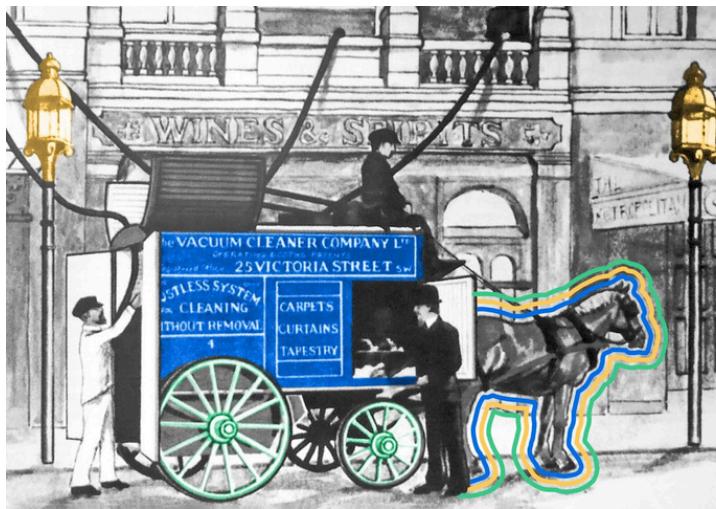


RANSOM NOTES



In 1901, an English inventor named Hubert Cecil Booth traveled to London and witnessed this strange machine that huffed and puffed and blew the dust all around. He queried the American inventor demonstrating this dirt-blowing machine as to why they didn't simply suck up the dust rather than blowing it. The demonstrator commented that sucking dirt was impossible.

Booth decided to prove the guy wrong. He returned home and began creating a contraption that could "inhale" instead of puff out. Guess what? Hubert filed a patent for a vacuum machine he named the "Puffing Billy." Stop, however, before you go spending your hard-earned nickels on a Puffing Billy with a large suction pump driven by a five-horsepower piston engine. You might have to first buy a wagon load of grain and build a horse stable.

This was not your ordinary Hoover or Dust Buster. It was a red, gasoline-powered, extremely loud, and big—really big contraption. In fact, Booth's vacuum cleaner was horse drawn. He would pull up to a home or office and drag an 82-foot-long hose in through the windows. The process was so expensive that customers were generally members of British high society. One special job was to clean Westminster Abbey's carpet before Edward VII's coronation in 1902.

Now stop and think! What possible connections might we apply to followers of the Lord? The bottom line of our huff-puff wolf examples resulted in no improvement. Two of the trio of pig houses were destroyed by the wolf. The wolf's desire was to destroy and, of course, maybe even have a pork sandwich for dinner that night. Perhaps we might have a substitute for the wolf. Satan, who goes around like a roaring lion (not a puffing wolf), seeking those whom he might derail, destroy, and cause to fall away from the Lord.

Peter reminds us in 1 Peter 5:8-9to, "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." The devil seems to encourage and provide "dirt" or sin in our lives. The Lord comes to the rescue of those willing to allow Him into their hearts and accept His cleansing power. Just as Hubert C. Booth's invention invaded a room and cleaned out the dirt, so does the cleansing power of Jesus' blood pay the price for anyone willing to receive God's forgiveness and follow him.

Paul, an apostle of Christ, provided the followers with soul-cleansing information. In 2 Corinthians 7:1 we find some of his words of wisdom. "Therefore, since we (early Christian followers) have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." The Father has promised to walk with us, but we need to have a good house cleaning. He wants our souls to be pure and as white as snow.

1 John 1:7 expands on the cleansing process. John's words are clear: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." Now those words remind us of an annual spring housecleaning job when the dust rag and vacuum cleaner zip around to find almost every dirt particle in the home. So too with God's life cleaning job. Christ's blood can be applied 365 days a year, not just in spring. Satan better watch out.

Our horse-drawn cleaning station was not as fancy as modern Dust Busters, but it did the job. The blood of Christ, however, cleanses in a different way from a Hoover, but will be life changing. Welcome "dirty," but his blood sacrifice helps us clean up.

Share God's cleansing power with a friend. Who have you told about God's "Heart Vacuum-Cleaners"?

"Puffing Billy" Clean Up

Perhaps you remember the childhood story about three small porkers or otherwise known as the "Three Little Pigs." It was a childhood favorite of this author.

The pigs had a problem. Their enemy liked to huff and puff and blow houses down. He was the BIG BAD WOLF. This story by James Halliwell-Phillips originally appeared in a book entitled "The Nursery Rhymes of England (1886)."

England had another puffing problem about fifteen years later, dirty rail cars. They had a machine with a bunch of high-pressured jets that blew air into carpets in hopes of getting the dust to fly from one side of the carriage into a dust box on the other side. All that really happened was just a rearrangement of the dust on the floor.