

The Daredevil

By
Maria Thompson Davies
Author of "The Melting of Molly"

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SYNOPSIS

Roberta, an orphan, half French, half American, starting for America to stay with an uncle, meets Count de Lussac on crossing to secure mules for France.

By a mistake, Roberta's uncle believes she is a nephew. Knowing him to be a woman hater, Roberta adopts man's attire.

Her uncle, General Carruthers, informs his supposed nephew that he needs his knowledge of French to straighten out a deal for providing mules for France. The governor's honor is involved in the mule deal.

Roberta pledges her aid and is introduced to Governor Faulkner and to his private secretary, Buzz Glendinning.

Mrs. Jeff Whitworth is deep in the mule scheme with her husband and endeavoring to get the governor's signature to the transaction.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Beautiful Madam Whitworth

"GOOD morning, Robert," said the Gouverneur Faulkner to me as I came and stood opposite him at the edge of his wide desk the following morning. And he smiled at me with a gentleness that had also humor playing into it from the corners of his eyes and mouth. "I'm afraid that you've landed in the midst of a genuine case of American bustle this morning after. Here are two lists of specifications, one in English weights and measurements and the other in French. I want you to compare them carefully, checking them as you go and then rechecking them. I want to be sure they are the same. Also make a good literal translation of any notes that may be in French and compare them with the notes in English. Do you think it can be done for me by 3 o'clock, in time for a conference I have at that hour?" With which request he, the Gouverneur Faulkner, handed me two large sheets of paper down which were many long columns of figures.

"Mon Dieu!" I said to myself under my breath, for always I have had to count out the pieces of money necessary to give to Nannette for the washer of the linen at the Chateau de Grez upon the fingers of my hands, which often seemed too few to furnish me sufficient aid. But in a small instant I had recovered my courage, which brought with it a determination to do that task if it meant my death.

"Yes, your excellency," I answered him with a great composure in the face of the tragedy.

"You'll find the small office between my office and that of General Carruthers empty. A ring of the bell under the desk means for you to come to me. I'll try not to interrupt you. Two rings mean to go to the general. That is about all." With a wave of his hand the Gouverneur Faulkner dismissed me.

With my head up in the air I turned from him and prepared to retire to my prison, from which I could see no re-

have finished." And this time I was in reality dismissed. I went, but in my heart was a strange smolder that the spark had kindled.

In the small room that opened off that of the Gouverneur Faulkner, with a door that I knew to lead into the room of my uncle, the General Robert, I seated myself at a table by a window which looked down upon the city spread at the foot of the Capitol hill lying shimmering in the young spring mists that drifted across its housetops. I laid down the papers, took a pencil from a tray close beside my hand and then faced the most dreadful of any situation that I had ever brought down upon my own head. I also faced at the same time the smiling countenance of my Buzz, who looked into the door from the room of my uncle, the General Robert, slipped through that door and closed it gently behind him.

"Safe on first base! The old boy of the bayonets has been called to the governor, and he'll not be back before they both have luncheon sent in to them. I have taken his letters, and now I'm off. What did Bill hand you?"

"Death and also destruction," I answered in an expletive often used by my father in times of a catastrophe, and with those words I showed to my Buzz the two long papers.

"Shoo; that's no big job! I looked over and verified this one myself yesterday in ten minutes. Hello; this other one is in French! Just run it through, and if it is to tally call it, and I'll hold this one. We can do it in fifteen minutes. Go ahead from the top line across." And my Buzz held the paper in his hand as he seated himself in readiness upon the corner of my desk beside me.

"Oh, my Buzz, I have such a mortification that I cannot add one to another of these long figures! When I place one number to another I must use my fingers, and in this case you see that it is impossible." Tears I did not allow in my eyes, but they were in my voice, and I looked into the eyes of my Buzz with a great terror. "What is it that I shall do? I am in disgrace."

"You complete edition of a kid, you; don't you know I can do it for you—that is, if you know what all these kilo things stand for in English? Do you?" As he spoke that kind Buzz put his hand on my shoulder with a nice rough shake.

"I do know from my governess, Madam Fournet, and I will write it all down for you, my Buzz, for whom I feel so much gratitude for help," I answered, with quickness.

"Stow the gratitude and write 'em all out. It will take us about an hour, but it is good to keep calicoes waiting occasionally," he said, and did thereupon seat himself beside the table and draw to himself the two sheets of paper, while I quickly wrote out the table of French weights and measurements translated into English.

I did very much enjoy that hour in which my Buzz labored with a pencil and a great industry while I called to him the list of long figures and then verified as he showed me the units upon the page in the French language. He made jokes at me between workings while he attended his cigarette and we, together, had much laughter.

"There are just three places where these figures disagree, and I have marked them carefully, L'Aiglon," he said, as at last he laid down both pieces of the paper. "These French specifications and figures that flooded you represent the ideal mule in bulk, and these United States figures promise the same multitude in scrub. I thought as much. You just run in there to Bill with them and then forget you ever saw them and we'll be on our way to the girls in ten minutes. Bobby, I mean it when I say that men in your and my positions of trust just forget facts and figures the minute we get out of sight of our chiefs. And we forget the chiefs, too, believe me. Now run along and come out to the car on toe same trot."

"Is it of honor not to tell to the Gouverneur Faulkner that you assisted me in this task, my Buzz?" I asked of him with anxiety.

"No need to tell him—it's all in the same office and will come to me for filing. Don't say anything that will bring on talk that keeps us from Sue and the gang. Just run!" With which advice my kind Buzz disappeared through the door into the office of my uncle, the General Robert, as I softly opened the door of the room of the Gouverneur Faulkner and entered into his presence. And in that presence I found also my uncle, the General Robert, in a very grave consultation with the Gouverneur Faulkner.

"The papers completed, your excellency," I said in a very low and meek tone of my voice as I laid the papers beside him on the table and prepared to take the running departure that my Buzz had commanded of me.

The two hours that I spent with my Buzz at his club in the country with what he called in front of their very faces bunches of calico passed with such a rapidity that I felt I must grasp each minute and remonstrate with them for their fleetness. That Mlle. Sue was even much more lovely in her gray costume of golf with a tie the color of the one worn by my Buzz than she had been in her chiffon of the dinner dance, and the beautiful Belle was much the same, with an added gaiety and charm, while I discovered a very sweet Kate Keith and a Mildred Summers who was not of a great beauty, but of many interesting remarks which induced much laughing. With them were that Miles Menefee whom my Buzz had recommended to me and also several young gentlemen of America whom I like exceedingly.

"Come on, L'Aiglon. It's time to beat it. We are late, and Sue is be-

ginning to shoo," called my Buzz from the door of the card room.

"My Buzz," I said to that Mr. Buzz Glendinning as he raced the slim car through the country and the city up to the Capitol hill, "you give to me a life of much joy in only a few days. I would that it could so continue."

"That's all right, Prince. Don't mention it," he answered me, with a laugh. "And, say, let's get to work, because at about 4 o'clock I'll have something that'll give you a start."

"Oh, but, my Buzz, at 4 o'clock I must go for tea to the home of beautiful Madam Whitworth."

"Vhe-ee-uh!" whistled my Buzz as he looked at me from the top of my head to the toe of my shoe.

"Go ahead, sport, but accept it from me that Madam Pat is the genuine and original pump, so don't let her empty you. Do you want me to come by and extract you at about fifteen to 5? I'm sorry, but I really must have a business interview with you before 6." And my Buzz's eyes twinkled with something that was of a great pleasure to him, I could observe.

"It would be of more pleasure to me if you came at the half of 5, my Buzz," I made a hurry to assure him, for I had a great dread of all of the falsehoods I was to say to that Madam Whitworth that afternoon for the purpose of extracting perhaps a little wicked truth from her to help in the defense of my Gouverneur Faulkner.

"I'm on," answered my Buzz promptly. "Beat it! I hear the old boy growling." And he disappeared behind the door of my uncle, the General Robert. I went to the duty of assuring the nice gentleman in very rough clothing that the gouverneur would in the morning read the paper on the subject of making a long road past his property in good condition by a vote.

The hour of 4 ended my duties for the day. Roberta, marquise of Grez and Bye, did so long to go into that room of the Gouverneur Faulkner and receive upon her hand one nice kiss of good night from him, but Mr. Robert Carruthers walked down from the capitol and only paused to lift for a little second his very handsome hat toward the window of his excellency's room high up above.

And the encounter with the beautiful Madam Whitworth was much worse than I had thought that it would be, though also it was of a very interesting excitement. She had made armaments for the encounter in the shape of a very lovely tea apparel of an incredible thinness to be used for covering, a little low fire in the golden grate and curtains of rose to throw somewhat of glow over the situation. Immediately I was seated beside her on a small divan upon which there was room for only one and a half persons, and my stupidity was called into vigorous action.

"I suppose you have spent the day in translating a lot of those long and tiresome French documents for the general and the governor. Thank goodness, that is no longer my task," she remarked as she tipped the cognac bottle over my tea and handed the cup to me.

"It is of a great fatigue to work upon a matter that one does not at all understand," I answered her as I sipped at that tea of a very disagreeable taste because of the cognac.

"Did they give you the two sets of specifications to compare?" she asked of me, with not much of interest apparent in her manner, though her hand shook as she poured for herself a very small cup of tea, which was then filled complete with cognac.

"Hellas," I answered, with a sigh. "And it is impossible for me to add mere figures to each other than my fingers will allow. I cannot even use my toes."

"Then he didn't get them ready for the conference this afternoon?" she demanded, with a great illumination of joy in her face.

"Oh, indeed, I handed them back completed to his excellency in a short space of time. Is not one mule like to another exactly? And why should a paper make them different?" I questioned, with deceit of stupidity.

"You are a dear boy," laughed that Madam Whitworth. "Of course those specifications agree, for I worked a whole day over them. And I'm glad you didn't tire your eyes out with them. You know, you are really a very beautiful creature, and I think I'll kiss you just once, purely for the pleasure of it." And I thereupon received a kiss upon my lips from the curled flower which was the mouth of that beautiful Madam Whitworth.

"Is it that the stupid Gouverneur Faulkner must very soon sign that paper that sends the many strong mules to carry food to the soldiers of France fighting in the trenches?" I asked of her as I made her comfortable in the hollow of my arm.

"If he doesn't sign them in a very few days the deal is all off," she answered me. "Jeff has got his capital to put up from some northern men who are—are restless and—and suspicious. It must go through and immediately."

"Then it must be accomplished immediately," I answered her with decision.

"The agent of the French government will be here on Tuesday, and all of these preliminary papers must be signed before he can close the matter up finally. I hope that the conference over those specifications this afternoon will be the last. Are you sure you discovered no flaw over which the old general or the big stupid governor can haggle?"

"I discovered not a flaw," I answered her, with a great positiveness. "Do you say that it is soon that those representatives of my government come

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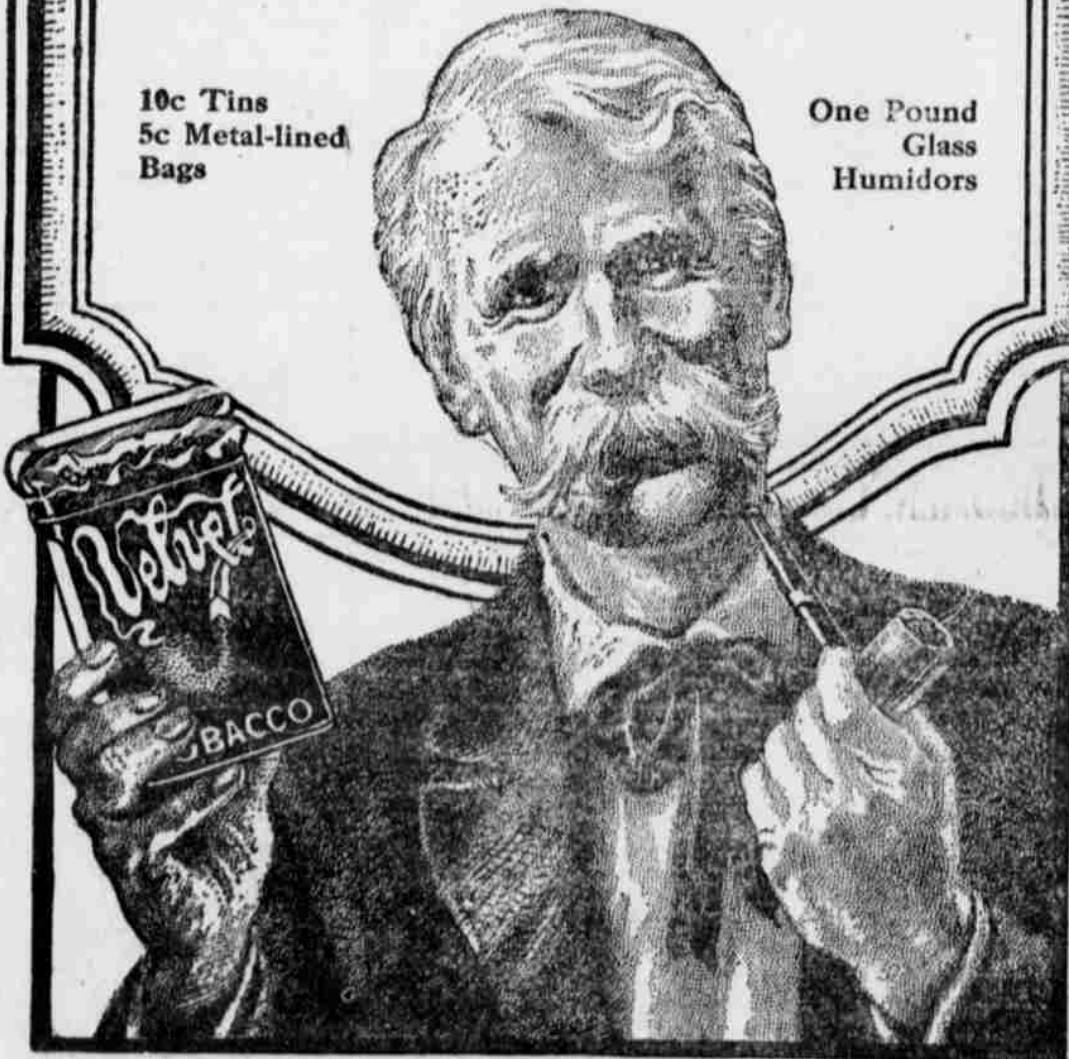
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"It is for France we plot."

to make a last signing of the papers about the excellent mules to be sent from the great state of Harpeth to France who is at a war of death? I had not heard of the nearness of the visit at the capitol.

(To Be Continued.)

GRANGE TO INSTALL OFFICERS TONIGHT

Prominent Portland Men Will Address Gathering at Annual Meeting—Officers are Named.

(From Saturday's Daily.)

The Eastern Star Grange will hold installation of officers at the Grange Hall tonight, the ceremonies attending the installation beginning at 7 o'clock. C. M. McAlister, of the Portland Union Stock Yards, of Portland, and J. P. Paville, editor of the Western Farmer, will address the members of the grange. Several Bend citizens are also expected to attend the gathering.

Before the regular installation of officers a supper will be served by the ladies of the grange.

The officers to be installed are: O. C. Cardwell, worthy master; S. P. Reynolds, worthy overseer; William McKnight, worthy lecturer; Leland Nickerson, worthy secretary; C. M. Bragg, worthy treasurer; J. E. Stewart, worthy steward; J. W. Whitmore, assistant worthy steward; Mrs. William Whitmore, lady assistant steward; George Erickson, worthy gatekeeper; Mrs. William Reynolds, chaplain.

Four chairs at your service at the Metropolitan. No waiting.—Adv.

ONE CENT A WORD is all a little Want Ad will cost you.

LOCKED IN THE PANTRY

The following story was written by Geraldine Rice, a 12-year-old pupil in the Bend public schools.

(From Saturday's Daily.)

I remember when I was a little boy, my mother always warned me never to get in the pantry while she was gone; because she said that I might break some of her China dishes. It happened one day she was out, and I got quite hungry. So, of course, I thought I could go in and get what I wanted and then when I got done I could fix everything back as it was. The pantry happened to have a night lock on it, so I went in and locked it after me. I did not know it until I got done eating. So I started to get out and the door was locked. I went back and started to cry. I cried for quite a while, and then happened to think of the jam that mother made. It was right behind me. It was in a big barrel. Mother had put it up for winter. I got up from where I was sitting, and opened the lid and started to eat. I could not quite get as much as I wanted, and I climbed upon the barrel. I could get my hands in it a lot better, and ate faster. Finally, I got tired sitting in that position, so I leaned over a little bit farther, and of course fell in head first. I struggled, but all in vain. I heard mother calling me, then she heard me in the pantry. She pushed at the door and it opened. Well, you know what little boys get. That is what I got. That is the last time I have been in the pantry without asking my mother.