

# TRUXTON KING

A Story of  
Graustark

By **GEORGE BARR M'CUTCHEON**

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### SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Truxton King arrives in Edelweiss, capital of Graustark, and meets the beautiful niece of Spantz, a gunmaker. II—King does a favor for Prince Robin, the young ruler of the country, whose guardian is John Tullis, an American. III—Baron Dangloss, minister of police, interviews King and warns him against Olga, the gunmaker's niece. IV—King invades the royal park, meets the prince and is presented to the lad's fascinating Aunt Lorraine. V—The committee of ten, conspirators against the prince, meets in an underground chamber, where the girl Olga is disclosed as one who is to kill Prince Robin with a bomb. VI—John Tullis calls on the beautiful Countess Ingomede, who warns him that her hated and notorious old husband, Count Marlanx, is conspiring against the prince. VII, VIII, IX and X—King visits the house of the witch of Ganlook gap and meets the royal household there. He sees an eye gleaming through a crack in a door, and while searching for the person he is overpowered and dragged into a loft. He is confronted by Count Marlanx and then taken to the underground den of the committee of ten.

### CHAPTER XI.

UNDER THE GROUND.

**T**HE second day after his incarceration began King was given food and drink. It was high time, for he was almost famished. Thereafter twice a day he was led into the larger room and given a surprisingly hearty meal.

Peter Brutus had just voiced the pleasure of the majority by urging the necessity for physical torture to wring the government's secrets from the prisoner. King, half famished, half crazed by thirst, had been listening to the fierce argument through the thin door that separated the rooms. He heard the sudden, eager movement toward the door of his cell and squared himself against the opposite wall, ready to fight to the death. Then there came a voice that he recognized.

A woman was addressing the conspirators in tones of deadly earnestness. His heart gave a bound. It was the first time since his incarceration that he had heard the voice of Olga Platanova, she who still must be his friend.

"No! You shall not torture him. I have said he is no spy. I still say it!" she was exclaiming.

"God, girl, we cannot turn him loose now. He must die." This was from Spantz.

"We cannot release him, I grant you," she said, and Truxton's heart sank. "Not now, but afterward, yes. When it is all over he can do no harm. But hear me now, all of you. If he is harmed in any way I shall not perform my part of the work on the 26th. This is final."

"You cannot withdraw!" exclaimed Peter Brutus. "You are pledged. You are sworn. It is ordained."

"I, Olga Platanova, say this to you. It is not a plea, not a petition; it is an ultimatum. Spare him or the glorious cause must suffer by my defection."

"Sh! Not so loud, girl! He can hear every word you say!"

"Let him hear. Let him know that I, Olga Platanova, am to hurl the thing that is to destroy the life of Prince Robin. I am not afraid to have him know today what the world will know next week. Then the world will say that Olga Platanova was not a beast, but a deliverer, a creator! Let him hear!"

The listener's blood was running cold. The life of Prince Robin! An assassination! "The thing that will destroy!" A bomb!

For half an hour they argued with her, seeking to turn her from the stand she had taken. Then they came to terms with her. Truxton King owed his life to this strange girl, who knew him not at all, but who believed in him. Truxton was brought into the room a few minutes later. He was white with emotion as he faced the committee of ten. Before a word could be addressed to him he blurted out:

"You coward! Weak as I am, I would have fought for you, Miss Platanova, if I could have got through that door. Thank you for what you have done to convince these dogs! Only don't do this awful thing! Think of that dear little boy!"

Olga Platanova cried out and covered her eyes with her hands. She was led from the room by William Spantz.

Peter Brutus stood over King, whose arms were held by two stalwart men. "Enough!" he commanded. "We spare you not for her sake, but for the sake of the cause we serve. Hear me! You are to be held here a prisoner until our plans are consummated. You will be properly fed and cared for. You have heard Miss Platanova say that she will cook the food for you herself, but you are not to see her."

King interrupted him. "I haven't the least doubt that you will kill me in the end. She may not be here to protect me after the assassination."

"She is prepared to die by the same bomb that slays the prince," was all that Brutus would say in response to this, but King observed the sly look that went around among them. He knew then that they meant to kill him in the end.

Afterward, in his little room, he writhed in the agony of helplessness. The prince, his court, the government—all were to be blasted to satisfy the



"WEAK AS I AM, I WOULD HAVE FOUGHT FOR YOU."

end of this sickening conspiracy. Lorraine! She, too, was doomed! He groaned aloud in his misery and awe.

There was a telegraph instrument in the outer room. He could hear it ticking off its messages day and night and could hear the discussion of reports as they came in or went out. It soon became clear to him that the wire connected the room with Marlanx's headquarters near Balak, in Aphnia, a branch instrument being stationed in the cave above the witch's hut.

On his third night he heard the committee discussing the conditions at the castle.

"The count is more afraid of this man Tullis than of all the rest," averred Peter Brutus. "He has reasons to hate and fear the Americans. That is why he desires the death of our prisoner. He has said time and again over the wire that King will in some way escape and play the deuce with our plans. It does not seem possible, however. We have him absolutely secure."

"This is the 22d; Saturday is the 26th. Nothing could be done to stop us in four days," said one of the women.

"Count Marlanx will be ready on the 26th. He has said so. A new strike will be declared on the railroad on the 25th, and the strikers will be in the city with their grievances. Saturday's celebration will bring men from the mountains and the mines to town. A single blow, and we have won." So spoke Brutus.

"We must not—we cannot fail," graded William Spantz, and the cry was reiterated by half a dozen voices.

The next morning, after a sleepless night, Truxton King made his first determined attempt to escape.

He knew that two armed men stood guard in the outer room day and night. The door to the stairway leading into the armorer's shop was of iron and heavily barred; the door opening into the sewer was even more securely bolted. Besides, there was a great stone door at the foot of the passage. The keys to these two doors were never out of the possession of William Spantz. One of his guards held the key to the stairway door. His only chance lay in his ability to suddenly overpower two men and make off by way of the armorer's shop.

When his little door was opened on the morning of the 23d Truxton King's long, powerful figure shot through as if sped by a catapult. The man with the candle and the knife went down like a beef, felled by a blow on the jaw.

The American, his eyes blazing with hope and desperation, kept onward, to find himself face to face with Olga Platanova! She was staring at him with frightened eyes, her lips apart, her hands to her breast. He turned.

"He has not the key," she cried, "nor have I. You have no chance to escape. Go back!"

A key rattled in the door. When it swung open two men stood in the

aperture, both with drawn pistols. The girl leaped between them and the helpless, defeated American.

"Remember!" she cried. "You are not to kill him!"

door, half dazed, but furious. He made a vicious leap at King, his knife ready for the lungs.

"I'm glad it's you!" roared King, leaping aside. His fist shot out, and again Brutus went down.

"Miss Platanova, call your uncle," she was ordered. "It is now necessary to bind the fellow's hands. They are too dangerous to be allowed to roam at large in this fashion."

All day long Truxton paced his little prison, bitterly lamenting his ill timed effort. Now he would be even more carefully guarded. His hands were bound behind his back. He was powerless. If he had only waited! Luck had been against him. How was he to know that the guard with the keys had gone upstairs when Olga brought his breakfast down? It was fate.

The 23d dragged itself into the past, and the 24th was following in the gloomy wake of its predecessors. Two days more! He began to feel the approach of madness. His own death was not far away. It would follow that of the prince and of Olga Platanova, his friend. But he was not thinking of his own death; he was thinking of the prince's life.

Forty-eight hours! That was all! Early that night as he lay with his ear to the crack of the door he heard them discussing his own death. It was to come as soon as Olga had gone to her reward. She was not there to defend him. Spantz had said that she was praying in her room, committing her soul to God. Truxton King suddenly pricked up his ears, attracted by a sentence that fell from the lips of one of the men.

"Tullis is on his way to the hills of Dawabergen by this time. He will be out of the way on the 26th safe enough."

"Count Marlanx was not to be satisfied until he had found the means to draw him away from Edelweiss," said another. "This time it will work like a charm. Late this afternoon Tullis was making ready to lead a troop of cavalry into the hills to effect a rescue. Santa Maria! That was a clever stroke! Not only does he go himself, but with him goes a captain with 100 soldiers from the fort. Ha, ha! Marlanx is a fox—a very exceptional fox!"

Tullis off to the hills with soldiers to effect a rescue! Truxton sat up, his brain whirling.

### CHAPTER XII.

A NEW PRISONER ARRIVES.

**I**T WAS far past midnight when King was aroused from the doze into which he had fallen. Was it the 26th? Loud, quick commands came to his ears.

"They are here at last," he heard some one say. "God! This suspense has been awful. But they are here." "Stand ready, then, with the guns!" cried Peter Brutus. "It may be a trick, after all. Don't open that door down there, Spantz, until you know who is on the outside."

"It's all right," came at last in the relieved, eager voice of Peter Brutus. "Clear the way, comrades. Give them room. By our holy father, this is a brave triumph. Ah!"

Heavy footsteps clogged into the room, accompanied by stertorous breathing and no small amount of grunting from masculine throats. Not one but three or four languages were spoken by the excited, intense occupants of the other room. King could make nothing of what they said. Finally the sharp, incisive voice of William Spantz broke through the babble, commanding silence.

"Still unconscious," he said when some measure of order was secured.

"Yes," grunted one of the men.

"We will have our instructions tomorrow. The count is to inform us before nightfall where she is to be removed to. Next week she is going to go to Schloss Marlanx." Brutus added a cruel, heartless laugh.

A woman, thought Truxton. The countess! They had brought her here from Balak, after all. What a remorseless brute Marlanx must be to maltreat his beautiful wife!

"To my mind she is more beautiful than his own wife," observed Anna Cromer. "She will be a fine morsel for the count, who has even cast longing eyes on so homely a mortal as I."

"All women are alike to him," said Spantz sententiously.

"We must put her in the room with the American for the present. You are sure he will take her away before Saturday? A woman's cries are most distressing." It was Spantz who spoke.

"I'll stop her crying," volunteered Anna Cromer harshly.

"She's regaining her senses!" exclaimed one of the men. "Stand back, every one. Give her air."

Presently the door to King's room was thrown open. He had got to his feet and was standing in the center of the room, his eyes blinking in the glare of light.

"Hello!" cried Peter Brutus. "You up, eh? We've got a fair lady for you, my friend. Get back there, you dog! Keep in your corner."

"You are a fine bunch of human beings!" blurted Truxton.

A man with a lighted candle entered first, holding the light above his head. He was followed by two others, who supported the drooping, tottering figure of a woman.

"Let her sit there against the wall, Drago. Julius, fetch in more candles. She must not be left in the dark. He says she is not to be frightened to death. Women are afraid of the dark and strange dogs. Let there be light," scoffed Peter Brutus, spitting toward King.

"I'll get you for that some day," grated the American, white with anger.

"Enough!" commanded William Spantz. "We are not children." Turning to King, he went on, a touch of kindness in his voice: "Cheer her if you can. She is one of your class. Do not let the lights go out."

Raising his hands, he fairly drove the others from the doorway.

For a time King stood in his corner, watching the figure huddled against the opposite wall. Suddenly he started forward, his eyes wide and staring. He had seen that gray riding habit before. Two eager steps he took and then halted half-way.

"Great Jehovah!" he gasped, unbelieving. "You! My God, is it you?"

He dropped to his knees before her, peering into her startled eyes. A look of abject terror crossed the tired, tear stained face. She shrank away from him.

"What is it? Where am I?" she moaned. "Oh, let me go! What have I done that you should bring me here? Let me go, Mr. King! You are not so wicked as"—

"I—I bring you here!" he interrupted, aghast. Then he understood. Utter dismay filled his eyes. "You think that I have done this thing to you? God above us! Look! I, too, am a prisoner here. They are going to kill me after tomorrow."

"Oh, Mr. King, what does it all mean? Forgive me! I see now. You are bound; you are suffering; you are years older. What have you done? What have I done?"

"Don't shrink from me," he urged. "Try to calm yourself."

Then, with the utmost gentleness, he persuaded her to rise and walk about the little room with him.

"It will give you courage," he urged. "Poor little girl!"

She looked up into his face, a new light coming into her eyes.

"Don't talk now," he said softly. "Take your time. Hold to my arm, please. There!"

For five or ten minutes he led her back and forth across the room very tenderly. At first she was faint and uncertain; then, as her strength and wits came back to her, courage took the place of despair. She smiled wanly and asked him to sit down with her.

"Where are we? What is it all about?" she asked.

"Not so loud," he cautioned. "I'll be perfectly candid with you. You'll have to be very, very brave. But wait. Perhaps it will be easier for you to tell me what has happened to you, so far as you know. I can throw light on the whole situation, I think."

She became more excited. Her eyes flashed; she spoke rapidly. On the morning of the 23d she had gone for her gallop in the famous Ganlook road, attended by two faithful grooms from the royal stables.

"I was in for a longer ride than usual," she said, with sudden constraint. She looked away from her eager listener. "I was nervous and had not slept the night before. A girl never does, I suppose."

He looked askance. "Yes?" he queried.

She was blushing, he was sure of it. "I mean a girl is always nervous and distrustful after—after she has promised, don't you see?"

"No; I don't see."

"I had promised Count Vos Engo the night before that I—Oh, but it really has nothing to do with the story. I—"

Truxton was actually glaring at her. "You mean that you had promised to marry Count Vos Engo?" he stammered.

"How very strangely you talk! Are you sure—I mean, do you think it is fever? One suffers so!"

He sighed deeply. "Well, that's over! Whew! It was a dream, by Jove!"

She waited a moment and then, looking down, said very gently, "I'm so sorry for you."

Then she resumed her story.

She had gone six or eight miles down the Ganlook road when she came up with five troopers of the royal guard. One of the troopers came forward and respectfully requested her to turn off into another road until a detachment passed, in charge of a gang of desperadoes taken at the inn of the Hawk and Raven the night before. Unsuspecting, she rode off into the forest lane for several hundred yards.

It was a trap. The men were not troopers, but brigands got up in the uniform of the guard. Once away from the main highway, they made prisoners of her and the two grooms. Then followed a long ride through roads new to her.

When night came they were high in the mountains back of the monastery, many hours ahead of any pursuit. They became stupidly careless, and the two grooms made a dash for freedom. One of them was killed, but one had escaped.

Some time during the slow, torturing ride through the forest she swooned. When she came to her senses she was in a dimly lighted room, surrounded by men. The gag had been removed from her mouth. She would have shrieked out in her terror had not her gaze rested upon the figure of a man who sat opposite, his elbows on the back of the chair which he straddled, his chin on his arms. He was staring at her steadily, his black eyes catching her gaze and holding it as a snake holds the bird it has charmed.

She recognized the hard, hawklike face. There could be no mistake. She was looking into the face that made the portrait of the Iron Count so abhorrent to her—the leathery head of a

cadaver with eyes that lived. She broke down and cried herself into the sleep of exhaustion.

All the next day she sat limp and helpless in the chair they had brought to her. She could neither eat nor drink. Late in the afternoon Marlanx came again. She knew not from whence he came; he stood before her suddenly as if produced by the magic of some fabled genie, smiling broadly, his hands clasped behind his back, his attitude one of designing calculation.

"He laughed when I demanded that he should restore me to my friends. He chided me when I pleaded and begged for mercy. My questions were never answered. Where am I, Mr. King? Oh, this dreadful place! Why are we here—and I?"

King's heart throbbed fiercely once more. A vast hunger possessed his soul. In that moment he could have laid down his life for her with a smile of rejoicing.

Then he told her why she was there, why he was there and of the 26th—the dreadful 26th!

"God in heaven!" she repeated over and over again in a piteous whisper. The light was going out.

"Quick!" he cried. "The candle! Light a fresh one. My hands are bound."

She crept to the candles and joined the wicks. A new light grew as the old one died. Then she stood erect, looking down upon him.

"You are bound. I forgot."

She started forward, dropping to her knees beside him, an eager gleam in her eyes. "If I can untie the rope—will that help? There must be one little chance for you—for us. Let me try."

"By Jove," he whispered admiringly, his spirits leaping to meet hers, "you've got pluck. You put new life in me. I—I was almost—a quitter."

At last, after many despairing tugs, the knot relaxed. "There!" she cried, sinking back exhausted. "Oh, how it must have hurt you! Your wrists are raw!"

His arms were stiff and sore and hung like lead at his sides. She watched him with narrowed eyes while he stood off and tried to work blood and strength back into his muscles.

"Do you think you can—can do anything now, Mr. King?" she asked after a long interval. "We must escape," she said as if it were all settled.

"It cannot be tonight," he gently informed her, a sickness attacking his heart. "Don't you think you'd better try to get some sleep?"

He prevailed upon her to lie down, with his coat for a pillow. In two minutes she was asleep.

For an hour or more he sat there looking sorrowfully at the tired, sweet face, the utmost despair in his soul. At last he stretched himself out on the floor near the door, and as he went to sleep he prayed that Providence might open a way for him to prove that she was not depending on him in vain.

(To be continued.)

### How's This?

We offer One Hundred Dollars Reward for any case of Catarrh that cannot be cured by Hall's Catarrh Cure. F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O.

We, the undersigned, have known F. J. Cheney for the last 15 years, and believe him perfectly honorable in all business transactions and financially able to carry out any obligations made by his firm.

WALDING, KINNAN & MARVIN, Wholesale Druggists, Toledo, O.

Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. Testimonials sent free. Price 75c. per bottle. Sold by all druggists.

Take Hall's Family Pills for Constipation.

The three-year-old child of Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose Powell, who live near Lenoir, was burned to death Saturday morning.

Comptroller of the Currency Lawrence O. Murray, will address the North Carolina Banker's Association which meets at Wrightsville, June 22nd.

### ITCHING SCALP.

Easy to Get Rid of by Using Parisian Sage, the Guaranteed Hair Invigorator.

Just as long as you have dandruff your head will itch. It's the little microbes that are gnawing down into the hair roots. It may take a long time for these persistent pests to get down to the vital part, but when they do, they will destroy the life of the hair in a very short time. If you want to stop itching scalp and drive away dandruff, you must first kill the dandruff germs or microbes.

Parisian Sage will do this. Just get a 50c. bottle today; relief will come immediately, and if at the end of two weeks your itching scalp and dandruff have not disappeared, you can have your money back.

Parisian Sage is also a delightful hair tonic, and is used by refined women who desire fascinating, lustrous and luxuriant hair. A large bottle only costs 50 cents at J. H. Kennedy & Co's. The girl with the Auburn hair is on every bottle.

## THE CABMEN OF PARIS

Halling One Is the Same as a Declaration of War.

THEY ARE INSOLENT ROGUES

Snipers and Caustic Advice Are Showered Upon Those Who Engage Them. On Wet or Fetal Days the Cabbies Spurn Those Who Want to Ride.

Among Anglo-Saxons there is a general and instinctive desire to do business on the basis of an entente cordiale. In Paris the hailing of a cabman is looked on by both parties to the transaction as an implied declaration of war. The cabman takes your measure, and you take his number if you are wise. At once he will give you a reason to remark that he has a rooted and premeditated objection to drive you where you wish to go. Perhaps he prefers the opera quarter because it is central, or should the weather be fine his heart is probably set upon driving in the Bois, while you may have business at the bourse. He explains his views on the subject selfishly and rudely.

A foreigner alighted recently from the Calais train at the Northern railway station in Paris and ordered a typical Parisian cabman, bloated, pale and abashed, to drive him to the Rue Blomet, which is a street in the relatively distant Vaugirard quarter. "Peut on habiter la Rue Blomet?" ("Is it possible to inhabit the Rue Blomet?") exclaimed the ragged ruffian in an epigrammatic note of disdain which would have done honor to Beau Brummel.

But it is when the Paris cabman has once started on his "course," a war-path in the strict sense of the term, that he proves to what a limitless extent he is the enemy of mankind. His hatred of the "bourgeois," the "man in the street," in spite of and indeed because of his being a potential client, is expressed at every yard. He constantly tries to run him down, which makes strangers to Paris accuse the Paris cabman of driving badly, while in point of fact he is not driving at all, but playing with miraculous skill a game of his own which suggests cannon billiards in the hands of a world's champion.

But it is not with the public alone that he is at war. On all other cabmen whose path he crosses, on omnibus drivers, motorcar men, bicyclists, private coachmen, costermongers with barrows and (sotto voce) the police he heaps deadly insults, the least outrageous of which are "Ours!" ("Bear") and "Fourneau!" ("Oven!"), the latter containing a subtle double meaning, intelligible only to those who have Paris "argot" or slang at their finger ends and too long to explain.

The cabman's wild career through the streets, the constant wavering and slashing of his pitiless whip, his madcap hurtlements and collisions, the frenzied gesticulations which he exchanges with his "fare," the panic stricken flight of the agonized women whose lives he has endangered, the ugly rushes which the public occasionally makes at him with a view to lynching him, the sprawlings and fallings of his maddened, hysterical, starving horse, contribute as much as anything to the spasmodic intensity, the electric blue fire diablerie, which are characteristic of the general movement of Paris.

All that can be said in mitigation of the Paris cabman's method is that "he has them in the blood." Every Parisian (and the cabman is no exception) has the soul of a dictator and the spirit of an artist. To exercise autocratic power and, falling thus, to enjoy the maximum of personal freedom from all restraint, moral or social, is the goal at which he is ever aiming, openly or secretly.

Watch a Paris cabman, for instance, on a wet day or on some festival occasion, such as the New Year, when there is a big demand for his services. With what haughty disdain does he drive along the streets, deaf to every appeal, refusing every fare, rejoicing in the discomfort and inconvenience he is causing, triumphant in the thought that at last he has "the bourgeois" at his feet; that the clientele which he detests and which detests him is now a humiliated, bemuddled or bedragged mob of supplicants waiting on his will, whom he can engage to boiling point with his sneers and his silence or lash with his sarcasms as cruelly as he beats his horse.

Cheerfully does he sacrifice half a day's earnings to the enjoyment of this exquisite revenge, for at least he can say to his hungry wife and children when he gets home, "J'ai vecu." They may not have dined, but he has lived.

It is because the Parisian recognizes in himself a certain community of sentiment with the cabman in this attitude toward life that he tolerates him, though he does not forgive him. —Harper's Weekly.

### Her Only Course.

Lady Anne Lindsay, the author of the old poem "Auld Robin Gray," was not only a delightful conversationalist, but she was a great story teller.

This gift made her not only a welcome guest abroad, but a valuable member of the home circle, for it is related in "A Group of Scottish Women" that at a dinner party which she was giving to some friends an old manservant caused some amusement by saying in a perfectly audible undertone:

"My lady, you must tell another story. The second course won't be ready for five minutes."