

The Yackin Ripple

VOL. XXVII.

YADKINVILLE, YADKIN CO., N. C., THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 1921

No. 9

TAXI

An Adventure Romance

By George Agnew Chamberlain

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SYNOPSIS.

PART I.—Robert Hervey Randolph, young New York man-about-town, leaves the home of his sweetheart, Madge Van Teller, chagrined because of her refusal of his proposal of marriage. His income, \$10,000 a year, which he must surrender if a certain Miss Imogen Pamela Thornton (whom he has seen only as a small girl ten years before) is found, is not considered by the girl of his heart adequate to modern needs. In a "don't care" mood Randolph enters a taxi, used by the driver, and is driven to the stage door of a theater. A man he knows, Duke Beamer, induces a girl to enter the cab. Beamer, attempting to follow, is pushed back by Randolph and the cab moves on. His new acquaintance tells Randolph she is a chorus girl, and has lost her position. She is in distress, even hungry, and he takes her to his apartment. There, after lunch, a chance remark convinces him the girl is the missing Pamela Thornton. He does not tell her of her good fortune, but secures her promise to stay in the flat until the morning, and leaves her. In a whimsical mood, also realizing that the girl's reappearance has left him practically penniless, he hires the taxi driver to let him take his job, and leaving word with the legal representative of the Thornton estate where he can find Pamela, takes up his new duties under the name of "Slim Hervey." He loves the girl, but his pride forbids him approaching her under their changed conditions.

PART II.—One evening he is engaged by Becker Tremont, notorious profligate, to drive him and Madge Van Teller to a party known as "Greenwood." Aware of the nature of the place, Randolph, being a pair to Greenwood cemetery, leaves her. Beamer gets out of the taxi. Randolph leaves him there, taking the girl (who has awakened to a realization of her folly) to her home. Madge recognizes him.

"Can't I drop you wherever you're going?" asked the very human mind of the leading legal authority on corporation hedge-rows and byways.

"Oh, no," said Pamela, translucent as love itself, "I shall go in taxis."

How many vulgar vehicles for hire were blessed by the transient presence of Miss Thornton during the next seven hours is a matter of gross mathematics and consequently beneath the ken of an intelligence that can chat along about nice things like Pamela and Robert Randolph for pure pleasure, and subsequently sell the remarks for cold cash. Five minutes to spot a lively cab, five minutes to ticket the driver and pile him on the discard, two more to find her purse, three more to look innocent; then start all over again. Divide seven times sixty minutes by all that, and you've got her number.

Let us leave the statistical fiasco and pass on to seven o'clock of the near-Christmas evening when Miss Thornton was momentarily out of a cab and strolling down the slope of the hump in West Fifty-seventh street. A mushy snow-fall had just begun to fall, giving anyone with the price a splendid excuse for taking a cab anywhere for anywhere. Before the portal of the Great Northern Lights squatted four taxis in a line. In the driver's seat of the rear-most of these, and consequently the last on the rank, a lank human being was buried in an enormous turned-up collar roofed by a chauffeur's cap set at an angle of slumber.

Pamela, the very moment her eyes fell on the recumbent figure, felt that short quick leap of the blood in her veins which is ordinarily termed a "hunch." She longed to step forward and raise the veiling headgear, but she dared not, for not only was the hotel-starter on the job but also the wind-whisper of the Poppy club next door were still elevated by special request, owing to the slippery state of the sidewalk in conjunction with the homeward-bound stream of dress-models.

As a consequence, she was necessarily content with opening the car door for herself and stepping in. The starter politely begged her to pass to the taxi at the head of the rank and just as politely she informed him that her feet were wet enough as it was. In the meantime, even her light weight on the running-board had startled the driver into wakefulness and, without going through any motions, he had heard the unforgettable tones of her voice.

The starter shrugged his shoulders, barked out an address in Fifty-ninth street and kindly offered to "turn her over 'or alm." The driver laid trembling hands on the wheel and cautiously drew himself up to a sitting position without disturbing the shielding angle of his cap. Far from his troubled mind were thoughts of snow, the slush and skidding. He threw in his clutch, started her with a jerk, rounded the cab in front successfully, skidded mightily thereafter, straightened her out, skidded again, and crashed, with a great splintering of spokes,



She Longed to Step Forward and Raise the Veiling Headgear.

broadside front on the curb directly before the delighted windows of the Poppy club.

Nothing would have happened to Miss Thornton had she been sitting back in a ladylike manner, but at the moment of the cab's collision with the imperturbable curb, she was otherwise occupied; in short, the glass before a bit frosted, she was standing up and trying to peek through the speaking-slot. As a consequence, when the door flew open with the shock, she also flew and volitioned to a landing on hands and knees in the very middle of the very wide sidewalk.

With a cry of "Oh, miss!" the driver sprang toward her, but when, still on hands and knees, she looked up and gasped, "Oh, Randy—Mr. Randolph!" he turned and fled down the hill.

"Hi! You Slim Hervey!" yelled the starter. "Come back here an' sign up for the junk!"

In the meantime, which wasn't much more than the twinkling of an eye, three perennial near-youths dashed down the steps of the Poppy club to the assistance of the loveliest trouble that had ever sent out an S. O. S. signal in the face of ready help to the falling. Individually and collectively, they raised the curly-haired vision to its feet.

"It was Mr. Randolph," gasped the maiden, in evident distress, "and I've been looking for him for weeks."

"Not Bobby!" exclaimed Mr. Nearton.

"Not Herv!" ejaculated Mr. Verries.

"Not Randy!" interjected Mr. Berry. Pamela nodded three times, but her eyes failed to show wonder. Nowadays everybody she ran into seemed to know everybody she knew by his first name.

"Excuse me," said Mr. Nearton, intent on getting there first with a remark—any remark; "does he owe you money, too?"

The effect was electrical. Miss Thornton assumed a freezing dignity. She fixed Mr. Nearton with steady eyes.

"How much does Mr. Randolph owe you?" she asked.

"Only tw-twent-y," habbled Mr. Nearton.

"Well, here it is," said Pamela, drawing a yellowback from her chattering and thrusting it into Mr. Nearton's nervous hand. "I happen to owe Mr. Randolph a great deal more than that." Wherewith she turned and made for the corner and the nearest telephone booth.

Pamela was short of breath when she reached the telephone, but she managed to get Mr. Milyuns' residence on the wire and learned that he was detained at the office. She called up that safe den of the world—undisturbed and connected with a new and strange drawl.

"You've got the wrong number, lady. This Mr. Milyuns went home early to celebrate his silver wedding."

"Will you put me through to Mr. Borden Milyuns," asked Pamela, in a sugar-sweet voice, "or do you really want to start looking for another job?"

"How do I know you know him—Miss Hurry, did you say? The office-boy ain't here, so I can't ask him. Leave me your number, an' I'll have him call you."

"Know him?" gulped Pamela, in a rage. "Why, I've k-kissed him!"

"Kissed Mr. Milyuns?" responded the voice, taking sudden notice. "Well, dearie, why didn't you say so? I thought you was one of them high-brow dames. If it's a matter of kissin' the boss over the wire, why just you go

to it. I won't listen—oh, no!"

And a moment later, Pamela, in a streamline body:

"Oh, Mr. Milyuns, this is Pamela and I've found him! . . . Yes; Randy—Mr. Randolph. . . No; he got away! . . . Yes. He's going under the name of Slim Hervey and he was driving the Village Cab company's No. 1898, and he smashed it on the curb just in front of that horrid Poppy club, and when he saw me, he ran. . . Oh, you will get him, won't you? Please hurry. Ah! now, if you'll hang up, I have a few words to say to that my telephone girl of yours. . . Oh, no! you needn't tell her; I can feel her sagging on the wire. . . Oh, will you? Oh, thank you! It isn't as if she didn't deserve it."

PART IV.

The Ascent to Mars.

When Mr. Robert Hervey Randolph, alias Slim Hervey, chauffeur, vice Patrick O'Reilly, ex-driver of the Village Cab company's No. 1898, skidded that vehicle disastrously to the curb in front of the Poppy club, and as a result of his criminal negligence, in conjunction with Miss Imogene Pamela Thornton's reprehensible pecking occupation, hurled that young lady to the middle of the sidewalk on her hands and knees, he leaped from his seat on a spontaneous impulse to help her to her feet and administer every kind of first comfort that the occasion seemed to demand.

Two considerations, however, shot from the double-barreled blunderbuss of Ridicule and Honor, caught him on the wing, as it were, and deflected his flight from west to east with a sharp turn due south at the corner of Fifty-seventh street and Sixth avenue. In the first place, out of the corner of his eye he had seen his one-time friends, Mr. Nearton, Mr. Verries and Mr. Berry descending the shadowy club front steps in an avalanche; in the second place, he suddenly recollected that Miss Thornton was an heiress.

As a result of his present sudden and hasty flight, he had broken steps and even the lines in various places, and even in the least press resorting to the location of his feet on the sidewalk and otherwise surrounding him for a number of ten thousand dollars a year—uninsured increment.

As he crept for the too brief second down into the pleading eyes and adorably eager face of the lovable vision on her hands and knees, which it seemed unbelievable he had once held in his arms, only the oft-remembered favorite poem of this nurse:

I could not love thee, dear, so much
Loved I not never more.

kept him, from facing the avalanche of Ridicule and Honor, the eternally searching Dietrich with his normally a run for his money. As previously stated, it was not to be. Mr. Randolph turned from the waiting arms of the sweetest temptation ever reigned by man and made his swift way to the sanctum of Mr. Tourke O'Shaughnessy, foreman-manager of the Village Cab company.

"Tourke," said Mr. Randolph, "I'm through. Smashed up the two off



"Tourke," said Mr. Randolph, "I'm through."

wheels of my wagon on the curb in front of the Poppy club. Dock me thirty, please, and make out my pay check."

"Through, Slim? Whadda ya mean?" said Mr. O'Shaughnessy. "Think I'm goin' to sack you for a skid on a day like this? Pay for your fun, kid, but take another wagon."

Robert Randolph, alias Slim Hervey, shook his head.

"You don't understand," he said. "I—I've lost my nerve."

"Lost your nerve?" gasped Mr. O'Shaughnessy. "Whadda ya mean by tellin' me a lie like that? Come on, now; draw a map! Did ye kill the inside?"

"Oh, no," said Slim, "that's just it. I mean, the young lady is very much all right."

"I begin to get you," murmured Tourke. "Set on your track, eh?" A look of pity followed by one of loyalty crept into his eyes. "Look here, Slim," he continued, "I know that tryin' to talk a female is like playin' horses with a pack of dynamite, but we make us high cards to draw to, and that one of the best all the best here is for you. Then there's your own name. I want to fall out, Slim, and the first driver I ever had that could get on a cop on a highway and make him think it was a joke."

"Thanks," said Mr. Randolph, but shook his head sadly.

"Now, listen," continued Mr. O'Shaughnessy. "The point is to have the boys in here as the cops in an 'put 'em on.' In the evening, you slip out for a makin'. The Sally Palmer round the corner to see your face down to the color of your freckles, do a little let on your eyebrows, an' do a deep seat in the upper lip of yer speech, 'twa. Get her?"

Mr. Randolph's widely placed blue eyes glared in an effort to examine the proposition shrewdly from all angles, and the light of hope was just beginning to dawn across the trouble in his honest face when there came a sharp knock on the door, followed promptly by the rattle of the loose knob and the unceremonious entry of one birdlike, bald-headed, dapper corporation lawyer and two corpulent quacking pathologists in a.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed the corpulent Mr. O'Shaughnessy.

"The legal thing paid him no heed and advanced on the fast-wilting Slim Hervey with outstretched hand.

"Robert!" he cried loudly. "My dear boy, I'm glad to see you."

"I'm not," said Slim, "and I'm not going to and I'm not."

"I don't care whether they think they're goin' to pinch you or not," remarked Mr. O'Shaughnessy, fixing malignant eyes on the two heavy banking boxes of the small lawyer.

"I never did like the small one, but I don't like the big one, either. The two bulls, swayed into inopportune postures, turned, stepped out-footed to the door, and took the faint of steps in three. They cannot be blamed, for they had recognized in Mr. O'Shaughnessy the man who had once been arrested for pushing over with one hand a Ford that had crowded him.

"Now, Robert," said the legal personage, apparently quite oblivious of the desertion of his supporters, "I just want to talk with you. May I sit down?"

"Certainly, Mr. Milyuns," said Robert, apathetically.

"Excuse me," murmured Mr. O'Shaughnessy. "Did I, or didn't I get the name correct?"

"I beg your pardon, Tourke," said Robert. "Mr. Borden Milyuns; Mr. Tourke O'Shaughnessy." He pronounced it "O'Shaughnessy," to the delight of the owner's ears, long unaccustomed to the correct intonation of the exotic pronunciation.

"I did hear you," said Mr. O'Shaughnessy, "and he rose and tipped from the room. "I leave you cents to your family affairs," he added from the door, his eyes drinking a last view of the brain king he had dared to call a rinky."

During the next half-hour, Mr. Milyuns delivered himself of an assorted lot of special pleading that he could have sold on the market almost any day for fifty thousand dollars, but the sole judge and subject of his efforts still sat scowlingly putted for in the chair, his thumbs running inside the valuable streams of sudden words, and continued pulling the more cigarette after another, discharged from the out of his presence.

"It's no use, Slim," said Robert, at last. "The truth is, and you know it, that a betting between myself and Pamela—Miss Thornton, at the present time and under the exceptional conditions, could only bring about complications beyond the capability of any one of us to handle. Her husband is so absurd that I am I suggest at your inner—at your heart, even mentioning it."

Mr. Milyuns, who had his brow in the first time in many years.

"I don't mind you calling me 'Impertinent' Robert," he said meekly. "Call me anything you please. Only—and his voice rose gradually to a surprising volume—"don't forget that I promised one of the dearest, most unspiced, lovable, and wholly adorable young persons that it's ever been my privilege to assure of the impossibility that I would bring you to bar, and by the holy hallelujah, I will—I have to hold you by one ear with my teeth."

Mr. Randolph took his later departure from his mouth during this strict-

ly illegal peroration, and allowed his lips to spread into a broad smile.

"Mr. Milyuns," he said, "I always did like you; now I've got a deeper feeling. They call it love. I admit to the human end of you that the only thing that keeps me from rushing straight away to curl on the body you have so accurately described is the fact that I haven't money and she has."

"But what about the job I offered you?" interjected Mr. Milyuns.

"I was coming to that," said Mr. Randolph. "I'm not keen on charity from you any more than from Miss Thornton, but—more than that—I wouldn't bury myself in your stuffy old skyscraper at any cash price known to man. In the first place, you belong to the most unorthodox of all professions, and in the second, you make money too slowly."

"Make money too slowly?" gasped Mr. Milyuns, forgetting Bobby and Pamela and their affairs for the first time in three weeks, and remembering, for a change, and with a twinge of his hardened conscience, the size of his last retainer. "Ha!"

But Mr. Randolph allowed him no time for indulgence in vocal mirth.

"That's what I said," he continued, unmoved. "To meet Miss Thornton face to face and unsmashed, I feel that I must have a capital of at least a hundred thousand."

He sank his head in thought for a moment. When he raised it again, the widely placed blue eyes were there. So was the saddle of faint freckles across his nose; so was the guarantee of honesty across his nose, but superimposed over all was a new look of sudden resolution.

Continued on last page

"Miss Jones in the House?"

Lexington, Ky.—Because a girl was not "traged" when her mother was reported lying all theaters, including the movies, must page people when the request is made.

U. S. BUYS "BLIMP" OF ITALY

Pays \$200,000 for Roma, Largest Semi-Rigid Aircraft in the World.

Washington.—Purchase of the Italian "blimp" airship Roma, believed to be the largest semi-rigid aircraft in the world, for approximately \$200,000, was announced by the War department.

It probably would cost \$1,250,000 to duplicate the ship, the statement said. The Roma is of 1,200,000 cubic capacity, 410 feet long, 82 feet wide and 88 1/2 feet high, and equipped with six 12-cylinder engines of 400 horse power each. It had an estimated speed of 30 miles an hour and a cruising radius at full speed of 3,500 miles and a cruising speed of 3,000 miles.

Major John G. Thorhill has been ordered to Italy with an air service detachment to bring the Roma to America.

SAYS JAZZ DEAD IN LONDON

English Dancing Authority Predicts Fox Trot Will Be Standard.

London.—The "jazz" is dead in London, says P. J. S. Richardson, one of the foremost English authorities on dancing. In his opinion, the dances will be popularized this year, but the fox trot, one-step and tango, which have held international interest for two or three seasons, will be standardized.

"Previously persons taught the same dances by different teachers found themselves hopelessly at sea when they tried to dance together," he said. "Through standardization on which the majority of dancing instructors in London have now agreed, a common framework in the steps will be assured without eliminating all chance of introducing individual variations. French and American 'light gymnastics' such as canter and forms of 'jazz' are rapidly being put out."

6,171 KILL SELVES IN 1920

Self-Destruction Record of Reckless Year to Break by More Than 1,000 Cases.

New York.—Suicides in the United States during the year of 1920 numbered 6,171, including 747 children. Members of the Save-a-Life League were told here by Dr. H. M. Warren, president of the league.

This exceeded the figures of the previous year by more than 1,000 cases, he said. During the year 2,604 were killed through self-destruction. This is a large increase over the preceding year.

The increased percentage among women was ascribed to their entry in commercial and political life.

The youngest suicide in the country during the last year was five years of age, while the oldest was 103. More than 400 soldiers have taken their lives since the termination of the war, he report stated.

Superior Court Cases

Superior Court which convened here Monday is still in session. Up to date the following cases have been disposed of.

Joe Thornton, colored, manufacturing liquor, nol. pros. with leave.

Herbert Jester, assault, nol. pros. with leave.

Charlie Welch, assault, nol. pros. with leave.

Jim Brown and Walter Omar, manufacturing liquor, not guilty.

R. L. Lovelace, assault, guilty no sentence.

Arthur Burch, carrying concealed weapons, not guilty.

Glenn Brown and W. W. Pinnix, assault, Pinnix fined \$40 and cost. No sentence as to Brown.

Lee Weatherman, driving auto to intoxicated, fined \$100 and cost.

Spencer McNeil, Joe Ham and Bryant Whitaker, store breaking, each sentenced to not more than 6 years nor less than 3 years in state prison.

Ed Mason, colored, carrying concealed weapons, judgment suspended on payment of costs.

Will Myers, house breaking, 18 months on roads.

Elizabeth Chappel, Age 101 Years, Died Tuesday

Elizabeth Chappel, whose age is said to be 101 years, died at the home of her son Mr. D. E. Chappel near Center last week. She was buried at Longtown and Rev. R. B. Spivey conducted the funeral services.

DEVICE FOR CLEANING GRAIN

South Dakota Man Has Invention for Improving Grain Which is Simple in Construction.

The Scientific American in this issue has described the invention of a device for cleaning, cooling and drying grain by air blasts. The object is to produce a device by which various grades



A Vertical Longitudinal Section of the Grain Cleaning Device.

may be cleaned, cooled and dried otherwise improved. The device is simple in construction, easy to maintain and carries no mechanical parts to get out of order, or require lubricating.

FOR FIRST FRENCHMAN SLAIN

Village Schiedam Victim of War to Have Government Shaft.

Joncheray, France.—A German shell in honor of the first Frenchman killed in the war has just been held in Little village. The victim, Jean Peugeot, was a schoolmaster before the war and joined the army as a corporal. He was shot by a shell which fell 12 kilometers (about seven miles) from the German front.

After 24 hours before the German front of war. A monument to the schoolmaster erected here will soon be dedicated by the French government.

Chimes Play a Horn of Death.

Fort Wayne, Ind.—Few understood why the program was changed when Edward P. Varnelle gave a salute on the new chimes erected in the Presbyterian church tower, but a testimonial message from the bedside of a dying woman told the "Fort Wayne Herald" the reason.