

# THE BARRIER

By Rex Beach

Copyright, 1908, by Harper & Brothers  
(Continued From Last Sunday.)

## SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—John Gale is a trader at Flambeau, a rough outpost of civilization in Alaska. His daughter Necla is a beautiful young girl, generally believed to be a half breed, daughter of Gale and the Indian squaw Alluna, with whom he lives. Some hidden burden weighs continually on the trader's mind, and he views with apprehension the arrival of a squad of soldiers at Flambeau. "That means the law," he says uneasily to Necla, who has become acquainted with and admired by Lieutenant Burrell, commander of the soldiers. It becomes known that Napoleon Roret, an honest, faithful French Canadian employed by Gale, is deeply in love with Necla. One Rynnion, a dissolute gambler and "bad man," arrives at Flambeau by steamer and in a fight with Burrell is worsted and forced to leave the town. On the departing steamer's deck he menacingly says, "I will return to take a hand in the game." III—Doret gives Necla a handsome silk gown brought by him from Dawson City for her. Arrayed in this, she meets Lieutenant Burrell, who falls madly in love with her, and he wonders if her blood is really tainted. Gale re-asserts that she is the illegitimate daughter of himself and the squaw. IV—Rynnion returns with Ben Stark, a professional gambler and man killer with plenty of money. Stark builds a saloon and dance hall at Flambeau. "No Creek" Lee discovers gold in a valley some miles distant, and Necla persuades Burrell to take her there and locate a claim for her, their trip requiring a day and a night in the forest. V, VI and VII—Gale, Lee, Rynnion and Stark have gone together to the site of Lee's discovery to locate claims. They are met by Necla and Burrell, and a bitter quarrel ensues. Rynnion and Stark conspire to rob Necla of her claims. Rynnion wants the girl, and Stark finds that Necla has a strange, unexplainable fascination for him. His baby daughter had been stolen years before. Burrell becomes the declared enemy of both Stark and Rynnion. A gun held by Gale is discharged, the bullet accidentally, he claims, narrowly missing Stark. VIII—Gale knows Stark to be an old enemy of his father and Necla, and Alluna, his squaw, says: "Kill Stark. Take the knife of my father. To kill is the law." IX, X, XI, XII and XIII—Necla, believing herself a half-breed, fears she cannot marry Burrell, whom she loves, as she learns that her tainted blood will bar her from meeting the people he naturally associates with, and she over-hears Burrell say he may not marry her after all. Stark persuades her to leave Flambeau after he discovers her to be his daughter. XIV—Gale tells Burrell of Necla's past and that Stark has hounded him from one section of the country to another and that Stark does not now recognize him as Gale.

"I want you to arrest the man who killed my wife. If you don't take him the miners will. I've got a following in this camp, and I'll raise a crowd in fifteen minutes—enough to hang this squaw man or batter down your barracks to get him. But I don't want to do that. I want to go by the law you've talked so much about. I want you to do the trick."

At last Burrell saw the gambler's devilry. He knew Stark's reputation too well to think that he feared a meeting with Gale. Stark had planned his settlement coldly and with deliberate malice. Moreover, he was strong enough to stand aside and let another take his place and thus deny to Gale the final recourse of a hunted beast, the desperate satisfaction that the trader craved. He tied his enemy's hands and delivered him up with his thirst unsatisfied—to whom? He thrust a weapon into the hand of his other enemy and bade this other enemy use it—worse than that, forced him to strike the man he honored, the man he loved. Burrell never doubted that Stark had carefully weighed the effect of this upon Necla and had reasoned that a girl like her could not understand a soldier's duty if it meant the blood of a parent. If he refused to act the gambler could break him, while every effort he made to protect Gale would but increase the other's satisfaction. There was no chance of the trader's escape. Stark held him in his hand. Was it impossible, the lieutenant wondered, to move this man from his purpose?

"Have you thought of Necla? She loves Gale. What effect will this have on her?"

"D—n her! She's more his brat than mine. I want John Gaylord!"

At this a vicious frenzy overtook Burrell, and he thought of the man behind yonder door, whom he had forgotten. Well, why not? These two men had stalked each other clear into the farthest places, driven by forces that were older than the hills. Who was he to stand between such passions?

The gambler's words rang in his ears—"I want John Gaylord!"—and before he knew what he was doing he had answered, "Very well; I'll give him to you," and crossed quickly to the door of his bedroom and flung it open. On the threshold he paused stockstill. The place was empty. A draft sucked through the open window, flitting with the curtain and telling the story of the trader's exit.

"If you're looking for your coat, it's here," he heard Stark say. "Get into it, and we'll go for him."

The lieutenant's mind was working

fast enough now, in all conscience, and he saw with clear and fateful eyes whether he was being led, at which a sudden reckless disregard for consequences seized him. He felt a blind fury at being pulled and hauled and driven by this creature and also an unreasoning anger at Gale's defection. But it was the thought of Necla and the horrible net of evil in which this man had ensnared them both that galled him most. He determined to finish this thing here and now.

Meade went to his bureau, took his revolver from the belt where he had hung it and came out into the other room. Stark, seeing the weapon, exclaimed:

"You don't need that. He won't resist you."

"I've decided not to take him," said Burrell.

"Decided not to take him!" shouted the other. "Have you weakened? Don't you intend to arrest that man?"

"No!" cried the soldier. "I've listened to your lies long enough. Now I'm going to stop them once for all. You're too dangerous to have around. You're faced each other silently a moment; then Stark spoke in a very quiet voice, though his eyes were glittering.

"What's the meaning of this? Are you crazy?"

"Gale was here just before you came and told me who killed your wife. I know."

"Well?"

"It's pretty late. This place is lonely. This is the simplest way."

The gambler fell to studying his antagonist, and when he did not speak Burrell continued:

"Come, brace up! I'm giving you a chance."

But Stark shook his head.

"Don't be afraid," insisted the lieutenant. "There are no witnesses. If you get me, nobody will know, and your word is good. If not, it's much simpler than the other." Then when the gambler still made no move he insisted. "You wouldn't have me kill you like a rattlesnake?"

"You couldn't," said the older man. "You're not that kind, and I'm not the kind to be cheated either. Listen. I've lived over forty years, and I never took less than was coming to me. I won't begin tonight."

"You'll get your share."

"Bah! You don't know what I mean. I don't want you. It's him I'm after, and when I'm done with him I'll take care of you, but I won't run any risk right now. You might put me away, there's the possibility, and I won't let you or any other man—or woman either, not even my girl—cheat me out of Gale. Put up your gun."

The soldier hesitated, then did as he was bidden, for this man knew him better than he knew himself.

"I ought to treat you like a mad dog, but I can't do it while your hands are up. I'm going to fight for John Gale, however, and you can't take him."

"I'll have his carcass hung to my ridgepole before daylight."

Stark turned to go, but paused at the door. "And you think you'll marry Necla, do you?"

"I know it."

"Is that so? Suppose you find her first."

"What do you mean? Wait!"

But his visitor was gone, leaving behind him a lover already sorely vexed and now harassed by a new and sudden apprehension. What venom the man distilled! Could it be that he had sent Necla away?

Stark traced his way back to his cabin in a ten times fiercer mood than he had come, reviling, cursing, hating. Back past the dark trading post he went, pausing to shake his clinched fist and grind out an oath between his teeth; past the door of his own saloon, which was alight and whence came the sound of revelry, through the scattered houses, where he went more by feel than by sight, up to the door of his own shack. He closed the door behind him now and locked it, for he had some thinking to do, then felt through his pockets for a match, and, striking it, bent over his lamp to adjust the wick. It flared up steady and strong at last, flooding the narrow place with its illumination. Then he straightened up and turned toward the bed to throw off his coat, when suddenly every muscle of his body leaped with an uncontrollable spasm, as if he had uncovered a deadly serpent coiled and ready to spring.

John Gale was sitting at his table, barely an arm's length away, his gray blue eyes fixed upon him and the deep seams of his heavy face set as if graven in stone. His huge, knotted hands were upon the table, and between them lay a naked knife.

## CHAPTER XVII. JOHN GALE'S HOUR.

IT was a heathenish time of night to arouse the girl, thought Burrell as he left the barracks, but he must ally these fears that were besetting him; he must see Necla at once. The low, drifting clouds obscured what star glow there was in the heavens, and he stepped back to light a lantern.

A few moments later he stood above the squaw, who crouched on the trader's doorstep, wailing her death song into the night.

"What's wrong? Where is Necla? Where is she?" he demanded and at last seized her roughly, faking her to the light, but Alluna only blinked owlishly at his lantern and shook her head.

"Gone away," she finally informed him and began to weave again in her despair, but he held her fiercely.

"Where has she gone? When did she go?" He shook her to quicken her reply.

"I don't know; I don't know. Long time she's gone now." She trailed off into Indian words he could not comprehend, so he pushed past her into

the house to see for himself and without knocking flung Necla's door open and stepped into her chamber. Before he had swept the unfamiliar room with his eyes he knew that she had indeed gone, and gone hurriedly, for the signs of disorder betrayed a reckless haste.

"When did she go, Alluna? For God's sake, what does this mean?" he cried.

"I don't know. She come and she go, and I don't see her; mebbe three, four hour ago."

"Where's Gale? He'll know. He's gone after her, eh?"

The upward glow of the lantern heightened the young man's pallor, and again the squaw broke into her sad lament.

"John Gale—he's gone away with the knife of my father. I am afraid; I am afraid."

"Did he come back here just now?"

"No. He went to the jail house, and he would not let me follow. He don't come back no more."

This was confusing, and Meade cried angrily:

"Why didn't you give the alarm? Why didn't you come to me instead of yelling your lungs out around the house?"

"He told me to wait," she said simply.

"Go find Poleon, quick!"

"He told me to wait," she repeated stolidly, and Burrell knew he was powerless to move her. He saw the image of a great terror in the woman's face. The night suddenly became heavy with the hint of unspeakable things, and he grew fearful, suspecting now that Gale had told him but a part of his story, that all the time he knew Stark's identity and that his quarry was at hand, ready for the kill, or, if not, he had learned enough while standing behind that partition. Where was he now? Where was Necla? What part did she play in this? He gave up trying to think and fled for Stark's saloon, reasoning that where one was the other must be near, and there would surely be some word of Necla. He burst through the door. A quick glance over the place showed it empty of those he sought; but, spying Poleon, he dragged him outside, indignant breathlessly:

"Have you seen Gale?"

"No."

"Have you seen Stark? Has he been about?"

"Yes; wan hour, mebbe two, hour ago. W'y? W'at for you ask?"

"There's the devil to pay. Those two have come together, and Necla is gone."

"Necla gone!" the Canadian jerked out. "W'at you mean by dat? W'ere she's gone to?"

"I don't know. Nobody knows. Heaven! I'm shaking like a leaf."

"Bah! She's feel purty bad. She's go out by herself. Dat's all right."

"I tell you something has happened to her! There's h—I to pay! I found her clothes at the house torn to ribbons and all muddy and wet."

Poleon cried out at this.

"We've got to find her and Gale, and we haven't a minute to lose."

"Where have you look?"

"I've been to the house, but Alluna is crazy and says Gale has gone to kill Stark, as near as I can make out. Both of them were at my quarters tonight, and I'm afraid the squaw is right."

"But where is Necla?"

"We don't know. Maybe Stark has got her."

The Frenchman cursed horribly.

"Have you try hees cabane?"

"No."

Without answer the Frenchman darted away, and the lieutenant sped after him through the deserted rows of log houses.

Burrell gripped his companion's arm with fingers of steel, and together they crept up to the door. But even before they had gained it they heard a voice within. It was Stark's. The walls of the house were of moss chinked logs that deadened every sound, but the door itself was of thin whipsawed pine boards with ample cracks at top and bottom, and they heard plainly. The lieutenant leaned forward, then with difficulty smothered an exclamation, for he heard another voice now—the voice of John Gale. The words came to him muffled, but distinct, and he raised his hand to knock when suddenly he seized Poleon, hissing into his ear:

"Listen! For God's sake, listen!"

For the first time in his pestiferous life Ben Stark lost the iron composure that had made his name a byword in the west, and at sight of his bitterest enemy seated in the dark of his own house waiting for him he became an ordinary, nervous, frightened man. It was the utter unexpectedness of the thing that shook him, and before he could regain his balance Gale spoke:

"I've come to settle, Bennett."

"What are you doing here?" the gambler stammered.

"I was up at the soldier's place just now and heard you. I didn't want any interruptions, so I came here, where we can be alone." He paused and when Stark made no answer continued, "Well, let's get at it." But still the other made no move. "You've had all the best of it for twenty years," Gale went on in his level voice, "but tonight I get even. I've lived for this!"

"That shot in Lee's cabin?" recalled Stark, with the light of new understanding. "You knew me then?"

"Yes."

Stark took a deep breath. "What a d—d fool I've been!"

With an effort Stark began to assemble his wits as the trader continued:

"You saddled your dirty work on me, Ben Stark, and I've carried it for fifteen years, but tonight I put you out the way you put her out. An eye for an eye!"

"I didn't kill her," said the man.

"So? The yellow is showing up at last. I knew you were a coward, but I didn't think you'd be afraid to own it to yourself."

"Look here," said Stark curiously, "do you really think I killed Merridy?"

"I know it. A man who would strike a woman would kill her—if he had the nerve."

Stark had now mastered himself and smiled.

"My hate worked better than I thought. Well, well, that made it hard for you, didn't it?" he chuckled. "I supposed, of course, you knew."

"Knew?" Gale's face showed emotion for the first time. "Knew what?" His hands were quivering slightly.

"She killed herself."

"So help you God?"

"So help me God!"

There was a long pause.

"Why?"

"Say, it's kind of funny our standing here talking about that thing, isn't it? Well, if you want to know, I came home early that night. I guess you hadn't been gone two hours. And the surprise did it more than anything else, I suppose. She hadn't prepared a story. I got suspicious, named you at random and hit the nail on the head."

Gale's face was like chalk, and his voice sounded thin and dry as he said: "You beat her; that's why she did it."

Stark made no answer.

"The papers said the room showed a struggle."

When the other still kept quiet Gale insisted:

"Didn't you?"

At this Stark flamed up defiantly.

"Well, I guess I had cause enough. No woman except her was ever untrue to me—wife or sweetheart."

"You didn't really think?"

"Think h—! I thought so then, and I think so now. She denied it, but—"

"And you knew her so well too. I guess you've had some bad nights yourself, Bennett, with that always on your mind?"

"I swore I'd have"—

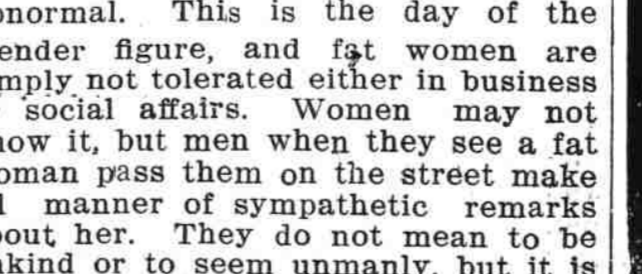
"—and so you put her blood on my head and made me an outlaw." After an instant, "Why did you tell me this, anyhow?"

"It's our last talk, and I wanted you to know how well my hate worked."

"Well, I guess that's all," said Gale. So far they had watched each other with unwavering, unblinking eyes, straining at the leash and taut in every nerve. Now, however, the trader's fingers tightened on the knife handle, and his knuckles whitened with the grip, at which Stark's right hand swept to his waist, and simultaneously Gale lunged across the table. His blade flickered in the light, and a gun spoke—once, twice, again and again. A cry arose outside the cabin; then some heavy thing crashed in through the door, bringing light with it, for with his first leap Gale had carried the lamp and the table with him, and the two had clinched in the dark.

(Continued Next Sunday.)

The cost of getting a new boarder is not often greater than the cost of one insertion of a Business Local. Sometimes two or three insertions are needed.



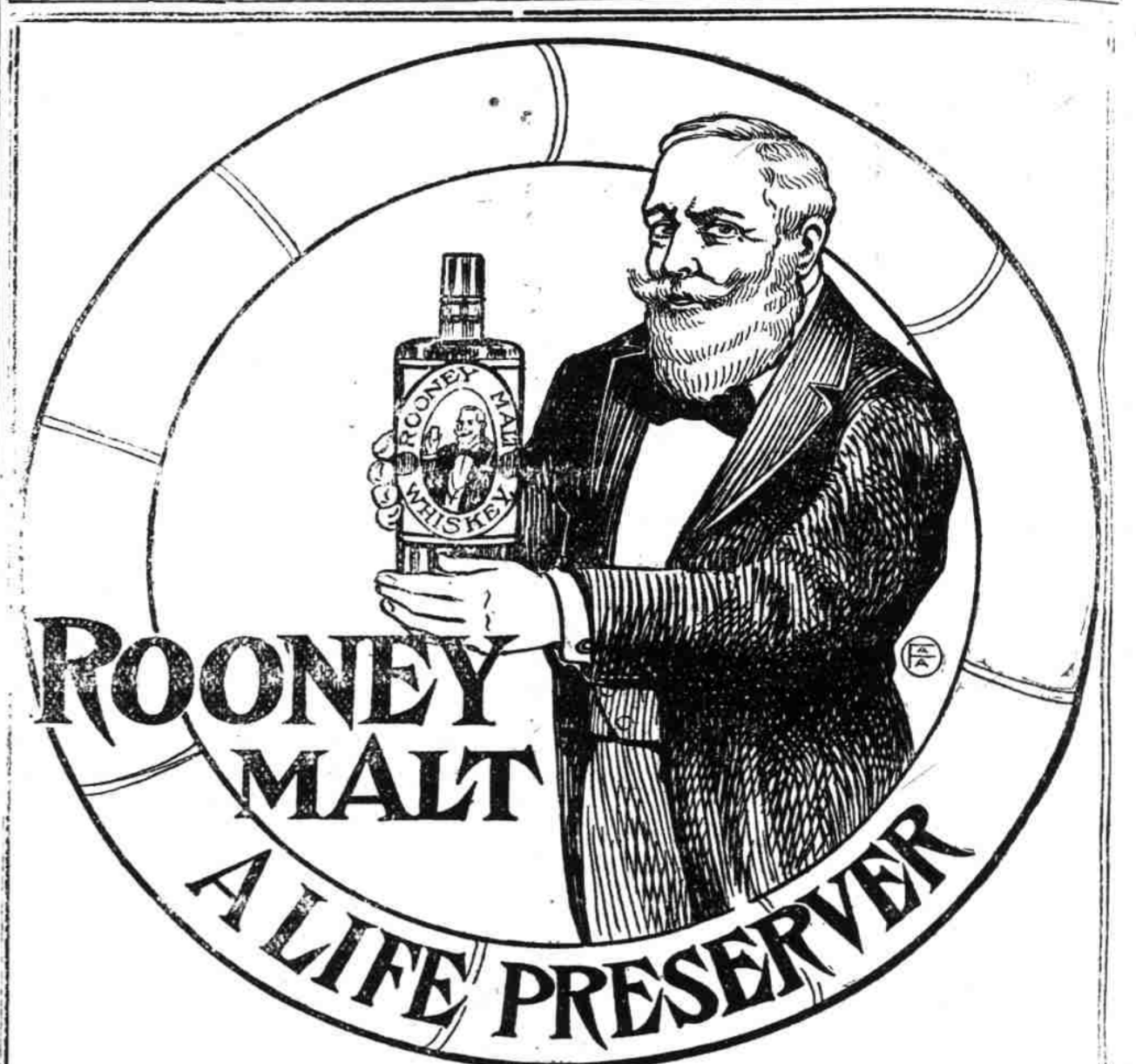
## Take Off the Fat Where It Shows

Most women suffer much humiliation because of great quantities of fat, so located that, no matter how they dress, everybody sees that they are abnormal. This is the day of the slender figure, and fat women are simply not tolerated either in business or social affairs. Women may not know it, but men when they see a fat woman pass them on the street make all manner of sympathetic remarks about her. They do not mean to be unkind or to seem unmanly, but it is natural for a man to dislike fat on a woman. Where fat shows the most there is where it must be removed, and as quickly as possible. The hot weather dresses seem to be made for the fat woman's misery and the slender woman's delight. They expose all the charms of woman and her ugliness as well. Exercise and diet will not remove fat. This has been proved. The famous Marmola prescription which has met with such phenomenal success and has so many of our society women as its sponsors, is now being sold in tablet form to meet the demand of the public for this style of treatment. These little tablets go into your system just like food. They stop the stomach and digestive apparatus from producing fat and reduce the fat upon the body at the rate of from 12 to 15 ounces a day. They are harmless and can be carried in your purse and taken even after you have indulged in a hearty meal away from home. They are sold at all drug stores at 75 cents a case, or if you prefer you may write the Marmola Company, Dept. 606, Detroit, Mich.

# S.S.S. CURES OLD SORES

If an old sore existed simply because the flesh was diseased at that particular spot, it would be an easy matter to apply some remedy directly to the place that would kill the germs; or the diseased flesh might be removed by a surgical operation and a cure effected. But the very fact that old sores resist every form of local or external treatment, and even return after being cut away, shows that back of them is a morbid cause which must be removed before a cure can result. Just as long as the pollution continues in the blood, the ulcer remains an open cesspool for the deposit of impurities which the circulation throws off. S. S. S. cures Old Sores by purifying the blood. It removes every trace of impurity and taint from the circulation, and thus completely does away with the cause. When S. S. S. has cleansed the blood, the sore begins to heal, and it is not a surface cure, but the healing process begins at the bottom; soon the discharge ceases, the inflammation leaves, and the place fills in with firm, healthy flesh. Under the purifying and tonic effects of S. S. S. the system is built up, and those whose health has been impaired by the drain and worry of an old sore will be doubly benefited by its use. Book on Sores and Ulcers and any medical advice free to all who write.

THE SWIFT SPECIFIC CO., ATLANTA, GA.



## The Nervous System.

The strenuous day's work and the many cares of life wear and tear on the nervous system—this often causes a break-down and ruins the health.

## Rooney Malt Whiskey

Will preserve your health by strengthening the nerves, BUILDS UP THE WASTE TISSUES. As a tonic it is highly recommended by physicians. Keep a supply of ROONEY MALT in the home. Its medicinal qualities are as a life preserver, as thousands of testimonials show.

Four Full Quarts.....\$ 4.00, delivered Express Prepaid

Twelve Full Quarts.....\$10.50 delivered to Any Point.

Orders filled promptly by leading dealers. If your dealer cannot supply you send us post-office or express order and we will have orders filled promptly.

## STRAUS GUNST & CO.,

Makers of the Celebrated Rooney Malt. RICHMOND, VIRGINIA.

# Old N.C. Corn Whiskey



## OUR SPECIAL OFFER. 4 FULL QUARTS WITH BOTTLE FREE 3.00

WE are making this special offer in order to convince you that we give you the best Whiskies for the money. This bottle, which we give away with every order of four quarts of Old North Carolina Corn, is fine old Longstreet Whiskey. Corn Whiskey is the purest Whiskey made—"Old North Carolina" is the purest Corn Whiskey, hence its rare mellow flavor. It is aged in wood and Guaranteed under the National Pure Food Law. Just remit \$3. by registered letter or money order, and the four full quarts will be sent you and the free bottle with our compliments. We prepay the express charges, and ship in plain packages. As this offer is limited—ORDER NOW.

## THE NEWCOMB Co., PETERSBURG VA.

"THE PROMPT MAIL ORDER HOUSE."

## SUMMER AT THE BEACH

# HOTEL TARRYMOORE WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH, N. C.

## Cool, Invigorating Sea Breezes

Free from malaria; no mosquitoes, sandflies or other insects. Delightful bathing beach. Deep sea and sound fishing, yachting, etc. Every known resort attraction and convenience. The finest sea food on earth can be had here. The breeze from the sea and salt water bathing tone up the entire system as nothing else can. June is an ideal month at Wrightsville Beach. Make your reservation at once.

Address, W. J. MOORE, Proprietor.