



The Stuff Heroes Are Made of

Confession is good for the soul—and my soul, being, as it is, susceptible to good influences, is no different than the general run of souls in my neighborhood. Hence this confession.

I realize that in confessing I am running a chance with my reputation and possibly with my complexion, inasmuch as I have not heard of confession being used as a first-aid in preserving the texture of the human hide.

If confession would benefit the complexion, wouldn't we be a homely race of people? All the bay rum in christendom wouldn't make us presentable; opticians would lose their trade and people would buy "dimmers" with their "meed of prosperity" until they went broke.

Fortunately, our hide is immune—yes or no—but before I start confessing I wish to state a gentleman friend of mine inveigled me and Shingle Creek Shorty into one of those moving picture places.

Ever have I tried to protect myself against this form of dissipation; these germ-breeding caverns of darkness and filth. Therefore, imagine my astonishment when I beheld on the screen scene after scene of unbridled splendor wherein a bunch of parasites cavorted regardless.

Across the silvered sheet struts a man who to my unpracticed eye seemed to have but one ambition in life. At the slightest opportunity he would bend over gracefully to suck at a lady's wrist. At first I thought he was trying to see what time it was by the lady's wrist watch, and I would still be of that opinion if Shorty, who used to be up society, hadn't told me that the parasites have that habit because time hangs heavy on their hands—having nothing else to do.

The hero of the piece got his start in life by tapping a man over the head, going through his clothes and relieving him of his valuables. The man robbed was no good, so I guess it was all right according to the bourgeois psychology, although we think it all wrong.

He makes a perfect getaway, under an assumed name, and then he runs into a lad who knows something about horses. They employ themselves betting on horses, and he clears a hundred thousand by the sweat of their brow. Again he makes a getaway.

Next he invests their capital in a gambling enterprise, a business proposition, and again he clears a million (and the law) in a "corner on cotton" deal without doing anything to earn the money. It is after getting his hands on this "jack" that he saves the lady from drowning and starts sucking her wrist. He gets caught up with by the man he rapped over the head, and that worthy proceeds to return the compliment; puts our hero in the hospital and commits suicide.

The ends of justice met!

Our hero recovers, reforms, and takes another suck at her wrist. And the play ends too soon (in an inspiring fade-out)—too soon for the audience to see our hero looking for a job.

Well, anyway, our hero by this time is well along in years. It's too late for him to start working for a living; besides, what's the use of working when you have a million dollars and a wrist? Too late!

By the way, I was going to do some confessing. It's too late now. The column is finished, and besides, the editor won't stand for any of that stuff—but

If we wanted to be mean we could put in a board bill against these heroes for a thousand years' board. We might be able to collect it, too. But, oh, well, if we couldn't, we could at least get a job as an umpire in baseball.

Ho hum!

You have nothing to break but your chains.

—T-Bone Slim.