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By REX BEACH

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Author of "The Spoilers" and "The Barrier"

HARPER & BROTHERS

(CONTINUED.)

"Indeed! I tried to find some one there, but you were out, of course. You have it arranged very cozily, I see." Mildred's manner was faintly patronizing. She was vexed at the beauty and evident refinement of this woman whom she had thought to find so different.

"If you will go back I will show it to you from the inside, Miss Wayland." Cherry enjoyed her start at the name and the look of cold hostility that followed.

"You have the advantage of me," said Mildred. "I did not think we had met. You are?" She raised her brows inquiringly.

"Cherry Malotte, of course."

"I remember. Mr. Marsh spoke of you."

"I am sorry."

"I beg your pardon?"

"I say I am sorry Mr. Marsh ever spoke of me."

Mildred smiled frigidly. "Evidently you do not like him."

"Nobody in Alaska likes him. Do you?"

"You see, I am not an Alaskan."

"Do you know that Mr. Marsh is to blame for all of Boyd's misfortunes?"

"Boyd's?"

"Yes, Boyd's, of course. Oh, let us not pretend. I call him by his first name. I think you ought to know the truth about this business, even if Boyd is too chivalrous to tell you."

"If Mr. Emerson blames any one but himself for his failure I am sure he would have told me."

"Then you don't know him."

"I never knew him to ask another to defend him."

"He never asked me to defend him. I merely thought that if you knew the truth you might help him."

"I? How?"

"It is for you to find a way. He has met with opposition and treachery at every step. I think it is time some one came to his aid."

"He has had your assistance at all times, has he not?"

"I have tried to help wherever I could, but I haven't your power."

Mildred shrugged her shoulders. "You even went to Seattle to help him, did you not?"

"I went there on my own business."

"Why do you take such an interest in Mr. Emerson's affairs, may I ask?"

"It was I who induced him to take up this venture," said Cherry proudly.

"I found him discouraged, ready to give up. I helped to put new heart into him. I have something at stake in the enterprise, too—but that's nothing. I hate to see a good man driven to the wall by a scoundrel like Marsh."

"Wait! There is something to be said on both sides. Mr. Marsh was magnanimous enough to overlook that attempt upon his life."

"What attempt?"

"You must have heard. He was wounded in the shoulder."

"Didn't Boyd tell you the truth about that?"

"He told me everything," said Mildred coldly. "This woman's attitude was unbearable. It would seem that

"The country is a bit different, but the people are much the same in Katvik and in Chicago. You will find unscrupulous men and unselfish women everywhere."

Mildred gave her a cool glance that took her in from head to foot.

"And vice versa, I dare say. You speak from a wider experience than I." With a careless nod she picked her way toward the launch, where her friends were already assembling. She was angry and suspicious. Her pride was hurt because she had not been able to feel superior to the other woman. Instead she had descended to the weak resource of innuendo, while Cherry had been simple and direct. She had expected to recognize instantly the type of person with whom she had to deal, but she found herself baffled. Who was this woman? What was she doing here? Why had Boyd never told her of this extraordinary intimacy? Boyd must either give up Cherry or—

During the talk between the two young women Constantine had kept at a respectful distance, but when Mildred had gone he came up to Cherry with the question:

"Who is that?"

"That is Miss Wayland. That is the richest girl in the world. Constantine."

"Humph!"

"And the pity of it is she doesn't understand how very rich she is. Her father owns all these canneries and many more besides and lots of railroads. But you don't know what a railroad is, do you?"

"Mebbe him rich as Mr. Marsh, eh?"

"A thousand times richer. Mr. Marsh works for him the way you work for me."

"She more han'somer than you be," he added with reluctant candor.

"Mebbe that's 'bout Mr. Marsh, eh?"

"White men all work for Mr. Marsh. He no work for nobody."

"No; it is true. Mr. Marsh knows how rich she is, and that is why he wants to marry her."

The breed wheeled swiftly. His soft notes crunching the gravel.

"Mr. Marsh want marry her?" he repeated, as if doubting his ears.

"Yes. That is why he has fought Mr. Emerson. They both want to marry her. That is why Marsh broke Mr. Emerson's machinery and hired his men away from him and cut his nets. They hate each other. Do you understand?"

"Me savvy?" said Constantine shortly, then strode on beside the girl. "Me think all the time Mr. Emerson goin' marry you."

Cherry gasped. "No, no! Why he is in love with Miss Wayland."

"S'pose he don't marry her?"

"Then Mr. Marsh will get her, I dare say."

After a moment Constantine announced with conviction. "I guess Mr. Marsh is bad man."

"I'm glad you have discovered that. He has even tried to kill Mr. Emerson. That shows the sort of man he is."

"It's good thing—get marry!" said Constantine vaguely. "The father say if woman don't marry she go to hell."

"I'd hate to think that," laughed the girl.

"That's true," the other affirmed stoutly. "The pries' he say so, and pries' don't lie. He say man takes a woman and don't get marry they both go to hell and burn forever. Bimby little baby come, and he go to hell too."

"Oh, I understand! The father wants to make sure of his people, and he is quite right. You natives haven't observed the law very carefully."

"He say Indian woman stop with white man, she never see Jesus' house no more. She go to hell sure, and baby go too. You s'pose that's true?"

"I dare say it is, in a way."

"By gosh! That's tough on little baby!" exclaimed Constantine fervently.

CHAPTER XX.

ALL that night Boyd stayed at his post, while the cavernous building shuddered and hissed to the straining toll of the machines and the gasping breath of the furnaces. As the darkness gathered he had gone out upon the dock to look regretfully toward the twinkling lights on the Grande Dame, then turned doggedly back to his labors. He would have sent Mildred word, but he had not a single man to spare.

At 10 o'clock the next morning he staggered into his quarters more dead than alive. In his heart was a great thankfulness that Big George had not found him wanting. The last defective machine was mended, the last weakness strengthened, and the plant had reached its fullest stride. The fish might come now in any quantity; the rest was but a matter of coal and iron and human endurance. Meanwhile he would sleep.

He met "Fingerless" Fraser emerging, decked royally in all the splendor of new clothes and spotless linen.

"Where are you going?" Boyd asked.

"To the office."

"To the office?"

"To the office."

"To the office."

"To the office."

"To the office."

"To the office."

"To the office."

"To the office."

"To the office."

(To Be Continued.)

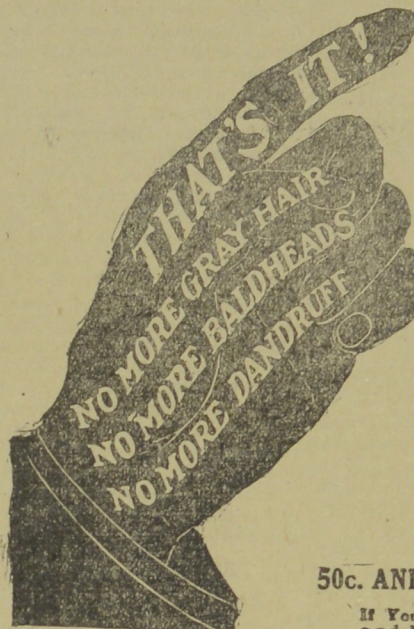
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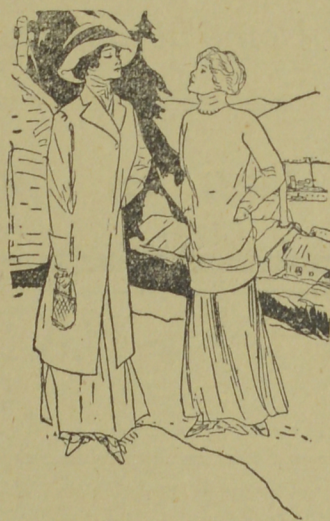
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"NOBODY IN ALASKA LIKES HIM. DO YOU?"

she even dared to criticize her, Mildred Wayland, for her treatment of Boyd.

"I shall ask him about it again this evening," she continued. "If there has really been persecution, as you suggest, I shall tell my father."

"You won't see Boyd this evening," said Cherry.

"Oh, yes, I shall."

"He is very busy, and—I don't think he can see you."

"You don't understand. I told him to come out to the yacht!" Mildred's temper rose at the light she saw in the other woman's face.

"But if he should disappoint you?"

Cherry insisted. "Remember that the fish are running, and you have no time to lose if you are going to help."

Mildred tossed her head. "To be frank with you, I never liked this enterprise of Boyd's. Now that I have seen the place and the people—well, I can't say that I like it better."

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