CASTORIA

For Infants and Children

Bears the signature of Chas. H. Fletcher.

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CASTORIA

THE CENTAUR COMPANY, NEW YORK CITY.

CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE.

would not ride, and there was a determination about her firm refusal which compelled him to yield and to permit her to trudge on as best she might.

You who have crossed those solitudes, those immensities of snow; who have braved those northern blasts and felt the sting of the icy flakes cut your face and hide your path, will know the story of those hours of toil and suffering. The brief halts for breath, the body leaning even then against the force of the storm; the almost blind staggering forward through the Arctic darkness; the slippery, uncertain path, the solemn stillness, strange moaning of the wind; the changeless scene; the dreadful loneliness and unspeakable agony of the barren, lorn land.

Conversation was almost impossible. Only once did she attempt to speak. They were huddled for the moment back of a great white hummuck, so as to be a little out of the sweep of the wind, and, in spite of the protests, he had drawn her down upon the sled and wrapped her warmly in a heavy woolen blanket.

"Tell me," she said, looking up at him from out her cover, "did you do anything dreadfully wrong back there that they are chasing you for?"

She could not see his face plainly, and it was just as well, for his answer was spoken so camly as to reassure her.

"I have seldom done anything that was right, I am afraid, but if you mean did I kill anybody or steal anything, I can answer you no—I reckon some of those sports concluded I was too lucky with the cards."

He felt how closely she was watching him, and he added firmly:

"Of course, you know I was a gambler, but I want to tell you that, luck or no luck, the game I ran was square.'

Some how he felt like a new man when she said quietly, so quietly that he had to bend down in the storm in order to catch the words:

"I shall believe that, always!"

* * * *

It was the second day. Already they had left the sweep of the wide, frozen river and were toiling upward now among the dread, desolate hills, the faint line of trail winding in and out among the bare reaches of rocks. Several times within the hour had O'Brien thrown himself flat on the snow and begged to be be left there to die, but Maynard, although numb himself from head to foot, had beaten him forward with cruel words that stung worse than the hail that beat their faces. The woman was upon the sled now, strapped there against her will after she had fallen twice, unnoticed and without a cry, on the desolate trail. Once they had retraced their steps a mile before they found her lying half-conscious in the snow.

It was nearing the noon hour now; they knew it by the slightly brighter light that widened their horizon, and made partially visible the desolate horror of the scene. O'Brien had fallen again from sheer weakness and as he succeeded in staggering to his feet once more he gave vent to a sudden cry and pointed away to the northward. Maynard painfully broke the crust of ice that had formed over his half-frozen eyes and stared back—far off yonder—on the very extremity of the dim snow line were some black specks. He endeavored to count them, but the minute spots danced so before his strained vision that he could not be sure. But he realized who they must be, and his firm jaw set.

"What is it?" The girl had straightened up, flung aside her blanket and was also staring into the north. "Is the posse coming?"

Maynard drew his gun out from the load on the sled and fingered it grimly.

"I reckon it must be Briggs," he said with a smile. "The trail ain't much used at this time a year, and I suppose I must be the fellow they want to see."

He bent down and cut the lashings that had held her fast.

"Now, Miss Cole," he spoke once more with his old easy manner, "as I figure it out you and Bill ought to make Shepherd's in about three hours, while I will stay here and enjoy a little serious argument with Briggs' outfit."

"You mean for us to leave you?"

"Sure thing—there will be some hope for me here dealin' with them alone, but if they ever get eye on you, there would not be a particle of show for any one of us. I tell you, I know the gang, and they're half drunk already, or Briggs never would have got them here at all. You go ahead, just as I tell you, and leave me to tend to this in my own way."

There was a certain tone of command in his low voice that seemed to impel obedience. O'Brien picked up the ropes, but she paused for a moment, and laid one heavily gloved hand on Maynard's arm.

"Jack," she said softly, using the familiar name for the first time unconsciously, and the hard look died out of his face as he looked down into her eyes. "You won't kill them, will you?"

"Not if I can help it," he answered slowly, and then suddenly he bent down and kissed her.

Her face flushed as, perhaps, it had never done before in all her life, and without a word she turned away and, side by side with O'Brien, stumbled through the drifts down the trail.

For a moment he stood there watching them, a new light upon his rugged face. Then he turned once more to the northward. He could make out those black spots now without difficulty, and counted six men and two dog teams. The hunted man smiled grimly.

"By thunder, old Briggs meant to make a sure thing out of it," he muttered thoughtfully. "But I reckon he hardly figured on my having this long-range gun along. There's going to be a surprise party here presently."

His eyes swept again to the southward, but the man and woman had already rounded the base of the hill and were out of sight.

"I reckon she would rather I would do it that way," he said, speaking softly to himself; but it goes sorter hard, for I never unloaded to such a gang as that before, especially when I had the 'drop.'"

He opened his heavy mackinaw coat, fumbling at the buttons with his half frozen fingers, as if he still hesitated as to his plan. Then, still more slowly, he unbuckled the broad leather belt about the waist, and, with almost a curse at himself as a fool, flung two laden canvas sacks on the snow at his feet. Without so much as glancing at them he crouched down behind a huge bowlder, and fingering the lock of his rifle, peered out through the storm into the north. The moments passed, but Maynard never moved, never took his eyes away from that point on the trail which he knew to be in perfect range with his rifle. Suddenly he rose to his feet, stepped out in front of the rock and sent his strong voice in challenge against the blast.

"Pull up, you fellows down there. Tom Briggs, I reckon you know the caliber of this gun and that I've got the 'drop' on your outfit."

There was a moment of confusion, the drivers struggling desperately to restrain their teams; the others stood in their tracks, gazing sullenly up at him, and it almost amused him to note the comical look of surprise on on every face.

"Oh, I've got you dead to rights," he said cheerfully. "There's not a bully among you who has got my range, and I have just six loads here—one apiece, my hearties—ready to go off any minute any of you care to eat lead. So I reckon you are ready to parley? Well, Tom Briggs, what do you want?"

The man thus addressed put his hand up to his mouth so as to make his reply audible.

"You know mighty well, Jack," he said hoarsely, or ye wouldn't have skipped. We've got a warrant for ye all right, and you might just as well give in, because you can't hope to get past Shepherd's nohow. Shepherd won't go back on no warrant."

Maynard laughed.

"If I didn't happen to know you and your whole outfit, that talk might go," he said carelessly. "Of course you've got a warrant all right enough, but what you really come down for was the stuff you knew I carried. Now, I'm going to give you your choice, and you've got to take it——quick. I reckon you'll never find me in this sort of mood again. Now there's the boodle—you take it and go north; if one of you comes another step this way, I promise to get five out of the six. You hear me!"

As he spoke he flung the two canvas bags far out over the edge of the hill down upon the trail.

The men grouped below stared up at him incredulous. Briggs took one step forward, then paused irresolute.

"What has got into you, Jack?" he asked wonderingly. "Is this yere deal square?"

They could not see the quick flush that leaped into Maynard's face, but they heard his fierce reply.

"Don't be asking fool questions. Take the stuff and get out before I get tired and kill some of you."

Briggs shuffled forward through the snow until he reached the bags, while Maynard, hungrily fingering his rifle, bent far over and watched, like a lynx, his every movement. So intent was he upon this that he failed to notice when one of the fellows slipped silently out of the crowd back on the trail and disappeared among the rocks. Briggs drew back, his prize hugged to his breast, his eyes still on Maynard, until he backed in among the snarling curs of the lead team. Then, suddenly, a sharp report rang out on the frosty air. Maynard felt the tearing blow of the ball as it crashed into his thigh, but the rock he was leaning against held him upright. With the sudden move of the practiced fighter he returned the fire, almost at the instant that he felt the shock, and then, maddened by pain, began to pump his repeater into the bunch, which was already flying up the trail as fast as the men could lash their dogs. It was over almost in an instant, and then, as helpless nearly as a dead man, Maynard toppled over and fell full length upon the snow.

Not for a moment did he lose consciousness. Footsteps sounded on the hard crust, and gritting his teeth in agony, he rolled over, his gun still ready, but it was a woman's form that approached, and the trembling hands fell from the lock.

"You here?"

"Of course I am," indignantly, and she sank on the snow at his side. "Do you think so poorly of me as to suppose I would really leave you? O'Brien is almost here also, and we will haul you on the sled. Are you much hurt?"

"Leg broken, I reckon."

She lifted his head gently and rested it against her shoulder. Then she sat silent, with quivering lips, looking far out into the north, where the fast retreating posse were already mere black specks on the snow line. She was not willing that he should see the tears in her eyes.

"I want to ask you something," she said at last, as if half afraid of the question. "Did you give them that money just to keep them from me?"

Maynard stirred uneasily.

"Well, I reckon that if you hadn't been along, that isn't exactly what they would have got," he admitted.

"But why did you do it?"

He could hear O'Brien now toiling up the hill, dragging the sled over the snow crust, and all at once he felt a tear that she did not restrain drop upon his hand.

"I don't hardly know, Jessie," he answered soberly; "but reckon it must have been because I love you."

The girl's face flamed. Then, as O'Brien drew near she bent her head lower until her lips almost brushed Maynard's cheek.

"Jack," she said, softly, "we are neither of us very good, but we can help each other to be better; can't we, dear?"

And the sudden clasp of his hand answered her.

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	A.M.	A.M.	Le.	Cherry Run Ar	A.M. 8 49	P.M. 12 40	P.M. 8 49
	9 50	5 10		Big Pool	8 46	12 37	8 46
	9 53	5 13		Clear Spring	8 34	12 25	8 34
	10 07	5 25	Ar.	Hagerstown Le	8 08	12 00	8 07
	10 35	5 55					
P.M.	P.M.	A.M.			A.M.	P.M.	P.M.
*4 10	2 10	7 02	Le.	Hagerstown Ar	*7 30	11 57	8 02
4 28	2 28	7 27		Smithsburg	7 10	11 38	7 41
4 35	2 38	7 36		Edgemont	7 03	11 31	7 32
4 42	2 45	7 42		Blue Mountain	6 55	11 25	7 25
4 45	2 48	7 44		Pen Mar	6 52	11 22	7 22
4 48	2 50	7 46		Buena Vista Spring	6 49	11 20	7 20
	2 56	7 50	Ar.	Highfield Le		11 18	7 15
	P.M.	A.M.				A.M.	P.M.
	P.M.	A.M.				A.M.	P.M.
	2 36	7 50	Le.	Highfield Ar		11 15	7 15
	3 52	8 42		Gettysburg		10 24	6 19
	4 14	9 04		New Oxford		10 01	5 55
	4 31	9 20		Hanover		9 45	5 39
	4 49	9 35	Ar.	Porters Le		9 33	5 27
	P.M.	A.M.				A.M.	P.M.
	P.M.	A.M.				A.M.	P.M.
	5 27	9 35	Le.	Porters Ar		9 28	4 47
	5 35	9 45		Spring Grove		9 21	4 39
	6 03	10 10	Ar.	York Le		8 55	4 12
	P.M.	A.M.				A.M.	P.M.
	P.M.	A.M.				A.M.	P.M.
	2 36	7 50	Le.	Highfield Ar		11 18	7 15
4 55	2 38	7 52		Blue Ridge	6 45	11 13	7 13
5 21	3 21	8 16		Thurmont	6 21	10 47	6 46
5 28	3 31	8 29		Rocky Ridge		10 36	6 31
5 38	3 44	8 37		Bruceville	6 03	10 25	6 22
5 45	3 54	8 45		Union Bridge	5 57	10 17	6 12
5 53	4 05	8 54		New Windsor	5 50	10 08	6 01
6 07	4 27	9 11		Westminster	5 38	9 43	5 42
6 37	5 03	9 43		Glyndon	5 10	9 52	4 58
7 18	6 03	10 27	Ar.	Baltimore Le	*4 30	8 05	4 03
P.M.	P.M.	A.M.			A.M.	A.M.	P.M.

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Leave Chambersburg for Hagerstown and Intermediate Stations at 7.43 p. m.

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Leave Bruceville for Frederick at 8.38, 9, 36 and 10.40 a. m. and 4.45 and 6.30 p. m. Leave Bruceville for Columbia, Littlestown and Taneytown at 9.47 a. m. and 3.45 p. m.
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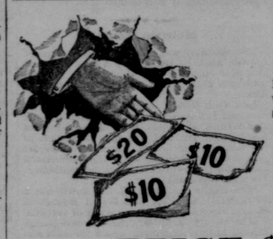
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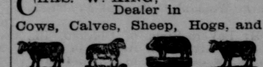
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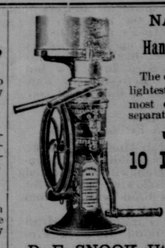
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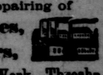
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