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Upstairs in Singer Bldg. Gastonia, N. C.

## APRIL

9th

## WATCH

An Acute Sense of Taste. Youth's Companion. William and Lawrence were in the habit of saving a part of their dessert from the evening dinner for consumption the next morning, and

in accordance with this custom two small cakes had been placed in the cracker jar for them. William being the first up on the following morning and being hungry, went to the jar. He found only one cake, and a large piece had been bitten out of that. Full of wrath, he went upstairs and roused his brother.

"Say!" he demanded. "I want to know who took that big bite out of my cake!"

"I did," sleepily answered Lawrence.

"What'd you do that for?"

"Well, when I tasted it I found it was your cake and so I ate the other one."

In a New York hospital Wednesday Mrs. Margaret Custer Calhoun Maugham, sister of General George A. Custer, who was killed at the battle of Little Big Horn in 1876, died of cancer. Her first husband and two brothers were killed in the same battle.

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## TRUXTON KING

A Story of Graustark

By GEORGE BARR M'GUTCHEON

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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. XI—Olga defends King before the committee of anarchists. XII—Lorraine is brought to the den and thrown into the same room with King. XIII—King tells a jester, dons his clothing and, disguised, carries Lorraine into a boat at night in which several of the anarchists are about to depart. XIV—King manages to get Lorraine, whom he loves, ashore, and they hide in a freight car.

### CHAPTER XV.

#### THE GIRL IN THE RED CLOAK.

INSIDE of an hour after the return of the frightened, quivering groom who had escaped from the brigands in the hills Jack Tullis was granted permission by the war department to take a hundred picked men with him in the effort to overtake and capture the abductors of his sister. The dazed groom's story hardly had been told to the horrified brother before he was engaged in telephoning to General Braze and Baron Dangloss. A hurried consultation followed.

Baron Dangloss was sadly upset. Three prominent persons had been stolen from beneath his nose, so to speak. He was beside himself with rage and dismay. This last outrage was the climax. The old man adored the sister of Jack Tullis. He was heartbroken and crushed by the news of the catastrophe.

Captain Haas of the dragoons was put in charge of the relief party. The party was armed and equipped for a bitter chase. Word had been sent to Serros, the capital of Dawsbergen, asking the assistance of Prince Danton in the effort to overtake the abductors. A detachment, it was announced in reply, was to start from Serros during the afternoon bound for the eastern passes.

Baron Dangloss rode to the southern gate with the white faced, suffering Tullis. "We will undoubtedly receive a communication from the rascals this afternoon or tomorrow," he said gloomily. "They will not be slow to make a formal demand for ransom, knowing that you and your sister are possessed of unlimited wealth. Hello! Who's this?"

A man who had ridden up to the gates, his horse covered with foam, was demanding admission. The warders halted him unceremoniously as Dangloss rode forward. They found that he was one of the foremen in the employ of the railway construction company. He brought the disquieting news that another strike had been declared, that the men were ugly and determined to tear up the track already laid unless their demands were considered and, furthermore, that there had been severe fighting between the two factions engaged on the work. He urgently implored Dangloss to send troops out to hold the rioters in check.

"What is your name?" demanded the harassed minister of police.

"Polson," replied the foreman. He lied, for he was no other than John Cromer, the unsavory husband of Anna Cromer of the committee of ten.

"Come with me," said Dangloss. "We will go to General Braze. Good-by and good luck, Tullis."

At that very moment Lorraine Tullis was comparing notes with Truxton King in the room beneath the armor-er's shop. Count Marlanx was hiding in the trader's inn outside the northern

gates. The abductors themselves were scattered about the city, laughing triumphantly over the success of the ruse that had drawn the well feared American away on a wild goose chase to the distant passes of Dawsbergen. More than that, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon a second detachment of soldiers left the city for the scene of the riots in the construction camps, twenty miles away.

Surely the well laid plans of the Iron Copart were being skillfully carried out!

All afternoon and evening men straggled in from the hills and surrounding country, apparently loath to miss the early excitement attending the ceremonies on the following day. Sullen strikers from the camps came down, cursing the company, but drinking noisy toasts to the railroad and its future. The city by night swarmed with reveling thousands. The bands were playing, the crowds were singing and mobs were drinking and carousing in the lower end.

At 3 o'clock in the morning word flew from brothel to brothel, from lodging house to lodging house, in all parts of the slumbering city. A thousand men crept out into the streets after the storm, all animated by one impulse, all obeying a single fierce injunction.

They were to find and kill a tall American! They were to keep him or his companion from getting in touch with the police authorities or with the royal castle, no matter what the cost!

At 5 o'clock a stealthy whisper went the rounds, reaching the ear of every vagabond and cutthroat engaged in the untiring vigil. Like smoke they faded away. The silent watch was over.

The word had sped to every corner of the town that it was no longer necessary to maintain the watch for Truxton King. He was no longer in a position to give them trouble or uneasiness.

The 26th dawned bright and cool after the savage storm from the north. "I don't like the looks of things," said Baron Dangloss time and again. His men were never so alert as today and never so deceived.

"There can't be trouble of any sort," mused Colonel Quinnox. "These fellows are ugly, 'tis true, but they are not prepared for a demonstration."

"Colonel, we'll yet see the day when Graustark regrets the economy that has cut our little army to almost nothing. What have we now all told? Three hundred men in the royal guard, fewer than 600 in the fortress. I have a hundred policemen. There you are. Today there are nearly 200 soldiers off in the mountains on nasty business of one sort or another. Gad, if these ruffians from the railroad possessed no more than pistols they could give us a merry fight. There must be a thousand of them. I don't like it. We'll have trouble before the day's over."

By 11 o'clock the streets in the neighborhood of the plaza were packed with people. At 12 the castle gates were to be thrown open for the brilliant cavalcade that was to pass between these cheering rows of people.

Shortly after half past 11 o'clock certain groups of men usurped the positions in front of certain buildings on the south side of the square, a score here, a half score there, others below them. They favored the shops operated by the friends of the committee of ten; they were the men who were to take possession of the rifles that lay hidden behind counters and walls.

From the distant castle came the sounds of shouts, crawling up the long line of spectators for the full length



THEY SLEPT. HOW TIRED THEY WERE!

of the avenue to the eager throng in Regenetz circus, swelling and growing louder as the news came that the prince had ridden forth from the gates. Glad voices cried out tidings to those in the background. The prince was coming!

Bonny, adorable Prince Robin! On came the splendid phalanx of guardsmen, followed by rigid infantrymen in measured tread. The great coach of gold, with its half score of horses, rolled somberly beneath nature's canopy of green, surrounded on all sides by proud members of the royal guard. Two carriages from the royal stables preceded the prince's coach. In the first were the Duke of Perse and three fellow members of the cabinet. The second contained Baron Dangloss and General Braze.

The curtains in a house at the corner of the square parted gently. A hawk faced old man peered out upon the joyous crowd. His black eyes swept the scene. A grim smile crept into his face. He dropped the cur-

tains and walked away from the window, tossing a cigarette into a grate on the opposite side of the room. Then he looked at his watch.

The man who stood in the middle of the freight car looking down in wonder at the fugitives was a tall vagabond of the most picturesque type. No rag-muffin was ever so tattered and torn as this rakish individual. His clothes barely hung together on his lank frame.

Long, thin lips curled into a smile of delicious regard. His sides shook with the quiet chuckle of understanding. He was thinking of other days and nights and of many maids in faroff lands and of countless journeys in which he, too, had had fair and gentle company—short journeys, yes, but not to be forgotten.

He lighted the stub of a tallow candle. Ah, how envied this great, sleeping wayfarer! How beautiful his mistress! How fortunate the lover! They slept. How tired they were! Whence had they come?

Why should he stay here to spoil their waking hour? No. He would surrender his apartment to them.

Softly he tiptoed to his own corner of the car. He gathered up his belongings—an ancient violin case, a stout walking stick, a goodly sized pack done up in gaudy cloth, a well worn pair of sandals with long, frayed lacings. As gently he stole back to the door. He tossed a kiss to the sleeping girl, his dark gypsy face aglow with admiration and mischief, and was about to blow out the light of his candle. Then he changed his mind.

With a determined shake of his head and a new flash of the eye, he calmly seated himself and began to open his ragged pack.

At last his small store of food lay exposed. Without hesitation he divided the pieces of smoked venison, giving one part to himself, two to the sleepers, then the miller's bread and the cheese and the bag of dates he had bought the day before.

Again he blew a kiss to the prettiest girl he had ever seen. Snuffing his candle, he dropped to the ground and closed the door against all spying, uncivil eyes.

Daybreak found him at the wharf gates.

Coming to an empty flat car direct from the quarries, he resolutely seated himself upon its edge and, with amiable resignation, set about devouring his early meal, all the while casting longing, almost appealing, glances toward the next car but one. Busy little switch engines began chugging about the yards. The railroad at least was exhibiting some signs of life.

Down through the maze of side-tracks whisked the little train, out upon the main line with a thin shriek of greeting, past the freight houses. It was then that Sir Vagabond sat up very straight, a look of mild interest in his eyes. Interest gave way to perplexity, perplexity to concern. What's this—leaving the city? He wasted no time. Clutching his belongings to his side, he vaulted from one hand, nimbly landing safely on his feet at the roadside.

He thought of the luckless pair in the empty "box."

Suddenly he stopped, his chin up, his hands to his sides. A hearty peal of laughter soared from his lips. The joke was on them. It was rich. The more he thought of their astonishment on awakening the more he laughed.

His immense levity attracted attention. Four or five men approached him from the shadows of the freight houses, ugly, unsmiling fellows. They demanded of him the cause of his unseemly mirth. With tears in his merry black eyes he related the plight of the pretty slumberers. They plied him with questions. He described the couple, even glowingly. Then the sinister fellows smiled. More than that, they clapped each other on the back and swore splendidly.

And so it was that the news spread over town at 5 o'clock that Truxton King was where he could do no harm. It was well known that the train would make forty miles an hour down the steep grade into the lower valley.

When Truxton King first awoke to the fact that they were no longer lying motionless in the dreary yards he leaped to his feet with a startled shout of alarm. With frantic energy he pulled open the door. For a minute he stared at the scudding walls of stone so close at hand, uncomprehendingly. Then the truth burst upon him with the force of a mighty blow. He staggered back, his jaw dropping, his eyes glaring.

"Great God, Lorraine! We're going! We're moving!" he cried hoarsely.

She shot to her feet and lurched to his side. "Don't fall out!" she almost shrieked.

Suddenly the train shot out into the open, farm spattered valley. Truxton fell back dumfounded.

"The country!" he exclaimed. "We've been carried away. God in heaven! The prince—he is lost!" He was beside himself, raging like a madman.

He had shouted to her that he must get back to the city.

"You would be killed!" she cried, clutching his arm fiercely. "You never can jump, Truxton. See how we are running. If you jump I shall follow. I won't go on alone. I am as much to blame as you."

A small station flew by. "Ronn, seven kilometers to Edelweiss." He looked at her in despair.

"We're going faster and faster," he grated.

Just then his gaze alighted on the pathetic breakfast. He stared as if hypnotized. Was he going mad? An instant later he was on his hands and knees examining the mysterious feast. She joined him at once. No two faces ever before were so puzzled and perplexed.

"By heaven," he exclaimed, "I see it all! We've been deliberately shanghaied! We've been bottled up here and shipped out of town. Don't touch that stuff! It's probably full of poison. Great Scott, what a clever gang they are!"

Whereupon he proceeded to kick the unoffending breakfast out of the car door. To their dying day they were to believe that the food had been put there by agents of the great conspirator.

"Hello!" said he. "We're slowing up." He looked out and ahead. "There's a bridge down the road a bit—yes, there's our same old river! They're running slow for the bridge. We can swing off, Lorraine. Now's our chance!"

The train was barely creeping up to the bridge. He clasped her in the strong crook of his left arm, slid down to a sitting position and boldly pushed himself clear of the car, landing on his feet. Staggering forward with the impetus he had received, he would have fallen except for a mighty effort. A sharp groan escaped his lips as he lowered Lorraine to the ground. She looked anxiously into his face and saw nothing there but relief.

"Come along," said the man briefly. "We must try to reach that station back there. There I can telegraph in. Oh!" His first attempt to walk brought out a groan of pain.

He had turned his ankle in the leap to the ground.

"Lean on me!" she cried despairingly.

"Nonsense!" he said, with grim stubbornness. "I don't mind the pain. We'll not stop, my dear—not till we get word to Dangloss."

At a wagon road crossing they paused to rest, having covered two miles. Her little cry of joy caused him to look up from the swollen ankle, which he was regarding with dubious concern. An ox cart was approaching from the west.

"A ride!" she cried joyously.

They stopped the cart and bargained for a ride to Ronn. The man was a farmer, slow and suspicious. He haggled.

"The country's full of evil men and women these days," he demurred. "Besides, I have a heavy enough load as it is for my poor beasts."

Miss Tullis conducted the negotiations.

"We are bound for Edelweiss. Can you get us there in two hours?"

"With these beasts, poor things? Never!"

"It will be worth your while. A hundred gavvos if you carry us to a place where we can secure quicker transportation."

In time she won him over. He agreed to carry them along the way at his best speed until they came up with better beasts or reached the city gates. They climbed up to the seat, and the tortuous journey began. The farmer trotted beside the wheel nearly all of the way, descending warmly in painful English on the present condition of things in the hills.

"The rascals have made way with the beautiful Miss Tullis. She is the American lady stopping at the castle. You should see her, sir. Excepting our dear Princess Yette—God rest her soul—she is the most beautiful creature Graustark has ever seen—not quite so grand as the Countess Ingomede, but fairer, believe me. She is beloved by every one. She is to be married to the Count Vos Engo, a fine lad, sir. Now she is gone I don't know what he will do. Suicide mayhap."

"Do you know the great Count Marlanx?" demanded King, possessed of a sudden thought. The man faced him at the mention of the name, a suspicious gleam in his eyes.

"Count Marlanx!" he snorted. There was no mistaking the angry scowl. "Are you friends of that snake? If you are, get out of my cart."

"He's all right!" cried Truxton. "Tell him who we are, Lorraine, and why we must get to the city."

Five minutes later the farmer, overcome by the stupendous news, was lashing his oxen with might and main. The astonished beasts tore down the road to Ronn so bravely that there seemed some prospect of getting a telegram through in time. At Ronn they learned that the operator had been unable to call Edelweiss since 7 o'clock.

In time the city gates came in sight, far up the straight, narrow road.

It seemed to the quivering Americans that the gates were mocking them by drawing farther away instead of coming nearer.

Near the gates, which were still open, it occurred to him in a single flash of dismay that he and Lorraine would be recognized and intercepted by Marlanx watchers.

It was she who had had the solution. They might succeed in passing the gates if they hid themselves in the bed of the cart, underneath the thick canvas covering. The farmer lifted the cloth, and they crawled down among the melons.

"To the tower!" cried the anxious Truxton.

"Impossible!" shouted the farmer. "The streets are roped off, and the crowds are too great."

"Then let us up as near to the tower as possible!" cried the other.

"Here we are!" cried the driver a few minutes later, pulling up his half dead oxen and leaping to the ground. Off through an alley they hurried. They came to the crowded square a few



"LEAN ON ME!" SHE CRIED.