

FUNNY THINGS IN PROSE

MR. RUGBY IN WARPAINT

After a Night of Broken Rest, He Becomes Quite Aggressive and Gets the Worst of It.

It was a gloomy morning in the Rugby household. The night had, by a strange combination of conditions, been practically a sleepless one for both Mr. and Mrs. Rugby. The silence that is popularly supposed to pervade the still, small hours had been rudely dispelled by a series of nerve-racking street noises. Mrs. Rugby had been shopping the previous day and was therefore unusually weary. Callers had dropped in during the evening, so that the hour of retiring was somewhat later than usual, and the Rugbys had only just fallen into that first sweet sleep, when the doorbell rang violently several times in quick succession.

Mrs. Rugby was at once alert and alarmed.

"It's a telegram, I know," she quavered. "Can it be that mother is sick? Do hurry, dear; I know something dreadful has happened."

Rugby tumbled out, hastily drew on a bath robe over his pajamas, and hurried to the door. Presently the hum of excited voices rose, something heavy fell with a thud on the hall floor, and the street door banged furiously. Just as Mrs. Rugby was about to alarm the police, thinking her husband had been knocked down by a midnight marauder, she was reassured by his voice, shouting: "Why in thunder can't these merchants deliver things in the daytime? It's a bale of goods for you from Smith's."

Quiet was again settling over the Rugby flat when the creaking of pulleys, the straining of ropes and the shouting of teamsters broke the stillness. Rugby rolled over, with a groan. "It's the house-movers," he cried in despair; "they're at it again. The minute the street-cars stop running they begin."

The Cause of It. Mrs. Rugby stole out of bed and peeped through the blinds. She saw a two-story frame building moving majestically down the street, escorted by a gang of workmen. The unwilling horses were treading round and round the block, urged on by whip and lash and the commands of the teamsters.

It was fully an hour before the house on wheels was out of hearing, and the Rugbys were just dozing off when the sharp, rasping, clatter of a street-car rattle, followed by the thump, thump of a rock-crusher, broke the hush of night.

"I shall appeal to the City Council tomorrow morning," Mr. Rugby shouted wrathfully. "That, dear," corrected Mrs. Rugby, "on account of these midnight matinees!" and he rose and fiercely banged down the window.

"Well, dear," said Mrs. Rugby, soothingly, "you know they are taking up the cables and erecting a new road, and I suppose they have to do the crossings in the night, so as not to interfere with the other street-car line. It all comes from living on a corner."

"Well, I shall be living in the incurable ward of a lunatic asylum if this thing keeps up much longer. It's now 2 o'clock in the morning and for the next three hours we'll have a steady stream of men crashing rock, hammering iron, exploding dynamite and disturbing the public generally. I say it's an outrage. Last night they were doing the same, and next week I expect they will roll the gas pipes. Now why in the name of common sense must all this street work be done in the dead of night, I want to know!"

Dawn was breaking in the rosy east when the final roll was laid. The merry milkmen had begun their rounds, the muffled call of the baker's boy came cheerily, dumb waiters began to creak, the speaking tubes to shriek, and the elevator bells to ring, as the occupants of the flats above and below the Rugbys woke to light and life again. Some one had said that trouble never comes singly, so it happened that, on this particular morning, by the time the last of the night's work was done, another trial awaited the long-suffering Rugbys.

More Trouble. A few weeks before, in a moment of extreme anguish, and threatened of mental weakness, caused by rheumatic pain, Mr. Rugby had ordered a new remedy for this arch enemy of his peace and happiness, in the shape of a patent medicine which the manufacturer advertised as a specific warranted to cure the worst case on record, or a reward of \$1000 would be paid the sufferer. For days after sending on the order Mr. Rugby had haunted the express office, either in person or by telephone, to know if there was a package away for him.

As time wore on and the medicine did not arrive and things began to get lively at the golf links, Mr. Rugby hid himself every Saturday afternoon, he gradually forgot all about his pain and his expected remedy, so that he was entirely unprepared to meet the test.

Just as they arose from the breakfast table on this particular morning, there came a loud peep at the door.

"Another agent," sighed Mrs. Rugby. "There were five here yesterday, and now they're beginning again at this early hour."

"Just let me handle him, my dear," said Mr. Rugby, who was in a pugilistic mood anyhow, and rather enjoyed the prospect of a scrap. "You're too easy with them, and, suiting the action to the man, he strode to the door.

"Will you," began a pleasant-faced, middle-aged man, as he proffered Mr. Rugby an open order book and a pencil. "No, sir, I will not sign any subscription of any sort," promptly interrupted Mr. Rugby.

The man looked surprised and said, "But this is not—"

"I don't care what it is," reiterated Mr. Rugby, with warmth. "Church fund, orphan-asylum collection, home prize contest, send-me-through-college subscription, petition for widening the street, or Salvation Army Thanksgiving dinner—I renounce them all," with a comprehensive sweep of his arm.

"But I have a pack—"

"I don't care how many packs of cigarettes, or cards or prize packages you have, I do not smoke, chew or swear."

Begins Again. The young man wiped the perspiration from his brow and began again. "But, my dear sir, this has been expressed—"

"Yes, I've no doubt it has been con-

ected expressly for me, but I'm onto your little game.

"Are you—" began the delivery man, in desperation.

"Yes, I'm a Buffalo."

"The character of your—"

"I know all about that. It cost me just 11 cents; I happened to have the change."

"I merely called to deliver"—began the unhappy man.

"The bill of goods my wife bought down town yesterday was delivered at 11:30 last night, after we were in bed. It's a little way they have."

"Are you looking for—"

"Yes, I'm looking for trouble, right here and now, if you don't clear out," and Mr. Rugby slammed the door in the face of the importunate intruder.

Half an hour later the telephone bell rang, and a severe, masculine voice shouted:

"This is the Express office. There is a package of patent medicine here for you, which you just now refused to accept from our agent. It is marked C. O. D., and you had better come down and about it, to avoid further trouble," and a decided denotation that the receiver at the other end was on its accustomed hook.

HENRIETTA B. FREEMAN.

HE MUST HAVE BEEN NERVOUS.

But, Anyhow, the "Cullud Pusson" in His Kitchen Had a Shock.

"Yes, she has come—my long-expected maid from the Southland—and she is the sweetest creature that ever graced a culinary department!" remarked the editor of the women's page, as she sharpened her shears preparatory to attacking the huge pile of exchanges.

You know, Nell wrote that she had a perfect jewel for me—a rather black diamond—bought her that she was an Ethiopian aristocrat, and would resent any reference to her race or color. In every letter this fact was underlined and underscored, and she was especially insistent that our 4-year-old Phil be instructed to ignore all racial distinctions.

So my husband dispensed instruction in the most lavish fashion. He took the poor little chap downtown and introduced him to the whole colored population of Chicago. He showed him every type, every age, from a cunning little pickaninny to a granddaddy, with wool as white as an Alabama cotton field, until actually the child was saturated with "cullud pussons."

He made the most blood-curdling threats, if he caught the lad looking at her out of the corner of his eye, and vehemently admonished him not to say negro, or he would think he had a portion of the Klondike compared with the paternal mansion.

The night her ladyship arrived we all went to the station to meet her, and my husband tried his prettiest to bring his gigantic intellect down to her level. He carried her dress suit case, pointed out the glittering attractions of the city and the gallant to perfection, for he knew from his experience at the intelligence offices what it means to get "help" in full swing.

She received his attentions like a queen, and finally flicking a speck of dust from her stunning traveling gown, she remarked, languidly:

"One gets so dirty traveling!"

It was this first observation she had descended to make, and my better half eagerly responded to the cue.

"Yes, my dear, it is a dreadful dusty in hot weather! Why the other day I went out of town on a short business trip and when I got home I was black as a nigger!"

Well, the lady had felt sorry for him, for he looked the picture of sorrow as he crawled down into his collar like a turtle in his shell. The awful silence

was broken by Phil's reproachful exclamation:

"Why, papa, you told me I would hammer the life out of me if I said nigger, and now you have said it yourself!"—Chicago Record-Herald.

HAY FEVER'S VICTIMS.

Wilkins Gets in Last Word, and It Settles Thompson.

"This hay fever that is beginning to rage now is a funny thing," said Wilkins. "Beats all how susceptible the hay fever victims are to the smell of hay. I tell you it's no joke. There is a friend of mine who is subject to hay fever, but he has not had an attack for two years. He was walking past a feed store the other day and a man rolled out a bale of hay. Just as soon as my friend saw it he began to sneeze and kept it up until they sent him up to the hay woods."

"That's right!" put in Thompson. "There's one thing that is well named."

—Chicago Record-Herald.

ILLUSTRATED TITLE "TO HAVE AND TO HOLD."

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