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TRUXTON KING
 A Story of Graustark
 By GEORGE BARR M'GUTCHEON

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CHAPTER IX.

STRAANGE DISAPPEARANCES.
BUT Hobbs halted his mad flight. He decided to return to the hut. His friend might be in desperate need of aid. Then, with his heart in his mouth, he slowly began to retrace his steps, walking where he had galloped a moment before. A turn in the road caused him to draw rein sharply. A hundred yards ahead five or six men were struggling with a riderless bay horse. "By Jove!" ejaculated Hobbs. "It's his horse!" As he drew nearer it struck him forcibly that the men were not what he had thought them to be. They were an evil looking lot, more like the strikers he had seen in the town earlier in the day. Even as he was turning the new thought over in his mind one of them stepped out of the little knot and, without a word of warning, lifted his arm and fired point blank at the little Englishman. A pistol ball whizzed close by his head. His horse leaped to the side of the road in terror, almost unseating him. But Hobbs had fighting blood in his veins. What is more to the point, he had a Mauser revolver in his pocket. He jerked it out and, despite a second shot from the picket, prepared to ride down upon the party. An instant later half a dozen revolvers were blazing away at him. Hobbs turned at once and rode in the opposite direction, whirling to fire twice at the unfriendly group. Soon he was out of range. The only thing left for him to do was to ride at once to the city and give the alarm. Suddenly his horse swerved and leaped furiously out of stride, stumbling, but recovering himself almost instantaneously. In the same second he heard the sharp crack of a firearm far down the unbroken ravine to his left. A second shot came, this time from the

right and close at hand. His horse was staggering, swaying; then down he crashed. Hobbs swinging clear barely in time to escape being pinned to the ground. A stream of blood was pouring from the side of the poor beast. Agitated at this unheard of wantonness, the little interpreter knew not which way to turn, but stood there dazed until a third shot brought him to his senses. The bullet kicked up the dust near his feet. He scrambled for the heavy underbrush at the roadside and darted off into the roadside, his revolver in his hand, his heart palpitating like mad. Time and again as he fled through the dark thickets he heard the hoarse shouts of men in the distance. At 10 o'clock the next morning Colonel Quinox and a company of soldiers riding up from the city gates toward the north in response to a call for help from honest herders who reported attacks and robberies of an alarming nature, came upon the stiff, footsore, thorn scratched Mr. Hobbs not far from the walls of the town. The colonel was not long in grasping the substance of Hobbs' revelations. He rode off at once for the witch's hotel, where Hobbs, with a small, instructed escort to the castle, where Baron Dangloss was in consultation with Mr. Tullis and certain ministers. The city was peaceful enough, much to the surprise of Hobbs. No disturbance had been reported, said the guardsmen who rode beside him. In the hills there had been some depredations, but that was all. "All?" groaned Mr. Hobbs. "All? Hang it all, man, wot do you call all? You haven't heard 'alf of it yet. I tell you, there's been the devil to go. Wait till the colonel comes back from Ganlook gap. He'll have news for you; take it from me, he will. The poor chap 'as gone up in smoke as sure as my name 's Hobbs." They met Baron Dangloss near the barracks, across the park from the castle. He was in close, earnest conversation with John Tullis and Count Halfont, both of whom seemed interested under intense excitement. The arrival of Hobbs, a pitiful but heroic object, at once arrested the attention of every one. His story was heard by a most distinguished audience. "There is nothing supernatural about King's disappearance," said Tullis sharply. "That's all nonsense. He had money about him, and it perhaps turns out that there really was a man at the crack in the door, a clever brigand who today has got the better of our valiant friends. The shooting in the hills is more disturbing than this, to my mind." "This mystery coming on top of the other is all the more difficult to understand—I mean the disappearance of the Countess Marlanx," said Baron Dangloss, pulling at his imperial in plain perplexity. "But we must not stop here talking. Will you come with me, Mr. Tullis, to the tower? I shall send out my best man to work on the case of the lady. It is a most amazing thing. I still have hope that she will appear in person to explain the affair." "I think not," said Tullis gloomily. "This looks like abduction—fond play or whatever you choose to call it. She has never left her father's house in just this manner before. I believe, baron, that Marlanx has taken her away by force. She told me yesterday that she would never go back to him if she could help it. I have already given you my suspicions regarding his designs upon the abem." Catching the eager gaze of the prince, he changed the word "throne" to "treasury."

Lorraine, her cheeks white with resolution, turned upon John Tullis. "You might leave the rescue of the countess to the proper authorities—the police," she said calmly. "I think it is your duty as an American to lend the search for Mr. King. If Count Marlanx has spirited his wife away, pray who has a better right?" "But we are not sure that he"— "We are sure that Mr. King is either dead or in dire need of help," she interrupted hotly. "Colonel Quinox is quite competent to conduct the search," he said shortly. "But Colonel Quinox has gone forth on another mission. He may be unable to give any of his time to the search for Mr. King. It is outrageous, John Tullis, to refuse help!" "I don't refuse help," he exclaimed. "But I'll tell you this—I consider it my duty as a man to devote what strength I have to the service of a woman in trouble. Come, baron; we will go to the tower." Count Halfont intervened, hastily proposing that a second party be sent out at once with instructions to raze the witch's hut if necessary. "I shall be happy to lead the expedition," said young Count Vos Engo, bowing deeply to the young lady herself. "You shall, Vos Engo," said Halfont. "Prepare at once. Take ten men." Tullis turned suddenly to the resentful girl. "Lorraine," he said gently as the others drew away, "don't be hard with me. You don't understand." "Yes, I do," she said stubbornly. "You are in love with her." "Yes; that's quite true." "A married woman!" "I can't help it. I must do all I can for her."

was brought to Tullis's attention as of their calculations and caused the minister of police to swear a filthy imprecation. It was from the Countess Marlanx herself, sent from Parvruk, a station far down the railway, in the direction of Vienna. It was self-explanatory: "I am going to Schloss Marlanx, there to end my days. There is no hope for me. I go voluntarily. Will you not understand why I am leaving Edelweiss? You must know." It was signed "ingomede." Tullis was dumfounded. He caught the penetrating glance of Dangloss and flushed under the sudden knowledge that this shrewd old man also understood why she was leaving Edelweiss. Because of him! Because she loved him and would not be near him. His heart swelled exultantly in the next moment. A brave resolve was born within him. "We don't need a key to that, my boy," said the baron indulgently. "But I will say that she has blamed little consideration for you when she steals away in the dead of night without a word. Unfeeling, I'd say. Well, we can devote our attention to Mr. King who is lost." "See here, baron," said Tullis after a moment; "I want you to give me a couple of good men for a few days. I'm going to Schloss Marlanx. I'll get her away from that place if I have to kill Marlanx and swing for it!" At 7 o'clock that night, accompanied by two clever secret service men, Tullis boarded the train for the west. A man who stood in the tobaccoist's shop on the station platform smiled quietly to himself as the train pulled out. Then he walked briskly away. It was Peter Brutus, the lawyer. A most alluring trap had been set for John Tullis! The party that had gone to Ganlook gap in charge of Count Vos Engo returned at nightfall no wiser than when it left the barracks at noon. Riding bravely, but somewhat dejectedly, beside the handsome young officer in command was a girl in gray. Now she was coming home with them, silent, subdued, dispirited—even more so than she allowed the count to see. Colonel Quinox and his men had been scouring the hills for bandits. They arrived at the witch's cabin a few minutes after Vos Engo and his company. Disregarding the curses of the old woman, a thorough search of the place was made. The old woman's story, reflected by the grandson, was convincing so far as it went. She said that the young man remained behind in the kitchen to puzzle himself over the smoke mystery while she went out to her doorstep. The man with the horses became frightened when she went down to explain the situation to him. He fled. A few minutes later the gentleman emerged to find his horse gone, himself deserted. Cursing, he struck off down the glen in pursuit of his friend, and that was the last she saw of him.

She looked into his honest eyes for a moment. "Forgive me," she murmured, hanging her head. Then she smiled brightly up into his face. "Have your way, then. Remember that I am her friend too." The guard about the prince was doubled. Orders requiring the strictest care of his person were issued by Count Halfont. Baron Dangloss began to see things in a different light. Things that had puzzled him before now seemed clear. But late in the afternoon a telegram [TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE FAVORITE WON.
 A Prizefight Refuses Who "Seen His Duty and Done It."
 In a sporting resort in the east end of London a popular Irish pugilist was matched against a burly and clever negro. The Irishman was a hot favorite, and his friends beat heavily that he would whip his colored opponent. The referee was also an Irishman, and when in the first round the negro reached the Irish fighter's jaw and the latter's head thumped the boards with a crash that seemed to preclude further contest the following monologue by the referee as he stood over the fallen favorite, counting the seconds, took place: "One!" (In an undertone to his gasping compatriot: "Come on, man; get up out o' that. Are yez goin' to let this black son of Ham say he knocked yez out?") "Two!" (Wurrath, man, can't yez raise yourself and listen to what I'm tellin' yez? Come on; get up!) "Three!" (For the sake of yer fathers that bled on many a field get up and wipe up the floor with this black smoke that's grinnin' at yez!) "Four!" (An' sure are yez goin' to lie there slappin' while this limb of Satan takes all the money? Get up, I say, afore I pull yez up!) "This sort of entreaty continued until, as the disgusted referee lingered on the final count, the badly dazed Irish

pugilist staggered to his feet, swung wildly at the unguarded negro and bowled him over unexpectedly. Quick as a flash the ever ready referee sprang to the prostrate colored man, who, though dazed and weak, was wildly struggling to regain his feet, and counted: "One, two, three, four, five and five is ten! You're out, you naygur!" Why He Didn't Go to Church. A Scottish minister who was indefatigable in looking up his folk one day called upon a parishioner. "Richard," he said, "I have na seen ye at the kirk for some time and wad like to know the reason." "Wael, sir," answered Richard. "I have three decided objections to goin'—firstly, I dinna believe in bein' whaur ye does a' the talkin'; secondly, I dinna believe in a' muckle slingin' an' thiridin' an' in conclusion, 'twas there I got my wife." Friendship. They seem to take away the sun from the world who withdraw friendship from life, for we have nothing better from the immortal gods, nothing more delightful.—Cicero. Not a Suffragist Yet. During a presidential campaign the question of woman suffrage was much discussed among women pro and con, and at an afternoon tea the conversation turned that way among the women guests. "Are you a woman suffragist?" asked the one who was most interested. "Indeed, I am not," replied the other most emphatically. "Oh, that's too bad! But, just supposing you were, whom would you support in the present campaign?" "The same man I've always supported, of course," was the apt reply—"my husband."—Ladies' Home Journal. His Son Andy. Dr. Andrew J. McCosh was in his college days a famous athlete. He could run faster, kick a football farther and jump higher than any man in Princeton. Publicly his father, President McCosh, took no notice of Andy's achievements. That he privately rejoiced in his son's prowess the students learned in this way: Jimmy, as the president was familiarly called, though exceedingly courteous, was given to fits of abstraction in which he entirely forgot his surroundings. Once at a reception in his home, apparently forgetful of all the world, he was pacing up and down the room with head bent and hands interlocked behind his back. Suddenly he walked up before a young lady and asked: "How tall are ye?" "In an embarrassed way she replied, "Why, doctor, I'm—I'm five feet two inches." "Me son Andy could jump over yer head," said the doctor and immediately resumed his walk.

An Aid to Digestion. The Blanks had invited a guest to dinner. As the last course was reached little Willie, who had been closely watching the guest almost continually during the meal, looked over at him once more and said, "You haven't changed a bit since you starting eating, have you, Mr. Curtiss?" "Why, no," laughed the visitor. "Why do you ask that question?" "Because," blurted out Willie, confused by the pairs of eyes focused on him—"because I heard pa say you'd make a big hog of yourself as soon as you got your eyes on this feed." His Bitter Rebuke. The dinner had not gone at all well. The waiter was slow, the food was cold, and the cooking was bad. The guest in the German restaurant was of a naturally peevish disposition, anyhow, and he complained vigorously to the head waiter, and especially complained of the waiter at his table. As he was leaving the waiter said humbly: "If you only knew vat a hard time us waiters hat you would nicht be so hard!" "But," said the guest, "why be a waiter?" "Vot else could I do?" asked the waiter. "Well," said the guest, "up at the Metropolitan Opera House they pay a man \$5 a night to play the oboe. You might try that." "But," said the waiter, "I don't know how to play dot oboe." "What is the difference?" observed the guest as he turned away, leaving a much mystified waiter. "You don't know how to waiter either. You might scenter your incompetence."—Cosmopolitan. On Safe Ground. A young clergyman who had been appointed to a curacy in one of the parishes of an English university town was embarrassed by the thought of criticism in his cultivated congregation. He sought counsel from his father, an old and sagacious vicar, saying: "Father, I am hampered in my ministry in the pulpit I am now serving. If I cite anything from geology there is Professor A., the eminent expert in this science, right before me. If I use an illustration in Roman mythology, then there is Professor B. ready to trip me up for my inaccuracy. If I instance something in English literature that pleases me, I am cowed by the presence of the learned doctor who holds the chair of English literature here. What shall I do?" The old man replied: "Do not be discouraged. I'll give you safe advice. Preach the gospel. They probably know very little of that."



"I DON'T REFUSE HELP!"



"YOU'RE OUT, YOU NAYGUR!"