



(Continued from Last Week)

CHAPTER XIII.

Hostilities Begin.
During Mallory's absence, Marjorie had met with a little adventure of her own. Ira Lathrop finished his encounter with Anne Gattie shortly after Mallory set out stalking clericalism. In the mingled confusion of finding his one romantic flame still glowing on a vestal altar, and of shocking her with an escape of profanity, he backed away from her presence, and sank into his own berth.

He realized that he was not alone. Somebody was alongside. He turned to find the great tear-eyed eyes of Marjorie staring at him. Her face was a recrudescence of his own, hating wrath, and dashing up the aisle, found the porter just returning from the baggage car. He seized the black factotum and growled:

"Say, porter, there's a woman in my berth."

The porter chuckled, incredulous: "Woman in yo' berth!"

"Yes—get her out."

"Yassah," the porter nodded, and advanced on Marjorie with a gentle, "Scuse me, missus—yo' berth is numba one."

"I don't care," snapped Marjorie. "I won't take it."

"But this un belongs to that gentleman."

"He can have mine—ours—Mr. Marjorie," cried Marjorie, pointing to the white-ribbed tent in the farther end of the car. Then she gripped the arms of the seat, as if defying eviction. The porter stared at her in helpless chagrin. Then he shuffled back and murmured: "I reckon you better put her out."

Lathrop withered the coward with one contemptuous look, and strode down the aisle with a determined grimace. He took his ticket from his pocket as a clinching proof of his title, and thrust it out at Marjorie. She gave it one indifferent glance, and then her eyes and mouth puckered, as if she had munched a green persimmon, and a long low wail like a distant engine-whistle, stole from her lips. Ira Lathrop stared at her in blank wrath, doddered irresolutely, and roared:

"Agh, let her have it!"

The porter snuffed triumphantly, and said: "She says you kin have her berth." He pointed at the bridal room. Lathrop almost exploded at the idea.

Now he felt a hand on his shoulder, and turned to see Little Jimmie Wellington emerging from his berth with an enormous smile:

"Say, Pop, have you seen lovely Mice-trap? Stick around till she flops."

But Lathrop flung away to the smoking room. Little Jimmie turned to the jovial negro:

"Porter, porter."

"I'm right by you."

"What time d'you say we get to Reno?"

"Maw'nin' of the fo'rd day, sah."

"Well, call me just before we roll in."

And he rolled in. His last words floated down the aisle and met Mrs. Little Jimmie Wellington just returning from the Women's Room, where she had sought nepenthe in more than one of her exquisite little cigars. The familiar voice, familiarly bibulous, smote her ears with amazement. She beckoned the porter to her anxiously.

"Porter! Porter! Do you know the name of the man who just buried in?"

"No'm," said the porter. "I reckon he's so broken up he ain't got any name left."

"It couldn't be," Mrs. Jimmie mused. "Things can be sometimes," said the porter.

"You may make up my berth now," said Mrs. Wellington, forgetting that Anne Gattie was still there. Mrs. Wellington hastened to apologize, and begged her to stay, but the spinster wanted to be far away from the disturbing atmosphere of divorce. She was dreaming already with her eyes open, and she sank into number six in a lullabyer's reverie.

Mrs. Wellington gathered certain things together and took up her handbag, to return to the Women's Room, just as Mrs. Whitcomb came forth from the curtains of her own berth, where she had made certain preliminary snarls to disrobing, and put on a light, decidedly negligee negligee.

The two women collided in the aisle, whirled on one another, as women do when they loathe, recognized each other with wild stares of amazement, set their teeth, and made a simultaneous dash along the corridor, shoulder wrestling with shoulder.

They reached the door marked "Women" at the same instant, and as neither would have dreamed of offering the other a courtesy, they squeezed through together in a killicenny jumble.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Dormitory on Wheels.
Of all the shocking institutions in human history, the sleeping car is the most shocking—or would be, if we were not so used to it. There can be no doubt that we are the most moral nation on earth, for we admit it to ourselves. Perhaps we prove it, too, by the Arcadian prosperity of these two-story hotels on wheels, where miscellaneous travelers dwell in complete promiscuity, and sleep almost side by side, in apartments of com-

partments, separated only by a plank and a curtain, and guarded only by one sleepy negro.

After the fashion of the famous country whose inhabitants earned a meager sustenance by taking in each other's washing, so in Sleeping Car-parlors we attain a meager respectability by everybody's chaperoning everybody else.

So topsy-turvy, indeed, are our notions, once we are aboard a train, that the stationers alone are regarded with suspicion; we question the motives of those who must have a room to themselves—a room with a real door, that locks!

And now, on this sleeping car, prettily named "Snowdrop," scenes were enacting that would have thrown our great-grandmothers into fits—scenes which, if we found them in France, or Japan, we should view with alarm as almost unendurable evidence of the moral obliquity of those nations.

But this was our own country—the part of it which admits that it is the best part—the merriest part, the staunch middle west. This was Illinois. Yet dozens of cars were heaving over to numba three, or does yo—yo—yo lady remain heah, while jest you preambulate?

"Just I preambulate, you black hound!" Marjorie answered, in a threatening tone. The porter could understand that, at least, and he bristled away with a meek: "Yessah. Numba three is yours, sah."

The troubled features of the baffled porter cleared up as by magic when he heard at number three, for there he found his tyrant and tormentor, the English invader.

He remembered how indignantly Mr. Wedgewood had refused to show his ticket, how cocksure he was of his number, how he had leashed the porter's services as a sort of private nurse, and had paid no advance royalties.

And now he was sprawled and snoring majestically among his many luggage, like a sleeping lion. Revenge tasted good to the humble porter; it tasted like a candied yam smothered in possum gravy. He smacked his thick lips over this revenge. With all the insolence of a servant in brief authority, he gloated over his prey, and prodded him awake. Then murmured with hypocritical deference: "Excuse me, but could I see yo' ticket for yo' seat?"

"Certainly not! It's too much trouble," grumbled the half-asleeper. "Confound you!"

The porter lured him on: "Is you ash' yo' got one?"

Wedgewood was wide awake now, and surly as any Englishman before breakfast: "Of cawse I'm ashaw. How dare you?"

"Too bad, but I'm 'bleeged to ask you to gimme a peek at it."

"This is an outrage!"

"Yassah, but I just natchelly got to see it."

Wedgewood gathered himself together, and ransacked his many pockets with increasing anger, muttering under his breath: "At length he move under the ticket, and thrust it at the porter: 'Thah, you idiot, are you convinced now?'"

The porter gazed at the billet with ill-concealed triumph. "Yassah," he said. "Mr. Wedgewood settled back and closed his eyes. 'It's convinced that you is in the wrong berth!'"

"Impossible! I won't believe you!" the Englishman raged, getting to his feet in a fury.

"Perhaps you'll believe Mista Ticket," the porter chorused. "He said numba ten, and that's ten across the way and down the road a piece."

"This is outrageous! I decline to move."

"You may decline, but you move just the same," said the porter, waving his hand at the ticket.

"Here's wait—how dare you! And that berth is made up. I don't want to go to bed now!"

"Mista Ticket says, 'Go to bed!'"

"Of all the disgusting countries! Heah, don't put that thah—heah."

The porter flung his load anywhere, and absolved himself with a curt, "I's got otha passengers to wait on now."

"I shall certainly report you to the company," the Englishman fumed. "Yassah, I p'mise so."

"Have I got to go to bed now? Really, I—," but the porter was gone, and the irate foreigner crawled under his curtains, muttering, "I shall write a letter to the London Times about this."

To add to his misery, Mrs. Whitcomb came from the Women's Room, and as she passed him, she prodded him with one sharp elbow and twisted the corner of her heel into his little toe. He thrust his head out with his fiercest, "How dare you!" But Mrs. Whitcomb was fresh from a prolonged encounter with Mrs. Wellington, and she flung back a venomous glare that sent the Englishman to cover.

The porter revealed in his victory till he had to dash out to the vestibule to give vent to hilarious rales of

CHAPTER XV.

A Premature Divorce.

Suddenly Marjorie's heart gave a leap of joy. She was having another idea. "I'll tell you, Harry. We'll pretend to quarrel, and then—"

"And then you can leave me in high dudgeon."

The ruse struck him as a trifle unconvincing. "Don't you think it looks kind of improbable on—on—such an occasion?"

Marjorie blushed, and lowered her eyes and her voice: "Can you suggest anything better?"

"No, but—"

"Then, we'll have to quarrel, darling."

He yielded for lack of a better idea: "All right, beloved. How shall we begin?"

On close approach, the idea did seem rather impossible to her. "How could I ever quarrel with you, my love?"

He gazed at her with a rush of lovely tenderness: "And how could I ever speak crossly to you?"

"We never shall have a harsh word, shall we?" she resolved.

"Never!" he seconded. So that resolution passed the house unanimously.

They held hands in luxury a while, then she began again: "Still, we must pretend. You start it, love."

"No, you start it," he pleaded. "You ought to," she beamed. "You got me into this mess."

The word slipped out. Marjorie started: "Mee! How is it my fault? Good Lord, are you going to begin chucking it up?"

"Well, you must admit, darling," Marjorie urged, "that you've harassed

everything pretty badly."

It was so undeniable that he could only groan: "And I suppose I'll hear of this till my dying day, dearest."

Marjorie had a little temper all her own. So she defended it: "If you are so afraid of my temper, love, perhaps you'd better call it off before it's too late."

"I didn't say anything about my temper, sweetheart," Marjorie insisted. "You did, too, honey. You said I'd chuck this up till your dying day. As if I had such a disposition! You can stay here." She rose to her feet. He pressed her back with a decisive motion, and demanded: "Where are you going?"

"Up in the baggage car with Snoozeums," she sniffed. "He's the only one that doesn't find fault with me."

Marjorie was stung to action by this crisis: "Wait," he said. He leaned out and motioned down the aisle. "Porter! Wait a moment, darling. Porter!"

The porter arrived with a half-dozed blanket in his hands, and his usual "Yassah!"

Beckoning him closer, Marjorie murmured in a low tone: "Is there an extra berth on this car?"

The porter's eyes seemed to rebuke his ears: "Does you want this upper made up?"

"No—of course not."

"Ex—excuse me, I thought—"

"Don't you dare to think!" Marjorie thundered. "Isn't there another lower berth?"

The porter breathed hard, and gave this bridal couple up as a riddle that followed no known rules. He went to find the sleeping car conductor, and returned with the information that almost unendurable evidence of the moral obliquity of those nations.

"Then I'll take number three," said Marjorie, poking money at the porter. And still the porter could not understand.

"Now, lemme onderstan' you-all," he stammered. "Does you both move over to numba three, or does yo—yo lady remain heah, while jest you preambulate?"

"Just I preambulate, you black hound!" Marjorie answered, in a threatening tone. The porter could understand that, at least, and he bristled away with a meek: "Yessah. Numba three is yours, sah."

The troubled features of the baffled porter cleared up as by magic when he heard at number three, for there he found his tyrant and tormentor, the English invader.

He remembered how indignantly Mr. Wedgewood had refused to show his ticket, how cocksure he was of his number, how he had leashed the porter's services as a sort of private nurse, and had paid no advance royalties.

And now he was sprawled and snoring majestically among his many luggage, like a sleeping lion. Revenge tasted good to the humble porter; it tasted like a candied yam smothered in possum gravy. He smacked his thick lips over this revenge. With all the insolence of a servant in brief authority, he gloated over his prey, and prodded him awake. Then murmured with hypocritical deference: "Excuse me, but could I see yo' ticket for yo' seat?"

"Certainly not! It's too much trouble," grumbled the half-asleeper. "Confound you!"

The porter lured him on: "Is you ash' yo' got one?"

Wedgewood was wide awake now, and surly as any Englishman before breakfast: "Of cawse I'm ashaw. How dare you?"

"Too bad, but I'm 'bleeged to ask you to gimme a peek at it."

"This is an outrage!"

"Yassah, but I just natchelly got to see it."

Wedgewood gathered himself together, and ransacked his many pockets with increasing anger, muttering under his breath: "At length he move under the ticket, and thrust it at the porter: 'Thah, you idiot, are you convinced now?'"

The porter gazed at the billet with ill-concealed triumph. "Yassah," he said. "Mr. Wedgewood settled back and closed his eyes. 'It's convinced that you is in the wrong berth!'"

"Impossible! I won't believe you!" the Englishman raged, getting to his feet in a fury.

"Perhaps you'll believe Mista Ticket," the porter chorused. "He said numba ten, and that's ten across the way and down the road a piece."

"This is outrageous! I decline to move."

"You may decline, but you move just the same," said the porter, waving his hand at the ticket.

"Here's wait—how dare you! And that berth is made up. I don't want to go to bed now!"

"Mista Ticket says, 'Go to bed!'"

"Of all the disgusting countries! Heah, don't put that thah—heah."

The porter flung his load anywhere, and absolved himself with a curt, "I's got otha passengers to wait on now."

"I shall certainly report you to the company," the Englishman fumed. "Yassah, I p'mise so."

"Have I got to go to bed now? Really, I—," but the porter was gone, and the irate foreigner crawled under his curtains, muttering, "I shall write a letter to the London Times about this."

To add to his misery, Mrs. Whitcomb came from the Women's Room, and as she passed him, she prodded him with one sharp elbow and twisted the corner of her heel into his little toe. He thrust his head out with his fiercest, "How dare you!" But Mrs. Whitcomb was fresh from a prolonged encounter with Mrs. Wellington, and she flung back a venomous glare that sent the Englishman to cover.

The porter revealed in his victory till he had to dash out to the vestibule to give vent to hilarious rales of

laughter. When he had regained composure, he came back to Marjorie, and bent over him to say:

"Yo' berth is empty, sah. Shall I make it up?"

Marjorie nodded, and turned to Marjorie, with a sad, "Good night, darling."

The porter rolled his eyes again, and turned away, only to be recalled by Marjorie's voice: "Porter, take this old handbag out of here."

The porter thought of the vanquished Lathrop, exiled to the smoking room, and he answered: "That belongs to the gentleman what owns this berth."

"Put it in number one," Marjorie commanded, with a quickly gesture.

The porter obeyed meekly, and wondering what would happen next. He had no sooner deposited Lathrop's valise among the incongruous white ribbons, than Marjorie recalled him to say:

"And, porter, you may bring me my own baggage."

"Yo' what, missus?"

"Our handbags, idiot," Marjorie explained, peevishly.

"I ain't seen no handbags of yours, the porter protested. 'You-all didn't have no handbags when you got on this cab.'"

Marjorie jumped as if he had been stung by his ears. "I remember! We left 'em in the taxicab!"

The porter cast his hands up, and walked away from the tragedy. Marjorie stared at Marjorie in horror.

"We had so little time to catch the train," Marjorie stammered. Marjorie leaped to her feet: "I'm going up in the baggage car."

"For the dog?"

"For my trunk."

And now Marjorie annihilated her completely, for he gasped: "Our trunks are on the train ahead!"

Marjorie fell back for one moment, then bounded to her feet with shrill cries: "Porter! Porter! I want you to stop this train this minute!"

The porter called back from the depths of a berth: "This train don't stop till tomorrow noon."

Marjorie had strength enough for only one vain protest: "Do you mean to say that I'm stuck in this train?"

The best consolation Marjorie could offer was companionship in misery. He pushed forward one not too immaculate cuff. "Well, this is the only line I have."

"Don't speak to me," snapped Marjorie, beating her heels against the floor.

"But, my darlings!"

"Go away and leave me. I hate you!"

Marjorie rose up, and stumbling down the aisle, plucked into berth number three, an allegory of despair.

About this time, Little Jimmie Wellington, having completed more or less chaotic preparations for sleep, found that he had put on his pyjamas hind-side before, and after vain efforts to whirl round quickly and get at his own back, he put out a frowny head, and called for help.

"Say, Porter, Porter!"

"I'm still on the train," answered the porter, coming into view.

"How dare you to look me up?"

The porter rendered what aid and correction he could in Wellington's hypochondriacal toilet. Wellington was just wide enough awake to discern the undisturbed bridal-chamber. He whined:

"Say, porter, that rice-trap. Aren't they going to flop the rice-trap?"

The porter shook his head sadly. "Don't look like that flopper's agoin' to flip. That dog-on bridal couple is done divorced already!"

CHAPTER XVI.

Good Night, All!

The car was settling gradually into peace. But there was still some murmur and drowsy energy. Shoes continued to drop, heads to bump against the berths, the bell to ring now and then, and ring again and again.

The porter paid little heed to it; he was busy making up number five (Ira Lathrop's berth) for Marjorie, who was making what preparations she could for her trousseauless husband, and closed his eyes. "It's convinced that you is in the wrong berth!"

"Impossible! I won't believe you!" the Englishman raged, getting to his feet in a fury.

"Perhaps you'll believe Mista Ticket," the porter chorused. "He said numba ten, and that's ten across the way and down the road a piece."

"This is outrageous! I decline to move."

"You may decline, but you move just the same," said the porter, waving his hand at the ticket.

"Here's wait—how dare you! And that berth is made up. I don't want to go to bed now!"

"Mista Ticket says, 'Go to bed!'"

"Of all the disgusting countries! Heah, don't put that thah—heah."

The porter flung his load anywhere, and absolved himself with a curt, "I's got otha passengers to wait on now."

"I shall certainly report you to the company," the Englishman fumed. "Yassah, I p'mise so."

"Have I got to go to bed now? Really, I—," but the porter was gone, and the irate foreigner crawled under his curtains, muttering, "I shall write a letter to the London Times about this."

To add to his misery, Mrs. Whitcomb came from the Women's Room, and as she passed him, she prodded him with one sharp elbow and twisted the corner of her heel into his little toe. He thrust his head out with his fiercest, "How dare you!" But Mrs. Whitcomb was fresh from a prolonged encounter with Mrs. Wellington, and she flung back a venomous glare that sent the Englishman to cover.

The porter revealed in his victory till he had to dash out to the vestibule to give vent to hilarious rales of

laughter. When he had regained composure, he came back to Marjorie, and bent over him to say:

"Yo' berth is empty, sah. Shall I make it up?"

Marjorie nodded, and turned to Marjorie, with a sad, "Good night, darling."

The porter rolled his eyes again, and turned away, only to be recalled by Marjorie's voice: "Porter, take this old handbag out of here."

The porter thought of the vanquished Lathrop, exiled to the smoking room, and he answered: "That belongs to the gentleman what owns this berth."

"Put it in number one," Marjorie commanded, with a quickly gesture.

The porter obeyed meekly, and wondering what would happen next. He had no sooner deposited Lathrop's valise among the incongruous white ribbons, than Marjorie recalled him to say:

"And, porter, you may bring me my own baggage."

"Yo' what, missus?"

"Our handbags, idiot," Marjorie explained, peevishly.

"I ain't seen no handbags of yours, the porter protested. 'You-all didn't have no handbags when you got on this cab.'"

Marjorie jumped as if he had been stung by his ears. "I remember! We left 'em in the taxicab!"

The porter cast his hands up, and walked away from the tragedy. Marjorie stared at Marjorie in horror.

"We had so little time to catch the train," Marjorie stammered. Marjorie leaped to her feet: "I'm going up in the baggage car."

"For the dog?"

"For my trunk."

And now Marjorie annihilated her completely, for he gasped: "Our trunks are on the train ahead!"

Marjorie fell back for one moment, then bounded to her feet with shrill cries: "Porter! Porter! I want you to stop this train this minute!"

The porter called back from the depths of a berth: "This train don't stop till tomorrow noon."

Marjorie had strength enough for only one vain protest: "Do you mean to say that I'm stuck in this train?"

The best consolation Marjorie could offer was companionship in misery. He pushed forward one not too immaculate cuff. "Well, this is the only line I have."

"Don't speak to me," snapped Marjorie, beating her heels against the floor.

"But, my darlings!"

"Go away and leave