Farmers, Says Secretary Wilson, Are the Real American Capitalists

Head of the Agricultural Department Says Farmers Are Prosperous and Are Not Disturbed By Labor Problems or By Trusts Except as Means of Investment...A Post-Graduate University Which Trains Men to Scientific Research Along Agricultural Lines

I CALLED on Secretary Wilson yesterday to ask some questions on capital and labor from the standpoint of the farmer. My interview was held at the Department of Agriculture during the busiest hour of the day, and the secretary answered my questions between jobs. As he did so I was surprised at his versatility. He is like Napoleon, in that he can do four things at a time and do them all well. His mind seemed to jump at a second's notice from the pasture lands of Dan to the grain fields of Beersheba, and when it landed it was all there. Now, the question was the appointment of a man to investigate crop conditions in the Philippines, now the arrangement of the new agricultural building to be put up at a cost of several million dollars, and now the importation of a bug to wipe out the San Jose scale and make our orchardists rich. At the same time great bunches of letters were brought in and the secretary read each one as he signed it.

I started out with:

"Mr. Secretary, you work as though you had your coat off; you claim to be the representative of the man with his coat off; I want to know what you think of that man in his relation to our big combinations of capital?"

"The only man with his coat off whom I know is the farmer," replied Secretary Wilson. "With the ordinary laborer I have nothing to do. The farmer is a big enough proposition for us here. We are working for him, and although we look over the fence now and then at the struggles of labor and capital we keep on our way saying nothing as to anything else, but steadily sawing wood."

"But, Mr. Secretary, adapt my questions to the farmers. What do they think of the gigantic trusts which, like Jonah's gourd, have sprung up in a night?"

"They are anxious about them," replied the secretary, "but it is from an investment standpoint. They want to know whether they have a substantial basis, how they are operated, what business they are doing and whether they will keep on paying dividends. The farmers are interested in the new Department of Commerce and Labor and especially in its Bureau of Corporations. If that bureau can give them as satisfactory information about the trusts as the treasury does about our national banks there will be no difficulty in their getting a fair share of the farmer's money."

OUR FARMER CAPITALISTS.

"But, Mr. secretary, I thought the farmer posed as a poor man. He is a chronic whiner, a constant complainer, and he always makes a poor mouth?"

"That may have been so some years ago," replied Secretary Wilson. "It is not so now. You can't whine on a full stomach, full barns and a full pocketbook. That is the condition of the farmer to-day. He is growing rich. He has become a creditor instead of a debtor. He is a capitalist hunting places to invest his surplus. He has had good crops and good prices, and to-day his deposits are rolling in like a golden tidal wave, flooding the Western banks with more money than they can handle. The local banks are sending their millions to the East, and New York is taking what they cannot lend out in the West. The farmers, not satisfied with American investments, are sending millions into Canada to buy lands there, and still they have money left. Indeed, what they want most is a safe place to put their surplus where it will bring them a fair rate of interest."

"What do you mean by a fair rate, Mr. secretary?" I asked.

"O, about 5 per cent," replied Mr. Wilson. "That is the best you can expect of money now."

"Why don't they take up their mortgages," said I. "Not long ago it was said that the whole United States west of the Missouri was practically owned by the savings banks of New England."

"That is not so now," replied Secretary Wilson. "Those mortgages have been paid long ago, and vast sums have been spent in improving the farms. There are mortgages still, it is true, but they have been given by the sons of the farmers, who are now buying farms of their own."

"Do you consider farm lands a good investment, Mr. Secretary?

"I do at the present prices," was the reply. "Investments differ according to localities, but any farm that will now produce enough to carry itself, that is, to pay its taxes and a low rate of interest, is a good purchase. Our public lands have been largely taken up. We are rapidly increasing in population, and the domestic market steadily grows. We are now the greatest manufacturing Nation of the globe, and the domestic market of the future is beyond conception. As to the foreign market, it will always take what we cannot use ourselves. We are farming better every day, and the business of farming will be more profitable as time goes on. We have some of the best food lands on the globe, and are just beginning to appreciate what they will produce."

THIRTY-THREE DOLLARS A SECOND.

"Have you any idea," said Secretary Wilson, as he turned to his desk, picked up a pencil and made some figures on a slip of paper. "Have you any idea of the money Uncle Sam's farmer capitalists bring into this country every year? The steel trust, the shipbuilding trust, and all the other trusts are peanut stands in comparison with it. I don't mean what our farmers sell at home, but what they sell abroad. The amount is so enormous you cannot comprehend it.

"In the decade ending 1900 it was more than $7,000,000,000, or on an average more than $700,000,000 a year. In 1901 our farm exports amounted to more than $800,000,000, or almost $3,000,000 for every working day of the year. That means $125,000 an hour, $2,000 a minute or $33 per second. Every time the watch ticked on every one of the days throughout that working year, $33 worth of our goods were dropped into the lap of Europe and three $10 gold pieces started on their way back to the United States.

"That was in 1901," Secretary Wilson continued. "Last year our exports were almost as large, and so it is going on year after year. You may talk about your great combinations of capital, your gigantic monopolies and enormous trusts, but, after all, Uncle Sam's most profitable asset is the American farmer."

"Give me some of the items of this business of the farmers' trust, Mr. Secretary," said I.

"The farmers are not a trust," said Secretary Wilson, "and to give all the details of their enormous business would require too much space. Still I can give you some of the items. Take cotton, for instance. We got high prices for that last year. Our exports amounted to about 12,000,000 pounds a day, not including Sundays, and our receipts were about $1,000,000 a day, or a gross amount of $317,000,000 per year. This was all cold, clean money brought into the country for stuff sold abroad.

"Our grain exports were $900,000 a day. We sent 204,000,000 bushels of wheat and almost half of that went in the shape of flour. We exported $178,000,000 worth of meat and enough beef and pork to have given every man, woman and child of the whole world one-half pound and enough additional to have made a mess of hash for every one of them the next day. Those figures show you something of our agricultural interests. The American farmer is the backbone of the country. He is the biggest institution in it."

"But last year and the year before have been the exceptions, Mr. Secretary. The crops have been much better than ever before."

"That is true to a minor extent," replied Secretary Wilson. "But for years the farmer has been bringing over foreign gold from Europe, Australia and Asia to even up our losses in other branches of trade. In the last thirteen years our average excess of exports over imports amounted to about $275,000,000 per year, and during that time the annual balance of such trade in favor of the farmer was $337,000,000; that is, the farmer had not only to give the balance of trade in our favor, but he had to pay $62,000,000 in the shape of an adverse balance to other imports. In the last fourteen years the farmers' balance of trade amounted to almost $3,000,000,000. It was enough to pay all the losses of our other foreign business and to put $4,000,000,000, in round numbers, to the credit of the Nation. Those figures give you some idea where this wonderful wave of prosperity which has been sweeping over the country comes from."

FARMING AS A BUSINESS.

"Then I suppose that farming as a business, has begun to pay?"

"It has always paid," replied Secretary Wilson, "when managed in a business-like manner. But the day has passed when you can take it up as a makeshift. The man who would make money in farming to-day must know his farm and how to farm it. He must know the nature of foods, and fertilizers. He must understand the markets and bring the same business judgment to bear that is necessary to the success of other businesses. Above all, the farmer must keep up to the times and farm scientifically, for it is only in that way that he can get the most out of his land."

"Will we ever have a great farmers' trust, which will corner the market, raise prices and fight the other combinations of capital?"

"I don't think such a thing possible," replied Secretary Wilson. "This is a big country and farming is a big business. All the world is more or less engaged in it and you can't control elements like that. Besides, each farmer is independent of the other, and while all have to a large extent common interests they are somewhat antagonistic to one another. I think the farmers might be united in opposition to anything vitally against the interests of all, but that matter settled they would as before act as individuals."

"But, Mr. Secretary, how about labor matters? I should think you would have trouble to get men to work on the farms. I understand that most of the farm boys are going to the cities."

"That was so for a time, but more now remain upon the farms. We have had a great immigration of farm laborers and we have been steadily making inventions in farm tools so that the average hand can do more now than the man of the past. Take the rice lands about the Gulf of Mexico. One American farm hand with our machinery can raise as much rice there in one year as four hundred Chinese laborers can raise in China employing Chinese methods and Chinese machinery. The condition as to other crops are somewhat similar. Indeed, the farm machines enable us to dispense with a large number of hands."

"Is farm labor organized, Mr. Secretary? Do the farm hands have trades unions?"

"Not that I know of. The men are so scattered that it would be difficult to organize them. They are not employed at steady work all the year round and besides the farm hand of to-day expects to own a farm of his own a few years from now. He is so busy scheming how he can do that that he has no time to worry over hours and wages."

"How about wages, Mr. Secretary? Is the farm laborer well paid?"

"I think he is," replied the secretary of agriculture. "Good men get good wages, varying with the locality. In the Northwest, where, perhaps, the most skilled of our farmers are found, hired men get $25 a month and more. That is equal to $40 a month without board, which is good pay. Such a hand will understand how to use farm machinery. He will know all about crops, and he can, if necessary, take the farm and manage it for himself. In some other parts of the country the wages are less."

WHERE OUR MONEY COMES FROM.

"Are we farming any better now than we did in the past, Mr. Secretary?"

"Very much so," replied Secretary Wilson. "And we shall farm better in the future than we are doing now. We are learning every day and are steadily adding to the aggregate of our crops. What we produce now is beyond conception. Our wheat crop amounts to 600,000,000 bushels every year, and it is worth in the neighborhood of $460,000,000.

"The value of the gold and silver mined in the United States is not half that, and all the gold mines of all the world did not produce as much by $100,000,000 in 1902. The corn crop is worth more than twice as much as the wheat crop. It is now bringing in $1,000,000,000 a year, and for our oats alone we raise enough to equal a value of $1,000,000 for every working day. The crop amounts to a billion bushels, with a value of $300,000,000. Our hay crop in many years is worth more than the total product of all the gold and silver mines of the world, and the cotton crop last year sold for more than $500,000,000. These figures are enormous. There is nothing like them anywhere, and we have not begun to approximate the maximum of our farming possibilities.

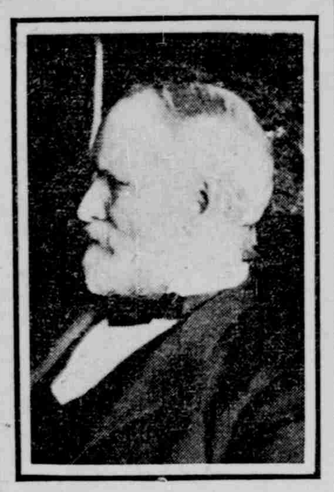
"No," said the secretary, reflectively, "we do not know what we have nor how rich we are. We are discovering some new thing every day which adds enormously to our national wealth. The Agricultural Department has become one of investigation and research. We have men traveling over the world looking for new plants and seeds. Some time ago it seemed impossible that we could raise figs. We planted the trees, but could not get results. At last, on the advice of our specialists, we imported a little insect from Smyrna to fertilize the trees; that is, to carry the pollen from one place to another. That little bug did the business, and we are now raising excellent figs on the dry highlands of the West. We produced more than 1,300,000 pounds last year, and we are just beginning.

"Do you see that macaroni?" the secretary went on, as he picked up a paper to which some pipe stems of white macaroni were sewn. "That macaroni was made in America from American wheat, which grows on land that will raise no other grain. We studied the wheat and the soils which produced it, and this is the result. We raised 10,000,000 bushels of macaroni wheat last year, and the day will come when we will be shipping it to Italy.

NEW COTTON FOR THE SOUTH.

"There on the mantel," the secretary continued, "you may see a frame containing samples of cotton. The cotton at the right has a short staple. That is the common cotton raised on the uplands all over the South. Those long silky fibers on the left are from the famous sea island cotton, the highest priced and the best known to the world. That cotton will grow only on the islands off the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina. We have planted its seeds on the uplands, but could get no results. Then we took the upland plants and married them to the sea island plants, and the result is we have produced the cotton which you see between the two in the frame. It is not so long as the sea island cotton, but it is far longer than the upland cotton. That cotton, the child of the two other kinds, will grow on the uplands and the breeding of it will add millions of dollars to the value of our cotton crop. We are now experimenting on the best varieties of the Egyptian cottons, of which we import $7,000,000 worth every year. We have had good results, and will soon raise all we want.

"Another important item is rice," said the secretary. "We used to import nearly all we consumed. We raised 390,000,000 pounds last year, and are now sending rice to Cuba and other countries. We are doing a big business in sugar. We have begun to raise it from sugar beets and our product last year of that kind of short sweetening was 520,000,000 pounds, enough to give thirty pounds to every family in the United States, or six and one-half pounds for every man, woman and child in the country. We have fifty factories now running making that sugar, and we could, if the matter were properly handled, produce every pound of sugar we use.



Secretary of Agriculture Wilson

"Indeed," said the secretary, "I doubt if the people know what a great scientific institution the Agricultural Department is. Aside from its other business it is now a post-graduate university devoted to training men to original scientific research along agricultural lines. We have had 496 students here, most of them college graduates, whom we have been training for this kind of work. About half of that number have already been given positions in the Agricultural Department and elsewhere. Indeed, I could find places for scores more if I had them. The British minister asked me for a man to send to the Berumdas to investigate some matters there. Another of our specialists has been recently employed by the government of Cuba and I understand he is to get $5,000 a year. I have an application now for a man to take charge of a new agricultural school which is being established in the middle West at a good round salary, and there are other openings along other lines. Indeed, the day of the old-time farmer is passed and the day of the scientific agriculturist is here."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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Indiana of 1796 In an Old Gazetteer

Richest Copper Mine in the World... Fine Country for Rice and Cotton

THE old volume of Morse's American Gazetteer, bearing the date of Jan. 1, 1797, is yellow with age, but its paper is still firm and its printing admirable, black and distinct and perfect, to the last quaint long S. The seven inclosed maps are marvels of fine steel engraving, such as one would not find in a modern map.

One finds surprising statements on every page of the old book. It is marvelous to see how much they knew then and how little they understood the significance of their knowledge. One is impressed more and more as one studies the book, with the great transforming power of railroads. On the old maps every tiny water course is laid down with precision and care. In the text, every little stream that would carry a canoe, every water route, every portage, is described as a feature of the utmost importance. No present-day geography contains a map of the West Indies that would bear comparison for completeness and accuracy. Any spot that could be reached by water was so important!

New York, at that time the second city in the country in population, is described as one mile wide, and, on the East river side, two miles long, was "esteemed the most eligible situation for commerce in the United States. It imports most of the goods consumed between a line thirty miles east of the Connecticut river and twenty miles west of the Hudson, a strip 130 miles wide, extending north to Canada." Think of that now! And it commanded the trade of half of the State of New Jersey, too!

The coast line of the United States at that time was only on the Atlantic, and stopped at the southern end of Georgia, Spain still owning east and west Florida, which, together, covered all the gulf coast to the Mississippi. West of the Mississippi, of course, all belonged to Spain.

Indiana, at that time, was a territory in Virginia, lying between Pennsylvania and the Little Kanawha, and containing three and one-half million acres. It had been ceded by certain Indian tribes to a number of private gentlemen, as reparation for destroying the property of said gentlemen, to the amount of £85,000.

The present State of Indiana was an unnamed part of the great Northwest Territory, but is laid down on the map with about its present boundaries as the II State. That portion of its lands to which the Indian title had been extinguished, Congress had named Knox county. There were five counties in the Northwest Territory, "organized with the proper civil and military officers." Settlement of the region had been delayed on account of Indian troubles, which had been finally settled, it was hoped, by General Wayne's treaty in 1795.

It is significant, however, that all the towns in Indiana at that time were forts—Fort Wayne, Fort Adams, Fort Aniatawan, Musquito Fort, Fort Jefferson, Fort St. Clair and Fort Vincents (Vincennes.) The White river figures as the east fork of the Wabash. The Wabash is a "beautiful navigable river, possible for bateaux and barges drawing three feet of water, 412 miles, to Oniatawan, and for large canoes 197 miles further," where a carry of nine miles (in high water) connected with the Miami, thence with the great lakes and the world. "The land on this river is remarkably fertile. A silver mine has been discovered about twenty-eight miles above Oniatawan, on the north bank of the Wabash. The copper mine on this river is perhaps the richest vein of native copper in the bowels of the whole earth."

Fort Vincents was erected in 1787, to repel incursions of the Wabash Indians. "It has four small brass cannon and is garrisoned by a major and two companies. The town contained, in 1792, about 1,500 souls. They raise Indian corn and wheat, and tobacco of extraordinary good quality." Hemp grows wild. All through this region the settlers make all the wine they can use of wild grapes. It is said to be of excellent quality, lacking only age to make it equal to the best wines of Europe!

Indiana is described as being particularly adapted to the culture of rice, and also an excellent country for raising cotton. The beautiful forests on the White and Wabash rivers are well described, with a pretty accurate list of the principal trees. Of these "the sugar maple is the most valuable. By reserving ten trees, every family can supply themselves with excellent sugar in perpetuity," as each tree will produce ten pounds of sugar a year, and the labor is trifling.

That the forests could ever disappear and timber become scarce and precious, or that any family could be so luxurious and extravagant as to use more than a hundred pounds of sugar in a year, were probably equally inconsiderable ideas in 1796.

Old Song.

"If you become a nun, dear,
A friar I will be;
In any cell you run, dear,
Pray look behind for me.
The roses all turn pale, too;
The doves all take the veil, too;
The blind will see the show;
What, you become a nun, my dear,
I'll not believe it, no!

"If you become a nun, dear,
The Bishop Love will be;
The Cupids every one, dear,
Will chant, 'We trust in thee!'
The incense will go sighing,
The candles fall a-dying,
The water turn to wine.
What! you to take the vows, my dear,
You may—but they'll be mine."

—Leigh Hunt.

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A Creature of Impulse

(CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 1, PART 3.)

middy, who seemed to have his heart in his work. Home, clad in rough tweeds, sighed.

"I suppose I am too late," said Vera Gotschakoff. "The steam-engine girl was before me—you can't forget that? There is another thing you might also remember."

"Ye—es?"

"I still have that bomb."

"Oh, indeed! I should chuck it into the bay if I were you."

"But you are not me—stupid Englishman that you are!"

"Come—come! It was awfully kind of you not to throw that bomb. Let us be friends."

"Yes," she said, apparently softening. "Let us be friends. Only remember that I come first. If you forget that, something unpleasant will happen. Some—thing unplea—sant! Please take me into the ballroom."

"What! Like this?"

"I would go with you in anything, anywhere."

Home had to take her into the ballroom. One side of it was all window, and the population of St. Prudoc gathered there, noses glued to the glass. He felt sorry that they should look on while others danced, and told Marie, the waitress, to take them out a couple of gallons of cider. Every time he gazed at the blue-eyed girl he felt that Vera Gotschakoff watched him. Collecting his energies at last, he went up to Miss Patton and begged for a dance.

"My things haven't come on here yet," he said. "Can you dance with a bear in tweeds?"

But his strained arm could not hold her sprained wrist. "Let us go into the other room and talk," he suggested, after a few turns. "I have been wanting to thank you properly ever since you came in."

"What for?"

"Saving my life."

"Was that so much to you?"

"Not until you saved it."

They went into the other room, Home feeling that the bomb might come whirling after them at any moment.

II.

In a week Home and the blue-eyed girl were engaged. How it had come about so rapidly neither of them knew, unless it was that the consciousness of peril stimulated Home to unusual effort. He might be wanted at the other end of the earth at any moment. On the other hand, Miss Patton explained that as she had nearly dislocated Mr. Home's arm and he had been the cause of spraining her wrist, they had joined forces as a means of self-preservation. Vera Gotschakoff had apparently forgotten her threats. She would, however, lean on her elbow at dejeuner, and, sadly regarding Home from the depths of her sombre eyes, ask in audible tones whether Miss Patton really understood him. After a time Miss Patton began to be annoyed.

"Do you think I understand you?" she asked Home one evening.

"Quite as much as is good for me."

"And you belong to me?"

"Indubitably."

"Then what does that woman mean by daring to make eyes at you all the time? Is she mad?"

"Yes; a bit. Besides, she's a Nihilist."

"Oh—h!"

"She'd think nothing of blowing us up."

Miss Patton laughed. "She's done that already."

Home was vaguely uneasy. "Don't irritate her," he implored. "You never know what a fanatic like that may do. She's got a bomb in her room, and threatens to throw it at us if the engagement is not broken off."

"It strikes me," said Miss Patton, "that mamma had better take us away. Then this mad woman won't have any one to throw bombs at unless she goes back to St. Petersburg."

"St. Prudoc is an ideal spot for lovers."

She looked at him with big, blue, serious eyes. "Don't I make any spot ideal where I happen to be?"

"Just what I was trying to put into words. Shows how well you understand me."

Vera Gotschakoff came into the salon and glared at them. Had Home told Miss Patton about the bomb?

"Keep her here for ten minutes," whispered Miss Patton, greatly to Home's surprise. Then she said aloud: "Yes, I shall be waiting for you at the foot of the Calvaire des Marins at 9 o'clock," and hurried away.

Vera Gotschakoff sneered. As she swayed toward him she reminded Home of a panther about to spring. "It is time," she said, "that we had an explanation."

Home brought her a chair. Mindful of Miss Patton's injunction, he smiled pleasantly. "Anything I can do?"

"You must break off your engagement with that chit of a girl or I will kill you both."

"I don't think I'd do that if I were you. You might get into trouble. We've neither of us done you any harm."

"Nei— Oh, you make me mad! You have blasted my career——"

"Of usefulness as a Nihilist?"

"She has dared to make love to you under my eyes."

"No, you're mistaken there. Honestly, I've done all the love-making."

"Bah! You call that love-making?"

"What do you call it?"

"I call it disgusting."

"Sort of disgust I've been hoping to experience all my life. Now, look here, Miss Gotschakoff. I'm awfully obliged to you for not blowing me up in St. Petersburg, and all that; but why can't you let me be happy in my own way?"

"Ha, you say that! But I will blow you up now. I will kill you."

"You can if you like. It isn't consistent."

"What isn't? What do I care for consistency?"

"Well, you say you love me, and you spared me in St. Petersburg. What's the use of sparing me in St. Petersburg and blowing me up here?"

"Then you were free to love me. Now you despise me."

"No, no, I don't. No right-minded man despises a woman who really loves him."

"I could give you a career."

"Thank you; I don't want one. I am content to be loved."

"Loved! By an 'English mees.' Bah! She won't love you as I do."

"I hope not. Can't you see that you are altogether wasting yourself on me? I'm not worthy of so much affection. Why don't you go back to Russia, and chuck up Nihilism and settle down? You've had your little fling."

"I have had my little fling, you say? Ah! you do not know. Wait and see. In an hour, perhaps two hours, perhaps later, you will see."

Miss Patton put her head in at the door. "Mamma has a headache, and we dine in our rooms. Meet me at the Calvaire des Marins at 9 o'clock. I'm just going to dress."

Home did not understand what it all meant. The Calvaire des Marins was a lonely cross on the top of a mound overlooking the bay. He turned to leave the room.

Vera Gotschakoff looked at him curiously. Her lips were set tight, the pupils of her eyes contracted into vicious slits.

"You won't give her up?"

"Of course I won't." Home made another attempt. "My dear girl, do forget this folly. You've no idea how you are mistaken in me."

"Bah! I hate her."

"Don't. Pity her rather, if she's going to marry me. See what a lot of bother she's saved you. You ought to be grateful."

"Oh yes, I am grateful. I will show you my gratitude—at 9 o'clock—later."

"And"—Home turned to go—"don't talk all that rubbish about bombs any more. The police will get hold of you and I shan't be able to save you. There's been a fellow sneaking about the hotel for the last three days. He just looks like a Russian spy."

"You warn me! You warn me!" Her face softened for the moment. "I'd like to kiss you just once."

Before Home could move she had thrown her arms round him and kissed him on the lips.

A little red spot flamed in his cheeks. He said no word—only pointed sternly to the door.

She lingered a moment, searched his face for some sign of yielding; then, finding none, glided away.

When Home strolled up to the Calvaire des Marins that evening he had a revolver in his pocket. It occurred to him that the spy might perhaps prove more dangerous than that handsome lunatic, Miss Gotschakoff. He was somewhat of a fatalist. If fate intended that infernal bomb to be thrown at him it would be thrown, and he must dodge it as he best could. Still it was annoying to have all these troubles when he wanted to be enjoying himself with Miss Patton. As he sauntered toward the mound he came to the conclusion that the resourceful Miss Patton did not wish to be blown up, either. Miss Gotschakoff had not yet left the hotel. Although the night was dark, Home knew perfectly well that he was being "shadowed."

He strolled leisurely along, the red tip of his cigar making an easy mark for hostile manifestations. When he reached the foot of the mound Elsie Patton glided out from the shadows, wrapped in a dark cloak.

"Do you want me to explain?" she asked, eagerly; "or will you wait and see?"

Home put his arm around her. "Wish you'd tell me your plan. I'm here to help you put it through."

"Is Miss Gotschakoff coming?"

"I fancy so. Hulloa! What do you want?"

The trim, middle-aged, rather catlike stranger bowed profoundly. "Permit me to introduce myself. I am Sergius Dravinsky, of"—he paused impressively—"the Russian secret service."

"Delighted to meet you; but we can manage our own affairs, thank you."

"Mlle. Gotschakoff is dangerous," said Dravinsky. "She is a little bit mad, you know, and she does monsieur the honor to admire him."

"So do I," rippled Elsie Patton. "That is why she is coming here to throw a bomb at us presently. It would be safer for you to pass on."

Dravinsky bowed. "If you will permit me to sit down beside you;" and he seated himself on the short, crisp turf, his back against the rock.

"I beg your pardon," said Elsie, admiringly. "You are a brave man. Are you aware that in about ten minutes we shall probably be blown to little pieces?"

Dravinsky shrugged his shoulders. "My dear young lady, you love Monsieur Home; therefore you do not want to die just yet. I await events."

A few stars twinkled in the sky. From a boat below came the tinkle-tinkle of a banjo. Elsie threw off her cloak and appeared in white.

"Don't be rash," said Home, quietly. "She'll throw the thing straight at you."

He had made up his mind to shoot Vera Gotschakoff directly she raised her arm to hurl the bomb.

Elsie's hand crept into Home's breast pocket and drew out his revolver. "Perhaps Mr. Dravinsky will take charge of this?"

Dravinsky bowed uneasily. He was a brave man, but this was going a little too far.

"I am your guest," he murmured, "and you don't want to die." He glanced up at the towering cross above them. "Very well. It is all one."

Some one glided across the short turf and halted a few yards away. "Are you there, mademoiselle?"

Vera Gotschakoff's voice had a slight tremor in it. They could all hear the faint ticking of clockwork.

"Yes," said Elsie Patton, stepping forward in her conspicuous white dress, "we are both——"

A missile crashed against the face of the rock and fell on the turf. The ticking ceased.

"You have dropped something," said Elsie. "Won't you come and pick it up?"

Dravinsky, with an oath, sprang to his feet. He grasped Vera Gotschakoff by the arm. The three stood round her in the open.

Vera Gotschakoff was bewildered. "Why? Why?" she gasped. "It has failed."

"Of course it has failed. You don't suppose I was going to let you blow us up! I got into your room and doctored it—I know a lot about machinery—while you were talking to Mr. Home," said Elsie, pleasantly. "Don't you think we have had enough of this nonsense?"

Dravinsky grasped Vera Gotschakoff's wrist with an iron hand. A dagger fell on the turf and lay there, shining.

Elsie picked it up. "If you don't mind," she said, composedly, "I will keep this as a little memento."

The moon came out and shone down upon Dravinsky.

Vera Gotschakoff started. "Netchoffski! You!"

"If I were true to the cause I ought to plunge this dagger into your own heart," said the man, bitterly. "They think I am a Russian spy; you know better. You have disgraced us. Come."

He turned to Home and Miss Patton. "Pardon my little subterfuge. If she interferes with you again she will be handed over to the Russian police. The purity of our cause cannot be sullied by such actions as this."

"Not half a bad chap for a Nihilist," said Home, as the incongruous couple disappeared. "Now we'll go to your mother and get the wedding day fixed. This kind of thing is too risky."

Elsie knelt at the foot of the rock with hands outstretched to the motionless figure above. Home turned away, feeling very humble.

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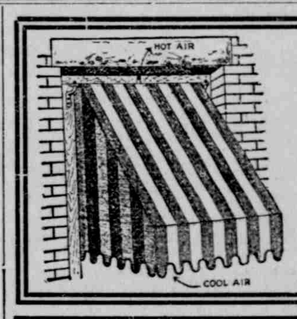

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