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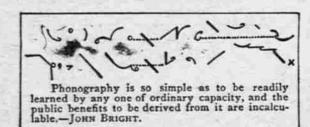
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# The SOWERS

Henry Seton Merriman

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(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK)

The rest we must leave towell, to the course of fortune. I have no doubt that our astute friend Karl taking his eyes from her face. Steinmetz will manage to hold them in check. But, whatever the end of the demonstration, the outcome will be the impossibility of a longer residence in this country for the Prince Pavlo bardly make it possible."

"And what do you wish me to do?" asked Etta, with the same concentrat-

harm will come to you, either directly indifferently. "Your husband-Sydney or indirectly. They would not dare to touch the prince; they will content which need not be gone into here in the themselves with breaking a few win-

"What do you want me to do?" repeated Etta.

De Chauxville paused.

"Merely," he answered lightly, "to leave open a door, a side door. I understand that there is a door in the left Tver to proceed eastward and cross old portion of the castle leading up by a flight of stairs to the smoking room and thence to the new part of the building."

Etta did not answer.

"This door I wish you to unbar yourself before dinner on Thursday evening," he said, turning round and slowly coming toward her.

"And I refuse to do it," said Etta.

Etta sprung to her feet and faced him, a beautiful woman, a very queen of anger. Her blazing eyes were on a level with his. "Yes," she cried, with clinched fists,

standing her full height till she seem-



"I refuse to betray my husband!" ed to look down into his mean, foxlike face-"yes, I refuse to betray my husband"-

"Stop! He is not your husband!" Slowly the anger faded out of her eyes. Her clinched fists relaxed. "What do you mean?" she whispered.

"What do you mean?" "Sydney Bamborough is your hus-

band," said the Frenchman, without "He is dead!" she hissed. "Prove it!"

"He died at Tver," she said, but there was no conviction in her voice. With her title and position to hold to she Alexis. A regiment of soldiers could could face the world. Without these what was she?

"A local newspaper reports that the body of a man was discovered on the plains of Tver and duly buried in the "In the first place, to believe that no pauper cemetery," said De Chauxville Bamborough, I mean-was for reasons neighborhood of Tver at the time. A police officer, who has since been transferred to Odessa, was of the opinion that the dead man was a foreigner. There are about 12,000 foreigners in Tver, operatives in the manufactories. Your husband, Sydney Bamborough, Siberia to China in order to avoid the emissaries of the Charity league, who were looking out for him at the western frontier. He will be due at one of the treaty ports in China in about a month. Upon the supposition that the body discovered on the plains of Tver was that of your husband you took the opportunity of becoming a princess. It was enterprising. I admire your spirit, But it was dangerous. I, madame, can suppress Sydney Bamborough when he turns up. I have two arrows in my quiver for him. One is the Charity league, the other the Russian government, who want him. Your husband-I beg your pardon, the prince-would perhaps take a different view of the case. It is a pretty story. I will tell it to him unless I have your implicit

> Etta stood dry lipped before him. She tried to speak, but no words came from her lips.

obedience."

reformetz.

"Thursday evening before dinner," said De Chauxville.

And he left her standing on the hearth rug, her lips moving and framing no words.

CHAPTER XXX.

AVE you spoken to the princess?" asked Steinmetz, without taking the cigar from his

They were driving home through the formst that surrounded Osterno as the sea surrounds an island. They were akose in the sleigh. That which they had been doing had required no serv-

"Yes," answered Paul. His face was set and hard, his eyes stern. This trouthe with the peasants was affecting him more keenly than he suspected. "And what did she say?" asked

That she would not leave unless we e went with her."-

elnmetz drew the furs closer up

"Yes," he said, glancing at his com-

poster's face and seeing little but the

eres by reason of the sable collar of his coat, which met the fur of his cap-'yes, and why not?"

twist his neck!"

Steinmetz smiled grimly.

"Yes," he answered; "you are capaof the moujik. He is an inveterate, in- me all you know!" curable fool. If he is going to be a dangerous fool as well, I should almost ing!" be inclined to let him go to the devil in his own way."

position."

"No, that is true, Pavlo. They were not my father's serfs. Generations of my ancestors have not saved genera- her shoulder. tions of their ancestors from starvathat I might doctor them."

"If I agree to make a bolt for Petersburg tomorrow, will you come?" re-

"No," answered the stout man.

"I thought not. Your cynicism is only a matter of words, Steinmetz, and not of deeds. There is no question of either of us leaving Osterno. We must stay and fight it right out here."

"That is so," answered Steinmetz, with the Teutonic stolidity of manner which sometimes came over him. "But the ladies-what of them?"

Paul did not answer. They were passing over the rise of a heavy drift. "This is no place for Miss Delafield," added Steinmetz, looking straight in front of him.

"I know that!" answered Paul sharp ly. "I wish to God she was not here!" he added in a lower tone, and the words were lost beneath the frozen mustache.

Steinmetz made no answer. They drove on through the gathering gloom. The sky was of a yellow gray, and the earth reflected the dismal hue of it. Presently it began to snow, driving in a fine haze from the north. The two

men lapsed into silence. "Stop!" cried Steinmetz suddenly, and Paul pulled the horses on to their haunches.

"I thought you were asleep," he said. There was no one in sight. They were driving along the new road now, the highway Paul had constructed from Osterno to Tver. The road itself was, of course, indistinguishable, but the telegraph posts marked its course.

Steinmetz tumbled heavily out of his furs and went toward the nearest telegraph post.

"Where is the wire?" he shouted. Paul followed him in the sleigh. Together they peered up into the darkness and the falling snow. The posts were there, but the wire was gone. A

whole length of it had been removed. They were cut off from civilization by 140 miles of untrodden snow. Steinmetz clambered back into the sleigh and drew up the fur apron. He gave a strange little laugh that had a

placid. "That settles one question," he said.

"Which question?" asked Paul. He was driving as hard as the horses could lay hoof to ground, taken with a sudden misgiving and a great desire to

reach Osterno before dark. go now."

der. The groom in his great sheepskin wielded best-the lightest, the quickcoat was waiting in the doorway. The servants threw open the vast doors and stood respectfully in the warm, brilliantly lighted hall while their master passed in.

"Where is the princess?" Steinmetz asked his valet while he was removing the evidences of a long day in the open

"In her drawing room, excellency." "Then go and ask her if she will give me a cup of tea in a few minutes." A few minutes later Steinmetz, pre-

senting himself at the door of the little drawing room attached to Etta's suit of rooms, found the princess in a matchless tea gown waiting beside a table laden with silver tea appliances.

"You see," she said, with a smile, for she always smiled on men, "I have obeyed your orders."

"I begin to think," said Steinmetz, coming to the point in his bluff way, "that you are a sort of beautiful Jonah, a graceful stormy petrel, a fair Wandering Jewess. There is always trouble where you go."

She glanced at his broad face and read nothing there. "Go on," she said. "What have I

been doing now? How you do hate me, Herr Steinmetz!" "Perhaps it is safer than loving you,"

he answered, with his grim humor. "You are horribly grave," she said. "The situation," he replied, "is horribly grave."

Etta looked up at him as he stood before her, and the lamplight, falling ligence. There was not much underon the perfect oval of her face, showed standing there. it to be white and drawn.

She sat looking up into his strong, making himself felt-force. We have grave face, and during all that followed worked for generations, we have tolled she never moved.

"I know you," he said, "to be courageous, and must ask you to believe us to put forth our strength; the time that I exaggerate nothing in what I has gone by for merely asking for am about to tell you. I tell it to you instead of leaving Paul to do so because I know his complete fearlessness | take!" and his blind faith in a people who are A few who had heard this speech or that his own ship is unseaworthy."

"Go on," said Etta, for he had paused. "This country," he continued, "is unsettled. The people of the estate are "I cannot leave them," answered on the brink of a revolt. You know Paul. "I cannot go away now that what the Russian peasant is. It will be there is trouble among them. What no Parisian uprising-half noise, half it is goodness only knows! They would laughter. We cannot hope to hold this never have got like this by them- old place against them; we cannot get selves. Somebody has been at them, away from it; we cannot send for help, and I don't think it is the nihilists. It because we have no one to send. Prinis worse than that. Some devil has cess, this is no time for half confibeen stirring them up, and they know dences. I know-for I know these peono better. He is still at it. They are ple better even than Paul knows them getting worse day by day, and I cannot | -I am convinced, that this is not the catch him. If I do, Steinmetz, I'll outcome of their own brains. They are being urged on by some one. There is some one at their backs. This is no revolt of the peasants, organized by ble of it. For me, I am getting tired the peasants. Princess, you must tell

"I-I," she stammered-"I know noth-

And then suddenly she burst into tears and buried her face in a tiny, "I dare say, but you are not in my useless handkerchief. It was so unlike her and so sudden that Steinmetz was

He laid his great hand soothingly on

"I know," he said quietly-"I know tion. My fathers before me have not more than you think. I am no saint, toiled and slaved and legislated for princess, myself. I, too, have had my them. I have not learned medicine difficulties. I have had my temptations, and I have not always resisted. God knows it is difficult for men to do always the right thing. It is a thousand times more difficult for women. When we spoke together in Petersburg and I offered you my poor friendship I was not acting in the dark. I knew as much then as I do now. Princess, I knew about the Charity league papers; I knew more than any except Stepan

> Lanovitch, and it was he who told me." He was stroking her shoulder with the soothing movements that one uses toward a child in distress. His great hand, broad and thick, had a certain sense of quiet comfort and strength in

> it. Etta ceased sobbing and sat with bowed head, looking through her tears into the gay wood fire. It is probable that she failed to realize the great charity of the man who was speaking to

"Is that all he knows?" she was wondering.

The suggestion that Sydney Bamborough was not dead had risen up to eclipse all other fear in her mind. In some part her thought reached him.

"I know so much," he said, "that it is safest to tell me more. I offered you my friendship because I think that no woman could carry through your difficulties unaided. Princess, the admiration of Claude de Chauxville may be pleasant, but I venture to think that my friendship is essential."

Etta raised her head a little. She was within an ace of handing over to Karl Steinmetz the rod of power held over her by the Frenchman.

ty-five years," he went on, and Etta deferred her confession. "We have never been good friends, I admit. I am no saint, princess, but De Chauxville is a villain. Some day you may discover when it is too late that it would have been for Paul's happiness, for your happiness, for every one's good, to have nothing more to do with Claude de Chauxville. I want to save you that discovery. Will you act upon my advice? Will you make a stand now? Will you come to me and tell me all ring of boyish excitement in it. This that De Chauxville knows about you man had not always been stout and that he could ever use against you? Will you give yourself into my handsgive me your battle to fight? You cannot do it alone. Only believe in my friendship, princess. That is all I ask." Etta shook her head.

"I think not," she answered in a voice too light, too superficial, too hope-"The question of the ladies," replied lessly shallow, for the depth of the mo-Steinmetz. "It is too late for them to ment. She was thinking only of Sydney Bamborough and of that dread se-At the castle all seemed to be in or- cret. She fought with what arms she est, the most baffling.

"As you will," said Steinmetz.

CHAPTER XXXI.

RUSSIAN village inn, with a smoking lamp, of which the chimney is broken. The greasy curtains drawn across the small windows exclude the faintest possibility of a draft. There is also the smell of vodka,

which bottled curse is standing in tumblers all down the long table. The news has spread in Osterno that vodka is to be had for the asking at the inn. where there is a meeting. Needless to say, the meeting is a large one.

"I tell you, little fathers," an orator was shouting, "that the day of the capitalist has gone. The rich men-the princes, the nobles, the great merchants, the monopolists, the spies tremble. They know that the poor man is awakening at last from his long lethargy. What have we done in Germany? What have we done in America? What have we done in England and France?"

The speaker, a neckless, broad shouldered ruffian, looked round, with triumphant head well thrown back.

"And now," continued he, "let us get to business. I think we understand each other."

He looked round with an engaging smile upon faces brutal enough to suit his purpose, but quite devoid of intel-

"The poor man has only one way of in silence, and we have gathered strength. The time has now come for what we want. We asked, and they heard us not. We will now go and

unworthy of it. He does not realize something like it before shouted their the gravity of the situation. They are applause at this moment. Before the his own people. A sailor never believes noise had subsided the door opened, and two or three men pushed their

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