

READING TIME FOR YOUNG FOLKS

THE PICKPOCKET

"Is this bus going to the city?"

"Yes, ma'am. Hurry in!"

A little old lady in a dress of old but expensive material got in, and sat down by the side of a poor, shabbily dressed woman with a baby in her arms. The old lady was scarcely seated when the bus started off with a jerk, and the little old lady was flung violently against her neighbor, the poor woman with the baby.

"Oh, I hope I have not hurt the baby,"

the old lady said. And there was such real concern in her voice that the mother of the baby smiled as she answered:

"No, you have not hurt her."

"She's a dear little thing," said the old woman, bending forward. "How old is she?"

"Ten months," replied the mother. "No, she doesn't look to be ten months old. She's been sick, and that has kept her from growing."

"Poor little baby," said the old lady.

"And there is a bandage on her arm. What is the matter with her arm?"

"I don't know," answered the mother. "I'm taking her to the hospital to find out."

"My! My! I hope it is nothing serious. I am getting off the bus here. Goodbye."

And she started to get down.

"Stop! Stop!" shouted a man from the back seat of the bus. "Lady," he said to the woman with the baby, "have you lost anything? Ask that old lady who is getting off what her hand was doing in your bag a moment ago."

The old lady stopped and blushed.

"My pocketbook! It's gone!" exclaimed the woman with the baby.

"Your pocketbook is in your lap," said a man sitting beside her.

"So it is," said the woman, as she opened her pocketbook and looked inside. Then she said slowly, "The old lady has not taken anything out; *she has put something in!*" And she held up a new bank bill of a large



denomination.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Did this story surprise you when you read it?
2. Were you surprised when the man said the old lady's hand was in the passenger's hand bag?
3. Did you think the old lady was a thief?
4. Why had she put her hand into the bag?