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## A GIRL OF THE PEOPLE

By Mrs. C. N. Williamson

Mrs. Jennett opened a  
whisked something out, threw off a  
loose layer of tissue-paper, and with  
pathetic delight held up a garment of  
white, soft satin and lace.

"Bought at Liberty's," she exclaimed,  
almost in awe. "The name was on the  
box. What do you think of it?"

"That—that Mr. Bourke ought not to  
have done this," I stammered, on the  
verge of tears.

Mrs. Jennett's quaint, rosy apple  
face straightened into lines of distress.

"Oh dear!" she ejaculated. "Perhaps  
I oughtn't to have told you. He didn't  
say not, that I can remember, but I  
dare say he took it for granted I'd have  
sense enough to keep it to myself."

She, too, was almost crying. My  
first impulse had been to refuse to wear  
the elaborate tea-gown which I owed  
to a stranger's charity, but her grief  
dismayed me. I knew that any slight  
put upon her (it was easy to see that  
John Bourke was that) would hurt her  
far more than the cruellest insult to  
myself.

In my palmy days I had possessed  
nothing more beautiful, and I experi-  
enced a very curious sensation in won-  
dering if he had used his own taste in  
the selection, troubling himself so  
much for me.

On the deck-chair in the study, where  
I had awoke to a new world the other  
night, were three or four ruffled silk  
cushions of pretty pale tints, which I  
was sure had not been there before.

But this time Mrs. Jennett was the soul  
of discretion, if there were a secret  
which she might have betrayed. She  
merely pointed to a great bunch of  
white lilacs in a vase on the table, say-  
ing:

"Those are for you, my dear. From  
—from Mr. Bourke and me."

Then, before I could answer, she had  
begun bustling about the room, draw-  
ing down the blinds so that the light  
did not come into my eyes as I reclined  
on the big chair, and asking me what  
books I would like to have from the  
shelves.

There certainly seemed a magnificent  
collection to choose from. Everything  
worth reading which I had ever heard  
of, and many, many learned-sounding  
books which I never had heard of,  
lined the walls.

I had no wish to read. I was reck-  
less, though not as unhappy as I ought  
to have been after breaking with my  
past so ruthlessly at Waterloo Bridge;  
and my strongest desire was for Mrs.  
Jennett's companionship.

I wanted her to talk to me; and deep  
down under the surface of my thoughts  
I knew exactly on what subject I de-  
sired her to talk, though by no means  
did I confess this openly to myself.

I begged her to bring her sewing, or  
some sort of work, and sit with me,  
which she cheerfully consented to do,  
after giving a few instructions to her  
maid-of-all-work, whom I had not yet  
seen.

At first I vaguely intended to angle  
for information, without letting her  
understand what I was about; but it  
occurred to me that this would be a  
dishonorable mode of procedure, and I  
blushed at myself for having enter-  
tained it. Because, no matter what  
mistakes Mr. John Bourke had made  
in his tactics, he had behaved gener-  
ously and—I believed—meant chival-  
rously by me.

"Do you think Mr. Bourke would  
mind my asking you a few questions  
about him?" I hesitatingly began.

"You know, perhaps, how it was that—  
he brought me to you?"

"I only know that he saw a lady al-  
most fainting, and that she was too ill  
to tell him anything much about her-  
self, so he thought she would be better  
off with me than at a hospital," said  
the little old woman, clicking her  
needles over a pair of long worsted  
stockings, which she was busily knit-  
ting—for him, perhaps. "I'm sure he  
wouldn't mind your asking questions,  
and I should be only too pleased to an-  
swer 'em, for there's nothing in his  
whole life that I'm not proud to talk  
about."

So then I did ask questions, timidly  
at first, eagerly as I went on. And she  
answered with evident delight.

Why, Mr. Bourke was the great Mr.  
Bourke. How extraordinary that those  
words should bring no light of com-  
prehension to my eyes! Where had I  
lived that I hadn't heard of him? Did-  
n't I read the papers? Oh, I hadn't  
been allowed to read them! That was  
quite a different thing. Some people  
were so particular with young girls;  
and quite right, too, no doubt. But as  
for Mr. Bourke—well, to begin at the  
beginning, it was just like a story-  
book.

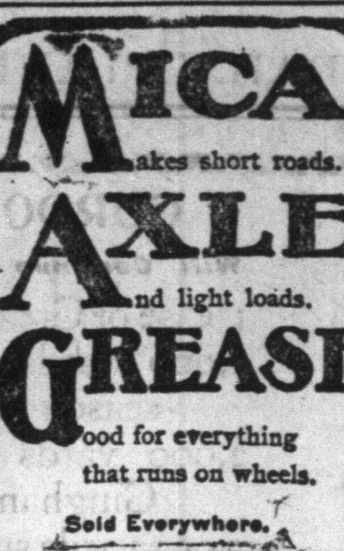
He'd been a poor boy, without friends  
or money. He'd sold newspapers and  
run errands in shops. Every penny he  
could save he spent in buying books.

He had taught himself to read, and he  
had gone to a night-school. There he  
attracted the notice of the teachers,  
one of whom got him apprenticed to a  
firm of engineers. He was eighteen by  
that time, and he began to send articles  
to a London paper, which were pub-  
lished, and brought the author great  
praise. The editor found out who he  
was, and, taking a great fancy to the  
wonderful boy, sent him to Oxford, as  
a non-collegiate.

That was a hard life, so Mrs. Jennett  
had heard—to be among a lot of more  
fortunate young men, who had plenty  
of money and fun, but to remain an  
outsider. However, Mr. Bourke won  
many honors, and he wrote several  
books on Socialism which made a great  
deal of talk among people who cared  
about such things.

When he was only twenty-two, he  
was editing an important Socialist  
paper; and now, though he was but  
six-and-twenty, he was a member of  
Parliament—a "Labor member," Mrs.  
Jennett thought was the right name  
for it. And he made such brilliant  
speeches that all England talked about  
them. And dukes and duchesses and  
earls and countesses invited him to  
their houses, but he would never go  
when he could help it.

When he was at home she had or-  
ders invariably to provide such and such



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At every meal for several unexpected  
guests, and it was seldom that they  
failed to appear. Such guests! In  
rags, generally. And sometimes very  
distinguished men, friends of Mr.  
Bourke's, had sat down at the same  
table with them. He never apologized.

There was a story about him, which  
Mr. Bourke did not mind that she had  
heard, but the lady concerned in it had  
told it herself to Mrs. Jennett one day  
when she had called at the house and  
waited a long time, loyally in vain that  
Mr. Bourke would come in. A beauti-  
ful young lady she was, too, and very  
rich. Who knew but, after all, he  
would marry her one day? If he did,  
with her money and position to help  
him on, why, he might rise to be Prime  
Minister of England.

But the story—oh, yes, Mrs. Jennett  
would tell it! Mr. Bourke had once  
been persuaded to dine at the house of  
this young lady of whom she had just  
spoken. Nobody else had been asked,  
and after dinner the lady had begged  
Mr. Bourke to tell her how she might  
begin to work as a Socialist—because  
she believed in the doctrines he taught.

"You can begin by washing the flour  
from the hair of my brothers in your  
hall," he had said, meaning the foot-  
men, of whom the lady kept several in  
livery and powder. At first she was  
very angry, but soon she forgave him,  
and liked him better than ever—she  
had remarked to Mrs. Jennett—for be-  
ing "so original and so daring." After-  
wards she had seen Mr. Bourke her  
photograph, and Mrs. Jennett had re-  
cognized it at once as the portrait of  
the charming young lady who had  
chatted with her for so long.

I listened to all this gossip with a  
strange diversity of feeling. The part  
of the disjointed narrative which con-  
cerned the beautiful "woman in the  
case" fascinated me oddly. "I should  
like to see the picture!" I said, rather  
wistfully, at last feeling even more  
insignificant and vaguely homesick  
than I had felt before the story began.

Mrs. Jennett rose and went to the  
mantelpiece, returning in a moment  
with a framed photograph in her hand.  
With an air of importance, she placed  
it in mine, and as my eyes fell upon  
those that looked out from the picture  
I gave a low cry of surprise, almost  
alarm.

CHAPTER XIV.  
The Woman Who Would Be a Socialist.

It was a beautiful face, and I knew  
it well. Now, my heart gave a quick  
throb as I gazed at it. For the woman  
who owned it belonged to that part  
of my life which had come before the de-  
luge. She was of the "ultra smart"  
set, which for a little while had petted  
and welcomed me as a promising de-  
buteante. She had been "nice" to me; but  
I had not valued her kindness highly  
after hearing her remark one day, with  
a characteristic laugh: "I always make  
a point of being charming to girls; one  
never knows whom they may marry."

Looking at her "counterfeit present-  
ment," taken (in a ball dress with be-  
coming backdrop of crimson) by the  
most popular woman-photographer of  
the moment, I seemed to hear her  
sweet, though slightly metallic voice  
saying the words again.

She would, according to her maxim,  
no longer care to charm me, since it  
no longer came to charm me, since it

was now certain that if I ever married  
at all, it would not be a man of im-  
portance.

So Lady Feo Ringwood was a disciple  
of John Bourke, the "man of the peo-  
ple!" I could imagine nothing more  
incongruous than that she should ad-  
vertise herself as a "Socialist."

She was a young widow, the daugh-  
ter of an impecunious earl. The mid-  
dle-aged city knight whom she had  
married when she was eighteen had  
considerably died three years later,  
leaving his fortune all to her. She was  
now five-and-twenty, with a beautiful  
house in Park Lane, and more money  
than she could well know what to do  
with. I had not met her so often during  
my butterfly days that it seemed  
strange I had never met the man she  
apparently delighted to honor. But,  
then, those butterfly days had been so  
few, and Mrs. Jennett declared that  
her hero went as seldom as possible  
into society.

Somewhat, I did not like to think of  
Lady Feo Ringwood as a friend of  
John Bourke's; and the sight of her  
portrait in his study brought me no  
nearly into touch with old times that  
I felt vaguely disturbed. I had disap-  
peared from Lady Feo's set for ever;  
and I did not relish the thought of  
being discovered, the miserable secret  
of my Easel street connections set  
up, perhaps, and discussed as a spicy  
bit of scandal in evening-rooms.

While I lay with the photograph in  
my hand, there was a ring at the door-  
bell and a light tapping of the knocker.

"That's Mr. Bourke, I'm sure, come  
to see you," said Mrs. Jennett, exclaim-  
ing, "how you are!"

Mrs. Jennett, jumping up from her  
chair. "He won't use his key and walk  
in, because he says the house is yours  
and mine, not his at all for the present.  
I'll just run and let him in myself."

Two minutes later and she was back  
again, peeping through a crack of the  
door. "It was Mr. Bourke," she an-  
nounced. "He's delighted to hear that  
you're downstairs, feeling better; and  
he'd be glad to see you for a few mo-  
ments if you are quite up to it. But  
you are not to say 'Yes' otherwise; for  
he will come back to-morrow."

"Please tell him I shall be pleased to  
see him," I replied, with an attempt at  
indifference of tone; but in reality I  
was curiously excited. Mrs. Jennett  
disappeared; and when Mr. Bourke  
came she was not with him.

The blood rushed up to my face as I  
saw his eyes fall upon the tea-gown  
and brighten into a smile of pleasure.  
I had almost forgotten it for the mo-  
ment, but his look brought back all my  
resentment.

"I had to wear it," I cried out, like a  
child, "or poor Mrs. Jennett would have  
been hurt. But I am vexed and grieved.  
You had no right to buy this gown for  
me."

He blushed boyishly, the sudden col-  
or and look of embarrassment making  
his grave face appear very young. "Oh,  
please don't say that!" he exclaimed,  
coming impulsively closer to the deck-  
chair which was my throne, then  
checking himself abruptly. "I'd rather  
have done anything than vex you. I  
didn't want you to know. I thought  
Mrs. Jennett would have managed  
without telling me."

To be Continued.

King of the East.

There is a little story about the  
young King of Italy which is being  
printed in the Italian papers, and  
which is worth reading:

The King was staying in the  
country at his palace in Racconig-  
li. He is little known to the people  
there, for in his walks about the  
country, he always strives to ap-  
pear as inconspicuous as possible. Hence  
some curious adventures. One day,  
while out tramping, he got very  
thirsty, and, seeing a woman milking  
a cow in a field near by, he  
went up to her and asked her for a  
glass of milk.

"I can't give you any of this, but  
if you'll mind the cow, I'll go to  
the house and get you some."

So the King minded the cow till  
the woman returned with a glass of  
cool milk. Then he asked her where  
all the farmers had gone.

"Oh, they're always running away  
now to try and see the King," an-  
swered the woman.

"And why did you not go? Don't  
you want to see the King?"

"Some one must stay and look af-  
ter the things."

"Well, if you see the King without  
running away from your work."

"You're joking!" exclaimed the  
woman, who could not believe that  
a monarch could be so quietly de-  
signed. But when the King put a gold  
coin in her hand, she fell on her  
knees, while he continued his walk,  
laughing over the incident.

Royal Poultry Keepers

Poultry keeping is one of the modern  
delights of society. That it  
should be so may puzzle those who  
base their ideas on some disreputable  
type of farmyard hen, and who have  
never visited a big poultry show  
where fancy fowls are staged in all  
their glory. No lover of the beauti-  
ful in nature can fail to be impress-  
ed by the delicate coloring of some  
of these aristocrats of the poultry  
world, the exquisite markings and the  
quaint eccentricities of others. The  
arts and sciences of breeding may  
remain a closed book to us. But the  
wonderful products of modern fance-  
ry demand admiration, says Lon-  
don M. A. P.

The Queen is the first poultry keep-  
er in the Kingdom, and a regular ex-  
hibitor and prize winner at all the  
great shows. One of her favorite  
varieties is the Silkie, a quaint lit-  
tle fowl with white plumage of a  
silky texture. The King, if he is not  
actually a poultry fancier, has a sin-  
cere respect for the Silkie fowl, for  
they are wonderful mothers for rear-  
ing pheasants and are much in re-  
quest at Sandringham. The Queen  
also has some of the tiniest and  
smartest bantams in the country,  
and their excellence from a show  
point of view is proved by the num-  
ber of prizes they win.

PA'S IDEA OF IT.

Little Willie—Say, pa, what does  
this paper mean "bloody money?"

Pa—I suppose, my son, it means the  
money in circulation.

Alas! how great the number of  
folks who have existed without hav-  
ing lived.

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