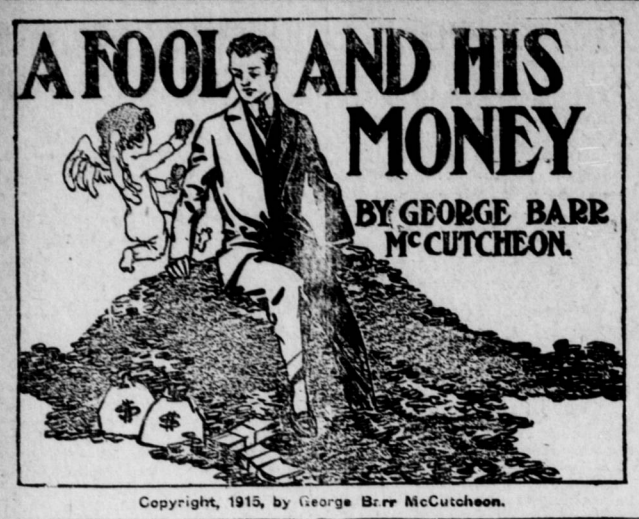

Copyright, 1915, by George Barr McCutcheon.

CONTINUED

"But surely you see the danger?"

"I do. I have tried to stop her. Mr. Bangs has tried to stop her. So has father. But she is coming. We must arrange something."

I was pacing the floor in front of her. She had resumed her place in the chair.

"My deepest regret, countess, lies in the fact that our little visits will be—well, at an end. Our delightful little suppers and"—

"Oh, but think of the comfort it will be to you—not having me on your mind all of the time! I shall not be lonesome; I shall not be afraid; I shall not be forever annoying you with selfish demands upon your good nature. You will have time to write without interruption. It will be for the best."

"No," said I positively. "They were jolly parties, and I shall miss them."

She looked away quickly. "And if all goes well I shall soon be safely on my way to America. Then you will be rid of me completely."

I was startled. "You mean that there is a plan afoot to—to smuggle you out of the country?"

"Yes. And I fear I shall have to trouble you again when it comes to that. You must help me, Mr. Smart."

I nodded slowly. Help her to get away? I hadn't thought of that lately. The prospect left me rather cold and sick.

"I'll do all that I can, countess."

She smiled faintly, but I was certain that I detected a challenge—a rather unkind challenge—in her eyes. "You will come to see me in New York, of course."

I shook my head. "I am afraid we are counting our chickens before they're hatched. One or the other of us may be in jail for the next few years."

"Heavens!"

"But I'll come to see you in New York if you'll let me," I cried, trying to repair the damage I had done. "I was jesting when I spoke of jail."

Her brow was puckered in thought. "It has just occurred to me, my dear friend, that even if I do get safely away you will be left here to face the consequences. When it becomes known that you sheltered me the authorities may make it extremely uncomfortable for you."

"I'm not worrying about that."

"Just the same, it is something to worry about," she said seriously. "Now, here is what I have had in mind for a long time. Why don't you come with me when I leave? That will be the safest plan."

"You are not in earnest!"

"Assuredly. The plan is something like this: I am to be taken by slow stages overland to a small Mediterranean port. One of a half dozen American yachts now cruising the seas will be ready to pick me up. Doesn't it seem simple?"

"It seems simple enough," said I. "But there are a lot of 'ifs' between here and the little port you hope to reach. It will not be an easy matter to manage the successful flight of a party as large as yours will be."

"Oh," she cried. "I shall be quite alone, except for Rosemary and Blake—and Mr. Bangs."

"But your mother? You can't leave her here."

"You will have to smuggle her out of the castle a day or two in advance. It is all thought out, Mr. Smart."

"By Jove!" I exclaimed, with more irascibility than I intended to show. "If I succeed in doing all that is expected of me, I certainly will be entitled to more than an invitation to come and see you in New York."

She arose and laid her fingers upon my bandaged hand. The reckless light had died out of her eyes.

"I have thought that out, too, Mr. Smart," she said quietly. "And now, goodby. You will come up to see Mr. Bangs tonight?"

Considerably mystified by her remark, I said I would come, and then assisted her through the opening in the wall. She smiled back at me as the portrait swung into place.

* * * * * * *

Bangs was a shrewd little Englishman. As I shook hands with him—easing my left hand with a superfluous apology—I glanced at the top of his waistcoat. There was no button missing.

"The countess sewed it on for me," he said drily, reading my thoughts.

I stayed late with them, discussing plans. Mrs. Titus and her sons were to enter the castle under cover of night, and I was to meet them in an automobile at a town some fifteen kilometers away, where they would leave the train while their watchers were asleep, and bring them overland to Schloss Rothhoefen. They would be accompanied by a single lady's maid and no luggage. A chartered motorboat would meet us up the river a few miles, and—well, it looked very simple! All that was required of me was a willingness to address her as "mother" and her sons as "brothers" in case there were any questions asked.

This was Tuesday. They were coming on Thursday, and the train reached the station mentioned at half past 12 at night. So you will see it was a jolly arrangement.

As we said good night to the countess on the little landing at the top of the stairs she took my bandaged paw between her two little hands and said:

"You will soon be rid of me forever, Mr. Smart. Will you bear with me patiently for a little while longer?" She seemed strangely subdued.

"I can bear with you much easier than I can bear the thought of being rid of you," I said in a very low voice. She pressed my clumsy hand fiercely, and I felt no pain.

"You have been too good to me," she said in a very small voice. "Some day, when I am out of all this trouble, I may be able to tell you how much I appreciate all you have done for me."

An almost irresistible—I was about to say ungovernable—impulse to seize her in my arms came over me, but I conquered it and rushed after Mr. Bangs as blind as a bat and reeling for a dozen steps or more. It was a most extraordinary feeling.

Bangs was chattering in his glib English fashion as we descended to my study, but I did not hear half that he said.

One remark of his brought me rather sharply to my senses.

"If all goes well," he was saying, "she should be safely away from here on the 14th. That leaves less than ten days more, sir, under your hospitable roof."

"Less than ten days," I repeated. This was the 5th of the month. "If all goes well. Less than ten days."

Again I passed a sleepless night.

She came to visit me at 12 o'clock the next day. I was alone in the study. Poopendyke was showing Mr. Bangs over the castle.

"I came to dress your hand for you," she said as I helped her down from Red Ludwig's frame.

Now, I have neglected to mention that the back of my hand was swollen to enormous proportions, an unlovely thing.

"Thank you," I said, shaking my head, "but it is quite all right. Britton attended to it this morning. It is good of you to think about it, countess."

"You will never let me do anything for you," she said. Her eyes were velvety. "It isn't fair. I have exacted so much from you, and"—

"And I have been most brutal and unfeeling in many of the things I have said to you," said I despairingly. "I am ashamed of the nasty wounds I have given you. My state of repentance allows you to exact whatsoever you will of me, and when all is said and done I shall still be your debtor. Can you, will you pardon the coarse opinions of a conceited ass? I assure you I am not the man I was when you first encountered me."

She smiled. "For that matter, I am not the same woman I was, Mr. Smart. You have taught me three things, one of which I may mention—the subjection of self. That, with the other two, has made a new Aline Titus of me. I hope you may be pleased with the transfiguration."

"I wish you were Aline Titus," I said, struck by the idea.

"You may at least be sure that I shall not remain the Countess Tarnowsy long, Mr. Smart," she said, with a very puzzling expression in her eyes.

My heart sank. "But I remember hearing you say not so very long ago that you would never marry again," I railed.

She regarded me rather oddly for a moment. "I am very, very glad that you are such a steady, sensible, practical man. A vapid, impressionable youth, during this season of propinquity, might have been so foolish as to fall in love with me, and that would have been too bad."

I think I glared at her. "Then—then, you are going to marry some one?"

She waited a moment, looking straight into my eyes. "Yes," she said, and a delicate pink stole into her cheek, "I am going to marry some one."

I muttered something about congratulating a lucky dog, but it was all very hazy to me.

"Don't congratulate him yet," she cried, the flush deepening. "I may be a very, very great disappointment to him and a never ending nuisance."

"I'm sure you will—will be all right," I floundered. Then I resorted to gaiety. "You see, I've spent a lot of time trying to—to make another woman of you, and so I'm confident he'll find you quite satisfactory."

She laughed gaily. "What a goose you are!" she cried.

I flushed painfully, for, I give you my word, it hurt to have her laugh at me. She sobered at once.

"Forgive me," she said very prettily, and I forgave her. "Do you know we've never given the buried treasure another thought?" she went on, abruptly changing the subject. "Are we not to go searching for it?"

"But it isn't there," said I, steeling my heart against the longing that tried to creep into it. "It's all balderdash."

She pouted her warm red lips. "Have you lost interest in it so soon?"

"Of course, I'll go any time you say," said I, listlessly. "It will be a lark, at all events."

"Then we will go this very afternoon," she said, with enthusiasm.

My ridiculous heart gave a great leap. "This very afternoon," I said, managing my voice very well.

She arose. "Now I must scurry away. I wouldn't do for Mr. Bangs to find me here with you. He would be shocked."

I walked beside her to the chair that stood below the portrait of Ludwig the Red and took her hand to assist her in stepping upon it.

"I sincerely hope this chap you're going to marry, countess, may be the best fellow in the world," said I, still clasping her hand.

She had one foot on the chair as she half turned to face me.

"He is the best fellow in the world," she said.

I gulped. "I can't tell you how happy I shall be if you—if you find real

"I want to be happy! I want to be loved!"

happiness. You deserve happiness—and love."

To Be Continued

MEXICAN SMUGGLERS KILLED

Texas Rangers Shoot Up Band Who Also Stole Cattle

Alpine, Tex., May 12.—Two Mexicans of a band of 12 smugglers were killed and others wounded, early yesterday morning, in a running fight with Texas rangers at a point 50 miles below Bouquillas, in Brewster county.

Nearly 100 stolen cattle were recovered. Recent wholesale thefts of cattle resulted in the organization of a number of posses.

Killed Negro, Get Life Terms

Little Rock, Ark., May 12.—W. R. Fisher, Ashley Ward and Andrew Holmes, white, each about 25 years old, yesterday were sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Angus Neely, an aged negro, Wrightsville, December 15, 1914.

Million Pounds of Halibut in Day

Seattle, May 12.—Eighteen fishing vessels have arrived here with 1,030,000 pounds of fresh halibut, the largest receipts in 24 hours in the history of the fishing industry.

HOUSEHOLD TALKS

Henrietta D. Grauel

Eva Tanguay's Kidney Stew

"Goodness gracious sakes alive," shouts Eva Tanguay, "What's the use of mubling over the whole bill of fare when you know very well you mean to order toast and tea in the end.

"Hurry up, folks, hurry up, there's other hungry people on this old globe besides you. Order veal or kidney stew. It'll do, it'll do, good enough for me or you!" she howls, and immediately, right there in the theatre, a kidney stew seems the thing you want most in all the world. Isn't it kind of her not to make us long for peacock's tongue or frieaseed angel's wings?

Just buy a couple of kidneys and cut them in small pieces and let them soap in salted water thirty minutes and you can have an Eva Tanguay stew "just as easy." Simmer the kidney gently for about half an hour in enough water to cover, which will not be a great deal. Now melt a lump of butter in a frying pan and brown a few slices of onion in it. Dip the bits of kidney out of their liquor and dredge them in flour, brown in the butter and pour the kidney broth in. Add a cup of cream, one tablespoon of Worcestershire sauce and continue stirring until the stew is as thick as you want it.

Clara Louise Kellogg used to enjoy telling her hearers about delectable tidbits, and while she was not so rampant as the Tanguay style, she had the same way of making one hungry for what she herself liked.

Miss Kellogg claimed she was the discoverer of stuffed artichokes, and perhaps she was. Certainly they must have been discovered by some person with heaps of initiative and courage to match.

She said, "Fry a few slices of onion, brown in butter and cool, then stuff into the fleshy part of nicely cooked artichokes and fill up with a mixture of seasoned, buttered crumbs and grated cheese. Brown in the oven and serve with Swiss sauce."

Swiss or Soubise sauce is made by pressing fried onions through a sieve and adding brown sauce.

MEALS FOR A MAY DAY

Breakfast
Fresh Cherries
Popovers Soft Boiled Eggs
Broiled Bacon
Coffee

Luncheon
New Potatoes in Cream
Young Onions Rolls
Rice Croquettes
Tea

Dinner
Hot Veal Loaf with Tomato Sauce
Frenched Potatoes
Spinach Peas
Cucumbers with Lettuce
Strawberry Short Cake
Camembert Cheese
Coffee Wafers

To-morrow—Sauces for This and That.

$1,000,000 Y. M. C. A. for Chicago

Chicago, May 12.—Construction of a 19-story, $1,000,000 Y. M. C. A. hotel in this city will begin next month, it was announced yesterday. The hotel will have 1,870 bedrooms, ranging in price from 25 to 40 cents a night. The lobby will seat 1,000 persons.

Warrant for Elgin Bank Official

Elgin, Ill., May 12.—A warrant charging Ray L. Seaman, teller of the Elgin National Bank, with the larceny of $10,000 in gold certificates, was issued late yesterday. Seaman is charged with having taken the certificates from the bank vaults on Saturday.

The Harrisburg Hospital is open daily except Sunday, between 1 and 2 o'clock p. m. for dispensing medical advice and prescriptions to those unable to pay for them.