

HOME AND FARM MAGAZINE SECTION SERIAL

A Fool and His Money--By George Barr McCutcheon

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EDITOR'S NOTE.

Owing to an error the concluding paragraphs of "A Fool and His Money," by George Barr McCutcheon, were omitted last week. The ridiculous ending thus given the story has aroused much comment among our readers. Some were disgusted that they had wasted their time in reading a novel that concluded so foolishly and others thought the conclusion was merely in line with the impressionistic trend of modern literature. Read on, O Reader, the conventional and satisfactory "and they lived happily ever after" conclusion.

"WAS SHE?" I inquired, with sudden interest which I contrived to conceal.

"Yes. She was wondering why you have never thought of marrying."

I closed my eyes for a second, and the piece of bread finally found the right channel.

"And what did you say to that?" I asked quietly.

She was disconcerted. "I? Oh, I think I said you didn't approve of marrying except for love, Mr. Smart."

"Um," said I. "Love on both sides is the better way to put it."

"Am I to infer that you may have experienced a one-sided leaning toward matrimony?"

"So far as I know, I have been singularly unsupported, Mrs. Titus."

"You really ought to marry."

"Perhaps I may. Who knows?"

"Aline said you would make an excellent husband."

"By that she means a stupid one, I suppose. Excellent husbands are invariably stupid. They always want to stay at home."

She appeared thoughtful. "And expect their wives to stay at home, too."

"On the contrary, an excellent husband lets his wife go where she likes—without him."

"I am afraid you do not understand matrimony, Mr. Smart," she said, and changed the subject.

I am afraid that my mind wandered a little at this juncture, for I missed fire on one or two direct questions. Mrs. Titus was annoyed; it would not be just to her to say that she was offended. If she could but have known that my thoughts were of the day and minute when I so brutally caressed the Countess Tarnowsky, I fancy she would have changed her good opinion of me. To tell the truth, I was wondering just how the Countess would behave toward me, with the memory of that unforgettable incident standing between us. I had been trying to convince myself for a very long time that my fault was not as great in her eyes as it was in mine.

Along about 5 o'clock I went to my room. I daresay I was sulking. A polite bellboy tapped on my door at 6:30. He presented a small envelope to me, thanked me three or four times, and, as an afterthought, announced that there was to be an answer. Whereupon I read the Countess' note with a magnificently unreadable face.

I cleared my throat, and (I think) squared my shoulders somewhat as a soldier does when he is being commended for valor, and said:

"Present my compliments to the Countess, and say that Mr. Smart will be down in five minutes."

The boy stared. "The—the what, sir?"

"The what?" I demanded.

"I mean the who, sir."

"The Countess. The lady who sent you up with this note."

"Wasn't no Countess sent me up hyer, boss. It was Miss Tarnowsky."

Somehow staggered, I managed to wave my hand comprehensively.

"Never mind. Just say that I'll be down in two minutes."

He grinned. "I reckon I'd better hustle, or you'll beat me down, boss."

CHAPTER XXI.

She Proposes.

She was still in her riding habit when I found her alone in the parlor of the Titus suite.

I give you my word my heart almost

stopped beating. I've never seen anyone so lovely as she was at that moment. Never, I repeat. Her hair, blown by the kind November winds, strayed—but no! I cannot begin to define the loveliness of her. There was a warm, rich glow in her cheeks and a light in her eyes that actually bewildered me, and more than that I am not competent to utter.

"You have come at last," she said, and her voice sounded very far off; although I was lifting her ungloved hand to my lips. She clenched my fingers tightly, I remember that; and also that my hand shook violently and that my face felt pale.

I think I said that I had come at last. She took my other hand in hers and drawing dangerously close to me said:

"I do not expect to be married for at least a year, John."

"I—I congratulate you," I stammered foolishly.

"I have a feeling that it isn't decent for one to marry inside of two years after one has been divorced."

"How is Rosemary?" I murmured.

"You are in love with me, aren't you, John dear?"

"Goo—good heaven!" I gasped.

"I know you are. That's why I am so sure of myself. Is it asking too much of you to marry me in a year from—"

I haven't the faintest notion how long afterward it was that I asked her what was to become of that poor, unlucky devil, Lord Amberdale.

"He isn't a devil. He's a dear, and he is going to marry a bred-in-the-bone Countess next January. You will like him, because he is every bit as much in love with his real Countess as you are with a sham one. He is a bird of your feather. And now don't you want to come with me to see Rosemary?"

"Rosemary," I murmured, as in a dream—a luxurious lotos-born dream.

She took my arm and advanced with me into a room adjoining the parlor.

As we passed through the door, she suddenly squeezed my arm very tightly and laid her head against my shoulder.

We were in a small sitting-room,

confronting Jasper Titus, his wife and his tiny grand-daughter, who was ready for bed.

"You won't have to worry about me any longer, daddy dear," said Aline, her voice suddenly breaking.

"Well, I'll be—well, well, well!" cried my late victim of the links. "Is this the way the wind blows?"

I was perfectly dumb. My face was scarlet. My dazzled eyes saw nothing but the fine aristocratic features of Aline's mother. She was leaning slightly forward in her chair, and a slow but unmistakable joyous smile was creeping into her face.

"Aline!" she cried, and Aline went to her.

Jasper Titus led Rosemary up to me. "Kiss the gentleman, kiddie," said he huskily, lifting the little one up to me.

She gave a sudden shriek of recognition, and I took her in my arms. "Ha! ha! ha!" laughed I, without the slightest idea of what I was doing or why I did it. Sometimes I wonder if there has ever been any insanity in our family. I know there have been fools, for I have my Uncle Elias' word for it.

Mr. Titus picked up the newspaper he had been reading.

"Listen to this, Aline. It will interest you. It says here that our friend Tarnowsky is going to marry that fool of a Cincinnati girl we were talking about the other day. I know her father, but I've never met her mother. Old Bob Thackery has got millions but he's only got one daughter. What a blamed shame!"

It must be perfectly obvious to you, kind reader, that I am going to marry Aline Tarnowsky, in spite of all my professed opposition to marrying a divorcee. I argued the whole matter out with myself, but not until after I was irrevocably committed. She says she needs me. Well, isn't that enough? In fact, I am now trying my best to get her to shorten the probationary period. She has taken off three months, God bless her, but I still hope for a further and more generous reduction—for good behavior!

(The End.)

THE SECRET OF THE NIGHT

By Gaston Leroux

Begins Next Week

Readers of the Farm Magazine will be pleased to note that the novel by George Barr McCutcheon, "A Fool and His Money," concluded in this issue, is to be followed with a serial by as well-known a writer and of even more absorbing interest. In offering to our readers a detective story we hope we do not offend those who scoff at the trashy detective novel of today. Since the advent of the wonderful creation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, "Sherlock Holmes," there have been many imitators of this style of hero, some good, some very poor. Gaston Leroux is not an imitator. He has created a character that will live.

Joseph Rouletabille, young, boyish and debonair, ostensibly a reporter on a Parisian newspaper, is the hero of Leroux' tale of "The Secret of the Night." Rouletabille appeared first in fiction in "The Mystery of the Yellow Room," by the same author.

In "The Secret of the Night" is pictured a Russian General whose life has been declared forfeited by the Nihilists because of his particularly ruthless stand against revolutionary forces. His faithful wife narrowly averts two attempts on his life, when the Czar, fearing for his servant, sends to Paris for Rouletabille, whose fame had spread to St. Petersburg. The fight against the mysterious power of the Nihilists, and the jealousies and passions of friends form the theme of "The Secret of the Night." Rouletabille stands alone between the General and death.

*Don't Fail to Begin With the First Installment
of This Thrilling Mystery Story*

The First Chapter Will Begin on This Page Next Week—WATCH FOR IT!