

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 gale 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 tons 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 bleak 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 jail 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 peeped 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 inconsequent 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 infi-

nately 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 rosebud mouth, round cheeks delicately tinted despite the wild wind, and little wisps of golden hair straggling out beneath the ear-flaps, and gleaming against the dusky face.

"I," 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—too horrid! 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 stepped 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 noiseless sledges. The doctor stayed behind for a moment. When the others were out of earshot he went toward Pavloski and laid his mittened 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.)

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.

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 blusher's bobance 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.

A Strong Line.

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

Micky—Wild 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.



FARMS AND FARMERS

The Disk Cultivator. Disks as farm tools are growing more popular all the time. They are used at all stages of farm work, from plowing to final cultivation. A man of long experience says of them:

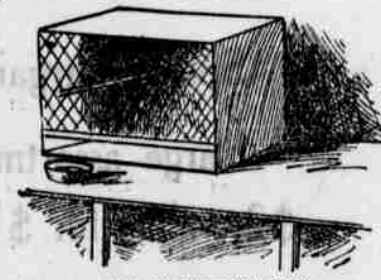
The main points in favor of the disk are that it will work closer to young corn without covering it, will work ground without injury that is too wet to be plowed with a shovel plow, will not throw up clods, but leaves the ground always in a fine tilth, can be set to run varying depths, shallow next to the corn and deeper in the middle of the row, which is the proper way when making the last two cultivations. However, the disk will not plow deep in very hard ground or turn the soil in such a way as to kill large weeds, yet if the weeds are taken in hand before they become too large the disk is satisfactory in this as well.

When corn is checked it is not practicable to plow across the field with the disk. If the disk is run across the rows, it will be very inconvenient, as the gangs are more nearly rigid and cannot be so easily adapted to the inequality of the ground.

For barring away the young corn, cutting the dirt away from it, and for giving the last cultivation, laying by, I consider the disk vastly superior to the shovel, but where land has been severely packed, as by hard rains, nothing, in my opinion, will take the place of a four-shovel cultivator of the twisted pattern, and they should not be less than five inches wide.

Fattening Coop for Poultry.

In the fattening of poultry for market it is always a good plan to confine the birds to quite small quarters in order that the food given them may accomplish the best possible result. The fattening coop should be where it is light and dry and the birds must be kept comfortable at all times. More than all, the coop or coops must be kept clean, else the fowls are likely to become sick and will not in such condition take on flesh. Where there are a number of fowls to fatten coops are arranged on a wide shelf which forms the bottom, then when it is to be cleaned simply lift it up and set in another place, leaving the shelf free to clean thoroughly. Any box of light material will do for the fattening coop with wire netting to within six inches of the bottom. Across this space a bar may be placed with just enough space between it and the wire netting so that the hen can get her head out to feed. A narrow trough should be kept in front of the coop and be filled with a variety of grain in mixture so that the fowl may help itself when it desires. These coops are very inexpensive, easy



THE FATTENING COOP.

to make and will prove very economical. The illustration shows the idea very plainly.—Indianapolis News.

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.

If you want to make the strawstack benefit the cow, put some of it under her for bedding.

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

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.

At a recent public sale of mule teams and other farm stock in Hancock county, Indiana, the mules averaged \$268 a span. This was the average price set by the buyers themselves, the teams being placed in the ring to sell for just what they would bring.

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

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

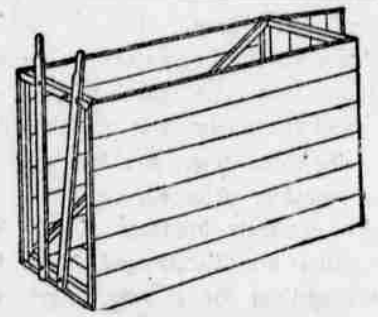
It is claimed that although the conditions of food and climate in Japan offers no serious obstacles to sheep farming, there were in 1901 only 2,545 sheep in that country.

Value of a Butter Cow.

The value of a cow considered as an investment was lately figured out by H. P. Guerier, the Illinois expert. Starting with a poor cow, one that produced 200 pounds of butter a year, he reckons the food cost at \$39 and the labor at \$12.50, while the butter is worth only \$35, or less than the market value of the food consumed. The fancy butter cow produces 400 pounds of butter per year, and on the same basis of reckoning nets her owner interest on \$400, besides paying for the food and labor. The price of butter in both cases is reckoned at 20 cents. The fancy cow consumed somewhat more food than the other, but the difference was more than offset by the increased amount of skim milk. According to Mr. Guerier, the fancy cow is better worth \$400 than the ordinary cow taken as a gift.

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



BOX AND STANCHION FOR RINGING.

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 tongs. Have a narrow shoot at rear end of box so you can drive hogs into it easily.—Farm and Home.

Tomatoes and Nitrate.

One hundred pounds of 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 100 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.

Waste Land in Corn Fields.

Most corn growers plant more acre to corn than they harvest. Investigation has shown that there are twenty-five acres and often a much larger area of idle land in every corn field of 100 acres. This idle land results from the failure of seed here and there throughout the field to grow. It is cultivated just the same as if it were properly engaged. The farmer, therefore, wastes labor and loses the use of the land. Where a large acreage of corn is grown, the aggregate loss is an important item.