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The Spoilers.

By REX E. BEACH.

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CHAPTER I. GLENISTER gazed out over the harbor agleam with the lights of anchored ships, then up at the crescent mountains, black against the sky. He drank the cool air laden with its taints of the sea, while the flood of his boyhood leaped within him.

"Oh, it's fine—fine," he murmured, "and this is my country—my country, after all, Dex. It's in my veins, this hunger for the north. I grow. I expand."

"Careful you don't bust," warned Dexty. "I've seen men get plumb drunk on mountain air. Don't expand too strong in one spot." He went back abruptly to his pipe, its villainous fumes promptly averting any danger of the air's too tonic quality.

"Gad, what a smudge!" sniffed the younger man. "You ought to be in quarantine."

"It's rather small like a man than talk like a kid. You desecrate the hour of meditation with rhapsodies on nature when your aesthetics ain't honed up to the beauties of good tobacco."

The other laughed, inflating his deep chest. In the gloom he stretched his muscles restlessly, as though an excess of vigor filled him.

They were lounging upon the dock, while before them lay the Santa Maria ready for her midnight sailing. Behind slept Unalaska, quaint, antique and Russian, resting amid the fogs of Bering sea. Where a week before mild-eyed natives had dried their cod among the old bronze cannon now a frenzied horde of gold-seekers paused in their rush to the new El Dorado. They had come like a locust cloud, thousands strong, settling on the edge of the Smoky sea, waiting the going of the ice that barred them from their golden fleece—from Nome the new, where men found fortune in a night.

The mossy hills back of the village were ridged with graves of those who had died on the one trip the fall before, when a plague had gripped the land, but what of that? Gold glittered in the sands, so said the survivors. Therefore men came in armies. Glenister and Dexty had left Nome the autumn previous, the young man raving with fever. Now they returned to their own land.

"This air whets every animal instinct in me," Glenister broke out again. "Away from the cities I turn savage. I feel the old primitive passions, the fret for fighting."

"Mebbe you'll have a chance."

"How so?"

"Well, it's this way. I met Mexico Mullins this mornin'. You mind old Mexico, don't you—the feller that relocated Discovery claim on Avall creek last summer?"

"You don't mean that 'Inhorn' the boys were going to lynch for claim jumping?"

"Identical! Remember me tellin' you about a good turn I done him once down Gundalupue way?"

"Greaser shooting scrape, wasn't it?"

"Yep. Well, I noticed first off that he's gettin' fat—high livin' fat, too, all in one spot, like he was playin' both ends agin the center. Also he wore d'fomon's fit to handle with fee toms."

"Says I, lookin' at his side elevation, 'What's accented your middle syllable so strong, Mexico?'"

"'Prosperity, politics an' the Waldorf-Astoria,' says he. It seems Mex hadn't forgot old days. He claws me into a corner an' says, 'Bill, I'm goin' to pay you back for that Morale deal.'"

"It ain't comin' to me," says I. "That's a bygone."

"Listen here," says he, an' seethin' he was in earnest. I let him run on.

"How much do you value that claim of yours at?"

"'Hard to tell,' says I. 'If she holds on like she can last fall, there'd ought to be a million clear in her.'"

"'How much'll you clean up this summer?'"

"'Bout four hundred thousand, with luck.'"

"'Bill,' says he, 'there's hell a pep in an' you've got to watch that claim like you'd watch a rattlesnake. Don't never leave 'em got a grip on it or you're down an' out.'"

"'He was so plumb in earnest it scared me up, 'cause Mexico ain't a gabby man.'"

"'What do you mean?' says I. 'I can't tell you nothin' more. I'm sittin' a string on my own neck sayin' this much. You're a square man, Bill, an' I'm a gambler, but you saved my life once, an' I wouldn't steer you wrong. For God's sake, don't let 'em jump your ground, that's all.'"

"'Let 'em jump it? Congress has five us judges an' courts an' our shute—I begin.'"

"'That's just it. How you goin' to buck that land? There's the best catch in the deck. There's a man comin' by the name of McNamara. Watch him close. I can't tell you no more. Don't never let 'em get a grip on your ground. That's all he'd say.'"

"'Bah! He's crazy! I wish some body would try to jump the Midas. We'd enjoy the exercise.'"

The wren of the Santa Maria interrupted, his hoarse warning throbbing on the mountain.

"We'll have to get aboard," said Dexty. "Sh-h! What's that?" the other whispered.

At first the only sound they heard was a stir from the deck of the steamer. Then from the water below them

came the rattle of rowlocks and a voice cautiously muffled.

"Stop! Stop there!"

A stiff burst from the darkness, grounding on the beach beneath. A figure scrambled out and up the ladder leading to the wharf. Immediately a second boat, plainly in pursuit of the first one, struck on the beach behind it.

As the escaping figure mounted to their level the watchers perceived with amazement that it was a young woman. Her breath sobbed from her lungs, and, stumbling, she would have fallen but for Glenister, who ran forward and helped her to her feet.

"Don't let them get me," she panted.

He turned to his partner in puzzled inquiry, but found that the old man had crossed to the head of the landing ladder up which the pursuers were climbing.

"Just a minute, you there! Back up or I'll kick your face in!" Dexty's voice was sharp and unexpected, and in the darkness he loomed tall and menacing to those below.

"Get out of the way. That woman's a runaway," came from the one highest on the ladder.

"So I judge."

"She broke up?"

"Shut up!" broke in another. "Do you want to advertise it? Get out of the way, there, ye blame fool! Climb up, Thorsen." He spoke like a bucko mate, and his words stirred the bile of Dexty.

Thorsen grasped the dock floor, trying to climb up, but the old miner



The old miner stamped on his fingers.

stamped on his fingers, and the sailor loosened his hold with a yell, carrying the under man with him to the beach in his fall.

"This way! Follow me!" shouted the mate, making up the bank for the shore end of the wharf.

"You'd better pull your freight, miss," Dexty remarked. "They'll be here in a minute."

"Yes, yes! Let us go! I must get aboard the Santa Maria. She's leaving now. Come, come!"

Glenister laughed as though there were a humorous touch in her remark, but did not stir.

"I'm gettin' awful old an' stiff to run," said Dexty, removing his mackinaw. "but I allow I ain't too old for a little diversion in the way of a rough house when it comes night around."

He moved lightly, though the girl could see in the half darkness that his hair was silvery.

"What do you mean?" she questioned sharply.

"You hurry along, miss. We'll try with 'em till you're aboard." They stepped across to the dockhouse, backing against it. The girl followed.

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

"Clear away that stern line!"

"Oh, well 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 shipboard and were praying for something to happen." His voice was hoarsely 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 hat on form, then the blot split up, and men plunged outward, falling heavily. Again the sailors rushed, attempting to catch them. They massed upon Dexty, only to grasp empty air, for he shifted with remarkable agility, striking bitterly, as an old wolf snags. It was badling work, however, for in the darkness his blows fell short or overreached.

Glenister, on the other hand, stood carefully, beating the men off as they came to him. He laughed gleefully, leap in his throat, as though the encounter were merely some rough sport. The girl shuddered, for the desperate glances 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 panted 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 whizzing 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 this 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 cry of the battle arose. The man yelled in sudden terror, and the others as suddenly fell back. The next instant 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 'er explosions and snowsides, not to mention a triffin' fall delivery, but fer 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.

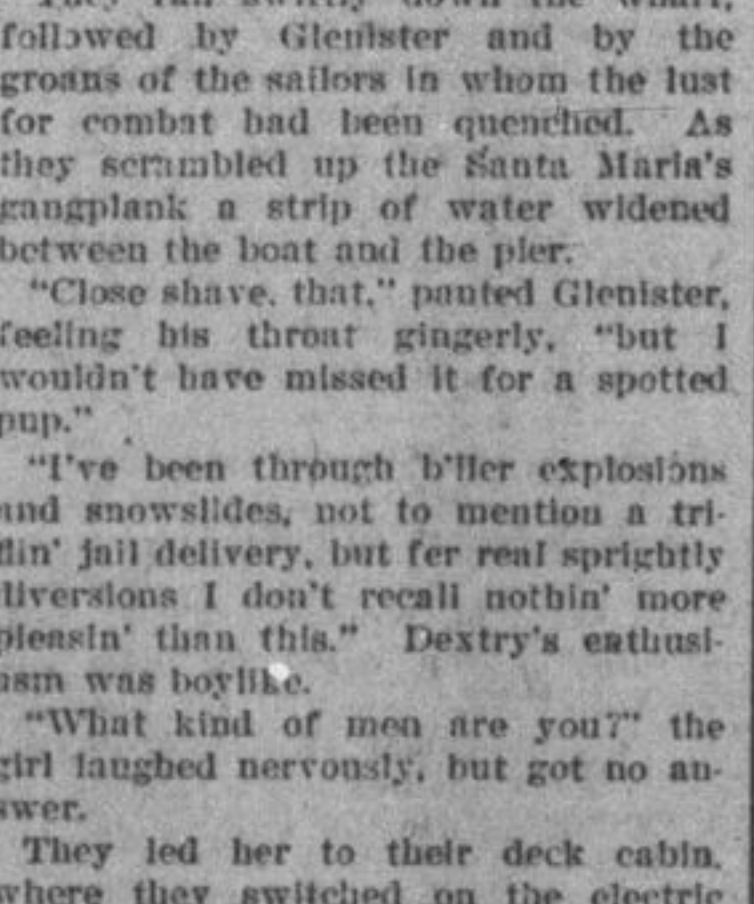
Glenister had been prepared for the type of beauty that follows the frontier-beauty that may stun, but that has the polish and chill of a new ground hovie. Instead this girl with the calm, reposeful face struck a note almost painfully different from her surroundings, suggesting countless pleasant things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



IN THE SPRING

will be the great test of a life and death struggle on the Western front. In the everyday walks of life, it is the spring time that brings ill health. One of the most recent statistics shows that one out of every five men runs down in March or April, is because he has spent nearly all his hours for the past four or five months penned up within the walls of house, factory or office. It is the reason for our diminished resistance—that is, lack of out-door life, coupled with perhaps over-eating, lack of good exercise, insufficient sleep, and constipation. In other words, we keep feeding the furnace with fuel but do not take out the "clinkers," and our fire does not burn brightly. Always keep the liver active.

There is nothing better for health than taking an occasional mild laxative, perhaps once a week; such a one as you can get at any drug store, made up of May-apple, jalap, aloes, sugar-coated, with a little castor, which has stood the test of fifty years of approval—namely, Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets. But for the "Spring Fever," the general run-down condition, the lack of ambition, the "blues," one should take a course of treatment every spring, such a standard tonic as Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, now to be had in tablet form in fifty-cent vials. Watch the people go plodding along the street. There's no spring vitality. A vitalizing tonic such as this vegetable extract of Dr. Pierce's gives you the power to force yourself into action. The brain responds to the new blood in circulation, and then you're ready to make a fight against stagnation which holds you in bondage. Try it now! Don't wait! To-day is the day to begin. Gain a little "pep," laugh and live. Vim and vitality are the natural out-pouring of a healthy body. It does not spring up in a night. Try this spring tonic, and you gain the courage that comes with good health.

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."

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

"No, no! I don't want you to do that. They must see me tonight. I know I'm acting awfully 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 do. 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, an' he couldn't have spoke truer if he'd knowed 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, so 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. "Ain'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 lifeboat, 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 mustily: "I had an ancestor who buccannered among the Indies a long time ago, so I'm told. Sometimes I think I have his disposition. He comes and whipspers 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, hurrying herself into her berth, where she withdrew silently, beating the pillow with her hands into which her nails had bitten, staring the while into the darkness with dry and aching eyes.

(Continued Next Saturday.)

Cautious in the City.

For uncommittal brevity of speech, commend us, if you please, to the lord of the soil. One such, who was recently making a visit to the city, was knocked down in the street by an automobile. A sympathizing crowd instantly surrounded him, with condolences and questions.

"Are you hurt, my friend?" kindly asked a gentleman who was foremost among the rescuers, as he helped the sufferer to his feet and brushed the mud and dust from his clothes.

"Well," came the cautious reply, "it ain't done me no good."

Towns Rolls in Wealth.

St. Clairsville, Ohio, is priding itself as being one of the richest towns of its size in the United States. With a population of only 1,500, made up mostly of farmers and coal miners, it has three banks recently had cash deposits amounting to \$2,200,000. The per capita cash wealth of every man, woman and child is therefore \$2,200,000.

Parrots can learn our language, but we are dense to acquire theirs. Once more the empire is undergoing his usual martyrdom.

Advertisement for Baker's Cocoa. Features a circular logo with a woman's silhouette and the text: 'A well made cup of BAKER'S COCOA is a large part of a good meal. It is delicious, is practically all nutrition, the protein matter being appropriated by the system almost to its full extent, and its use saves other more expensive and wasteful foods.' Includes 'Trade-mark on every package.' and 'Book of Choice Recipes sent FREE'. The advertiser is 'WALTER BAKER & CO. Limited' with locations in 'DORCHESTER MASS.' and 'MONTREAL CAN.'. A small illustration of a woman in a dress is also present.

Advertisement for Eddy's 'Silent 500's' matches. Text: 'The SAFEST MATCHES in the WORLD Also the Cheapest! — are EDDY'S "SILENT 500'S" Safest because they are impregnated with a chemical solution which renders the stick "dead" immediately the match is extinguished— Cheapest, because there are more perfect matches to the sized box than in any other box on the market. War time economy and your own good sense, will urge the necessity of buying none but EDDY'S MATCHES.'

Advertisement for Mercury Hosiery. Text: 'This New Hosiery Fits Perfectly Mercury Hosiery is fashioned differently from others. The ankles are narrowed and fit without a wrinkle. The toes and heels are perfectly turned. The calves are full fashioned. The tops are widened, therefore more comfortable than any others. It is seamless from toe to top. While it is only a little more than a year since we started knitting this new Mercury Fashioned Seamless Hosiery it has achieved a wonderful success. Women who have worn one pair invariably purchase more Mercury Hosiery. Such sightly, shapely hosiery has not hitherto been obtainable even in the finest imported lines now off the Canadian market on account of war conditions. Cashmere in black, white, grays and browns. Cottons, Mercerized Lisses, Pure Silks, in all fashionable shades. Mercury Mills, Ltd., Hamilton, Canada.' Includes illustrations of hosiery and the Mercury logo.