THE GIRL WITH A MILLION

By D. C. Murray

CHAPTER XX.—(Continued.)

The widow with her tear-stained face and crumpled dress, and her hair wildly disarranged, ran out of the room, skimmed downstairs like a swallow, opened the street door with her own hands, and left it wide behind her. The coachman jumped down, but she was at the carriage door before him, and he stared at the wild disorder in which she appeared.

"The Palace Hotel," she said. "Quickly. Go as quickly as you can."

She was taken at once to Angela's apartments.

"Oh, Julia," Angela began, "how kind of you to come so soon. We only reached town yesterday."

"Read that!" said Julia, in a voice so harsh and strange that it surprised herself.

Angela took the wet and twisted letter from her outstretched hand.

"Julia! You are ill. You are in trouble. You are crying. What is the matter?"

She hastened toward her friend, who repulsed her and said: "Read that!" again in the same strange voice.

Angela skimmed the letter as a bird skims water, and arose to her feet.

"Angela Butler," said the little widow, "did you have that sent to me?"

"No," said Angela. "How dare you think such a thing of me? How could you think it?"

"Who sent it?" she sobbed. "Who dared to send it?" Angela's mind was darting this way and that in swift inquiry; but she knew too little of the patriot and his affairs to find the faintest clew to an answer. Who could have known enough to write the letter? Lucy Farley, Maskelyne and O'Rourke himself—these were all. It flashed across her suddenly that O'Rourke had possibly boasted of his own insolence. Men did such things—she had read of them. Even to the confused mind of the sufferer Angela's passionate start at this fancy meant no less than discovery.

"He is a wretch!" cried Angela.

"Who? Who is a wretch?" demanded the little widow, with appealing hands. Angela began to cry with her friend, and fell to kissing and mourning over her. "Oh," cried Mrs. Spry, wringing her hands and weeping all the more for these demonstrations of sympathy, "who—who is a wretch?"

"He is a wicked, bad, unprincipled man," said Angela. "Oh, my dear; I am so sorry. I saw that you were beginning to care for him; but I could not warn you. Why are we so tongue-tied when we see things going wrong?"

"Angela," said Mrs. Spry, gulpingly, "how dare you say so? I'm sure he's the best and noblest of men."

"He's the basest and most dishonorable of men!" cried Angela, stung by her new suspicion of him, which, following on her old certainties, made her feel altogether merciless.

"Angela," said the widow, clinging to her and looking at her imploringly, "did he make love to you before he met me?"

"Only a few days before," Angela answered. "And he knew then that George—that Mr. Maskelyne—— He professed to be Mr. Maskelyne's dearest friend. I hated him from the first——"

"I don't believe it!" said Mrs. Spry, withdrawing her clinging hands and betaking herself to walking up and down the room. "You wanted him for yourself. You know you did."

"You are very grieved, I know, dear," said Angela, "or you would never think or say such things. I did not want him for myself. You know that Mr. Maskelyne and I are going to be married? I loved him long before he came over to Belgium to visit us. I should never have married another man if he had never spoken to me. But Mr. O'Rourke heard that I had money and he tried to come between us and to separate us. If he had not done that, I might have liked him very well. But he succeeded for awhile, and made us both very unhappy. Then he met you, dear, and found that you had more money than I, and so he pretended to fall in love with you—the mercenary wretch! Then he boasted—I can see it all—to some man friend of his about his impertinence to me, and I am made to seem as if he had thrown me away like an old glove. He is a base, unworthy creature, Julia. Throw him away. Be brave and forget him."

This was one of those thigs which are much easier to advise than to do. But Angela since her engagement had learned from her lover most that was to be known from him, and she tried to strengthen her friend's mind with it to such effect that at length she drew from her a declaration that she would see O'Rourke no more. When she had achieved this triumph, she took pen, ink and paper and wrote this note, whilst Mrs. Spry still lay dissolved in grief on the sofa.

"Sir—Oblige me by reading the inclosed. Should you desire to answer it you may do so in person. I am staying with Miss Butler, and you may meet us together at any time it may suit you to appoint."

After a prolonged effort she succeeded in persuading the widow to copy this, and to address it to O'Rourke, accompanied by the Fraser letter. This feat accomplished, the poor thing was got to bed, and after a weary while to sleep. Angela rejoiced in this victory for Mrs. Spry's own sake, and held her saved from the most terrible of fates.

CHAPTER XXI.

Mrs. Spry and Angela were sitting together when O'Rourke's hastily pencilled card arrived. Mrs. Spry tore open the envelope and uttered a little cry.

"He is here," she said, tremulously. "He is waiting." Her shaking hand pressed the card upon Angela.

"I will wait until you are ready to see me," she read. "I have a right to clear myself. It will be best to speak in Miss Butler's presence."

"Oh, he is innocent!" cried the widow.

"Julia," said Angela, with tender anxiety, "he is not innocent. He has come to take advantage of your weakness. We will admit him, and hear what he has to say."

O'Rourke was shown into the room. He was pale, but his manner was under perfect control. He made no attempt to approach Mrs. Spry, but, having closed the door, bowed, and, advancing to the center of the room, laid both hands on the rail of a chair, which he held firmly. He looked then at Angela, and his brows contracted ever so little as if in inquiry. He was playing to look as if he asked himself what had induced her to adopt a role so extraordinary as the one she had taken up, and his trained sense of humbug came so to his aid that he asked himself that question unfalteringly. Next he looked at the widow, and his glance was full of appeal. Neither of the women spoke a word, but Angela, with her eyes fixed upon O'Rourke, reached out a hand sideways, and took her friend by the wrist, sliding her hand downward until the fingers of both were interlaced.

"I have received a letter from you, Julia," O'Rourke began, "containing an inclosure in the handwriting of a bitter enemy of mine, a political rival, who is enraged at his own want of success. I am here to tell you that that letter contains one innuendo which is based on truth, and only one. I am indebted to your friend, Mr. Maskelyne. Apart from that one truth I deny every statement the letter contains."

Then he paused, looking from one to the other of his auditors. Mrs. Spry drew her hand from her companion's, and half arose, but Angela checked her.

"I begin to see, sir, that I have made a mistake," she said. "I fancied you would not dare to come here. I have read the letter you speak of." She could go no further.

"I supposed," returned O'Rourke, "from the note which accompanied it that you had done so. I supposed, also, that you support its statements. I do not know how you have allowed yourself to be persuaded of the truth of those statements, but I declare them, on the faith of an honest man, to be without foundation."

"Angela!" cried Mrs. Spry, "I knew it. I was sure of it. It's all a mistake!"

"Thank you, Julia!" cried the patriot; "thank you."

At this Angela took unexpected fire, and rising to her feet in sudden self-possession, faced the patriot with flushed cheeks and glittering eyes.

"I do not rely upon much from you, Mr. O'Rourke, upon which I might count with safety from most men. But I will ask you a question or two, if you will be so kind as to answer them."

"I will answer any question you may ask me, Miss Butler," he answered, inclining his head with grave courtesy.

"Forgive me if I hurt you, dear," said Angela, swiftly turning to her friend. "You did not know, Mr. O'Rourke, that my friend Mrs. Spry was wealthy until she herself told you so?"

"I knew that she was well-to-do," returned O'Rourke, "but I did not know that she was wealthy. You will remember, Julia, that your statement took me by surprise."

"You did not suppose her fortune to be greater than it really is?"

"I certainly did not," said O'Rourke. He actually smiled at this, as if the thought amused him.

Angela rang the bell and sent for Maskelyne, who was in the hotel. When he came Angelo told him of what had occurred, and he at once told of his conversation with O'Rourke about Mrs. Spry's riches.

"It's a lie," said O'Rourke, "Fraser and I have quarreled, and he has invented this story to damage me with you and with my friends."

The widow suddenly fell on her knees and threw up her head with shriek on shriek of laughter. Maskelyne raised her, and rang the bell for assistance.

O'Rourke stood staring at the pair, as much lost for the moment as if the whole world had tumbled in ruins about his ears. A waiter knocked at the door and entered.

"Send a female servant here, and run for a doctor," Angela called to him. Mrs. Spry's wild laughter ran through the house. A chambermaid looked in at the open door and ran to her assistance. A dozen people were in the corridor, staring with frightened faces.

O'Rourke still retained a grain of his customary self-government. He walked down the corridor and out of the hotel. His cabman hailed him, and he threw him half a crown and strode toward his chambers, desperate, and half beside himself with rage. His chambers reached, he entered his bedroom without a word, and, locking the door, sat down to think. His thoughts were too terrible to be endured without emotion, and in a little time he began to pace wildly up and down. Now and then he groaned aloud.

It was dark, and O'Rourke was still raging up and down his bedroom, when the maid brought up a note and knocked at the door.

"What's the matter?" he asked, unlocking the door and thrusting a pale face into the light of the adjoining room.

"A note, sir," said the girl, "marked 'immediate.'"

He took it and tore it open with a passionate eagerness. It was from Dobroski, and asked him to call upon the morrow. He cursed Dobroski, for his usual suavity and self-control had altogether deserted him. Then, clinching the note in his hand, he slammed the door and locked it, and fell to pacing up and down again.

CHAPTER XXII.

At first he had resolved that he would not take any notice of Dobroski's invitation. Nothing seemed to matter any longer. Things were going to the bad all round, and he was in a mood to welcome and even to hasten the final crash. But in a little time his desperation took another turn, and he felt fit to join in the maddest enterprise the old anarchist might unfold before him. In this mood he set out, and in this mood he reached Dobroski, who welcomed him with an air and manner of almost fatherly affection.

"I have asked you to call this morning," he said, "for an important reason. I have received an offer of a hundred thousand stand of arms on terms which are not likely to be secured again. The present political lull deceives the venders, who think that no chance of sale is likely to occur to them for some time. The arms are stored in New York, and can be delivered at any time in Ireland. We are not fit to use them yet, but the opportunity is one that may never occur again. This," he went on, taking up a leather case and unstrapping it as he talked, "is a specimen. The rifle is the Berdan, and was made for the use of the Russian troops during the Russo-Turkish war. An admirable weapon, little liable to get out of order, even with unskillful usage. There are two million cartridges to be had also. I will show you the contract, and you will see how very easy the terms are made. It may be a year or two before we can venture to strike—it may be even three or four years—but it will be well to be in readiness."

"Don't bid for the ammunition," said O'Rourke. "For my own part I never shoot with last year's cartridges; and to take stuff for war that one wouldn't use even in sport is the sort of thing that only governments are guilty of. Let the enemy do that, but let us have our ammunition new. We can order it when we want it. And that," he added to himself, "won't be in your lifetime, or mine, old gentleman."

"That is wise," said Dobroski, marching up and down the room with his hands behind him. "That is sensible and practical. We want practical hands for this kind of work. A valuable suggestion." He smiled upon O'Rourke like a father commanding a son. The smile was so soft, benevolent and gentle that the patriot wondered at it a little.

"Let us understand each other completely," said O'Rourke, who, desperate as he had felt himself to be an hour ago, began to grow cautious again now that he came face to face with an actual enterprise. "These arms when purchased must on no account be introduced into Ireland until they are actually to be used. The stroke, when it comes, must be bold, swift and unexpected. There must be no sparring beforehand, to put the enemy upon his guard."

"We are as one about that matter," returned Dobroski. "You are a little earlier than I expected you. I named an hour for you, but in a note which I dispatched later I suggested an hour before noon to my good friend Wroblewskoff, and to Mr. Frost, who will accompany him. When they arrive we can discuss business formally. They will be here almost directly."

Almost as he spoke there came a knock at the door, and a minute later the maid of the house brought in a card.

"Show the gentleman this way," said Dobroski, when he had glanced at it. "I have a call from your old friend Mr. Farley. It will be but an affair of a few minutes." He rose to meet his visitor, and received him cordially. "You had my note? That is well. I have your old friend Mr. O'Rourke here." The old friends bowed like old enemies, and Dobroski looked from one to the other in some confusion. "Ha!" he said, to cover his momentary awkwardness. "The child! How do you do, little sir? We are old acquaintances, you and I. Will you shake hands? The brave little man. Sit here a while, dear little one."

O'Rourke had turned his back upon host and guest, and was staring out of the window. Farley was pulling at his mustache and holding himself with unusual erectness. Dobroski looked uneasily at either of them.

"Will you walk this way, sir?" he said, addressing Farley. The novelist bowed somewhat stiffly and followed him to the next room, which was evidently the old man's workshop.

Having reclosed the door, and taking a heap of manuscripts from one of the drawers of the table, he sat down and began to talk in so picturesque and animated a fashion that Farley forgot all about the treacherous old friend and new enemy in the next room. Neither noticed a new summons at the street door or heard voices in the next room.

"Mr. Dobroski is engaged for the moment," said O'Rourke, when Frost and the good Wroblewskoff came in together.

(To be continued.)

Motoring is now so popular in the British navy that some officers carry their cars afloat with them. The Autocar says Lord Charles Beresford is one of them.

RESTOCKING THE RANGES.

Serious Problem as Viewed by State Veterinarian of Washington.

During the past few weeks Dr. S. B. Nelson, state veterinarian of Washington has spent considerable time in Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield and Asotin counties, examining many bands of sheep that are kept in these counties, as to their general health, with particular reference to "scab." Recently, in discussing things of interest he had observed in going from one sheep camp to another, Dr. Nelson came to the problem of "restocking the ranges," which is now so absorbing to stockmen.

"One of the serious problems now confronting the stockmen of this state is the question of restocking the ranges with the original bunch grass," he said. "Old settlers tell us that when they came here forty years ago, the bunch grass was from two to three feet tall, and very heavy. The promiscuous grazing of the stock over the ranges has put them in their present bare, or semi-bare, condition The reclaiming of these vast tracts of grazing land is a problem to which the agricultural departments of various institutions have given a great deal of attention.

"Some seven or eight years ago I rode over these same ranges and found the bunch grass practically all gone in many places. This condition could be observed for miles and miles as the ranges were ridden over. Recently I was very much astonished is passing through these same regions to find that thousands of acres had been fenced, while equally large tracts were not fenced, but were held as summer range by sheepmen who practically controlled them. I observed that these ranges, bare several years ago, were, at the time of my visit, covered with a luxuriant growth of bunch grass, standing from eighteen to thirty inches high. In places the grass was so heavy that it could not be mowed for hay. I was also much surprised to see that in places that had been protected for a less number of years, the heavy bunches of grass were scattered, and between the big bunches, bunches from two to three years old were well started. It was very easy to pick out a bunch of two-year-old grass from among a number of the older bunches. In looking into theis question I discovered how it was that these ranges had been restocked.

"The sheep are kept on these winter ranges from the time they come out of the mountains in the fall, during September and early October, until after lambing, and a short time the following spring. Early in the spring the sheep eat the young, tender bunch grass, but the sheep are well scattered (a good herder nearly always keeps his sheep scattered) the bunch grass as it gets older becomes tougher, and the sheep do not like it so well. By the latter part of April and early in May, the sheep prefer the many weeds, especially sunflowers, never touching bunch grass at all. Many, many times during my trips through these counties, I saw bands of from fifteen to twenty-five hundred sheep grazing in bunch grass from one foot to eighteen inches high and never touching it. They were picking out the little weeds in between the bunches of grass, and wherever there were areas of sunflowers, they would eat the flowers perfectly clean wherever they went.

"From the first to the fifteenth of June the sheep are taken into the mountains and kept until the latter part of September. Now when the sheep are brought back in September, the bunch grass has seeded, the seed being scattered over the ground. The fall rains seem to soften the bunch grass, making it tender so that the sheep eat it greedily. In this way, by eating the early shoots before the grass goes to seed, and then eating this mature, semi-cured grass after it has gone to seed, the seed is saved on the ground and resown, and the stand of bunch grass is continually increased.

"This has demonstrated to me very strongly, that if men owning large areas of grazing land expect to keep their ranges up to the present standard, or even increase the stand of bunch grass, that they must of necessity protect the bunch grass at least every other year, during its seeding time; that is, from the time the seed begins to form until the mature seeds are shattered on the ground. I am convinced that the problem of restocking the ranges may to a very large extent be solved by fencing the grazing lands, and, at intervals, resting them."

WRITES OF OREGON.

Sidelights on Beaver State by Professor of Cornell.

In his recent book on "How to Choose a Farm, With a Discussion of American Lands," Professor Thomas F. Hunt, of Cornell university, devotes several complimentary paragraphs to farming conditions of the Pacific Northwest and to the resources of Oregon in particular. Professor Hunt accompanies his descriptions with tables of statistics which throw several interesting sidelights on the conditions existing in the Beaver State.

"This region is characterized by its immense forest resources, its fishing industries, and the high production of wheat by dry farming in the eastern part of Washington and along the Columbia river in Oregon," writes Professor Hunt of Oregon, Washington and Idaho. "One-third of the area is covered by forests of immense commercial value, while at least one-fifth more is covered by trees of less importance. In Western Oregon and Washington are to be found millions of acres of the densest forests, with coniferous trees of great height, and large diameters, of which the Douglas fir and the red cedar are perhaps the most important. It is not uncommon for five acres of land to cut a million feet of lumber.

"Wheat and hay constitute about one-third the value of all crops. While general farming is somewhat more developed than in the Rocky Mountain states, the grazing of livestock is still one of the principal industries. Certain areas in Oregon, Washington and California furnish ideal conditions of soil and climate for the production of hops. These three states produce two-thirds of the product of the United States.

"The Cascade mountains divide this region, climatically and agriculturally, into two parts. Between the Cascade mountains and the Coast range are fertile, well-watered valleys, already thickly populated. Upon the western coast, owing to the Japan current, the temperature is the most equable in North America. The climate is more like England than that of any other part of the United States.

The soils are mostly of a volcanic origin and are unusually fertile and enduring. The prairies consist of an expanse of rolling hills. The layout of the farms and general aspect of the improvements are similar to those in the newer portions of the North Central states. The people are mostly native-born Americans from the older settled states. There is a general air of hopefulness and prosperity among them.

"There are still 30,000,000 acres of unappropriated and unreserved public lands ready for entry in this region. While some of this is forest land and some is arid, this region probably contains the best large body of public yet open for settlement in the United States."

Oregon, Washington and Idaho are credited with about 90,000 farms. The area in farms is about 25,000,000 acres, the improved area being about 9,000,000 acres for the three states. The average size of the farms is a trifle over 250 acres, and the average size of improved farms is nearly 100 acres. The state of Oregon alone has about 11,000,000 acres of land in farms and ranches, which is estimated to be worth about $13 per acre.

EXPERIMENTS WITH HYBRIDS.

Pullman Station Develops New Varieties of Wheat.

The Washington State college experiment station at Pullman has brought a line of experiments with Little Club and White Track wheat to a point where definite statements concerning results can be given. These hybridization experiments were begun in 1899 by Professor E. E. Elliott. One long-headed variety which is now growing in the eighth generation produces more straw than any other hybrid heretofore grown on the station farm. Because of this and that it will withstand cold nearly as well as Jones' Fife, the station staff believes it will be well adapted to the dry section included in the greater portion of the Big Bend country. A length of six inches and 100 grains to the head is not unusual in this variety.

Another hybrid is remarkable for the stiffness of the straw. On the farm a plot of Red Russian and Arcadian were cut to the ground by squirrels, while the hybrid variety was left uninjured. The stem grows too short to be suitable for dry land, but it is the most stable variety yet produced and in several instances produced 60 bushels per acre.

A long stem hybrid has the peculiarity of growing with surprising uniformity of height, and the staff say this wheat should be well adapted to threshing with a combined harvester. The evenness in length, and the fact that it shatters but little, makes it one of the most desirable hybrids brought out on the college farm.

EXCELLENT COAL PROSPECTS.

Much Interest Aroused in Deposits Around Ashland.

The recent work in developing the various coal prospects found in the vicinity of Ashland, Oregon, has met with so much success and has attracted such widespread attention that it promises to insure sufficient perseverance in work along this line to determine the real extent of the coal deposits which, beyond doubt, exist in this section. There is no question about the coal being found and the quality of it, but there are skeptics as to the extent of the deposits. The scarcity and high price of wood for fuel has prompted and encouraged the coal prospecting to a large extent, and the opening up of coal beds of ample extent would be a welcome solution of the fuel problem, which is a serious one and promises to be more serious before another winter is over. The inability to secure woodchoppers during the past year or two has greatly curtailed the wood output and has resulted in soaring prices.

The British soldier is now to possess three shirts instead of two.