

# GREEN FANCY

by GEORGE BARR  
MC CUTCHEON

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## THE CUT DIRECT

**Synopsis.**—Thomas K. Barnes, a wealthy young New Yorker, on a walking trip in New England near the Canadian border, is given a lift in an automobile by a mysterious and attractive girl bound for a house called Green Fancy. At Hart's tavern Barnes finds a stranded troupe of "barn-storming" actors, of which Lyndon Rushcroft is the star and "Miss Thackeray" the leading lady. They are doing hotel work for their board. He learns Green Fancy is a house of mystery. That night two mounted men leave the tavern under odd circumstances. One is shot dead near by; the other is brought back dying. Barnes comes under suspicion. He stays to help clear up the mystery. O'Dowd of Green Fancy says that that place of mystery is not concerned in any way. Barnes gets into the Green Fancy grounds and sees the mysterious girl.

## CHAPTER VII.

Spun-Gold Hair, Blue Eyes and Various Encounters.

She was quite unaware of his presence, and yet he was directly in her path, though some distance away. Her head was bent; her mien was thoughtful, her stride slow and aimless.

She was slender, graceful and evidently quite tall, although she seemed a pigmy among the towering giants that attended her stroll. Her hands were thrust deep into the pocket of a white duck skirt. A glance revealed white shoes and trim ankles in blue. She wore no hat. Her hair was like spun gold, thick, wavy and shimmering in the subdued light.

Suddenly she stopped and looked up. He had a full view of her face as she gazed about as if startled by some unexpected, even alarming sound. For a second or two he held his breath, stunned by the amazing loveliness that was revealed to him. Then she discovered him standing there.

In a flash he realized that he was face to face with the stranger of the day before. He took two or three impulsive steps forward, his hand going to his hat—and then halted. Evidently his senses had deceived him. There was no smile in her eyes—and yet he could have sworn that it was there an instant before. Instead there was a level stare.

"I am sorry if I startled—" he began.

The figure of a man appeared as if discharged bodily from some magic tree-trunk, and stood directly in his path—a tall, rugged man in overalls was he, who held a spade in his hand and eyed him inimically. Without another glance in his direction the first and more pleasing vision turned on her heel and continued her stroll, sauntering off to the right, her fair head once more bent in study, her back eloquently indifferent to the gaze that followed her.

"Who do you want to see?" inquired the man with the spade.

Before Barnes could reply a hearty voice accented him from behind. He whirled and saw O'Dowd approaching, not twenty yards away. The Irishman's face was aglow with pleasure.

"I knew I couldn't be mistaken in the shape of you," he cried, advancing with outstretched hand. "You've got the breadth of a dockhand in your shoulders and the trimness of a prize fighter in your waist."

They shook hands. "I fear I am trespassing," said Barnes. His glance went over his shoulder as he spoke. The man with the spade had been swallowed up by the earth! He could not have vanished more quickly in any other way. Off among the trees were intermittent flashes of blue and white.

"I am quite sure you are," said O'Dowd promptly but without a trace of unfriendliness in his manner. "Bedad, loving him as I do, I can't help saying that Curtis is a bally old crank. Mind ye, I'd say it to his face—I often do, for the matter of that. Of course," he went on seriously, "he is a sick man, poor devil. You see I've known him for a dozen years and more, and he likes me, though God knows why, unless it may be that I once did his son a good turn in London."

"Sufficient excuse for reparation, I should say," smiled Barnes.

"I introduced the lad to me only sister," said O'Dowd, "and she kept him happy for the next ten years. No doubt I also provided Mr. Curtis with three grandchildren he might never have had but for my graciousness." A look of distress came into his merry eyes. "By Jove, I'd like nothing bet-

ter than to ask you in to have a dish of tea—it's teatime, I'm sure—but I'd no more think of doing it than I'd consider cutting off my head. He doesn't like strangers, he—"

"My dear fellow, don't distress yourself," cried Barnes heartily. "There isn't the least reason in the world why—"

"You see, the poor old chap asks us up here once or twice a year—that is to say, De Soto and me—to keep his sister from filling the house up with men he can't endure. So long as we occupy the only available rooms, he argues, she can't stuff them full of objectionables. Twice a year she comes for a month, in the late fall and early spring."

"Why does he continue to live in this out-of-the-world spot? He is an old man, I take it, and ill."

"You wouldn't be wondering if you knew the man," said O'Dowd. "He is a scholar, a dreamer, a sufferer. He's not a very old man at that. Not more than sixty-five."

"He certainly has a fanciful streak in him, building a place like that," said Barnes, looking not at the house but into the thicket above. There was no sign of the blue and white and the spun gold that still defied exclusion from his mind's eye. He had not recovered from the thrill into which the vision of loveliness plunged him. He was still a trifle dazed and distrustful.

"Right you are," agreed O'Dowd; "the queerest streak in the world. It's his notion of simplicity."

"Green Fancy. Is that the name he gave the place or does it spring from—"

"'Twas christened by me own sister, Mr. Barnes, the first time she was here, two years ago. I'll walk with you to the fence beyond if you've no objections," said O'Dowd genially, and linked his arm through that of Barnes. The latter was at once subtly aware of the fact that he was being deliberately conducted from the grounds. Moreover, he was now convinced that O'Dowd had been close upon his heels from the instant he entered them. There was something uncanny in the feeling that possessed him. Such espionage as this signified something deep and imperative in the presence not only of O'Dowd but the jack-in-the-box gardener a few minutes earlier.

His mind was still full of the lovely stranger about whom O'Dowd had so manifestly lied over the telephone.

"I must ask you to apologize to the young lady on whom I blundered a few moments ago, Mr. O'Dowd. She must have been startled. Pray convey to her my solicitude and excuses."

"Consider it done, my dear sir," said the Irishman. "Our most charming and seductive guest," he went on. "Bedad, of the two of you, I'll stake me head you were startled the most. Coming suddenly upon such rare loveliness is almost equivalent to being struck by a bolt of lightning. More than one painter of portraits has said that she is the most beautiful woman in the world. Mayhap you have heard of her. She is Miss Cameron of New Orleans, a friend of Mrs. Van Dyke. We have quite an enchanting house party, Mr. Barnes, if you consider no more than the feminine side of it. By the way, have you heard when the coroner is to hold his inquests?"

"Nothing definite. He may wait a week," said Barnes.

"I suppose you'll stick around until it's over," ventured O'Dowd. Barnes thought he detected a slight harshness in his voice.

"I have quite made up my mind to stay until the mystery is entirely cleared up," he said. "The case is so interesting that I don't want to miss a shred of it."

"I don't blame ye," said O'Dowd heartily. "I'd like nothing better myself than to mix up in it. The next time you plan to pay us a visit, telephone in advance. I may be able to persuade my host that you're a decent, law-abiding, educated gentleman, and he'll consent to receive you at Green Fancy. Good day to ye," and he shook hands with the departing trespasser.

"Takin' a walk?" was the landlord's greeting as Barnes mounted the tavern steps at dusk.

"Going over the grounds of last night's affair," responded Barnes, pausing.

As he entered the door he was acutely aware of an intense stare leveled at him from behind by the landlord of Hart's Tavern. Half way up the stairway he stopped short and with difficulty repressed the exclamation that rose to his lips.

He had recalled a significant incident of the night before. Almost immediately after the departure of Room and Paul from the Tavern Putnam Jones had made his way to the tele-

phone behind the desk and had called a number in a loud, brisk voice, but the subsequent conversation was carried on in subdued tones, attended by hasty and occasional furtive glances in the direction of the taproom.

Upon reaching his room Barnes permitted the suppressed emotion to escape his lips in the shape of a soft whistle, which if it could have been translated into words would have said: "By Gad, why haven't I thought of it before? He sent out the warning that Room and Paul were on the way! And I'd like to bet my last dollar that someone at Green Fancy had the other end of the wire."

Mr. Rushcroft was giving Hamlet's address to the players, in the taproom when Barnes came downstairs at nine o'clock.

A small, dark man who sat alone at a table in the corner caught Barnes' eye and smiled almost mournfully. He was undoubtedly a stranger; his action was meant to convey to Barnes the information that he too was from a distant and sophisticated community and that a bond of sympathy existed between them.

Putnam Jones spoke suddenly at Barnes' shoulder. He started involuntarily. The man was beginning to get on his nerves. He seemed to be dogging his footsteps with ceaseless persistency.

"That feller over there in the corner," said Jones softly, "is a book agent from your town. He sold me a set of Dickens when he was here last time, about six weeks ago. A year's subscription to two magazines thrown in. By gosh, these book agents are sleek ones."

"He's a shrewd-looking chap," commented Barnes.

"Says he won't be satisfied till he's made this section of the country the most cultured, refined spot in the United States," said Jones dolefully. "Excuse me. There goes the telephone. Maybe it's news from the sheriff."

With the spasmodic tinkling of the telephone bell the book agent arose and made his way to the little office. Barnes glanced over his shoulder a moment later and saw him studying the register. The poise of his sleek head, however, suggested a listening attitude. Putnam Jones, not four feet



Suddenly She Stopped and Looked Up.

away, was speaking into the telephone receiver. As the receiver was restored to its hook Barnes turned again. Jones and the book agent were examining the register, their heads almost meeting from opposite sides of the desk.

The latter straightened up, stretched his arms, yawned, and announced in a loud tone that he guessed he'd stop out and get a bit of fresh air before turning in.

"Any news?" inquired Barnes, approaching the desk after the door had closed behind the book agent.

"It wasn't the sheriff," replied Jones shortly, and immediately resumed his interrupted discourse on books and book agents. Ten minutes elapsed before the landlord's garrulity was checked by the sound of an automobile coming to a stop in front of the house. Barnes turned expectantly toward the door. Almost immediately the car started again, with a loud shifting of gears, and a moment later the door opened to admit, not a fresh arrival but the little book agent.

"Party trying to make Hornville tonight," he announced casually. "Well, good night. See you in the morning."

Barnes was not in a position to doubt the fellow's word, for the car unmistakably had gone on toward Hornville. He waited a few minutes after the man disappeared up the narrow stairway, and then proceeded to test his powers of divination. He was as sure as he could be of anything that had not actually come to pass that in a short time the automobile would again pass the tavern, but this time from the direction of Hornville.

Lighting a cigarette he strolled outside. He had barely time to take a position at the darkened end of the porch before the sound of an approaching machine came to his ears. A second or two later the lights swung around the bend in the road a quarter of a mile above Hart's Tavern, and down came the car at a high rate of speed. It dashed past the tavern with a great roar and rattle and shot off into the darkness beyond. As it rushed through the dim circle of light in front of the tavern Barnes succeeded in obtaining a brief but convincing

view of the car. That glance was enough, however. He would have been willing to go before a jury and swear that it was the same car that had deposited him at Hart's Tavern the day before.

Having guessed correctly in the one instance he allowed himself another and even bolder guess—the little book agent had either received a message from or delivered one to the occupant or driver of the car from Green Fancy.

## CHAPTER VIII.

A Note, Some Fancies and an Expedition in Quest of Facts.

He started upstairs, his mind full of the events and conjectures of the day. As he entered the room his eyes fell upon a white envelope at his feet. It had been slipped under the door since he left the room an hour before.

Terse reminder from the prudent Mr. Jones! His bill for the day! He picked it up, glanced at the inscription, and at once altered his opinion. His full name was there in the handwriting of a woman. For a moment he was puzzled; then he thought of Miss Thackeray. A note of thanks, no doubt unpleasantly fulsome! Vaguely annoyed, he ripped open the envelope and read:

"In case I do not have the opportunity to speak with you tonight, this is to let you know that the little man who says he is a book agent was in your room for three-quarters of an hour while you were away this afternoon. You'd better see if anything is missing. M. T."

He made a hasty but careful examination of his effects. There was not the slightest evidence that his pack had been opened or even disturbed. If the little book agent spent three-quarters of an hour in the room he managed most effectually to cover up all traces of his visit.

Barnes did not go to sleep until long after midnight. He now regarded himself as definitely committed to a combination of sinister and piquant enterprises, not the least of which was to know about the mysterious young woman at Green Fancy.

The next day he, with other lodgers in the Tavern, was put through an examination by the police and county officials from St. Elizabeth, and notified that, while he was not under suspicion or surveillance, it would be necessary for him to remain in the "hallway" until detectives, already on the way, were satisfied that he possessed no knowledge that would be useful to them in clearing up what had now assumed the dignity of a "national problem."

O'Dowd rode down from Green Fancy and created quite a sensation among the officials by announcing that they had a perfect right to extend their search for clues to all parts of his estate, and that he was deeply interested in the outcome of their investigations.

The sheriff said he would like to "run over the ground a bit" that very afternoon if it was agreeable to Mr. O'Dowd.

O'Dowd stayed to dinner. (Dinner was served in the middle of the day at Hart's Tavern.) He made a great impression upon Lyndon Rushcroft, who, with his daughter, joined the two men. Indeed, the palavering Irishman extended himself in the effort to make himself agreeable. He was vastly interested in the stage, he declared. As a matter of fact he had been told a thousand times that he ought to go on the stage. . . .

The little book agent came in while they were at table. He sat down in a corner of the dining room and busied himself with his subscription lists while waiting for the meal to be served. He was still poring over them, frowning intently, when Barnes and the others left the room.

Barnes walked out beside Miss Thackeray.

"The tailor-made gown is an improvement," he said to her. He was thinking that she was a very pretty girl, after all.

"The frock usually makes the woman," she said slowly, "but not always the lady."

He thought of that remark more than once during the course of an afternoon spent in the woods about Green Fancy.

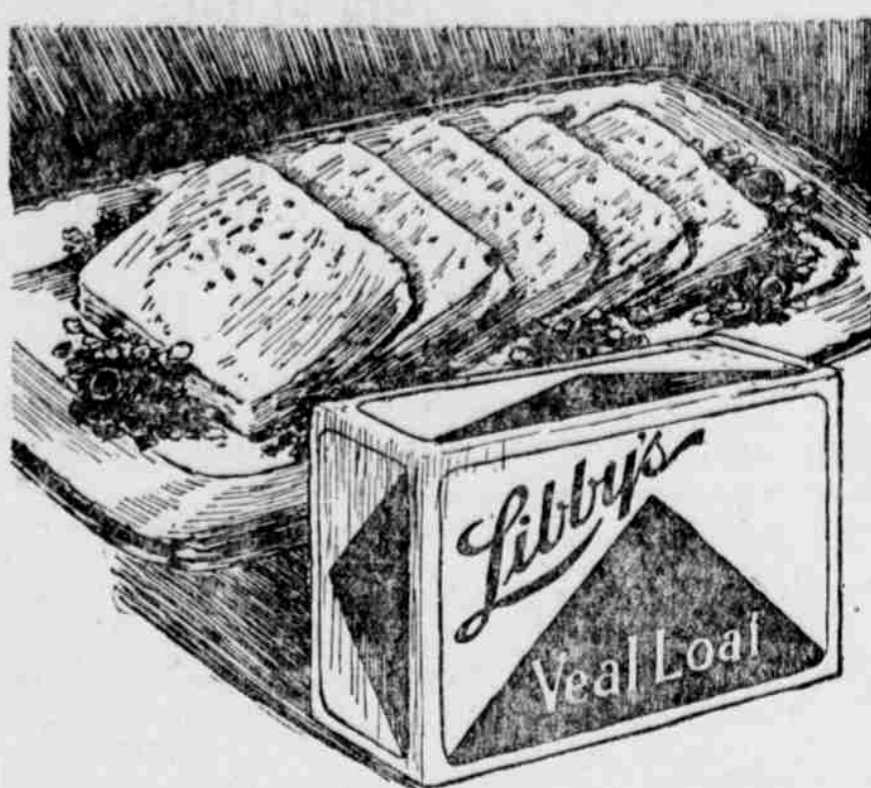
O'Dowd virtually commanded the expedition. It was he who thought of everything. First of all, he led the party to the corner of the estate nearest the point where Paul was shot from his horse. Sitting in his saddle he called the attention of the other riders to what appeared to be a most significant fact in connection with the killing of this man.

Barnes again visits Green Fancy and meets with a very different reception, which is, however, quite as mystifying.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

**Tea Popular British Beverage.**  
Tea is the most popular of British beverages, and in spite of William Cobbett's lament that "tea shops" were being substituted for wholesome small beer to the detriment of the populace in his day, "the cup that cheers" is the staple drink of all classes. It cannot be said that there has been any marked deterioration of English people through constant indulgence in tea.

**Daily Thought.**  
The commander of the forces of a large state may be carried off; but the will of even a common man cannot be taken from him.—Confucius.



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**Everything Lovely.**  
"Howdy, Gap!" sauntered an acquaintance, upon meeting the well known Rumpus Ridge citizen on a shopping expedition in Tumlinville. "How's everything going with you?" "Finer'n frog hair, Jurd!" triumphantly replied Gap Johnson. "Of course, my wife has been sorter puny, yur of late, and several of the children have got the measles and mumps and one thing and another, and the lightning struck the corner of the house tuther night and like to have tore the whole place to pieces, and one of the kids fell out of a tree and broke his arm, and a feller took a shot at me day before yesterday and ventilated my ear, and such as that, but I swapped for a running horse last week, and a couple of my hounds have got six pups apiece. Aw, I tell you, they can't keep a good man down!"—Kansas City Star.

**Well Known.**  
I was hurrying home up the hill when a little boy came rushing down in such haste that he ran headlong into me. He was quite breathless and very flushed. "Have you seen my pa?" he managed to stammer. "I don't know your pa, little boy," said I. He looked at me in round-eyed wonder and his pink cheeks fairly stuck out. "You don't know my pa?" he said incredulously. "Why, I know pa just as easy!"—Exchange.

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## EATONIC (FOR YOUR ACID-STOMACH)

**KNEW THAT WOULD STOP HIM**  
Lawyer Evidently Was Well Acquainted With the Weakness of His Long-Winded Friend.

C. H. Murphy relates the story of a Philadelphia lawyer, retired, who, in the days of his active practice, was notorious for his long-windedness.

On one occasion he had been spouting forth his concluding argument for six hours, and the end was nowhere in sight, when the opposing attorney beckoned his associate and whispered: "Can't you stop him, Jack?"

"I'll stop him in two minutes," Jack replied confidently. And he wrote and passed to the orator the following note:

"My Dear Colonel—As soon as you finish your magnificent argument I would like you to join me at the hotel in a bumper of rare old Bourbon."

The lawyer halted in the midst of an impassioned period, put on his glasses, and read the note that had been handed him, then he removed his glasses again and, taking up his hat and bag, he said:

"And now, may it please the court and gentlemen of the jury, I leave the case with you."

A minute later he was proceeding in stately fashion in the direction of the hotel bar.

Who'd do the work of the world if everybody were rich?

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