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See that you get "Dr. Wood's" when you ask for it. Do not accept any imitation. The genuine is put up in a yellow wrapper, three pine trees the trade mark, price, 25 and 50c., and manufactured only by The T. Milburn Co., Limited, Toronto, Ont.

## The Lash of Circumstance

— BY —  
**Harry Irving Greene**

Author of "Yosonde of the Wilderness"

Supplied Exclusively in Canada by The British & Colonial Press Service, Limited.

"At the end of the block he threw his cigar into the street. 'The police—you did not tell them about seeing your cousin have the key yesterday?' he said, half interrogatively, half assertively. I told him I had not. His next question was, 'Why?'"

"Because of several reasons. First of all, they did not ask me; second, because I have no idea that Bruce is guilty in this matter; and third, because I did not care, under the circumstances, to put his reputation in their hands. Also, I assumed that he would immediately acknowledge his possession of it and give an adequate explanation. You will readily understand that I did not want the newspapers to come out with a sensational story, and I, therefore, reserved that bit of information for my own investigation. You may be sure, however, that I had intended to mention it to him privately when we met again, and only volunteered the information to you because I knew you would work up to it eventually and corkscrew it out of me. Furthermore, I know I can rely upon you to suppress details, which although as yet unexplained, in all probability have no real bearing on the issues." His reply came without hesitation.

"Tom, you have known me for years and you know that even as a boy I always played fair. Now, I have no more use for a professional criminal than I have for a mad dog or a venomous serpent. They have shot me, stabbed me and laid in ambush to assassinate me, and when I think of them I am imbued with a great and righteous wrath. But when I come across a young fellow of good instincts who has fallen because of a reckless step, I would a whole lot rather give him a boost than a kick. I want you to get me right on that statement."

I signified my comprehension. As he himself said, LeDuc had always been a fair, even a generous, fighter, and his last assertion was wholly in accord with my understanding of the man. Glancing about to make sure that we were safely beyond earshot of any possible listener, I broached a matter about which I had been thinking for some little time.

"Billy, there is another thing which the police did not bring out and which I did not volunteer, but which you ought to know. My excuses for not having stated it before are practically the same as those I gave in Bruce's case, namely, because I do not believe it has anything to do with the crime and because I wish to shield a certain individual from annoyance and publicity. Under the same understanding that you are to consider it as a privileged communication I will tell it to you. It is this: There is one more person, at least, who knows that Uncle Abner occasionally had considerable sums of money on hand, and to whom I imparted in a casual conversation the circumstance of this particular amount being in the house. I had a little visit with her yesterday on my way down town after my quarrel with my uncle. In it I told her of Bruce's misfortune. Also, I once left my keys at her house through an oversight, and they remained there several days. And while I should bitterly resent even the intimation that she was a conscious party to the crime, it is nevertheless a crevice through which the information may have leaked. I suppose you would like to hear me out on this line." He slipped his arm through mine, drawing me closer to him.

"By all means. It may prove decidedly interesting. My promise goes to this angle of the case as well as all others. Shoot ahead."

"Then I do not mind telling you that I am in the habit of calling upon a lady who is—well, we will call her an exceedingly good friend of mine. I care a great deal for her, respect her thoroughly and believe she is fond of me. I have incidentally told her about Uncle Abner and his strange ways, and one evening left my keys in her apartments after having opened a bottle of wine with a cork screw which I kept attached to my key ring. It was several days later that I called her attention to my oversight and received them back from her. While I trust her implicitly, yet she has a yellow maid who is inscrutable to me and who always seems to be hovering within earshot. To my mind it is not impossible that this maid was in possession of the keys while they were on those premises—infact, her mistress so intimated when she returned them to me. That the maid through outside acquaintances might have taken advantage of my information which she chanced to overhear is within the realm of possibilities. You understand I merely offer this as a suggestion."

"And do you know anything of the character of the maid's acquaintances on the outside?" was the swift interrogation. I bit my lip.

"No. But I do know this. I know that Richard Mackay is the business agent of the girl's mistress—Mrs. Dace, of the Arcadia—and that he sometimes calls upon her. And knowing his reputation as I do, it has occurred to me that stranger things have happened than that this girl might be under his influence and reveal secrets to him that she has become possessed of. I understand there is practically no limit to the man's machinations."

LeDuc brought me to a sudden standstill. "Do you mean Richard Mackay, 'Coughing Dick,' the hoodler and arch conspirator?" he cried, his hand gripping my arm like a trap.

"Yes. You will remember the fact that uncle mentioned the fact that the man who choked him cleared his throat in a peculiar manner."

The grip upon my arm loosened and for a moment my friend stood staring

into my face. Then with a soft whine he drew me on again. It was several moments before he once more broke the silence.

"Bye the bye, you had better give me your card with your telephone number on it so that I may be able to reach you over the wire in case of necessity," he suggested reflectively, and I felt in the pocket in which I always carried my card case in order to comply with his request. The case, which was an unusually handsome affair, had been presented to me by Mrs. Dace, and I would not have lost it for a great deal, but at the end of a couple of minutes' search, which exhausted every nook and cranny of my raiment, I was compelled to give up the quest in despair.

"I must have lost it," I announced, deeply chagrined. LeDuc looked at me with a question in his eyes.

"And you had it last—when?" were his words. I ran the course of my actions during the past few days through my mind until I recalled the occasion of its last use.

"Last evening. After the theatre I gave the friend who was with me one of my cards with the request that he call me up some evening when he was lonesome. But I have a distinct recollection of putting it back in my upper vest pocket. I would not have lost it for many times its value, and it was a rather expensive trinket at that." Ruefully I continued my search for the fourth or fifth time as he sympathized with me, following his condolences with the remark that a pencil memorandum in his book would answer the same purpose. Therefore I gave him the number orally and noted that he wrote it down correctly. Then with an apology and an excuse of urgent business he darted aboard a passing car with a farewell flirt of his hand.

(To Be Continued.)

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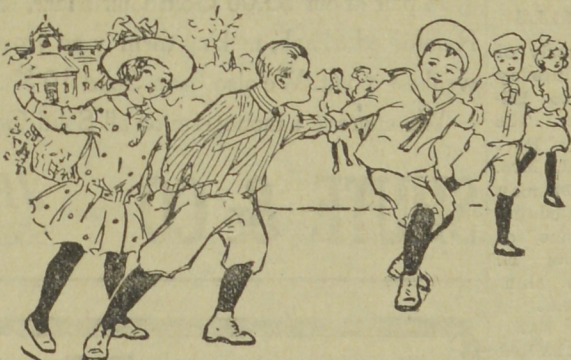
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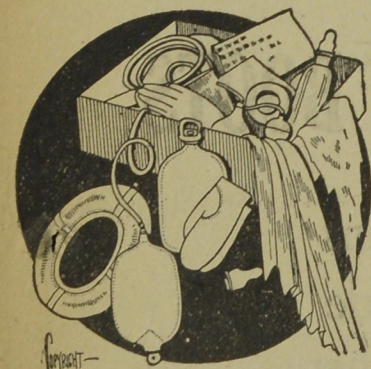
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