BEVERLY OF GRAUSTARK

By George Barr McCutcheon. Author of "Graustark"

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Baron Dangloss rode beside the coach until it passed through the southern gates and into the countryside. A company of cavalrymen acted as escort. The bright red trousers and top boots, with the deep blue jackets, reminded Beverly more than ever of the operatic figures she had seen so often at home. There was a fierce, dark cast to the faces of these soldiers, however, that removed any suggestion of play. The girl was in ecstasles. Everything about her appealed to the romantic side of her nature. Everything seemed



Two men rode up to the carriage. so unreal and so like the story book. The princess smiled lovingly upon the throngs that lined the street. There was no man among them who would not have laid down his life for the gracious ruler.

"Oh, I love your soldiers," cried Bev erly warmly.

"Poor fellows, who knows how soon they may be called upon to face death in the Dawsbergen hills?" said Yetive, a shadow crossing her face.

Dangloss was to remain in Ganlook for several days, on guard against manifestations by the Axphainians. A corps of sples and scouts was working with him, and couriers were ready to

ride at a moment's notice to the castle in Edelweiss. Before they parted Beverly extracted a renewal of his promise take good care of Baldos. She sent a message to the injured man, deploring the fact that she was compelled to leave Ganlook without seeing him as she had promised. It was her intention to have him come to Edelweiss as soon as he was in condition to be removed. Baron Dangloss smiled mysteriously, but he had no comment to make. He had received his orders and was obeying them to the letter.

"I wonder if Grenfall has heard of my harum-scarum trip to St. Petersburg," reflected Yetive, making herself comfortable in the coach after the gates and the multitudes were far behind. "I'll go you a box of chocolate creams

that we meet him before we get to Edelweiss," ventured Beverly.

"Agreed," said the princess, "Don't say 'agreed,' dear. 'Done' is the word," corrected the American girl

Beverly won, Grenfall Lorry and a small company of horsemen rode up in furious haste long before the sun was in mid-sky. An attempt to depict the scene between him and his venturesome wife would be a hopeless task. The way in which his face cleared itself of distress and worry was a joy in itself. To use his own words, he breathed freely for the first time in hours. The American took the place of the officer who rode beside the coach, and the trio kept up an eager, interesting conversation during the next two

It was a warm, sleepy day, but all signs of drowsiness disappeared with the advent of Lorry. He had reached Edelweiss late the night before, after a three days' ride from the conference in Dawsbergen. At first he encountered trouble in trying to discover what had become of the princess. Those at the eastle were aware of the fact that she had reached Ganlook safely and sought to put him off with subterfuges, He stormed to such a degree, however, that their object failed. The result was that he was off for Ganlook with the earliest light of day.

Regarding the conference with Prince Gabriel's representatives, he had but little to say. The escaped murderer naturally refused to surrender and was to all appearances quite firmly established in power once more. Lorry's only hope was that the reversal of feeling in Dawsbergen might work ruin for the prince. He was carrying affairs with a high hand, dealing vengeful blows to the friends of his half brother and encouraging a lawlessness that, sooner or later, must prove his undolng. His representatives at the conference were an arrogant, law defying set of men who laughed scornfully at every proposal made by the Graustarkians.

"We told them that if he were not surrendered to our authorities inside of sixty days we would declare war and go down and take him," concluded the American.

understand."

There was method in that ultimatum. Axphain, of course, will set up a howl, but we can forestall any action the Princess Volga may under-Naturally one might suspect that we should declare war at once, masmuch as he must be taken sooner or later, but here is the point: Before two mouths have elapsed the better element of Dawsbergen will be so disgusted with the new dose of Gabriel that it will do anything to avert a war on his account. We have led them to believe that Axphain will lend moral if not physical support to our cause. Give them two months in which to get over this tremendous hysteria and they'll find their senses. Gabriel Isn't worth it, you see, and down in their hearts they know it. They really loved young Dantan, who seems to be a devil of a good fellow. I'll wager my head that in six weeks they'll be wishing he were back on the throne again. And just to think of it, Yetive, dear, you were off there in the very heart of Axphain risking everything!" he cried,

wiping the moisture from his brow. "It is just eleven days since I left Edelweiss, and I have had a lovely journey," she said, with one of her rare smiles. He shook his head gravely, and she resolved in her heart never to give him another such cause for alarm.

"And in the meantime, Mr. Grenfall Lorry, you are blaning me and hating me and all that for being the real cause of your wife's escapade," said Beverly Calhoun plaintively. "I'm awfully sorry. But you must remember one thing, sir-I did not put her up to this ridiculous trip. She did it of her own free will and accord. Besides, I am the one who met the lion and almost got devoured, not Yetive, If you please."

"I'll punish you by turning you over to old Count Marlanx, the commander of the army in Graustark," said Lorry laughingly. "He's a terrible ogre, worse than any lion."

"Heaven pity you, Beverly, if you fall into his clutches!" cried Yetive. "He has had five wives and survives to look for a sixtu. You see how terrible It would be."

"I'm not afraid of him," boasted Beverly, but there came a time when she thought of those words with a shudder.

"By the way, Yetive, I have had word from Harry Anguish. He and tons will leave Paris this week. if the baby's willing, and will be in Edelweiss soon. You don't know how it relieves me to know that Harry will be with us at this time."

Yetive's eyes answered his enthusiasm. Both had a warm and grateful memory of the loyal service which the young American had rendered his friend when they had first come to Graustark in quest of the princess, and both had a great regard for his wife, the Countess Dagmar, who as Yetive's lady in waiting had been through all the perils of those exciting

days with them. As they drew near the gates of Edelweiss a large body of hersemen rode forth to meet them. The afternoon was well on the way to night, and the nir of the valley was cool and refreshing despite the rays of the June sun.

"Edelweiss at last," murmured Beverly, her face aglow. "The heart of Graustark. Do you know that I have been brushing up on my grammar? I have learned the menning of the word 'Graustark,' and it seems so appropriate. 'Grau' is gray, hoary, old; 'stark' is strong. Old and strong, isn't it, dear?"

"And here rides the oldest and strongest man in all Graustark-the Iron Count of Marlanx," said Yetive, looking down the road. "See; the strange gray man in front there is our greatest general, our craftiest fighter, our most heartless warrior. Does he not look

like the eagle or the hawk?" A moment later the parties met, and the newcomers swung into line with the escort. Two men rode up to the carriage and saluted. One was Count Marianx, the other Colonel Quinnox of the royal guard. The count, lean and that came directly under her supervigray as a wolf, revealed rows of huge white teeth in his perfunctory smile of welcome, while young Quinnox's face fairly beamed with honest joy. In the the underground passages. They sigpost that he held he was but following | nified more to her than all the rest. in the footsteps of his forefathers. Since history began in Graustark a Quinnox had been in charge of the cas-

The "Iron Count," as he sometimes was called, was past his sixtleth year. had been held a prisoner and the mon-For twenty years he had been in com- astery in the clouds were all places of mand of the army. One had but to unusual interest to her. look at his strong, sardonic face to know that he was a fearless leader, a to recognize the fair American girl who savage fighter. His eyes were black, plercing and never quiet; his hair and amount of homage was paid to her. close cropped beard were almost snow white; his voice was heavy and without a vestige of warmth. Since her bowed as deeply and as respectfully babyhood Yetive had stood in awe of this grim old warrior. It was no un- Beverly was just as grand and gracommon thing for mothers to subdue disobelient children with the threat to give them over to the Iron Count. "Old Marlanx will get you if you're not good," was a household phrase in known before. With the castle bril-

left a widower. If he were disconsolate in any instance, no one had been able to discover the fact. Enormously rich, as riches go in Graustark, he had found young women for his wives who thought only of his gold and his lands in the trade they made with Cupid. It was said that without exception they died happy. Death was a joy. The fortress overlooking the valley to the south was no more rugged and unyielding than the man who made his home within its walls. He lived there from choice, and it was with his own money that he fitted up the commandant's quarters in truly regal style. Power was more to him than wealth, though he enjoyed both.

Colonel Quinnox brought news from the castle. Yetive's uncle and aunt, the Count and Countess Halfout, were eagerly expecting her return, and the city was preparing to manifest its joy in the most exuberant fashion. As they drew up to the gates the shouts of the people came to the ears of the travelers. Then the boom of cannon and the blare of bands broke upon the air, thrilling Beverly to the heart. She wondered how Yetive could be so calm and unmoved in the face of all this homage.

Past the great Hotel Regengetz and the tower moved the gay procession into the broad stretch of boulevard that led to the gates of the palace grounds. The gates stood wide open and inviting. Inside was Jacob Fraasch, the chief steward of the grounds, with his men drawn up in line; upon the walls the sentries came to parade rest; on the plaza the royal band was playing as though by inspiration. Then the gates closed behind the coach and escort, and Beverly Calboun was safe Inside the castle walls. The Iron Count handed her from the carriage at the portals of the palace, and she stood as one in a dream.

CHAPTER XI.

HE two weeks following Beverly Calhoun's advent into the royal household were filled with joy and wonder for her. Daily she sent glowing letters to her father, mother and brothers in Washington, elaborating vastly upon the paradise into which she had fallen. To her highly emotional mind the praises of Graustark had been but poorly sung. The huge old castle, relic of the feudal days, with its turrets and bastions and portcullises, impressed her with a never ending sense of wouder. Its great halls and stairways, its chapel, the throne room and the armor closet; its underground passages and dungeons all united to fill her Imaginative soul with the richest, rarest joys of romance. Simple American girl that she was, unused to the rigorous etiquette of royalty, she found embarrassment in the first confusion of events, but she was not long in recovering her poise.

Her apartments were near those of the Princess Yetive. In the private intercourse enjoyed by these young women all manuer of restraint was abandoued by the visitor and every vestige of royalty slipped from the princess, never forget what you have done for Count Halfout and his adorable wife, him." had grown old in the court, found the girl and her stronge servant a source of wonder and delight.

Some days after Beverly's arrival there came to the castle Harry Anguish and his wife, the vivacious Dag- hills." mar. With them came the year-old coolng babe who was to overthrow the heart and head of every being in the household, from princess down. The tiny Dagmar became queen at once, and no one disputed her rule.

Anguish the painter became Anguish the strategist and soldier. He planned with Lorry and the ministry, advancing some of the most harebrained projects that ever encouraged discussion in a solemn conclave. The staid, cautious ministers looked upon him with wonder, but so plausible did he make his proposals appear that they were forced to consider them seriously. The old Count of Marlanx held him in great disdain and did not hesitate to expose his contempt. This did not disturb Anguish in the least, for he was as optimistic as the sunshine. His plan for the recapture of Gabriel was ridleulously improbable, but it was afterward seen that had it been attempted much distress and delay might actually have been avoided.

Yetive and Beverly, with Dagmar and the baby, made merry while the men were in council. Their mornings were spent in the shady park surrounding the castle, their afternoons in driving, riding and walking. Oftentimes the princess was barred from these simple pleasures by the exigencles of her position. She was obliged to grant audiences, observe certain customs of state, attend to the charities sion and confer with the nobles on affairs of weight and importance. Beverly delighted in the throne room and She was shown the room in which Lorry had folled the Viennese who once tried to abduct Yetive. The dungeon where Gabriel spent his first days of confinement, the tower in which Lorry

Some of the people of the city began was a guest in the castle, and a certain When she rode or drove in the streets, with her attendant soldiers, the people as they did to the princess herself, and clous as if she had been born with a

scenter in her hand. The soft moonlight nights charmed her with a sense of rapture never

narpises at their posts, the minuary had no terrors for her. If she thought of it at all it was with the fear that it might disturb the dream into which she had fallen. True, there was little or nothing to distress the most timid in patient at once, relying upon her rethese first days. The controversy between the principalities was at a standstill, although there was not an hour in which preparations for the worst were neglected. To Beverly Calhoun It meant little when sentiment was laid aside. To Yetive and her people this probable war with Dawsbergen meant Dangloss, going back and forth be-

tween Edelweiss and the frontier north

of Ganlook, where the best of the police and secret service watched with the sleepless eyes of the lynx, brought unsettling news to the ministry. Axphain troops were engaged in the annual maneuvers just across the border in their own territory. Usually these were held in the plains near the capital, and there was a sinister significance in the fact that this year they were being carried on in the rough southern extremity of the principality, within a day's march of the Graustark line, fully two months earlier than usual. The doughty baron reported that foot, horse and artillery were engaged in the drills, and that fully 8,000 men were massed in the south of Axphain. The fortifications of Ganlook, Labbot and other towns in northern Graustark were strengthened with almost the same care as those in the south, where conflict with Dawsbergen might first be expected. General Marlanx and his staff rested neither day nor night. The army of Graustark was ready. Underneath the castle's gay exterior there smoldered the fire of battle, the tremor of defiance,

Late one afternoon Beverly Calhoun and Mrs. Anguish drove up in state to the Tower, wherein sat Dangloss and his watchdogs. The scowl left his face as far as nature would permit, and he welcomed the ladies warmly.

"I came to ask about my friend, the goat hunter," said Beverly, her cheeks a tride rosier than usual.

"He is far from an amiable person, your highness," said the officer. When discussing Baldos he never falled to address Beverly as "your highness." The fever is gone, and he is able to walk without much pain, but he is as restless as a witch. Following instruc- him, suspicions grew into amazing tions, I have not questioned him concerning his plans, but I fancy he is eager to return to the hills." What did he say when you gave

him my message?" asked Beverly. "Which one, your highness?" asked he, with tantalizing density.

"Why, the suggestion that he should come to Edelweiss for better treatment," retorted Beverly severely,

"He said he was extremely grateful for your kind offices, but he did not deem it advisable to come to this city. He requested me to thank you in his behalf and to tell you that he will

"And weiss?" irritably demanded Beverly. "Yes, your highness. You see, he still

regards himself with disfavor, being a fugitive. It is hardly fair to blame him for respecting the security of the "I hoped that I might induce him to

give up his old life and engage in something perfectly honest, although, mind you, Baron Dangloss, I do not question his integrity in the least. He should have a chance to prove himself worthy, that's all. This morning I petitioned Count Marlanx to give him a place in the castle guard."

"My dear Miss Calhoun, the princess has"- began the captain.

"Her highness has sanctioned the re-

quest," interrupted she. "And the count has promised to discover a vacancy," said Dagmar, with a smile that the baron understood perfectly well.

"This is the first time on record that old Marlanx has ever done anything to oblige a soul save himself. It is wonderful, Miss Calhoun. What spell do you Americans cast over rock and metal that they become as sand in your fingers?" said the baron, admiration and wonder in his eyes.

"You dear old flatterer!" cried Beverly so warmly that he caught his breath. "I believe that you can conquer even that stubborn fellow in Ganlook," he said, fumbling with his glasses. "He is the most obstinate being I know, and yet in ten minutes you could bring him to terms, I am sure. He could not resist you."

"He still thinks I am the princess?" "He does and swears by you."

"Then my mind is made up. I'll go to Ganlook and bring him back with me, willy nilly. He is too good a man to be lost in the hills. Goodby, Baron Dangloss! Thank you ever and ever so much. Oh, yes; will you write an order delivering him over to me? The hospital people may be er disobliging, you know."

"It shall be in your highness' hands this evening."

The next morning, with Colonel Quinnox and a small escort, Beverly Calhoun set off in one of the royal coaches for Ganlook, accompanied by faithful Aunt Fanny. She carried the order from Baron Dangloss and a letter from Yetive to the Countess Rallowitz insuring hospitality overnight in the northern town. Lorry and the royal household entered merrily into her project, and she went away with the godspeeds of all. The Iron Count himself rode beside her coach to the city

gates, an unheard of condescension. "Now, you'll be sure to find a nice place for him in the castle guard, won't you, Count Marianx?" she said at the

Aus count promised rathrully, even band playing in the parade ground, the was in the diplomacy of silence, which he was quiet to contain the parade ground. balconies and porches offering their he was in the diplomacy of silence, most inviting allurements, it is no won- could scarcely conceal his astonishder that Beverly was entranced. War ment at the conquest of the hard old

Although the afternoon was well spent before Beverly reached Ganlook, she was resolved to visit the obdurate



He dropped to his knee.

sourcefulness to secure his promise to start with her for Edelweiss on the following morning. The coach delivered her at the hospital door in grand style. When the visitor was ushered into the snug little antercom of the governor's office her heart was throbbing and her composure was undergoing a most unusual strain. It annoyed her to discover that the approaching contact with a humble goat hunter was giving her such unmistakable symptoms of perturbation,

From an upstairs window in the hospital the convalescent but unhappy patient witnessed her approach and ar rival. His sore, lonely heart gave a bound of joy, for the days had seemed long since her departure.

He had had time to think during these days too. Turning over in his mind all of the details in connection with their meeting and their subsequent intercourse, it began to dawn upon him that she might not be what she assumed to be. Doubts assailed forms of certainty. There were times when he laughed sardonically at himself for being taken in by this strange but charming young woman, but through it all his heart and mind were being drawn more and more fervently toward her. More than once he called himself a fool and more than once he dreamed foolish dreams of her, princess or not. Of one thing he was sure -he had come to love the adventure for the sake of what it promised, and there was no bitterness beneath his

Arrayed in clean linen and presentable clothes, pale from indoor confine- both at the parting. But Francilla ment and fever, but once more the start for the pass that night, at straight and strong cavaller of the had expected. Strange news had me hills, he hastened into her presence when the summons came for him to descend. He dropped to his knee and morning came, eager to catch the kissed her hand, determined to play the game notwithstanding his doubts. As he arose she glanced for a flitting second into his dark eyes, and her own long lashes drooped,

"Your highness!" he said gratefully. "How well and strong you look!" she said hurriedly. "Some of the tan is gone, but you look as though you had never been ill. Are you quite recovered?"

"They say I am as good as new," he smillingly answered. "A trifle weak and uncertain in my lower extremities, but a few days of exercise in the mountalus will overcome all that. Is all well with you and Graustark? They will give me no news here, by whose order I do not know."

"Turn about is fair play, sir. It is a well established fact that you will give them no news. Yes, all is well with me and mine. Were you beginning to think that I had deserted you? It has been two weeks, hasn't it?"

"Ah, your highness, I realize that you have had much more important things to do than to think of poor Baldos. I am exceedingly grateful for this sign of interest in my welfare. Your visit is the brightest experience of my life."

"Be seated!" she cried suddenly. "You are too ill to stand."

"Were I dying I should refuse to be seated while your highness stands," said he simply. His shoulders seemed to square themselves involuntarily, and his left hand twitched as though accustomed to the habit of touching a sword hilt. Beverly sat down instantly. With his usual easy grace he took a chair near by. They were alone in the antechamber.

"Even though you were on your last legs?" she murmured, and then wondered how she could have uttered anything so inane. Somehow she was beginning to fear that he was not the ordinary person she had judged him to "You are to be discharged from the hospital tomorrow," she added hastily.

"Tomorrow?" he cried, his eyes lighting with joy. "I may go then?"

"I have decided to take you to Edelweiss with me," she said, very much as if that were all there was to it. He stared at her for a full minute as though doubting his ears.

"No!" he said at last, his jaws settling, his eyes glistening. It was a terrible setback for Beverly's confidence. "Your highness forgets that I have your promise of absolute free-

ed. "You have nothing to fear. It is subscription to the Observed will be not compulsory for the computation of the computation for the computation not compulsory, you know. You don't paid up to date. Subscribe now. Edelwelss. He had been married five times, and as many times had he been limits and draw times, and as many times had he been limits and draw times had he been limits and draw times, and as many times had he been limits and draw times had he be

in one castie guard. Habite, a which he was quies to se, he contrition was immediate

"Pardon, your nighten. rude, ungrateful wretch, and 16 punishment instead of remaid proposal was so esteender that a

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Whereupon, catching him is the trite mood, she began a determine sault against his resolution Po hour she devoted her whole bear soul to the task of overton prejudices, fears and objectors ing his protestations firmly and ally, unconscious of the fact the very enthusiasm was betraying be him. The first signs of westeries spired her afresh and at last the riding over him roughshod, a victor. She made promises that ye herself could not have made; she a ed inducements that never could carried out, although is her sal a did not know it to be so; the pion such pictures of ease, confer a pleasure that he wondered why me ty did not exchange places with servants. In the end, overcome by spirit of adventure and a desire a near her, he agreed to enter the ser for six months, at the expirates which time he was to be relessed he all obligations if he so desired "But my friends in the pass, he

highness," he said in surrende "what is to become of them? The waiting for me out there is the way ness. I am not base enough to them.'

"Can't you get word to them" asked eagerly. "Let them come be the city too. We will provide far poor fellows, believe me."

"That, at least, is impossible, at highness," he said, shaking his in sadly. "You will have to sky be before you can bring them with a city gates. My only hope is that him may be here tonight. He has pers sion to enter, and I am expecting in today or tomorrow."

"You can send word to then to you are sound and safe, and you tell them that Graustark solder at be instructed to pay no attention them whatever. They shall not be a turbed." He laughed outright at enthusiasm. Many times during b enger conversation with Balle i had almost betrayed the fact that was not the princess. Some of b expressions were distinctly unap as she viewed them in retrospect.

"What am 1? Only the humble m hunter, hunted to death and eager is a short respite. Do with me as n like, your highness. You shall be princess and sovereign for all man at least," he said, sighing. "Pelapt is for the best."

"You are the strangest man l'ween seen," she remarked, pumied beau expression.

That night Franz appeared at a hospital and was left alone with be dos for an hour or more. What pure between them no outsider has though there were tears in the eyes to the ears of the faithful old follows and he hung about Ganlook mi of his leader before it was too lab.

The coach was drawn up in front

the hospital at 8 o'clock, Beverly B umphant in command. Baldes cas down the steps slowly, carefully, b voring the newly healed ligaments his legs. She smiled cheerly at inand he swung his rakish bat in There was no sign of the black pair Suddenly he started and peered by tently into the little knot of person near the coach. A look of min crossed his face. From the crowd of vanced a grizzled old leggs, in boldly extended his hand, Bella grasped the proffered hand and bestepped into the coach. No one saw the bit of white paper that passed has Franz's paim into the possession Baldos. Then the coach was of it Edelweiss, the people of Ganlock # Joying the unusual spectacle of a speterious and apparently undistinguis stranger sitting in luxurious case b side a fair lady in the royal coats Graustark.

CHAPTER XII.

T was a drowsy day, and is sides, Baldos was not a s communicative frame of mal Beverly put forth her hest d forts during the forenoon, but after the basket luncheon had been dispose of in the shade at the roadside she as content to give up the struggle and se render to the soothing importunits of the coach as it bowled along Sa dozed peacefully, conscious to the imthat he was a most ungracious creates and more worthy of resentment in of benefaction. Baldos was not into tionally disagreeable; he was not and unhappy because he could not his it. Was he not leaving his friends is wander alone in the wilderness will he drifted weakly into the control and pleasures of an enviable serie His heart was not in full sympan with the present turn of affairs, so he could not deny that a selfish as the was responsible for his action. He is the all too human eagerness to se beauty; the blood and fire of pos were strong in this wayward addr man of the hills.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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