

Fiction

Peggy Came Back.

By JANE MEREDITH.

"I saw it with my own eyes." "Well?" "You'd 'a' thought it?" "You sure he kissed her? P'raps he was just picking a leaf or some-thing out of her hair."

"Mrs. Demming, you needn't be just because I ain't been kissed by no man ever kissed me. I've got many beaus in my day as ever you have."

"Miss Lavina, I didn't kiss anything personal! Only it was a step from your porch to Mrs. Demming's and I thought—" "You ain't on my porch!" answered Mrs. Demming shortly.

"It is a long walk from the village, and as soon as Ned comes in we'll have some lemonade. He makes famous lemonade."

"Ned! That must be the awful man and she called him by his first name with such a proud light in her eyes. A brisk step sounded in the entry, the knob rattled, and Peggy turned dizzy."

"Ned, dear, this is little Peggy Smithers, who made that lovely lace for me, Peggy, this is—" "Peggy had risen mechanically, and as she caught the next words she raised her eyes, swimming with tears to Mrs. Burckett's astonished gaze."

"But he came back at early with his arms full of white poodles, and when he got on the porch he tossed them helter skelter on the lawn and—hugged her!"

hat from the shelf beneath the counter and started on her hateful errand.

The great trees arched protectively over her head, the wild strawberries bloomed at her feet, and from the woodlands came the calls of her favorite birds. But her eyes were heavy with unshed tears.

Languidly and tremblingly she mounted the broad steps leading to Widow Burckett's porch. That much discussed lady met her at the door. Her quick glance detected the misery in Peggy's face.

"Come in, child. You look utterly worn out," she remarked, ushering Peggy into the dim, cool parlor. "What have you there? Oh, such lovely lace collars! I must have one of them. But I'm afraid this sort of work is pulling you down. You're looking bad, Peggy."

The girl flushed guiltily, and her tongue clung to the roof of her mouth. Mrs. Burckett studied her curiously.

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"Why, you're looking better already, Peggy. And now, if you won't have any more cake or lemonade, I shall carry you off to my room. I want you to see the beautiful silks and embroideries Mr. Lameroux has brought me from Japan and China."

"The gossips at Mrs. Smithers' showed becoming restless when Peggy came back. The girl fairly shivered with suppressed excitement, and her hand trembled as she struck the hatpin through her sallor."

"Well, ain't you never going to speak?" snapped her aunt. "Didn't you hear anything?"

"Yes; I heard lots, aunt," answered the girl, trying hard to keep the exultation from ringing in her voice. The women leaned forward eagerly.

"His name is Mr. Edward Lameroux—" "Holtz toly!" sniffed Miss Lavina. "Just like a novel," murmured Mrs. Marsden.

"And he's just home from China and Japan, and he's going to stay a year this time, and he's brought her the most beautiful silks you ever saw, and I'm going there to sew on 'em for a whole week, and she gave me the queerest candy. It came from China, too, and it burns your mouth, but it's good—and—"

"Lawzee, Peggy! Why don't you get down to facts?" ejaculated Miss Lavina. "Is he going to marry her?"

"No!" exclaimed Peggy in a final burst of triumph. "He can't. He's her twin brother, and he's in the navy, and he's been gone five years—and—"

Mrs. Demming rose abruptly, saying: "I declare I forgot that batch of bread. Like as not it's all over my clean floor."

Miss Lavina, looking decidedly aggrieved, departed in silence. One by one her visitors left, and Mrs. Smithers stood alone, absently dusting and redusting her tiny showcase.

And in Mrs. Burckett's parlor the widow was saying: "I do feel so sorry for Peggy, Ned, dear, that I believe I'll ask her aunt to let me take her to Boston when we go back. She is so handy with her needle. I know I could get her lots of work."

"Well, if she's so handy why don't you have her for your maid?" "The widow laughed softly. "She'd simply ruin me, Ned. The child adores me."

Humor

WISE WILLIAM.

Why He Did Not Want a Lawyer to Defend Him.

When Justice Buffum opened court in a small town in southern Georgia one morning last week he called loudly, "Jones against Johnson?"

A dignified gentleman came to the bar and said: "I am Dr. Jones, your honor, the complaining witness. My chickens were stolen and found in the possession of—" "One moment, doctor," the judge interrupted. "We must have the defendant at the bar. Jones against Johnson! Jones against Johnson! Is the defendant present? Is William Johnson in court?"

A tall and shambling negro shuffled to the bar, ducked his head, pulled his woolly forelock in token of respect and grinned a propitiatory grin.

"Ah's Willyum Johns'n, please, suh, Jedge," he said. "Ah doan' know nuffin' 'bout no 'fendant, suh. Ah'm jes' de man wot took de chickens."

"Don't talk like that," the court warned William. "You ought to have a lawyer to speak for you. Where's your lawyer?"

"Ah ain't got no lawyer, Jedge—" "Very well, then," said his honor. "I'll assign a lawyer to defend you."

"Oh, no, suh; no, suh! Ple-e-ase don't do dat!" William begged. "Why not?" asked the judge. "It won't cost you anything. Why don't you want a lawyer?"

"Well, Ah'll tell you, suh," said William, waving his tattered old hat confidentially. "Hit's jes' dis away—Ah wan' tuh enjoy dem chick'ns masef."—Harper's Weekly.

Not So Particular.

Little Johnnie, five years old, whose father was a missionary in India and whose mother was dead, had been instructed by his grandmother, to whom his rearing had been intrusted, always to place ladies before gentlemen in his thought and action. A few nights ago he was saying his prayers, prompted by his grandmother, who added:

"O God, bless my father in India. O God, bless my mother in heaven!" "There, grandma, you've done it!" "Done what?"

"Why, you've taught me to put ladies first, and here you've made me pray for papa first. But never mind. Perhaps God is not so fussy about politeness as you are."—Judge.

Aesthetic Lily.

"Here comes my little Lily!" exclaimed a doting mother to a room full of guests. "I have nurse take her for a walk in the park every afternoon, and you have no idea how rapidly it is developing her sense of the aesthetic, the beautiful. Come here, my darling. Tell us what you remember best about your walk in the park today."

Lily's breath came hard. She paused a moment, then answered in a shrill, excited treble: "Oh, mamma, the bears smelled awful."—New York Herald.

Viewing the Artistic.

The Artist—I saw you gazing at my painting, entitled "Rebecca at the Well," for over twenty minutes. Were you admiring the beauty of the subject?"

Learned Professor—Er—no, my young friend. I was just thinking what an unsanitary age those people must have lived in to drink from a cracked jar and a moss grown well.—Houston Post.

And the Cat Came Back.

Mr. Jinks—I'm so awfully glad, don't y' know, to be able to offer you an umbrella to protect you from this deuced wet, don't y' know. Mrs. Winks—It's so very kind of you, Mr. Jinks, don't y' know. I shall be very glad to return it to my husband. It is the one he left at the club last night, don't y' know!—Philadelphia Ledger.

Danger.

"I live," confessed the dreamer, "with my head in the clouds." "You'd better watch out," replied the up to date maiden, "or it'll get an awful bump from some airship."—Kansas City Times.

Reciprocal Reticence.

"Do you expect your constituents to believe all you tell them?" "No," answered Senator Sorghum, "and in return they must not expect me to tell them all I believe."—Washington Star.

The Marathon Craze.

The Long One—This is a great walk we're having, old man! The Short One—Oh, is it a walk? I thought it was a ten mile dash!—New York World.

Meant Business.

Littleton—Where's Fisson going with the sledge hammer? Jollyton—To call on the handsome Sally Perth. Somebody told him she had a heart of stone.—Judge.

HER NEWEST IDOL

He watches Gladys while she writes. He sits beside her as she sews. She fondly nods and smiles at him. A kiss to him she often blows. To callers she denies herself. Lives quite retired since Lem's begun. But morning, noon and night he's there, Caressed and welcomed, lucky one!

He is not handsome, for a fact; With grace or wit is not endowed. For downright ugliness, in truth, You'd single him in any crowd. It's just from feminine caprice That Gladys vows he's "sweet" and "dear."

Declares that fortune, happiness, Depend upon his presence near. There's cunning in his twinkling eye. But Gladys simply won't believe That while she wastes her love on him He's laughing at her in his sleeve. My jealousy, perforce, I hide, Although I hate him worse than sin. A fickle lady's latest fad— That hideous "M god, Billikin!"—Ella A. Fanning in New York Times.



Good Thing. First Clubman—Let's invite him to our game. Second Clubman—He's a hard loser. First Clubman—Still he always loses.—New York Herald.

Unusual.

"Yes," says the prima donna, "I am going to create the character of Salome anew." "You are?" exclaims the interviewer. "This is astonishing! You really are going to essay the role of Salome?"

"I truly am. And I am going to give the most daring and unusual portrayal of the character ever seen. I shall occasion comment and excitement and talk when I appear." "Will you—or that is—er—will you dress the part in a more daring manner than the others have?"

"I shall. I shall wear clothes."—Chicago Post.

The Post and the Editor.

"What do I get for this?" demanded the spring poet, tossing his latest effusion on the desk of the marble hearted editor. "Six months if I had my way," replied the editor briskly as he swept the poem into the wastebasket. And yet some people wonder why we never read of a spring poet plunging into the waves or into a burning building to save the life of an editor, marble hearted or otherwise.—New York Times.

Tough on the Count.

Gunner—Ah, there goes the count that was entertained at Newport last season! He boasts that he belongs to the upper crust. Guyer—I knew it the first time I met him. Gunner—How could you tell? Guyer—Easily. His dough is short, he is easily broke and going stale.—Chicago News.

Agreed.

"I'm afraid Mrs. Flirt doesn't like me." "Why not?" "Perhaps it's because I asked her at the club the other day what brand of hair restorative she recommended." "Didn't you want to know?" "Why, of course not." "Then I guess that's it."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

An Athletic Suggestion.

"So you don't approve of the Marathon races?" "No," answered Farmer Cornstossel. "Long distance running don't help to fit folks for practical life. What we want is training for a quick sprint from curbstone to curbstone in a crowded street."—Washington Star.

Broad Hint.

Hiram Hornby—Gosh, Cynthia, this be the wireless age for fair! "Pears like everything is wireless these days. Cynthia Sweet—Yes, Hiram. Pa says even this old sofa will be wireless after you've called another three months.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Moreover, Also.

"That actor you think so bad has a fat part in the new production." "Has he? That's too much of a good thing." "Why so?" "Because he is such a 'ham.'"—Baltimore American.

Selfish Economy.

"Why does that toastmaster limit each speaker to ten minutes?" "In order to save time and enable him to devote a half hour to introducing each of them."—Washington Star.

Skill.

"She has always married well." "Yes, but she divorces better." "Huh?" "She has retired on her alimony."—Cleveland Leader.

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