

Prisoners and Captives

By H. S. MERRIMAN

CHAPTER XX.

One morning, about a fortnight later, Matthew Mark Easton received a letter which caused him to leave his breakfast untasted and drive off in the first hansom cab he could find to Tyars' club.

The waiter whose duty it was to look after the few resident members informed the American, whom he knew well by sight, that Mr. Tyars was not downstairs yet.

"Well," replied Easton, "I guess I'll wait for him; in fact, I am going to have breakfast with him—a boiled egg and two pieces of thin toast."

He was shown into the room occupied by Tyars, and proceeded to make himself exceedingly comfortable in a large armchair, with the morning newspaper.

Tyars was not long in making his appearance—trim, upright, strong as usual, and conveying that unassuming sense of readiness for all emergencies which was at times almost aggressive. He carried his hand in the smallest and most unobtrusive sling allowed by the faculty. At his heels walked Muggins—the grave, the pink-eyed. Muggins was far too gentlemanly a dog to betray by sign or sound that he considered this visitor's behavior a trifle too familiar.

"Good morning, captain," said Easton, cheerily. "Well, Muggins, I trust I see you in the enjoyment of health."

The violent chuck under the chin with which this hope was emphasized received but scant acknowledgment from a very stumpy tail.

"I have news," said Easton, at once, laying aside the newspaper; "news from old Smith—Pavloski Smith."

"Where from?" inquired Tyars, without enthusiasm.

"From Tomsk. It is most extraordinary how these fellows manage to elude the police. Here is old Pavloski—an escaped Siberian exile—a man they would give their boots to lay their hands on—goes back to Russia, smuggles himself across the German frontier, shows that solemn face of his unblushing in Petersburg, and finally posts off to Tomsk with a lot of contraband luggage as a merchant. I thought I had a fair allowance of cheek, but these political fellows are far ahead of me. Their cheek and their calm assurance are simply unbounded."

"The worst of it," said Tyars, turning over his letters with small interest, "is that the end is always the same. They all overdo it sooner or later."

"Yes," admitted the American, whose sensitive face betrayed a passing discomfort, "but it is no good thinking of that now."

"Not a bit," acquiesced Tyars, cheerfully. "Only I shall be rather surprised if I meet those three men up there. It would be better luck than one could reasonably expect."

"If one of them gets through with his party, all concerned should be very well pleased with themselves," said Easton. "Now listen to what Pavloski says."

He unfolded a letter, which was apparently a commercial communication written on the ordinary mail paper of a merchant, and bearing the printed address of an office in Cronstadt.

On the first page was a terse advice, written in a delicate, clerical hand, of the receipt by Hull steamer of a certain number of cases containing American apples.

"This," said Easton, "is from our stout friend. He has received the block soups and the Winchester cartridges."

He then opened the letter further, and on the two inside pages displayed a closely written communication in a peculiar pink-tinted ink, which had evidently been brought to light by some process, for the paper was wrinkled and blistered.

"I have," read the American, slowly, as if deciphering with difficulty, "reached Tomsk without mishap. I have bought a strong sledge, wholly covered in, and instead of sleeping in the stations, usually lie down on the top of my cases under the cover. I give as reason for this the information that I have many valuables—watches, rings, trinkets—and, being a young merchant, cannot run the risk of theft to save my own personal comfort. I have traveled day and night, according to the supply of horses, but have always succeeded hitherto in communicating with those who are to follow me. One man on my list was in the prison indicated; he is probably dead. I find great improvements. Our organization is more mechanical, and not so hysterical—this I attribute to the diminished number of female workers. All the articles with which your foresight provided me have been useful, but the great motor in Siberia is money. With the funds I have at my command I feel as powerful as the Czar. I can buy whom I like and what I like. My only regret is that the name of C. T. has to be suppressed—that the hundreds of individuals who will benefit by his grand generosity will never know the name of the Englishman who has held out his laden hands to those groaning under the yoke of a barbarous oppression. When we are all dead, when Russia is free, his name will be remembered by some one. The watches will be very useful; I have sold two at a high price; but once beyond Irkutsk, and I will send or give one to the master of each important station, or to the starost of each village. By this means those who follow me will know that they are on the right track. I have enough watches to lay a train from Irkutsk to the spot where I assemble my party. I met my two companions by appointment at the base of the Ivan Veliki tower in the Kremlin, and we spent half an hour in the cathedral together within musket shot of the Czar, and under the very nose of the cream of his police. Since then we have not met, but

are each working forward by the prescribed route alone. I see great changes here. Russia is awakening—she is rubbing her eyes. God keep you all three!"

Matthew Mark Easton indicated by a little jerk of the head that the letter was finished. Then, after looking at it curiously for a moment, he folded it and put it away in his pocket.

"Old Smith," he said, "waxes quite poetic at times."

"Yes," answered Tyars, pouring out his coffee, "but there is a keen business man behind the poetry."

"One," observed Easton, in his terse way, "of the sharpest needles in Russia, and quite the sharpest in Siberia at the present moment."

"He will need to be; though I think that the worst of his journey is over. The cream is, as he says, at Moscow. Once beyond Nijni he will find milk, then milk and water, and finally beyond Irkutsk the thinnest water. The official intellect in Siberia is not of a brilliant description. Pavloski can outwit every gendarme or Cossack commandant he meets, and once out of Irkutsk they need not fear the law. They will only have Nature to compete with, and Nature always gives fair play. When they have assembled they will retreat north like an organized army before a rabble, for there are not enough Cossacks and gendarmes in Northern Siberia to form anything like an efficient corps of pursuit. They may follow, but I shall have the fugitives on board and away long before they reach the seaboard."

"How many are there in Yakutsk?"

"Two thousand altogether, soldiers and Cossacks. They have no means of transport and no commissariat corps. By the time that the news travels south to Yakutsk, that there is a body of supposed exiles to the north, our men will have gained such an advantage that pursuit would be absurd."

"It seems," replied Easton, "so very simple that I wonder no one has tried it before."

"Simply because no one has had the money. I know several whaling captains who would be ready enough to try, provided they were paid. The worst danger was the chance of the three men being captured as soon as they entered Russia. They are now at their posts in Siberia. In May they meet surreptitiously on the southern slope of the Verkoioniska, cross the mountains, and they are safe. The three leaders will then be together, and they will retreat north as arranged, scaring the Yamschicks into obedience, and taking all the post deer and dogs with them, so that an immediate pursuit will be impossible. I think," added the organizer of this extraordinary plot, "that we shall succeed."

As the middle of February approached Claud Tyars was tranquilly engaged in his preparations. Several ladies were pleased to express their disapproval of this affectation of hard work and failed to see why his evenings should be devoted to a task for which he had plenty of time during the day.

It would be hard to determine how far Tyars realized his position. He was a disciplinarian of the finest mold, and it is probable that he had never, up to this time, allowed for a moment the fact that he loved Helen Grace. This determination to cultivate the blindness of those who will not see was not dictated by cowardice; because Claud Tyars was, like most physically powerful men, inclined, to exaggerate the practice of facing disagreeable facts with both eyes open. He had refused to realize this most inconvenient truth, because he was oppressed by a vague fear that realization meant betrayal.

He now suspected that Miss Winter had known all along that Helen Grace was not the same to him as other women. Added to this was a suspicion that she calmly and deliberately undertook the task of forcing him to say as much to Helen herself. He could think this now without vanity.

Matthew Mark Easton stood and watched, as you may have watched these slow, strong rivers, and knew that his friend was passing on to some new country with a purpose which he could not stay nor turn aside. Probably he felt a little doubtful of Claud Tyars—felt that he could not rely upon him to act like other men. At any moment the unexpected might supervene.

Deeply, however, as he felt his responsibility, anxious as he was, he never lost spirit. He was one of those men whose courage rises to the occasion, and while he recognized fully that without Claud Tyars failure was inevitable, he would not blind himself into the belief that the leader was absolutely safe.

CHAPTER XXI.

At the risk of being accused of betraying the secrets of the sex, this opportunity is taken of recording an observation made respecting men. It is simply this: That we all turn sooner or later to some woman in our difficulties. And when a man has gone irretrievably to the dogs, his descent is explicable by the simple argument that he happened to turn to the wrong woman. Matthew Mark Easton had hitherto got along fairly well without feminine interference, but this in no manner detracted from his respect for feminine astuteness. This respect now urged him to brush his hat very carefully one afternoon, purchase a new flower for his button hole, and drive to Miss Winter's. He found that lady at home and alone.

"I thought," he said, as he entered the room and placed his hat carefully on the piano, "that I should find you at home this afternoon. It is so English outside."

"The weather does not usually affect my movements," replied Miss Winter. "I am glad you came this afternoon, because I am not often to be found at home at this time. Tell me, how is Mr. Tyars?"

"He is well," was the answer, "thank you. His arm is knitting nicely."

There was a little pause, then he added, with a marked drawl—an Americanism to which he rarely gave way:

"Ho-w is Miss Grace?"

Agnes Winter looked up sharply. Matthew Mark Easton met the gaze of those clever northern eyes with a half smile. She gave a little short laugh, half pleased, half embarrassed, like the laugh of some fair masker when she finds herself forced to lay aside her mask.

"I wonder," she said, "how much you know?"

The strange, wrinkled face fell at once into an expression of gravity which rendered it somewhat wistful and almost ludicrous.

"Nothing—I guess!"

"How much do you surmise?" she amended, unconsciously using a word toward which he had a decided conversational penchant.

"Everything. My mind is in a fevered state of surmise."

"Is there anything to be done?" she asked, after a lengthened pause.

"I counted," he answered, "that I would put that question to you."

"Don't you see that I can do nothing, that I am powerless?"

"And," he continued, imperturbably, "what am I to do?"

"Well, I should go to Mr. Tyars and say, 'Claud Tyars, you cannot go on this expedition—you have no right to sacrifice the happiness of—of another to the gratification of your own personal ambition.'"

"I cannot do that," he said, "because Claud Tyars has bound himself to go, and I will not let him off his contract. It is my expedition."

He hardly expected her to believe it, knowing Tyars and himself as she did. But he was quite aware that he laid himself open to a blow on the sorest spot in his heart.

"Then why do you not go yourself, Mr. Easton?"

He winced under it, all the same, though he made no attempt to justify himself. She had touched his pride, and there is no prouder man on earth than a high-bred North American. He merely sat and endeavored to keep his lips still, as Tyars would have managed to do. In a second Miss Winter saw the result of the taunt, and her generous heart softened.

"I beg your pardon," she said; "I know there must be some good reason."

She waited, in order to give him an opportunity of setting forth his good reason, but he refused to take it, and she never had the satisfaction of hearing it from his own lips.

(To be continued.)

FEAT IN RAILROAD LIGHTING.

English Line Tests New System Which Greatly Reduces Cost.

A new and interesting engineering test and one of considerable value to railway companies and of great commercial possibilities has been made on the Great Eastern Railway of Great Britain, says the New York Tribune.

It was to demonstrate the value of a new system of lighting railway trains, which is known as the Leitner-Lucas system.

The dynamos were entirely sealed up; that is, the oil wells, brush and reversing gear. The automatic cutouts were similarly placed under seal, as well as the storage battery, the sealing being done by the railway company in such a way that no replacement or repairs could be made, no oil added to the well or any part of the machinery and no water or acids added to the batteries. Mr. Leitner's claim was that under these conditions he would light the carriages designated during the time they would cover a distance exceeding the circumference of the earth at the equator and during the most exacting period of the year, from October to the end of December.

On Jan. 1 the distance agreed on had been exceeded, the two coaches used for the test on arriving at Paddington from Cornwall having covered 25,200 miles. The light had not failed on any occasion, the illumination being as bright on the last journey as on the first. The lights were kept supplied with an electric current at a practically constant voltage, running or standing. The seals were taken off, and it was found that though the dynamos had not had a drop of oil, nor the accumulators a drop of water or acid, they were in first rate condition, and could have gone on for another month or more, still under seal, and supplied a good and sufficient light.

The result of this test in a commercial point of view is that during twelve weeks and for a distance of 25,200 miles, coaches were effectually and even luxuriantly lighted, practically without any human attendance at all, and without renewals, replacements or repairs—in other words, without any cost, except for more coal, theoretically consumed on the locomotive, which is such an infinitesimal amount as not to be traceable.

Indebtedness.

"Don't you feel that you owe something to the public?"

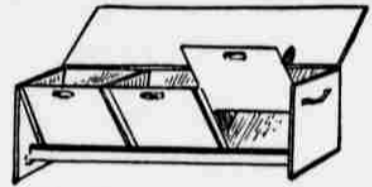
"No," answered Mr. Dustin Stax. "The principal object of my financial career has been to keep the public in debt to me."—Washington Star.

There are four millionaires in Britain to one in France.



Automatic Chicken Feeder.

The feed box or trough at the bottom for the chickens to eat out of is made out of 1x6 inch boards, 3 feet long, with slats on the side 3 inches wide, making the trough 2 inches deep; end pieces of 1-inch lumber, 1 foot wide, 18 inches high. The middle partitions are cut 6 inches wide at the bottom to fit bottom of trough 3 inches high, then tapers out to 10 inches at top, that makes it a V-shape from both sides, so chickens can eat from either side of feeder. One side is fastened to end pieces and middle partitions, the other side has pieces to slide up and down between cleats, so you can shut the feed clear off or raise it up any height according to what you have in the bins. The bottoms of these bins are 1 inch from bottom of feed trough, so as the chickens eat more feed it will come down. You can have corn in one, wheat



THE AUTOMATIC CHICKEN FEEDER.

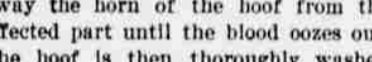
in one and grit or oyster shells in a third. The chickens can help themselves whenever they want to eat, and their feed is always clean and they can't waste their feed by getting it in the mud or snow, and the lid is on hinges, so it can be shut down and fastened, so that feed is perfectly dry. Each bin will hold one peck of feed.—Farm Progress.

Nail Wounds in Hoofs.

It has long been known that nail pricks and other similar injuries in the horse's hoof may lead to an infection followed by formation of pus under the horn of the hoof and a serious general disease of the horse or at least the loss of the hoof. In a bulletin of the South Dakota Station, Moore has recently reported results obtained in a number of cases from applying a strict antiseptic treatment to injuries of this sort. The method consists in paring away the horn of the hoof from the affected part until the blood oozes out. The hoof is then thoroughly washed in a solution of bichlorid of mercury at the rate of one part to 500 of water, after which absorbent cotton saturated in a solution of the same strength is applied to the wound and the whole hoof is packed in cotton surrounded by a bandage and well coated with tar. This prevents any further filth from coming in contact with the wound. The operation must usually be done by a qualified veterinarian. Subsequent treatment, however, can be applied by the average farmer, since all that is necessary is to pour a little of this solution of bichlorid of mercury upon the cotton which projects from the upper part of the bandage. The cotton will absorb enough of the solution to keep the wound moistened and hasten the healing process.

Fine Wool Sheep.

The Wensleydale breed of sheep is far from common even in its home, England. None is in America. It is a fine sheep, superior in some respects to all others. It is said that for cross-



A TYPICAL WENSLEYDALE.

ing on any other breed the Wensleydale has no equal. Since the Royal Agricultural Society of England commenced giving prizes for wool three years ago, the Wensleydale wool has each time secured first prize in the "any other long-wooled class." No long wool produced in the British Isles is equal to the Wensleydale in quality or value.

New Varieties of Potatoes.

Many varieties of potatoes come and go, and, but for the introduction of new varieties, potatoes would soon be scarce. This is due to the careless selection of seed. All the tubers of a crop are sold for seed, when only the best should be selected. If only the largest tubers from the thriftiest and strongest plants were retained for seed, there would be an improvement in the old varieties instead of deterioration in quality. But as long as seed potatoes bring good prices, there will be both good and inferior seed used.

Use the Poultry Yard.

If it is necessary to confine the poultry during the summer and the enclosure cannot be placed near the shade of buildings or trees, try the plan of growing some plants just outside the fence, but far enough from it so that the fowls cannot get at the foliage. One of the best plants for the purpose is the canna, using the cheap, tall-growing sorts, and buying the roots, not the seeds. Another quick growing plant and one which will make an abundance of shade is the castor bean, which may be grown from seeds planted where they are to stay; that is, the young plants cannot well be transferred. Even corn set thickly will furnish some shade quickly, and if a vine is wanted, nothing is better than the common morning-glory, the seeds being sown thick and the vines trained along strings fastened to the poultry yard fence. While the vines or plants are growing erect a rough roof of boards open on all sides to supply temporary shade.

A Pointed Question.

Two cows cost \$40 each per year for keep. One of them yields you 4,000 quarts of milk a year, that bring you \$86. The other yields 120 quarts, that bring you \$26. The latter loses for you about \$14 and reduces the gain on the former from \$46 to \$32. Why do you keep the 1,200-quart cow? You would be better off with the one that clears \$46, for you would have only half the investment, half the work, and half the feeding, and you would gain \$14 each year. There would be no surplus butter on the market for years to come and prices would rule strong if the cows were eliminated which are kept at a loss. Dairy farmers have not yet half waked up to an understanding of the great practical importance of weeding out the unprofitable cows from their herds. Many a man would make a fair profit, that now faces a constant loss, if he would keep only such cows as pay a profit on their keep.—Farm Journal.

Farm Irrigation Plant.

A current wheel to run a chain and bucket gearing is quite feasible for farm irrigation purposes. Herewith is



IRRIGATION BY CURRENT WHEEL.

given an illustration of such a wheel for operating a chain and bucket. The diagram is self-explanatory.

Hauling Hay.

It is a very desirable thing to be able to haul all the hay into the barn the same day it is cut. The worry and anxiety consequent upon the liability of a storm before morning are thus avoided, and experience has taught that hay having no more than three or four hours' sun will come out in the spring perfectly sweet and in fine condition for the cattle. In adopting this plan it is well to keep the hay constantly stirred with a tedder. There has been a fear of putting hay into some barns that contain a noticeable amount of water, but if it is properly packed by being evenly distributed over the mow, each forkful trodden upon, and the barn kept closed as much as possible, the result will probably be gratifying.

Use of Coal Ashes.

While coal ashes contain no fertilizing value they are certainly useful on the farm and should be saved. They are not entirely valueless in the soil, for they will materially assist in making a stiff clay soil more workable if well mixed with it. The best use for coal ashes, however, is in the filling in of wet spots, sifting them and using the fine ashes in the dust boxes in the poultry houses and the coarser portions for the making of walks alone or mixed with gravel. They may be used to advantage as a mulch around trees mainly for the purpose of keeping the soil moist and keeping grass from growing around them.

Apply a Good Fertilizer.

The value of vegetables depends largely upon quick growth, and if crops are not growing well some quick-acting fertilizer like nitrate of soda, guano or poultry droppings, should be worked into the soil close to the roots. Frequent cultivation of the soil with the cultivator, rake or hoe will often be all that is necessary.

Vines in the Barnyard.

The barn should never be built near the house, and wherever it is, it should be kept as sanitary as the house itself. A country barnyard should be as neat and tidy as the dooryard. There is no reason why vines should not grow over the walls and fences, and trees shade the inclosed animals. It is possible to have lilacs and mock oranges growing around the barn, as freely as about the shrubbery. The animals are not any less happy, and one can pick great bunches for oneself and friends.