

## EXCUSE ME!

Novelized from the Comedy of the Same Name

By  
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ILLUSTRATED  
From Photographs of the Play as Produced by Harry 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 station. They are discovered in train on passengers. Porter has a lively time with an Englishman and Ira Lathrop, a Yankee business man. The elopers have an exciting time getting to the train. "Little Jimmie" Wellington, bound for Reno, gets diverted to Salt Lake in a mountain condition. Later Mrs. Jimmie appears. She is also bound for Reno with same object. Likewise Mrs. Sammy Whitcomb. Later comes Mrs. Jimmie for her marital troubles. Classmates of Mallory decorate bridal berth. Rev. and Mrs. Temple, the clergymen who have come to cut loose and Temple removes evidence of his calling. Marjorie decides to let Mallory proceed alone, but train starts while they are lost in farewell. Passengers join Mallory's classmates in giving couple a wedding hazing. Marjorie is discovered. Ira, a womanizer and a bachelor, discovers an old sweetheart, Anne Gattie, a fellow passenger. Mallory vainly hunts for a preacher among the passengers. Mrs. Wellington hears Little Jimmie's voice. Later she meets Mrs. Whitcomb. Mallory repents and leaves. His failure to find a teacher. They decide to avert quarrel and Mallory finds a vacant berth. Mrs. Jimmie discovers Wellington in the train. Mallory again makes an unsuccessful hunt for a preacher. Dr. Temple poses as a physician. Mrs. Temple is bound for Reno. Wellington is smoking a cigar. Sight of preacher on a station platform raises Mallory's hopes, but he takes another train. Missing hand baggage compels the couple to borrow from passengers. Jimmie gets a cinder in his eye and Mrs. Jimmie gives first-aid. Coolness is then resumed. Still no clergyman. More borrowing.

### CHAPTER XXII—(Continued).

He felt that he was the greatest sinner on earth, but worst of all was the fact that when he had fallen, the forbidden brew was not sweet. He was inexperienced enough to sip it and it was like foaming quinine on his palate. But he kept at it from sheer shame, and his luxurious transgression was its own punishment.

The doleful Mallory was on his way to join the "club." Crossing the vestibule he had met the conductor, and had ventured to quiz him along the old lines:

"Excuse me, haven't you taken any clergymen on board this train yet?"

"Devil a one."

"Don't you ever carry any preachers on this road?"

"Usually we get one or two. Last trip we carried a whole Methodist convention."

"A whole convention last trip! Just my luck!"

The unenlightened conductor turned to call back: "Say, up in the forward car we got a couple of undertakers. They be of any use to you?"

"Not yet."

Then Mallory dawdled on into the smoking room, where he found his own porter, who explained that he had been "promoted to the bottley."

"Do we come to a station stop soon?" Mallory asked.

"Well, not for a considerable interval. Do you want to get out and walk up and down?"

"I don't," said Mallory, taking from under his coat Snoozleums, whom he had smuggled past the new conductor. "Meanwhile, Porter, could you give him something to eat to distract him?"

The porter grinned, and picking up a bill of fare held it out. "I got a meenue. It ain't written in dog, but you can explain it to him. What would you 'canine deshal, sah'?"

Snoozleums put out a paw and Mallory read what it indicated: "He says he'd like a filet Chateaubriand, but if you have any old bones, he'll take those." The porter gathered Snoozleums in and disappeared with him into the buffet, Mallory calling after him: "Don't let the conductor see him."

Dr. Temple advanced on the disconsolate youth with an effort at cheer: "How is our bridegroom this beautiful afternoon?"

Mallory glanced at his costume: "I feel like a rainbow gone wrong. Just my luck to have to borrow from everybody. Look at me! This collar of Mr. Wellington's makes me feel like a peanut in a rubber tire." He turned to Fosdick.

"I say, Mr. Fosdick, what size collar do you wear?"

"Fourteen and a half," said Fosdick. "Fourteen and a half!—why don't you get a neck? You haven't got a plain white shirt, have you? Our English friend lent me this, but it's purple, and Mr. Ashton's socks are maroon, and this peacock blue tie is very unhappy."

"I think I can fit you out," said Fosdick.

"And if you had an extra pair of socks," Mallory pleaded, "just one pair of unemotional socks."

"I'll show you my repertoire."

"All right, I'll see you later." Then he went up to Wellington, with much hesitation of manner. "By the way, Mr. Wellington, do you suppose Mrs. Wellington could lend Miss—Mrs. could lend Marjorie some—some—"

Wellington waved him aside with

magnificent scorn: "I am no longer in Mrs. Wellington's confidence."

"Oh, excuse me," said Mallory. He had noted that the Wellingtons occupied separate compartments, but for all he knew their reason was as romantic as his own.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

#### Through a Tunnel.

Mrs. Jimmie Wellington, who had traveled much abroad and learned in England the habit of smoking in the corridors of expensive hotels, had acquired also the habit, as traveler do, of calling England free, as Americans do. She determined to do her share toward the education of her native country, and chose, for her topic, tobacco as a feminine accomplishment.

She had grown indifferent to stares and audible comment and she could fight a protesting head waiter to a standstill. If monuments and tablets are ever erected to the first woman who smoked publicly in this place or that, Mrs. Jimmie Wellington will be variously remembered and occupy a large place in historical record.

The narrow confines of the women's room on the sleeping car soon palled on her, and she objected to smoking there except when she felt the added luxury of keeping some other woman outside—fuming, but not smoking.

And now Mrs. Jimmie had staked out a claim on the observation platform. She sat there, puffing like a major-general, and in one portion of Nebraska two farmers fell off their agricultural vehicles at the sight of her cigar-smoke trailing after the train. In Wyoming three cowboys followed her for a mile, yipping and howling their compliments.

Feeling the smoke mood coming on, Mrs. Wellington invited Mrs. Temple to smoke with her, but Mrs. Temple felt a reminiscent qualm at the very thought, so Mrs. Jimmie sauntered out alone, to the great surprise of Ira Lathrop, whose motto was, "Two heads are better than one," and who was apparently willing to wait till Anne Gattie's head grew on his shoulder.

"I trust I don't intrude," Mrs. Wellington said.

"Oh, no. Oh, yes." Anne gasped in fiery confusion as she fled into the car, followed by the purple-faced Ira, who slammed the door with a growl: "That Wellington woman would break up anything."

The prim little missionary toppled into the nearest chair: "Oh, Ira, what will she think?"

"She can't think!" Ira grumbled. "In a little while she'll know."

"Don't you think we'd better tell everybody before they begin to talk?"

Ira glowed with pride at the thought and murmured with all the ardor of a senile Romeo: "I suppose so, ducky darling. I'll break it—I mean I'll tell it to the men, and you tell the women."

"All right, dear, I'll obey you," she answered, meekly.

"Obey me!" Ira laughed with boyish swagger. "And you a missionary!"

"Usually we get one or two. Last trip we carried a whole Methodist convention."

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The rapture died from her face as she caught sight of Dr. Temple, who happened to stroll in and go to the bookshelves, and taking out a book happened to glance near-sightedly her way.

"Be careful of that man, dearie," Mrs. Fosdick hissed out of one side of her mouth. "He's a very strange character."

Her husband was infected with her own terror. He asked, huskily: "What do you think he is?"

"A detective! I'm sure he's watching us. He followed you right in here."

"We'll be very cautious—till we get to Utah."

The old clergyman, a little fuzzy in brain from his debut in beer, continued innocently to confirm the appearance of a detective by drifting aimlessly about. He was looking for his wife, but he kept glancing at the uneasy Fosdicks. He went to the door, opened it, saw Mrs. Wellington finishing a cigar, and retreated precipitately. Seeing Mrs. Temple wandering in the corridor, he motioned her to a chair near the Fosdicks and she sat by his side, wondering at his filmy eyes.

The Fosdicks, glancing uncomfortably at Dr. Temple, rose and selected other chairs further away. Then Roger Ashton sauntered in, his eyes searching for a proper companion through the tunnel.

He saw Mrs. Wellington returning from the platform, just tossing away her cigar and blowing out the last of its grateful vapor.

With an effort at sarcasm, he went to her and offered her one of his own cigars, smiling: "Have another."

She took it, looked it over, and parried his irony with a formula she had heard men use when they hate to refuse a gift-cigar: "Thanks, I'll smoke it after dinner, if you don't mind."

"Oh, I don't mind," he laughed, then bending closer he murmured: "They tell me we are coming to a tunnel, a nice, long, dark, dismal tunnel."

Mrs. Wellington would not take a dare. She felt herself already emancipated from Jimmie. So she answered Ashton's hint with a laughing challenge:

"How nice of the conductor to arrange it."

Ashton smacked his lips over the prospect.

And now the porter, having noted Ashton's impatience to reach the tunnel, thought to curry favor and a quarter by announcing its approach. He hustled in and made straight for Ashton just as the tunnel announced itself with a sudden swoop of gloom, a great increase of the train-noises and a far-off clang of the locomotive bell.

Out of the Egyptian darkness came the unmistakable sounds of osculation in various parts of the room. Doubtless, it was repeated in other parts of the train. There were numerous cooing sounds, too, but nobody spoke except Mrs. Temple, who was heard to murmur:

"Oh, Walter, dear, what makes your breath so funny!"

Next came a little yowl of pain in Mrs. Fosdick's voice, and then day-light flooded the car with rush, as if time had made an instant leap from midnight to noon. There were interesting disclosures.

Mrs. Temple was caught with her arms round the doctor's neck, and she blushed like a spoony girl. Mrs. Fosdick was trying to disengage her hair from Mr. Fosdick's scarf-pin. Mrs. Whitcomb alone was deserted. Mr. Ashton was gazing devotion at Mrs. Wellington and trying to tell her with his eyes how velvet he had found her cheek.

But she was looking reproachfully at him from a chair, and saying, not without regret:

"I heard everybody kissing everybody, but I was cruelly neglected."

Ashton's eyes widened with disbelief, he heard a snicker at his elbow, and whirled to find the porter rubbing his black velvet cheek and writhing with pent-up laughter.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

#### No Occasion for Surprise.

This story is told of Forrest, the great tragedian:

Forrest was playing in "Richard III," and the part of Catesby had to be taken by a low comedian, who sauntered on the stage at the wrong moment and uttered the famous words, "My lord, the duke of Buckingham is taken," in the wrong place.

Forrest clenched his fists in rage, but otherwise took no notice of the remark.

Later on the comedian repeated the words in the right place, and when the king expressed surprise at the news Catesby folded his arms, walked boldly down the stage, and remarked to the great actor in loud tones:

"I told you so before, Mr. Forrest, but you wouldn't believe me."

#### Unexpected Testimonial.

Little Belderson prided himself upon his good appetite and his capacity for amusing. He was dining with a friend a few nights ago, and did his best to keep his host and hostess with their six-year-old daughter amused, and at the same time managed to do ample justice to the good things provided. "Oh, dear, Mr. Belderson," remarked the little one, after the guest's witless sally, "I wish you'd come here to dinner every day." Belderson positively beamed satisfaction. "Do you, dear?" he smiled. "Why?" "Canse," came the reply, as the observer maiden glanced round the table "cause there wouldn't be anything cold to eat the next day."

Fosdick's face blazed with good

news: "In just a little while we come to the Utah line—then we're safe." "God bless Utah!"

### POULTRY COOPS OF PAPER

Successful Fancier Declares They Are Warm as Others That Are Built of Wood.

Everybody in Marblehead, Mass., knows Frank Brown. Although his business is that of a grocer, he keeps poultry on the side, and is especially enthusiastic over a flock of guinea fowl, one pullet having laid 195 eggs in nine months. Mr. Brown keeps his pet birds in little houses in the rear of his store, but most of his hens are kept on a half-acre of ledge on which a little soil appears in patches. He also has ducks and geese and pigeons.

A large number of the fowls are successfully kept in houses made of paper. In the coldest weather the hens live in these houses and seem as comfortable as those in the frame building. These houses are long enough to be divided into several pens. One of them has been in use seven years. In making these houses a light frame is put up and poultry wire is stretched tightly over it and heavy tarpaulin paper laid over the wire. The paper is given a heavy coat of paint inside and out. The outside color is red, but white is used inside to enhance the light.

Being in the heart of the town, night prowlers are to be looked for, but any activity on their part during the summer is prevented by the presence of Mr. Brown's son, who has a tent in one corner of the half-acre, where he spends the night. His sleep is seldom disturbed, except when he finds it necessary to get up and shoot a few rats.

In his war on these pests he is aided by a nimble Irish terrier.

Both Mr. Brown and his son say that paper houses for poultry are a distinct success. There is seldom a frozen comb, even when the mercury drops below the zero mark, and the hens lay well. The houses are so tight that an opening has been made above each window, which is covered with burlap, for ventilation.

Mr. Brown hatches several thousand chicken each season, all of them in incubators. These machines hold between 200 and 300 eggs each. Hot water supplies the heat, and gas heats the water.

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