

# The Silver Horde

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## CHAPTER XIII.

NEVER did men have more willing hands to do their bidding than did Boyd and George, and when a week later the Juliet, with Willis Marsh on board, came to anchor the bunk houses were up and peopled, while the new site had become a beehive of activity.

The mouth of the Kalvik river is several miles wide, yet it contains but a small anchorage suitable for deep draft ships, the rest of the harbor being underlaid with mud bars and tide flats over which none but small boats may pass, and as the canneries are distributed up and down the stream for a considerable distance it is necessary to transport all supplies to and from the ships by means of tugs and lighters. Owing to the narrowness of the channel the Juliet came to her moorings not far from the Bedford Castle.

To Marsh, already furious at the trick the ice had played him, this forced proximity to his rival brought home with added irony the fact that he had been forestalled, while it emphasized his knowledge that henceforth the conflict would be carried on at closer quarters. It would be a contest between two men, both determined to win by fair means or foul.

It was on the afternoon following his arrival that Marsh after a tour of inspection landed from his launch and strolled up to where Boyd Emerson was at work. He was greeted courteously, if a bit coolly, and found, as on their last meeting, that his own bearing was reflected exactly in that of Boyd.

"I see you have a number of my old fishermen," Marsh observed.

"Yes; we were fortunate."

"You are very lucky."

"Indeed! How?"

"Well, don't you think you were lucky to beat that strike?"

"It wasn't altogether luck. However, I do consider myself fortunate in escaping at the last moment," Boyd laughed easily. "By the way, what happened to the man they mistook for me?"

"Let him go, I believe. I didn't pay much attention to the matter. I rather think you will have a lot to explain one of these days," he said, with deliberate menace.

"With 50,000 cases of salmon aboard the Bedford Castle I will explain anything. Meanwhile the police may go to the devil!"

"You got away from Seattle, but there is a commissioner at Dutch Harbor, also a deputy marshal, who may have better success with a warrant than those policemen had." The trust's manager could not keep down the angry tremor in his voice, and the other, perceiving it, replied in a manner designed to inflame him still more.

"Yes, I have heard of those officers. I understand they are both in your employ."

"What?"

"I hear you have bought them."

"Do you mean to insinuate?"

"I don't mean to insinuate anything. Listen! We are where we can talk plainly, Marsh, and I am tired of all this subterfuge. You did what you could to stop me, you even tried to have me killed."

"You dare to?"

"But I guess it never occurred to you that I may be just as desperate as you are. I broke through in spite of you, and I'm on the job. If you want to cry quits, I'm willing, but I won't be balked, and if any of your hired marshals try to take me before I put up my catch I'll put you away Understand?"

Willis Marsh recoiled involuntarily. "You are insane," he cried.

"Am I?" Emerson laughed harshly. "Well, I'm just crazy enough to do what I say. Don't come back here until I send for you. Something might fall on you."

"Then it is to be war, eh?"

"Suit yourself," Boyd pointed to the shore.

As Marsh made his way to the water's edge he stumbled like a blind man; his lips were bleeding where his small, sharp teeth had bitten them, and he panted like an hysterical woman.

During the next fortnight the sailing ships began to assemble, standing in under a great spread of canvas to berth close alongside the two steamships.

On the morning after the arrival of the last ship Emerson and his companions were treated to a genuine surprise. Cherry had come down to the site as usual—she could not let a day go by without visiting the place—and Clyde after a tardy breakfast had just come ashore. They were watching Big George direct the launching of a scow when all of a sudden they heard a familiar voice behind them cry cheerfully:

"Hello, white folks! Here we are all together again."

They turned to behold a villainous looking man beaming benignly upon them. He was dirty, his clothes were in rags, and through a riotous bristle of beard that hid his thin features a

mangy patch showed on either cheek. It was undeniably "Fingerless" Fraser, but how changed, how altered, from that radiant flower of indolence they had known! He was pallid, emaciated and bedraggled.

"Fraser!" they cried in chorus, then fell upon him noisily.

Fraser drew himself up with injured dignity, then spoke in dramatic accents. "I worked my way!"

"How? Where?"

"On that bloody wind jammer."

"But the police?" queried Boyd.

"Oh, I squared them easy. It's you they want. Yes, sir, I worked. I'm a scullery maid."

"Tell us about it," urged Cherry.

"What's the use?" he demanded, with a glare at Clyde. "That bone-head wouldn't understand."

"Go ahead," Boyd seconded, with twitching lips. "You look as if you had worked, and worked hard."

"Well, there ain't any Pullmans running to this resort, so I stow away on a coal burner, but somebody flags me. Then I try to hire out as a fisherman, but I ain't there with the gang talk and my stuf drags, so I fix it for a hide-away on the Blessed Isle—that's her name. Can you beat that for a monaker? This sailor of mine



"FRASER!" THEY CRIED IN CHORUS.

goes good to grub me, but he never shows for forty-eight hours—or years. I forget which. Anyhow, I stand it as long as I can, then I dig my way up to a hatch and mew like a house cat. It seems they were hep from the start, and batted me down on purpose, then made book on how long I'd stay hid. Oh, it's a funny joke, and they all get a stomach laugh when I show. When I offer to pay my way they're insulted. Nix! that ain't their graft. They wouldn't take money from a stranger. Oh, no! They permit me to work my way. The scullery has quit, see? So they promote me to his job."

"You deserted this morning, eh?"

"I did. I want a bath and some clean clothes and a whole lot of sleep. He was granted his desires."

The Bedford Castle having discharged her cargo steamed away to return in August.

The middle of June brought the first king salmon, scouts sent on ahead of the "sockeyes," but Boyd made no effort to take advantage of this run, laboring manfully to prepare for the advance of the main army, that terrific horde that was soon to come from the mysterious depths either to make or ruin him. Once the run proper started there would be no more opportunity for building or for setting up machinery. He must be ready and waiting by the first of July.

For some time his tin machines had been busy night and day turning out great heaps of gleaming cans, while the carpenters and machinists completed their tasks. The gill netters were overhauling their gear, the beach was lined with fishing boats. On their dock great piles of seines and drift nets were being inspected. Three miles below Big George with a picked crew and a pilot-driver was building the fishtrap. It consisted of half mile "leads," or rows of piling, capped with stringers upon which netting was hung and terminated in "hearts," "corrales" and "spillers," the intricate arrangements of webbing and timbers out of which the fish were to be taken.

As for Boyd the fever in his veins mounted daily as he saw his dream assuming concrete form. Always he found Cherry at his shoulder, unobtrusive and silent for the most part, yet intensely observant and keenly alive to every action. She seemed to have the faculty of divination, knowing when to be silent and when to join her mood with his, and she gave him valuable help, for she possessed a practical mind. One day when their preparations were nearly completed a foreman came to Boyd and said excitedly:

"Boss, I'd like you to look at the Iron Chinks right away."

"What's up?"

"I don't know, but something is wrong." A hurried examination showed the machines to be cunningly crippled; certain parts were entirely miss-

ing while others were broken.

The iron Chinks, or mechanical cleaner, is perhaps the most ingenious of the many labor saving devices used in the salmon fisheries. It is an awkward looking, yet very effective contrivance of revolving knives and conveyers which seizes the fish whole and delivers it cleaned, clipped, cut and ready to be washed. With superhuman dexterity it does the work of twenty lightning like butchers. Without the aid of these iron Chinks Boyd knew that his fish would spoil before they could be handled. He hastened straightway to George Bah. A half hour's run down the bay and he clambered from his launch to the pile driver, where, amid the confusion and noise, he made known his findings. The big fellow's calmness amazed him.

"What are you going to do now?"

"Butcher by hand," said the fisherman.

"But how? That takes skilled labor—lots of it."

George grinned. "I'm too old a bird

to be caught like this. I figured on accidents from the start, and when I hired my Chinamen I included a crew of cutters. Willis Marsh will have to try again."

## CHAPTER XIV.

WHILE they were talking a tug-boat towing a pile driver came into view. Boyd asked the meaning of its presence in this part of the river.

"I don't know," answered Big George, staring intently. "Yonder looks like another one behind it, with a raft of piles."

"I thought all the company traps were up stream."

"So they are. I can't tell what they're up to."

A half hour later, when the new flotilla had come to anchor a short distance below, Emerson's companion began to swear.

"I might have known it."

"What?"

"Marsh aims to 'cork' us."

"What is that?"

"He's going to build a trap on each side of this one and cut off our fish."

"Good Lord! Can he do that?"

"Sure! Why not? The law gives us 900 yards both ways. As long as he stays outside of that limit he can do anything he wants to."

"Then of what use is our trap? The salmon follow definite courses close to the shore, and if he intercepts them before they reach us—why, then we'll get only what he lets through."

"That's his plan," said Big George sourly. "It's an old game, but it don't always work. You can't tell what salmon will do till they do it. I've studied this point of land for five years, and I know more about it than anybody else except the Creator. If the fish hug the shore, then we're up against it, but I think they strike in about here; that's why I chose this site. We can't tell, though, till the run starts. All we can do now is see that them people keep their distance."

The "lead" of a salmon trap consists of a row of web hung piling that runs out from the shore for many hundred feet, forming a high, stout fence that turns the schools of fish and leads them into cunningly contrived inclosures, or "pounds," at the outer extremity, from which they are "brailled" as needed. These corrales are so built that once the fish are inside they cannot escape. The entire structure is devised upon the principle that the salmon will not make a short turn, but will swim as nearly as possible in a straight line. It looked to Boyd as if Marsh, by blocking the line of progress above and below, had virtually destroyed the efficiency of the new trap, rendering the cost of its construction a total loss.

That evening when he had seen the night shift started Emerson decided to walk up to Cherry's house, for he was worried over the day's developments and felt that an hour of the girl's society might serve to clear his thoughts.

Cherry's house was situated a short distance above the cannery which served as Willis Marsh's headquarters, and Boyd's path necessarily took him past his enemy's very stronghold. Finding the tide too high to permit of passing beneath the dock, he turned up among the buildings, where, to his surprise, he encountered his own day foreman talking earnestly with a stranger.

The fisherman started guiltily.

"What are you doing here, Larsen?" asked Boyd.

"I just walked up after supper to have a talk with an old mate."

"Who is he?"

"He's Mr. Marsh's foreman."

Emerson spoke out bluntly: "See here, I don't like this. These people have caused me a lot of trouble already, and I don't want my men hanging around here."

"Oh, that's all right," said Larsen carelessly. "Him and me used to fish together." And as if this were a sufficient explanation he turned back to his conversation, leaving Emerson to proceed on his way.

He found Cherry at home and, flinging himself into one of her easy chairs, relieved his mind of the day's occurrences.

"Marsh is building those traps purely out of spite, she declared indignantly when he had finished. "He doesn't need any more fish—he has plenty of traps farther up the river."

"To be sure! It looks as if we might have to depend upon the gill netters."

"We will know before long. If the fish strike in where George expects Marsh will be out a pretty penny."

"And if they don't strike in where George expects we will be out all the expense of building that trap."

"Exactly! It's a fascinating busi-

ness, isn't it? It's a business in which the unexpected is forever happening. But the stakes are high, and—I know you will succeed. By the way," she continued, "have you heard the historic story about the pink salmon?"

He shook his head.

"Well, there was a certain shrewd old cannery man in Washington state whose catch consisted almost wholly of pink fish. As you know, that variety does not bring as high a price as red salmon, like these. Well, finding that he could not sell his catch, owing to the popular prejudice about color, this man related a lot of striking can-

labels, which read, "Best Grade Pink Salmon, Warranted Not to Turn Red in the Can." They tell me it worked like a charm."

"No wonder!" Boyd laughed.

"I wish I were a man," she went on. "I'd like to engage in a business of this sort, something that would require ingenuity and daring. I'd like to handle big affairs."

"There is your copper mine. You surely handled that very cleverly."

Cherry's expression altered, and she

shot a quick glance at him as he went on.

"How is it coming along, by the way? I haven't heard you mention it lately."

"Very well, I believe. The men were down the other day and told me it was a big thing."

"I'm delighted. How does it seem to be rich?"

"I—I hardly know. Rich! That has always been my dream, and yet—"

"The wonderful feature about dreams," he took advantage of her pause to say, "is that they come true."

"Not all of them—not the real, wonderful dreams," she returned.

"Oh, yes! My dream is coming true, and so is yours."

"I have given up hoping for that," she said, without turning.

"But you shouldn't give up. Remember that all the great things ever accomplished were only dreams at first, and the greater the accomplishments the more impossible they seemed to begin with."

Something in the girl's attitude and in her silence made him feel that his words rang hollow and commonplace. While he had talked an unaccustomed excitement had been mounting in his brain, and it held him now in a kind of delicious embarrassment. It was as if both had been suddenly unfolded in a new and mysterious understanding without the need of speech. He did not tell himself that Cherry loved him, but he roused to a fresh perception of her beauty and felt himself privileged in her nearness.

It may have been the unusual ardor of his gaze that warmed her cheeks and brought her eyes back from the world outside. At any rate, she turned, flashing him a startled glance that caused his pulse to leap anew. Rising silently, she went past him to the piano. Never before had she surprised that look in his eyes and at the realization a wave of confusion surged over her. She strove to calm herself through her music, which shielded while it gave expression to her mood, and neither spoke as the evening shadows crept in upon them. But the girl's exaltation was short lived; the thought came that Boyd's feeling was but transitory; he was not the sort to burn lasting incense before more than one shrine. Nevertheless, at this moment he was hers, and in the joy of that certainty she let the moments slip.

They heard a child crying somewhere in the rear of the house and Chakawana's voice soothing; then in a moment the Indian girl appeared in the doorway, saying something about going out with Constantine. Cherry acquiesced half consciously, impatient of the intrusion. Boyd finally rose and, going to the door, saw that the sky was deeply overcast, rendering the night as dark as in a far lower latitude.

"I've overstayed my welcome," he ventured and smiled at her answering laugh.

With a trace of solicitude she said: "Wait! I'll get you a raincoat." But he reached out a detaining hand. In the darkness it encountered the bare flesh of her arm.

"Please don't! You'd have to strike a light to find it, and I don't want a light now."

"It has been a pleasant evening," she said in a low voice.

"I saw you for the first time tonight, Cherry. I think I have begun to know you."

Again she felt her heart leap. Reaching out to say goodby, his hand slipped down over her arm like a caress until her palm lay in his.

With trembling, gentle hands she pushed him from her.

When the black bulk of Marsh's cannery loomed ahead of Emerson he left the gravel beach and turned up among the buildings, seeking to retrace his former course. As he turned the corner of the first building he nearly ran against a man who was standing motionless against the wall. The fellow, with a sharp exclamation, vanished into the gloom. Boyd lost no time in gaining the plank runway that led to the dock and, finding an angle in the building, backed into it and waited.

From his momentary glimpse of the man as he made off he knew that he was tall and active—just the sort of person to prove dangerous in an encounter. But if his suspicions were correct there must be others close by, and Boyd wondered why he had heard no signal. After a breathless wait of a moment or two he stole cautiously out, and, selecting the darkest shadows, slipped from one to another till he was caught by the sound of voices issuing from the yawning entrance of the main building on his right. The next moment his tension relaxed; one of the speakers was a woman. Evi-

dently his alarm had been needless, for these people, whoever they were, made no effort to conceal their presence. On the contrary, the woman had raised her tone to a louder pitch, although her words were still undistinguishable.

Greatly relieved, Boyd was about to go on, when a sharp cry, like a signal, came in the woman's voice, a cry which turned to a genuine wail of distress. The listener heard a man's voice cursing in answer, and then the sound of a scuffle, followed at length by a choking cry, that brought him bounding into the building. He ran forward, recklessly, but before he had covered half the distance he collided violently with a piece of machinery and went sprawling to the floor. A glance upward revealed the dim outlines of a "topper," and showed him farther down the building, silhouetted briefly against the lesser darkness of the windows, two struggling figures. As he regained his footing, something rushed past him—man or animal he could not tell which, for its feet made no more sound upon the floor than those of a wolf dog. Then, as he bolted forward, he heard a man cry out, and found

himself in the midst of turmoil. His hands encountered a human body, and he seized it, only to be hurled aside as if with a giant's strength. Again he clung with a man's form, and bore it to the floor, cursing at the darkness and reaching for its throat. His antagonist raised his voice in wild clamor, while Boyd braced himself for another assault from those huge hands he had met a moment before. But it did not come. Instead he heard a cry from the woman, an answer in a deeper voice and then swift, pattering footsteps growing fainter. Meanwhile the man with whom he was locked was fighting desperately, with hands and feet and teeth, shouting hoarsely. Other footsteps sounded now, this time approaching, then at the door a lantern flared. A watchman came running down between the lines of machinery, followed by other figures half revealed.

Boyd had pinned his antagonist against the cold sides of a retort at last and with fingers clutched about his throat was beating his head violently against the iron when by the lantern's gleam he caught one glimpse of the fat, purple face in front of him and loosed his hold with a startled exclamation. Released from the grip that had nearly made an end of him, Willis Marsh staggered to his feet.

The man was wounded, badly wounded, as he saw by the red stream which gushed down over his breast. Marsh leveled a trembling finger at Boyd and cried hysterically:

"There he is, men. He tried to murder me. I—I'm hurt. I'll have him arrested."

The seriousness of the accusation struck the young man on the instant. He turned upon the group.

"I didn't do that. I heard a fight going on and ran in here!"

"He's a liar," the wounded man interrupted shrilly. "He's stabbed me! See? He tried to strip the shirt from his wounds, then fell to chattering and shaking. 'O God, I'm hurt!' He staggered to a packing case and sank upon it, weakly fumbling at his sodden shoulder."

"I didn't do that," repeated Boyd. "I don't know who stabbed him. I didn't."

"Then who did?" some one demanded.

"What are you doing in here? You'd a killed him in a minute," said the man with the lantern.

"We'll fix you for this," a third voice threatened.

"Listen," Boyd said in a tone to make them pause. "There has been a mistake here. I was passing the building when I heard a woman scream, and I rushed in to prevent Marsh from choking her to death."

"A woman?" chorused the group.

"That's what I said."

"Where is she now?"

"I don't know. I didn't see her at all. I grappled with the first person I ran into. She must have gone out as you came in." Boyd indicated the side door, which was still ajar.

"It's a lie," screamed Marsh.

"It's the truth," stoutly maintained Emerson, "and there was a man with her too. Who was she, Marsh? Who was the man?"

"She—she—I don't know."

"Don't lie."

"I'm hurt," reiterated the stricken man feebly. Then, seeing the bewilderment in the faces about him, he



"THERE HE IS, MEN. HE TRIED TO MURDER ME."

burst out anew: "Don't stand there like a lot of fools. Why don't you get him?"

"If I stabbed him I must have had a knife," Emerson said, again checking the forward movement. "You may search me if you like. See?" He

opened his coat and showed his belt. "He's got a size square," some one said.

"Yes, and I may use it," said Emerson quietly.

"If he hasn't a knife then he must have had a friend with him."

"Then tell your men what we were doing in here and how you came to be alone with us in the dark." Emerson stared at his accuser curiously, but the trust's manager seemed at a loss.

"See here, Marsh, if you will tell us whom you were choking maybe we can get at the truth of this affair."

Without answering Marsh rose and, leaning upon the watchman's arm, said:

"Help me up to the house. I'm hurt. Send the launch to the upper plant for John. He knows something about medicine." With no further word he made his way out of the building, followed by the mystified fishermen.

No one undertook to detain Emerson, and he went his way, wondering what lay back of the night's adventure. He racked his brain for a hint as to the identity of the woman and the reason of her presence alone with Marsh in such a place.

## To Be Continued

# DEATH CLAIMS ANOTHER CITIZEN

Anton Choloupka, an Old Resident Passes Away.

From Wednesday's Daily.

Monday night after an illness of several months, Anton Choloupka, residing in the northwest part of the city, passed away.

Mr. Choloupka was born in Roseet, Moravia, about 1850, and was the son of Joseph and Anna Choloupka, and resided in the old country until about the year 1882, when he came to America and to Plattsmouth. The deceased was for the past twenty-five years an employee of the Burlington here.

In June, 1886, he was married to Mrs. Pet Nowacek. To this union four children were born, three of whom survive the deceased, Agnes having died in childhood. The surviving children are Frank, Hermia and Sophia, who with the widow remain to mourn the loss of the departed father and husband. Two step children, James Nowacek and Mary Vitousek, also survive.

The deceased was a kind husband and father, a good neighbor and a true friend and will be deeply mourned by his circle of friends. He was a member of the Catholic Insurance Society, The Catholic Workman, and the M. W. A.

The funeral services will be conducted by Rev. Father Velcek of St. Rosary church. The funeral procession will leave the residence at 9:30 Thursday morning and the funeral will take place at the church at 10 o'clock.

## To Make Travel Easier.

In an effort to make traveling easier for the public the railroad commission of Oklahoma has issued an order which has caused consternation among the roads. The order intimates that unless the roads are willing to sell interline tickets that will enable passengers to start at any point in the state and reach any other railroad point without buying a second ticket the commission will try to force them to do so.

Several citizens of Oklahoma advised the commission that the business of that city would be greatly enhanced provided people from every section of the state could get there without buying several tickets, and the new order was the result.

The railroad officials declare that they will not comply with the order, but will appeal to the courts. The railroad men say they are willing to do anything within reason that will make travel more comfortable, but are not ready to issue interline tickets on such wholesale basis. The railroads are putting the order up to their legal men to see if there is anything in the law that would enable the commission to enforce such an order.

## Returns to Pekin, Illinois.

Peter Meisinger and wife and son Walter, who have been visiting Joe Lutz and J. P. Sattler and families and other relatives for two weeks, departed for their home last evening.

Mr. Meisinger has been away from home just a month today when he will arrive at Pekin, Illinois. He resides on and owns the farm that his grandfather and his father owned, this being the first trip from the city home.

Billousness is due to a disorderly condition of the stomach. Chamberlain's Tablets are essentially a stomachic medicine, intended especially to act on that organ; to cleanse it, strengthen it, tone and invigorate it, to regulate the liver and to banish billousness positively and effectually. For sale by F. G. Fricke & Co.