

GREEN FANCY

BY GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON

Author of "GRAUSTARK," "THE HOLLOW OF HER HAND," "THE PRINCE OF GRAUSTARK," ETC.

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"Now I know you are mistaken," cried Barnes, a wave of relief surging over him. "He has been in this tavern every night—"

"Sure he has. But answer me, did you ever see him here after eleven in the evening? You did not—not until last night, anyhow. In the struggle he had with Nicholas last night he was recognized. That's why poor old Nicholas is lying dead up there at the house now—and will have a decent burial unbeknownst to anybody but his friends."

"Good God, O'Dowd, you can't mean that he—he killed—"

"He stuck a knife in his neck. The dirty snake! And the chief trusted him as no crook ever was trusted before. In the name of God, Barnes, how did you happen to fall in with the villain?"

Barnes passed his hand over his brow, dazed. "He—he represented himself as a book agent," he mumbled, striving to collect himself. "Jones knew him. Said he had been around here for weeks. I—"

"That's the man," said O'Dowd, scowling. "He trotted all over the county, selling books. For the love of it, do you think? Not much. He had other fish to fry, you may be sure. Barnes, if you ever lay hands on that friend of yours—well, he won't have to fry in hell. He'll be burnt alive. Thank God, my mind's at rest on one score. She didn't skip out with him. They all think he did. Not one of them suspects that she came away with you. There is plenty of evidence that she let him in through her window—"

"All ready, O'Dowd," called Loeb. "Come along, please."

"Coming," said the Irishman. "Don't blame yourself, old man. See you later, Barnes. So long!"

CHAPTER XVI.

The First Wayfarer Visits a Shrine, Confesses, and Takes an Oath.

How was he to find the courage to impart the appalling news to her? He was now convinced beyond all doubt that the so-called Sprouse had made off with the priceless treasure and that only a miracle could bring about its recovery. He realized to what extent he had been shaped into a tool to be used by the master craftsman. He saw through the whole Machiavellian scheme, and he was also now acutely certain that Sprouse would have sacrificed him without the slightest hesitation.

In the event that anything went wrong with their enterprise, the man would have shot him dead and earned the gratitude and commendation of his associates! He would have been glorified and not crucified by his friends.

With a heavy heart he mounted the stairs. At the top he paused to deliberate. Would it not be better to keep her in ignorance? What was to be gained by revealing to her the— But Miss Thackeray was lurking him on to destruction. She stood outside the door and beckoned. Then she closed the door from the outside, and Barnes was alone with the countess of kings and queens and princes.

"I feared you had deserted me," she said, holding out her hand to him as he strode across the room.

"I saw no occasion to disturb your rest," he mumbled.

"I have been peeping," she said, looking at him searchingly. "Where is Mr. Loeb going, Mr. Barnes?"

"O'Dowd says he is to be gone for a few days on business," she equivocated.

"He will not return," she said quietly. "He is a coward at heart. Oh, I know him well," she went on, scorn in her tone.

"Was I wrong in not trying to stop him?" he asked.

"She pondered this for a moment. "No," she said, but he caught the dubious note in her voice. "It is just as well, perhaps, that he should disappear. His flight today spares—but we are more interested in the man Sprouse. Has he returned?"



He Was Known to Her as a Thief of International Fame.

She sighed. "Alas, I fear that I shall have to tell you a little more about this wonderful man you know as Sprouse. Six months ago the friends and supporters of the legitimate successor to my country's throne consummated a plan whereby the crown jewels and certain documents of state were surreptitiously removed from the palace vaults. Instead of depositing the treasure in Paris, it was sent to this country in charge of a group of men whose fealty could not be questioned. The man you know as Loeb is in reality my cousin. I have known him all my life. He is the youngest brother of the pretender to the throne, and a cousin of the prince who is held prisoner by the Austrians. This prince has a brother also, and it was to him that I was supposed to deliver the jewels. I traveled from New York, but not alone as you may suspect. I was carefully protected from the time I left my hotel there until—well, until I arrived in Boston.

"While there I received a secret message from friends in Canada directing me to go to Spanish Falls, where I would be met and conducted by Prince Sebastian himself to the place called Green Fancy, which was near the Canadian border. A safe escort would be provided for us, and we would be on British soil within a few hours after our meeting. It is only necessary to add that when I arrived at Green Fancy I met Prince Ugo—and understood! I had carefully covered my tracks after leaving Boston. My real friends were, and still are, completely in the dark as to my movements, so skillfully was the trick managed.

"And now for Chester Nalmsmith. It was he who, acting for the misguided loyalists and recommended by certain young aristocrats who by virtue of their own dispositions had come to know him as a man of infinite resourcefulness and daring, planned and carried out the pillaging of the palace vaults. Almost under the noses of the foreign guards he succeeded in obtaining the jewels. No doubt he could have made off with them at that time, but he shrewdly preferred to have them brought to America by some one else. It would have been impossible for him to dispose of them in Europe. You see how cunning he is?"

"He was no doubt thwarted in his design to waylay me on the road from Spanish Falls by a singular occurrence in this tavern. He was attacked in his room here, overpowered, bound and gagged by two men. He knew the men. They were thieves as clever and as merciless as himself. They too were watching for me. I do not know how these men learned of my intention to come to Green Fancy."

"They came to the Tavern four or five days before your arrival at Green Fancy," Barnes interrupted. "Sprouse told me that they were secret service men from abroad and that he was working with them. My theory is this, and I think it is justified by events: The men were really secret agents, sent here to watch the movements of the gang up there. They came upon Sprouse and recognized him. On the day mentioned they overpowered him and forced him to reveal certain facts connected with affairs at Green Fancy. Possibly he led them to believe that you were one of the conspirators. They waited for your arrival and then raised the hazardous trip to Green Fancy. They were discovered and shot."

"I believe you are right," she cried. "When we have accounted for Mr.

Sprouse, and I am no longer interested in the unravelling of the mystery surrounding the deaths of Roon and Paul," said Barnes. "There is nothing to keep me here any longer, Miss Cameron. I suggest that you allow me to escort you at once to your friends, wherever they—"

"She was opposed to this plan. While there was still a chance that Sprouse might be apprehended in the neighborhood, or the possibility of his being caught by the relentless pursuers, she declined to leave.

"Then, I shall also stay," said he promptly, and was repaid by the tremulous smile she gave him. He was helplessly in love with this beautiful cousin of kings and queens. And when he thought of kings and queens he realized that beyond all question his love was hopeless.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Second Wayfarer is Transformed. O'Dowd returned late in the afternoon. He was in a hurry to get back to Green Fancy; there was no mistaking his uneasiness.

"For the love of heaven, Barnes, get her away from here as soon as possible, and do it as secretly as you can," he said. "I may as well tell you that she is in more danger from the government secret service than from anyone up yonder."

"She may prefer to face the music," O'Dowd said. "If I know her at all, she will refuse to run away."

"Then you'll have to kidnap her," said the Irishman earnestly. "There will be men awaiting her from both sides of the border by tomorrow night or next day. It's the gospel truth, and—it's going to be had for all of us if we're here when they come."

"Who is she, O'Dowd? Man to man, tell me the truth. I want to know just where I stand."

O'Dowd hesitated, looked around the taproom, and then leaned across the table.

"Miss Cameron is in reality the Countess Therese Mara-Dafanda—familiarily and lovingly known in her own land as the Countess Ted. She



Miss Cameron is Lovingly Known in Her Own Land as the Countess Ted.

was visiting in this country when the war broke out. If it is of any use to you, I'll add that she would be rich if Aladdin could only come to life and restore the splendors of the demolished castle, refill the chests of gold that have been emptied by the conquerors, and restock the farms that have been pillaged and devastated. In the absence of Aladdin, however, she is almost as poor as the ancient church mouse. So there you are, my man. Half the royal progeny of Europe have been suitors for her hand, and the other half would be if they didn't happen to be of the same sex. Good-by. I must be on my way. He arose and held out his hand. "Good-by and good luck forever."

"You are a brick, O'Dowd. I want to see you again. You will always find me—"

"Thanks. Don't issue any rash invitations. I might take you up."

Barnes started upstairs as soon as O'Dowd was off, urged by an eagerness that put wings on his feet and a thrill of excitement in his blood. Half-way up he stopped short. A new condition confronted him. What was the proper way to approach a person of royal blood? He would have to think.

Pausing at her door, he was at once aware of voices inside the room. He rapped on the door, but so timidly that nothing came of it. His second effort was productive. He heard Miss Thackeray say "good gracious" and, after a moment, Miss Cameron's subdued: "What is it?"

"May I come in?" he inquired, rather ashamed of his vigor. "It's only Barnes."

"Come in," was her lively response. "It was awfully good of you. Miss Thackeray, to let me hear your lines. I think you will be a great success in the part."

"Thanks," said Miss Thackeray dryly. "I'll come in again and let you hear me in the third act." She went out, mumbling her lines as she passed Barnes without seeing him.

"I hope you will feel able to leave this place tomorrow, countess. We must get away almost immediately."

"Ah, you have been listening to

O'Dowd, I see."

"Yes. He tells me it will be dangerous to—"

"He is right. It would be difficult for me to clear myself. No one would believe that I did not deliberately make off with the jewels. They would say that I—oh, it is too dreadful!"

"Don't worry about that," he exclaimed. "You have me to testify that—"

"How little you know of intrigue," she cried. "They would laugh at you and say that you were merely another fool who had lost his head over a woman. They would say that I duped you—"

"No!" he cried vehemently. "Your people know better than you think. You are disheartened, discouraged. Things will look brighter tomorrow."

"I don't know what I should do without you," she said.

"Mr. Sprouse continues to be perplexing, but puts his nose to the ground," Barnes was abroad early. He was at breakfast when Peter Ames called up. An inspiration seized him when the chauffeur mentioned the wholesale exodus: he hired Peter forthwith and ordered him to report immediately—with the car. He was going up to Green Fancy for Miss Cameron's wardrobe.

Two minutes after Peter drove up to the Tavern he was on the way back to Green Fancy again, and seated beside him was Thomas Kingsbury Barnes, his new master.

There was not a sign of human life about the place. Peter accompanied him upstairs to the room recently occupied by Miss Cameron.

They found two small leather trunks, thickly belabeled, in the room upstairs. Both were locked.

"You take this one," said Barnes, "and I will manage the other." He was in a hurry to get away from the house. There was no telling when the government agents would descend upon the place.

Barnes helped Peter to lift the trunks into the car and then ordered him to start at once for Hart's Tavern.

"You can return later on for your things," he said.

"I got 'em tied up in a bundle in the garage, Mr. Burns," he said. "Won't take a second to get 'em out." He hurried around the corner of the house.

A dry, quiet chuckle fell upon Barnes' ears. He glanced about in surprise and alarm. No one was in sight.

"Look up, young man," and the startled young man obeyed. His gaze halted at a window on the second story. Mr. Sprouse was looking down upon him, his sharp features fixed in a sardonic grin.

"Well, I'll be d—!" burst from Barnes' lips.

"Surprised to see me, eh? If you're not in a hurry, I'd certainly appreciate a lift as far as the Tavern, old man. I'll be down in a jiffy. Stand aside! I'm going to drop." A moment later he swung over the sill, and dropped lightly to the ground eight feet below.

"See, here, Sprouse or whatever your name is—"

"Better hear me out," broke in Sprouse calmly. "I could drill a hole through you so quickly you'd never know what did it," he went on. His hand was in his coat pocket, and a quick glance revealed to Barnes a singularly impressive angle in the cloth, the point of which seemed to be directed squarely at his chest. "But I'm not going to do it. I just want to see myself straight with you. In a word, I never got anywhere near the room in which the jewels were hidden. This is God's truth, Barnes. I wasn't the only one who was trying to get the baubles, my friend. It was a game in which only the best man could win."

"I know the truth now about Roon and Paul," said Barnes significantly.

"You do?" sneered Sprouse. "I'll bet you a thousand to one you do not. The girl was led to believe that they were a couple of crooks and that they fixed me in that tavern down there. Isn't that what she told you? Well, that story was cooked up for her special benefit. Roon was the Baron Hedlund. Hedlund came up here a week or so ago to keep a lookout for his wife. The baroness is supposed to be deeply enamored of Prince Ugo. He found letters which seemed to indicate that she was planning to join the prince up here. When he heard of the arrival of a lady at Green Fancy the other afternoon, he got busy. I admit that I am the gentleman who telephoned the warning up to the prince. They tried to head the baron and his man off at the cross-roads, but he beat them to it. If there was to be a fight, they didn't want it to happen anywhere near the house. I believe Ugo is the one who got the baron—or Roon, as you know him. Now, that is the true story of the little affair."

"To go back to my own troubles. When I got out into the hall night before last, after leaving her room, I heard voices whispering in Prince Ugo's room. I bent it up the stairway into the attic. Nothing happened, so I sneaked down to have a peep around. The door to Ugo's room was open, but there was no light on the inside. He came to the door and looked up and down the hall. Then some one else came out and started to sneak away. I leave you to guess the sex."

(Continued next Saturday.)

On account of ill health following a nervous breakdown, Albert L. Langerman, secretary of the Anglo and London Paris National Bank, organized outside at San Francisco Tuesday by shooting himself.

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On motor trucks equipped with electric starters operators sometimes try the experiment of changing their storage batteries so as to have nine volts instead of six. This is a mistake, as the motor will not stand up under a higher voltage than the one it was intended for.

If a set of inside and outside metrics are not available and the repair man is in doubt as to whether the new piston is too tight a fit in the cylinder, the next nearest accurate operation is this: Place the piston in a rather slow-heating fire and let it come to a heat of about 600 degrees Fahrenheit. While it is in this condition place it in the cylinder and work it up and down. If the piston works freely it is evident there will be little danger of its striking in the cylinder from heat expansion. While this cannot be as accurate, it will serve.

Veterans of the Civil and Spanish-American wars ask that they be included in Secretary Lane's project for farms for soldiers and sailors.

Because he had worked his mine 15 years and never found a pay streak Henry Irwin, an aged prospector, shot himself through the head at Redding, Cal.

Secretary Baker has asked congress for legislative authority and an appropriation of \$10,000,000 for the immediate purchase of the Cape Cod canal.

The senate interstate commerce committee has ordered reported favorably a bill restoring at once the rate making powers of the interstate commerce commission.

The town council of Woodland has decided to erect a town hall commensurate with the dignity of a progressive town like Woodland.

Henry Lake of Seginaw, Or., was taken to a hospital in Salem Tuesday night with a broken back as a result of a fall in a logging camp.

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