

# The Blazed Trail

By STEWART EDWARD WHITE

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CONTINUED.

CHAPTER XXV.

WINTER set in early and continued late, which in the end was a good thing for the year's cut. The season was capricious, hanging for days at a time at the brink of a thaw, only to stiffen again into severe weather. This was trying on the nerves, for at each of these false alarms the six camps fell into a feverish haste to get the job finished before the breakup. It was really quite extraordinary how much was accomplished under the nagging spur of weather conditions and the cruel howling of Thorpe.

The latter had now no thought beyond his work, and that was the thought of a madman. He had been stern and unyielding enough before, goodness knows, but now he was terrible. Not for an instant was there a resting spell. The veriest chore boy talked, thought, dreamed, of nothing but saw logs. Men whispered vaguely of a recent cut. The difficulties of snow, accident, topography, were swept aside like straws. Little time was wasted and no opportunities. It did not matter how smoothly affairs happened to be running for the moment; every advantage, even the smallest, was eagerly seized to advance the work. A drop of five degrees during the frequent warm spells brought out the sprinklers even in the dead of night. At night the men fell into their bunk beds like sand bags, and their last conscious thought, if indeed they had any at all, was of eagerness for the morning. It was madness, but it was the madness these men loved.

For now to his old religion Thorpe had added a fanaticism, and over the fanaticism was gradually creeping a film of doubt. To the conscientious energy which a sense of duty supplied was added the tremendous kinetic force of a love turned into other channels. And in the wild nights while the other men slept Thorpe's half crazed brain was revolving over and over again the words of the sentence he had heard from Hilda's lips, "There can be nothing better than love."

His actions, his mind, his very soul, vehemently denied the proposition. He clung as ever to his high Puritanic idea of man's purpose. But down deep in a very tiny, sacred corner of his heart a very small voice sometimes made itself heard when other more militant voices were still: "It may be. It may be."

The last month of hauling was also one of snow. Each day a little fell. By and by the accumulation amounted to much. In the woods where the wind could not get at it lay deep and soft above the tops of bushes. On either side of the logging roads the snow piled so high as to form a kind of ramp. When all this water in suspense should begin to flow and to seek its level in the water courses of the district the logs would have plenty to float them at least.

So late did the cold weather last that, even with the added plowing to do, the six camps beat all records. On the banks at Camp One were 9,000,000 feet. The totals of all five amounted to 33,000,000. About 10,000,000 of this was on French creek, the remainder on the main bank of the Ossawinimakee. Besides this, the firm up river, Sadler & Smith, had put up some 12,000,000 more. The drive promised to be quite an affair.

About the 15th of April attention became strained. Every day the mounting sun made heavy attacks on the snow; every night the temperature dropped below the freezing point. The river began to show more air holes, occasional open places. About the center the ice looked worn and soggy. Some one saw a flock of geese high in the air. Then came rain.

One morning early Long Jim Pine came into the men's camp bearing a huge chunk of tallow. This he held against the hot stove until its surface had softened, when he began to swab liberal quantities of grease on his spiked river shoes, which he fished out from under his bunk.

"She's comin', boys," he said. He donned a pair of woollen trousers that had been chopped off at the knee, thick woollen stockings and the river shoes. Then he tightened his broad leather belt about his heavy shirt, cocked his little hat over his ear and walked over in the corner to select a peavey from the lot the blacksmith had just put in shape. A peavey is like a cant hook except that it is pointed at the end. Thus it can be used either as a hook or a pike. At the same moment Shearer, similarly attired and equipped, appeared in the doorway. The opening of the portal admitted a roar of sound. The river was rising.

"Come on, boys; she's on!" said he sharply. "Lively, boys, lively!" shouted Thorpe. "She'll be down on us before we know it!"

Above the crackling of dead branches in the wind sounded a steady roar. In the hollowing of a wild beast leaping itself to fury. The freight was above. The men heard it, and their eyes brightened with the lust of battle. They cheered.

At the banks of the river Thorpe

above the first rollways was Dam Three, with its two wide sluices through which a veritable flood could be loosened at will; then four miles farther lay the railway of Sadler & Smith, the up river firm, and above them tumbled over a forty-five foot ledge the beautiful Siscoe falls. These first rollways of Thorpe's, spread in the broad marsh flat below the dam, contained about \$600,000. The rest of the season's cut was scattered for thirty miles along the bed of the river.

Already the ice cementing the logs together had begun to weaken. The ice had wrenched and tugged savagely at the locked timbers until they had, with a mighty effort, snapped asunder the bonds of their liberation. Now a narrow lane of black rushing water pierced the rollways to bill and eddy in the consequent jam three miles below.

To the foremen Thorpe assigned their tasks.

"Moloney," said he to the big Irishman, "take your crew and break that jam. Then scatter your men down to within a mile of the pond at Dam Two and see that the river runs clear. You can tent for a day or so at West Bend or some other point about half way



Sprung boldly and confidently ten feet straight downward.

down, and after that you had better camp at the dam. Just as soon as you get logs enough in the pond start to sluicing them through the dam. You won't need more than four men there if you keep a good head. You can keep your gates open five or six hours. And, Moloney—

"Yes, sir."

"I want you to be careful not to sluice too long. There is a bar just below the dam, and if you try to sluice with the water too low you'll center and jam there as sure as shooting."

Bryan Moloney turned on his heel and began to pick his way down stream over the solidly banked logs. Without waiting the command a dozen men followed him. The little group bobbed away irregularly into the distance, springing lightly from one timber to the other, holding their quality-fashioned peaveys in the manner of a ropedancer's balancing pole. At the lowermost limit of the rollways each man pried a log into the water and, standing gracefully erect on this unstable craft, floated out down the current to the scene of his dangerous labor.

"Kerlie," went on Thorpe, "your crew can break rollways with the rest until we get the river fairly filled, and then you can move on down stream as fast as you are needed. Scotty, you will have the rear, Tim and I will boss the river."

At once the signal was given to Ellis, the dam watcher. Ellis and his assistants thereupon began to pry with long iron bars at the ratchets of the heavy gates. The chore boy bent attentively over the ratchet pin, lifting it delicately to permit another inch of raise, dropping it accurately to enable the men at the bars to seize a fresh purchase. The river's roar deepened. Through the wide sluiceways a torrent foamed and tumbled. Immediately it spread through the brush on either side to the limits of the freshest banks and then gathered for its leap against the uneasy rollways. Along the edge of the dark channel the face of the logs seemed to crumble away. Farther toward the banks where the weight of timber still outweighed the weight of the flood the tiers gumbled and stirred. Far down the river, where Bryan Moloney and his crew were picking at the jam, the water in rapid streamlets sought the interstices between the logs, gurgling excitedly.

The jam cracked and groaned in response to the pressure. From its face a hundred jets of water spouted into the lower stream. Logs up-ended here and there, rising from the bristling surface slowly like so many arms from the rollways, paused at the slack oddbed boulders, were shot down from the

rollways, paused at the slack water and finally hit with a hollow and resounding boom against the tail of the jam. A moment later they, too, up-ended.

The crew were working desperately. Down in the heap somewhere two logs were crossed in such a manner as to lock the whole. They sought those logs. Thirty feet above the bed of the river six men clamped their peaveys into the soft pine, jerking, pulling, lifting, sliding the great logs from their places. Thirty feet below, under the threatening face, six other men coolly picked out and set adrift, one by one, the timbers not inextricably imbedded. From time to time the mass creaked, settled, perhaps even moved a foot or two, but always the practiced river men after a glance went more eagerly to their work.

Outlined against the sky, big Bryan Moloney stood directing the work. He knew by the tenseness of the log he stood on that behind the jam power had gathered sufficient to push the whole tangle down stream. Now he was offering it the chance.

Suddenly the six men below the jam scattered. Four of them jumped lightly from one floating log to another in the zigzag of their footing and, over-leaping an open end of water, landed heavily and firmly on the very ends of two small floating logs. In this manner the force of the jump rushed to the little timbers end-on through the water. The two men, maintaining marvelously their balance, were thus ferried to within leaping distance of the other shore.

In the meantime a barely perceptible motion was communicating itself from one particle to another through the center of the jam. The men redoubled their exertions. A sharp crack exploded immediately underneath. There could no longer exist any doubt as to the motion, although it was as yet sluggish, glacial. Then in silence a log shifted—in silence and slowly, but with irresistible force. Jimmy Powers quietly stepped over it just as it menaced his leg. Other logs in all directions up-ended. The jam crew were forced continually to alter their positions, riding the changing timbers bent knee, as a circus rider treads his four galloping horses.

Then all at once down by the face something crashed. The entire stream became alive. It hissed and roared; it shrieked and gumbled. At first slowly, then more rapidly, the very forefront of the center melted inward and forward and downward until it caught the fierce rush of the freshest and shot out from under the jam. Far up stream, bristling and formidable, the tons of logs, grinding savagely together, swept forward.

The six men and Bryan Moloney, who, it will be remembered, were on top, worked until the last moment. When the logs began to cave under them so rapidly that even the expert river men found difficulty in "staying on top" the foreman set the example of hunting safety.

"She 'pulls,' boys!" he yelled. Then in a manner wonderful to behold, through the smother of foam and spray, through the crash and yell of timbers, through the leap of destruction, the drivers zigzagged calmly and surely to the shore.

All but Jimmy Powers. He poled tense and eager on the crumbling face of the jam. Almost immediately he saw what he wanted and without pause sprang boldly and confidently ten feet straight downward, to alight with accuracy on a single log floating free in the current. And then in the very glory and chaos of the jam itself he was swept down stream.

After a moment the constant acceleration in speed checked, then commenced perceptibly to slacken. At once the rest of the crew began to ride down stream. Each struck the callus of his river boots strongly into a log and on such unstable vehicles floated miles with the current. From time to time, as Bryan Moloney indicated, one of them went ashore. There, usually at a bend of the stream where the likelihood of jamming was great, they took their stands. When necessary they ran out over the face of the river to separate a congestion likely to cause trouble. The rest of the time they smoked their pipes.

All night long the logs slipped down the moonlit current, silently, swiftly, yet without haste. From the whole length of the river rang the hollow boom, boom, of timbers striking one against the other.

The drive was on.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

IN the meantime the main body of the crew under Thorpe and his foremen were briskly tumbling the logs into the current. The men had continually to keep alert, for at any moment they were called upon to exercise their best judgment and quickness to keep from being carried downward with the rush of the logs. Not infrequently a frowning, sheer wall of forty feet would hesitate on the brink of plunge. Then Shearer himself proved his right to the title of river man.

Shearer wore calls nearly an inch in length. He had been known to ride ten miles without shifting his feet on a log so small that he could carry it without difficulty. For cool nerve he was unequalled.

"I don't need you boys here any longer," he said quietly.

When the men had all withdrawn he walked confidently under the front of the railway, glancing with practical eye at the perpendicular wall of logs over him. Then as a man pries Jackstraws he clamped his peavey and tugged sharply. At once the railway flattened and toppled. A mighty splash, a surf of flying foam and crushing timbers, and the spot on which the river man had stood was buried beneath twenty feet of solid green wood. To Thorpe it seemed that Shearer must

have been overwhelmed, but the river man always mysteriously appeared at one side or the other, nonchalant, urging the men to work before the logs should have ceased to move. History stated that Shearer had never lost a man on the river simply and solely because he invariably took the dangerous tasks upon himself.

In three days the rollways were broken. Now it became necessary to start the rear.

For this purpose Billy Camp, the cook, had loaded his cook stove, a quantity of provisions and a supply of bedding aboard a scow. At either end were long sweeps to direct its course. The craft was perhaps forty feet long, but rather narrow, in order that it might pass easily through the shoot of a dam. It was called the "wanigan."

The huge, unwieldy craft from that moment was to become possessed of the devil. Down the white water of rapids it would bump, smashing obstinately against boulders, against the branches of the stream side it would scrape, in the broad reaches it would scud, refusing to proceed, and when expediency demanded its pause it would drag Billy Camp and his entire crew at the rope's end, while they tried vainly to snub it against successively uprooted trees and stumps. When at last the wanigan was moored fast for the night—usually a mile or so below the spot planned—Billy Camp pushed back his battered old brown derby hat, the badge of his office, with a sigh of relief. To be sure, he and his men had still to cut wood, construct cooking and camp fires, pitch tents, snip browse and prepare supper for seventy men, but the lard work of the day was over.

Along either bank, among the bushes, on sand bars and in trees, hundreds and hundreds of logs had been stranded when the main drive passed. These logs the rear crew were engaged in restoring to the current.

And, as a man had to be able to ride any kind of log in any water, to propel that log by jumping on it, by rolling it squirrel fashion with the feet, by punting it as one would a canoe, to be skillful in pushing, prying and poling other logs from the quarter deck of the same cranky craft; as he must be prepared at any and all times to jump waist deep into the river, to work in ice water hours at a stretch; as he was called upon to break the most dangerous jams on the river, representing, as they did, the accumulation which the jam crew had left behind them, it was naturally considered the height of glory to belong to the rear crew. Here were the best of the Fighting Forty, men with a reputation as "white water biliers," men afraid of nothing.

Every morning the crews were divided into two sections under Kerlie and Jack Hyland. Each crew had charge of one side of the river. Scotty Parsons exercised a general supervisory eye over both crews. Shearer and Thorpe traveled back and forth the length of the drive, riding the logs down stream, but taking to a partly submerged pole trail when ascending the current. On the surface of the river in the clear water floated two long, graceful boats called bateaux. These were in charge of expert boatmen. They carried in racks a great supply of pike poles, peaveys, axes, rope and dynamite for use in various emergencies.

Intense rivalry existed as to which crew "sacked" the farthest down the stream in the course of the day. There was no need to urge the men. Some stood upon the logs, pushing mightily with the long pike poles. From one end of the rear to the other shouts, calls, warnings and jokes flew back and forth. Once or twice a vast roar of Homeric laughter went up as some unfortunate slipped and soured into the water. When the current slackened and the logs hesitated in their run the entire crew hastened, bobbing from log to log, down river to see about it. Then they broke the jam, standing surely on the edge of the great darkness, while the ice water sucked in and out of their shoes.

Behind the rear Big Junko poled his bateau backward and forward exploding dynamite. Many of the bottom tiers of logs in the rollways had been frozen down, and Big Junko had to loosen them from the bed of the stream. He was a big man, this, as his nickname indicated, built of many awkwardnesses. His cheek bones were high, his nose flat, his lips thick and slabby. He sported a wide, ferocious straggling mustache and long eyebrows, under which gleamed little fierce eyes. His forehead sloped back like a beast's, but was always hidden by a disreputable felt hat. Big Junko did not know much and had the passions of a wild animal, but he was a reckless river man and devoted to Thorpe. Just now he exploded dynamite.

The sticks of powder were piled amidships. Big Junko crouched over them, inserting the fuses and caps, closing the openings with soap, finally lighting them and dropping them into the water alongside, where they immediately sank. Then a few strokes of a short paddle took him barely out of danger. He huddled down in his craft, waiting. One, two, three seconds passed. Then a hollow boom shook the stream. A cloud of water sprang up, strangely beautiful. After a moment the great brown logs rose suddenly to the surface from below, one after the other, like Leviathans of the deep.

Thorpe and Tim Shearer nearly always slept in a dog tent at the rear though occasionally they passed the night at Dam Two, where Bryan Moloney and his crew were already engaged in sluicing the logs through the shoot.

The affair was simple enough. Long beams arranged in the form of an open V guided the drive to the sluiceway, through which a smooth spray of water rushed to turned in an eddy

ing pool below. Two men traipsed steadily backward and forward on the beams, urging the logs forward by means of long pike poles to where the section could seize them. Below the dam the push of the sluice water forced them several miles down stream.

where the rest of Bryan Moloney's crew took them in charge.

Thus through the wide gate nearly three-quarters of a million feet an hour could be run, and at length the last of the logs drifted into the wide dam pool. The rear had arrived at Dam Two, and Thorpe congratulated himself that one stage of his journey had been completed.

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### CURIOUS CULLINGS.

Recently in Machias, Me., the roof of a house caught fire from sparks from a burning chimney, and the unique method of firing snowballs to put it out was successfully used.

The people of the United States spend \$10,000,000 a year in adulterated foods which are classed as having "poisonous and otherwise noxious ingredients" by the government analyst.

A physical examination of candidates for the police force at New Haven, Conn., showed that two candidates had stuck carboards on their heels, then pulled on their stockings to reveal the requisite height.

Just for the fun of the thing, a North Danville (N. H.) housewife the other day tried her hand at ice cutting. She did so well that her husband offered her a cent a cake, and she worked the livelong day, earning 81 cents.

The clerk of a parish in England when reading the third chapter of Daniel, wherein the names of Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego are three times repeated, after speaking them once, called them, during the remainder of the chapter, "the aforesaid gentlemen."

### GOWN GOSSIP.

Long handled parasols are promised considerable vogue this season.

In ribbons melon shades, resembling the interior of a muskmelon, are much favored.

Linon belts with small gun metal clasps will be worn as much this year as they were last.

Veils with ribbon edge and others showing a single thread of gold are among the season's leaders.

If we are to judge by the quantity and the beauty of the sash ribbons offered in the shops there is to be a revival of this fashion on an extensive scale.

We are growing so fastidious that real lace blouses are worn almost as commonly as collars and handkerchiefs were of old. Nothing but real lace blouses is worn by careful dressers in New York Post.

### CURRENT COMMENT.

In five years you wouldn't know it had ever happened.—Baltimore American.

When the newspapers call a man a pyromaniac people are driven to the slang of firebug.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Radium, you may have observed, is now guaranteed to do all those things that liquid air was going to do a few years ago.—Washington Post.

Probably Mr. Wyndham is correct in his calculation that the Irish question can scarcely be settled in fifty years. It belongs to the perpetual motion class.—Boston Herald.

When Russia accuses England of tonkying to the United States it must shock a number of fashionable Britons who have fancied all these years that it was the other way.—Washington Star.

### THE MOVING WORLD.

A Swiss watchmaker has invented an electric watch which will go for fifteen years without being rewound.

Formetal is a new chemical combination of metals invented to meet the need of automobile builders for a material which will withstand severe twists and will not corrode.

The sinking of shafts through wet ground has recently been successfully accomplished by the aid of artificial freezing. The ground is hardened in this manner to prevent a sudden rush of water.

With the assistance of the latest machines a piece of leather can be transformed into a pair of boots in thirty-four minutes, in which time it passes through the hands of sixty-three persons and through fifteen machines.

### COLLEGE AND SCHOOL.

Of the public school teachers in the United States 27 per cent are men.

In English schools three hours a week are given to needlework; in New York schools but one.

Dr. Simeon Bell of Rosedale, Kan., has given the University of Kansas \$25,000 in Missouri lands.

The teachers of three French public schools in Normandy report that 75 per cent of the girls in them take brandy in their coffee at breakfast.

### Carefully Brought Up.

"Were you carefully brought up, my lad?" asked the merchant of the applicant for a situation.

"Please, sir, yes, sir; I came up in the elevator, sir," said the respectful youth.

### Making Sure.

Gritty George—I hope dat bowl of coffee won't stimulate yer to go to work. Sandy Pikes—No, pard; I asked de lady to put loaf sugar in it.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

# A PIECE OF SCARF

(Original.)

Marina was a Mexican girl, with the usual black hair and eyes of Mexicans. She was only sixteen, but at sixteen many girls of the tropics are as old as girls of twenty in the north. Marina was but a poor man's daughter, with very little education. One evening a stranger stopped at her father's cabin. He was a young man with fair hair and blue eyes and above all a winning smile. He asked Marina if he might have one of her flowers growing in a bed beside the door and when he did so smiled at her. That was the last of Marina's peace of mind. Edwin Cooper, the stranger, a young civil engineer on the railroad being built through the valley below, had plucked her heart as easily as he had plucked her flower.

But there is danger in plucking hearts in those tropical gardens. It is like touching one of the beautiful insects of the country. Marina did not sting Cooper, but one Narvaez, a dirty little Mexican, who had seen the engineer's smile and how it went to a heart that he had in vain tried to appropriate, was made his enemy, and such enemies, who invariably strike in the dark, are to be dreaded. When Cooper went the next day he had cut an end from a faded many colored scarf Marina wore. She followed him to the gate, chattering as she went, and the last thing Cooper said to her was, "See, I will wear your souvenir in my buttonhole."

Cooper had no sooner departed than Narvaez, who had been present the evening before—indeed he had been hanging about Marina most of the time—entered and upbraided her for her conduct toward the stranger. This conduct had been without excuse, for Marina was betrothed to Narvaez. She had consented to be his wife not because she loved him, but because he was the first man she had met since she emerged from childhood. She did not seem to be at all ashamed of having been led aside so easily. She told Narvaez in patois Spanish that he was a miserable specimen of humanity and the stranger was a god. Narvaez was so beside himself with rage that he was tempted to run a knife into her, but was too much infatuated with her to do so. He resolved that he would take revenge on the Americano.

Cooper continued to wear the bit of scarf in his buttonhole. Whether he didn't have time to take it out or whether he expected that he ought meet the little girl from whom he got it and desired to let her see that he valued it, no one knows. Several of his associates asked him what it meant—was it the badge of a society, a decoration—what was it? But he only replied that he had got it from a girl.

One day Cooper was carrying a theodolite, which he occasionally set up on three legs, looked through it at a rod on which was a slide and made some figures in his notebook. He found it a tedious process, and one while he sent his rodman forward a long distance he sat down on the grass to wait. There was no one about, and he sat enjoying the solitude and listening to the birds. Suddenly a huge stone came down on his head and crushed his skull. The rodman, not hearing or seeing anything from him for some time, finally went back to find out what was the matter. Cooper was dead.

There was no clew to the murderer. Cooper's valuables had not been taken; at least none was missed, and no one could understand how any person could have had any interest in murdering him. Not long after the tragedy Narvaez renewed his attentions to Marina, who, so far as he could see, had forgotten the handsome stranger.

"When shall we be married?" said the little Mexican one day to Marina.

"I'll tell you," she replied. "We will be married when you bring me the bit of scarf I gave the engineer."

"I bring you the bit of scarf! How could I get it?"

"You must find it. Perhaps he left it among his clothing. You might steal it."

"I will not do such a thing."

"Then I will not marry you."

From that time Marina would have nothing to do with him. At last one day he brought her the souvenir. Then she named a day for the wedding.

On that day while Narvaez was putting on a new suit of clothes he had bought at a store for his marriage he was arrested and carried before the judge. There were present a number of the men employed on railroad construction, and sitting in a conspicuous place, wearing on her bosom the bit of scarf which she had made the price of her consent, was Marina. Narvaez looked at her in astonishment. She returned his look with a cold blooded stare.

Narvaez was accused of the murder of Cooper, and Marina was called to the stand. She told her story, giving an account of Cooper's visit and the giving him the bit of scarf, calling her testimony in this wise:

"I knew, senior judge, that Narvaez had killed the Americano, but I could not make him be punished without the proof. I knew the Americano would wear my scarf, for he promised me. When I heard that it was not found on him I suspected Narvaez, but I was a trophy. I pretended not to know Narvaez of the murder, but told him he must steal it for me from the Americano's clothes. At last he brought it to me."

It did not take long to convict Narvaez of the murder. Just before he was led away he acted on two occasions from a table and before he could be prevented hurled it at the girl he had supposed he was to marry that day and who instead of being his bride had become the Americano's conqueror. Fortunately he missed her.

LEVIN C. WILSON.