

Rex Beach Short Stories

Continued from Last Week

scrambled out of bed, shouting lustily through their livid gums, their bloated features mottled and sickly with fright. One even lifted himself toward his rifle, and it fell from his hands full cocked when Buck hurled him into a corner, where he lay screaming in agony.

Drawn by the uproar, the stampede outside rushed toward the shack, to be met in the door by the young man.

"Keep back!"

"What's up?"

"Fight!"

"Let me in!"

A man bolted forward, but was met with such a driving blow in the face that he went crashing to the slush. Another was hurled back, and then they heard Crowley's voice, rough and throaty as he abused the recorder. Strained to the snapping point, his restraint had shattered to bits, and now passion ran through him, wild and unbridled.



Crowley Strangled Him.

from his words they grasped the situation, and their sympathies changed. They crowded the door and gazed curiously through the window, to see him jam the recorder shapelessly into a chair, place pen and ink in his hand and force him to execute two receipts. It is not a popular practice, this blanketing, as the temper of the watchers showed.

"Serves 'em right, the legs!" some one said, and he voiced the universal sentiment.

That night as they ravened over their meager meal Knute came to them beating. He was greatly worried, and apprehension wrinkled his wooden face.

"Say, w'at you t'ink 'bout Sully?"

"I don't know. Why?"

"By jingo, ay t'ink he's lost!"

"Lost! How's that?"

In his dialect, broken by anxiety, he told how Sully and he had quarreled on the big divide. Maddened by failure to gain on Crowley, the former had insisted on following the mountain crests in the hope of quicker travel. The Swede had yielded reluctantly till, frightened by the network of radiating gulches which spread out beneath their feet in a bewildering sameness, he had refused to go farther. They had quarreled. In a bit of fury Sully had hurled his pack away, and Knute's last vision of him had been as he went, raving and cursing, onward like a madman, traveling fast in his fury. Knute had retreated, dropped into the valley and eventually reached his goal.

There is no time for regrets on a stampede. The gentler emotions are left in camp with the women. He who would risk life, torture and privation for a stranger will trample pitilessly on friend and enemy blinded by the gold glitter or drunken with the chase of the rainbow.

For five days and nights the army lived on its feet, streaming up gullies where lay the hint of wealth or swarming over the slobber bluffs. And hourly the madness grew, feeding on itself till they fought like beasts. Fabulous values were begotten. Giant sales were bruited about. Flying rumors of gold at the cross roots inflamed them to further frenzy.

A town site was laid out, and a terrible scramble for lots ensued.

One man was buried in the plot he claimed, his disputant being adjudged the owner by virtue of his quicker draw. It was manslaughter, they knew, but no one spared the time to guard him, so he went free. Nor did he run away. One cannot while the craze is on.

Five days of this, and then the stream broke. With it broke the de-

struction of the snow. The valleys roared and bawled from bluff to bluff, while the flats became seas of seething ice and rubbish. Thus, cut off from home they found their grub was gone, for every one had clung till his food grew low. As the obsession left them their brotherhood returned. Food was apportioned in community, and they spoke vaguely of the fate of Sully.

For still another half fortnight they lay about the cabin, while the stream raged, and then Crowley spoke to his partner. Rolling their blankets, they started, and, although many were tempted to go, none had the courage, preferring to starve on quarter rations till the waters lowered.

Ascending for miles, where the torrent narrowed they felled a tree across for a bridge and, ascending the ridges, took the direction of camp. In a new and broken country, not formed of continuous ranges, this is difficult. So to avoid frequent fordings they followed the high ground, going devious, crossing miles. The snows were largely gone, though the nights were cruel, and thus they traveled fast, albeit unasily.

At last, when they had worked through to the Yukon spurs, one morning on a talus high above Buck spied the flapping forms of a flock of ravens. They fluttered ceaselessly among the rocks, rising noisily, only to settle again.

These are the gleaming, baleful vultures of the north, and often they attain a considerable size and ferocity. The men gazed at them with apathy. Was it worth while to spend the step to see what drew them? By following their course they would pass far to the left.

"I hate the things," said Crowley, "crossly. 'I seen 'em onct hangin' to a caribou calf with a broken leg, tryin' to pick his eyes out. Let's see what it is."

He veered to the left, scrambling up among the boulders. The birds rose fretfully, perching near by, but the men saw nothing. As they rested momentarily the birds again swooped downward, reassured.

Then, partly hidden among the detritus, they spied that which made Crowley cry out in horror, while the sound of Buck's voice was like the choking of a woman. As they started one of the ebony scavengers dipped fiercely, picking at a ragged object. A human arm slowly arose and blindly beat it off, but the raven's mate set it also and, sinking its beak into the object, tore hungrily.

"With a shout they stumbled forward, favored by the jagged slide rock, only to pause, aghast and shaking."

Sully lay crouched against a bowl of ice, where he had crawled from the ravens' heat. Rags of clothing hung upon his gaunt frame, through which the sharp bones strove to pierce. At sight of his hands and feet they shuddered. With the former he had covered his eyes from the raven, but his cheeks and head were bloody and shredded. He muttered constantly, like the thick whirring of machinery run down.

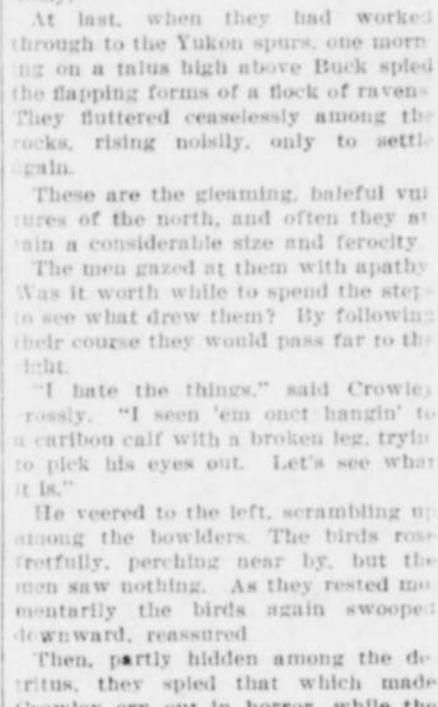
"Oh, my God!" Buck whispered.

Crowley had mastered himself and knelt beside the figure. He looked up, and tears lay on his cheeks.

"Look at them hands and feet! That was done by fire and frost together. He must have fell in his own campfire after he went crazy."

The garments were burned off to elbow and knee, while the flesh was black and raw.

Tenderly they carried the gabbing creature down to the timber and laid



One of the Ebony Scavengers Dipped Fiercely.

him on a bed of boughs. His condition told the grim tale of his wanderings, crazed with hunger and hardship. Heating water, they poured it into him, dressing his wounds with strips from their underclothes. Of stim-



One of the Ebony Scavengers Dipped Fiercely.

ulants they had none, but fed him the last pinch of flour together with the final rasher of salt pork, although they knew that these things are not good for starving men. For many days they had traveled on less than quarter rations themselves.

"What will we do?"

"It ain't over twenty miles to the Niggers. He'll die before we can get help back. D'ye reckon we can carry him?"

It was not sympathy which prompted Crowley, but he sympathized with his boyish companion whose sufferings it hurt him sorely to augment. It was not pity. He pitied himself and his own deplorable condition. Nor did mercy enter into his processes, for the man had mercilessly planned to kill him and he likewise had nursed a bitter hatred for the man which misfortune could only dim. It was not these things which moved him, but a vaguer, wilder quality—an elemental, unspoken, undefinable feeling of brotherhood throughout the length of the north, teaching subtly, yet absolutely, and without appeal, that no man shall be left in his extremity to the cruel harshness of this forbidding land.

"Carry him?" Buck cried. "No! You're crazy! What's the use? He'll die anyhow, and so'll we if we don't get grub soon." Buck was new to the country, and he was a boy.

"No, he won't. He lived hard, and he'll die hard, for he's a corker, he is. We've got to pack him in!"

"By heaven, I won't risk my life for a corpse, especially one like him!" The lad broke out in hysterical panic, for he had lived on the raggedest edge of his nerve these many days. Now his every muscle was dead and numbed with pain. Only his mind was clear, caused by the effort to force movement into his limbs. When he stopped walking he fell into a half slumber, which was acutely painful. When he arose to retire his weary body it became frenzied, so that he fell or collided with trees. He was bloody and bruised and out. Carry a dead man? It was madness, and besides, he felt an utter giving away at every joint.

He was too tired to make his reasoning plain. His tongue was thick and Crowley's brain too caloused to grasp argument. Therefore he squatted beside the muttering creature and wept impotently. He was asleep, with tears in his stubble beard, when his partner finished the rude litter, yet he took up his end of the burden, as Crowley knew he would.

"You'll kill us both!" he growled.

"Probably so, but we can't leave him to them things." The other nodded at the vampires perched observantly in the surrounding firs.

Then began their great trial and temptation. For hours on end the birds dattered from tree to tree, always in sight and hoarsely complaining till the sick fancies of the men distorted them into foul gibing creatures of the pit screaming with devilish glee at their anguish. Blindly they staggered through the forest while the limbs reached forth to block them, thrusting sharp needles into their eyes or whipping back viciously. Vines writhed up their legs, straining to delay their

march, and the dank moss curled ankle deep, sily tripping their dragging, swollen feet. Nature hindered them sullenly, with all her heart breaking implacability. They reeled constantly under their burden and grew to hate the ragged barbed trees that smote them so cruelly and so roughly tore their flesh. Ofttimes they fell, rolling the manne limply from his couch, but they dragged him back and strained forward to the hideous racket of his mumbledings which grew louder as his delirium increased. They were forced to stop his ghastly shriekings. At every pause the dismal ravens croaked and leered evilly from the shadows till Buck shuddered and hid his face while Crowley gnashed his teeth. From time to time other birds joined them in anticipation of the feast (8) they were ringed about, and the sight of this ever growing, grisly, clamorous flock of watchers became awful to the men. They felt the horny talons searching their flesh and the beak's tearing at their eyeballs.

A dog sled and birch bark practice covering both banks of the Yukon for 200 miles yielded Doc Lewis sufficient revenue to grub stake a Swede. Thus he slept warm, kept his feet dry and was still a miner. He did not believe in hardship and eschewed stampedes. Yet when he had seen the last able-bodied man vanish from camp on the Skookum run he grew restless. He scoffed at fake excitements to Jarvis, the fero dealer, who also forbore the trail by virtue of his calling, but he got no satisfaction.

A fortnight later he rolled his blankets and journeyed toilsomely up the river valley.

"Better late than never," he thought.

Arriving at the empty shack of the negroes, he camped, only to awaken during the night to the roar of the torrent at his door. Having seen other mountain streams in the break-up, he waited philosophically, hunting ptarmigan among the firs back of the cabin.

He had lost track of the days, when, down the gulch, in the morning light he descried a strange party approaching.

Two men bore between them a stretcher made from their shirts. They crawled with dreadful slowness, resting every 100 feet. Moreover, they stumbled and staggered aimlessly through the niggerheads. As they drew near he sighted their faces, from which the teeth grinned in a grimace of torture and through which the cheek bones seemed to penetrate.

He knew what the signs boded. For years he had ministered to these necessities, and no man had ever approached his success.

"It is the rape of the north they are

going," he signed. "We ravage her stores, but she takes grim toll from all of us." He moved the hot water forward on the stove, cleared off the rude table and laid out his instrument case.

CHERRYVILLE

Just before the battle!

Use your best judgment and let reason rule and not prejudice and partisanship next Tuesday.

Teddy talks no more about social justice nor Perkins the former Big Bull Moose about his fears for the future of his grand children if the present system continues.

The Socialist meeting at the school house last Friday night was well attended considering the size of the community and the speakers were given close attention. The first speaker was Mr. King of Logan, a candidate for County Commissioner on the Socialist ticket and he dwelt upon the social evil without appeal, that no man shall be left in his extremity to the cruel harshness of this forbidding land.

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A. PEARCE

GILBERT

The members of the Bennett Chapel M. E. Church gave a reception last Saturday evening in honor of the new pastor and his wife, Rev. and Mrs. Zimmerman. The evening was greatly enjoyed by all present.

Clinton Johnson made the trip to Newport with Fred Dozier last week. He will visit there a few days before returning home.

Mrs. L. LaMear and children expect to spend some time visiting at the home of her daughter, Mrs. W. McLain of Sellwood.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Abbott and family spent Sunday at the home of Mrs. Abbott's parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Calkins.

Mrs. J. Brandt left Saturday for Baker, Oregon, where she will spend the winter with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dustin. Mr. Brandt is also in Baker where he is engaged in the carpenter business.

Fred Peters of Belrose died Wednesday evening of a lingering illness. He leaves a wife.

Members of the board met Wednesday evening at the school house to confer with insurance agents in reference to insuring the buildings.

Rev. D. C. McCole of Buckley avenue was seriously hurt by being knocked down by an automobile in the city Monday afternoon at Sandy road and 31st street. He is in the hospital.

Boys of the neighborhood got a good scare Tuesday evening. They ran Mrs. Alice Kelleen's wagon to Armand as a Halloween prank. Hearing Deputy Calkins was going after them they thoughtfully brought it home.

Stop The First Cold

A cold does not get well of itself. The process of wearing out a cold wears you out, and your cough becomes serious if neglected. Hacking coughs drain the energy and sap the vitality. For 47 years the happy combination of soothing antiseptic balsams in Dr. King's New Discovery has healed coughs and relieved congestion. Young and old can testify to the effectiveness of Dr. King's New Discovery for coughs and colds. Buy a bottle today at your Druggist, 50c.

Appreciation

"How was the concert last night?" asked the low browed person.

"Splendid," replied the lover of music. "Signor Spodell actually made his violin talk."

"It's remarkable what some of those fellows can do with a fiddle. I heard a chap in vaudeville once who could imitate the howling of a dog to perfection."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

At The Churches

Arleta Baptist Church

9:45 a. m. Bible School.

11 a. m. Preaching service.

8:30 p. m. Evening services.

7:30 p. m. B. Y. P. U. meeting.

8:30 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. Pauls 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. 8:45 p. m. Paul Bradford, President.

Prayer meeting Thursday 8 p. m.

A cordial welcome to all.

T. R. Hornschuch, 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 and Nettie Riley, Pastors.

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. Bible Study Class, 5:30 p. m. Epworth League 6:30 p. m. Preaching 7:30 p. m. Prayer meeting Thursday evening at 7:30.

F. M. Jasper, pastor. Residence 5703 83rd 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.

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.

Free Methodist Church

Sunday School, 10 a. m. Preaching, 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. Prayer meeting, Wednesday 7:30 p. m. All are cordially invited to attend these services.

Robert H. Clark, 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.

Toledo votes down a 12 mill special tax levy.

Richland will bond for a \$15,000 water system.