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March 17, 18 and 19, 1915

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The Miles City Horse Sales Company

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YOU SHOULD DO IT WITHOUT DELAY.

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Phone 49, Malta, Montana

## A FOOL AND HIS MONEY

By  
GEORGE BARR  
M'UTCHEON,  
Author of "Grandmark,"  
"Truston King," Etc.

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McCutcheon.

ing an old man unused to difficult stairways. He—

"Buy it, Orson," said his wife, with authority. "We'll take a chance on it. If it isn't the right thing we can sell it to the secondhand dealers. What's the price?"

"A thousand dollars to you, madam," said I.

They were at once suspicious. While they were busily engaged in looking the seat over the porters shifted it about at all angles I stepped over and ordered my workmen to resume operations.

"Here!" roared Mr. Rocksworth. "Stop this beastly noise! What the deuce do you mean, sir, permitting these scoundrels to raise the dead like this?"

I moved forward apologetically. "They are raising the dead. The place is fairly alive with dead rats and—"

"Good Lord!" gasped Riley-Werkheimer. "We'll get the bubonic plague here."

"Well, let's move on upstairs," said Rocksworth. Addressing the porters, he said: "You fellows get this lot of stuff together, and I'll take an option on it. I'll be over tomorrow to close the deal, Mr.—Mr.— Now, where is the old Florentine mirror the count was telling us about?"

"The count?" said I, frowning. "Yes, the real owner. You can't stuff me with your talk about being the proprietor here, my friend. You see, we happen to know the count."

They all condescended to laugh at me. I don't know what I should have said if Britton had not returned with a box of matches at that instant.

Almost simultaneously there appeared in the lower hall a lanky youth of eighteen.

"Say, these clubs are the real stuff, all right, all right. They're as brittle as glass. See what I did to 'em. We can have 'em spliced and re-wound, and I'll hang 'em on my wall. All I want is the heads anyhow."

He held up to view a headless mallet and brassie and triumphantly waved a splendid deck. My favorite clubs! I could play better from a hanging he with that beautiful brassie than with any club I ever owned, and, as for the iron, I was deadly with it.

He lit a cigarette and threw the match into a pile of shavings. Old Conrad returned to life at that instant and stamped on the incipient blaze.

"I shouldn't consider them very good clubs, Harold, if they break off like that," said his mother.

"What do you know about clubs?" he snapped, and I at once knew what class he was in at the preparatory school.

If I was ever like one of these, said I to myself, God rest the sage soul of my Uncle Elias!

The situation was no longer humorous. I could put up with anything but the mishandling of my devoted golf clubs.

Striding up to him, I snatched the remnants from his hands.

"You infernal cut!" I roared. "Haven't you any more sense than to smash a golf club like that? For two cents I'd break this putter over your head."

"Father," he yelled indignantly, "who is this macker?"

Mr. Rocksworth bounced toward me, his cane raised. I whirled upon him.

"How dare you?" he shouted. "The ladies squealed."

If he expected me to bring he was mightily mistaken. My blood was up. I advanced.

"Paste him, dad!" roared Harold.

But Mr. Rocksworth suddenly altered his course and put the historic treaty table between him and me. He didn't like the appearance of my rather brassy fist.

"You big stiff!" shouted Harold. "Afterward it occurred to me that this elegant appellation may have been meant for his father, but at the time I took it to be aimed at me."

Before Harold quite knew what was happening to him he was prancing down the long hall with my bony fingers grasping his collar. Coming to the door opening into the outer vestibule, I drew back my foot for a final aid to locomotion. Acutely recalling the fact that slippers are not designed for kicking purposes, I raised my foot, removed the slipper and laid it upon a taut section of his trousers with all of the melancholy force that I usually exert in slicing my drive off the tee. I shall never forget the exquisite spasm of pleasure his plaintive "Ouch!" gave me.

Then Harold passed swiftly out of my life.

Mr. Rocksworth, re-enforced by four reluctant mercenaries in the shape of porters, was advancing upon me. Somehow I had a vague but unerring instinct that some one had fainted, but I didn't stop to inquire. Without much ado I wrestled the cane from him and sent it scuttling after Harold.

"Now get out!" I roared.

"You shall pay for this!" he spluttered, quite black in the face. "Grab him, you infernal cowards!"

But the four porters slunk away, and Mr. Rocksworth faced me alone. Randolph and Max, thoroughly fed and most prodigious, were bearing down upon us, accounting for the flight of the mercenaries.

"Get out!" I repeated. "I am the owner of this place, Mr. Rocksworth, and I am med through and through! Skip!"

They skipped

### CHAPTER IV. I Converse With a Mystery.

LATE in the afternoon I opened my door, hoping that the banging of hammers and the buzz of industry would have ceased; but, alas, the noise was even more deafening than before. Eysing Britton in the gloomy corridor, I shouted to him, and he came at once.

"Britton," said I as he closed the door, "do you think they will carry out their threat to have the law on me? Mr. Rocksworth was very angry—and put out. He is a power, as you know."

"I think you are quite safe, sir," said he. "Shortly before 2, sir, one of the porters from the hotel came over to recover a gold purse Mrs. Riley-Werkheimer had dropped in the excitement, and he informed Mr. Poopendyke that the whole party was leaving at 4 for Dresden."

Later on, somewhat refreshed and relieved, I made my way to the little balcony, first having issued numerous orders and directions to the still stupefied Schmalcks, chief among which was an inflexible command to keep the gates locked against all comers.

Suddenly as I sat there ruminating I became acutely aware of something white on the ledge of the topmost window in the eastern tower. Even as I fixed my gaze upon it something else transpired. A cloud of soft, wavy, luxurious brown hair eclipsed the narrow white strip and hung with spreading splendor over the casement ledge plainly, indubitably to dry in the sun.

My neighbor had washed her hair! And it was really a most wonderful head of hair. I can't remember ever having seen anything like it except in the advertisements.

What a glorious, appealing, sensuous thing a crown of hair—but just then Mr. Poopendyke came to my window.

"May I interrupt you for a moment, Mr. Smart?" he inquired, as he squinted at me through his ugly bone-rimmed glasses.

"Come here, Poopendyke," I commanded in low, excited tones. He hesitated. "You won't fall off," I said sharply.

Although the window is at least nine feet high, Poopendyke stooped as he came through. He always does it, no matter how tall the door. It is a life-long habit with him. Have I mentioned that my worthy secretary is six feet four and as thin as a reed? I remember speaking of his knees. He is also a bachelor.

"It is a dreadful distance down there," he murmured, flattening himself against the wall and closing his eyes.

A pair of slim white hands at that instant indolently readjusted the thick mass of hair and quite as casually disappeared. I failed to hear Mr. Poopendyke's remark.

"I think, sir," he proceeded, "it would be a very good idea to get some of our correspondence off our hands. A great deal of it has accumulated in the past few weeks. I wish to say that I am quite ready to attend to it whenever—"

"Time enough for letters," said I, still staring.

"First of all, we must have a ladder," I went on. "Have you seen to that?"

"A ladder?" he faltered, putting one foot back through the window in a most suggestive way.

"Oh," said I, remembering, "I haven't told you, have I? Look! Up there, in that window. Do you see that?"

"What is it, sir? A rug?"

"Tug! Great Scott, man, don't you know a woman's hair when you see it?"

"I've never—er—never seen it—you might say—just like that. Is it hair?"

"It is. You do see it, don't you?"

"How did it get there?"

"Good! Now I know I'm not dreaming. Come! There's no time to be lost. We may be able to get up there before she hears us!"

I instructed old Conrad to have the tallest ladder brought to me in the courtyard at once.

"There is no such thing about the castle," he announced blandly.

"Where are your sons?" I demanded. The old couple held up their hands in great distress.

"Herr Britton has them wearing their souls out, turning a wheel outside the gates—ach, that terrible invention of his!" groaned old Conrad. "My poor sons are faint with fatigue, mein herr. You should see them perspire and hear them pant for breath."

Happily a new idea struck me almost at once.

In a jiffy half a dozen carpenters were at work constructing a substantial ladder out of scantlings, while I stood over them in serene command of the situation.

The vast middle corridor after stumbling through a series of dim, damp rooms, and then found our way effectually blocked by a stout door which was not only locked and bolted, but bore a most startling admonition to would-be trespassers.

"Pinned to one of the panels there was a dainty bit of white note paper, with these satiric words written across its surface in a bold feminine hand:

"Please keep out. This is private property."

Most property owners no doubt would have been incensed by this calm defiance on the part of a squatter, either male or female, but not I. The very impudence of the usurper appealed to me. What could be more delicious than her serene courage in dispossessing me with the stroke of a pen of at least two-thirds of my domicile and what more exciting than the thought of waging war against her in the effort to regain possession of it? Really it was quite glorious! Here was a happy, enchanting bit of feudalism that stirred my romantic soul to its very depths.

We returned to the courtyard and held a council of war. I put all of the Schmalcks on the grill, but they stubbornly disclaimed all interest in or knowledge of the extraordinary occupant of the east wing.

"We can smoke her out, sir," said Britton.

"I could scarcely believe my ears. 'Britton,' said I severely, 'you are a brute. I am surprised you forget there is an innocent babe, maybe a collection of them, over there and a dog. We shan't do anything heathenish, Britton. Please bear that in mind. There is but one way—we must storm the place. I will not be defied to my very nose.' I felt it to see if it was not a little out of joint. 'It is a good nose.'

"It is, sir," said Britton. And Poopendyke in a perfect ecstasy of loyalty, shouted, "Long live your nose, sir!"

My German vassals, waved their hats, perceiving that a demonstration was required without in the least knowing what it was about.

That night was very black and tragic, swift storm clouds having raced up to cover the moon and stars. With a radiant lantern in the window behind me, I sat down with my pad and my pipe and my pencil. The storm was not far away.

I was scribbling away in serene contentment for the physical world when there came to my ears a sound that gave me a greater shock than any streak of lightning could have produced and yet left sufficient life in me to appreciate the sensation of being electrified.

A woman's voice, speaking to me out of the darkness and from some point quite near at hand!

"I beg your pardon, but would you mind doing me a very slight favor?"

"Those were the words, uttered in a clear, sweet, perfectly confident voice, as of one who never asked for favors, but exacted them.

I looked about me, blinking, utterly bewildered. No one was to be seen. She laughed. Without really meaning to do so, I also laughed—nervously, of course.

"Can't you see me?" she asked. I looked intently at the spot from which the sound seemed to come—a perfectly solid stone block less than three feet from my right shoulder. It must have been very amusing. She laughed again. I flushed resentfully.

"Where are you?" I cried out rather tartly.

"I can see you quite plainly, and you are very ugly when you scowl, sir. Are you scowling at me?"

"I don't know," I replied truthfully, still searching for her. "Does it seem so to you?"

"Yes."

"Then I must be looking in the right direction," I cried impetuously. "You must be—Ah!"

My straining eyes had located a small, oblong blotch in the curve of the tower not more than twenty feet from where I stood, and on a direct line with my balcony. True, I could not at first see a face, but as my eyes grew a little more accustomed to the darkness, I fancied I could distinguish a shadow that might pass for one.

"I didn't know that little window was there," I cried, puzzled.

"It isn't," she said. "It is a secret loophole, and it isn't here except in times of great duress. See, I can close it!" The oblong blotch abruptly disappeared, only to reappear an instant later. I was beginning to understand. Of course it was in the beleaguered east wing! "I hope I didn't startle you a moment ago."

I resolved to be very stiff and formal about it. "May I inquire, madam, what you are doing in my hon—my castle?"

"You may."

"Well," said I, seeing the point, "what are you doing here?"

"I am living here," she answered distinctly.

"So I perceive," said I, rather too distinctly.

"And I have come down to ask a simple, tiny little favor of you, Mr. Smart," she resumed.

"You know my name?" I cried, surprised.

"I am reading your last book— Are you going?"

"Just a moment, please," I called out, struck by a splendid idea. Reaching inside the window, I grasped the lantern and brought its rays to bear upon the—perfectly blank wall! I stared open mouthed and unbelieving. "Good heaven! Have I been dreaming all this?" I cried aloud.

object that, at once recognized his finger protruded from one of them and wiggled at me in a merry but exceedingly irritating manner.

Sensibly I restored the lantern to its place inside the window and waited for the mysterious voice to resume.

"Are you so homely as all that?" I demanded when the shadowy face looked out once more. Very clever of me, I thought.

"I am considered rather good looking," she replied serenely. "Please don't do that again. It was very rude of you, Mr. Smart."

"Oh, I've seen something of you before this," I said. "You have long, beautiful brown hair—and a dog."

She was silent.

"I am sure you will pardon me if I very politely ask who you are?" I went on.

"That question takes me back to the favor. Will you be so very, very kind as to cease bothering me, Mr. Smart? It is dreadfully upsetting, don't you know, feeling that at any moment you may rush in and—"

"I like that. In my own castle too!"

"There is ample room for both of us," she said sharply. "I shan't be here for more than a month or six weeks, and I am sure we can get along very amiably under the same roof for that length of time if you'll only forget that I am here."

"I can't very well do that, madam. You see, we are making extensive repairs about the place, and you are proving to be a serious obstacle. I cannot grant your request. It will grieve me enormously if I am compelled to smoke you out, but I fear—"

"Smoke me out!"

"Perhaps with sulphur," I went on resolutely. "It is said to be very effective."

"Surely you will not do anything so horrid."

"Only as a last resort. First we shall storm the east wing. Failing in that, we shall rely on smoke. You will admit that you have no right to poach on my preserves."

"None whatever," she said rather plaintively.

I can't remember having heard a sweeter voice than hers. Of course by this time I was thoroughly convinced that she was a lady, a cultured, high bred lady, and an American.

That plaintive note in her voice served its purpose. My firmness seemed to dissolve, even as I sought to re-enforce it by an injection of harshness into my own manner of speech.

"Then you should be willing to vacate my premises—er—er—here is where I began to show irresoluteness—er—explain yourself."

"Won't you be generous?"

I cleared my throat nervously. How well they know the cracks in a man's armor!

"I am willing to be—amenable to reason. That's all you ought to expect." A fresh idea took root. "Can't we effect a compromise—a truce, or something of the sort? All I ask is that you explain your presence here. I will promise to be as generous as possible under the circumstances."

"Will you give me three days in which to think it over?" she asked, after a long pause.

"No."

"Well, two days?"

"I'll give you until tomorrow afternoon at 5, when I shall expect you to receive me in person."

"That is quite impossible."

"But I demand the right to go wherever I please in my own castle. You—"

"If you knew just how circumspect I am obliged to be at present you wouldn't impose such terms, Mr. Smart."

"Oh, circumspect! That puts a new light on the case. What have you been up to, madame?" I spoke very severely.

She very properly ignored the banality. "If I should write you a nice, agreeable letter, expatiating as much as I can, won't you be satisfied?"

"I prefer to have it by word of mouth."

She seemed to be considering. "I will come to this window tomorrow night at this time and—and let you know," she said reluctantly.

"Very well," said I. "We'll let it rest till then."

"And, by the way, I have something more to ask of you. Is it quite necessary to have all this pounding and hammering going on in the castle? The noise is dreadful. I don't ask it on my own account, but for the baby. You see, she's quite ill with a fever, Mr. Smart. Perhaps you've heard her crying."

"The baby?" I muttered.

"It is nothing serious, of course. The doctor was here today and he re-assured me."

"A doctor here today?" I gasped. She laughed once more. Verily, it was a gentle, high bred laugh.

"Will you please put a stop to the noise for a day or two?" she asked very prettily.

"Certainly," said I, too surprised to say anything else. "Is—is there anything else?"

"Nothing, thank you," she replied. Then: "Good night, Mr. Smart. You are very good."

"Don't forget tomorrow!"

But the oblong aperture disappeared with a sharp click, and I found myself staring at the blank, sphinxlike wall.

### CHAPTER V. I Become an Ancestor.

T RUE to the promise she had extracted from me, I laid off my workmen the next morning.

They trooped in bright and early, considerably augmented by fresh recruits, who came to share the benefits of my innocuous prodigality, and if I live to be a thousand I shall never again experience such a noisome half hour as the one I spent in listening to their indignant protests against my tyrannical oppression of the poor and