

The Prince of Graustark

(Continued from Page 6)

that Graustark has not given up hope that Prince Robin may soon espouse the daughter of our neighbor, Daws-bergen."

King gave him a queer look. "By jove, that's odd. I was thinking of that very thing when you spoke."

"The union would be of no profit to us in a pecuniary way, my friend," explained the Count. "Still it is most desirable for other reasons. Daws-bergen is not a rich country, nor are its people progressive. The reigning house, however, is an old one and rich in traditions. Money, my dear King, is not everything in this world. There are some things it cannot buy. But our prince assumes an attitude of independence that we find difficult to overcome. He is prepared to defy an old precedent in support of a new one. In other words, he points out the unmistakably happy union of his own mother, the late Princess Yetive, and the American Lorry, and it is something we cannot go behind. He declares that his mother set an example that he may emulate without prejudice to his country if he is allowed a free hand in choosing his mate.

"BUT enough. I know what is in your mind. You are wondering why our Prince should not wed one of fabulously rich American girls—"

"My dear Count," said King warmly, "I am not thinking anything of the sort. Naturally I am opposed to your pre-arranged marriages and all that sort of thing, but still I appreciate what it means as a safeguard to the crown you support. I sincerely hope that Robin may find his love-mate in the small circle you draw for him, but I fear it isn't likely. He is young, romantic, impressionable, and he abhors the thought of marriage without love. He refuses to even consider the princess you have picked out for him. Time may prove to him that his ideas are false and he may resign himself to the—I was about to say the inevitable."

"Inevitable is the word, Mr. King," said Count Quinnox grimly. "Pon my word, sir, I don't know what our princes and princesses are coming to in these days. There seems to be a perfect epidemic of independence among them. They marry whom they please in spite of royal command, and the courts of Europe are being shorn of half their glory. It wouldn't surprise me to see an American woman on the throne of England one of these days. 'Gad, sir, you know what happened in Asphain two years ago. Her crown prince renounced the throne and married a French singer."

"And they say he is a very happy young beggar," said King dryly.

"It is the prerogative of fools to be happy," said Count Quinnox.

"Not so with princes, eh?"

"It is a duty with princes, Mr. King."

They had not been in New York City an hour before they discovered that William W. Blithers was the man to whom they would have to appeal if they expected to gain a fresh hearing with the banks.

Something had happened during the day to alter their friendly attitude; they were now politely reluctant, as one of the agents expressed it, which really meant that opposition to the loan had appeared from some unexpected source, as a sort of eleventh hour obstacle. The heads of the two banks had as much as said that negotiations were at an end, that was the long and short of it; it really didn't matter what was back of their sudden change of front, the fact still remained that the transaction was as "dead as a door nail" unless it could be revived by the magnetic touch of a man like Blithers.

"What can have happened to cause them to change their minds so abruptly?" cried the perplexed Count. "Surely our prime minister and the

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