

The Spoilers.

By REX E. BEACH.

Copyright, 1906, by Rex E. Beach.

(Continued from Page Three.)

Again came the warning blast from the steamer and the voice of an officer:

"Clear away that stern line!" "Oh, we'll be left!" she breathed, and somehow it struck Glenister that she feared this more than the men whose approaching feet he heard.

"You can make it all right," he urged her roughly. "You'll get hurt if you stay here. Run along and don't mind us. We've been thirty days on ship-board and were praying for something to happen." His voice was boyishly glad, as if he exulted in the fray that was to come, and no sooner had he spoken than the sailors came out of the darkness upon them.

During the space of a few heartbeats there was only a tangle of whirling forms with the sound of fist on flesh, then the blot split up, and forms plunged outward, falling heavily. Again the sailors rushed, attempting to clinch. They massed upon Dexty, only to grasp empty air, for he shifted with re-



The old miner stamped on his fingers.

markable agility, striking bitterly, as an old wolf snaps. It was baffling work, however, for in the darkness his blows fell short or overreached.

Glenister, on the other hand, stood carelessly, beating the men off as they came to him. He laughed gloatingly, deep in his throat, as though the encounter were merely some rough sport. The girl shuddered, for the desperate silence of the attacking men terrified her more than a din, and yet she stayed, crouched against the wall.

Dexty swung at a dim target and, missing it, was whirled off his balance. Instantly his antagonist grappled with him, and they fell to the floor, while a third man shuffled about them. The girl throttled a scream.

"I'm goin' to kick 'im, Bill," the man ganted hoarsely. "Le' me fix 'im." He swung his heavy shoe, and Bill cursed with stirring eloquence.

"Ow! You're kickin' me! I've got 'im safe enough. Tackle the big un."

Bill's ally then started toward the others, his body bent, his arms flexed, yet hanging loosely. He crouched beside the girl, ignoring her, while she heard the breath wheezing from his lungs; then silently he leaped. Glenister had hurled a man from him, then stepped back to avoid the others, when he was seized from behind and felt the man's arms wrapped about his neck, the sailor's legs locked about his thighs. Now came the girl's first knowledge of real fighting. The two spun back and forth so closely intertwined as to be indistinguishable, the others holding off. For what seemed many minutes they struggled, the young man striving to reach his adversary, till they crashed against the wall near her and she heard her champion's breath coughing in his throat at the tightening grip of the sailor. Fright held her paralyzed, for she had never seen men thus. A moment and Glenister would be down beneath their stamping feet—they would kick his life out with their heavy shoes. At thought of it the necessity of action smote her like a blow in the face. Her terror fell away, her shaking muscles stiffened, and before realizing what she did she had acted.

The seaman's back was to her. She reached out and gripped him by the hair, while her fingers, tense as talons, sought his eyes. Then the first loud sound of the battle arose. The man yelled in sudden terror, and the others as suddenly fell back. The next in-

stant she felt a hand upon her shoulder and heard Dexty's voice.

"Are ye hurt? No? Come on, then, or we'll get left." He spoke quietly, though his breath was loud, and, glancing down, she saw the huddled form of the sailor whom he had fought.

"That's all right. He ain't hurt. It's a Jap trick I learned. Hurry up!"

They ran swiftly down the wharf, followed by Glenister and by the groans of the sailors in whom the lust for combat had been quenched. As they scrambled up the Santa Maria's gangplank a strip of water widened between the boat and the pier.

"Close shave, that," panted Glenister, feeling his throat gingerly. "but I wouldn't have missed it for a spotted pup."

"I've been through boiler explosions and snowslides, not to mention a triffin' jail delivery, but for real sprightly diversions I don't recall nothin' more pleasin' than this." Dexty's enthusiasm was boylike.

"What kind of men are you?" the girl laughed nervously, but got no answer.

They led her to their deck cabin, where they switched on the electric light, blinking at each other and at their unknown guest.

They saw a graceful and altogether attractive figure in a trim short skirt and long tan boots. But what Glenister first saw was her eyes, large and gray, almost brown under the electric light. They were active eyes, he thought, and they flashed swift, comprehensive glances at the two men. Her hair had fallen loose and crinkled to her waist, all agleam. Otherwise she showed no sign of her recent ordeal.

Glenister had been prepared for the type of beauty that follows the frontier—beauty that may stun, but that has the polish and chill of a new ground bowie. Instead this girl with the calm, reposeful face struck a note almost painfully different from her surroundings, suggesting countless pleasant things that had been strange to him for the past few years.

Pure admiration alone was patent in the older man's gaze.

"I make oration," said he, "that you're the gamest little chap I ever fought over, Mexikin, Injun or white. What's the trouble?"

"I suppose you think I've done something dreadful, don't you?" she said. "But I haven't. I had to get away from the Ohio tonight for—certain reasons. I'll tell you all about it tomorrow. I haven't stolen anything, nor poisoned the crew—really I haven't." She smiled at them, and Glenister found it impossible not to smile with her, though dismayed by her feeble explanation.

"Well, I'll wake up the steward and find a place for you to go," he said at length. "You'll have to double up with some of the women, though. It's awfully crowded aboard."

She laid a detaining hand on his arm. He thought he felt her tremble.

"No, no! I don't want you to do that. They mustn't see me tonight. I know I'm acting strangely and all that, but it's happened so quickly I haven't found myself yet. I'll tell you tomorrow, though, really. Don't let any one see me or it will spoil everything. Wait till tomorrow, please."

She was very white and spoke with eager intensity.

"Help you? Why, sure Mike!" assured the impulsive Dexty. "An', see here, miss—you take your time on explanations. We don't care a cuss what you done. Morals ain't our long suit, 'cause there's never a law of God or man runs north of fifty-three," as the poetry man remarked, and he couldn't have spoke truer if he'd known what he was sayin'. Everybody is privileged to 'look out' his own game up here. A square deal an' no questions asked."

She looked somewhat doubtful at this till she caught the heat of Glenister's gaze. Some boldness of his look brought home to her the actual situation, and a stain rose in her cheek. She noted him more carefully—noted his heavy shoulders and ease of bearing, an ease and looseness begotten of perfect muscular control. Strength was equally suggested in his face, she thought, for he carried a marked young countenance, with thrusting chin, aggressive thatching brows and mobile mouth that whispered all the changes from strength to abandon. Prominent was a look of reckless energy. She considered him handsome in a heavy, virile, perhaps too purely physical fashion.

"You want to stowaway?" he asked. "I've had a right smart experience in that line," said Dexty, "but I never done it by proxy. What's your plan?"

"She will stay here tonight," said Glenister quickly. "You and I will go below. Nobody will see her."

"I can't let you do that," she objected. "Isn't there some place where I can hide?" But they reassured her and left.

When they had gone, she crouched trembling upon her seat for a long time, gazing fixedly before her. "I'm afraid," she whispered. "I'm afraid. What am I getting into? Why do men look so at me? I'm frightened. Oh, I'm sorry I undertook it." At last she rose wearily. The close cabin oppressed her. She felt the need of fresh air. So, turning out the lights, she stepped forth into the night. Figures loomed near the rail, and she slipped

astern, screening herself behind a life-boat, where the cool breeze fanned her face.

The forms she had seen approached, speaking earnestly. Instead of passing, they stopped abreast of her hiding place. Then as they began to talk she saw that her retreat was cut off and that she must not stir.

"What brings her here?" Glenister was echoing a question of Dexty's. "Bah! What brings them all? What brought the duchess and Cherry Malotte and all the rest?"

"No, no," said the old man. "She ain't that kind—she's too fine, too delicate—too pretty."

"That's just it—too pretty! Too pretty to be alone—or anything except what she is."

Dexty growled sourly. "This country has plumb ruined you, boy. You think they're all alike—an' I don't know but they are—all but this gal. Seems like she's different, somehow, but I can't tell."

Glenister spoke musingly:

"I had an ancestor who buccaneered among the Indies a long time ago, so I'm told. Sometimes I think I have his disposition. He comes and whispers things to me in the night. Oh, he was a devil, and I've got his blood in me—untamed and hot—I can hear him saying something now—something about the spoils of war. Ha, ha! Maybe he's right. I fought for her tonight, Dex—the way he used to fight for his sweethearts along the Mexico. She's too beautiful to be good, and there's never a law of God or man runs north of fifty-three."

They moved on, his vibrant, cynical laughter stabbing the girl till she leaned against the yawl for support.

She held herself together while the blood beat thickly in her ears, then fled to the cabin, hurling herself into her berth, where she writhed silently, beating the pillow with hands into which her nails had bitten, staring the while into the darkness with dry and aching eyes.

CHAPTER II.

SHE awoke to the throb of the engines and, gazing cautiously through her stateroom window, saw a glassy, level sea, with the sun brightly agleam on it.

So this was Bering? She had clothed it always with the mystery of her school days, thinking of it as a weeping, fog bound stretch of gray waters. Instead she saw a flat, sunlit main, with occasional sea parrots flapping their fat bodies out of the ship's course. A glistening head popped up from the waters abreast, and she heard the cry of "Seal!"

Dressing, the girl noted minutely the personal articles scattered about the cabin, striving to derive therefrom some fresh hint of the characteristics of the owners. First, there was an elaborate copper backed toilet set, all richly ornamented and leather bound. The metal was magnificently hand marked and bore Glenister's initial. It spoke of elegant extravagance and seemed oddly out of place in an arctic miner's equipment, as did also a small set of De Maupassant.

Next she picked up Kipling's "Seven Seas," marked liberally, and felt that she had struck a scent. The roughness and brutality of the poems had always chilled her, though she had felt vaguely their splendid pulse and swing. This was the girl's first venture from a sheltered life. She had not rubbed elbows with the world enough to find that truth may be rough, unshaven and garbed in homespun. The book confirmed her analysis of the junior partner.

Pendent from a hook was a worn and blackened holster from which peeped the butt of a large Colt's revolver, showing evidence of many years' service. It spoke mutely of the white haired Dexty, who, before her inspection was over, knocked at the door, and, when she admitted him, addressed her cautiously:

"The boy's down forrad, teasin' grub out of a stunk. He'll be up in a minute. How'd ye sleep?"

"Very well, thank you," she lied, "but I've been thinking that I ought to explain myself to you."

"Now, see here," the old man interjected, "there ain't no explanations needed till you feel like givin' them up. You was in trouble—that's unfortunate. We help you—that's natural. No questions asked—that's Alaska."

"Yes, but I know you must think"—"What bothers me," the other continued irrelevantly, "is how in blazes we're goin' to keep you hid. The steward's got to make up this room, and somebody's bound to see us packin' grub in."

"I don't care who knows if they won't send me back. They wouldn't do that, would they?" She hung anxiously on his words.

"Send you back? Why, don't you savvy that this boat is bound for Nome? There ain't no turnin' back on gold stampedes, and this is the wildest rush the world ever saw. The captain wouldn't turn back. He couldn't. His cargo's too precious, and the company pays \$5,000 a day for this ship. No, we ain't puttin' back to unload no stowaways at five thousand per. Besides, we passengers wouldn't let him—time's too precious." They were interrupted by the rattle of dishes outside, and Dexty was about to open the door when his hand waver-

CASTORIA

The Kind You Have Always Bought, and which has been in use for over 30 years, has borne the signature of *Charles H. Fletcher* and has been made under his personal supervision since its infancy. Allow no one to deceive you in this. All Counterfeits, Imitations and "Just-as-good" are but Experiments that trifle with and endanger the health of Infants and Children—Experience against Experiment.

What is CASTORIA

Castoria is a harmless substitute for Castor Oil, Paregoric, Drops and Soothing Syrups. It is Pleasant. It contains neither Opium, Morphine nor other Narcotic substance. Its age is its guarantee. It destroys Worms and allays Feverishness. It cures Diarrhoea and Wind Colic. It relieves Teething Troubles, cures Constipation and Flatulency. It assimilates the Food, regulates the Stomach and Bowels, giving healthy and natural sleep. The Children's Panacea—The Mother's Friend.

GENUINE CASTORIA ALWAYS

Bears the Signature of

Charles H. Fletcher

The Kind You Have Always Bought

in Use For Over 30 Years.

THE CENTAUR COMPANY, 77 MURRAY STREET, NEW YORK CITY.

THE ORIGINAL BEE'S LAXATIVE COUGH SYRUP

Best for Coughs, Colds, Croup, Whooping Cough, Etc.

No Opium, Conforms to National Pure Food and Drug Law.

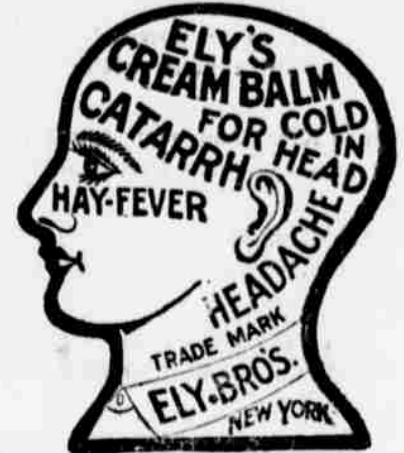
CONTAINS HONEY AND TAR

All cough syrups containing opiates constipate the bowels. Bee's Laxative Cough Syrup moves the bowels and contains no opiates.

PARKER'S HAIR BALSAM

Cleanses and beautifies the hair. Promotes a luxuriant growth. Never Fails to Restore Gray Hair to its Youthful Color. Cures scalp diseases & hair falling. 50c. and \$1.00 at Druggists.

CATARRH



ELY'S CREAM BALM

Sure to Give Satisfaction. GIVES RELIEF AT ONCE.

It cleanses, soothes, heals and protects the diseased membrane resulting from Catarrh and drives away a Cold in the Head quickly. Restores the Senses of Taste and Smell. Easy to use. Contains no injurious drugs. Applied into the nostrils and absorbed. Large Size, 50 cents at Druggists or by mail. Liquid Cream Balm for use in atomizers, 75 cents.

ELY BROTHERS, 56 Warren St., New York.

The Blues

Do you have a fit of "the blues" every month? Suffer from headache, backache, low waist-pains, creeping sensations, nervousness, irritability, irregularity, or any disorder of your natural functions? Such symptoms show that you suffer from one of the diseases peculiar to women. Don't procrastinate. Take

WINE OF CARDUI

WOMAN'S RELIEF

Mrs. Sarah G. Butts, of White Plains, Va., writes: "Cardui is certainly a panacea for suffering women. I was sunk in despair. Death is no worse than the pains I suffered periodically. Nothing relieved me, until I took Cardui. Now the pains have gone, and I am stronger than in 15 years." Try it for your troubles.

At all Drug Stores

E39

RHEUMATISM CURED IN A DAY. Dr. DeChon's Relief for Rheumatism and Neuralgia radically cures in 1 to 3 days. Its action upon the system is remarkable and mysterious. It removes at once the cause and the disease. Immediately disappears. The first dose greatly benefits, 75 cents and \$1. Sold by H. E. Garco, druggist, Red Cloud.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]