

## SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I-Thomas K. Barnes, wealthy New Yorker, on a walking trip through New England, is caught in a storm miles from his destination. At a rough New England, is caught in a orm miles from his destination. At a ossroads point he meets a girl in the me plight. While they discuss the sit-tion an automobile, sent to meet the rl, arrives and Barnes is given a lift to art's tavern, while the girl is taken to her destination, which she tells arnes is a place called Green Fancy.

CHAPTER II—At the tavern Barnes falls in with a stranded troupe of "barn-storming" actors, headed by Lyndon Rushcroft, and becomes interested in

CHAPTER III—As the storm grows, Barnes finds himself worrying over the safety of the girl, traveling over the mountain roads at what he considers dangerous speed. He learns that Green Fancy is something of a house of mystery, Two mounted men leave the tavern in a manner which arouses Barnes' curiosity.

"Kind o' curious about 'em?" he drawled.

"It never entered my mind until this instant to be curious," said Barnes,

"Well, it entered their minds about an hour ago to be curious about you," said the other.

## CHAPTER IV.

An Extraordinary Chambermaid, a Midnight Tragedy, and a Man Who Said "Thank You."

Miss Thackeray was "turning down" his bed when he entered his room after bidding his new actor friends good night. He was staggered and somewhat abashed by the appearance of Miss Thackeray. She was by no means dressed as a chambermaid should be, nor was she as dumb. On the contrary, she confronted him in the choicest raiment that her wardcheery and exceedingly incompetent. It was her costume that shocked him. Not only was she attired in a lownecked, rose-colored evening gown, liberally bespangled with tinsel, but she wore a vast, top-heavy picture hat Jones' voice rose above the clamour. whose crown of black was almost wholly obscured by a gorgeous white feather that once must have adorned ing angrily. "What's up? This is a the king of all ostriches. She was not at all his idea of a chambermaid. He What's the matter with him?" started to back out of the door with the wrong room by mistake.

but I just had to write a few letters. I Easy now! Eas-ee!" am Miss Thackeray. This is Mr. Barnes, I believe."

He bowed, still quite overcome.

regular uniform. I'm starting a new style for chambermaids. Did it paralyze you to find me here?" "I couldn't believe my eyes." She abandoned her easy, careless manner. A look of mortification came into her eyes as she straightened up-

and faced him. Her voice was a trifle husky when she spoke again, after a other one." "You see, Mr. Barnes, these are the

only duds I have with me. It wasn't

"You See, Mr. Barnes, These Are the Only Duds I Have With Me."

necessary to put on this hat, of course, but I did it simply to make the character complete. I might just as well make beds and clean washstands in a picture hat as in a low-necked gown, so man's lips, and he smiled. here I am."

of twenty-three or four, not unlike her father in many respects.

"I call it rather good luck to have and Italian, and tried again with no

got away with the only dress in the lot that cost more than tuppence," she said, smiling again. "Lord knows what would have happened to me if they had dropped down on us at the end of the first act. I was the beggar's daughter, you see-absolutely in rags. Glad to have met you. I think you'll find

She closed the door behind her, leaving him standing in the middle of the room, perplexed but amused.

everything nearly all right. Good night,

"By George," he said to himself, still staring at the closed door, "they're wonders, all of them. I wish I could do something to help them out of-He sat down abruptly on the edge of the bed and pulled his wallet from his pocket. He set about counting the bills, a calculating frown in his eyes. Then he stared at the ceiling, summing up. "I'll do it," he said, after a moment of mental figuring. He told off a half dozen bills and slipped them into his pocket. The wallet sought its usual resting place for the night: Under a pillow.

He was healthy and he was tired. Two minutes after his head touched the pillow he was sound asleep.

He was aroused shortly after midnight by shouts, apparently just outside his window. A man was calling in a loud voice from the road below: an instant later he heard a tremendous pounding on the tavern door.

Springing out of bed, he rushed to the window. There were horses in front of the house several of themand men on foot moving like shadows among them.

Turning from the window, he unocked and opened the door into the robe contained, and she was bright and | tall. Some one was clattering down

the narrow staircase. The bolts on the front door shot back with resounding force, and there came the hoarse jumble of excited voices as men crowded through the entrance. Putnam

"Keep quiet! Do you want to wake everybody on the place?" he was sayfine time o' night to be- Good Lord!

"Telephone for a doctor, Put-damn' an apology for having blundered into quick! This one's still alive. The other one is dead as a door nail up at "Come right in," she said cheerily. Jim Conley's house. Git ole Doc "Til soon be through. I suppose I James down from Saint Liz. Bring should have done all this an hour ago, him in here, boys. Where's your light?

Barnes waited to hear no more. His blood seemed to be running ice cold as he retreated into the room and be-"You needn't be scared," she cried, gan scrambling for his clothes. The observing his confusion. "This is my thing he feared had come to pass. Disaster had overtaken her in that wild, senseless dash up the mountain road. He was cursing half aloud as he dressed, cursing the fool who drove that machine and who now was perhaps dying down there in the taproom. "The other one is dead as a door nail," kept running through his head-"the

A dozen men were in the taproom gathered around two tables that had been drawn together. The men about the table, on which was stretched the figure of the wounded man, were undoubtedly natives: Farmers, woodsmen or employees of the tavern. At a word from Putnam Jones they opened up and allowed Barnes to advance to the side of the man.

"See if you c'n understand him, Mr. Barnes," said the landlord. Perspiration was dripping from his long, rawboned face. "And you, Bacon-you and Dillingford hustle upstairs and get a mattress off'n one of the beds. Stand at the door there, Pike, and don't let any woman in here. Go away, Miss Thackeray! This is no place for you." Miss Thackeray pushed her way past the man who tried to stop her

and joined Barnes. "It is the place for me," she said sharply. "Haven't you men got sense, enough to put something under his head? Where is he hurt? Get that cushion, you. Stick it under here when I lift his head. Oh, you poor thing!

We'll be as quick as possible. There!' The man's eyes were closed, but at the sound of a woman's voice he opened them. The hand with which he clutched at his breast slid off and seemed to be groping for hers. His breathing was terrible. There was blood at the corners of his mouth, and more oozed forth when his lips parted

in an effort to speak. With a courage that sumprised even herself, the girl took his hand in hers. It was wet and warm. She did not dare look at it.

"Merci, madame," struggled from the

Barnes leaned over and spoke to him She was a tall, pleasant-faced girl in French. The dark, pain-stricken eyes closed, and an almost imperceptible shake of the head signified "I am very sorry," he said lamely, that he did not understand. Evidently "I have heard something of your mis- he had acquired only a few of the fortunes from your father and-the simple French expressions. Barnes others. It's really hard luck." | had a slight knowledge of Spanish

better results. German was ms last resort, and he knew he would fall once more, for the man obviously was not Teutonic.

The bloody lips parted, however, and the eyes opened with a piteous, appealing expression in their depths. It wasapparent that there was something he shootin', or was there two of 'em, one wanted to say, something he had to say before he died. He gasped a dozen words or more in a tongue utterly unknown to Barnes, who bent closer to catch the feeble effort. It was he who now shook his head; with a groan the sufferer closed his eyes in despair. He choked and coughed violently an instant later.

"Get some water and a towel," cried Miss Thackeray, tremulously. She was very white, but still clung to the man's hand. "Be quick! Behind the bar.'

Barnes unbuttoned the coat and revealed the blood-soaked white shirt. "Better leave this to me," he said in her ear. "There's nothing you can do.

He's done for. Please go away." "Oh, I sha'n't faint-at least, not yet. Poor fellow! I've seen him upstairs and wondered who he was. Is he really going to die?"

"Looks bad," said Barnes, gently opening the shirt front. Several of the craning men turned away sud-

"Who is he, Mr. Jones?"

"He is registered as Andrew Paul, from New York. That's all I know. The other man put his name down as Albert Roon. He seemed to be the boss and this man a sort of servant, far as I could make out. They never talked much and seldom came downstairs. They had their meals in their room.

"There is nothing we can do," said Barnes, "except try to stanch the flow of blood. He is bleeding inwardly, I'm afraid. It's a clean wound, Mr. Jones. Like a rifle shot, I should say."

"That's just what it is," said one of the men, a tall woodsman. "The feller | what your real profession is. That's who did it was a dead shot, you c'n bet on that. He got t' other man square through the heart."

"Lordy, but this will raise a rumpus," groaned the landlord, "We'll have detectives an'-"

"I guess they got what was comin' to 'em," said another of the men. "What's that? Why, they was ridin' peaceful as could be to Spanish Falls. What do you mean by sayin' that, Jim Conley? But wait a minute! How does it happen that they were up near your dad's house? That certainly

ain't on the road to Span-' "Spanish Falls nothin'! They wasn't oin' to Spanish Calls any more'n I am at this minute. They tied their horses up the road just above our house," said young Conley, lowering his voice out of consideration for the feelings 'leven o'clock, I reckon. I was comin' home from singin' school up at Number Ten, an' I passed the hosses hitched to the fence. Naturally I stopped, curious like. There wasn't no one around, fer as I could see, so I thought I'd take a look to see whose hosses they were. I thought it was derned funny, them hosses bein' there at that time o' night an' no one around. mighty queer to me. Course, thinks I, they might belong to somebody visitin' in there at Green Fancy, so I thought I'd-"

"Green Fancy," said Barnes, start-

"Was it up that far?" demanded

"They was hitched jest about a hundred yards below Mr. Curtis' propity, on the off side o' the road. I hadn't any more'n got to our front gate when I heard some one running in the road up there behind me. 'Fore I knowed what was happenin', bang went a gun. I almost jumped out'n my boots. The runnin' had stopped. The horses was rarin' an' tearing' so I thought I'd-" "Where'd the shot come from?" demanded Jones.

"Up the road some'eres, I couldn't swear just where. Must'a' been up by the road that cuts in to Green Fancy. So I thought I'd hustle in an' see if pa was awake, an' git my gun. Jest then pa stuck his head out'n the winder an' yelled what the hell's the matter. You betcher life I sung out who I was mighty quick, 'cause pa's purty spry with a gun an' I didn't want him takin' me fer burglars sneaking around the house. While we wuz talkin' there one of the hosses started our way lickety-split, an' in about two seconds it went by us. It was purty dark, but we see plain as day that there was a man in the saddle, bendin' low over the hoss' neck and shoutin' to it. We waited a couple o' minutes, wonderin' what to do, an' listenin' to the hoss gittin' furder and furder away in the direction of the cross-roads. Then 'way down there by the pike we heerd another s' ot. Right there an' then pa said he'd put on his clothes an' we'd set out to see what it was all about.

"Well, pa come out with my gun an' his'n an' we walks up to where I seen the hosses. Shore 'nough, one of 'em was still hitched to the fence, an' t'other was gone. We stood around a minute or two examinin' the hoss an then pa says let's go up the road a ways an' see if we c'n see anything. by gosh, we hadn't gone moren' fifty feet afore we come plumb on a man layin' in the middle of the road. Pa shook him an' he didn't let out a sound. He was warm, but deader'n a tombstone. I wuz fer leavin' him there till we c'd git the coroner, but pa says no. We'd carry him down to our porch an' lay him there, so's he'd be out o' danger. I jumps on Polly an' lights out fer here, Mr. Jones, to telephone up to Saint Liz fer the sheriff an' the coroner, not givin' a dang what I run into on the way. Polly shied somethin' terrible jest afore we got to the nike an' I come derned near bein'

throwed. An' right there 'side the rone was this feller, att in a heap. Thinks I, you poor cuss, you must 'a' tried to stop that feller on hossback an' he plunked you. That accounted fer the second shot. The thing that worries all of us is did the same man do the waitin' down the cross-roads?"

"Must have been two," said Jones, thoughtfully. "The same man couldn't have got down there ahead of him, that's sure. Did anybody go up to Green Fancy to make inquiries?"

"Twasn't necessary. Mr. Curtis heard the shootin' an' jest before we left he sent a man out to see what it was all about. The old skeezicks that's been drivin' his car lately come down half-dressed. He said nothin' out of the way had happened up at Green Fancy.'

"It's most mysterious," said Barnes, glancing round the circle of awed faces. "There must have been some one lying in wait for these men, and with a very definite purpose in mind."

"Strikes me," said Jones, "that these two men were up to some kind of dirty work themselves, else why did they say they were goin' to Spanish Falls? They were queer actin' men, I'll have to say that."

His eyes met Barnes' and there was a queer light in them. "You don't happen to know anything about this, do you, Mr. Barnes?" he de-

## CHAPTER V.

manded, suddenly,

The Farm-Boy Tells a Ghastly Story and an Irishman Enters.

Barnes stared, "What do you mean?" he demanded sharply. "I mean just what I said. What do you know about this business?" "How should I know anything about

"Well, we don't know who you are, nor what you're doing up here, nor why I ask the question."

"I see," said Barnes, after a moment. He grasped the situation and he admitted to himself that Jones had cause for his suspicions. "It has occurred to you that I may be a detective or a secret service man, isn't that the case? Well, I am neither. Did you know any more about these two men. Mr. Jones, than you know about me?"

"I don't know anything about 'em.' "What was their business?"

"Mr. Roon was lookin' for a place to bring his daughter who has consumption. a didn't want to take her a potive community,

he said, an' so he was lookin' for a quiet place where she wouldn't be associatin' with lungers all the time. That was his business, Mr. Barnes, an' of the helpless man. "It was about I guess you'd call it respectable, wouldn't you?"

"Perfectly. But why should he be troubled by my presence here if-" Miss Thackeray put an end to the

discussion in a most effectual manner. "Oh, for the Lord's sake, cut it out!" Wait till he's dead, can't you?" she whispered fiercely. "You've got all the time in the world to talk, and he hasn't more than ten minutes left to breathe unless that rube doctor gets here pretty soon. I think he's going



pered.

now. Keep still, all of you. Is he breathing, Mr. Barnes? That awful cough just now seemed to-" Her eyes were fixed on the still face. "Why-why, how tightly he holds my hand! I can't get it away-he must be alive, Mr. Barnes. Where is that silly doctor?"

Barnes unclasped the rigid fingers of the man called Andrew Paul, and, shaking his head sadly, drew her away from the improvised bier. He and the shivering Mr. Dillingford conducted her to the dining room, where a single kerosene lamp gave out a feeble, rather ghastly light.

"Would you like a little brandy?" inquired Barnes, as she sat down limply in the chair he pulled out for her. "I have a flask upstairs in my-"

"I never touch it," she said. "I'm all right. My legs wabble a little but-Sit down Mr. Barnes. I've got something to say to you and I'd better say it now, because it may come in pretty handy for you later on. Don't let

those women come in here, Dilly, "This afternoon I walked up in the woods back of the tavern to go over some lines in a new piece we are to do

later on-God knows when! I could see the house from where I was sit-Roon's windows were plainly ting. visible. I saw Roon standing at a window looking toward the cross-roads with a pair of field-glasses. Every once in awhile he would turn to Paul, who stood beside him with a notebook, and say something to him. Paul wrote it down. Then he would look again, turning the glasses this way and that. Suddenly my eyes almost popped out of my head. Paul had gone away from the window. He came back and he had a couple of revolvers in his hands. They stood there for a few minutes carefully examining the weapons and reloading them with fresh cartridges. Just as I was about to start down to the house-it was a little after six o'clock, and getting awfully dark and overcast-Roon took up the glasses again. He seemed to be excited and called his companion. Paul grabbed the glasses and looked down the road. They both became very much excited, pointing and gesticulating, and taking turn about with the glasses."

"About six o'clock, you say?" said Barnes, greatly interested.

"It was a quarter after six when I got back to the house. I spoke to Mr. Bacon about what I'd seen and he said he believed they were German spies, up to some kind of mischief along the Canadian border. Then about half an hour later you came to the tavern. I saw Roon sneak out to the head of the stairs and listen to your conversation with Jones when you registered. That gave me an idea. It was you they were watching the road for."

Barnes held up his hand for silence. "Listen," he said in a low voice. "I will tell you who they were looking for." As briefly as possible he recounted his experience with the strange young woman at the crossroads. "From the beginning I have connected this tragedy with the place called Green Fancy. I'll stake my last penny that they have been hanging around here waiting for the arrival of that young woman. They knew she was coming and they doubtless knew what she was bringing with her. What do you know about Green Fancy?"

He was vastly excited. His active imagination was creating all sorts of possibilities and complications, depredations and intrigues.

Bacon was the one who answered. "People live up there and since we've been here two, or three men visitors have come down from the place to sample our stock of wet goods. I talked with a couple of 'em day before yesterday. They were out for a horseback ride and stopped here for a mug of ale.

"Were they foreigners?" inquired Barnes,

"If you want to call an Irishman a foreigner. I'll have to say one of them was. He had a beautiful brogue. The other was an American, I'm sure. Yesterday they rode past here with a couple of swell-looking women. I saw them turn up the road to Green Fancy."

The arrival of four or five men, who stamped into the already crowded hallway from the porch outside, claimed the attention of the quartette. Among them was the doctor who, they were soon to discover, was also the coroner of the county. A very officious deputy sheriff was also in the group.

Mr. Jones called out from the doorway: "Mr. Barnes, you're wanted in

"All right," he responded.

The doctor had been working over the prostrate form on the tables. As Barnes entered the room, he looked up and declared that the man was dead. "This is Mr. Barnes," said Putnam

Jones, indicating the tall traveler with a short jerk of his thumb. "I am from the sheriff's office," said the man who stood beside the doctor. The rest of the crowd evidently had been ordered to stand back from the

fore?" "Not until he was carried in here an hour ago."

tables. "Did you ever see this man be-

"What's your business up here, Mr. Barnes?" "I have no business up here. I just

happened to stroll in this evening." "Well," said the sheriff darkly, "I guess I'll have to ask you to stick around here till we clear this business up. We don't know you an'- Well, we can't take any chances. You understand, I reckon."

"I certainly fall to understand, Mr. Sheriff. I know nothing whatever of this affair and I intend to continue on my way tomorrow morning."

"Well, I guess not. You got to stay here till we are satisfied that you don't know anything about this business. That's all."

"Am I to consider myself under arrest, sir?"

"I wouldn't go so far as to say that. You just stick around here, that's all I got to say. If you're all right, we'll soon find it out. What's more, if you are all right you'll be willin' to stay. Do you get me?" "I certainly do. And I can now as-

sure you, Mr. Sheriff, that I'd like nothing better than to stick around here, as you put it. I'd like to help clear this matter up. In the meantime, you may readily find out who I am and why I am here by telegraphing to the mayor of New York city. This document, which experience has taught me to carry for just such an emergency as this, may have some weight with you." He opened his bill folder and drew forth a neatly creased sheet of paper. "Read it, please, and note the date, the signature, the official seal of the New York police department, and also the rather interesting silver print pasted in the lower left hand corner. I think you will agree that it is a good likeness of me.

Each year I take the precaution or having myself certified by the police department at home before venturing into unknown and perhaps unfriendly communities."

"Yes," said the sheriff dubiously; "but how do I know it ain't a forgery?" "You don't know, of course. But in case it shouldn't be a forgery and I am subjected to the indignity of arrest or even detention, you would have a nasty time defending yourself in a civil suit for damages. I shall remain here, as you suggest, but only for the purpose of aiding you in getting to the bottom of this affair."

Standing on Jim Conley's front porch a little after sunrise. Barnes

made the following declaration: "Everything goes to show that these men were up here for one of two reasons. They were either trying to prevent or to enact a crime. The latter is my belief. They were afraid of me. Why? Because they believed I was trailing them and likely to spoil their game. Gentlemen, those fellows were here for the purpose of robbing the place you call Green Fancy."

"What's that?" came a rich, mellow voice from the outskirts of the crowd. A man pushed his way through and confronted Barnes. He was a tall, good-looking fellow of thirty-five, and It was apparent that he had dressed in haste. "My name is O'Dowd, and I am a guest of Mr. Curtis at Green Fancy. Why do you think they meant to rob

his place?" "Well," began Barnes dryly, "it would seem that his place is the only one in the neighborhood that would bear robbing. My name is Barnes. Of course, Mr. O'Dowd, It is mere specu-

lation on my part." "But who shot the man?" demanded the Irishman. "He certainly wasn't winged by anyone from our place. Why, Lord love you, sir, there isn't a soul at Green Fancy who could shoot a thief if he saw one. This is Mr. De Soto, also a guest at Green Fancy. He will, I think, bear me out in upsetting your theory."

A second man approached, shaking his head xigorously. He was a thin, pale man with a singularly scholastic face. Quite an unprepossessing, unsanguinary person, thought Barnes.

"Mr. Curtis' chauffeur, I think it was, said the killing occurred just above this house," said he, visibly excited. "Green Fancy is at least a mile from here, isn't it? You don't shoot burglars a mile from the place they are planning to rob, do you?"

"I'll admit it's a bit out of reason." said Barnes. "The second man could only have been shot by some one who

was lying in wait for him." "Bedad," said O'Dowd, "it beats the devil. There's something big in this



"Bedad," Said O'Dowd, "It Beats the Devil."

thing, Mr. Barnes—something a long shot bigger than any of us suspects." "You'll find that it resolves itself into a problem for Washington to solve," said De Soto darkly. "Nothing local about it, take my word for it. These men were up to some international devilment. There'll be a stir in Washington over this, sure as anything."

"What time was it that you heard the shots up at Green Fancy?" ventured Barnes.

"Lord love you," cried O'Dowd, "we didn't hear a sound. Mr. Curtis, who has insomnia the worst way, poor devil, heard them and sent some one out to see what all the racket was about. The man, it seems, made such a devil of a racket when he came home with the news that the whole house was up in pajamas and peig-

noirs." "I think I have a slight acquaintance with the chauffeur," said Barnes. "He gave me the most thrilling motor ride I've ever experienced. Gad, I'll never forget It."

The two men looked at him, plainly

perplexed. "When was all this?" inquired De Soto.

"Early last evening. He picked up your latest guest at the corners, and she insisted in his driving me to the tavern before the storm broke. I've been terribly anxious about her. She must have been caught out in all that frightful-" "What's this you are saying, Mr.

Barnes?" cut in De Soto, frowning. "No guest arrived at Green Fancy last evening, nor was one expected." Barnes stared. "Do you mean to

say that she didn't get there, after

(To be continued next week)