

THE MYSTERY OF GRASLOV

By Ashley Towne

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CHAPTER I THE FATHER AND THE LOVER OF AN AMERICAN GIRL

THE GREAT Transiberian railway had progressed as far to the eastward as the Obi, and the train carrying soldiers, convicts, sightseers, railway constructors, laborers and supplies, with some goods for trade with Manchuria, ran from Moscow.

The possibilities of this immense line of railway to the people of Europe and Russia were not yet fully appreciated. It gave them a prospect of trade as they had never dreamed of. It gave them a speedy entrance into a region of their domain the crossing of which had formerly occupied months and involved much hardship.

What a change there was from the old sledges or foot trains of convicts to the swiftly moving cars that were drawn by the puffing, screaming locomotives, at once a source of delight and terror to the people whose territory they crossed!

Among those who had made this change so remarkable a success was James Gordon, an American engineer, who had charge of much of the advance work of the road.

Gordon was a typical American, ready to go anywhere to build a railway so long as the pay was sufficient to make it an object for him to take his daughter with him.

For Frances Gordon was her father's companion, secretary and comfort. Left motherless at an early age, she had been brought up by strict aunts and she revolted. Her father had been surveying a route across New Mexico for a new road, fondly and longingly thinking of his daughter in her far-away home in New York, when, lo, the young lady herself, then aged nineteen, put in an appearance mounted on a broncho and accompanied by a half-breed guide, to whom she spoke in an authoritative tone that he bowed before her slightest wish in abject obedience. Since that day Frances Gordon was to be found wherever her father was.

A year and a half after they had finished the work in Mexico, they had moved together to Russia, where Gordon was to take charge of the important part of putting through the railway that was destined to revolutionize the trade and commerce of the world.

This great railway had progressed as far as the Obi river, in the possession of Tomsk, Siberia, when a meeting of managers, engineers and government officials was ordered at Moscow. Thither from the Obi journeyed James Gordon and Frances.

Thither also journeyed Nicholas Neslov, prince of the empire and governor of the province of Tomsk.

Prince Neslov was one of the wealthiest nobles of the land, and had, besides his exalted position as governor of Tomsk, estates in various parts of Russia, particularly a fine one at Graslov, in the government of Perm.

It was after the convention, which had to do with certain concessions and arrangements that were necessary as the road drew near the border of Manchuria, the crossing of certain mountains, the bridging of certain streams, that Mr. Gordon was preparing to return to the Obi, where the western end of his operations was laid, the operations themselves reaching eastward to Lake Baikal, in Irkutsk.

To him one day as he sat smoking at his hotel in Moscow came Prince Neslov.

"Good morning, your excellency," said Gordon, who had met the prince at several conferences and now knew him because of the fact that the operations had passed almost across his province. "Glad to see you. When do you return to Tomsk?"

"I shall not be long behind you, my friend," replied the prince. "It is a fact, however, that upon your answer to a certain question which I shall put to you depends many of my acts in the immediate future. M. Gordon, you are an American."

"So I believe; I have heard it hinted at," said Mr. Gordon, wondering what was coming.

"And I am a Russian of the Russian," said the prince, "and I am a well-identified fact."

"I am worthy, a governor of a province and shall soon be promoted to a better station. Since you entered the road territory in the southern part of my government we have met frequently; we have been friends."

"Yes," replied Gordon, rather dubiously, stroking his chin.

"When you needed protection, my power protected you."

"I believe you," said Gordon, failing to remember the time when he needed the protection of the prince.

"I merely express myself thus to recall to you my friendship," said the prince. "Now I come to the real errand that brought me here. I love your daughter."

"Eh?" exclaimed Gordon, rousing himself and stiffening perceptibly.

"I repeat, sir, that I love your daughter. I want her for my wife, my princess."

A cloud of smoke came from Gordon's lips. He was looking at a distant church tower with eyes that saw no church.

"You seem surprised," said the prince. "Is it a matter of surprise that a man should love so noble and beautiful a young woman as your daughter?"

"No," said Gordon slowly, "and if it were I would be used to it by this time. You are not the first."

A slight pallor appeared on the cheeks of Neslov.

hearty, and—well, she is my boss, I can tell you!"

"You charm me. I am more in love than ever."

"I won't do a bit of good, I tell you. If I thought you were the finest man on earth, my wishes would not prevail upon Frances to marry you. She will make her own choice, when it is made, and it will stand."

"You lead me to believe this choice has already been made."

"No, I did not mean that, prince. It might be so, for all I know to the contrary. Frances might love a man and not yet be ready to tell me, although there is nothing secret about her. We have each other's confidence."

"Still it could not be possible that she would be in love and you not know it."

"It might, and I will tell you why. She has refused to marry the man I chose for her, the finest young man, in my estimation, on earth."

"Then you have already given your allegiance to a lover?"

"I gave it to the lover, but Frances would not marry him. I have no objection to your knowing who it is. It is Deuton, the bridge builder. Jack Deuton was the son of one of my oldest friends."

"I love your daughter."

Old Deuton was at one time worth a lot of money, but lost it through the rashness of a man he trusted. Jack was a sort of genius and asked me what profession to take up. I told him bridge engineering. He is one of the best at the business now and is only twenty-five. He is out near the Obi. The prince looked at me and put across the Obi will be his work."

"It is a fascinating profession. And your daughter refused him?"

"Yes, and it was a great disappointment to me. Jack and she have been friends since they first went to school. He loves her, and she loves him, but she won't have him for some reason. Said they could never be romantic lovers or some such argument. Couldn't love him because she had known him all her life. Thought it was essential to have a slight coldness, who could bamboozle her."

"And so it was broken off?"

"There was nothing to break off. They were never engaged. She simply refused him. They are friendly when they meet—coolly so. What could he do, a girl, to have her own way?"

"A prosaic friendship such as that is not dangerous," said the prince. "Have I your permission to enter the list?"

"My permission is worthless. You can ask Frances if you like, but it will do you a bit of good. You are too rich, and Frances has peculiar notions."

"There is some one in whom your daughter is much interested, and perhaps you have not heard. It is my duty to inform you, although I myself do not attach much importance to the thing. There is a blacksmith—"

"Oh, the blacksmith of Perm?" exclaimed the prince, "he is a cold, cold man, his voice, as though he did not relish having the story told him by the prince. I am fully aware of all that."

"Does Frances—does your daughter love that man?"

"Goodness, no! She is interested, she likes him and is trying to help him. He is a fine fellow, I suppose, and pity soon leads to love."

"Well," said Gordon, laughing, "if it does in this case neither you nor I can prevent it. I am sure, however, that the girl is fancy free, and, as for you, he is too simple and sensible to look upon her friendship as more than ordinary. They met in this way: When the road was crossing into Tobolsk, I wanted some peculiar ironwork done, and she went with me. The stature and strength and the handsome face of the young ironworker pleased her, and she talked with him. She said that he was a magnificent specimen of a man and fitted by nature to adorn a higher station. She is trying to assist him in improving himself."

"You take this very coolly," said the prince. "But, being Russian, perhaps our customs are so different that this free intercourse between a girl like your daughter and a mere ironworker seems more to me than to you. Then you assure me there is nothing more than mere friendship between these two?"

"No, I do not assure you of anything of the kind. I do not know. I think, though, if there was Frances would tell me. If there is, she will have her way; if there is not, the same."

"But if this blacksmith asked her to marry him would you consent?"

"I'll have to," said the prince.

"Do you consider such a thing probable?"

"Prince, I know as little about it as you do. There was only one man—Jack Deuton—that I wanted for a son-in-law, and she won't have him. Now, I know little about her plans, if she has any. She might fall in love with you, in which case I could not prevent her marrying you. If she does not fall in love with you, I could not compel her to marry you if I would."

"I am pleased at your candor," replied the prince. "I shall soon have an opportunity to speak to her myself. I trust that this conversation will not interrupt our friendship."

"Nonsense! I appreciate the honor you have done me, but unless she loves you your case is hopeless."

The prince bowed and took his departure, and Gordon, laughing, turned into the hotel.

to which he was born. I send him books, and he studies. You could help him, prince. With your power, your influence, you could do much for him. I refer to Vladimir Panpoff, the blacksmith of Perm."

"You are very kind to my poor countryman," said the prince, with a smile. "To please you I will make it my business to see this blacksmith, and if there is any way in which I may be of use in assisting him along the lines you suggest I shall be pleased to do so."

She thanked him and passed on into the hotel.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MILK AND CREAM.

Standardizing as a Means of Justification.

Selling milk by measure alone is unjust to the producer as well as to the consumer. While the fallacy of this system is apparent to a few, the majority of people seem to think that "milk is milk" and that one quart is worth as much as another as long as it is sweet, according to W. J. Fraser of the Illinois station. And Professor Fraser further says as to this matter:

City or state standards, where they exist, make the sale of milk coming direct from some individual cows that give milk low in fat unlawful, while it is in reality good, wholesome milk and a perfectly legitimate product when sold at its proper price. But what is even worse, this system prevents the man who produces rich milk from getting the price he should, according to its food value and cost of production. Milk containing a high per cent of fat is not only worth more for food, but it costs more to produce than milk containing a low per cent of fat, and the price should be governed by its composition and food value and not by its bulk.

Before there was a ready means of determining the composition of milk these difficulties could not well be overcome, and providing city standards was about all that could be done. But since the invention of the Babcock test by Dr. Babcock of the Wisconsin station, by this test and lactometer and at slight expense and with the aid of a few simple tools, it is now possible to determine accurately the amount of fat and solids not fat in any milk.

How to Standardize.

Since fat in milk is the most variable constituent, the other solids remaining fairly constant, standardizing milk is a comparatively simple matter. All that is necessary is to add or remove a certain amount of butter fat, which is easily done by means of the centrifugal separator or by letting the cream rise by gravity. While it is true that milk from individual cows varies somewhat from day to day, the amount of milk handled is small so that it does not warrant testing every day, it may be run very close to the desired per cent of fat by testing once a week, so as to be sure that it is up to the required standard. Where the amount of milk handled is large it is more economical to run tests frequently and keep the fat at exactly the desired per cent. Even if the per cent of fat varies but slightly it makes a great difference in profit in the course of the year in a large business.

The only apparatus necessary to standardize milk is a cream separator and a milk test. For dairymen handling but a small amount of milk the same results may be accomplished by setting the milk for a time and skimming off the cream. In this case all that is necessary is a milk test, for the fat must be added or removed. If the skimmilk used contains fat, proper allowance must be made according to the amount of fat contained or the results will obviously be different. Water cannot be used to dilute the milk or the per cent of solids not fat will be reduced.

The Dairymen's Interest.

A law compelling a man to standardize the milk and cream he sells would result in justice to both producer and consumer. A dairymen would then receive the legitimate price for their product according to its food value and cost of production and would not be selling 6 per cent milk for the same price per quart.

The Apple Crop.

Reports respecting apples are favorable from New England, Michigan, Kansas, Oklahoma and portions of Illinois, Ohio and Virginia, and the outlook in Wisconsin is improved, while in Missouri the prospects are less favorable, and variable reports are received from New York. Elsewhere a light crop is indicated.—United States Weather Bureau.

Steam in the Dairy.

Since the advent of the cream separator, which is usually on steam power, steam has been used to clean all the utensils in the dairy. Not only is it efficient for this purpose, but as a germ destroyer there is nothing better because it penetrates to the bottom of the seams and heats the metal to such a degree as to kill dangerous germs.

Agricultural Notes.

The Maine station finds it easy to take blueberries from seed. It is simply spraying with Bordeaux for blight saved the cucumber pickle crop on the extensive fields of a farm this season.

The value of the broom corn crop averages about \$80 per ton, or \$20 an acre, and farmers in New England think there is more profit in other crops.

A cranberry crop above the average in quality and quantity is the general estimate.

Why Not Keep the Farm Next?

One "keep" clean is worth more or farther than two or three "make" clean.

Discard onion sets and sow the hardy white onions, say some of the growers.

The Messenger Boy.

"Why is it that you can never get a bright, reliable and speedy messenger?"

"The company don't pay that kind of wages, ma'am."—Indianapolis News.

It is never right to say what one does not mean, but why not mean the nice things? Intentionally do not necessarily follow in the wake of politeness.—Ladies' Home Journal.

FOR THE CHILDREN

A Tale With a Moral.

This little story is one which has been often told, but may be unfamiliar to the young readers of today:

The celebrated Dean Swift was never considered a generous man. He lived, as did many a poor writer in those days, upon the bounty of a great patron and was so accustomed to being the recipient of favors and gifts that others never occurred to him.

Now, it chanced upon a certain occasion that a neighbor sent him a present of a fine fish. The boy who brought it had been on similar errands before and was of accepting gifts, so on this special morning he pushed open the door in his rudest manner and flung the fish upon the table.

"Master sent it!" he snapped and turned to run away, but the dean detained him.

"You are very rude," he said severely, rising and eyeing the culprit. "Here, sir, take my chair, and I will show you the proper way in which to deliver a present."

Thompson the dean took up the fish and, walking to the door, knocked modestly on the outside.

"Come in," said the boy.

He entered, went up to the chair and bowed respectfully. "My master presents his compliments, sir," said the dean in his softest tones, "and begs the acceptance of this modest offering."

The boy, entering into the spirit of the gift, received the fish with all the courtliness of the dean himself.

"Thank your master for me most earnestly, my good boy; and hope that the price he should, according to its food value and cost of production. Milk containing a high per cent of fat is not only worth more for food, but it costs more to produce than milk containing a low per cent of fat, and the price should be governed by its composition and food value and not by its bulk.

Tommy and His Diary.

He was only a little boy, and his father had bought him a book in which he could write each day's doings. This book, or diary, as it is called, was the boy's first, and he was very proud of it. For it had a red cover and a very pretty binding, and he began to write in it.

Now, Tommy meant to begin his book well and early, so he carefully wrote, "Got up at 7." Then, according as he had been told, he took it to his teacher for her approval. The way she opened her eyes made him feel very uncomfortable, and he began to feel that some one had been tampering with his records.

"Got up," she screamed, "got up! You naughty boy! Does the sun get up? No; it rises."

Very angrily she scratched out the words she had made him write, "Rose at 7." This nettled Tommy more; no more mistakes of this kind for him again.

So on retiring for the night he wrote, with the air of a man who knew his business well, "Set at 7."

Bobbie's Question.

The scholars were standing in two little rows.

The sun through the window shone bright.

White soft little airs on the tips of their toes.

Came tripping with April delight, And bubbly looked as they gently went by.

They had him a tale of the spring And talk of the clouds in the happy, blue sky And all that the summer would bring.

He heard not the voice of the teacher at all. His thoughts had gone out with the sun. He stood with the others, his back to the teacher, who was looking at him.

He absorbed till the lesson was done. "Now ask me some questions," the teacher had cried, and he had solemnly sighed.

"How long till the holidays, sir?"

How Dorothy Showed Her Sympathy.

Little Dorothy takes a trip alone in the horse cars every morning under the conductor's care on her way to the kindergarten. On her return at noon she always has some story to tell of what she saw and saw on her journey.

"What did you see in the car this morning, Dorothy?" asked her mamma at dinner one day.

"Why, mamma," said the sweet-tempered Dorothy sorrowfully, "I saw a man and woman sitting side by side and quarreling so I went and sat between them, for I felt so sorry for that poor man, mamma."—Youth's Companion.

A Merry Game.

To play "cat and mouse" the players stand back to back in a circle, the mouse being inside and the cat outside. They dance around, raising their arms and lowering them alternately, which gives the cat a chance to jump in at the other.

The cat is now a prisoner and goes round "mauling," but as the dance continues she soon gets out and chases the mouse, who darts in to save herself. If she gets in by herself, the cat pays a forfeit, but if puss gets in also it is the mouse who has to suffer for it.

Discovered.

A story told of a little girl who asked one morning at the breakfast table, "Mamma, is hash animal or vegetable?"

"Animal, my dear," replied mamma.

"Then," cried the little one triumphantly, holding up a tiny bone, "here's the hash's tooth!"

A Ready Reply.

Foot's reply to the caution, "Your handkerchief, sir, is hanging out of your pocket," was of high merit, both from the surprise and for the courtesy in which the caution was accepted.—"Thank you, sir; you know the company better than I do."—Gentleman's Magazine.

No Reason For Delay.

"My darling," he exclaimed, "I would go to the end of the earth for you." There was a slight pause while the orchestra played tremulous ragtime.

"Suppose," she said, "you begin your travels now."—Pittsburg Dispatch.

Persistence not only goes far to insure success, but also obtains honors for those who, although the less fortunate, have been the most diligent.

BLIND-FOLD.

Blindfold woman and she loses all confidence in herself. Her step is slow and uncertain. Her hands are raised to ward the imaginary blows which threaten her. When a woman seeks the means of health she is often like a woman blindfold. She has no confidence. She cannot tell what her effort will lead to. She turns now to this side and then to the other in uncertainty and doubt.

The sick woman who uses Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription may do so with absolute confidence. It invites open investigation. There need be no hesitation in following the hundreds of thousands of women who have found a perfect cure for womanly ills in the use of this medicine.

Favorite Prescription cures irregularity and other menstrual troubles. It heals inflammation and ulceration and cures female weakness.

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A DARING WORKMAN.

His Crazy Antics on an Unfinished Bridge Across the Niagara.

"I remember," said a bridge contractor some time ago while on the subject of workmen's daredevilries, "when working at the big bridge across the Niagara when the two cantilever arms had approached within fifty feet of each other a keen rivalry as to who should be the first to cross sprang up among the men. A long plank connected the two arms, leaving about two and a half feet of support at each end. Strict orders were issued that no one should attempt to cross the plank upon penalty of instant dismissal."

At the noon hour I suddenly heard a great shout from the men, who were all starting up. Raising my eyes, I saw a man step on the end of that plank, stop a minute and look down into the whirlpool below. I knew he was going to cross, and I shouted to him but he was too high up to hear. Deliberately he walked out until he reached the middle of the plank. It sagged far down with his weight until I could see light between the two short supporting ends and the cantilevers on which they rested. He saw the end in front of him do this, hesitated and looked back to see how the other end was.

"I thought he was going to turn. He stopped, grasped both edges of the plank with his hands and, throwing his feet up, stood on his head, kicking his legs in the air, cracking his heels together and yelling to the terrified on-lookers. This he did for about a minute. It seemed to me like forty. Then he let his feet drop down, stood up, waved his hat and trotted along the plank to the other side and regained the ground."

"We discharged him, of course, but what did he care? He got all the glory, his fellows envied him, and he could command work anywhere."—Cassier's Magazine.

Cool Trees.

It is not shade alone that makes it cooler under a tree in the summer. The coolness of the tree itself helps, for its temperature is about 45 degrees F. at all times, as that of the human body is a fraction more than 98 degrees. So a clump of trees cools the air as a piece of ice cools the water in a pitcher.

Rapping.

Barber—How's the razor, sir? Customer—Didn't know I was being shaved. Barber (dattered)—Very glad, I'm sure, sir. Customer—I thought I was being sandpapered.—Pick Me Up.

Happy Married.

"I hope you have found happiness in marriage, dear." "Oh, yes. I can do lots of things I didn't dare do when I was a girl!"—New York Press.

Nasal CATARRH

In all its stages there should be cleanliness.

Ely's Cream Balm cleanses, soothes and heals the diseased membrane. It cures catarrh and drives away a cold in the head quickly.