

BEVERLY OF GRAUSTARK

By GEORGE BARR M'UTCHEON,
Author of "Graustark"

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surreptitiously lifted—were unusually pensive.

"It is strange that you live in Graustark and have not seen its princess—before," she said, laying groundwork for inquiry concerning the acts and whereabouts of the real princess.

"May it please your highness, I have not lived long in Graustark. Besides, it is said that half the people of Ganlook have never looked upon your face."

"I'm not surprised at that. The proportion is much smaller than I imagined. I have not visited Ganlook, strange as it may seem to you."

"One of my company fell in with some of your guards from the Ganlook garrison day before yesterday. He learned that you were to reach that city within forty-eight hours. A large detachment of men has been sent to meet you at Labbot."

"Oh, indeed," said Beverly, very much interested.

"They must have been misinformed as to your route or else your Russian escort decided to take you through by the lower and more hazardous way. It was our luck that you came by the wrong road. Otherwise we should not have met each other, and the lion," he said, smiling reflectively.

"Where is Labbot?" asked she, intent upon the one subject uppermost in her mind.

"In the mountains many leagues north of this pass. Had you taken that route instead of this you would by this time have left Labbot for the town of Erros, a half day's journey from Ganlook. Instead of vagabonds your escort would have been made up of loyal soldiers, well fed, well clad and well satisfied with themselves at least."

"But no braver, no truer than my soldiers of fortune," she said earnestly. "By the way, are you informed as to the state of affairs in Dawsbergen?"

"Scarcely as well as your highness must be," he replied.

"The young prince—what's his name?" she paused, looking to him for the name.

"Dantan?"

"Yes, that's it. What has become of him? I am terribly interested in him."

"He is a fugitive, they say."

"They haven't captured him, then? Good! I am so glad!"

Baldos exhibited little or no interest in the fresh topic.

"It is strange you should have forgotten his name," he said wearily.

"Oh, I do so many ridiculous things!" complained Beverly, remembering who

she was supposed to be. "I have never seen him, you know," she added.

"It is not strange, your highness. He was educated in England and had seen but little of his own country when he was called to the throne two years ago. You remember of course that his mother was an Englishwoman, Lady Ida Falconer."

"I—I think I have heard some of his history. A very little, to be sure," she explained lamely.

"Prince Gabriel, his half brother, is the son of Prince Louis III. by his first wife, who was a Polish countess. After her death, when Gabriel was two years old, the prince married Lady Ida. Dantan is their son. He has a sister, Candace, who is but nineteen years of age."

"I am ashamed to confess that you know so much more about my neighbors than I," she said.

"I lived in Dawsbergen for a little while and was ever interested in the doings of royalty. That is a poor man's privilege, you know."

"Prince Gabriel must be a terrible man," cried Beverly, her heart swelling with tender thoughts of the exiled Dantan and his little sister.

"You have cause to know," said he shortly, and she was perplexed until she recalled the stories of Gabriel's misdemeanors at the court of Edelweiss.

"Is Prince Dantan as handsome as they say he is?" she asked.

"It is entirely a matter of opinion," he replied. "I for one do not consider him at all prepossessing."

The day went on, fatiguing, distressing in its length and its happenings. Progress was necessarily slow, the perils of the road increasing as the little cavalcade wound deeper and deeper into the wilderness. There were times when the coach fairly crawled along the edge of a precipice, a proceeding so hazardous that Beverly shuddered as if in a chill. Aunt Fanny slept serenely most of the time, and Baldos took to dreaming with his eyes wide open. Contrary to her expectations, the Axphalians did not appear, and if there were robbers in the hills they thought better than to attack the valorous looking party. It dawned upon her finally that the Axphalians were guarding the upper route and not the one over which she was traveling. Yetive doubtless was approaching Ganlook over the northern pass, provided the enemy had not been encountered before Labbot was reached. Beverly soon found herself fearing for the safety of the princess, a fear which at last became almost unendurable.

Near nightfall they came upon three Graustark shepherds and learned that Ganlook could not be reached before the next afternoon. The tired, hungry travelers spent the night in a snug little valley through which a rivulet bounded onward to the river below. The supper was a scant one, the foragers having poor luck in the hunt for

food. Daybreak saw them on their way once more. Hunger and dread had worn down Beverly's supply of good spirits; she was having difficulty in keeping the haggard, distressed look from her face. Her tender, hopeful eyes were not so bold or so merry as on the day before; cheerfulness cost her an effort, but she managed to keep it fairly alive. Her escort, wretched and half starved, never forgot the deference due to their charge, but strode steadily on with the doggedness of martyrs. At times she was impelled to disclose her true identity, but discretion told her that deception was her best safeguard.

Late in the afternoon of the second day the front axle of the coach snapped in two, and a tedious delay of two hours ensued. Baldos was strangely silent and subdued. It was not until the misfortune came that Beverly observed the flushed condition of his face, involuntarily and with the compassion of a true woman, she touched his hand and brow. They were burning hot. The wounded man was in a high fever. He laughed at her fears and scoffed at the prospect of blood poisoning and the hundred other possibilities that suggested themselves to her anxious brain.

"We are close to Ganlook," he said, with the setting of the sun. "Soon you may be relieved of your tiresome, cheerless company, your highness."

"You are going to a physician," she said resolutely, alive and active once more, now that the worst part of the journey was coming to an end. "Tell that man to drive in a gallop all the rest of the way."

CHAPTER VIII.

By this time they were passing the queer little huts that marked the outskirts of a habitable community. These were the homes of shepherds, hunters and others whose vocations related especially to the mountains. Farther on there were signs of farming interests; the homes became more numerous and more pretentious in appearance. The rock lined gorge broadened into a fertile valley; the road was smooth and level, a condition which afforded relief to the travelers. Rayone had once more dressed the wounds inflicted by the lion, but he was unable to provide anything to subdue the fever. Baldos was undeniably ill. Beverly, between her exclamations of joy and relief at being in sight of Ganlook, was profuse in her expressions of concern for the hero of the Hawk and Raven. The feverish gleam in his dark eyes and the pain that marked his face touched her deeply. Suffering softened his lean, sun browned features, obliterating the mocking lines that had impressed her so unfavorably at the outset. She was saying to herself that he was handsome after a most unusual cast; it was an unforgettable face.

"Your highness," he said earnestly,

after she had looked long and anxiously at his half closed eyes, "we are within an hour of Ganlook. It will be dark before we reach the gates, I know, but you have nothing to fear during the rest of the trip. Franz shall drive you to the sentry post and turn over the horses to your own men. My friends and I must leave you at the end of the mountain road. We are—"

"Ridiculous!" she cried. "I'll not permit it! You must go to a hospital."

"If I enter the Ganlook gates it will be the same as entering the gates of death," he protested.

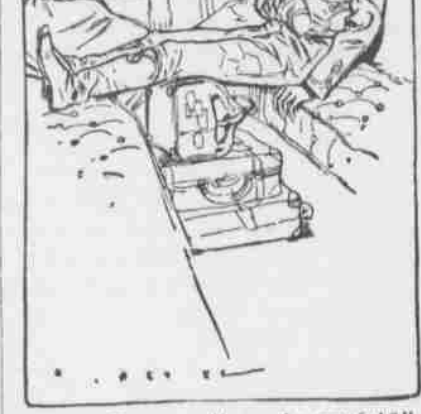
"Nonsense! You have a fever or you wouldn't talk like that. I can promise you absolute security."

"You do not understand, your highness."

"Nevertheless, you are going to a hospital," she firmly said. "You would die out here in the wilds, so what are the odds either way? Aunt Fanny, will you be careful? Don't you know that the least movement of those bags hurts him?"

"Please do not mind me, your highness. I am doing very well," he said, smiling.

The coach brought up in front of a roadside inn. While some of the men were watering the horses others gathered about its open window. A com-



"Aunt Fanny, will you be careful?"

versation in a tongue utterly incomprehensible to Beverly took place between Baldos and his followers. The latter seemed to be disturbed about something, and there was no mistaking the solicitous air with which they regarded their leader. The pseudo princess was patient as long as possible and then broke into the discussion.

"What do they want?" she demanded in English.

"They are asking for instructions," he answered.

"Instruct them to do as I bid," she said. "Tell them to hurry along and

get you a doctor; that's all."

Evidently his friends were of the same opinion, for after a long harangue in which he was obdurate to the last they left the carriage, and he sank back with a groan of dejection.

"What is it?" she anxiously demanded.

"They also insist that I shall go to a surgeon," he said hopelessly. His eyes were moist, and he could not meet her gaze. She was full of exultation.

"They have advised me to put myself under your protection, shameless as that may seem to a man. You and you alone have the power to protect me if I pass beyond the walls of Ganlook."

"I?" she cried, all a-flutter.

"I could not thrust my head into the jaws of death unless the princess of Graustark were there to stay their fury. Your royal hand alone can turn aside the inevitable. Alas, I am helpless and know not what to do!"

Beverly Calhoun sat very straight and silent beside the misguided Baldos. After all, it was not within her power to protect him. She was not the princess, and she had absolutely no influence in Ganlook. The authorities there could not be deceived as had been these ignorant men of the hills. If she led him into the city it was decidedly probable that she might be taking him to his death. She could only petition, not command. Once at Yetive's side she was confident she could save the man who had done so much for her, but Ganlook was many miles from Edelweiss, and there was no assurance that intervention could be obtained in time. On the other hand, if he went back to the hills he was likely to die of the poisonous fever. Beverly was in a most unhappy state of mind. If she confessed to him that she was not the princess he would refuse to enter the gates of Ganlook, and be perfectly justified in doing so.

"But if I should fall?" she asked at last, a shiver rushing over her and leaving her cold with dread.

"You are the only hope, your highness. You had better say farewell to Baldos and let him again seek the friendly valley," said he wearily. "We can go no farther. The soldiers must be near, your highness. It means capture if we go on. I cannot expose my friends to the dangers. Let me be put down here and do you drive on to safety. I shall fare much better than you think, for I am young and strong and—"

"No! I'll risk it!" she cried. "You must go into the city. Tell them so, and say that I will protect you with my own life and honor."

Fever made him submissive. Her eyes gave him confidence. Her voice soothed his fears, if he possessed them. Leaning from the window he called his men together. Beverly looked on in wonder as these strange men bade farewell to their leader. Many of them were weeping, and most of them kissed his hand. There were broken sentences, tear choked promises, anxious

inquiries, and the young man once

whispered as they moved away in the dusk.

"Back into the mountains to some poor fellows. God be kind to them! God be good to them!" he half sobbed as his chin dropped to his breast. He was trembling like a leaf.

"Starve!" she whispered. "Have no money?"

"We are penniless," came in tones from the stricken leader.

Beverly leaned from the window and called to the departing ones. Without a word she opened a traveling bag and drew forth a purse. This she pressed into the hands of the student. It was filled with Graustark gnyvros, for which she had exchanged American gold in Edelweiss.

"God be with you!" she fervently cried. He kissed her hand, and the two stood aside to let the coach roll on into the dusky shadows that awaited them from the gates of Ganlook, old Franz still driving, the one of the company left to serve as a leader to the very end.

"Well, we have left them," muttered Baldos as though to himself. "I never see them again—never see them again. And how true they have been!"

"I shall send for them the moment I get to Ganlook, and I'll promise them for them all!" she cried rather to her compassion.

"No," he exclaimed fiercely; "you do not disturb them. Better that they should starve."

Beverly was sufficiently subdued, they drew nearer the city gates, and heart began to fail her. The night life was in her weak, incapable hands, and the time was nearing when she must stand between him and disaster.

"Where are these vaulted soldiers of yours?" he suddenly asked, indignantly in his voice.

"My soldiers?" she said faintly.

"Isn't it rather unusual that in time of trouble and uncertainty you should be able to approach within a mile of one of your most important cities without even so much as seeing a soldier of Graustark?"

She felt that he was scolding, but it mattered little to her.

"It is a bit odd, isn't it?" she asked. "Worse than that, your highness!"

"I shall speak to Dauglos about it," she said serenely, and he looked at her with a new surprise. Truly she was an extraordinary princess.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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\$200.00 of Store Fixtures for Sale Cheap.

CLOSING OUT SALE

We have not SOLD OUT. Our stock is now being packed.

The cold weather has greatly interfered with our SALE. During this week we sold only half as much as we expected. To make up for this loss we are going to CUT DEEPER. There are many articles that would be a handicap in Albany. These we have cut to prices that will sell them. Look over this list. There are many more just as good bargains in the store. Store remains open while we are packing.

- \$1.50 Water Set Pitcher, 6 glasses and tray - 90c
- \$1.50 China Sugar Bowl and Cream Pitcher - 95c
- 250 envelopes for - 25c
- Wall Mirrors 15 in. x 21 in. - 54c
- Chop Plate 12 in. across, Decorated German China - 54c
- 10c Passe Partout Binding for Pictures, green, red black or grey - 7c
- Crepe Paper any color, roll of 10 feet - 6c
- 20c Matted pictures, 16 x 26 in. - 10c
- 35c German China Plate, decorated in pink - 6 for 95c
- Tea Spoons, Silveroid plate on White Metal - 6 for 15c
- Pocket Knives, choice of 50c to \$1.00, value for - 40c
- 2 qt. Glass Water Pitcher - 15c
- Salad Set Decorated German China, large dish, 6 small ones - 73c

NEW GOODS

This week we received \$200 of German China ordered for the Christmas trade. These goods were 6 months in coming from the factory making them two months late. Rather than reship them to Albany, we have marked them at the EASTERN COST PRICE. We will lose the freight from Baltimore, Md. and you will buy at the Eastern cost. There are over 500 pieces but they will go rapidly at these prices.

- Plates will sell from 25c to 40c
- Cups and Saucers - 40c
- Cracker Jars, the largest mouthed kind - \$1.25
- Chop plates 12 inches across - \$1.25
- Chocolate Sets, 6 cups and saucers and pot jar - \$3.35
- Sugar and Creamer - \$1.00

- 35c Kid Body Dolls, 12 inches long - 20c
- 15c fancy Handkerchiefs, Your choice - 2 for 15c
- 75c China Cake plate with Fancy Rose or Pearl Tinted patterns - 49c
- 40c and 50c China Cups and Saucers, 25 different decorations - 28c
- \$4.00 Salad Sets, 1 bowl and 6 small dishes 6 different patterns now - \$2.48
- \$6.00 fancy Parlor Lamps, 3 different patterns left - \$4.00
- 35c Bohemian glass vases, fancy shapes and decorations - 23c
- 40c Tea or coffee pots 1 1/2 pt graniteware, now - 28c

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