

TAXI

An Adventure Romance

By George Agnew Chamberlain

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At two minutes after five the door bell rang again. In spite of the fact that it was almost exactly the hour which Mr. Milyuns had set for the arrival of his wife and daughter, Pamela couldn't help hoping—but in vain. It was with a slightly resigned air that she received Mrs. and Miss Milyuns instead of Mr. Robert Randolph.

Mrs. Milyuns flew to her, set hands on her shoulders, searched her face with eager shrewd eyes, and said:

"Borden indeed told me the truth about you, my dear. May I kiss you?"

Pamela extended one cheek to the salute while her eyes wandered off to size up the tall, blonde, cool young person that she surmised must answer to the name of Eileen Milyuns. Being the product of two shorts, how on earth had she managed to grow so long? Her face was regularly beautiful, as though it had been carefully made to order like her clothes. She appeared as passive as a Palmer snowscape.

After a little skirmishing for position, the three ladies seated themselves in a triangle, in the center of which the well-trained Tomlinson ran a tea-wagon.

"Now," said Mrs. Milyuns, having emptied and put down her cup, "let's forget the sheer romance of the situation, my dear, and get down to practical problems. The first of all things, as you must realize, is the necessity of getting you a companion. Would you care to be our guest in Madison avenue until you can pick one out?"

"I would put clothes ahead of a housecat," murmured Eileen.

Her mother ignored the remark and kept her eyes fixed on Miss Thornton's perplexed face. That young lady seemed to be in search of something to say but rather in search of words and the plunging courage necessary to the saying. She drew a long breath and delivered herself of the following:

"Really, it's most awfully kind of you, but, as I told Mr. Milyuns, Tomlinson is such a dear that I am going to continue him as my companion."

"Tomlinson!" exclaimed Mrs. Milyuns, and then smiled indulgently for the first time during the interview, being under the impression that at last she had run into something appropriately naive in the hearing of her new charge. "Of course you can keep him on, but you must realize that you can't live here without a woman in the house."

"Oh, yes, I can," said Miss Thornton, a little breathlessly. "I have a feeling—I can't explain it exactly—that this apartment is a one-woman setting. As I said to Mr. Milyuns, I don't want to clutter it with females."

A silent laugh crept into the eyes of the marblesque Eileen; something inside of her sat up and took notice. She glanced round the room and murmured:

"Mother, she's absolutely right. I'm for her."

"Right!" Eileen exclaimed Mrs. Milyuns, flushing in her indignation at finding a traitor in the home camp. "I don't know what your generation is coming to. The impossible is never right."

Having taken up her snave endzel, Eileen was in no haste to lay it down, and may it be pointed out right here that Miss Imogene Pamela Thornton had the rare faculty of eliciting the nearest bystander to assume her battles for her, thenceforth becoming a charmingly interested onlooker, ready to watch the tide of her own fortune from the vantage-point of an entirely impersonal detachment.

"That's where you slipped, mother," continued the quite unruffled Eileen. "There's nothing impossible to our generation. Impossibilities are our food, drink and raiment. We're like those surprising orchid things that defy the usual laws and live on air."

"Yes," remarked Mrs. Milyuns; "any new air. But I didn't bring you here, Eileen, to be a stumbling-block to Pamela, who is suddenly faced with problems in the solution of which she deserves our sympathetic assistance."

"You've hit the nail on the head again, mother," parried Eileen. "You're not in sympathy with her, and I am; so you'd better lend over her check, and tomorrow morning at ten I'll be here to help her cash and spend it—if necessary." She turned to Pamela with a twinkle of anticipation in her eyes. "How about it?"

Pamela smiled back her bubbling smile, and then suddenly grew grave.

"Do you think I could order by measure?" she asked, and, remarking the hurt astonishment on Eileen's face, continued in rapid but nevertheless halting explanation: "You see, it's Mr. Randolph. This is really his apartment, and he may be back almost any—any day. I—I don't want to miss him. I—I wouldn't be out when he comes, for anything."

"H'm," interjected Mrs. Milyuns, but before she could make any further progress along that line, Eileen was on her feet and saying good-by among these other things:

"That's all nonsense, if Bobby found you here just as he left you, the

first time he tried to turn up, he might never appear again. But if he finds you after two or three unsuccessful calls and just one day's shopping he will never leave. Tomlinson will have to throw him out."

"Tomlinson couldn't," said Pamela with calm complacency.

Gradually the sure shot made by Miss Milyuns began to take effect. The thought of new clothes—new smart suits, airy evening nothings, filmy undergarments, and solid-silk hostery—stole Pamela from her intention of eternal vigilance and led her to say:

"After all, I will go with you. If it really isn't asking too much of you."

"Thus was Mrs. Milyuns side-tracked for keeps, and on the following morning the two young ladies were wadded down-town in Mr. Milyuns' best limousine and proceeded to open a chain of credit-accounts, on the bare say-so of Eileen and in the name of Miss I. P. Thornton, that spoke volumes for the former's exclusive taste in fashionable purveyors and financial ability to humor it. Possibly the two would have shopped up to the moment of the present writing had it not been for the fact that Pamela knew all about money from the short end.

"I have finished," she suddenly announced.

"Finished what?" asked Eileen.

"Finished shopping," said Pamela. "I've been keeping account, and I've spent almost the whole check."

"The whole check?" exclaimed Eileen. "Why, you haven't touched it. That's the beauty of charge accounts. You can keep your checks to look at. I've got some that checks gave me three years ago."

Pamela smiled a smile of much wisdom and made for the nearest exit. As a matter of polite formality, when they reached Fifty-ninth street, she asked Eileen to come up for lunch from the bachelor's buffet in the basement, and she could not help a slight feeling of relief at the news that Miss Milyuns had promised herself elsewhere.

"But I'll break away and come for tea at five, if you'll let me," said Eileen. "I simply must help you try them all on."

"All right; do," said Pamela, inwardly pleased that she would have some one beside Tomlinson upon whom to flash the first dazzling vision of her metamorphosis.

The first thing she did when she reached the apartment was to ask if Mr. Randolph had called; the next was to summon the office of Milyuns, Branch & Milyuns on the telephone to know what steps had been taken in the new search. She was somewhat surprised to learn that the entire firm had gone out to lunch in a body, and still more startled at the information, obtained three hours later from the same supercilious voice at the other end of the wire, to the effect that none of them had come back. She was young; she believed it.

There is no doubt that in five minutes more Mr. Gloom would have assumed full sway in the late apartment



And Were Soon Involved in an Orgy of Trying On.

of Mr. Robert H. Randolph had not a long procession of parcels begun to arrive in the nick of time. Tomlinson brought them into the bedroom, one, two, three at a haul, and Pamela herself cut the knots with Mr. Randolph's best nail-scissors and laid out the goods, filmy fold upon filmy fold.

By the time Eileen turned up the apartment looked like the stateroom de lux of a millionaire young lady returning from Paris with nothing to wear and preparing to swear to it before all the customs officials in Gotham. Tomlinson was ordered to fill the cellar with wrapping-paper, tissue-paper, cardboard boxes and string, burning what was left over in the back yard.

As soon as sufficient space had been cleared for action, the two girls set to work, and were soon involved in such an orgy of "trying on" as only the healthiest stamina of youth could have endured without falling over in a dead faint from exhaustion. Even Eileen divested her person of everything but, and experimented with such dear garments as it seemed impossible Miss Thornton could get round to in the allotted time.

Having tried to show the public how charming was Pamela in and without her cheap clothes, no puerile and gasping effort will be made in these pages to measure the effect upon her of the latest creations of the raiment dream-gods of Fifth avenue. Suffice it to say

that, in one hour's twinkling of the eye, she became such a radiant vision as chokes mere words down into the pit of a man's stomach, makes his jaw work like that of a fish on a hot side-walk, fills his eyes with the pleading light of calf-love and inspires his hands with an overmastering desire to reach for it.

For two, four, six days, a week, two weeks, Pamela lived in breathless anticipation of the moment when she should burst upon the eyesight of one Robert Hervey Randolph, and when all these days—and weeks—passed without any news of him, her lips that were made to smile, to kiss, and to bless the air with words softly spoken and carried on the fragrance of clean young breath began to droop pitifully.

Mr. Milyuns' efforts in several directions had so far proved in vain. He had advertised in every paper in Gotham, from the New York Epoch to the pink Police Gazette; he had offered rewards; he had set traps and was now supporting a large corps of rapidly fattening individuals who called themselves "plain-clothes" men—a name that would have fitted them admirably had the last syllable been omitted. His net results were the information that Mr. Randolph, in a reprehensible state of intoxication and at seven o'clock of the morning of which he had disappeared had exchanged his well evening garments at a second-hand emporium on Sixth avenue for a suit of thick and eighteen dollars in cash, stating, as he left the place, that he was thinking of going South for the rest of the winter.

After a minute and leisurely study of all the exits from Manhattan, the plain-clothes men had given it as their united opinion that Mr. Randolph had been speaking facetiously in his last-known remark and had probably not voyaged farther south than Canal street. They said if he would only try to leave New York they could find him at once, and settled down on a policy of watchful waiting for that event.

The efforts made by Mr. Milyuns in the direction of springing Miss Thornton on society went equally awry, but were not quite so fruitless. His natural love of a smooth-running establishment on the slippery crust of Gotham's social plane would have been saved a severe bump if American parents were as careful to look up their guests' moral records as they are to study their ratings in Bradstreet's.

Unfortunately for Mr. Milyuns, it happened that a certain young scion of a once gentlemanly house was included in the first large dinner-box party given to meet Miss Imogene Pamela Thornton. In the natural course of such events, the party youth stepped up for presentation, registering in his protuberant eyes a gleam of dubious surprise. What if he should say, "Hello, Vivienne!" Would it create a sensation?

Something else did; namely, Miss Thornton's modulated but terribly clear voice.

"I met Mr. Beamer," said Pamela, drawing back quickly her half-extended hand, "when I was a chorus-girl." She turned with a winning smile to her recently beaming hostess. "I don't care to know him in pleasanter surroundings."

For one breathless second there threatened one of those silences that spell social disaster. Eileen took it upon herself to mash it in its extreme youth with a soft tap of her efficient hammer.

"Oh, must you really go?" she remarked to Mr. Beamer.

Did this spectacular debut strike the name of Imogene Pamela from the lists of the matronly elite of Manhattan? It did not. Invitations rained on her and found her unresponsive. Her would-be hostesses would have gone the length of submitting rostrums of proposed guests as though to royalty, except for the fact that each and every one of them wished to put her own nearest and dearest to the test of a sudden meeting with the most exclusive of New York's latest crop of buds.

Pamela refused and accepted these bids for the latest thing in sensations in the most erratic manner. No one could fathom just why she said, "No," and much less why she occasionally said, "Yes." The mystery only added to the demands for her company and the Nays soon began to show an overwhelming preponderance over the Ayes. Why? Simply because it was not in the power of any of the hostesses to call up the moody girl and say: "My dear, we are going to have just pork and beans for dinner tonight. Won't you join us? Mr. Robert Hervey Randolph said he would drop in for pot-luck."

Yes; every time Pamela had accepted an invitation, it was in the rapidly waning hope that Mr. Randolph, beloved and once at the beck and call of these very people, would appear and come into his own. Could she have surmised that on two separate occasions the knight errant of her thoughts had actually seen her in her most ravishing bibbles evening tucker, had driven her to two familiar doors, taken her money with averted face and without inspecting the "clock," and had passed on to some quiet stand to dream over her new glory and read the latest batch of ads crying for news of the whereabouts and welfare of self—could she have known these apparently insignificant items in the daily life of the great city, she would have wept her lovely eyes out twice over.

(Continued in Next Issue)

Mrs. J. J. Dixon has been confined to her home for the past week on account of illness.

TOO LATE TO CLASSIFY

WANTED—Woman for general household work. Phone Black 363.

ALLIANCE BRIEFS

Beginning May 1, 1921, Alliance printers as well as all union printers in the entire country, will receive a reduction in the working hours, making the standard week 44 hours in place of 48. The agreement for the decrease was made originally in 1919, at a time when the industry was in a most prosperous condition, and inasmuch as the employing printers are just as proud of their record of keeping agreements as the typographical union, the decrease in hours will be put into effect despite the slump in business conditions. As yet, no cut in wages has been made in the industry, although this will undoubtedly be done if conditions are such as to warrant it. If all unions were as sensible as the typographical, the union labor bugbear wouldn't be half as terrifying as it is.

The A. H. Jones company has filed an appeal in district court from the decision of the Box Butte county commissioners, who denied their claim for \$300. The Jones company asked to be reimbursed for expense money advanced to Sheriff Miller in November, 1920, to go to Portland, Ore., to arrest A. H. Hutchinson, a former salesman, who was charged with the theft of a Roa car. The sheriff failed to bring back his man after a more or less exciting extradition hearing, the Oregon governor refusing to honor the extradition papers sent by Governor McKelvie of Nebraska, and the commissioners decided, at their January session, not to allow the claim. The commissioners had refused to allow the sheriff money to make the trip. No explanation was given for rejecting the claim, but the county board apparently is standing pat on its theory that the Jones company advanced the money at its own risk and the failure to secure the return of the prisoner is taken as an evidence that the county should not have spent the money.

Tabulation of the results of the movie questionnaire in the high school was made by a dozen senior girls, who themselves classified the answers under headings of their own make-up. The questionnaire was given hurriedly, only forty minutes being given the students to make their replies. From some of the gossip that has been heard among high school students, it is apparent that some of the two hundred students who handed in replies rather "fudged" a little in regard to movie attendance and the amount they spent on motion pictures, but there were only a few of them. Several of the students have expressed themselves as opposed to movie censorship, and those evidently feared that the figures were to be used in the campaign for state supervision. There were not enough of these, however, to invalidate the value of the figures.

J. W. Guthrie last Saturday received from the Equitable Life Assurance society checks aggregating \$17,000, representing life insurance carried by the late Oscar O'Bannon. Proofs of death were forwarded just one week prior to the day the checks were received. Three policies were carried in this company by Mr. O'Bannon, his wife receiving \$10,022.90; his brother Richard \$5,997.84 and a third check, representing partnership insurance, amounting to \$1,000.18.

George Breckner this week superintended the removal of the two old smokestacks from the city's light and power plant. These stacks have not been in use and at a recent council meeting, the matter of taking them down was discussed at some length. One or two councilmen doubted whether the material would be of sufficient value to pay the salvage bill, and their judgment was vindicated. The pipes were rusted to such an extent that they were worthless for anything but junk. It had been thought that they could be taken down without considerable expense, but Breckner solved the problem by cutting a section out of the bottom with his high-powered torch, after which they were dropped to the ground. The removal was accomplished without so much as knocking a single brick loose. Carl Rocky and the superintendent of the water plant were on hand to render assistance and give advice.

PERSONALS

Mrs. P. S. Young is suffering from pneumonia.

Fred Vogel and Joe Robbins were in Minnatare between trains Saturday.

Grant Parmenter of Mitchell, is visiting at the home of his niece, Mrs. S. J. Epler.

Mrs. J. W. DeMoss who has been quite ill the past week is again able to be up.

Mrs. Nellie Wilson and Mrs. Blanche Wilson will spend this weekend in Denver.

Two DeLaval Separators at a discount if sold soon. W. E. Cutts.

Mrs. James Carmody returned yesterday from Bayard where she spent the week-end.

Mr. Hagerman, a civil war veteran, is very ill at the home of his daughter, Mrs. C. H. Rocky.

Miss Mable Gilbert has returned to Alliance after a weekend visit at her home in Lead, S. D.

Mrs. John Nation who has been on the sick list for three weeks is reported worse today.

Mrs. A. J. Cole enjoyed a visit Saturday from her cousin, Mr. Applegate, from southwest of town.

Mrs. Thos. Parsley and Mrs. Ernest Garnet, both of Scottsbluff, spent the week-end with Mrs. C. Bullock.

Two DeLaval Separators at a discount if sold soon. W. E. Cutts.

Mrs. H. D. Hacker and daughter, Valetta returned Saturday from Rochester, Minn., where the latter underwent an operation in the Mayo Brothers' hospital.

Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Smart left Sunday on No. 42 for Chicago and Sioux Falls, S. D., where Mr. Smart was called on business. They will return next Sunday.

DR. BOWMAN—office in First National Bank Building. 8t

COMMENT & DISCOMMENT

Will some kind friend please tell us what there is about petitions that is so fascinating. Why is it that the average man and every woman is so willing to place his or her name on the dotted line? Usually a man is careful about signing his name. If it were a contract, and a good one, at that, the average male would hesitate three or four days, and go over the matter from every possible angle, but when it comes to petitions he doesn't even take the time to read them through. It doesn't make any difference whether he knows the one who asks him to do it. It's an act fully as thoughtless and automatic as raising the hand to the mouth to hide a yawn.

The signing of petitions is a national weakness, fastened upon the country when it was young and when the only way to get anything done was by petition, and even then the plan worked but seldom. The English kings used to pay about as much attention to a colonial petition as the city council has paid to the requests of the east siders for water mains and other improvements. In those days, that was believed to be the best way to reach the ear of the king, and therefore that was the method that was used. Perhaps, were the truth known, there were a dozen means that would have been worked with greater ease, but the United States, despite its scoffing at President Wilson in the days just before the war, has always been fond of note writing. A petition is a variety of diplomatic note.

Three or four years ago, a university instructor in psychology, who had been worried over the alarming increase in petitions among the student body, sought to discover just how many of the students who so readily appended their signatures to various and sundry of these documents really had any idea of what they were doing at the time. His theory was that the average student signed for one of four reasons—either to get rid of the persistent devil who had the petition in tow; the fear of offending the P. D. or some of his influential friends; the fear of being considered a crab; or because the name of some friend or some important person was on the sheet. And so this professor devised a scheme to test his theory.

The results were even more convincing than he had dared to hope. He prepared three petitions, something after this fashion:

PETITION
To the Honorable Chancellor and Faculty of the University of Wisconsin:

The undersigned most respectfully petition your honorable body to appoint and designate the afternoon of Wednesday, the nineteenth of May, A. D., 1917, as a

HOLIDAY
for the student body and the faculty of the University of Wisconsin, and to provide for a proper observance of same by decreeing that those whose names are appended to this petition shall be hung by the neck until dead in front of the stands at the athletic field.

We and each of us signing this document solemnly covenant and agree to submit to such punishment at the time and place mentioned.

This, in substance, was the wording of the petition. Our memory is possibly at fault in one or two minor particulars. It has been some time since we recall our psychology prof. relating the incident. The interesting fact about the petition is that it was circulated among the student body just one day, and over seven hundred students signed the document without reading it through. Not one of the students to whom it was presented refused to sign. Every one of them looked at the paper, saw the words "petition" and "holiday" and couldn't get his name down fast enough.

It doesn't require a test of this kind to convince the average man that is the course of a year he signs a good many petitions that he wouldn't have signed had he taken time to do any thinking at all. The average organization endorses a lot of movements that the members wouldn't approve if they stopped to reflect. The trouble is that the average gathering dreads a

whole lot of speechmaking or argument, and it saves some personal discomfort to vote in favor of the motion and get the thing over with. That's why an endorsement from the average organization on any subject doesn't carry much weight any more. That's the reason that it's so easy to get endorsements, by the way. People don't think any more about voting an endorsement than they do about signing a petition.

There's a reason, of course, for all this. During the past week symptoms of another petition epidemic have been apparent. Sooner or later someone will call upon you, saying "I want your name" and hand you a pencil to do the deed with. When this person comes, man or woman, don't take the pencil until you have read the petition. Think the matter over carefully, and if you have any question in your mind as to whether you should lend your influence to the pet scheme of the one who is carrying the petition around, give one of those fishy stares and say: "No, thanks." If you want to be particularly polite, say gently, but firmly, "I believe I will think this matter over." Ten chances to one, they'll never see you again. Why should they? There are a hundred chumps who are willing to put down their names without protest.

Now, this isn't to be taken as a blanket condemnation of all petitions. Some of them are worth signing. But if you readily lend your support to everything that comes along, your support will soon be worth mighty little. Support, you know, is like credit—the less it's used the stronger it gets. If everybody used the same judgment in signing notes that they do in signing mortgages, it wouldn't take very long before a petition would mean something. As matters now stand, it's simply a means of furnishing an occupation for somebody who isn't rushed.

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