

Mr. Barnes, American

By Archibald Clavering Gunter
A Sequel to
Mr. Barnes of New York

Author of "Mr. Barnes of New York,"
"Mr. Potter of Texas,"
"That Frenchman," Etc.

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"And never dare to look on the face of any true man or woman? No, no!" Frantically she has broken from his arms; she is running towards the torch, desperately hoping to snatch it from the hands of the satyr holding it ready to apply it to the fuse.

After one unsuccessful step to overtake her swift foot, Danella cries savagely: "Fire the mine!"

Enrico, the fuse in one hand, the blazing torch in the other, is applying the flame to it.

There is a sharp whiff of the still night air like the faint snap of a distant whip and the man with the scar falls, as if struck from Heaven.

"Diavolo, what mystery is this? Myself to light the fuse!" cries Cipriano, and runs to the flambeau flaring on the ground.

But Marina, her eyes baneful with agony, mutters: "I am a Corsican," and as he picks up the torch, the desperate girl seizes him with her delicate hands and struggles with him frantically.

But her slight strength is naught to that of his wiry frame. Danella picks up the torch. "Take your choice," he whispers. "The Englishman lives and you are my mistress; he dies, and you are my honored wife!"

He is holding her down with one knee pressed on her. He is moving the torch slowly to the fuse; he is giving her a chance to save the life she loves by despairing surrender—he is giving himself just one more chance to win the beauty of the woman who loathes him—when, even as the flame is licking the fuse, another whiff rends the atmosphere, and from a spot midway between his longing eyes spouts something that is red in the torch flame, and with one shrill scream, "Morte!" Cipriano, springing high in the air, falls stark dead beside Marina's prostrate form.

The detective and Edwin are thundering at the tower door. Marina staggers to it, with a great effort turns the key and lifts up the steel bars, and stands faintly leaning against the stone masonry as Edwin, springing out, catches her in his arms.

"What did it? What wondrous thing wrought our deliverance?" he asks between kisses that make the girl wife think she is in heaven.

"By gum, was it lightning?" asks the detective, scratching his head. Then hearing a cry he runs down the chasm and moves the swinging bridge into place across the crevice.

Over this comes Mr. Barnes, leisurely walking, humming the sweet romantic tune the minstrels are sending up from the distant sea.

Looking at the two dead men, Tomasso, in his old-time Corsican way, is saying solemnly: "Tis the hand of God!"

But Marina, running to the American, cries: "I know the 'hand of God!'" and sinks down uttering blessings on the great pistol shot.

"By Goliath, 'tain't possible to do that with a revolver in this light," mutters Emory, pacing off the distance. "Holy smoke, you should be proud of them shots."

"It was that wondrous Orezza water that did it. That toned up my nerves after two days of devilish misery," remarks Burton modestly.

"But grub's what I'm thinking about," says Emory; "you haven't been fed on spoon-victuals for two weeks!" and he dashes into the farmhouse.

Edwin, after slapping Barnes upon the back, has carried his wife, half-swooning now with joy, onto the verandah, when of a sudden, with a roar like that of a hundred-ton gun, the whole tower rises from its base and falls tumbling, a mass of ruined masonry, and on high there is a flight of rocks like fireworks. Fortunately the explosion has been so strong that the missiles nearly all fall into the sea, with great splashing of the water. They can hear the cries of terror from the minstrels in the boat as they hastily row away.

"My last shot wasn't quick enough," says the American dolefully. "Hang me, if Cip didn't get the torch to the fuse before he died." Then Barnes suddenly questions: "Where's my wife? Can't anybody tell me where is my wife?"

"She was not in that tower, anyway; that we know," answered Edwin. "We examined every portion of it, trying to escape."

"Your wife?" cries Marina. "You should know! I left you going up the stairs to her chamber in Bocognano!"

"She wasn't there?" mutters Burton. "Wasn't there? My servant said she was there. Who was the lady?"

Barnes doesn't answer, but says moodily: "Then I've got to find Enid. My horse is just on the other side of the crevice."

"But you are too tired."

"I'm never too tired to find my best girl," says the poor worn-out fellow, trying to be cheerful, and steps down

toward the bridge.

But from a distance a pretty feminine voice is heard crying excitedly: "This is the way to the explosion, young Signore Bellacoscia!"

Then Barnes' voice rings, really happy for the first time in twenty-four hours: "Enid, that you? This way, little girl. Look out for the crevice," and his long sought-for bride comes cantering across the bridge followed by two young bandits, who announce themselves as Conrad and Rodrigo Bonelli. The next second Enid has been lifted in Barnes' arms from the saddle.

"Where have you been, all this time?" he asks eagerly.

"Following you ever since this morning, when the great Bellacoscia sent me on with these two gentlemen, his nephews, charging them with their lives to deliver me safe into your hands. I came from Bocognano."

"And where were you two nights ago when I was seeking you there?"

"I was asleep at Salicetti's home under the influence of a narcotic. Oh, mercy, don't look at me so," stammers Enid. "I was beneath the care of Salicetti's mother."

"Asleep under a narcotic?"

"Yes; when they were planning the ambush for you, I struggled so that Salicetti and his men forced an anodyne down my throat. When I became conscious, they told me that when the great Bellacoscia demanded my surrender Bernardo was afraid to explain to him, and some other woman was substituted for me. But when Salicetti learnt that Bonelli for his deceit had declared against him a vendetta that meant his certain death, he went to the great bandit, confessed and surrendered me to him. Whereupon, with many kind words, Bonelli sent me to his 'dear friend, Monsieur Barnes, of New York, the celebrated pistol shot.'"

"Oh, the most divine pistol shot upon earth," calls Marina, running out and embracing him. "By his skill, Burton has killed the man whose life forever would have been a menace to us." Then gazing at Barnes, she laughs: "And I supposed you happy for the last twenty-four hours. You remember I left you going up to your wife's chamber in Bocognano?"

"Going up to my chamber in Bocognano?" almost yells the young English bride. "I cannot understand; I was asleep under opium in charge of Salicetti's mother."

"Oh, no, you were at my house. You were waiting for Burton in the guest chamber on the second floor. Mr. Barnes went up to you— Good gracious, Edwin, don't! Dio mio, what are you squeezing my hand so for?"

"A word in private with you, Mr. Barnes," whispers Enid in suppressed tone.

Barnes, sheepishly muttering to himself, "Our first row," follows his wife into the shrubbery of the verandah, where they are quite apart.

"The lady who was substituted for me?" asks his bride haughtily.

"Sally Blackwood," answers Burton boldly.

"La Belle Blackwood! Good Heavens! What brought her there?" sudden tears springing up in Enid's blue eyes.

"She said she came to Bocognano to save my life from the vendetta. You remember she had warned me before, the other evening in Nice."

"Yes, I remember," she sighs; then adds more brightly, "I remember also, that you told me."

Never up to this time has Barnes so thoroughly appreciated the latent nobility of his sweet bride.

She gazes at him anxiously, but only for a moment—the awful lines about her husband's face proclaiming his unremitting pursuit of her for three merciless days and nights softens Enid's tender heart. She slips one rounded arm about his neck and whispers: "I shall never question you about this. If you feel you can kiss me, Burton, kiss me!" and for this gets a kiss whose longing ardor makes her blush.

"Ah, that was an honest husband's kiss!" she says rapturously, and for the speech receives another that makes her tremble with joy.

Running to Marina, she cries: "Fancy, it was that awful La Belle Blackwood, who wanted to save Burton's life!"

"I am very glad she didn't want to save my husband's life," laughs Marina.

"The superb Madame Blackwood," cries Rodrigo Bonelli, who with excited exclamations has with his brother been examining Barnes' shots, "has received my great uncle's favor and is about to become his spouse. Let no one mention her name lightly!"

"The great bandit's bride!" half shrieks Enid.

"The wife of the grand Antonio!" ejaculates Marina.

"Aye, and that is why we must soon take our leave. To-morrow is their nuptial day in Bocognano."

Then the ladies get to discussing this wondrous news, and Barnes, leading Edwin aside, whispers: "We must get the girls out of here quick. If we vamoose now, probably the explosion of the tower and those bodies will be attributed to the riotous 'Lucchese.'"

The American's tone is awed, he reflects that till this last dire episode of his life, no human being had ever fallen to his fatal pistol.

"By gum," remarks the detective, who is gaunt with much fasting, coming out of the house, "there was a fine supper for two setting there, with white flowers and champagne. I finished it all!"

Marina's face flames. She knows for whom the nuptial dinner was designed, and as Edwin suggests leaving, cries: "Yes, quick, from this awful place!"

"You're quite right—now get away smart—they may think it was bloody Italians," observes Emory, and makes himself useful helping the ladies down

to the sea, to which some steep steps on the further side of the cliff lead them.

From a little jetty Barnes hails a boat that is apparently in waiting from the fishing vessel. To the captain of the craft who is in the boat's stern, he cries: "The 'Lucchese' are making a row all along the coast. We must leave at once."

"Yes, the rocks that fell about us from the explosion told us that," answers the captain, anxious to leave this dangerous anchorage. But as the



From a Little Jetty, Barnes Hails a Boat.

party board his boat, he mutters: "Count Cipriano and his nephew?"

"They are trying to protect their vines and crops from the 'Lucchese.' We are not to wait for them. You remember, the count said a lady would be on board. Your charter money?"

"Oh, yes," cries the captain, pocketing some bills, as his men row them to the fishing vessel, where he orders his sails set.

Barnes tells the skipper to steer to Villefranche harbor. As he turns away Emory edges beside him and whispers: "This is the infernal felucca, in whose hold I banged about from St. Tropez."

The two Bellacoscia have assisted the ladies to the deck.

"Now, gentlemen," asks Barnes of the young bandits, "what can I do for you for bringing me my wife?"

"You can give us the pistols that make incredible shots," answers one of the young men.

"By them we will kill many gendarmes," whispers the other.

"Sorry for the gendarmes, but the pistols go," laughs Barnes, and passes his weapons to these nice young bandits, who, after kissing the ladies' hands, take their leave with many words of gratitude and thanks.

"I fear I'm leaving murder behind me," sighs the American.

"Yes, nothing will cure this country but half a dozen railroads," remarks the detective. "Then you're able to get about and handcuff a man."

The vessel is soon under way, leaving the Corsican coast. The ladies, worn out with fatigue, are asleep in the little cabin, where there is only room for two.

As their husbands seated on the deck are smoking languidly their cigars, Barnes whispers to Edwin: "I rather imagine this vendetta is settled for good. Marina is again beloved by the people of her commune, and you will be honored when you go back with her to visit her estates."

"And the Danellas?"

"Oh, I don't think there will be much said about them. The 'Lucchese' have been raising the devil in the last few days. Anyway, Cip had to be planted; he was the dangerous one; he was the money of the affair. You and I will be now able to walk down Piccadilly or Fifth avenue and not squint over our shoulders—and if our brides disappear we'll seek for them at Delmonico's or the Langham, and not at some Baxter street rendezvous of the Black Hand or some Whitechapel haunt of foreign stiletto gentlemen."

On the following noon the felucca is anchored at Villefranche. As the party disembark at the pretty landing stage, Maud, running down the path greets them with: "My, you are scarecrows!"

"Happy scarecrows!" cries Enid, as Barnes tenderly lifts her from the boat. Then they all go up to Lady Chartriss' villa, followed by old Tomasso, contentedly smoking a pipe, and Emory in consultation with Barnes and Edwin as to silence in regard to the slain Danellas and bringing Graham and the Seagull back. In her parlor they are received with many sighs by Lady Chartriss, who says mournfully: "I'm going back to London. Do you know that after that night you left, that wretched Cipriano has never visited me?"

To avoid discussing Danella, Enid and Marina run upstairs to get on civilized clothes, the former says: "Oh, mama," cries Maud breaking into the room with the Nice morning paper in her hand, "that detective is eating up everything in the house, and old Tomasso is chuckling over this telegram from Corsica: 'Salicetti, the vendetta man, is defeated for the chamber of deputies—and—here's bad news for you, Barnesy—La Belle Blackwood is being married this morning in Bocognano to the great bandit who kills so many, the one they call the Bellacoscia.'"

"Hush, my child," shudders her mother, "don't mention that horrible creature's name."

"Oh, I can speak of her now, mama, dear," remarks Maud, naively; "Blackey is now an honest wife."

"You bet Sally will make Bonelli a thoroughly honest wife," sneers Barnes in a whisper to Edwin. "No

firtatious glances at other mountain cavaliers, or the dagger in the back for both, biff! I reckon that kiss I gave Sally the other night in Bocognano is Sally's last outside kiss for a deuced long t-time."

The careless words gurgled in his throat. Enid standing in the conservatory, dressed in some light white carriage costume, looking like a fairy bride, cries sweetly but possessively: "Burton, I'm going to take you with me into Nice, shopping!"

"Oh, good Lord, now I know I'm married," laughs Mr. Barnes.

"Gee, you'll never be married really till you give me that bridesmaid present!" pouts Maud savagely.

Exquisite blushes rise to Enid's face.

"Right you are, Maudie," cries Mr. Barnes excitedly. "We'll get you the finest kind of gift this very morning."

"Oh, it must be something very handsome," answers the bride enthusiastically. "We're going to be so happy."

Burton leads his wife to the victoria, puts her carefully in, seats himself beside her and says casually to Lady Chartriss, who has come to the door with them: "By the bye, we shan't be back for a week."

"Oh, mercy, I—I have no baggage," falters Enid.

"Sent on ahead with Tompson."

"Where are you going to take me, dear?"

"To a nice little Swiss canton where there are plenty of mountains, but no bandits or vendettas. By the lord Harry, I'm tired of taking separate wedding tours," he adds savagely.

"Y-e-s, Burton." His beautiful wife snuggles a little closer to the ardent Barnes. Then she starts up with a little scream as an old slipper thrown by Maud nearly knocks off her hat, and Edwin and Marina from the window above are laughing and showering rice and flowers on her.

The sun is shining very brightly as Mr. and Mrs. Barnes of New York drive into Nice.

FINIS.

His Qualification.

A certain New York alderman was asked, when it first became known that he had political ambitions, what qualifications he had for that office. The aspirant for public honors proceeded to name a number of his accomplishments. Finally he wound up by saying:

"But what counts for more than all else is that I can marry nutes in their own language. And that, let me tell you, is no mean qualification. Of all persons who wish to enter the state of matrimony none are so restricted in their choice of officiating clergymen or magistrates as the deaf and dumb. There are a few preachers in town capable of performing a marriage ceremony in that language, but a couple of nutes who wished a civil marriage alone would be hard put to it to find a competent person among the city's officials. I learned the sign language a few years ago, when I was laid up in a hospital, and I think it would be a good thing to give me the place for the benefit of nutes who wish to be wed."

The man was elected, and in recognition of his one shining talent he really has been called upon to officiate at a number of these "quiet" weddings.

Cats Prey on Rabbits.

Farmers and gunners of Pennsylvania are taking steps to have the game laws so amended as to impose a fine upon owners of cats that kill wild rabbits, just as in the case of dogs caught chasing the cotton-tails. At this season of the year there are numerous wild rabbits in the fields and woods close to the town and three times as many of them are killed by cats as are caught by dogs. Some of the cats have become particularly skillful in stalking the young rabbits, and when within springing distance they pounce upon the unsuspecting bunny much as they would upon a rat.

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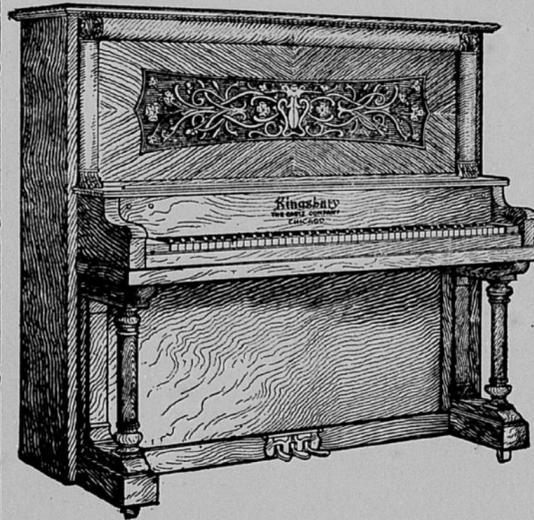


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