

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 Guggenslocker, 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 Guggenslocker 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 Guggenslocker is not on the steamer list. He sees the steamer off. Miss G. waves him a kiss from the deck. VI.—Lorry joins his old friend, Harry Anguish, an American artist, in Paris. Graustark and its capital, Edelweiss, are located by a guide book. The Americans get no trace of the Guggenslockers there.

Wherever the tall, distinguished Americans walked they formed the center of observation and were the cause of comment that bore unmistakable signs of admiration. They bowed pleasantly to many of those who passed them and received in return gracious and profound recognition. Military men saluted courteously, the women stared modestly and prettily, perhaps covetously; the merchants and citizens in general bowed and smiled a welcome that could not have been heartier. The strangers remarked the absence of vehicles on the main streets. There were pack mules and horses, human carriers, both male and female, but during the entire morning they saw not more than six or eight carriages. Vehicles were used solely by the quality and as a means of transportation for their persons only. Everybody, with the few exceptions mentioned, walked or rode horseback. The two friends were delighted with the place, and Anguish advocated a sojourn of several weeks, even though they did not find the Guggenslockers, his object being to secure photographs and sketches of the picturesque people and the strange scenery and to idle away some hours upon the glittering boulevards. Grenfall, since he was in the project so deeply, was so nearly reconciled as to be exhilarated by the plan. They decided to visit the royal grounds in the afternoon, provided there was no prohibition, reserving a ride up the hill for the next day. A gendarme who spoke German fairly well told them that they could enter the palace park if they obtained a signed order from the chief steward, who might be found at any time in his home near the gates.

They were strolling leisurely toward the hotel, for the moment forgetting their quest in this strange, sunny land, when they espied a carriage, the most conspicuous of any they had seen. The white horses were gayly caparisoned, the driver and the footman beside him wore rich uniforms, the vehicle itself gleamed and glistened with gold and silver trimmings. A short distance behind rode two young soldiers, swords to their shoulders, scabbards clanking against their stirrups. Each was attired in the tight red trousers, shiny boots, close fitting black coat with gilt trimmings and the red cap which the Americans had noted before because of its brilliancy. People along the street were bowing deeply to the occupants, two ladies.

"Harry! Look!" exclaimed Lorry, clutching his friend's arm like a vise. "There in the carriage—on this side!" His voice was hoarse and trembling.

"Miss Gug—Guggenslocker?" cried Anguish.

"Yes, yes!" They had stopped, and Lorry was grasping a garden wall with one hand.

"Then it's funny nobody knows the name here. She seems to be some one of consequence." Good heaven! I don't blame you! She's the most beautiful!"

By this time the carriage was almost opposite and within forty feet of where they stood. The ladies—Miss Guggenslocker's companion was young and almost as beautiful as herself—had not observed the agitated two, but Lorry's face was beaming, his hat was off, and he was ready to spring to the carriage side at a moment's warning. Then the young girl at the side of the



"Harry! Look!" exclaimed Lorry.

woman whose beauty had drawn a man half around the world saw the tall strangers and called her companion's attention to them. Once more Grenfall Lorry and Miss Guggenslocker were looking into each other's eyes.

The lady started violently. Her eyes grew wide, her lips parted, and her body was bent forward eagerly, a little gloved hand grasping the side of the open carriage. Her "ideal American" was bowing low, as was the tall fellow at his side. When he looked up again, his eyes were glowing, his handsome face was flushed, and he saw her smile, blush furiously and incline her head gravely. The carriage had swept past, but she turned her head, and he detected an appealing glance in her eyes, a perplexed wrinkle across her brow, both of which were swept away an instant later by the most bewitching of smiles. Again her head was inclined, this time a trifle more energetically, and then the maddening face was turned from him. The equipage rolled onward, and there was no effort on her part to check its progress. The men were left standing alone and disappointed on the streets of Edelweiss, the object of their search slipping away as soon as she had been found. Her companion was amazed by the little scene, it was evident, judging by the eager look on her face as she turned with a question in her eyes.

"Turned down!" exclaimed the irrepresible Anguish dolefully. "That's

pretty shabby treatment, old man, but she's quite worth the journey."

"I'll not go back to America without her. Do you hear that, Harry Anguish?" He was excited and trembling. "But why didn't she stop?" he went on dismally.

"Oh, you dear old fool!" said Anguish.

The two stood looking after the carriage until it turned into a side street half way down the shady stretch toward the castle. They saw her companion glance back, but could not tell whether she did or not. Lorry looked uneasily at Anguish, and the latter read his thought.

"You are wondering about the Guggenslocker-name, eh? I'll tell you what I've worked out during the past two minutes. Her name is no more Guggenslocker than mine is. She and the uncle used that name as a blind. Mark my words, she's quality over here; that's all there is about it. Now, we must find out just who she really is. Here comes a smart looking soldier chap. Let's ask him, provided we can make him understand."

A young soldier approached, leisurely twirling a cane, for he was without his side arms. Anguish accosted him in French and then in German. He understood the latter and was very polite.

"Who was the young lady in the carriage that just passed?" asked Lorry eagerly.

The face of the soldier flushed and then grew pale with anger.

"Hold on! I beg pardon, but we are strangers and don't quite understand your ways. I can't see anything improper in asking such a question," said Anguish, attempting to detain him. The young man struck his hand from his arm, and his eyes fairly blazed.

"You must learn our ways. We never pass comment on a lady. If you do so in your land, I am sorry for your ladies. I refuse to be questioned by you. Stand aside, fellow!"

Anguish stood aside in astonishment, and they watched the wrathful gallant strut down the street, his back as stiff as a board.

"Blamed touchy!" growled Anguish.

"You remember what Sitzky said about their respect for the weaker sex. I guess we'd better keep off that tack or we'll hatch up a duel or two. They seem to be fire eaters. We must content ourselves with searching out her home, and without assistance too. I've cooled off a bit, Harry, and, now that I've seen her, I'm willing to go slowly and deliberately. Let's take our time and be perfectly cool. I am beginning to agree with your incog. proposition. It's all clearing up in my mind now. We'll go back to the hotel and get ready for the visit to the palace grounds."

"Don't you intend to hunt her up? Gad, I wouldn't miss a minute if I had a chance to be with a girl like that! And the other was no scarecrow. She is rather a beauty too. Greatest town for pretty women I ever struck. Vienna is out of it entirely."

They strolled on to the hotel, discussing the encounter in all its exhilarating details. Scarcely had they seated themselves on the piazza after partaking of a light luncheon when a man came galloping up to the walk in front of the hotel. Throwing his bridle rein to a guard, he hastened to the piazza. His attire was that of a groom, and something about him reminded them of the footman who sat beside the driver of the carriage they had seen a short time before. He came straight to where the Americans sat smoking and, bowing low, held before them an envelope. The address was "Grenfall Lorry, Esq.," but the man was in doubt as to which was he.

Lorry grasped the envelope, tore it open and drew forth a daintily written note. It read:

My Dear Mr. Lorry—I was very much surprised to see you this morning. I

may add that I was delighted. If you will accompany this messenger when he calls for you at 3 o'clock tomorrow afternoon, he will conduct you to my home, where I shall truly be charmed to see you again. Will you bring your friend?
SOPHIA GUGGENSLOCKER.

Lorry could have embraced the messenger. There was a suspicion of breathlessness in his voice when he tried to say calmly to Harry:

"An invitation for tomorrow."

"I knew it would come that way."

"Also wants you to come."

"Shan't I be in the way?"

"Not at all, my boy. I'll accept for you. After this fellow goes I'll let you read the note. Wait until I write an answer."

Motioning for the man to remain, he hastened to his room, pulled out some stationery and feverishly wrote:

My Dear Miss Guggenslocker—I shall be delighted to accompany your messenger tomorrow, and my friend, Mr. Harry Anguish, will be with me. I have come half way across the continent to see you, and I shall be repaid if I am with you but for a moment. You will pardon me if I say that your name has caused me despair. No one seems to have heard it here, and I was beginning to lose hope. You may expect me at 3, and I thank you for the pleasure you bestow. Yours sincerely,
GRENFALL LORRY.

This note, part of which had been written with misgiving, he gave to the messenger, who rode away quickly.

"She didn't wait long to write to you, I notice. Is it possible she is suffering from the effects of those three days on the other side of the Atlantic? Come to think of it, she blushed when she saw you this morning," said Anguish. Lorry handed him her note, which he read and then solemnly shook hands with its recipient. "Congratulations. I am a very far sighted young man, having lived in Paris."

(Continued)

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