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A Trolley Car Romance—By Eleanor H. Porter

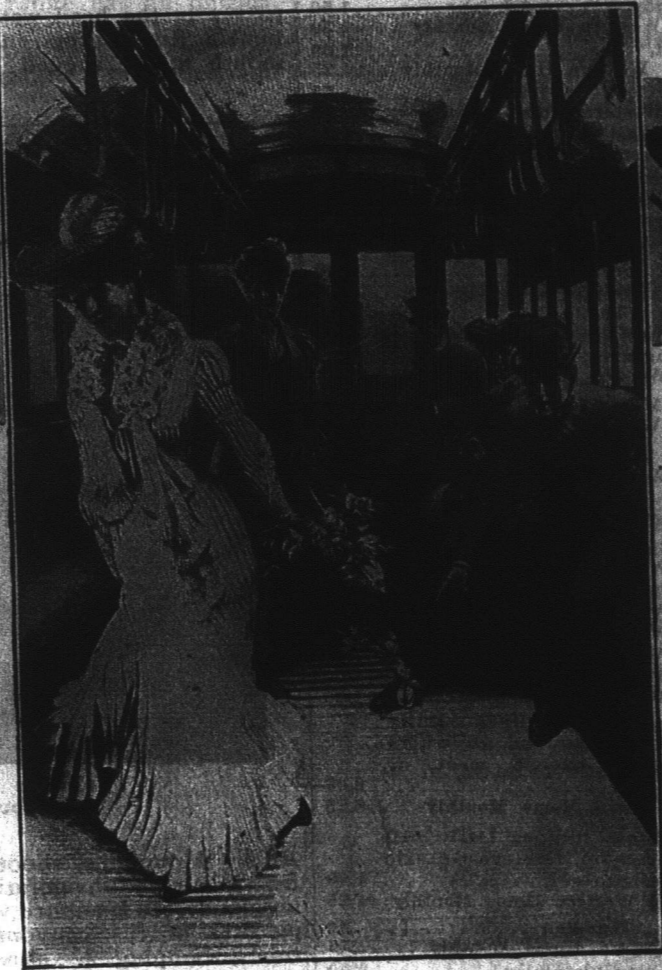
The Incident.



HE trolley-car contained six passengers—the Petty Girl and the Elderly Lady together, the Young Man opposite, the Countrywoman on his right, the Boy in the right corner, and the Dude near by.

The Pretty Girl signalled the conductor, and in due time the car stopped. As the Girl left her seat, a superb red rose slipped from its mates in her hand and fell to the floor. The Dude sprang to his feet, but the Young Man was already holding out the rose, his hat upheld. The Girl waved aside the extended flower with a disdainful toss of her head, and followed her companion from the car.

The Dude smiled, the Boy grinned, and the Countrywoman turned an embarrassed gaze to the street outside, but the Young Man broke the long stem of the rose, and placed the flower in the lapel of his coat.



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The Elderly Lady Speaks.

"James, what do you think? Who should be on the car to-day but that dreadful Charles Denton! Marjorie never looked at him, but when she went out—careless girl—she dropped one of her roses. And didn't he jump for it? Well, I should say he did!

"For a minute I fairly shook in my boots. You know Marjorie was so silly over him just a little while ago, and one never knows what the foolish child will take into her head to do.

"But I was proud of her, James—proud of her and of our success in weaning her from that silly infatuation. She passed him by with the air of a queen, and I never saw her in such high spirits as she was immediately afterward, when we met the Baron at the Waltons'.

"It was such a relief to me, James—such a relief!"

The Dude Speaks.

"By Jove, Algy, I'm all broke up, I am! Deuced mean thing on the car this afternoon, don't you know. Pretty girl dropped a rose, wanted a flirtation, and all that; been making eyes at me all the way from Twenty-third Street—by Jove, she had! But a beast of a man opposite got ahead of me, don't you know—common-looking fellow, no style, he picked it up first.

"Take it? Not a bit she didn't! By Jove, she was game! Just tossed her head and marched out of the car like an empress—she did!"

The Countrywoman Writes.

"Oh, Polly dear, how I do wish you could have seen the lady I did to-day. She was dressed beautiful; silk made with plaits—lots of 'em—and a hat that was all feathers and shiny beads. She looked so pretty and sweet that I just wanted to know her awful bad. I wanted to go right over and speak to her and make her acquaintance.

"But, Polly, I'm glad I didn't. She wasn't sweet and lovely inside—not a mite. She dropped one of her flowers, and a nice young gentleman opposite picked it up for her, real polite-like, and handed it to her. And do you know, she wouldn't even look at him, much less thank him, but she strutted out of the car as though anything he had touched was poison. I didn't like her then—not a mite!"

The Boy Speaks.

"Gee, Bill, guess what I seen? Swell gal—real high-stepper, yer understand—dropped a posy in the car ter-day. Nice young gent that sat opposite to her he picks it up, an' gits walked all over fer his pains. She jest mopped up the floor with him—that's what she did!"

"But he wa'n't feezed—not on yer life! He jest swiped the posy, an' stuck it in his coat.
"Gee, Bill, but you'd oughter seen the gal! She was a sure 'nough winner."

The Pretty Girl Writes.

"Oh, Dot, I'm so happy! It's all done and over—my part, you know—and everything came out all right. And won't Uncle and Aunt be surprised (it to-night goes lovely) when they find I'm really married—and to Charles, too, notwithstanding the watch they've kept on my mail and calls all these weeks.

"Dear old hearts, they'll be angry at first, but they'll get over it—I don't worry. It isn't as though Charles wasn't altogether good and splendid in every way except the money. It's the money they care for, but when they find I'm really married—and awfully happy, too—they'll relent and give us the nicest kind of a blessing. I know them!

"But just think, Dot, what a lot I owe to you! Everything went just as you'd planned. Charles walked into the car at Twentieth Street, but I didn't seem to notice him at all. I could see Aunt Mattie watch me out of the corner of her eye, and I could just feel her quiver with terror for fear I was going to speak or do something.

"Well, I dropped the rose, and he's got it. It was such a fine signal! I'm so glad you thought of it—so natural, you know; nothing would ever be suspected from it. But, Dot, you don't know how hard it was for me, after all. He looked so grand and handsome, and there I couldn't even show him that I saw him! There was an absurd little man near the door—a regular dude—and I just looked and looked at him; he was so small and insignificant beside my Charlie!

"Dear, dear, how I do run on! But who wouldn't? "By-by, dearie, until to-night."
"Lovingly,
Marjorie."

The Young Man Writes.

"It's all right, Bob. She dropped the rose in the car to-day, and let me keep it; so she agrees and you can go ahead with the arrangements. I'm to meet her at Dorothy's, you know, and we are all to be at the church at eight-thirty sharp. The license and the ring are already in my hands, and I know you'll have everything OK at the church, so there'll be no delay.

"When it's all over, Bob, I'll tell you how much I appreciate what you've done for me. Only think how it would have been if we hadn't had you and Dot to help us! Until to-night, then,
C.D."