# The Spoilers.

By REX E. BEACH.

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[Continued from last week.]

CHAPTER XXI.

he found were not those of the two riders he followed, he urged his lathered horse ahead till he became suddenly conscious that he was very tired and The recollection did not reassure the young man, for his body was a weapon which must not fall in the slightest measure now that there was work to do. Even the unwelcome speculation upon his physical handicap offered relief, however, from the agony which fed upon him whenever he thought of Helen in the gambler's hands. Meanwhile the horse, groaning at his master's violence, plunged onward toward the roofs of Nome, now growing gray in the first dawn.

It seemed years since Roy had seen the sunlight, for this night, burdened with suspense, had been endlessly long. His body was faint beneath the strain, and yet he rode on and on, tired, dogged, stony, his eyes set toward the sea, his mind a storm of formless, whirling thoughts, beneath which was an undeviating, implacable determination.

He knew now that he had sacrificed all hope of the Midas, and likewise the hope of Helen was gone; in fact, he began to realize dimly that from the beginning he had never had the possibility of winning her, that she had never been destined for him and that his love for her had been sent as a fight by which he was to find himself. He had failed everywhere; he had become an outlaw; he had fought and gone down, certain only of his rectitude and the mastery of his unruly spirit. Now the hour had come when he would perform his last mission, deriving therefrom that satisfaction which the gods could not deny. He would have his vengeance.

The scheme took form without contwo things-the death of the gambler this belief that the details did not entell. Anyway, McNamara should never have Helen-Roy believed his mission covered that point as well as her dehe had finished, he would pay the price. If he had the luck to escape, he would go back to his hills and his be in the hands of his enemies.

He entered the silent streets unoblow. Smoke columns arose vertically in the still air. The rain had ceased. having beaten down the waves which rumbled against the beach, filling the streets with their subdued thunder. A in from the lee of Sledge Island with the first lull, while midway to the shore a tender was rising and falling. its oars flashing like the silvered feelers of a sea insect crawling upon the surface of the ocean.

He rode down Front street heedless of danger, heedless of the comment his appearance might create, and, unseen, entered his enemy's stronghold. He passed a gambling hall, through the windows of which came a sickly yellow gleam. A man came out unsteadily and stared at the horseman,

the Northern and from there to track down its owner relentlessly, but in order to reach the place his course led him past the office of Dunham & Struve. This brought back to his mind the man dying out there ten miles at his back. The scantiest humanity demanded that assistance be sent at once. Yet he dared not give word openly, thus betraying his presence, for it was necessary that he maintain his Hiberty during the next hour at all hazards. He suddenly thought of an expedient and relued in his horse, which stopped with wide spread legs and dejected head while he dismounted and climbed the stairs to leave a note upon the door. Some one would see the message shortly and recognize its

In dressing for the battle at the Midas on the previous night he had re- his mouth corners betrayed the high placed his leather boots with "muk- nervous pitch to which he was keyed. luks," which are waterproof, light and pliable footgear made from the skin of Namara. Now we'll have it out man seal and walrus. He was thus able to to man." move as noiselessly as though in moccasins. Finding neither pencil nor pa- "You have the drop on me. I am unper in his pocket, he tried the outer armed." At which the miner's face door of the office, to find it unlocked. Eighted fiercely, and he chuckled. He stepped inside and listened, then heard a rustle in Struve's private of your throat since the first time I saw fice. Evidently his soft soles had not

the man inside. Roy was i sai to tiptoe out as he had come satisfy it. when the hidden man cleared his throat. It is in these involuntary AY was breaking as Glenister | sounds that the voice retains its natcame down the mountain. With ural quality more distinctly even than your gun. the first light he halted to in speaking. A strange eagerness grew sean the trail, and, having no in Glenister's face, and he approached means of knowing that the fresh tracks | the partition stealthily. It was of wood and glass, the panes clouded and opaque to a height of some six feet; but, stepping upon a chair, he peered into the room beyond. A man knelt in bad not slept for two days and nights. a litter of pers before the open safe. its drawers and compartments removed and their contents scattered. The watcher lowered himself, drew his gun and laid soft hand upon the doorknob turning the latch with firm fingers. His vengeance had come to meet him.

After lying in wait during the long night, certain that the vigilantes would spring his trap, McNamara was astounded at news of the battle at the Midas and of Glenister's success. He stormed and cursed his men as cowards. The judge became greatly exercised over this new development. which, coupled with his night of long anxiety, reduced him to a pitiful hysteria.

"They'll blow us up next. Great beavens! Dynamite! Oh, that is barbarons. For heaven's sake, get the soldiers out, Alec."

"Ay, we can use them now." Thereupon McNamara roused the commanding officer at the post and requested him to accouter a troop and have them ready to march at daylight, then bestirred the judge to start the wheels of his court and invoke this military aid in regular fashion.

"Make it all a matter of record," he said. "We want to keep our skirts clear from now on."

"But the townspeople are against us," quavered Stillman. "They'll tear us to pieces."

"Let 'em try. Once I get my hand on the ringleader, the rest may riot

and be damued." Although he had made less display than had the judge, the receiver was scious effort on his part and embraced | no less worried about Helen, of whom no news came. His jealousy, fanned and a meeting with McNamara. Of to red heat by the discovery of her the former, he had no more doubt than earlier defection, was enhanced fourthat the sun rising there would sink fold by the thought of this last advenin the west. So well confirmed was ture. Something told him there was treachery afoot, and when she did not gage his thought; but on the result of return at dawn he began to fear that the other encounter he speculated with she had cast in her lot with the riotsome interest. From the first McNa- ers. This aroused a perfect delirium mara had been a riddle to him, and of doubt and anger till he reasoned mystery breeds curiosity. His blind, further that Struve, having gone with instinctive hatred of the man had as- her, must also be a traitor. He recogsumed the proportions of a mania; but nized the menace in this fact, knowing as to what the outcome would be when the man's venality, so began to reckon they met face to face, fate alone could carefully its significance. What could Struve do? What proof had he? Mc-Namara started and, seizing his hat. hurried straight to the lawyer's office liverance from the Bronco Kid. When and let himself in with the key be curried. It was light enough for him to decipher the characters on the safe lock as he turned the combination, so solitude: If he did not, his future would he set to work scanning the endless bundles within, hoping that after all the man had taken with him no incrimserved, for the mists were heavy and inating evidence. Once the searcher paused at some fancied sound, but when nothing came of it drew his revolver and laid it before him just inside the safe door and close beneath his hand, continuing to run through ship anchored in the offing, had run the documents while his uneasiness increased. He had been engaged so for some time when he heard the faintest creak at his back, too slight to alarm and just sufficient to break his tension and cause him to jerk his head about. Framed in the open door stood Roy Glenister watching him.

McNamara's astonishment was so genuine that he leaped to his feet. faced about, and prompted by a secretive instinct swung to the safe door as though to guard its contents. He had acted upon the impulse before realizing that his weapon was inside and that now, although the door was not Glenister's plan was to go straight to locked, it would require that one dan-

gerous, yes, fatal second to open it. The two men stared at each other for a time, silent and malignant, their glances meeting like blades; in the older man's face a look of defiance, in the younger's a dogged and grim purposed enmity. McNamara's first perturbation left him calm, alert, dangerous, whereas the continued contemplation of his enemy worked in Glenister to destroy his composure, and his purpose dazed forth unhidden.

He stood there unkempt and soiled, the clean sweep of jaw and throat overgrown with a three days' black stubble, his hair wet and matted, his whole left side foul with clay where he had fallen in the darkness. A muddy red streak spread downward from a cut above his temple, beneath his eyes were sagging folds, while the flicker at "I have come for the last act, Mc-

The politician shrugged his shoulders.

"Ah, that's almost too good to be moved toward a table on which were true. I have dreamed about such a writing materials, but in doing so thing, and I have been hungry to feel

you. It's grown on me till shooting wouldn't satisfy me. Ever had th feeling? Well, I'm going to choke the fe out of you with my bare hands. McNemara squared himself.

"I wouldn't advise you to try it have lived longer than you, and I sever beaten, but I know the fe you speak about. I have it now."

His eyes roved rapidly up and de the other's form, noting the lean the and close drawn belt, which lent appearance of sparseness, belied on. by the neck and shoulders. He had beaten better men, and he reasoned that if it came to a physical to these cramped quarters his weight would more than off perior agility the miner mig. The longer he looked the mo yielded to his hatred of the man him and the more cruelly he lon

"Take off your coat," said Gle "Now turn around. All right! I wanted to see if you were lying a!

"I'll kill you!" cried McNamara. Glenister laid his six shooter upon safe and slipped off his own wet ga. ment. The difference was more marked now and the advantage more strongly with the receiver. Though they had avoided allusion to it, each knew that this fight had nothing to do with the Midas and each realized whence sprang their flerce enmity. And it was meet that they should come together thus. It had been the one certain and logical event which they had felt inevitably approaching from long back. And it was fitting. moreover, that they should fight alone and unwitnessed, armed only with the weapons of the wilderness, for they were both of the far, free lands, were both of the fighter's type and had both warred for the first great prize.

They met ferociously. McNamara almed a fearful blow, but Glenister met him squarely, beating him off eleverly, stepping in and out, his arms swinging loosely from his shoulders like whalebone withes tipped with lead. He moved lightly, his footing made doubly secure by reason of his soft soled mukluks. Recognizing his opponent's greater weight, he und took merely to stop the hearly rushes and remain out of reach long as possible. He struck the tician fairly in the mouth so man's head snapped back :: went wild, then, before could grasp him, the m. υken ground and whipped a olow across, but McNamara was a boxer himself, so covered and blocked it. The politician spat through his mashed lips and rushed again, sweeping his opponent from his feet. Again Glenister's fist shot forward like a lump of granite, but the other came on head down and the blow finished too high, landing on the big man's brow A sudden darting agony paralyzed Roy's hand, and he realized that he had broken the metacarpal bones and that henceforth it would be useless. Before he could recover McNamara had passed under his extended arm and seized him by the middle, then, thrusting his left leg back of Roy's, he whirled him from his balance, flinging him clear and with resistless force. It seemed that a fatal fall must follow, but the youth squirmed catlike in the air, landing with set muscles which rebounded like rubber. Even R. E. & E. N. BEATY so the receiver was upon him before he could rise, reaching for the young Georgetown, - - - S. C. man's throat with his heavy hands. Roy recognized the fatal "strangle" held and, seizing his enemy's wrists. endeavored to tear them apart, but his left hand was useless, so with a mighty wrench he freed himself, and. lecked in each other's arms, the men 3-19-tf

till their neck veins were bursting. their muscles paralyzed. Men may fight duels calmly, may shoot or parry or thrust with cold de liberation, but when there comes the jar of body to body, the sweaty contact of skin to skin, the play of iron muscles, the painful gasp of exhaustion-then the mind goes skittering back into its dark recesses while every venomous passion leaps forth from its hiding place and joins in the horrid

strained and swayed about the office

They tripped across the floor, crashing into the partition, which split, showering them with glass. They fell



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and rolled in it, then, by consent, wrenched themselves apart, rose, eye to eye, their jaws hanging, their lungs wheezing, their faces trickling blood and sweat. Roy's left hand pained bim excruciatingly, while McNamara's macerated lips had turned outward in a hideous pout. They crouched so for an instant, cruek bestial-then clinched again. The office fittings were wrecked utterly, and the room became a litter of ruins. The men's garments fell away till their breasts were bare and their arms swelled white and knotted through the rags. They knew no pain, Supervisor of construction New School their bodies were insensate mechan-

Gradually the older man's face was

[Continued on page 3.]

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