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By... Frank

Norris.

IF IT FAILS TO OURE.



had not been a farce, after all. This was fighting at last, and there within arm's length were men grappling and gripping and hitting one another, each honestly striving to kill his fellow-Chinamen, all, fighting in barbarous oriental fashion with nails and teeth comber the country was a sufficient to the country of the country of the country of the country and the country are the country and the country are the country and the country are the country and the country are the country and the country are the country are and the country are the country are and the country are the country are and the country are and the country are and the country are the country are and the country are the country are and the country are the country are the country are the country are and the country are the countr when the knife or hatchet failed. What that hideous trouble that wrought it-self out there on that heat stricken tropic beach under that morning's sun?

Suddenly there was a fash of red flame, and a billow of thick, yellow



Wilbur thrust his foot sharply forward smoke filled all the air. The cabin was afire. The flatchet man with whom Wilbur was fighting had been backing in the direction. He was close in Wifbur heard the hideous sound of stamping and struggling and the noise when the fire began to leap from the one window. Now he could go no far-ther. He turned to run sideways be-

in. Wilbir thrust his foot sharply forward. The beachcomber tripped, staggered, and before he had reached the

suddenly, at the sight of his smitten enemy rolling on the ground at his soot, the primitive man, the half brute of the stone age, leaped to life in Wilbur's breast. He felt his muscles thrilling with a strength they had not known before. His nerves, stretched tense as harp strings, were vibrating to a new tune. His blood spun through his veins till his ears roared with the ruch of it. Never had he conceived of such savage exultation as that which mastered him at that instant. The knowledge that he could kill filled him with a sense of power that was verita bly royal. He felt physically larger it was the joy of battle, the horrid ex hilaration of killing, the animal of the and dominating every instinct and tra dition of centuries of civilization. The fight still was going forward.

Wilbur could hear the sounds of it though from where he stood all sigh was shut off by the smoke of the burning house. As he turned about, knifth hand, debating what next he should, a figure burst down whom his shoot of the burning was dead of the should be should be

were blazing under her thick frown like fire under a bush. Her arms were bared to the elbow, her heavy rope of hair flying and coiling from her in all directions, while with a voice hoarse from shouting she sang or, rather chanted, in her long forgotten Norse tongue, fragments of old sagas, words and sentences meaningless even to herand sentences meaningless even to her-self. The fury of battle had exalted her to a sort of frenzy. She was beside herself with excitement. Once more she had langed back to the vitury; she was Brunehild again, a shield maiden, a Valkyrie, a berserker and the daughter of berserkers, and, like them. fought in a veritable frenzy, see ing nothing, hearing nothing, every sense exalted, every force doubled, in-sensible to pain, deaf to all reason.

Her dirk uplifted, she rushed upor Wilbur, never once pausing in her chant. Wilbur shouted a warning to her as she came on, puzzled beyond words, startled back to a consciousness of himself again by this insensate at

"Moran! Moran!" he called, "What is it? You're wrong! It's I! It's Wilbur, your mate! Can't you see?"

Moran could not see. Blind to friend or foe, as she was deaf to reason, she struck at him with all the strength of her arm. But there was no skill in her fighting now. Wilbur dropped his own knife and gripped her right wrist. She closed with him upon the instant, clutching at his throat with her one free hand, and as he felt her strength, doubled and tripled in the fury of her madness, Wilbur knew that, hewever easily he had overcome his enemy of a moment before, he was now fighting for his very life.

At first William merely struggled to keep her from him—to prevent her using her dirk. He tried not to hurt her. But what with the spirits he had drunk before the attack, what with the xcitement of the attack itself and the dden unleashing of the brute in him an instant before, the whole affair grew dim and hazy in his mind. He ceased o see things in their proportion. His new found strength gloried in matchas its equal. He fought with Moran ann or with anything human, for the matter of that. He fought with her as igninst some impersonal force that it was incumbent upon him to conquer-that it was imperative he should con-quer if he wished to live. When she struck, he struck blow for blow, force for force, his strength against hers, glorying in that strange contest, though he never once forgot that this last enemy was the girl he loved. It was not Moran whom he fought. It was her force, her determination, her will, her splendid independence, that he set him-

Already she and dropped or flung away the dirk, and their battle had become an issue of sheer physical strength between them. It was a question now as to who should master the other. Twice she had fought Wilbur to his knees, the heel of her hand upon his face, his head thrust back between his shouldows, and twice he had wrenched away, sixing to his feet again, panting, bleeding even, but with his teeth set and all his assolution at the sticking point. Ones he saw his chance and planted his knackless squarely between her eyes where her frown was knotted hard, hoping to stun her and end the fight once and for all. But the blow did not seem to affect her in the least. By this time he saw that her bersærker rage had worked itself clear as fermenting wine slears itself and that as knew now with whom she was fighting and he seemed now to understand the incomprehensible and to sympathise with her joy in measuring her strength against his, and yet he knew that the combat was deadly serious and that more thas life was at stake. Moran descending the stood off, breathing hard and rolling up her sleeye. Then, as she started forward again, Wilbur met her half way, caught her round the neck and under the arm, gripping her left wrist with his right hand behind her. Then, exerting every ounce of strength heyet retained, he thrust her down and from him until at length, using his hip as a pivot, he swung her off her feet, threw her fairly on her back and held her so, one knee upon her chest, his hands closed viselik. on her wrists.

Then suddenly Moran gave up, relaxing in his grasp all in a second, and, to his great surrise, suddenly smiled. Already she had dropped or flung

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"Hob, mate!" she exclaimed. "That was a tough one, but I'm beaten— pou're stronger than I thought for."

Wilbur released her and rose to his hand. I'm as weak as a kitten." As Wilbur helped her to her feet she put her hand to her forehead, where his knuckles had left their mark, and frowned at him, but not ill naturedly. "Next time you do that," she said,
"use a rock or a belaying pin, or something that won't hurt-not your fist, mate." She looked at him admiringly. "What a two fisted brawny dray horse is! I told you I was stronger than most men, didn't I? But I'm the weaker of us two, and that's a fact. You've beaten, mate—I admit it. You've conquested me, and," she continued, smil-

Diseased Men

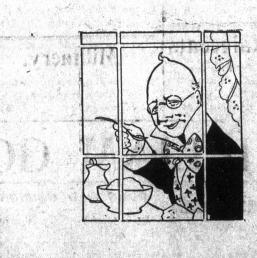


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blood squeich in the sole of his boot as he staggered for the moment, almost tripping over the man in front of him.

The Chinaman sprang to his feet again, but Wilbur was at him in an instant, feeling instinctively that his chance was to close with his man and so bring his own superior weight and strength to bear. Again and again he tried to run in and grlp the slim yellow bedy, but the other dodged and hocked away as herd to hald as any

backed away, at hard to hold as any fish. All around and back of him now

of hoarse, quick shouts and the re-bound of bodies failing and rolling up-

on the hard, smooth beach. The thing

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