My Lady Peggy Goes to Town

By

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"And, O God, high up in heaven, forgive me for all my wilfulness and jealousy and foolhardiness, and stealing my twin's clothes, and deceit, the which has got me into this foul station, wherein I have told naught but lies. And I do despise lies—they are most disgusting and utterly wicked. Forgive me for all the horrible sins I've committed"—

Footsteps now resound in the corridor, and the voice of Mr. Brummel's own man says blandly, "This way, Mr. Chalk," as he raps gently at the door.

—"and for all those I shall have to commit!" concludes her ladyship as she springs to her feet and unfastens the door, admitting the tailor a la mode.

That night, the suit of grays well brushed, her wig recurled and her pocket napkin richly perfumed, her mother's brussels veil stripped up and made into a cravat of so ravishing a device as caused her host almost a

"Snip, clip, and away with you!"

spasm when he beheld it, Sir Robin McTart sat at honor place at dinner and was, to make a long story short, the cynosure and toast of the occasion.

The duel with Sir Percy, the rescue of my Lady Diana, the invention of a cravat, the nimble wit, the handsome face, soon bespoke Peggy into a favor that, considering all other things, was well nigh incredible, and when the following day she appeared in one of the suits Mr. Chalk had made, with a dash of powder on her wig and a bronzed complexion due to surreptitious purchase at the players' cosmetic shop in Drury lane of sundry brown, red and black pastes while making feint of being a comedian, the satisfaction of her host was unbounded.

"Robin, my boy," said this one, with a side glance at his guest, "an' [illegible] a bit short of mo[illegible] happy, [illegible] hundreds to your account at my banker's. Young gentlemen will be wild and spendthrift at times. London's new to you, I fancy, and"—

"I thank you, Mr. Brummel, from my heart," returned Peg, "but I've £300 now idle in my pocket. That will last me, I'm confident, until I reach home, and, by your leave, I'm thinking I'll quit town this evening."

But Mr. Brummel has no ears for any such scheme. The Beau's erratic fancy has not been caught by a new object for the mere sake of losing it; his joy in the dash and buoyancy, the originality and naivete, of his latest discovery is genuine, and no argument of the very few Lady Peggy can offer but he breaks down at once.

"Zounds, sir! Are you a fool, sir? Your sire was not one before you. To have half London a-talking about you, all the prints a-chronicling your movements, all the ladies a-dying for a glimpse of you, and you only up in town these few days, and a-proposing to go back and bury your talents for tying brussels in Kent! Fie upon you, sir! I listen to no such whims. Here's my basket loaded with invitations for you already. Lady Brookwood's rout tonight!" with a sly glance at Peg's really blushing face. "Lady Diana Weston's mother, as you are doubtless aware! The charity bazaar at Selwyn's tomorrow, dinner at Holland House, Almack's, and my own little plan for next Thursday, which is an outing to my seat in Surrey a-horseback; dinner, bowls, a look over the stables, and home by the light o' the moon. 'Back to Kent,' forsooth! No, sir; not yet."

A few hours later, as Lady Peggy got into her magnificent suit of crimson satin, gold embroidered, as she beheld her image in the glass and caught the hilt of her sword in her hand, the blood that surged over her face and throat was ruby red, and, at her wit's ends for what to do, the girl's tears forced themselves to her eyes once again.

She was to be off soon to Lady Brookwood's. Here she should encounter not only Lady Diana, but doubtless Percy himself; mayhap Kennaston, if he had been able to get him a decent coat to wear in place of the gray velvets. Doubtless, too, all those others she had met in Lark lane.

For the hundredth time she cast wildly 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 home to 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 man as I love 'll know 'tis of his sometime Peggy he'll be jealous."

So it was with a prodigious fine flutter of her napkin and a mightily impudent twirl of her eyeglass (purchased not two hours since) that her ladyship made her bows and kissed the finger tips 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 Mayfair were a-bowing and scraping 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 Kennaston—one green with anxiety 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; the other green with envy of Peggy and any other who neared his divinity, yet afraid and too diffident to approach her closer than with the devouring 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 t'other, your incomparable Diana included, for fear he won't stop and pay her a compliment."

"Ah," sighs the young poet. "Percy, an you loved like me 'twould be bliss to even gaze upon your fair. Think you I dare make bold now to cross and make my bow?"

"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, zooks, sir, tonight you've clothed me, for since the scurvy knaves that frightened Lady Di stole my suit of grays and my sword and hat, what had 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 an 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 royal 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, 'twas plain to be seen by every other than this bashful 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 his ode to her, and, leaving the 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 quips and jests and ogles of the fair, still kept her eye on Per[illegible] face, [illegible] yet had she seen [illegible] everyth[illegible] him a[illegible] questioning, he [illegible] "Of course you [illegible] Even [illegible] upon him, he turned [illegible] roses as many as [illegible] presently 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 apartment 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 cried in her bitterness: "What am I that I cannot abide to even see him a-bending over her hand? Ain't you no spirit, Peg? No pride? He's not thinking of you, my dear. Didn't he say plain if Sir Robin was the better man he'd give up to him? What kind of a suitor is that, Peg? Lud! I'd not give him up to any one, whether they were my betters or no!"

Could my lady but have postponed her exit for a few brief moments 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?"

Grigson shook his head and got even whiter.

"No letter?" Percy says in a dazed way.

"Only your own, Sir Percy," handing back the missive. "Her ladyship was from home, sir."

"Well, what of that? You infernal rascal, did I not command you seek her, if 'twere at the other end of the world?"

"Aye, sir, and the quickest way of settin' about findin' her ladyship was for me to get back to town, sir, as fast as the cursed beast I was cheated into hirin', sir, would fetch me."

"Speak out! Is her ladyship up in London?" asked Sir Percy, actually shaking with impatience and astonishment.

Grigson nods and without more ado proceeds to give an exact if somewhat rambling account of his entire experiences from the moment he had quitted his master until the present.

'Twere idle to attempt to describe Sir Percy's state of mind. Up to now there had ever lingered in his heart the hope—nay, one of those unconscious beliefs men have—that in the end Peggy would be his. This news that Grigson brought crushed every such thought from his brain, but put in its place such a hatred of the young man now tasting the sweets of hero worship (in little) in the adjoining room as caused his fingers to itch for his steel and t'other's flesh to meet once more, and to the death.

He drew Grigson in from the vestibule and, unobserved in the crush, down the corridor to the darkness of the card room, where Peggy still sat disconsolate in her faroff corner.

She for the moment is even unconscious that any one has entered until the voices arrest her attention.

"By gad!" Sir Percy cries in a low tone, falling into a seat and clapping his brow. "Up in London! The woman, vowing Sir Robin had crossed your entrance, inquiring for her ladyship! Your meeting not Sir Robin, but an ill conditioned little popinjay with squint eyes and of the height of the dwarf that waits upon my Lady Brookwood?"

"Aye, Sir Percy," returns Grigson. "No more like Sir Robin, which, sir, begging your honor's parding, is a very pretty young nobleman, with a good eye and a proper height."

Sir Percy nods.

"Then," speaking as if to himself and motioning the man away, "since she's up in town without her parents' knowledge and with a cock and bull story stuck into her abigail's mouth, it must be she's eloped with the scoundrel out of Kent!"

Grigson, going, ventures to ask: "Any more horders, Sir Percy? Will I cover the town, all the inns and taverns, sir?"

The young man shakes his head, and the servant bows himself away.

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."

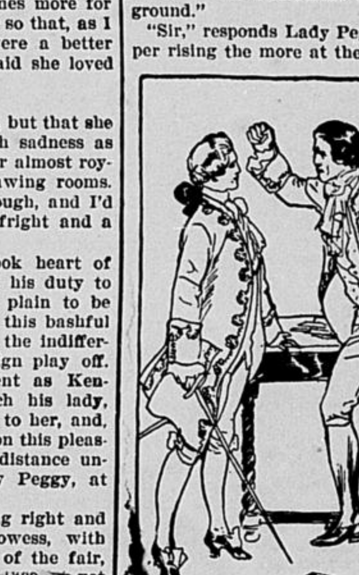
At which speech my lady's color burned as never before since she was born, and her choler rose at the double charge, both the one that was true as to her deceit and the one that was not as to her secret nuptials.

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, b[illegible]d 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 wrap-rascal 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 Rob-

"McTart! McTart! Up with you!"

in 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 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.

(Continued.)

Curb the Temper.

The peculiarity of ill temper is that it is the vice of the virtuous. It is often the one blot on an otherwise noble character. You know men and women who are all but perfect but for an easily ruffled, quick tempered or "touchy" disposition. This compatibility of ill temper with high moral character is one of the strangest and saddest problems of ethics.

Low Excursion Rates to Denver, Colorado Springs and Pueblo, Via. the M. & O.

Jan. 5 & 19, 1903,	March 1 & 15, 1904,
Feb. 2 & 16, 1904,	April 5 & 19, 1904,

The Manchester & Oneida, Railway will sell one way tickets, to Denver, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo, Colorado at $17.50.

For further information call on, or write, J. L. Kelsey, Traffic Mgr.

49 5m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS!

ILLINOIS CENTRAL R. R.

Direct to Havana

Via Illinois Central R. R. to New Orleans and the weekly Southern Pacific S. S. "Louisiana" to Havana. Leaves Chicago and Cincinnati Friday morning, leave St. Louis and Louisville Friday noon, arriving New Orleans Saturday 10:00 a. m. leave Saturday 2:00 p. m., arriving at Havana, Monday morning. Round trip and one-way through tickets at unusually low rates. Free Illinois Central R. R. illustrated Folder on Cuba, giving all particulars, on application.

OCEAN STEAMSHIPS FROM NEW ORLEANS

Ocean steamship sailings from New Orleans for Mexico, Panama, Central and South America, West Indies and Europe concisely set forth in a special folder issued by the Illinois Central R. R. Send for a copy.

MEXICO CALIFORNIA Tour of all Mexico via Illinois Central R. R., under escort of Beau Campbell, General Manager of the American Tourist Association, Quincy Building 113 Adams St., Chicago, leaves Chicago January 26. Select clientele. Limited. All exclusive privileges, independent travel. Special Pullman Vestibule Train, Drawing Rooms, Compartments, Library and Music Room, with the largest Dining Car in the world, and the famous Open Top Observation Car, Chililitli. Special Baggage Car. Tickets include all expenses everywhere.

Special tours of Mexico and California via the Illinois Central and New Orleans under the auspices of Raymond & Whitcomb, will leave Chicago Friday, Feb. 12, and St. Louis Saturday, Feb. 13, 1904, for Mexico and California via New Orleans, including a stop-over for the Mardi Gras; also from Chicago Friday, March 4 h, and St Louis Saturday, March 5th, for California, via the Illinois Central and New Orleans. Entire trips made in special private vestibule trains of finest Pullmans, with dining car service. Fascinating trips, complete in every detail.

Illinois Central Weekly Excursions to California. Excursion Cars through to Los Angeles and San Francisco as follows; Via New Orleans and the Southern Route every Wednesday from Chicago; every Tuesday from Cincinnati Via Omaha and the Scenic Route every Wednesday from Chicago.

MARDI GRAS This occurs at New Orleans on February 16, 1904 For it excursion rate will be in effect to New Orleans on specific dates which your local ticket agent will be able to advise you.

NEW ORLEANS A delightfully unique city for the tourist to visit. Winter tourist rates now in effect. Double daily service and fast steam-heated vestibule trains with through sleeping cars, buffet-library-smoking car service and all meals enroute in dining cars. Ask for an illustrated book on New Orleans.

GULFPORT, MISS. The Great Southern Hotel at Gulfport, Miss, on the Mexican Gulf Coast, has 250 rooms single or en suite, with or without bath. Steam heat, electric light, hot and cold running water and telephone in every room. Reached via Memphis and the Illinois Central's fast morning trains, carrying sleeping and buffet-library cars, with a single change, on same train en route at Memphis, into through sleeping car at Gulfport. Send for illustrated folder describing Gulfport and hotel.

FLORIDA Through "Dixie Flyer" Sleeping Car Lines St. Louis to Jacksonville and Chicago to Nashville, the latter connecting en route with through Jacksonville car from St. Louis. Route via Nashville, Chattanooga and Atlanta.

HOT SPRINS, ARK. Through Sleeping Car between Chicago and Hot Springs carried on the Central's fast Pullman vestibule "Limited" train. Send for book describing this most interesting of health and pleasure resorts.

Full Particulars concerning all of the above can be had of agents of the Illinois Central, or by addressing the nearest of the undesigned representatives of the "Central."

A. H. HANSON, G. P. A., Chicago, Ill.
J. F. MERRY, A. G. P. A., Dubuque, Iowa.
April 1, 1904.

Rich Milk

Are your cows doing poorly? Is the milk of poor quality, and quantity scant? Does the milk turn out but a small quantity of butter? Pratts Food will positively produce more milk of richer quality, more butter, healthy cows and healthy calves at no extra cost, and a bigger profit. Slinking of calves never occurs where it is fed.

50,000 dealers sell Pratts Food and give (free) our 64 page Handbook on Horses, Poultry, Cattle and Hogs. Ask your dealer about Pratts Food.

Pratt Food Co Philadelphia

The Original [illegible] and Poultry Foods of America

In use over 30 years

M. & O. EXCURSIONS,

on the Certificate Plan.

Cincinnati, Ohio, Feb. 1-7. Annual Convention National Brick Manufacturers Assn.

Bloomington, Ill., March 1-3. State Convention Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Bowling Congress, Des Moines, Iowa, Feb 23-25.

Northwestern Lumbermen's Assn, Minneapolis, Minn., Jan. 19-21.

Trenton, N. J., Jan. 11-23. Bricklayer's and Mason's Union, on the certificate plan, return at one third fare.

For further particulars call on or address the undersigned at Manchester, Iowa

J. L. Kelsey, Traffic Mgr.

Homeseeker's Excursions Via. the M. & O.

Jan. 5 & 19, 1904,	March 1 & 15, 1904,
Feb. 2 & 16, 1904,	April 5 & 19, 1904,

The Manchester & Oneida Railway will sell round trip Homeseeker's Tickets at one fare plus $2.00 for the round trip except rates to Denver, Colorado Springs, Pueblo and Trinidad, Col., and Cheyenne, Wyo., will be made one fare plus $5.50 for the round trip. No ticket to be sold for less than $9.00.

For children of five and under twelve years of age, tickets will be sold at half of the gross rate.

Tickets will be sold to points in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Indian Territory, Western Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska, 100 miles west of the Missouri River, Louisiana, except New Orleans and Hammond, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Salt Lake City, and Ogden only, Wisconsin and Northern Michigan and Wyoming.

For further particulars enquire of, or address, the undersigned at Manchester Iowa.

J. L. Kelsey, Traffic Manager.

Illinois Central

EXCURSION RATES.

Excursion tickets will be sold by the Illinois Central, to the points, and at rates, as follows:

TOURIST RATES

Ticketes on sale every day during the winter, limited to June 1, 1904; for return; to Hammond La., New Orleans, La, Havana, Cuba, and many other Tourist points in Porto Rico. Cuba, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Mexico, Arizona and California.

Write for rates and free copies of New Orleans pamphlet, Hammond folder, Cuban folder, California folder, Cuban folder, California or Florida folder.

Fare and one-third on Certificate Plan. OPEN RATE OF ONE FARE PLUS $2.00 Home seekers' Excursions, West, South, South-east and South-west, Dec 1 and 15, Jan 5 and 19, Feb. 2 and 16, March 1 and 15, April 5 and 19.

LESS THAN ONE FARE.

One Way, Second-class, Colonists' tickets to points in the South and South west on the same dates as Home seeker's Excursion tickets.

For particulars as to dates of sale, rates, etc., apply to any Illinois Central ticket agent, or address the undersigned.

J. F. Merry Asst. Gen. Pass. Agent, Dubuque, Iowa.

THE NEW YORK WORLD.

Thrice-a-Week Edition.

Read wherever the English Language is Spoken.

The Thrice-a-Week World long ago established itself in public favor, and it is now recognized as the strongest publication of its kind in the United States. Advertisers and publishers seeking clubbing combination [illegible] they know best—univers[illegible] testify to this. It is widely circulated in every State and Territory of the Union, and even in remote South Africa and on the gold fields in the deserts of Australia. These are things that tell.

Next year we have the Presidential campaign, in which all Americans are deeply interested. Already the issues are being discussed and the two great parties are preparing for the first moves. You will not want to miss any details, and if you subscribe now your year's subscription will cover the campaign from beginning to end.

The Thrice-a-week World is absolutely fair in its political news. Partisan bias is never allowed to affect its news columns, and democrat and republican alike can obtain in its pages truthful accounts of all the great political contests.

In addition to all the news, the Thrice-a Week World furnishes the best serial fiction, elaborate market reports and other features of interest.

The Thrice-a-Week World's regular subscription price is only $1 00 per year and this pays for 156 papers. We offer this unequalled newspaper and the Manchester Democrat together one year for $2.15.

The regular subscription price of the two papers is $2.50 tf

M. & O. Excursions.

Fare and one-third on certificate plan.

Chicago, Ill., Jan. 25-30, National Fanciers and Breeders Assn.

Columbus, Ohio, Jan. 19-22, Custom Cutters Assn.

Minneapolis, Minn., Jan. 1-2, Convention Zeta Psi Fraternity.

Toronto, Ont., Feb. 9-12, National Assn. Painters and Decorators.

Low Homeseekers Excursions South via the M. & O.

The Manchester and Oneida Ry, will sell Homeseekers Excursion tickets to points in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia on Jan 5, 19; Feb 2, 16; March 1, 15; April 5, 19, 1904; at one fare plus $2.00 for the round trips good for going passage 15 days from date of sale. Final limit 21 days from date of sale.

For further particulars apply to or address J. L. Kelsey Traffic Mgr.

$2.00 More Than Half Fare Via C. G W. Railway.

To points in Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Tickets on sale Jan. 5th and 19th, 1904; and Feb. 2d and 16th, 1904. March 1st and 15th; Apr. 5th and 19th. For further information apply to any G. W. Agent, or J. P. Elmer, G. P. A., Chicago, Ill.

52-w16

One Fare Plus $2.00 for Round Trip Via C. G. W. Ry.

To points in New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas and Mississippi. Ample return limits. Tickets on sale Jan 5-19th; and Feb. 2nd and 16, March 1 and 15; Apr. 5 and 19th, 1904. For further information apply to any G. W. Agent or J. P. Elmer, G P A Chicago, Ill. 52w-16.

Every Day in the Year the M. & O.

Are selling round trip tickets,-good for 30 days-to Chicago and Great Western stations, inside of 166 miles at 10% discount. 49tf

Railroads.

Manchester & Oneida Ry.

TIME TABLE.

Train No. 2 leaves Manchester at 5 a. m. arrives at Oneida at 5:30 a. m. Connects with west bound C. G. W. No. 5 Returning leaves Oneida at 5:35 a. m, arrives at Manchester at 6:05 a. m.

Train No. 4, leaves Manchester at 7:15 a. m. arrives at Oneida at 7:45 a. m., connects with east bound C. G. W. No. 6. Returning leaves Oneida at 7:50 a. m., arrives at Manchester at 8:20 a. m.

Train No. 6, leaves Manchester at 8:45 a. m., arrives at Oneida at 9:14 a. m. Connects with the north bound C. M. & St. P., No. 22. Returning leaves Oneida at 9:20, arrives at Manchester at 9:50 a. m.

Train No. 8, leaves Manchester at 2:00 p. m., arrives at Oneida at 2:30 p. m. Connects with C. G. W., No. 4, east bound, and No. 9, west bound. Returning leaves Oneida at 3:20 p. m., arrives at Manchester at 3:45 p. m.

Train No 10, leaves Manchester at 5:00 p. m., arrives at Oneida at 5:25 p. m. Connects with south bound C. M. & St. P., No. 21. Returning leaves Oneida at 5:30 p. m., arrives at Manchester 6:00 p. m.

J. L. KELSEY, Gen. Traffic Manager.

Through tickets for sale at Manchester to all points in North America.

ILLINOIS CENTRAL R. R.

TIME TABLE.

Main Line Passenger Trains.

WEST BOUND	MAIN LINE	EAST BOUND
No 1* 12:13 a m	..Fast Train..	No 2* 3:42 a m
No 3* 2:18 pm.	Thro Express..	No 4* 3:42 p m
No 33 †6:05 p m	....Clipper..	No 34†9:00 a m
No 5 †9:00a m	Local Express	No 6† 8:40 p m
No 93† 2:00 p m.	.Way Freight.	No 94 11:45 a m

CEDAR RAPIDS BRANCH.

North Bound —Arrive—	Bet Cedar Rpds an Manchester	South Bound —Leave—
No.306 6:00p.m	...†Passenger..	No.305 9:10 a.m
No 334 8.40a.m	..†Passenger...	No.335 3:20 p.m
No. 360 1:00p.m	...†Freight....	No.360 3:30 p.m

All above trains carry passengers.
*Daily.
†Daily Except Sunday.

H. G. PIERCE, Station Agt

No. 5 Runs to Sioux City only.
No. 3 Runs to Omaha only.
No. 1 has connections to Omaha, Sioux City and Sioux Falls and No. 2 from same points.

NEW SHORT LINE

Omaha - Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Illinois Central between Omaha and Fort Dodge in connection with the Minneapolis and St. Louis between Fort Dodge and Minneapolis and St. Paul, also to be inaugurated January 28, 1900

"THE LIMITED"	Lv. Omaha 7.35 p. m. Ar. Minneapolis 7.30 a. m. Ar. St. Paul 8.00 a. m.	Lv. St. Paul 8.00 p. m. Lv Minneapolis 8.30 p. m. Ar. Omaha 8.15 a. m.

A fast vestibule night train, daily, carrying through Pullman sleeping car and couches.

"THE EXPRESS"	Lv. Omaha 7.00 a. m. Ar. Minneapolis 7.00 p. m. Ar. St. Paul 7.30 p. m.	Lv. St. Paul 9.00 a. m. Lv Minneapolis 9.30 a. m. Ar. Omaha 9.40 p. m.

Fast day train, daily except Sunday, carrying throughparlor car and coaches.

CHICAGO GREAT WESTERN RY.

"The Maple Leaf Route."

Time card, Oneida, Iowa.

Chicago Special, Daily, Going East.....7:47 a m
Day Express daily.....2:39 p m
Way Freight daily ex. Sunday.....11:20 a m
Going West, North and South.
Way Freight, daily ex. Sunday.....11:20 am
Day Express daily.....3:16 p m
St Paul & Kansas City Exp, daily.....5:31 a m
For information and tickets apply to C. A. Robinson, Agent, Oneida.

LOW-RATE-EXCURSIONS

Twice each month, on specific dates, the Illinois Central will sell at greatly reduced rate from points on its line north of Cairo, roundtrip Homeseekers' Excursion tickets South to certain points on or reached by its lines in Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama. Also to certain points West and Southwest in Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas Oklahoma and Indian Territory. Particulars of your Illinois Centralagents.

For a free copy of the Homeseekers' Guide describing the advantages and resources of the South, address J. F. Merry, A. G. P. A., I. C. R. R., Dubuque, Iowa. For information regarding lands in the famous Yazoo Valley of Mississippi, address E. P. Skene, Land Commissioner Y. & M. V. R. R., Chicago.

INVESTMEMTS IN SOUTHERN LANDS

Such investments are not speculative. The South is not a new country. Market and shipping facilities are adequate and first class. The climate is mild and favorable. Notwithstanding these and other advantages, southern lands are selling for prices far below their real value, and at present prices net large returns on the investment. For a free set of circulars Nos. 1 to 10, inclusive, concerning the possibilities of lands in Kentucky, West Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana, on and near the Illinois Central Railroad, for homeseekers and investors, address the undersigned.

J. F. MERRY, Ass't Gen'l Pass'r Agent I. C. R. R., Dubuque, Iowa.

Through Sleeping Car from Chicago to Jacksonville, Fla., via I. C. R. R.

Commencing Sunday January 11, 1903, a through sleeping car from Chicago to Jacksonville, Fla, will be run on the Illinois Central Dixie Flyer, leaving Chicago at 6 30 p. m. daily via Nashville, Chattanooga and Atlanta.

2tf H. G. Pierce, Agent.

FARM LANDS!

If you are looking for a home or an investment, do not forget that the best farm lands in the Northwest are along the line of The Minneapolis & St. Louis R. R. where crop failures are unknown. Good soil, good climate, good people there Farm values are rising rapidly and the time to buy is NOW.

Low excursion rates from point on Iowa Central and Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroads, if you wish to investigate. For particulars address,

A. B. CUTTS,
G. P. A., Ia. Cent, and M. & St. L. R. R.
20tf Minneapolis Minn.

Half Fare Excursion Rates via the M. & O.

Jan. 5 & 19, 1904,	March 1 & 15, 1904,
Feb. 2 & 16, 1904,	April 5 & 19, 1904,

The Manchester & Oneida Railway will sell one way Colonists tickets at one half the one way rate, plus $2.00 to points in Arkansas, Colorado, east of and including Rocky Ford, Ordway and Calahan, Indian Territory, Kansas, to points 100 miles and over west of the Missouri River, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

For further information call on, or write.

49-5m J. L. Kelsey, Traffic Manager.