

THE GIRL WITH A MILLION

By D. C. Murray

CHAPTER XVII.

Town was filling fast after the Whit-sundae recess, and O'Rourke was back in London, engaging less warily than of old in his parliamentary and journalistic warfare with the world. It all mattered so little now that he fought listlessly. He was gayer than ever in manner, and more sympathetically charming than ever, for he had time to cultivate the friendly emotions. The little widow stayed on in Houfoy and kept her own secret.

Maskelyne came striding upstairs with a supernatural gravity of expression. This changed for one moment to a delightful smile when O'Rourke ran out to the landing place to meet him, and with both hands outstretched in friendly welcome.

"My dear old fellow!" said O'Rourke. "Not tired of England yet? I have an idle hour or two to-day, and had resolved to come round and take a look at you."

"Upon my word," said Maskelyne, "you are a man to be envied. You have the power of benefiting your fellow creatures. You are like fresh air."

O'Rourke laughed breezily, and took stock of his friend with smiling eyes. He saw that Maskelyne was pale, and almost haggard.

"Come," he said. "It strikes me that you want fresh air. You're not looking well, old fellow."

"Do you think not?" asked Maskelyne. "O'Rourke, I'm going to surprise you."

"Are you?" asked O'Rourke.

"I am causing some unnecessary anxiety to the authorities of Scotland Yard," said Maskelyne. "I think it's in consequence of my having been a good deal with Dobroski of late. At any rate I am being watched. My goings out and comings in are observed with constant vigilance."

"Stupid beggars," said O'Rourke, with friendly petulance. "Abominably annoying, isn't it?"

"I don't know," returned Maskelyne. "It makes me feel nice and safe. But it is not worth while to cocker up a mere private citizen of the United States in that way. The old country is well to do, but she can't afford it. And I don't think I should feel humbled any way if my bodyguard got told off to some one else who was more in want of it."

"I'll stop all that for you," said O'Rourke.

"There's a good fellow," answered Maskelyne, and fell into silence.

At this instant the knocker on the hall door was brought into play with violence. There was an audible whirl and scurry in the hall as the housemaid ran to the door to answer this unusual summons, and a second or two later a voice cried so loudly that O'Rourke and his companion heard it.

"Mr. O'Rourke's within doors! Don't be telling me he's not, for I know he is. I'll find the way myself."

"That is Fraser," said Maskelyne.

"Did you conjure him here?" O'Rourke asked. Steps flying up the staircase, and Fraser, perspiring and pale, burst into the room, holding in his left hand a newspaper and a walking stick. He closed the door behind him, nodded strangely to Maskelyne, and then, striding to O'Rourke, thrust the journal he carried into his face, and flourishing his stick as if he were trying the temper of a foil, cried, "Look at that, ye voiper!"

O'Rourke, with a look of wonder, took the journal and retired a pace.

"Oho!" cried Fraser, rolling his head at his ancient comrade so energetically that he rolled his hat off. "Don't be making your faces of innocence at me, Hector O'Rourke. Maybe ye didn't write that? Come, now. Maybe ye didn't write it? Well, ye're a loyar, for write it ye did. And here's the manuscript in your own dirty fist, ye smiling snake."

He tugged a little rolled-up bundle of paper from his breast pocket and stood in a white heat of passion, flourishing it and the stick. O'Rourke smiled with less than his usual spontaneous charm, and Maskelyne set himself between the two.

"Ye needn't fear," said Fraser. "I'll not soil me hands with the dirty coat of him. For few pins," he added, turning anew upon O'Rourke, "I'd cleave the life out of ye."

"This seems likely to be a private affair," said Maskelyne, in his quiet way, "and I won't meddle with it. But we'll have no fighting."

"Private, begorra!" cried Fraser, snorting. "It's that private there's a round fifty thousand copies printed at the very least. Would ye believe it, now, Maskelyne? I put it to you. Ye're not the smartest man alive, but ye're a man of honor, and I put it to you. Here's this dirty villain, here, has been going about with me for years and damaging my reputation by calling me his friend, and borrowing money from me by the handful whenever I had a sixpence in me pocket, and all the time he's been attacking me anonymously. I've had him bring the articles—the very articles he's written—and wonder at me who was the blagyard that wrote 'em, and making innocent eyes and swearing he'd like to know the villain that did it."

"Come, come, Fraser," said O'Rourke, "don't make a mountain out of a mole hill."

There was something in this reply which so exasperated Fraser that, but for Maskelyne's interposition, he would then and there have assaulted O'Rourke. "I'll mole hill the villain!" cried Fraser. "I'll mole hill him!" He struggled to get past Maskelyne, who held him

back with an unexpected strength and adroitness. "Ye take that ruffian's part, do ye?" he said, suddenly ceasing his efforts. "Then I disown ye. Ye're no friend of mine."

"My dear Fraser," returned Maskelyne, "I am taking your part as much as O'Rourke's. I know nothing of the merits of the quarrel, but you shan't fight if I can help it."

"If ever ye speak to me again," said Fraser, stooping for his hat and shaking it in O'Rourke's face over the intervening Maskelyne's shoulder, "I'll cane ye. I'll take any solitary word ye speak to me as a sign that ye want a hoyding. And that's my farewell to ye."

He followed this declaration by an abrupt exit, ran noisily downstairs and slammed the street door behind him.

"There's a Celtic madman for you," said O'Rourke. Maskelyne looked at him with an air of grave inquiry, almost of displeasure. "I don't know that it was altogether fair on my part, but then the beggar provoked it. He has been altogether unamenable to party discipline of late, and I gave him a little satirical dressing down in the hope that it might do him good—bring him to his senses. If you'll wait for me a moment while I dress, the patriot resumed, "I'll drive down to the House and take you with me. I'll introduce you to the Home Secretary, and he will take the trouble to put right that absurd little affair you spoke of a while ago. Shall we go?"

"Yes," said Maskelyne, rather coldly. "I shall be very much obliged."

"Confound him," thought O'Rourke. "The yarn may be true, after all, foolish as it sounded."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Farley and Dobroski had encountered more than once since the novelist's return to London. The novelist's general creed being patience, and the anarchist's impatience, each formed a capital study for the other. To Farley, Dobroski typified the capital error of human nature, and the elder man knew it, and indeed heard it sometimes, and retaliated in complete good faith and good temper.

"I am writing a book," said the novelist, one day. "The story, though mainly carried on in England, takes me abroad—to Russia. I have been reading for months to get what I want, but I do not seem to breathe the Russian atmosphere. I miss the feel of what I want to do. And I have an idea of which I am not quite certain. I should like to lay it before you, and to ask your opinion about it."

"I am wholly at your service," said Dobroski.

"Let me begin with the incident," said Farley, nervously. "You will see the better then on what points I stand in need of advice. The thing began in my mind out of some mock-heroic nonsense I was talking to my wife on the night on which you found my boy in the wood at Janenne and brought him home to us."

"Yes," said Dobroski, with an attentive smile. "I am conscious of having used you as a figure to hang another man's dress on. You must understand that the central figure of my story is an elderly Russian noble. When the story opens he is an exile from his native land. He has identified himself with the popular aspirations, has joined himself with the revolutionary party, the plots of his friends have been detected and he has escaped with his life."

"One moment," said Dobroski, raising his hand. "Who is there? Come in."

The door opened and Wroblewskoff entered. He bowed to Farley and took Dobroski's extended hand in his own with deep reverence of manner.

"Sit down," said Dobroski to the newcomer. "Go on, Mr. Farley."

"We will talk of this another time," returned Farley.

"No, no!" cried Dobroski. "Let us talk of it now. Go on."

"Permit me to retire," said Wroblewskoff, rising. "I am evidently in the way. I see it and feel it. You have private things to speak of, dear and respected sir."

"No, no," said Austin, "not at all."

"Wroblewskoff knows as much as I," broke in Dobroski, smilingly. "Tell your tale to both of us. His advice will be of as much use as mine."

"Well," said Austin, "the Russian noble came to England. There he imagined himself to be safe, but he was the repository of many secrets, and the Russian government would have given much to have him in their hands."

"As they would you, sir," said Wroblewskoff, "and even me."

"A spy," continued Austin, "a spy in the Russian service, a Greek, a cunning, unscrupulous and fearless rascal, determines upon the noble's arrest."

Mr. Wroblewskoff changed the position of his chair and brought his face into deep shadow.

"He racks his mind in vain for a plan by which the anarchist can be induced to return to his native country. At length he hits upon a scheme. He is personally unknown to his intended victim. He comes to England, feigns a profound sympathy with the revolutionary cause, secures an introduction to the anarchist and becomes intimate with him."

Farley was telling the story with his eyes upon the carpet of the room, as if he were reading something there. Dobroski lay back idly in his chair, looking toward the ceiling. Wroblewskoff sat

with his right hand thrust carelessly in the breast of his coat. The right hand, though neither of his companions guessed as much, held the butt of a revolver there.

"When the Greek has once secured an intimacy with the Russian he makes a journey to Calais. There he hires two rooms, which he furnishes in precise imitation of his rooms in London. He goes to Vienna, and there hires two other rooms, and again furnishes in precise imitation of his rooms in London. He then returns to London, and explaining his absence by any pretense you may choose to fancy, he renews his intimacy with his victim. He invites the victim to dinner and drugs him. One of his accomplices is a doctor. The unconscious man is driven to the railway station in a well appointed carriage and is lifted into a sleeping wagon. The doctor attends him. The poor gentleman is being carried to his native air as a last resort, and the doctor is most sedulous in his watchfulness. He hovers about him as he is carried to the steamer. He watches him across. A second well appointed carriage meets the conspirators and their victim at Calais. The drugged man awakes in due time, and looking about him, finds himself surrounded by the objects on which he closed his eyes. The same pictures hang upon the walls, the same ornaments decorate the mantelpiece, the same furniture is disposed about him in the same positions. He recognizes the gentlemen with whom he dined. They bend over him in tender concern. He has been ill, but he knows that one of his friends is a medical man—a man of the highest repute, he has been told. He is advised to lie still and repose himself. He is able in a little while to take nourishment. The object of his abduction is not to kill him, but to hand him over with all the secrets which he only can reveal. His life is precious to his captors. When he is sufficiently recovered to endure a second dose without danger, he is drugged anew. And then the well-appointed carriage, the sleeping wagon, the railway journey, the awakening to the familiar faces and the partial recovery, the composing draught, and all. Finally he is landed in Russian territory, and is arrested."

Dobroski had listened to all this with an attentive air, but M. Wroblewskoff had heard it with a watchfulness altogether cat-like. His keen look dwelt alternately on Dobroski and Farley.

"Yes," said Dobroski, when Farley's pause had lasted long enough to seem to demand an answer to his speech. "The plan is simple and ingenious enough. What of it?"

"If any servant of Russia took upon him to carry such a plan into execution, and succeeded in it, would his government accept the risk of detaining the man?"

"What do you say to that, Wroblewskoff?" asked Dobroski.

"I have not altogether understood, dear sir," said Wroblewskoff. "Is it history? Is it a discovered plot? Has it happened? Is it feared that it will happen?"

"Neither," said Austin. "It is merely an invention. It is part of the plan of a book I am writing—a novel."

"Sir," cried Mr. Wroblewskoff, rising to his feet, "do not write that book."

"Why not?" asked Austin, a little startled by the other's vehemence.

"Oh, sir, put no such tool as that in Muscovite hands! Put no such thought as that in Muscovite hearts! If that thing has not been done, it is only because they have not seen their way to do it. Do not show them such a way. Do not set a trained and cunning intellect to work to devise plans for that devilish police. Ah, dear sir—he turned to Dobroski—"your friend must not imperil your safety."

"My good Wroblewskoff," said Dobroski, with his mournful and affectionate smile. "Write your book, Mr. Farley, with no fear of my amiable companion's fears. You ask me would Russia do such a thing as you have described. I tell you she would do anything for her own profit. If the thing were well done, the victim would disappear—simply and absolutely. No inquiries would unearth him."

"He would never be heard of more," cried Wroblewskoff, with new vehemence. "You confess it. You admit it. Such a scheme made public—sovereign broadcast in a book! It is intolerable. It is horrible. It is terrible."

Even whilst he stood declaiming there, a vivid hope was burning within him, and the thought was in his mind, "If I could frighten the fool from writing such a tale, I should have all the credit to myself."

Nobody knew better than Mr. Zeno how his employers would applaud and pay the man who placed Dobroski in their hands. But then, on the other hand, nobody knew better than he how completely that man would be lost who tried such a trick as Farley had been speaking of, and failed in it. To succeed would be to be covered with glory—that is to say, with glory of such quality as Mr. Zeno coveted. To be found out—to be foiled—to give reason to the enemies of the master he served for a new outcry against the disregard of national honesty, would be to be lost beyond redemption. It was a big stake to play for, and Zeno had had it in his mind ever since he had been set upon Dobroski's track. But it had been with him as a dream rather than as a plan—a thing to wish for rather than arrange. Now that he saw it formulated it looked possible. Zeno walked homeward, turning the thing over in his mind. Then he began to draw up an inventory.

(To be continued.)

Between Friends.

Alyse—Jack is desperately in love with me. He proposed last night.
@rayse—Speaking of desperation—that certainly was the limit.—Chicago News.

EXCAVATING THE PANAMA CANAL.



HUGE "STEAM NAVY" AT WORK IN A PANAMA CANAL CUTTING.

The Panama Canal is being excavated by means of digging machines having the appearance of mechanical hands armed with steel nails, which tear away nearly a truckload of material at a single effort. A line of "flat cars" is seen waiting for the soil as the arm comes swinging back from the face of the cutting. The sight is a fascinating one to watch.

STURDY SECRETARY WILSON.

Man Who Has Built Up the Department of Agriculture.

For more than ten years Hon. James Wilson has held the position of Secretary of Agriculture and under him the department has grown to be one of the most important of the branches of government. When he became Secretary, the department consisted of a few scientists and a couple of roll-top desks and was not seriously regarded anywhere. He proceeded at once to revolutionize it, his main idea being to protect the home market and grab all the foreign trade he could. He acted on the theory that this was the Little Father department of the government and that the development of the industry which he represented was his chief concern. While other cabinet officers devote themselves to the routine humdrum of their duties, writes a Washington correspondent, Wilson has been "projficking" around the whole



SECRETARY JAMES WILSON.

globe in search of things. He has developed such an ear that he can hear an apple grow in Thibet; and as soon as he does he dispatches an expedition after it. In Finland they grow alcohol potatoes, immense things, as big as your head, and no earthly good for eating. Wilson sent after them and had them brought here and naturalized—not to eat, but to get alcohol out of. A year or so back he sent some scientists into the interior of China to get a rare peach, never heard of out of that section, and never heard of in most of China—said by legendary sharps to be the original peach that Eve buncoed Adam with, but Wilson did not go after it on account of its historical value, but because it was good to eat.

He imported macaroni wheat from Italy, and set the unimaginative farmers of America to raising that high-class product. He fostered the Sumatra leaf tobacco growing industry. It is due to him that the mohair industry has grown to its present proportions. He found that we spend \$24,000,000 a year for mohair, and he couldn't see why mohair could not be raised here. He brought it over, and now we are raising it on a tremendous scale in Arizona and Texas, and men are getting rich on it.

Then he started in on milch goats. His idea was that any poor man who

had room enough to keep a couple of goats could raise his own milk supply; and trivial as this seems, it is worth counting to a man who has to figure up pennies instead of dollars when he looks over his household accounts.

He has started the task of restoring the extinct Morgan horse. The Morgan horse was the highest breed we ever had in this country. Its center of origin and development was New England, particularly Vermont. The civil war took all the Morgan horses into the cavalry, and the western emigration which followed the war finished the breed. They got mixed up with others until a pure-bred Morgan horse became unknown and the breed entirely disappeared. Wilson took up this task about two years ago. He got a man in Vermont to give 200 acres for a Morgan horse farm, and Wilson is running it.

He has also gone in for developing a distinct breed of American coach horse. He has got a place out in Colorado where the work is being managed by one of his scientists, and expects to produce an extraordinarily handsome breed of horses. George Rommel is the man in general direction of this scheme.

Wilson has given a great deal of attention to the problem of corn breeding, of solving the problem how to get as much corn as possible on one hill. If a man gets only two or three ears to a hill Wilson regards it as a waste of productive force, because the total number of bushels produced is less than it ought to be. He sent out to Illinois and got Shamel, the most distinguished corn breeder in the world, to come east and take charge of this scheme.

These are merely a few illustrations of the way in which Secretary Wilson has been playing the Little Father for ten years. His department is now one of the greatest in the government and he has thousands of men under him while his predecessors had scores or hundreds.

Nobody can do more with Congress than Secretary Wilson. Every year it is announced that expenses are going to be cut down—not on the navy or army, but on civil expenses, rivers and harbors, postoffices, agriculture and such things. The River and Harbors Committee swears that river and harbor expenses shall not be cut down, the Postoffice Department throws fits. But Secretary Wilson goes down to the Agricultural Committee, meets blank and hostile faces, and in two hearings has them all won over to his side. Not by blarney, not by rhetoric. By jamming facts into them in his nasal snarl.

There are refreshing things about Wilson. In this age of kow-towing to the powers that be. He bends the knee to nobody, not even to Roosevelt. He never antagonizes anybody recklessly, and never surrenders his opinion to anybody. And in a fight he is a holy terror. For he fights as craftily as he fights boldly.

Reminders.

"Is your wife spiteful?"
"The worst ever! She keeps all my old love letters."—Detroit Free Press.