

TRUXTON KING

A Story of
...Graftark
By GEORGE BARR M'GUTCHEON

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CHAPTER XIV.
ON THE RIVER.

No word was spoken during this cautious, extraordinary voyage underground. The pseudo Julius supported his charge in the stern of the boat. Peter Brutus sat in the bow, a revolver in his hand. His gaze bent upon the opaqueness ahead.

At last the boat crept out into the misty, starless night. He drew the skirts of his own mackintosh over her shoulders and head. The night was so thick black that one could not see his hand before his face.

At least two of the occupants opened up their throats and lungs and gulped in the wet, fresh air.

It was now that he began to wonder. To calculate against the plans of their silent escort. Whither were they bound? The occasional creak of an oar, a whispered oath of dismay, the shivering breathing of tollers, the soft swooshing of the mist—that was all; no other sound on the broad, still river.

Truxton began to chafe under the strain. His uneasiness was increased by the certain conviction that before long they would be beyond the city. The walls of which were gradually slipping past.

He considered their chances if he were to overturn the frail boat and make out for shore in the darkness. This project he gave up at once. He did not know the waters or the banks between which they glided. They were past the walls now and rowing down stealthily. How long they would be in a position to speak aloud. It would be awkward for him.

Suddenly the boat turned to the right and shot toward the unseen bank. They were perhaps half a mile above the city wall. Truxton's mind was working like a triphammer. He was recalling a certain nomad settlement south of the city, the quarters of fishermen, peddlers and horse traders. These people, he was not slow to surmise, were undoubtedly hand in glove with Marlanx, if not so surely connected with the misguided committee of men.

He had little time to speculate on the attitude of the denizens of this unwholesome place. The prow of the boat grated on the pebbly bank, and Peter Brutus leaped over the edge into the shallow water.

"Come, on Julius—hand her over to me!" he cried.

As he leaned over the side to seize the girl in his arms Truxton King brought the butt of the heavy revolver down upon his skull. Brutus dropped across the gunwale with a groan, dead to all that was to happen in the next half hour or more.

Leaning forward, he had the two amazed oarsmen covered with the weapon.

"Hands up! Quick!" he cried.

Two pairs of hands went up, together with strange oaths. Truxton's eyes had grown used to the darkness; he could see the men quite plainly. "What are you doing?" he demanded of Lorraine, who, behind him, was fumbling in the garments of the unconscious Brutus.

"Getting his revolver," she replied, with a quaver in her voice.

"Good!" he said exultantly. "Let's search a minute." He went on. "We don't dare turn these fellows loose, even if we disarm them. They'll have a crowd after us in two minutes."

"We'll keep the boat. There! Now push off, Newport." For King had recognized his guard in the witch's dress in the person of one of the oarsmen.

"What the devil!" began Newport, but King silenced him. The boat slowly drifted out into the current.

"Row row!" he commanded. With his free hand he reached back and dragged the limp Brutus into the boat. "Good, I believe he's dead!" he muttered.

"Can you swim?" demanded King.

"Not a stroke," gasped Newport.

"Good Lord, pal, you're not going to jump us overboard! It's ten feet deep along here."

"Pull on your left, hard. That's right. I'm going to land you on the opposite shore."

Two minutes later they ran up under the western bank of the stream, which at this point was fully 300 yards wide. Under cover of the dead body of Brutus the two men dropped into the water, which was above their waists. The limp form of Peter Brutus was pulled out and transferred to the shoulders of his companions.

"Good night," called out Truxton cheerily. He had grasped the

"I'll row over to the east side," announced King to the girl, "but I don't like to get too close to the walls. Some one may have heard the shouts of our friends back there."

Not another word passed between them for ten or twelve minutes. She peered anxiously ahead, looking for signs of the barge dock, which lay somewhere along this section of the city wall.

At last the sound of rapidly working rowlocks came to the girl's ears.

"They're after us," grated Truxton in desperation. "They've got word by friends one way or another. By Jove, I'm nearly fagged too! I can't pull much farther. Hello! What's this?"

The side of the boat caromed off a solid object in the water, almost spilling them into the wind blown river.

"The docks!" she whispered. "I've struck a small scow, I think. Can you find your way in among the coal barges?"

He paddled along slowly, feeling his way, scraping alongside the big barges which delivered coal from the distant mines. At last he found an opening, and pushed through. A moment later they were riding under the stern of a broad cargoless barge, plumb up against the water lapped piles of the dock.

Standing in the bow of the boat, he managed to pull himself up over the slippery edge. It was the work of a second to draw her up after him. He gave the boat a mighty shove, sending it out into the stream once more.

In a few minutes loud curses came from the river, proclaiming the fact that the pursuers had found the empty boat. Afterward they were to learn that Newport's shouts had brought a boat load of men from the opposite bank, headed by the innkeeper, in whose place Lorraine was to have encountered Marlanx later on, if plans had not miscarried.

By this time King had located the open space which undoubtedly afforded room for the transfer of cargoes from the dock to the company's yards inside the walls. Without hesitation he drew her after him up this wide, sinister roadway.

The pursuers were trying for a landmark, noisily, even boisterously. It struck Truxton as queer that these men were not afraid of alarming the watchmen on the docks or the man at the gate above. Suddenly it came to him that there would be no one there to oppose the landing of the miscreants. No doubt hundreds of men already had stolen through these gates during the night, secreting themselves in the fastnesses of the city, ready for the morrow's fray.

They rushed up the narrow railway chutes and through one of the numerous gateways that opened out upon the barge docks. No one opposed them. No one was standing guard. From behind came the sound of rushing footsteps. Lightning flashed in the sky, and the rumble of thunder broke over the desolate night.

"They'll see us by the lightning," gasped Truxton, almost ready to drop from faintness and exhaustion.

Following a vivid flash of lightning, two shots were fired by the men who were now plunging up through the gates, a hundred yards or more away. The same flash of lightning showed to King the narrow, muddy street that stretched ahead of them. Instead of doing the obvious thing he turned sharply to the left, between the lines of freight cars. Their progress was slow.

At last they came to the end of their rope. They were literally up against the great city wall.

A car door stood open in front of them. He waited for a second flash of lightning to reveal to him the nature of its interior. It was quite empty. Without hesitation he clambered in and pulled her up after him. They fell over on the floor, completely fagged.

A few minutes later the storm broke. He managed to close the door against the driving torrents.

"We've fooled them," he managed to whisper close to her ear. "They won't look here. You're safe, Lorraine. God, I'd like to see any one get you away from me now!"

She pressed his arm. Then she was fast asleep.

He sat with his back against the side of the car, a pistol in one hand, the other lying tenderly upon the drenched hair of the girl whose head rested upon his leg. She had slipped down from his shoulder. He did not have the desire or the energy to prevent it. Manfully as he had fought against the impelling desire to sleep, he could not beat it off. His last waking thought was of the effort he must make to reach Dangle with the warning.

Something stirred in the far end of the car—a still small noise as of something alive that moved with the utmost wariness. A heavy, breathing body crept stealthily across the intervening space, so quietly that a mouse could have made but little less noise.

An instant later the bluish flame of a sulphur match struggled for life, growing stronger and brighter in the hand of a man who stood above the sleepers.

(To Be Continued.)

SUMMER EXCURSIONS EAST.

The Southern Pacific company will sell excursion tickets to eastern points at reduced rates on the following dates: May 2d and 9th, June 2d and 17th and 24th, July 5th and 22d, August 3d and September 8th, going limit ten days, total limits 90 days. Rates to Missouri River points and return \$69.90; to Chicago and return, \$82.40. For further information call at local ticket office or address A. S. Rosenbaum, Local Agent Southern Pacific Co.

Haskins for Health.

WELLS FARGO RATES ARE UNDER FIRE

Railroad Commission to Investigate Strange Disparity in Rates by Express Company in Oregon.

SALEM, Or., March 25.—A strange disparity in the rates enforced by the Wells, Fargo Express company between points in Southern Oregon and points in the Willamette Valley, including Portland, has been called to the attention of the railroad commission by P. T. Everton of Aumsville, this county. For instance, the rate on green fruits from Medford or Ashland to towns such as Halsey, Shedd, Jefferson, Turner and Marion is \$1.75 per 100 pounds, while the rate to Portland, Salem, Albany or Eugene is but 70 cents per 100 pounds.

Mr. Everton points out that it is possible to ship 100 pounds of green fruits from Meritt to Astoria for \$1.10 per 100 pounds and to Portland, Eugene, Albany or Salem for 70 cents, while if the shipment is consigned to any other smaller town in the Willamette valley, such as Turner or Shedd, the rate is \$1.50 without regard to distance.

The railroad commission is now investigating the rates of the Wells, Fargo Express company on its own motion with a view to a reduction and correction of the rates now in force in this state. The Wells, Fargo company is charged with imposing rates so excessive as to be beyond what would produce a reasonable income on the capital invested.

NOTICE

Is hereby given that the undersigned will apply at the next meeting of the city council of Medford, Oregon, for license to sell malt, vinous and spirituous liquors in less quantities than one gallon, for six months, at lot 10, block 20, in Medford, Oregon, for a period of six months.

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Dated March 22, 1910.

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360 acres, \$8000.
7-room house, lot 91x200, on West Main, \$3000.

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Want 2 or 3 old men who can't work steady and would like a good place at \$15 per month, only work half time; hot and cold water and good board. Call.
If you have house you want a renter for, list with me.
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Chambermaid, out, \$25.
Dining-room girl, out, \$20.
Woman cook, \$30.
Man and wife, no objection to children.

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SUES FOR \$250,000 DAMAGES



WASHINGTON, D. C., March 25.—A libel suit in which \$250,000 damages are asked is on file here today against Thomas F. Walsh, the Colorado millionaire mining magnate. Delmer Hansen, a New York lawyer, is the complainant. He charges that Walsh caused to be published an article in a Denver newspaper in which it is alleged Hansen was referred to as a "blackmailer and a perjurer." The article is alleged to have been published July 12, 1905. Hansen further charges that Walsh entered into a conspiracy to ruin his standing as a lawyer and finally caused his disbarment for a year.

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V—11.95 acres, all set to fruit, right varieties, in age from 1 to 20 years. Price \$15,000.

W—11.60 acres, all in fruit; 574 Newtowns 4 years old, 175 Bose pears 4 years old, 80 Bartlett pears 4 years old. Price \$8400.

3—Fine lot, 50x175 feet, two blocks from Oakdale pavement; lot lies high; 14 bearing apple trees. Price for short time, \$450.

13—Lot, 100x285 feet, South Central avenue; 6-room box house; 45 bearing fruit trees; east front. Price \$1600, easy terms; a good buy.

1—New 5-room modern house; plastered; two porches; cement walks; sheds, woodshed, large barn. Price \$2500; \$1450 cash and balance one year at 6 per cent.

100x100 feet, with two residences; only three blocks from new depot to cost \$40,000; will sell this at \$42000; renting now at good interest on investment; time on part; good business location.

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