

The Haunted Taxi

(Continued from page 6)
The police and told him about it. Then they took me to the mortuary and showed me his dead body—his face all white like it was tonight, and his eyes staring.

"What had happened," queried Mr. Martin.

"Done in—murdered," answered Rumble. "He was a foreigner, and some of 'em had got it in for him. They saw him in my cab and he made a bolt for it, but they got him in about a minute. Stabbed in two places, he was. . . Struth! I can never drive this cab again."

Mr. Martin stood in silence as he thought over the story. "Very strange," he muttered. "And you say others have seen him?"

Rumble told of the other three fares who had turned him away.

"But some hired you and saw nothing?"

"Yes, one or two. They must have been blind," replied Rumble.

"Not at all," corrected Mr. Martin. "If these things are seen at all they are only seen by certain people who have some kind of affinity with the subject—but there, it's most difficult to explain, most difficult."

"So I should think," agreed Rumble heartily. "But what about me and my cab. Do you want me to drive you after what you've seen?"

"Well, I confess I don't fancy it very much," answered Martin. "But I don't mind doing it, if only to give you a fare. You can drive me to Notting Hill."

"Thank you, sir," said Rumble, fervently. "And that'll be the last job I'll do tonight, or my name isn't William Rumble."

"Very good," replied Mr. Martin. "And if you're sharp you may be home in time to wish your wife a Merry Christmas. I suppose you live near here?"

"Just off the Edgware Road, sir," answered Rumble, starting up his engine.

Mr. Martin's surmise was correct, for the bells of many churches were ringing in the old, old festival as William Rumble drove his taxi into the garage at the back of his little home. He closed the door and locked it, without so much as a glance into the interior of his cab. Then he entered the house by the back door, where his wife met him and told him sharply that he was late. Rumble took the rebuke quietly, and sat down moodily by the fire.

"I wonder if he was in it?" he pondered, thinking of the taxi which he had just locked in the garage.

Presently the smell of sizzling sausages filled the house, but awakened no enthusiasm in the breast of Mr. Rumble.

"Merry Christmas," ventured his wife presently, as she put the meal on the table.

"Come to you, old girl," replied Rumble absently, taking his seat at the table, and making a brave show at eating his supper. His wife observed his eyes, which seemed to look right through her into the beyond.

"What's up?" she asked.

"It was some time before Mr. Rumble replied. Then he repeated Mr. Martin's words:

"Most difficult to explain—most difficult," he said; after which his wife interrogated him no more, but went in silence to bed.

Rumble sat until the fire died down. In its fading depths he could see a face—a faint ghost—with an Imperial beard. . .

"I wonder if he's there?" he asked himself, again and again, until the question obsessed him. Then he rose, and, opening the door very quietly, crept down the garden to the garage. With trembling hands he unlocked the door and peered in. The back of the taxi faced him, and it was some moments before he dared go round to the front.

Had anyone been at hand they would have heard a terrified exclamation, and the sound of a heavy body against the garage side, as Rumble staggered backwards from what he saw. . .

Following this, a silence; then the sound of the opening of a petrol tin. . . A little later, William Rumble might have been seen hurrying on tiptoe back to the house.

It was a neighbor who roused the alarm whilst Rumble was undressing.

"Mr. Rumble, your cab's afire!" came the voice, and Rumble hurriedly ran downstairs and down the garden to the garage, whilst his wife looked on aghast from a back window as the flames shot up, casting a warm, orange glow on the snow-covered neighborhood.

It was clear that nothing could be done, and soon everyone ceased to try.

They were all very sorry for Mr. Rumble.

It was a little more than a week later that a clerk entered the private office of the Fire Claims Department of the Fidelity Insurance Co.

"This claim, sir, by a man named Rumble—taxi burnt out in garage," he said. "Mr. Smithers thinks it needs further investigation. A taxi couldn't set itself on fire."

"Let me see the papers," said the head of the Fire Claims Department, taking several documents from the clerk and reading them carefully.

"I'm afraid I don't quite agree with Mr. Smithers," he said. "I have known of cases like this before. Please say the claim is to be passed."

"Very good, Mr. Martin," answered the clerk.

THE END

BUZZ

This is a very old game, but it is always a very great favorite. The more the players, the greater the fun. The way to play it is as follows: The players sit in a circle and begin to count in turn, but when the number 7 or any number in which the figure 7 or any multiple of 7 is reached, they say "Buzz" instead of whatever the number may be. As, for instance, suppose the players have counted up to 12, the next player will say "13," the next "14," because 14 is a multiple of 7 (twice)—the next player would then say "15," the next "16," and the next would, of course, say "Buzz" because the figure 7 occurs in the number 17. If one of the players forgets to say "Buzz" at the proper time, he is out. The game then starts over again with the remaining players, and so it continues until there is but one person remaining. If great care is taken the numbers can be counted up to 70, which, according to the rules before mentioned, would, of course, be called Buzz. The numbers would then be carried on as Buzz 1, Buzz 2, etc., up to 75, but it is very seldom that this stage is reached.

MAGIC MUSIC

One of the players is sent out of the room, and the rest then agree upon some simple task for her to perform, such as moving a chair, touching an ornament, or finding some hidden object. She is called in and some one begins to play the piano. If the performer plays very loudly, the "seeker" knows she is somewhere near the object she is in search for. When the music is soft then she knows that she is very near, and when the music ceases altogether, she knows that she has found the object she was intended to look for.

WANTED ALL HE SAW

Father—I hope you like your Christmas dinner, Willie. Did you have all you wanted?

Willie (much shocked)—"I should think not, father."

"Why?"

"Because if I'd had all I wanted I should have eaten up a Christmas pudding, a turkey, two ducks, ten sausages, eighteen apples, two pounds of nuts, five years, sixteen oranges, three boxes of dates, two bottles of prunes, and a dozen bottles of lemonade!"

HUNT THE RING

For this game a long piece of string is required. On this a ring is threaded, and the ends of the string are knotted together. The players then take the string in their hands and form a circle, while one of the company who is called the hunter, stands in the centre. They must be passed rapidly round and round, and the players must try to prevent the hunter finding out who holds the string in his hands and form a circle, he takes his place in the circle, while the person who held the ring becomes the "hunter."

WHAT A DRUGGIST OUGHT TO KNOW

1—How little chocolate may be used in frosting chocolate before the customer complains?

2—What is a good book for a boy eleven years of age?

3—What is the first class postage rate on a two and one-half ounce letter?

4—What effect has the safety razor had upon the drug trade?

5—What cold cream is best to use before the application of what rouge?

6—What is a good 15-cent cigar?

7—How many years will a box of \$2 a pound chocolate remain "fresh"?

The cattle plague in Palestine and Transjordan has caused a quarantine and owing to the prohibition against cattle slaughter, prices of most food-stuffs are mounting.

Valentino's Double



TABOR MINDEZENTY.

An Austrian nobelman who resembles Rudolph Valentino, movie star who died several months ago. He has come for tryout.

THE OTHER MAN

Perhaps he sometimes slipped a bit. Well, so have you.

Perhaps some things he ought to quit. Well, so should you.

Perhaps he may have faltered—why? Why, all men do, and so have I.

You must admit, unless you lie, that so have you.

When painting some as black as ink, As some folks do.

Perhaps, if we would recollect, Perfection we would not expect.

Just a man halfway correct, Like me and you.

I'm just a man who's fairly good, I've done some things I never should.

Perhaps like you. But, thank the Lord, I've sense to see The rest of men with charity.

They're good enough if good as me— Say men like you.

When the tax collector appears at Melanesia, off the coast of Australia, a tom-tom is beaten to warn the villagers, who run to the woods and hide.

Liverpool and Manchester, England, are to be connected by a modern automobile road, which will cost nearly \$18,000,000 and give employment to 4,000 men.

Do Your Christmas Shopping Late

(Continued from page 4)

In the beginning, pulled upon them. They tasted the bitter fruit of repentance. By this time they judged, the watchman might have been discovered, and have added to the hue and cry. For through the ever-falling snow, the cold bleak dawn was breaking. They ceased to sing, and they saw no humor in their plight.

And then, as for no discernible reason, they happened to be passing a subway near Van Cortlandt Park, a blue shape sprang upon the running board, and, admitting himself beaten, stopped the car.

"We're pinched!" said Pudge. "Well, I don't know that I'm sorry."

The door was opened, and the red face of Terence Malone was framed in the opening.

"Saints preserve us!" he said richly. "An' you're still there?"

And then madness descended upon Pudge, and he took with Terence the same line that he had taken, earlier, with the unresponsive watchman.

"And where else would we be, you—you omnidimensional?" he said savagely. Now, he had not the least notion of what an omnidimensional might be, but somewhere he had heard an Irishman use the word. "You and your whistling! Setting every cop in town on your trail, when we were nothing better than to go home and to bed."

He shook his fist in the face of Terence, who recoiled, his blue eye popping.

"You're burglars!" said Terence weakly. "It's me duty to run ye in."

"Burglars your grandmother!" snapped Pudge, aroused. "If we were burglars would we have stayed with the cab? When we got away from you wouldn't we have sneaked for the subway or something, and made a get-away?"

He asked a polar bear and smote Terence full in the face with his furry weight.

"You've made mischief enough!" he said, springing out and threatening Terence with some other animal.

Perhaps like you. "What are you doing here anyhow? This isn't your post!"

"I'm off duty!" said Terence feebly. "I'm on my way home to Christmas dinner and the bit tree for the young ones."

"Oh, you are, are you?" said Pudge bitterly. "After keeping us out all night, you're on your way home! Glad I don't pay taxes here to keep you and your like in uniform! Well, home you shall go, in Hank's cab, here, when we've gone home—right, straight home! And you're going with us, to be connected by a modern automobile road, which will cost nearly \$18,000,000 and give employment to 4,000 men."

"Get in!" roared Pudge.

And in Terence got. Don't blame him too much. Pudge was berserk at that moment. And, once they had him in, and were bowling pleasantly southward, with only an occasional interlude to dig out the wheels, where, in open spaces, the snow had drifted badly, they told him about Billy. It was somewhere along the way, that Pudge got his really great idea, but he kept quiet about it until they had run the dispirited gantlet of police that still hovered about the mansion in which the Frothinghams lived. Terence, still dazed, assured them that all was well, and would, in due season, be explained.

The greeting that Frothingham received from the sleepy but still impossible hallway seemed to settle the last doubts of Terence Malone.

"Is all right, I'm thinking," he said, rubbing his hands over his poor brow. "But 'is not accord' to regulations—"

"Here!" said Pudge. They were in the hall, and Hank and the bell boy and Frothingham were bringing in their purchases from the cab. He took the clothes of Santa Claus. Skillfully he attached the false beard and whiskers to the face of Patrolman Terence Malone. "Put on the duds," he commanded. "You've got to play Santa Claus. Maybe the kid's old enough to recognize his father—but he never saw you before."

There was a little argument. While it endured, Frothingham held converse with his wife, and five minutes later, with lips that smiled and eyes that were two blazing question marks, she let them in, clad in a kimono, with beside her.

Billy's eyes grew wide at the vision of Santa Claus, gift laden. Neither for his father nor his Uncle Pudge had he eye or word.

"Oh-o-o!" he said. "There is a Santa Claus!"

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After carrying for three years, a pair of six-inch forceps, left in her abdomen during an operation, Mrs. Florence Tapp of Fulham, England, died recently following an effort to remove the instrument.

Because of dullness among factories of industrial centers of Brazil, the municipal government of Sao Paulo has started a movement to keep workers on the farms and away from the cities.

Before a crowd of 50,000, racing clubs of Siena, Italy, recently held a horseback race, the course being three times around the market square in keeping with a medieval custom of the city.

SAYS EARTH LIKE GOLF BALL

That the earth is built on the principle of the old-fashioned metal-cored golf ball is the contention of Dr. E. D. Williamson, the scientist who has just concluded a series of investigations into the subject. The metal core of the earth, he says, is pure iron or an alloy of iron and nickel, having a thickness of not less than 4,200 miles. Outside of this is a layer of iron and rock on top of which is strata of rock

IS COW GUILTY?

Is a motorcyclist or a cow at fault when the two meet, is a question before the magistrate at Te Aroha, N.Z. Robert Troughton, a farmer, sued to have been caused when he collided with Jackson's cow. Jack-

son counter-claimed \$200 for his pedicled better killed by the motorcycle. Troughton says Jackson is guilty of negligence in allowing the cow to roam the road, while Jackson claims that Troughton drove the machine carelessly and if he had kept a proper lookout he would have seen the cow. So the magistrate is scratching his head in perplexity.

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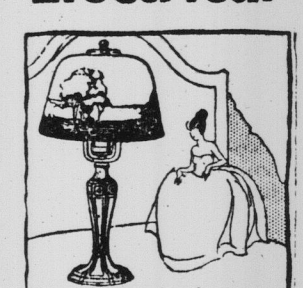
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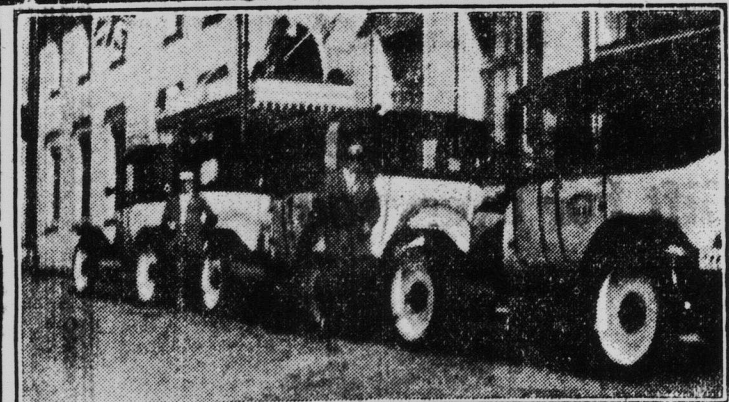
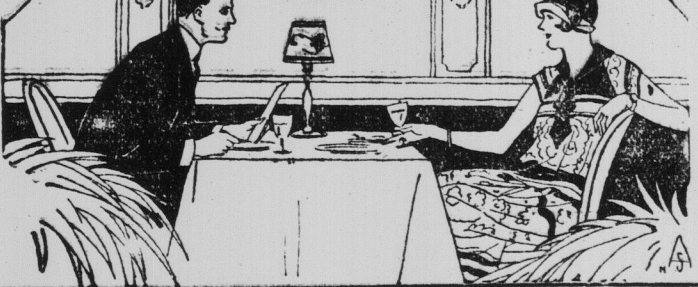
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