

**CATCHING A PICK-POCKET.**

"I START to-morrow for Belleville," said Rhoda Clare to her aunt, upon whom she was making a farewell call.

"Are you going alone, child?" inquired her relative.

"Yes," was the reply. "Papa cannot leave his business, just now, to go with me, but he will put me on the cars, and my friends, who are already in Belleville, will meet me at the depot."

"I don't think it is safe," continued the old lady. "Just think, if you should be robbed, as I was, on that very road, last summer!"

"How was that?" asked Rhoda.

"Well," replied her companion, "we were just approaching the tunnel, when a gentlemanly looking young man, wearing spectacles, came up to me and inquired, 'Is this seat engaged, madam?'"

"No," I replied, and he immediately appropriated it. He was disposed to be rather chatty, and was quite interesting; but he left at the first station we reached. After we had passed through the tunnel, and when I put my hand in my pocket, I found that my pocket-book had left with him!"

"The strange young man had proved too fascinating for you," laughed Rhoda. "I defy any one to rob me so easily." Having just passed through the graduating course at school, and come off with flying colors, she felt equipped for any emergency which might present itself in the battle of life.

"Don't be too sure," replied her aunt; "and beware of any gentlemanly-looking young man in spectacles, who wishes to share your seat in the cars."

Rhoda set forth with bright anticipations of a pleasant summer. Her ticket was bought, her trunk checked, and she was established in a seat, all to herself, with an interesting book in her hand, and her lunch in a satchel beside her.

The whistle blew, and papa, giving her a hurried kiss, bade her good bye; and, for the first time in her life, she was traveling alone. For a while she watched the scenery, as the train whirled her rapidly along. Then she devoted herself to her book; but finally becoming tired of both, she yawned and wished for company, and even fancied that her aunt's fascinating young robber would be rather an agreeable diversion.

"I should like to see him get my pocket-book," thought Rhoda. "If his hand were once in her pocket, he would not escape so easily without an introduction to the police." And she closed her own little palm tightly, as though she already had the prize within her grasp.

While these thoughts were passing through the young lady's mind, the cars stopped, and several passengers came on board. Rhoda was conscious of a shadow falling near, and looking up, she beheld a vision which mantled her cheeks with a deep blush; a tall and rather elegant looking young man, with dark whiskers, and wearing spectacles, was respectfully touching his hat, and inquiring:

"Is this seat engaged, Miss?" And then he added, apologetically, "All the others seem to be occupied."

"Answers the description exactly," soliloquized the young detective. "Now Aunt Ann shall be revenged; I will give him the opportunity to pick my pockets, if he desires it. Perhaps he may not enjoy it so much in the end!" Then she added, aloud, putting on a look of sternness which set comically upon her childlike face, "The seat is at your service, sir," and she proceeded to remove her satchel.

"Allow me," said the stranger, and he elevated it to the bracket above.

Rhoda kept her eye upon her property, almost expecting to see it and her companion disappear together.

"He prefers pocket-books," was her mental comment; "I'll be on my guard."

In spite of herself, our heroine became interested in the conversation of the stranger. He was so perfectly acquainted with the road, and pointed out all the objects of interest, telling amusing anecdotes connected with them.

"But I must not forget that he is a villain," was her mental reservation, as she listened. "Aunt Ann said that he was entertaining. 'How funny,' she continued, addressing herself, "that I should meet the same person. But then, he frequents this road."

Finally, they entered the tunnel.

"I scarcely wonder," remarked the strange young man in spectacles, "at the mistake of the old lady who, having entered the tunnel for the first time in her life, and having never heard of it, supposed the Day of Judgment had come."

"He is trying to divert my attention," thought Rhoda. "Perhaps he imagines that I am a young chit of a school-girl who can be easily imposed upon, but he may find himself mistaken."

Just then she felt a slight tug at her linen polonaise, and immediately thrusting her hand in to the pocket, imprisoned a masculine hand, which she grasped tightly.

"Now I can triumph over Aunt

Ann," thought Rhoda, "if I am not accustomed to traveling alone."

They emerged from the tunnel, and what was the chagrin of the young lady to discover that she was imprisoning her companion's hand in the pocket of his own linen duster.

"Oh! I—beg your pardon!" stammered Rhoda, feeling very much like the culprit for whom she had mistaken the stranger.

"You are very excusable," he replied, gazing in wonder at her blushing countenance, while his face seemed to be an interrogation point.

Rhoda felt that, in justification to herself, some explanation was necessary, but with a sense of mortification, she remembered that the only one she had to offer was the reverse of complimentary.

"I thought," she began—"that is—Aunt Ann said you were—I mean, I thought it was my pocket—and I mistook you for a—"

"Pick-pocket?" asked the stranger, as the truth began to dawn upon him; and his eyes twinkled with a sense of the ludicrous situation.

"Yes," answered Rhoda, desperately, while her blushes deepened into scarlet.

"And so I was to be brought to justice, I suppose, and delivered up to the police at the next station." And the dark eyes danced behind the spectacles with merriment.

"Do please forgive me!" replied Rhoda. "I have never traveled alone before, and I have been from home but very little."

"Well," was the laughing retort, "I'll forgive you for putting your hand in my pocket. Now see how much more merciful I am than you intended to be!"

But Rhoda was in no mood for laughter; she felt that she had disgraced herself; and every time the train stopped she wished that her companion would leave, and that she might never see him again. She was doomed to be disappointed, however, for the cars were nearing her own destination, and the stranger was still with her.

"Belleville!" shouted the conductor, and the inexperienced little traveler sprang to her feet, fancying that there was not a moment to lose.

"I will bid you good-bye," she remarked, triumphantly.

"Oh, don't be in a hurry," was the reply; "there is plenty of time. I stop here, too."

"Provoking!" thought Rhoda. "Now I shall be constantly meeting him. I wish the summer was over."

Rhoda's friends were at the depot ready to smother her with kisses.

"Did you have a pleasant journey?" asked Miss Townsend, as they were driving to the one large hotel of which Belleville boasts.

"I was somewhat lonely," replied Rhoda.

"Duncan Rivers came on the train with you. He is quite a distinguished lawyer from Philadelphia, with any amount of wealth, which he inherited from an uncle. I wonder if you saw him. He is tall, with dark whiskers, and wears spectacles."

"I was reading a good deal of the time," remarked Rhoda, evasively, "and paid very little attention to the passengers."

Her friends wondered why the warm blood mantled her cheeks.

On their way to the dining-room, Mr. Rivers came up and shook hands with the Townsend family; and Nina immediately presented him to her "particular friend and schoolmate, Miss Clare."

"Miss Clare's face is familiar," remarked the gentleman, roguishly, "were you not on the train this afternoon?"

Again the roses deepened on the soft, dimpled cheeks, adding new brightness to the dark violet eyes; and Nina wondered if any masculine heart could resist the innocence, and freshness, and beauty of that fair face.

Belleville was not a place in which people could spend their time yawning and going to sleep. The shaded walks and beautiful drives, the magnificent scenery, with the noble old mountains frowning down upon the river, which sparkled in the sunshine—all these proved to have greater fascination for the young people than the cosy, old-fashioned hotel, surrounded, as it was, by great spreading trees, and looking so invitingly cool to the weary pedestrian.

Although Belleville boasted of many eligible *jeux* just now, who had come to rusticate for a few weeks, yet Duncan Rivers decidedly carried off the palm. His cultivation, his personal appearance, his polished manners, and his politeness to all and devotion to none, served to rivet the thoughts of the young ladies, upon him rather than upon those whose particular attentions were bestowed more indiscriminately. All but Rhoda. The recollection of the particular compliment with which she had favored him in the car served to render her shy towards him now, and she avoided him upon every possible occasion.

Meanwhile, this little episode, which he considered a good joke, had only served to amuse him; and the pet of

society wondered, and was piqued, at the indifference of an unsophisticated young girl, just fresh from the school room. He carelessly resolved that she should be conquered, not dreaming that he had anything deeper at stake than the amusement of the hour.

His frequent invitations to her to walk and drive, his devotion to her on the croquet ground, their *tete-a-tetes* over the chess board, were soon noticed by the other occupants of the house, who, of course, did not fail to make their comments.

A picnic had been planned to the Falls, about twelve miles from the village. On the previous evening Rhoda had wandered to the end of one of the long halls, and had seated herself in the window, where the moon poured in a flood of silvery light, bringing out in a shadowy beauty the leaves of the grand old maple trees, which were reflected on the walls, dancing in their own grotesque fashions as they were gently swayed by the light breeze.

"I have found you at last," said a pleasant voice. "Why did you run away from us?"

"I accidentally strayed into this corner," replied Rhoda, "and then I could not resist its beauty."

"It is charming," said Mr. Rivers, seating himself. "I have come to ask you, Miss Rhoda, if I may have the pleasure of your company in my carriage, to the picnic, tomorrow."

"I had half made up my mind not to go," said Rhoda, "for I promised poor old Miss Dennis, that I would spend a day with her before I leave, and now the summer is almost past."

"Oh, it will never do for you to give up the picnic!" exclaimed her companion; "the last gaiety of the season. Give the old lady some other day and go with me to-morrow. Come, Miss Rhoda; you must say 'yes.' I think I will not take 'no' for an answer."

"Well," was the reply, "I will think about it."

Just then the pair became conscious of a presence. There was a rustle of starched muslin, and they caught glimpse of a figure as it glided past, a little in the distance, where another hall intersected? And how much of the conversation had been overheard? All of it, or only the latter part? These were the thoughts that had passed through Rhoda's mind, and she glanced up and encountered the merry twinkle in her companion's eyes.

"There is the foundation for quite a romance; a lover, deeply in earnest, and an undecided young lady taking him into consideration," laughed Mr. Rivers, as they separated.

That he, Duncan Rivers, the spoiled pet of society, could be taken into consideration, that any young lady would not answer an immediate "yes," to a proposition of marriage emanating from him, had never entered that gentleman's head as one of the possibilities; therefore, he could afford to be amused in contemplation of the reports to which the conversation just related might give rise.

The bright morning sun overturned Rhoda's self-sacrificing intentions, and charitably resolving to bestow upon old Miss Dennis the first rainy day, should one occur before she left Belleville, she took her seat in Mr. River's comfortable little carriage. She was beginning to recover from the shyness which she had always felt toward her companion, in consequence of the awkward mistake she had made when she first met him; and now this drive through a lovely country, surrounded by the most enchanting scenery, had an exhilarating effect upon her spirits, and her companion was charmed with the wit and freshness of her remarks, and wished that this *tete-a-tete* drive might last all day. It came to an end all too soon, and the entire party was established in the woods, some sitting in groups, some in two, and some taking solitary walks, perhaps in quest of congenial company. Mr. Rivers had unconsciously fallen into a brown study, from which he was rather rudely awakened by one of the party, who stepped up to him, exclaiming:

"I was to be the first to congratulate you!"

"For what?" asked the gentleman, somewhat startled by the abruptness.

"For being the lucky chap who has secured the prettiest girl in the company," was the reply. "At least, we suppose you have secured her. We were told she was taking you into consideration; but as she drove with you today, we fancy that is equivalent to an acceptance." And there was a malicious glance in the eyes of the speaker, who had so frequently been eclipsed by the gifted young lawyer.

"Save your congratulations until you receive your information from a more reliable source than boarding-house gossip," replied Mr. Rivers, as he turned haughtily away.

"Confound that little school girl!" he mentally ejaculated. "She first takes me for a pick-pocket, and then places me, to all appearance, in the position of a humble suitor, waiting meekly for my sentence."

Just then a peal of laughter greeted his ears, and turning in the direction whence it proceeded, he beheld the "little school girl" surrounded by four of her companions, and Mr. Rivers was obliged to acknowledge to himself that he had never before seen so lovely a picture. The sunshine had lent an additional flush to her cheeks, and was playing bo-peep through the leaves with her soft brown hair, from which her hat had partially fallen; her beautiful eyes sparkled with mischief, and a merry laugh parted her rosy lips. In her fingers she held four blades of grass, with one end concealed in her dimpled hand. Each gentleman eagerly drew, and compared lengths with his neighbor, and then exclaimed in a tone of disappointment:

"All alike!"

"Certainly," replied Rhoda, demurely. "How could I be the partner of either of you when I am already engaged for the first game of croquet?"

The gentlemen took her joke good naturedly, and went off in quest of other partners.

"That little coquette!" mentally ejaculated Mr. Rivers. "I never noticed before that she was so much admired, she seemed such a shy little thing."

But this gentleman was doomed to make several discoveries in the course of the day, one of which was that he felt a certain unpleasant sensation in the region of his heart, when Rhoda's smiles were showered too indiscriminately among her admirers, and that his own attentions, hitherto carelessly bestowed had a deeper meaning than he was himself conscious of. He noticed that his courtesies now were accepted or declined with the same saucy indifference which greeted her other admirers. He wearied of the day and rejoiced when he found himself once more seated in his carriage with Rhoda beside him, their faces turned homeward.

"Well," said Rhoda, "this is the last picnic of the season! I shall be half sorry to return to the city and settle down to propriety once more."

"That will not require much exertion," remarked her friend, mischievously, "if you can return to it as easily as you left it."

"What do you mean?" demanded Rhoda, half angrily.

"Have you forgotten that you attempted to pick my pocket on the journey?"

"Oh!" laughed Rhoda. "It was you who were trying to rob me, only by some legerdemain you managed to get both hands into your own pocket before you emerged into the light."

"But you really did steal something from me, Rhoda. I was unconscious of it at the time, but I have discovered my loss since. Give me an equivalent for it and I will promise not to make the theft public." Then he added, more seriously, "You cannot want two hearts."

A saucy reply rose to Rhoda's lips, but something in that earnest gaze put it to flight.

"I don't think you have been any more honest than I," she faltered. "I have missed—"

But the rest of the sentence was lost, as her lips were smothered with kisses.

"Then you do love me, Rhoda, after all? I thought you were indifferent."

"And I thought that, after you had stolen my heart, you had merely played with it for awhile, and then thrown it away."

"When did you begin to care for me, darling?"

"I believe it was when I found my hand in your pocket, although I wished then that I might never see you again."

A few days more ended Rhoda's visit to Belleville; but she did not return home alone. Mr. Rivers declared it would be necessary for him to accompany her, to prevent her from making arrests on the cars. He said that she had taken him prisoner at their first meeting, and had held him in chains ever since.

**A Strange Fight.**

A Middletown, N. Y. paper says: A heavy throated bull near this city, noted for his fierceness, accidentally stepped on one of a brood of goslings recently which a stately gander was holding watch and guard over with great solicitude. Straightway the gander attacked the bull, and seized him by the tail with his beak, his wings lashing the animal's flanks with the greatest fury. In vain the bull wheeled about to reach his antagonist; the gander wheeled with him, all the while retaining his hold upon the bull's tail, and showering blows with his powerful wings with telling effect upon the bull's legs, until he fairly roared with pain and terror. At last the gander, apparently thinking that his adversary had sufficient punishment, let go his hold, and the bull took to his heels with the liveliest speed, only stopping when he reached the further corner of the field.

Life is like a roll of costly material passing swiftly through our hands and we must embroider our pattern as it goes. We cannot wait to pick up a false stitch, or pause too long before we set another.

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**VEGETINE**  
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MEDICINE;  
I WISH NO OTHER.

PROVIDENCE, April 7, 1876.  
MR. H. R. STEVENS—Dear Sir: When I was about 6 years of age a humor broke out upon me, which my mother tried to cure by giving me herbs, teas and all other such remedies as she knew of, but it continued to grow worse, until finally she consulted a physician and he said I had the salt rheum, and doctored me for that complaint. He relieved me some, but said I could not be permanently cured as the disease originated in the blood. I remained a great sufferer for several years, until I heard of and consulted a physician, who said I had the disease called "Scrophulous Humor," and would allow him to doctor me. He would cure me, I did so, and he commenced healing up my sores and succeeded in effecting an external cure, but in a short time the disease appeared again in a worse form than ever, and I suffered most upon my lungs, throat and head. I suffered the most terrible pain, and there seemed to be no remedy, and my friends thought I must soon die, when my attention was called, while reading a newspaper, to a VEGETINE medicine of Dr. Waterhouse, No. 354 Athens St., South Boston, and I, formerly residing in South Boston and being personally acquainted with her and knowing her former feeble health, I concluded I would try the "Vegetine." After I had taken a few bottles it seemed to force the sores out of my system. I had running sores in my ears which for a time were very painful, but I continued to take the Vegetine until I had taken about twenty bottles, and my health improved all the time from the commencement of the first bottle, and the sores to heal. I commenced taking the Vegetine in 1873, and continued its constant use for 8 months. At the present time my health is better than it has been since I was a child. The Vegetine is what healed me, and I most cordially recommend it to all sufferers, especially my friends. I had been a sufferer for over thirty years, and until I used the Vegetine, I found no remedy, now I use it as my faithful medicine, and wish no other.

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**Best Remedy in the Land.**  
LITTLE FALLS, N. Y., Sept. 23d, 1876.  
MR. H. R. STEVENS—Dear Sir: I desire to state to you that I was afflicted with a breaking out of blotches and pimples on my face and neck for several years. I have tried many remedies, but none cured the humor on my face and neck. After using two or three bottles of your Vegetine the humor was entirely cured. I do certainly believe it is the best medicine for all impurities of the blood that there is in the land, and should highly recommend it to the injured public.

Truly yours, P. FERRINE, Architect.  
Mr. Ferrine is a well-known architect and builder at Little Falls, N. Y., having lived there and in the vicinity for the last 33 years. 23 1m

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