

CENTRAL POINT HERALD

S. A. PATTISON, PUBLISHER.

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"5,000 IN 1912"

GOVERNMENT COMPETITION.

Many merchants complain about mail order house competition, but the operation of these houses dwindle in comparison to what a printing office is up against. The post office department has not only distributed circulars and cards in every post office, not only advising every one to buy stamped envelopes, but agreeing to print a return card upon lots of 500 or more. Not satisfied with this they are now sending out circulars in government envelopes, on which is printed, in place of the usual stamp, "Penalty for private use to avoid payment of postage, \$300." Now, mind you, here is the great government of the United States trying to monopolize the envelope business of the country. The name of every patron of the post office is furnished free, the letters are mailed free, the stamp and envelopes cost nothing, and the people pay for the making of the envelopes, printing of circulars, etc. The only reason we can see for this extra effort to dispose of envelopes is that a company in Dayton, Ohio, has secured the government contract, and are pushing the business at the expense of the people of the United States of America; and manifestly to the injury of the printing trades. The people should know this and every senator and representative in congress should take action in the matter.—Ex.

THE BARRIER

By Rex Beach

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(Continued.)

He said that he had; that for twenty years he had been on the frontier and knew it from west Texas to the circle. "I've never known anything except this." She swept the points of the compass with her arm. "And there is so much beyond that I want to know about. Oh, I feel so ignorant! There is something now that perhaps you could tell me, you have traveled so much." "Let's have it," said he, smiling at her seriousness. She hesitated, at a loss for words, finally blurted out what was in her mind: "My father is a squaw man. Mr. Stark, and I've been raised to think that such things are customary." "They are in all new countries," he assured her. "But how are they regarded when civilization comes along?" "Well, they aren't regarded, as a rule. Squaw men are pretty shiftless, and people don't pay much attention to them. I guess if they weren't they wouldn't be squaw men." "My father isn't shiftless," she challenged, at which he remained silent, refusing to go on record. "Isn't a half breed just as good as a white?" "Look here," said he. "What are you driving at?" "I'm a 'blood,'" she declared rock-lessly, "and I want to know what people think of me. The men around here have never made me feel conscious of it, but—" "You're afraid of these new people who are coming, eh? Well, don't worry about that, miss. It wouldn't make any difference to me or to any of your friends whether you were red, white, black or yellow." "But it would make a difference with some people," insisted the girl. "Oh, I reckon it would with eastern people. They look at things kind of funny. But we're not in the east." "That's what I wanted to know. Nice people back there wouldn't tolerate a girl like me for a moment, would they?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "I guess you'd have a hard time breaking in among the 'bontonnors.' But what's the use of thinking about it? This is your country, and these are your people."

A morbid desire was upon her to track down this intangible racial distinction, but she saw Runyon, whom she could not bear, coming toward them, so thanked Stark hurriedly and went on her way.

"Been making friends with that squaw, eh?" remarked Runyon casually.

"Yes," replied Stark. "She's a nice little girl, and I like her. I told her I didn't have any part in that miners' meeting affair."

"Hub! What's the matter with you? It was all your doing."

"I know it was, but I didn't aim it at her. I wanted that ground next to Lee's, and I wanted to throw a jolt into Old Man Gale. I couldn't let the girl stand in my way, but now that it's over I'm willing to be friends with her."

"Me too. By heaven, she's as graceful as a fawn. She's white too. Nobody would ever know she was a freed."

"She's a good girl," said Stark musingly in a gentle tone that Runyon had never heard before.

"Getting kind of mushy, ain't you? I thought you had passed that stage-old man."

"No; I don't like her in that way." "I'll lay you a little eight to five that Burrell has thrown her down," chuckled Runyon.

"I never thought of that. You may be right."

"If it's true I'll shuffle up a hand for that soldier."

Meanwhile Neela had passed on out of the town and through the Indian village at the mouth of the creek until high up on the slopes she saw Allana and the little ones. She climbed up to them and seated herself where she could look far out over the westward valley, with the great stream flowing half a mile beneath her. She stayed there all the morning, and, although the day was bright and the bushes bending with their burden of blue, she picked no berries, but fought resolutely through a dozen varying moods that mirrored themselves in her delicate face. It was her first soul struggle, but in time the buoyancy of youth and the almighty optimism of early love prevailed. And so she was in a happier frame of mind when the little company made their descent at midday.

As they approached the town they heard the familiar cry of "Steam-bo-o-at!" and by the time they had reached home the little camp was noisy with the plaint of wolf dogs. There were few men to join in the welcome today, every able-bodied inhabitant having disappeared into the hills, but the animals came trooping lastly to the bank and sat down on their haunches, watching the approaching steamer, in their soft eyes the sadness of a canine race of slaves.

The deserted aspect of the town puzzled the captain of the steamer, and upon landing he made his way at once to John Gale's store, where he learned from the trader of the strike and of the stampede that had resulted. Before the recital was finished a man approached and spoke excitedly:

"Captain, my ticket reads to Dawson, but I'm getting off here. Won't you have my outfit put ashore?" He was followed by a group of fellow passengers, who made a similar request.

"This place is good enough for me," one of them said.

"Me, too," another volunteered. "This strike is new, and we've hit her just in time."

Outside a dozen men had crowded "No Creek" Lee against the wall of the store and were clamoring to hear about his find.

Stark wasted no time. With money in his hands, he secured a dozen men who were willing to work for hire, for there are always those who prefer the surety of ten coined dollars to the hope of a hundred. He swooped down with these helpers on his pile of merchandise that had lain beneath tarpaulins on the river bank since the day he and Runyon landed, and by midafternoon a great tent had been stretched over a framework of peeled poles built on the lot where he and Neela had stood earlier in the day. Before dark his saloon was running. To be sure, there was no floor, and his polished fixtures looked strangely new and incongruous, but the town at large had assumed a similar air of incompleteness and crude immaturity, and little wonder, for it had grown threefold in half a day. Stark swiftly unpacked his gambling implements, keen to scent every advantage, and out of the handful of pale faced jackals who follow at the heels of a healthy herd he hired men to run them and to deal.

By night Flambeau was a mining camp.

CHAPTER X.

MEADE BURRELL FINDS A PATH IN THE MOONLIGHT.

"NO CREEK" LEE had come into his own at last and was a hero, for the story of his long ill luck was common gossip now, and men praised him for his courage. He had never been praised for anything before and was uncertain just how to take it.

"Say, are these people kiddin' me?" he inquired confidentially of Poleon.

"Why? What you mean?"

"Well, there's a feller makin' a speech about me down by the landin'."

"What he say?"

"It ain't nothin' to fight over. He says I'm another Dan'l Boon, leadin' the march of empire westward. Certainly sounds good, but is it on the level?"

"Waal, I guess so," admitted Poleon. The prospector swelled with indignation.

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"Then why in a— didn't you fellers tell me long ago?"

The scanty ounce or two of gold from his claim lay in the scales at the post, where every newcomer might examine it, and, realizing that he was a never ending source of information, they fawned on him for his tips, bribing him with newspapers worth \$1 each or with cigars, which he wrapped up carefully and placed in his mackinaw till every pocket of the rusty garment bulged so that he could not sit without losing them. They dwelt upon his lightest word and stood him up beside the bar, where they filled him with proofs of friendliness until he shed tears from his one good eye.

Cautiously at first he let out his wit, which was lacy from long disuse and as heavy on its feet as the jumping frog of Calaveras, but when they laughed at its labored leaps and sallies his confidence grew. With the regularity of a clock he planted cigars and ordered "a little more hard stuff," while his roving eye rejoiced in lachrymose profusion, its overburdened lodging itself in the tangle of his careless beard. By and by he wandered through the town, trailed by a troop of tenderfeet, till the women marked him, whereupon he fled back to the post and hugged the bar, for he was a bashful man. When Stark's new place opened it offered him another retreat, of which he availed himself, for some time. But late in the evening he reappeared at Old Man Gale's store, walking a bit unsteadily, and as he mounted the flight of logs to the door he stepped once too often.

"What's become of that fourth step?" he demanded sharply of Poleon.

"Dere she is," said the Frenchman.

"I'm blamed if it is. You moved it since I was here."

"I'll have 'im put back," laughed the other.

"Say, it's a grand thing to be rich, ain't it?"

"I don't know. I ain't never try it."

"Well, it is, and now that I've arrived I'm goin' to change my ways complete. No more extravagance in mine. I'll never lend another cent."

"What's dat?" ejaculated Doret in amazement.

"No more hard luck stories and 'hurry ups' for mine. I'm the stony hearted feller, I ain, from now, henceforth, world 'thout end, amen! No busted miners need apply. I've been a good thing, but tonight I turn on the time lock."

"Ba gosh! You're founy feller," laughed Poleon, who had lent the one eyed man much money in the past and, like others, regarded him not merely as a bad risk, but as a total loss.

"Mebbe you t'ink you've been a spender' all dese year."

Doret took the hero of the day by the arm and led him to the rear of the store, where he bedded him on a pile of flour sacks, but he had hardly returned to the bar when Lee came veering out of the dimness, making for the light like a ship tacking toward a beacon.

"What kind of flour is that?" he spluttered.

"Dat's just plain wheat flour."

"Not on your life," said the miner, with the firmness of a great conviction. "It's full of yeast powders. Why, it's 'artin' and risin' like a buckin' hoss. I'm plumb seasick." He laid a zigzag course for the door.

"Where you goin'?" asked Poleon. "I'm goin' to get somethin' for this stomach trouble. It's fierce." He descended into the darkness boldly and stepped off with confidence—this time too soon. Poleon heard him floundering about, his indignant voice raised irascibly, albeit with a note of triumph.

"Wh'd I tell you? You put that step back while I was ashleep." Then, whistling blithely, if somewhat out of tune, he steered for the new saloon to get something for his "stomach trou-

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