

# Prisoners and Captives

By H. S. MERRIMAN

## CHAPTER XXIV.

There are many people who go through life without ever knowing what it is to fight a battle of wind.

There is a breath of heaven of which the sole message is death. It is a wind with no fine-sounding name, for it belongs to the north, where men endure things and have no thought of naming them. It blows for six months of the year. It veers from south-southwest to northwest-by-north, and it is born upon the gray icefields round the pole. For many hundred miles it raves across the frozen ocean, gathering deathly coldness at every league. On its shoulders it carries tones of snow, and then striking land, it rages and tears, howls, moans and screams across northern Europe into far-frozen Asia. In passing it clothes all Russia in white, and still has plenty to spare for black Siberia, northern China and Japan.

A few northern races manage to live on in such numbers as to save extermination, and that is all. More than a third of them are partially or wholly blind. Their existence is a constant and unequal struggle against this same wind and its pitiless auxiliaries—snow and frost. The earth yields no increase here. A little sparse vegetation, sufficient only to nourish miserable reindeer and a few horses, a scattering of pine trees, and that is all. Although no sanctifying spirit can be said to walk upon the waters, the sea alone sustains life, for men, dogs and reindeer eat fish, not dried but frozen, when they can get it.

It was across this country, and in face of this wind, that a party of men and women made their way in the late summer several years ago. By late summer one means the first fortnight in July in these high latitudes. These travelers were twenty-one in number—sixteen men and five women. One woman carried a baby—a full bird—born in prison—unbaptized. It did not count, not even as half a person, to any one except its mother. Men and women were dressed alike in good fur clothing, baggy trousers tucked into felt boots, long blouse-like fur coats, and caps with earflaps tied down. Boots, trousers, coats and even caps bore signs of damage by water. When northern Siberia is not frozen up it is in a state of flood, and traveling, except by water, is almost impossible. These people had come many miles by this comparatively easy method at imminent risk, for they had traveled north on the bosom of the flood. Since then they have literally burned their vessels in order to cut off pursuit.

The men dragged light sledges, three to a sledge, and four resting. The women carried various more precious burdens—delicate instruments, such as compasses and aneroids. Beneath the fur caps throbbed some singular brains, from under the dragged brims looked out some strange faces. There was a doctor among them, two army officers, a judge and others who had not been allowed time to become anything, for they were exiled while students.

The whole party pressed forward in silence with tight-locked lips and half-closed eyes, for the rushing wind carried a fine blinding snow before it. Only one person spoke at times. It was the woman who carried the baby, and she interlarded her incoherent remarks with snatches of song and bursts of peculiar cackling laughter. Suddenly she sat down on a boulder.

"I will sit here," she said, "in the warm sun."

The whole party stopped, and one of the women answered:

"Come, Anna," she said, "we cannot wait here." Still speaking, she took her arm and urged her to rise.

"But," protested she who had been addressed as Anna, "where is the picnic to be?"

"The picnic, Anna Pavloski," said a small, squarely built man, coming forward and speaking in a wonderfully deep and harmonious tone of voice, "is to be held further on. You must come at once."

"I think," she said gently, "that I will wait here for my husband. I expect him home from the office. He will bring the newspaper."

They were all grouped round the woman now except one man, and he stood apart with his back turned toward them. He had been dragging the foremost sledge, and the broad band of the trace was still across his shoulders. He had been leading the way, and seemed in some subtle manner to be recognized as chief and pioneer.

Again the woman who had first spoken persuaded: again the broad-shouldered man spoke in his commanding gentleness. It was, however, of no avail. Then after a few moments of painful hesitation, he left the group and went to where the leader stood alone.

"Pavloski," he said.

"Yes, doctor." He never turned his head, but stood rigid and stern, looking straight before him, scowling with eyes from which the horror now would never fade, into the gray, hopeless distance. No marble statue could reproduce the strong, cold despair that breathed in every limb and feature.

"Something," said the doctor, "must be done. We are behind our time already."

"I suppose it is my duty to stay with you?" said Pavloski. "I cannot leave the party? I cannot stay behind?"

The little man made no answer. His silence was more eloquent than any words could have been. A dramatic painter could scarcely have found a sadder picture than these two friends who dared not to meet each other's eyes. And yet, in a moment, it was rendered infinitely sadder by the advent of a third person.

Swathed as she was in furs, it was difficult to distinguish that this was a woman at all, and yet to a close observer her movements, the manner in which she set her feet upon the ground, the suggestion of graceful curves in limb and form, betrayed that she was indeed a young girl. Her face confirmed it—gray blue eyes and a ruffled mouth, round cheeks delicately tinted despite the wild wind, and little wisps of golden hair struggling out beneath the ear-flaps, and gleaming against the dusky face.

"L," said this little woman, "will stay with her. Sergius, I will try and take her back. We will give ourselves up. It does not matter. Now that Hans is dead, I have nothing to live for. I have no husband."

The little doctor winced. He was not a nihilist at all, and never had been; but in personal appearance he had resembled one. There was something horribly real in the words that came from the girl's rosy lips. Sergius Pavloski shook his head and moved a step or two toward the group half hidden by a fine driving snow.

"No," he answered. "We arranged it before leaving London. There is only one thing to be done."

The doctor and the girl exchanged a look of horror, and hesitated to follow him.

"It was agreed," he continued, mechanically, "that the lives of all were never to be endangered for the sake of one. Tyars said that."

Slowly the two followed him. As they approached the group some of these stepped silently back, some walked away a few paces and stood apart with averted faces.

"Can you tell me," said the woman, looking up suddenly and leaving the baby's face and throat fully exposed to the cruel wind, "whether I can find a lodging near here?"

She addressed Pavloski, who was standing in front of her. He made no answer, but presently turned away with a convulsive movement of lips and throat, as if he were swallowing with an effort. Then he raised his voice and, addressing his companions generally, he said, with the assurance of a man placed in a position to exact obedience:

"Will you all go on? Keep the same direction, north-by-west according to the compass. I shall catch you up before evening."

He stood quite still, like a man hewn out of stone—upright, emotionless and quite determined—awaiting the fulfillment of his commands. All around him his companions waited. It almost seemed as if they expected the Almighty to interfere. Even to those who have tasted the bitterest cup that life has ever brewed, this seemed too cruel to be true—to be so horrible! And the wind blew all around them, tearing, raging on.

At last one man had the courage to do it. It was he who had spoken to Pavloski, the man whom they called doctor. He went toward one of the sledges and proceeded to disentangle the traces thrown carelessly down when a halt had been called. The men stopped silently forward and drew the cords across their shoulders.

The women moved away first, stepping softly on the silent snow, and like phantoms vanishing in the mist and windy turmoil. The men followed, dragging their noisome sledges. The doctor stayed behind for a moment. When the others were out of earshot he went toward Pavloski and laid his mitted hand upon his arm.

"Sergius," he said, with painful hesitation, "let me do it—I am a doctor—it will be easier."

Pavloski turned and looked at the speaker in a stupid, bewildered way, as if the language used were unknown to him. Then he smiled suddenly, in a sickening way; it was like a cynical smile upon the face of the dead.

"Go!" he said, pointing to windward, where their companions had disappeared. "Go with them. Let each one of us do his duty. It will be a consolation, whatever the end may be."

The doctor was bound in honor to obey this man in all and through all. He obeyed now, and left Sergius Pavloski alone with his mad wife and his helpless babe. As he moved away he heard the woman prattling of the sun and the birds and the flowers.

He turned his face resolutely northward and pressed forward into the icy wind, but a muffled, gurgling shriek broke down his strong resolution. Without stopping, he glanced back over his shoulder with a gasp of horror. Sergius Pavloski was kneeling with his back to the north; but he was not kneeling on the snow, for the doctor saw two fur-clad arms waving convulsively, and between the soles of Pavloski's great snow boots he caught sight of two other feet drawn up in agony.

"Oh, God!" exclaimed the man, aloud, "forgive him!"

And with bloodshot eyes and haggard lips he stumbled on, not heeding where he set his feet. He fell, and rose again, scarce knowing what he did. Despite the freezing wind, the perspiration ran down his face, blinding him. It froze and hung there in little icicles on his mustache and beard.

And in the agony of his strong mind his brain lost all power of concentration. His lips continued to frame those four words over and over again until they became bereft of all meaning and lapsed into a mere rhythmic refrain, keeping time with the swing of his sturdy legs.

(To be continued.)

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(To be continued.)

Smoke Nuisance.

The humorous individual came out on the back platform and said:

"I love my native soil."

"Indeed?" responded the usual crowd of smokers. "And what do you call your native soil?"

He pointed to the black streak on his shirt front.

"That, gentlemen. I live in Chicago."

Not Inconsistent.

Nell—You don't mean to say you're going to marry him?

Belle—Yes.

Nell—The idea! Why, you said you wouldn't marry him if he were the last man on earth.

Belle (snappily)—Well, my gracious! He isn't, is he?

Caught Something.

Church—Are people with tainted money liable to catch anything?

Gotham—Oh, yes; old Oilsticks caught a husband for his daughter.—Yonkers Statesman.

Every man must be his own doctor, and decide what is best in his case. The doctors and philosophers do not agree on anything.

## GETS LIVING FROM SNAKES.

Novel Industry Pursued by an Indian—Rattlesnake Rattlers.

Joshua Fleener, an octogenarian of Brown County, Indiana, is following a strange occupation, and declares that there is more money in it when time and trouble are taken into consideration than any other business in which he has engaged since his discharge after serving through the Civil War, says the New York Tribune. He is engaged in breeding timber rattlesnakes, a species which, he says, is exceedingly scarce, and in some parts of the country extinct, and is selling dressed skins to museums to be mounted. He recently sold two of the oldest that he had on hand, one having nine and the other eight rattles, for \$37.50 and \$26, respectively.

Fleener has a cabin of two rooms in the hills of Brown County, and has gone into the rattlesnake industry in a systematic way. He has constructed a wall of cement and stone around the stone chimney of his cabin, making a chamber about 6 by 6 feet, and this is kept warm in the winter by a constant fire in the fireplace in the cabin. In this den he keeps the snakes for breeding and feeds them regularly through the winter. He says he made a study of the habits of timber rattlers for years and found that they were always more prolific after a warm winter than after one that was exceedingly cold.

He constructed the den around the outside of the chimney on the theory that the keeping of the chimney immediately back of the fire always warm would furnish ample heat for the snakes and with proper feeding he would be able to increase the propagation indefinitely.

He accounts for the scarcity of the species known as timber rattlers by the increasing cold winters of the West, and says that his experience in keeping the reptiles in a warm place during winter justifies the theory upon which he started. This spring he had eleven, though he began two years ago with only a single pair, and last year he sold three live ones, for which he got \$75. He believes he can count on doubling his present number in a year, notwithstanding the fact that he expects to dispose of three of his 2-year-olds in a few days. Though the octogenarian makes no professions of being a snake charmer, he says that domestication makes a great difference in the habits of the rattlers, for they are in no sense venomous when they are raised in his den. He often opens the door leading from the den into his cabin and permits them to enter the house.

"I'd rather sell the skins than the live snakes," said the aged snake raiser, "for then I have the advantage of the meat, and it is the best I ever ate. It tastes something like turtle, but is more tender and has a better flavor, and a big rattler will make three meals good enough for a king. It don't cost anything to raise them and there ought to be a big demand because they are so scarce. Yes, there's plenty of rattlesnakes, but they ain't timber rattlers, and that makes a big difference to them that know."

Fearless Swimmers.

In the water the Hawaiians are absolutely fearless. As soon as they can walk, little babies are taken to bathe in the sea, and in a very short time they are able to swim like porpoises. The author of "Hawaiian Yesterdays" gives a reminiscence of the courage of the natives.

Our party had arrived in Hilo Bay, and we were all seated upon the platform of a big double canoe, paddling ashore from the schooner which lay out in the harbor. A throng of natives lined the beach, waiting to welcome their returning teachers.

Just as we were entering the surf that rolled upon the sandy shore, through some accident the canoe suddenly filled and sank, leaving us all sitting half-submerged in the shallow water. With a loud roar of "Awee!" (Oh and Alas!) the assembled crowd rushed as one man into the waves and bore us safely to land.

On one occasion, about the same date, a coasting vessel was upset in a violent squall between the islands of Hawaii and Maui. Although the nearest land was twenty miles distant, the native crew and passengers boldly struck out to swim ashore; and several of them did come safe to land after a night and day in the deep.

Among the survivors of the wreck was a poor woman who for several hours swam with her husband upon her back; but the poor man died of cold and fatigue, and had to be abandoned at last before the coast was reached.

Words Used but Rarely.

A philologist was talking about words. "There are over 225,000 words in the English language," he said, "but we only use a few thousand of them. The extra ones are no use to us. Any man could sit down with a dictionary and write in good English a story that no one in the world would understand. Here, for instance; can you make head or tail of this?"

And the philologist pattered off glibly:

"I will againbuy the atabal. You are asweyed. Yet this is no blimble's hobance nor am I a cudden, either. Though the atabal is dern, still will I againbuy it."

Then he translated:

"I will recover the drum. You are amazed? Yet this is no young girl's boasting nor am I a fool, either. Though the drum is hidden, still will I recover it."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

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# FARMS AND FARMERS

Federal and Utah state sheep inspection officials have decided to make dipping compulsory in the state in order to eradicate the scab.

A man is quite liable to make a mistake when he attempts to grow three crops of corn in rotation. This is taking a step backward.

There is more clean corn ground this year than usual. The cultivator cannot do its best work when rains are plentiful and abundant.

With the hay loader and the horse hay fork hay ought to go into the barn rapidly. When hay is cured it cannot be put away too fast.

For Ringing Hogs.

Make a box 6 feet long, 4½ feet high, 18 inches wide and put a floor in it. Put a door in one end and a stanchion in the other end with loose bolts, so you can adjust it easily to suit the size of the hog. The stanchion is the same as for cows, except the one you move should not have a bolt through it, but a notch cut in lower end to catch over bolt. When you are through ringing,

loosen stanchion. The hog will always step back, then lift out the loose stanchion so he can go through. Simply catch the hog in stanchion to hold him and then use the tongue. Have a narrow shoot at rear end of box so you can drive hogs into it easily.—Farm and Home.

Sheep on the Farm.

A knowledge of the habits of feeding is of value in selecting breeds of sheep for the farm. Merinos feed in a bunch, while the large, openwool breeds scatter like cattle. For herding with cattle, the larger breeds are preferable, as they do not spoil the grass, unless in large numbers. For fence pastures, used for sheep alone, the habits of the merino favor close feeding. For weedy ground sheep should be kept on scant pasture. If there is plenty of sweet grass they will not touch the weeds. If grass is scarce the weeds are cropped low.

It is a good policy to change the feed of a sheep frequently. Especially is this necessary for fattening sheep; they become tired of one variety of food. The hay may be varied with corn-fodder, or even straw occasionally. The grain should by all means be varied with roots, oil cake, bran, etc. This method of feeding stimulates their appetite and keeps sheep from "getting off their feed." Sheep often go a long time without drinking, especially if in good pasture, and when the dew is so heavy that they can fill up with wet grass in the morning. But when they do want to drink, water is as necessary to their health and comfort as to that of other animals.

Tomatoes and Nitrate.

One hundred pounds to the acre of nitrate of soda applied to the tomato crop when the fruit is beginning to set will largely increase the yield and hasten the time of ripening. Spread the nitrate broadcast or between the rows just before a shower, and then cultivate it into the soil. One quarter of an ounce to a plant is about right in small gardens. Experiments at the New Jersey station have shown that nitrate applied about the middle of June had a much greater effect on the crop than the same amount applied earlier in the season. A dressing of 160 pounds per acre increased the crop one-third above that of a plot not so treated. Nitrate of soda is a very quick working fertilizer. It produces rank, dark green foliage, which obstinately resists the attacks of insects and of mildew. We have found nitrate excellent also to produce early asparagus, but care must be taken not to apply too much.

Method for Testing Eggs.

A simple method for testing eggs, which comes from Germany, is based upon the fact that the air chamber in the flat end of an egg increases with age. If the egg is placed in a solution of common salt it will show an increasing inclination to float with the long axis vertical. By watching this tendency the age of the egg can be determined almost to a day. A fresh egg lies in a horizontal position at the bottom of the vessel; an egg from three to five days old shows an elevation at the flat end, so that its long axis forms an angle of 20 degrees, and an egg a month old floats vertically upon the pointed end.

When to Dock Lambs.

The docking of lambs should take place when they are 2 or 3 days old. Of course, it may be done later, but the injury resulting is less at the age named than later. When docking is deferred until the lambs are several weeks old bleeding is usually profuse. In some instances it will cause the death of the lambs unless it is stayed. The flow of blood may be checked by tying a cord tightly around the adhering portion of the tail, and better still by searing the wound with a hot iron.

Farm Notes.

A man makes a mistake when he depends on a scrub bull to head his herd of cows.

## THE LATE LADY CURZON.

American Girl Who Was the First Lady of India.

The death recently at her beautiful home in England of Lady Curzon, of Kedleston, brought grief to three nations. England, where she had endeared herself by her charming simplicity and womanly sweetness, and India, where for so many years she reigned as the wife of the viceroy, unite with the United States in mourning the demise of an American girl whose elevation to British aristocratic and official circles had not caused her to forget the republic in which she was born and for which she retained the deepest affection.

Lady Curzon's health failed while in India, but it was supposed that her return to England would speedily restore her strength and activity. The extreme heat, however, increased the general debility from which she suffered and death resulted from heart failure.

Mary Victoria Leiter was born in Chicago, daughter of Levi Z. Leiter, a millionaire business man. Some years ago the family moved to Washington



LADY CURZON.

and resided in a magnificent home, entertaining largely and with a lavishness such as only great wealth permits. While on a visit to England Miss Leiter met Lord George Nathaniel Curzon, since made Baron Kedleston, and his lordship followed her to Washington. The wedding took place in April, 1895, one of the guests being Mrs. Cleveland, of whom the bride was a close personal friend.

The beautiful American girl was welcomed to the most exclusive inner circles of English society and at once set herself the task of mastering British politics in order to be an aid to her able and ambitious husband. In 1898 Lord Curzon was made viceroy of India, retaining the office until August 10 of last year. His success and popularity as viceroy was largely attributed to the good judgment, graciousness and womanly worth of his American wife. Her court at Bombay, Calcutta, and Simla was among the most magnificent in the world and the Indian potentates accepted her social sway as they would that of the Empress of the empire. It is no exaggeration to say that no English-speaking woman ever equaled her in the influence she wielded in India or in the affection which the millions of that continental peninsula showered upon her.

At one time there was talk that Lord Curzon would be made governor general of Canada, in which case an American girl would have been the lady of Rideau Hall.

Lady Curzon was left \$3,000,000 in her own right on the death of her father. An equally liberal provision was made for her sister, the Countess of Suffolk and Berkshire. She leaves three children, the youngest but a few months old.

How May Sutton Felt.

Miss May Sutton, the tennis champion, was talking one day in Boston about an early defeat.

"I had been so sure of winning," she said, "and that made my disappointment all the greater when I failed."

"I was as disappointed," she said, "as a huckster who used to live in Los Angeles."

"This huckster, coming out of a patron's house one day, saw a little boy feeding apples to his horse. Pleased to see the animal getting an excellent meal at no cost to himself, the man patted the boy on the head and said:

"That's right; always be good to animals. And where did you buy those pretty apples?"

"I didn't buy them," the boy answered. "I took them out of your wagon."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Damages Sufficient.

An old colored woman was seriously injured in a railway accident. One and all her friends urged the necessity of suing the wealthy railroad corporation for damages.

"I 'clar to gracious," she scornfully replied to their advice, "ef I ain't done git more'n nuff of damages! What I'se wantin' now and what I'se done gwine to sue dat company for is repairs."—Cleveland Leader.

A Strong Line.

Judge—With what instrument or article did your wife inflict those wounds on your face and head?

Micky—With a motty, yer honor.

Judge—A what?

Micky—A motty—wan av thim frames wid "God Bless Our Home" in it.—Judge.

When a boy likes to go swimming and hunting, his mother's season for worry lasts all the year round.

If you deliver the goods, a well-paying job is always gaping open for you.