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**GRAUSTARK**  
By...  
**GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON**  
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CHAPTER XXIV.  
OFF TO THE DUNGEON.  
THE table lasted but a moment. Gabriel advanced a few steps, his eyes gleaming with jealousy and triumph. Before him stood the petrified lovers caught red-handed. Through her dazed brain struggled the conviction that he could never escape. Through his ran the miserable realization that he had ruined her forever. Gabriel of all men! "I arrive inopportunely," he said harshly, the veins standing out on his neck and temples. "Do I intrude? I was not aware that you expected me, your highness." He viciously sought to convey the impression that he was there by appointment, a clandestine visitor in her apartments at midnight. "What do you mean by coming to my apartment at this hour?" she stammered, trying to rescue dignity from the chaos of emotions. Lorry was standing slightly to the right and several feet behind her. He understood the prince and quickly sought to interpose with the hope that he might shield her from the sting. "She did not expect me, sir," he said, and a menacing gleam came to his eyes. His pistol was in his hand. Gabriel saw it, but the starting princess did not. She could not take her eyes from the face of the intruder. "Now, may I ask you why you are here?" Gabriel's wit saved him from death. He saw that he could not pursue the course he had begun, for there was murder in the American's eye. Like a fox, he swerved and, with a servile promise of submission in his glance, said: "I thought you were here, my fine fellow, and I came to satisfy myself. Now, sir, may I ask why you are here?" His fingers twitched and his eyes were glancing with the malice he was subdued. "I am here as a prisoner," said Lorry boldly. Gabriel laughed derisively. "And how often have you come here in this manner as a prisoner? Midnight and alone in the apartments of the princess, the guard dismissed! A prisoner, eh? Ha, what a prisoner!" "Stop!" cried Lorry, white to the lips. The princess was beginning to understand. Her eyes grew wide with horror, her figure straightened imperiously and the white in her cheeks gave way to the red of insulted virtue. "I see it all! You have not been outside this castle since you left the prison. A pretty scheme! You could not marry him, could you, eh? He is not a prince! But you could bring him here and hide him where no one would dare to think of looking for him—in your apartments!" With a snarl of rage Lorry sprang upon him, cutting short the sentence that would have gone through her like the keenest knife blade. "Liar! Dog! I'll kill you for that!" he cried, but before he could clutch the princess' throat Yetteve had frantically seized his arm. "Not that!" she shrieked. "Do not kill him! There must be no murder here!" He reluctantly buried Gabriel from him, the prince tottering to his knees in the effort to keep from falling. She had saved her malingerer's life, but courage deserted her with the act. Helplessly she looked into the blazing eyes of her lover and faltered: "I—I do not know what to say or do. My brain is bursting!" "Courage, courage!" he whispered gently. "You shall pay for this," shrieked Gabriel. "If you are not a prisoner you shall be. There'll be scandal enough in Graustark tomorrow to start a volcano of wrath from the royal tombs where lie her fathers. I'll see that you are a prisoner!" He started for the door, but Lorry's pistol was leveled at his head. "If you move, I'll shoot," said Lorry. "The world will understand how and why I fell by your hand and in this room. Shoot!" he cried triumphantly. Lorry's hand trembled, and his eyes filled with the tears of impotent rage. The prince held the higher card. A face suddenly appeared at the door, which had been stealthily opened from without. Captain Quinox gazed into the room behind the prince and gently closed the door, unnoticed by the glowerer. "A prisoner?" sneered Gabriel. "Where is your captor, pray?" "Here!" answered a voice at his back. The prince wheeled and found himself looking at the stalwart form of the captain of the guard. "I am surely privileged to speak now, your highness," he went on, addressing the princess significantly. "How came you here?" gasped Gabriel. "I brought my prisoner here. Where should I be if not here to guard him?" "When—when did you enter this room?" "An hour ago." "You were not here when I came?" "I was here, and I am here. Have a care how you speak. Were I to do right I should shoot you like a dog. You came like a thief, you insult the ruler of my land. I have borne it all because you are a prince, but I have a care—a care. I may forget myself and tear out your black heart with these hands. One word from her royal highness will be your death warrant!" He looked inquiringly at the princess as if anxious to put the dangerous witness where he could tell no tales. She shook her head, but did not speak. Lorry realized that it was time to come forward to assert himself. Assuming a distressed air, he bowed his head and said dolefully: "My pleading has been in vain, then, your highness. I have sworn to you that I am innocent of this murder, and

She closed the door and stood like a statue until their footsteps died away in the distance. As one in a daze she sat at the desk till dawn. Grenfall Lorry's revolver lying before her. Through the hall, down the stairs and into the clammy dungeon strode the silent trio. But before Lorry stopped inside the cell Gabriel asked a question that had been troubling him for many minutes. "I am afraid I have—misjudged her," muttered Gabriel, now convinced that he had committed himself irretrievably. "You will find she has not misjudged you," said the prisoner grimly. "Can't I have a candle in here, captain?" "You may keep this lantern," said Quinox, stepping inside the narrow cell. As he placed the lantern on the floor he whispered: "I will return in an hour. Read this!" Lorry's hand closed over the bit of perforated paper. The prince was now inside the cell, peering about curiously, even timorously. "By the way, your highness, how would you enjoy living in a hole like this all your life?" "Horrible!" said Gabriel, shuddering like a leaf. "Then take my advice—don't commit any more of these blunders." "The two men eyed each other steadily for a moment or two. Then the prince looked out of the cell, a mad desire to fly from some dreadful, unseen horror coming over him. Quinox locked the door and, striking a match, bade his highness precede him up the stone steps. In the cell the prisoner read and re-read the incoherent message from Yetteve: "It is the only way, Quinox will assist you to escape tonight. Do I implore you as you love me, go. Your life is more than all to me. Gabriel's story will not be understood, and he will be no proof. He will be torn to pieces, Quinox says. Do not think of me, but save yourself. I would lose everything to save you." He smiled sadly. "The concluding sentences swept away the last thought he might have had of leaving her to bear the consequences. "Do not think of me, but save yourself. I would lose everything to save you." He leaned against the stone wall and shook his head slowly, the smile still on his lips.

CHAPTER XXV.  
"BECAUSE I LOVE HIM."  
THE next morning Edelweiss was astray early. Great throngs of people flocked to the streets long before the decree that was to divide the north from the south. The whole nation, it seemed, stood before the walls awaiting with bated breath and dismal faces the announcement that Yetteve had decided to Bolaroz the lands and lives of half of her subjects. Shortly before 9 o'clock Harry Anguish, with his guard of six, rode up to the castle. Captain Dangloss was on his side him on his gray charger. They had scarcely passed inside the gates when a throng of mounted men came riding up the avenue from the Hotel Regenetz. Then the howling, the hissing, the shouting began. Maledictions were hurled at the heads of Asaphin noblemen as they rode toward the maddened lines of people. They smiled sardonically in reply to the impotent signs of hatred, but they were glad when the castle gates closed between them and the despairing crowd, in which the tempest of revolt was brewing with unmistakable earnestness. Prince Bolaroz, the Duke of Mizrox and the ministers were already in the castle and had been there since the previous afternoon. In the royal palace the excitement was intense, but it was of the subdued kind that strains the nerves to the point where control is martyrdom. When the attendants went at 7 o'clock, as was their wont, they found, to their surprise, no one standing guard. The princess had been there during the night. The bed was undisturbed. In some alarm the two women ran to her parlor, then to the boudoir. Here they found her asleep on the divan, attired in the gown she had worn since the evening before, now crumpled and creased, the proof positive of a restless, miserable night. Her first act after awakening and untangling the meshes in her troubling, uncomprehending brain was to send for Quinox. "She could scarcely wait for his appearance and the assurance that Lorry was out of danger. The footman who had been sent to fetch the captain was a long time in returning. She was dressed in her breakfast gown long before he came in with the report that the captain was nowhere to be found. Her heart gave a great throbbing joy. She alone could explain his absence. To her it meant but one thing—Lorry's flight from the castle. Where else could Quinox be except with the fugitive, perhaps once more inside St. Valentine's? Preparations began at once for the eventual transaction in the throne-room. The splendor of two courts was to shine in rivalry. Ten o'clock was the hour set for the meeting of the two rulers, the prince and the victim. Her nobles and her ladies, her ministers, her guards and her lackeys moved about in the halls, dreading the hour, brushing against the hated Asaphin guests. In one of the small waiting rooms sat the Count and Countess Halfont, the latter in tears. The young Countess Dagmar stood at a window with Harry Anguish. The latter was flushed and nervous and acted like a man who expects that which is unexpected by others. With a strange confidence in his voice he sought to cheer his depressed friends, but to their listless ears he was not contagious. The sobriety of a burial hung over the castle. Half an hour before the time set for the meeting in the throne-room Yetteve sent for her uncle, her aunt and Dagmar. As Anguish and the latter followed, the girl turned her sad, puzzled eyes up to the face of the tall American and said: "Are you rejoicing over our misfortune? Do you not show a particle of regret? Do you forget that we are sacrificing a great deal to save the life of your friend?" "I do not understand how you can be so heartless!" "If I think I can explain satisfactorily to him I have more time," he said softly in her ear, and although she tried, she could find no words to continue. He left her at the head of the stairs and did not see her again until she passed him in the throne-room. Then she was pale and brave and trembling. Prince Bolaroz and his nobles stood to the right of the throne, the two stark men and woman of the degree to the left, while near the door on both sides were to be seen the leading military men of both principalities. Near the Duke of Mizrox was stationed the figure of Gabriel, prince of Dawsbergen. He had come, with a half dozen followers, among a crowd of unsuspecting Asaphinians, and had taken his position near the throne. Anguish entered with Baron Dangloss, and they stood together near the doorway, the latter

whiter than he had ever been in his life. Then came the hush of expectancy. The doors swung open, the curtains parted and the princess entered. She was supported by the arm of her tall uncle, Caspar of Halfont. Pages carried the train of her dress, a jeweled gown of black. As she advanced to the throne, calm and stately, those assembled bent knee to the fairest woman the eye ever had looked upon. The calm, proud exterior hid the most unhappy of hearts. The resolute courage with which her spirit had been braced for the occasion was remarkable in more ways than one. Among other inspirations behind the valiant show was the bravery of a guilty conscience. Her composure sustained a shock when she passed Alode at the door. That faithful, heartbroken servant looked at her face with pleading, horror-struck eyes, as much as to say: "Are you going to destroy Graustark for the sake of that murderer? Have pity on us—have pity!" Before taking her seat on the throne she swept the thrilled assemblage with her wild blue eyes. There were shadows beneath them, and there were wells of tears behind them. As she looked upon the little knot of white faced northern barons her knees trembled and her heart gave a fresh throbbing of pity. Still the face was resolute. Then she saw Anguish and the suffering Dangloss when the accusing, merciless eyes of Gabriel. At sight of him she started violently, and an icy fear crept into her soul. Instinctively she searched the gorgeous company for the captain of the guard. Her stanch ally was not there. Was she to hear the condemning words alone? Would the people do as Quinox had prophesied, or would they believe Gabriel and curse her? She sank into the great chair and sat with staring, helpless eyes, deserted and feeble. At last the whirling brain ended its fight and settled down to the issue first at hand—the transaction with Bolaroz. Summoning all her self control, she said: "You are come, most noble Bolaroz, to draw from us the price of our defeat. We are loyal to our compact, as you are to yours, sire, yet in the presence of my people and in the name of mercy and justice I ask you to grant us respite. You are rich and powerful, you despoiled and struggling beneath a weight we can lift and displace if given a few short years in which to grow and gather strength. Let us have the fifteen years of our indebtedness I see in supplication for the leniency that you can so well accord. It is on the advice of my counselors that I put away personal pride and national dignity to make this request, trusting to your goodness of heart. If you will not hearken to our petition for a renewal of negotiations, there is but one course open to Graustark. We can and will pay our debt of honor." Bolaroz stood before her, dark and uncompromising. She saw the futility of her plea. "I have not forgotten, most noble petitioner, that you are ruler here, not I; therefore I am in no way responsible for the conditions which confront you except that I am an honest creditor come for his honest dues. This is the 20th of November. You have had fifteen years to accumulate enough to meet the requirements of this day. Should I suffer for your faults? There is in the treaty a provision which applies to an emergency of this kind. Your inability to liquidate this debt does not prevent the payment of this honest debt in kind, as provided for in the sixth clause of the agreement. All that part of Graustark north of a line drawn directly from east to west between the provinces of Ganlock and Doswan, a tract comprising Doswan, Shellott, Yafrac, Oeswald, Semal and Gattabaton." You have two alternatives, your highness. Produce the gold or sign the decree ceding to Asaphin the lands stipulated in the treaty. I can grant no respite." "You knew when that treaty was framed that we could raise no such funds in fifteen years," said Halfont, forgetting himself in his indignation. Gaspon and other men present approved his hasty declaration. "Am I dealing with the Princess of Graustark or with you, sir?" asked Bolaroz roughly. "You are dealing with the people of Graustark, and among the poorest, I will sign the decree. There is nothing to be gained by appealing to you. The papers, Gaspon, quick! I would have this transaction finished speedily," cried the princess, her cheeks flushing and her eyes glowing from the flames of a burning conscience. The groan that went up from the northern nobles cut her like the slash of a knife. "There was one other condition," said Bolaroz hastily, unable to gloat as he had expected. "The recapture of

**The Name Moses.**  
It is a curious fact, unknown perhaps to a majority of readers, that Moses of Scriptural fame was called by eight different names in various places in the Bible. Bathia, the daughter of Pharaoh, called him Moses because she drew him out of the water. Jochebed, his nurse, called him Jehonathai, saying, "I had hoped for him." Miriam, his sister, called him Jared because she had descended after him into the water to see what his end would be. Aaron called his brother Abi Zanuch because his father had deserted their mother. Amram, the father of Moses, called the boy Chabar because he was again reunited to the mother of the lad. Kehath, the grandfather of Moses, called him Abigior because God had repaired the breach in the house of Jacob. The nurse of the grandfather of Moses called him Abi Sobcho because he was once hidden three months in the Tabernacle. All Israel called him Shemahai because "in his days God heard their cries and rescued them from their oppressors."

**A Useful Coffin.**  
A writer in an English church magazine once found in a collier's cottage in Staffordshire a coffin used as a bread and cheese cupboard. Notwithstanding his wife's remonstrance, he told the story of the coffin as follows: "Eighteen years ago I ordered that coffin. The wife and me used to have a good many ones. One day she said, 'I'll never be content till I see the life in your coffin.' 'Well, lass, I said, 'if that'll content thee I'll soon be done.' 'Next day I gave directions to have the thing made.' In a few days it came home, to the wife's horror. I got into it and said, 'Now, lass, are thee content?' She began to cry and wanted the 'horrid thing' taken away. But that I wouldn't allow. In the end she got accustomed to see it, and, as we wanted to turn it to some use, we had some shelves put in and made it into a bread and cheese cupboard. We have never quarreled since that time."

**Preferred Hogs to Land.**  
They tell a good one on a prominent real estate man of Waurika. Some time ago he carried a prospector over on Beaver creek to show him a certain land. He told the man that it was an exceptionally fine claim, that the land did not overflow and that he would sell it to him for \$4,000. The man looked around and discovered some red mud up in a tree and asked the real estate man what caused that mud in the tree tops if the land did not overflow. The agent promptly replied that there was a kind of hog raised over in the Chickawabaw country which used to range on the creek and that they rubbed their mud on the trees. The prospector took a look over the land, glanced up in the tree again and told the Waurika man that he wouldn't take the claim, but he would give him \$4,000 for a couple of those hogs.—Kansas City Journal.

**The Cranberry.**  
The value of the cranberry as a medicinal agent was early recognized by the American aborigines, who prepared medicines from them to extract the venom from poisoned arrows. On the same principle they are used now as a remedy for erysipelas, taken internally or applied as a poultice. In malarial and typhoid conditions the acid of the fruit is specially commended, while dyspeptics who lack gastric juice are also offered cranberries. Eaten raw they are said to be an excellent remedy for biliousness. As a health food cranberries should not be strained, as too much of their substance is lost.

**Sugar Making in 1700.**  
The historian Lafitau, the period of whose observation dates back to 1700-05, describes how in March the Indians make transverse incisions with their hatchets, from which trickles an abundance of water, which they afterward boil over a fire. He says the sugar thus made has nearly always a burned taste, but that the French make it better than the Indian women, from whom they learned how to make it. Bossu, writing in 1756, is equally explicit as to the source of sugar making.

**Nothing to Do.**  
Towne—The last time I saw Jenkins he was looking pretty blue; said he had nothing to do.  
Brown—He told me the same thing today when I met him, but he was quite cheerful.  
Towne—Resigned to it, I suppose.  
Brown—Resigned to it? No; just appointed to it. He's got a political job.—Philadelphia Press.

**Soothing.**  
Pompous Customer—That insect powder you sold me the other day is no good. The cockroaches fatten on it.  
Affable Salesman—Yes, sir. That's the first stage. They get fat on it and then die of apoplexy. Come round next week and report again. Anything I can do for you, ma'am?

**Heroic Sacrifice.**  
Belle—Do you think Chaplie loves Grace?  
Grace—I know it. He told me today that he was going to shave off his mustache so that he could devote more thought to you.  
Encouraging.  
The Prospective Bride—I sometimes wish I had more experience in house-keeping and domestic life.  
The Old Stager—But, my dear, if you had you would never get married.

**Rentally Frank.**  
The Wife—Will you do when you have a little wife to mend your clothes for you?  
The Wretch—Have money to buy new ones.—Exchange.

**Launched on His Literary Career.**  
"I understand your son has decided to go in for literature."  
"Yes, and he's made a splendid start already."  
"You don't say."  
"Yes; went to an auction this morning and bought a secondhand writing desk for only \$4.98.—Catholic Standard and Times.

**An Inviting Field.**  
"They say there's an island in the Pacific with 600 inhabitants where drunkenness, crime, jails, police and courts are unknown."  
"Is that so? It's a wonder somebody hasn't started in to civilize it!"—Brooklyn Life.

**Strength of Animal Scent.**  
The bird dog man is likely to think his favorite has a better nose than any animal on earth. He can tell you any amount of stories about birds being scented at very long distances. Now it is a covey of chickens winged at 300 yards, or, again, a berry of quail drawn straight to its owner's eye. There are other animals, however, which have wonderfully keen noses. For instance, the sea otter hunters do not dare build a fire for days at a time on the little islands of the Pacific ocean frequented by those animals because the otter can smell the fumes from the smallest blaze a distance of five miles out at sea. It is said of this animal that he can trail a fish under the sea. Moose have been known to wind a man at two miles and make up their minds so positively about him as to never quit running under twenty-five.

**A White Ant Diet.**  
A book on the Kongo Free State gives this picture of the fondness of the natives for white ants: "In the white ant month the natives have a very busy time. The river is deserted, and men and women, boys and girls, go out to gather the white ant for food. I cannot say I admire their taste, but the white ant is not bad as food, merely very rich. In the evening it is about an inch long. The natives gather them in hundreds, pull off the wings and roast him. The native boys have a shorter way with him. Sometimes at mess white ants dopped on to the table, attracted by the light. The boys who were waiting pounced on them and without further ceremony popped them into their mouths."

**Strength of Eggshells.**  
Most people are aware of the power of eggshells to resist external pressure on the ends, but not many would credit the results of tests recently made, which appear to be genuine. Eight ordinary hen's eggs that were submitted to pressure varied between 400 pounds and 675 pounds per square inch. With the stresses applied internally to twelve eggs these gave way at pressures varying between thirty-two pounds and sixty-five pounds per square inch. The pressure required to crush the eggs varied between twenty pounds and seventy-five pounds. The average thickness of the shells was thirteen one-thousandths inch.

**The Public School.**  
The public school is generally underestimated and is frequently looked upon with indifference. Its influence cannot be expressed in a few words, but its influence is the lifeblood of the home, the community and the nation. Any ordinary imagination can conjure up a state of affairs that would soon come to pass if the schoolhouse were closed. It is the great sieve into which all the nations of the world are thrown, to be shaken down to the common level of obedience and patriotism.—Schoolmaster.

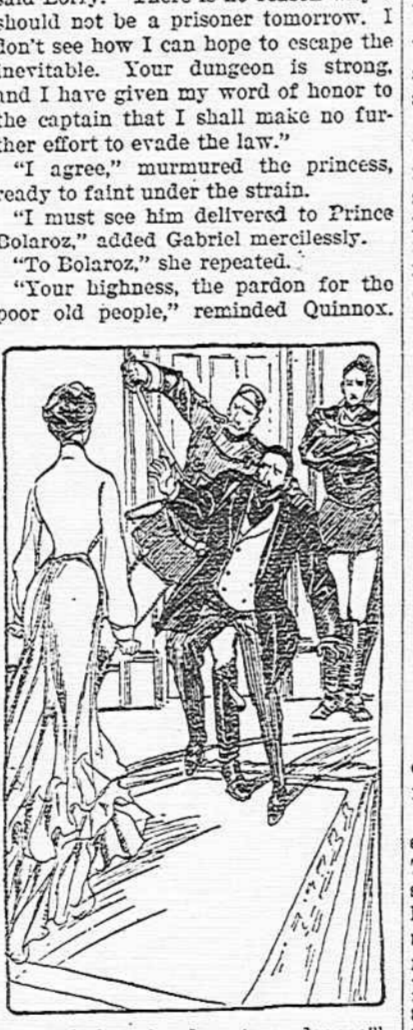
**History Repeating.**  
Mr. Binks—I don't like the looks of that young man who calls to see Clara.  
Mrs. Binks—He looks exactly as you did when you first came to see me.  
"Was I any such fool as that?"  
"Yes, you were, and yet I married you in spite of all my parents could say, and I am afraid that in spite of all we can say our Clara will now be just as big a fool as I was."

**An Odd Inscription.**  
At Wymondham, Norfolk, England, is this inscription at an old country house engraved on an oak board and all in one line: "Nee nishl ghl servus, nec hospes hirudo." Translated from the Latin, in which it appears in antique Roman capital letters, it may be rendered, "No dormouse as a servant for me, neither a horse leech for a guest."

**Not a Case of Superstition.**  
Mrs. B.—Oh, Charles, we can never sit down with thirteen at table.  
Mr. B.—Pshaw! I hope you're not so superstitious as that.  
Mrs. B.—No, of course not, but we have only twelve dinner plates.  
Widepread Interest.  
"Do you think the people appreciate art in this country?"  
"Certainly," answered Mrs. Cumrox. "Everybody gets interested as soon as you tell 'em how much a masterpiece costs!"—Washington Star.

**What He Didn't Mean.**  
Ambiguous—How are you, old fellow? Are you keeping strong?  
"No; only just managing to keep out of my grave."  
"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that."

**An Observing Child.**  
One man in New York had social aspirations which somewhat warped his admiration of his homespun father. The father actually sometimes reposes into the barbarism of eating with his knife. But the man has a little son whose eyes seek and find out the truth. The other day the little boy licked some mashed potatoes from his knife, and his mother chided him, "Stupid, dear!" he said, "only stupid people eat with their knives." "How can you say that?" cried the child. "Grandpa eats with his knife. And he made all our money!"



"For God's sake, do not murder me!"



"I have the prisoner, your highness."

"For God's sake, do not murder me!" Let me go!" cried the prince. "I do not mean that you should kill him now, Quinox, but I instruct you to do so if he puts foot inside these walls again. Do you understand?" "Yes, your highness." "Then you will place this prisoner in the castle dungeon until tomorrow morning, when he is to be taken to the tower. Prince Gabriel may accompany you to the dungeon cell if he likes, after which you will escort him to the gates. If he enters them again, you are to kill him. Take them both away!" "Your highness, I must ask you to write a pardon for the good people in whose house the prisoner was found," suggested Quinox, shrewdly seeing a chance for communication unsuspected by the prince. "A moment, your highness," said the prince, who had recovered himself cleverly. "I appreciate your position. I have made a serious charge, and I now have a fair proposition to suggest to you. If this man is not produced tomorrow morning, I take it for granted that I am liberty to tell all that has happened in this room tonight. If he is produced, I shall kneel and beg your pardon." The princess turned paler than ever and knew not how she kept from falling to the floor. There was a long silence following Gabriel's unexpected but fair suggestion. "That is very fair, your highness," said Lorry. "There is no reason why I should not be a prisoner tomorrow." "I don't see how I can hope to escape the inevitable. Your dungeon is strong, and I have given my word of honor to the captain that I shall make no further effort to evade the law." "I agree," murmured the princess, ready to faint under the strain. "I must see him delivered to Prince Bolaroz," added Gabriel mercilessly. "To Bolaroz," she repeated. "Your highness, the pardon for the poor old people," reminded Quinox.

Her first act after awakening and untangling the meshes in her troubling, uncomprehending brain was to send for Quinox. "She could scarcely wait for his appearance and the assurance that Lorry was out of danger. The footman who had been sent to fetch the captain was a long time in returning. She was dressed in her breakfast gown long before he came in with the report that the captain was nowhere to be found. Her heart gave a great throbbing joy. She alone could explain his absence. To her it meant but one thing—Lorry's flight from the castle. Where else could Quinox be except with the fugitive, perhaps once more inside St. Valentine's? Preparations began at once for the eventual transaction in the throne-room. The splendor of two courts was to shine in rivalry. Ten o'clock was the hour set for the meeting of the two rulers, the prince and the victim. Her nobles and her ladies, her ministers, her guards and her lackeys moved about in the halls, dreading the hour, brushing against the hated Asaphin guests. In one of the small waiting rooms sat the Count and Countess Halfont, the latter in tears. The young Countess Dagmar stood at a window with Harry Anguish. The latter was flushed and nervous and acted like a man who expects that which is unexpected by others. With a strange confidence in his voice he sought to cheer his depressed friends, but to their listless ears he was not contagious. The sobriety of a burial hung over the castle. Half an hour before the time set for the meeting in the throne-room Yetteve sent for her uncle, her aunt and Dagmar. As Anguish and the latter followed, the girl turned her sad, puzzled eyes up to the face of the tall American and said: "Are you rejoicing over our misfortune? Do you not show a particle of regret? Do you forget that we are sacrificing a great deal to save the life of your friend?" "I do not understand how you can be so heartless!" "If I think I can explain satisfactorily to him I have more time," he said softly in her ear, and although she tried, she could find no words to continue. He left her at the head of the stairs and did not see her again until she passed him in the throne-room. Then she was pale and brave and trembling. Prince Bolaroz and his nobles stood to the right of the throne, the two stark men and woman of the degree to the left, while near the door on both sides were to be seen the leading military men of both principalities. Near the Duke of Mizrox was stationed the figure of Gabriel, prince of Dawsbergen. He had come, with a half dozen followers, among a crowd of unsuspecting Asaphinians, and had taken his position near the throne. Anguish entered with Baron Dangloss, and they stood together near the doorway, the latter

whiter than he had ever been in his life. Then came the hush of expectancy. The doors swung open, the curtains parted and the princess entered. She was supported by the arm of her tall uncle, Caspar of Halfont. Pages carried the train of her dress, a jeweled gown of black. As she advanced to the throne, calm and stately, those assembled bent knee to the fairest woman the eye ever had looked upon. The calm, proud exterior hid the most unhappy of hearts. The resolute courage with which her spirit had been braced for the occasion was remarkable in more ways than one. Among other inspirations behind the valiant show was the bravery of a guilty conscience. Her composure sustained a shock when she passed Alode at the door. That faithful, heartbroken servant looked at her face with pleading, horror-struck eyes, as much as to say: "Are you going to destroy Graustark for the sake of that murderer? Have pity on us—have pity!" Before taking her seat on the throne she swept the thrilled assemblage with her wild blue eyes. There were shadows beneath them, and there were wells of tears behind them. As she looked upon the little knot of white faced northern barons her knees trembled and her heart gave a fresh throbbing of pity. Still the face was resolute. Then she saw Anguish and the suffering Dangloss when the accusing, merciless eyes of Gabriel. At sight of him she started violently, and an icy fear crept into her soul. Instinctively she searched the gorgeous company for the captain of the guard. Her stanch ally was not there. Was she to hear the condemning words alone? Would the people do as Quinox had prophesied, or would they believe Gabriel and curse her? She sank into the great chair and sat with staring, helpless eyes, deserted and feeble. At last the whirling brain ended its fight and settled down to the issue first at hand—the transaction with Bolaroz. Summoning all her self control, she said: "You are come, most noble Bolaroz, to draw from us the price of our defeat. We are loyal to our compact, as you are to yours, sire, yet in the presence of my people and in the name of mercy and justice I ask you to grant us respite. You are rich and powerful, you despoiled and struggling beneath a weight we can lift and displace if given a few short years in which to grow and gather strength. Let us have the fifteen years of our indebtedness I see in supplication for the leniency that you can so well accord. It is on the advice of my counselors that I put away personal pride and national dignity to make this request, trusting to your goodness of heart. If you will not hearken to our petition for a renewal of negotiations, there is but one course open to Graustark. We can and will pay our debt of honor." Bolaroz stood before her, dark and uncompromising. She saw the futility of her plea. "I have not forgotten, most noble petitioner, that you are ruler here, not I; therefore I am in no way responsible for the conditions which confront you except that I am an honest creditor come for his honest dues. This is the 20th of November. You have had fifteen years to accumulate enough to meet the requirements of this day. Should I suffer for your faults? There is in the treaty a provision which applies to an emergency of this kind. Your inability to liquidate this debt does not prevent the payment of this honest debt in kind, as provided for in the sixth clause of the agreement. All that part of Graustark north of a line drawn directly from east to west between the provinces of Ganlock and Doswan, a tract comprising Doswan, Shellott, Yafrac, Oeswald, Semal and Gattabaton." You have two alternatives, your highness. Produce the gold or sign the decree ceding to Asaphin the lands stipulated in the treaty. I can grant no respite." "You knew when that treaty was framed that we could raise no such funds in fifteen years," said Halfont, forgetting himself in his indignation. Gaspon and other men present approved his hasty declaration. "Am I dealing with the Princess of Graustark or with you, sir?" asked Bolaroz roughly. "You are dealing with the people of Graustark, and among the poorest, I will sign the decree. There is nothing to be gained by appealing to you. The papers, Gaspon, quick! I would have this transaction finished speedily," cried the princess, her cheeks flushing and her eyes glowing from the flames of a burning conscience. The groan that went up from the northern nobles cut her like the slash of a knife. "There was one other condition," said Bolaroz hastily, unable to gloat as he had expected. "The recapture of

"I have the prisoner, your highness." The assassin who slew my son would have meant much to Graustark. It is unfortunate that your police department is so inefficient. Dangloss with me, for you and for Graustark has been done. There is there a man among you who owns to which he is stranger. I must commit him to prison once more. But," she cried in sudden fierceness, "I promise him now, before the trial, a royal pardon. Do I make my meaning clear to you, Prince Bolaroz?" The white lips of the old prince could frame no reply to the daring speech. "Be careful of what you say, your highness," cried the prisoner hastily. "I must refuse to accept a pardon at the cost of your honor. It is because I love you better than my life that I stand here. I cannot allow you and your people to suffer when it is in my power to prevent it. All that I can ask is fairness and justice. I am not guilty, and God will protect me. Prince Bolaroz, I call upon you to keep your promise. I am not the slayer of your son, but I am the man you wish to send to the block, guilty or innocent." As he spoke the princess dropped