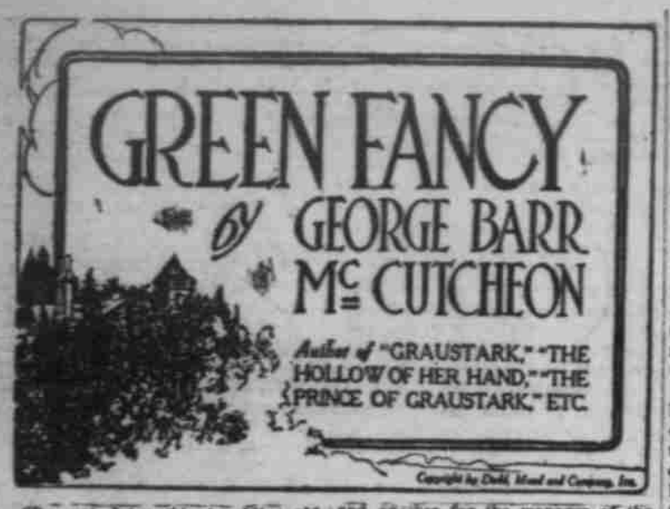

"I'm not doing this to oblige old man Jones, you know. I won't attempt to deceive you. I'm working out a fairly hoggish bill. Chuck three times a day and a bed to sleep in—that's what I'm doing it for, so don't get it into your head that I applied for the job. Let me look at you. I want to get a good square peep at a man who has the means to go somewhere and yet is fool enough to come to this goshawful place of his own free will and accord. Darn it, you look intelligent. I don't get you at all. What's the matter? Are you a fugitive from justice?"

Barnes laughed aloud. There was no withstanding the fellow's sprightly impudence.

"I happen to enjoy walking," said he.

"If I enjoyed it as much as you do I'd be limping into Harlem by this time," said Mr. Dillingford sadly. "But you see I'm an actor. I'm too proud to walk—"

The cracked bell on the office desk interrupted him, somewhat peremptorily. Mr. Dillingford's face assumed an expression of profound dignity. He lowered his voice as he gave vent to the following:

"That man Jones is the meanest human being God ever let— Yes, sir, coming, sir!" He started for the open door with surprising alacrity.

Barnes surveyed the little bedchamber. It was just what he had expected it would be. The walls were covered with a garish paper selected by one who had an eye but not a taste for color—bright pink flowers that looked more or less like chunks of a shattered watermelon spilt promiscuously over a background of pearl gray. The bedstead, bureau and washstand were offensively modern. Everything was as clean as a pin, however, and the bed looked comfortable. He stepped to the small, many-paned window and looked out into the night. The storm was at its height. In all his life he never had heard such a clatter of rain, nor a wind that shrieked so appallingly.

His thoughts went quite naturally to the woman who was out there in the thick of it. He wondered how she was faring and lamented that she was not in his place now and he in hers. What was she doing up in this God-forsaken country? What was the name of the place she was bound for? Green Fancy! What an odd name for a home! And what sort of house—

His reflections were interrupted by the return of Mr. Dillingford, who carried a huge pewter pitcher from which steam arose in volume. At his heels strode a tall, cadaverous person in a checked suit.

Never had Barnes seen anything quite so overpowering in the way of a suit. Joseph's coat of many colors was no longer a vision of childhood. It was a reality. The checks were an inch square and each cube had a narrow border of azure blue. The general tone was a dirty gray, due no doubt to age and a constitution that would not allow it to outlive its usefulness.

"Meet Mr. Bacon, Mr. Barnes," introduced Mr. Dillingford, going to the needless exertion of indicating Mr. Bacon with a generous sweep of his free hand. "Our heavy leads. Mr. Montague Bacon, also of New York."

"Ham and eggs, pork tenderloin, country sausage, rump steak and spring chicken," said Mr. Bacon in a cavernous voice, getting it over with while the list was fresh in his memory. "Fried and boiled potatoes, beans, succotash, onions, stewed tomatoes and—er—just a moment, please. Fried and boiled potatoes, beans—"

"Ham and eggs, potatoes and a cup or two of coffee," said Barnes, suppressing a desire to laugh.

"And apple pie," concluded the waiter triumphantly. "I knew I'd get it if you gave me time. As you may have observed, my dear sir, I am not what you would call an experienced waiter. As a matter of fact, I—"

The bell downstairs rang violently. Mr. Bacon departed in great haste.

While the traveler performed his ablutions Mr. Dillingford, for the moment disengaged, sat upon the edge of the bed and enjoyed himself. He talked.

"We were nine at the start," said he passively. "Gradually we were reduced to seven, not including the manager. Two of 'em escaped before the smash. The low comedian and character old woman, Joe Buckley and his wife. That left the old man—I mean Mr. Rushcroft, the star—Lyndon Rushcroft, you know—myself and Bacon, Tommy Gray, Miss Rushcroft, Miss Hughes and a woman named Bradley, seven of us. The woman named Bradley said her mother was dying in Buffalo, so the rest of us scraped together all the money we had—nine dollars and sixty cents—and did the right thing by her. Actors are always doing darn-fool things like that, Mr. Barnes. And what do you suppose she did? She took that money and bought two tickets to Albany, one for herself and another for the manager of the company—the lowest, meanest ornerlest white man that ever— But I am crabbing the old man's part. You ought to hear what he has to say about Mr. Manager. He can use words I never even heard of before. So that leaves just the four of us here, working off the two days' board bill of Bradley and the manager, Rushcroft's ungodly spree, and at the same time keeping our own slate clean. Miss Thackeray will no doubt make up your bed in the morning. She is temporarily a chambermaid. Cracking fine girl, too. Are you all ready? I'll lead you to the dining room. Or would you prefer a little appetizer beforehand? The taproom is right on the way. You mustn't call it the bar. Everybody in that little graveyard town down the road would turn over completely if you did. Hallowed tradition, you know."

"I don't mind having a cocktail. Will you join me?"

"As a matter of fact, I'm expected to," confessed Mr. Dillingford. "We've been drawing quite a bit of custom to the taproom. The rubes like to sit around and listen to conversation about Broadway and Bunker Hill and Old Point Comfort and other places, and then go home and tell the neighbors that they know quite a number of stage people. Human nature, I guess. Listen! Hear that? Rushcroft reciting 'Gunga Din.' You can't hear the thunder for the noise he's making."

The descended the stairs and entered the taproom, where a dozen men were seated around the tables, all of them with pewter mugs in front of them. Standing at the top table—that is to say, the one farthest removed from the door and commanding the attention of every creature in the room—was the imposing figure of Lyndon Rushcroft. He was reciting, in a sonorous voice and with tremendous fervor, the famous Kipling poem. A genial smile wiped the tragic expression from his face. He advanced upon Barnes and the beaming Mr. Dillingford, his hand extended.

"My dear fellow," he exclaimed resoundingly, "how are you?" Cordiality boomed in his voice. "I heard you had arrived. Welcome—thricefold welcome!" He neglected to say that Mr. Montague Bacon, in passing a few minutes before, had leaned over and whispered behind his hand:

"Welcome, Thricefold Welcome."

"Fellow upstairs from New York, Mr. Rushcroft—fellow named Barnes. Quite a swell, believe me."

It was a well-placed tip, for Mr. Rushcroft had been telling the natives for days that he knew everybody worth knowing in New York.

Barnes was momentarily taken aback. Then he rose to the spirit of the occasion.

"Hello, Rushcroft," he greeted, as if meeting an old-time and greatly beloved friend. "This is good. 'Pon my soul you are like a thriving date palm in the middle of an endless desert. How are you?"

They shook hands warmly. Mr. Dillingford slapped the newcomer on the shoulder affectionately, familiarly, and shouted:

"Who would have dreamed we'd run across good old Barnesy up here? By Jove, it's marvelous!"

"Friends, countrymen," boomed Mr. Rushcroft, "this is Mr. Barnes of New York. Not the man the book was written about but one of the best fellows God ever put into this little world of ours. I do not recall your names, gentlemen, or I would introduce each of you separately and divisibly."

Lyndon Rushcroft was a tall, saggy man of fifty. Despite his determined erectness he was inclined to sag from the shoulders down. His head, huge and gray, appeared to be much too ponderous for his yielding body, and yet he carried it manfully, even theatrically. The lines in his dark, seasoned face were like furrows; his nose was large and somewhat bulbous, his mouth wide and grim. Thick, black eyebrows shaded a pair of eyes in which white was no longer apparent—it had given way to a permanent red. A two-days' stubble covered his chin and cheeks. Altogether he was a singular exemplification of one's idea of the old-time actor.

Passing through the office, his arm linked in one of Barnes', Mr. Rushcroft hesitated long enough to impress upon Landlord Jones the importance of providing his "distinguished friend, Robert W. Barnes," with the very best that the establishment afforded. Putnam Jones blinked slightly and his eyes sought the register as if to excuse or justify his memory. Then he spat copiously into the corner, a necessary preliminary to a grin. He hadn't much use for the great Lyndon Rushcroft. His grin was sardonic. Something told him that Mr. Rushcroft was about to be liberally rolled.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Rushcroft Dissolves, Mr. Jones Intervenes, and Two Men Ride Away.

Mr. Rushcroft explained that he had had his supper. In fact, he went on to confess, he had been compelled, like the dog, to "speak" for it. What could be more disgusting, more degrading, he mourned, than the spectacle of a man who had appeared in all of the principal theaters of the land as star and leading support to stars, settling for his supper by telling stories and reciting poetry in the taproom of a tavern?

"Still," he consented, when Mr. Barnes insisted that it would be a kindness to him, "since you put it that way, I dare say I could do with a little snack, as you so aptly put it. Just a bite or two. What have you ready, Miss Tilly?"

Miss Tilly was a buxom female of forty or thereabouts, with spectacles. She was one of a pair of sedentary waitresses who had been so long in the employ of Mr. Jones that he hated the sight of them.

Mr. Rushcroft's conception of a bite or two may have staggered Barnes but it did not bewilder Miss Tilly. He had four eggs with his ham, and other things in proportion. He talked a great deal, proving in that way that it was a supper well worth speaking for. Among other things he dilated at great length upon his reasons for not being a member of the Players or the Lambs in New York city. It seems that he had promised his dear, devoted wife that he would never join a club of any description. Dear old girl, he would as soon have cut off his right hand as to break any promise made to her. He brushed something away from his eyes, and his chin, contracting, trembled slightly. "What is it, Mr. Bacon? Any word from New York?"

Mr. Bacon hovered near, perhaps hungrily.

"Our genial host has instructed me to say to his latest guest that the rates are two dollars a day, in advance, all dining-room checks payable on presentation," said Mr. Bacon, apologetically.

Rushcroft exploded. "O scurvy insult," he boomed. "Confound his—"

The new guest was amiable. He interrupted the outraged star. "Tell Mr. Jones that I shall settle promptly," he said with a smile.

"It has just entered his bean that you may be an actor, Mr. Banes," said Bacon.

Miss Tilly, overhearing, drew a step or two nearer. A sudden interest in Mr. Barnes developed. She had not noticed before that he was an uncommonly good-looking fellow. She always had said that she adored strong, "athaletic" faces.

Later on she felt inspired to jot down, for use no doubt in some future literary production, a concise, though general, description of the magnificent Mr. Barnes. She utilized the back of the bill of fare and she wrote with the feverish ardor of one who dreads the loss of a first impression. I herewith append her visual estimate of the hero of this story:

"He was a tall, shapely specimen of mankind," wrote Miss Tilly. "Broad-shouldered. Smooth-shaved face. Penetrating gray eyes. Short, curly hair about the color of mine. Strong hands of good shape. Face tanned considerable. Heavy dark eyebrows. Good teeth, very white. Square chin. Lovely smile that seemed to light up the room for everybody within hearing. Nose ideal. Mouth same. Voice aristocratic and reverberating with education. Age about thirty or thirty-one. Rich as Croesus. Well-turned legs. Would make a good nobleman."

All this would appear to be reasonably definite were it not for the note regarding the color of his hair. It leaves to me the simple task of completing the very admirable description of Mr. Barnes by announcing that Miss Tilly's hair was an extremely dark brown.

Also it is advisable to append the following biographical information: Thomas Kingsbury Barnes, engineer, born in Montclair, N. J., September 26, 1885. Cornell and Beaux Arts, Paris. Son of the late Stephen S. Barnes, engineer, and Edith (Valentine) Barnes. Office, Metropolitan building, New York city. Residence, Amsterdam mansion. Clubs: (Lack of space prevents listing them here). Recreations, golf, tennis and horseback riding. Fellow of the Royal Geographical society. Member of the Loyal Legion and the Sons of the American Revolution.

Added to this, the mere announcement that he was in a position to indulge a fancy for long and perhaps aimless walking tours through more or less out-of-the-way sections of his own country, to say nothing of excursions in Europe.

He was rich. Perhaps not as riches are measured in these Midas-like days, but rich beyond the demands of service. His legacy had been an ample one. The fact that he worked hard at his profession from one year's end to the other—but excluding the six devoted to masterly productive jaunts—is proof sufficient that he was not content to subsist on the fruits of another man's enterprise. He was a worker.

The first fortnight of a proposed six weeks' jaunt through upper New England terminated when he laid aside his heavy pack in the little bedroom at Hart's Tavern. Cockcrow would find him ready and eager to begin his third week. At least so he thought. But, truth is, he had come to his journey's end; he was not to sling his pack for many a day to come.

After setting the mind of the landlord at rest Barnes declined Mr. Rushcroft's invitation to "quaff" a cordial with him in the taproom, explaining that he was exceedingly tired and intended to retire early.

Instead of going up to his room immediately, however, he decided to have a look at the weather. His uneasiness concerning the young woman of the crossroads increased as he peered at the wall of blackness looming up beyond the circle of light. She was somwhere outside that sinister black wall and in the smothering grasp of those invisible hills, but was she living or dead? Had she reached her journey's end safely? He tried to extract comfort from the confidence she had expressed in the ability and integrity of the old man who drove with far greater recklessness than one would have looked for in a wild and irresponsible youngster.

He recalled with a thrill the imperious manner in which she gave directions to the man, and his surprising servility. It suddenly occurred to him that she was no ordinary person; he was rather amazed that he had not thought of it before.

Moreover, now that he thought of it, there was, even in the agreeable rejoinders she had made to his offerings, the faint suggestion of an accent that should have struck him at the time but did not for the obvious reason that he was then not at all interested in her. Her English was so perfect that he had failed to detect the almost imperceptible foreign flavor that now took definite form in his reflections. He tried to place this accent. Was it French or Italian or Spanish? Certainly it was not German.

He took a few turns up and down the long porch, stopping finally at the upper end. The clear, inspiring clang

Some One Spoke Suddenly at His Elbow.

of a hammer on an anvil fell suddenly upon his ears. He looked at his watch. The hour was nine, certainly an unusual time for men to be at work in a forge. He remembered two men in the taproom who were bare-armed and wore the shapeless leather aprons of the smithy.

He had been standing there not more than half a minute peering in the direction from whence came the rhythmic bang of the anvil—at no great distance, he was convinced—when some one spoke suddenly at his elbow. He whirled and found himself facing the gaunt landlord.

"Good Lord! You startled me," he exclaimed. His gaze traveled past the tall figure of Putnam Jones and rested on that of a second man, who leaned, with legs crossed and arms folded, against the porch post directly in front of the entrance to the house, his features almost wholly concealed by the broad-brimmed slouch hat that came far down over his eyes. He, too, it seemed to Barnes, had sprung from nowhere.

"Fierce night," said Putnam Jones, removing the corncob pipe from his lips. Then, as an afterthought, "Where'd you walk from today?"

"I slept in a farmhouse last night, about fifteen miles south of this place, I should say."

"There'll be a little ways out of East Cobb," speculated Mr. Jones.

"Five or six miles."

"Goin' over into Canada?"

"No. I shall turn west, I think, and strike for the Lake Champlain country."

"I suppose you've traveled right smart in Europe?"

"Quite a bit, Mr. Jones."

"Any particular part?"

"No," said Barnes, suddenly divining that he was being "pumped." "One end to the other, you might say."

"What about them countries down around Bulgaria and Roumania? I've been considerable interested in what's going to become of them if Germany gets licked. What do they get out of it, either way?"

Barnes spent the next ten minutes expatiating upon the future of the Balkan states. Jones had little to say. He was interested, and drank in all the information that Barnes had to impart. He puffed at his pipe, nodded his head from time to time, and occasionally put a leading question. And quite as abruptly as he introduced the topic he changed it.

"Not many automobiles up here this time o' the year," he said. "I was a little surprised when you said a fellow had given you a lift. Where from?"

The crossroads a mile down. He came from the direction of Frogg's Corner and was on his way to meet someone at Spanish Falls. It appears that there was a misunderstanding. The driver didn't meet the train, so the person he was going after walked all the way to the forks. We happened upon each other there, Mr. Jones, and we studied the signpost together. She was bound for a place called Green Fancy."

"Did you say she?"

"Yes. I was proposing to help her out of her predicament when the belated motor came racing down the slope."

"What for sort of looking lady was she?"

"She wore a veil," said Barnes succinctly.

"Young?"

"I had that impression. By the way, Mr. Jones, what and where is Green Fancy?"

"Well," began the landlord, lowering his voice, "it's about two mile and a half from here, up the mountain. It's a house and people live in it, same as any other house. That's about all there is to say about it."

"Why is it called Green Fancy?"

"Because it's a green house," replied Jones succinctly. "Green as a gourd. A man named Curtis built it a couple o' years ago and he had a fool idee about paintin' it green. Might ha' been a little crazy, for all I know. Anyhow, after he got it finished he settled down to live in it, and from that day to this he's never been off'n the place."

"Isn't it possible that he isn't there at all?"

"He's there, all right. Every now and then he has visitors—just like this woman today—and sometimes they come down here for supper. They don't hesitate to speak of him, so he must be there. Miss Tilly has got the idee that he is a recluse, if you know what that is."

Further conversation was interrupted by the irregular clatter of horses' hoofs on the macadam. Off to the left a dull red glow of light spread across the roadway and a man's voice called out, "Whoa, dang ye!"

The door of the smithy had been thrown open and someone was leading forth freshly shod horses.

A moment later the horses—prancing, high-spirited animals — their bridle bits held by a strapping blacksmith, came into view. Barnes looked in the direction of the steps. The two men had disappeared. Instead of stopping directly in front of the steps the smith led his charges quite a distance beyond and into the darkness.

Putnam Jones abruptly changed his position. He insinuated his long body between Barnes and the doorway, at the same time rather loudly proclaiming that the rain appeared to be over.

"Yes, sir," he repeated, "she seems to have let up altogether. Ought to have a nice day tomorrow, Mr. Barnes—nice, cool day for walkin'."

Voices came up from the darkness. Jones had not been able to cover them with his own. Barnes caught two or three sharp commands, rising above the pawing of horses' hoofs, and then a great clatter as the mounted horsemen rode off in the direction of the crossroads.

Barnes waited until they were muffled by distance and then turned to Jones with the laconic remark:

"They seem to be foreigners, Mr. Jones."

Jones' manner became natural once more. He leaned against one of the posts and, striking a match on his leg, relighted his pipe.

"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 wardrobe contained, and she was bright and cheery and exceedingly incompetent. It was her costume that shocked him. Not only was she attired in a low-necked, rose-colored evening gown, liberally bespangled with tinsel, but she wore a vast, top-heavy picture hat whose crown of black was almost wholly obscured by a gorgeous white feather that once must have adorned the king of all ostriches. She was not at all his idea of a chambermaid. He started to back out of the door with an apology for having blundered into the wrong room by mistake.

"Come right in," she said cheerily. "I'll soon be through. I suppose I should have done all this an hour ago, but I just had to write a few letters. I am Miss Thackeray. This is Mr. Barnes, I believe."

He bowed, still quite overcome.

"You needn't be scared," she cried, observing his confusion. "This is my 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 moment's pause.

"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 here I am."

She was a tall, pleasant-faced girl of twenty-three or four, not unlike her father in many respects.

"I am very sorry," he said lamely. "I have heard something of your misfortunes from your father and—the others. It's—it's really hard luck."

"I call it rather good luck to have 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 everything nearly all right. Good night, sir."

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

"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 them—and men on foot moving like shadows among them.

Turning from the window, he unlocked and opened the door into the hall. 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 Jones' voice rose above the clamour.

"Keep quiet! Do you want to wake everybody on the place?" he was saying angrily. "What's up? This is a fine time o' night to be— Good Lord! What's the matter with him?"

"Telephone for a doctor, Put—damn' quick! This one's still alive. The other one is dead as a door nail up at Jim Conley's house. Git ole Doc James down from Saint Liz. Bring him in here, boys. Where's your light? Easy now! Eas-ee!"

Barnes waited to hear no more. His blood seemed to be running ice cold as he retreated into the room and began scrambling for his clothes. The 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 other one."

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, raw-boned 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 surprised 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 man's lips, and he smiled.

Barnes leaned over and spoke to him in French. The dark, pain-stricken eyes closed, and an almost imperceptible shake of the head signified that he did not understand. Evidently he had acquired only a few of the simple French expressions. Barnes had a slight knowledge of Spanish and Italian, and tried again with no better results. German was his last resort, and he knew he would fail 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 was apparent that there was something he 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 suddenly.

"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 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 goin' to Spanish Falls any more'n I am at this minute. They fled their horses up the road just above our house," said young Conley, lowering his voice out of consideration for the feelings of the helpless man. "It was about '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. Looked 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, starting.

"Was it up that far?" demanded Jones.

(Continued next Saturday.)