

THE LASH OF CIRCUMSTANCE
By HARRY IRVING GREENE
Author of
"YOSONDE OF THE WILDERNESS"
Illustrations by Magnus G. Kettner

It is now necessary that I take one step backward in my relation of this mysterious occurrence. I must go back to some time before the commission of the burglary and the entry of the Duc upon the scene, in order that you may have all the facts presented to you as they were to that detective when he took hold of the case. Having made this now start I think I can proceed chronologically to the end of the case, detailing events in the order in which they happened. I am now beginning a few months before the robbery:

"I was at the period of my life that I was not under a spell. Hopelessly, helplessly and blindly I fell in love with a woman whose beauty was so aggressive that no mortal man could ignore it, while to attempt to describe it would be almost to insult it. I was about twenty-five then and she was possibly four years older. My acquaintance with her began through the irrefragable Bruce.

I had dropped into the blue room of the Imperial for a bottle of ale and a cigar after the theater, when I ran into my cousin's arms. He beamed upon me.

"Delighted, old fellow, but it's time to come—I want to introduce you." He grasped my hand with the grip of a wrestler. Now, you have to exercise a little discretion before agreeing to meet Bruce's friends, and I glanced around furtively. You can never tell whether the next minute you will be shaking hands with the Chinese ambassador or the latest popular pugilist, so as the latter gentleman would express it, I sparr'd a moment for wind.

"To whom?" I inquired. He nodded toward a nearby table at which sat two women and a man.

"To Dick Edwards—but I guess you know him already—and the two ladies. But especially to Mrs. Dace. If you want good company, you need not go any further, for you won't find any better anywhere." I asked him whom the especial Mrs. Dace might be, and he laughed with what I thought was a faint undercurrent of significance beneath it.

"Oh, I haven't time to tell. Widow of somebody who died somehow, which is enough to know all at once. Main thing is she is as beautiful as a houri and gracious as an empress, but wise, my boy, wise, wise. Also apparently is a person of some means, amount of means represented by X, meaning unknown quantity; source of means problem in higher mathematics very difficult of solution. But remember this: If you begin to feel sentimental when you look at her, remember that life is only a joke and laugh at yourself; but when it comes to wine, remember that life is a mighty serious proposition and stay sober. Come on now." In another moment he was introducing me.

"Mrs. Dace and Miss Lyndon—Mr. Halliday. Cousin of mine through no fault of his, but nevertheless highly recommended by me. I believe you have met him, Dick, and will confirm me. Sorry I have to go, but he will fill my place and round out your party. Good night all," and he was gone.

I took my chair with a quick mental inventory of my new acquaintances. Miss Lyndon was tall, waspy and good looking in an indolent blond way; Edwards was a prosperous looking man of about thirty-five; Mrs. Dace positively startling. From a purely physical standpoint her beauty was gorgeous. But so wonderfully complex was it that it could no more be analyzed by one glance than can a painted masterpiece. While its general effect was to cause a gasp of delight at first sight, when you looked again you saw that its perfection was the result of the exquisite blending of many tints into an incomparable whole. Never had I seen a mouth so bewitching, lips so rich or smile so caressing. Her hair was changeable as

an opal, her brows wonderfully arched, her eyes royal blue and bordered by long lashes that screened them as ferns shade deep forest pools. She was wonderful. Fascinated by her beauty for a moment I sat silently as she calmly surveyed me, one perfect hand idly toying with a small gold purse that lay upon the table. Then far down in the sea depths of her blue eyes I saw faint amusement gathering and I drew myself together with a start. Edwards was explaining:

"You see, we had arranged for a theater party and there were to be four of us. Then at the last hour Mrs. Dace's escort became slightly indisposed and she came down alone and met Miss Lyndon and myself. We are now about to have something to eat, and possibly a wee bit to drink. I happened to see your cousin Bruce and hailed him to join us, but it seems he has an excuse. Then he providentially happened to spy you and impressed you into his place to complete the party. So everybody is happy once more."

While I am no such gabbler as Bruce, I think I can hold my own in any fairly well regulated conversation. I rose to the occasion. The wine oiled my tongue and Mrs. Dace's little applauding laughs and nods of approval spurred my wit. Edwards seemed content to remain comparatively quiet; Miss Lyndon was too indolent to care to do other than be entertained; Mrs. Dace was a sympathetic listener, and without effort I held the floor. I had read considerably, and the pigeon holes of my memory were well stocked with the aphorisms of the sages. Through the simple effort of recollection I became philosopher, theologian, poet. To the soft patter of their applause I even soared to original heights. In the parlance of the stage, I made a hit. In fact when one o'clock came and with it the intimation from Mrs. Dace that she must depart, it was only after a little sigh that reached my ears alone, and a flash from her wonderful eyes that quickly hid themselves behind the screening lashes as I looked deep into

my hair without pants secretly philosophized by the knowledge that the gods won't allow us to be in their debt, and when man wins and dines with woman he must pay for it with the glistening jewels of his brow. We prepared to depart.

Edwards paved the way for me. "Mrs. Dace lives at the Arcadia, which is not more than a mile from your house. You can take her there, step back in your carriage and be home ten minutes later. Miss Lyndon and I go in another direction, and leave you to your pleasant homeward ride. Of course we must all meet again. It will require another evening to talk this one over."

We bade them good night, and hailing a carriage, I assisted my companion into it. The rather long ride homeward still lingers in my mind as a pleasant dream. The gentle swaying of the carriage as the rubber tires rolled noiselessly over the boulevard lulled us into half confidences. She told me quite a few things about herself. Her husband, an Englishman, had been in some diplomatic service in the orient, had died a year before, and she had now come back to her birthplace on matters of business. Unreservedly, she seemed to accept me as a thorough man of the world, and even did me the flattery to repeat some of my witticisms of the evening and laugh over them for a moment the second time. When I say that I was charmed I think I have expressed it.

In front of the formidable entrance to the building where she resided I assisted her to alight, and she thrust out her fingers which I took eagerly. The physical contact thrilled me from head to toe and the enchantment of her smile enthralled me. "You have entertained me delightfully. I feel flattered to have met you," she murmured. "And since you are a busy man by day, I hope you will call and see me some evening when you can think of nothing else to do. You can reach me over the phone at almost any time. I hope you will not forget me."

That anyone once seeing her could ever forget her! Nothing could be more ridiculous than the thought. I lightly laughed the idea to scorn as I bent over her hand. "Mrs. Dace, the old Roman general reported to his emperor, 'I came, I saw, I conquered.' To you I must report somewhat differently. I came, I saw, I am conquered. I will pay you my tributes very soon. Until then life will be a necessity instead of a pleasure."

She tripped up the entrance steps and from their top sent me a flutter of her handkerchief and a flashing smile that made my blood leap as she vanished behind the heavy door. Back into the carriage I climbed and went home in an exhilaration of spirits that the wine did not account for. The scene had been cast and was being held wide to receive. Unconsciously the fish wiggled on.

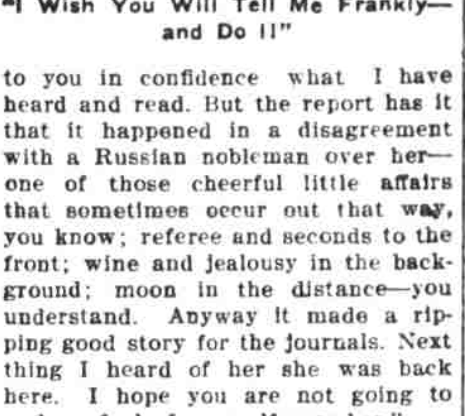
The next day I happened to see Bruce. In the course of our conversation I casually asked him what he knew of my companion of the night before, and he began digging his fingers into his head as though trying to scratch out an answer. Presently it came:

"Let's see. I don't know that I can tell you very much—you know I never paid any particular attention to her," he began in a quizzical glance at me. "Still, if you will agree to keep it a family secret, I might remember a few things. Promise, honest Injun!"

as a girl, and people forgave her parentage on that account. She eloped out of school with a more or less account Englishman named Dace, who afterwards got into the service of his government over in India or some other outlandish place on the back of the map. He died with his boots on.

"How was he killed?" I inquired. Bruce grew a trifle more serious.

"Well, now, that is something I am no authority upon. I can only repeat what Edwards was explaining:



"I Wish You Will Tell Me Frankly—and Do It!"

to you in confidence what I have heard and read. But the report has it that it happened in a disagreement with a Russian nobleman over her—one of those cheerful little affairs that sometimes occur out that way, you know; referee and seconds to the front; wine and jealousy in the background; moon in the distance—you understand. Anyway it made a ripping good story for the journals. Next thing I heard of her she was back here. I hope you are not going to make a fool of yourself over her."

His general tone had slightly irritated me, but the last remark positively nettled. "No; I think one in the family is enough. I forgot—she slipped the thrust aside in his usual smooth way, laughing.

"I guess that's right. Come to think of it, I never did know you to make a fool of yourself over anything. That does seem to be my specialty, doesn't it? But while I give you credit for having a better balanced head than I have, I'll tell you what I do in certain cases. When I get up against a proposition like cocaine in wine, or a woman like Mrs. Dace, I run for the fence. They are too blamed seductive to fool with and I don't take any chances with them. She has got the beauty and graces of all the mythological goddesses combined, but that does not count for everything. If I remember rightly, those mythological goddesses were a pretty bad lot."

With the instinctive desire that Clare had possessed to fly to his defense, I now felt myself surging to Mrs. Dace's. But I held myself in leash. "Even assuming for the sake of argument that I should desire to make a fool of myself over her, what possible object could she have in encouraging me to such idleness?" I asked. He puckered up his mouth and thrust his hands deep in his pockets.

"Well, now, that is one of the funny things about women. Of course we don't know much about them, but we do know this: We know that the only reason they care for us is because they can't get anything better. If the gods came to earth, the only thing left for man to do would be to cast himself like swine into the sea. And therein is where we differ from woman-kind. Man doesn't want angels; plain mortal woman—provided she is not too plain, of course—is good enough for him. But inasmuch as she can't achieve the gods, on this earth at least, she turns to man as the next best substitute. Now you are a strapping young fellow, good looking and all that, and such men have always interested women from the beginning. But remember, there are women and women. Take Clare, for instance. She is beautiful, too, and keeps herself looking as attractive as possible in order to make people like her. Yet she is as harmless as a butterfly. Some others aren't. You ought to know something of the species before you pick up a thing just because it is gaudy. You might get stung."

Absolutely without information concerning her beyond what Bruce himself had confided in me, half angry at myself that I should take the trouble to answer him, I nevertheless yielded to my impulse to defend her. With considerable emphasis I told him that I should refuse to believe any insinuations against her until I had positive knowledge of their truth. He listened silently, growing suddenly sober at my warmth, and when I had finished addressed me with a mollifying pat upon the back.

"Whew! I didn't think you were going to get so warmed up over a little thing like that. But you may be sure I have no desire to disparage your lady. I told you to start with that I knew almost nothing about her except by hearsay, and you know as well as I do what that sort of evidence is worth. They won't listen to it in law. She may be pure gold for all I know; but I was just warning you to keep your guard up until you have fainted her out. But now I'll tell you something which I do know to be a fact. If you expect to hold a princess, you have got to be a prince of good fellows yourself and go out and buy her a new castle every few days. Furthermore, in this case you are going to run up against a real dragon." I smiled.

casual. But Bruce seemed very much in earnest.

"Well, you won't find this one any fairy tale beast that you can chop up with a tin sword. He is an up-to-date, high-geared, sixty-horse power, millimetric juggernaut, and you had better keep out of his way or you'll get smashed."

"And the dragon is who?"

"Richard Mackay, hoodler prince and political boss who was indicted by the grand jury in connection with that thirty-million dollar franchise grab from the city; and who by some means unknown to me escaped the cell that he ought to garnish," he shot over his shoulder as he turned away.

"Thank you ever so much," I retorted.

(To Be Continued)

Explanation of Colors of Leaves.
In extremely moist atmosphere the color of the leaves are not usually very bright, as in England. And in very dry climates the leaves dry up suddenly, and their skin, which is very thick to prevent the escape of moisture, is not sufficiently transparent to allow the color to be seen beneath. In regions where the autumn foliage is most vivid we find that an average season produces the most exquisite colors. Neither a very dry nor a very wet summer will result in much brilliancy.

Marriage Made Easy.
Gréna Green, Scotland, became famous for its celebration of irregular marriages. For many years the average number was five hundred. The ceremony consisted only of an admission, before witnesses, by the couple that they were husband and wife, this being sufficient to constitute a valid marriage. After this the officiating functionary (for many years a blacksmith), together with two witnesses, signed the marriage certificate.

Origin of the Bath Towel.
A towel manufacturer found that his machinery was not working right and that his towels were suffering in vast tangling of the threads. While adjusting the machine he used one of the damaged towels to dry his hands. He found it pleasantly absorbent, and from the idea to which that gave rise was born the bath towel and a fortune to the patentee.

Not for Her.
The verger of a large church, seeing an old woman in one of the seats reserved for some important persons, beckoned her to come out. But just at that moment the organ started playing. The old woman, never having been in a church containing an organ, startled him and the congregation by calling: "Ha, man, get somebody younger; my dancing days are past."

One Member All Right.
Little Edith, aged three, was supposed to take her afternoon nap, a thing she dreaded very much. Her mother came into the room, but Edith pretended she was sleeping. Her mother could tell by the unsteadiness of her eyes that she wasn't sleeping, and said: "Mamma knows you aren't sleeping." "Well, I isn't sleeping, but my eyes is."

Without the Letter "E."
The following verse contains all the letters of the alphabet except the letter "e," which is the letter more frequently used than any other:
A jovial swain may rack his brain,
And tan his fancy's might;
To quiz is vain, for 'tis most plain,
That what I say is right.

Move On Now!
says a policeman to a street crowd, and whacks heads if it don't. "Move on now," says the big, harsh mineral pills to bowel congestion and suffering follows. Dr. King's New Life Pills don't bulldoze the bowels. They gently persuade them to right action, and health follows. 25c at all druggists.

The Perfect Laxative for Elderly People

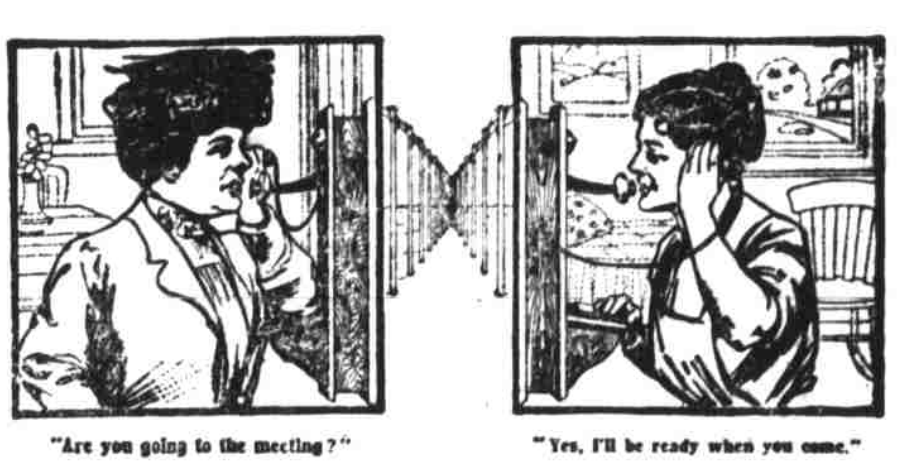
Age has its attractions no less than youth in a more serene and quieter life. But it is this very life of rest without sufficient exercise that brings with it those disorders that arise from inactivity. Chief of those are a chronic, persistent constipation.

Most elderly people are troubled in this way, with accompanying symptoms of belching, drowsiness after eating, headaches and general lassitude. Frequently there is difficulty of digesting even light food. Much mental trouble ensues, as it is hard to find a suitable remedy. First of all the advice may be given that elderly people should not use cathartic pills or powders, waters or any of the more violent purgatives. What they need, women as well as men, is a mild laxative tonic, one that is pleasant to take and yet acts without griping.

The remedy that fills all these requirements, and has in addition tonic properties that strengthen the stomach, liver and bowels, is Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin, which thousands of elderly people use, to the exclusion of all other remedies. Trustworthy people like Mr. H. W. Robinson, 100 W. Divine St., Columbia, S. C., and Mrs. W. L. Shepard, Statesville, Ga., say they take it at regular intervals and in that way not only maintain general good health, but that they have not in years felt as good as they do now. You will do well to always have a bottle of it in the house. It is good for all the family.

Anyone wishing to make a trial of this remedy before buying it in the regular way of a druggist at fifty cents or one dollar a large bottle (family size) can have a sample bottle sent to the home free of charge by simply addressing Dr. W. B. Caldwell, 406 Washington St., Monticello, Ill. Your name and address on a postal card will do.

To Lonesome Women!



Women living on farms and in rural districts haven't time to seek and enjoy social pleasures. Distances are too great—the work is too urgent. When grown some and live when ruble of these pleasures.

The Rural Telephone

solves the problem. It enables women to talk with neighbors and friends and keep alive to the news of the day. Our free booklet tells how you can have a telephone in your home at small cost. Women living in the country should write for it. Address

Farmers Line Department
SOUTHERN BELL TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH COMPANY
192 South Pryor St., Atlanta, Ga.

Atlantic Coast Line

The Standard Railroad of the South. Ramifies the "Nation's Garden Spot." Through the States of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Florida.

FOUR FAMOUS TRAINS
"New York and Florida Special" (January to April)
"Florida and West Indian Limited"
"Palmetto Limited"
"Coast Line Florida Mail"

DINING CARS—a la carte service
All year round through car service from New York to both Port Tampa and Knights Key, connecting with steamships to and from Havana.

For beautifully illustrated booklets and copy of the "Purple Folder," address:
W. J. CRAIG, Passenger Traffic Manager, Wilmington, North Carolina.
T. C. WHITE, General Passenger Agent, Wilmington, North Carolina.

Our Big Four Clubbing Offer
The Greatest Subscription Bargain Ever Offered. Reading for the Entire Family.

THE FARMERS VOICE 1861 Bloomington, Illinois. Edited by ARTHUR J. BILL. Is a semi-monthly farm paper published for the purpose of reporting, interpreting and teaching agricultural truth for the benefit of all who are interested in better farms, better homes, better schools, better churches, and a better and more satisfying country life. It is edited from the field, and is closely associated with the farmers, the Farmers' Institutes, the Agricultural Colleges, Experiment Stations, and all other organizations devoted to country life progress.	THE FRUIT GROWER ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI. Edited by JAMES M. IRVINE. Is an illustrated National Farm Magazine for progressive farmers in all agricultural communities. It is authority on fruit culture and should be read by every farmer and gardener in America. If you expect to make a success of raising fruit it is necessary to have the best ideas of those who have succeeded. These will be found in every issue of The Fruit Grower.	WOMAN'S WORLD Chicago, Illinois. Edited by HERBERT KAUFMAN. Gives more reading matter for the money than any monthly magazine printed. In it you will find history, travel, science, invention, art, literature, drama, education, religion, and many useful departments of interest to almost every family. Such as cooking, fashion, health, work, dress, home decoration, etc. Woman's World is superior to most magazines selling for \$1.00 a year.
Three Magazines and The Semi-Weekly Observer for \$1.50, Value \$2.00	The Fruit Grower (month)..... \$1.00	The Woman's World (monthly)..... \$1.00
The Semi-Weekly Observer, one year..... \$1.00	The Farmers' Voice, one year (twice a month)..... 50c	Do Not Postpone Your Order
The Charlotte Semi-Weekly Observer	A Farm Paper as Well as a Newspaper.	Fill in Coupon, Clip out and Mail with Remittance.
Formerly The Semi-Weekly Observer was merely a reprint of The Daily Observer. Now it is also a FARM paper, but still carries all the news, condensed and made a continued story of world events from day to day. This news is gathered from all parts of the world and paid for by The Daily Observer. The political news is an impartial chronicle of the events of the week without regard to party or fact.	Send The Semi-Weekly Observer, The Fruit Grower, The Woman's World, TWELVE MONTHS..... \$1.50	To.....
*THE SEMI-WEEKLY OBSERVER, Charlotte, N. C.	Postoffice.....	R. F. D.....
	Amount Enclosed.....	