GRAUSTARK

...By...

GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE SOLDIER.

OFF went the carriage with a dash, the rumble of its wheels joining in the grewsome roar of the elements. For some time the two sat speechless side by side. Outside the thunder rolled, the rain swirled and hissed, the wind howled and all the horrors of nature seemed crowded into the blackness of that thrilling night. Lorry wondered vaguely whither they were going, why he had seen no flashes of lightning, if he should ever see her again. His mind was busy with a thousand thoughts and queries.

"Where are we going?" he asked after they had traveled half a mile or so.

"To a place of safety," came the reply from the darkness beside him.

"Thanks," he said dryly. "By the way, don't you have any lightning in this part of the world? I haven't seen a flash tonight."

"It is very rare," came the brief reply.

"Devilish uncommunicative," thought Lorry. After a moment he asked, "How far do we travel tonight?"

"A number of miles."

"Then I'm going to take off this wet coat. It weighs a ton. Won't you remove yours?" He jerked off the big rain coat and threw it across to the opposite seat, with the keys and the lantern. There was a moment's hesitation on the part of his companion, and then a second wet coat followed the first. Their rain helmets were also tossed aside. "Makes a fellow feel more comfortable."

After this there was a longer silence than at any time before. The soldier drew himself into the corner of the seat, an action which repelled further discussion, it seemed to Lorry, so he leaned back in the opposite corner and allowed his mind to wander far from the interior of that black, stuffy carriage. Where was he going? When was he to leave Graustark? Was he to see her soon?

Soon the carriage left the smooth streets of Edelweiss, and he could tell by the jolting and careening that they were in the country, racing over a rough, rocky road. It reminded him of an overland trip he had taken in West Virginia some months before, with the fairest girl in all the world as his companion. Now he was riding in her carriage, but with a surly, untalkative soldier of the guard. The more he allowed his thoughts to revel in the American ride and its delights the more uncontrollable became his desire to see the one who had whirled with him in "Light Horse" Jerry's coach.

"I wish to know how soon I am to see your mistress," he exclaimed impulsively, sitting up and striking his companion's arm by way of emphasis.

To his surprise, the hand was dashed away, and he distinctly heard the soldier gasp. "I beg your pardon!" he cried, fearing that he had given pain with his eager strength.

"You startled me. I was half asleep," stammered the other apologetically. "Whom do you mean by my mistress?"

"Her royal highness, of course," said Lorry impatiently.

"I cannot say when you are to see the princess," said his companion after waiting so long that Lorry felt like kicking him.

"Well, see here, my friend, do you know why I agreed to leave that place back there? I said I wouldn't go away from Graustark until I had seen her. If you fellows are spirting me away—kidnaping me, as it were—I want to tell you I won't have it that way. I must know right now where we are going in this awful storm!"

"I have orders to tell you nothing," said the soldier stanchly.

"Orders, eh! From whom?"

"That is my affair, sir!"

"I guess I'm about as much interested in this affair as anybody, and I insist on knowing our destination. I jumped into this thing blindly, but I'm going to see my way out of it before we go much farther. Where are we going?"

"You—you will learn this soon enough," insisted the other.

"Am I to see her soon? That's what I want to know."

"You must not insist!" cried the soldier. "Why are you so anxious to see her?" he asked suddenly.

"Don't be so blamed inquisitive," cried Grenfall angrily, impatiently. "Tell me where we are going or I'll put a bullet into you!" Drawing his revolver, he leaned over, grasped the guard by the shoulder and placed the muzzle against his breast.

"For God's sake, be calm! You would not kill me for obeying orders! I am serving one you love. Are you mad? I shall scream if you keep pressing that horrid thing against my side." Lorry felt him tremble and was at once filled with compunction. How could he expect a loyal fellow to disobey orders?

"I beg your pardon a thousand times," he cried, jamming the pistol into his pocket. "You are a brave gentleman, and I am a fool. Take me where you will. I'll go like a lamb. You'll admit, however, that it is exasperating to be going in the dark like this."

"It is a very good thing that it is dark," said the soldier quickly. "The darkness is very kind to us. No one can see us, and we can see no one."

"I should say not. I haven't the faintest idea what you look like. Have I seen you at the castle?"

"Yes, frequently."

"Will you tell me your name?"

"You would not know me by name."

"Are you an officer?"

"No. I am new to the service."

"Then I'll see that you are promoted. I like your stanchness. How old are you?"

"I am—er—twenty-two."

"Of the nobility?"

"My father was of noble birth."

"Then you must be so too. I hope you'll forgive my rudeness. I'm a bit nervous, you know."

"I forgive you gladly."

"Devilish rough road this."

"Devilish. It is a mountain road."

"That's where we were too."

"Where who were?"

"Oh, a young lady and I some time ago. I just happened to think of it."

"It could not have been pleasant."

"You never made a bigger mistake in your life."

"Oh, she must have been pretty, then."

"You are right this time. She is glorious."

"Pardon me. They usually are in such adventures."

"By Jove, you're a clever one!"

"Does she live in America?"

"That's none of your affair."

"Oh!" And then there was silence between them.

"Inquisitive fool!" muttered Gren to himself.

For some time they bumped along over the rough road, jostling against each other frequently, both enduring stoically and silently. Suddenly Lorry remembered the lantern. It was still lit with the slide closed when he threw it on the seat. Perhaps it still burned and could relieve the oppressive darkness if but for a short time. He might at least satisfy his curiosity and look upon the face of his companion. Leaning forward, he fumbled among the traps on the opposite seat.

"I think I'll see if the lantern is lighted. Let's have it a little more cheerful in here," he said. There was a sharp exclamation, and two vigorous hands grasped him by the shoulder, jerking him back unceremoniously.

"No, no! You will ruin all! There must be no light!" cried the soldier, his voice high and shrill.

"But we are out of the city."

"I know! I know! But I will not permit you to have a light. Against orders. We have not passed the outposts," expostulated the other nervously.

"What's the matter with your voice?" demanded Lorry, struck by the change in it.

"My voice?" asked the other, the tones natural again. "It's changing. Didn't it embarrass you when your voice broke like that?" went on the questioner breathlessly. Lorry was now leaning back in the seat, quite a little mystified.

"I don't believe mine ever broke like that," he said speculatively. There was no response, and he sat silent for some time, regretting more and more that it was so dark.

Gradually he became conscious of a strange, unaccountable presence in that dark cab. He could feel a change coming over him. He could not tell why, but he was sure that some one else was beside him, some one who was not the soldier. Something soft and delicate and sweet came into existence, permeating the darkness with its undeniable presence. A queer power seemed drawing him toward the other end of the seat. The most delightful sensations took possession of him. His heart fluttered oddly. His head began to reel under the spell.

"Who are you?" he cried in a sort of ecstasy. There was no answer. He remembered his match safe and with trembling, eager fingers drew it from the pocket of the coat he was wearing. The next instant he was scratching a match, but as it flared the body of his companion was hurled against his and a ruthless mouth blew out the feeble blaze.

"Oh, why do you persist?" was cried in his ears.

"I am determined to see your face," he answered sharply, and with a low cry of dismay the other occupant of the carriage fell back in the corner. The next match drove away the darkness and the mystery. With blinking eyes he saw the timid soldier huddling in the corner, one arm covering his face, the other hand vainly striving to pull the skirt of a military coat over a pair of red trouser legs. Below the arm that hid the eyes and nose he saw parted lips and a beardless, dainty chin; above, long, dark tresses strayed in condemning confusion. The breast beneath the blue coat heaved convulsively.

The match dropped from his fingers, and as darkness fell again it hid the soldier in the strong arms of the fugitive—not a soldier bold, but a gasping, blushing, unresisting coward. The little form quivered and then became motionless in the fierce, straining embrace. The head dropped upon his shoulder, his hot lips caressing the burning face and pouring wild, incoherent words into the little ears.

"You! You!" he cried, mad with joy. "Oh, this is heaven itself! My brave darling! Mine forever—mine forever! You shall never leave me now! Drive on! Drive on!" he shouted to the men outside, drunk with happiness. "We'll make this journey endless. I know you love me now—I know it! Oh, I shall die with joy!"

A hand stole gently into his hand, and her lips found his in a long, passionate kiss.

"I do not want you to know! Ach, I am so sorry! Why, why did I come to night? I was so strong, so firm, I thought; but see how weak I am! You dominate me; you own me, body and soul, in spite of everything—against my will. I love you, I love you, I love you!"

"I have won against the princes and the potentates! I was losing hope, my queen—losing hope. You were so far away, so unattainable. I would brave a thousand deaths rather than lose

The next match drove away the darkness and the mystery.

this single minute of my life. It makes me the richest man in all the world. How brave you are! This night you have given up everything for my sake. You are fleeing with me away from all that has been dear to you."

"No, no; you must not be deluded. It is only for tonight, only till you are safe from pursuit. I shall go back. You must not hope for more than this hour of weakness, sweet as it is to me!" she cried.

"You are going back and not with me?" he cried, his heart chilling.

"You knew I cannot. That is why I hoped you would never know how much I care for you. Alas, you have found me out! My love was made rush by fear. You could never have escaped the vengeance of Axphain. I could not have shielded you. This was the only course, and I dared not hesitate. I should have died with terror had you gone to trial, knowing what I knew. You will not think me unwomanly for coming with you as I am. It was necessary—really it was! No one else could have"— But he smothered the wail in kisses.

"Unwomanly!" he exclaimed. "It was by divine inspiration. But you will come with me, away from Graustark, away from every one. Say that you will!"

"I cannot bear to hear you plead, and it breaks my heart to go back there. But I cannot leave Graustark—I cannot! It would be heaven to go with you to the end of the world, but I have others besides myself to consider. You are my god, my idol. I can worship you from my unhappy throne, from my chamber, from the cell into which my heart is to retreat. But I cannot, I will not, desert Graustark—not even for you!"

He was silent, impressed by her nobility, her loyalty. Although the joy ebbed from his craving heart, he saw the justice of her self sacrifice.

"I would give my soul to see your face now, Yetive. Your soul is in your eyes. I can feel it. Why did you not let me stay in prison, meet death and so end all? It would have been better for both of us. I cannot live without you."

"We can live for each other, die for each other—apart. Distance will not lessen my love. You know that it exists. It has been betrayed to you. Can you not be satisfied—just a little bit—with that knowledge?" she pleaded.

"But I want you in reality, not in my dreams, my imagination."

"Ach, we must not talk like this! There is no alternative. You are to go; I am to stay. The future is before us. God knows what it may bring to us. Perhaps it may be good enough to give us happiness—who knows? Do not plead with me. I cannot endure it. Let me be strong again! You will not be so cruel as to battle against me now that I am weak. It would only mean my destruction. You do not seek that!"

His soul, his honor, the greatest reverence he had ever known were in the kiss that touched her brow.

"I shall love you as you command—without hope," he said sadly.

"Without hope for either," she sobbed.

"My poor little soldier," he whispered lovingly as her body writhed under the storm of tears.

"I—I wish—I were a—soldier!" she wailed. He comforted her as best he could, and soon she was quiet—oh, so very quiet! Her head was on his shoulder, her hands in his.

"How far do we drive?" he asked at last.

"To the monastery. We are nearly there," she answered in tones far away.

"The monastery? Why do we go there?" he cried.

"You are to stay there."

"What do you mean? I thought I was to leave Graustark."

"You are to leave—later on. Until the excitement is over the abbey is to be your hiding place. I have arranged everything, and it is the only safe place on earth for you at this time. No one will think of looking for you up there."

"I would to God I could stay there forever, living above you," he said drearily.

"Your window looks down upon the castle; mine looks up to yours. The lights that burn in those two windows will send out beams of love and life for one of us at least."

"For both of us, my sweetheart," he corrected fondly. "You say I will be safe there. Can you trust these men who are aiding you?"

"With my life! Quinnox carried a message to the abbot yesterday, and he grants you a temporary home there, secure and as secret as the tomb. He promises me this, and he is my best friend. Now, let me tell you why I am with you, masquerading so shamefully"—

"Adorably!" he protested.

"It is because the abbot insisted that I bring you to him personally. He will not receive you except from my hands. There was nothing else for me to do, then, was there, Lorry? I was compelled to come, and I could not come as the princess—as a woman. Discovery would have meant degradation from which I could not have hoped to recover. The military garments were my only safeguard."

"And how many people know of your deception?"

"Three besides yourself—Dagmar, Quinnox and Captain Dangloss. The abbot will know later on, and I shiver as I think of it. The driver and the man who went to your cell, Ogbot, know of the escape, but do not know I am here. Allode—you remember him—is our driver."

"Allode? He's the fellow who saw me—er—who was in the throneroom."

"He is the man who saw nothing, sir."

"I remember his obedience," he said, laughing in spite of his unhappiness. "Am I to have no freedom up here—no liberty at all?"

"You are to act as the abbot or the prior instructs, and, I must not forget, Quinnox will visit you occasionally. He will conduct you from the monastery and to the border line at the proper time."

"Alas, he will be my murderer, I fear! Yetive, you do not believe I killed Lorens. I know that most of them do, but I swear to you I am no more the perpetrator of that cowardly crime than you. God bears testimony to my innocence. I want to hear you say that you do not believe I killed him."

"I feared so at first—no, do not be angry—I feared you had killed him for my sake, but now I am sure that you are innocent."

The carriage stopped too soon, and Quinnox opened the door. It was still as dark as pitch, but the downpour had ceased except for a disagreeable, misty drizzle, cold and penetrating.

"We have reached the stopping place," he said.

"And we are to walk from here to the gate," said the princess, resuming her hoarse, manly tones. While they were busy donning their raincoats she whispered in Lorry's ear, "I beg of you, do not let him know that you have discovered who I am."

He promised, and lightly snatched a kiss, an act of indiscretion that almost brought fatal results. Forgetful of the darkness, she gave vent to a little protesting shriek, fearing that the eyes of the captain had witnessed the pretty transgression. Lorry laughed as he sprang to the road and turned to assist her in alighting. She promptly and thoughtfully averted the danger his gallantry presented by ignoring the outstretched hands, discernible as slender shadows protruding from an object a shade darker than the night, and leaped boldly to the ground.

With Lorry in the center, the trio walked off rapidly in the darkness, the fugitive with the sense of fear that belongs only to a blind man. A little light far ahead told the position of the gate, and for this they bent their steps. Reaching the gate, the captain pounded vigorously, and a sleepy monk soon peered from the little window through which shone the light.

"On important business with the abbot, from her royal highness the Princess Yetive," said Quinnox in response to a sharp query, spoken in the Graustark tongue. A little gate beside the big one opened, and the monk, lantern in hand, bade them enter.

"Await me here, captain," commanded the slim, straight soldier, with face turned from the light. A moment later the gate closed, and Lorry was behind the walls of St. Valentine's, a prisoner again. The monk preceded them across the dark court toward the great black mass, his lantern creating ghastly shadows against the broken mist. His followers dropped some little distance behind, the tall one's arm stealing about the other's waist, his head bending to a level with hers.

"Is it to be goodby, dearest?" he asked. "Goodby forever?"

"I cannot say that. It would be like wishing you dead. Yet there is no hope. No, no! We will not say goodby—forever," she said despairingly.

"Won't you bid me hope?"

"Impossible! You will stay here until Quinnox comes to take you away. Then you must not stop until you are in your own land. We may meet again"—

"Yes, by my soul, we shall meet again! I'll do as you bid and all that, but I'll come back when I can stay away no longer. Go to your castle and look forward to the day that will find me at your feet again. It is bound to come."

They passed inside the massive doors and halted. "You must remain here until I have seen the prior," she said, laughing nervously and glancing down at the boots which showed beneath the long coat. Then she hastily followed the monk, disappearing down the corridor. In ten minutes—ten hours to Lorry—she returned with her guide.

"He will take you to your room," she said breathlessly, displaying unmistakable signs of embarrassment. "Goodby, and God be with you always. Remember, I love you."

The monk's back was turned, so the new recluse snatched the slight figure to his heart.

"Some day?" he whispered.

She would not speak, but he held her until she nodded her head.

CHAPTER XX.

THE APPROACHING ORDEAL.

"THE American has escaped!" was the cry that spread through Edelweiss the next morning.

It brought undisguised relief to the faces of thousands. There was not one who upbraided Baron Dangloss for his astounding negligence. Never before had a criminal escaped from the tower. The only excuse, uttered in woebegone tone, was that the prison had not been constructed or manned for such clever scoundrels as Yankees—good name for audacity.

The full story of the daring break for liberty flashed from lip to lip during the day, and it was known all over the water swept city before noon. Baron Dangloss himself had gone to the prisoner's cell early in the morning, mystified by the continued absence of the guard. The door was locked, but from within came groans and cries. Alarmed at once, the captain procured duplicate keys and entered the cell. There he found the helpless, blood covered Ogbot, bound hand and foot and almost dead from loss of blood. The clothes of the American were on the floor, while his own were missing, gone with the prisoner.

Ogbot as soon as he was able related his experience of the night before. It was while making his rounds at midnight that he heard moans from the cell. Animated by a feeling of pity, he opened the slab door and asked if he were ill. The wretched American was lying on the bed, apparently suffering. He said something which the guard could not understand, but which he took to be a plea for assistance. Not suspecting a trick, the kindly guard unlocked the second door and stepped to the bedside only to have the sick man rise suddenly and deal him a treacherous blow over the head with the heavy stool he had secreted behind him. Ogbot knew nothing of what followed, so effective was the blow. When he regained consciousness, he was lying on the bed just as the captain had found him. The poor fellow, overwhelmed by the enormity of his mistake, begged Dangloss to shoot him at once. But Dangloss had him conveyed to the hospital ward and tenderly cared for.

Three guards in one of the offices saw a man whom they supposed to be Ogbot pass from the prison shortly after 12, and the mortified chief admitted that some one had gone through his private apartment. As the prisoner had taken Ogbot's keys, he experienced little difficulty in getting outside the gates. But, vowed Dangloss stormily, he should be recaptured if it required the efforts of all the policemen in Edelweiss. The chagrin of the grim old captain, who had never lost a prisoner, was pitiful to behold.

The forenoon was half over before Harry Anguish heard of his friend's escape. To say that he was paralyzed would be putting it much too mildly. There is no language that can adequately describe his sensations. Forgetting his bodyguard, he tore down the street toward the prison, wild with anxiety and doubt. He met Baron Dangloss, tired and worn, near the gate, but the old officer could tell him nothing except what he had learned from

"Oh, I beg pardon!"

Ogbot. Of one thing there could be no doubt—Lorry was gone. Not knowing where to turn or what to do, Anguish raced off to the castle, his bodyguard having located him in the meantime. He was more in need of their protection than ever.

At the castle gates he encountered a party of raving Axphainians, crazed with anger over the flight of the man whose life they had thirsted for so ravenously. Had he been unprotected Anguish would have fared badly at their hands, for they were outspoken in their assertions that he had aided Lorry in the escape. One fiery little fellow cast a glove in the American's face and expected a challenge. Anguish snapped his fingers and sarcastically invited the insulter to meet him next winter in a battle with snowballs, upon which the aggressor blasphemed in three languages and 300 gestures.

Anguish and his men passed inside the gates, which had been barred to the others, and struck out rapidly for the castle doors.

The Princess Yetive was sleeping soundly, peacefully, with a smile on her lips, when her prime minister sent an excited attendant to inform her of the prisoner's escape. She sat up in bed, and, with her hands clasped about her knees, sleepily announced that she would receive him after her coffee was served. Then she summoned her maids.

(To be continued.)

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NOTICE OF FINAL SETTLEMENT.

In the County Court for Josephine County, Oregon.

In the Matter of the Estate of Josiah F. Van Ness, Deceased.

Notice is hereby given that Joseph Moss, the administrator of the estate of Josiah F. Van Ness, deceased, has filed with the County Court for Josephine County, Oregon, his final account in the matter of said estate, and the Hon. J. O. Booth, judge of said court, has fixed Thursday, April 21, 1904, at the hour of 10 o'clock A. M. of said date at the court house in Grants Pass, Josephine County, Oregon, as the time for hearing any objections to said account that may be presented, and all persons interested in said estate are hereby notified to file their objections thereto on or before said date.

Dated March 23, A. D., 1904.

Joseph Moss, Administrator.

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS.

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has been appointed administrator of the estate of H. H. Barton, deceased. All persons having claims against said estate are requested to present the same to the undersigned at Grants Pass, Oregon, with the proper vouchers, within six months from this date.

March 23, 1904.

MARY L. BOBZIEN,
Administratrix.

CONTEST NOTICE.

Department of the Interior.
United States Land Office.
Roseburg, Oregon, March 23, 1904.

A sufficient contest affidavit having been filed in this office by John M. Eades, contestant, against homestead entry No. 10,361, made December 12, 1900, for E½ NW¼, NE¼ SW¼ Section 30, Township 33 South, Range 6 West, by Charles A. Hill, contestee, in which it is alleged that Charles A. Hill had not established his residence on the said land, that he has made no effort to cultivate or improve the same, and that he has abandoned the said land, having been absent without obtaining leave for a period of more than six months last past, said parties are hereby notified to appear, respond and offer evidence touching said allegation at 10 o'clock a. m., on June 15, 1904, before R. L. Bartlett, County Clerk, Grants Pass, Oregon, and that final hearing will be held at 10 o'clock a. m., on June 25, 1904, before the Register and Receiver at the United States Land Office in Roseburg, Oregon.

The said contestant having, in a proper affidavit, filed March 23, 1904, set forth facts which show that after due diligence personal service of this notice can not be made, it is hereby ordered and directed that such notice be given by due and proper publication.

J. H. Booth, Receiver

NOTCE TO LABORERS AND MINERS.

To all whom it may concern: Notice is hereby given:

That all those certain Placer mining claims, situated in Township 39, South; Range 9 west of the Willamette Meridian and on the left hand bank of Josephine Creek, and the "Blue Jay" on the right hand bank, in the county of Josephine and State of Oregon, and lying between Fiddlers' Gulch, and Days Gulch, are owned ty Edward Dailey and David Bour. That said Mining claims are being worked by M. Marks, under an agreement in the nature of a Deed in Escrow.

Therefore, all laborers and miners are hereby notified that they are not entitled to a laborers' lien on said above described property (mining claims,) under the law. And we warn all persons who are working for the said M. Marks, not to attempt to file liens against said above described mining claims or either of them, as we will contest all or any liens, that may be filed on said claims.

January 30th, 1904.

EDWARD DAILEY,
DAVID BOUR.

NOTICE OF FORFEITURE.

Grants Pass, Oregon, Feb 4, 1904.

To S. J. Paul:

You are hereby notified that the undersigned, Franta Novotny has expended during the year ending December 31, 1901, One Hundred Dollars in labor and improvements on each of the following described mining claims, to-wit:

The Iron Horse Quartz Mining Claim situated in Wolf Creek (unorganized) Mining District, Josephine County, Oregon, the location notice of which was on March 31, 1900, filed for record with the County Clerk for Josephine County, Oregon, and the same now appears of record in Volume 13 of Mining Records of Josephine County, Oregon, at page 338 thereof.

Also that quartz mining claim known as the Climax, situated in the Wolf Creek (unorganized) Mining District, Josephine County, Oregon, the location notice of which was on June 15, 1900, filed for record in the office of the County Clerk for Josephine County, Oregon, and the same now appears of record in Vol. 13 Mining Records of said County at page 400 thereof.

Also the Dutchman Quartz Mining Claim situated in Mt. Reuben (unorganized) Mining District, Josephine County, Oregon, as particularly described in the location notice thereof filed in the office of the County Clerk for Josephine County, Oregon, June 21, 1901, and the same now appears of record in Vol. 14 of Mining records of said County at page 142 thereof.

That I expended the moneys aforesaid on said mining claims under the provisions of section 2324 of the Revised Statutes of the United States and the amendment thereto, approved January 22, 1889, concerning annual labor on mining claims, the sums so expended on each of said claims being the annual assessment and representation work thereon, and the amount required to hold each of said mining claims for the period ending December 31, 1902.

You are further notified that if within ninety days from the time of personal service of this notice upon you, or within ninety days after the first publication hereof you fail or refuse to contribute your portion of such expenditure as co-owner, to-wit: one-half thereof, your interest in each of said claims will become the property of the undersigned, your co-owner, who has made the expenditure required in accordance with the requirements of the law in such cases made and provided.

FRANTA NOVOTNY
Co-owner.

CATARRH

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Atlantic Express 8:15 p. m. via Huntington.	Salt Lake, Denver, Ft. Worth, Omaha, Kansas City, St. Louis, Chicago and East.	9:00 a.m.
St. Paul Fast Mail 7:45 a. m. via Spokane.	Walla Walla, Lewiston, Spokane, Wallace, Pullman, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, Milwaukee, Chicago and East.	8:00 a. m.

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