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A GIRL OF THE PEOPLE

By Mrs. C. N. Williamson

"I hear that even for smart, like girls it's hard work to get a place as a governess," the poor, pale woman was querulously saying. "Of course, I don't know anything about it, though. Such things are a good many cuts above me, or Fan and Totsy. Fan was with her till her health broke down, when she came home and helped me with the tailoring. I do for a West End sweater—for that's what he is. You ought to get something miles better. You might go into a grand draper's shop, only there you'd have to pay a premium. But it may be months before you can get hold of what you want. Wouldn't Lady Cope's heir do something, a little allowance?"

"I wouldn't have a penny from him!" I reiterated, picturing the blank lack of comprehension in these poor narrowed minds if I should blurt out the truth that I had refused Sir Roger Cope, with everything that was now his.

"You must've meant to go somewhere," observed Fan, still sulky, "for you've got a lot of regular Noer's harks out there on your growler. I bet you wasn't going to stop here?"

She finished innocently, but my face must have betrayed that she had stumbled upon the truth. Her jaw dropped. "Well, I never!" she ejaculated. "If I don't believe you meant that very thing?"

"I didn't know," I lied miserably to explain, "that that there were other daughters. I came because I had nowhere else to go, and I hoped—but, of course, I see—"

"We might put you up," said my mother, thoughtfully. "If you could stand it. It does seem hard to send one's own flesh and blood away from one's door. You'd have to help with the expenses, of course. That's what the girls do, though it nearly all comes on Fan now, and I couldn't afford anything else. Your six pounds would last you pretty near three months, the way we live, and you could go about looking for a place. But—"

"Law! you must be off your chump, ma!" coarsely exclaimed Fan. "A sweet-tempered girl like you for a fine lady like 'er. She's most ready to 'old 'er nose as it is."

My mother's thin face flushed angrily, and I felt the blood rush to mine. Until Fan's taunt it would have appeared unbearable to stay in such surroundings, crowding the occupants, who must already be cramped for breathing space. But her words raised in me a curious antagonism, a desire to contradict.

"It is my mother's house," I said, stiffly. "If she says that she will have me I will stay."

"There!" cried my mother. "Well, I do say it."

"Can you really put up with me?" I asked, pretending not to hear Fan's rude laughter.

"Fan can come in here to this bed," my mother returned. "You'd have to bunk in the back room with Totsy."

"I'll send her away," I said, drearily. Then, suddenly I remembered a new embarrassment.

"My luggage!" I exclaimed. "What shall I do with it?"

"Lor!" groaned my mother, ruefully eyeing the proportions of my boxes through the one small window of the bedroom-kitchen.

"Oh, 'ave 'em in, do!" entreated Totsy, almost dancing in excitement at the prospect. "We'll manage some'ow. I'm jest dyin' to see 'er things."

Half the street was ready to help the driver carry my belongings into the little house. The big trunks were taken to a tiny bare back room, furnished only with a narrow bed and shabby chest of drawers, the latter having a tin basin and a cracked yellow jug on its top. Small as the room was, the lack of furniture made accommodation for the boxes possible, and they were piled one on top of another against the wall. The cabman, evidently very curious, was paid, and sent away; and during the process of finding the right change I heard Totsy whispering to a slatternly woman from next door that her "sister had come 'ome to stop—quite a lady, with no end of smart clothes, and 'ad been livin' with a p'rress."

Ten minutes later, no doubt, all Easel street was in possession of this savory morsel.

Mother had been engaged in replenishing the fire for "tea" when I had arrived. Now Totsy was sent out with a few coppers, and shortly after returned with something brown wrapped in newspaper. This something resolved itself into four bladders, a delicacy with which my nose and eyes for the first time made acquaintance, as I was informed that it had been provided in honor of my coming.

While the bladders frizzled pungently in the fire, and the tea brewed in a brown earthen pot with half a spout, I was invited by Totsy into the next room, which I was to share with her. Fan followed, with none too good a grace, to remove her belongings from two or three hooks on the wall, and the top drawers of the dilapidated chest. But her big black eyes sparkled as they roved over my boxes.

"I say, you must open them after tea," she said, with a commanding air which was characteristic of her. "I'll be fun to see what you've got."

"Wouldn't it be rather useless?" I asked, tonelessly. "I only brought so much luggage because I could not leave anything at home at Arrish Mell Court, and didn't know where to store the boxes. But, of course, I shall not need the things while I'm here, and they might as well stay packed as they are."

"Well, you will be a pig if you don't let us 'ave a look in!" exclaimed Fan, her red cheeks growing redder. "But it's jest what I expected."

"Oh, if you really care, you shall see everything, of course!" I sighed. And so it was settled. We were to come back directly after tea for the entertainment.

We sat down at the deal table, which had no cloth, and my mother hewed thick, repulsive rounds of bread or the strangest, most lumpy loaf I had ever seen. The girls spread this with the grease from the newly-cooked

HEART DISEASE

is a symptom of Kidney Disease. A well-known doctor has said, "I never yet made a post-mortem examination in a case of death from Heart Disease without finding the kidneys were at fault." The Kidney medicine which was first on the market, most successful for Heart Disease and all Kidney Troubles, and most widely imitated is

Dodd's Kidney Pills

Tea was a serious meal in Easel street, and my three newly-acquired relatives laid in rations to last for several hours, asking me questions with their mouths full, about the doings of the aristocracy. I answered kindly, though as briefly as I could, but they hung upon my words with curious greediness, which I did not understand. Then, pushing back their well-polished plates at last, Fan and Totsy sprang up, reminding me of my promise.

Then followed a strange scene, I knew not whether more comic or tragic. But my sense of humor swooned; and, sick at heart, I took from my boxes, exquisitely packed by Swift, my smart frocks, and underlinen of cambric or silk, and lace, sweet with the scent of orris root and violets. Each garment reminded me of some half-sister of mine; things utterly unsuitable to them, yet delighting their hearts with a joy such as, perhaps, they had never known. After the first gift or two, Totsy capitulated entirely, smothering me with moist kisses, which I tried not to find repulsive. But Fan was still curiously on the defensive. She accepted what I gave with a stiff "thank you," but she eyed me as a house-cat eyes another suddenly imported to share its rug. I caught her watching me sometimes with a sullen, jealous stare, and one of scorned with a vivid gleam when she heard our mother appraising my possessions, exclaiming that when my six pounds were exhausted I should have something substantial to fall back upon.

Never shall I forget my first night in Easel street. Used to a big, deliciously springy bed, spread with lavender-scented sheets, blankets light and white as thistle-down, and a satin coverlet that shatched the coloring of my room, the narrow prison bunk which had to be shared with Totsy was almost unbearable in its discomfort and squalor. I had half fearfully expected a letter from Roger Cope in the morning, but there was nothing for me; and after a

breakfast of bitter tea and bread (eaten early that Fan might hurry off to the factory), I went out to try my luck at several employment agencies.

At one or two I had to pay a small booking fee in advance, and I was alarmed as I found my money (Swift's money) dwindling. My requirements and capabilities were written down, and towards noon I left the last establishment while I meant to visit that day, faint with hunger and weary for want of sleep.

As I came into the street and climbed adroitly up to the outside of an omnibus which I had halted, something made me suddenly turn my head over my shoulder. A man was looking up at me with intent, narrowed eyes, and an expression both sarcastic and threatening. As he met my astonished glance, his face became more menacing. He pretended to be halting another omnibus close behind the one I had taken, but though it was hard to believe that those dull, commonplace features were acting upon my mother's advice that I should make an instant go, I could not forget the shock I had received.

CHAPTER X.
The Spider in the Glass.

Within the next few days I had occasion to notice something strange in connection with the agencies to which I applied for a situation as companion or governess in a school or family. The managers would be cordial at first, and when she had heard the list of my accomplishments, held out high hopes of speedily obtaining me a desirable situation. But the next time that I went to make enquiries all would be changed. She would be stiff, reserved in manner, almost forbidding, telling me that there was a very little chance of my finding anything of the sort I wanted.

If this had been so only in one case I should have thought little of it; but, acting upon my mother's advice that it was well to have numerous "strings to one's bow," I had laid my claims before several agencies. And it certainly was remarkable, I thought, that in every instance it should be the same.

My half-sister Fan was now sixteen, and yet, as she informed me one day in a moment of confidence, she had no lover. But one evening she came home from the factory looking mysterious, with eyes that advertised a secret. The next night she did not appear till bedtime. We had been sitting up for her, and she awakened, in a dazed, drowsy way, showing a ring on the third finger of her left hand. This was a present, she excitedly announced, from a young man, a "real swell," who had been trying to make her acquaintance for some time, and who had taken her to the theater. He wanted to "marry her family," and she was going to bring him home to the noon dinner next day, which would be Sunday.

I did not wish to meet my future brother-in-law; and besides, I thought that the family gathering would be happier without me, so I dined at a particularly early hour on a piece of bread and disappeared before Mr. Tom Stephens was expected. I would take a long walk, I thought, and not return until he was certain to have escorted the lady of his choice to some Sunday afternoon entertainment.

Hardly had I reached the end of the street, turning into another which led towards Commercial road, when I almost ran into the arms of the man who had stared after me one day as I left an employment agency. He gave me a queer look, and passed on, while I hurried away, fearing that he might follow. Presently, I glanced back, and was relieved to find that he was not in sight; but, snatching after me, with his hands in the pockets of his Sunday coat, was a young man who lived in the "upper flat" of the house opposite my mother's in Easel street.

To be Continued.

JINGLES AND JESTS.

Loanin' Time.
Th' trees are whisperin' a tale
Of what an' how dreams,
Of loiterin' an' lingerin'
Beside th' singin' stream;
'Tis loasin' time.

Th' woods are makin' love to you;
They're callin' you to jest
Come out from work an' idle there
Upon th' lap of rest;
'Tis loasin' time.
—Whitwood (S. D.) Plaindealer.

Her Heart.
Arthur—Yes, I think Minnie loves me very much. She's a dear girl; she has a large heart.
Harry—A heart like a London omnibus; always room for one more.

Expert Criticism.
"Dis haystack leaks," grumbled Lay-around Lucas as he pulled his hat down farther.
"Yes," replied Tired Timothy, "modern architecture is on de bum."

The Hero.
I longed to be a hero once,
But now that longing's o'er;
The hero has to run and hide
Or be assailed from every side
For being such a bore.

Nothing to Be Proud Of.
"Yes," he said, "I am a self-made man."
"But, my dear sir," returned the other, "why are you so anxious to reflect on your man making ability?"

II.
Oh, what a pleasant world 'twould be,
How smoothly we'd slip through it,
If all the fools who "meant no harm"
Could manage not to do it!

Did Him Injustice.
Old Lady—I heard you swearing just now. You have a bad heart.
Tramp—You do me injustice, mum. It isn't a bad heart; it's a bad tooth.

The Pinking Ankle.
The pinking machine now comes 'long
To bulldoze and affright us,
And when he pinks our ankles, pong!
We've tendosynovitis.

Women love good men, but are interested in men whose goodness is more or less impaired.—The Man from Glengarry.

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at night and you will have no
trouble with your stomach, this we
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