See Moving Pictures of This Story
In Weekly Installments at

TONAWAMA
THEATRE
Every Wednesday Evening

THE TREY O' HEARTS

CHAPTER XXXII.

Light Engine.

Toward the close of that summer's day it was the whim of that arch-manager of theatricals whom men call Fate to stage an anticlimax in the midst of a vast and hilly expanse of desolate middle western country—a rude and rugged disk of earth which boasted no human tenancy within a circle of its far-flung horizon and was bisected, not neatly, rather irregularly, by the flowing double line of steel ribbons which marked the railroad's right of way over the old Santa Fe trail.

So much for the stage: the light effects were provided exclusively by the crimson and purple and gold of a portentous sunset; the properties employed were simply a special train and what is known as a light engine (meaning a locomotive unhandicapped by cars); audience there was none, if one except the actors—who were one and all far too deeply preoccupied with the interpretation of their several roles to be aware of the show.

They were not many in number: perhaps half a dozen aboard the special train—which was making away as fast as it could run toward the glory of the sunset; as many more aboard the light engine.

It was the engineer who started the trouble. After bringing his monster to a full pause, he turned upon his passengers and—not without plausible excuse—violently indicted Mr. Alan Law for abuse of his and his fireman's trustfulness. This the said fireman (climbing forward over the tender) vigorously applauded.

They had been engaged, both gentlemen asserted vigorously, for nothing more dangerous than a quick run across the prairies, in furtherance of the unspecified plans of Mr. Alan Law, and his companion, Miss Judith Trine. After starting out, they had wickedly and maliciously been bribed by the said Law to put on speed and catch up with the special, in order that he might rescue from the latter a young woman, his bride-to-be and the sister of Miss Trine.

But—and here was the grievance—they hadn't bargained to be shot at with pistols. And precisely that outrage had been put upon them during and subsequent to the moment of rescue.

It was unhappy Mr. Barcus who precipitated the affair. This gentleman was suffering from a severe sprain to his sense of decent pride. In the service of Miss Rose Trine and her betrothed, Mr. Law, Barcus had blackened his face and hands to the hue of ebony and had garmented himself in the garb of a Pullman porter, surrendering himself to humiliating service to those aboard the special, suffering their insolence and scorn without a murmur, but with the tides of wrath mounting ever higher in his bosom.

And now, when at length he had won his freedom from that ignominious servitude, it was only to be sworn at and vilified, as a common nigger, by railroad hands!

It was the fireman (to be just) who brought the row to a focus by a slighting reference to that "shiftless and misbegotten dinge."

He repented quite promptly. Mr. Barcus jumped for his throat with a

One of His Arms Was Around Her Shoulder.

bellow of rage. The brakeman leaped for his shovel and brandished it threateningly. Mr. Barcus made nothing of that: he closed in without hesitation and got the fireman by the throat, proceeding to shake the breath out of his body with the greatest good will and dispatch. In the course of this entertainment the fireman slipped on the cab platform, trod on nothing, and went over backwards, taking Mr. Barcus with him to the ballast.

At almost the same moment Mr. Law, attempting to restrain the engineer from going to the assistance of his fellow-worker, ducked in under a vicious swing for his chin, grappled with his foe, tripped him up—and went with his to the ground on the opposite side of the locomotive from that occupied by Mr. Barcus and the fireman.

For the next several seconds he was very busy indeed keeping his face out of the ballast. The engineer was a heavy man, but active and infuriated. He fought like a demon unchained. It was all very exciting. Mr. Law was even beginning to enjoy it when he heard a woman shriek. At the same instant revolvers began to pop.

Mr. Law released his foe almost as quickly as he was released. Both rose as one man, to find Judith Trine beside them, a little smile of excitement playing round her lips as she looked up the track and watched the special slow down to a stop—several persons on the back platform plying busy trigger-fingers all the while.

As these last threw open the platform gates and dropped to the ballast, still perforating the air with many bullets, Mr. Law, Miss Judith Trine, and that late belligerent, the engineer, turned simultaneously and sought the rear of the tender.

On the opposite side they found Rose Trine and Mr. Barcus standing uncertainly above the body of the fireman, who, it appeared, had stunned himself in falling and remained insensible.

The appearance of Law and Judith from behind the tender, closely pursued by the engineer, who was in turn closely pursued by gentlemen with revolvers, stirred Barcus and Rose to action. Alan passed him at a round pace, pausing only long enough to seize Rose and drag her with him toward the special. Judith flung him a phrase of well-meant advice in passing:

"Come along, you simpleton—unless you want to be shot down where you stand!"

Mr. Barcus acted on that advice, as immediately as resentfully. Judith Trine was little before him at the steps of the Pullman. Mr. Law had already assisted Rose aboard. Mr. Barcus ungraciously gave place to the lady: his ingrained chivalry sorely strained by bullets that kicked among the ballast round his feet.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Pullman.

"Come inside," Law suggested, "and introduce me to the brakeman. I presume I've got to fix things up with him—"

"If there's really any doubt in your mind as to that," Barcus said, rising, "I don't mind telling you you're right."

He paused as Alan entered the car before him and was greeted by a storm of vituperation that fairly blistered the panels of the Pullman. Mr. Seneca Trine, helpless in his invalid chair, thus celebrated his introduction to the young man whom he had never before seen whose life he had schemed to take these many years. His heavy voice boomed and echoed through the car like the sounding of a tocsin.

Alan made no effort to respond, but listened with his head critically to one side and an exasperating expression of deep interest informing his countenance until Mr. Trine was out of breath and vitriol; when the younger man bowed with the slightest shade of mockery in his manner and waved a tolerant hand to Barcus.

"He has, no doubt," Alan inquired, "his own private cell aboard this car?"

"Yas, suh!" Barcus agreed, aping well the manner of his apparent caste and color. "Ain't dat de troof?"

"Take him away, then," Alan requested wearily—"if you please."

"Yas, suh!" Barcus replied, with nimble alacrity seizing the back of the wheeled chair and swinging it round for a spin up the length of the car.

Before Trine had recovered enough to curse him properly, the door to his drawing room was closed and Barcus was ambling back down the aisle.

His grin of relish at this turning of the tables on the monomaniac proved, however, short-lived. It erased itself in a twinkling when Judith shouldered roughly past him, wearing a sullen and forbidding countenance, and flung herself into the drawing room with her father.

The cause of her temper was not far to seek: at the far end of the car Alan was bending solicitously over the chair in which Rose was resting. One of his arms was around her shoulder. Her face was lifted confidently to his.

Barcus mused morosely on his apprehension of trouble a-brew, simmering over the waxing fire of that strange woman's jealousy. He didn't like the prospect at all. If only Alan and Rose hadn't been so desperately in love that they couldn't keep away from one another! If only Alan had been sensible enough to outwit the woman and leave her behind when he started in pursuit of the special! If only there had not been that light engine in pursuit—as Barcus firmly believed it must be—loaded to the guards with Trine's unscrupulous hirelings!

No telling when they might catch up!

The fear of this last catastrophe worked together with his fears of Judith to render that night a sleepless one for Barcus. He spent it in a chair whence he could watch both the door to the compartment Judith had chosen for her own (formerly Marrophat's quarters) and the endless ribbons of steel that swept beneath the tracks.

But nothing happened. He napped uneasily from time to time, waking with a start of fright, but always to find nothing amiss. Ever Judith stopped behind that closed door, and ever the track behind was innocent of the glare of a pursuing headlight.

Nor did anything untoward mark the progress of the morning—unless, indeed, Judith's protracted sessions with her father behind the closed door of the drawing room were to be counted ominous.

Ever since lunch-time the girl had been closeted with her father; Barcus had been getting some well-earned and sorely-needed rest in his quarters; Alan standing his watch on the observation platform, in company with Rose; and the train booming along through an uncouth wilderness of grim mountains, barren mesas, and sun-smitten flats given over to the desolate genius of sagebrush.

Whatever had been the tenor of the communication between father and daughter, Judith eventually emerged from the drawing room in an ominous temper. Barcus, coming drowsily away from his compartment at the same time, was jarred wide awake by sight of the foreboding countenance she wore; and after a moment of doubt followed her back to the lounge at the rear of the car.

He got there in time to see her at rigid standstill, staring steadfastly at the two figures so close together on the observation platform. But on his appearance Judith shook herself together, snatched up a magazine, and plunged wrathfully into an easy chair, burying her nose between the pages of the publication with every indication of deep interest in its text.

Mr. Barcus, however, had learned the lesson of bitter experience to the effect that the outward bearing of Miss Judith Trine was no sure index to her inward humor—unless, that is, it might be taken to indicate the direct contrary of its semblance; though even this was no reliable rule. Reminding himself of this, he therefore invented a morbid interest in another magazine—round the edge of which he kept a wary eye upon the young woman.

For all her exasperation, Judith contained herself longer than might have been expected. Her continued show of placidity, indeed, lulled Barcus into a dangerous feeling of security. Persuaded that she meant to behave, he gradually ceased to watch her as narrowly as at first, and lost himself in a morose reverie whose subject was the seemingly permanent mourning into which he had plunged his face and

Struck the Caboose With a Crash Like the Explosion of a Cannon.

hands for the purposes of his masquerade—staining them a shade of ebony upon which soap and water and scrubbing had no effect whatever. And he had invented a most excruciating method of revenging himself upon the druggist who had taken advantage of his confidence and sold him the ineradicable dye—when he was roused by the sudden flight of a magazine across the car, missing his head by a bare two inches, and the bang of a chair overturned by Judith as she jumped up and flung herself furiously toward the door.

Just what had happened on the observation platform Barcus didn't know, but he could readily believe that the lovers had just indulged in some especially provoking and long-drawn-out caress.

He overhauled Judith none too soon. In another moment she would have had her sister by the throat—if her purpose had not been to throw Rose bodily overboard, as Barcus suspected. Happily, he was as quick on his feet as Judith on hers; and almost before he had grasped the situation, he had grasped her—had seized her arms and drawn them forcibly behind her back, at the same time swinging her round and endeavoring to propel her back through the doorway.

It was a man-size job. For the ensuing five minutes he had his hands full of violently resentful and superbly able-bodied young woman. Only with the greatest difficulty did he succeed in wrestling her up the aisle and to the door of her compartment, where an even more furious resistance for some additional minutes prefaced the ultimate closing of the door upon the maddened Judith. Even then he might not draw a free breath: there was no way of locking that door from the outside; and he dared not leave go the handle, lest the girl again fly out and renew the battle.

Having aside Alan's proffer of assistance, he acidly advised that gentleman to return to his post of duty and not let his infatuation blind him to what might at any moment loom on the track behind them. Barcus stoutly held the door against the girl's attempt to pull it open and through another period when she occupied herself with kicking its panels as if hopeful of breaking a way out. A long pause followed. He heard no sounds from within. And wearying, he wondered what the devil she was up to. Then her voice penetrated the barrier, the accents calm and not unamiable:

"Mr. Barcus!"

"Hello!" he replied, startled. "What is it, Miss Judith?"

"Please let me out."

"Not much."

"Oh—please!"

Struck by the fact that she hadn't lost her temper on hearing his refusal, he hesitated. It was very true that he couldn't stay there forever, holding on to that knob.

"Will you be good if I let you out?"

"Perfectly."

"No more shenanigan?"

"I promise."

"Word of honor?"

"If my word of honor means anything to you—you have it."

"Well . . .!" he said dubiously.

In the same humor he turned and released the knob; promptly Judith opened it wide and swept out into the corridor, her mood now one of really fetching mockery.

"Thank you so much!" she laughed into his face of discomfiture; and dropping him an ironic curtsy, she turned forward and swung into the drawing room occupied by Trine.

"Wonder what she put that on for?" he speculated, with reference to the ankle-long Pullman wrapper which Judith had seen fit to don during her period of captivity. "Heaven knows it's hot enough without wearing more clothing than decency demands . . . But you never can tell about a woman . . . I bet a dollar I've made a blithering ass of myself—letting her loose at all!"

He took his doubts aft, communicating them to Alan and Rose.

And his long conference with Alan and Rose on the observation platform afforded Judith ample opportunity in which undetected to suborn the train crew to treachery.

Whether she did or not, this is what happened in the course of the next hour: the special was forced to take a siding to make way for the California limited, east-bound; and when this had passed, the engine of the special coughed apologetically and pulled swiftly out, leaving the Pullman stalled on the siding.

From the rear of the tender the brakeman and fireman waved affecting farewells to the indignant faces of Alan and Barcus when they showed in the front doorway.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Hand Car.

"Well!" Mr. Barcus broke a silence whose eloquence may not be translated in print—"can you beat it?"

"Not with this outfit," Alan admitted gloomily.

"But—damn it!—we've got to."

"Profanity—even yours, my friend—won't make this Pullman move without an engine."

"All the same, we can't stop here like bumps on a log, waiting for that gang of thugs to sail up in the light engine and cut our blessed throats."

Mr. Law answered this unanswerable contention only with a shrug. Then, stepping out on the forward platform of the Pullman, he cast a hopeless eye over the landscape.

Raw, rugged hills hemmed in the right of way, hills whose vast flanks were covered with dense thickets of mesquite, chapparal, sagebrush and cacti, the haunt of owls and rattlesnakes and—solitude. No way of escape from that pocket in the hills other than by the railroad itself.

He lowered his gaze to the tracks and siding—and started sharply.

"Eh—what now?" Barcus inquired with interest.

"Some thoughtful body has left an old hand car over there in the ditch," Alan replied. "Maybe it isn't beyond service—"

"With me supplying the horsepower, I suppose!"

"Horse isn't the word," Alan corrected meticulously; and escaped the other's wrath by dropping down to the ballast and trotting over to the ditch, where the hand car lay.

"Looks as if it might work," he announced. "Come along and lend me a hand."

"Half a minute," Barcus answered, dodging suddenly back into the car.

When he reappeared, after some five minutes, Rose accompanied him, and Barcus was smiling as brilliantly as though nothing whatever was wrong with his world.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, old top," he explained; "but I was smitten with an inspiration. There didn't seem to be any sense in letting the amiable Judith loose upon this fair land, so I found a coil of wire in the porter's closet and wired the handle of the drawing room door fast to the bars across the aisle. It'll take her some time to get out, now, without assistance."

Ten minutes more had passed before the two grimy and perspiring gentlemen succeeded in placing the hand car upon the tracks.

"It's a swell little hand car," Barcus observed grimly: "no wonder they threw it away."

"What's the difference how it looks, as long as it will go?"

"But will it?" Barcus doubted.

Somewhere far back along the line a locomotive hooted mournfully.

"It's got to!" Alan replied, helping Rose aboard. "If we can only get out of sight before they get here—"

"Don't worry," Barcus advised: "that's a freight whistle."

"Maybe you can distinguish the whistle of a freight from that of a passenger train—I don't say you can't; but I'll take no chances on your judgment being good. Hop aboard here if you're coming with us!"

Slowly the hand car stirred on its grease-hungry and complaining axles; slowly it gathered momentum and surged noisily up the track as Alan and Barcus, on opposite sides of the handlebar, alternately rose and fell back; slowly it mounted the slight grade to the bend in the track, rounded it, lost sight of the stalled Pullman on the siding and began to move more swiftly on a moderate down grade.

Behind it the thunder of an approaching train grew momentarily in volume, lending color to the theory of Mr. Barcus that what they had heard had been the whistle of a freighter rather than of the light engine. But just as Alan was about to advocate leaving the tracks and taking the hand car with them, to clear the way for the train, its rumble began to diminish, grew less and beautifully less, and was stilled.

"What do you make of that?" Alan panted across the racking bar.

"The obvious," Barcus returned. "The freight has taken the siding to wait for some other through train to pass. We'll have to look sharp and be ready to jump."

The grade became a trace more steep; the car moved with less reluctance.

"Let go," Alan advised: "it'll coast down the balance of this incline—and we'd better save our strength."

But they had barely regained their breath and mopped the streaming sweat away from their eyes when a second whistle, of a different tone, startled both back to their task.

Catching the eye of Barcus Alan nodded despairingly.

"Afraid it's all up with us now," he groaned; "that sounded precisely like the whistle of the light engine."

"Sure it did!" Barcus agreed. "It wouldn't be us if we had any better luck. The saints be praised for this grade!"

For all its age and decrepitude the hand car made a very fair pace at the urge of the two who rose and sagged again without respite on either side the handlebar; and the grade was happily long, turning and twisting like a snake through the hills.

A little grace was granted them, moreover, through the circumstance (as they afterward discovered) that the light engine had stopped at the siding long enough to couple up Trine's Pullman—thus automatically ceasing to be a light engine, and becoming a special.

It was fully a quarter of an hour before the growing rumble of the latter warned the trio on the hand car, just as it gained the end of the grade and addressed itself to a level though tortuous stretch of track.

And at this point discovery of the switch of a spur line that shot off southward into the hills furnished Alan with his independent inspiration.

Stopping the hand car after it had jolted over the frogs, he jumped down, set the switch to shunt the pursuit off to the spur, and leaped back upon the car.

Hardly had they succeeded in working the hand car up round the shoulder of the next bend when the special took the switch without pause and the roar of its progress, shut off by an intervening mountain, was suddenly stilled to a murmur.

But even so, there was neither rest for the weary nor much excuse for self-congratulation; the rumble of the special was not altogether lost to hearing when the thunder of the freight replaced and drowned it out.

Of a sudden, releasing the handlebar, Alan stood up and signed to Barcus to imitate his example.

"Eh—what now?" this last panted, when he had obeyed.

"Jump off—leave the hand car where it is—they'll have to stop to clear it off the track."

"And then?"

"I'll buy a lift from them if it takes my last dollar in the world," Alan promised. "It's our only hope. We can't keep up this heartbreaking business forever—and it can't be long before Trine and Marrophat discover their mistake!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

Caboose.

For once, in a way, it fell out precisely as Mr. Law had planned and prayed.

Constrained to pull up in order to remove the obstruction from the track, the train crew of the freight choked down its collective wrath on being presented with a sum of money. In the hopes of further largesse it lent its common ear to Alan's well-worn tale, which had so frequently proved useful in similar emergencies, of an eloping couple pursued by an unreasoningly vindictive parent; and had its hopes rewarded by the price Alan bargained to pay in exchange for exclusive use of the caboose as far as the next town.

So that it was not more than ten minutes before Rose was settled to rest in such comfort as the caboose afforded, while Alan and Barcus sat within its doorway and smoked.

Neither he nor any other aboard the freight suspected for an instant that, in the box car next forward of the caboose, a woman in man's clothing lay perdue, now and again chuckling impishly to herself in anticipation of the time and the event she was biding with such patience as she could muster.

The whistle of a locomotive overtaking the freight sounded the signal for her to take action on her cherished plan.

Rising, she glanced out of the open door. A curve in the track below the freight, laboring up a steep grade, enabled her to catch a glimpse of a headlight, followed by a string of lighted windows, indicating a single car: the special, beyond a doubt.

Without hesitation, since the train was not running at speed, she dropped out to the ballast, wheeled smartly about, caught the handbar at the end of the box car as it passed and swung herself up between it and the caboose.

A trifle later the freight gained the summit of the grade and began to run more smoothly.

Climbing to the top of the box car she peered keenly through the gloaming, which was not yet so dense that she might not discern two heads protruding from the window of the special's engine, one on either side.

Judith Uncoupling the Caboose.

At a venture, she snatched off her coat and waved it wildly in the air.

An arm answered the signal from one window of the pursuing locomotive.

Marrophat, of course!

She turned and peered ahead. The freight was approaching a trestle that spanned a wide and shallow gully.

So much the better!

Dropping down again between the cars, she set herself to solve the problem of uncoupling the caboose.

In this she was successful just as the last car rolled out on the trestle . . .

Its own impetus carried the caboose to the middle of the trestle before it stopped.

As this happened, Alan and Barcus, already warned of an emergency by the slowing down of the car, and for some time alive to the fact that the special was again in pursuit, leaped out upon the ties and helped Rose to alight.

Already the last of the freight was whisking off the trestle, its crew thus far unconscious of their loss.

And behind them the special was plunging forward at unabated speed.

There was no time to execute their plan of the first desperate instant—to run along the ties to safety on the solid earth: the distance was too great; they could not possibly make it.

With common impulse the two men glanced down to the bottom of the gully, then looked at each other with eyes informed by common inspiration.

Barcus announced in a breath: "Thirty feet—not more."

Alan replied: "Can you hold the weight of the two of us for half a minute?"

Barcus shrugged: "I can try. We might as well—even if I can't."

While speaking, he was lowering himself between the ties.

"All right," he announced briefly.

With a word to Rose, Alan slipped down beside Barcus, shifted his hold to the body of the latter, and climbed down over him until he was supported solely by the grasp of his two hands on Barcus' ankles.

Instantly Rose followed him, slipping like a snake down over the two men till she in turn hung by her grasp on Alan's ankles, then released her hold and dropped the balance of the distance to the ground, a scant ten feet, landing without injury.

A thought later Alan dropped lightly to her side, staggered a trifle, recovered and dragged her out of the way.

Barcus fell with a heavy thump and went upon his back, but demonstrated his lack of injury by immediately picking himself up and joining the others in a mad scramble for safety.

Overhead the special engine, hurtling onward like some titanic bolt, struck the caboose with a crash like the explosion of a cannon. It collapsed upon itself like a thing of pasteboard.

That it had been constructed of more solid stuff was abundantly proved by the shower of timbers, splinters and broken iron that rained about the heads of the fugitives.

For all that, the gods smiled upon them for their courage: they escaped without a scratch.

(To be continued)

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ISOLATED TRACT. PUBLIC LAND SALE.

UNITED STATES LAND OFFICE, Burns, Oregon, February 26, 1915.

Notice is hereby given that, as directed by the Commissioner of the General Land Office, under provision of Act of Congress approved June 27, 1906 (34 Stats., 517), pursuant to the application of Corey E. Smyth, Serial No. 07513 we will offer at public sale, to the highest bidder, but at not less than $2.00 per acre, at 10 o'clock A. M., on the 14th day of April, 1915, at this office, the following tract of land:

W½SW¼, SE¼SW¼, Sec. 24; NE¼NW¼, Sec. 25, T. 20 S., R. 34 E., W. M.

This tract is ordered into the market on a showing that the greater portion thereof is mountainous or too rough for cultivation.

The sale will not be kept open, but will be declared closed when those present at the hour named have ceased bidding. The person making the highest bid will be required to immediately pay to the receiver the amount thereof.

Any persons claiming adversely the above described land are advised to file their claims, or objections, on or before the time designated for sale.

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UNITED STATES LAND OFFICE, Burns, Oregon, February 9th, 1915.

Notice is hereby given that the Northern Pacific Railway Company, whose post office address is St. Paul, Minnesota, has this 7th day of December 1914 filed in this office its application to select under the provisions of the act of Congress, approved July 1, 1898 (30 Stat. 597, 620) as extended by the act of Congress approved May 17, 1906, the

SW¼SE¼ Sec. 20, Twp 36 S., R. 29 east, W. M. Serial No. 07837

Any and all persons claiming adversely the lands described, or desiring to object because of the mineral character of the land, or any other reason to the disposal to applicant, should file their affidavits of protest in this office, on or before the 5th day of April, 1915.

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IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR HARNEY COUNTY.

In the matter of the Estate of F. Crews Croxton, Dec'd. } CITATION

To W. T. Croxton, Mary L. Croxton, Robert Croxton and Natalie Croxton, GREETING:

IN THE NAME OF THE STATE OF OREGON, you are hereby cited and required to appear in the County Court of the State of Oregon, for Harney County, at the Court Room there of at Burns, in the County of Harney on Monday, the 15th day of March, 1915, at 10 o'clock in the forenoon of that day, then and there to show cause, if any exist, why the Real property, to-wit: E½ NW¼ and Lots 1 and 2 of Sec. 18, Twp. 25, S., R. 34 E. W. M., belonging to said estate should not be sold.

WITNESS: The Hon. H. C. Levens, Judge of the County Court of the State of Oregon, for the County of Harney with the Seal of said Court affixed this 13th day of Feb., A. D. 1915.

ATTEST: R. T. Hughet, Clerk.
By Walter T. Struck, Deputy Clerk
(Seal)