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— BY —
Harry Irving Creene
Author of "Vesonde of the Wilderness"

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

"Look at me! This suit cost me nine dollars and I have worn it for a year. My shirt cost forty cents, my collar six and my necktie eight. Mean to say I am not as well dressed as you?"

"That is a matter of personal opinion. Anyway, it is none of your business so long as I pay you for my living. At any rate I have never had to ask you for money." He reached forward with his long arm and began thumping me on the chest with his bony knuckles.

"Hey! Wouldn't you though if you thought you could get it? Wouldn't you though, Mr. Peacock, with your fine clothes, if you thought you could wheedle a dollar out of me? But you know your Uncle Abner ain't fool enough to let you have it. I'd rather trust it to Bruce, for with all his foolishness he has got twice the sense that you have. He takes chances and some day may win a fortune, while you only spend, spend, spend. Get a cent from me! I'd like to see you." With a quick run he gathered up the money, shoved it into the safe, spun the combination until it rattled like a roulette wheel and faced me again with his nose wrinkled. I faced him in a boiling rage. For while I had always cherished the natural and legitimate hope that I, as his next of kin, might some day profit by reason of his accumulative instincts, he could have left his money strewn broadcast throughout the house from the time I had first come to live with him and I would not have touched a dollar of it, even had I known I never would be even suspected. Furthermore, none had a better reputation for honesty than myself, and his everlasting treatment of me as a potential thief had always nauseated me. Not caring how he might regard the act, I drew the key to the front door from my pocket and flung it on the table before him. It was the only key to the house I had ever possessed, and its surrender left me without means of entrance, but without another word I stalked out into the open, banging the door behind me. Never had I been in a more villainous mood than now as I stride through the trees on my way downtown.

I desired to see Bruce again. I was concerned to know just what turn his dependency might take, and I thought that I might cheer him up a bit. Knowing his usual places of habit in his hours of recreation it was not long before I had located him. He was humped up buzzard-like in a semi-private room of a cafe, his hands sounding the depths of his pockets and his chin resting upon his breast. A cocktail, apparently untouched, stood on the table before him. I sat down on the other side of the board, noticing that his eyes were closed.

He had the general appearance of a man who had been drinking. Ordinarily immaculate of person, he was now semi-disreputable. He had not shaved that day, his necktie was disarranged and his hair rumpled. However, as I had never known him to be the worse for liquor, I was inclined to give him the benefit of the doubt in this case and ascribe his unkemptness to brooding over his misfortune. "Bruce," I said after a moment.

He opened his eyes and looked at me vacantly, but made no reply. In a general way I attempted to console him, but he only shook his head in silence, and finding my efforts unrewarded I finally abandoned them. Ordering a mild concoction for myself, I touched his glass and drank to the hope that better times might soon be on the wing. He emptied his glass without reply, and sank back again into his dejected posture. Five minutes later he seemed to be half asleep, and I determined to take him bodily in hand. Not wishing to have him seen in that condition by any friends who might chance to enter, I shook him into a semblance of life. Then making him take my arm, I assisted him into the open air. Darkness had already fallen and the lights of the skyscrapers were beginning to sparkle. He lurched heavily against me, and seeing that his condition was rapidly becoming hopeless, I signalled a cab, opened the door and thrust him inside. He fell upon the seat, muttering some address to which he wished to be taken, and I turned to the Jehu, who was propping him up.

"He will be all right in a couple of hours. At present he is not feeling particularly well and should be taken care of," I said significantly. The other nodded his understanding. Then with brief instructions for him to handle his charge right side up with care, I turned away as he picked up the reins.

I formulated my own plans for the evening. In my then state of mind, I did not care to exert myself, preferring to go where I could sit quietly and be entertained by others. I decided upon the theatre. A block further on I happened across a banking acquaintance, who, upon my invitation, joined me. At the end of the performance we emerged. It was now in the neighborhood of 11 o'clock, and, shaking hands, we parted for the night.

Having thrown down my key to the house, I decided to stay downtown until morning. Crossing the street, I entered the Pacific Hotel. I knew the clerk at the desk, and saluting him by name, I asked him to assign me to a room a few floors up and fronting on the alley, such a location being quieter in the early morning hours than a room facing the street. He gave me the key and a bell boy immediately showed me to my number.

Not being accustomed to retiring before 12, I was not in the least sleepy. Leaving the light burning, I threw myself upon the bed as scene by scene I ran the film of the events of the day before my mental eyes. And so deeply did I become engrossed in this that

when I aroused myself and looked at my watch it was after midnight. I arose and stood before the mirror, searching my own face keenly, my mind still reverting to my quarrel with my uncle and its probable future consequences. While I did not imagine that in his present state of mind he would be particularly concerned as to where I was, I resolved to call him up and advise him of my whereabouts. It did not seem that it could do any harm, and undoubtedly it was good policy to try and conciliate him now that we had given full vent to our spleen. Going to the wall telephone, I asked for his number, and a moment later heard his querulous voice over the wire as he demanded to know who it was that called him up at that hour. I answered him with the quietness I always strove to employ except upon rare occasions when I for the moment lost command of myself. I wished him well and told him where I was and that I had decided to remain downtown for the night. His answering sentences exploded in my ear like distant firecrackers.

"That's right. Just like you; spending your money for hotel bills when you have a better bed at home. And I suppose you will pay those pirates a dollar for your breakfast. All right, go ahead, young millionaire. But I will charge you for your breakfast here, anyway. Don't you forget that." "I will be home at nine o'clock, the usual Sunday breakfast hour," I returned in an unruffled tone. He snorted and rang off without deigning to reply further, and I hung up the receiver with the feeling that I had done my part towards a reconciliation. For the present, at least, the matter must rest where it was. Then calling up the hotel office and leaving an order for them to awaken me at seven o'clock, I locked the door and turned out the light.

At the ringing of the call-bell the next morning at the hour I had designated, I arose and began my toilet. I had slept but little, and that little was more like the semi-consciousness which comes from exhaustion rather than the slumber of repose. I felt unrefreshed, despondent, self-angry. My appearance in the glass satisfactory as I ran my eyes over my reflection, I had little desire for breakfast, but inasmuch as I had told Uncle Abner that I would be present at that occasion, I paid my bill and took a car homeward. The morning was a midsummerday dream. The foliage had been bathed by a night shower and the air was perfumed with the incense of growing green things. As I passed up the walk among the oaks I could not but realize how beautiful the grounds were despite their unkemptness, and that it would cost me a pang after all to leave this place permanently should my quarrel with its owner develop to that acute stage. For it was under these trees that I had passed so many pleasant hours with Clare, or wandering through the marble halls of my air castles. Mrs. Tebbetts admitted me upon my summons; but no sooner had I entered the empty halls than my fondness for the place vanished in the old depression which always came upon me as I viewed their loneliness. It was like passing into a vault, cheerless, gloomy, the echoes mocking my footsteps. I went straight to my own room. The door was closed between where I was and my uncle's apartment, and I stood listening. Usually he was up and could be heard putting around before this, but now all was silence beyond. I opened the door that separated our quarters and stepped forward. But on the threshold I stopped with my eyes sweeping the scene that lay before me.

(To Be Continued.)

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USES FOR MILKWEED

Science, with practical optimism, tries to find "good in everything," and now points out that we are wasting opportunities by not utilizing our neglected wealth in milkweed. The best fibres of the plant, well known to the birds as nest-weaving materials and to Indians as thread, may readily be separated, however, and when bleached yield a white, silky, textile material much like flax and even stronger. The woody material of which four-fifths of the plant consists has excellent qualities for paper-making. If treated with a soda solution under pressure. From the seeds may be obtained a large percentage of a drying oil, while the long silky down of the seeds is known to be useful as an upholstering material. It would seem as though it would be well worth while to raise the milkweed as a crop, since it can be grown on land otherwise of little value.

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WAS TROUBLED WITH BOILS AND CARBUNCLES.

There is no more frequent source of illness than that arising from bad blood, for when the blood becomes impure, it is only natural that boils, pimples or some other indication of bad blood should break out of the system.

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