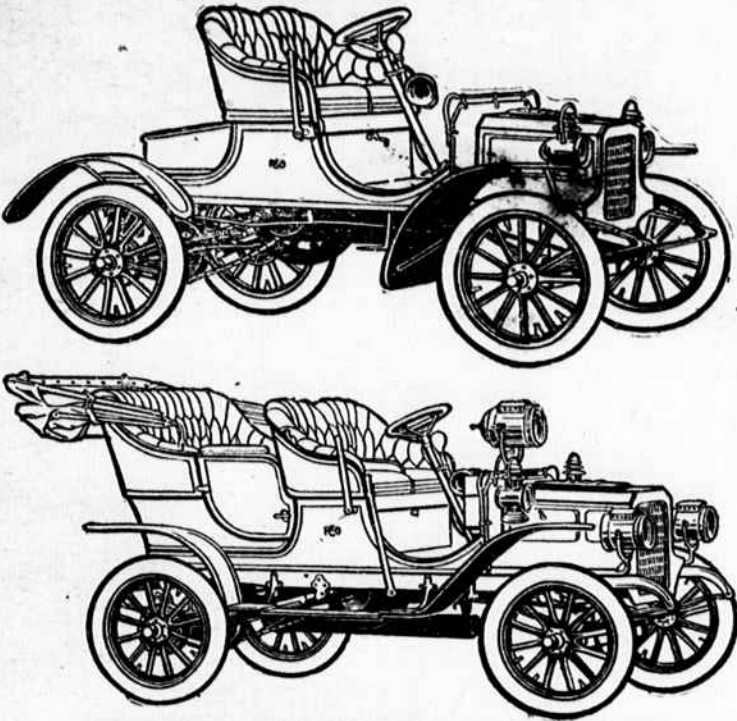


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## Beverly of Graustark

By  
GEORGE BARR  
M'CUTCHEON,  
Author of "Graustark"

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## CHAPTER IX.

BEVERLY'S eyes showed her astonishment. Baron Dangloss courteously placed a chair for her and asked her to be seated. "We were expecting you, Miss Calhoun," he explained. "Her royal highness left St. Petersburg but a few hours after your departure, having unfortunately missed you."

"You don't mean to say that the princess tried to find me in St. Petersburg?" cried Beverly in wonder and delight.

"That was one of the purposes of her visit," said he brusquely.

"Oh, how jolly!" cried she, her gray eyes sparkling. "The grim old captain was tried for the smallest fraction of the duty, but at once for the impression that he visited the czar on matters of importance," he said, with a condescending smile.

"And it really was of no importance at all, that's what you mean?" She smiled back securely.

"Your message informing her, highness of your presence in St. Petersburg had no sooner arrived than she set forth to meet you in that city, much against the advice of her counselors. I will admit that she had other business there, but it could have waited. You see, Miss Calhoun, it was a great risk at this particular time. Misfortune means disaster now. But Providence was her friend. She arrived safely in Ganlook not an hour since."

"Really? Oh, Baron Dangloss, where is she?" excitedly cried the American girl.

"For the night she is stopping with the Countess Rallowitz. A force of men, but not those whom you met at the gates, has just been dispatched at her command to search for you in the lower pass. You took the most dangerous road, Miss Calhoun, and I am amazed that you came through in safety."

"The Russians chose the lower pass, I know not why. Of course, I was quite ignorant. However, we met neither brigands nor soldiers, explain or Graustark." I encountered nothing more alarming than a mountain lion. And that, Baron Dangloss, recalls me to the sense of a duty I have been neglecting. A poor wanderer in the hills defended me against the beast and was badly wounded. He must be taken to a hospital at once, sir, where he may have the proper care."

Whereupon, at his request, she hurriedly related the story of that trying journey through the mountains, not forgetting to paint the courage of Baldos in most glowing colors. The chief was deeply interested in the story of the goat hunter and his party. There was an odd gleam of satisfaction in his eyes, but she did not observe it.

"You will see that he has immediate attention, won't you?" she implored in the end.

"He shall have our deepest consideration," promised he.

"You know I am rather interested because I shot him, just as if it were not enough that his legs were being torn by the brute at the time. He ought not to walk, Baron Dangloss. If you don't mind, I'd suggest an ambulance," she hurried on glibly. He could not conceal the smile that her eagerness inspired. "Really, he is in a serious condition. I think he needs some quinine and whisky, too, and—"

"He shall have the best of care," interrupted the captain. "Leave him to me, Miss Calhoun."

"Now, let me tell you something," said she, after due reflection. "You must not pay any attention to what he says. He is liable to be delirious and talk in a terrible sort of way. You

know, delirious people never talk rationally." She was loyally trying to protect Baldos, the hunted, against any incriminating statements he might make.

"Quite right, Miss Calhoun," said the baron very gravely.

"And now, I'd like to go to the princess," said Beverly, absolutely sure of herself. "You know we are great friends, she and I."

"I have sent a messenger to announce your arrival. She will expect you," Beverly looked about the room in perplexity.

"But there has been no messenger here," she said.

"He left here some minutes before you came. I knew who it was that came knocking at our gates, even though she traveled as Princess Yotive of Graustark."

Dangloss, Baron Dangloss, said to be the princess. Is it necessary to tell him the truth about me? Just at present, I mean? I'm sure he'll rest much easier if he doesn't know differently."

"So far as I am concerned, Miss Calhoun, he shall always regard you as a queen," said Dangloss gallantly.

"Thank you. It's very nice of you to—"

A man in uniform entered after knocking at the door of the room. He saluted his superior and uttered a few words in his own language.

"Her royal highness is awaiting you at the home of the countess, Miss Calhoun. A detail of men will escort you and your servant to her place."

"Now, please, Baron Dangloss," pleaded Beverly at the door, "be nice to him. You know it hurts him to walk. Can't you have him carried in?"

"If he will consent," said he quietly. Beverly hurried into the outer room after giving the baron a smile he never forgot. Baldos looked up eagerly, anxiously.

"It's all right," she said in low tones, pausing for a moment beside his chair. "Don't get up! Goodbye. I'll come to see you tomorrow. Don't be in the least disturbed. Baron Dangloss has his instructions." Impulsively giving him her hand, which he respectfully raised to his lips, she followed Aunt Fanny and was gone.

Almost immediately Baldos was requested to present himself before Baron Dangloss in the adjoining room. Refusing to be carried in, he resolutely strode through the door and stood before the grim old captain of police, an easy, confident smile on his face. The black patch once more covered his eye with defiant assertiveness.

"They tell me you are Baldos, a goat hunter," said Baron Dangloss, eying him keenly.

"Yes."

"And you were hurt in defending one who is of much consequence in Graustark. Sit down, my good fellow." Baldos' eye gleamed coldly for an instant; then he sank into a chair. "While admitting that you have done Graustark a great service, I am obliged to tell you that I at least know you to be other than what you say. You are not a goat hunter, and Baldos is not your name. Am I not right?"

"You have had instructions from your sovereign, Baron Dangloss. Did they include a command to cross-question me?" asked Baldos haughtily. Dangloss hesitated for a full minute.

"They did not. I take the liberty of inquiring on my own responsibility."

"Very well, sir. Until you have a right to question me, I am Baldos and a goat hunter. I think I am here to receive surgical treatment."

"You decline to tell me anything concerning yourself?"

"Only that I am injured and need relief."

"Perhaps I know more about you than you suspect, sir."

"I am not in the least interested, Baron Dangloss, in what you know. The princess brought me into Ganlook, and I have her promise of help and protection while here. That is all I have to say, except that I have implicit faith in her word."

Dangloss sat watching him in silence for some time. No one but himself knew what was going on in that shrewd, speculative mind. At length he arose and approached the proud fellow in rags.

"You have earned every consideration at our hands. My men will take you to the hospital, and you shall have the best of care. You have served our princess well. Tomorrow you may feel inclined to talk more freely with me, for I am your friend, Baldos."

"I am grateful for that, Baron Dangloss," said the other simply. Then he was led away, and a comfortable cot in the Ganlook hospital soon held his long, feverish frame, while capable hands took care of his wounds. He did not know it, but two fully armed soldiers maintained a careful guard outside his door under instructions from the head of the police. Moreover, a picked detail of men sallied forth into the lower pass in search of the goat hunter's followers.

In the meantime Beverly was conducted to the home of the Countess Rallowitz. Her meeting with the princess was most affectionate. There were tears, laughter and kisses. The whole atmosphere of the place suggested romance to the eager American girl. Downstairs were the royal guards. In the halls were attendants. All about were maidservants and obsequious lackeys, crowding the home of the kindly countess. At last, comfortable and free from the dust of travel, the two friends sat down to a dainty meal.

"Oh, I am so delighted," murmured Beverly for the hundredth time.

"I'm appalled when I think of the dangers you incurred in coming to me. No one but a very foolish American girl could have undertaken such a trip as this. Dear me, Beverly, I should have died if anything dreadful had happened to you. Why did you do it?" questioned the princess. And then they laughed joyously.

"And you went all the way to St. Petersburg to meet me, you dear, dear Yotive!" cried Beverly so warmly that the attentive servant forgot his mask of reverence.

"Wasn't it ridiculous of me? I know Gren would have forbidden it if he had been in Edelweiss when I started. And, more shame to me, the poor fellow is doubtless at the conference with Dawsbergen, utterly ignorant of my escapade. You should have heard the ministry—er—ah— And the princess paused for an English word.

"Kick?" Beverly supplied.

"Yes. They objected violently. And, do you know, I was finally—"

Whether or no, my uncle insisted that he should be brought home, a three days' journey, in order that he might keep me from going to St. Petersburg. Of course they could not disobey my edict, and so poor Gren is none the wiser, unless he has returned from the conference. If he has, I am sure he is on the way to Ganlook at this very minute."

"What a whimsical ruler you are!" cried Beverly. "Upsetting everything sensible just to rush off hundreds of miles to meet me! And Asphain is trying to capture you too! Goodness, you must love me!"

"Oh, but I did have a trifling affair of state to lay before the czar, my dear! Tomorrow we shall be safe and sound in the castle, and it will all be very much worth while. You see, Beverly, dear, even princesses enjoy a diversion now and then. One wouldn't think anything of this adventure in the United States; it is the environment that makes it noticeable. Besides, you traveled as a princess. How did you like it?"

And then the conversation related particularly to the advantages of royalty as viewed from one side and the disadvantages as regarded from another. For a long time Beverly had been wondering how she should proceed in the effort to secure absolute clemency for Baldos. As yet she had said nothing to Yotive of her promise to him, made while she was a princess.

"At any rate, I'm sure the goat hunters would not have been so faithful and true if they had not believed me to be a princess," said Beverly, paying the way. "You haven't a man in your kingdom who could be more chivalrous than Baldos."

"If he is that kind of a man, he would treat any woman as gently."

"You should have heard him call me 'your highness,'" cried Beverly. "He will loathe me if he ever learns that I deceived him."

"Oh, I think he deceived himself," spoke Yotive easily. "Besides, you look as much like a princess as I."

"There is something I want to speak very seriously about to you, Yotive," said Beverly, making ready for the cast. "You see, he did not want to enter Ganlook with me, but I insisted. He had been so brave and gallant, and he was suffering so intensely. It would have been criminal in me to leave him out there in the wilderness, wouldn't it?"

"It would have been heartless."

"So I just made him come along. That was right, wasn't it? That's what you would have done, no matter who he was or what his objections might have been. Well, you see, it's this way, Yotive: He is some sort of a fugitive—not a criminal, you know, but just some one they are hunting for, I

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wearing apparel and more comfortable in every way.

Also the members of his party, now in the hills (whose names are unknown to me), are to be accorded every protection. Franz, the driver, is to have his freedom if he desires it.

And from this edict there is no recourse until its abatement by royal decree.

YETIVE.

"There," said the princess, affixing her signature. "I think that will be sufficient." Then she rang for a servant. "Send to Baron Dangloss, and ask him to come here at once."

Fifteen minutes later the chief of police stood in the presence of the eager young interpreters of justice.

"I want you to witness my signature, Baron Dangloss," said the princess after the greetings.

"Gladly," said the officer.

"Well, here is where I signed," said Yotive, handing him the paper. "I don't have to write my name over again, do I?"

"Not at all," said the baron gallantly. And he boldly signed his name as a witness.

"They wouldn't do that in the United States," murmured Beverly, who knew something about red tape at Washington.

"It is a command to you, baron," said Yotive, handing him the document with a rare smile. He read it through slowly. Then he bit his lip and coughed. "What is the matter, baron?" asked Yotive, still smiling.

"A transitory emotion, your highness, that is all," said he, but his hand trembled as he folded the paper.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

## Dangers of Cocaine.

Cocaine, an alkaloid of coca leaves, was discovered in 1859, but remained in comparative obscurity until 1884. In minute doses, whether taken internally or used as a spray on mucous surfaces, its effect is wonderfully exhilarating, producing for a time the fresh and buoyant sensations of youth and perfect health, that have apparently no unpleasant reaction, and therein lies the explanation of the subtle and irresistible power it quickly acquires over its victims, carrying them to the very brink of destruction before they have dreamed of danger. Being a cumulative poison, the first warning symptom does not appear until the fatal chains are riveted that shall drag them, horror stricken and powerless of resistance, over the precipice to complete mental, moral and physical ruin.

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