

CASTORIA

For Infants and Children.

The Kind You Have Always Bought

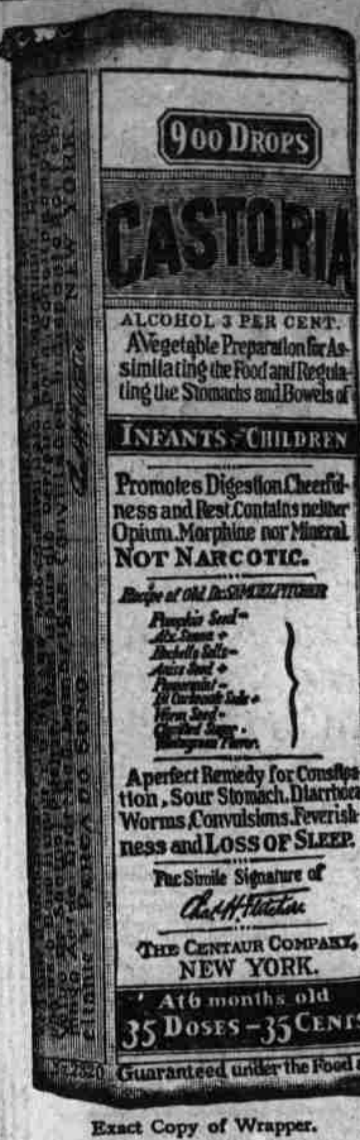
Bears the Signature of

Charles H. Fletcher

In Use For Over

Thirty Years

CASTORIA



Exact Copy of Wrapper.

"Thank God!"

"For heaven's sake, water," interrupted a trembling hoarse, anguished voice.

"Who speaks?" I asked.

"I, Pimball, I am pinned to the ground, my legs are crushed, my back is broken, I am dying."

"There should be a lantern here," I said. "I placed it—let me think—where did I place it?"

"It was just to the left of the opening," answered my mistress.

I was turned around and giddy, but I managed to fix the direction of the entrance by Pimball's groans and by good fortune presently found the lantern. It would burn but a few hours, but we never needed a light as we did then. My flint and steel, I carried ever in my pocket, and to kindle a flickering flame was the work of a moment. If I had not possessed it I would have given years of my life for that light which threw a faint illumination about the place.

There opposite me, where I had stationed her, protected by a niche in the cave from the rain of rocks which had beaten me down, was the mistress, safe and unharmed. I stepped toward her and with a low cry of thankfulness she fell into my arms. I soothed her for a moment and then turned to the other occupant of the chamber. The entrance was blocked up, the rock had settled down, Pimball's legs were broken and his back as well. It was impossible to release him—what lay upon him weighed tons and tons.

"You murdering hound!" I cried. "you have brought this upon us." But he would only plead for water, disregarding my reproaches.

I was for killing him with my cutlass, which I picked up, but she would not have it so. She filled a half coconut shell with water and brought it to him. She bathed his brow and gave him some to drink. It gave him temporary relief, but his minutes were numbered. His life was going out by seconds.

"God!" he cried as his eyes caught the gleam of the gold and silver; "the treasure!" He stretched out his hand toward it and then stopped. "I am undone," he choked out a fearful scream. "Mistress!"

"Yes?"

"Forgive me," I make no doubt, but her forgiveness came too late, for his head dropped—he had been looking sideways—and his face buried itself in the wet sand.

"Is he dead?" she asked, awestruck.

I nodded. No closer inspection was needed to establish the truth of that fact.

"And we, too, shall die," she said, shuddering. "We are buried here in the bowels of the earth, in this treasure lined prison."

"The earthquake which closed the mouth of the cave may have opened the other end."

"It is possible," she answered, "but not likely."

"And, besides, you remember the running stream on the other side, which we did not follow?"

"Yes."

"It must run somewhere."

"Well?"

"Where water runs man and woman may follow."

"At least it will do no harm to try."

"Come, then," said I, extending my hand to her and holding the lantern before me for pitfalls.



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THE ISLAND OF THE STAIRS

Being a True Account of Certain Strange and Wonderful Adventures of Master John Hampdon, Seaman, and Mistress Lucy Wilberforce, Gentlewoman, in the Great South Sea.

By **CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY**

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(CONTINUED.)

They gave us no time for further speech, for, urged by what promises of reward, what passionate hatred, I knew not, they came on. The narrow entrance was suddenly black with the islanders, who thrust their spears at us. Fortunately, my mistress had moved aside and was out of range, but I was perilously near being cut down. Mistress Lucy had the sword which I had thrust into her hand, and I the great ax which I had cast into the inner cave ahead of me.

Those outside were even less able to see than we, and perhaps they thought we had withdrawn or been driven back, for they crept forward. While I had lived in the gardener's lodge of Wilberforce castle I had got down the heavy weapon on the first day, striking with just enough force to kill the man and yet leave me able to recover myself without delay, and when three heads had been knocked that way in rapid succession with no more damage to me than a trifling spear cut on the ankle, the battle stopped for a moment. I laughed. "Come on, you dogs!" I shouted. "I can play at that game until you are

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more tired of it than I."

I spoke without thought, however, for those outside the opening drew back the bodies by their legs and thus cleared the entrance. I judged that the outer cave, which was large and spacious, was now filled with men. They were shouting and gesticulating in great excitement. But none made any effort to enter. Finally I heard a human voice speaking English. It was Pimball.

"Master Hampdon!" he cried.

"Speak not to me, you murdering villain!" I answered.

"Now, this is madness," he went on. "You are trapped like rats. We have only to wall up the entrance or build a fire in front of it and you will die."

"It is better to die even so," I replied. "than to live with men like you."

"You are trapped like rats. We have only to wall up the entrance or build a fire in front of it and you will die."

"It is better to die even so," I replied. "than to live with men like you."

"You are a fool!" he exclaimed.

He dropped down on his knees as he spoke and I could see his face in the opening, but too far away for me to sling my ax. If it were my last effort I was determined that I would get him, and so I waited.

"Don't lose the sword!" I cried to my lady across the chamber, where her white face stared at me out of the dimness.

"I shall not," she answered undauntedly.

Then I lifted the ax and waited for Master Pimball and his men to come on. But he had a better plan. Bullets and powder they had in plenty, and he knew from the fact that I had thrown my pistols at them that I had none left. With a deafening roar a storm of bullets from a dozen weapons swept into the cave. I leaped back. I had to or I should have been shot where I stood. Of the way they opened they took advantage, and under cover of a second volley they entered. Well, it was all up. All I could do was to leap upon them as they rose, and—

But at that moment the solid rock beneath my feet began to sway. It was as if I had been instantly translated to the deck of a tossing ship. I stood rooted to the spot trying to maintain a balance. Pimball had lifted himself upon one knee and was almost clear of the entrance, but he, too, stopped appalled. A sickening feeling of apprehension that all the savages on earth could not inspire came over me. My mistress screamed faintly. The natives outside broke in to terror stricken shouts and cries; an oath burst from the lips of the leader of the mutineers.

The next moment, with a crash like a thousand thunder peals, the earth was rent in twain.

The earthquake shook that rocky island like a baby's cradle. A great mass of rock over the entrance fell. With another roar like the first the cliff was riven in every direction. The noise outside ceased. The man with Pimball were ground to death. Upon his legs lay fifty feet of "Yen rocks. Darkness, total and absolute, succeeded the dim light. I remember I realized that the attack had failed and then something struck me. Down upon the wall, still quivering and I fell and knew no more.

Water, icy cold, trickling upon me from some spring, seeped in the wall by the earthquake presently brought me to myself. I lay for a moment listening. I could hear nothing at first but in a little while a deep groan and then a faint whispered prayer came to me.

I strove desperately to collect my senses, and finally I realized where I was—the cave, the battle, the earthquake, Pimball and the women!

"Mistress Lucy!" I cried.

"Oh, thank God!" his voice came through the darkness hysterically. "I thought you were killed."

"No," I answered, slowly rising to my knees and stretching my members to see if I had control of them, which fortunately I soon discovered I had. "I was stunned but otherwise I believe I am not much hurt. How is it with you?"

Chapter XVII.

In Which We Win Light, Life, Liberty and Love.

We went down the cave. To find the water was easy. Sure enough, it led away through a narrow rift in what direction we could not tell, although its tendency was downward, and I knew it would come out upon a beach somewhere. It had not seemed to me that the rift was more than enough to carry the water, but it had probably opened wider now by the shock, and so we followed it. Although sometimes the walls closed over the water course, making tunnels, we managed to force our way through them. I went in the advance, for I knew that

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