

Prisoners and Captives

By H. S. MERRIMAN

CHAPTER XXV.

Matthew Mark Easton arrived in St. Petersburg by train from Libon, and took a drosky to the Hotel de France, for which he paid seventy roubles. His passport was in perfect order, although smeared most lamentably by the clerk of the Russian consulate who visited it in London.

After breakfast he wandered forth, guidebook in hand, having refused the services of a poliglott individual who professed to be the brother-in-law of the hall porter. The landlord himself directed Easton to the Newski prospect, which, however, was not considered interesting until the afternoon. Nevertheless, he went that way, and finally found himself on the English quay. He crossed the Neva, still in the same tourist gait, and lost himself among the smaller commercial streets of the Vassil Ostroff. Presently by the merest accident he found himself opposite a small warehouse bearing the name "L. Ostroff" in painted letters above the blind windows of what had once been a shop. He pushed open the curtains and, addressing himself to a pleasant-looking girl who was seated at a counter adding up the columns of a ledger, he mentioned the name "Loris Ostroff."

"Yes," answered the girl, in perfect English, "he is in. Who are you?"

"Matthew Mark Easton."

"Ah! Come in."

She led the way into an inner room which was lined with shelves containing long wooden boxes like miniature coffins. There were upon the table some rolls of common cloth.

"Mr. Ostroff is apparently a tailor," hazarded Easton in a conversational way.

"Yes," she answered, with a short laugh, "a very cheap one."

"He is upstairs in the cutting-out room," she continued, with a twinkle in her childish eyes. "I shall tell him."

Easton stood looking at the curtained door after she had closed it. Then he picked up a piece of rough cloth and examined its texture critically.

"I am half inclined," he reflected aloud, "to become a nihilist. There are alleviations even in the lot of a tailor's assistant of the establishment Ostroff."

In a few moments the door opened again, and a stout man entered with a bow. He shook hands without speaking, and pointed to a chair.

We last saw this man in Easton's rooms in London. His name was not mentioned then, because there was not much in a name for him. It was not Ostroff then. He was not minutely described, because a written description is not always of great value. For instance, he was in London a dark, grizzled man with a beard; in his shop in the Vassil Ostroff, St. Petersburg, he was a fair, hairless man.

"Well?" he said, asthmatically, at length.

"Not a word," replied Easton; "and you?"

The man shrugged his heavy shoulders.

"Not a word. I have written to you all that I heard. I wrote on the fifth of May; have you destroyed the letter?"

"Yes—burned it."

"Well!" ejaculated the Russian, misusing the word, "I heard," he continued—"never mind how—that they all got away, in good health, at the proper time—that is, in the early summer of the year before last. They were followed, but they destroyed all the horses and boats as they went, and the pursuit was necessarily given up."

"Since that," inquired Easton; "not a word?"

"Not a word."

There has been no semi-official account of the matter in the newspapers."

"No; it has been hushed up. The official report is that certain exiles and prisoners escaped; that they were pursued by Cossacks, and that the chase was only given up when their death by starvation was a moral certainty."

"And," said Easton, "are they struck out of the list?"

"Yes; they are struck out."

"I am going to look for them," announced Easton, after a pause.

The Russian raised his flaxen eyebrows.

"Ah! I understood that you were condemned—by the doctors."

"No, not condemned; they merely said, 'If you go, it will kill you.'"

"And still," said the Russian, calmly, "you go."

"Some one must. You cannot—you are too fat. I am going by land," continued the American. "I leave Petersburg tomorrow morning."

Ostroff rose from his chair.

"You must go now," he said. "You have been here long enough; we are watching you now. Here in Petersburg we all watch each other."

The Russian held out a fat white hand.

"Good-bye, you brave American," he said.

"G'by!" returned Easton, with a laugh.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Well, at all events, we have tried it!"

These words were spoken by the mere remnant of a man to a solitary companion while both looked out—peered through the twilight—on death. He who spoke crouched in a singular way on the hard snow, supporting himself on one fur-lined arm. He could not stand, for he had but one leg. The other had been cut off just above the knee—a recent amputation, rudely tied with rope, was stained a deep, suggestive color. His face was a horrid sight to look upon, for here and there in the pasty yellow flesh were deep indentations of half-healed sores, the result of frost bite. One eye was quite closed by a swelling which deformed the features and drew them all up. He spoke in a mumbling way, as if his tongue were swollen or diseased, and the language was most dramatic of all tongues—Russian.

His companion, a short, thick-set man, stood beside him; but he stood weakly, and the terribly sunken lines of his cheeks told a story only slightly less horrible than that depicted by the face and form of the cripple. Both faces alike bore that strange dry look which tells unerringly of starvation.

Within a few yards of the two men,

at their backs, stood a rude, ill-shapen hut, built clumsily and ignorantly of snow. Its low doorway faced the north, and amid the gloom of its interior there were discernible a number of heaps, apparently formed of old and tattered fur clothing. These were dead men; the women of Sergius Pavloski's party had not lived to see the Arctic Ocean.

The man who stood gave a short heart-rending laugh as he looked out over the frozen sea.

"Yes," he said, "we have tried it."

There was a pause, and then the cripple—Sergius Pavloski—spoke again:

"Of course," he said, almost unintelligibly, "we have failed; but still our failure may teach others, and we have kept it secret. Those who want to know will never know. They will always be in uncertainty as to whether we have escaped and are living hidden in America, in Europe, perhaps in Russia. We shall be more terrible, doctor, dead than alive."

"I hope so."

"At all events, shall be, for you say that I could not live a week in a warm climate. This leg of mine is less painful to-day; perhaps it is healing."

"No, Pavloski; I have told you a dozen times it is not healed, it is only frozen. It can never heal. The moment it thaws you will die."

A sickly smile passed across his unshiny features, and there was silence for a time—the deathly expectant silence of the far North. At length Pavloski raised his mitted hand and extended it outward like the needle of a compass.

"I wonder," he mumbled, "if Tyars is out there."

"I wonder," said the doctor, "why you intrusted this to an Englishman."

"If I had the whole world to choose from, I should not have selected another man," said Pavloski; "but there was no choice in the matter."

"I suppose," said the doctor, with an ill-concealed sneer, "that he has turned back."

"I will swear by St. Paul that he has not done that!"

"Then where is he?"

"Dead?" was the answer. "If Claud Tyars had been alive, he would have come. He is not here, therefore he is dead! Ough!"

He stopped and fell back fainting with pain. In his excitement he had moved, and allowed some of his weight to rest upon the raw stump of his leg. In a second the doctor was kneeling on the snow beside him, raising his head, touching his lips with snow. It was a poor restoration, but there was nothing else at hand. One cannot offer to a dying man even the tenderest piece of an old sealskin mitten.

Without waiting for consciousness to return, he attempted to lift the cripple, intending to carry him within the little snow hut, but the movement brought back Pavloski's falling senses, and he shook his head in token that he wished to be left where he lay.

"No," he said, after gasping twice for breath; "I would rather die out here."

The doctor's bare hand crept within the tattered sleeve toward the pulse. He said nothing. There was nothing to say.

"I do not want," continued Pavloski brokenly, "to see their faces. I brought them here. It is my fault. I suppose—the good God—will know how to revenge all this. If they—the Romanoffs—the Czar—had twenty lives, and we could take them all—we might pay—the debt; but they have—only one life—to take; that would be too short—a punishment. God will know how to do it—will He not, doctor?"

"Yes," said the sweet, deep voice of the doctor, "God will know how to do it."

"Pray," said the dying man, "pray to Him to do it—well!"

Then his head fell back and he breathed regularly and softly. But this was not the end. Presently the blackened lips began to move, and he spoke in quite a different voice—so different as to startle his listener. It was soft and even, as if recounting a dream long dispelled.

"It is not yet a year ago," he said.

"There were seven of us—four Russians, two Englishmen, and an American. Four Russians, two Englishmen and an American—what a strong combination! The Russians to go into action on land, the Englishmen on the sea, and the sharp-witted American to watch and plot and scheme. I remember the last time we met was at Easton's house. Two of us are dead, and I am nearly—dead. Tyars and Graess—where can they be? They are out there, doctor, in front of us—to the north. I—I shall go and—meet them."

The lips closed with a sudden snap, and the doctor leaned eagerly forward. Sergius Pavloski was dead. The survivor rose to his feet. It had begun to snow gently and in large flakes—a snow that would cover the ground to the depth of twelve inches in half that number of hours. As it fell it gradually covered the dead man, even to his face and eyes, which were already cold.

Presently the doctor moved a little, and, turning slowly round, scanned the near horizon. He could not see the pack ice now, for the snow was blowing in from the north, wreathing and curling as it came.

Then this lone man moved toward the snow hut, and entered it on his hands and knees. He took no notice of the dead—one soon gets accustomed to them—but fumbled about among the baggage piled up in one corner.

In a dull, stupid way he realized the responsibilities of his position. He dragged two of the sledges out of the hut, and with a hatchet broke them up. Then he took the two strongest pieces of each—the cross-bars—and bound them securely together, thus forming a rough pole. This he erected on a little mound where the snow was thin, building it up with such debris as he could lay hands upon. It stood up gauntly, almost the only object within sight that was not white. It was a mere pole, the thickness of a man's wrist, and yet it was probably visible ten miles off against its gleaming surroundings.

"It would be good," he mumbled, "to be warm once more—just once."

And he piled up the wood in a little heap. He crawled into the hut and presently returned bearing a good sized tin

bottle labeled "Spiritus." He poured the contents over the wood and struck a match. In a moment the blue flames leaped up and the wood crackled. He crouched down to the leeward side, so close that his clothes were singed and gave forth a sharp, acrid smell. He withdrew his mittens and held his bare, scarred hands right into the flames.

"Ah!" he murmured in a gurgling voice, "that is good!"

But it did not last long. The wood was light and very dry, and in five minutes there was nothing left but a few smoldering ashes.

The doctor rose to his feet and looked long and steadily out to the north over the broken ice. His eyes lingered over each white mound and hillock—not lovingly, for it was horribly dismal, almost too dismal to be part of this world at all.

Strange to say, his eyes finished their inspection by looking up to heaven. The great snow-clouds were rolling south, bearing in their huge, rounded bosoms the white pall to cover a continent for many months to come. But this man seemed to be looking beyond the clouds, seeking to penetrate the dim ether. He was not looking at the sky, but into heaven. At last he gave a contented little shrug of the shoulders, full of a terrible meaning. The next moment he sought for something in the inner pocket of his fur tunic. There was a gleam of dull, rusted metal, and he raised his hand toward his open mouth. At the same instant a sharp report broke upon that echoless silence, and a little puff of white smoke was blown southward on the breeze.

(To be continued.)

EARTHQUAKES IN CARIBBEES.

Phenomena Always Attended by Dread Bordering on Terror.

To us the lands and countries about the Caribbean Sea are of the greatest interest and importance. Our people will be locating there with more and increasing frequency, and all the while the ties of international co-operation will become stronger, says Francis C. Nicholas in the Review of Reviews.

That eruptive and seismic disasters have afflicted places in those regions will not deter us very much, for one has abundant faith that it is not going to happen to him, and a good many of our people are locating directly in range of the volcanoes, happy and prospering along with the natives.

The region is not very far away. A few days on the steamer and one is in the tropics. That bit of yellow seaweed picked up at the shore last summer because it was different from the others was probably brought by the gulf stream from the Caribbean regions and carried to our shores by a southerly wind. Surely it is not a far-away country that we are considering, and it is very beautiful—sunshine and flowers, green savannas and towering mountains, torrential rivers, clear, splashing brooks and deep blue seas.

Why should one think of earthquakes? My own experiences with them have happily been free from scenes of death; yet the coming of an earthquake is so sudden, so wildly terrible, that the stoutest hearts must quail. Even wild animals shrink with fear, and one is always filled with dread bordering on terror. It is all so sudden. A sense of some unknown fear pervades all nature, as if the spirit of the world had caught its breath and held all life an instant in suspense, while sounds seem to beset one's nerves rather than to assault the ears. Then comes a reeling, sickening, staggering motion, and fear, and human crying out, and then quivering silence for the space of a breath, followed perhaps by crushing destruction, or, it may be, by a sound like a great sighing and the earth settles back, that the pulsations of nature may begin again in harmony. Then excited people find their voices, bewildered faces gleam with intelligence and every one is talking, comparing experiences, wondering what it was, where it had come from and how it had gone away. Such have been my experiences with earthquakes in the Caribbean regions.

Stalking Wild Geese.

In a number of counties lying on both sides of the Sacramento River, in the central portion of California, the farmers are greatly harassed every winter by the depredations of countless flocks of wild geese, which swarm over the broad grain fields and destroy the young, sprouting grain stalks. Indeed, so serious has this annual invasion become that nearly all the large farms have employes who regularly patrol the fields, and do nothing else but keep the feathered pests on the wing.

One of the most novel blinds or stalkers ever used in that section, or any other, for the purpose of destroying the geese, is that of a Colusa farmer who lives on the bank of the Sacramento. He has a big red steer which he has trained to stalk geese. The steer walks round a flock of geese in an ever decreasing circle, his master, armed with a repeating shotgun, walking beside him, but on the farther side from the flock.

The geese have become so used to seeing animals grazing near that they pay no attention to them; so the farmer is enabled to get within shotgun distance and pour a broadside into the flock while it is feeding on the ground, and two more shots before the birds are out of range when they rise.

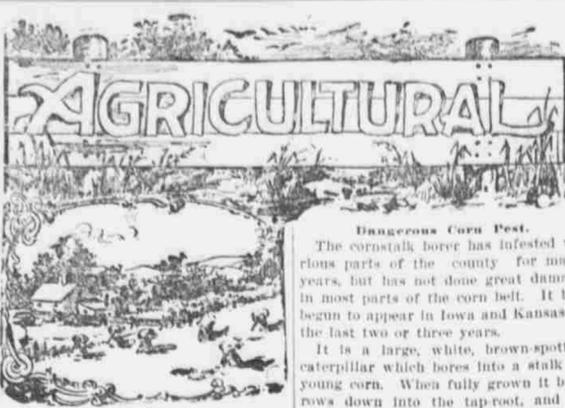
This dumb hunter is held in great esteem by its owner and his family, it is needless to state, and receives the best of everything.

Short.

"I hear some scientists are going to try to make the north pole with an air ship. Do they intend to stay long?"

"Oh, no. They're only going to make a flying trip."—Detroit Free Press.

Trouble is about the only thing that you can borrow that is not wanted back.



Clod Masher, Leveler and Drag.

This clod masher, leveler and drag can also be used for mashing down cornstalks and weeds. Cut off a log about twelve inches in diameter that will split straight through the middle nicely, take off the bark from both sides, and raise his hand toward his open mouth. At the same instant a sharp report broke upon that echoless silence, and a little puff of white smoke was blown southward on the breeze.

Get some old half-inch rod irons, six pieces about fifteen inches long, have taps on one end and hook about two inches long, bent on the other end; bore two auger holes in each piece a foot from each end; put the hooks with taps through holes. Get two pieces of old log chaulis, with three links each, which will fasten the two pieces of timber together. Bore two more holes in one of the pieces about two feet from each end, and take one long trace chain and fasten to doubletree. Letter A shows shape of the rods. If you want to

make it heavier, drop a pole on the chains between the logs. This will make as fine a drag, clod crusher, land leveler, stalk and weed knocker as you would wish to use.

Grading Cream.

The establishment of creameries has done much to put the dairy business on a stable and profitable basis, as well as to provide consumers with a uniform quality of good butter. The introduction of the hand separator, by enabling the farmer to feed skim-milk in prime condition and minimizing transportation expense, has also done much for the business. This has not been without a drawback, however, in that the separated cream is not always kept under proper conditions, and that delivered to the creameries differs greatly in quality. When all are paid the same rate for butter fat there is no incentive to careful preservation of the cream. At the experiment station, Manhattan, Kan., a system of grading cream was adopted about two years ago, the prices paid varying with the quality of the cream. This has resulted in great improvement in the cream delivered and enables the butter maker to do his part better. Bulletin No. 135, "Grading Cream," treats of this subject, and can be obtained by addressing the station as above.

The Way to Make Hens Mout.

One of the achievements of modern poultry keeping is that of forcing a hen to doff her old coat, and grow a new one before the time when she would do so naturally. Many have shed their feathers so late in the season, naturally, that cold weather overtakes them before they get new suits, consequently they seldom begin laying before spring. If the moult can be hastened so that a new coat of feathers is grown and the laying can be started before cold weather, the prospect is good for a supply of eggs during fall and winter.

The result is usually accomplished by cutting off all meat and mash foods, putting the hens on short rations of grain for a week or so to stop the laying, then allow more liberty and feed a full ration high in protein. This loosens the old feathers, which drop off quickly and starts a rapid growth of the new. A liberal allowance of beef scrap is essential, and linseed meal is an advantage. Sunflower seeds are also good during the moult.

Tape Worm in Turkeys.

The presence of the tapeworm may be recognized through the indolent, drowsy spirits of turkeys infested by it; a careful examination of voidings will reveal its presence, as those infested will pass small portions of the worm. Powdered male fern is an effective remedy, and may be administered in doses of from thirty grains to one dram of the powder; or of the liquid extract, fifteen to thirty drops. This should be administered morning and evening before feeding; the minimum dose to the younger, increasing the dose as they grow older. Oil of turpentine is an excellent remedy against worms of all kinds which inhabit the digestive organs of poultry. A common remedy for the removal of worms from fowls is one drop of kerosene oil night and morning. This should not be administered to the very young, but may be used with impunity after they are a few weeks old.

Dangerous Corn Pest.

The cornstalk borer has infested various parts of the county for many years, but has not done great damage in most parts of the corn belt. It has begun to appear in Iowa and Kansas in the last two or three years.

It is a large, white, brown-spotted caterpillar which bores into a stalk of young corn. When fully grown it burrows down into the taproot, and in the spring transforms to a pupa, from which the adult soon emerges and lays its eggs on the young corn near the axilla.

The young larvae hatching from them bore into the stalk and upward through the pith. When fully grown they bore outwards to the surface, making a hole, from which the moth escapes and transforms to pupa in the burrow. This insect is two-brooded, the second brood feeding on the old stalks, generally between the second joint and the ground, and becoming full grown about harvest time, when they go into winter quarters.

When corn was seriously infested last year and the stalks left standing a second infestation may be expected this year unless the farmer has raked and burned, a method which we have always suggested when the cornstalks were known to harbor any kind of insect pests. Corn is too good to be without its full supply of enemies, which attack it from the very time it is planted in the ground until it is in the full ear.

Cheap Fuel Alcohol.

Denaturized alcohol will probably become another great product of the southern states. It is claimed that cottonseed oil machinery is perfectly adapted to making industrial alcohol from the potato. If this is successfully proven, the many cottonseed oil mills of the south, which are idle each summer season for lack of material, will be able to operate all the time and keep their employes together. Furthermore, being already equipped with the machinery, they will, no doubt, be able to manufacture the alcohol very cheaply. Farmers would also be benefited by the immense demand for potatoes that would result. In Cuba alcohol is produced and sold from twelve to fifteen cents a gallon, and it is said to make an excellent fuel for running engines. It produces no soot or disagreeable odors. When the law recently passed by congress to denaturize alcohol in the United States becomes operative it is expected greatly to increase the use of the article both for fuel and other purposes.

Arranging Large Kettle.

This illustration gives a plan to set up a kettle in butchering time which is much better than the old way with posts and pole. Take one and one-half

inch old wagon tire to the blacksmith shop and get a ring made the size of your kettle, with three legs welded to it, and you can move your kettle any place where wanted, and nothing is in your way to go around it.

Cutting Asparagus Stalks.

The right way in cutting asparagus stalks, says an expert in answer to a question, is to cut everything clean up to the end of the asparagus season, or up to about the time that green peas are fit to gather. After that we let all the stalks grow, but if we were to cut any, we would remove the little ones rather than the big ones. This clean cutting is also the best remedy for the asparagus beetle, which gives us some trouble here. As long as all the stalks are cut, the insect is given no chance to breed, and later on, when we stop cutting, we can spray the plants with the Bordeaux mixture and arsenate of lead combination which makes an end to the beetle attacks for a while, and also checks the rust if that gives trouble. For ridding the stalks of slugs alone, dusting with freshly slaked lime while the plants are still wet with dew will answer.

Value of Dairy Products.

There were 12,147,304,550 pounds of milk and 588,180,471 pounds of cream used in 1904 in the manufacture of 551,278,141 pounds of butter, 313,685,290 pounds of cheese and 303,485,182 pounds of condensed milk. These figures are part of the census of manufactures for 1905. The total cost of the materials used in the industry was \$142,920,277, while the value of the products was \$168,182,789, an increase of the former of 31.3 per cent, and of the latter of 28.6 per cent. The number of establishments dropped from 9,242 to 8,926, while the capital increased 30 per cent to \$47,255,556. There were 3,507 salaried officials and clerks and 17,557 engaged in the manufacture of these articles. These received salaries and wages amounting to \$9,789,036.

THE WEEKLY HISTORIAN



1129—Alphonso I. vanquished Moors at battle of Aurlique.

1261—Constantinople taken by Michael; end of Latin empire.

1364—English, under Edward II., captured city of Caen, in France.

1419—Town hall of Prague taken by the Hussites; Hussite war.

1540—Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, beheaded on Tower hill.

1554—Marriage of Philip of Spain and Mary of England.

1565—Mary, Queen of Scots, married Lord Barnley.

1603—King James and his Queen crowned at Westminster.

1676—Battle of Bridgewater, Mass.; King Phillip's war.

1706—Legislative union of England and Scotland completed.

1759—English took Fort Ticonderoga from the French;...Fort Niagara, New York, surrendered to Sir William Johnson.

1789—Pittsburg Gazette, first newspaper west of Alleghenies, appeared.

1794—Robespierre and seventy-one others guillotined in Paris;...End of the reign of terror in Paris.

1821—Peru issued declaration of independence.

1830—Charles X. of France suspended liberty of the press;...War of the barricades in Paris began.

1852—Steamboat Henry Clay wrecked on Hudson river; 25 lives lost.

1854—Yellow fever becomes epidemic at New Orleans.

1856—Several lives lost and many homeless by fire in Boston.

1858—Third attempt to lay Atlantic cable commences in midocean.

1861—Gen. George B. McClellan took command of the Army of the Potomac.

1862—Ship Golden Gate lost on Mexican coast; 204 lives lost.

1863—Surrender of Morgan, the guerrilla leader, at New Lisbon, Ohio.

1864—Chambersburg, Pa., burned by Confederates.

1868—Wyoming territory formed by act of Congress;...Fourteenth amendment to Constitution of United States declared in force;...Alaska organized as a territory.

1871—Boiler explosion on ferryboat Westfield in New York harbor; over 100 perished.

1873—Serious fire at Portland, Oregon.

1874—Many lives lost in floods at Pittsburg, Pa.

1880—Revolt in City of Mexico to prevent installation of Gen. Gonzalez as president.

1884—Henry M. Stanley arrived in England from exploring tour in Africa.

1894—War declared between China and Japan;...Japanese victorious at battle of Song-Hwan, Korea.

1898—Ponce, Porto Rico, taken by United States troops;...Ambassador Cambon opened negotiations for peace between Spain and United States;...President McKinley transmitted terms of peace to Spain.

1899—Heureaux, president of Santo Domingo, killed.

1901—Battleship Maine launched at Philadelphia.

1904—Newchwang evacuated by Russians;...Von Plehve, Russian minister of the interior, assassinated;...England demanded indemnity from Russia.

Missed the Whip.

When the summer resident offered to show his new automobile to Uncle Ephraim Dodge of Cyrusville, and explain all the workings of the machine, his offer was promptly accepted.

The old man's face wore its most impressive look as he listened to the explanations and descriptions of the various details; he felt of handles and levers, wheels and boxes as he was requested to do; lay flat to investigate the workings of mysteries under the vehicle; bent double and squinted at half-hidden gearing, and put his foot in several designated places.

At last the inspection was over, and the owner, flushed and full of pride, waited for Uncle Ephraim to speak.

"Going to run that up here, be ye?" inquired the old man, after a silence.

"Yes, indeed, these roads are all right for it," said the owner.

"Um-h" and Uncle Ephraim stroked his beard reflectively. "Well, how do you suppose to get red o' the boys that'll be on the back o' your wagon, er? Strikes me there's a considerable of a lack that way."

Hereditary Resemblance.

"What you chilun been doin'?"

"We ain't been doin' nuthin'."

"Deah me! You grow moah like youn pa every day."—Indianapolis News.

Received Merciful Treatment.

Post—I want you to know, sir, that this poem cost me a week's hard labor.