

HOME AND FARM MAGAZINE SECTION SERIAL.

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A Fool and His Money

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALLMENTS.

In the opening installments of "A Fool and His Money," George 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. The story continues:

(Continued From Last Week.)

"IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN, Mr. Smart, what could have induced you to—" He got no further than this, and to my certain knowledge this unfinished reproof was the nearest he ever came to openly convicting me of asininity.

"Make yourself at home, old fellow," said I in some haste. I felt sorry for him. "We are going to be very cosy here."

"Cosy?" murmured he, blinking as he looked up, not at me, but at the frowning walls that seemed to penetrate the sky.

"I haven't explored those upper regions," I explained nervously, divining his thoughts. "We shall do it together, in a day or two."

"It looks as though it might fall down if we jostled it carelessly," he remarked, having recovered his breath.

"I am expecting masons at any minute," said I, contemplating the unstable stone crest of the northeast turret with some uneasiness. My face brightened suddenly. "The particular section of the castle is uninhabitable, I am told. It really doesn't matter if it collapses. Ah, Britton! Here you are, I see. Good morning."

Britton, a very exacting servant, looked me over critically.

"Your coat and trousers need pressing, sir," said he. "And where am I to get the hot water for shaving, sir?"

"Frau Schmick will supply anything you need, Britton," said I, happy on being able to give the information.

"It is not I as needs it, sir," said he, feeling of his smoothly shaven chin.

"Come in and have a look about the place," said I, with a magnificent sweep of my arm to counteract the feeling of utter insignificance I was experiencing at the moment. I could see that my faithful retinue held me in secret but polite disdain.

A day or two later the castle was swarming with workmen; the banging of hammers, the rasp of saws, the spattering of mortar, the crashing of stone and the fumes of charcoal crucibles extended to the remotest recesses; the tower of Babel was being reconstructed in the language of six or eight nations, and everybody was happy. I had no idea there were so many tinsmiths in the world. Every artisan in the town across the river seems to have felt it his duty to come over and help the men from Linz in the enterprise. There were so many of them that they were constantly getting in each other's way and quarreling over matters of jurisdiction with even more spirit than we might expect to encounter among the labor unions at home.

Poopendyke, in great distress of mind, notified me on the fourth day of rehabilitation that the cost of labor as well as living had gone up appreciably since our installation. In fact, it had doubled. He paid all of my

bills, so I suppose he knew what he was talking about.

"You will be surprised to know, Mr. Smart," he said, consulting his sheets, "that scrub-women are getting more here than they do in New York City, and I am convinced that there are more scrub-women. Today we had thirty new ones scrubbing the loggia on the gun-room floor, and they all seem to have apprentices working under them. The carpenters and plasterers were not so numerous today. I paid them off last night, you see. It may interest you to hear that their wages for three days amounted to nearly seven hundred dollars in our money, to say nothing of materials—and breakage."

"Breakage?" I exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes, sir, breakage. They break nearly as much as they mend. We'll—we'll go bankrupt, sir, if we're not careful."

I liked his pronoun. "Never mind," I said, "we'll soon be rid of them."

"They've got it in their heads, sir, that it will take at least a year to finish the—"

"You tell the foremen that if this job isn't finished to our satisfaction by the end of the month, I'll fire all of them," said I, wrathfully.

"That's less than three weeks off, Mr. Smart. They don't seem to be making much headway."

"Well, you tell 'em, just the same." And that is how I dismissed it. "Tell 'em we've got to go to work ourselves."

"By the way, old man Schmick and his family haven't been paid for nearly two years. They have put in a claim. The late owner assured them they'd get their money from the next—"

"Discharge them at once," said I.

"We can't get on without them," protested he. "They know the ropes, so to speak, and, what's more to the point, they know all the keys. Yesterday I was nearly two hours in getting to the kitchen for a conference with Mrs. Schmick about the market-men. In the first place, I couldn't find the way, and in the second place all the doors are locked."

"Please send Herr Schmick to me in the—in the—" I couldn't recall the name of the administration chamber at the head of the grand staircase, so I was compelled to say: "I'll see him here."

"If we lose them we also are lost," was his sententious declaration. I believed him.

On the fifth day of our occupancy, Britton reported to me that he had devised a plan by which we could utilize the tremendous horse-power represented by the muscles of those lazy giants, Rudolph and Max. He suggested that we rig up a huge windlass at the top of the incline, with stout steel cables attached to a small car which could be hauled up the cliff by a hitherto wasted human energy, and as readily lowered. It sounded feasible and I instructed him to have the extraordinary railway built, but to be sure that the safety device clutches in the cog wheels were sound and trusty. It would prove to be an infinitely more graceful mode of ascending the peak than riding up on the donkeys I had been persuaded to buy, especially for Poopendyke and me, whose legs were so long that when we sat in the saddles our knees touched our chins or were spread out so far that we resembled the Prussian coat-of-arms.

That evening, after the workmen had filed down the steep, looking for all the world like an evacuating army, I sought a few minutes of peace and quiet in the small balcony outside my bedroom windows. My room was in the western wing of the castle, facing the river. The eastern wing mounted even higher than the one in which we were living, and was topped by the loftiest watch tower of them all. We had not attempted to do any work in that section as yet, for the simple reason that Herr Schmick couldn't find the keys to the doors.

The sun was disappearing beyond the highlands and a cool, soft breeze swept up through the valley. I leaned back in a comfortable chair that Britton had

selected for me, and puffed at my pipe, not quite sure that my serenity was real or assumed. This was all costing me a pretty penny. Was I, after all, parting with my money in the way prescribed for fools? Was all this splendid antiquity worth the—

My reflections terminated sharply at that critical instant and I don't believe I ever felt called upon after that to complete the inquiry.

I found myself staring as if stupefied at the white figure of a woman who stood in the topmost balcony of the eastern wing, fully revealed by the last glow of the sun and apparently as deep in dreams as I had been the instant before.

For ten minutes I stood there staring up at her, completely bewildered and not a little shaken. My first thought had been of ghosts, but it was almost instantly dispelled by a significant action on the part of the suspected wraith. She turned to whistle over her shoulder, and to snap her fingers peremptorily, and then she stooped and picked up a rather lustrous chow dog which promptly barked at me across the intervening space, having discovered me almost at once although I was many rods away and quite snugly ensconced among the shadows. The lady in white uzuzled him with her hand and I could almost imagine I heard her reproving whispers. After a few minutes, she apparently forgot the dog and lifted her hand to adjust something in her hair. He again barked at me, quite ferociously for a chow. This time it was quite plain to her that he was not barking at the now shadowy moon. She peered over the stone balustrade and an instant later disappeared from view through the high, narrow window.

Vastly exercised, I set out in quest of

Herr Schmick, martialing Poopendyke as I went along, realizing that I would have to depend on his German, which was less halting than mine and therefore, more likely to dovetail with that of the Schmicks, neither of whom spoke German because they loved it but because they had to—being Austrians.

(To Be Continued.)

A RARE OPPORTUNITY FOR AN ALASKAN INVESTMENT.

The stock and bond house of Herrin & Rhodes, Inc., Seattle, Wash., the oldest established firm in this line in Washington, has been authorized by the management of the Golden Hill Consolidated Mines Company, situated in the famous Willow Creek free gold quartz district of Alaska, to sell 100,000 shares of treasury stock at 15c per share. The remarkable feature of this commission is that we are furnished with a written guarantee that the full purchase price of these shares is to be returned to all of the purchasers of this stock in dividends before any other shareholders can participate in the profits. The guarantee provides that the money is to be used only for a stamp mill, which is under construction now, and is expected to be in operation on July 15. There is sufficient ore in sight to warrant a substantial profit from this season's run, and to reimburse the purchasers of this stock. By reason of this operation the shares should greatly increase in face value. This is a great opportunity for a good investment. Mail your check today. We will gladly furnish you further information. References—Any Seattle Bank. Herrin & Rhodes, Inc., established 1896, Mining, Oil & Bank Stock Brokers, 119 Cherry St., Seattle, Washington. Adv.

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