

# Youth Rides West

by Will Irwin

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## CHAPTER V.

I finished, hesitatingly set the copy on the case before Marcus. He ran rapidly, professionally, through the sheets. "Nine hundred words or thereabouts," he said. "Couldn't have guessed better at space myself. Now I'll show my gratitude and appreciation practically, just for a change. I can use you. I've been wanting a reporter. If you like the job, sit down and go on with it—at twenty a week. What say?"

My breath taken away by the

dramatic suddenness of his proposal, I realized that here lay my way out. The smell of printer's ink was already perfume to my nostrils. I had enjoyed this little while at intellectual work—the thing I was trained to do—as much as I had loathed digging at the claim. If Shorty would only buy me out— With a promptness which equaled that of Marcus, I answered:

"Give me an hour, and I'll let you know."

"Well, come back anyhow—need you tonight!" exclaimed Marcus as I darted through the door to search for Buck and Shorty.

I pushed and jostled my way from Siegel's beer hall to the Plack Jack, from the Plack Jack to Myer's Variety theater, where at last I found my two adventurers hollering expansively on a back seat, Buck's arm hooked over Shorty's shoulder. They, in common with the rest of the audience, were listening with heads sentimentally askew to "The Blue Alsatian Mountains," as rendered, to the accompaniment of a guitar, a violin and the only piano in camp, by a hawk-faced woman in a short and ruffy skirts. I had to wait until she rendered two encores before I could announce to Buck and Shorty that I wanted to see them on important business and drag them to the recess between the Variety and

Cheap Jack Eckstein's dry goodsemporium. And there I wasted no time with preliminaries, but plunged straight into business.

"Shorty," I said—I had never heard any other name for him, "do you want to buy out my share of our claim?"

It was Buck who answered. He looked upon me with a startled eye, which grew a little suspicious as he asked:

"What's the game? Got anything in sight?"

"Nothing in mining," said I. "But I've been offered a job on the newspaper. And I want to take it."

Shorty spoke; a slight difficulty in pronunciation proved that since I left him he had taken many drinks.

"Throwin' down your good old partner, huh!" he exclaimed, truculently. "Double-cross him—"

"Shut up, Shorty!" commanded Buck. "This is a square kid. Only I want to see if he ain't a d—n fool. Don't you know you're lettin' go of a mighty promising prospect?"

"I know you think so," I replied.

"Course," said Buck, with the flash of an understanding for which I had not given credit, "you're plum disgusted with diggin' just now. It's hard for a young fellow to get down to real work. But the

first week's always the toughest. You'll—"

"Aw, come to the point!" exclaimed Shorty, moving slightly toward me as though to begin hostilities. "How much do you want to skin me for?"

"I don't want to skin you at all," said I, a little touched, in spite of Shorty's condition. "Just what I put into it."

"Don't know's I can let you cheat yourself that way," said Buck, utterly ignoring, then and afterward, the interpositions of his muddled friend. "Why don't you grub-stake Shorty? Then you'll hav. your share comin'—"

"Grub-stake h—!" broke in Shorty. "No grub-stake in mine—"

"When we strike a pocket," concluded Buck. "And how's Shorty goin' to pay?"

"I'd rather not grub-stake anyone," said I, "and Shorty can pay me on the installment plan, can't he?"

I was growing eager for our discussion had brought up in my mind the sickening memory of that last week in the ooze of the stream-bed; and the blisters on my hands still burned. I perceived, however, that my affair was going well. Buck had not denied that he wanted to combine with Shorty. Only, honest man that he was, he had tried to guard my interests.

"I've got a better chance with the Courier," I added. "Of course, I don't like—" and here I stopped, too shy by virtue of my youth and my origin to bring out the rest. I wanted to tell Buck that my only regret at selling Claim No. 32 was the thought of leaving him. Toward Buck I felt at that stage of my western wanderings as a young soldier must feel toward a stern but benevolent and efficient superior officer. But Buck, it seemed, understood, for he replied in an un- wittingly low voice:

"I'll be sorry to lose you, kid." And it was done; all excepting the process of getting logic into the muddled head of Shorty. Alternating force with tact, Buck accomplished that. Shorty had admitted ownership of a hundred dollars. He even drew it from its hiding place in back of his watch. I should have that to bind the bargain. I was to keep my horse and the personal articles of our equipment, and to take Shorty's note at three months for the remainder of the money we had put into our outfit—which had now been transmuted into our claim. That note Shorty was to pay off on the installment plan from current yield. Having arranged the details of this simple transaction, having got momentarily at least, the consent of the party of the second part, Buck and I hurried him to the Comstock Lode saloon. We managed to jam our way to the bar, gave Shorty a drink to keep him quiet, paid the harassed bartender four bits for a pen, ink and two sheets of paper.

Buck wrote in his scrawly hand at my dictation, which seemed entirely to satisfy Shorty. But he drew back at the last moment, glaring at me with a suspicious eye. Then his shoulders began to heave with suppressed laughter; he suddenly took the pen and appended the signature of Edward D. Croly to agreement and note. And, having handed back the paper, he let his laughter go.

"All right!" he inquired. "Look's all right don't it?" Ain't worth paper's written on. Note signed by drunken man ain't no good." Shorty's laughter became Homeric.

"It's good in this case," remarked Buck dryly; and then he added in an aside to me:

"Better move on—expect you up for your stuff in the mornin'. I'll have your half of our outfit ready for you—share and share alike." I had actually forgotten the small detail of reward for my week's work.

Not in the least disturbed by Shorty's drunken remark about the note, I jostled back to the Courier. Marcus was still sticking type with jerky, maniacal speed.

"All right," I said, "I'll stay."

"All right," echoed Marcus. "Now move! I'm a hard boss, I am. Local news is awful slack. Hasn't been a single shooting, and it's Saturday night at that. Want three columns of telegraph stuff—"

"Telegraph?"

"Sure—news of the world. You'll find the Denver Friday morning papers and the Wednesday K. C. evening sheets there in a heap. Run through 'em and rewrite me a set of good-looking dispatches. If there's a hanging anywhere, play that up big for the main story. If anything happened in congress, make three or four inches out of that, unless it's got to do with mining. And remember, we're Republican, lock, stock and barrel. Treat the Democrats nasty."

I gathered the Denver papers to myself, and settled down to my job. However, ten minutes later Marcus, looking up as he transferred a stick of type to the stone, found me loafing and called:

"Rustle! What I want ain't literature, but speed!"

Struggling with the creative problem of imagining how a man might deport himself on the scaffold, I had looked up to meditate. And my eye had caught on a sheet of proofs hooked to a leg of the stone. At its head was an advertisement for Mrs. Barnaby's boarding house and restaurant, California and Arpa streets; special attention to

transients. At Marcus' rebuke I started unnecessarily; and as I bent to my work, I felt my cheeks burning.

Marcus, on bidding me good night, added that Sunday was a day off for the whole staff excepting maybe him; and he didn't know but that even he was going to get the big sleep. I had found it the meantime that my duties as the Courier, like his, were not to be wholly literary. When the last news filler had passed into type, I helped wash forms and carry them onto the platens. As soon as the somewhat jerky old press, at the furious impulsion of the two boys, began to knock off passably fair impressions, all spare hands set to folding—Marcus on the stone, I on our editorial table, the little printer's devil on the floor. But not before I had retired into a corner with one of the early, dim copies and read myself for the first time in print.

It was Marcus who recalled that I had no lodgings. "Sorry I can't bed you down," he added, "but I'm sleeping three in a room as it is. My cabin's just behind Siegel's beer hall. If you're doing nothing today, come around about noon and rout me out. There's a lot of things I've had to leave at loose ends. You'd better go to the St. Louis lodging house. Tell them I said they were to give you a bed."

By now very tired, with a night of mental work piled onto a day of physical, I trudged down Main street. It was three o'clock in the morning. The clerk of the St. Louis lodging house lay wrapped in a blanket just inside the flap of his tent, a dim lantern illuminating a drawn and unshaven face. He woke when I shook him, muttered that he was full up, fell asleep, had again to be shaken awake before I could make him understand that I came from Marcus Handy and must have a bed. Then without a word he shed his covers, rose, stretched, yawned, took the lantern in one hand and a roll of blankets in the other, and led me up to a tiny compartment with canvas walls. On the floor lay three men, snoring; between them and the wall a pile of hay afforded just space for one more. My nostrils, fresh from the pure air of a mountain night, bridled at a vile mixed scent of human effluvia, stale tobacco, staler whiskey. The clerk unrolled my blankets, collected my two dollars, and turned away.

Next morning stirring on all sides woke me and I shook out my clothes, dressed and emerged to the outer air. I made my toilet with such poor and soiled facilities as the St. Louis lodging house afforded—a tin washbasin, encrusted round the edge, a roller towel whereof only one hand's breadth was gray instead of black, a hair-brush from which the bristles were coming out in bunches, a stained whiskbroom, a piece of broken mirror. Some premonition of need had caused me, when Buck and I left the claim, to slip a clean collar into my overcoat pocket. I put this on and started for breakfast at Mrs. Barnaby's boarding house in a condition of Sabbath respectability. Never had I entertained the slightest doubt of where I intended to board in Cottonwood.

I pushed through the canvas flap of Mrs. Barnaby's, half expecting to find Mrs. Dean at the long table, wholly disappointed when I did not. Three nondescripts of the mines, their eyes on their tin plates, were wolfing ham and eggs and sucking down hot coffee. These, I learned later, were accidental transients. Just then Mrs. Barnaby herself waddled in with a platter of steaming cakes in one hand and three tin cups, emitting breakfast odors, hooked fanwise into the other. She wore a long gingham apron, not any too recently laundered, but her gray frizzes seemed past out of curl-papers; above her flushed, tanned and ruddy face they gave the effect of a silver crown.

(To be continued.)



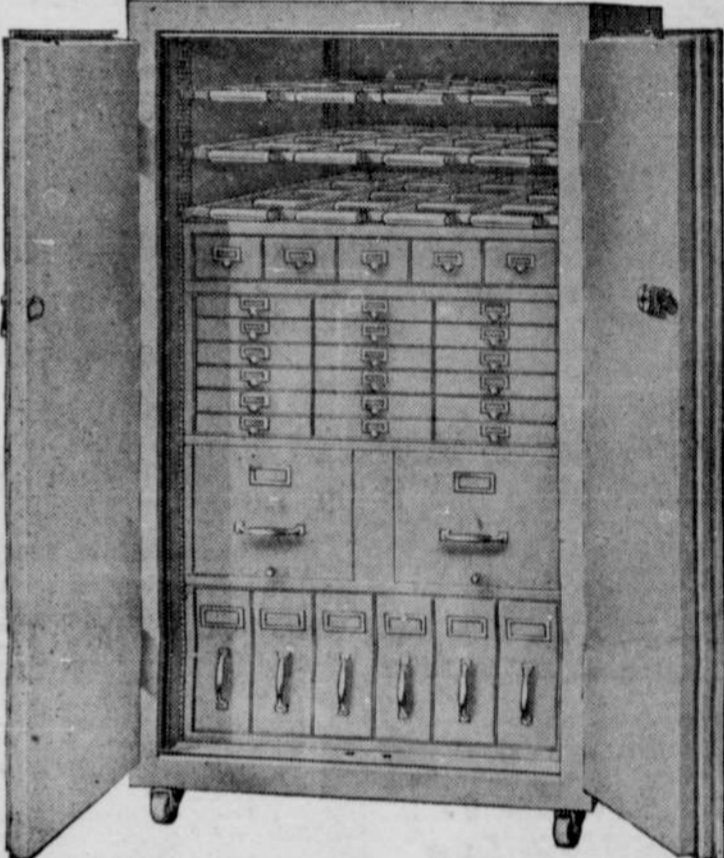
## Simplex Bookkeeping Systems

What more information could you want than is to be found in the following departments, all kept in one book:

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  - Checks issued, to whom and what for.
  - Journal.
  - Invoice record.
  - Petty cash.
  - Bank statement.
  - Sales and expense summary.
  - Financial statement.
- Your business at your finger tips every moment of the day.

# The Sentinel

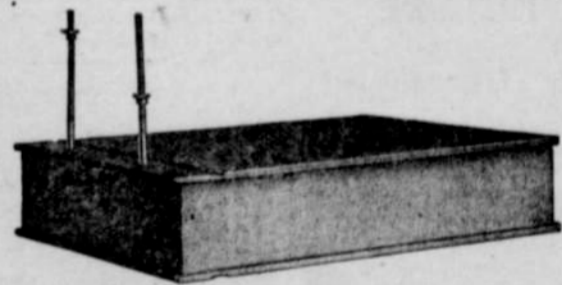
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## THE SENTINEL

Printers—Publishers  
Office Outfitters



The DeLuxe Line of

## TOP LOCK BINDERS

The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Publishers—Printers—Office Outfitters

**STANDARD OIL COMPANY**  
**COTTAGE GROVE**

**AIRWAYS OF THE PACIFIC COAST**  
AS SUPPLIED BY U.S. ARMY AIR SERVICE

To aid in the development of aviation the Standard Oil company of California is marking the airways of the Pacific coast by placing names of cities on roofs of company buildings. The chart shows the airways of the Pacific Coast, as mapped by the United States army air service, and the points at which the Standard Oil company has or will soon erect air-signs. In addition to town names, the company will also paint arrows indicating true north.

The signs consist of large block letters on a dark background and are visible from several thousand feet in the air.

Watch a growing business and see its NEWSPAPER ads grow in size.

Manifold Forms. The Sentinel.

## "Where does all the money go?"

YOUNG Mrs. Henshaw was almost in tears. She had been telling Mrs. Blair something about her failure to "get a few dollars ahead."

"Where does all the money go?" she asked hopelessly.

"Do you really want me to tell you, dear?" Mrs. Blair replied, in the kindly voice of mature experience.

"Like so many other young people," she continued, "you and Jack are 'always broke'—as you say—because you have no systematic, intelligent buying plan. You need to adopt a budget! You should study your problem—know exactly what you must have each week and buy accordingly).

"There comes the big test! Do you know how to buy—what to buy, and when, and where? You simply must learn, and, the best way in the world is to study the advertisements in your newspaper. Read the ads carefully; apply their suggestions to your own needs, and you will save money! I know, because for many years I have done so."

### ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS FOR STREET IMPROVEMENT COTTAGE GROVE, OREGON.

Notice is hereby given that on Monday, the 2nd day of August, 1926, at the hour of 8 o'clock p. m. of said day, in the council chamber of the city hall, sealed bids will be opened for the improvement of Madison avenue from the east line of Third street to the west line of south Sixth street, according to the provisions of ordinance 602, passed and approved July 6, 1925; with hard surface pavement constructed of bitulithic or bituminous concrete or of cement concrete.

Plans and specifications therefor, prepared by the city engineer, are on file in the office of the city recorder, who will receive unit bids for any part or all of said improvement until 7:30 o'clock p. m. of said day, August 2, 1926.

Work shall be completed within 60 days from the signing of the contract, and certified check for 10% of the amount of bid or an approved bid bond shall accompany each bid. The common council reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

Dated this 29th day of July, 1926.  
HOMER GALLOWAY,  
City Recorder.