

# GRAUSTARK

...By...

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CHAPTER I.—Grenfall Lorry, a weal'hy 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 Guggenlocke, 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 Guggenlocke 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 Guggenlocke 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 Guggenlockers there. VII. Lorry sees his charmer driving in a carriage with a beautiful companion of her own sex. He gets a glance of recognition, but the carriage rolls on, leaving the mystery unsolved. Later he receives a note at his hotel signifying Sophia Guggenlocke, inviting him to visit her next day. VIII. In the evening Lorry and Anguish ramble about the grounds of the castle where dwells the court of the Princess of Graustark. They overhear a plot to abduct the princess and resolve to capture the plotters red handed. IX.—Following the conspirators, Lorry finds himself in a room he heard them designate as that of the princess. X.—Lorry tells the princess of the plot. Mutual recognition; she is Miss Guggenlocke. Dannoix, the guard, is in the abduction plot. He tells Lorry with a terrible blow. Anguish to the rescue. XI.—Lorry quartered in the castle. The princess visits him, but forbids all talk of love. XII—Graustark is bankrupt and owes the neighboring prince dom of Aphaia \$40,000.00. The creditor demands cash or the cessation of the richest districts of Graustark. XIII.—The Prince of Aphaia offers to extend the loan if the princess will marry his son Lorenz. Prince Gabriel of Dawsberg also bids for the princess's hand with offer of a loan. Yvette tells Lorry that she belongs to her people and will marry Lorenz.

Neither of his listeners spoke for some moments. Then Lorry broke the silence.

"You mean that the money cannot be raised?" he asked.

"It is not in our treasury. Our people have been taxed so sorely in rebuilding their homes and in recuperating from the effect of that dreadful invasion that they have been unable to pay the levies. You must remember that we are a small nation and of limited resources. Your nation could secure \$30,000,000 in one hour for the mere asking. To us it is like a death-blow. I am not betraying a state secret in telling you of the sore straits in which we are placed, for every man in the nation has been made cognizant of the true conditions. We are all facing it together."

There was something so quietly heroic in his manner that both men felt pity. Anguish, looking at the military figure, asked:

"You fought through the war, your excellency?"

"I resigned as minister, sir, to go to the front. I was in the first battle and I was in the last," he said simply.

"And the princess—the present ruler, I mean—was a mere child at that time. When did she succeed to the throne?" asked Lorry.

"Oh, the great world does not remember our little history! Within a year after the death of Prince Ganlook his wife, my sister, passed away, dying of a broken heart. Her daughter, their only child, was, according to our custom, crowned at once. She has reigned for fourteen years, and wisely since assuming full power. For three years she has been ruler de facto. She has been frugal and has done all in her power to meet the shadow that is descending."

"And what is the alternative in case the indemnity is not paid?" asked Lorry breathlessly, for he saw something bright in the approaching calamity.

The cession of all that part of Graustark lying north of Edelweiss, including fourteen towns, all of our mines and our most productive farming and grazing lands. In that event Graustark will be no larger than one of the good sized farms in your western country. There will be nothing left for her royal highness to rule save a tract so small that the word principality will be a trystery and a jest—this city and twenty-five miles to the south, a strip about 150 miles long. Think of it! Twenty-five by 150 miles, and yet called a principality! Once the proudest and most prosperous state in the east, considering its size, reduced to that! Ach, gentlemen—gentlemen, I cannot think of it without tearing out a heart string and suffering such pains as mortal man has never endured. I lived in Graustark's days of wealth, power and supremacy. God has condemned me to live in the days of her dependency, weakness and poverty. Let us talk no more of this unpleasant subject."

"Willingly, your excellency, since it is distasteful to you. I hope, however, you will permit me to ask how much you are short of the amount," said Lorry considerately, yet curiously.

"Our minister of finance, Gaspon, will be able to produce 15,000,000 gavvos at the stated time, far from enough. This amount has been sucked from the people from excessive levy and has been hoarded for the dreaded day. Try as we would, it has been impossible to raise the full amount. The people have been bled and have responded nobly, sacrificing everything to meet the treaty terms honorably, but the strain has been too great. Our army has cost us large sums. We have strengthened our defenses and could, should we go to war, defeat Aphaia. But we have our treaty to honor. We could not take up arms to save ourselves from that honest bond."

"Our levies have barely brought the amount necessary to maintain an army large enough to inspire respect among those who are ready to leap upon us the instant we show the least sign of distress. There are about us powers that have held aloof from war with us simply because we have awed them with our show of force. It has been our safeguard, and there is not a citizen of Graustark who objects to the manner in which state affairs are conducted. They know that our army is an economy at any price. Until last spring we were confident that we could raise the full amount due Aphaia, but the people in the rural districts were unable to meet the levies on account of the panic that came at a most unfortunate time. That is why we were burying home from your country, Mr. Lorry. Gaspon had cabled the princess that affairs were in a hopeless condition, begging her to come home and do what she could in a final appeal to the people, knowing the love they had for her. She came and has seen these loyal subjects offer their lives for her and for Graustark, but utterly unable to give what they have not—money. She asked them if she should disband the army, and there was a negative wall from one end of the land to the other. Then the army agreed to serve on half pay until all was tided over. Public officers are giving their services free,

and many of our wealthy people have advanced loans on bonds, worthless as they may seem, and still we have not the required amount."

"Cannot the loan be extended a few years?" asked Lorry, angry with the ruler in the north, taking the woes of Graustark as much to heart as if they were his own.

"Not one day! Not in London, Paris nor Berlin."

Lorry lay back and allowed Anguish to lead the conversation into other channels. The count remained for half an hour, saying as he left that the princess and his wife had expressed a desire to be remembered to their guests.

"Her royal highness spent the evening with the ministers of finance and war, and her poor head, I doubt not, is racking from the effects of the consultation. These are weighty matters for a girl to have on her hands," solemnly stated the count, pausing for an instant at the door of the apartment.

After he had closed it the Americans looked long and thoughtfully at each other, each feeling a respect for the grim old gentleman that they had never felt for man before.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### UNDER MOON AND MONASTERY.

FOR two days Lorry lived through intermittent stages of delight and despondency. His recovery from the effects of the blow administered by Dannoix was naturally rapid, his strong young constitution coming to the rescue bravely. He saw much of the princess, more of the Countess Dagmar, and made the acquaintance of many lords and ladies for whom he cared but little except when they chose to talk of their girlish ruler. The atmosphere of the castle was laden with a depression that could not be overcome by an assimilated gayety.

The princess could not hide the trouble that had sprung up in her eyes. Her laugh, her gay conversation, her rare composure and gentle hauteur were powerless to drive away the haunted, worried gleam in those expressive eyes of blue. Lorry had it on his tongue's end a dozen times during the next day or so after the count's narrative to question her about the condition of affairs as they appeared to her.

The Countess Dagmar, when not monopolized by the very progressive or aggressive Anguish, unfolded to Lorry certain pages in the personal history of the princess, and he, of course, encouraged her confidential humor, although there was nothing encouraging in it for him.

Down by the great fountain, while the soldiers were on parade, the fair but volatile countess unfolded to Lorry a story that wrenched his heart so savagely that anger, resentment, helplessness and love oozed forth and enveloped him in a multitude of emotions that would not disperse.

"She will not mind my telling you, because she considers you the very best of men, Mr. Lorry," said the countess, who had learned her English under the Princess Yvette's tutor.

It seems, according to the very truthful account given by the lady, that the princess had it in her power to save Graustark from disgrace and practical destruction. The Prince of Aphaia's son, Lorenz, was deeply enamored of her, infatuated by her marvelous beauty and accomplishments. He had persuaded his father to consider a matrimonial alliance with her to be one of great value to Aphaia. The old prince, therefore, some months before the arrival of the Americans in Graustark sent to the princess a substitute ultimatum, couched in terms so polite and conciliatory that there could be no mistaking his sincerity. He agreed to give Graustark a new lease of life, as it were, by extending the fifteen years or, in other words, to grant the con-

quered an additional ten years in which to pay off the obligations imposed by the treaty. He furthermore offered a considerable reduction in the rate of interest for the next ten years. But he had a condition attached to this good and gracious proposition—the marriage of Graustark's sovereign. His ambassador set forth the advantages of such an alliance, and departed with a message that the matter should have most serious consideration.

The old prince's proposition was a blow to the princess, who was placed in a trying position. By sacrificing herself she could save her country, but in so doing her life was to be plunged into interminable darkness. She did not love nor did she respect Lorenz, who was not favorably supplied with civilized intelligence.

The proposition was laid before the cabinet and the nobility by the princess



"Cannot the loan be extended a few years?"

herself, who said that she would be guided by any decision they might reach. The counselors to a man refused to sacrifice their girlish ruler, and the people vociferously ratified the resolution. But the princess would not allow them to send an answer to Aphaia until she could see a way clear to save her people in some other manner. An embassy was sent to the Prince of Dawsberg. His domain touched Graustark on the south, and he ruled a wild, turbulent class of mountaineers and herdsmen. This embassy sought to secure an indorsement of the loan from Prince Gabriel sufficient to meet the coming crisis. Gabriel, himself smitten by the charms of the princess, at once offered himself in marriage, agreeing to advance, in case she accepted him, 20,000,000 gavvos at a rather high rate of interest for fifteen years. His love for her was so great that he would pawn the entire principality for an answer that would make him the happiest man on earth. Now, the troubled princess abhorred Gabriel. Of the two, Lorenz was much to be preferred. Gabriel flew into a rage upon the receipt of this rebuff and openly avowed his intention to make her suffer. His infatuation became a mania, and up to the very day on which the countess told the story he persisted in his appeals to the princess. In person he had gone to her to plead his guilt on his knees, groveling at her feet. He went so far as to exclaim madly in the presence of the alarmed but relentless object of his love that he would win her or turn the whole earth into everything unpleasant.

(Continued)

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