My Lady Peggy Goes to Town

By

FRANCES AYMAR MATHEWS

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"He's not above one and twenty, smooth faced as a girl, those say who've caught a glimpse of him under his mask; dresses like a macaroni, voiced like a choir singer and nimble as an Indian monkey."

"Frequents he this neighborhood?" queries Lady Peggy, who at the mention of the word "highwayman" has tightened her rein, clapped a hand on her holster and felt her heart thump as she involuntarily connects it with possible danger to Percy.

"That he does," said Mr. Chalmers. "His den or one of 'em's somewhere in the depths of Epstowe, and no one can tell when or where he's like to turn up next."

"When did he turn up last?" says Sir Wyatt, laughing.

"I can tell you," returns Vane. "'Twas about Candlemas. I was down at home on a visit from town when the news came, almost frightening my mother out of her wits and setting the maids a-shivering like so many poppies in a storm. Tom Kidde had pounced on Lord Brookwood not a mile from his own gates, lifted him off his mount in the politest fashion imaginable, rifled his lordship's pockets, appropriated his weapons and ridden off on his victim's horse, leaving his lordship tied to a tree at the roadside, where he was found by Biggs, the J. P., the next morning, a-bellowing and a-cursing like a wild bull."

A hearty laugh greets Mr. Vane's description.

"Yes, but that ain't all of't, my lords and gentlemen," continues he.

"By no means," cries Beau Brummel, out of his fit of hilarity. "I recall now that I rode over from Lauriston castle, where I was visiting, that very morning and heard the adventure from Brookwood himself. I fancy he had the laugh, or will have it some day, on Tom or some of his men, for the stolen mare was none other than his lordship's famous Homing Nell."

"Is it possible!" exclaims Sir Percy. "The mare that's been taken off a hundred miles, let loose, and finds her way home again; the mare that's been sold and ridden fifty miles away, and then, when she felt a hand at her mouth she could master, has taken the bit between her teeth, and the one in the saddle's only sometimes been able to keep his seat and let her take him straight back whence she came?"

"The very same Homing Nell. Brookwood's sure of her getting back sooner or later," says the Beau.

"They'll never catch Tom, though!" cries Escombe.

"If they do," remarks Vane, "he'll hang not two hours after he's bagged. His death warrant's been lying signed in Mr. Biggs' pocketbook any time this twelvemonth, and there's still a gibbet

Whiz! and her ball strikes Tom Kidde.

standing on the hill above Brook-Armsleigh village."

"Zounds, sirs!" exclaims Mr. Chalmers. "What a life 't must be, though—sleep o' days, wake o' nights, prowling under the branches, harkening for game from dusk till dawn, all seasons the same, one's heart in one's mouth, till the hoof's heard, and then a masking dash, a brawl, a thrift quick as the lightning's flash, a corpse or two and your purse the heavier by as many guineas as the game's had under cover, and all to the tune of the owl's cry, and I doubt not for some sweet Maid Marian's sake!"

"'Slife, hear the boy!" cries Mr. Brummel. "One would think him sired by a Jack Sheppard rather than by the gentlest sir that ever lived. For your froward tendencies, sir, you shall pay a penalty."

"Yea, yea, a penalty! A penalty!" cry they all.

"In what kind?" returns Jack, waving his hat over his head.

"A song! A song!" they answer.

"Well, then, what say you to 'Lady Betty Takes the Air,' since all can join me in the chorus?"

"Good!"

"Percy," says Jack, "you've a pretty pipe in your throat. Give me the key, will you? Not too high, you rascal! I'm not vainglorious at my music. So, and so—there," as Percy does as he is asked.

"When all the May is deck'd about
With hawthorn bud and blow,
When pinkly shows the heather's tip
And harebells nod a-row,
Lady Betty takes the air,
Sing ah fa, la-la-la!
With a rush hat on her hair,
Sing ah fa, la-la-la!"

Peggy is listening to the song. She hears it well; also the crunch of her horse's hoofs on the narrow path; also the crackle of the fresh twigs as they snap before the advance, and, too, so sharp are her ears, the sleepy cheep of some disturbed bird in its nest, and what else?

What is this curious, stealthy stir far off and creeping nearer in the wood?

And, hark! Peggy puts her hand to her ear to hear a subdued whistle, sweet, tuneful, underbreath, but patent to her sense and, too, to Sir Percy's.

Before either can move or, indeed, had as yet gathered the impulse of even self defense, into the midst of Mr. Chalmers and the rest, with their chorus, dashes a company of riders in masks.

A shot, low aimed and merely intended as a slight warning of what may be expected should occasion demand, strikes the ground at her ladyship's right.

With remorse and reparation at his heartstrings—'tis the kind of man who could be but generous to his worst enemy—Sir Percy's horse is flung betwixt the supposed Sir Robin and the band.

"Good evening, my lords and gentlemen," says the leader in a voice like a lute. "I thank you heartily for coming my way. Purses and watches, merry sirs; jewels, trinkets, snuffboxes, if of gold; pins, fobs, seals—these are all the toll I demand, and shall be forced to collect if you show any disposition to deny."

It might be wisely argued that while this speech was being made any gentleman might have either run the highwayman through or put an ounce of lead into his heart, but the fact of the matter was each gentleman found himself face to face with another gentleman who held a blunderbuss up to within three inches of his nose.

My lady's first thought had been that Sir Robin's men had not waited for the Sunday night to come, but presently she recognized the truth, and, stung by the fact that Sir Percy had put himself between her and danger, she was the only one of the whole company who stirred in her saddle other than to do the bidding of Tom Kidde.

While the rest were busily engaged in emptying their treasures she, making feint to do the same, says very low and tauntingly to Sir Percy:

"Had I but one to show fight with me I'd ne'er give in to these scoundrels."

"As soon done as said, Sir Robin," whispers Percy. "No man can say I'm his lesser in courage!" with which he wrests his bridle from the blackguard whose hand's upon it, whips out his sword with one hand, picks out his pistol with the other, grips his reins in his teeth and strikes with steel and shot, both at once.

Peg's his match, imitating him with such a will as sets every gentleman of 'em a-shooting, a-lunging and a-cursing with all the arms and breath he's got, and sets the robbers for a second to their wits, for they are not used to any sort of encounter save one that's terror stricken and submissive in the opponent.

'Tis a bit of melee quite in the dark, slashing and pounding betwixt the branches, now a man unhorsed, anon up again; shots resounding, powder flashing, until in about ten minutes or less the chief makes a plunge for Sir Percy, crying out:

"So 'twas you said 'fight,' was't? Have a care! No man can defy Tom Kidde and live to tell it!"

"Nay!" shouts her ladyship, with spurs all inches into the gray's sides, making him rear as she puts herself between Percy and the highwayman. "'Twas I said 'fight!'"

Whiz! And a ball intended for Sir Percy strikes the gray dead under her.

Whiz! and her ball strikes Tom Kidde from his mount.

In less time than it takes to tell it, Peg was straight in the highwayman's saddle. He was picked up by two of his men, bleeding, set before one of 'em and off. My lords and gentlemen find themselves once more alone in the midst of Epstowe forest, a-crawling about on their hands and knees a-gathering up their spilled guineas and trinkets by flash of tinder box.

Sir Percy, trying to explain to them who had been the means of their recovering their valuables and of putting the desperadoes to flight, cries out:

"I tell you, we owe't all to Sir Robin here! 'Slife, gentlemen, I'd not have ventured to think of resistance had it not been for him. It was he, said, close in my ear, 'Fight!' and, by gad, sirs, he's lost more'n any of us—the horse shot under him!"

"The gray's well lost teaching Tom Kidde he can't terrify all the men in England," answers the Beau from his sprawling search after his diamond snuffbox.

"Ho, Sir Robin! Sir Robin! Sir Robin!" Sir Wyatt shouts it out, and the rest of the company take it up with a long, mellow cadence that echoes for a mile.

"Answer, man, for, by the faith, if we can't pledge you here in anything but a lap of May dew out of a primrose leaf, we'll drink you such a bumper an we reach the White Horse as never was filled before! London 'll toast you at every dinner table in Mayfair. Odzooks, sir, were you the fashion yesterday, what will you be tomorrow?" This from Escombe.

"Where is Sir Robin?" asks Percy. "He was beside me not five seconds since, but now, by my tinder, nor yet by the coming dawn, can I descry him," shading his eyes with his hand and peering about, for of a truth 'tis close to 4 o'clock, and, notwithstanding the heavy clouds, the east begins to thrill with the touch of day.

"Robin! Sir Robin! Ho, now! Think not to play a trick on us and presently spring from a greenwood tree," says Wootton.

"Sir Robin," exclaims Percy loudly, "I pray you answer and leave not your friends to imagine evil."

"Tut, tut, 'evil,'" puffs the Beau, rising from his knees. "Evil 'll never happen to him. Zounds, but my legs ache! He's laughing in his sleeve now hard by. Robin's not one to court notice or praise—as modest a youth as I ever beheld."

"Worthy of Lady Peggy Burgoyne even, I suppose?" says Mr. Chalmers mischievously as he adjusts his recovered fob. "I could embrace him for the rendering of me back my watch, but I think him a fool to eschew good company and make home alone to town."

"Jack," says Percy low, "I like not his quitting of us. 'Twas too sudden. I believe I'll go a-hunting him," pulling his rein as the cavalcade once more prepared to start.

"Where?" asks Jack. "Bah! Be not such a ninny! Belike he's off to his lady to win kisses off her lips by the rehearsal of his prowess. An a man chooses to flee me, I let him. Do you the same, Percy. 'Tis a good advice, I promise you."

"But suppose those devils attack him again when alone?" says this one, not all reassured, as he and Jack linger a bit in the rear of their companions.

"Go to the devil!" remarks Mr. Chalmers blithely. "I'm for breakfast at the White Horse and for leaving the hero of the hour to eat his where he sees fit. He's safe enough."

"I've a misgiving," answers De Bohun, "and he risked his life for mine tonight. I'll strike off here to the west and join you when I find him."

"Good luck to you for a fool!" laughs Jack, putting spurs and going on to tell this news to the others.

The instant that Lady Peggy felt herself in the highwayman's saddle she knew from long acquaintance with every colt Bickers had bred, raised or broke since she was six that her wrists had met their match. Before she had time to utter a word, turn her head or think, she felt the warm flesh under her quiver with that recovering impulse which horsemen know so well—that streak of untamed and untamable nature which lies, however deep hidden, in every four-foot that breathes and which never fails to spurt to the front when it gets exactly the right chance.

Peggy's light, nay by this, weak, hand, now gave the big black its chance, and with a snort, a toss of its head and a vicious swell of its sides it laid back its ears, took the bit between its teeth as if it had been a mess

All she could do was to keep her seat.

of oats and reared a length on its forelegs, when, finding its rider still on, it started on a run which her ladyship had not the slightest power to check. All she could do was to keep her seat.

Where she was going she knew not. Where she was she had no smallest idea when as the sun looked over the long low line of horizon before her she with a shudder beheld a gibbet outlined against the morning sky. The black gave a lunge that knocked her feet out of the stirrups (quick in again), reared, whinnied like a devil and, nose to ground, now made her rider understand that up to the present she had done nothing much in the way of speed or of efforts at emptying the saddle.

Yet her ladyship stuck on, with flying colors, too, and no loss of either wig, hat, weapon or will, and with grateful heart she now found herself being spun across a magnificent park, where the deer fled before her, it is true, but at the upper end of which she saw looming the turrets and towers of a fine castle.

CHAPTER XI.

ALTHOUGH Sir Percy had cheerfully foretold for Kennaston the roseate picture of Lady Diana's "Yes" crowning the young poet's somewhat diffident suit with untold happiness, the fact was quite other. Her ladyship on the day of Mr. Brummel's party to Ivy Dene, having overheard the Hon. Dolly Tarleton in the library laying six to four to Lady Biddy O'Toole that their host's daughter was "only waiting for the beautiful young poet's asking to jump into his arms immediately," did with such sudden change of demeanor from sweets to sours, languishing eyes to averted looks, smiles to pouts, corner chats to open flouts, put her lover into a state of mind the like of which he presently described as only he could in a copy of verses, which the next night at White's were pronounced to be, indeed, "the masterpiece of one whose heart pants, whose whole being's but at the beck and call of her who wears a smocked petticoat, ogles with a witching eye and should be vain that so much genius lays itself at her feet—to wit, Lady D—a W—n."

For, taking immediate fright at his lady's coldness, Kennaston had ordered a post chaise from the Brookwood Arms and without a word of farewell to Lady Diana, save that embodied in an ode, "To Chloe When Unkind," which her woman found pinned to her ladyship's cloak when she was putting it on her shoulders the following morning, had gone to town and just in time at the White Horse to be haled into Mr. Brummel's party for breakfast and to learn of the adventure with Tom Kidde, the valor of Sir Robin McTart and the absence of that young gentleman, as also Sir Percy, from the board.

When Lady Diana's woman hooked her mistress' cloak about her 'twas at 5 o'clock in the morning, and of the party at the castle every lady's woman was performing the same office, adding hood over curls and puffs, and sticking the finest of cambric pocket napkins into their mistress' hands by the half dozens, for 'twas easily seen that such early rising could be for no other cause than to go forth to bathe their ladyships' faces in the May dew—the which, when gathered from little copses and shadowy nooks before the sun had yet shone upon't, was warranted to enhance the beauty which was already evident and to create those charms which, alas, are occasionally lacking.

Lady Diana spelled out her lover's verses as best she could, tripping from door to door and calling her young companions from their mirrors, sending a footman and a page to summon the gallants who were to accompany them in their expedition, and laughing heartily as she made out, more from a footman than from Kennaston's muse, that he had betaken himself to town rather than longer incur her displeasure and her frowns.

"Bless me, but my suitor is in a fine pickle! Lud, though, I'm not disposed to have these hussies a-laying six to four on my being ready to jump at his offer. Still, I'd rather he'd stopped over or else that some one most amusing were here—for instance, Sir Robin McTart, which is not to be!"

Then a rapping at the doors and laughter from girlish lips, pattering of heels down the hall and staircase, out to meet the gentlemen, bowing and complimenting on the terrace, over the lawns and through the flower gardens and past the offices and stables, where Lord Brookwood, even thus early, was sunning himself in the yard and talking over county matters with Mr. Biggs, J. P.

"Where to? Where to?" sings out his lordship cheerily, with hat in hand, and Mr. Biggs down to the ground before so much beauty, fashion and rank.

"Off to the copse, father," calls back Diana, "to gather the May dew and wash our faces. When we come back, you must tell us all how much more beautiful we are today than we were yesterday."

With which lively sally Lady Diana and the rest of 'em are crossing the hill and laughing as they pass out of sight on their two miles' away walk to Armsleigh copse.

Lord Brookwood is about to resume his conversation with Biggs, while the half dozen grinning stable boys behind his lordship's back are rubbing their fists in the wet turf of a paddock and smearing their red faces with the dew, the head groom touching them up with a lash, when a whinny that sets every animal in the stalls and out of 'em a-replying, sets all the cocks crowing, hens cackling, chicks peeping, dogs barking, geese squawking, smites their startled ears, and yonder, hilly-o-ho, sirs, in a cloud of upturned soil, in a shower of splash from the river, with a thud on the wooden bridge, a bound over the stone wall of the kitchen garden, comes a black with nigh every tooth in its mouth bared, foaming, smoking, bloody, rider bent double to saddle's bow, clinging with legs and arms.

"Homing Nell and the highwayman! Tom Kidde! Tom Kidde!"

"Homing Nell!" The shout goes up from every throat there, from his lordship to the hostlers and boys.

"Tom Kidde! Tom Kidde!"

"By heaven, sir!" cries the earl, "I knew Nell 'd come back sooner or later. Surround him! Bag him!"

Peggy hears the shouts as the ungovernable steed lunges, lurches, rears beneath her spurs and still tightly gripped reins. She takes in the situation, but not to its full import, until she now hears the voice of Biggs uplifted.

"Lord Brookwood! Lord Brookwood! Mind her heels, my lord! Mind her heels! Leave the taking of the cutpurse to me and the boys!"

At the word "Brookwood" her ladyship realizes that she is on the domains of Lady Diana's father and being mistaken for a knight of the road!

The latter she felt she could easily abide and as easily refute, but the former was more than even her spent spirit could stand. So, as Biggs, his lordship, the grooms, the stable boys and 'ostlers and helpers all formed into a ring with whips, canes, stones and halloos to take her prisoner, she plucked up courage from the depths, and, raising herself in her saddle and her head in the air, with one superhuman tug at the bridle and prick with the steels, she made to get off and away. But her ladyship's nerve was not the equal of Homing Nell's, nor yet to be pitted with success against the waving arms and jumping legs of a dozen stout men. With the final crack of the head groom's lash about her heels, with the pop in the air above her hat of Mr. Biggs' blunderbuss, caught from the hand of one of the lads, Homing Nell was brought to a quivering standstill and my Lady Peggy to bay in the stable yard of Brookwood castle.

Peggy, glad of the use of her lungs once more and now nigh bursting with laughter at being so glibly mistook for one of the most reckless fellows in all England, took off her hat, bowed low and said:

"My Lord Brookwood, 'tis, I believe, I have the honor of addressing?"

"Ho, ho, ho!" Mr. Biggs, from a survey of the saddlebow, now bursts out in triumphant joyfulness.

"Od's blood, my lord, but here's luck, here's justice, here's what comes of my bein' here when I am!" and Mr. Biggs now holds aloft upon the point of his stick the black mask of Master Tom Kidde, which the rogue had dropped when he was hit and which had caught and hung by its riband from that moment to this unseen by Lady Peg.

"Highwayman! Highwayman! Highwayman!" yells every lung in the place, while the whole dozen, including his lordship and the justice, threaten Lady Peggy with their cudgels, lashes and stones.

"I pray ye, my lord, gentlemen and good fellows!" cries she, remembering now the entire history of the animal she bestrides as rehearsed some six hours earlier by Beau Brummel and Mr. Vane. "I am no highwayman."

A groan of derision greets this announcement.

"Nay, but the rather, as I'm the victim of Tom Kidde than he himself! Together with a party of my friends, being at midnight last on the return from a visit to Mr. Brummel's seat, Ivy Dene, we were set upon by the rogues in the midst of Epstowe forest. I had the luck, both good and bad, to put a ball into Tom, to get my horse shot under me and to mount the scoundrel's steed, the which has brought me to your lordship's door, and the mare herself to where she belongs, it seems."

"A deuced fine story, 'fore George!" exclaims Biggs, laughing triumphantly, now holding up two watches, three rings, a diamond snuffbox, a seal, two magnificent pins and a most splendid jeweled stomacher high above his head in the tip of the sunshine.

"'Sdeath!" cried Lord Brookwood, seizing one of the trinkets and examining it with his spyglass. "What's this? 'Percy de Bohun, Christmas, from his aff. mother,' reads his lordship. Then another, "'Wyatt Lovell, souvenir of Italy!' Gad, Biggs," looking her ladyship over where she still sits atop of the steaming black, "we've got the cursed blackguard this time. What else in his saddle pockets, aught?"

These Biggs, assisted by the head groom, is energetically emptying of a miscellaneous collection of valuables, while Lady Peggy looks on in amazement as yet only flavored with amusement and one more vain regret for her abandoned petticoats.

"Yes, my lord, these thousands of pounds' worth," replied the justice, holding aloft his treasure trove, "and it'll be a short shrift for the villain, I can say that."

"Hark ye," now says her ladyship as she recalls with a not unnatural tremor the death warrant she had heard was lying to hand in Mr. Biggs' pocket. "Lord Brookwood, I am no highwayman. My story is true. I am"— The words stuck in Peggy's throat. She coughed, the stable boys tittered; then the head groom tilted the saddle and spilled her out of it to the ground. At a word from Biggs a couple of the men tied her, hand and foot, with a stout rope and a pair of farming reins about her middle.

"Now who do you call yourself, my fine fellow?" says his lordship.

"Sir Robin McTart of Robinswold, Kent!" cries Peggy, glad to be able to answer without the lie direct. "And I demand instant freedom and immunity!" cries she, tortured and quivering beneath the rude hands and ruder gibes of the grooms and 'ostlers.

"Demand away, my pretty buckskin, with your jeweled hilt," returns Biggs, stripping the weapon from her thigh, "your satin breeches and gold laced waistcoat! 'Tain't no use denyin' you your speech and your will to palaver on whatever matter you will, for before the clock strikes 8 you'll be home with your father in hades."

"Tut, tut, Mr. Biggs," says his lordship. "Call Mr. Frewen, the curate. He's at his studies in the library, we having sat late over our cards last night, and let him have his prayer book to hand, open at the page for malefactors after condemnation."

"Go you, Michael," this to one of the now awestruck lads hanging staring at Peg over the paddock. "Ask Mr. Frewen to come quickly."

"But this is monstrous, sir!" cries her ladyship, now thoroughly alarmed and near to losing her wits betwixt her endeavors to keep up her man's estate, her contempt of her own frowardness, her shame at being thus at the mercy of her rival's parent and her actual terror of her position.

"I do beseech you, I am an honest person. My tale is true. Is it not but the justice due to any subject of his majesty, however humble, that he should not be condemned before he is tried or even his identity proven?"

"I'll be sworn, my lord," exclaims Biggs, "'tis a voice and air to wheedle fine ladies out of their stomachers and chains, but not to tempt the law. Sirrah," he continues, addressing himself to her ladyship, who is by this firmly tied to a post, like a colt about to be broken to harness, "'tain't no use for you to be imagining as justice and his majesty ain't a-doing their best for you. Here have you been a terror to all God fearing, law abiding Englishmen any time these half dozen of years. Haven't you left the earth strewed with corpses in your ugly path? Answer me, sir!" And Mr. Biggs stamps his foot on the ground.

"No, sir," shouts Peg, "I ain't and haven't, and I'm not! 'Slife, my Lord Brookwood," cries she in a terrible way, twisting her tied hands together, "for God's sake, send up to town posthaste and find out Mr. Brummel, Mr. Vane, Mr. Chalmers, Lord Escombe, Sir Lovell Wyatt!"

But his lordship has turned up the path toward the castle and met Mr. Frewen, to whom he is explaining the necessities of the situation.

Mr. Frewen approaches. 'Tis a young man of a pale, cadaverous countenance, whose first bow to a highwayman is indeed, though he find him in durance vile, a timid one.

The supposed Tom Kidde gives the man of the cloth eye for eye, so that this one quails and stumbles in his

"Now who do you call yourself?"

speech, and finally, leaving in the rear all his preconceived plans for a hasty reformation, he promptly remarks, opening his prayer book to the riband:

"You know your doom, Mr. Kidde. Shall I pray for you here?"

"Faith!" says Lady Peggy, plucking up heart once her resolution is taken not to reveal her secret, come what may, "I do not know my doom, sir. Pray for me, sir, an you will; there's none so much deserves or needs it. Pray on."

"Hark ye, Mr. Kidde," says Mr. Frewen, lowering his voice and, for the credit of his soul, with gentleness at his heartstrings.

"I'm not Mr. Kidde, I tell you. I swear't!" says her ladyship firmly.

"Well, well," says the man of the church, "mayhap that's an assumed name, but surely now, sir, with not two hours of life left you, to me, me alone, sir, it were wiser drop all disguises. Surely now you are not Sir Robin McTart?" in a soothing and solemnly reproachful tone.

Peggy winces.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A Menace to Society.

The Colonel—Well, boys, this is my last night at the club. I've got to be a fearful menace to society, so there's nothing left for me to do but go away and be a hermit for the rest of my life.

The Chorus—Why?

The Colonel—Because I've lived here so long I know everybody's family history.

The Chorus—What of that?

The Colonel—And, confound it, I've got into the habit of thinking aloud.—New York Times.

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New Orleans, La., Mobile, Ala., and Pensacola, Fla., Feb. 10 to 16, 1904.

One fare plus $2.00 round trip via C. G. W. Ry. Tickets on sale Feb. 9 to 14, good returning until Feb. 20th, and by payment of 50 cts. fee until March 5th. For further information apply to any C. G. W. Agent, or J. P. Elmer, G. P. A, Chicago, Ill. 5-w3.

Homeseekers and Settlers.

On the first and third Tuesdays of each month round trip excursion tickets are on sale to points in the west, south and southwest at one fare plus two dollars; return limit 21 days from date of sale; stopovers allowed.

On the same dates special one-way settlers tickets are on sale at a trifle more than half the regular fares.

The Iowa Central operates through sleeping cars and reclining chair cars.

Call on agents for full particulars or address A. B. Cutts, G. P. & T. A., Minneapolis, Minn. 3w6

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 Tour of all Mexico via Illinois Central R. R., under escort of Reau 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, Chililili. 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 th, 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 when 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 Line 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 SPRINGS, 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.

Through to California Without Change of Cars.

The Iowa Central operates a through tour st car to California without change on each Wednesday leaving Albert Lea 1:30 P. M., Mason City 2:40 P. M., Hampton 3:50, Eldora 5:01 P. M., Grinnell 7:10 P. M., Oskaloosa 8:30 P. M., etc, running by the way of Kansas City and the popular Santa Fe System through New Mexico and Arizona, arriving at Los Angeles 8:00 A. M., following Sunday morning. Rate for double lower berth is $6 75 from Albert Lea and $6 25 from Marshalltown.

This car runs through a most delightful climate at this season of the year, where snow blockades are unknown and the passenger is not inconvenienced on account of cold.

Before you make your trip call on agents for particulars or address A. B. Cutts G. P. & T. A., Minneapolis, Minn 3w5.

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.

M. & O. Homeseeker's Excursions.

February 2 and 16, March 1 and 15, and April 5 and 19 the Manchester and Oneida Railway Company will sell Homeseeker's Excursion tickets, good to return in 21 days, at one fare plus $2.00 for the round trip.

To Mason City and points in Iowa west on Iowa and Dakota division of the C. M. & St. P. Ry.

To Albert Lea, Taopa and Dexter, Minn, and points west on Hastings and Dakota Division of the C. M. & St. P. Ry.

To all points in North and South Dakota on the C. M. & St. P. Ry, except McCook and Jefferson.

To Storm Lake and Fonda and points north. To Hesford Junction, and Pembis, Wis. and points north in Wisconsin and Michigan. To nearly all points in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado to Rocky Ford, Ordway, Calahan, Byers, Fort Morgan, and points east in Colorado, Indian Territory all points, Iowa, to points on Iowa Central Ry Albion to Northwood inclusive and Algona. On Chicago Rock Island and Pacific Ry [B. C. R. & N. Ry.] to points north and west of Mason City. To Kansas and Nebraska, all points west of stations 100 miles west of the Missouri river. Kentucky, Louisiana, Mexico, Michigan, Mississippi, Minnesota, points in southwest Missouri, all points in New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

For further information, call on or address, the undersigned at Manchester Iowa. J. L. KELSEY

3w14 Traffic Manager

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

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