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Megeath Stationery Company

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A MOUNTAIN SIREN.

BY JOHN WINTHROP GREEN.

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When a man has a story to tell I believe he should be permitted to tell it in his own way, and that the reader should not sneer and criticize because the teller must use the personal pronoun and perhaps refer to his position or his prowess. If it is his adventure how can he avoid saying, "I did this or so?" If his courage pulled him out of a tight place why seek to demand it? A man is what he is. If things have happened to him which may be of interest to others, let him write of them as they took place, whether he was a hero or a scoundrel.

Your atlas will show you that the eastern Carpathian mountains form a portion of the boundary line between Serbia and Bulgaria. If you cross anywhere to the north of Pirot you must cross the range. In my wanderings about I had planned to cross the range by the public road between Pirot and Nissa, but for three days I was a guest at a poor little wayside inn in the shadow of the foothills. The inn differed in no degree from a hundred others, being only a wretched apology for a house of entertainment, but I had made a long tramp and wanted a breathing spell before the long and rugged ascent. The landlord was a silent, grotesque man, giving me little attention, and his wife was a sloven with a face which a man would look at twice only for its wickedness. The beds and the fare were of the meanest, but, as I had expected nothing better, I was not disappointed.

On the second day of my arrival, as I was walking along the banks of a stream half a mile from the inn, an English pedestrian came along. That is, he was a pedestrian in the sense that he was footed. As soon as he learned who I was, he told me that a cousin of his had journeyed that way three months before, but had mysteriously disappeared. The missing man had been traced as far as Pirot. He was known to have set out for the mountain trail, but he could not be traced into Bulgaria, somewhere on the mountain trail he had vanished from sight. The story did not interest me overmuch. American and English pedestrians abroad have a habit of disappearing from the world now and then, and it is learned later on that they were tucked away in some obscure inn or camped amidst some old ruin. The searcher passed on to my inn and made inquiries, and two hours later informed me that he had secured no news.

That evening a second searcher arrived. He was a native Serbian, living at Leskovatz, and had been hired by a Frenchman to prosecute inquiries regarding the disappearance of a young man of 20 who was making a pedestrian tour. Indeed, I soon recalled the fact of making the young man at Semendria two months previously. He had headed for the Carpathians and Bulgaria, and he had also disappeared in the mountains. Even when the two disappearances were coupled together I saw nothing alarming. It was not until the third day that I felt I had come for speculation. Then a police official, who had been sent out from Novi-bar by the widowed mother of a young man who had disappeared as mysteriously as the other two, reached the inn. This young man, who simply set out for a two weeks' tramp in order to "hoast" of having crossed the Carpathians, had been traced to within five miles of the inn, but the landlord and his daughter stoutly denied that he had ever reached it. There were roads by which he could have branched off and continued his way, but yet the official

was shot down from ambush. Had I not been able to see the old ruins almost as soon as we started I should have doubted that they existed. As it was, I found myself wondering if this pair was in any manner connected with the disappearance of the tourists. I was on my guard for what might happen, and yet I did not betray myself. I kept up the conversation as we walked along, and I am sure she took me for an easy victim. I rather expected to be fired on from some rock as soon as we were off the road, but by and by we heard the man calling from the ruins, and I realized that the ambush would be there if anywhere. As we halted on the plateau it was easy to make out that a vast building stood there once. I should have said a monastery, but the woman insisted that it was a great castle belonging to some mighty prince, and that it had been destroyed by an earthquake. We wandered among the acres of ruins as we talked. As we neared what must have been the rear of the building, I found that the walls stood almost on the brink of a precipice. Before



THE MAN CAME DASHING THROUGH THE DOORWAY, KNIFE IN HAND.

opening we had to climb up three stone steps, and she stood for a moment looking out and clinging to the wall for support. "You will see a fine view—a fine view," she said, as she made room for me. "Step out and look up and down."

I did not step out. There was something so modern about that platform and it had been built so deftly that I feared it. I simply clung to the wall and thrust my head out and I was looking up the valley when the woman gave me a push with all her strength. Her hand did not strike me fair or my hold would have been broken. I was whirled half way round and partly thrown down, but as I recovered my footing I swept her aside with my arm and she went to the ground with a scream. Next instant the man came dashing through the doorway in the wall. He had a knife in his hand and he meant murder. I leaped down to meet him, but I believe we battled for ten minutes. Still lying on the ground, the woman seized my legs and tried to pull me down, but I kicked her away and gave all my at-

us was what had been a large room, with three of the walls yet standing. There were no less than five window openings, and as I advanced to one of them the woman said: "No—take this one. My brother has built a platform from which you can look up and down the valley for miles."

A peculiar something in her voice caused me to glance at her face, and I found it pale and her features working in a nervous way. It was the window, then, which was the ambush? My heart beat against my ribs, but I meant to see the thing to a finish. The man had called to us, but we had not seen him since arriving at the ruins. With a laugh that sounded more like a croak the woman pulled herself together and preceded me to the window. To reach the

NOTED GOTHAM CHARACTER.

What Forty Years of Thrift Brought to Apple Mary.

Thrift tells. Apple Mary will prove it for you. Long ago—say forty years ago—the heart and the greed of gain gripped the heart of her. She saw in the future fortune awaiting her in the New York Journal. But it was a fortune that should not come by any sudden climax. It meant hard, unending, unglorious toil. It meant to forego the vanities of pleasure and dress. She won it.

Yesterday the police arrested Apple Mary in Hanover square for begging. But that is a mere detail—neither here nor there. It served, however, to bring out the fact that in forty years she has accomplished her purpose. It means that today Apple Mary writes at will large figures—75,000—and before them she can set this magic mark—\$.

Apple Mary's real name is Mary Ward, of somewhere in the counties of Ireland. Forty years ago, almost to a day, Mary Ward and her sister, Kate, stepped off an immigrant ship at the port of New York. Mary was 19 and her sister 17. They were fresh colored, bright-eyed and beaming with hope. Fortune did not come as quickly as the fortune tellers expected. Marriage seemed the easiest means of comfort, so the weaker sister married.

Mary concluded to keep on. The years passed—ten years, more, maybe—and she was no longer a girl. But she had saved, not much, perhaps, but still something. In the old Fourth ward was a politician who thought a great deal of Mary. He felt that he would like to do something for her. He asked whether there was anything in the world by which he might prove devotion and friendship.

"Well," said Mary, musing, "you might get a body the right to sell apples and pasties down by Wall and Nassau streets."

He got it. Then he went away. Mary kept her stand on the corner, and displayed apples as round and rosy as her own cheeks had been. They were good apples, and they sold. Mary saved. She used to see her sister in ribbons and new hats and things like that, but Mary had none. She had instead pennies and dimes and quarters.

After a while the figure of Mary became familiar in Wall street. The brokers and bankers got to know Apple Mary. Russell Sage has bought his luncheon more times from Mary than a good many other millionaires have bought theirs at Delmonico's. Sometimes Mary's influential friends gave her a quiet tip on the market and once in a while—once in a great while—Mary took a flyer.

She was never whipped but once and that was on Black Friday, when one day she was worth \$30,000 and on the next day exactly nothing at all. A few men blew out their brains on that occasion, but Mary began anew.

When ordinary persons make a fortune and retire they set out to enjoy themselves. That's what Mary did, too. The brokers and the bankers, the treasury officers, the policemen and the messenger boys missed her from the corner.

Some of Mary's old time friends were a bit astonished subsequently to find Mary begging in the street. When Mary, with that outreached palm, appealed for the mercy of alms, they expressed their astonishment. "Sure, your honor," Mary answered them, "and can't a body enjoy herself wan way or t'other?"

A policeman saw Mary staggering along Hanover square yesterday, swayed by a heavy load. On one arm was a basket laden with a varied assortment of rubbish; things that a pauper would throw away, but still valuable to one of Mary's thinking thrift. Up and down the street she plied, wheeling and pleading for pennies.

She went contentedly to the police station and from there she went to the city

DECLINE IN BUCKWHEAT.

Crop Once Large in This Country, but Steadily Decreasing.

What is the matter with buckwheat? Cakes made of it and eaten warm are regarded as very nutritious and are still a favorite article of food with many thousands, but for all that the cultivation of the grain is steadily declining. It must be that a great many have stopped eating buckwheat cakes, reports the New York Sun, for there is certainly a great deal less buckwheat to be eaten than in former days. Thirty-five years ago the farmers of our country sowed, every year, over 1,000,000 acres in buckwheat. Since then the crop has sometimes been larger, sometimes smaller, but, on the whole, the acreage and yield have been almost steadily decreasing. In 1858 the acreage was 678,332, only a little more than half that of thirty-five years ago, and the yield was only 11,700,000 bushels, which was just about one-half the yield at the close of the civil war.

No explanation of this great decline in buckwheat raising has been made. It is probable, however, that the unreliability of the crop, which has sometimes large and sometimes small, without any apparent reason for the variation, has discouraged a great many farmers. Another reason for the decline may be the larger use within the past few years of cereal preparations, especially wheat, all of which come under the general designation of hygienic foods. These preparations have probably won many persons from their allegiance to buckwheat cakes.

If buckwheat raising continues to decline, perhaps the best most of all will miss the fields, for they are very partial to the flowers of this plant, which secrete a great deal of honey. That is not, however, of the first quality, as everybody knows who has eaten it.

Buckwheat is not raised widely over the world, and this fact makes its decline in America, where it is most largely grown, all the more interesting. Russia and France are about the only countries in Europe that produce it, and Great Britain has never taken kindly to buckwheat cakes and imports very little of the grain.

J. Q. Hood, Justice of the Peace, Crowley, Miss., makes the following statement: "I can certify that One Minute Cough Cure will do all that is claimed for it. My wife could not get her breath and the first dose of it relieved her. It has also benefited my whole family." acts immediately and cures coughs, colds, croup, grippe, bronchitis, asthma and all throat and lung troubles.

COST OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRIP.

Plenty of Money Necessary to Make the Journey.

"Well," said the man who knew something about it to the Chicago Inter-Ocean reporter, "if you want to go to South Africa you will get to have money or you have got to swim. Swimming is slow because it is 5,900 miles from London to Cape Town and 4,000 miles from Chicago to London, or to Southampton, from which port the white sail. You can go from the other side by the German East African line, but that takes you around to Delagoa bay only. There are several English lines, but the best are the Union and Castle lines, sailing every Saturday from Southampton. The fare from here to London is anything you want to make it from \$69 up. From London to Cape Town by Royal Mail boats is \$200 first class, \$125 second class, \$67 third and the usual time is seventeen days.

"By intermediate boats first class fare is \$184, second \$117, third \$67 and the time is twenty-one days. If you want to camp out you can get an open berth ticket for \$32. The German lines go through the Mediterranean, stopping at Lisbon, Naples, Zanzibar and other ports. The British and colonial boats sail every two weeks from London, as do the Aberdeen boats, but these latter go direct to Port Natal. Before the war you could get tickets direct from London to Johannesburg via Natal, but you can't now. The fare was \$224 first class, \$152 second and \$103 third, with a 10 per cent less rate by intermediate boats. When you have got to Cape Town you will find railroads travel expensive and distances about as stretched out as in the United States.

"For instance, it is 1,614 miles to Johannesburg and it costs, first class, \$37 to double there, or nearly six cents a mile, double the usual rate in this country. Second class was \$29 and third \$21. Time, two days. From Cape Town to Kimberley, which is now open, the distance is 647 miles and the fare, first class, is, or was before the war, \$40, second \$27, third \$13, and the time was a day and a half. From Cape Town to Bulawayo it is 1,360 miles and the first class fare is \$40, second \$26, third \$18 and the time is four days. That, you see, gives you plenty of time and opportunity to spend money for bed and board, though I don't believe they have our kind of sleeping cars down there.

The railway time from Durban to Johannesburg was twenty-seven hours and to Pretoria twenty-nine hours. Incidentally I may add that if you want to do any telegraphing you will find it somewhat expensive also, the rate from England to West Africa being running from \$1.01 a word to \$2.64, while to the east coast it runs from \$1.21 to \$1.28. It is a bit cheaper in South Africa, being 97 cents to Cape Town, Natal and the South African republic and the Orange Free State and \$1.01 to all other points. Taking it all in all a man doesn't want to start to South Africa with much less than \$1,000 in his pocket if he expects to get back home again without having to work his way."

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