

# Rex Beach Short Stories

Continued from Last Week

Unconsciously we had both sought a quiet corner, but he had sunk on to a box. Now, as I glanced at him I saw what made me shiver. The fear was there again—naked and ugly—for he held one lonesome letter, and its inscription was in no woman's hand. He had crouched there by my side all this time, staring, staring, staring at it, afraid to read—afraid to open it. Some men smile in their agony, shifting their pitiful masks to the last, others curse, and no two will take their blows alike.

McGill was plucking feebly at the end of his envelope, tearing off tiny bits, dropping the fragments at his feet. Now and then he stopped, and when he did he shuddered.

"Buck up old pal," I said. Then, recognizing me, he thrust the missive into my hand.

"Tell me—for God's sake—tell me quick. I can't—no, no—wait! Not yet. Don't tell me. I'll know from your face. They said she couldn't live—but she had and he watched me so fiercely that when the light came into my face he snatched the letter from me like a madman.

"Ah-h. Give it to me! Give it to me! I know it. I told you they couldn't fool me. No, sir. I felt all the time she'd make it. Why, I knew it in my marrow."

"What's the date?" I inquired.

"Sept. 30," he said. Then, as he realized how old it was, he began to worry again.

"Why didn't they write later? They must know I'll eat my heart out. Suppose she's had a relapse. That's it. They wrote too soon, and now they don't dare tell me. She—got worse—died—months ago, and they're afraid to let me know."

"Stop it," I said and reasoned sanity back into him.

Monty had taken his mail and run off like a puppy to feast in quiet, so I went over to Eckert's and had a drink.

Sam winked at me as I came in. A man was reading from a letter.

"Go on, I'm interested," said the proprietor.

The fellow was getting full pretty fast and was down to the gurgulous stage, but he began again:

"Dear Husband—I am sorry to hear that you have been so unfortunate, but don't get discouraged. I know you will make a good miner if you stick to it long enough. Don't worry about me, I have rented the front room to a very nice man for \$15 a week. The papers here are full of a gold strike in Siberia. Just across Bering sea from where you are. If you don't find something during the next two years why not try it over there for a couple?"

"That's what I call a persevering woman," said Eckert solemnly.

"She's a business woman, too," said the husband. "All I ever got for that room was \$7.50 a week."

It seems I'd missed Montague at the store, but when the crowd came out Ollie Marceau found him away at the back, having gone there to be alone with his letters. She saw the utter abandon and grief in his pose, and the tears came to her eyes. Impulsively she went up and laid her hand on his bowed head. She had followed the frontier enough to know the signs.

"Oh, Mr. Prosser," she said, "I'm so sorry. Is it the little mother?"

said he. "Gue of 'em is going to fall in love, sure, and it won't be reciprocated none. It would serve him right to get it hard, but if she's hit—it'll be too pitiful. You an' I will have to combine forces and beat him up, I reckon."

The days were growing long and warm, the hills were coming bare on the heights, while the snow packed wet at midday when we went into town to sited out grub for the cleanup. We found everybody else there for the same purpose, so the sap began to run through the camp. We were loading at the trading post the next day when I heard the name of Ollie Marceau. It was a big limbed fellow from Alder Creek talking, and, as he showed no liquor in his face, what he said sounded all the worse. I have heard as bad many a time without offense, for there



He Knocked the Man Off the Counter at the First Pass.

is no code of loyalty concerning these girls, but Ollie had got my sympathy somehow, and I resented the remarks, particularly the laughter. So did Prosser, the Puritan. He looked up from his work, white and dangerous.

"Don't talk that way about a girl," said he to the stranger, and it made a sensation among the crowd. I never knew a man before with courage enough to kick in public on such subjects. As it was, the man said something so much worse that right there the front busted out of the tiger cage, and for a few brief moments we were given over to chaos.

I had seen Whitewater walloped, and I knew how full of parlor tricks the kid was, but this time he went insane. He knocked the man off the counter at the first pass and flung him with his hobnails as he lay on the floor. A fight is a fight and a good thing for spectators and participants, for it does more to keep down scum than anything I know of, but the third of those heavy boots into that helpless flesh sickened me, and we rushed Prosser out of there while he struggled like a maniac. I never saw such a complete reversal of corn. Somewhere, away back yonder, that boy's forefathers were pirates or cannibals or butchers.

When the fog had cleared out of his brain the reaction was just as powerful. I took him out alone while the others worked over the Alder Creek party, and all at once my man fell apart like wet sawdust.

"What made me do it?—what made me do it?" he cried. "I'm crazy. Why, I tried to kill him! And yet what he said is true—that's the worst of it—it's true! Think of it, and I fought for her. What am I coming to?"

After the cleanup we came to camp, waiting for the river to break and the first boat to follow. It was then that the suspense began to tell on our partner. He read and reread his letters, but there was little hope in them, and now, with no work to do, he grew nervous. Added to everything else, our food ran short and we lived on scraps of whatever was left over from our winter grubstake. Just out of cussedness the breakup was ten days late, but eventually it came, and a week later also came the mail. We needed food and clothes, we needed whisky, we needed news of the great, distant world, but all we thought of was our mail.

The boy had decided to go home. We were sorry to see him leave, too, for he had the makings of a real man in him even if he shaved three times a week, but no sooner was the steamer tied than he came plunging into my tent like a moose, laughing and dancing in his first gladness. The mother was well again.

Later I went aboard to give him the last lonesome good wishes of the fellow who stays behind and fights alone

for another year. The big freighter, with her neat stateroom and long, glass burdened tables, awoke a perfect panic in me to be going with him, to shake this cruel country and drift back to the home and the wife and the pies like mother made.

I found him on the top deck with the Marceau girl, who was saying goodbye to him. There was a look about her I had never seen before, and all at once the understanding and the bitter irony of it struck me. This poor waif hadn't had enough to stand, so love had come to her, just as Kink had predicted—a hopeless love which she would have to fight the way she fought the whole world. It made me bitter and cynical, but I admired her nerve—she was dressed for the sacrifice, trim and well curried as a \$1,000 pony. Back of her smile, though, I saw the waiting tears, and my heart bled. Spring is a fierce time for romance, anyhow.

There wasn't time to say much, so I squeezed Monty's hand like a cider press.

"God bless you, lad. You must come back to us," I said, but he shook his head, and I heard the girl's breath catch. I continued, "Come on, Ollie. I'll help you ashore."

We stood on the bank there together and watched the last of him, tall and clear cut against the white of the wheelhouse, and it seemed to me when he'd gone that something bright and vital and young had passed out of me, leaving in its stead discouragement and darkness and age.

"Would you mind walking with me up to my cabin?" Ollie asked.

"Of course not," I said, and we went down the long street, past the theater, the trading post, and the saloons, till we came to the hill where her little nest was perched. Every one spoke and smiled to her, and she answered in the same way, although I knew she was on parade and holding herself with firm hands. As we came near to the end her pace quickened, however, and I guessed the panic that was on her to be alone where she could drop her mask and become a woman—a poor, weak, grief-stricken woman. But when we were inside at last her manner astounded me. She didn't throw herself on her couch nor go to pieces, as I had dreaded, but turned on me with burning eyes and her hands tight clinched, while her voice was throaty and hoarse. The words came tumbling out in confusion.

"I've let him go," she said. "Yes, and you helped me. Only for you I'd have broken down, but I want you to know I've done one good thing at last in my miserable life. I've held in. He never knew—he never knew. Oh, God, what fools men are!"

"Yes," I said, "you did mighty well. He's a sensitive chap, and if you'd broken down he'd have felt awful bad."

"What?" She grasped me by the coat lapels and shook me. Yes! That weak little woman shook me, while her face went perfectly livid. "He'd have felt badly, eh? Man, man! Didn't you see? Are you blind? Why, he asked me to go with him. He asked me to marry him. Think of it—that great, wonderful man asked me to be his wife—me—Ollie Marceau, the dancer! Oh, oh! Isn't it funny? Why don't you laugh?"

I didn't laugh. I stood there picking pieces of fur out of my cap and wondering if ever I should see another woman like this one. She paced about over the skin rug, tearing at the throat of her dress as if it choked her. There were no tears in her eyes, but her whole frame shook and shuddered as if from great cold, deep set in her bones.

"Why didn't you go?" I asked stupidly. "You love him, don't you?"

"You know why I didn't go," she cried fiercely. "I couldn't. How could I go back and meet his mother? Some day she'd find me out, and it would spoil his life. No, no! If only she hadn't recovered—no, I don't mean that either. I'm not his kid, that's all. Ah, God, I let him go—I let him go, and he never knew."

She was writhing now on her bed in a perfect frenzy, calling to him brokenly, stretching out her arms with great dry, coughing sobs wrenched her.

"Little one," she said unsteadily, and my throat ached so that I couldn't trust myself. "You're a brave girl, and you're his kind or anybody's kind."

With that the rain came, and so I left her alone with her comforting misery. When I told Kink he sputtered like a plowheel, and every evening thereafter we two went up to her house and sat with her. We could do this because she'd quit the theater the day the boat took Prosser away, and she wouldn't heed Eckert's offers to go back.

"I'm through with it for good," she told us, "though I don't know what else I'm good for. You see, I don't know anything useful, but I suppose I can learn."

"Now, if I wasn't married already"—I said.

"Humph!" snorted Kink. "I ain't so young as either one of my partners,

miss, but I'm possessed of rare intellectual treasures." She laughed at both of us.

When a week had passed after the first boat went down with Prosser we

began to look for the first upriver steamer, bringing word direct from the outside world. It came one midnight, and as we were getting dressed to go to the landing our tent was torn open and Montague tumbled in upon us.

"What brought you back?" we questioned when we'd finished mauling him. It was June, and the nights were as light as day in this latitude, so we could see his face plainly.

"Why—er—" he hesitated for an instant, then threw back his head, squared his great young shoulders and looked us in the eyes, while all his embarrassment fled.

"I came back to marry Olive Marceau," said he. "I came to take her back home to the little mother."

He stared out wistfully at the distant southern mountains, effulgent and glorified by the midnight sun which lay so close behind their crests, and I winked at Martin.

"She's left!"

"What?" he whirled quickly.

"—the theater, and I don't suppose you can see her until tomorrow." Disappointment darkened his face.

"Besides," Kink added gloomily, "when you quit her like a dog I sicken myself up some, and I ain't anyways sure she'll care to see you now—only just as a friend of mine. Notice I've cut my whiskers, don't you?"

We made Monty pay for that instant's hesitation, the last he ever had, and then I said:

"You walk up the river trail for a quarter of a mile and wait. If I can persuade her to come out at this hour I'll send her to you. No, you couldn't find her. She's moved since you left."

"I wouldn't gamble none on her meetin' you," Martin said discouragingly, and combed out his new mown beard with ostentation.

She was up the moment I knocked, and when I said that a man needed help I heard her murmur sympathetically as she dressed. When we came to our tent I stopped her.

"He's up yonder a piece," said I. "You run along while I fetch Kink and the medicine kit. We'll overtake you."

"Is it anything serious?"

"Yes, it's apt to be, unless you hurry. He seems to think he needs you pretty badly"—and so she went up the river trail to where he was waiting, her way golden with the beams of the sun whose rim peeped at her over the far-off hills. And there, in the free, still air, among the virgin spruce, with the clean, sweet moss beneath their feet, they met. The good sun smiled broadly at them now, and the grim Yukon hurried past, chuckling under its banks and swigging among the roots, while the song it sang was of spring and of long, bright days that had no night.

Described.

"Pa, what is money mania?"

"An incurable disease, my boy, and your mother has it." — Detroit Free Press

308 X YES IS A VOTE FOR YOUR CHILDREN

ONE NORMAL, NOT ENOUGH

Oregon has but one Normal School. This school is located at Monmouth. Excellent as is the work of this school it is utterly unable to supply but a small part of the need for trained teachers for the State.

Of more than 6,000 school teachers in the public schools of Oregon, but 13 per cent have been trained for their profession of teaching in Normal Schools.

It is a well established fact that our one Normal School cannot supply the needs of the entire state. That is why we ask for your work and vote for the proposed Eastern Oregon State Normal School at Pendleton, Oregon.

GIVE EASTERN OREGON SQUARE DEAL

Eight counties in the Willamette Valley have employed during the past five years, 233 teachers who have graduated from the Monmouth Normal as against 39 Monmouth Normal School graduates for the eight leading counties of Eastern Oregon.

## Don't Let Skin Troubles Spread

Trivial blemishes are sometimes the first warning of serious skin diseases. Neglected skin troubles grow. Dr. Hobson's Eczema Ointment promptly stops the progress of eczema, heals stubborn cases of pimples, acne, blotchy, red and scaly skin. The anti-septic qualities of Dr. Hobson's Eczema Ointment kill the germ and prevent the spread of the trouble. For cold sores or chapped hands, Dr. Hobson's Eczema Ointment offers prompt relief. At your Druggist, 50c.

Youngs Bay shipyards now have 7 large ocean going vessels on ways employing 400 skilled workmen.

## COME TO the new Tin Shop in Lents 91 and Foster STOVEPIPE ELBOWS STOVE and FURNACE REPAIRING

We make all kinds of chicken supplies, champion Sanitary Fountains, Grit and Shell Boxes, Dry and Wet Mash Hoppers and Troughs.

We will Make Anything You Want out of Sheet Metal GUTTERING and ROOFING

Bring in Your Repairing, No Job too Small

A. PEARCE

## The Herald is Only \$1.00 Per Year DO IT NOW!

**PATENTS**

Established 1889. We have a complete description of your invention. We are free to search and report on patentability. We set patents or no fees. Write for our free book of 200 needed inventions.

**D. SWIFT & CO.**  
Patent Lawyers, Estab. 1889.  
307 Seventh St., Washington, D. C.

## At The Churches

**Arlita Baptist Church**  
9:45 a. m. Bible School.  
11 a. m. Preaching service.  
8:00 p. m. Evening services.  
7:30 p. m. B. Y. P. U. meeting.  
8:00 Thursday Prayer meeting.  
Everybody welcome to any and all of these services.  
W. T. S. Spriggs, pastor.

**Millard Avenue Presbyterian Church**  
10 a. m. Sabbath School.  
11 a. m. Morning worship.  
7:30 p. m. Y. P. S. C. E.  
7:45 p. m. Evening worship.  
7:30 p. m. Thursday, midweek service.  
8 p. m. Thursday, choir practice.  
Rev. Wm. H. Amos, Pastor.

**St. Peter's Catholic Church**  
Sundays:  
8 a. m. Low Mass.  
10:30 a. m. High Mass.  
8:30 a. m. Sunday School.  
12 m. Choir rehearsal.  
Week days: Mass at 8 a. m.

**Seventh Day Adventist Church**  
10 a. m. Saturday Sabbath School.  
11 a. m. Saturday preaching.  
7:30 p. m. Wednesday, Prayer meeting  
7:45 p. m. Sunday preaching.

**Kern Park Christian Church**  
Corner 69th St. and 46th Ave. S. E.  
10 a. m. Bible School.  
11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. preaching service.  
6:30 p. m. Christian Endeavor.  
7:30 p. m. Thursday, mid-week prayer meeting.  
A cordial welcome to all.  
Rev. G. K. Berry, Pastor.

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church**  
One block south of Woodmere station.  
Holy Communion the first Sunday of each month at 8 p. m. No other services that day.  
Every other Sunday the regular services will be as usual.  
Evening Prayer and sermon at 4 p. m.  
Sunday School meets at 3 p. m. B. Boatwright, Supt., L. Maffett, Sec.  
Rev. O. W. Taylor Rector.

**Lents Evangelical Church**  
Sermon by the Pastor, 11 a. m. and 7:15 p. m.  
Sunday School 9:45 a. m., Albert Fankhauser, Superintendent.  
Y. P. A. 6:45 p. m. Paul Bradford, President.  
Prayer meeting Thursday 8 p. m.  
A cordial welcome to all.  
T. R. Hornsuech, Pastor.

**Lents Friend's Church**  
9:45 a. m. Bible School, Clifford Barker Superintendent.  
11:00 a. m. Preaching services.  
6:25 p. m. Christian Endeavor.  
7:30 p. m. Preaching Services.  
8:00 p. m. Thursday, mid-week prayer meeting.  
A cordial welcome to all these services.  
John Riley, Pastor.

**Lents Baptist Church**  
Lord's Day, Bible School 9:45 a. m.  
Morning worship, 11 a. m.  
Elmo Heights Sunday School, 2:30 p. m.  
B. Y. P. U., 6:30 p. m.  
Evening worship, 7:30 p. m.  
A cordial welcome to these services.  
J. M. Nelson, Pastor.

**Fifth Church of Christ**  
Fifth Church of Christ, Scientist of Portland, Ore. Myrtle Park Hall, Myrtle Park.  
Services Sunday 11 a. m.  
Sunday School 9:30 and 11 a. m.  
Wednesday evening testimonial meeting 8 p. m.

**Lents M. E. Church**  
Sunday School 9:45 a. m.  
Preaching 11:00 a. m.  
Services at Bennett Chapel at 3 p. m.  
Epworth League 6:30 p. m.  
Preaching 7:30 p. m.  
Prayer meeting Thursday evening at 7:30.  
W. E. F. Browne, pastor.  
Residence 5703 8th St.

**Laurelwood M. E. Church**  
9:45 a. m. Sunday school.  
11:00 a. m. preaching.  
12:30 a. m. class meeting.  
6:30 p. m. Epworth League.  
7:30 p. m. preaching.  
The pastor is assisted by a chorus choir and the Amphion Male Quartette.  
8:00 p. m. Thursday evening, prayer service.  
Dr. C. R. Carlos, pastor.

**German Evangelical Reformed Church**  
Corner Woodstock Ave., and 87th St.  
Rev. W. G. Lienkaemper, pastor.  
Sunday School 10 a. m.  
Morning Worship, 11 a. m.  
Y. P. S. at 7:30 p. m.  
German School and Catechetical Class Saturday 10 a. m.

**Third United Brethren Church**  
10 a. m. Sunday School.  
11 a. m. Preaching.  
3 p. m. Junior Christian Endeavor.  
6:30 p. m. Senior Christian Endeavor.  
7:30 p. m. Preaching.

**Brentwood M. E. Church**  
10 a. m. Sunday School.  
11 a. m. Preaching service.  
Rev. W. L. Wilson, Pastor.

**LODGE DIRECTORY**  
Magnolia Camp No. 4026, Royal Neighbors, meets regular Second and Fourth Wednesdays of each month at I. O. O. F. Hall. Second Wednesdays social meeting. Neighbors bring your families and friends. Fourth Wednesday, business. All Neighbors requested to come. By order of the Camp.



"He asked me to marry him. Think of it."

Eastern Oregon State Normal School Committee  
By J. H. Gwinn, Secy., Pendleton, Ore.

(Paid advertisement)