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## The Lash of Circumstance

— BY —  
Harry Irving Greene

Author of "Yessonde of the  
Wilderness"

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

I never opened the heavy door that led from the group of magnificent, century-old oaks, the branch ends of which stroked the gray house like caressing hands, without a feeling of disgust and hot shame. The lower floors were unfurnished save for the kitchen, the dining-room and the room for the housekeeper. Barring those portions it was as barren as a ship's empty hold. For years Mrs. Tebbets had been the housekeeper of the place, doing all the household work and never, to our knowledge, receiving company, and almost never leaving the premises. The upstairs portion of the house was also bare of furniture save for my uncle's and my apartments. His quarters consisted of a large, sparsely furnished room running the length of the front of the house, with an alcove in connection; my own sleeping-room and den being adjacent thereto. That Uncle Abner continued to live amidst this shameful waste of handsomely designed rooms and broad natural grounds, was about the only piece of extravagance I ever knew him to indulge himself in. However, I could partially account for it in two ways. In the first place he had come into possession of the premises through some sort of a hocus-pocus swap; had secured them for a song, won the resulting lawsuit, and then left the former owner to whistle for the song; and in the second he had a real and abiding fondness for trees and grass. Trees and grass, however, do not require repairs.

Now, as to his associates. There were only three people in the world whom he did not seem to have a natural aversion for. These were myself, whom he tolerated as a sort of licensed and necessary evil; Bruce Halliday, my second cousin, whose happy-go-lucky exploits he would sometimes chuckle over, and Clara Winton, another distant cousin of mine from a different branch of the family. But it was practically impossible to know Clara and not love her, a little at least; and it was his affection for her, combined with his fondness for nature, that made me realize that he was a human being after all. Bruce used to say to me privately that if Uncle Abner was the crab apple of the family tree, Clara was certainly the peach, but I always preferred to regard her as the jewel. I would not liken her to a diamond as I would Mrs. Dace, who scintillates and dazzles, but rather to a perfect pearl whose beauty is so soft and emanates from deep within.

While it was easy enough to account for his fondness for Clara, I never could quite understand what a man of his instincts saw about a prodigal like Bruce to put on the back, good-looking and agreeable though he is. And it puzzled me almost as much to notice that Clara, who is high-minded and as sweet and wholesome as fresh milk, would so readily overlook things in my cousin of which I knew she instinctively disapproved. One day I spoke to her about it. I good naturedly charged her with being very fond of him, and she admitted it with audacious sang froid. "Of course I am. Everybody is—everything is. Children climb all over him and stray dogs follow him home. Why shouldn't they if he pets them?"

I expostulated. "But he is so obvious—I might even say notorious—about his—well, I will call them 'financial peculiarities.' He doesn't care who knows about them." She answered me as pertly as a sparrow. "That's just what I like about him. Bruce doesn't know there is such a thing as underhandedness."

So that's the way some immaculate women have of sticking up for 'fashioned men. It seems to be one of the mysteries of the female mental equipment which is incomprehensible to the male mind. But while I always liked Bruce, we are of some what different temperaments. I am not a purist in any sense of the word but I believe in discretion. Personally I prefer a person who does the indiscreet thing discreetly to one who does the discreet thing indiscreetly. And that is one way in which he and I differ. Neither do I admit that it is hypocrisy on my part—merely discretion. It has always seemed to me that when two people's characters are equal, that whatever advantage the one may have over the other rests with the one who has the better reputation.

Also Bruce was usually up to his ears in trouble of one of two kinds—financial or feminine. But no matter which it was, he always managed to slip through it like an eel through oil. He is a broker by trade. Also he speculates on his own account, and part of the time in floating like a bubble on the top wave of prosperity, and the rest of the time swimming for dear life in the succeeding trough. It was a good deal, as he himself once put it, when he had planned to feed a few of us a week in advance.

"You had better put a sandwich in your pocket, boys, for life is uncertain. As you know, it is turkey with me one day and feathers the next, and you have got to take your chance as to which you will get when you dine with me. But come on just the same. If it is turkey it will be the biggest one in the market, and if it's the other it will be feathers in our caps anyhow."

In spite of yourself, you can't cherish anything against a man like that. I never criticized him to any one save Clara, and only to her incidentally and openly the same as we criticized other things that were in common between us. She understood perfectly that there was no animus back of my words, and I would not have cared particularly if she had told him all I said. As a general proposition

she would agree with me, but not always. I remember once when she crushed the rose which she had been caressing into a shapeless pulp with one convulsive squeeze at some careless remark of mine concerning his improvidence.

"Did you ever happen to notice where Bruce's clothes show the first signs of wear?" she asked defiantly. I admitted that I had not.

"Then I will tell you. It is at the flap of his right-hand trouser's pocket where he carries the loose money that he leans and gives away." So yet see her action signified nothing except another instinctive desire on her part to fly to his defence and cover his sins of extravagance by the mantle of his charities. And, of course, against sentiment like that logic is useless.

(To Be Continued.)

## NATIONAL W. C. T. U. IN SESSION

Asbury Park, N. J., Oct. 31—More than five hundred delegates and as many more visitors filled the Casino here today when the fortieth annual convention of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union was formally opened. The delegates came from every state of the Union. In addition many of the foreign delegates who took part in the world's convention in Brooklyn last week are here. The chief feature of today's programme was the annual address of Mrs. L. M. N. Stevens, of Maine, the president of the national organization. New Orleans, Indianapolis and Atlanta are engaged in a spirited contest for the next convention.

### Electric Restorer for Men

Phosphonal restores every nerve in the body to its proper tension; restores vim and vitality. Premature decay and all sexual weakness averted at once. Phosphonal will make you a new man. Price \$3 a box, or two for \$5. Mailed to any address. The Seabell Drug Co., St. Catharines, Ont.

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You are at liberty to use my name at any time as I am convinced they are the best pills on the market for any form of heart disease."

Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills are 50 cents per box, or 3 boxes for \$1.25, at all dealers, or mailed direct on receipt of price by The T. Milburn Co., Limited, Toronto, Ont.

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