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A GIRL OF THE PEOPLE

By Mrs. C. N. Williamson.

"Oh, it can't be the right case! Street!" I exclaimed, tremblingly.

"Easel street, Commercial road. There ain't no other of the same name, miss. Shall I kn—"

"If you please," I meekly answered. "And—don't take down the luggage, yet. I'll wait and see if—"

"What d'you want?" shrilly demanded the woman. "Miggits or Newlyn?"

I drew my breath in sharply. My mother's name! There was no mistake, then. The cabman turned questioning to me, and I realized that I must answer. "I want Mrs. Newlyn," I reluctantly thrust out my head to explain.

"Owh!" returned the dweller on the upper floor. "I'm Miggits. Newlyn's the ground floor."

As my informant partially withdrew, a girl's face showed itself in the crack of the door; then the door was thrown wide open. She was about fifteen, with pale unwholesome skin, a pert nose, and an aggressive fringe of drab-colored hair.

"Is Mrs. Newlyn at home?" I enquired, in a voice which did not sound like mine, so dull and toneless was it.

"Yes, ma's 'ome," (I started). "D'ye want to see 'er?"

"If you please, May I—may I walk in?" Already half the pattering population of Easel street had come to its doors and windows to enjoy the sight—such as it was.

I felt curiously eddy. The suggestion in one of the first three words this girl had spoken had caught me by the throat. I entered the narrow passage, having again bidden the cabman wait; and the close odor of the house added to my faintness. A door a few feet down the passage was opened, and I had a dim impression that my companion was bidding me follow her into a room beyond. I obeyed, and then almost recoiled as I passed the threshold.

The room could not have been more than twelve feet square. The boards of the floor were uncovered, and not too clean; the low ceiling was blackened with smoke, and the wall, destitute of paper, was decorated with a few glances of blue and red lithographs, held in place with pins.

In one corner was a tumbled bed, covered, pillows and all, with a dark calico quilt. There was one unheated deal table, spread with a few common dishes and a tin or two; there were three or four rough wooden chairs; a big box, heaped with a strange medley of cooking utensils and women's outdoor wraps; a mantelshelf, littered with odds and ends; and a kitchen range, into which a woman, with her back turned to me, was throwing a few coals from a battered shovel.

"May, 'ere's a ldy to see you," brusquely announced my guide. The woman turned, showed in hand. My eyes sought her face wistfully, imploringly, for the one gleam of hope left. But the last flicker died as our eyes met. No subtle violet of nature or art out in my heart. "This is your mother; you are of one flesh and blood." She was a tall, thin woman, who might once have been pretty, even ladylike-looking in better days, but there was hardly a vestige of past beauty remaining, though in years she was not really old. Her scanty, grizzled hair was pulled carelessly back from a lined forehead. Her small mouth had a fretful drop; slightly open, in surprise at sight of the visitor, it showed that one front tooth was gone. The cheeks were hollowed in, the well-cut nose sharpened, the complexion of the uniform, faded gray most fashionable in Easel street among those who were not overboard. She wore a rusty black dress, and a colored cotton handkerchief was tied round the thin throat instead of a collar.

My tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. It seemed physically impossible to tell her who I was, to ask her if she were not my mother. But they were both waiting for my explanation, why, I can just tell you as I told the last one, that you ain't wanted here," she said, acridly, with a rather better accent than the girl's.

"I—my name is Cope," I stammered. "At least, I always thought it was until to-day."

Still she stared at me, with little, if any, awakening comprehension in her eyes. I blundered desperately on. "Perhaps, if you don't know what I mean it may be a mistake after all. But Lady Cope is dead. I was brought up to believe her my mother, and now—"

Suddenly the woman's pale face changed and reddened to a vivid flush. The small fire-shovel she had been grasping slid out of her hand and fell to the floor with a metallic crash. "My goodness, gracious me!" she ejaculated, with a gasp. "It's Jenny!"

A faint shiver ran through me. I was not even "Shells" any more. I was "Jenny."

"I heard to-day that—that—" I faltered. I could not go on. But she took up the words with a shy, awkward sort of eagerness, as if she were half-afraid of me; while the girl stood by, wide-eyed and dumb in bewilderment. "Did they tell you the whole story? Did they tell you who I was, and all?"

"Sir Roger Cope told me that you were—my mother," I said, dully. "Well, I never. He told you that! And after Lady Cope making me swear I'd never breathe a word to a soul so long as I lived."

"Oh, ma, it ain't true, is it?" cried

Rheumatism...

is Uric Acid in the blood. Unhealthy kidneys are the cause of the acid being there. If the kidneys acted as they should they would strain the Uric Acid out of the system and rheumatism wouldn't occur. Rheumatism is a Kidney Disease. Dodd's Kidney Pills have made a great part of their reputation curing Rheumatism. So get at the cause of those fearful shooting pains and stiff, aching joints. There is but one sure way—

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"You heard to-day, and you came straight here to see me," said my newly-found mother, reflectively.

"Well, that was very good of you, my dear, but why was it to do—after she took you away I married again. 'Twas the only thing to do, for I wasn't the sort of woman to be left alone. I had two girls by my second husband, very different sort of man from your father. I thought, though he was but a rough fellow compared to him, he'd be a protector. But 'twasn't long before I found out it was the money he was after—the money Lady Cope gave me when she took you."

"So I had been sold for a price! was the thought that darted through my mind. But I was silent, listening.

As she went on there was a loud noise in the passage outside the door. The hands turned, I started and turned round. What was to come now?

CHAPTER IX. Home, Sweet Home. A big, black-eyed girl in a coarse blue dress, with a large hat trimmed with feathers, bounced into the room, but paused at sight of me. This, I was sure, was my other half-sister. She was older than "Totsey," quite a young

girl in appearance, and had the way of thinking herself pretty. No doubt she was a beauty—for Easel street. "I didn't know there was company," she remarked, bristling.

"It's a wonderful thing's happened, Fan," said the mother of us all. "This young lady—I never told you before my daughter by my first husband was alive—but it's so. And here she is."

The poor, faded creature spoke as if she were half-ashamed, half-proud of the startling revelation.

"Laws!" said Fan. Then, stinging: "She seems to have done pretty well by 'erself."

"She was adopted by a grand lady, a lady of title," answered the elder woman, with emphasis. "Things were different with me in those days. I was poor, goodness knows; but her father was a gentleman, if he had come down in the world, she'd have known how to treat a woman. Yours brought me to this, as I was telling her when you came in."

"You never pry'd us a call before," said Fan, still laughing with a certain jealous defiance.

"She never knew who she was till to-day," said Fan, "what you had a right to expect you to come often, or—"

"I've just six pounds in the world," I interrupted, impulsively; "nor shall I have any more till I've earned it. And I've even lost my name."

"For an instant nobody spoke. "That's bad; that is bad," said my mother, gloomily, at last. "What a shame. Can't anything be done? Can't you go to law?"

I shook my head. "Lady Cope's nephew comes into everything." He was her husband's cousin as well, and I have no chance at all. Besides, I wouldn't fight him for the money if I could."

"Well, I don't see why!" exclaimed my mother. "I'd fight him for all I was worth. Your friends—you must have a lot of grand friends—would pay the costs. You'd get something. But there, that's your father all over! It's wonderful how blood tells. He was on his beam-ends when he came to my mother's house; a lodge, poor fellow, he'd been unfortunate—everything had failed. But he was a gentleman. And he looked at things different from any man I ever saw. I didn't pretend to understand him. He had relatives with some money; but when we were at our worst, and he d'yd' for lack of medicine and proper food, he wouldn't let me go to them. 'Let me die,' says he. 'I'm no more good to you or the baby. It's better I should die than they should know what I've sunk to.' Now, it's the same thing with you."

"What sort of fellow's the heir?" enquired Fan. (She pronounced it "hair.") "A young or old?"

"Over thirty," I answered. "Ow, not past the marryin' age. Couldn't you 'ave set yer cap at 'im? Then it would 'ave bin all right. Jest like the stories in 'My Love's Novelties.'"

I shuddered. I fear perceptibly, for her face hardened and she tossed her head, with its wild profusion of dark locks. I heard her indistinctly murmur something about "folks that were too stuck up to live."

"What are you going to do?" asked my mother. "I don't know." I almost sobbed. "Six pounds won't go far."

"No, indeed," I admitted. "You'll live with friends, I suppose, till you get something to do—governessing, or—or a lady's companion."

"I'm afraid I haven't anyone among the old friends who would take me in; no one, at least, that I would ask."

"There it is again. Just your father's pride. How it does bring back old times! I used to get cross enough with him till he'd flung out of the house, like as not, and stop away for hours."

"My poor father, whom I had never known! My heart warmed to him; and I wondered if he cared for me, his freedom from the bondage of this so-called world; if he could see and feel sorry for me?"

Quickly my thoughts traveled on to possibilities. To stay with my mother and her two daughters did not seem to be among them. Yet, with six pounds between me and starvation, what other way was open?

To be Continued.

JINGLES AND JESTS.

The Wise Inhabitant. It seems quite true That spring is here, with violets blue,

And yet 'tis best To hold off somewhat from that linen vest

And make no note For thirty days upon my overcoat.

A bilizard can Be shame a "duster" and palmetto fan —Atlanta Constitution.

Cure For Dyspepsia. "Troubled with dyspepsia, are you? Well, I can tell you how to cure it."

"It isn't necessary, I know how."

"You do?"

"Yes. All that is necessary is to eat nothing that one likes and pretty nearly everything that one doesn't like." —Chicago Post.

Something Definite. "And will you wait for me," said she, "if I will consent to wed?"

He thought a moment earnestly, and then, "How long?" he said.

"A year," she answered. "Yes," said he. "That shows there's something in it."

"You'd answer, 'Wait a minute'?" —Philadelphia Bulletin.

Emergencies. Agent—Let me show you something very neat in the way of artificial limbs.

Mr. Busyman—Nonsense! Don't bother me. I'm not a cripple.

Agent—Of course not, but it's always well to be prepared for emergencies, especially here in New York.—Brooklyn Life.

Compliments. Miss Vera Oldmorden was hardly to blame

For feeling as proud as a queen. On the swell hotel register after her name The gallant clerk wrote, "Suite 16."

—Catholic Standard and Times.

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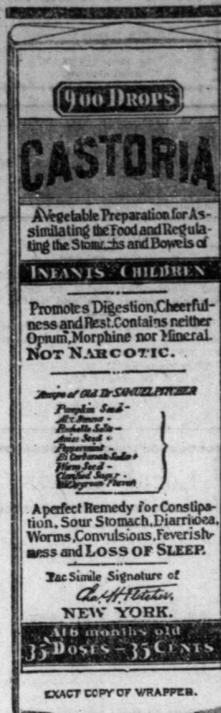
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