

GREEN FANCY

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GIRL OF MYSTERY! HOUSE OF MYSTERY!

An American story of love and patriotism, of plot and counterplot, that enthralles the reader and keeps him guessing.

CHAPTER I.

The First Wayfarer and the Second Wayfarer Meet and Part on the Highway.

A solitary figure trudged along the narrow road that wound its serpentine way through the dismal, forbidding depths of the forest—a man who, though weary and footsore, lagged not in his swift, resolute advance. Night was coming on, and with it the uncertain prospects of a storm.

He came to the "pike" and there was a signpost. A huge, crudely painted hand pointed to the left, and on what was intended to be the sleeve of a very stiff and unflinching arm these words were printed in scaly white: "Hart's Tavern. Food for Man and Beast. Also Gasoline. Established 1798. 1 Mile."

On the opposite side of the "pike," in the angle formed by a junction with the narrow mountain road, stood a humbler signpost, lettered so indistinctly that it deserved the compassion of all observers because of its humility. Swerving in his hurried passage, the tall stranger drew near this shivering friend to the uncertain traveler, and was suddenly aware of another presence in the roadway.

A woman appeared, as if from nowhere, almost at his side. He drew back to let her pass. She stopped before the little signpost, and together they made out the faint directions.

To the right and up the mountain road Frogg's Corner lay four miles and a half away; Pitcairn was six miles back over the road which the man had traveled. Two miles and a half down the turnpike was Spanish Falls, a railway station, and four miles above the crossroads where the man and woman stood peering through the darkness at the laconic signpost reposed the village of St. Elizabeth. Hart's Tavern was on the road to St. Elizabeth, and the man, with barely a glance at his fellow traveler, started briskly off in that direction.

He knew that these wild mountain storms moved swiftly; his chance of reaching the tavern ahead of the deluge was exceedingly slim. His long, powerful legs had carried him twenty or thirty paces before he came to a sudden halt.

What of this lone woman who traversed the highway? His first glimpse of her had been extremely casual—indeed, he had paid no attention to her at all, so eager was he to read the directions and be on his way.

She was standing quite still in front of the signpost, peering up the road toward Frogg's Corner—confronted by a steep climb that led into black and sinister timberlands above the narrow strip of pasture bordering the pike.

The fierce wind plinned her skirts to her slender body as she leaned against the gale, gripping her hat tightly with one hand and straining under the weight of the bag in the other. The ends of a veil whipped furiously about her head, and, even in the gathering darkness, he could see a strand or two of hair keeping them company.

Retracing his steps, he called out to her above the gale:

"Can I be of any assistance to you?" She turned quickly. He saw that the veil was drawn tightly over her face.

"No, thank you," she replied. Her voice, despite a certain nervous note, was soft and clear and gentle—the voice and speech of a well-bred person who was young and resolute.

"Pardon me, but have you much farther to go? The storm will soon be upon us, and—surely you will not consider me presumptuous—I don't like the idea of your being caught out in—"

"What is to be done about it?" she inquired, resignedly. "I must go on. I can't wait here, you know, to be washed back to the place I started from."

He smiled. She had wit as well as determination.

"If I can be of the least assistance to you pray don't hesitate to command me. I am a sort of tramp, you might say, and I travel as well by night as I do by day—so don't feel that you are putting me to any inconvenience. Are you by any chance bound for Hart's Tavern? If so, I will be glad to lag behind and carry your bag."

"You are very good, but I am not bound for Hart's Tavern, wherever that may be. Thank you, just the same. You appear to be an uncommonly genteel tramp, and it isn't because I am afraid you might make off with my belongings." She added the last by way of apology.

clouds now rolling ominously up over the mountain ridge.

"By Jove, we're going to catch it good and hard," he exclaimed. "Better take my advice. These storms are terrible. I know, for I've encountered half a dozen of them in the past week. They fairly tear one to pieces. You are a stranger in these parts?"

"Yes. The railway station is a few miles below here. I have walked all the way. There was no one to meet me. You are a stranger also, so it is useless to inquire if you know whether this road leads to Green Fancy."

"Green Fancy? Sounds attractive. I'm sorry I can't enlighten you." He drew a small electric torch from his pocket and directed its slender ray upon the signpost.

"It is on the road to Frogg's Corner," she explained nervously. "A mile and a half, so I am told. It isn't on the signpost. It is a house, not a village. Thank you for your kindness. And I am not at all frightened," she added, raising her voice slightly.

"But you are," he cried. "You're scared half out of your wits. You



He Drew a Small Electric Torch From His Pocket and Directed its Slender Ray Upon the Sign Post.

can't fool me. I'd be scared myself at the thought of venturing into those woods up yonder."

"Well, then, I am frightened," she confessed plaintively. "Almost out of my boots."

"That settles it," he said flatly. "You shall not undertake it."

"Oh, but I must. I am expected. It is import—"

"If you are expected why didn't someone meet you at the station? Seems to me—"

"Hark! Do you hear—doesn't that sound like an automobile—ah!" The hoarse honk of an automobile horn rose above the howling wind, and an instant later two faint lights came rushing toward them around a bend in the mountain road. "Better late than never," she cried, her voice vibrant once more.

He grasped her arm and jerked her out of the path of the oncoming machine, whose driver was sending it along at a mad rate, regardless of ruts and stones and curves. The car careened as it swung into the pike, skidded alarmingly, and then the brakes were jammed down. Attended by a vast grinding of gears and wheels, the rattling old car came to a stop fifty feet or more beyond them.

"I'd sooner walk than take my chances in an antediluvian rattletrap like that," said the tall wayfarer, bending quite close to her ear. "It will fall to pieces before you—"

But she was running down the road toward the car, calling out sharply to the driver. He stooped over and took up the traveling bag she had dropped in her haste and excitement. It was heavy, amazingly heavy.

"I shouldn't like to carry that a mile and a half," he said to himself.

The voice of the belated driver came to his ears on the swift wind. It was high-pitched and unmistakably apologetic. He could not hear what she was saying to him, but there wasn't much doubt as to the nature of her remarks. She was roundly upbraiding him.

Urged to action by thoughts of his own plight he hurried to her side and said:

"Excuse me, please. You dropped something. Shall I put it up in front or in the tonneau?"

The whimsical note in his voice brought a quick, responsive laugh from her lips.

"Thank you so much. I am frightfully careless with my valuables. Would you mind putting it in behind? Thanks!" Her tone altered completely as she ordered the man to turn

the car around—"And be quick about it," she added.

The first drops of rain pelted down from the now thoroughly black dome above them, striking in the road with the sharpness of pebbles.

"Lucky it's a limousine," said the tall traveler. "Better hop in. We'll be getting it hard in a second or two."

"You must let me take you on to the Tavern in the car," she said. "Turn about is fair play. I cannot allow you to—"

"Never mind about me," he broke in cheerily. He had been wondering if she would make the offer, and he felt better now that she had done so. "I'm accustomed to roughing it. I don't mind a soaking. I've had hundred of 'em."

"Just the same you shall not have one tonight," she announced firmly. "Get in behind. I shall sit with the driver."

If anyone had told him that this rattling, dilapidated automobile—ten years old, at the very least, he would have sworn—was capable of covering the mile in less than two minutes he would have laughed in his face. Alas! before he realized that they were on the way up the straight, dark road the lights in the windows of Hart's Tavern came into view. Once more the bounding, swaying car came to a stop under brakes, and he was relaxing after the strain of the most hair-raising ride he had ever experienced.

Not a word had been spoken during the trip. The front windows were lowered. The driver—an old, hatchet-faced man—had uttered a single word just before throwing in the clutch at the crossroads in response to the young woman's crisp command to drive to Hart's Tavern. That word was uttered under his breath and it is not necessary to repeat it here.

The wayfarer lost no time in climbing out of the car. As he leaped to the ground and raised his green hat he took a second look at the automobile—a look of mingled wonder and respect. It was an old-fashioned, high-powered car, capable, despite its antiquity, of astonishing speed in any sort of going.

"For heaven's sake," he began, shouting to her above the roar of the wind and rain, "don't let him drive like that over those—"

"You're getting wet," she cried out, a thrill in her voice. "Good night—and thank you!"

"Look out!" rasped the unpleasant driver, and in went the clutch. The man in the road jumped hastily to one side as the car shot backward with a jerk, curved sharply, stopped for the fraction of a second, and then bounded forward again, headed for the crossroads.

"Thanks!" shouted the late passenger after the receding tail light, and dashed up the steps to the porch that ran the full length of Hart's Tavern.

A huge old-fashioned lantern hung above the portal, creaking and straining in the wind, dragging at its stout supports and threatening every instant to break loose and go frolicking away with the storm.

He lifted the latch and, being a tall man, involuntarily stooped as he passed through the door, a needless precaution, for gaunt, gigantic mountaineers had entered there before him and without bending their arrogant heads.

CHAPTER II.

The First Wayfarer Lays His Pack Aside and Falls in With Friends

The little hall in which he found himself was the "office" through which all men must pass who come as guests to Hart's Tavern. A steep, angular staircase took up one end of the room. Set in beneath its upper turn was the counter over which the business of the house was transacted, and behind this a man was engaged in the peaceful occupation of smoking a corn-cob pipe.

An open door to the right of the stairway gave entrance to a room from which came the sound of a deep, sonorous voice employed in what turned out to be a conversational solo. To the left another door led to what was evidently the dining room. The glance that the stranger sent in that direction revealed two or three tables covered with white cloths.

"Can you put me up for the night?" he inquired, advancing to the counter.

"You look like a feller who'd want a room with bath," drawled the man behind the counter, surveying the applicant from head to foot. "Which we ain't got," he added.

"I'll be satisfied to have a room with a bed," said the other.

"Sign here," was the laconic response.

"Can I have supper?"

"Food for man and beast," said the other patiently. He slapped his palm upon a cracked old bell and then looked at the fresh name on the page. "Thomas K. Barnes, New York," he read aloud. He eyed the newcomer once more. "My name is Jones—Putnam Jones. I run this place. My father an' grandfather run it before me. Glad to meet you, Mr. Barnes. We used to have a hostler here named

Barnes. What's your ideal for footin' it this time o' the year?"

"I do something like this every spring. A month or six weeks of it puts me in fine shape for a vacation later on," supplied Mr. Barnes whimsically.

Mr. Jones allowed a grin to steal over his seamed face. He reinserted the corn-cob pipe and took a couple of pulls at it.

"I never been to New York, but it must be a heavenly place for a vacation. If a feller c'n judge by what some of my present boarders have to say about it. It's a sort of play actor's paradise, ain't it?"

"It is paradise to every actor who happens to be on the road, Mr. Jones," said Barnes, slipping his big pack from his shoulders and letting it slide to the floor.

"Hear that feller in the taproom talkin'?" Well, he is one of the leading actors in New York—in the world, for that matter. He's been talkin' about Broadway for nearly a week now, steady."

"May I inquire what he is doing up here in the wilds?"

"At present he ain't doing anything except talk. Last week he was treddin' the boards, as he puts it himself. Busted. Up the flue. Showed last Saturday night in Hornville, eighteen mile north of here, and immediately after the performance him and his whole troupe started to walk back to New York, a good four hundred mile. They started out the back way of the opery house and nobody missed 'em till next mornin' except the sheriff, and he didn't miss 'em till they'd got over the county line into our balliwick. Four of 'em are still stoppin' here just because I ain't got the heart to turn 'em out ner the spare money to buy 'em tickets to New York. Here comes one of 'em now. Mr. Dillingford, will you show this gentleman to room eleven and carry his baggage up fer him? And maybe he'll want a pitcher of warm water to wash and shave in." He turned to the new guest and smiled apologetically. "We're a little short o' help just now, Mr. Barnes, and Mr. Dillingford has kindly consented to—"

"My word!" gasped Mr. Dillingford, staring at the register. "Someone from little old New York? My word sir, you— Won't you have a—er— little something to drink with me before you—"

"He wants something to eat," interrupted Mr. Jones sharply. "Tell Mr. Bacon to step up to his room and take the order."

"All right, old chap—nothing easier," said Mr. Dillingford genially. "Just climb up the elevator, Mr. Barnes. We do this to get up an appetite. When did you leave New York?"

Taking up a lighted kerosene lamp and the heavy pack, Mr. Clarence Dillingford led the way up the stairs. He was a chubby individual of indefinite age. At a glance you would have said he was under twenty-one; a second look would have convinced you that he was nearer forty-one.

Depositing Barnes' pack on a chair in the little bedroom at the end of the hall upstairs he favored the guest with a perfectly unabashed grin.

"I'm not doing this to oblige old man Jones, you know. I won't attempt to deceive you. I'm working out a daily board bill. Chuck three times a day and a bed to sleep in—that's what I'm doing it for, so don't get it into your head that I applied for the job. Let me look at you. I want to get a good square peep at a man who has the means to go somewhere and yet is boob enough to come to this gosh-awful place of his own free will and accord. Darn it, you look intelligent. I don't get you at all. What's the matter? Are you a fugitive from justice?"

"Barnes find the theatrical people entertaining, but as the storm rages does a good deal of thinking about the mysterious girl bound for Green Fancy."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Mystery in Plant's Presence.

The Chilean provinces of Atacama, Tarapaca and Tacna are in the rainless region, or desert country west of the Andes, and are entirely devoid of vegetation. The winds in all of this region are from the east, and in passing over the elevated perpetual snows of the Andes are stripped of their moisture and arrive on the coast perfectly dry. The last rain, a slight shower which fell in Antofagasta, in Atacama province, was the first rain which had fallen in 16 years. The last rain which fell in Iquique, in Tarapaca province, was the first in 24 years. With both of these showers a notable phenomenon occurred. The hills back of these cities assumed a green tint from a little plant which sprang up almost in a night. The query is: "From where did this plant come?"

THE WAR BOARD'S WORK AT AN END

MEMBERS HAND THEIR RESIGNATIONS TO SECRETARY REDFIELD.

LATTER PAYS THEM TRIBUTE

Dissolution Means that Natural Forces of Supply and Demand Will Govern Peace Time Price Readjustment Problems.

Washington, D. C.—Governmental officers to hasten the return of industry to normal peace time activity by stabilizing prices through the industrial board of the department of commerce came to an end.

Following a final unsuccessful effort to bring the railroad administration and steel producers to an agreement on prices in New York, the resignations of Chairman George N. Peek, of Moline, Ill., and the other six members of the board were accepted by Secretary Redfield. The resignations, tendered April 22, when the railroad administration first refused to accept the reduced steel prices arranged by the board on the ground that they were too high, had been held in abeyance until Mr. Redfield was satisfied the board had exhausted every effort to stimulate an industrial revival through the satisfactory of the largest single purchaser of materials in the country.

What Dissolution Means.

With the dissolution of the board the natural forces of supply and demand will be left to readjust prices from war levels to those of peace. Director General Hines announced the railroad administration would return to the old system of competitive bidding in placing its orders.

Government officials declared they did not know whether the steel producers would keep in force the price schedule approved by the industrial board, and which was the basis of all bids recently submitted for 20,000 tons of steel needed by the navy. It became known that when the legality of price agreements arranged by the board was submitted to Attorney General Palmer he rendered an opinion that such action was not authorized by law, but did not declare that such an agreement would be illegal. Other officials held that the purely voluntary nature of new price schedules arranged by a board which admittedly was without power to enforce the prices, and seeking merely to stimulate business by effecting reductions, put the agreements without the pale of the Sherman law.

The steel schedule was the first and only one ever promulgated by the board, which was appointed in March. Representatives of four other industries—coal, cement, hardwood and pine lumber—had expressed a willingness to co-operate with the board, and conferences looking to price reductions, had been held.

REDS STILL HOLD YANKS.

Mission Sent to Vologda to Negotiate an Exchange of Prisoners Fails.

Archangel—The commission of allied officers, including Capt. A. Harzfeld, of Kansas City, which went to Vologda to negotiate for an exchange of prisoners, has returned to Archangel, the mission having failed, owing to the attempt of the bolsheviks to turn the meeting into a political one and their evasion of the question of prisoners. Private Earl Fulcher, of Tyre, Mich., who was a prisoner at Vologda, was allowed to return, however, by Capt. Harzfeld. The only other American prisoner at Vologda, Private August B. Peterson, of Whitehall, Mich., died in a hospital the day before Capt. Harzfeld's departure, from the effects of wounds and shell shock. The commission found the prisoners at Vologda well treated and well fed, but object to the constant bolshevik propaganda. Of the prisoners held in Moscow, six are Americans. Through the efforts of the commission these men, who were formerly in prison, have been given liberty of the streets.

Munich Riots Over.

Munich.—Munich is quieting, after four weeks of turmoil. The last of the Spartacan nests in the city has been cleared out by the Hoffman government forces. The Hoffman government announces that it will introduce the council form of government in Bavaria, minus the communist features. Prof. Bernhard, one of the released hostages, declares that the Munich experiment failed because no one would work.

To Buy Wheat in Canada.

Minneapolis, Minn.—Frank L. Carey, second vice president of the United States grain corporation, will leave for Winnipeg to purchase wheat for resale to millers of the northwest, it was announced here. Mr. Carey said that the amount purchased "would not be large," and would depend upon surveys which are being made. The resale wheat will be sold to millers for grinding until the 1919 crop is harvested. Carey said the "a" price by the government will be figured "on a strictly cost basis."

PERKINS TELLS OF "Y" WORK IN EUROPE

Reasons for the Unfavorable Criticism Are Explained.

DIFFICULT TO GET GOOD MEN

Complaints of Prices Charged in Canteens Generally Not Justified.—Immense Extent of the Organization's Numerous Activities Abroad During War.

New York, May 7.—George W. Perkins of New York, chairman of the finance committee of the war work council of the Y. M. C. A., has just returned from Europe, where he spent over four months in making a thorough investigation of the work done by the Y. M. C. A. His report was made public today, and in large part is an answer to the unfavorable criticisms of the organization so often heard of late.

First explaining the difficulty of securing efficient workers and the care exercised in the selection of the 11,229 persons who were sent abroad, Mr. Perkins says:

"Much has been said about the inefficiency of some of these workers, and, without doubt, a number of them were inefficient. In any form of organization in civilian life, whether it be public schools, chain stores or corporations, if 90 per cent of those originally employed make good, the result is regarded as highly satisfactory. If 10 per cent of the 11,229 people operating in France for the Y. M. C. A. were inefficient it would mean that there were 1,122 men and women who were more or less of a failure. I do not believe that anything like this number of people were unsuccessful; but if under the close scrutiny which the soldiers give these welfare workers even 5 per cent of them were failures, it would have put a large amount of criticism in circulation, and the work of the 95 per cent who were successful would be forgotten in the publicity given to the 5 per cent who were unsuccessful.

"That the workers as a whole were brave and unselfish is shown by the fact that 14 Y. M. C. A. secretaries were killed and 123 others were wounded."

Why Canteen Prices Varied.

The report relates the troubles and expenses met by the Y. M. C. A. after it undertook the management of the army canteens at the request of General Pershing and the confused conditions that made it impossible to arrive at an average cost price of the goods sold to the soldiers. It continues:

"The Y. M. C. A. never solicited money for the purpose of giving away its canteen supplies. If the Y. M. C. A. had given away canteen supplies in France on the scale of its sales, it would have spent in this activity alone at least as much money as its entire expenditures in France for all its activities. The constant policy of the Y. M. C. A. was to sell canteen supplies at as nearly cost as possible, and to bend every effort, when fighting was in progress, to furnish the men at the front with supplies free of charge where it was at all possible to get the goods to them.

"Some have criticized the Y. M. C. A. for not giving away more articles, such as cigarettes, chocolate, etc. Its policy has been not to give away generally, but only in special and needy cases. From June, 1918, to April, 1919, the Y. M. C. A. handled in France alone upward of 2,000,000,000 packages of cigarettes, 32,000,000 bars of chocolate, 18,000,000 cans of smoking tobacco, 50,000,000 cigars, 60,000,000 cans of jam, 29,000,000 packages of chewing gum, and 10,000,000 packages of candy. These are only a few of the items handled, but the size of these figures should convince anyone that it would be financially impossible for the Y. M. C. A. to give its supplies away generally. Furthermore, the army does not favor any such policy. It thinks that it is far better for the men to spend their money on such articles as these than to spend it in other ways. For the most part the men hold the same view."

Its Varied Activities.

In considerable detail Mr. Perkins relates the varied and extraordinarily extensive activities of the Y. M. C. A. abroad, including the manufacture of much of its supplies, the establishment of many hundreds of huts, with athletic, moving pictures, and various other forms of entertainment; the management of sight-seeing tours for soldiers on leave; the immense work of the educational and religious departments and the distribution of reading matter. In conclusion Mr. Perkins says:

"The Y. M. C. A. undoubtedly made mistakes, but what it tried to do was to respond to every call that the army made on it. It never hesitated to tackle any job it was asked to undertake; it did not sidestep any task it was asked to perform. It took the position that it was in Europe to do all it could, as best it could; that when it was called on to render service of any kind, its duty was to respond in the same kind of spirit that the soldiers did and not hold back because adverse circumstances might make it impossible to meet with maximum success. Surely every contributor of money will approve the Y. M. C. A.'s course in this respect."