My Lady Peggy Goes to Town

By FRANCES AYMAR MATHEWS

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SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I—Lady Peggy Burgoyne is the daughter of the bankrupt Earl of Exham of Kennaston castle. She accuses her lover, Sir Percy de Bohun, of neglecting her in favor of Lady Diana Weston and sends him away. II—Lady Peggy's twin brother, Kennaston, has left home to win fame and fortune by his pen in London. He writes Lady Peggy that Sir Percy is with him in London and is carousing and gaming to drown his sorrow and accuses her of flirting with Sir Robin McTart, a "little towhended sprat" and "blackguard from Kent." Peggy's maid, Chockey, suggests a formal visit to town to win back Sir Percy. Lady Peggy decides to go surreptitiously with Chockey as her chaperon. The discovery that her serving man, Bickers, delayed a letter written by her to Sir Percy over a week makes her despetate. Perhaps, too, Lady Diana is in London. III—Closely veiled, Lady Peggy and Chockey ride to London in the public coach. At the King's Arms they see Lady Diana, gorgeously arrayed. The landlady of Kennaston's lodgings, at Holywell road and Lark Lane, tells them the twin is out with Sir Percy and adds that Sir Percy is going the pace all on account of a beautiful heiress all London is dangling after. They put their extra clothing in the sleeping loft, intending to await Kennaston's return, when they are startled by a hullabaloo in the street. IV—Kennaston and Sir Percy, with several companions, come in in a merry mood. Lady Peggy sends Chockey just across the street to buy a wig matching the locks of Sir Robin McTart. Donning this, with a suit of her brother's clothes she waits in a corner of the hall for the gallants to pass to their room. With a letter introducing Sir Robin McTart to her brother, which she herself had written and not delivered, she presents herself as that person. Sir Percy picks a quarrel with the newcomer, incidentally showing his love for Lady Peggy. Sir Robin's double declares that Lady Peggy's eyes and hands and lips are his, and they cross swords. Lady Peggy is cut in the wrist, but makes a good fight. While the men pledge a bumper to the supposed Sir Robin, Lady Peggy answers a knock at the door. The real Sir Robin is below in a street chair. V—Sir Robin is seeking news from Kennaston of his sister, and the incognito tells him that Lady Peggy is supposed to be at home. He goes to seek her there. Lady Peggy returns to the room and wins heavily at cards. While the revellers are asleep Lady Peggy sends Chockey to the King's Arms, promising to join her there and go home. On the way Lady Peggy encounters Lady Diana in her chair. The heiress is in love with her twin. Lady Beau Brummel runs Lady Peggy down with his coach and insists upon installing the son of his old friend, Sir Hector McTart, in his own apartments. His extraordinary conduct was due to envy of the incognito's cravat, which he wished to copy. VI—Sir Robin finds Chockey at Kennaston Castle. She supposes Lady Peggy is in Kent, and he goes in search of her. At Sir Robin's heels comes Lord Percy's man, Grigson. Seeing the real Sir Robin, he goes back to his master convinced that Lady Peggy is in London with the Kentish lover. VII—Lady Peggy resolves to disclose her identity, but Beau Brummel sends his tailor to measure her for a man's suit, and she changes her mind, even cutting off her hair. Both she and Sir Percy have an excess of jealousy on account of their supposed rivals, Sir Robin and Lady Diana.

CHAPTER VIII.

At this precise moment Lady Peggy, scarce able to contain herself longer and reckless of every possible consequence, being about to cast herself upon her quondam lover's protection and to be rid forever of being a man, is stopped short of her purpose by the words that now fall slowly from the young man's lips.

"To deceive, to lie, to scheme and plot and bring shame and trouble upon her father and mother! Gad's life!" Sir Percy brings his clinched hand down with a thump upon the card table. "I had never believed that of Peggy! I'd have felled him that had hinted she could even plan a lie or run off to a secret marriage with the best man that lives."

At which speech my lady's color burned as never before since she was born, and her choler rose at the double charge, both the one that was true as to her deceit and the one that was not as to her secret nuptials.

Palpitating with rage and wounded sensibility, with remorse and wretchedness, brought to bay with a situation she could not endure, Peg now utterly forgot her breeches or her shame at these, and, stepping boldly forth into the small circle of light shed in at the doorway from the candles in the corridor, she saluted Sir Percy and spoke:

"I bid you good evening, Sir Percy de Bohun, and, having had either the good or the ill fortune to unintentionally overhear your remarks concerning Lady Peggy Burgoyne, I feel it my duty and pleasure alike to defend her from the unjust and unworthy attack which you, sir, have just been pleased to make."

"Sir Robin McTart!" exclaims Percy, with a start and in a prodigious anger. "I deny your charges, sir, and would remind you that eavesdroppers are ever the cumberers of dangerous ground."

"Sir," responds Lady Peggy, her temper rising the more at the sense of the

"Tell me, or I'll brain you where you stand!"

injustice and falseness of her whole tenure, "you coupled just now the name of a lady with that of Sir Robin McTart. I demand how you dare to assume such a responsibility, sir, until at least either the lady in question or I gives you our confidence or our leave."

"'Our,' forsooth; 'our!'" comes fiercely from between Sir Percy's clinched teeth, while his hand flies to his sword hilt.

"Why the devil, sir—an you've been so lucky as win the lady for your bride—make off with her i' the dark, shut her up in some unfindable hole, cheat her parents and go strutting like some vain peacock up and down other ladies' drawing rooms? Be a man, sir, and publish your triumph broadcast, nor let the town presently go gossiping and countryside wagging with the scandal of an elopement! Zounds! Sir Robin McTart, that"—flipping a stray card from the table almost in her ladyship's face—"for your gallantry and your honor!"

"What do you mean, sir?" cries Peggy, struck with horror all a-heap and with terror as well, yet keeping up a brave show with her drawn rapier and sparkling eyes.

"Whatever you please, sir," returns Percy, now white heat, too, and most reckless of time or place.

"I've too much regard for Lady Peggy, sir, not to postpone the climax of this matter until our next meeting Let it be when you see fit!" cries Peg, with woman's wit and wisdom too.

"'Slife, sir, I ask you as one gentleman to another—nay, I implore it of you," cries Sir Percy, rent betwixt choler, love and apprehension, "most humbly—is Lady Peggy your wife?"

Her ladyship was now like to laugh, so near akin are mirth and sorrow, but she replied very loftily:

"I decline to discuss the matter, sir, and would remind you that report hath your attentions engaged in quite another direction."

"You know where Lady Peggy Burgoyne is at this moment?" says Sir Percy hotly, determined to push his matter to its ending this very night, and almost crazed by his passion and its balking.

"That I do, sir," returns her ladyship, with a covert smile.

"Tell me, or I'll brain you where you stand!" Percy makes an ugly lunge at his opponent with his fist, but merely as a threat.

"That will I not," says she firmly.

What might have further ensued is at this crisis put out of the question by the entrance of Kennaston, who, espying Percy the first, cries out joyfully:

"Percy, Percy, Lady Diana hath given me leave to tell you she consents"—

"Tush, sir!" interrupts Percy, jerking his head toward the other occupant of the room. "Sir Robin McTart and I have come near to blows, and must fight of a surety on the subject of your sister, sir, and 'tis for you to know without more delay that Lady Peggy is up in London, unknown to her parents; that Sir Robin hath her whereabouts and absolutely refuses to reveal the same." Percy crosses the room, strikes a tinder and lights the candles on the mantelshelf.

"You are cursedly badly mistook, gentlemen, both of you," says Kennaston quietly enough. "I've got a letter which I found upon my table this very night just come from my sister at Kennaston," with which her twin pulls my lady's most ill spelled and crumpled missive from his pocket and holds it up before the four astonished eyes that are staring at it.

Peggy in amaze recognizes the letter she had written to her brother the day long since in the buttery and which she had taken up to town in her reticule and must have dropped when she had paid her ill starred visit to Kennaston's chambers in Lark lane.

"Frowse, the charwoman's daughter, vowed she'd found it a-lying in the entry under the water tub. There's an end of your dispute, sirs, I trust," glancing from one to the other. "Come, come, Sir Percy, and you, Sir Robin, whom indeed the letter you brought me from Lady Peggy the other night doth most highly commend to my good offices, must be friends," taking a hand of each. "Nor let Dame Rumor split ye asunder with her lies about my little twin's being up in town. Gadzooks, sirs, the child's not a notion of a difference betwixt Mayfair and—Drury lane! I beg of you, Mr. Brummel," as this one now comes mincing in together with Lord Escombe, Sir Wyatt, Mr. Jack Chalmers and others for their game, "for you've the graces I lack in such matters—these two gallants have had a difference, and 'tis you, Mr. Brummel, can set 'em straight again."

"Cards, cards! Spades, clubs, diamonds, hearts!" exclaims the Beau, touching the queen of hearts with the toe of his high heeled shoe as it lies on the floor where it was shot from Sir Percy's hand.

"Split me, but 'tis them that are at the bottom of every quarrel, sirs! Whisk me, but if a spade or a club or a heart, provided it be a lady's, or a diamond, ain't the only causes for disagreement in this world!"

"Correct as your own toilet, sir!" cries Wyatt.

"Now, 'twas hearts of course, and the queen of 'em, that's roused both your tempers, but, zounds, gentlemen," taking now the hand of each, which had slipped clear of Kennaston's fingers, "bethink you, if the lady, whose name I can't even guess, whom you both adore, stood here, what would her pleasure be? Robin, my lad, answer me, for of brawling there can be none here and fighting no more. Speak, sir!"

"Faith," answered Lady Peggy, with splendid valor and a rise in her color and her heels, "to my certain knowledge the lady 'd have her name put out of the matter wholly, and she'd sooner die, sir, than have any fighting over her preferences by either Sir Percy de Bohun or Sir Robin McTart."

The which being taken to be, by all present, a most prodigious and amazing gentlemanlike and politic speech, Sir Percy was feign accept, mock-smile and bow, while all the rest blew their lungs hollow applauding and praising his still hated and still suspected rival.

Peace restored outwardly, whatever else raged in the breasts of the two opponents, the gallants sat to their tables, Kennaston managing to whisper to Sir Percy across the deal:

"As I was telling you when I entered, Percy, Lady Di permits me to let you know she consents to my dedicating the ode to her, and Lillie, at the corner of Beauford Buildings in the Strand, hath engaged to publish it at once."

But this Lady Peggy, at a distant table, engaged in picquet with his grace of Escombe, hears not. There rings in her ears naught save the words Kennaston uttered when he came into the card room—"Lady Diana hath given me leave to tell you she consents."

"Consents!" To what else but his suit, which, egged on by his noble uncle, has been pushing any time these ten years, since, boy and girl, Sir Percy and Lady Di had played, ridden, romped, quarreled as brother and sister together?

"Consents!"

It echoes and resounds in her ladyship's head over and over again the night through, and 'tis quite of a piece with her mood that she seeks out Lady Diana when tea and cakes are passing and with sly looks congratulates her ladyship on the happiness she has this night conferred on a very gallant gentleman not so many miles away.

And quite in Lady Diana's line of reasoning, having heard from Kennaston that Sir Robin has come up to town highly commended to him by his sister, and that, although he had been sorely jealous and distraught at the said Sir Robin's good fortune in the matter of the rescue of her ladyship, he still believed him to be head over heels in love with his twin, etc., and so, her ladyship argued, Kennaston had doubtless confided to the said Sir Robin such tokens of her favor as the said Lady Diana had that evening seen fit to manifest, never for a moment misdoubting that any other swain was in the supposed Robin's mind any more than he was in her own.

"Consents!"

'Twas reverberating in Peg's ear and a-knocking at her heart for the hundredth time when, returned to the card room, she learned that Mr. Brummel was inviting the company for the Thursday to his seat Ivy Dene. 'Twas to be a gentlemen's party only, out on horseback, the twenty miles, leaving the White Horse at 10 in the morning, with luncheon en route at the Merry Rabbit at Market Ossory, a look over the stables and paddocks on arriving at Ivy Dene, a quiet game, maybe, and such a dinner as only, the Beau swore, his country cook could get up, with the ride back to town by the light of the near full moon.

Lady Peggy was soon made aware that this festivity was solely in her honor and succumbed to it as cheerfully as she might.

God keep her! All the while staring at the ribbon of her twin's wig, a-longing to cast her arms about his neck and pray him cover her up in his wraprascal and fetch her home, vowing she'd run away from 'em all the next minute. But where? How? Which way could it be done so that capture, discovery and humiliation would not follow? Peggy could contrive no method, and the girl was literally terrified both at the prospect before her and by the realization that, easy as it had been to jump into man's attire, it was well nigh impossible to get out of it again. Should she on returning to Peter's Court lay off her satin suit, wig and rapier, and resume her Levantine gown, hood, petticoats, patches and reticule, how and of what hour of the day or night could she in safety leave the mansion and find her way unsuspected to the King's Arms and the coach? 'Twould be out of the question. Servants were up and about at all hours, and were a woman seen emerging from her room, what piece of scandal would not the next day ring from one end of the town to t'other!

With "consents" tattooing in her brain, my lady recklessly put all the heart there was left in her into the present moment, lost a hundred pounds to Escombe with a fine grace, won five hundred with no more ado, laughed, drank a little wine, went home with her host at 4 in the morning and fell heavily asleep.

At 2 of the afternoon the Beau usually held an informal levee attended by the more noted of the bucks and macaronis of the town—vastly entertaining half hours, wherein, while soundly abusing the newspapers for their being stuffed with lies, the company still eagerly devoured every scrap of gossip they contained; where the amount of friz towering above Lady This' brow was measured and scanned, the better appearance of Lady That in the new fashioned gown discussed, and the horrid aspect of the Hon. Miss So-and-so's toupee and her general resemblance to a malt sack tied in the middle talked over. This couplet and that comedy were torn to pieces by as many pretty wits as chanced to be present, while Tempers dressed his master's wig in a corner and a footman and a negro page handed chocolate round in silver trays.

The Beau himself reclined on his great bedstead with its fine tester, a half dozen of pillows richly laced at his head, a flowered gown about his shoulders, his nightcap on, a coverlet embroidered by the Chinese over him, his snuffbox at hand, reading aloud from the damp and freshly arrived print whilst Sir Wyatt, Lord Escombe, Mr. Jack Chalmers and a dozen more sat or stood, cup in fingers, 'twixt lip and saucer, harkening, eager, to the news.

"'Tis by this on the tip of every tongue in town that there occurred last night at Lady B—d's rout an encounter (the second within a se'ennight) betwixt Sir P—y de B—n and a certain young gentleman from Kent, whose handsome face, genteel manners and dashing behavior have conspired to place him in so brief a time at the very height of favor in society and more especially in the eyes of Lady D—a W—n. It had been supposed that the affair recounted in these pages as having taken place in the chambers of Lord K—n of K—n was on account solely of the above mentioned adorable young scion of a noble house. We are in a position to assure the world of fashion that such is not the case and that both the unfortunate disputes betwixt these two gallants are to be laid to the door of Lady P—y B—e, sister to Lord K—n. Report hath it that her ladyship is in London; rumor contradicts report and avers that the fair one has not stirred from home. The issue is awaited with interest, as the verbatim account of an unsuspected elopement may be looked for at any moment. Safe to say the vivacious Lady P—y B—e, whom the town hath never had the pleasure of beholding, has succeeded in stirring Mayfair to its depths and has been the cause already of a very pretty pair of quarrels between two young gentlemen of the first quality."

"'Slife!" cried Beau Brummel. "Who, now, the devil's Lady P—y?"

"By the dragon himself, I never heard that Kennaston had a sister," said Lord Wootton and Mr. Vane at once.

"Yes!" exclaims Sir Wyatt, tapping his forehead recollectively. "I do recall that Sir Robin McTart, the night we were at Kennaston's chambers, entered with the presentation of a letter of introduction from 'Lady Peggy Burgoyne to her brother,' and, 'sdeath, 'twas, I believe, she about whom they fought too."

"Ha! 'Tis not only Lady Di, then, that's at the bottom of their quarrel after all," says Mr. Brummel reflectively.

"Where is the fair one?" asks Escombe. "Who knows that?"

"Faith, no one. Stop! Sir Robin must know, since 'tis for her he unsheathes twice in a week!" cries the host.

"Where is he?"

"Bring him in."

"Send for Sir Robin!" is the cry of the company.

"Zooks, sirs, but our reputations as gallants are broken up an we've not seen her of whom the prints speak thus," says the Beau, adding at once: "Tempers, my compliments to Sir Robin McTart, and beg of him to join us for, at the least, a few moments. I know he's averse to early rising, but pray inform him to skip across in his dressing gown and slippers and nightcap; we've no ladies hereabout to ogle him."

The which message, being conveyed to my Lady Peggy a-sitting by the pulled out chest of drawers mournfully contemplating her long shorn tresses with barred door, arouses in her such a fever of sorrow as well nigh chokes her utterance.

"Say to Mr. Brummel I'm asleep, Tempers, and crave to know his pleasure, the answer to which I'll send as faithfully as Morpheus will permit by you for Mercury. Off with you!" And her ladyship softly stroked her locks and for the thousandth time went planning her escape.

Peals of laughter, rattling of rapiers, click of heels, and now:

"Rat-a-tat-tat-tat-tat!" on the door.

"McTart! McTart! Up with you from betwixt coverlets and into your Persian quilt!"

"Out with ye, Sir Robin, or, sir, we'll in, the fifteen of us, and rout you up from Morpheus' arms!"

"Come, Sir Robin, dally no longer with sweet sleep. Up, sir, and bethink

"McTart! McTart! Up with you!"

you of beauty spelled with a P-e-g-g-y!" shouts Sir Wyatt, chorused by the rest.

At first clap of voices Peggy stuck her hair back into the drawer, jumped up and stood, hand upon the dressing table, her expression like nothing else so much as that of a fawn caught in a thicket.

"'Sdeath! Gentlemen, I pray of you, a few moments' grace!" cries she, trembling from the knees down, for 'tis quite of the temper of the manners of the day that in a second more the whole company should batter down the mahogany and burst in.

"Three-and-thirty, an you like, Sir Robin!" says Escombe, who is soberer than the rest.

"Give us the whereabouts of Lady Peggy Burgoyne," shouts Mr. Chalmers, "and we'll trouble you no more 'til doomsday!"

"Lady Peggy Burgoyne!"

"Lady Peggy Burgoyne!"

"Where's Lady Peggy Burgoyne?"

"Where's Lady Peggy Burgoyne?"

"Where is the fair one for whom you and Sir Percy de Bohun have fought with blades and tongues twice now since this day last week?"

"Lady Peggy Burgoyne!" cried they in hot concert, joined in most lustily by the Beau from his bed across the corridor and accompanied by the pounding of fifteen rapier points on the parquet and thirty fists on the woodwork as well as the demoniacal screams of the Beau's little negro and the parrot on his wrist.

"Tell us where she is!" came high staccato last from Sir Wyatt's exhausted lips.

"My lords and gentlemen," answers her ladyship, standing close to the door enveloped from top to toe in a sheet over her nightrail, "would I could!"

There was a ring of heartfelt truth in the reply, and its utterance was succeeded by a second's surprised pause.

The young bucks regarded each other with shrugs, pursed mouths and interrogation points bristling in their eyes.

Mr. Chalmers, recovered of his surprise sooner than the others, says:

"Do you mean to say, Sir Robin, that the whereabouts of the lady with whose name the prints and the coffee houses are ringing, for whose sake you came near to fighting Sir Percy only last night and did fight him in Lark lane on Thursday last, ain't known to you?"

"Is she in London?" pipes the Beau, pinching the little black till he squeaks again.

"That I cannot tell," responds her ladyship. "I do know she's not in Kent, and she's not at Kennaston castle. 'Slife, sirs," adds she, "I pray your consideration. Guess what you will. This matter of Lady Peggy sticks me closer than you dream, and I'd give my life to know her safe at home with her mother."

Silence ensues. The disappointed fifteen get them back to the Beau's bedside to talk over this latest development as to the mysterious Lady Peggy.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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IN the Superior Court of the State of Washington for Thurston county.

Annie D'Oyly, Plaintiff,
vs.
Thornton A. Snider and Mary S. Snider, husband and wife, Mary E. Snider, and Adrian H. Snider, husband and wife, and all of the unknown heirs of W. M. Francis, deceased, and Mary E. Snider, wife of Adrian H. Snider, formerly wife of said W. M. Francis, deceased; also all other persons or parties unknown, claiming any right, title, estate, lien or interest in the real estate described in the complaint herein, Defendants. } Summons.

State of Washington to Thornton A. Snider and Mary S. Snider, husband and wife, Mary E. Snider and Adrian H. Snider, husband andf wife, and all of the unknown heirs of W. M. Francis, deceased, and Mary E. Snider, wife of Adrian H. Snider, formerly wife of said W. M. Francis, deceased; also all other persons or parties unknown claiming any right, title, estate, lien or interest in the real estate described in the complaint herein, Defendants:

You are hereby summoned to appear within sixty days after the date of the first publication of this summons, to-wit: within sixty days after the 19th day of February, 1904, and defend the above entitled action in the above entitled court, and answer the complaint of the plaintiff herein, and serve a copy of your answer or other pleading upon the undersigned, attorneys for plaintiff, at their office below stated; and in case of your failure so to do, judgment will be rendered against you according to the demand of the complaint which has been filed with the Clerk of said court.

The object of this action is to foreclose a trust deed conditioned as a mortgage between the defendants, Thornton A. Snider, Mary S. Snider and Mary E. Snider, to one N. D'Oyly, deceased, the plaintiff having succeeded to the rights of said N. D'Oyly upon land in Thurston county, Washington.

TROY & FALKNOR,
Attorneys for Plaintiff.

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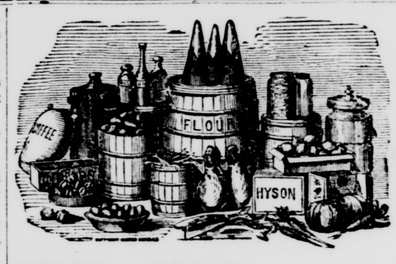

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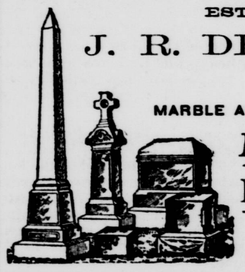

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