

# TRUXTON KING

A Story of  
Graumark

By GEORGE BARR  
M'CLUTCHEON

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## CHAPTER V. THE COMMITTEE OF TEN.

It has been said before that Truxton King was the unsuspecting object of interest to two sets of watchers. The fact that he was under the surveillance of the government police is not surprising when we consider the evident thoroughness of that department, but that he should be continually watched by persons of a more sinister cast suggests a mystery which can be cleared up by visiting a certain underground room unknown to the police scarce two blocks from the Tower of Graumark.

There were two ways of reaching this windowless room, with its low ceilings and dank atmosphere. If one had the secret in his possession he could go down through the mysterious trapdoor in the workshop of William Spantz, armorer to the crown, or he might come up through a hidden aperture in the walls of the great government sewer which ran directly parallel with and far below the walls of the quaint old building. One could take his choice of direction in approaching this hole in the huge sewer—he could come up from the river, half a mile away, or he could come down from the hills above if he had the courage to drop through one of the intakes.

It is of special significance that the trapdoor in Spantz's workshop was preserved for by the armorer and his more fastidious comrades, of whom three were women and one an established functionary in the royal household.

The committee of ten represented the brains and the activity of a rabid coterie in Edelweiss, among themselves styled the Party of Equals. In plain language, they were "reds."

The nominal leader was William Spantz, he who had a son in the prince's household, Julius Spantz, the master of arms. Far off in the hills above the Danube there lived the real leader of this deadly group—the Iron Count Marlanx, exile from the land of his birth, hated and execrated by every loyal Graumarkian, hating and execrating in return with a tenfold greater venom.

Olga Platanova was the latest acquisition to this select circle. A word concerning her: She was the daughter of Professor Platanova, one time oculist and sociologist in a large German university. He had been one of the most brilliant men in Europe and a member of a noble family. Less than a year before the opening of this tale he was executed for treason and conspiracy against the empire.

His daughter, Olga, was recognized as one of the most beautiful and cultured young women in Warsaw. Her suitors seemed to be without number. Finally there came one who conquered and was beloved. He was the son of a mighty duke, a prince of the blood. The young prince pledged himself to marry her despite all opposition; he was ready to give up his noble inheritance for the sake of love. The all powerful ruler of an empire learned of this proposed mesalliance and was horrified. The will of the crown was made known to him and he obeyed. Olga Platanova was cast aside, but not forgotten. He became the husband of an unloved, scrawny lady of diadems. When the situation became more than he could bear he blew out his brains.

When Olga heard the news of his death she was not stricken by grief. She cried out her joy to a now cloudless sky, for he had justified the great love that had been theirs and would be theirs to the end of time.

From a passive believer in the doctrines of her father and his circle she became at once their most impassioned exponent. She threw herself, heart and soul into the deliberations and transactions of the great red circle; her father understood and yet was amazed.

Then he was put to death by the class she had come to hate—one more stone in the sepulcher of her tender, girlish ideals. When the time came she traveled to Graumark in response to the call of the committee of ten; she came prepared to kill the creature she would be asked to kill. And yet down in her heart she was sore afraid.

She was there not to kill a man grown old in wrongs to her people, but to destroy the life of a gentle, innocent boy of seven!

There were times when her heart shrank from the unholy deed she had been selected to perform. But there was never a thought of receding from the bloody task set down for her.

On a Saturday night, following the last visit of Truxton King to the armorer, the committee of ten met in the underground room to hear the last word from one who could not be with them in person, but was always there in spirit, if they were to believe his most zealous utterances. The Iron Count Marlanx, professed hater of all that was rich and noble, was the power behind the committee of ten. The assassination of the little prince

and the overthrow of the royal family awaited his pleasure. He was the man who would give the word.

Alas for the committee of ten! The wildest fox in the history of the world was never so wily as the Iron Count. Some day they were to find out that he was using them to pull his choicest chestnuts from the fire.

The committee was seated around the long table in the stifling, breathless room, the armorer at the head. Those who came by way of the sewer had performed ablutions in the queer toilet room that once had been a secret vault for the storing of feudal plunder. What air there was came from the narrow ventilator that burrowed its way up to the shop of William Spantz or through the chimney hole in the ceiling. Olga Platanova sat far down the side, a moody, inscrutable expression in her dark eyes. At Spantz's right lounged Peter Brutus, a lawyer, formerly secretary to the Iron Count and now his sole representative among these people. He was a dark faced, snaky eyed young man, with a mop of coarse black hair that hung ominously low over his high, receding forehead.

Julius Spantz, the armorer's son, a placid young man of goodly physical proportions, sat next to Brutus, while down the table ranged others deep in the consideration of the world's gravest problems. One of the women was Mme. Drovnsk, whose husband had been sent to Siberia for life, and the other Anna Cromer, a rabid red lecturer, who had been driven from the United States, together with her amiable husband, an assassin of some distinction and many aliases, at present foreman in charge of one of the bridge building crews on the new railroad.

Every man in the party, and there were eight, for Olga was not a member of the "ten," wore over the lower part of his face a false black beard of huge dimensions—not that they were averse to recognition among themselves, but in the fear that by some hook or crook Dangloss or his agents might be able to look in upon them.

Brutus was speaking. "The man is a spy. He has been brought here from America to Tullia." "We shall continue to watch his every movement," said William Spantz. "Time will tell. When we are positive that he is a detective and that he is dangerous there is a way to stop his operations."

"Dangloss suspects more than one of us," ventured Brutus, his gaze traveling toward Olga. There was lewd admiration in that steady glance. "But we'll fool the old fox. The time will soon be here for the blow that frees Graumark from the yoke."

It appeared in the course of his remarks that Marlanx had friends and supporters in all parts of Graumark. Hundreds of men in the hills, including honest shepherds and the dishonest brigands who thrived on them, coal miners and wood stealers, hunters and outlaws were ready to do his bidding when the time was ripe. Moreover, Marlanx had been successful in his design to fill the railway construction crews with the riffraff of all Europe, all of whom were under the control of leaders who could sway them in any movement provided it was against law and order.

With a cunning that commands admiration, the Iron Count deliberately sanctioned the assassination of the little prince of the reds, knowing that the condemnation of the world would fall upon them instead of upon him and that his own actions following the regicide would at once stamp him as irrevocably opposed to anarchy and all of its practices!

In the course of his remarks Peter Brutus touched hastily upon the subject of the little prince. "He's not very big," said he, with a laugh, "and it won't require a very big bomb to blow him to smithereens. He will!"

"Stop!" cried Olga Platanova, springing to her feet. "I cannot listen to you! You shall not speak of it in that way!"

Olga's lids were lifted. Her dark eyes looked straight into those of the older woman. "No," she said quietly, her body relaxing. "I shall not bungle it."

The discussion went back to Truxton King. "Isn't it possible that he is merely attracted by the beauty of our charming young friend here?" ventured Mme. Drovnsk.

"It is part of his game," said Julius Spantz. "He knows Olga's past. He is waiting for a chance to catch her off her guard. He may even go so far as to make pretty love to you, cousin, in the hope that—No offense, my dear, no offense!" Her look had silenced him.

"Mr. King is not a spy," she said steadily. "Well," said William Spantz, "we are safe if we take no chances with him. He must be watched all the time. If we discover that he is what some of us think he is there is a way to end his usefulness. Now, Brutus, what does Count Marlanx say to this day two weeks? Will he be ready? On that day the prince and the court are to witness the unveiling of the Yelive memorial statue in the plaza. It is a full holiday in Graumark. No man will be employed at his usual task, and—"

Brutus interrupted him. "That is the very day that the count has asked me to submit to the committee. He believes it to be the day of all days. Nothing should go amiss. We conquer with a single blow. By noon of that day, the 20th of July, the committee of ten will be in control of the state; the new regime will be at hand. A new world will be begun, with Edelweiss as the center, about which all the rest shall revolve. We, the committee of ten, will be its true founders. We shall be glorified forever. The death of the prince is the signal for the overthrow of the present government and the establishment of the new order of equal humanity."

Up in the distant hills slept the Iron Count, dreaming of the day when he should rule over the new Graumark—for he would rule!—a smile on his grizzled face in reflection of recent waking thoughts concerning the punishment that should fall swiftly upon the assassins of the beloved Prince Robin. He would make short shrift of assassins!

(To Be Continued.)

### WILL PROHIBIT KILLING WHITE HERONS IN SEASON

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 14.—According to advices received here today from Consul Isaac A. Manning of Guarira, Venezuela, the Venezuelan government has passed a law to prohibit the killing of white herons during the mating season.

This action was taken owing to the fact that large numbers of the birds were killed yearly by hunters for the argente, which is much used in millinery for decorating women's hats.

According to the new law, each hunter is now compelled to secure a permit to gather heron feathers from the president of the state in which he proposes to operate and under no circumstances is the slaughter of the birds allowed.

### RATS AND RHEUMATISM DRIVE HIM TO SUICIDE

CINCINNATI, March 15.—Relatives of Charles Hinterberger, aged fifty, single, thought his death today was from natural causes, although sudden.

But the coroner's constable, Chas. Stagnaro, came across this note: "Rats in this house and continued pains from rheumatism drove me to this, so forgive me. Good bye to all Charlie." It is thought that the man took paris green.

### ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE.

Notice is hereby given, that the undersigned has, by the county court of the state of Oregon for the county of Jackson, been appointed administrator with the will annexed of the estate of Sylvestre Scudder, deceased.

All persons owning or holding claims against said estate are hereby notified and required to present the same, duly verified, as required by law, to me in Medford, Oregon, within six months after the date of this notice; and all persons owing said estate are notified to make immediate payment.

Dated March 8th, 1910; date of first publication March 8, 1910.

W. E. PHIPPS, Administrator, with will annexed, of the estate of Sylvestre Scudder, deceased.

### GILT EDGE INVESTMENTS

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A fine corner lot 60x150, improved, just off of Oakdale; a snap at \$1000.

Take a look at our Ross Park lots. They are A No. 1; only \$350; terms to suit you.

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128 East Main. Wright & Allin 128 East Main Street.

### NO MORE OF CUPID'S GAME FOR THIS WOMAN

SPOKANE, Wash., March 15.—Mrs. Madge King, the self-proclaimed "queen of matrimony," who was arrested in Spokane a few days ago on the charge of swindling unsophisticated swains and lonely spinsters and widows in various parts of the Pacific northwest with the ancient matrimonial bureau game, said in an interview at the city jail that she will reform when she is permitted to leave the cell. Her husband is also under arrest on a similar charge.

"No more matrimony in mine when I get out of here," quoth Mrs. King, adding: "Me for the housework, where I belong, instead of butting into Dan Cupid's game. I never was cut out for a match-maker, anyhow. We did not hold them up strong as they do in New York, Boston, Chicago and other eastern cities. They make a minimum charge of \$25 for an introduction to soul mates, while out here we were giving the people a regular bargain counter rate, never charging more than \$5 for bringing them together."

### WHOLESALE MURDER AND ARSON IS SUSPECTED

BOISE, Idaho, March 15.—Wholesale murder, following robbery, is suspected in the burning to death early yesterday of Theophil Thont, his wife and two grown daughters, in a fire which destroyed their home six miles west of Twin Falls. When the fire was discovered by neighbors it was too late to rescue the occupants, and after the house was consumed the four bodies were found in the ashes.

Thont recently arrived in this country from Nebraska, purchasing a ranch. He was known to possess considerable means. The two daughters who lost their lives had been educated in Europe.

Two horsemen were seen riding

through the streets of Filer, a nearby town, shortly after the fire was discovered, hurrying away from the direction of the burning home.

The sheriff of Twin Falls county and a large posse are now riding over the country where the two suspects were last seen.

### FLOWERS FIRST TO GREET HER RESTORED SIGHT

DETROIT, Mich., March 15.—Red tulips in a florist's window were the first objects to greet the eyes of fourteen-year-old Norma Bentley yesterday after she had been totally blind since the day before last Thanksgiving day.

"I can see, mamma, I can see!" the child cried suddenly as she was being led along the street by her mother. And she removed the big goggles that had been shielding her eyes.

"What do you see, my child?" the mother asked doubtfully.

"Red tulips," laughed the little girl in delight. Then she became quiet and thoughtful as the second object that met her view was a blind man.

Doctors attribute the child's blindness to anæmia, and say that the return of sight followed the building up of her constitution.

### INSURGENTS SHARPENING KNIVES AND TOMAHAWKS

WASHINGTON, March 15.—Insurgents in both house and senate began sharpening their knives and tomahawks today after reading the announcement that the National Republican congressional committee not only did not intend aiding them in their districts, but were going to send speakers and literature into their bailiwicks setting forth nothing but pure, regular Republican doctrine. The statement bears the stamp of approval of the administration.

## FOR SALE 160 Acres

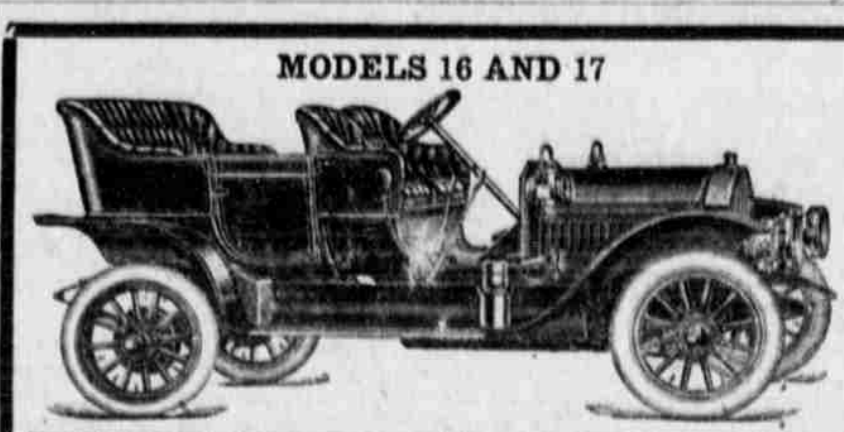
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- YORICK CLUB TROPHY**—First and second, 150 miles at an average speed of 51 miles an hour.
- VESPER CLUB TROPHY**—212 miles at an average speed of 55.5 miles per hour.
- RIVERHEAD, L. I., CLASS 4**—113 miles at an average speed of 70 miles an hour.
- ATLANTA**—200 miles at an average speed of 72.2 miles per hour.

In winning the Los Angeles-Phoenix Desert Race the BUICK achieved one of the greatest victories of the year. This race, run over hills and through fields of sand such as a car seldom encounters, was entered upon with great enthusiasm by the manufacturers of high-priced cars, because they knew that the "popular-priced" car could not stand the grind. But it was the same old story—the BUICK won, defeating its nearest competitor nearly four hours and lowering the record 12 hours, thereby achieving one of the greatest victories for the "popular-priced" car in the history of the automobile.

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