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Darwin estimates that there are 100,000 earthworms quietly at work for the advantage of the upper six feet of every acre. They continually turn over the se" and drag down leaves and grass, and thus they loosen the soil and fertilize the ground, so that necessary air can reach the roots that spread and

Mothers will find Mr. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children during the teething pariod.

Fortune's Wheel.

"See that old chap?" remarked the clubman, pointing out the window to an old peddler, who carried a basket of shoe "Well, he came to this country from Russia ten years ago. He borrowed some money to purchase a basket and began to peddle shoe laces. How much do you think he's worth to-day? Just make a guess.

Several large sums were mentioned expectantly.

"Wrong." said the clubman. "He isn't worth a cent and he still owes for the basket."-Puck.

Encouraging Him.

The Young Man (ardent, but bashful) -Miss Hope, I shall try to show you that I am not-er-as big a fool as I seem. You mustn't judge me by appear-

The Young Woman-Certainly not, Mr. Wrightsort. You don't make your appearances here often enough for that.

Protection of American Birds.

The movement for the protection of birds in America has long since assumed formidable proportions, says American Homes and Gardens. Much of the credit for the work accomplished is due to the Audubon societies, which exist in thirty-five States, and which for a number of years have carrled on an active work for the conserving of bird life. The results accomplished are considerable. A "model law" drawn up by the American Ornithologists' union is now in force in thirty States and the District of Columbia. The Lacey law excludes from interstate commerce all birds killed illegally in any State, and makes those legitimately killed subject to the law of the State in which they are bought.

Laws prohibiting the sale of game out of season, even when killed in season, look toward the same end of conserving bird life. Public attention has been aroused on the subject, and even the manufacturer of air rifles no longer calls attention to the fact that they will kill small game within short distances. Absolute protection has not yet been given the birds everywhere, but a great and important work has been well begun and is being carried forward.

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"The chemical processes which he employed were some of them simple and some quite complicated. To make vanilla ice cream by artificial means, for instance, the alchemist took some triple refined cottonseed oil and placed it in a centrifugal machine which revolved at a velocity of 3,000 revolutions a minute. A beautiful emuision was thereby produced, which was then frozen, chemically, of course. The flavor was obtained by the addition of vanillin, glucin and nitrobenzol. They say that ice cream composed as above is sold in many Southern States where cottonseed oil is more plentiful and consequently cheaper than milk or good and does not melt as quickly as the genuine ice."



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Prisoners and Captives By H. S. MERRIMAN

CHAPTER XVI.

is no cloak for tears like laughter. He is a strong man who merely does nothing in the midst of tears. Most men either laugh or weep, but some there are who remain grave.

Matthew Mark Easton was not a strong man. The last meeting of the association he was pleased to call "Guy Fawkes" was looked forward to by him with positive dread. He did not hold himself responsible for Pavloski and his three compatriots, for he knew well enough that he himself was but a means to the end. If these four Russians had not met with him, they would still have gone to Siberia; for they were branded, their souls were seared by the hot ironthe thrice-heated iron of unquenchable vengeance.

Sergius Pavloski was the first to arrive. Immaculate, cold, and self-contained as usual; his old-fashioned dress clothes scrupulously brushed, his large amethyst shirt studs brightly polished. There was a steady glitter in his unpleasantly veiled eyes, but his manners were always suave and courtly.

"Ah, Smith!" cried Easton; "punctual as usual. We business men know its value, eh? especially at meal times.'

When the guests were assembled, Easton led the way to another room, where dinner was served. The usual silence upon the subject of their meeting was observed until the meal was over, and all chairs were drawn round the fire.

Then the informal proceedings commenced. Matthew Mark Easton was a trifle more restless than usual; his mobile features alternated between grave and gay, while his dancing eyes were

never still. "Gentlemen," he said, "we have done a vast deal of talking, and now at last some of us are going into action. Each one of you knows his part, and each one of you, of course, will do his best. The three gentlemen who leave to-night for Siberia take absolutely nothing with them except a little money. There are no maps, no letters, no instructions, nothing that an enemy can get hold of. We have, however, taken measures to supply them with money at various stages of the journey. We have also completed a method of communication, by means of which the safe progress of the travelers can from time to time be reported to St. Petersburg, and subsequently, to the headquarters in London. But in case of partial failure, it is quite understood that cream. It is far from harmful, tastes the others go on. Mr. Tyars undertakes to get his ship round Cape Chelyuskin, and to wait for you at the meeting place arranged, namely, the wasternmost mouth of the river Yana, not far from Oust Yansk, where we have a good friend. On the 10th of July he sails thence to complete the northeast passage, and reach the coast of Alaska. That date, gentlemen, is fixed. If no one comes to meet him, he goes on alone, but he hopes to

> not exceeding fifteen persons. The three men turned their dull eyes toward the two Englishmen seated side by side. Unconsciously the seven men assembled had grouped themselves in order. The stout Russian and Easton were seated side by side with their backs to the table, and on their left were placed the three young Russians, while on the right the two sailors sat side by side big man and a small one—the lesser and

see you all three, and each with a party

the greater power.

'Of course," went on Easton, "the distances are enormous, but we have endeavored to equalize them as much as possible. The meeting point has been fixed with a view to this. It is the southernmost anchorage obtainable east of Cape Chelyuskin, though it is far within the Arctic Circle. We have succeeded, I surmise, in keeping our scheme completely secret. No one knows of it except ourselves; not even the Nihilist party in London. We must remember that we are not Nihilists, but merely seven men engaged upon a private enterprise. have friends who have been unjustly exiled, many of them without a trial-upon mere suspicion. We are attempting to rescue those friends; that is all."

"Yes," echoed the stout man, speaking for the first time, "that is all. I seek my daughter."
"And I my sister," said one.

"And I my brother," said another.

"It is," added Pavloski, slowly, "a wife

with me." Tyars and Grace said nothing. They had not quite thought it out, and were

unprepared with a reason. Easton was more at ease now. He consulted a little notebook hitherto concealed in his waistcoat pocket.

"I have endeavored," he continued, without taking his eyes from the pocketbook, "to make every department indemy own death would in no wise affect the expedition. The money and information would, after such an event, continue to filter through to Siberia by prearranged channels. In case of the death or imprisonment of our agent in St. Petersburg, the same communications would be kept open. We have each a substitute, and the arrangements are so simple that these substitutes will have no difficulty in carrying them out. I need scarcely tell you that heavy bribes have been sent to the right quarters in Siberia-high official quarters."

The stout man grunted in a knowing way, and signified by a little nod of the head that no further interruption need be feared.

"In Russia," continued Easton, turning the pages of his notebook, "we all know that every official has his price. The only difficulty lies in the discovery of that

doubled are those of the three gentlemen who go out to Siberia to organize the escape of the prisoners and exiles. I surmise that it is unnecessary to point out that these parts cannot be doubled. There are not three other such men to be found. As to our ship, she was built, above and below, under the personal supervision of Tyars and myself. In Mr. Tyars and Lieut. Grace we have two sailors eminently calculated to bear the strain that will be put upon them. Humanly speaking, they may be trusted to do all that man can do to get the Argo around Cape Chelyuskin to the rendezvous by the date named. This is our last meeting in London. Some of us may see each other again. I trust to God we shall. I trust that He who knows no nationalities will bring five of you together again next sum-

There was a pause. Matthew Mark Easton turned the pages of his notebook in a vague, aimless way. Then in that same position, without looking around, he spoke in a low tone of voice:
"Gentlemen," he said, "my report is

finished."

CHAPTER XVII.

On the evening of the Admirals' Club dinner, early in December, Helen had been in the habit of dining at the Winters'. Although Agnes Winter was now alone, she seemed singularly anxious to keep up this custom, and Helen acceded to her proposal readily enough. Oswin was easily disposed of. A sailor returning to London after an absence of some years can usually employ his evenings satisfactorily.

It happened that Miss Winter was absent from town during the three days preceding the anniversary, and Helen was, therefore, left in ignorance as to the nature of the entertainment to which she was invited. As she drove through the fog and gloom of December streets the thought came to her, however, that had there been other guests her brother Oswin would, in the ordinary course of events, have been invited. This thought generated others, and before the little brougham drew up smoothly, the young girl was verging upon a conviction that the course of events had diverged already from the commonplace. She was not therefore, surprised to see Miss Winter standing at the head of the brightly lighted, softly carpeted stairs to greet her. Before she spoke Helen had guessed that they were to pass the evening alone together, and as she mounted the stairs she did her best to quell an indefinite feeling of discomfort.

The drawing room looked intensely Two armchairs, and two only, small and low, were drawn forward to the fire, and between them a small table, promising coffee. In response to a little gesture of the hand, Helen took possession of one of the chairs. Miss Winter took up an evening newspaper, of which the careful cutting betrayed no tamper ing on the part of a literary cook, and slowly unfolded it.

"I want," she said, "to see who is acting in that new piece at the Epic. I had a note from Oswin to-day, propos-ing to make up a party for next Wednes-

day."
"Yes; he spoke to me about it. should like to go.'

Miss Winter continued to unfold the paper with a considerable bustle. She was not looking at it, but at Helen, who seemed interested in the texture of an absurd little lace handkerchief.

"Who-is going?"

The girl raised her head and frowned slightly, as if making a mental effort. "Let me see-papa, Oswin, you, myself, and-and-oh, yes! Mr. Tyars."

Miss Winter was not an impulsive woman. There was a graceful finish and sense of leisure about her movements, but before Helen could move, her friend was kneeling on the white fur hearth rug, drawing her toward her, forcing her to face the light. 'Helen, let me see your face."

It was almost a command, and the girl obeyed, slowly turning. Her eyes were dull, as if with physical agony. Miss Winter relinquished the warm, soft fingers. She half turned, and sat with her hands clasped in her lap, gaving into the

"When," she asked, "when was it? Long ago at Oxford, or only just lately?" "I suppose," Helen answered, quietly, "that it was long ago at Oxford; but-

but I think I did not know it." This daughter of a sailor race was not given to tears, but now her lashes were glistening softly. It is not the bitterest

tear that falls. "My poor, poor Helen!" murmured Miss Winter, stroking her friend's hand gently. "And he-Claud Tyars-he has

said nothing?"

"Of course not." Miss Winter's eyes fell on the newspaper lying open at her feet. Mechanically she read the heading of a long article on the "New Arctic Expedition."

"But, Helen," she whispered, "do you

Her heart sank within her.

"Hush, dear," interrupted the girl. Don't ask me that."

"Helen, will you tell me one thing?" The girl moved uneasily, keeping her

eyes averted.
"I think not," she answered, "you can ask it, but I do not think I will answer

"Long ago," murmured the low voice of the elder woman, "long ago at Oxford did you think-Helen, forgive my asking -did you think that he loved you?"

There was a long silence, broken only by the officious little clock upon the price. The only parts that have not been | mantel piece, and the heated creak of the

glowing cinders. Then at last the an-

'No-no, certainly not. But he was different from the others-quite different. It seems ridiculous, but at the time I thought that it was because he was a

Cambridge man." "Then if you had not met again this

would not have happened?" "No," answered Helen, gravely; "it would not. I wonder why Oswin should have saved him, of all men, in the middle of the Atlantic ocean.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

On this same day Oswin Grace dined with Claud Tyars at his club. It was in this manner that he disposed of his unoccupied evening.

During the actual meal, served in a tall, hushed, and rather lonesome room, by a portentous gentleman in sed plush breeches and pink stockings, there was not much opportunity for private conversation. The elder man was the first to break the silence. He watched the fire burn while he spoke.

"You have not," he said, interrogatively, "got leave from the Admiralty yet?" 'Not yet," was the answer, returned confidently. Grace evidently anticipated no difficulty.

"Then don't do it."

The little square-shouldered man sat up, but Tyars bore with perfect equa-nimity the glance of a remarkably direct pair of eyes.

"Why," he asked, "do you want to get rid of me?"

"I don't want to get rid of you. There is no man affoat whom I would put in your place. But I must be consistent. I have refused many good men for the same reason. You have too many-home ties."

"What do you mean?" It was an awkward question, for Tyars had been assured by this man's sister that there existed a distinct understanding between him and Miss Winter.

"You see," said Tyars, awkwardly. "I am quite alone in the world. I have no one to sit at home and worry over my absence or my silence. I should like all the fellows who go with me to be in the same circumstances

A somewhat prolonged silence followed the stately silence of a club room, with padded doors and double windows. The two men smoked meditatively.

"I suppose," said Grace, at length, "that Helen has been getting at you."

"I merely told her that you were going She did not say in what way it would affect her; only suppose we are away two years suppose we don't come back at Your father is an old man-she will be alone in the world."

Oswin Grace stroked his neatly cropped

beard thoughtfully. "Helen," he said at length, "will mar-

Like most big men, Tyars possessed the faculty of sitting very still. During the silence that followed this remark he might have been hewn of solid stone, so motionless was he as to limbs, features and even nerves. At length he moistened his lips and turned his slow gaze to meet that of his companion, who was sitting forward in his chair awaiting the effect of this argument.

"Yes," he said, "that is probable, and she always has her friend-Miss Winter." Oswin Grace relapsed suddenly into

"Yes," he said, "she will always have Agnes Winter, and if she married, her friendship would be only the more use-

That settled it. Claud Tyars gave a little sigh of relief, and helped himself to coffee.

"Of course," he said, "if you feel quite free from the slightest moral obligation, have nothing more to say "Thank you," said Oswin Grace, with relieved cheerfulness; "that is exactly

how I feel. But, old fellow, I wish you would give me notice when you feel a fit like that coming on. It gave me a beastly fright. Quite a turn, as my washerwoman said, when she saw my shirt-cuff covered with red paint."

(To be continued.)

For Spring.

"Hello, Ed, have you seen Billy?" said friend No. 1 as they met on the avenue. "Yes," answered No. 2, "I just saw

him going into a seed store." "What was he going in there for?" "Don't know, unless it was to buy

another package of wild oats."

Cheap Enough. "Isn't it ridiculous," began Henpeck,

"to say 'talk is cheap' when as a matter of fact---' "Oh! I don't know," interrupted

Newitt. "I can take you to a place where you'd get dead loads of it and a shave thrown in for 10 cents."-Catholic Standard and Times.

The Need.

"Here is another question that ought to be brought before Congress," said the earnest citizen. "My dear sir," answered Senator

Sorghum, "Congress now has all the questions it can take care of. What it needs is some answers."-Washington Star.

Looking After Insects.

Bacon-Why do they put all those dead insects, in the museum, in glass cases?

Egbert-They consider that is the place for them.

"I think it would be better for the public if they put 'em in glass cases before they dled."-Yonkers Statesman.

A Small Beginning. Elsie-Your Uncle Harry seems awful young to be a doctor.

Willie-Yes, but he ain't a real, growed-up doctor yet. I guess he's only 'tendin' to children yet, so's to get some practice.-Philadelphia Ledger.