

EXCUSE ME!

Novellized from
the Comedy of
the Same Name
By
Report
Hughes
ILLUSTRATED
From Photographs of
the Play as Produced
By Henry W. Savage

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SYNOPSIS.

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. Transcontinental train is taking on passengers. Porter has a lively time with an Englishman and Ira Lathrop, a Yankee business man. The alopers have an exciting time getting to the train. "Little Jimmie" Wellington, bound for Reno to get a divorce, boards train in maudlin condition. Later Mrs. Jimmie appears. She is also bound for Reno with same object. Likewise Mrs. Sammy Whitcomb. Latter blames Mrs. Jimmie for her marital troubles. Classmates of Mallory decorate bridal berth.

CHAPTER VI—(Continued).

Then Ashton intervened like a dog in the manger and dragged her off to her seat, leaving the young man to exclaim:

"Some tamarind, that!"

Another young man, behind him growled: "Cut out the tamarinds and get to business. Mallory will be here any minute."

"I hate to think what he'll do to us when he sees what we've done to him."

"Oh, he won't dare to fight in the presence of his little bride-widely. Do you see the porter in there?"

"Yes, suppose he objects."

"Well, we have the tickets. We'll claim it's our section till Mallory and Mrs. Mallory come."

They moved on into the car, where the porter confronted them. When he saw that they were loaded with bundles of all shapes and sizes, he waved them away with scorn:

"The emigrant sleeps runs only Tuesdays and Thursdays."

From behind the first mass of packages came a brisk military answer:

"You black hound! About face—forward march! Section number one."

The porter retreated down the aisle, apologizing glibly. "Excuse me for questioning you, but you-all's baggage looked kind o' eccentric at first."

The two young men dumped their parcels on the seats and began to unwrap them hastily.

"If Mallory catches us, he'll kill us," said Lieutenant Shaw. Lieutenant Hudson only laughed and drew out a long streamer of white satin ribbon. Its glimmer, and the glimmering eyes of the young man excited Mrs. Whitcomb so much that after a little hesitation she moved forward, followed by the jealous Ashton.

"Oh, what's up?" she ventured. "It looks like something bridal."

"Talk about womanly intuition!" said Lieutenant Hudson, with an ingratiating salutation.

And then they explained to her that their classmate at West Point, being ordered suddenly to the Philippines, had arranged to elope with his beloved Marjorie Newton; had asked them to get the tickets and check the baggage while he stopped at a minister's to "get spliced and hike for Manila by this train."

Having recounted this plan in the full belief that it was even at that moment being carried out successfully, Lieutenant Hudson, with a ghoulish smile, explained:

"Being old friends of the bride and groom, we want to fix their section up in style and make them truly comfortable."

"Delicious!" gushed Mrs. Whitcomb. "But you ought to have some rice and old shoes."

"Here's the rice," said Hudson. "Here's the old shoes," said Shaw. "Lovely!" cried Mrs. Whitcomb, but then she grew soberer. "I should think, though, that they—the young couple—would have preferred a stateroom."

"Of course," said Hudson, almost blushing, "but it was taken. This was the best we could do for them."

"That's why we want to make it nice and bride-like," said Shaw. "Perhaps you could help us—a woman's touch—"

"Oh, I'd love to," she glowed, hastening into the section among the young men and the bundles. The unusual stir attracted the porter's suspicions. He came forward with a look of authority:

"Excuse me, but what's all this?"

"Vanish—get out," said Hudson, poking a coin at him. As he turned to obey, Mrs. Whitcomb checked him with: "Oh, Porter, could you get us a hammer and some nails?"

The porter almost blanched: "Good Lord, Miss, you ain't allowin' to drive nails in that woodwork, is you?" That woodwork was to him what the altar is to the priest.

But Hudson, resorting to heroic measures, hypnotized him with a two-dollar bill: "Here, take this and see nothing, hear nothing, say nothing."

The porter caressed it and chuckled: "I'm blind, deaf and speechless." He turned away, only to come back at once with a timid "Excuse me!"

"You here yet?" growled Hudson.

Anxiously the porter pleaded: "I just want to ask one question. Is you all fixin' up for a bridal couple?"

"Foolish question, number eight million, forty-three," said Shaw. "Answer, no, we are."

The porter's face glistened like fresh stove polish as he gloated over the prospect. "I tell you, it'll be mahy refreshin' to have a bridal couple on bode! This dog-on Reno train don't carry nothin' much but divorcees. I'm just nachally hungry for a bridal couple."

"Brile coup-hic-le?" came a voice, like an echo that had somehow become intoxicated in transit. It was Little Jimmie Wellington looking for more sympathy. "Whass zis about brile couple?"

"Why, here's Little Buttercup!" sang out young Hudson, looking at him in amazed amusement.

"Did I un'stan' somebody say you're preparing for brile coup?"

Lieutenant Shaw grinned. "I don't know what you understood, but that's what we're doing."

Immediately Wellington's great face began to churn and work like a big eddy in a river. Suddenly he was weeping. "Excuse these tears, zentlemen, but I once—I was once a b-b-ride myself."

"He looks like a whole wedding party," was Ashton's only comment on the copious grief. It was poor Wellington's fate to hunt as vainly for sympathy as Diogenes for honesty. The decorators either ignored him or shunted him aside. They were interested in a strange contrivance of ribbons and a box that Shaw produced.

"That," Hudson explained, "is a little rice trap. We hang that up there and when the bridal couple sit down—biff! a shower of rice all over them. It's bad, eh?"

Everybody agreed that it was a happy thought, and even Jimmie Wellington, like a great baby, bounding from tears to laughter on the instant, was chortling: "A rishe trap? That's absolutely splendid—greatest invensh' modern times. I must stick around and see her when she flops." And then he lurched forward like a too-obliging elephant. "Let me help you."

Mrs. Whitcomb, who had now mounted a step ladder and poised herself as gracefully as possible, shrieked with alarm, as she saw Wellington's bulk rolling toward her frail support.

If Hudson and Shaw had not been football veterans at West Point and had not known just what to do when the center rush comes bucking the line, they could never have blocked that flying wedge. But they checked him and impelled him backward through his own curtains into his own berth.

Finding himself on his back, he decided to remain there. And there he remained, oblivious of the carnival preparations going on just outside his canopy.

CHAPTER VII.

The Masked Minister.

Being an angel must have this great advantage at least, that one may sit in the grandstand overlooking the earth and enjoy the ludicrous blunder of that great blind man's bluff we call life.

This night, if any angels were watching Chicago, the Mallory mix-up

must have given them a good laugh, or a good cry—according to their natures.

Here were Mallory and Marjorie, still merely engaged, bitterly regretting their inability to get married and to continue their journey together. There in the car were the giggling conspirators preparing a bridal mockery for their sweet confusion.

Then the angels might have nudged one another and said:

"Oh, it's all right now. There goes the minister hurrying to their very car. Mallory has the license in his pocket, and here comes the parson. Hokey!"

And then the angelic cheer must have died out as the one great hurrah of a crowded ball-ground is quenched in air when the home team's vitally needed home run swerves outside the line and drops useless as a stupid foul ball.

In a shabby old hack, were two of

the happiest runaways that ever sought a train. They were not miserable like the young couple in the taxicab. They were white-haired both. They had been married for thirty years. Yet this was their real honeymoon, their real elopement.

The little woman in the timid gray bonnet clasped her hands and tittered like a schoolgirl.

"Oh, Walter, I can't believe we're really going to leave Ypsilanti for a while. Oh, but you've earned it after thirty years of being a preacher."

"Hush. Don't let me hear you say the awful word," said the little old man in the little black hat and the close-fitting black bib. "I'm so tired of it, Sally, I don't want anybody on the train to know it."

"They can't help guessing it, with your collar buttoned behind."

And then the amazing minister actually dared to say, "Here's where I change it around." What's more, he actually did it. Actually took off his collar and buttoned it to the front. The old carriage seemed almost to rock with the earthquake of the deed.

"Why, Walter Temple!" his wife exclaimed. "What would they say in Ypsilanti?"

"They'll never know," he answered, defiantly.

"But your bib?" she said.

"I've thought of that, too," he cried, as he whipped it off and stuffed it into a handbag. "Look, what I've bought." And he dangled before her startled eyes a long affair which the sudden light from a passing lamp-post revealed to be nothing less than a flaring red tie.

The old lady touched it to make sure she was not dreaming it. Then, omitting further parley with fate, she snatched it away, put it round his neck, and, since her arms were embracing him, kissed him twice before she knotted the ribbon into a flaming bow. She sat back and regarded the vision a moment, then flung her arms round him and hugged him till he gasped:

"Watch out—watch out. Don't crush my cigars."

"Cigars! Cigars!" she echoed, in a daze.

And then the astounding husband produced them in proof.

"Genuine Lillian Russells—five cents straight."

"But I never saw you smoke."

"Haven't taken a puff since I was a young fellow," he grinned, wagging his head. "But now it's my vacation, and I'm going to smoke up."

She squeezed his hand with an earlier ardor: "Now you're the old Walter Temple I used to know."

"Sally," he said, "I've been traveling through life on a half-fare ticket. Now I'm going to have my little fling. And you brace up, too, and be the old mischievous Sally I used to know. Aren't you glad to be away from those sewing circles and gossip-bees, and—"

"Ugh! Don't ever mention them," she shuddered. Then she, too, felt a tinge of recurring springtide. "If you start to smoking, I think I'll take up flirting once more."

He pinched her cheek and laughed. "As the saying is, go as far as you desire and I'll leave the coast clear."

He kept his promise, too, for they were no sooner on the train and snugly bestowed in section five, than he was up and off.

"Where are you going?" she asked. "To the smoking-room," he swaggered, brandishing a dangerous looking cigar.

"Oh, Walter," she snickered, "I feel like a young runaway."

"You look like one. Be careful not to let anybody know that you're a"—he lowered his voice—"an old preacher's wife."

"I'm as ashamed of it as you are," she whispered. Then he threw her a kiss and a wink. She threw him a kiss and winked too. And he went along the aisle eyeing his cigar glottingly. As he entered the smoking-room, lighted the weed and blew out a great puff with a sigh of rapture, who could have taken him, with his feet cocked up, and his red tie rakishly askew, for a minister?

And Sally herself was busy disguising herself, loosening up her hair coquettishly, smiling the primness out of the set corners of her mouth and even—let the truth be told at all costs—even passing a pink-powdered puff over her pale cheeks with guilty surreptition.

Thus arrayed she was soon joining the conspirators basking the bower for the expected bride and groom. She was the youngest and most mischievous of the lot. She felt herself a bride again, and vowed to protect this timid little wife to come from too much hilarity at the hands of the conspirators.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Honor Utterer of Epigrams.

The Japanese are great admirers of epigrams and apt phrases. Their love of such things is carried so far that when a guest says something unusually brilliant the host or hostess will beg him to write down his remark in large ornamental script. The sentence is then mounted and hung on the wall as a permanent addition to its ornaments, much as we might hang up a text or motto. Naturally the author of a bon mot treated in this way feels himself highly honored to be thus placed on record. But the sentences are selected more for their wisdom than their humor; so that the funny man is not much in evidence.

Was 102 and Didn't Know It.

John Wilson, a naval pensioner who has died at Bexhill, Sussex, aged 102, did not know that he was a centenarian. His true age was only discovered after his death, when his naval service papers were examined. Previously his age had been estimated from the date of his baptism at 98.—London Daily Mail.

SPITBALL ARTISTS ATTRACT ATTENTION



Jimmy Lavender of Chicago Cubs.

Chief interest in the National league pennant chase no longer centers about the hurling achievements of Richard Le Marquis, alias Rube Marquard. How the wry-necked, tall and rangy southpaw of the New York Giants carved his niche in the pitching hall of fame by winning 19 straight has been jotted down on history's page, three successive beatings following the establishment of that high-water mark.

Other truly greats have risen to take prominent places in the headline section, notably Larry Cheney, Jimmy Lavender and Marty O'Toole past-masters in the art of spitball pitching. A few years ago the classy exponents of this sort of twirling could be counted on the fingers of one hand. In fact, John J. McGraw, maker of champions, contends there have been only three real spitball marvels—Jack Chesbro, Ed Walsh and Russell Ford. Two other veteran field generals, likewise makers of champions, Frank Chance and Fred Clarke take issue with McGraw on this point.

The Cub leader would add the names of Lavender and Cheney, his present-day, slab phenoms, to those of Walsh, Chesbro and Ford. Down Pittsburgh way Clarke hails his \$22,500 find, the sorrel-topped O'Toole, as the one best bet of all time. Spitball heavers are bobbing up with startling regularity and setting a lively pace for the curving wizards who dote only upon the ancient and honored round-house delivery, and another season or two will probably find the moistened delivery in general use on all clubs.

Among Lavender's most important victories was one scored against Marquard, the defeat putting a sudden halt to Rube's record-busting string of triumphs and starting McGraw's men on a downward slump.



Marty O'Toole of Pittsburgh.

\$50,000 OFFER FOR JOHNSON

President of Boston Red Sox Makes Big Bid for Star Pitcher of Washington Team.

The Detroit Evening Journal publishes the following Boston dispatch: James McAleer, president of the Red Sox, has offered \$50,000 cash for Walter Johnson, Washington's wonderful pitcher. It is the highest price ever offered for a baseball player—about twice the Marty O'Toole figure.

That shows just how anxious President McAleer is to win the world's series. Here is the story. McAleer, with Ban Johnson and Clark Griffith and a number of other friends, was



Walter Johnson.

dining at a club in Washington. The talk was baseball and McAleer finally looked at Griffith and said: "I'll give you \$50,000 for Johnson and you turn him over to me tomorrow. Here's a thousand dollars right now to bind the agreement."

"Are you kidding me?" was the reply of the Senator's manager.

"No, I'm not kidding," replied McAleer. "Here's the \$1,000 on the table."

Griffith refused to consider the offer.

Johnson Picks Foster.

Eddie Foster has been picked by Ban Johnson as the best young player in the American league this season. The little Chicago lad is worthy of the honor because he has helped the Senators climb into second place.

URGE TRAINERS FOR PLAYERS

Little or No Attention Paid to Physical Condition After Preliminary Season Is Finished.

A good many professional athletes do things which amateurs never would think of doing. This is particularly true of baseball players.

In order that the point may be understood, one must appreciate the hardships under which amateurs get ready for contests. They quit smoking and their diet is regulated with as much science back of it as a physician gives to a patient. The amateur mortifies his flesh and punishes his stomach with the one single idea of making himself proficient in the contests in which he has undertaken to engage.

The professional baseball player, on the contrary, pays little or no attention to training after the preliminary season is finished. The average baseball player, like every other human being who exercises a good deal, gets pretty hungry and permits himself to over eat, says the Milwaukee Sentinel. After dinner, while loafing around the hotel he over smokes and few of them take very good care of themselves generally. They do not over drink as a rule, but they have other foolish ways of not taking care of themselves. The average baseball player is in such a hurry to get to the bus after the game that he does not properly clothe himself and a good many of them find themselves stiffened up after a hot finish because they ride to the hotel without properly cooling off.

What every baseball team ought to have is a professional trainer who has absolute power and control over the physical welfare of the men. He should be a heartless dictator, whose orders are to be obeyed, and the management should back him up in everything he does. In this way baseball players could be kept in condition and it is about the only way that good condition can be assured.

Longest Home Run Drive.

The home run drive made by Zimmerman of the Cubs in the game with the Cardinals on August 28 is claimed to be the longest hit on record in the National league. The ball struck the lower edge of the score board in left field, 425 feet from the plate, and was going with great force when it hit, so that there is no telling what distance it might have traveled had it been unobstructed.

No Chance for Doolin.

Garry Herrmann says there's no chance of the Reds getting Red Doolin from Philadelphia for the simple reason the Reds have nothing to give for him.

PRAISE FOR BASEBALL

University of Nebraska Pedagogue Lauds National Game.

Professional Diamond Pastime Only One That Appeals to Prof. George Howard—"Rooting" Is Mental Perversion.

Professional baseball carries off the palm as king of sports, a chief agent of American democracy, and a moral uplifter, according to the decision stated by Prof. George Elliot Howard, the University of Nebraska authority, in an article in the American Journal of Sociology, published at the University of Chicago. The educator gives the pastime a clean bill of health ahead of the recreations indulged in by the colleges of the land.

Prof. Howard makes a vigorous attack upon intercollegiate athletics, declaring them an unmixed evil, and recommending that they be abandoned. He declares that college athletics spectacles lower the moral tone of the spectator's emotions, destroy the most important business of the institutions and threaten to bring on other evils more serious.

"Under existing conditions," he declares, "the spectator crowd at an intercollegiate football contest fosters ideals much lower than those suggested by a game of professional baseball."

In handing the glory to baseball and criticizing other sports, Prof. Howard writes:

"Psychologically, for instance, the great American game of baseball is a powerful democratic agent. Vast crowds of both sexes and of all ages, persons of every economic, social, religious or intellectual class touch shoulders. They shout, thrill and gesture in sympathy. They are just human beings, with the differentials of rank or vocation laid aside.

"The chief menace to the general use of recreation activities comes from the extraordinary vogue of college athletic spectacles. The primary business of the student is, or ought to be, to study. Naturally, he is inactive during a third or more of the day. There is plenty of time left for restful recreative exercise if it be made use of. But the student cannot keep his bodily and mental energy up to the mark by exercising viciously. The vicious play of the team, however fascinating, does not exercise the spectator's muscles.

"It is imperative that college authorities recognize the function of recreation. At whatever cost for facilities, every student should be physically as well as mentally educated, and the most efficient mental, even moral, education depends on physical education. Moreover, play for all is the best form of educational recreation.

"A similar example of mental perversion, an absurd and immoral custom tenaciously held fast in mob mind, has its genesis in the partisan zeal of athletic spectator crowds. I refer to the practice of organized cheering known in college 'argot' as 'rooting.' From every aspect it is bad. Morally it stands on the level of the 'toe hold,' the card trick, the stuffed ballot box, tainted news of the campaign canard and, like the canard, it is apt to prove a 'boomerang.'"



McGraw is using Devore in the outfield again.

Buy your world's series tickets early if you're interested.

Ted Easterly certainly is going great guns for the White Sox.

Williams, the Notre Dame youngster, is making good in the Cub outfield.

Hendrix of the Pirates is not only pitching good ball, but he is hitting right along with it.

Jeff Tesreau's first name isn't Jeff. It's Charles; but that doesn't make any difference in his pitching.

New Yorkers say the attendance at the Polo grounds this season has averaged about 10,000. Not so bad.

Pitcher Walker, a Washington semi-pro player, has been turned loose by the Naps. He couldn't stand the pace.

The Chicago Americans will give Pitcher Harry Smith of the Lincoln Western league club a tryout next spring.

President McAleer of the Red Sox says his purse and trading blocks are closed for this season. He's going to stand pat.

Pitcher Walker of Bristol, who is to get a trial with Brooklyn, was pitching amateur ball a year ago. His rise has been rapid.

Garry Herrmann is still talking about trading some of his ball players, but the trouble is he cannot find anyone to make the trade with.

Manager Holmes of Sioux City thinks he has a find in Lynch, secured from the Pacific Coast. He has done great work as a substitute for Dick Breen and before going lame was a whirlwind in the outfield.