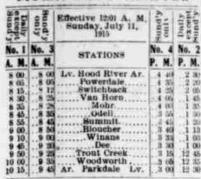
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## THE BROKEN (OIN

A Story of Mystery and Adventure From the Scenario by GRACE CUNARD

friendship.

paused for breathing space, heard a

steady footfall advancing to the door,

"I was sent back by my master." be-

"Indeed! That is most plausible!

"As to that," replied the other with

"Cease, I say," exclaimed Count

Frederick, frowning now, his face

He turned from Roleau to the other

intruder in his apartments. Rolean

"Monsieur le Comte," said he, "the

young woman was here when I en-

tered-when this man also entered.

opportunity-and took with her one

Count Frederick stooped and picked

was his own half of the coin-or that

the way to his most secret hiding

to Count Frederick's heart. For a

"I shall not offer this trinket to

you, my friend," said he grimly to

coin, "for of course you were not look-

With these stinging words, which

CHAPTER XXVI.

Solitary Confinement.

come there to obtain, and loath also to

abandon her stout-hearted ally in his

time of stress. She turned back,

more. As she did so, yet another door

When at length she fully regained

calm effrontery, "I cannot say. I only

But why seek for them in my rooms.

Kitty Gray, newspaper woman, finds in a curio shop half of a broken coin, the mutilated inscription on which arouses her curiosity and leads her, at the order of her managing editor, to go to the prinof her managing editor, to go to the prin-cipality of Gretzhoffen to piece out the story suggested by the inscription. She is followed, and en arrival in Gretzhoffen her adventures while chasing the secret of the broken coln begin.

SEVENTH INSTALLMENT

CHAPTER XXV. Divided.

As Kitty approached the little room | Had I known your own curlosity reof the count's palace-which before garding it, I might have asked some now had proved to be something of a of my servants to assist you in a storm center in the affairs of the Gretz-search more orderly." hoffen coin-there came to her the conviction that there might be others gan the stranger-who was none other beside herself who would have some than Bartel, the late successor to Ruinkling as to the whereabouts of the dolph in Count Sachio's good graces. missing portion of the coin, and who "He had left certain of his belongmight therefore arrive upon the scene ings-some silver cases of the toilet, at much the same time as that of her Monsieur le Comte-he did not trouble own visit. She was not altogether to ask you about them, and now he surprised at the sudden interruption sent meof her labors, just at the moment of her success.

As she saw herself the object of a when his quarters were in quite anpoised weapon, she swerved aside in. other part of the palace, my dear sir?" stinctively-called out instinctively for

"Roleau!" she exclaimed, for, wom- came here because the servants told anlike, she had learned the value of me that this was the room. Of course, a strong nfan's arm, and her first if there has been any mistake-" thought was of the faithful servant who so strangely had attached himself to her own varying fortunes. And flushing. Roleau came hastening from his watching place outside the door.

He saw the little room occupied by stood dumb. The other shook his a man-who now suddenly had en- head. tered-and who menaced Kitty, so that, to save her life as she supposed. she was on the point of surrendering to him both pieces of the coin. The She passed yonder-when she had the sight of his mistress in danger was enough for Roleau. With his custom- half the coin. There lies the other on ary battle cry he plunged immediately | your floor. She disappeared-we heard into the conflict, careless of the threat. a cry-" ening weapon. In the melee the two half coins both were dropped upon the up the object pointed out to him. It

Even now the ruling impulse of Kit- which he had called his own-since he ty did not quite forsake her. She had taken it from her. stooped and regained one of the half So then, he reflected, she had found coins, but the struggling men, shifting here and there in the room, kept her place-she was on the very point of from securing the other. In the blind success when this last contretemps instinct for escape she fled now to had interfered with her plans. A new the open hall, taking that direction feeling of admiration for her keenwhich led back from the front of the ness and persistence once more came

Roleau heard her pass, and could moment he stood regarding half-renot join her in flight-but he heard gretfully the bit of metal in his hand her give a cry of alarm whose cause he could only guess. His energies were fully occupied by the combat with this | the man Bartel, as he pocketed the



She Felt a Hard Hand Close Upon Her Mouth.

stranger-whom now he saw to be one stopped her voice. It seemed to her of Count Sachio's men. He had noted that some pungent aromatic drug Contractors & Builders him at the hunting lodge. He himself filled the car with its fumes. She had not time to reason as to the pres- struggled less violently. Events ence of this new factor in the general seemed to pass by her in a dream, imbroglio, but at last, able to bring and she regarded them carelessly, his own weapons into play, he stayed apathetically. In short, either in part the issue for a time. They both had or in whole, she had lost conscioustime to recognize one another as they ness. stood, the one as much baffled as the other, and neither quite comprehend- her senses she was alone-alone with ing what the other was doing here.

Very naturally the sounds of all this overpowering than any she yet had confusion could not be concealed. The known. Instead of her own apartscream of a woman had rung widely ments in her hotel, instead of the room through the halls, and used as they of Count Frederick or the hunting were to extraordinary circumstances lodge of his quondam friend, Count hereabouts, the servants could not fail | Sachio, she found herself surrounded to investigate the cause of this. They by four barren walls-in what edifice hastened in the direction of the up- or in what place, she could not guess. roar, but their advance was stayed by There seemed some sort of doorthe command of the master of the palace himself.

"Well, well, then, Bartel," exclaimed poignant torture. the count, "why the delay? What's wrong? You are not going to tall me she could not tell, when at length the -you have not failed?"

curses of all incompetence.

coin," went on the unfortunate mes- lently as she had come. senger. "I don't know which it was.

The intruders, whatever the errand of each, took their eyes from one anmatter what I myself may have done hearing the tinkle of some object on other and turned now, recognizing yet as to the girl and the coin-they eat the floor at her feet. another man who scarce had come in caped you?"

"You honor me greatly, gentlemen," said Count Frederick with his usual not prevent the man from escaping, it had been meant as some communicoolness in any extraordinary situs. and the count himself allowed the cation to her-from someone outside, gave it away unasked to one who is once more. other man to do so." tion. "But might I ask why you care "What other man?" thus to disarrange my apartment?

"Roleau, they called him-the girl's servant-he follows her like a dogand fights like one." "So, there were two others present

beside yourself?" "Yes, it seemed as though everyone

quick work of all of us. And we will fare badly."

who waited for him impatiently reach For the time Klitty was of the had left him. Now he learned that tair could be undertaken de novo, my enough at the rendezvous which had belief that her senses must leave her the message from the king asked his dear count. She gave it to you to forever. The sense of solidude was a attendance at the palace as soon as return to me? Well, no matter, only I How long she had thus remained

the same story that Rudolph brought close-fitting door in one side of the four walls opened. An old woman The shamefaced look of the other came in bringing some food for her. gave him his own answer Count Kitty tried her in every language Sachio himself gave way to hearty which she had ever known, but got no answer. The old woman shook her "The count retained one-half the head, and after a time retreated si-

Getting no answer to her appeal for The girl-the young American got help, Kitty sat down once more, fightthe other piece. I saw her pick it up, ing herself to retain her faculties, her But she did not get both' I don't calm her poise. Escape? How could know which one she did get, but I there be hope for that? For once she know that each has one-half-the was at her wit's end as she looked count and the girl. She must have about her. She sat moody and silent, been carried away by some other too dazed, suffering too much, too unman. I heard her scream, then all was certain in her own mind to plan intelligently any course of action. She "So all escaped you? It is another was brought to herself somewhat by

It was a bit of stone wrapped tight- coin." "Yes, excellency, naturally I could by in a little wad of paper. Surely the room. It must have come through the window.

She opened the paper and smoothed it out. As she read it she wondered cause for my act. But, see you, one how many other persons there were in does not make gifts unrequited. Now at one; it opened before her. She this strange country who could claim the young American has disappeared, stood once more face to face with acquaintance with her own plans.

interested in the coin came all at your paper and return to America. coin has disappeared and with it the "Naturally, the competition asks your freedom. Refuse and you will



An Old Woman Came in Bringing Some Food for Her.

speak remorselessness, revengefulstrange words suddenly act quickly. Tell me, what happened ness. No, something softer lay in the brought Kitty back to a train of then?" thought which for the time had been When Kitty in her blind impulse of self-preservation sprang out of Count Frederick's room, she did not at first contemplate continued flight. Once out of reach of immediate danger, she paused, loath to leave what she had

taken from her. Kitty sprang to the sill of the little erick." window and peered out for an instant; but her hold was too feeble. She sank back, not seeing what would have given her great joy to see,

paused just outside the door once Apparently some eye had caught opening into the hall was pushed sight of her face, brief as had been its silently ajar-opened fully. Yet anappearance. In truth, Roleau, houndother man, whom never in her life like, had run his game to earth. It had she seen before, now stepped out. was he who had caught sight of her She felt a hard hand close upon her just for an instant. Later she heard mouth, more than half-stifling her once more the tinkling of some falling scream for help. "Silence!" she heard object upon the floor. She picked it his voice insist. "Go on ahead of me up-it was a substantial file, which Once more Kitty undertook to evidently had been flung through the scream, and again the firm hand window by someone having the intent to aid her. This thought gave her hope. Almost as soon as she grasped it she fell to work at the bars which had restrained her.

Meantime, at the scene from which she had been so unceremoniously abstracted but now, Count Frederick remained still pondering on the strange events which had been brought home so close to him. He was too much preoccupied in his concern over the a terror which seemed to her more young woman's disappearance to note carefully anything else that went on about him. When one of his household placed a message in his hand, for the time he gazed at it, scarce comprehending that it came from the roy-

al palace Since he had left unattended the servant of Count Sachio, whom he had found in his own room, the latter yes. There was a small, high, barred seized the present opportunity to eswindow; but the latter was at such cape from the place and to find his bimself from the apathy of inaction I am in possession once more of what entered unannounced

"The Count Frederick allowed her broken. She felt quickly at her bosom to escape-strangely, he seemed to and at her waist for the bit of coin have small resentment for her after which she had brought away from all. Nor did he have too much for Count Frederick's room. It was gone! Roleau, whom he must have ranked a At some time during her journey from | wholly faithless servant. He did not Count Frederick's palace to this place | punish him-but even sent him off -long or short whether it had been, after the girl! Excellency, my word she could not tell-the coin had been for it, he seemed to miss the girl as much as the coin-did Count Fred-

Follow them then, Bartel. Follow Roleau-if you can find him-he will lead you to the girl, wherever she may For myself, I cannot guess."

It was this counsel, followed diligently by the unhappy messenger of Count Sachio, which resulted in a quick shifting of the forces of Kitty's enemies. It was true Roleau had gained access to a point within sight of Kitty's window, where still he tried to be of aid to her-still hoped she soon would be able to aid herself. But here he was surprised by these emissaries of Count Sachto-it was none less than the nobleman himself who led the forces now.

Therefore when, after all her toil, Kitty at length managed to make her escape through the barred window, it was but to find herself once more a prisoner-Roleau once more a prisoner with her! The fact of captivity had not changed only the phases of captivity. She and her ally had only exchanged captors. Who her last prison guardian had been Kitty could not tell. Now, without doubt, she was once more to be subjected to the scant courtesy of the nobleman of Grahof-

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Counterfeit Coin. Count Frederick finally aroused

communication which he desired to she will come back again."

make to Count Frederick at once. to any king, for I have affairs of my ice, own to trouble me sufficiently."

Nevertheless, grumbling, he went his way to the palace, for the royal will was something not yet at least to be set aside.

greeted blm. "I asked your return be- been but now. At least, she had seen cause of a sudden thought that had Roleau-had found once more proof come to my mind."

come to you alone, unassisted?" The king was too much preoccupied of whom she knew something, than a to concern himself with sarcasm.

"Yes, assuredly. It is regarding the at all. Of late despair had been knock-

the summons of opportunity found no "The coin! I thought your majesty cared little for it-so little that you hearing, but now she began to plan not even of our country-a stranger-

the young American." "Precisely. That is true. And I had and so has the coin. Perhaps, rather, "Better write an imaginary story for I should reverse that, and say that the Give up the coins and you will gain young American. At least, that is to say-they both are gone. So I sent pleased." for you, my dear Frederick, to tell me what to do."

> The nobleman stood for a moment but half concealing his real feelings, gauging the man before him, this imitation of a king.

"She was a most charming young person," began the king, trying to conceal his own thoughts. "Do you not think such hair as hers is rare?" "Rare, indeed, your majesty-she is in all things rare," suddenly ex-

"And where is she gone?" "I do not know-I have no idea."

"But you can find her-you certainly can bring her back." "I hope it, your majesty-I hope it very much. But then, as to the coin?"

claimed the count.

he added, somewhat maliciously-for he knew well enough where sat the wind in royal quarters. "Oh, yes, about the coin. Well, I was only going to ask you to find it

"That seems simple, your majesty! Even though I do not know where the young girl is."

"That is why I ask you, my dear "Agreed then, your majesty. Of what use is a servant of the king if

he cannot do the king's will? I accept your errand. I will soon return to you the coin-at least, I hope so. After all, perhaps it has no such value as you seem to think—I am sure it has less value for you than other things that we might mention." Count Frederick did not add aloud

what was in his own mind—the truth -that the coin had more value for him than he at any time before now had believed. Presently he excused himself from

the royal presence and departed to put into effect a little plan of his own which he fancied might blunt both horns of this dilemma into which the naivete of King Michael so suddenly

had placed him As luck would have it, there had been thrown into his hands the king's half of the coin.

Count Frederick thought for a moment before he made a plan. Then he made a hurried journey to a certain, silversmith in whose skill he had much confidence.

"Make me," he said as he laid upon the counter his piece of the coin-"a replica of this-absolutely, line for line, so that I myself cannot tell the two apart. Do you hear me? Can it be done?

"it can be done-so nicely that I myself scarcely could tell them apart." Then quick with it," said Count

Frederick. "How soon?" "By tomorrow, excellency, I promise

you a duplicate." It was therefore on the morrow that Count Frederick was able once more to visit the royal palace with a mind more at peace with circumstances. With him he carried what was apparently the king's half of the coin which he had given to the young American so carelessly, and which now at once he coveted again-since

are the acme of punctiliousness and efficiency, my dear count. You are and she proposed to escape. Once indeed a man of results. Go now to more free, she admitted to herself, she my cabinet again and help yourself to would be willing enough to take the such jewels as you fancy."

you. If I have been of service I am back home, to see the familiar sky pleased. Jewels are not for me. They line of her own city, to find her own are for women-and no woman has place back in the smoky and grimy jewels from me now. I have reformed, city, her own place in the hum and your majesty. I shall be taking my- grind of the old newspaper. How self to a monastery next."

companion. "Not so far as that for she would go back home. me," he said. "I am not yet ready for any monastery. I swear I can rememsee them yet again-when I gave her it-and closed it again. as our gift this which you have re-The men in the room, as they height as to be almost beyond her own master. Count Sachio himself- in which Kitty's sudden disappearance formerly was mine. Perhaps the af-

might be. The king had, it seemed, a hope that in some way, on some day,

"I trust it, your majesty," said Count "Confound his royal highness!" ex. Frederick fervently; and the deluded claimed Frederick to himself. "I never monarch, pleased at the quick execuleave him but he asks me back at tion of his wishes knew nothing of the once. He is always in some trouble, deeper machinations of the keen brain and I am ill-disposed now to be nurse which he fancied still was in his serv-



Means to an End. Kitty, left alone once more, found "Good! Count Frederick," Michael herself in better heart than she had of his faithfulness and his efficiency. "As to what, your majesty? Did it Surely he would help her to escape yet again. And as for Sachio-better he. stranger of whom she knew nothing

ing at her heart in such fashion that

She sought to study the exits of the apartment in which she found herself. There were two doors, so it seemed, both fastened. She pushed strongly Count Sachio, the mocking conspirator who had of late had so much to do with her own misfortunes!

"Mademoiselle!" said he, "I am so

"For myself," rejoined Kitty indignantly, "I was never so much displeased as I am now. So the gentlemen of this country in this way show their quality-in their treatment of women? I compliment you."

"Your words are at least better than your absence, mademoiselle-I like neither."

"And what of me? What shall I say of a man who treats me as a criminal? Nay, a criminal would be treated better in my country-he would have a trial. There would be process of law, observance of the law. Is the habeas corpus writ a thing unknown in this country-have the people never yet wrung that right from the hands of tyrants? In my country there are some recourses which any citizen may have."

"Your own country? Why did you

ever leave it, mademoiselle?" "The reasons concern me alone, sir." "Indeed, you mistake-they do not concern you alone. We are many of us in this country also concerned with them. We would that you never had come from America. There are many reasons moving to that. And, indeed we even ask your return to your own country.'

"So, then, it was your message to me that I got? Most melodramatic of you, Count Sachio-but by what right do you demand my return?"

"There are some large rights, mademoiselle, which need small explanation."

"But which allow you to hinder me in the performance of my own dutiesto ask me to be unfaithful to my emdeceive the public-to present a counterfeit-to pretend that I have done what I have not done."

"So? And you cannot take such

good advice?" "No, I will not. To deceive, to pretend, to counterfeit-those are attributes of your kingdom, not of my own country, America. In my country we have better standards-men and women alike-for which I heartily am

"You have a stinging tongue, mademoiselle," said Count Sachio, red under his swarthy skin. "Perhaps it will grow milder if left unused. I shall leave you here-until you are willing to say you are done with Gretzhoffen and ready to return to your own country. This land, mademoiselle, can keep its own secrets-it could even close over the secret of the disappear ance of a young woman-and leave "Yes, excellency," said the workman, her fate a mystery. I trust that you will reconcider what you have said." A moment and he had left her once more. Before he passed through the door she glanced beyond. The room was occupied, apparently, by his friends-escape on that side was im-

possible. The other door still remained fastened. Kitty turned to it with burglarious intent-using an art learned when she was a schoolgirl. With no better instrument than a hairpin, she had seen wonders done at opening locks

Her brisk interchange of complithe young American herself was gone. ments with Count Sachio had set her "So soon!" exclaimed Michael. "You pulses stirring once more. She wanted to get out-she wanted to escape, advice which but now she had "No more, your majesty, I thank scorned-willing enough to take ship good it would seem to her now to see King Michael laughed loudly at this the faces of the local room. They jest on the part of his former boon might chaff her all they liked. Yes,

And now, with schoolgirl finesse in the employment of the small instruber a queen's face and a queen's figure ment at her disposal, she succeeded when I see them, well as ever. And I in her burglary. She felt the lock turn saw them both here not so long ago. at last-felt it give-saw that she I thought I had secured the chance to could open the door. She did open

Back of her she heard once more stored to me now. It seems I failed the creak of the other door as it in that. But should the same case opened. She turned-to encounter come up again for action—should she once more the figure of Count Sachio. by intent or accident meet us again- He smiled at her as once more he

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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