

# My Lady Peggy Goes to Town

By FRANCES AYMAR MATHEWS

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**SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.**

**CHAPTER I.**—Lady Peggy Burrows is the daughter of the bankrupt Earl of Exham of Exhamshire, and is the only daughter of the Earl. She is a beautiful girl, and is the favorite of her father. She is now in London, and is waiting for her father to return from his exile. She is very lonely, and is very fond of her father. She is very kind and generous, and is very popular with her friends. She is very brave and courageous, and is very determined. She is very beautiful and charming, and is very popular with her friends. She is very kind and generous, and is very popular with her friends. She is very brave and courageous, and is very determined. She is very beautiful and charming, and is very popular with her friends.

**CHAPTER VII.**

Mr. Brummel was a most shrewd and an altogether kindly personage as well. He had easily, on alighting from his carriage and assisting Lady Peggy to the same, espied the disreputable looking parcel which the supposed son of his dear old friend vainly tried to conceal, and the Beau was not long of putting two and two together and of concluding that young Sir Robin had lost his all at play and had even pawned his wardrobe, saving the ill looking bundle, for the price of his last few days' food. Therefore it was that in the most obliging manner he not only installed Sir Robin in an elegant and spacious apartment, but vowed he would at once send for both his tailor and perurguer to wait upon him and ended by securing his guest that his own man Tempers would be up presently to make the young gentleman's toilet for him.

"Your pardon, sir, Mr. Brummel," quoth Peggy, while her maiden heart set off at such a race horse flutter as it seemed must never quiet down, "but, pray you, remember I am country bred, unused to town ways, have never had a man to wait upon me in my life" (the solemn truth) "and should never know how to comport myself in such altered conditions."

The Beau shrugged his shoulders in the French fashion, lifted his eyebrows, thought 'twas amazing strange that Sir Hector's son should have been so ill educated, and said:

"Your pleasure, sir, whilst under my roof shall be mine, nor can I misdo but that one who has had the genius to invent that tie is amply able to array and perfume himself, even to the dressing of his eyes."

"You fatter, sir; I protest!" answered the guest. "I await with impatience the moment when, in cleaner case, I may have the honor of instructing you in the intricacies of the neck you are good enough to admire."

With any number of bows the distinguished host closed the door, and my Lady Peggy was left to herself.

For a moment she stood quite still, her heart yet a-clapping madly in her bosom, her eyes wandering about the princely room in which she found herself and at last resting on the mirror wherein was reflected her own slim figure, tricked out in Kennaston's suit of gray velvet, and in the yellow wig, which was indeed the counterpart of the real Sir Robin's pate. Her countenance—sure none would recognize it since neither twin nor quondam tutor had—was dark with the coffee stains; her eyes were ringed with sleeplessness and unaccustomed wine; her general aspect that of a young gentleman very much the worse for whatever his most recent experiences might have been.

Peg laughed, then she cried, then ran to the door and fastened it securely, then untied her bonnet, when out fell nightgail, green hood and kerchief, powder, patch box, lavender, musk, pins, needles, red silk hose, Levantine gown and veil of brussels lace. She shook the skirt out of its wrinkles, laid her wig on a broken wainscot, unpinned her long plaited hair from its coil and was stoutly making up her mind to brave all, get into her petticoats and confess everything to Mr. Brummel; but as she was about to wash the dark stains from her face comes there a "rap-tap" at the door, and Peg, dropping the ewer, calls out fiercely:

"Who's there?"

"An it please you, Sir Robin, Mr. Brummel bids me say to you that Mr. Chalk, the tailor, a person of the best fashion, will have the honor of waiting upon you for your measurements in a quarter of an hour, if you'll be pleased to see him then, or later."

He had been able to get him a decent coat to wear in place of the gray velvet. Doubtless, too, all those others she had met in Lark lane.

For the hundredth time she cast wistfully about in her mind as to how she could now at this present moment rid herself of the hated disguise, get into her Levantine, get bounds of her mother's arms, hide her head forever, and never, no, never, look into face of man again!

But Peggy saw no road. Every path seemed barred save those that would forever damn her in the eyes of foes and friends alike.

"Oh," cried she in desperation, "how easy 'tis to get into breeches, a coat, a waistcoat and a wig; but, mercy, will I ever be able to get out of 'em?"

It is to be put down to the credit of my Lady Peggy's up-bringing in the country, with most times only a lad for her playmate, that now she bore herself with not only a fine ease and grace, but also with as splendid a swagger and daring as any young macaroni that carried a sword.

"An I'm to be a man, I'll be one!" cried she. "And if Lady Diana ogles I'll give as good as she sends. Little him as I love, I'll know of his sometime Peggy he'll be jealous!"

So it was with a prodigious figure of her napkin and a nightly impudent twirl of her eyeglass (purchased not two hours since) that her ladyship made her bows and kissed the fingertips of Lady Brookwood's handsome daughter.

"I am your most grateful, Sir Robin!" cried this one, "and more pleased than I can express to welcome you. I only regret that Lord Brookwood is at Brookwood Hall and not here to thank you for rescuing his daughter." And so forth and on, with presentations to a dozen of fine ladies, dowagers and damsels, and a precious lot of fine gentlemen, and it seemed to Peggy, in her simplicity, as if the whole of Lark lane were abounding and serping and making her out a hero, which indeed was not far off the fact.

Two watched her as she came in on Beau Brummel's arm. These were Sir Percy and Miss Spousits—one to greet and another for Grigson's return from his errand, jumping at every sound, having left word both at Lark lane, his coffee house, as well as at home, where he had gone, that Grigson should report to him at once he arrived, or green with envy of Peggy and any other who neared his divinity, yet afraid and too diffident to approach her closer than with the deavouring gaze of his eyes.

"That puppy again!" cries Percy under his breath as he surveys Peg in her satins. "By gad, sir, every lady in the room's turning spite eyes on 'other, your incomparable Diana included, for fear he won't step and pay her a compliment."

"Why not?" returns the other gloomily. "Forgive my humor, Kennaston! Truth is, sir, I'm mad, mad, for Peg, and my ears are cracking and my brain splitting until that rascal Grigson gets back with answer to my letter. He's been gone long enough to have made the journey four times over."

"Oh, Percy," returns Peg's twin. "I love you as a brother, an' could I but physic your lady into complaisance I'd give my life for it. What owe I not to you?" adds the young man with deep feeling. "You've fed me, and, you've kept me, and you've clothed me, for since the scurvy knaves that frightened Lady Di stole my suit of grays and my sword and hat, what have I left? Where would I be now were 't not for you?"

"Tush, Ken, lad; I love you for yourself and ten thousand times more for her sake. Ken, I love her so that, as I told her, if Sir Robin were a better man, I'd cry off on she said she loved him."

"What said she?"

"Not that she loved him, but that she might," he continues with sadness as his eyes follow Peg on her almost rapid progress about the drawing rooms. "Tis a proper fellow enough, and I'd always heard he was a fright and a coward."

Kennaston presently took heart of grace and crossed to pay his duty to Lady Diana, who, he thought, he had seen by every other than this beautiful swain, was by no means the indifferent to him she would feign play off. Her color came and went as Kennaston, blushing to match his lady, ventured to spout into the ear of the leaving pair to gallop on this pleasant path, Sir Percy at a distance unconsciously followed Lady Peggy, at least with his gaze.

Peggy meantime, denying right and left the story of her prowess with whips and fists and ogle of the fair, still kept her eye on Percy. Not yet had she seen him approach Lady Diana. Yet hold! Even now, catching her own gaze fixed upon him, he turned and was present by bending over the little beauty's fingers.

A pang shot through Peg's heart, and the tears were like to force their way. She made an excuse and left the long drawing room, taking refuge in a small parlour where the tables were ready for cards. She sank into a chair and buried her face in her hands. The candles were not yet lighted, and she was totally unobserved. Dashing the salt drops from her lashes with her hand she would have beheld Sir Percy, at a word in his ear from the footman, quit Lady Diana's side with but the smallest ceremony, dash out into the vestibule, seize with a viselike grip the man who stood there pale and trembling and gasp out: "At last! The letter, the letter!"

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