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INCORPORATED 1869

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Total Assets	180,000,000

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EXCUSE ME!

Continued from page 6.

"You see," Marjorie fluttered, "by a sad mistake, my baggage isn't on the train. And I haven't any—really need to buy some—some things very badly. It's awfully embarrassing to be without them."

"I can imagine," the conductor mumbled. "Why don't you and your husband drop off and take the next train?"

"My husband—Mr. Mallory has to be in San Francisco by tomorrow night. He just has to!"

"So have I!"

"But to oblige me? To save me from distress—don't you think you could?" Like a sweet little child she twisted one of the brass buttons on his coat sleeve, and wheedled: "Don't you think you might hold the train just a little tiny half hour?"

He was sorry, but he didn't see how he could. Then she took his breath away again, by asking, out of a clear sky: "Are you married?"

He was as awkward as if she had proposed to him, she answered for him: "Oh, but of course you are. The women wouldn't let a big, handsome, noble brave giant like you escape long." He mopped his brow in agony as she went on: "I'm sure you're a very chivalrous man. I'm sure you would give your life to rescue a maiden in distress. Well, here's your chance. Won't you please hold the train?"

She actually had her cheek almost against his shoulder, though she had to poise a tip-toe to reach him. Marjorie's dismay was changing to a boiling rage, and the conductor was a pitiable combination of Saint Anthony and Tantalus. "I—I'd love to oblige you," he mumbled, "but it would be as much as my job's worth."

"How much is that?" Marjorie asked, and added reassuringly, "If

He stormed into the smoking room to open the safety valve of his wrath, and found the porter just coming out of the buffet with a tray, two bottles of low-stemmed glasses and a bottle swaddled in a napkin.

"Say, Ellsworth, what in—do you suppose that female back there wants?—wants me to hold the Trans-American while—"

American while—"

But the porter was in a hurry himself. He was about to serve champagne, and he cut the conductor short: "Scuse me, boss, but they's a love-

in' couple in the stateroom forward that is in a powerful hurry for this. I can't talk to you now. I'll see you later." And he swaggered off, leaving the door of the buffet open.

The conductor paused to close it, glanced in, started, stared, gazed, roared: "What's this! Well, I'll be a dog smuggled in here! I'll break that coon's head. Come out of there, you miserable ordinary hound." He seized the incredulous Snoozeleums by the scruff of his neck, growling, "It's you for the baggage car ahead," and dashed out with his prey, just as Marjorie, now getting new bearings on Marjorie's character, spoke across the rampart of his Napoleonicly folded arms:

"Well, you're a nice one!—making violent love to a conductor before my very eyes. A minute more and I would have—"

She silenced him with a snap: "Don't you speak to me! I hate you! I hate all men. The more I know the more I like—" this reminded her, and she asked anxiously: "Where is Snoozeleums?"

Mallory, impatient at the shift of subject, snapped back: "Oh, I left him in the buffet with the waiter. What I want to know is how you dare to—"

"Was it a colored waiter?"

"Of course. But I'm not speaking of—"

"But suppose he should bite him?"



MARJORIE ASKS THE CONDUCTOR TO HOLD THE TRAIN SO SHE CAN SHOP.

"Oh, you can't hurt those nigger waiters. I started to say—"

"But I can't have Snoozeleums biting colored people. It might not agree with him. Get him at once."

Mallory trembled with suppressed rage like an overloaded boiler, but he gave up and growled: "Oh, Lord, all right. I'll get him when I've finished—"

"Go get him this minute. And bring the poor darling back to his mother."

"His mother! Yo gods!" cried Marjorie, wildly. "He turned away and dashed into the men's room with a furious: 'Where's that damned dog?'"

He met the porter just returning. The porter smiled: "He's right in the head, sir," and opened the buffet door. His eyes popped and his jaw sagged: "Why, I left him here just a minute ago."

"You left the window open, too," Mallory observed. "Well, I guess he's gone."

The porter was panic-stricken: "Oh, I'm terrible sorry, boss, I wouldn't have lost that dog for a fortune. If you was to hit me with a axe I wouldn't mind."

To his utter befuddlement, Mallory grinned and winked at him, and murmured: "Oh, that's all right. Don't worry." And actually laid half a dollar in his palm. Leaving the black lids batting over the starting eyes, Mallory pulled his smile into a long face and went back to Marjorie like an undertaker: "My love, prepare yourself for bad news."

Marjorie looked up, startled and apprehensive: "Snoozeleums is ill. He did bite the darkey?"

"Worse than that—he—he—fell out of the window."

"When?" she shrieked, "in heaven's name—when?"

"He was there just a minute ago, the waiter says."

Marjorie went into instant hysterics, wringing her hands and sobbing: "Oh, my darling, my poor child—stop the train at once!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Dog-on-Dog Again.
As the conductor left the Mallorys for their own devices, it rushed over him anew what sacrifice had been at tempted—a fool bride had asked him to stop the Trans-American of all things!

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THE IMPOSSIBLE BOY.

I do not wish to go and fish, as other lads are going! I'd rather take the spade and rake, or spend the long day hoeing. I'll plant the seeds and pull the weeds, where grow the beet and radish, nor yearn at all to play baseball, or other pastimes faddish. When I am done at set of sun, I won't forgo, bean and onion. I won't read sooth, read tale of sleuth—I'll do the works of Bunyan. I do not care to see the bear or elephant performing, or watch the clown come tumbling down when up a pole he's swarming. To do my task is all I ask, all day, till light is dawning, to saw the wood, as the children should, and split the morning kindling. Let other lads distress their dads and in the brook go swimming, with and give edge I'll prune the hedge. I'll clean the trees a trimming. I'll clean the yard, which now looks hard, and paint the shed with zeal stable, and fix the fence with zeal intense, and toil while I am able.

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She began to pound Mallory's shoulders and shake him frantically. He had never seen her this way either. He was getting his education in advance. He tried to calm her with ineffectual words: "How can I stop the train? Now, dearie, he was a nice dog, but after all, he was only a dog." She rounded on him like a panther: "Only a dog! He was worth a dozen men like you. You find the conductor at once, command him to stop this train—and back up! I don't care if he has to go back ten miles. Run, tell him at once. Now, you run!"

Mallory stared at her as if she had gone mad, but he set out to run somewhere, anywhere. Marjorie paced up and down distractedly, tearing her hair and moaning, "Snoozeleums, Snoozeleums! My child. My poor child!" At length her wildly roving eyes noted the bell rope. She stared, pondered, nodded her head, clutched at it, could not reach it, jumped for it several times in vain, then seized a chair, swung it into place, stood up in it, gripped the rope, and came down on it with all her weight, dropping to the floor and jumping up and down in frenzied dance. In the distance the engine could be heard faintly whistling, whistling for every pull.

The engineer, far ahead, could not imagine what unheard-of crisis was brewing about such mad signals. A fireman yelled: "I bet that crazy conductor is tacked with an epileptic fit."

But there was no disputing the command. The engine was reversed, the air brakes set, the sand run on, and every effort made to pull the iron horse, as it were, back on its haunches.

The grinding, squeaking, jolting shook the train like an earthquake. The shrieking of the whistle froze the blood like a woman's cry of "Murder!" in the night. The women among the passengers echoed the scream. The men turned pale and braced themselves for the shock of collision. Some of them were mumbling prayers. Dr. Temple and Jimmie Wedgewood, with one idea in their disheveled souls, dashed from the smoking room to go to their wives.

Ashton and Wedgewood, with one eye to care for but themselves, seized windows and tried to fight them open. At last they budged a sash and knelt down to thrust their heads out.

"I don't see a beastly thing ahead," said Wedgewood, "except the heads of other fools."

"We're slowing down though," said Ashton, "she stops! We're safe. Thank God!" And he collapsed into a chair. Wedgewood collapsed into another, gasping: "Whatever are we safe from, I wonder?"

The train-crow and various passengers descended and ran alongside the train asking questions. Panic gave way to mystery. Even Dr. Temple came back into the smoking room to finish a precious cigar he had been at work on. He was followed by Little Jimmie, who had not quite reached his wife when the stopping of the train put an end to his excuse for chivalry. He was regretfully mumbling: "It would have been such a good shansh to shave my life's wife—I mean my—I don't know what I mean."

He sank into a chair and ordered a drink; then suddenly remembered his vow, and with great heroism, rescinded the order.

Mallory, finding that the train was checked just before he reached the conductor, saw that official's bewildered wrath at the stoppage and had a fearsome intuition that Marjorie had somehow done the deed. He hurried back to the observation room, where he found her charging up and down, still distraught. He paused at a safe distance and said: "The train has stopped, my dear. Somebody rang the bell."

"I guess somebody did!" Marjorie answered, with a proud toss of the head. "Where's the conductor?"

"He's looking for the fellow that pulled the rope."

"You go tell him to back up—and slowly, too!"

"No, thank you!" said Mallory. He was a brave young man, but he was not bearing the conductors of stopped expresses. Already the conductor's voice was heard in the smoking room, where he appeared with the rum and roar of a Bushan bull. "Well!" he bellowed, "which one of you guys pulled that rope?"

"It was nobody here, sir," Dr. Temple meekly explained. The conductor transfixed him with a baleful glare: "I wouldn't believe a gambler on oath. I bet you did it."

"I assure you, sir," Wedgewood interposed, "he didn't touch it. I was heath."

The conductor waved him aside and charged into the observation room, followed by all the passengers in an awe-struck rabble. Here, too, the conductor thundered: "Who pulled that rope? Speak up somebody!"

Mallory was about to sacrifice himself to save Marjorie, but she met the conductor's black rage with the withering contempt of a young queen: "I pulled the old rope. Whom did you suppose?"

The conductor almost dropped with apoplexy at finding himself with nobody to vent his immense rage on, but this pink and white slip, "You!" he gulped, "well, what in— Say, in the name of—why don't you know it's a penitentiary offense to stop a train this way?"

Marjorie tossed her head a little higher, grew a little calmer: "What do I care? I want you to back up."

The conductor was reduced to a wet rag, a feeble echo: "Back up—the train up?"

"Yes, back the train up," Marjorie answered, resolutely, "and go slowly till I tell you to stop."

The conductor stared at her a moment, then whirled on Mallory: "Say, what in hell's the matter with your wife?"

Mallory was saved from the problem of answering by Marjorie's abrupt change from a young Tsarina rebuking a serf, to a terrified mother. She flung out imploring palms and with a gush of tears pleaded: "Won't you please back up? My darling child fell off the train!"

The conductor's rage fell away in an instant. "Your child fell off the train!" he gasped. "Good Lord! How old was he?"

With one hand he was groping for the bell cord to give the signal, with the other he opened the door to look back along the track.

"He was two years old," Marjorie sobbed.

"Oh, that's too bad!" the conductor groaned. "What did he look like?"

"He had a pink ribbon round his neck."

"A pink ribbon—oh, the poor little fellow! the poor little fellow!"

"And a long curly tail."

The conductor swung round with a yell: "A curly tail—your son?"

"My dog!" Marjorie roared back at him.

The conductor's voice cracked weakly as he shrieked: "Your dog! You stopped this train for a fool dog!"

"He wasn't a fool dog," Marjorie retorted, facing him down, "he knows more than you do."

The conductor threw up his hands: "Well, don't you women beat—" He studied Marjorie as if she were some curious freak of nature. Suddenly an idea struck into his daze: "Say, what kind of a dog was it?—a measly little cheese-bound?"

"He was a noble, beautiful soul with wonderful eyes and adorable ears."

The conductor was growing weaker and weaker: "Well, don't worry. I got him. He's in the baggage car."

Marjorie stared at him unbelievingly. The news seemed too gloriously beautiful to be true. "He isn't dead—Snoozeleums is not dead!" she cried, "he lives! He lives! You have saved him." And once more she flung herself upon the conductor. He tried to bat her off like a gnat, and Mallory came to his rescue by dragging her away and shoving her into a chair. But she saw only the noble conductor: "Oh, you dear, good, kind angel. Get him at once."

"He stays in the baggage car," the conductor answered, firmly and as he supposed, finally.

"But Snoozeleums doesn't like the baggage cars," Marjorie smiled. "He won't ride in one."

"He'll ride in this one or I'll wring his neck."

"You bend in human flesh!" Marjorie shrank away from him in horror, and he found courage to seize the bell rope and yank it viciously with a sardonic: "Please, may I start this train?"

The whistle tooted faintly. The bell began to hammer, the train to crack and writhe and click. The conductor pulled his cap down hard and started forward. Marjorie seized his sleeve: "Oh, I implore you, don't consign that poor sweet child to the horrid baggage car. If you have a human heart in your breast, hear my prayer."

The conductor surrendered unconditionally: "Oh, Lord, all right, all right. I'll lose my job, but if you'll keep quiet, I'll bring him to you." And he slunk out meekly, followed by the passengers, who were shaking their heads in wonderment at this most amazing feat of this most amazing bride.

When they were alone once more, Marjorie, as radiant as April after a storm, turned her sunshiny smile on Mallory: "Isn't it glorious to have our little Snoozeleums alive and well?"

But Mallory was feeling like a March day. He answered with a sly chuckle: "You care more for the dog than you do for me."

"Why shouldn't I?" Marjorie answered with wide eyes, "Snoozeleums never would have brought me on a wild goose eposlement like this. Heaven knows he didn't want to come."

Mallory repeated the indictment: "You love a dog better than you love your husband."

"My what?" Marjorie laughed then.

Continued on page 8.