



Miss Clara Williams, daughter of Colonel Williams, of Brooklyn, had been visiting relatives in the western part of the state, and of her home-coming her father wrote:

"I have got to be in Buffalo on the tenth to see a man. The train arrives at three. You can leave Blankville so as to arrive there at 2:30. Take a seat in the ladies' waiting room and I will look there for you. There isn't one chance in a thousand of anything going wrong, but if anything should, then appeal to the police as I have always told you to."

About the first thing to attract the young lady's attention, after being put on the train by her relatives, was a young man. He had the chair next to her in the chair car, and he could not very well help but attract her attention. He had to remove his grip and hat and came from her chair, before she could occupy it, and he had to beg her pardon for not knowing that she was to take the train at that particular station and occupy that particular chair, and when she dropped her purse in settling herself, he had to pick it up and hand it to her with something like another apology. He was good-looking and of pleasing address, but when once settled the girl turned her shoulder to him. In her scrapbook at home she had a list of over 100 divorce cases that had come about between couples that had first met on railroad trains and fallen in love while speeding along at 50 miles an hour, and she didn't propose that her name should be added to the list.

The young man was most circum-spect. He had a daily paper containing the account of a scandal in high life and three murders, but he did not



Had Him Out of the Depot and on His Way to a Police Station.

offer it to her. He had two of the current magazines, but she waited in vain for the "Beg pardon, but may I offer?" In fact, when she ventured to turn her shoulder ever so little after half an hour and take a peep from the corner of her eye, the good young man was lying back in his chair with his eyes shut. Miss Clara felt piqued. Any good-looking young lady of twenty would have felt the same. She would have resented it had he sought a flirtation, but for him to quietly ignore her in that fashion was, to say the least, an ill-bred thing. She first made up her mind that he must have been married within the last month; then that he was a sharper who was lying low for fear of the conductor; then that he was a fugitive from justice and did not want to put himself forward and be remembered. It was with a glow of satisfaction that the girl thought this out. It was her revenge for being snubbed.

Buffalo was reached in due time and she had 30 minutes to wait. She forgot about the young man as she left the train, but five minutes later she saw him in the waiting room. She saw that he saw her, and she gave him a freezing look. Colonel Williams would have taken his oath that his train would roll into the depot at three o'clock to the second, but it was not there at three, nor a quarter past, nor yet when half an hour had passed. As the minutes flew away Miss Clara became very nervous and walked about and kept peeping at the big clock. At a quarter past three she not only saw the young man again, but he dared to approach her and lift his hat and say:

"Perhaps you are waiting for the three o'clock train from New York? So, let me say that it is 40 minutes late. I have just consulted the card, as I am expecting a party on that train."

The girl gave him a cold bow in return. Had he lingered to wonder why the train was late when her father had said that it would be on time—had he hung around to talk about the exports and imports of the United States for the last 12 months and he evinced the least interest in it, she would have sent him packing. At the very fact that he did not utter her plique afresh, and she looked off and looked in a mirror to see if the sunburn of the country had taken away any of her good looks. She had just satisfied herself that it had not when she missed her purse. She uttered an "Oh-h-h-h!" and slipped into a seat, and of course, a dozen women gathered around to see what was the matter. All had served her carrying her purse in her hand. She had it in her hand when talking to the young man about lateness of the train, or rather, when he was talking to her. They had noted that it was not in her hand when she came back from consulting the clock for the twenty-third time. There were six women and a young

man who stammered, and while the six women expressed their unalterable belief that it was one of the boldest cases of pocket-picking they ever heard of, the young man who stammered went for a policeman who did not stutter. No policeman ever does. It is against orders. What the officer could not see, and what Miss Clara could not help him to see, was how the pickpocket could have taken the purse from her hand without her knowing it. Each one of the six women, all talking at once, vowed that it could be done and had been done and would be done again, and the stammerer backed them up. There was only one man on whom suspicion could rest—the young man who had been a fellow-passenger on the other train. He was even then sitting not over 30 feet away and trying to look innocently unconscious. While talking the girl that her father's train was late he had by some hocus-pocus managed to possess himself of her purse, and was now sitting only ten yards away to brazen it out.

The tears of the victim aroused the feelings of the officer who was a new man on the force. He also knew that he had a name to make. He therefore walked over to the young man and gave him the collar and had him out of the depot and on his way to a police station before inquiries could be made or protests entered. The victim was to follow and prefer charges as soon as her father arrived. A few more minutes passed before that event happened, and during this interval the six women related a store of instances of robbery and pocket-picking, and four of them recognized the arrested man as a scoundrel they had met before. It was hard work for the stammering young man to back them up and guarantee at least a five-year sentence, but he finally accomplished the feat.

Then the train from New York arrived. Colonel Williams found his daughter surrounded by sympathetic people and as soon as he learned what had happened he made things hum. To the policeman who had just returned he handed a \$5 bill for doing his duty. To the woman he extended his thanks. Of course his daughter should go to the police station and prefer charges, and of course he would spend his last earthly dollar to put that brazen-faced pickpocket behind the criss-cross bars. By thunder, but things were coming to a pretty pass in Buffalo when a young lady could be robbed in her Union depot in broad daylight and not know it!

At the police station the young man was brought out of a cell to be confronted, identified and put on the high road to the penitentiary. Colonel Williams didn't say thunder this time. He made use of a far stronger word and followed it by exclaiming:

"Why, Davis, how does this come! What have they got you locked up for!"

"Pocket-picking, I believe," replied the prisoner.

"Yes, he is the man who got my purse!" said Clara.

"But there must be some mistake here. I was to meet him here in Buffalo on a business matter. He is no pickpocket. Clara, you have certainly made a wretched mistake. This is Paul Davis. I have known his father for 40 years. I have known him for seven or eight. You can't mean that he picked your pocket."

"But, who—'who did?'" stammered the girl.

As no one answered, she opened her reticule and took a peep inside and then staggered to a chair. She had dropped the purse into the bag. She took it out and held it in her hand and blushed and went pale and the tears started to her eyes.

"Mr. Davis, my daughter, Miss Clara," said the colonel to break a painful silence.

"Charmed to meet Miss Davis."

"And I—I—it was all the fault of those women. I didn't think you took it until—until—"

"Until six silly women and a stammering boy all got to talking to you," finished the colonel. "Well, sergeant, there is no prisoner to be arraigned. Come, Davis—come Clara. If there is anything more to talk over we will discuss it at the hotel!"

There was something more—lots more, and perhaps the discussion hasn't been finished yet. At least, Mr. Davis spends much of his time in New York now and is a frequent caller at the Brooklyn mansion, and the society reporters are on his trail and waiting to make the usual announcement.

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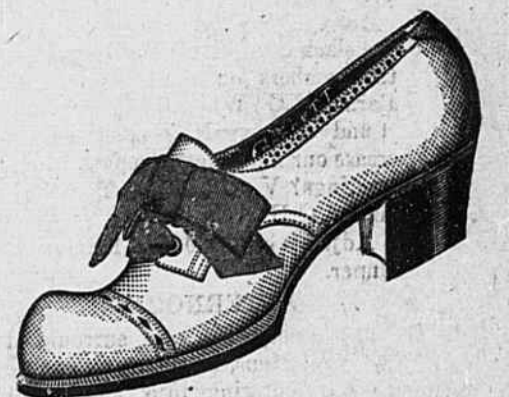
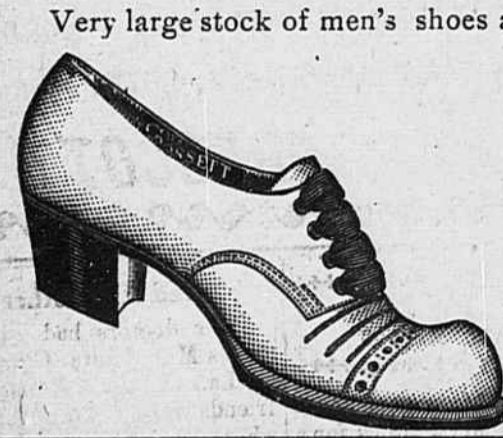
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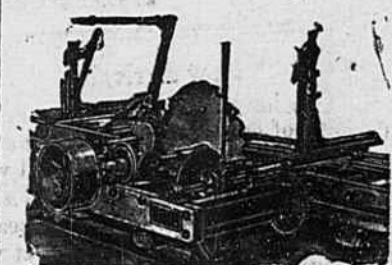
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