

Children Cry for Fletcher's
CASTORIA

The Kind You Have Always Bought, and which has been in use for over thirty years, has borne the signature of *Chas. H. Fletcher* and has been made under his personal supervision since its infancy. Allow no one to deceive you in this. All Counterfeits, Imitations and "Just-as-good" are but Experiments that trifle with and endanger the health of Infants and Children—Experience against Experiment.

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GENUINE CASTORIA ALWAYS
Bears the Signature of
Chas. H. Fletcher
In Use For Over 30 Years
The Kind You Have Always Bought
THE CENTAUR COMPANY, NEW YORK CITY.

"The Fighting Trail"

(Continued)
"Father! Father!" she whispered, her throat closing on the words as she realized that Don Carlos had reached the end.
Ybarro looked up at her and smiled bravely. His outstretched hand held a fluttering, bulky manuscript. The other envelope lay on the floor beside him. Then, as if exerting all his energy, he spoke with quivering lips.
"Nan, dear," he said tenderly, "I am not your father. Don't let them get it—it's yours. Read this—read it, and know I loved you as my child. This is the story; it will explain."
Ybarro pushed the yellow papers into her hand and fell backward to the floor.
Nan and Gwyn gazed at each other for a moment with a look filled half with uncomprehending mystery, half with amazement. Ybarro's parting confession had so shocked and astounded her that she could find no words to voice her feelings. Gwyn, in the short time that he had known her, had naturally enough not learned the secrets of her heart. Moreover, the tense excitement had remained at such a high pitch ever since he had met her that he had not been able to study the girl. He could see, of course, that the revelation made by Ybarro as he was dying had thoroughly upset Nan, but as he had looked upon her supposed father, he deemed it wisest not to speak until he knew her sentiments. The two looked down again at the manuscript before them. Gwyn held in his hand the second envelope, while they read:
Dearly Beloved Nan:
"You will not read this until I have passed beyond either your blame or your approval. Although, as you will find, I am not your father, I have tried to take his place, for I loved you as my own both for my own sake and because I loved your mother.
"Years ago the death of my father placed me in possession of vast estates in Chihuahua, in Mexico. The main estate was comprised chiefly of farm land from which I derived a large income. Among my most devoted servants was one whom you know, an Indian—Yaqui Joe. He was at that time, and afterward, a most loyal associate.
"While I was living on my estate there came to me one day an American, a Southerner, named George Wythe, who was seeking investment. He bore a letter from a friend of mine, asking me to advise him. With him was only one person, his daughter, Frances, a very beautiful girl of twenty years. Should you be curious as to her features, you have but to look in the mirror. Upon my invitation, Wythe and his daughter decided to remain at my home until they should be ready to return to the States.
"I was enthralled by the beauty and charm of Wythe's daughter. My devotion grew each time I spoke with her until I admitted that I loved her and was joyous when she told me the love was returned.
"About this time a New York friend of mine, James Lawton, came on a visit. He was a rather wild youth whom I had not seen for some years, and was on a visit to Mexico. He decided also to stay with me. It was but a very short time before he left it be openly known that he, too, was in love with Frances. I paid little attention, however, feeling sure that my suit was safe.
"One evening, about a month after Lawton's arrival, he learned that Wythe's passion was gambling, and engaged him in a game of cards, at high stakes. I merely watched; I never gambled. The game was long and disastrous to Wythe. He lost all of the money which he had brought with him to invest.
"When I returned, some time later, I was astounded. The words that reached my ears, as I entered the room, struck as a mighty blow.
"The scene that followed was one to shudder at. In a civilized country, at a rich estate, it seemed too ridiculous for belief. Yet it was true; and its absurdity made it the more sorrowful. Lawton, having won everything, made an offer. To this day I do not know whether it was a selfish or generous motive that incited it. He said he would return his monetary winnings if Wythe would induce Frances to consent to marry him. We all left the room.
"Frances was on the veranda, crying. I was the first to reach her, but I said nothing of the game. When I attempted to approach her, however, she spurned me. I learned later that she had heard my offer to 'buy' her and had not waited for the explanation. I naturally was despicable in her eyes.
"Wythe took her upstairs and pleaded with her. He told her that it was his desire that she agree to marry Lawton in order that a vast sum of money which he had lost in gambling would be returned if she refused, he said, they would both be driven to poverty and their lives ruined. She refused at first, but he pleaded and begged until she agreed. He did not tell her that she as well as money had been gambled for. He was too proud for that.
"Frances was married to Lawton and shortly afterward Wythe died. I gave Lawton a half interest in my estate in order to keep them near me, for my love for his wife was still existent. Some time later I decided to investigate some land grants in California which had been left to me, but which I had never investigated. I confided in Lawton that there was a tradition in my family that there was a valuable mine on the property. We left the estate in the care of Yaqui Joe and set out for California. By means of some old maps and papers we were able to locate an old claim mine which had been lost for 150 years. We drew a chart showing the location of the mine and divided it into two parts, each useless without the other. We each took one part. Then I returned to my home to raise money for the reopening of the mine, while Lawton remained to attend to the preliminary details. I left with him all the money I had with me, to cover the first expense of the undertaking.
(To be continued)

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