By George Barr McCutcheon. Author of "Graustark"

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"Stop, sir! It may be your experithis the way in which you won the would ask no questions. five unfortunates whom you want me submission?"

most amusing." she interrupted, with trying to believe her eyes. a laugh that stung him to the quick. "You have been unique in your lovethem, I'll confess that I don't like Calhoun?" them in the least. You may have been wonderfully successful in the past, but you were not dealing with an American girl. I have had enough of your insults. Go in and face"-

"Have a care, girl!" be snarled. "I have it in my power to crush you." "Pooh!" came scornfully from her

eall Mr. Lorry. Let me pass!" "Just glance at this paper, my beau- fied. He is on duty!"

ty. It goes before the eyes of the council unless you"- He paused signifi-

Beverly took the document and with dllated eyes read the revolting charges against her honor. Her cheeks grew white with anger, then flushed a deep

"You flend!" she cried, glaring at him so fiercely that he instinctively shrank back, the vicious grin dying in his face. "I'll show you how much I fear you. I shall give this revolting thing to the princess. She may read it to the cabinet, for all I care. No one will believe you. They'll kill you for this!" She turned and flew into the presence

of the princess and her ministers. Speeding to the side of Yetive, she thrust the paper into her hands. Surprise and expectancy filled the eyes of all assembled.

"Count Marianx officially charges me with-with-read it, your highness!" she cried distractedly.

Yetive read it, pale faced and cold. A determined gleam appeared in her eyes as she passed the document to her husband. "Allode."

after a brief glance at its revolting con-

tents, "ask Count Marlanx to appear

here instantly. He is outside the door." Lorry's anger was hard to control. He clinched his hands and there was a fine suggestion of throttling in the way he did it. Marlanx, entering the room, saw that he was doomed. He had not expected Beverly to take this appalling step. The girl, tears in her eyes, rushed to a window, hiding her face from the wondering ministers. Her courage suddenly falled her. If the charges were read aloud before these men it seemed to her that she never could lift her eyes again. A mighty longing for Washington, her father and the big Calhoun boys rushed to her heart as she stood there and awaited the crash. But Lorry was a true nobleman.

"Gentlemen," he said quietly, "Count Marlanx has seen fit to charge Miss Calhoun with complicity in the flight of Baldos. I will not read the charges to you. They are unworthy of one who has held the highest position in the army of Graustark. He has"-

"Read this, my husband, before you proceed further," said Yetive, thrusting into his hand a line she had written with feverish haste. Lorry smiled gravely before he read aloud the brief edict which removed General Marlanx from the command of the army of

"Is this justice?" protested Marianx angrily. "Will you not give me a hearing? I beseech"-

"Silence!" commanded the princess. "What manner of hearing did you expect to give Miss Calhoun? It is know." enough, sir. There shall be no cowards

in my army." "Coward?" he faltered. "Have I not proved my courage on the field of battle? Am I to be called a"-

Bravery should not end when the soldier quits the field of battle. You have had a hearing, Count Marianx. I

heard the truth about you last night." viciously. "I must be content to ac- with indignation. cept this dismissal, your highness. There is no hope for me. Some day you may pray God to forgive you for the wrong you have done your most loyal servant. There is no appeal from your decision, but as a subject of Graustark I insist that Miss Calhoun shall be punished for aiding in the escape of this spy and traitor. He is gone, and it the crown will fall heavily upon you."



"You fiend!" she cried.

"I will give you the chance to save to the outer world. She cannot deny yourself. I love you. I want you. I this, gentlemen. I defy her to say she must have you for my own," he was did not accompany Baldos through the

secret passage last night." "It will do no harm to set herself ence in life that women kneel to you right by denying this accusation," sugwhen you command. It may be your gested Count Halfont solemnly. Every habit to win what you set about to man in the cabinet and army had hated win. But you have a novel way of pre- Marianx for years. His degradation senting your devoirs, I must say. Is was not displeasing to them. They

But Beverly Calhoun stood staring to succeed? Did you scare them into out of the window, out upon the castle park and its gay sunshine. She did not "No, no! I cared nothing for them. answer, for she did not hear the pre-You are the only one I ever loved"- mier's words. Her brain was whirling "Really, Count Marlanx, you are madly with other thoughts, She was

"The spy is gone," cried Marianz, secing a faint chance to redeem himself at making. I am not used to your meth her expense, "She cannot face my ods. Besides, after having known charge. Where is your friend, Miss

> Beverly faced them with a strange, subdued calmness in her face. Her heart was throbbing wildly in the shelter of this splendid disguise.

"I don't know what all this commotion is about," she said. "I only know that I have been dragged into it shamelessly by that old man over lips. "If you molest me further I shall there. If you step to the window you may see Baldos himself. He has not

Baldos was striding steadily across the park in plain view of all.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OTH Yetive and Beverly experienced an amazing sense of relief. They did not stop to cousider why or how he had returned to the castle grounds. It was sufficient that he was actually there, sound, well and apparently satisfied.

"I dare say Count Marianx will withdraw his infamous charge against our asked Baldos easily. He was smiling guest," said Lorry, with deadly directness. Marianx was mopping his damp forehead. His eyes were fastened upon the figure of the guard, and there was something like awe in their steely depths. It seemed to him that the supernatural had been enlisted against

"He left the castle last night," be muttered, half to himself.

"There seems to be no doubt of that," agreed Gaspou, the grand treasurer, "Colonel Quinnox reports his tomed to the light one finds in a chapel strange disappearance." Clearly the case was a puzzling one. Men looked at kindly look in the direction of the one another in wonder and uneasiness. exclaimed Marlanx, suddenly trium phant. "It bears out all that I have said. Baldos left the castle last night. as I have sworn, but not for the purpose of escaping. He went forth to carry information to our enemies. Can any one doubt that he is a spy? Has he not returned to carry out his work? And now, gentlemen, I ask you-would he return unless he felt secure of pro-

tection here?" It was a facer. Yetive and Beverly had been closed down upon them. Lor- and accusing. Above, Yetive and Bevcided movement among the ministers.

"Colonel Quinnox, will you fetch Balnecessary. "It is cooler out there." The men were descending the steps as He gave Beverly a look of inquiry. if to surround him. She flushed painfully, guiltily, and he was troubled in consequence.

arrest of this man," Marlanx was saying excitedly. "We must go to the its secret is known to more than one bottom of this hellish plot to injure Graustark."

standing over him, "up to this time we with which Miss Calhoun found me have been unable to discern any rea- when she was a princess. Count Marsons for or signs of the treachery you lanx is quite right when he says that preach about. I don't believe we have I have gone in and out of the castle been betrayed at all."

"But I have absolute proof, sir," grated the count. "I'd advise you to produce it. We must have something to work on, you

sir? You are not one of us. You are this, as you may judge by taking a a meddler-an impertment alien. Your beart is not with Graustark, as mine is. How long must we endure the insolence of these Americans?"

The count was fuming with anger. As might have been expected, the easy going Yankees laughed unreservedly "From Miss Calhoun?" sneered he at his taunt. The princess was pale

"Count Marlanx, you will confine your remarks to the man whom you have charged with treachery," she said. "You have asked for his arrest, and you are to be his accuser. At the proper time you will produce the proof. 1 warn you now that if you do not sustain these charges the displeasure of "I only ask your highness to order his arrest," he said, controlling him-

self. "He is of the castle guard and can be seized only on your command." "Baldos is at the castle steps, your highness," said Colonel Quinnox from the doorway. The entire party left the council chamber and passed out to the great stone porch. It must be confessed that the princess leaned rather heavily upon Lorry's arm. She and Beverly trembled with anxlety as they stood face to face with the tall guard who had come back to them so mys-

Baldos stood at the foot of the stone steps, a guard on each side of him, after you had fied?" One of these was the shamefaced Haddan, Dangloss' watchman, whose vigil had been a failure. The gaze of the suspected guard purposely avoided that of Beverly Calhoun. He knew Calls promptly answered day or night, that the slightest communication between them would be misunderstood

and magnified by the witnesses. "Baldos," said Lorry from the top step, "It has come to our ears that you left the castle surreptitiously last night. Is it true that you were aided by Miss Calhoun?" Baldos looked

thankful for this eminently leading question. In a flash it gave him the key to the situation. Secretly he was wondering what emotions possessed the slender accomplice who had said goodby to him not so many hours before at the castle gate. He knew that she was amazed, puzzled by his sud-den return. He wondered if she were glad. His quick wits saw that a crisis had arrived. The air was full of it. The dread of this very moment was the thing which had drawn him into the castle grounds at early dawn. He had watched for his chance to glide in unobserved and had snatched a few hours' sleep in the shelter of the shrubbery near the park wall.

"it is not true," he said clearly in answer to Lorry's question. Both Beverly and Marianx started as the sharp falsehood fell from his lips. "Who made such an accusation?" he demand-

"Count Marianx is our informant." "Then Count Marlanx lies," came coolly from the guard. A snarl of fury burst from the throat of the deposed general. His eyes were red and his tongue was half paisled by rage. "Dog! Dog!" he shouted, running

down the steps. "Infamous dog! I swear by my soul that he"-"Where is your proof, Count Marlanx?" sternly interrupted Lorry. "You

have made a serious accusation against our honored guest. It cannot be overlooked." Marianx hesitated a moment and

then threw his bomb at the feet of the conspirators. "I was in the chapel when she opened

the secret panel for him." Not a word was uttered for a full minute. It was Beverly Calhoun who spoke first. She was as calm as a spring morning.

"If all this be true, Count Marlanx, may I ask why you, the head of Graustark's army, did not intercept the spy when you had the chance?"

Marlanx flushed guiltily. The question had caught him unprepared. He dared not acknowledge his presence there with the hired assassins.

"I-I was not in a position to restrain him," be mumbled.

"You preferred to wait until he was safely gone before making the effort to protect Graustark from his evil designs. Is that it? What was your object in going to the chapel-to pray? Besides, what right had you to enter the castle in the night?" she asked iron-

"Your highness, may I be heard?" up at Yetive from the bottom of the steps. She nodded her head a triffe uneasily. "It is quite true that I left the castle by means of your secret passage last night."

"There!" shrieked Marianx. "He admits that he"-

"But I wish to add that Count Marlank is in error when he says that Miss Calhoun was my accomplice. His eyes were not keen in the darkness of the sanctuary. Perhaps he is not accussouthern gate? Your august gaze may fall upon the reclining figure of a boy asleep there in the shadow of the friendly cedar. If Count Marianx had looked closely enough last night he might have seen that it was a boy who went with me and not"-

"Fool! Don't you suppose I know a woman's skirts?" cried the Iron Count. "Better than most men, I fancy," calmly responded Baldos. "My young friend wore the garments of a woman, let me add."

Lorry came down and grasped Balfelt as though a steel trap suddenly fos by the arm. His eyes were stern ry and Anguish were undeniably dis- erly had clasped hands and were lookconcerted. There was a restless, unde- ing on dumbly. What did Baidos mean? "Then, you did go through the passage? And you were accompanied by dos to the veranda at once?" asked this boy, a stranger? How comes this, Lorry, his quick American perception sir?" demanded Lorry. Every eye was telling him that immediate action was accusing the guard at this juncture.

"It is not the first time that I have gone through the passage, sir," said "As a mere subject, I demand the Baldos, amused by the looks of consternation. "I'd advise you to close it. person. It is known, by the way, to Prince Gabriel of Dawsbergen. It is "My dear count," said Angulah, known to every member of the band grounds from time to time. He is right when he says that I have communicated with men inside and outside of these grounds. But he is wrong when he accuses Miss Calhoun of being responsible for or even aware of my reprehen-"What right have you to give advice, sible conduct. She knew nothing of all look at her face at this instant."

Beverly's face was a study in emotions. She was looking at him with dilated eyes. Pain and disappointment were concentrated in their expressive gray depths; indignation was struggling to master the love and pity that and lurked in her face all along. It required but a single glance to convince the most skeptical that she was ignorant of these astounding movements on the part of her protege. Again every eye was turned upon the bold, smiling

"I have been bitterly deceived in you," said Lorry, genuine pain in his voice, "We trusted you implicitly. I didn't think it of you, Baldos. After all, it is honorable of you to expose so thoroughly your own infamy in order to acquit an innocent person who believed in you. You did not have to come back to the castle. You might have escaped punishment by using Miss Calhoun as a shield from her highness' wrath. But none the less you compel me to give countenance to all that Count Marianx bas said."

"I Insist that it was Miss Calhoun who went through the panel with him," said Marianx eagerly. "If it was this boy who accompanied you, what was his excuse in returning to the castle

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