

The Enterprise

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THE MYSTERY OF GRASLOV

By Ashley Towne

CHAPTER I THE FATHER AND THE LOVER OF AN AMERICAN GIRL.

The great Transiberian railway had progressed as far as the eastward as the Obi, and trains carrying soldiers, convicts, lightermen, railway constructors, laborers and supplies, with some goods for trade with Manchuria, ran from Moscow.

The possibilities of this immense line of railway made the people of European Russia gasp. It opened up such 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 and foot trains of convicts to the swiftly moving cars that were drawn by the puffing, screaming locomotive, 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 till 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 so authoritative a tone that he bowed before her slightest wish in abject obedience.

A year and a half after they had finished the work in Mexico they journeyed 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 government 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 Neslerov, prince of the empire and governor of the province of Tomsk. Prince Neslerov was one of the wealthiest nobles of the land, was about thirty-five years of age 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.

church tower with eyes that saw so clearly. "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 slow to let it by this time. You are not the first."

"She is different from girls in Europe," said the prince, biting his lip. "Gordon let out a jocular guffaw. "I should say she was!" he said. "Different! Why, she is a real, whole, healthy woman. She doesn't smoke



"I love your daughter," said Gordon, smiling at her. "Frances has a healthy mind and is as noble as she is good looking. But she has a mind of her own, if it is healthy, and—well, she is my boss, I can tell you!"

"You charm me. I am more in love than ever." "I love them—yes. But these are for a friend, a young man fitted by nature to adorn a higher station than the one 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 Paupoff, 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."

"He 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 Denton, the bridge builder. Jack Denton was the son of one of my oldest friends. Old Denton 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 big iron bridge we are to put across the Obi will be his work."

"Oh, the blacksmith of Perm!" exclaimed Gordon, with a slight coldness in 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."

"Through pity, 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, the girl is fancy free, and, as for him, he is too simple and sensible to look upon their 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 saw 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 have to see."

"Do you consider such a thing probable?" "Prince, I know as little about it as you do. There was only one man—Jack Denton—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 my girl. But unless she loves you your case is hopeless."

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

"It is study that does it, and work. I think the knowledge gives me more pleasure than the wealth. But we also need the wealth."

"The old man sighed. "You will grow away from me. You will perhaps marry that American girl, and she would not like our simple ways."

"The hammer in Vladimir's hand came down with redoubled force. "What is that you say—our Vladimir talking of marrying?" asked the trembling voice of Mrs. Paupoff. "I came to say that the meal is ready, and I find—what do I find?"

"Oh, Papa Paupoff is dreaming one of his dreams," said Vladimir, with a gay laugh. "But is it not so, old woman?" asked Papa Paupoff. "Is it not quite possible that our Vladimir may marry that handsome American girl?"

"I have seen it so," answered the old woman. "It seems that no young woman would take this interest if she did not love."

"Oh, nonsense!" cried Vladimir. "We are friends. She is good. I admire. Why, I could almost worship her, but I am a peasant. She is not."

"There came the sound of cursing outside and the fall of a horse's hoofs. A shout took the old man by the door. "Curses upon this beast!" came an angry voice as a man about thirty-five, clad in a neat riding suit, entered the room striking his high boots with his whip. "I have just been thrown. In some mysterious manner my horse, who never stumbles, caught his foot in something, tore loose his shoe and hurled me to the ground. The horse is injured, but he has lost the shoe. I heard the sound of a snuffly and came to you for assistance. I must reach Graslov tonight, and the delay is serious."

"It is long since we were mere horse-shoers," said the old man. "The railroad—"

"But surely you can make a shoe and put it on. I must go forward, and I do not wish to lose this valuable horse."

"Certainly, we will shoe the horse," put in Vladimir, whose kind heart could never refuse any request that was reasonable and proper. "I will attend to it at once."

"The meal is but a short distance, and Graslov is far," said Vladimir. "I will shoe the horse and permit the prince to proceed."

"American girl who thinks well of our..."

"Hush!" exclaimed Vladimir impatiently. "You are speaking of some one whose name must be sacred."

"His face was flushed, and Neslerov looked at it searchingly. "You are very fortunate," said Neslerov jokingly. "I cannot give you one to marry me."

"You do not love, that is different. Her acts are kind, and I feel grateful. But for marrying—it will require a fine man to make her happy."

"He will make any one happy," put in the old woman, with a glance of pride at the young giant. "Any girl, even though she might be a princess, would get no better for a husband. Look at those arms! Can they not protect?"

"They could feel a bull!" said Neslerov. "How do you pass the time here? Do you go to the nearest village or to Perm and play?"

"Not he!" said the old man, pausing long enough in his work to add his tribute to this son they loved so well. "That young man spending his time at a village! I think not, your excellency. With his books he spends his nights. He studies or he paints."

"What's that? Paints?" "Aye, indeed yes. He is a born painter."

"And shoeing horses?" "One gets a kopeck or two for shoeing horses. One must paint for the pleasure of it, unless one is well known. It will come in time," said Vladimir.

"See, he is not so simple as he looks," said Papa Paupoff, nodding his head toward the big boy.

"Very far from simple, I should say," answered Neslerov.

ALL OVER THE HOUSE.

How to Press Cloth So as to Remove Folds and Wrinkles.

When woolen cloth is to be pressed, but not washed, it is sometimes the question of how best to give it the dampness that will enable the hot iron to remove folds and wrinkles. Good results are to be had by wringing a sheet out of warm water, spreading it on a large table, arranging upon it the pieces to be pressed and then folding or rolling all in a bundle. After lying thus for several hours the cloth is evenly damp, but not wet, and all creases and folds soften to the best possible condition for the ironing. The pressing rather than the ironing must be done slowly with irons not too hot nor too cool, moving them just fast enough to prevent one from printing its outline on the goods. Hot enough to raise the steam, but not hot enough to scorch the wool, is right for the irons. Ladies' cloth treated thus loses every crease and the too clinging softness lent it by wear. Thinner goods are handled the same way with success. The process, of course, is that followed by all tailors and called "sponging," except that no pressing follows the dampness of new cloth, it being merely spread smooth and left to dry.

For a Girl's Room.

In furnishing her room a girl should bear in mind that quality, not quantity, is the keynote to beauty. She should decide on a color scheme and stick to it, or if she departs slightly from it let her go in the right direction and choose a color which corresponds well with the main color scheme. In the first place, she should avoid too many personal photographs—half a dozen of her dearest friends' photos and no more. Her room should contain at least one picture beautiful enough to raise her to a higher plane whenever her eyes fall upon it. She should be cautious in dealing with posters, bric-a-brac and gewgaws. Simplicity of hue and outline should be her main idea, striving rather to have a few good things than a great many inferior ones.

To Get Rid of "Old" Smell.

To remove a close, "old" smell from a room it is necessary to take up the carpet or matting if there should happen to be either. The carpet should be beaten and fumigated by letting it lie on the ground for several days, removing it at night. Finally it should be covered thickly with dry salt, allowed to stay in the sun for several hours and then swept thoroughly. Before replacing scour the floor in hot water and carbolic acid. The walls, if papered, should be stripped and washed with chloride of lime. If painted, scrub with carbolic acid soap. When dry have them repainted or papered. If all this is performed thoroughly there should be perfect freshness and cleanliness in place of the musty odor.

Return of the Sandglass.

The sandglass is again to be found as a picturesque dining table equipment, and the old world time-keepers look quite at home with the antique furnishings now in vogue. Three minute sandglasses accompany the bronze egg boilers now so popular for breakfast table use. These glasses are employed by many housewives at table when the cooking of dainty viands runs the risk of being spoiled by a fraction of a second under or over "doing." They are also elaborately mounted and adorn desks and even cabinets.—Washington Star.

Keeping Meats.

Meat should not be laid on the ice, as that draws out the juices, if fresh killed allow it to get chilled before putting in cold storage. Otherwise the animal heat is driven inside and causes fermentation, which is poisonous. Do not let chops and steak rest against one another, much less ham and steak.

To Remove a Cork.

Let both bottle and cork dry thoroughly, for a dry cork is smaller than a damp one. Take a piece of fine, strong twine, make a loop of it by holding the two ends, and then put the loop into the bottle, and move the bottle about till you get the string under the center of the cork at the neck of the bottle. Then give a careful pull, and the cork will come out.

Steam a Tough Fowl.

A really tough fowl can be made into an excellent roast if steamed for an hour. Before placing in a steamer put a few stalks of celery and a slice of onion inside the bird to flavor it. When it is taken from the steamer fill with a well seasoned dressing. The fowl must be carefully handled in stuffing.

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"What is it that you say—our Vladimir talking of marrying?"

The old woman, patient now under the rebuke of Vladimir, stood waiting. "This is not much of a place for successful men," said Neslerov, looking around him.

"He" chuckled the old man. "You have come too soon. See, nothing is being done. We are about to leave this place for a spot nearer the railway."

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To Cure a Cold in One Day

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