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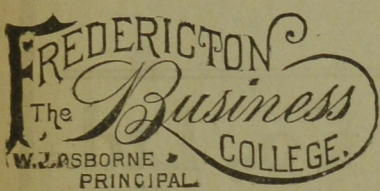
PRICE :- is what you pay for a thing when you get it. You pay it Once.

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— BY —
Harry Irving Greene

Author of "Yosonde of the
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"That is what almost anyone would think under first impulse. But when you are dealing with criminals you must remember that they do not reason and act just as do honest men. When a sane man takes his life and liberty in his hand and commits a desperate crime, he is of necessity more or less regardless of consequences, as well as being driven by strong pressure. And in nearly all cases it is because of this recklessness that we catch him. He may commit the crime itself with a skill and caution that is almost more than human, yet the next day, is apt to go out and do something so foolish that it instantly attracts attention to him. For instance, having had no money before, he now begins to spend it lavishly; or becoming under the influence of liquor, boasts or lets things drop that sound queer. If it were not for these peculiarities of the criminal make-up, and the fact that he generally makes a confidant of some woman, who betrays him, the road of the criminal would be comparatively safe and that of the detective an unhappy one."

"But I cannot believe that there is anything crooked about Bruce. Deceit is foreign to his whole nature." My friend thrust one hand in his pocket.

"Does he ever smoke cigarettes?" he smiled.

"Frequently."

"Any particular brand?"

I paused to reflect. "I think so. As I remember, those that I have seen were invariably a Turkish abomination with a serrated gilt band for a mouthpiece. What is your reason for asking me that?" He withdrew his hand from beneath the table and tossed a half-smoked specimen of the species which I had been describing on the table before me. I looked at him inquiringly.

"I found that in the hallway of your house near the closet where your uncle had been confined. Perhaps you noticed at the time that I picked up something that I did not show you."

Silently I sat trying to read his blank eyes. But as for divining what lay behind them I might as well have gazed at windows back of which the shades were drawn.

CHAPTER XIII.

Directly after this seance with Le Duc, the stock which I had margined began that series of kangaroo leaps upward which will never be forgotten by those who, by reason of their interest, watched the marvel. I probably called my broker up not less than half a dozen times a day during this period, and it was seldom indeed that his last quotation was not higher than the one of say half an hour before. It went darting skyward in the eccentric zig-zags with which a kite mounts in a gale, and within a fortnight I found myself richer by thousands added to thousands. The glittering heights of fortune seemingly hung close over me; the end of the rainbow with its great bag of gold was within mathematical striking distance; and taking greater chances than ever for the sake of greater gains, I plunged wildly as I restaked my winnings on every throw. And day by day the Midas touch was mine, and I won, won, won. Then, grown money reckless by my constant success, I permitted myself another piece of extravagance for the allurements of the woman I loved and the greater opportunities it would give me to be with her. I bought a handsome motor-car upon which I had had my eyes for some time, housing it in a public garage, and telling nobody but her that I had purchased it.

I took Mrs. Dace out on the first evening after I had mastered my new acquirement for a long ride countryward. The weather was ideal, the roads in splendid condition, and we sped along to the low whirl of the machine, with the soft night air fanning our faces. It had long been understood between us that she was to carefully guard all my confidences, and I kept few things from her. Exultantly I spoke of my increasing wealth and magnificent prospects. Her arm slipped under mine.

"Good, good," she cried, with a schoolgirl's enthusiasm. "I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart. It makes me happy to know about it. I told you that I should exercise my sorcery to command your success. When you win I feel that I have won also."

Her tacit confession that she considered herself as a close partner of mine, and that she was backing me to the winning of a prize which we should share together in the long time to come, combined with the delicious sense of comradeship awakened by her arm pressure, became as an intoxicant. In that moment I would have pawned my soul to have possessed her. I threw my arms about her and pressed her to my breast almost fiercely. "My God, how I love you, Matie. Tell me that you will marry me—you must," I cried, as I found her lips and drained them as a drunkard drains his cup. Her arms hung upon my shoulder; her upturned lips seemed to be clinging to mine; I could feel the ebb and swell of her bosom so closely was she drawn to me, and in that position I held her until a slight warning reverberate of the machine temporarily restored my sanity. I quickly removed my right arm and clutched the wheel, but still kept the other round her waist, as I begged her in the name of my great passion to make me the happiest man on earth by her answer. Impassioned I recalled to her my long nights and days of torture when I was half sick with despair of ever possessing her. For the first time since our acquaintance began she was visibly agitated by my pleading.

"You say that you love me with all this great love and tell me that I must answer your question, Tom, dear," she said, very softly. "Very well, I will answer you. I will marry you upon one condition."

"And that?" I cried wildly, feeling myself grow weak in the suspense.

"That you will not importune me now to fix the date. You must leave that entirely to my discretion. When I think the right time has come I will manage in some way to let you know that I am ready. Until then you must be patient with me like the dear boy that you have always been."

"Then we are really—engaged?" I gasped it out with the unbelief of one who by a seeming miracle sees the dead restored to life. She patted my cheek.

"You may so consider us if you wish—under that condition. But it must for the time being remain strictly our secret."

Half doubting that I was still of this earth, I steered onward as in a trance. Then, unless my senses were tricking me, this most glorious of women was to become my close companion through all the days to come; the one whose head should rest upon my shoulder through the long nights; whose bosom should pillow my face in hours of weariness; who should be my wife, the mother of my children. My eyes filled with the moisture of happiness, and through the mist the chalky roadway blurred before me. A feeling almost of awe filled my soul. Never again will such a great thankfulness possess me, and silently I blessed God that in His infinite goodness he had permitted me to be born.

In front of an out-of-door garden, frequented by the better class, we stopped and dismounted. Long lines of motor cars and carriages extended away on either side, and the music of an European orchestra floated over the walls of the enclosure. We passed through the palm-lined entrance and took our seats at a table beneath a tree whose long hanging limbs almost brushed it. A thousand well-dressed people were eating and drinking around us as they idly chatted or listened to the music. It was the soul of Beethoven throbbing in our ears out of his grave. I ordered champagne in honor of our betrothal.

(To Be Continued.)



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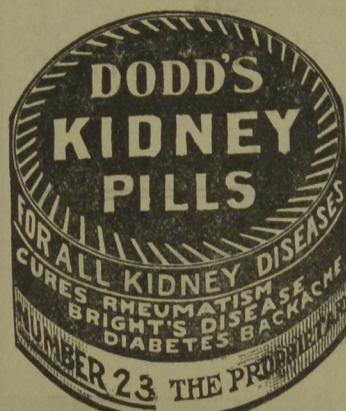
How an Apple Barrel Began a Romantic Story

When William Brooks, an Englishman, and the owner of a large orchard in British Columbia, came to Canada, he secured a position packing apples. Into one of the apple barrels he put a letter which secured him a charming wife.

Miss Gretchen Van Durfer, a pretty flaxen-haired Dutch girl, the daughter of a rich fruit merchant in Rotterdam was standing near a barrel of apples when it was being opened by one of her father's workmen to get one of the apples out to show to a prospective customer. A letter fell to the ground from the blade of the axe. The man in opening the barrel had pierced the letter.

Miss Van Durfer picked it up and found it was from far-off Canada, asking whoever opened the letter to answer it for the writer, who was William Brooks, was lonesome. Miss Van Durfer could write very little English but she managed to put a letter together and send it to Mr. Brooks. In return he sent her his photograph.

It was another case of "Love at first sight." After that they corresponded until Miss Van Durfer left her home for Canada to become Mrs. William Brooks.



AGRICULTURAL EXPERTS IN CONFERENCE

Louisville, Ky., Nov. 27.—Commissioners of Agriculture from nearly all the States of the South gathered here today as the guests of Commissioner of Agriculture J. W. Newman, preparatory to their departure for Chicago where they expect to attend the Live Stock show. The program for the round table included addresses by Commissioner Kolb, of Alabama; Commissioner Rogers of Arkansas; Commissioner Price of Georgia; Commissioner Newman of Kentucky; Commissioner McRae of Florida; Commissioner Bruner of Louisiana; Commissioner Blakeslee of Mississippi; Commissioner Wilson of Missouri; Commissioner Watson of South Carolina; Commissioner Hooper of Tennessee; Commissioner Kone of Texas and Commissioner Kolner, of Virginia.

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