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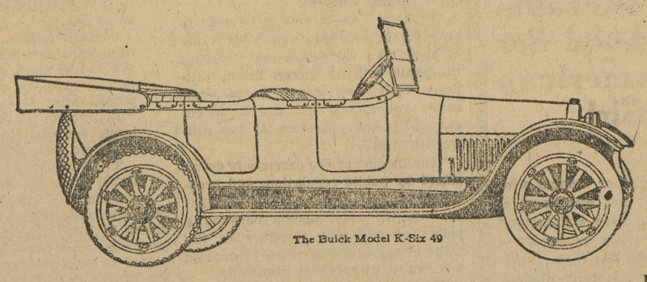

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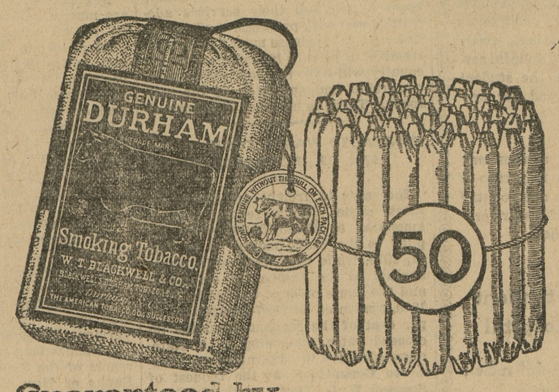

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TOBACCO

A Happy Thought

By GEORGE ELMER COBB

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Vernon Clyde was learning how to become a banker. He had put in two years in the minor capacities necessary to a routine apprenticeship and had graduated finally into the credit department of the Empire National. Then Clyde fell in love with Naomi Russell, a stenographer in the transit division, and hoping for an increase in salary and that Naomi would continue to love and wait for him about comprised the main activities in his career.

"Naomi is sensible," he told a friend, "and I've got to show up with a little home before she will marry me."

"Then you've got a definite object in life to work for," encouraged his adviser.

"Wish I could make some extra money," said Clyde. "You see, there won't be much of a raise in my salary for two years."

Clyde was an all around favorite with his fellow workers and with those of its patrons who chanced to come in contact with him. These were quite numerous, for whenever a visiting bank man or a client wanted information he was invariably sent to Clyde, who was always accommodating, exerted himself to do his best, and was so prompt and reliable in his investigation that one of the vice presidents singled him out for any confidential work he had.

One day an assistant receiving teller appeared at Clyde's desk with a dusky-hued, bright-eyed little man who looked forlornly all at sea as to his surroundings. He had a pass book on a savings bank in a remote Minnesota town, showing that he had deposited something over three hundred dollars in that institution.

"He don't understand nor write a word of English," explained the teller. "I've tried the foreign department where they talk fifteen languages, but none of them seem to hit him. From his gestures I assume that he wants to get some money on that Minnesota account, but of course identification is necessary. See, he does that all the time—shows his left hand as if trying to indicate something."

The teller departed and Clyde studied his visitor. There was a lost, eager expression in the eyes of the little dark man. Abruptly Clyde got an idea. He wetted a piece of blotting pad with ink, pressed his thumb into it, then made an impression on a clean sheet of paper and looked inquiringly at his client, who at once was all smiles, nodding his head vigorously and made his own thumb mark for Clyde on a fragment of paper, Clyde pointed to a clock, ran his finger four times around its dial and held up as many fingers.

"In four days, understand?" he questioned the stranger, who nodded assent

At the end of that time the little man showed up, this time with a man who could act as an interpreter. In the meantime Clyde had carried out his happy thought, had sent the thumb mark to the Minnesota bank and had received a reply stating that the thumb mark answered to their identification of one Netro Vladis, who had three hundred dollars on deposit with them, and if they found also a small wen upon his left ear, they need not fear to cash the deposit book.

The wen was discovered, Vladis given fifty dollars which he asked for, and with the balance he opened up a checking account. Vladis looked proud and important as he was given a check book, and for two or three days he would draw a check in the morning, but return the amount in the afternoon, enjoying the novelty of signing with a cross and showing the thumb mark and the wen on his ear.

One day there was great excitement in the institution when it was discovered that some clever thief, taking advantage of the absence of one teller, when the other teller was busy, had inserted some kind of a hooked instrument through the window and had departed with twelve packages of fifty-dollar bills, but no clew left as to the clever criminal.

The next morning when Clyde reached the bank he found Vladis, wild eyed and excited, waiting for him. He was amazed when the little man drew from his pocket a number of paper bands each marked five thousand dollars and each bearing the initials of the teller, who had been robbed. It appeared that Vladis had leased a room behind his little fruit store to two men, had found the bands in their waste basket and, familiar with the bands from having drawn money several times, his suspicions were aroused. Very quietly Clyde left the bank with Vladis and accompanied by two of the special detectives of the institution, and within an hour all except a trifle of the sixty thousand dollars was recovered.

The bank fairly overwhelmed Vladis by presenting him with a thousand dollars. As to Clyde, the vice president learned of his love for Naomi Russell and their mutual longing for a home. At the next meeting of the directors of the bank it was decided that a neat little bungalow that had come into possession of the institution should be given to Clyde, and so this helpful friend of rich and poor alike acquired a royal reward.

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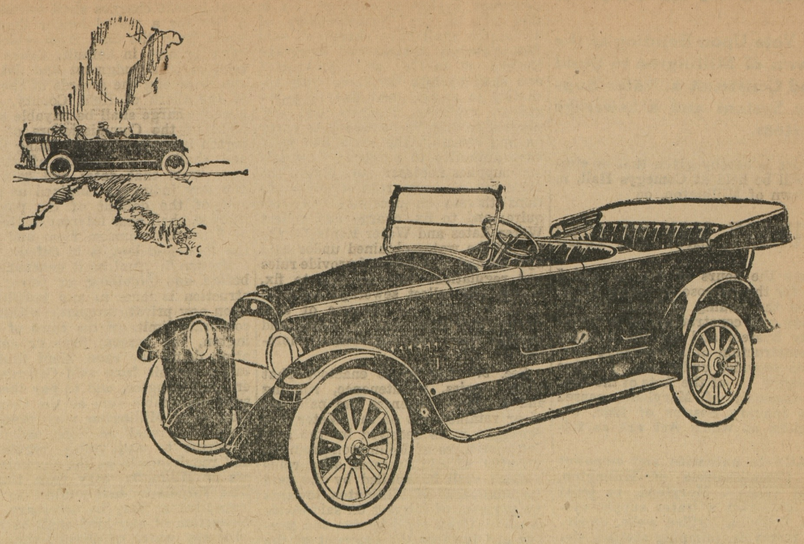

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