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# Edged Tools.

By Henry Seton Merriman.

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"Yes," answered Jocelyn, "I under-

At this moment a servant came in with lamps and proceeded to close the windows. She was quite an old woman—an Englishwoman—and as she placed the lamps upon the table she scrutinized the guest after the man-ner of a privileged servitor. When she had departed Jack Meredith continued his narrative with a sort of deliberation which was explained later on. "And." he said, "that is why I came

to Africa—that is why I want to make meney. I do not mind confessing to a low greed of gain, because I think I have the best metive that a man can have for wanting to make money.' He said this meaningly and watched

her face all the while.

"A motive which any lady ought to approve of."

She smiled sympathetically.

"I approve and I admire your spirit." She rose as she spoke and moved toward a side table, where two lighted candles had been placed.

"My motive for talking so bare-facedly about myself," he said as they moved toward the door together, "was to let you know exactly who I am and why I am here. It was only due to you on accepting your hospitality. I might have been a criminal or an es-caped embezsier. There were two on board the steamer coming out and several other shady characters."

"Yes," said the girl; "I saw your motive."

motive."

They were now in the hall, and the aged servant was waiting to show him

"No one knows," Victor Durnovo was in the habit of saying, "what is going on in the middle of Africa."

And on this principle he acted.
"Ten miles above the camping

ground where we first met," he had told Meredith, "you will find a village where I have my headquarters. There is quite a respectable house there, with—a—a—weman to look after your wants. When you have fixed things up at Loango and have arranged for the your men to this village-Msala is the and send the boats back. Wait there till we come."

In due time the telegram came, via St. Paul de Loand, announcing the fact that Oscard had agreed to join the expedition and that Durnovo and he might be expected at Msala in one month from that time. It was not ut a vague feeling of regret that Jack Meredith read this telegram. To be at Msala in a month with forty men and a vast load of provisions meant leaving Loango almost at once. And, strange though it may seem, he had become somewhat attached to the dreary west African town. The singular cosmopolitan society was entirely new to him; the life, taken as a life, almost unique. He knew that he had not outstayed his welcome. Maurice taken care to assure him of that is his boisterous, hearty man-ner, savoring more of Harrow than of

Eton, every morning at breakfast. Jack took a seat on the porch and began to search for his cigar in the pocket of his jacket. Jocelyn went to the front of the veranda and watched her brother mount his horse. When she came to the back of the veranda a little later she was thinking about her brother Maurice, and it never suggested itself to her that she should not speak her thoughts to Meredith, whom she had not seen until three weeks ago. She had never spoken of Maurice behind his back to any man before.

"Does it ever strike you," she said to Jack, "that Maurice is the sort of man to be led astray by evil influence?" "Yes, or be led straight by a good in-

fuence, such as yours." He did not meet her thoughtful gaze. He did not meet her thought in gaze. He was apparently watching the retreating form of the horse through the tangle of flower and leaf and tendril.

"I am afraid," said the girl, "that my influence is not of much account."

"Do you really believe that?" asked Meredith, turning upon her with a half cynical smile.

'Yes." she answered simply, Before speaking again he took a pull

at his cigar. "Your influence," he said, "appears to me to be the making of Maurice Gordon. I frequently see serious flaws in the policy of Previdence, but I suppose there is wisdom in making the strongest influence that which is un-

conscious of its power." "I am glad you think I have some power over him," said Jocelyn, "but at the same time it makes me uneasy. because it only confirms my conviction that he is very easily led. And sup-pose my influence, such as it is, was withdrawn; suppose that I were to die, or, what appears to be more likely,

suppose that he should marry." "Then let us hope that he will marry the right person. People sometimes

do, you know." She smiled with a strange little flicker of the eyelids. They had grown wonderfully accustomed to each other during the last three weeks. Here, it would appear, was one of thos

ships between man and woman that occasionally set the world agog with curiosity and skepticism. But there seemed to be no doubt about it. He was over thirty, she verging on that prosaic age. Both had lived and moved in the world. To both life was an open book, and they had probably



"I might have been a criminal or an discovered, as most of us do, that the larger number of the leaves are blank He had almost told her that he was engaged to be married, and she had quite understood. There could not pos sibly be any misappr was no room for one of those little mistakes about which people write novels and fondly hope that some youthful reader may be carried away by a very faint resemblance to that which they hold to be life. Moreover, at thirty one leaves the first romance of youth be-

There was something in her smile that suggested that she did not quite believe in his cynicism.

"Also," she said gravely, "some stronger influence might appear—an influence which I could not counteract." chair and looked at her searchingly.
"I have a vague idea," he said, "that
you are thinking of Durnovo."

"I am," she admitted, with some surprise. "I wonder how you knew? I am afraid of him." "I can reassure you on that score,"

said Meredith. "For the next two years or so Durnovo will be in daily intercourse with me. He will be under my immediate eye. I did not anticipate much pleasure from his society, but now I do." "Why?" she asked, rather mystified.

"Because I shall have the daily satisfaction of knowing that I am relieving you of an anxiety."
"It is very kind of you to put it in

that way," said Jocelyn. "But I should not like you to sacrifice yourself to what may be a foolish prejudice on my part." "It is not a foolish prejudice.

Durnovo is not a gentleman, either by birth or inclination. He is not fit to associate with you." To this Jocelyn answered nothing.

Victor Durnovo was one of her brother's closest friends; a friend of his own choosing. "Miss Gordon," said Meredith sud-

denly, with a gravity that was rare, "will you do me a favor?"
"I think I should like to."

"You admit that you are afraid of Durnovo now; if at any time you have reason to be more afraid, will you make use of me? Will you write or come to me and ask my help?" "Thank you," she said hesitatingly.

"You see." he went on in a lighter tone," I am not afraid of Durnovo. have met Durnovo before. You may have observed that my locks no longer resemble the raven's wing. There is a little gray, just here, above the temple I am getting on in life, and I know how to deal with Durnovos."

"Do you know," she said, after a little silence, "that I was actually thinking of warning you against Mr. Durnovo? Now I stand aghast at my own presumption.

"It was kind of you to give the matter any thought whatever." He rose and threw away the end of his cigar. Joseph was already before the door, leading the horse which Maurice Gordon had placed at his visitor's disposal.

CHAPTER X. THE short equatorial twilight was drawing to an end, and all nanight crept up to claim the land where her reign is more autocratic than elsewhere on earth. There was a black night above the trees, and a blacker



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