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 By Rupert Hughes
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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Lieut. Harry Mallory is ordered to the Philippines. He and Marjorie Newton decide to elope, but wreck of taxicab prevents their seeing minister on the way to the train.
CHAPTER II.—Transcontinental train is taking on passengers. Porter has a lively time with an Englishman and Ira Lathrop, a Yankee business man.
CHAPTER III.—The sleepers have an exciting time getting to the train.
CHAPTER IV.—"Little Jimmie" Wellington, bound for Reno to get a divorce, boards train in maudlin condition. Later Mrs. Jimmie appears.
CHAPTER V.—She is also bound for Reno with same object. Likewise Mrs. Sammy Whitcomb.
CHAPTER VI.—Latter blames Mrs. Jimmie for her marital troubles. Classmates of Mallory decorate bridal berth.
CHAPTER VII.—Rev. and Mrs. Temple start on a vacation. They decide to cut loose and Temple removes evidence of his calling.
CHAPTER VIII.—Marjorie decides to let Mallory proceed alone, but train starts while they are lost in farewell.
CHAPTER IX.—Passengers join Mallory's classmates in giving couple wedding hazing.
CHAPTER X.—Marjorie is distracted over their situation.
CHAPTER XI.—Ira Lathrop, woman-hating bachelor, discovers an old sweetheart, Anne Gattie, a fellow passenger.
CHAPTER XII.—Mallory vainly hunts for a preacher among the passengers.
CHAPTER XIII.—Mrs. Wellington hears Little Jimmie's voice. Later she meets Mrs. Whitcomb.
CHAPTER XIV.—Mallory reports to Marjorie his failure to find a preacher.
CHAPTER XV.—They decide to pretend a quarrel and Mallory finds a vacant berth.
CHAPTER XVI.—Mrs. Jimmie discovers Wellington on the train.
CHAPTER XVII.—Mallory again makes an unsuccessful hunt for a preacher.
CHAPTER XVIII.—Dr. Temple poses as a physician. Mrs. Temple is induced by Mrs. Wellington to smoke a cigar.
CHAPTER XIX.—Sight of preacher on a station platform raises Mallory's hopes, but he takes another train.
CHAPTER XX.—Missing hand baggage compels the couple to borrow from passengers.
CHAPTER XXI.—Jimmie gets a cinder in his eye and Mrs. Jimmie gives first aid. Coolness is then resumed.
CHAPTER XXII.—Still no clergyman. More borrowing.
CHAPTER XXIII.—Dr. Temple puzzled by behavior of different couples.
CHAPTER XXIV.—Marjorie's jealousy aroused by Mallory's baseball jargon.
CHAPTER XXV.—Marjorie suggests wrecking the train in hopes that accident will produce a preacher.
CHAPTER XXVI.—Marjorie tries to induce the conductor to hold the train so she can shop.
CHAPTER XXVII.—Marjorie's dog is missing. She pulls the cord, stopping the train. Conductor restores dog and lovers quarrel.
CHAPTER XXVIII.—Lathrop wires for a preacher to marry him and Miss Gattie. Mallory tells Lathrop of his predicament and arranges to borrow the preacher.
CHAPTER XXIX.—Kitty Lewellyn, former sweetheart of Mallory's, appears and arouses Marjorie's jealousy.
CHAPTER XXX.—Preacher boards train.
CHAPTER XXXI.—After marrying Lathrop and Miss Gattie the preacher escapes Mallory by leaping from moving train.
CHAPTER XXXII.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Fresh Trouble Daily.
 The following morning the daylight creeping into section number one found Ira and Anne staring at each other. Ira was touselled and Anne was unkempt, but her blush still gave her cheek at least an Indian summer glow.
 After a violent effort to reach the space between her shoulder blades, she was compelled to appeal to her new master to act as her new maid.
 "Oh, Mr. Lathrop," she stammered—"Ira," she corrected, "won't you please hook me up?" she pleaded.
 Ira beamed with a second childhood boyishness: "I'll do my best, my little ootsum-tootsums, it's the first time I ever tried it."
 "Oh, I'm so glad," Anne sighed, "it's the first time I ever was hooked up by a gentleman."
 He gurgled with joy and, forgetting the poverty of space, tried to reach her lips to kiss her. He almost broke her neck and bumped his head so hard that instead of saying, as he intended, "My darling," he said, "Oh, hell!"
 "Ira!" she gasped. But he, with all the proprietorship he had assumed, answered cheerily: "You'll have to get used to it, ducky darling. I could never learn not to swear." He proved the fact again and again by the refractory hooks. He apologized, but she felt more like apologizing for herself.
 "Oh, Ira," she said, "I'm so ashamed to have you see me like this—the first morning."
 "Well, you haven't got anything on me—I'm not shaved."
 "You don't have to tell me that," she said, rubbing her smarting cheek. Then she bumped her head and gasped: "Oh—what you said."
 This made them feel so much at home that she attained the heights of frankness and honesty by reaching in her handbag for a knob of supplementary hair, which she affixed dextrously to what was home-grown. Ira, instead of looking shocked, loved her for her honesty, and grinned:
 "Now, that's where you have got something on me. Say, we're like a couple of sardines trying to make love in a tin can."
 "It's cozy though," she said, and then vanished through the curtains and shyly ran the gauntlet of amused glances and over-cordial "Good mornings" till she hid her blushes behind the door of the women's room and turned the key. If she had thought

the man that invented doors—and the other angel that invented locks."
 The passengers this morning were all a little briskeer than usual. It was the last day aboard for everybody and they showed a certain extra animation, like the inmates of an ocean liner when land has been sighted.
 Ashton was shaving when Ira swaggered into the men's room. Without pausing to note whom he was addressing, Ashton sang out:
 "Good morning. Did you rest well?"
 "What?" Ira roared.
 "Oh, excuse me!" said Ashton, hastily, devoting himself to a gash his razor had made in his cheek—even in that cheek of his.
 Ira scrubbed out the basin, filled it and tried to dive into it, slapping the cold water in double handfuls over his glowing face and puffing through it like a porpoise.
 Meanwhile the heavy-eyed Fosdick was slinking through the dining-car, regarded with amazement by Dr. Temple and his wife, who were already up and breakfasting.
 "What's the matter with the bridal couples on this train, anyway?" said Dr. Temple.
 "I can't imagine," said his wife, "we old couples are the only normal ones."
 "Some more coffee, please, mother," he said.
 "But your nerves," she protested. "It's my vacation," he insisted.
 Mrs. Temple stared at him and shook her head: "I wonder what mischief you'll be up to today? You've already been smoking, gambling, drinking—have you been swearing, yet?"
 "Not yet," the old cregyman smiled. "I've been saving that up for a good occasion. Perhaps it will rise before the day's over."
 And his wife choked on her tea at the wonderful train-change that had come over the best man in Ypsilanti.
 By this time Fosdick had reached the stateroom from which he had been banished again at the Nevada state-line. He knocked cautiously. From within came an anxious voice: "Who's there?"
 "Whom did you expect?"
 Mrs. Fosdick popped her head out like a Jill in the box. "Oh, it's you, Arthur. Kiss me good morning."
 He glanced round stealthily and obeyed instructions: "I guess it's safe—my darling."
 "Did you sleep, dovie?" she yawned.
 "Not a wink. They took off the Portland car at Granger and I had to sleep in one of the chairs in the observation room."
 Mrs. Fosdick shook her head at him in mournful sympathy, and asked: "What state are we in now?"
 "A dreadful state—Nevada."
 "Just what are we in Nevada?"
 "I'm a bigamist, and you've never been married at all."
 "Oh, these awful divorce laws!" she moaned, then left the general for the particular: "Won't you come in and hook me up?"
 Fosdick looked shocked: "I don't dare compromise you."
 "Will you take breakfast with me in the dining-car?" she pleaded.
 "Do we dare?"
 "We might call it luncheon," she suggested.
 He seized the chance: "All right, I'll go ahead and order, and you stroll in and I'll offer you the seat opposite me."
 "But can't you hook me up?"
 He was adamant: "Not till we get to California. Do you think I want to compromise my own wife? Sh! Somebody's coming!" And he darted off to the vestibule just as Mrs. Jimmie Wellington issued from number ten with hair askew, eyes only half open, and waist only half shut at the back. She made a quick spurt to the women's room, found it locked, stamped her foot, swore under her breath, and leaned against the wall of the car to wait.
 About the same time, the man who was still her husband according to the law, rolled out of berth number two. There was an amazing clarity to his vision. He lurched as he made his way to the men's room, but it was plainly the train's swerve and not an inner lurch that twisted the forthright of his progress.
 He squeezed into the men's room like a whole crowd at once, and sang out, "Good morning, all!" with a wonderful heartiness. Then he paused over a wash basin, rubbed his hands gleefully and proclaimed, like another Chanteclair advertising a new day: "Well—I'm sober again!"
 "Three cheers for you," said his rival in radiance, bridegroom Lathrop.
 "How does it feel?" demanded Ashton, smiling so broadly that he encountered the lather on his brush.
 While he sputtered Wellington was flipping water over his hot head and incidentally over Ashton.
 "I feel," he chortled, "I feel like the first little robin redbreast of the merry springtime. Tweet! Tweet!"
 When the excitement over his redemption had somewhat calmed, Ashton reopened the old topic of conversation:
 "Well, I see they had another scrap last night."
 "They—who?" said Ira, through his flying toothbrush.
 "The Mallorys. Once more he occupied number three and she number seven."
 "Well, well, I can't understand these modern marriages," said Little Jimmie, with a side glance at Ira. Ira suddenly remembered the plight of the Mallorys and was tempted to defend them, but he saw the young lieutenant himself just entering the washroom. This was more than Wellington saw, for he went on talking from behind a towel:
 "Well, if I were a bridegroom and had a bride like that, it would take

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another berth."
 The others made gestures which he could not see. His enlightenment came when Mallory snapped the towel from his hands and glared into his face with all the righteous wrath of a man hearing his domestic affairs publicly discussed.
 "Were you alluding to me, Mr. Wellington?" he demanded, hotly.
 Little Jimmie almost perished with apoplexy: "You, you?" he mumbled. "Why, of course not. You're not the only bridegroom on the train."
 Mallory tossed him the towel again: "You meant Mr. Lathrop then?"
 "Me! Not much!" roared the indignant Lathrop.
 Mallory returned to Wellington with a fierce: "Whom, then?"
 He was in a dangerous mood, and Ashton came to the rescue: "Oh, don't mind Wellington. He's not sober yet."
 This inspired suggestion came like a life-buoy to the hard-pressed Wellington. He seized it and spoke thickly: "Don't mind me—I'm not sober yet."
 "Well, it's a good thing you're not," was Mallory's final growl as he began his own toilet.
 The porter's bell began to ring furiously, with a touch they had already come to recognize as the Englishman's. The porter had learned to recognize it, too, and he always took double the necessary time to answer it. He was sauntering down the aisle at his most leisurely gait when Wedgewood's rumped mane shot out from the curtains like a lion's from a jungle, and he bellowed: "Pawtah! Pawtah!"
 "Still on the train," said the porter. "You may give me my portman-teau."
 "Yassah." He dragged it from the upper berth, and set it inside Wedgewood's berth without special care as to its destination. "Does you desire anything else, sir?"
 "Yes, your absence," said Wedgewood.
 "The same to you and many of them," the porter muttered to himself, and added to Marjorie, who was just starting down the aisle: "I'll suitably be interested in that man gittin' where he's gon' to git to." Noting that she carried Snoozlemus, he said: "We're comin' into a station right soon." Without further discussion she handed him the dog, and he hobbled away.
 When she reached the women's door, she found Mrs. Wellington waiting with increasing exasperation: "Come, join the line at the box office," she said.
 "Good morning. Who's in there?" said Marjorie, and Mrs. Wellington, not noting that Mrs. Whitcomb had come out of her berth and fallen into line, answered sharply:
 "I don't know. She's been there forever. I'm sure it's that cat of a Mrs. Whitcomb."
 "Good morning, Mrs. Mallory," snapped Mrs. Whitcomb.
 Mrs. Wellington was rather proud that the random shot landed, but Marjorie felt most uneasy between the two tigresses: "Good morning, Mrs. Whitcomb," she said. There was a disagreeable silence, broken finally by Mrs. Wellington's: "Oh, Mrs. Mallory, would you be angelic enough to hook my gown?"
 "Of course I will," said Marjorie.
 "May I hook you?" said Mrs. Whitcomb.
 "You're awfully kind," said Marjorie, presenting her shoulders to Mrs. Whitcomb, who asked with malicious sweetness: "Why didn't your husband do this for you this morning?"
 "I—I don't remember," Marjorie stammered, and Mrs. Wellington tossed over-shoulder an apothegm: "He's no husband till he's hook-broken."
 Just then Mrs. Fosdick came out of her stateroom. Seeing Mrs. Whitcomb's waist agape, she went at it with a brief, "Good morning, everybody. Permit me."
 Mrs. Wellington twisted her head to say "Good morning" and to ask, "Are you hooked, Mrs. Fosdick?"
 "Not yet," douted Mrs. Fosdick.

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SUCKERS AND HIGH LIVING.
 There is always something happening to make it harder for us poor people to get along. Just as I was congratulating myself that the sucker season would relieve the pressure of butcher's bills, there comes correspondence from Windermere in which all kinds of disparaging things are said about suckers. A fellow cannot economize in the good old way our fathers used to or he is ridiculed for using fish that are not fit for food. Why, bless you, in the good old days, the fathers of some of our powerful preachers, leading financiers, railway magnates, college professors, &c., used to go to the "crick" at Beaverton and get a wagon load of suckers and have them salted before spring work began. I'll venture to say that Sir William Mackenzie often splashed up and down the creek driving suckers into the net held by his big brothers, and now look at the catches he gets! Of course, they are full of bones, but they chew up easily, or swallow fairly well. I have often heard old-time farmers of Marjorie's age of the old sucker days, when their legs used to get itchy in summer from the sucker bones working through the skin, and how the fish bones would fly out when the skin was scratched. But all that has changed, and it is no wonder we are eternally bothered by the high cost of living.—Brace-bridge Gazette.

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