BEVERLY OF GRAUSTARK

By George Barr McCutcheon.

Author of "Graustark"

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"I can't help it, Yetive. I know I oughtn't to, but what is there to do when one can't help it? There would be an awful row at home if I married him. Of course he hasn't asked me. Maybe he won't. In fact, I'm sure he won't. I shan't give him a chance. But if he does ask me I'll just keep putting him off. I've done it before, you know. You see, for a long, long time I fancied he might be a prince, but he isn't at all. I've had his word for it. He's just an ordinary person, like—like—well, like I am, only he doesn't look so ordinary. Isn't he handsome, Yetive? And, dear me, he is so impulsive! If he had asked me to jump over the balcony rail with him last night I believe I would have done it. Wouldn't that have surprised old Marlanx?" Beverly gave a merry laugh. The troubles of the morning seemed to fade away under the warmth of her humor. Yetive sat back and marveled at the manner in which this blithe young American cast out the "blue devils."

"You must not do anything foolish, Beverly," she cautioned. "Your parents would never forgive me if I allowed you to marry or even to fall in love with any Tom, Dick or Harry over here. Baldos may be the gallant, honest gentleman we believe him to be, but he also may be the worst of adventurers. One can never tell, dear. I wish now that I had not humored you in your plan to bring him to the castle. I'm afraid I have done wrong. You have seen too much of him, and—oh, well, you will be sensible, won't you, dear?" There was real concern in the face of the princess. Beverly kissed her rapturously.

"Don't worry about me, Yetive. I know how to take care of myself. Worry about your old Gabriel, if you like, but don't bother your head about me," she cried airily. "Now let's talk about the war. Marlanx won't do anything until he hears from me. What's the use worrying?"

Nightfall brought General Marlanx in from the camps outside the gates. He

But her hand was pointing to the door.

came direct to the castle and boldly sent word to Beverly that he must speak to her at once. She promptly answered that she did not want to see him and would not. Without a moment's hesitation he appealed for audience with the princess, and it was granted.

He proceeded, with irate coolness, to ask how far she believed herself bound to protect the person of Baldos, the guard. He understood that she was under certain obligations to Miss Calhoun, and he wanted to be perfectly sure of his position before taking a step which now seemed imperative. Baldos was a spy in the employ of Dawsbergen. He had sufficient proof to warrant his arrest and execution; there were documents and there was positive knowledge that he had conferred with strangers from time to time, even within the walls of the castle grounds. Marlanx cited instances in which Baldos had been seen talking to a strange old man inside the grounds, and professed to have proof that he had gone so far as to steal away by night to meet men beyond the city walls. He was now ready to seize the guard, but would not do so until he had conferred with his sovereign.

"Miss Calhoun tells me that you have made certain proposals to her, Count Marlanx," said Yetive coldly, her eyes upon his hawkish face.

"I have asked her to be my wife, your highness."

"You have threatened her, Count Marlanx."

"She has exposed herself to you? I would not have told what I saw last night."

"Would it interest you to know that I saw everything that passed on the balcony last night? You will allow me to say, general, that you have behaved in a most outrageous manner in approaching my guest with such fool proposals. Stop, sir! She has told me everything, and I believe her. I believe my own eyes. There is no need to discuss the matter further. You have lost the right to be called a man. For the present I have only to say that you shall be relieved of the command of my army. The man who makes war on women is not fit to serve one. As for Baldos, you are at liberty to prefer the charges. He shall have a fair trial, rest assured."

"Your highness, hear me," implored Marlanx, white to the roots of his hair.

"I will hear what you have to say when my husband is at my side."

"I can but stand condemned, then, your highness, without a hearing. My vindication will come, however. With your permission, I retire to contrive the arrest of this spy. You may depose me, but you cannot ask me to neglect my duty to Graustark. I have tried to save him for Miss Calhoun's sake"—But her hand was pointing to the door.

Ten minutes later Beverly was hearing everything from the lips of the princess, and Marlanx was cursing his way toward the barracks, vengeance in his heart. But a swift messenger from the castle reached the guardroom ahead of him. Colonel Quinnox was reading an official note from the princess when Marlanx strode angrily into the room.

"Bring this fellow Baldos to me, Colonel Quinnox," he said, without greeting.

"I regret to say that I have but this instant received a message from her highness commanding me to send him to the castle," said Quinnox, with a smile.

"The devil! What foolishness is this?" snarled the Iron Count.

"Have a care, sir," said Quinnox stiffly. "It is of the princess you speak."

"Bah! I am here to order the man's arrest. It is more important than"—

"Nevertheless, sir, he goes to the castle first. This note says I am to disregard any command you may give until further notice."

Marlanx fell back amazed and stunned. At this juncture Baldos entered the room. Quinnox handed him an envelope, telling him that it was from the princess and that he was to repair at once to the castle. Baldos glanced at the handwriting, and his face lit up proudly.

"I am ready to go, sir," he said, passing the Iron Count with a most disconcerting smile on his face.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BALDOS started off at once for the castle, his heart singing. In the darkness of the night he kissed the message which had come to him from "her highness." The envelope had been closed with the official seal of Yetive, princess of Graustark, and was sacred to the eyes of any one save the man to whom it was directed. The words it contained were burned deep in his brain:

You are ordered to report for duty in the castle. Come at once. Her highness has sent an official command to Colonel Quinnox. Count Marlanx has been here. You are not expected to desert until you have seen me. There is an underground passage somewhere. B.

Baldos went alone and swiftly. The note to Colonel Quinnox had been imperative. He was to serve as an inner guard until further orders. Some one, it was reported, had tried to enter Miss Calhoun's room from the outside during the rainstorm of the previous night, and a special guard was to be stationed near the door. All of this was unknown to Baldos, but he did not ask for any explanations.

He was halfway to the castle when the sharp report of a gun startled him. A bullet whizzed close to his ear! Baldos broke into a crouching run, but did not change his course. He knew that the shot was intended for him and that its mission was to prevent him from reaching the castle. The attendants at the castle door admitted him, panting and excited, and he was taken immediately to the enchanted boudoir of the princess, which but few men were fortunate enough to enter. There were three women in the room.

"I am here to report, your highness," said he, bowing low before the real princess, with a smile upon his flushed face.

"You are prompt," said the princess. "What have you to report, sir?"

"That an attempt has just been made to kill a member of the castle guard," he coolly answered.

"Impossible!"

"I am quite certain of it, your highness. The bullet almost clipped my ear."

"Good heavens!" gasped the listeners. Then they eagerly plied him with more agitated questions than he could answer.

"And did you not pursue the wretch?" cried the princess.

"No, your highness. I was commanded to report to you at once. Only the success of the assassin could have made me—well, hesitate," said he calmly. "A soldier has but to obey."

"Do you think there was a deliberate attempt to kill you?" asked the Countess Dagmar. Beverly Calhoun was dumb with consternation.

"I cannot say, madame. Possibly it was an accidental discharge. One should not make accusations unsupported. If you have no immediate need of my services, your highness, I will ask you to grant me leave of absence for half an hour. I have a peculiar longing to investigate." There was a determined gleam in his eyes.

"No, no!" cried Beverly. "Don't you dare to go out there again. You are to stay right here in the castle, sir. We have something else for you to do. It was that awful old Marlanx who shot at you. He"—

"I left General Marlanx in Colonel Quinnox's quarters, Miss Calhoun," interposed Baldos grimly. "He could not have fired the shot. For two or three nights, your highness, I have been followed and dogged with humiliating persistence by two men wearing the uniforms of castle guards. They do not sleep at the barracks. May I ask what I have done to be submitted to such treatment?" There was a trace of poorly concealed indignation in his voice.

"I assure you that this is news to me," said Yetive in amazement.

"I am being watched as if I were a common thief," he went on boldly. "These men are not your agents; they are not the agents of Graustark. May I be permitted to say that they are spies set upon me by a man who has an object in disgracing me? Who that man is I leave to your royal conjecture."

"Marlanx?"

"Yes, your highness. He bears me a deadly grudge and yet he fears me. I know full well that he and his agents have built a strong case against me. They are almost ready to close in upon me, and they will have false evidence so craftily prepared that even my truest friends may doubt my loyalty to you and to the cause I serve. Before God, I have been true to my oath. I am loyal to Graustark. It was a sorry day when I left the valley and"—

"Oh," cried Beverly piteously, "don't say that!"

"Alas, Miss Calhoun, it is true," said he sadly. "I am penned up here where I cannot fight back. Treason is laid against me. But, beyond all this, I have permitted my loyalty to mislead my ambition. I have aspired to something I can cherish, but never possess. Better that I never should have tasted of the unattainable than to have the cup withdrawn just as its sweetness begins to intoxicate."

He stood before them, pale with suppressed emotion. The women of Graustark looked involuntarily at Beverly, who sat cold and voiceless, staring at the face of the guard. She knew what he meant; she knew that something was expected of her. A word from her and he would understand that he had not tasted of the unattainable. In one brief moment she saw that she had deliberately led him on, that she had encouraged him, that she actually had proffered him the cup from which he had begun to sip the bitterness. Pride and love were waging a conflict in this hapless southern girl's heart. But she was silent. She could not say the word.

"I think I know what you mean, Baldos," said Yetive, seeing that Beverly would not intervene. "We are sorry. No one trusts to your honor more than I do. My husband believes in you. I will confess that you are to be arrested as a spy tomorrow. Tonight you are to serve as a guard in the castle. This should prove to you that I have unbounded faith in you. Moreover, I believe in you to the extent that I should not be afraid to trust you if you were to go out into the world with every secret which we possess. You came here under a peculiar stress of circumstances, not wholly of your own volition. Believe me, I am your friend."

"I shall revere your highness forever for those words," said he simply. His eyes went hungrily to Beverly's averted face and then assumed a careless gleam which indicated that he had resigned himself to the inevitable.

"I am constrained to ask you one question, sir," went on the princess. "You are not the common goat hunter you assume. Will you tell me in confidence who you really are?" The others held their breath. He hesitated for a moment.

"Will it suffice if I say that I am an unfortunate friend and advocate of Prince Dantan? I have risked everything for his sake, and I fear I have lost everything. I have failed to be of service to him, but through no fault of mine. Fate has been against me."

"You are Christobal!" cried Dagmar eagerly.

He gave her a startled glance, but offered no denial. Beverly's face was a study. If he were Christobal, then what of the game warden's daughter?

"We shall question you no further," said Yetive. "You enlisted to serve Miss Calhoun. It is for her to command you while you are here. May God be with you to the end. Miss Calhoun, will you tell him what his duties are for tonight? Come, my dear."

Yetive and Dagmar walked slowly from the room, leaving Beverly and her guard alone.

"I am at your service, Miss Calhoun," he said easily. His apparent indifference stung her into womanly revolt.

"I was a fool last night," she said abruptly.

"No; I was the fool. I have been the fool from the beginning. You shall not blame yourself, for I do not blame you. It has been a sweet comedy, a summer pastime. Forget what I may have said to you last night, forget what my eyes may have said for weeks and weeks."

"I shall never forget," she said. "You deserve the best in the world. Would that I could give it to you. You have braved many dangers for my sake. I shall not forget. Do you know that we were watched last night?"

"Watched?" he cried incredulously. "Oh, fool that I am! I might have known. And I have subjected you to—to—don't tell me that harsh things have been said to you, Miss Calhoun!" He was deeply disturbed.

"General Marlanx saw you. He has threatened me, Baldos"—

"I will kill him! What do I care for the consequences? He shall pay dearly for"—

"Stop! Where are you going? You are to remain here, sir, and take your commands from me. I don't want you to kill him. They'd hang you, or something just as bad. He's going to be punished, never fear!" Baldos smiled in spite of his dismay. It was impossible to face this confident champion in petticoats without catching her enthusiasm. "What have you done with—with that rose?" she asked suddenly, flushing and diffident. Her eyes glistened with embarrassment.

"It lies next my heart. I love it," he said bravely.

"I think I'll command you to return it to me," vaguely.

"A command to be disobeyed. It is in exchange for my feather," he smiled confidently.

"Well, of course, if you are going to be mean about— Now, let me see," she said confusedly, "what are your duties for tonight? You are to stand guard in the corridor. Once in awhile you will go out upon the balcony and take a look. You see, I am afraid of some one. Oh, Baldos, what's the use of my trifling like this? You are to escape from Edelweiss tonight. That is the whole plan—the whole idea in a nutshell. Don't look like that. Don't you want to go?" Now she was trembling with excitement.

"I do not want to leave you," he cried eagerly. "It would be cowardly. Marlanx would understand that you gave aid and sanction. You would be left to face the charges he would make. Don't you see, Beverly? You would be implicated; you would be accused. Why did you not let me kill him? No; I will not go!" Neither noticed the name by which he had called her.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Legal blanks at this office.

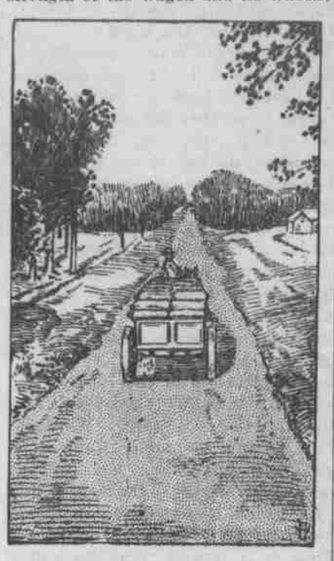
VALUE OF WIDE TIRES

CANADIAN DOCTOR TELLS HOW THEY BENEFIT ROADS.

Have a Greater Bearing and Do Not Cut Into Them—He Favors Tires Four Inches Wide—How They Destroy Ruts.

A vast amount of the present wear and tear of and injury to roads could readily be avoided by using wide instead of narrow tires on heavily loaded wagons, says Dr. J. O. Reume of Toronto, Canada, in the Motor News. Narrow wagon tires are the great destroyers of good roads. The injury done by these increases as the wagon gets older and the wheel wabbles loosely on the axle. A narrow tire on an old and heavily loaded wagon can do more damage to a road in one trip to market and back than would pay for a new wagon.

Wide tires, on the other hand, are a benefit rather than an injury to the road. They have a greater bearing and do not cut into the road. Instead of two inches of road surface supporting the load, wagon and all, by doubling the width of tire the load is distributed over twice the amount of road surface. In making wagons consideration should be given not merely to the strength of the wagon and its wheels,



A WIDE TIRE ROAD IN KANSAS.

but also to the strength of the roads to be traveled and the kind of wagon they have strength to support.

Tests have been made from time to time of the effect of wide tires not merely on the roads, but also on the pull required to move the loads. Among these tests have been those made by the British Association For the Advancement of Science in 1902, by the experimental station of Missouri university of 1897 and more recently by the United States war department. The results in all cases have been practically the same:

First.—With regard to the roads it is found that wide tires leave a road in better condition than before passing over it.

Second.—As to tractive effect, the only practical disadvantage of wide tires arises where the road is so soft that the wheels sink into it and the mud sticks to the rims and packs between the spokes. On very hard, smooth roads or roads covered with dust wide tires require a very slightly increased tractive effort. On all other classes of roads the advantage is in favor of the wide tire.

The practical application of the result of tests is that for traffic on country roads if wide tires of four inches and upward are generally used there would be a decided improvement in every class of road. The tractive power required would be less and the cost of keeping the roads in repair would be much reduced. If all farm wagons were equipped with wide tires the muddiest and stickiest of our roads would be very much improved and many of what are now known as bad roads would be for the most of the year in fair condition.

While the majority of wagons continue to have narrow tires, the few having wide tires are heavier to draw on very muddy and sticky clay roads, but on the great majority of roads, the average country roads, the advantage is in favor of the tire four inches wide.

It is urged against wide tires that they do not roll freely in the ruts made by narrow tires. So long as narrow tires are commonly used this will be the case to some extent; but, on the other hand, if wide tires were generally used the ruts would not exist.

In any case, with narrow tires the bottom of the ruts made by the narrow tires are uneven, and the narrow rims are constantly grinding against the sides of the ruts, creating the greatest friction, so that the objectionable difference is not so great as it appears on first sight, if it exists at all.

It is further contended that the wide tires come in contact with more loose stones than do those with a narrow tread. The greater resistance offered in this way is more than counterbalanced, however, by the loose stones dropping into the narrow ruts.

In the one case the wheel goes to the stone; in the other the stone gets in front of the wheel. The irregular bottom of the ruts and the stones in the narrow ruts keep up a constant vibration of the wagon, which transmits a swinging motion to the tongue, galling and annoying the horses and destructive to conveyances.

A provincial law coming into effect after a term of years requiring a stated width of tire for certain sizes of wagon axles would not create hardship, might be accompanied by a rebate of taxes or a small bounty and would result in a benefit to the roads, decreasing the cost of maintenance.

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			7:15	11:10	3:20	Lv.	DALLAS	Ar.	9:30	1:45	5:15			
			7:34	No Stop	3:39	Ar.	*TEATS	Ar.	No Stop	No Stop	No Stop			
			7:38	No Stop	3:43	Ar.	*GILLIAMS	Ar.	9:02	No Stop	4:47			
Lv.	Lv.	Lv.	7:43	No Stop	3:48	Ar.	*BRIDGEPORT	Ar.	8:57	No Stop	4:42	Ar.	Ar.	Ar.
6:00	9:00	1:30	7:55	11:50	4:00	Ar.	FALLS CITY	Lv.	8:45	1:00	4:30	8:30	11:45	4:15
6:30	9:30	2:00				Ar.	*BLACK ROCK	Lv.				7:45	11:00	3:30

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