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 feathered 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 desperate. 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. VIII—Sir Percy, still in the dark, accuses Lady Peggy of running off with herself. Kennaston flourishes a belated letter from his sister as proof that she is at home. Lady Peggy's troubles increased by an invitation to a gentlemen's horseback party. IX—Lady Peggy starts for home and discovers a plot between Sir Robin and two outlaws to kill Sir Percy. She returns to Beau Brummel's in her disguise bent on saving Sir Percy. X and XI—My lady joins the riding party, sitting astride, in order to be near to guard Sir Percy. Tom Kidde's highwaymen attack the cavalcade in Epstowe forest. Lady Peggy shoots Kidde and mounts his horse, Homing Nell, which the outlaw had stolen from Lady Diana's father, Lord Brookwood. The horse makes for home in spite of his rider, and is rounded up by the men of the castle, who condemn Lady Peggy to the gallows as the original Tom Kidde. XII—Sir Percy cuts Lady Peggy down from the gallows, and she rushes off to London. Word reaches Sir Percy from Kennaston castle that Lady Peggy is married. XIII—Lady Peggy shoots down Sir Robin's hirelings, who attack Sir Percy, but slips away unseen by her lover. Sir Robin believes that his rival is dead. Lady Peggy leads him to seek for his missing sweetheart at a party to be given at Vauxhall Gardens. XIV and XV—The guests at Vauxhall are in masks. Sir Robin mistakes Lady O'Toole for Lady Peggy and attempts to unmask her. Challenged by Sir Percy, he proves his identity and disappears, as does his double. XVI and XVII—Sir Robin, Sir Percy and Lady Peggy, en route for Kennaston, lodge at the same tavern. Lady Peggy falls in a fever swoon on Farnham heath and is taken up by Sir Robin's coach. XVIII and XIX—Sir Percy captures Sir Robin's coach. In her delirium Lady Peggy reveals her identity, and mutual love avowals end in marriage.

CHAPTER XIX.

UNTIL midsummer he rides over to Kennaston twice each day, morning and night, to find out how it fares with her, and 'twas not until then that the earl gave him hopes he might see her, perhaps, within the se'ennight.

Notes there had been daily as soon as Chockey had let him know that her mistress was in her head once more but never yet had she been able to bring herself to scribble one line to her suitor or to send any message save polite civilities by Chockey.

'Twas only after the buxom damsel (having the night previous heard from Grigson that his master was like to die of suspense and having imparted the same to her ladyship), together with the lady mother and the earl, had argued and preached into her the great and chivalrous devotion of Sir Percy that Peggy at last had brought her mind into a condition of acquiescing in his coming up to her morning room on the Thursday (being St. James' day) after the sixth Sunday after Trinity, which same she carefully marked in her prayer book with a dab of the crimson her mother sent in to beautify her pale cheeks with, against Sir Percy's advent.

"Oh, slitterkins, madam!" cries the abigail under her breath. "And asking your ladyship's pardon, but how can I do up your ladyship's hair an' it no longer than the peltry of a meadow mouse?"

"True enough, Jane Chockey," replies her mistress, contemplating her countenance in the mirror. "Of a fact, I resemble nothing so much as one of those weazen little vermin. My nose is sharp, too, and my cheeks"—

"Stay, my lady," says Chock, taking up the rouge and putting on layer after layer. Who'll say your ladyship ain't handsome now? Lawk, madam! You look like an angel! What a blessing of Providence the French is with their nostrums!"

Peggy regards herself.

"Now, my lady," cries Chockey, "would you but borrow your lady mother's worked head, a cup of powder and her ladyship's pink feathers atop of it, what a sight would you be for Sir Percy to behold!"

Peggy shakes her head. The three feet of wire, wool, pomade, frizz and plumage the handmaiden suggests even causes her to laugh aloud as she figures it above her own face.

"Chock," says she, "I'll do as I am. Sir Percy has seen my cropped head. Faith, he 'twas, you tell me, that fetched the tail of my locks to Kennaston in his saddle pocket or tied upon him somewhere?"

"Aye, my lady, Mr. Grigson says never, since Adam and Eve began courtin' under the fig tree, has any young nobleman been seen in such a frenzy as Sir Percy about your ladyship. Lawk, Lady Peggy! When a young gentleman goes off his feed, ceases swearin' and cursin' his man and stops down in the country nigh three months in the season, a-readin' loud to his deaf aunt, there ain't no sort of doubt as to the quality of his passion!"

Her ladyship smiles as she spreads her train and glances at it over her shoulder.

"Chock," says she, "look you now, while I cross the room. Does the paduasoy stand out well over my hoop?"

"Like the dishclout, my lady, when I spreads it to dry over one of the biggest hencoops. 'Tis monstrous fine; finer, I should swear, than anything Lady Diana could have!" Chockey sighs, lost in admiration. "Though belike Lord Kennaston wouldn't think so."

"And, Chock, look again." Her ladyship crosses back to the divan. "'Tis thus the town ladies give the true quality sweep to their trains. Give me the trinket Sir Percy sent me last night." Peggy takes a fan of most beautiful feathers from a mother-of-pearl box and waves it back and forth. "'Tis so, Chock, the London fine ladies flutter the fan, as 'tis called, and every wriggle hath a different meaning!"

"Oh!" Chockey is well nigh speechless as she watches her mistress sidling, bridling, agitating the fan back, forth, hither and yon. "Madam, 'tis amazin' grand! A glass of port now, my lady, as by the orders of the surgeon?"

"Nay," says Peggy; "I ain't in need of such."

"A mug of ale? Cider? Milk?"

"I'll none of 'em, Chock," returns her ladyship, seating herself on the divan and spreading out the paduasoy as 'twere a tail and she the peacock owning it.

"Set my etui beside me on the stand. Place that large chair off yonder by the window for Sir Percy, that he may not disturb my furbelows, and"—

"Hark, madam! Hoofs!"

"Lud!" cries her ladyship. "His new horse's hoofs! I've learned the ring of 'em as well as I once knew that of the poor long roan." Peggy sighs. She has heard much during her convalescence by way of Mr. Grigson and the abigail.

"Go you down, Chock, and, after a suitable period of waiting—I mean such decent few minutes," cries she after the girl, "as may be occupied in dutiful greetings to dad and her ladyship, you may send Sir Percy up to see me."

She hears his voice in the hall greeting her father and mother; she glances over at the mirror, and, snatching her pocket napkin from her bag, Peggy tips it to the top of the essence bottle and rubs the red from her cheeks; she flings the fan down, draws in her splendid train to a crumpled heap about her, gives the hoop as smart a thrust as her feeble strength will permit, hears a footstep and promptly buries her shamed face in the cushions of the divan.

"Ah, Peggy, my adored one."

She does not answer the light rap on the half open door, nor does her lover wait. He enters, and in a second, kneeling at her feet, his two arms about her, he raises her sweet face and lays his yearning lips on her ladyship's own beautiful mouth.

"Ah, Peggy, my adored one," says he, devouring her pale face with his happy eyes, stroking her cropped head with caressing fingers.

"Oh, Percy!" says she, with real roses blooming in her cheeks.

"I know a deal," whispers he, "but one thing I must ask. You'll tell me at once, will you?"

"What is't?" says she, smiling, as she leaves her two hands in the hold of one of his.

"Why did you adventure so much? For what, for whom? Whose sake? Wherefore?" The young man's voice is feverish with anxiety.

She hangs her head; raises it proudly; wishes she had him at a distance, and, so, leave to swing her train and use her fan indifferent.

"My beloved!" cries he. "Answer me! 'Tis your own Percy, him that worships the ground you tread upon, who has never had a thought apart from you, to whom every other lady on earth's but a puppet, that asks. Eh, Peg, for whom, who?" coaxes he, with eyes, lips, hands, heartbeats.

"For your sake, sir, and none other," she answers. "'Twas because I knew I'd done wrong and sent you from me careless. I would not give in; but you up in town, Ken writing me as he did, I could abide it no longer, and I went."

"Now, heaven bless you," says he, taking her in his arms and at the same instant pulling from his waistcoat pocket the scrap of a note she'd written him in the eye of the scaffold.

"Peg, Peg! I'm not worthy to mate with you, and when I learned of all your hairbreadth 'scapes, your twice saving of my life—when I read this, 'slife! My lady, what's a man like me to such as you?"

"I'll tell you," says she, laying her head on his shoulder. "He's the man she loves."

"Will you marry me in a fortnight, Peggy?" asks he, rapturous.

"Nay!" answers she, laughing. "I've another suitor to consider, sir."

"And who is he?"

"Sir Robin McTart. He was over yesterday to ask my hand from daddy."

"The devil!"

"Nay, sir, not enough courage for that!"

"Peggy, sweet lips, will you be mine the Tuesday after Transfiguration?"

"Lud, no, Sir Percy! That will I not!"

"When will you, then, love?"

"Next Christmas."

"Split it!" cries he imploringly. "Make it the first quarter of the October moon?"

"Well," she answers, looking up to where her father and mother stand in the doorway, "an daddy and my lady mother consent, you shall have your way, sir."

The young man glances up, following Peggy's eyes, springs to his feet, raises her from the old divan and leads her before them.

"My lord and your ladyship," says he, "will you consent, as Peggy has, to our being made man and wife on October the 5th, and will you give my lady and my unworthy self your blessing?"

They kneel down, and the earl puts out his hands above their heads, the words stumble, for there are drops in his old eyes as he looks and beholds about their faces that most splendid of all aureoles, the light of love and faith, honor with youth, and hope and wholesome minds to guide.

THE END.

The Gentle Englishman.

Mortimer Menpes, the English artist, in a book on India tells of the brutal conduct of some British soldiers toward the natives in the Victorian era. He writes: "One day a subaltern got into a first class railway carriage and found sitting there a 'colored gentleman.' In a fit of rage he seized the poor man by the shoulders and shouting out to him, 'Out you go, you black beast!' pitched him and his portmanteaus on the platform. This, to his great astonishment, caused considerable disturbance, and when he inquired what the people meant by putting themselves out over a black man, an Englishman who was passing by answered, 'Well, perhaps you don't know it, but you have thrown one of her majesty's judges out of the train.'"

The Filigree Ball

BY ANNA KATHARINE GREEN

AUTHOR OF

"The Mystery of Agatha Webb," "Lost Man's Lane," Etc.

ANNA KATHARINE GREEN

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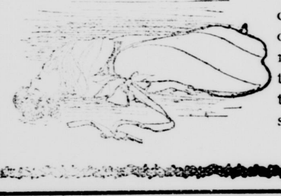
Sherlock Holmes probably would have been able to tell at a glance just how Veronica Jeffrey came to her death in the "Moore house" and who was the guilty person. But we confess Anna Katharine Green, in her new detective story, "The Filigree Ball," kept us guessing until the precise point near end of the tale when she wished to let us know just who committed the crime. When the mystery was cleared up—we shall not indicate here the way the story turns out—we had more thrills than one could hope to expect from a detective story written in these days.

—New York Press.

The dead bride



Yankee Shrewdness.

Washington Post.

"Talk about Yankee shrewdness," said the traveling man. "I was in a little tavern up in Connecticut not long ago, and a farmer came in with eggs to sell. The transaction took place in the barroom of the establishment. The proprietor agreed to take two dozen, and when the farmer came to count over the contents of his basket he found that he had 25 eggs. The proprietor wanted the extra egg thrown in for good measure. The farmer didn't see it that way, and they argued the matter. At last the proprietor said he'd take the 25 eggs, give the man a drink and call it square. The farmer agreed, and pocketed his money.

"'Now what'll you have?" asked the proprietor.

"The Yankee farmer was ready with his reply.

"'Sherry and egg," said he."

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ON THE FARM.

There's many a successful business man who sits in his city office and lets his mind slip back to his boyhood days on the farm. How good it felt to live! What an appetite he had! How good everything tasted! How sound his sleep was! How eagerly he rose with the sun and raced with him through the long day. And now he's a successful man. But he can't sleep. He doesn't enjoy his food. His stomach is weak, his nerves are shaken, and he no more rises with the sun to race eagerly against him. His vitality is low and now and again his heart seems to plunge in his breast as if it would break loose. That's the price he has paid for success.

The mischief of the whole business is that he buys "tablets" of one sort or another to "aid" his digestion, and indulges in bromides and other nerve stimulants, just to hold himself together, and wonders why he seems to be getting worse.

The whole trouble with such a man generally lies in what is called a "weak" stomach. The food he eats does not nourish him because it is only partially digested and assimilated. No man can be stronger than his stomach, because it is in the stomach and allied organs of digestion and nutrition that strength is made from the food which is eaten.

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HAD GIVEN UP HOPE.

"I will express my thanks to you for the kindly advice you have given me in regard to my case," writes Miss Carrie J. Wharton, of Dunavant, Spottsylvania Co., Virginia. "When I wrote to you last spring I was in a terrible state of health. Had given up all hope of ever being better. I spit up my food all the time and it seemed sour as vinegar. I would have a bad sick headache every other week; in fact my head never felt clear, and I was perfectly broken down under the strain of losing my food constantly. I had read a great deal in your books of what your medicine had done for others, so I wrote you and got your advice. Bought two bottles of 'Golden Medical Discovery' and the first dose I took I felt better. When I had finished taking the two bottles the spitting up had entirely stopped and my head was much better. I believe your medicines are just what you have said of them.

"I carefully read the books you sent me and shall always speak a good word for the 'Golden Medical Discovery' whenever I have a chance.

"You can publish this if you think it worth while. It might induce some one else to try your medicine who was suffering as I did. It was by the testimonials of others that I was induced to try it. I shall always rely upon your advice and feel safe to do as you tell me."

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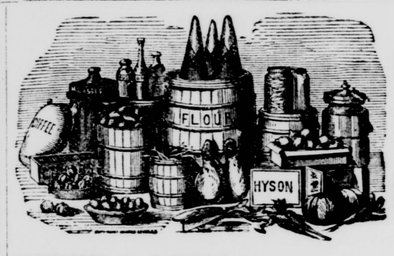

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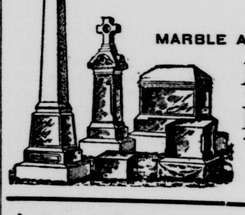

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