

# THE KISS STEALER

### He Was Very Adroit In His Thefts

By F. A. MITCHEL

The railroad, like everything else, is a development. The first rails were strap iron on wooden beams. The first car was a stagecoach, then several stagecoaches together mounted on wheels. Then came the passenger car of the present day, only much smaller. When these cars were pulled through a tunnel the passengers were left in total darkness. Indeed, the lighting of railway cars passing through tunnels is a feature of recent years.

When Tom Arnold was about to return to college for his sophomore year he was asked if he would escort a little girl who was going in the same direction to boarding school. Tom didn't like being burdened with the care of a "little girl," but he couldn't very well decline. When he saw his charge he didn't mind taking care of her so much as he had thought he would. Lucy Atwood was fourteen years old, but tall enough for a girl of sixteen. She was very demure and appeared to be utterly devoid of conversational powers. Her protector, having reached the advanced age (to her) of eighteen, probably filled her with such awe as to prevent conversation with him.

But if Miss Atwood was tongue tied she was very pretty. There is nothing more delicate, to a young man especially, than a pair of pink coral lips. Lucy's complexion was as soft and downy as a peach, and her lips were a combination of beautiful curves. Tom couldn't keep his eyes off them. He was young and a sophomore in college, a combination that can occur but once in a man's life. His thoughts, his arguments, therefore were sophomoric:

"I have been burdened with the care of a tongue tied kid without recompense. It behooves me to look out for my own reward. I don't know any payment that would suit me better than just one kiss of those lips. In half an hour we'll get to the tunnel. It requires three minutes for a train to go through it, and one can do a great deal in three minutes."

This was the basis of a plan Tom formed. Before reaching the tunnel he would go into another car, first noting the exact position of his charge. As soon as the train plunged into darkness he would re-enter, make his way to where Lucy sat, take the kiss and retire. Some time after the train had emerged into the light he would go back to his seat, yawn, take up a newspaper and begin to read as if unconscious of anything eventful having happened.

It was a very pretty scheme, but more tempting to a youngster of eighteen than to a full fledged man. There was one thing about it, however, that Tom didn't like. The kid had been placed in his care, and he didn't consider it quite honorable to avail himself of the situation to take what didn't belong to him. But the more criminal the act, the more horror attached to being found out, the more attractive the scheme.

Tom sat looking sideways at those lips, before which every vestige of honor faded. Nevertheless as the train approached the tunnel his courage began to fall him. What an awful thing for him to do! But how nice! Suppose the girl should scream and some one should grab him! The very thought gave him the shivers. But he was at an age when the greater the risk the greater the temptation. He fell, and great was the fall thereof.

He had often been through the tunnel and knew the approaches well. Some ten minutes before the train reached it he told his charge that he would go into the smoking car for a while if she didn't mind sitting alone. She said she didn't, and Tom, having noted that the seat was the third one from the door on the right, left the car. He didn't smoke, fearing that the odor of tobacco would give him away. He sat looking out through a window, a prey to numerous emotions.

When the train entered the tunnel, summoning all his resolution, he hurried into the car he had left and counted the seats on the right by putting a hand on each till he came to the seat required. Folding Lucy in his arms, he took the desired kiss. There was a smothered cry, followed in a few moments by the sound of an opening and closing door, then no other than the rattling of the train.

When daylight came again several passengers who sat near Lucy looked in her direction for an explanation of the cry they had heard. She gave no indication of anything unusual. She was wiping the dust from her face with her handkerchief. She would remove a portion of it, look at the smudge it had made on her handkerchief, then rub off some more, scrutinizing it also, especially in one corner.

Some twenty minutes after the train had left the tunnel Tom Arnold came back and sat down beside his charge. Had Lucy looked him in the face she would surely have seen signs of guilt which, despite his efforts, he was unable to conceal, but she was looking out through the window and did not give him a glance.

Tom was delighted with the success of his scheme. He was not the kiss

that pleased him, for to have enjoyed that he should have been intent upon it rather than on committing a robbery. It was the fact that he had carried out his scheme without having been detected. He wondered that Lucy made no mention of the stolen kiss, but a very young and delicate miss might feel abashed at communicating such a thing to a young man.

When the journey was ended and Tom left his charge at the door of her school he looked scrutinizingly into her eyes to see if he could detect any evidence of her suspecting him. She returned his gaze with a childlike simplicity that reassured him, and he left her feeling very comfortable.

One June morning, when the trees, the flowers and especially the roses were in bloom, a young man who had been invited to spend a week end at the country place of a friend sauntered out on the veranda in negligee summer costume, plucked a rose, sniffed it, put it in the buttonhole of his fannel coat, descended the steps and strolled about the grounds. Having examined the tennis court, the stables and other features of the place, he sauntered toward a hedge, which was just the height to enable him to look over it. In the adjoining grounds was a pagoda, in the pagoda a hammock and in the hammock a feminine figure. But whether the lady was old, middle aged or young he could not see. He thought he would like to satisfy himself on this point. Walking back and forth along the hedge, he looked for an opening. At length, finding a place where the hedge was thinner than at others and stooping, he wormed his way through, though when he reached the other side his costume was somewhat disarranged.

Brushing off the dirt and straightening the hang of his clothing, he sauntered toward the pagoda. There was no movement of the figure in the hammock, and, the morning being warm, he fancied the occupant might be asleep. He had no business in the grounds, but he was a venturesome fellow, with no end of resource and assurance, and had an excuse ready in case he met any one. Drawing gradually nearer to the pagoda, he finally reached a point near enough for him to see a lady asleep in the hammock.

She was young—about twenty—and fair to look upon. She seemed to be sleeping so soundly that the young man drew nearer, even to the steps of the pagoda. There was something in the face of the sleeper that seemed familiar to him. He thought that he had seen her before, then that he had not, vibrating between these two opinions, at last deciding that he had not. One feature especially charmed him—the lady had a very kissable mouth.

For a young man to stand looking at a young lady asleep with a kissable mouth is dangerous—not so dangerous to the young lady as the young man, for there is certainly no harm in one being kissed who doesn't know of the fact. But the young man taking that which does not belong to him is liable to the consequences of his rash act. Then suppose the lady is awakened by the process! Such a contingency would naturally strike terror into any sensitive man.

The watcher drew nearer and nearer on tiptoe till he reached the hammock, then, bending over the sleeper, in one of the alternate risings and bendings finally lightly touched the lips with his. The sleeper twitched. The young man was tempted to take another, but suddenly the abyss on which he stood occurred to him, and, turning, he tiptoed away to the opening of the hedge and passed through. Then he began to wonder at the recklessness, the folly, the awfulness of what he had done.

When he untied his scarf at dressing for dinner that same evening he missed a stickpin surmounted with a horseshoe that he had worn during the day. He wondered how and where he had lost it. Then he remembered working his way through the hedge. He must have dropped it there. He was tempted to go out and look for it, but he had barely time to dress for dinner, so he must needs put off the search till morning.

When he went down to dinner whom should he see but the girl he had kissed in the hammock. He was seized with a terrible fright, but on being presented to her she gave no evidence whatever of ever having seen, met or heard of him before. He was assigned to her for a dinner companion, and by the time they were seated at table he had regained enough of his equanimity to remark that it had been a very hot day, that he hoped it would be cooler tomorrow and that he feared the summer would be an oppressive one.

However, the lady made it easy for him by being agreeable, and he gradually forgot that if she knew how he had robbed her she would despise him. After dinner the company strolled out on to the veranda and spent the evening under the moonlight amid the fragrance of roses. The thief of the kiss quite recovered from any qualms of conscience and was glad he had done it, especially since the girl had not awakened.

On Monday the young man took an early train to the city. When the postman arrived during the afternoon he brought a small package addressed to Thomas Arnold, Esq. Opening it, the recipient took out a handkerchief. In one corner of which were his initials and a stickpin with a horseshoe mounting.

Arnold sank down in a chair, with a moan.

He saw it all. When he had kissed the girl in the tunnel she had snatched his handkerchief from his pocket. She had since grown to be a young lady, and after he had kissed her a second time she had found his stickpin under the hedge.

### WHAT IS WORN.

Coats generally make the figure look thicker than is natural at the waist line.

Collars on coats and waists are both open and high.

Many of the smartest new waists are of stiff white material.

Some of the most airy and filmy blouses have metallic lace for foundation.

Circular cut flounces on skirts have an increasing vogue.

Around the knees the fashionable skirt is as narrow as ever.

The short skirts are bringing out more fanciful stocking effects.

Modish shades are bright and clear like the colors of flowers.

### THE POPULAR VEILS.

#### Colored Lining Gives Chic to the New French Fabrics.

The latest beauty veil is made of fine black silk spider web net and lined with flesh pink tulle. Two large patches made of black velvet are placed at suitable points, one to fall at the corner of the left eye and the other at the corner of the mouth. This is a specially becoming veil, flattering to the complexion and very comfortable to wear.

Another beauty veil which is a great favorite in Paris is made of pale heliotrope net and dotted with a couple of black patches. On fair complexions heliotrope tulle is very effective. The same may be said of cobweb tulle in a pale shade of lemon yellow.

For ordinary wear the favorite veil is that made of fine black silk tulle and dotted all over with white pin spots. Pale rose tulle dotted with white is also admirably becoming, and for women who go in for looking smart one can recommend the new veils in electric blue tulle dotted with black and white pin spots and finished with black velvet patches.

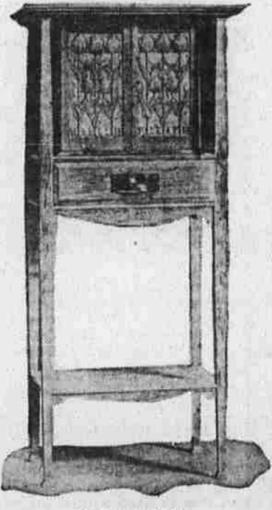
A great deal depends upon the veil. Some of these lengths of fine tulle are real beautifiers. Others merely make the skin look hard or coarse. It is a capital idea to stick to one particular style of veil when it has been found to be becoming.

### ARTISTIC FURNISHINGS.

#### A Dainty Receptacle For Music Books or Records.

The charming music cabinet illustrated may be carried out in any wood that suits the taste. It is one of the new art designs. The doors are fitted with pressed glass on which is a conventionalized crocus pattern. The sheets of music may be filed inside the cabinet and music books placed on the shelf underneath. A cabinet of this sort would be a convenient receptacle for the rolls from the automatic piano or the records of the phonograph.

The very latest library and living room sets are beautiful examples of conventionalized orientalism in coloring and design. Studying those em-



brodered sets haphazardly classified as futuristic, we recognize them as definitely oriental.

The sets include scarf, pillow and table mat. One that attracted attention was of rich green rep, done in glistening fiber, in conventional design, with the larger figures heavily padded so that all of the embroidery formed an exquisitely shaded study in golden brown.

A living room set of scarf, pillow and table mat was made of leather brown linen mummy cloth, rich in embroidery of oriental design done in peacock blue, greens, terra cotta and browns. The same color scheme was varied in a mercerized rep hand bag, with a touch of red and black to give it a futurist tone. The bag was lined with emerald green satin.

#### Children's Hats.

Straw hats of all sorts will be worn by children, but silk hats will be worn, too, and straw and silk will be combined. One popular hat shows a straw brim of tan chip, with a crown of darker crepe de chine. Three little feather birds of brown and yellow are arranged lightly on the right side of the straw band that holds in the fullness of the silk puff at the bottom. Two of the birds are on silk covered wire and they hover in humming bird fashion above the dainty hat.

### China's Peerless Iron Mine.

China's famous iron mine, the Tayeh, the foremost in the far east, is especially notable for the ease with which it is worked. It stands peerless in the world in this respect, excavation requiring no machine power. The work is done by hand by the Chinese coolies. The mine is reputed to be inexhaustible in its ore. In the days of the "three kingdoms" the locality formed a theater of bloody fighting, and the vicinity abounds in relics of that memorable period in Chinese history. It is about 3,630 Chinese miles from Peking overland and about 4,980 Chinese miles by water. Tayehhsien is traversed by ranges of hills and mountains, the valleys of which abound in innumerable lakes of all sizes, with water course facilities. Consequently the locality is rich in scenery of great beauty, and the Chinese poets from olden times have never tired of singing of the "eight views" of Tayeh. In the neighborhood of the Tayeh iron mine are found the ruins of ancient iron foundries, probably 1,000 years old. Millions of tons of slag lie in heaps.

### Settled the Question.

In Regensburg, in the middle ages, the headsman died and three applicants presented themselves for the post. A test of their skill would settle the matter. Accordingly three criminals were brought forth for slaughter.

The first headsman made with his sword a tiny nick in the first criminal's neck. "I'll lop him off just there," he said, and, swinging his sword round with a great swishing sound, lo! he did as he had said he would.

The second headsman tied a string round his criminal's neck. "I'll cut off his head and bisect the string," he said. And he did as he had promised.

These two first headsmen now began to study and ponder the neck of the third criminal, asking what proof of skill the third headsman should undertake, when the latter with one vast and splendid sweep cut off all three heads, thus finishing the criminal and his rivals together and winning the headmanship of Regensburg amid the applause of all.

### Harvard's First Building.

No man now living can describe as an eyewitness the crudities of Harvard's first building, where the ground floor was devoted to academic uses, religious and literary exercises and the purpose of refectory, kitchen and buttery, while above were students' quarters, mere cells of the rudest sort.

The building was far from weather proof, and more air than light was admitted by the windows, which were only partly glazed, oiled paper serving elsewhere to let in a few of the sun's rays and keep out the "coarsest of the cold," as Artemus Ward said when he hung an old hoopskirt over his chamber window at the country hostelry in midwinter.

Not even the most rudimentary of table equipment was supplied at the college eating room. His own knife and fork were carried by each student when he went to dinner, and after he had finished he wiped them on the tablecloth.—Dial.

### Wasp Waisted Cretans.

In describing the civil guards at Canan, Mr. Trevor-Battye in "Camping in Crete," alludes to the slender waists of the Cretan men:

One point about the figures of these men, he says, as of all the mountain villagers, is the extreme smallness of their waists, which in some cases are almost wasplike. It is interesting to observe that this has always been a Cretan characteristic, for the figures on the frescoes and vases in the Minoan section of the museum in Candia (e. g., the famous "Cup Bearer") have the same remarkable slenderness of waist.

He is not sure whether this slim waist is natural or whether produced by tight belting.

### A Lesson in Morals.

Mother—Now, Willie, you told me a falsehood. Do you know what happens to little boys who tell falsehoods?

Willie (sheepishly)—No, ma'am.

Mother—Why, a big black man with only one eye in the center of his forehead comes along and flies with him up to the moon and makes him pick sticks for the balance of his life. Now, you will never tell a falsehood again, will you? It is awfully wicked.—Puck.

### Reason For His Popularity.

Stranger—The whole town seems to be turning out to this funeral. The deceased must have been very popular.

Native—Stranger, he was one man in a million. After he bought his car he gave everybody a ride that he had promised to.—Judge.

### Wine Tasters.

When wine tasters are employed in their professional duties they never swallow the wine they taste. They merely hold a sip of the beverage in the mouth for a few moments and breathe through the nostrils.—Exchange.

### An Alternative.

Passenger—Do I have to change cars in Chicago? Excessively Polite Conductor—Not necessarily, madam. You can go back to New York if you want to.—Life.

### Koreans and Chinese.

While the Chinese do not care for alcoholic drinks, but are addicted to opium, the Koreans like strong drink and do not care for opium.

### The Box Was Good.

Wife—Charles, wasn't that a good box of cigars I gave you on your birthday? Husband—I never saw a better box, my dear.

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