

# The Silver Horde

By REX BEACH

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HARPER & BROTHERS

## CHAPTER XI.

CLYDE: You mean Fraser-Frobisher. I should say," gasped Boyd to the reporter.

"No, sir. Alton Clyde! He was pretty talkative the night I saw him." The reporter laughed meaningly.

"Drunk, do you mean?"

"Oh, not exactly drunk, but pretty wet. He knew what he was saying, however. Can't you give me something more?"

"Nothing." Boyd hurried to his hotel, a prey to mingled anger and contrition. So Fraser had told the truth, after all, and with a kind of sullen loyalty had chosen to remain under a cloud himself rather than inform on a friend. It was quite in keeping with the fellow's peculiar temperament. As it happened, Boyd found the two men together and lost no time in acquainting them with his discovery.

"I've come to apologize to you," he said to Fraser, who grinned broadly and was seized with a sudden abashment which stilled his tongue. Emerson turned to Clyde. "Why did you permit me to do this injustice?"

"I—I didn't mean to give out any secrets—I don't remember doing it," Alton apologized lamely. "You know I can't drink much. I don't remember a thing about it, honestly." Boyd regarded him coldly, but the young man's penitence seemed so genuine, he looked so weak, so pitifully incompetent, that the other lacked heart to chastise him. It requires resistance to develop heat, and against the absence of character it is impossible to create any sort of emotion.

"When you got drunk that night you not only worked a great hardship on all of us, but afterward you allowed me to misjudge a very faithful man," declared Boyd. "If you can't keep a close mouth and do as you are told you'd better go back to Chicago."

"Don't climb any higher," admonished "Fingerless" Fraser. "He's all stuffed up now. I'll lay you 8 to 1 he won't make another break of the kind."

"No; I was so com-cussed-pletely pickled that I forgot I even spoke about the salmon canning business. I'll break my corkscrew and seal my flask, and from this moment until we come out next fall the demon rum and I are divorced. Is that good news?"

"Everything is a joke to you, isn't it?" said Boyd. "If this trip doesn't make a man of you, you'll never grow up."

As if Hilliard's conversion had marked the turning point of their luck, the partners now entered upon a period of almost uninterrupted success. Boyd signed his charter, securing a tramp steamer then discharging at Tacoma; Balt closed his contracts for Chinese labor, and the scattered carloads of material which had been lost en route or mysteriously laid out on sidings began to come in as if of their own accord.

A brigade of orientals and a miniature army of fishermen had appeared as if by magic and were quartered in the lower part of the city awaiting shipment. At the dock one throbbing April evening the Bedford Castle berthed, ready to receive her cargo, and the two men made their way toward their hotel, weary, but glowing with the grateful sense of an arduous duty well performed. The following morning would find the wharf swarming with stvedores and echoing to the rattle of trucks, the clank of hoists and the shrill whistles of the signal men.

"Looks like they couldn't stop us now," said Balt.

"It does," agreed Emerson. "We ought to clear in four days—that'll be the 15th."

"It smells like an early spring, too," the fisherman observed, sniffing the air. "If it is well in Kalvik the first week in May."

"I'm off to tell Cherry," said Boyd.

His course took him past Hilliard's bank, and when abreast of it he nearly collided with a man who came hurrying forth. In the well-groomed, gray-haired, plump figure man Emerson recognized the manager of the North American Packers' association.

"Good evening, Mr. Marsh."

Marsh whirled about. "Eh? Ah! Why, yes, it's Emerson."

Marsh informed Boyd of the anger of Mildred's father at his canning enterprise and also that Mildred and Mr. Wayland were to visit Kalvik on a yachting tour. Emerson was greatly amazed at this information; also he realized that Marsh had arrived on the spot because Hilliard had granted his opponents their needed loan. The men separated.

The next morning Balt rushed in on Emerson with news that the laborers loading the Bedford Castle had gone on a strike because the captain, Peasley, rightly refused a demand of \$2,000 by the union.

"It's Marsh again," said Big George.

"Yes," Emerson answered; "it's a holdup pure and simple." A look of intense anxiety came into his eyes.

When Boyd returned some two hours later he found the dock deserted save for Big George, who prowled watchfully about the freight piles.

"Well, did you fix it up?" the fisher-

man inquired.

"No," exclaimed Boyd. "It's a rank frame-up, and I refused to be bled."

"Good for you."

"There are some things a fellow's manhood won't stand for. I'll carry that freight aboard with my own hands before I'll be robbed by a labor union at the bidding of Willis Marsh."

"Say, will you let me load this ship my way?" George asked.

"Can you do it?"

Balt's thick lips drew back from his yellow teeth in that smile which Emerson had come to recognize as a harbinger of the violent acts that rejoiced his lawless soul.

"Listen," said he, with a chuckle.

"Down the street yonder I've got a hundred fishermen. Half of them are drunk at this minute and the rest are half drunk."

"Then they are of no use to us."

"I don't reckon you ever seen a herd of Kalvik fishermen out of a job, did you? Well, there's just two things they know, fishing and fighting, and this ain't the fishing season. When they hit Seattle the police force goes up into the residence section and stuffs cotton in its ears, because the only thing that is strong enough to stand between a uniform and a fisherman is a hill."

"Can you induce them to work?"

"I can. All I'm afraid of is that I can't induce them to quit. They're liable to put his freight aboard the Bedford Castle and then pull down the dock in a spirit of playfulness and pile it in Captain Peasley's cabin. There ain't no convulsion of nature that's equal to a gang of idle fishermen."

"When can they begin?"

"Well, it will take me all night to round them up, and I'll have to lick four or five, but there ought to be a dozen or two on hand in the morning."

George cast a roving eye over the warehouse from the heavy planking underfoot to the wide spanning rafters above. "Yes," he concluded, "I don't see nothing breakable, so I guess it's safe."

"Would you like me to go with you?"

The giant considered him speculatively. "I don't think so. I ain't never seen you in action. No, you better stay here and arrange to guard this stuff till morning. I'll do the rest."

The following morning, true to his word, the big fellow walked into the warehouse followed by a score or more of burly fishermen.

Balt bore signs of strife. The big man's lips were cut, while back of one ear a knot had sprung up overnight like a fungus.

They fell to work quickly, stripping themselves to their undershirts; they manned the hoists, seized trucks and bale hooks and began their tasks with a thoroughly nonunion energy. Some of them were still so drunk that they staggered, their awkwardness affording huge sport to their companions, yet even in their intoxication they were surprisingly capable. George sought out Boyd and proudly inquired:

"What do you think of them, eh?"

"They are splendid. But where are the others?"

"Well, there are two or three that won't be able to get around at all." He meditatively stroked the knuckles of his right hand, which were badly bruised. "But the balance will be here tomorrow. These are just the mildest mannered ones—the family men, you might say. The others will show up gradual."

The work had not continued many hours before a stranger made his way in upon the dock and began to argue with the first fisherman he met. Boyd, approaching him, demanded:

"What do you want?"

"Nothing," said the newcomer.

"Then get out."

"What for? I'm just talking to this man."

"Will you go?"

"Say, you can't load that cargo this way," the man began threateningly. "And you can't make me go—"

At which Emerson seized him by the collar and quickly disproved the assertion, to the great delight of the fishermen. He thrust him out into the street.

"I'm a union man, and you can't load that ship with scabs." The stranger swore as he slunk off.

The first actual violence, however, occurred when the fishermen knocked off for the noon hour. Boyd called up the police department, then summoned Big George. It was with considerable difficulty that the nonunion crew fought its way back to resume work at 1 o'clock.

During the afternoon the strikers made several attempts to enter the dock shed, and it required a firm stand by the guards to restrain them.

The next morning found the nonunion men out in such force that they were divided into a night and a day crew, half of them being sent back to report later, while among the mountains of freight the work went forward faster than ever. But in time the city awoke to the realization that a serious conflict was in progress. The handful of fishermen, armed,

bered twenty to one and guarded only by a thin line of pickets, became a center of general interest.

It was on the fourth day that Boyd espied the man in the gray suit among the strikers and pointed him out to his three companions, Clyde and Fraser having joined him and George in a spirit of curiosity.

Late in the afternoon, without a moment's warning, the strikers rushed in a body, bearing down the guards like reeds.

Emerson and his companions found themselves carried away before the onslaught like chips in the surf, then sucked into a maelstrom where the first duty was self preservation. Boyd succeeded in keeping his footing and eventually fought his way to a backing of crated machinery, where he stooped and ripped a cleat loose. Then, laying about him with this weapon, he cleared a space.

At the first alarm the fishermen had armed themselves with bale hooks and bludgeons and for a time worked havoc among their assailants.

Seeing Clyde in a helpless condition, Emerson shouted:

"Come on! I'll help you aboard the ship."

He found a hardwood club beneath his feet and with it cleared a pathway for Clyde and himself. He suddenly spied the man in the gray suit, who had climbed upon one of

the freight piles, whence he was scanning the crowd. The man recognized Emerson and pointed him out. The next instant Boyd saw him approaching, followed by several others. Then, though Boyd fell back farther, the others rushed in and he found himself hard beset. What happened thereafter neither he nor Alton Clyde, who was half dazed to begin with, ever clearly remembered.

Before he had recognized the personal nature of the assault Emerson found himself engaged in a furious hand to hand struggle. Then a sudden blackness swallowed him up, after which he found himself upon his knees, his arms loosely encircling a pair of legs. As he struggled upward something smote him in the side with sickening force, and he went to his knees again.

He could only raise his shoulder and fling an arm weakly above his head in anticipation of the crushing blow he



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thought was coming. But it did not descend. Instead he heard a gunshot. A weight sank across his calves. Then, with a final effort, he pulled himself free and staggered to his feet. His head reeling, his knees sagging. He saw a man's figure facing him and lunged at it to bring up in the arms of "Fingerless" Fraser.

Boyd turned and beheld the body of a man stretched face downward on the floor. Beyond the fellow in the gray suit was disappearing into the crowd. Then he saw a gleam of blue metal in Fraser's hands.

"Give me that gun!" he panted.

"I may need it myself, and I ain't got but the one here. Let's get Clyde out of this."

Fraser lifted the young clubman, who was huddled in a formless heap as if he had fallen from a great height, and together the two dragged him toward the Bedford Castle.

That night under glaring headlines the evening papers told the story, reporting one fisherman fatally hurt, one striker dead of a gunshot wound and many others injured.

## CHAPTER XII.

A HALF mile from Captain Peasley's ship the rival company tenders were loading rapidly with union labor. The next day Emerson and Clyde drove down to the dock with Cherry in a closed carriage, experiencing no annoyance beyond some jeers and insults as they passed through the picket line. Boyd had barely seen them comfortably established on board when up the ship's gangway came "Fingerless" Fraser radiantly attired, three heavily laden hotel porters groaning at his back, the customary thick waisted cigar between his teeth.

"Are you going with us?" Boyd inquired.

"Sure."

"See here! Is life one long succession of surprise parties with you?"

"Why, I've figured on this right along."

"But the ship is jammed now. There is no room."

"Oh, I fixed that up long ago. I am going to bunk with the steward."

"Well, why in the world didn't you let us know you were coming?"

"Say, don't kid yourself. You know I couldn't stay behind." Fraser blew a cloud of smoke airily. "I never start anything I can't finish. I keep telling you, and I'm going to put this deal through now that I've got it

started." With a half embarrassed laugh and a complete change of manner, he laid his hand upon Boyd's shoulder, saying: "Pal, I ain't much good to myself or anybody else, but I like you and I want to stick around. Maybe I'll come in useful yet—you can't tell."

Emerson had never glimpsed this side of the man's nature, and it rather surprised him.

"Of course you can come along, old man," he responded heartily. "We're glad to have you."

The decks of the big, low lying tramp steamer were piled high with gear of every description. Ready now to sail, Boyd went out to the dock of face to wire Mildred of his success.

"Fingerless" Fraser soon ran in upon him. "They've come to grab you for killing that striker!" he began breathlessly. "There's a couple of square toes on the dock now. Better take it on the lam—quick!"

"God!" So Marsh had withheld this stroke until the last moment.

"You'd better beat it, quick!"

"How? I couldn't get through that crowd. They know me. Listen!" Outside the street broke into a roar at some taunt of the fishermen high up in the rigging. "I can't run away, and if those detectives get me I'm ruined."

Boyd clinched his hands in desperation. "I guess they've got me," he said bitterly. "There's no way out."

"From what they said I don't think they know you," Fraser continued. "Anyhow, they wanted Peasley to point you out. When they come off maybe you can slip 'em."

Boyd seized eagerly upon the suggestion. "The wharf is empty—see! I'll have to cross it in plain sight."

Through the rear door of the office that opened upon the dock proper they beheld the great floor almost entirely clear. Save for a few tons of freight at which Big George's men were working it was as unobstructed as a lawn, and, although it was nearly the size of a city block, it afforded no more means of concealment than did the little office itself, with its glass doors, its counter and its long desk, at the farther end of which a bill clerk was poring over his task.

They saw at the foot of the gang-plank two men talking with Big George. They saw Balt point the strangers carelessly to the office, whence he had seen Boyd disappearing a few moments before, and turn back to his stvedores. Then they saw the plain clothes men approaching.

"Here! Gimme your coat and hat, quick!" cried Fraser in a low voice, his eyes blazing at a sudden thought. He stripped his own garments from his back with feverish haste. "Put mine on. There! I'll stall for you. When they grab me, take it on the run. Understand?"

"That won't do. Everybody knows me." Boyd cast an apprehensive glance at the arched back of the bill clerk, but Fraser, quick of resource in such a situation, forced him swiftly to make the change, saying:

"Nix. It's your only 'out.' Stand here, see?" He indicated a position beside the rear door. "I'll step out the other way where they can see me." He continued, pointing to the wagon way at the right. "Savvy? When they grab me you beat it and don't wait for nothing."

"But you?"

Already they could hear the footsteps of the officers.

"I'll take a chance. Goodbye."

There was no time even for a hand-shake. Fraser stepped swiftly to the door, then strolled quietly into the view of the two men, who an instant later accosted him.

"Are you Mr. Boyd Emerson?"

The adventurer answered brusquely. "Yes, but I can't talk to you now."

"You are under arrest, Mr. Emerson."

Boyd waited to hear no more. The glass door swung open noiselessly under his hand, and he stepped out just as the bill clerk looked up from his work, staring out through the other entrance.

"Fingerless" Fraser's voice was louder now, as if for a signal. "Arrest me? What do you mean? Get out of my way!"

"You'd better come peacefully."

Boyd heard a sharp exclamation—"Get him, Bill!"—and then the sound of men struggling. He ran, followed by a roar from the strikers, in whose full view Fraser's encounter with the plain clothes men was taking place. A backward glance showed him that Fraser had drawn his pursuers to the street.

Scarcely had Boyd reached Big George when a wing of the besieging army swept in through the unguarded entrance and down the dock like an avalanche, leaving behind them the battling officers and the hungry pack clamoring for the prisoner.

"Drop that freight and get aboard the best way you can!" Boyd yelled at the fishermen, and, with a bound, was out into the open, crying to Captain Peasley on the bridge:

"Here they come! Cast off, for God's sake!"

The dozen men who had been slinging freight on the dock hastened up the gangplank or climbed the fenders, while the signalman clung to the lifting tackle and, at the piping cry of his whistle, was swung aloft out of the very arms of the rioters.

Above, on the flying bridge, Captain Peasley was bellowing orders. At last the Bedford Castle was under way.

Even after they were miles down the sound Boyd remained at his post, sweeping the waters astern in an anxious search for some swift harbor craft, the appearance of which would signal that his escape had been discovered.

"I won't feel safe until we are past Port Townsend," he confessed to Fraser,

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ry, who maintained a position at his side. "The police can wire on from Seattle to stop us and take me off at that point."

"If they find out their mistake."

"They must have found it out long ago. That's why I've got Peasley forcing this old tub. She's doing 10 knots, and that's a breakneck speed for her. Once we're through the straits I'll be satisfied."

"What will happen to Fraser?" she queried.

"Nothing serious, I am sure. You see, they wanted me and nobody else. Once they find they have the wrong man I rather believe they will free him in disgust."

A moment later he went on: "Just the same, it makes me feel depressed and guilty to leave him. I—I wouldn't desert a comrade for anything if the choice lay with me."

"You did quite right," Cherry warily assured him.

"You see, I am not working for myself. I am doing this for another."

It was the girl's turn to sigh softly, while the eyes she turned toward the west were strangely sad and dreamy.

"Two hours more," he told her as the ship's bell sounded, "then I can eat and sleep—and sing."

Captain Peasley was pacing the bridge when later they breasted the glare of Port Townsend and saw in the distance the flashing searchlights

of the forts that guard the straits. They saw him stop suddenly and raise his night glasses. Boyd laid his hand on Cherry's arm. Presently the captain crossed to them and said:

"Yonder seems to be a launch making out. See! I wonder what's up. By Jove! They're signaling."

The two boats were drawing together rapidly, and soon those on the bridge heard the faint but increasing patter of a gasoline exhaust. Carrying the same speed as the Bedford Castle, the launch shortly came within hailing distance. The cyclopean eye of the ship's searchlight blazed up, and the next instant out from the gloom leaped a little craft, on the deck of which a man stood waving a lantern. She held steadfastly to her course, and a voice floated up to them:

"Aho! What ship?"

"The Bedford Castle, cannery tender, for Bristol bay," Peasley shouted back.

The man on the launch relinquished his lantern and, using both palms for a funnel, cried more clearly now:

"Heave to! We want to come aboard."

With an exclamation of impatience, the commanding officer stepped to the telegraph, but Emerson forestalled him.

"Wait. They're after me, captain; it's the Port Townsend police, and if you let them aboard they'll take me off."

Turning, the skipper bellowed:

"Who are you?"

"Police!"

"What did I tell you?" cried Emerson.

"What do you want?"

"One of your passengers—Emerson. Heave to. You're passing us."

"That's bloody hard luck, Mr. Emerson; I can't help myself," the captain declared. But again Boyd blocked him as he started for the telegraph.

"I won't stand it, sir. It's a conspiracy to ruin me."

"But, my dear young man—"

"Don't touch that instrument!"

From the launch came cries of growing vehemence, and a startled murmur of voices rose from somewhere in the darkness of the deck beneath.

"Stand aside!" Peasley ordered gruffly.

"her held his ground,

"I warn you. I am desperate." "Shall I stop her, sir?" the quartermaster asked from the shadows of the wheelhouse.

"No," Emerson commanded sharply, and in the glow from the binnacle light they saw he had drawn his revolver, while on the instant up from the void beneath heaved the massive figure of Big George Balt, a behemoth, more colossal and threatening than ever in the dim light. He wrenched open the door and with one sweep of his hairy paw flung the helmsman from his post, panting.

"Keep her going, cap, or I'll run them down!"

The launch was abreast of them now and skimming along so close that one might have tossed a biscuit aboard of her. The sputter of the craft along-side was now punctuated by a volley of curses.

The police launch sheered off, and the sound of her exhaust grew rapidly fainter and fainter. But not until it had wholly ceased did Big George give over his post at the wheel. Even then he went down the ladder reluctantly and without a word of thanks, of explanation or of apology. With him this had been but a part of the day's work. He saw neither sentiment nor humor in the episode.

From the crow's nest of the Bedford Castle a week later the lookout stared down upon a white expanse that stretched beyond the horizon. At dawn they began their careful search, feeling their way eastward through the open lanes and tortuous passages that separated the floes, now lying to for the northward set of the fields to clear a path before them, now stealing through some narrow lead that opened into freer waters.

Captain Peasley did all the navigating in person, but eventually they were hemmed in so closely that for a day and a night they could do nothing but drift with the pack. In time, however, the winds opened a crevice through which they retreated to follow the outer limits farther eastward until they were bailed again.

Late one evening they discerned smoke on the horizon, and the next morning's light showed a three masted steamship fast in the ice a few miles to the westward.

"That's the Juliet," Big George informed his companions, "one of the North American Packers' association tenders."

"She was loading when we left Seattle," Boyd remarked.

"It is Willis Marsh's ship, so we must be aboard," supplemented Cherry. "She's a wooden ship and built for this business. If we don't look out he'll beat us in after all."

"What good will that do him?" Clyde questioned. "The fish don't bite—I mean run—for sixty days yet."

Emerson and Balt merely shrugged.

To Cherry Malotte this had been a voyage of dreams, for once away from land Boyd had become his real self again—that genial, irrepressible self she had seen but rarely—and his manner had lost the restraint and coolness which recently had disturbed their relations. Of necessity their cramped environment had thrown them much together, and their companionship had been most pleasant.

To Be Continued

Miss Mary Shaver, of Burlington, arrived yesterday and will be the guest of Mr. and Mrs. D. Hawksworth for a time. Mr. and Mrs. Hawksworth, Mrs. Dr. E. W. Cook, Miss Nettie Hawksworth and Miss Shaver spent the day in the metropolis, getting on the morning train.