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A Kiss In a Coach

In the Days Before There Were Railways

By F. A. MITCHEL

I have always had a fancy for looking back into the past for items concerning those from whom I have descended. The doings of these persons who lived and moved and worked and loved and quarreled, just as others of my family are doing today, have always been of interest to me. I have before me a portrait of one of my grandfathers painted when he was the age that I am now, and one would suppose that he and I were twin brothers instead of being two generations apart. He was young in the last century, when the railroad was coming into vogue as a mode of travel and shortly before the use of electricity in telegraphing. Among family documents, of which I have collected a great number, there is one written by this gentleman which I prize more than any of the others. I give it just as he wrote it except for a little editing where he referred to himself, for

an autobiographer is always at a disadvantage in this respect. I need to say that the writer at the time of the happenings narrated was twenty-three years old and considered handsome. His narrative reads:

I started to cross the Allegheny mountains on a business trip to Cincinnati, then the principal city in the west, and expected to be gone several weeks, having planned to spend a week in Cincinnati and a week returning. We left at 6 o'clock in the morning from the Antlers' tavern, there being eight insides and four out-sides on the coach.

There was some shifting of passengers during the day, and at evening the positions of those inside was as follows—I give them minutely, for they are pertinent to an understanding of my narrative; I sat on the front seat, riding backward. There was one other person on the seat with me, a middle aged lady. She sat on my left. On the middle seat, facing me, but on the other side of the coach, was an elderly gentleman, eminently respectable looking. The other two places on the middle seat were occupied by a young woman, very precise looking, whom he called Amelia, and his daughter, a girl of about eighteen. On the back seat were a man and two women. I do not describe them, for they have no part in what I am going to record.

The first night in a coach is very uncomfortable; it is only when one gets somewhat accustomed to the jolting and has met with sufficient loss of sleep to render him hungry for slum-

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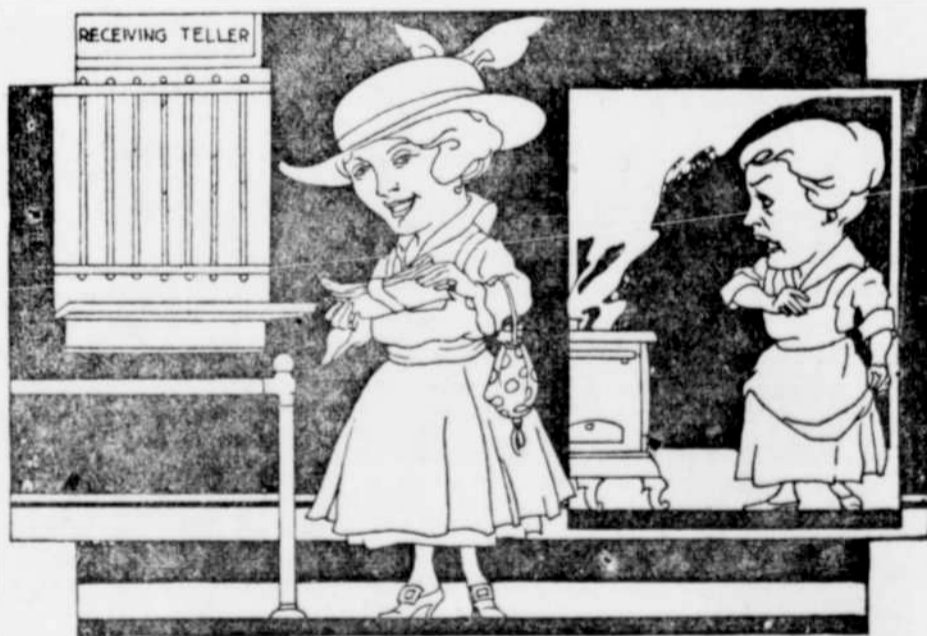
"SHOCK ABSORBER"

That takes the jolts and jars out of life later on and gives you that worry-free, successful air which comes from the knowledge of the little "nest egg" earning you 4 per cent interest in some good bank like ours. To be **THRIFTY** and **PRUDENT** from 21 to 50 means a successful and comfortable old age.

Open a Savings Account Today.

TILLAMOOK COUNTY BANK

The Bank Is Safer Than the Stove.



SCARCELY a week goes by that the newspapers don't print a story of some foolish housewife who thoughtlessly started a fire in the stove where she had stored away the savings of a lifetime. Money placed in a stove or in a teapot or under a carpet does not draw interest. It is not safe from thieves. It is not safe from fire. Money deposited in a bank draws interest. The steel vaults in our bank are impervious to fire and thieves. Bank your money with us.

NESTUCCA VALLEY BANK

Cloverdale, Oregon.

ber that he can lose himself sitting straight up and continually bumped. But I on this first night ascending the mountains, having been up late several evenings preceding my departure, slept fairly well. The horses were obliged to proceed at a walk.

In the middle of the night I was awakened by a pair of arms thrown around me and a pair of lips pressed against mine. My faculties not taking in the situation at once, it did not immediately occur to me to detain whoever kissed me, and by the time I proceeded to do so it was too late. The arms about me were unlocked and the lips removed from mine.

Not only was there no light in the coach, but the night was very dark. I could not see my hand before my eyes. All I knew of the episode was by the sense of touch. There was no doubt in my mind that I had been kissed by a woman, but the principal evidence of this was that the lips that were pressed upon mine were soft and there was no beard. Had the matter occurred when my faculties were normally alive doubtless I should have lain awake the rest of the night deliberating as to who had favored me. As it was, my deliberations, assisted by the monotonous breathing, not to mention snoring, of the passengers put me to sleep.

In the morning we stopped at a tavern, and after cold water thrown over my face and a good breakfast of fried chicken, various kinds of game and buckwheat cakes, for which I expended a Spanish silver half dollar, on returning to the coach my adventure of the night came back to me, exciting not only curiosity, but other emotions. I had scarcely seated myself when I made a careful survey of those persons some one of whom might have given me the kiss.

There were three women sitting sufficiently near me to have committed the act. There was the middle aged lady beside me, whose name I do not know; there were Amelia and the young girl, her niece, whom they called Agnes. I did not doubt that one of the three was the perpetrator. I scrutinized the face of each, but could see no trace of guilt. The lady beside me and Amelia met my gaze without a quiver, but Agnes, who sat opposite me, lowered her eyes.

I made up my mind that Agnes was the culprit, partly from this bit of evi-

dence and partly because I preferred to believe that it was her red lips that had been pressed upon mine. We had all become well acquainted, and the woman beside me was very cordial in her manner toward me, while Amelia was rather reserved. As to Agnes, she acted as any young girl would have acted toward a young man under similar circumstances. She certainly appeared to be the personification of innocence. But still waters run deep, and I am free to admit that I was influenced by this adage.

The journey was especially interesting to me, because I had a problem to solve. I reckoned that the guilty one would betray herself before we arrived at the Queen City of the West. But the only one of the three who could have kissed me who showed a special predisposition for me was Agnes, and she gave no sign of guilt. At all events, it seemed to me that I had made a very favorable impression upon her.

On arrival at Pittsburgh those of us who were going further west took a steamboat to descend the Ohio river. Among those who were aboard were the elderly gentleman, whose name by this time I had learned to be Shotwell; his sister and his daughter. In the coach, crowded together as we were, there was no opportunity for a tete-a-tete between me and Agnes, but on the steamboat was plenty. We sat together on the guards outside the ladies' cabin, and at times on deck. The Ohio was called by the early French settlers La Belle Riviere, and justly so. At the time of this journey, the autumn, her waters were clear, and the foliage on the multitude of hills on her banks was of many colors. No affair of the heart could have taken place under more propitious circumstances.

One evening, when the air was out of the south, Agnes and I went on to the hurricane deck, which is the highest deck of all. No one was there but ourselves. We stood looking out on a moonlit scene. The sounds were the throbbing of the engine below and the striking of the paddle wheels at the sides of the boat upon the water.

Now, I had not thus far regarded my affair with Agnes Shotwell as any more serious than those I had had with oth-

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