# The Spoilers.

By REX E. BEACH.

. by Rex E. Beach. -:-

begged the captain. "I am the only one at fault. Oh, I had to get away! I have papers here that must be delivered quickly." She laid a hand upon her bosom. "They couldn't be trusted to the unsettled mail service. It's almost life and death. And I assure you there is no need of putting me in quarantine. I haven't the smallpox I wasn't even exposed to it."

"There's nothing else to do," said Stephens. "I'll isolate you in the deck smoking cabin. God knows what these madmen on board will do when they hear about it, though. They're apt to tear you to shreds. They're crazy!"

Glenister had been thinking rapidly. "If you do that, you'll have mutiny in an hour. This isn't the crowd to stand that sort of thing."

"Bah! Let 'em try it. I'll put 'em The officer's square jaws down." clicked.

"Maybe so; but what then? We reach Nome and the health inspector hears of smallpox suspects, then we're

all quarantined for thirty days; 800 of us. We'll lie at Egg island all summer while your company pays five thousand a day for this ship. That's not all. The firm is liable in damages for your carelessness in letting disease aboard."

"My carelessness!" The old man ground his teeth.

"Yes; that's what it amounts to. You'll ruin your owners, all right. You'll tie up your ship and lose your job, that's a cinch!"

Captain Stephens wiped the moisture from his brow angrily.

"My carelessness! Curse you-you say it well! Don't you realize that I am criminally liable if I don't take every precaution?" He paused for a moment, considering. "I'll hand her over to the ship's doctor."

"See here, now," Glenister urged. "We'll be in Nome in a week-before the young lady would have time to show symptoms of the disease, even if she were going to have it-and a thousand to one she hasn't been exposed and will never show a trace of it. Nobody knows she's aboard but we three. Nobody will see her get off. She'll stay in this cabin, which will be just as effectual as though you isolated her in any other part of the boat. It will avoid a panic-you'll save your ship and your company-nobody will be the wiser-then if the girl comes down with smallpox after she gets ashore she can go to the pesthouse and not jeopardize the health of all the people aboard this ship. You go up forrad to your bridge, sir, and forget that you stepped in to see old Bill Dextry this morning. We'll take care of this matter all right. It means as much to us as it does to you. We've got to be on Anvil creek before the ground thaws or we'll lose the Midas. If you make a fuss you'll ruin us all."

For some moments they watched him breathlessly as he frowned in indecision, then:

"You'll have to look out for the steward," he said, and the girl sank to a stool while two great tears rolled down her cheeks. The captain's eyes softened, and his voice was gentle as he laid his hand on her head.

"Don't feel hurt over what I said, miss. You see, appearances don't tell much hereabouts most of the pretty ones are no good. They've fooled me many a time, and I made a mistake. These men will help you through. I can't. Then when you get to Nome. make your sweetheart marry you the day you land. You are two far north to be alone."

He stepped out into the passage and closed the door carefully.

CHAPTER III.

ELL, bein' as me an' Glen ister is gougin' into the bowels of Anvil creek all last summer, we den't really get the fresh grub habit fastened on us none. You see, the gamblers downtown cop out the few aigs an' green vegetables that stray off the ships, so they never get out as far as the creek none, except maybe in the shape of anecdotes.

"We don't get intimate with no nutriments except hog boosum an' brown beans, of which luxuries we have unstinted measure, an', bein' as this is our third year in the country, we hanker for bony fido grub somethin' scanlous. Yes, ma'am, three years without a taste of fresh fruit nor meat nor nuthin' except pork an' beans. Why, I've et bacon till my immortal soul has

growed a rind.

"When it comes time to close down the claim, the boy is sick with the fever, an' the only ship in port is a Point Barrow whaler, bound for Seattle. After I book our passage I find they have nothin' aboard to eat except canned salmon, it bein' the end of a two years' cruise, so when I land in the States after seventeen days of a fish diet I am what you might call sated with canned grub and have added salmon to the list of things concernin' which I am goin' to economize.

"Seen's ever I get the boy into a hospital I gallop up to the best restarawnt in town an' prepare for the huge petlatch. This here, I determine, is to be a gormandizin' jag which shall live in billing an' wheref in later years

"Don't blame these men, sir," she the natives of Puget sound shall st all with bated breath.

> "First I call for \$5 worth of pork an beans an' then a full grown platter of canned salmon. When the waiter lays 'em out in front of me, I look them ming mady in chase. Always on clear, vittles coldly in their disgustin' visages an' say in sarcastic accents:

" 'Set there, d- you, an' watch me eat real grub, which I proceed to do. cleanin' the menu from soda to bock When I have done my worst, I pile bones an' olive seeds an' peelin's all over them articles of nourishment, stick toothpicks into 'em, an', havin' offered 'em what other indignities oc cur to me, I leave the place."

Dextry and the girl were leaning over the stern rail, chatting idly in the darkness. It was the second night out, and the ship lay dead in the ice pack. All about there was a flat, floe clogged sea, leprous and mottled in the deep heard the hiss and whine of dry snow twilight that midnight brought in this latitude. They had threaded into the ice field as long as the light lasted. following the lanes of blue water till they closed, then drifting laly till others appeared; worming out into leagues of open sea, again creeping into the shifting labyrinth till darkness rendered progress pertious.

Occasionally they had passed herds of walrus huddled sociably upon ice pans, their wet hides glistening in the sunlight. The air had been clear and pleasant, while away on all quarters they had seen the smoke of other ships tolling through the barrier. The spring feet was knocking at the door of the golden north.

Chafing at her imprisonment, the gir had asked the old man to take her out on deck under the shelter of darkness then she had led him to speak of his own past experiences and of Glenis-

ter's, which he had done freely. She was frankly curious about them, and she wondered at their apparent lack of interest in her own identity and her secret mission. She even construed their silence as indifference, not realizing that these northmen were offering her the truest evidence of camaraderie.

The frontier is capable of no finer compliment than this utter disregard of one's folded pages. It betokens that highest faith in one's fellow man, the belief that he should be measured by his present deeds, not by his past. It says, translated: "This is God's free they run through the mountains on country, where a man is a man, nothing more. Our land is new and pure, our faces are to the front. If you have been square, so much the better; if not, leave behind the taints of artificial things and start again on the level. That's all."

It had happened, therefore, that, since the men had asked her no questions, she had allowed the hours to pass and still hesitated to explain further than she had explained to Captain Stephens. It was much easier to let things continue as they were, and there was, after all, so little that she was at liberty to tell them.

In the short time since meeting them the girl had grown to like Dextry, with his blunt chivalry and boyish, whimsical philosophy, but she avoided Glenister, feeling å shrinking, hidden terror of him, ever since her eavesdropping of the previous night. At the memory of that scene she grew bot, then cold-hot with anger, ley at the sinister power and sureness which had vibrated in his voice. What kind of life was she entering where men spoke of strange women with this assurance and hinted thus of ownership? That he was handsome and unconscious of it she acknowledged, and had she met him in her accustomed circle of friends, garbed in the conventionalities, she would perhaps have thought of him as a striking man, vigorous and intelligent, but here be seem ed naturally to take on the attributes of his surroundings, acquiring a picturesque negligee of dress and morals and suggesting rugged, elemental, chilling potentialities. While with him-and he had sought her repeatedly that day-she was uneasily aware of his strong personality tugging at her; aware of the unbridled passionate flood of a nature unbrooking of delay and heedless of denial. This it thing but a big, blank corner in the was that antagonized her and set her every mental sinew in rigid resistance.

During Dextry's garrulous ramblings Compister emerged from the darkness and silently took his place beside her

against the rail. "What portent do you see that makes you stare into the night so anxiously?" he inquired.

"I am wishing for a sight of the midnight sun or the aurora borealis,' she replied.

"Too late for one an' too fur south for the other," Dextry interposed "We'll see the sun further north, though.'

"Have you ever heard the real origin of the northern lights?" the young man inquired. "Naturally, I never have," she an

"Well, here it is. I have it from the lips of a great hunter of the Tananas. He told it to me when I was sick once in his cabin, and inasmuch as he is a wise Indian and has a reputation for truth I have no doubt

that it is scrupulously correct. "In the very old days, before the white man or corned beef had invaded this land, the greatest tribe in all the

north was the Tananas. The braves hunter of these was Itika, the secon chief. He could follow a moose till it fell exhausted in the snow, and he had many belts made from the claws of the brown bear, which is deadly wicked the spirits of 'yabla men,' or devils.

"One winter a terrible famine settled over the Tanama valley. The moose departed from the guiches, and the care, the Atlantic coast Line railroad lbou melted from the hills like mist. The dogs grew gaunt and howled all night, the babies cried, the women be came hollow eyed and peevish.

"Then it was that Itika decided to go hunting over the saw tooth range which formed the edge of the world They tried to dissuade him, saying it as certain death because a pack of

ons white wolves taller than the se and swifter than the eagle was ,wn to range these mountains, runcold nights could be seen the flashing of the moonbeams from their gleaming, hungry cides, and, although many hunters had crossed the passes in other years, they never returned, for the pack dew them.

"Nothing could deter Itika, however, so he threaded his way up through the range and, night coming, burrowed into a drift to sleep in his caribou skin. Peering out into the darkness, he saw the flashing lights a thousand times brighter than ever before. The whole heavers were ablaze with shifting streamers that raced and writhed back and forth in wild revel. Listening, he under the feet of the pack and a distant noise as of rushing winds, although the air was deathly still.

"With daylight he proceeded through the range till he came out above a magnificent valley. Descending the sk pe, he entered a forest of towering spruce, while on all sides the snow was trampled with tracks as wide as a snowshoe. There came to him s noise which as he proceeded increased till it filled the woods. It was a frightful din, as though a thousand welves were howling with the madness of the kill. Cautiously creeping nearer, be found a monstrous white animal struggling beneath a spruce which had fallen upon it in such fashion as to pinion it

"All brave men are tender hearted, so Itika set to work with his ax and cleared away the burden, regardless of the peril to himself. When he had

released it the beast grose and, instead of running away, addressed him in the most polite and polished Indian, without a trace of accent.

"You have saved my life. Now. what can I do for you?

"I want to hunt in this valley. My people are starving,' said Itika, at which the wolf was greatly pleased and rounded up the rest of the pask to belp in the kill.

"Always thereafter when Itika came to the valley of the Yukon the giant drove hunted with him. To this day cold, clear night in a multitude, while the light of the moon flickers from their white sides, flashing up into the sky in weird, fantastic figures. Some people call it northern lights, but old Isaac assured me earnestly, toothlessly and with the light of ancient truth as I lay snow blind in his lodge that it is nothing more remarkable than the spirit of Itika and the great white wolves."

"What a queer legend?" she said. "There must be many of them in this I feel that I am going to like the north."

"Perhaps you will." Glenister repiled, "although it is not a woman's land.

"Tell me what led you out here in the first place. You are an eastern man. You have had advantages, edu- 9-20-tf. cation, and yet you choose this. You must love the north."

"Indeed I do! It calls to a fellow in some strange way that a gentler have lived the long, lazy Junedays that never end and heard geese honking under a warm, sunlit midnight, or when once you've hit the trail on a winter morning so sharp and clear that the air stings your lungs and the whole white, silent world glistens like a jewel; yes, and when you've seen the dogs romping in harness till the sled runners ring and the distant mountain ranges come out like beautiful carvings, so close you can reach themwell, there's something in it that brings you back-that's all, no matter where you've lost yourself. It means health and equality and unrestraint. That's what I like best, I dare saythe utter unrestraint.

"When I was a schoolboy I used to gaze at the map of Alaska for hours. I'd lose myself in it. It wasn't anynorth then, with a name and mountains and mystery. The word Yukon suggested to me everything unknown and weird-hairy mastodons, golden river bars, savage Indians with bone arrowheads and sealskin trousers. When I left college, I came as fast as

ever I could-the adventure, I suppose. "The law was considered my destiny. How the shades of old Choate and Webster and Patrick Henry must have wailed when I forswore it! I'll bet

Blackstone tore his whiskers." "I think you would have made a suc

cess," said the girl, but he laughed. "Well, anynow," I stepped out, leaving the way to the United States supreme bench unobstructed, and came north. I found it was where I belonged. I fitted in. I'm not contenteddon't think that. I'm ambitious, but I prefer these surroundings to the others-that's all. I'm realizing my desires. I've made a fortune. Now I'll see what else the world has."

He suddenly turned to ber. "See here," he abruptly questioned, "what's your name?"

She started and glanced toward where Dextry had stood, only to find that the old frontiersman had slipped

### New Train Schedule.

The following schedule of the new train from Lane to Florence, which went into effect Monday, and, as every one knows, inhabited by December 17, has been furnish ed us by Mr J P Taylor, the courteous and efficient agent of .: Kin estree:

North Bound Arrives 7:37 A. N. No. 80 11:42 A. M. No. 46 6:36 P. V. South Bound Arrives 9:18 P. 3 No. 89 5:46 P Vi. No. 47 10:52 A.M. No. 51 Daidy Except Sunday.

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