

## SEVEN REASONS

By SUZANNE GLENN.

They sat on the crumbling, old stone wall, looking down the sun-kissed lane at the reviving signs of spring.

"Ethel," said the young man, "are you glad I'm back?"

"Why, to be sure, Fred." She looked at him curiously. "But there is something different about you—you have changed."

"Don't you know what it is? Don't you, Ethel? I could hardly wait to get home and tell you. Tell me you missed me! Tell me you love me! Ethel, I want you to marry me!"

The girl smiled serenely.

"Is this a proposal, Freddie? It is a good thing that I am an old, old friend or you would frighten me to death with your vehemence."

"It is a proposal," he said grimly, "and you need not receive it flippantly either, young lady. Look at me!"

But Miss Maybome wisely kept her gaze directed down the enchanted lane.

She did not in the least wish to marry Fred Craig—in fact she had several excellent reasons for especially not desiring it. But she knew from many experiences dating back to childhood that if she looked into his eyes she was lost, would do whatever he wished against her better judgment. And he knew it, too.

"I'm not going to look at you," declared the girl calmly. "You have led me into too much mischief as it is. And I am not receiving your proposal flippantly. But—I cannot believe you mean it, boy. All our friends have predicted you would propose to me, but I never believed it. I thought our friendship was of another sort."

"Well, you see it isn't. And I am proposing, Ethel, in dead earnest. Do you want me to go into all the details?"

"Oh, Freddie, no! Because I can never marry you."

"Why not?"

"I have, let me see, one, two, three—yes, six very excellent reasons for not doing so."

"Fire away."

"You wish to hear them?"

"I demand to hear them," sternly. She turned and looked at him. But not for long. The look in his eyes hurt her.

"Oh, I'm sorry for him," she whispered with sudden tears in her eyes. "I cannot stand the death of me."

"Well," her voice sounded a little unsteady, "we know each other too well, Fred."

"But how can a fellow know too much about the girl he is going to marry? I supposed that was one of the surest stones in our foundation of happiness."

"Well, it isn't! You would know every one of my faults and weaknesses, and be watching out for them to appear. And I would yours. And you would know all my youthful mistakes and follies, and I—Pd hate you for it!"

"Do you hate me now?"

"There isn't any romance about it, either. How can there be, when we have played together all our lives? We never could have nice, romantic dreams about each other; we'd just know all there was to know right from the first."

"Sometimes," suggested Craig, "the romance ends with the awakening. At least we would know the worst about each other."

"But there would be no romance in it, just the same," persisted Ethel.

"Who cares for romance if we are happy?"

"And then," ignoring the interruption, "we should miss so much experience. You have never had any girl but me; how can you be sure you really want me?"

"True," he answered gravely. But his eyes danced.

"And I have never had any other—lover!"

"Oh, Ethel, this is going too far! What name do they go by, may I inquire?"

"And—all our friends would laugh. I cannot endure being laughed at."

"But you just told me they all expected it. Why should they laugh, pray tell?"

"They would all come rushing to congratulate me with a what-did-I-tell-you sort of sinner that would drive me wild. And there wouldn't be a thing in the world to talk about."

because they all know as much about me as I do!"

"Ah!"

"And we'd just settle down right here. And that would be the end of everything."

"I thought it would be the beginning," said the young man, softly.

"It ought to be, but it wouldn't! I should all the time be thinking of the big world I had missed. And you would soon begin thinking of what you had left."

"We could see as much of the world as falls to the lot of most people, together, afterward."

"Yes, but it would be afterward, when the glamour had worn off everything."

"Is that all?"

"No, of course I've left the most important thing until the last. You—bully me so, Fred! I never could endure it. You've teased me all my life. I'll never be able to say my soul is my own."

"Has it been as bad as that, girl?"

"Oh, of course I've liked it, so far. But—this would be different!"

The young man slid off the wall, and stood before her, hands on her shoulders.

"Then we are to be friends just as we always have been until one of us finds someone dearer, I take it?"

"And we'll forget all about this unpleasant discussion. Come, let's go on to the end of the lane."

Ethel was immensely relieved that he took the matter so sensibly.

But as the days slipped past, she began to perceive that things were not as they once had been.

Craig came over daily, but no longer rambled the garden wall and marched in at the kitchen door. He came decorously, and sat in the parlor, his hat and gloves on the hall table.

He took her out frequently, but there were no delightful, enforced sojourns up the enchanted lane, or tramps through the woods. Now, he consulted her wishes so solicitously that she could have wept with vexation.

Then quite suddenly he did not come at all. And Ethel knew why: It did not take her friends long to tell her.

"It is just what I wanted him to do, of course," she told herself; "now I shall feel free to go on my own way."

And such a gay, bright way as it was! She even determined upon going out to see the world, and accepted an invitation to visit a friend in the metropolis.

It was all flattering and exciting. Even Fred and the judge's niece were at the station to see her off.

Ethel saw life at first hand. She should have been very happy. But in the midst of many excitements she found herself wondering how the moon looked on the little river at home, and if the cherry blossoms were out yet in the enchanted lane. All the home people came to see her the evening she returned. "So it will not seem quite so dull to you after all your gaiety," they said.

And Ethel laughed and chatted and related her various experiences.

But next morning she stole up the lane—a very ordinary, unenchanted lane, now. The cherry blossoms were out. The sun shone warmly.

She reached the cleared place on the wall and attempted to climb up. The wall was too high; the stones bruised her hands. Suddenly she put her arms on the top, her face buried against them, and sobbed unreasonably.

"It's too high. I can't do it!"

Someone lifted her up, sprang up beside her, and put strong arms around her.

"Little girl, I've come to talk over those six reasons with you."

Ethel closed her eyes and held her breath for a moment of realization.

"I've found out that we do not know each other too well—that we do not even know ourselves!"

"And that there isn't any romance in the world if we haven't it."

"That experience is more bitter than sweet."

"That it doesn't make any difference what sort of expression our friends have when they congratulate us."

"That things have been about as nearly finished for me lately as I care about having them."

"And that you need someone to—boos you. Dear, I have one reason why you should marry me which knocks out your whole six."

"What is it?" whispered Ethel, clinging to him unreasonably.

"It is," holding her tight, "that we are never really happy unless we are together!"

## PUTS BLAME ON STEEL PEN

Englishman Says It Started Handwriting on the Way Toward Decadence and Neglect

The decay of handwriting was the subject of a plaid by a correspondent recently in the London Times.

"The steel pen," he wrote, "was one factor in vitiating the style and legibility of writing, and the fountain pen, in some of its varieties, improved to be a still more harmful machine. Typing certainly secured a legibility, but that is not writing and it is doing much to discourage the practice of calligraphy."

"There is good reason to believe that neat writing is neither taught nor even encouraged in our great secondary schools. Schoolmasters appear to accept any kind of handwriting. The average boy or girl now takes little or no pains to form letters. In other words, they do not write at all. Few parents or teachers appear to take any notice of this writing, and the letters of the last century, which were generally neat and legible, at the hands of both sexes, certainly put us to shame to-day."

This "lawdator temporis acti" concluded by a corio prediction that posterity will have some severe comments to make on the handwriting of the twentieth century, remarks the Indianapolis News.

## ROCKS CRADLE WITH HER TOE

Devotee of Kwakiutl Squaw Whereby Her Hands Are Left Free for Weaving.

Unique and probably the most primitive cradle rocking device ever seen or employed in any part of the world is the one that has been adopted by the matter-of-fact squaws of the Kwakiutl tribe of Indians now living on Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

The mother performs the double duty of spinning and rocking her infant; snugly packed in a hollowed-out cradle stuffed with cedar bark strips, suspended from the limb of a sapling. This is about the most realistic and accurate representation of the old nursery song, "Rock-a-bye, Baby, in the Tree Top," so far known.

The most striking part, however, is that of the Indian mother—using her big toe as the motive power.

With a cord attached to the bent limb and the other end wound around her toe, she swings her dangling offspring to and fro, leaving her hands entirely free for weaving.—Christian Herald.

## MUST FACE THE MUSIC.

The action of the director of the Eastbourne Municipal orchestra, who varied the ordinary methods of the musical conductor by turning his back on his men while they were playing, was the subject of a long discussion at the meeting of the town council.

Councillor Eden moved that in future the musical director be requested to face his men while conducting the municipal band. No other conductor in England, he said, faced his audience, and it was utterly impossible for Mr. Henton to control the musicians in that way. The band ought to be conducted in proper English fashion. Eastbourne spent nearly \$70,000 on its music, and it was too big a place to allow of trifling with the band.—London Chronicle.

## NOT LOADED.

"So those two lovely men were in love with you?"

"Yes."

"And they really fought a duel about you?"

"Yes."

"Swords or pistols?"

"P-p-pistols!"

"How exciting! Were they loaded?"

"No. Both of 'em were sober."

## SHORT OF MATERIAL.

Editor (of society paper)—Young fellow, you opened a letter that was addressed to me and marked "Personal."

New Reporter—Yes, sir; I'm doing the personal column today, and there wasn't another blamed item in sight.

## SIDE LIGHTS ON HISTORY.

General Sherman had defined war.

"And purgatory," he muttered sotto voce, "is a political campaign."

Neither definition will be found in the dictionaries; but the dictionary makers don't know everything.

## HAPPY ENDING OF BOLD MASQUERADE

By JULIA STONE.

Peggy expressed her exasperation in an impatient bang on the screen door, went up the stairs two at a time, and dropped breathless into a wicker chair opposite her mother.

"Mother! The school board at Roswell gave the position to that old fright with ten years' experience and here I am out \$5 in train fare—not to mention the time."

Her mother glanced up gently from her darning. "You must remember that you're very young, Peggy."

"Every member of the school board told me that."

She straightened her shoulders, assumed a ramrod attitude and a frown to match. "Mother, don't I look capable of managing high school youngsters?"

Mrs. Lamson smiled. "You have a youthful expression and you're only twenty-one," she consoled.

"Wait until you look older."

Suddenly Peggy tore off her brilliant red hat with its nodding poppies.

"I've an idea, mother," she announced. "I'm going out to Thompson's Corners, a little town just ten miles from here, tomorrow. I want a teacher in English."

She lowered her voice to a whisper. "I shall disguise my face in a black sailor, a stiff, white shirtwaist with a high collar, a dark blue skirt and black cotton gloves."

She pulled ruthlessly at the pins in her hair and the fashionable coiffure tumbled down in brown gold glory. "All this I shall get into a neat knob at the back of my neck."

Marjorie appeared in the doorway. "Mother, is Peggy intoxicated with the suffrage movement, or is she only going to shampoo her hair?"

"I'm going to apply for a position."

"With your hair down?"

"No. Up, stupid! Like this!"

Peggy parted her hair at random, pulled it down over her ears and twisted it into a close knot at the back of her neck.

Marjorie studied the effect. "You need a few wrinkles. Come on up. I'll get my make-up box and put them in for you."

Peggy paused in the doorway. "You won't mind then?"

"You'll fool me, mother?"

Mrs. Lamson shook her head. "As long as our friends don't see you."

The next morning as the train pulled into Thompson's Corners, Peggy saw herself in the slip of a mirror between the windows and smiled grimly, frowning the dimple out of sight. Her brown hair was plastered close to her head, every curl in place, and a plain black sailor suit, with a high collar and a black skirt, settled on with an air of finality. The pair of black gloves would have given her an uncanny air of wisdom if Marjorie had not worked in the wrinkles so artistically. Without the air of a martyr she wore a stiff, high collar, and a shirtwaist that, rasped with every move. A navy blue skirt, black shoes with common sense heels and black cotton gloves completed an effect of decorous propriety.

Going into the superintendent's office, she passed two young applicants, one all fuss and feathers, the other too full in dress and appearance. Peggy, gleefully blessed her inspiration. The superintendent, a grizzled young man who noted the details of her costume with approving, startled eyes, gave her a list of the board members and admitted that he was more than pleased with her recommendations. Of course her age would be against her.

"If, however, an applicant has what might be termed an—er—staid appearance," he observed, "Perhaps the question of age could be waived; that is, if the recommendations and scholarship are undoubtedly high—as in your case. Still, I am not holding out hope."

With a light heart and a dignified mien Peggy hastened on her round of the board, beginning with the doctor. She spoke in measured syllables. He was visibly impressed. She repeated her success down the line—a grocer, a farmer, a druggist, and—triumph of triumphs!—even the woman member of the board, an ex-school teacher. All her bubbling levity locked within; Peggy gave flattering attention to that lady's account of her various experiences in the school field.

That ordeal over, she hurried to the bank to interview the president of the board, who was also president

of the bank. The cashier came back with her card to say that Mr. Forsythe would see her at once.

Peggy mentally rehearsed her little autobiography. Two seconds later she was thankful that she had it on the tip of her tongue, for there at the desk stood the one romantic figure in her past. His eyes lighted up and he looked at her a second time.

She began mechanically: "I am Miss Lamson from the University of Chicago."

He gave her a chair and the expression of joyous anticipation faded from his face. "I thought," he murmured, "that you were an old friend."

She smiled politely, thankful that her disguise was so good, yet longing to tear off the hat and glasses and remark calmly, "I am she."

Instead she went on discreetly enumerating her attainments. He listened absent-mindedly and gave indifferent responses. Peggy flashed him a natural smile when she said goodby, conscious that she was leaving a woefully perplexed man staring after her.

There was barely time to make the train. The economy of a light lunch incited her to the extravagance of the parlor car. She did not know that anyone else had taken the train at Thompson's corners.

The sailor and glasses were removed. The sailor and glasses were removed. The sailor and glasses were removed.

He rubbed Marjorie's whiskies off and stared out of the window, picturing the expression on the superintendent's face when she arrived, her natural, frivolous self, on the first of September—if she received the position. Forsythe! That was a nice name.

At that moment she became conscious of a voice beside her. "Cinderella! Why didn't you tell me?"

She swung around sharply and looked into the eyes of the president of the bank.

"Mr. Forsythe!" Her tone was conscience stricken.

"The prince," he amended. "I say, Cinderella, wasn't that last dance a peach? But why did you slip away when the lights went out and leave me without a single cue?"

Peggy clutched wildly for the prim personality that she had worn for the last eight hours. Then she yielded and laughed joyously.

"Marjorie and I were stopping at the other beach hotel with mother. We went home the next morning on the six o'clock train. Mother would never let us go to masquerades and we sneaked away to the ball at your hotel—that's why we didn't dare to stay more than an hour."

Mr. Forsythe was not mistaking a shade of her expression. "To think I should find you in Thompson's Corners when I've looked all over for you. The governor sent me out there to start a bank. If I make good he's going to take me into partnership in town. Say, Cinderella, do you really want that job?"

"So badly that I've made a fright of myself today to make them think I'm old enough to teach, O prince!"

"Well, I'm president of the board on the theory that the most money ought to boss, and I'll hand the job to you on a silver salver."

Peggy smiled. "Thank you."

The prince grinned happily and twisted his chair a bit closer. "I thought that town was the limit, but it's going to be heaven this winter."

## KILLED DESPOILING EAGLE.

A large eagle, with wings measuring eight feet from tip to tip, was killed a few days ago by a gamekeeper near Milly, fifty miles from Paris. The keeper had noticed that recently the game had hidden as if panic-stricken in the underbrush and learned that two immense birds had been seen hovering above. He kept watch and saw an enormous eagle pass overhead. He fired at the bird, which fell some way off in the darkness, dropping a young rabbit from its claws. Next morning the keeper found the eagle alive and had a struggle with the wounded bird before despatching it.

## FORTUNE'S FAVORITE.

"This is the third time you have been here for food," said the woman at the kitchen door to the tramp.

"Are you always out of work?"

"Yes," replied the itinerant. "I guess I was born under a lucky star."—Yonkers Statesman.

## WHY HE ASKED.

"Have you any children, Mrs. Faddlesigh?"

"No. Why do you ask?"

"You have so many splendid theories about bringing up children."

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