he. But his voice was not so clear as a while ago.

Then Polly Ann surprised me.

"What made you come back?" said she, as though she didn't care a minkskin. Whereat Mr. McChesney shifted his feet.

"I reckon it was to fetch you, Polly Ann."

"I like that!" cried she. "He's come to fetch me, Davy." That was the first time in months her laugh had sounded natural. "I heerd you fetched one gal across the mountains, and now you want to fetch another."

"Polly Ann," says he, "there was a time when you knew a truthful man from a liar."

"That time's past," retorted she; "I reckon all men are liars. What are ye tom-foolin' about here for, Tom

McChesney, when yere Ma's breakin' her heart? I wonder ye come back at all."

"Polly Ann," says he, very serious, "I ain't a boaster. But when I think what I come through to git here, I wonder that I come back at all. The folks shut up at Harrod's said it was sure death ter cross the mountains now. I've walked two hundred miles, and fed seven times, and my sculp's as near hangin' on a Red Stick's belt as I ever want it to be."

"Tom McChesney," said Polly Ann, with her hands on her hips and her sunbonnet tilted, "that's the longest speech you ever made in your life."

I declare I lost my temper with Polly Ann then, nor did I blame Tom McChesney for turning on his heel and walking away. But he had gone no distance at all before Polly Ann, with three springs, was at his shoulder.

"Tom!" she said very gently.

He hesitated, stopped, thumped the stock of his gun on the ground, and wheeled. He looked at her doubtfully, and her eyes fell to the ground.

"Tom McChesney," said she, "you're a born fool with wimmen."

"Thank God for that," said he, his eyes devouring her.

"Ay," said she. And then, "You want me to go to Kaintuckee with you?"

"That's what I come for," he stammered, his assurance all run away again.

"I'll go," she answered, so gently that her words were all but blown away by the summer wind. He laid his rifle against a stump at the edge of the corn-field, but she bounded clear of him. Then she stood, panting, her eyes sparkling.

"I'll go," she said, raising her finger, "I'll go for one thing."

"What's that?" he demanded.

"That you'll take Davy along with us."

This time Tom had her, struggling like a wild thing in his arms, and kissing her black hair madly. As for me, I might have been in the next settlement for all they

cared. And then Polly Ann, as red as a holly berry, broke away from him and ran to me, caught me up, and hid her face in my shoulder. Tom McChesney stood looking at us, grinning, and that day I ceased to hate him.

"There's no devil ef I don't take him, Polly Ann," said he. "Why, he was a-goin' to Kaintuckee ter find me for you."

"What?" said she, raising her head.

"That's what he told me afore he knew who I was. He wanted to know ef I'd fetch him thar."

"Little Davy!" cried Polly Ann.

The last I saw of them that day they were going off up the trace towards his mother's, Polly Ann keeping ahead of him and just out of his reach. And I was very, very happy. For Tom McChesney had come back at last, and Polly Ann was herself once more.

As long as I live I shall never forget Polly Ann's wedding.

She was all for delay, and such a bunch of coquetry as I have never seen. She raised one objection after another; but Tom was a firm man, and his late experiences in the wilderness had made him impatient of trifling. He had promised the Kentucky settlers, fighting for their lives in their blockhouses, that he would come back again. And a resolute man who was a good shot was sorely missed in the country in those days.

It was not the thousand dangers and hardships of the journey across the Wilderness Trail that frightened Polly Ann. Not she. Nor would she listen to Tom when he implored her to let him return alone, to come back for her when the redskins had got over the first furies of their hatred. As for me, the thought of going with them into that promised land was like wine. Wondering what the place was like, I could not sleep of nights.

"Ain't you afeerd to go, Davy?" said Tom to me.

"You promised Polly Ann to take me," said I, indignantly.

"Davy," said he, "you ain't over handsome. 'Twouldn't improve yere looks to be bald. They hev a way of

takin' yere ha'r. Better stay behind with Gran'pa Ripley till I kin fetch ye both."

"Tom," said Polly Ann, "you kin just go back alone if you don't take Davy."

So one of the Winn boys agreed to come over to stay with old Mr. Ripley until quieter times.

The preparations for the wedding went on apace that week. I had not thought that the Grape Vine settlement held so many people. And they came from other settlements, too, for news spread quickly in that country, despite the distances. Tom McChesney was plainly a favorite with the men who had marched with Rutherford. All the week they came, loaded with offerings, turkeys and venison and pork and bear meat — greatest delicacy of all — until the cool spring was filled for the feast. From thirty miles down the Broad, a gaunt Baptist preacher on a fat white pony arrived the night before. He had been sent for to tie the knot.

Polly Ann's wedding-day dawned bright and fair, and long before the sun glistened on the corn tassels we were up and clearing out the big room. The fiddlers came first — a merry lot. And then the guests from afar began to arrive. Some of them had travelled half the night. The bridegroom's friends were assembling at the McChesney place. At last, when the sun was over the stream, rose such Indian war-whoops and shots from the ridge trail as made me think the redskins were upon us. The shouts and hurrahs grew louder and louder, the quickening thud of horses' hoofs was heard in the woods, and there burst into sight of the assembly by the truck patch two wild figures on crazed horses charging down the path towards the house. We scattered to right and left. On they came, leaping logs and brush and ditches, until one of them pulled up, yelling madly, at the very door, the foam-flecked sides of his horse moving with quick heaves.

It was Chauncey Dike, and he had won the race for the bottle of "Black Betty," — Chauncey Dike, his long, black hair shining with bear's oil. Amid the cheers of the bride's friends he leaped from his saddle, mounted a stump

and, flapping his arms, crowed in victory. Before he had done the vanguard of the groom's friends were upon us, pell-mell, all in the finest of backwoods regalia, — new hunting shirts, trimmed with bits of color, and all armed to the teeth — scalping knife, tomahawk, and all. Nor had Chauncey Dike forgotten the scalp of the brave who leaped at him out of the briers at Neowee.

Polly Ann was radiant in a white linen gown, woven and sewed by her own hands. It was not such a gown as Mrs. Temple, Nick's mother, would have worn, and yet she was to me an hundred times more beautiful than that lady in all her silks. Peeping out from under it were the little blue-beaded moccasins which Tom himself had brought across the mountains in the bosom of his hunting shirt. Polly Ann was radiant, and yet at times so rapturously shy that when the preacher announced himself ready to tie the knot she ran into the house and hid in the cupboard — for Polly Ann was a child of nature. Thence, coloring like a wild rose, she was dragged by a boisterous bevy of girls in linsey-woolsey to the spreading maple of the forest that stood on the high bank over the stream. The assembly fell solemn, and not a sound was heard save the breathing of Nature in the heyday of her time. And though I was happy, the sobs rose in my throat. There stood Polly Ann, as white now as the bleached linen she wore, and Tom McChesney, tall and spare and broad, as strong a figure of a man as ever I laid eyes on. God had truly made that couple for wedlock in His leafy temple.

The deep-toned words of the preacher in prayer broke the stillness. They were made man and wife. And then began a day of merriment, of unrestraint, such as the backwoods alone knows. The feast was spread out in the long grass under the trees — sides of venison, bear meat, corn-pone fresh baked by Mrs. McChesney and Polly Ann herself, and all the vegetables in the patch. There was no stint, either, of maple beer and rum and "Black Betty," and toasts to the bride and groom amidst gusts of laughter "that they might populate Kaintuckee." And Polly Ann would have it that I should sit by her side under the maple.

The fiddlers played, and there were foot races and shooting matches. Ay, and wrestling matches in the severe manner of the backwoods between the young bucks, more than one of which might have ended seriously were it not for the high humor of the crowd. Tom McChesney himself was in most of them, a hot favorite. By a trick he had learned in the Indian country he threw Chauncey Dike (no mean adversary) so hard that the backwoods dandy lay for a moment in sleep. Contrary to the custom of many, Tom was not in the habit of crowing on such occasions, nor did he even smile as he helped Chauncey to his feet. But Polly Ann knew, and I knew, that he was thinking of what Chauncey had said to her.

So the long summer afternoon wore away into twilight, and the sun fell behind the blue ridges we were to cross. Pine knots were lighted in the big room, the fiddlers set to again, and then came jigs and three and four handed reels that made the puncheons rattle,—chicken-flutter and cut-the-buckle,—and Polly Ann was the leader now, the young men flinging the girls from fireplace to window in the reels, and back again; and when, panting and perspiring, the lass was too tired to stand longer, she dropped into the hospitable lap of the nearest buck who was perched on the bench along the wall awaiting his chance. For so it went in the backwoods in those days, and long after, and no harm in it that ever I could see.

Well, suddenly, as if by concert, the music stopped, and a shout of laughter rang under the beams as Polly Ann flew out of the door with the girls after her, as swift of foot as she. They dragged her, a struggling captive, to the bride-chamber which made the other end of the house, and when they emerged, blushing and giggling and subdued, the fun began with Tom McChesney. He gave the young men a pretty fight indeed, and long before they had him conquered the elder guests had made their escape through door and window.

All night the reels and jigs went on, and the feasting and drinking too. In the fine rain that came at dawn to hide the crests, the company rode wearily homeward through the notches.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NOLLICHUCKY TRACE

Some to endure, and many to quail,
Some to conquer, and many to fail,
Toiling over the Wilderness Trail.

As long as I live I shall never forget the morning we started on our journey across the Blue Wall. Before the sun chased away the filmy veil of mist from the brooks in the valley, the McChesneys, father, mother, and children, were gathered to see us depart. And as they helped us to tighten the packsaddles Tom himself had made from chosen tree-forks, they did not cease lamenting that we were going to certain death. Our scrawny horses splashed across the stream, and we turned to see a gaunt and lonely figure standing apart against the sun, stern and sorrowful. We waved our hands, and set our faces towards Kaintuckee.

Tom walked ahead, rifle on shoulder, then Polly Ann; and lastly I drove the two shaggy ponies, the instruments of husbandry we had been able to gather awry on their packs,—a scythe, a spade, and a hoe. I triumphantly carried the axe.

It was not long before we were in the wilderness, shut in by mountain crags, and presently Polly Ann forgot her sorrows in the perils of the trace. Choked by briars and grapevines, blocked by sliding stones and earth, it rose and rose through the heat and burden of the day until it lost itself in the open heights. As the sun was wearing down to the western ridges the mischievous sorrel mare turned her pack on a sapling, and one of the precious bags burst. In an instant we were on our knees gathering the golden meal in our hands. Polly Ann baked