George Barr McCutcheon

HOME AND FARM MAGAZINE SECTION SERIAL.

A Fool and His Money

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#### SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALLMENTS

In the opening installments of Fool and His Money," Geo. Barr McCutcheon's charming novel, serial rights for which have been specially obtained for the Home and Farm Magazine Section, we learn of John Bellamy Smart, the young man who is telling the story. He has just written his first novel, and at the same time has fallen heir to an immense fortune left him by his uncle. He is 35 years of age.

After a visit to London, Smart takes a trip on the River Danube. After finding an old-world town, he discovers an ancient castle, which he purchases from its owner, the Count. With his secretary, Poopendyke, he takes possession of the immense structure, which is supposed to be tenanted only by the caretaker and his family, the Schmicks. To Smart's amazement, the first night, he hears the cry of a baby.

Looking out at a balcony one night Smart sees the white figure of a woman silhouetted. He immediately begins a hunt for Schmick, the caretaker, to solve the mystery of who the woman may be. With the Schmicks he endeavor s to break down a heavily barred door into that section of the castle, but fails. The story continues:

(Continued From Last Week.)

HE Schmicks fairly glowed with Joy Afterwards Max informed me that the door was nearly six inches thick and often had withstood the assaults of

huge battering rams, back in the dim past when occasion induced the primal baron to seek safety in the east wing, which, after all, appears to have been the real, simon pure fortress. The west wing was merely a setting for festal amenities and was by no means feudal in its aspect or appeal. Here, as I came to know, the old barons received their friends and feasted them and made merry with the flagon and the horn of plenty; here the humble tithe payer came to settle his dues with gold and silver instead of with blood; here the little barons and baronesses romped and rioted with childish glee, and here the barons grew fat and gress and soggy with laziness and prosperity, and here they died in stupid quiescence. On the other side of that grim, staunch old door they simply went to the other extreme in every particular. There they killed their captives, butchered their enemies, and sometimes died

with the daggers of traitors in their shivering backs.

As we trudged back to the lower halls, defeated but none the less impressed by our failure to devastate our stronghold. I was struck by the awful barrenness of the surroundings. There suddenly came over me the shocking realisation: the "contents" of the castle, as set forth rather vaguely in the bill of sale, were not what I had been led to consider them. It had not occurred to me at the an inventory, and I had been too busy Kick him into the river. Or, better still, take more than a passing account of my belongings. In excusing myself for this thing to sit on or sleep in or cat from rather careless oversight, I can only say. Lock the doors, Conrad, and don't adthat during daylight hours the eastle mit any one without first consulting me.

was so completely stuffed with workBy Jove, I'd like to wring that rascal's men and their queer utensils that I neck. A Count! Umph! couldn't do much in the way of elimination, and by night it was so horribly black and lonesome about the place and and mops and timber that it was extremely hazardous to go prowling about, pointment and semewhat loudly returned so I preferred to remain in my own quarters, which were quite comfortable, ing and cosy in spite of the distance between points of convenience.

articles I had seen about the halls on are not forthcoming before noon tomormy first and second visits were no row, I'll file 'em off, so help me." longer in evidence. Two or three "They are yours to destroy, mein antique rags, for instance, were miss- herr, God knows," said he dismally

 at the lower end where we had stacked; ♦ a quantity of rare old furniture in order to make room for the workmen.

"Herr Schmick," said I, abruptly halting my party in the center of the hall, "what has become of the rugs that were here last week, and where is that pile of furniture we had back yonder?'

Rudolph allowed the lantern to swing behind his huge legs, intentionally I believe, and I was compelled to relieve you actually want to keep me out of him of it in order that we might extract that part of the castle," I exploded. ourselves from his shadow. I have never seen such a colossal shadow as the one

Old Conrad was not slow in answering.

"The gentleman called day before yesterday, mein herr, and took much away. They will return tomorrow for the remainder."

"Gentlement" I gasped. "Remainderf'

"The gentlemen to whom the Herr and gentlemen who are coming tomor-Count sold the rugs and chairs and row to pick out the--" "The gentlemen to whom the Herr chests and—''
''What!'' I roared. Even Poopen-

dyke jumped at this sudden exhibition of wrath. "Do you mean to tell me that these things have been sold and carried away without my knowledge or consent? I'll have the law-

Herr Poopendyke intervened. "They of property dated several weeks prior to your purchase, Mr. Smart. We had ing delinquencies to be laid to the late to let the articles go. You surely remember my speaking to you about it."

snapped, which was the truth. "Whywhy, I bought everything that the castle contained. This is robbery! What the dickens do you mean by-

Old Conrad held up his hands as if expecting to pacify me. I sputtered out the rest of the sentence, which really amounted to nothing.

"The Count has been selling off the lovely old pieces for the past six months, sir. Ach, what a sin! They have come here day after day, these furniture buyers, to take away the most priceless of our treasures, to sell them to the poor rich at twenty prices. I could weep I have wept, over the sacrifices. haven't I, Gretelf Eh, Rudolph? Buckets of tears have I shed, mein herr. Oceans of them. Time after time have I implored him to deny these rascally curio hunters, these blood-sucking-

"But listen to me," I broke in. "Do you mean to say that articles have been taken away from the castle since I came into possession?"

"Many of them, sir. Always with proper credentials, believe me. what a spendthrift he is! And his poor wife! Ach, Gott, how she must suffer. Nearly all of the grand paintings, the tapestries that came from France and Italy hundreds of years ago, the wonderful old bedstoads and tables that were here when the castle was new-all gone! And for mere songs, mein herr, -the cheapest of songs! I-I-'

"Please don't weep now, Herr Schmick," I made haste to exclaim, seeing lachrymose symptoms in his blear old eyes. Then I became firm once more. This knavery must cease, or I'd know the reason why. "The next man who comes here to cart away so much as a single piece is to be kicked out. Do you notify me and I'll do it. Why, if this

"Ach, he is of the noblest family in all the land," sighed old Gretel. "His the halls were so littered with tools grandfather was a fine man." I contrived to subdue my rage and disapto the topic from which we were drift-

"As for those beastly padlocks, I shall have them filed off tomorrow. Still I was vaguely certain that many give you warning, Conrad, if the keys

ing from the main hall, and there was "It is a pity to destroy fine old pad-locks-"

"Well, you wait and see," said I, howdy-dos to the sun. grimly.

His face beamed once more. "Ach, I I am to have remembered it in time."

"Confound you, Schmick, I believe

The four of them protested manfully, even Gretel.

"I have a plan, sir," said Britton. "Why not place a tall ladder in the the windows?"

"Splendid! That's what we'll do!" I cried enthusinstically, "And now let's go to bed! We will breakfast at eight, Mrs. Schmick. The early bird catches the worm, you know." "Will you see the American ladies

"Yes, I'll see them," said I, compressing my lips. "Don't let me over- lather in my shaving mug. sleep, Britton.

"I shan't, sir," said he.

Sleep evaded me for hours. What with the possible preximity of an undesirable famine neighbour, mysterious and clusive though she may prove to had bills of sale and orders for removal be, and the additional dread of dogs and babies, to say nothing of the amazowner of the place, and the prospect of a visit from coarse and unfeeling bar-"I don't remember anything," I bain-hunters on the morrow, it is really not surprising that I tossed about in my baronial bed, counting sheep backwards and forwards over hedges and fences until the vociferous cocks in the stable

enough, with the first peep through the decrepit window shutters I forgot to say that there are padlocks fell into a sound sleep. Britton got on the other side of the door, just as nothing but grunts from me until halfon this side. It will be of no use to past nine. At that hour he came into destroy these. The door still could not my room and delivered news that be forced. Mein Gott! How thankful aroused me more effectually than all the alarm clocks or alarm cocks in the world could have done,

"Get up, sir, if you please," he re-peated the third time. "The party of Americans is below, sir, rummaging about the place. They have ordered the workmen to stop work, sir, complaining of the benstly noise they make, and the courtyard and crawl in through one of dust and all that, sir. They have already selected half a dozen pieces and they have brought enough porters and carriers over in the boats to take the stuff away in-"

"Where is Poopendyke?" I cried, leaping out of bed. "I don't want to be shaved, Britton, and don't bother about the tub." He had filled my twentieth century portable tub, recently acquired, and was nervously creating a

"You look very rough, sir,"

"So much the better.

"Mr. Poopendyke is in despair sir. He has tried to explain that nothing is for sale, but the gentlemen say they are onto his game. They go right on yanking things about and putting their own prices on them and reserving them. They are perfectly delighted, sir, to have found so many old things they really want for their new houses.

"I'll-I'll put a stop to all this," I grated seeing red for an instant.

(To be Continued Next Week.)

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