

GREEN FANCY

BY GEORGE BARR
MC CUTCHEON

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

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"How about luncheon? Will you join me at twelve-thirty?"

"That's quite another matter," said Mr. Rushcroft readily. "Luncheon is an esthetic tribute to the physical intelligence of man, if you know what I mean. I shall be delighted to join you."

"Twelve-thirty, did you say?"

"It would give me great pleasure if your daughter would also grace the festal board. I think it is too good that she has to go about in the gown she wears," Mr. Rushcroft said. "She's much too splendid for that. I have a proposition I'd like to make to you later on. I cannot make it, however, without consulting Miss Thackeray's feelings."

"My dear fellow!" beamed Rushcroft, seizing the other's hand. "One frequently reads in books about it coming like this, at first sight, but, damme, I never dreamed that it ever really happened. Count on me! She ought to leave the stage, the dear child. No more fitted to it than an Easter lily. Her place is in the home, the—"

"Good Lord, I am not thinking of—"

And Barnes, aghast, stopped before blurring out the words that leaped to his lips. "I mean to say this is a proposition that may also affect your excellent companions, Bacon and Dillingford, as well as yourself."

At twelve-thirty sharp Barnes came down from his room freshly shaved and brushed, to find not only Mr. Rushcroft and Miss Thackeray awaiting him in the office, but the Messrs. Dillingford and Bacon as well.

"I took the liberty, old fellow," said Rushcroft, addressing Barnes, "of asking my excellent co-workers to join us in our repeat."

"Delighted to have you with us, gentlemen," said Barnes affably.

The sole topic of conversation for the first half hour was the mysterious slaying of their fellow lodgers. Mr. Rushcroft complained bitterly of the outrageous, high-handed action of the coroner and sheriff in imposing upon him and his company the same restrictions that had been applied to Barnes. They were not to leave the county until the authorities gave the word. One would have thought, to hear the star's indignant lamentations, that he and his party were in a position to depart when they pleased. It would have been difficult to imagine that he was not actually rolling in money instead of being absolutely penniless.

Barnes had been immersed in his own thoughts for some time. A slight frown, as of reflection, darkened his eyes. Suddenly—perhaps impulsively—he interrupted Mr. Rushcroft's flow of eloquence.

"Have you any objection, Mr. Rushcroft, to a more or less personal question concerning your private—misfortunes?" he asked, leaning forward.

For a moment one could have heard a pin drop. Mr. Rushcroft evidently held his breath. There could be no mistake about that.

"It's rather delicate, but would you mind telling me just how much you were stuck up for by the—was it a writ of attachment?"

"It was," said the star. "A writ of inquisition, you might as well substitute. The act of a polluted, impetuous, parsimonious—what shall I say? Well, I will be as simple as possible—hotel keeper. Ninety-seven dollars and forty cents. For that pitiful amount he subjected me to—"

"Well, that isn't so bad," said Barnes, vastly relieved. He was covertly watching Miss Thackeray's half-averted face as he ventured upon the proposition he had decided to put before them. "I am prepared and willing to advance this amount, Mr. Rushcroft, and to take your personal note as security."

Rushcroft leaned back in his chair and stuck his thumbs in the armpoles of his vest. He displayed no undue elation. Instead he affected profound calculations. His daughter shot a swift, searching look at the would-be Samaritan. There was a heightened color in her cheeks.

"Moreover, I shall be happy to increase the amount of the loan sufficiently to cover your return at once to New York, if you so desire—by train." Barnes smiled as he added the last two words.

"Extremely kind of you, my dear Barnes," said the actor, running his fingers through his hair. "Your faith in me is most gratifying. I—I really don't know what to say to you, sir."

"May I inquire just how you expect to profit by this transaction, Mr. Barnes?" Miss Thackeray asked steadily.

He started, catching her meaning.

"My dear Miss Thackeray," he exclaimed, "this transaction is solely between your father and me. I shall have no other claim to press."

"I wish I could believe that," she said.

"You may believe it," he assured her.

"It isn't the usual course," she said quietly, and her face brightened. "You are not like most men, Mr. Barnes."

"My dear child," said Rushcroft, "you must leave this matter to our friend and me. I fancy I know an honest man when I see him. My dear fellow, fortune is but temporarily frowning upon me. In a few weeks I shall be on my feet again, slipping along on the crest of the wave. I dare say I can return the money to you in

a month or six weeks. It—

"Oh, father!" cried Miss Thackeray. "We'll make it six months and pay any rate of interest—"

"Six per cent?"

"It's a year!"

"Agree!"

"Dilly! We shall be in New York tomorrow!"

"You forget the dictatorial sheriff, Mr. Rushcroft," said Barnes.

"The varlet!" barked Mr. Rushcroft. "It was arranged that Dillingford and Bacon were to go to Hornville in a hired motor that afternoon, secure the judgment, pay the costs, and attend to the removal of the personal belongings of the stranded quartette from the hotel to Hart's Tavern. The younger actors stoutly refused to accept Barnes' offer to pay their board while at the Tavern. That they declared, would be charity, and they preferred their friendship and his respect to anything of that sort. Miss Thackeray, however, was to be immediately relieved of her position as chambermaid. She was to become a paying guest."

Rushcroft took the whole affair with the most noteworthy complacency. He seemed to regard it as his due, or



Rushcroft Took the Whole Affair With the Most Noteworthy Complacency.

more properly speaking as if he were doing Barnes a great favor in allowing him to lend money to a person of his importance.

"A thought has just come to me, my dear fellow," he remarked as they arose from table. "With the proper kind of backing I could put over one of the most stupendous things the theater has known in fifty years. I don't mind saying to you—although it's rather sub rosa—that I have written a play—a four-act drama that will pack the biggest house on Broadway to the roof for as many months as we'd care to stay. Perhaps you will allow me to talk it over with you a little later on. You will be interested, I'm sure. Egad, sir, I'll read the play to you. I'll—What ho, landlord. Have your best automobile sent around to the door as quickly as possible. A couple of my men are going to Hornville to fetch hither my—"

"Just a minute," interrupted Patnam Jones, wholly unimpressed. "A man just called you up on the phone, Mr. Barnes. I told him you were entertaining royalty at lunch and couldn't be disturbed. So he asked me to have you call him up as soon as you revived. His words, not mine. Call up Mr. O'Dowd at Green Fancy. Here's the number."

The mellow voice of the Irishman soon responded to Barnes' call.

"I called you up to relieve your mind regarding the young woman who came last night," he said. "You observe that I say 'came.' She's quite all right, safe and sound, and no cause for uneasiness. I thought you meant that she was coming here as a guest, and so I made the very natural mistake of saying she hadn't come at all, at all. The young woman in question is Mrs. Van Dyke's maid. But, bless me soul, how was I to know she was even in existence, much less expected by train or motor or Shanks' mare? Well, she's here, so there's the end of our mystery."

Barnes was slow in replying. He was doubting his own ears. It was not conceivable that an ordinary—or even an extraordinary—lady's maid could have possessed the exquisite voice and manner of his chance acquaintance of the day before, or the temerity to order that sour-faced chauffeur about as if—

"The chauffeur!"

"But I thought you said that Mr. Curtis' chauffeur was moon-faced and—"

"He is, bedad," broke in Mr. O'Dowd, chuckling. "That's what deceived me entirely, and no wonder. It wasn't Peter at all, but the rascalion washer who went after her. He was instructed to tell Peter to meet the four o'clock train, and the blockhead forgot to give the order. Bedad, what does he do but sneak out after her

himself, scared out of his boots for fear of what he was to get from Peter. I had the whole story from Mrs. Van Dyke."

"Well, I'm tremendously relieved," said Barnes slowly.

"And so am I," said O'Dowd with conviction. "I have seen the heroine of our busted romance. She's a good-looking girl. I'm not surprised that she kept her veil down. If you were to leave it to me, though, I'd say that it's a sin to carry discretion so far as all that. You see what I mean, don't you?" His rich laugh came over the wire.

"Perfectly. Thank you for letting me know. My mind is at rest. Good-by." As he hung up the receiver he said to himself, "You are a most affable, convincing chap, Mr. O'Dowd, but I don't believe a word you say. That woman is no lady's maid, and you've known all the time that she was there."

At four o'clock he set out alone for a tramp up the mountain road in which the two men had been shot down. His mind was quite clear. Room and Paul were not ordinary robbers. They were, no doubt, honest men. He would have said that they were thieves bent on burglarizing Green Fancy were it not for the disclosures of Miss Thackeray—and the very convincing proof that they were not shot by the same man.

It was not beyond reason—indeed, it was quite probable—that they were trying to cross the border; in that event their real operations would be confined to the Canadian side of the line. He could not free himself of the suspicion that Green Fancy possessed the key to the situation. Room and his companion could not have had the slightest interest in his movements up to the instant that he encountered the young woman at the crossroads. His busy brain suddenly suffered the shock of a distinct conclusion. Was she a fellow conspirator? Was she the inside worker at Green Fancy in a well-laid plan to rife the place?

Could it be possible that she was the confederate of these painstaking agents who lurked with slithering patience outside the very gates of the place called Green Fancy?

His rambles carried him far beyond the spot where Room's body was found and where young Conley had come upon the tethered horses. His eager, curious gaze swept the forest to the left of the road in search of Green Fancy. Overcome by a rash, daring impulse, he climbed over the stake and rider fence and snuntered among the big trees which so far had obscured the house from view. The trees grew very thickly on the slope, and they were unusually large. He progressed deeper into the wood. At the end of what must have been a mile he halted. There was no sign of habitation, no indication that man had ever penetrated so far into the forest. As he was on the point of retracing his steps toward the road his gaze fell upon a huge moss-covered rock less than a hundred yards away. He stared, and gradually it began to take on angles and planes and recesses of the most astounding symmetry. Under his widening gaze it was transformed into a substantial object of cubes and gables—and yes, windows.

He was looking upon the strange home of the even stranger Mr. Curtis—Green Fancy.

Now he understood why it was called Green Fancy. Its surroundings were no greener than itself; it seemed to melt into the foliage, to become a part of the natural landscape. Mountain ivy literally enveloped it. Exposed sections of the house were painted green; the doors were green; the leafy porches and their columns, the chimney pots, the window hangings—all were the color of the unchanging forest. And it was a place of huge dimensions, low and long and rambling.

"Gad," he said to himself, "what manner of crank is he who would bury himself like this? Of all the crazy ideas I ever—"

His reflections ended there. A woman crossed his vision; a woman strolling slowly toward him through the intricately avenues of the wildwood.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HOPKINTON.

Mr. and Mrs. David Smith visited in Monticello Tuesday and Wednesday. Mrs. George Hucker and Misses Lela Morrow and Opal Hucker spent the day in Cedar Rapids Wednesday. Miss Wand Earhart is visiting relatives in Illinois.

Mr. and Mrs. Fleetwood of Fort Dodge, made a brief visit last week at the home of the latter's parents. Miss Lucile Bort returned with them for a visit of several weeks at the home of her sister.

Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Main were up from Monticello to spend the Fourth with home folks.

Prof. W. B. Guthrie arrived from New York Wednesday evening and will spend most of the summer in the vicinity, except when out on speaking tours.

Howard Smith and family of Roundup, Montana, spent Tuesday with Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Irish. They are visiting in Manchester with Mr. Smith's father.

F. R. Tesar has sold his residence property to Almon Danford of Hazel Green for \$9000, possession to be given next spring.

S. B. Lowe, who has sold his farm in River Valley, has purchased the property of George Eager adjoining town. There are ten acres.

A. E. Dunlap of Manchester was in town Tuesday.

F. D. Joseph of Des Moines, visited Friday at the home of his brother, F. J. Joseph. He is interested in an insurance company, which has to do with teachers and will continue to make his home in Des Moines.

Mrs. J. C. Edgar and two children have gone to Stecker, Okla., for a six weeks' visit with relatives.

Rev. W. A. Montgomery and family of Manchester, made a brief stop here Monday morning on their automobile trip east.

J. C. French of Onslow, has bought

158 acres of the McGlade Bros. at \$210 an acre.

Mrs. G. A. Dishan and son, Roy, are visiting Mrs. James Rae at Marcus. They also expect to go to South Dakota.

Word has been received from Deer River, Minnesota, that John Stutt, who formerly resided here has had a stroke of paralysis and that no hope of recovery is given.

Tommy Blanchard arrived home last week having been discharged from service. He will again take up the work at the Leader office which he gave up when called to service.

Mr. and Mrs. Mac Arthur and daughter of Davenport, were guests of D. C. Oehler and wife the 4th and over Sunday.

Rev. Odell of Buck Creek, left this week for the Centenary Conference at Columbus, Ohio. His congregation provided the funds necessary and he deeply appreciates their kindness.

Mrs. Verne Wheelless and baby were visitors at the Wheelless home over the Fourth.

Editor Beels and wife spent Sunday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Doolittle at Delhi.

W. A. Milroy is expecting to extend his electric service to Sand Spring and also to connect with the Iowa Electric Co.

Miss Jennie Dunlap was taken to the McDonald hospital at Monticello where she will receive care for several weeks.

Rev. A. P. Walton of Monticello, and Rev. Howard Irvine of Castle Grove, attended the reception for Dr. J. F. Hinkhouse Tuesday evening.

Everyone is glad of the law regarding "cut-outs" on the automobiles. It seemed as if each one was trying to make a bigger noise than the rest. They were a terror by day as well as by night and very annoying to sick people.

The public reception to Dr. Hinkhouse was well attended. All were glad to welcome the new president of Lenox College. He has at once started in to work out his plans for Lenox College and the opening of the 61st year next September. His family will come when he can secure a residence for them.

Mrs. T. B. Cummings and daughter Nellie, left Thursday for a month's visit at Coggon and Waterloo.

Dr. J. F. Hinkhouse, president of Lenox College, preached in the Presbyterian church at Manchester Sunday morning.

Mrs. William Bucher and children of Farley, were visitors over the 4th with the former's sister, Mrs. A. W. McDonald.

Ralph Gee of Monmouth, spent the 4th of July in town.

Miss Marie Stamey of Robbins, visited last week at the home of her aunt, Mrs. Landers.

Dr. W. H. Ensign and wife leave Monday morning to spend part of their vacation at Cedar Falls Christian Endeavor Conference. Misses Carrie Brooks and Margaret Wallin will also attend.

The 4th was very quiet around town except for fire crackers. There were a number of small picnics and fishing parties and also automobile loads left headed for Manchester, Central City, Dubuque and Cascade, and their trip was much pleasanter going out than coming home, as the heavy rains prevailed in every direction.

Life Wisdom.
The wisdom of the wise and the experience of ages may be preserved by quotation.—Benjamin Disraeli.

Collecting That Living.
The world owes a living to every man who feels that he owes the world for his living. It is a sort of exchange in which the world deals as fairly as it is dealt by.

Clock of Long Service.
In the examination hall at Canton, China, where under the old regime students sat for their military tests, is a water clock which has automatically recorded the time for 3,000 years.

Travel is Expensive.
"De Bible say dat de poor you hab wiv you always," ruminated Shinbone, "an' I reckon dat's kase dey is too poor ter break away."—Boston Transcript.

Jefferson's Wisdom.
Thomas Jefferson said: "I have often thought that if heaven had given me choice of my position and calling, it should have been a rich spot of earth, well watered, and near a good market. No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth."

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Farmer's Good Work.

Some people find it impossible to do two things at the same time. The farmer often does four, and does them well—he walks, thinks, talks, and smiles all at once.

True Aristocracy.

Mere democracy cannot solve the social question. An element of aristocracy must be introduced into our life. I do not mean the aristocracy of birth, or of the purse, or even the aristocracy of intellect. I mean the aristocracy of character, of will, of mind. That only can free us.—Ibsen.

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