

# The Blazed Trail

By STEWART EDWARD WHITE

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## CHAPTER XX.

**F**IVE years passed. In that time Thorpe had succeeded in cutting 100,000,000 feet of pine. The money received for this had all been turned back into the company's funds. From a single camp of twenty-five men the concern had increased to

six large, well equipped communities of 50 to 100 men apiece, using nearly 200 horses and hauling as far as eight or nine miles.

Near the port stood a mammoth saw-mill capable of taking care of 22,000,000 feet a year, about which a lumber town had sprung up. Besides its original holding the company had acquired about 150,000,000 more back near the headwaters of the Ossawinimakee.

During the four years in which the Morrison & Daly company shared the stream with Thorpe the two firms lived in complete amity and understanding. Northrop had played his cards skillfully. The older capitalists had withdrawn suit. Afterward they kept scrupulously within their rights and saw to it that no more careless openings were left for Thorpe's shrewdness.

And as the younger man on his side never attempted to overstep his own rights the interests of the rival firms rarely clashed. As to the few disputes that did arise Thorpe found Mr. Daly singularly anxious to please. In the desire was no friendliness, however, Thorpe was watchful for treachery and could hardly believe the affair finished when at the end of the fourth year the M. & D. transferred its operations to another stream a few miles east.

"They're altogether too confounded anxious to help us on that freight, Wallace," said Thorpe, wrinkling his brow uneasily. "I don't like it. It isn't natural."

Thorpe's Camp One was celebrated in three states. Thorpe had set out to gather around him a band of good woodsmen. Except on a pinch he would employ no others.

"I don't care if I get in only 2,000 feet this winter, and if a boy does that," he answered Shearer's expostulations, "it's got to be a good boy."

The result of his policy began to show even in the second year. Men were a little prouder to say that they had put in a winter at "Thorpe's One." Those who had worked there during the first year were loyal enthusiasts. As they were authorities their perforce had to accept the dictum. There grew a desire among the better class to see what "Thorpe's One" might be like. In the autumn Harry had more applicants than he knew what to do with. Eighteen of the old men returned. He to them all, but when it came to distribution three found themselves assigned to one or the other of the new camps. And quietly the rumor gained that these three had shown the least will to spirit during the previous winter.

Tim Shearer was foreman of Camp One, Scotty Parsons was drafted from the veterans to take charge of Two. Thorpe engaged two men known to Tim to boss Three and Four, but in selecting the "push" for Five he sought out John Radway and induced him to accept the commission.

"You can do it, John," said he, "and I know it. I want you to try, and if you don't make her go I'll call it nobody's fault but my own."

The result proved his sagacity. Radway was one of the best foremen in the outfit. He got more out of his men, he rose better to emergencies, and he accomplished more with the same resources than any of the others excepting Tim Shearer. As long as the work was done for some one else he was capable and efficient. Only when he was called upon to demand on his own account did the paralyzing shyness affect him.

But the one feature that did more to attract the very best element among woodsmen was Camp One. Old woodsmen will still tell you about it, with a longing reminiscent glimmer in the corners of their eyes as they recall its glories and the men who worked in it. To have "put in" a winter in Camp One was the mark of a master and the ambition of every raw recruit to the forest.

But Camp One was a privilege. A man entered it only after having proved himself; he remained in it only as long as his efficiency deserved it. Its members were invariably recruited from one of the other camps, never from applicants who had not been in Thorpe's employ.

So Shearer was foreman of a pick crew. Probably no finer body of men was ever gathered at one camp. So of them had the reputation of being the hardest citizens in three states—others were mild as turndown. They were all pioneers. They had the independence, the unabashed eye, the subordination even, of the men who had drawn his intellectual and moral nourishment at the breast of a wilderness. They were afraid of nothing alive. From no one, were they more or president, would they take a single word, with the exception always Tim Shearer and Thorpe.

And they were loyal. It was a point of honor with them to stay "until the last dog was bled." He who desert-

in the hour of need was not only a renegade, but a fool, for he thus earned a magnificent licking if ever he ran up against a member of the "Fighting Forty." A band of soldiers were they, ready to attempt anything their commander ordered, and it must be confessed, they were also somewhat on the order of a band of pirates. Marquette thought so each spring after the drive, when, hat tilted, they surged, swearing and shouting, down to Denny Hogan's saloon. Denny had to buy new fixtures when they went away, but it was worth it.

Proud! It was no name for it. Boast! The fame of Camp One spread abroad over the land. Some people thought Camp One must be a sort of hellhole of roaring, fighting devils. Others sighed and made rapid calculations of the number of logs they could put in if only they could get hold of help like that.

Thorpe himself, of course, made his headquarters at Camp One. During the five years he had never crossed the strait of Mackinaw. The rupture with his sister had made repugnant to him all the southern country. All winter long he was more than busy at his logging. Summers he spent at the mill. Occasionally he visited Marquette, but always on business.

He was happy because he was too busy to be anything else. The insistent need of success which he had created for himself absorbed all other sentiments. He demanded it of others rigorously. He could do no less than demand it of himself. The chief end of any man, as he saw it, was to do well and successfully what his life found ready.

Success, success, success. Nothing could be of more importance. Its attainment argued a man's efficiency in the scheme of things. Anything that interfered with it—personal comfort, inclination, affection, desire, love of ease, individual liking—was bad.

Thorpe cared for just three people, and none of them happened to clash with his machine. They were Wallace Carpenter, little Phil and Injun Charley.

Wallace was always personally agreeable to Thorpe. Lately, since the erection of the mill, he had developed unexpected acumen in the disposal of the season's cut to wholesale dealers in Chicago. Thereafter he was often in the woods both for pleasure and to get his partner's ideas on what the mill would have to offer. The entire responsibility of the city end of the business was in his hands.

Injun Charley continued to hunt and trap in the country round about. Once or twice a month the lumberman would snowshoe down to the little cabin at the forks. Entering, he would nod briefly and seat himself on a cracker box.

"How do, Charley?" said he.

"How do?" replied Charley.

They filled pipes and smoked. At rare intervals one of them made a remark tersely:

"Catch our beaver last week," remarked Charley.

"Good haul," commented Thorpe.

Or:

"I saw a mink truck by the big bowl der," offered Thorpe.

"H'm!" responded Charley in a long drawn false whistle.

Yet somehow the men came to know each other better and better, and each felt that in an emergency he could depend on the other to the uttermost in spite of the difference in race.

As for Phil, he was like some strange, shy animal, retaining all its wild instincts, but led by affection to become domestic. He drew the water, cut the wood—none better. In the evening he played atrociously his violin—none worse—bending his great white brow forward with the wild glare in his eyes, swaying his shoulders with a fierce delight in the subtle dissonances of the horrible tunes he played. And often he went into the forest and gazed wondering at occult things. Above all he worshiped Thorpe. And in turn the lumberman accorded him a good natured affection.

Financially the company was rated high and yet was heavily in debt. This condition of affairs by no means constituted an anomaly in the lumbering business.

The profits of the first five years had been immediately reinvested in the business. Thorpe intended to establish in a few years more a big plant which would be returning benefits in proportion not only to the capital originally invested, but also in ratio to the energy, time and genius he had himself expended.

Every autumn the company found itself suddenly in easy circumstances. At any moment that Thorpe had chosen to be content with the progress made he could have, so to speak, declared dividends with his partner. Instead of undertaking more improvements, for part of which he borrowed some money, he could have divided the profits of the season's cut. But this he was not yet ready to do.

He had established five more camps; he had acquired over 150,000,000 more of timber lying contiguous to his own; he had built and equipped a modern high efficiency mill; he had constructed a harbor breakwater and the necessary booms; he had bought a tug; built

a boarding house. All this cost money. He wished now to construct a logging railroad. Then he promised himself and Wallace that they would be ready to commence paying operations. He had made all the estimates and even the preliminary survey. He was therefore the more grievously disappointed when Wallace Carpenter made it impossible for him to do so.

It was about the middle of July. He was sitting back idly in the clean painted mill office with the big square desk and the three chairs. Through the door he could see Collins perched on a high stool before the shelf-like desk. From the open window came the clear, musical note of the circular saw, the fresh, aromatic smell of new lumber, the bracing air from Superior sparkling in the offing. He felt tired. In rare moments such as these, when the muscles of his striving relaxed, his mind turned to the past. Old sorrows rose before him and looked at him with their sad eyes. He wondered where his sister was. She would be twenty-two years old now. A tenderness, haunting, tearful, invaded his heart. At such moments the hard shell of his rough woods life seemed to rend apart. He longed with a great longing for sympathy, for love.

The outer door, beyond the cage behind which Collins and his shelf desk were placed, flew open. Thorpe heard a brief greeting, and Wallace Carpenter stood before him.

"Wallace, I didn't know you were coming!" began Thorpe, and stopped. The boy, usually so fresh and happily buoyant, looked ten years older. Wrinkles had gathered between his eyes. "Why, what's the matter?" cried Thorpe.

He rose and swiftly shut the door to the outer office. Wallace seated himself mechanically.

"Everything! Everything!" he said in despair. "I've been a fool. I've been blind."

So bitter was his tone that Thorpe was startled. The lumberman sat down on the other side of the desk.

"That 'll do, Wallace," he said sharply. "Tell me briefly what is the matter."

"I've been speculating!" burst out the boy.

"Ah!" said his partner.

"I thought on a margin. There came a slump. I met the margins because I am sure there will be a rally. But now all my fortune is in the thing. I'm going to be penniless. I'll lose it all!"

"Ah!" said Thorpe.

"And the name of Carpenter is so old established, so honorable!" cried the unhappy boy. "And my sister?"

"Easy!" warned Thorpe. "Being penniless isn't the worst thing that can happen to a man."

"No, but I am in debt," went on the boy more calmly. "I have given notes. When they come due I'm a goner."

"How much?" asked Thorpe laconically.

"Thirty thousand dollars."

"Well, you have that amount in this firm."

"What do you mean?"

"If you want it you can have it."

Wallace considered a moment.

"That would leave me without a cent," he replied.

"But it would save your commercial honor."

"Harry," cried Wallace suddenly, "couldn't this firm go on my note for

his cut to 30,000,000 feet.

"I'll do it," he muttered to himself after Wallace had gone out to visit the mill. "I've been demanding success of others for a good many years; now I'll demand it of myself."

## CHAPTER XXI.

**T**HE moment had struck for the woman. Thorpe did not know it, but it was true. A solitary, brooding life in the midst of grand surroundings, an active, strenuous life among great responsibilities; a starved, hungry life of the affections whence even the sister had withdrawn her love—all these had worked obtrusively toward the formation of a single psychological condition. Such a moment comes to every man. Then are happiness and misery beside which the mere struggle to dominate men becomes trivial, the petty striving with the forces of nature a little thing, and the woman he at that time meets is more than a woman; she is the best of that man made visible.

Thorpe found himself for the first time filled with the spirit of restlessness. His customary iron evenness of temper was gone, so that he wandered quickly from one detail of his work to another without seeming to penetrate below the surface need of any one task. But a week before he had felt himself absorbed in the component parts of his enterprise. Now he was outside of it. Thorpe took this state of mind much to heart and combated it. Invariably he held himself to his task. By an effort, a tremendous effort, he succeeded in doing so. The effort left him limp. He found himself often standing or moving gently, his eyes staring sightless, his will chained so softly and yet so

firmly that he felt no strength and hardly the desire to break from the dream that lulled him. Then he was conscious of the physical warmth of the sun, the faint sweet wood smells, the soothing caress of the breeze, the sleepy cicada-like note of the pine creeper. He wanted nothing so much as to sit on the pine needles there in the golden flood of radiance and dream—dream on—vaguely, comfortably, sweetly.

"Lord, Lord!" he cried impatiently. "What's coming to me? I must be a little off my feed!"

And he hurried rapidly to his duties. After an hour of the hardest concentration he had ever been required to bestow on a trivial subject he again unconsciously sank by degrees into the old apathy.

"Glad it isn't the busy season!" he commented to himself. "Here, I must quit this! Guess it's the warm weather. I'll get down to the mill for a day or two."

There he found himself incapable of even the most petty routine work. He sat at his desk at 8 o'clock and began the perusal of a sheaf of letters. The first three he read carefully, the following two rather hurriedly, of the next one he seized only the salient and essential points, the seventh and eighth he skimmed, the remainder of the bundle he thrust aside in uncontrollable impatience. Next day he returned to the woods.

The incident of the letters had aroused to the full his old fighting spirit, before which no mere instincts could stand.

Once more his mental process became clear and incisive, his commands direct and to the point. To all outward appearance Thorpe was as before.

He opened Camp One, and the Fighting Forty came back from distant drinking joints. This was in early September. That alcoholized and devoted band of men was on hand when needed. Shearer in some subtle manner of his own had let them feel that this year meant 30,000,000 or "bust." They tightened their leather belts and stood ready for command. After much discussion with Shearer the young man decided to take out the logs from "eleven" by driving them down French creek.

To this end a gang was put to clearing the creek bed. It was a tremendous job. Centuries of forest life had choked the little stream nearly to the level of its banks. Old snags and stumps lay imbedded in the ooze; decayed trunks, moss grown, blocked the current; leaning tamaracs, fallen timber, tangled vines, dense thickets, gave to its course more the appearance of a tropical jungle than of a north country brook bed. All these things had to be removed one by one and either piled to one side or burned. In the end, however, it would pay French creek was not a large stream, but it could be driven during the time of the spring freshets.

Each night the men returned in the beautiful dreamlike twilight to the camp. There they sat after eating, smoking their pipes in the open air. Much of the time they sang, while Phil, crouching wolf-like over his violin, rasped out an accompaniment of dissonances. The men's voices lent themselves well to the void minor strains of the chanteys. These times, when the men sang and the night wind rose and died in the hemlock tops, were Thorpe's worst moments. His soul, tired with the day's iron struggle, fell to brooding. He wanted something, he knew not what.

The men were singing in a mighty chorus, swaying their heads in unison and bringing out with a roar the emphatic words of the crude ditties written by some genius from their own ranks.

"Come all ye sons of freedom throughout old Michigan, Come all ye gallant lumbermen, flat to a shanty men. On the banks of the Muskegon, where the rapid waters flow, Oh, we'll range the wild woods o'er while a-lumberin' we go."

Here was the bold unabashed front of the pioneer, here was absolute certainty in the superiority of his calling, absolute scorn of all others. Thorpe passed his hand across his brow. The

same spirit was once fully and freely his.

"The music of our burnished ax shall make the woods resound. And many a lofty ancient pine will tumble to the ground. At night around our shanty fire we'll sing while rude winds blow. Oh, we'll range the wild woods o'er while a-lumberin' we go!"

That was what he was here for. Things were going right. It would be pitiful to fail merely on account of this idiotic lassitude, this unmanly weakness, this boyish impatience and desire for play. He a woodsman! He a fellow with these big strong men!

A single voice, clear and high, struck into a quick measure:

"I am a jolly shanty boy, As you will soon discover; To all the dodges I am fly, A hustling pine wood rover. A peavey hook it is my pride; An ax I well can handle; To fell a tree or punch a bull Get rattling Danny Randall!"

And then, with a rattle and crash, the whole Fighting Forty shrieked out the chorus:

"Bung yer eye! Bung yer eye!"

Active, alert, prepared for any emergency that might arise; hearty, ready for everything, from punching bulls to felling trees—that was something like Thorpe despised himself. The song went on:

"I love a girl in Saginaw; She lives with her mother. I defy all Michigan To find such another. She's tall and slim; her hair is red; Her face is plump and pretty. She's my daisy Sunday best-day girl, And her front name stands for Kitty!"

And again, as before, the Fighting Forty howled truculently:

"Bung yer eye! Bung yer eye!"

The words were vulgar, the air a mere minor chant. Yet Thorpe's mind was still. His aroused subconsciousness had been engaged in reconstructing these men entire as their songs voiced rudely the inner characteristics of their beings. Now his spirit halted. Their bravery, pride of caste, resources, bravado, boastfulness—all these he had checked off approvingly. Here now was the idea of the mate. Somewhere for each of them was a "Kitty," a "daisy Sunday best-day girl." At the present or in the past these woods rolsters, this Fighting Forty, had known love. Thorpe rose abruptly and turned at random into the forest. The song pursued him as he went.

"I took her to a dance one night, A mossback gave the bidding; Silver Jack bossed the shebang. And Big Dan played the fiddle. We danced and drank the livelong night. With fights between the dancing. Till Silver Jack cleaned out the ranch. And sent the mossbacks prancing."

And with the increasing war and turmoil of the quick water the last shout of the Fighting Forty mingled faintly and was lost.

"Bung yer eye! Bung yer eye!"

Thorpe found himself at the edge of the woods facing a little glade into which streamed the radiance of a full moon.

There he stood and looked silently, not understanding, not caring to inquire. Across the way a white-throat was singing, clear, beautiful, like the shadow of a dream. The girl stood listening.

Her small, fair head was inclined ever so little sideways, and her finger was on her lips as though she wished to still the very hush of night, to which impression the inclination of her supple body lent its grace. The moonlight shone full upon her countenance. A little white face it was, with wide, clear eyes and a sensitive, proud mouth that now half parted like a child's. Her eyebrows arched from her straight nose in the peculiarly graceful curve that falls just short of pride on the one side and of power on the other to fill the eyes with a pathos of trust and innocence. The man watching could catch the poise of her long white



The girl stood listening.

neck and the molten moon fire from her tumbled hair—the color of corn silk, but finer.

Behind her lurked the low, even shadow of the forest where the moon was not, a band of velvet against which the girl and the light-touched twigs and bushes and grass blades were etched like frost against a black window pane. There was something, too, of the frostwork's evanescent spiritual quality in the scene, as though at any moment, with a buff of the balmy summer wind, the radiant glade, the hovering figure, the filigreed silver of the entire setting would melt into the accustomed stern and menacing forest of the northland, with its voices and its wild deer and the voices of its

sterner calling.

Thorpe held his breath and waited. Again the white-throat lifted his clear, spiritual note across the brightness, slow, trembling with ecstasy. The girl never moved. She stood in the moonlight like a beautiful emblem of silence, half real, half fancy, part woman, wholly divine, listening to the little bird's message.

For the third time the song shivered across the night; then Thorpe, with a soft sob, dropped his face in his hands and looked no more.

## CONTINUED

## AN AFRICAN ADVENTURE.

Paul du Chailu's First Encounter With a Monster Gorilla.

In his "Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa" Paul du Chailu tells of his first encounter with a gorilla.

"We saw an immense one coming straight toward us out of the woods," he wrote. "As he came he gave vent to terrible howls of rage, as much as to say, 'I am tired of being pursued and will take you.'"

"It was a lone male, the kind which is always the most ferocious. This fellow made the woods resound with his roar, which is an awful sound, resembling the muttering of distant thunder. He was about twenty yards off when we first saw him. I was about to take aim and bring him down where he stood when my most trusted man, Malancon, stopped me, saying in a whisper, 'Not time yet.'"

"We stood in silence, gun in hand. The gorilla looked at us for a minute or so, then beat his breast with his gigantic arms—and what arms he had!—then gave another howl of defiance and advanced upon us. How horrible he looked!"

"Not yet," whispered Malancon.

"Again the gorilla made an advance upon us. Now he was not twelve yards off. His face was distorted with rage. His huge teeth were ground against each other so that we could hear the sound. The skin of the forehead was drawn forward and backward rapidly, making his hair move up and down and giving a fiendish expression to his hideous face. Again he roared, a sound which shook the woods like thunder. It seemed as if I could feel the earth trembling under my feet. The beast, looking us in the eye and beating his breast, advanced again."

"Don't fire too soon," said Malancon.

"If you don't kill him he will kill you."

"This time he came within eight yards of us before he stopped. I was breathing fast with excitement as I watched the huge creature. Malancon only said, 'Steady!' as the gorilla came up. When he stopped Malancon said: 'Now!'

"And before the beast could utter the roar for which he was opening his mouth three musket balls were in his body. He fell dead almost without a struggle."

## PITH AND POINT.

Laugh when a friend tells a joke. It is one of the taxes you must pay.

People who visit the cemetery a good deal gossip about the monuments.

About the only thing a man will allow his wife to have a monopoly of is patience.

It is natural for a man who was once in the harness to imagine he is still a fire horse.

A man may not be able to manage his own affairs, but he will give you advice about yours.

Those riding in carriages are not as happy and comfortable as those on foot think they are.

These things that are cooked in a chafing dish late at night taste awfully like crabs on the door.—Atlantic Globe.

## Joint Abjection.

When the Halliday twins were babies their mother always referred to them collectively. This was natural enough, for they shared everything, from their baby carriage to chicken pox.

As they grew a little older, however, there were slight differences between Elnora and Eudora, but Mrs. Halliday took no account of them. When they had reached the age of seven, she still referred to them in a way which struck casual listeners as amusing.

"Where are Elnora and Eudora?" asked a cousin, who had come to spend the afternoon.

"The twins have gone with their father to have one of their teeth out," said Mrs. Halliday calmly.—Youth's Companion.

## No Questions Asked.

Old Brother Cooley is a colored philosopher, but he is superstitious in the extreme. He tells this story:

"I once wuz in a house that wuz haunted, but I didn't know it. Dar wuz a bright fire burnin' in de room I wuz in, w'en all er a sudden de do' opened, en a man with his throat cut shuck his head at me! Now, I knowed right well it wuz a ha'nt, en de only thing ter do wuz ter ax him, 'de name er de Lawd, what does you want?'"

"And did you ask him?"

"No, sah! Beca' I wuz so scared dat I'd tell no more 'bout it."

## Mortified to Death.

"Of course, doctor, German measles are never serious."

"I never met but one fatal case."

"Yes! It was a Frenchman, and when he discovered it was German measles he had mortification set in."—Philadelphia Press.