

TRUXTON KING

A Story of
...Graumark

By GEORGE BARR
M'GUTHGHEON

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CHAPTER IV. TRUXTON TRESPASSES.

THERE was a sparkle in King's eyes as he struck out across town after breakfast the next morning. He burst in upon Mr. Hobbs at Cook's.

"Say, Hobbs, how about the castle today—in an hour, say? Can you take a party of one rubbernecking this morning? I want you to get me into the castle grounds today and show me where the duchesses dawdle and the countesses cavort."

"Of course, sir, you understand there are certain parts of the park not open to the public. The grotto and the playgrounds and the Basin of Venus."

"I'll not trespass, so don't fidget, Hobbs. I'll be here for you at 10."

Truxton hurried to the square and across it to the shop of the armorer, not forgetting, however, to look about in some anxiety for the excellent Dangloss, who might, for all he knew, be snooping in the neighborhood.

Spantz was at the rear of the shop talking to a customer. The girl was behind the counter, dressed for the street.

She came quickly out to him, a disturbed expression in her face. As he defied his hat the smile left his lips. He saw that she had been weeping.

"You must not come here, Mr. King," she said hurriedly in low tones. "Take your broadsword this morning, and please, for my sake, do not come again. I—I may not explain why I am asking you to do this."

"Just a minute, please," he interrupted. "I've heard your story from Baron Dangloss. Are you in trouble? Do you need friends, Miss Platanoova?"

"The baron has told you all about me?" She smiled sadly. "Alas, he has only told you what he knows. But it should be sufficient. There is no place in my life for you or any one else. There never can be. Do you question me? I can say no more. Now I must be gone. I—I have warned you. Do not come again."

She slipped into the street and was gone. King stood in the doorway, looking after her, a puzzled gleam in his eyes. Old Spantz was coming up from the rear, followed by his customer.

"Hello, Mr. Spantz! Good morning. I'm here for the sword."

The old man glared at him in unmistakable displeasure. Truxton began counting out his money. The customer, a swarthy fellow, passed out of the door, turning to glance intently at the young man. A meaning look and a sly nod passed between him and Spantz.

The man halted at the corner below and later on followed King to Cook's office, afterward to the castle gates, outside of which he waited until his quarry reappeared. Until King went to bed late that night this swarthy fellow was close at his heels, always a SWARTHY FELLOW keeping well out PASSED OUT OF OFEIGHT HIMSELF.

"I'll come in soon to look at those rings," said King, placing the notes on the counter. Spantz merely nodded, raked in the bills without counting them and passed the sword over to the purchaser.

Truxton picked up the weapon and stalked away.

A few minutes later he was on his way to the castle grounds, accompanied by the short legged Mr. Hobbs.

Hobbs led him through the great park gates and up to the lodge of Jacob Fraasch, the venerable high steward of the grounds. Here, to King's utter disgust, he was booked as a plain Cook's tourist and mechanically advised to pay strict attention to the rules.

"It's no disgrace," growled Hobbs, redder than ever. "You're inside the grounds, and you've got to obey the rules, same as any tourist. Right this way, sir. We'll take a turn just inside the wall. Now, on your left, ladies and—ahem—I should say—ahem!—sir, you may see the first turret ever built on the wall. It is over 400 years old. On the right we have—"

"See here, Hobbs," said King, stopping short. "I'm dashed if I'll let you lecture me as if I were a gang of hayseeds from Joshville."

"Very good, sir. No offense. I quite forgot, sir."

"Just tell me, old chap. Don't lecture. Hobbs, this is all very beautiful and very grand and very slow," said King, stopping to lean against the moss covered wall that encircled the park within a park, the grounds adjoining the grotto. "Can't I hop over this wall and take a peep into the grotto?"

"By no means!" cried Hobbs, horrified. King looked over the low wall. The prospect was alluring. The pool, the

trickling rivulets, the mossy banks, the dense shadows—it was maddening to think he could not enter.

"I wouldn't be in there a minute," he argued. "And I might catch a glimpse of a dream lady. Now, I say, Hobbs, here's a low place. I could jump!"

"Mr. King, if you do that I am ruined forever. I am trusted by the steward. He would cut off all my privileges"—Hobbs could go no further. He was prematurely agast. Something told him that Mr. King would hop over the wall.

"Go and report me, Hobbs; there's a good fellow. Tell the guards I wouldn't obey. That will let you out, my boy, and I'll do the rest."

He strode off across the bright green turf toward the source of all this enchantment, leaving poor Mr. Hobbs braced against the wall, weak kneed and helpless.

"What are you doing in here?" demanded a voice.

Truxton, conscious of guilt, whirled with as much consternation as if he had been accosted by a voice of thunder. He beheld a very small boy standing at the top of the knoll above him, not thirty feet away. His face was quite as dirty as any small boy's should be at that time of day, and his curly brown hair looked as if it had not been combed since the day before. His firm little legs, in half hose and presumably white knickers, were spread apart, and his hands were in his pockets.

King recognized him at once and looked about uneasily for the attendants who, he knew, should be near. It is safe to say that he came to his feet and bowed deeply, even in humility.

"I am resting, your highness," he said meekly.

"Don't you know any better than to come in here?" demanded the prince. Truxton turned very red.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I'll go at once."

"Oh, I'm not going to put you out!" hastily exclaimed the prince, coming down the slope. "But you are old enough to know better. You are the gentleman who picked up my crop yesterday. You are an American."

"Yes, a lonely American," with an attempt at the pathetic.

The youngster looked cautiously about. "Say, do you ever go fishing?" he demanded eagerly.

"Occasionally."

"You won't give me away, will you?" with a warning frown. "Don't you tell Jacob Fraasch. He's the steward. I—I know a fine place to fish."

The prince led the way up the bank, followed by the amused American. "Who stooped so admirably that the boy looking back, whispered that it was 'just fine.'"

At the top of the knoll the prince turned into a little shrub lined path leading down to the banks of the pool almost directly below the rocky face of the grotto.

The prince scurried behind a big rock and reappeared at once with a willow branch from the end of which dangled a piece of thread. A bent pin occupied the chief end in view. He unceremoniously shoved the branch into the hands of his confederate and then produced from one of his pockets a silver cigarette box, which he gingerly opened to reveal to the gaze a conglomerate mass of angleworms and grubs.

"A fellow gets awful dirty digging for worms, doesn't he?" he pronounced.

The prince took the branch and gingerly dropped the hook into the dancing pool. In less time than it requires to tell he had a nibble, a bite and a catch. There never was a boy so excited as he when a scarlet nibbler flew into the shrubbery above.

On the opposite bank of the pool suddenly appeared two rigid members of the royal guard, intently watching the fishers. King was somewhat disturbed by the fact that their rifles were in a position to be used at an instant's notice. He felt himself turning pale as he thought of what might have happened if he had taken to flight.

A young lady in a rajah silk gown, a filmy panama hat tilted well over her nose, with a red feather that stood erect as if always in a state of surprise, turned the bushes and came to a stop almost at King's elbow. He had time to note in his confusion that she was about shoulder high alongside him and that she was staring up into his face with amazed gray eyes. Afterward he was to realize that she was amazingly pretty; that her teeth were very white and even; that her eyes were the most beautiful and expressive he had ever seen, that she was slender and imperious; and that there were dimples in her cheeks so fascinating that he could not gather sufficient strength of purpose to withdraw his gaze from them. Of course he did not see them at the outset. She was not smiling, so how could he?

The prince came to the rescue. "This is my Aunt Lorraine, Mr.—Mr.—" He swallowed hard and looked helpless.

"King," supplied Truxton—"Truxton King, your highness." Then, with all the courage he could produce, he said to the beautiful lady: "I'm as guilty as he. See?" He pointed ruefully to four goldfish which he had strung upon wire grass and dropped into the edge of the pool.

"Please put those poor little things back in the pool, Mr. King," said the lady in perfect English.

"Gladly, with the prince's permission," said King, also in English. The prince looked grim, but interposed no imperial objection.

It must be confessed that King's composure was sorely disturbed. He glanced up to find her studying him, plainly perplexed.

"I just wandered in here," he began guiltily. "The prince captured me down there by the big tree."

"Did you say your name is Truxton King?" she asked somewhat skeptically.

"Yes, your—yes, ma'am," he replied, "of New York."

"Your father is Mr. Emerson King?"

Are you the brother of Adele King?" she asked.

"I am."

"I've heard her speak of her brother Truxton. She said you were in South America."

She was regarding him with cool, speculative interest. "I wonder if you are he?"

"I think I am," he said, but doubtfully. "Please pardon my amazement. Perhaps I'm dreaming. At any rate, I'm dazed."

"We were in the convent together for two years. Now that I observe you closely you do resemble her. We were very good friends, she and I."

"Then you'll intercede for me?" he urged, with a fervent glance in the direction of the wall.

She smiled joyously.

"More than that," she said, "I shall assist you to escape. Come!"

He followed her through the shrubbery, his heart pounding violently.

"Say!" whispered the prince a few moments later, dropping back as if to impart a grave secret. "See that man over there by the fountain, Mr. King?"

"Bobby!" cried the lady sharply. "Goodby, Mr. King. Remember me to your sister when you write. She"—



"DON'T YOU KNOW ANY BETTER THAN TO COME IN HERE?"

"That's Aunt Lorraine's beau," announced the prince. "That's Count Eric Vos Engo." Truxton's look turned to one of interest at once. The man designated was a slight, swarthy fellow in the uniform of a colonel. He did not appear to be particularly happy at the moment.

The American observed the lady's dainty ears. They had turned a delicate pink.

"May I ask who?" began Truxton timidly.

"She will know if you merely call me Lorraine."

They parted company at once, the prince and the lady in the rajah silk going toward the castle, King toward the gates, somewhat dazed and by no means sure of his senses.

(To Be Continued.)

FLOGGING OF AMERICAN MAY LEAD TO COMPLICATIONS

WINNIPEG, Man., March 14.—William Howell of Boston, a book agent, threatened to precipitate international complications between England and the United States as the result of his recent conviction on charges of assaulting a woman. He was convicted by a police magistrate without trial and sentenced to be flogged and to serve fifteen years in the penitentiary. He was flogged at once, then filed an appeal. The higher court quashed the conviction and ordered a new trial but specifically stated that he could not get damages because he had been flogged. Howell declares he has been denied his rights as an American citizen and that he will appeal to Secretary of State Knox at Washington.

UNIVERSITIES TO HOLD BIG MEET APRIL 30

PHILADELPHIA, Pa., March 14.—Three events for inter-collegiate championship of America will be the leading features of the sixteenth annual relay carnival to be held on Franklin Field April 30. From entries and assurances already received nearly every university east of the Mississippi and a few from the west will be represented in one or more of the games.

Yale, Columbia, Princeton, Cornell, Dartmouth and probably Harvard, are among those from the east which are practically certain to enter teams.

Michigan, Chicago, Illinois and Wisconsin and others will enter from the west.

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One mile from city; five acres Bartlett pears, 2 to 10 years old, 5 acres other fruit; good house, barn, etc; \$10,500, terms.

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Six miles from city; 13 acres in fruit, 25 acres alfalfa, 10 acres timber; good seven-room house, barn and other buildings; \$15,000, terms.

88 ACRES

Two and one-half miles from Medford; 30 acres 5-year-old Bose pears, 20 acres 1-year-old pears, and 3 acres Newtowns; five-room house and barn; \$20,000, easy terms.

115 ACRES

Five miles from city; 100 acres good fruit land; 50 acres 7 and 8-year-old Newtowns, 10 acres Jonathans in bearing, 10 acres Bartlett pears; this is one of the finest ranches in the valley and will pay for itself in a few years. Let us show you.

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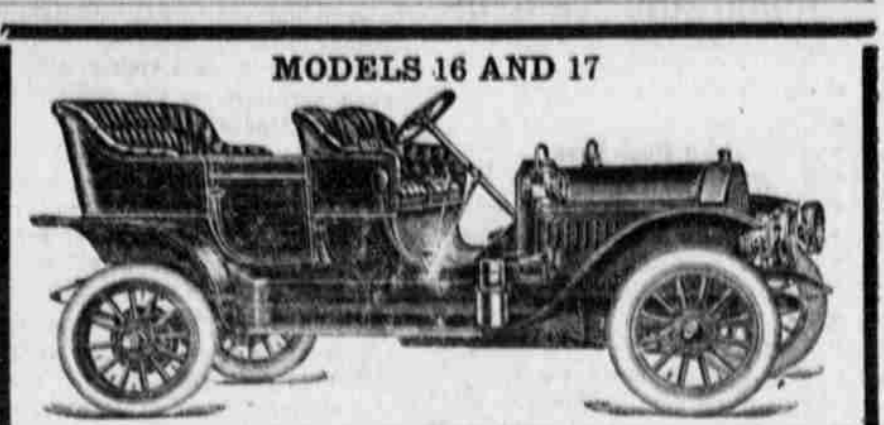
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