

# GRAUSTARK

... By ...

GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON

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CHAPTER I.—Grenfall Lorry, a wealthy American globe trotter, stumbles into acquaintance with a charming foreign girl on the train from Denver to Washington. The pair is left behind when the flier stops for repairs in West Virginia. II.—Lorry wires ahead to hold the train. He and the unknown girl ride twenty miles at a tearing pace in a mountain coach. There is no love-making, but a near approach to it as the rolling stage tumbles the passengers about. III.—Lorry dines with the foreign party, consisting of Miss Guggenlocker, Uncle Caspar and Aunt Yvonne. They are natives of Graustark, a country Lorry had never heard of before. IV.—Lorry shows the foreigners the sights of Washington. They leave for New York to sail on the Kaiser Wilhelm. Miss Guggenlocker naively calls Lorry her "ideal American" and invites him to come and see her at Edelweiss. V. Wildly infatuated, Lorry hurries to New York. The name Guggenlocker is not on the steamer list. He sees the steamer off. Miss G. waves him a kiss from the deck.

But the young man shook his head slowly, Lorry's shaking in unconscious accord.

"Are you sure that you saw the young lady on board?"

"Well, rather!" exclaimed Lorry emphatically.

"I was going to say there are a lot of Italian and German singers on the ship, and you might have been mistaken. But since you are so positive it seems very strange that your friends are not on the list."

So Lorry went away discouraged and with a vague fear that she might have been a prima donna whose real name was Guggenlocker, but whose stage name was something more euphonious. He instantly put away the thought and the fear. She was certainly not an opera singer—impossible! He drove back to his hotel and made preparations for his return to Washington. Glancing casually over the register, he came to the name that had been haunting him—Guggenlocker! There were the names, "Caspar Guggenlocker and four, Graustark." Without hesitation he began to question the clerk.

"They sailed on the Kaiser Wilhelm today," said that worthy. "That's all I know about them. They came yesterday and left today."

Mr. Grenfall Lorry returned to Washington as in a dream—a fairy dream. The air of mystery that had grown from the first was now an impenetrable wall, the top of which his curiosity could not scale. Even his fancy, his imagination, served him not. There was but one point on which he was satisfied—he was in love. His own condition was no mystery.

Through the long hot summer he worked and worried and wondered. He must know all about her! But how?

The early months of autumn found him pale and tired and indifferent alike to work and play. He found no pleasure in the society that had known him as a lion. The doctor told him he was approaching nervous prostration. His mother's anxious eyes could no longer be denied, so he realized grimly that there was but one course left open to him. He suggested it to the doctor, to his mother and to his uncle, and they agreed with him. It involved Europe.

Having fully decided again to cross the sea, his spirits revived. He became more cheerful, took an interest in things that were going on, and by the time the Kaiser Wilhelm sailed in September was the picture of health and life.

He was off for Edelweiss—to the strange Miss Guggenlocker who had thrown him a kiss from the deck that sailing day.

## CHAPTER VI. GRAUSTARK.

TWO weeks later Grenfall Lorry was landed and enjoying the sensations, the delights, of that wonderful world called by the name of Paris. The second day after his arrival he met a Harvard man of his time on the street. Harry Anguish had been a pseudo art student for two years. When at college, he was a hail fellow well met, a leader in athletics and in matters upon which faculties frown. He and Lorry were warm friends, although utterly unlike in temperament. To know either of these men was to like him. Between the two one found all that was admirable and interesting in man. The faults and virtues of each were along such different lines that they balanced perfectly when lumped upon the scale of personal estimation. Their unexpected meeting in Paris was an exhilarating pleasure to both, and for the next week or so they were inseparable. Together they sipped absinth at the cafes and strolled into the theaters, the opera, the dance halls and the homes of some of Anguish's friends, French and American.

Lorry did not speak to his friend of Graustark until nearly two weeks after his arrival in the city. He had discussed with himself the advisability of revealing his plans to Anguish, fearing the latter's ridicule with all the cowardice of a man who knows that scoffing is in a large measure justifiable. Growing impatient to begin the search for the unheard of country, its capital and at least one of its inhabitants, he was at last compelled to inform Anguish to a certain extent of his plans for the future. He began by telling him of his intention to take a run over toward Vienna, Budapesth and some of the eastern cities, expecting to be gone a couple of months. To his surprise and consternation, Anguish enthusiastically volunteered to take the trip with him, having had the same project in view for nearly a year.

There was nothing left for Lorry but to make a clean breast of it, which he did shamefacedly, expecting the laughter and raillery of his light hearted friend as payment for his confidence. Instead, however, Anguish, who possessed a lively and romantic nature, was charmed by the story and proclaimed it to be the most delightful adventure that had ever happened outside of a story book.

"Tell me all about her," he urged, his eyes sparkling with boyish enthusiasm. And Lorry proceeded to give him a personal description of the mysterious beauty, introducing him in the same manner to the distinguished uncle and aunt, adding all those details which had confounded and upset him during his own investigations.

"This is rich!" exclaimed Anguish. "Beats any novel written. I declare. Begad, old man, I don't blame you for hunting down this wonderful bit of femininity. With a curiosity and an admiration that had been sharpened so keenly as yours, I'd go to the end of the world myself to have them satisfied."

"I may be able to satisfy but one—curiosity. And maybe not that. But who knows of Graustark?"

"Don't give up before you've tried. If these people live in such a place, why, it is to be found, of course. Any railroad guidebook can locate this land of mystery. There are so many infernal little kingdoms and principalities over here that it would take a lifetime to get 'em all straightened out in one's head. Tomorrow morning we will go to one of the big railway stations and make inquiries. We'll locate Graustark, and then we'll go over and pluck the flower that grows there. All you need, my boy, is a manager. I'll do the arranging, and your little act will be the plucking."

"Easier said than done."

"She threw a kiss to you, didn't she?"

"Certainly, but, confound it, that was because she never expected to see me again."

"Same reason why you threw a kiss to her, I suppose."

"I know why; I wasn't accountable."

"Well, if she did it any more wittingly than you did she is accountable, and I'd hunt her up and demand an explanation."

Lorry laughed at his apparent fervor, but was glad that he had confided in his energetic countryman. Two heads were better than one, and he was forced to admit to himself that he rather liked the idea of company in the undertaking; not that he expected to encounter any particular difficulty, but that he saw a strange loneliness ahead; therefore he welcomed his friend's avowed intention to accompany him to Edelweiss as a relief instead of an annoyance. Until late in the night they discussed the coming trip, Anguish finally startling him with a question just as he was stretching himself preparatory to the walk to his hotel.

"What are you going to do with her after you find her, Gren, old man?"

Grenfall's brow puckered, and he brought himself up with a jerk, puzzled uncertainty expressing itself in his posture as well as in his face.

"I'll think about that after I have found her," he replied.

"Think you'll marry her?" persisted the other.

"How do I know?" exclaimed the woman hunter savagely.

"Oh, of course you don't know. How could you?" apologized Anguish. "Maybe she won't have you; maybe she is married—all sorts of contingencies, you know. But, if you'll pardon my inquisitiveness, I'd like to ask why you are making this wild goose chase half around the world—just to have another look at her?"

"You asked me if I thought"—Here he stopped.

"I take it for granted, then, that you'd like to. Well, I'm glad that I've got something definite on which to base operations. The one object of our endeavors from now on is to exchange Guggenlocker for Lorry—certainly no robbery; a clarity, I should say. Good night; see you in the morning."

The next morning the two friends took a cab to several railway stations and inquired about Graustark and Edelweiss.

"She was stringing you, old man," said Anguish after they had turned away from the third station. He spoke commiseratingly, as he really felt sorry.

"No!" exclaimed Lorry. "She told me the truth. There is a Graustark, and she lives there. I'll stake my life on those eyes of hers."

"Are you sure she said it was in Europe?" asked Harry, looking up and down the street as if he would not have been surprised to see her in Paris. In his heart he believed that she and her precious relatives had deceived old Gren. Perhaps their home was in Paris and nowhere else. But for Lorry's positiveness he would have laughed heartily at the other's simple credulity or branded him a dolt, the victim of some merry actress' whim. Still he was forced to admit he was

not in a position to see matters as they appeared and was charitable enough to bide his time and to humor the faith that was leading them from place to place in the effort to find a land that they knew nothing about. Lorry seemed so sure, so positive, that he was loath to see his dream dispelled, his ideal shattered. There was certainly no Graustark. Neither had the Guggenlockers sailed on the Wilhelm, all apparent evidence to the contrary notwithstanding. Lorry had been in a delirium and had imagined he saw her on the ship. If there, why was not her name in the list? But that problem tortured the sanguine searcher himself.

At last, in despair, after a fruitless search of two days Lorry was willing to submit. With the perverseness common to half hearted fighters Anguish at once protested, forgetting that he had sought to dissuade his friend the day before.

"We'll go to the library of Paris and take a look through the books and maps," he said. "Or, better still, let us go to the postoffice. There! Why have we not thought of that? What there is of Graustark they'll know in the postal service."

Together they visited the chief postoffice, where, after being directed to various deputies and clerks, they at length found the department in which the information was obtainable. Inside of five minutes they were in possession of facts that vindicated Miss Guggenlocker, lifted Lorry to the seventh heaven and put Mr. Anguish into an agony of impatience. Graustark was a small principality away off to the east, and Edelweiss was a city of some 75,000 inhabitants, according to the postal guidebook.

The Americans could learn no more there, so they went to Baedeker's office. Here they found a great map, and, after a diligent and almost microscopic search, succeeded in discovering the principality of Graustark. Then they looked at each other in dismay.

"It's a devil of a distance to that little red blot on the map," mused Lorry, pulling his nose reflectively. "What an outlandish place for a girl like her to live in," he continued. "And that sweet faced old lady and noble Uncle Caspar! Ye gods, one would think barbarians existed there and not such people as the Guggenlockers, refined, cultivated, smart, rich! I'm more interested than ever in the place."

"So am I! I'm willing and ready to make the trip, old man, if you are still of a mind. It's a lark, and, besides, she may not be the only pretty and gracious girl there. We've had hard work to find it on the map, let's not stop till we see Edelweiss on the earth itself."

They made hasty preparations for the journey. Anguish, romantic and full of adventure, advised the purchase of a pair of pistols and a knife apiece, maintaining that as they were going into an unknown and mountainous region they should be prepared for brigands and other elements of danger. Lorry poohpooled the suggestion of brigands, but indulged his mood by buying some ugly looking revolvers and inviting the prospect of something really thrilling in the way of an adventure. With their traps they were soon whirling through France, bound for a certain great city on the road to Edelweiss, one filled with excitement, eagerness and boyish zeal, the other harassed by the somber fear that a grave disappointment was in store for him.

(Continued)

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