

# The Blazed Trail

By STEWART EDWARD WHITE

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CONTINUED

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

**D**URING perhaps ten seconds the survivors watched the end of Thorpe's rope trailing in the flood. Then the young man with a deep sigh began to pull it toward him.

At once a hundred surmises, questions, ejaculations, broke out. "What happened?" cried Wallace Carpenter.

"What was that man's name?" asked the Chicago journalist, with the eager instinct of his profession. "This is terrible, terrible, terrible!" a white haired physician from Marquette kept repeating over and over.

A half dozen ran toward the point of the cliff to peer down stream, as though they could hope to distinguish anything in that waste of flood water. "The dam's gone out," replied Thorpe. "I don't understand it. Everything was in good shape as far as I could see. It didn't act like an ordinary break. The water came too fast. Why, it was as dry as a bone until just as that wave came along. An ordinary break would have eaten through little by little before it burst, and Davis should have been able to stop it. This came all at once, as if the dam had disappeared. I don't see."

His mind of the professional had already begun to query causes. "How about the men?" asked Wallace. "Isn't there something I can do?"

"You can head a hunt down the river," answered Thorpe. "I think it is useless until the water goes down. Poor Jimmy! He was one of the best men I had. I wouldn't have had this happen."

The horror of the scene was at last beginning to filter through numbness into Wallace Carpenter's impressionable imagination. "No, no," he cried vehemently. "There is something criminal about it to me! I'd rather lose every log in the river."

Thorpe looked at him curiously. "It is one of the chances of war," said he. "I'd better divide the crew and take in both banks of the river," suggested Wallace.

"See if you can't get volunteers from this crowd," suggested Thorpe. "I can let you have two men to show you trails. I need as many of the crew as possible to use this flood water."

"Oh, Harry!" cried Carpenter, shocked. "You can't be going to work again today, before we have made the slightest effort to recover the bodies!"

"If the bodies can be recovered, they shall be," replied Thorpe quietly. "But the drive will not wait. We have no dams to depend on now, you must remember, and we shall have to get out on the fresher water."

"Your men won't work. I'd refuse just as they will!" cried Carpenter, his sensibilities still suffering. Thorpe smiled proudly. "You do not know them."

"By Jove!" cried the journalist in sudden enthusiasm. "By Jove, that is magnificent!"

The men on the river crew had crouched on their narrow footholds while the jam went out. Each had clung to his peavey, as is the habit of river men. Down the current past their feet swept the debris of flood. Soon logs began to swirl by—at first few, then many—from the remaining rollways which the river had automatically broken. In a little time the eddy caught up some of these logs, and immediately another jam threatened. The river men, without hesitation, as calmly as though catastrophe had not thrown the weight of its moral terror against their stoicism, sprang, peavey in hand, to the insistent work.

Thorpe's face lit with gratification. He turned to the young man. "You see," he said in proud simplicity. "With the added danger of fresher water, the work went on."

At this moment Tim Shearer approached from inland, his clothes dripping wet, but his face retaining its habitual expression of iron calmness. "Anybody caught?" was his first question as he drew near.

"Five men under the face," replied Thorpe briefly. Shearer cast a glance at the river. He needed to be told no more.

"I was afraid of it," said he. "The rollways must be all broken out. It's saved us that much, but the fresher water won't last long. It's going to be a close squeak to get 'em out now. Don't exactly figure on what struck the dam. Thought first I'd go right up that way, but then I came down to see about the boys."

"Where were you?" asked Thorpe. "On the pole trail. I got in a little, as you see."

In reality the foreman had had a close call for his life. "We'd better go up and take a look," he suggested. "The boys has things going here all right."

The two men turned toward the brush. "Hi, Tim!" called a voice behind them. Red Jacket appeared, clambering up the cliff.

"Jack told me to give this to you,"

he panted, holding out a cask of strangely twisted wood. "Where'd he get this?" inquired Thorpe quickly. "It's a piece of the dam," he explained to Wallace, who had drawn near.

"Picked it out of the current," replied the man. "The foreman and his boss bent eagerly over the morsel. Then they stared with solemnity into each other's eyes.

"Dynamite!" exclaimed Shearer. "What does it mean?" almost whispered Carpenter. "Mean? Foul play!" snarled Thorpe. "Come on, Tim."

The two struck into the brush, threading the paths with the ease of woodsmen. It was necessary to keep to the high inland ridges. The pole trail had by now become impassable. Thorpe and his foreman talked briefly.

"It's Morrison & Daly," surmised Shearer. "I left them 'count of a trick like that. I been suspecting something. They've been laying too low."

Thorpe answered nothing. Through the site of the old dam they found a torrent pouring from the narrowed pond, at the end of which the dilapidated wings flapping in the current attested the former structure. Davis stood staring at the current.

Thorpe strode forward and shook him violently by the shoulder. "How did this happen?" he demanded hoarsely.

The man turned to him in a daze. "I don't know," he answered. "You ought to know. How was that shot exploded? How did they get in here without your seeing them? Answer me."

"I don't know," repeated the man. "I jest went over in th' brush to kill a few partridges, and when I come back I found her this way."

"Were you hired to watch this dam, or weren't you?" demanded the tense voice of Thorpe. "Answer me, you fool."

"Yes, I was," returned the man, a shade of aggression creeping into his voice. "Well, you've done it well. You've cost me my dam, and you've killed five men. If the crew finds out about you, you'll go over the falls sure. You get out of here! Pike! Don't you ever let me see your face again!"

The man blanched as he thus learned of his comrades' death. Thorpe thrust his face at him, lashed by circumstances beyond his habitual self control.

"It's men like you that make the trouble," he stormed. "Stupid fools who say they didn't mean to! It isn't enough not to mean to; they should mean not to! I don't ask you to think I just want you to do what I tell you and you can't even do that."

He threw his shoulder into a heavy blow that reached the dam watcher's face, and followed it immediately by

another. Then Shearer caught his arm, motioning the dazed and bloody victim of the attack to get out of sight. Thorpe shook his foreman off with one impatient motion and strode away up the river, his head erect, his eyes flashing, his nostrils flared.

"I reckon you'd better mosy," Shearer dryly advised the dam watcher, and hurried on.

Late in the afternoon the two men reached Dana Tree, or, rather, the spot on which Dana Tree had stood. The same spot, the same trees, the same water, except that the old dam watcher was wanting.

"The dam's gone out," cried Thorpe. "They did it!"

"I don't know," he said, and there and so some traces of his blindfolded and dazed state were apparent. The dam watcher was unable to give any account of his associates.

"They came up behind me while I was cooking," he said. "One of 'em grabbed me, and the other one kivered my eyes. Then I hears the 'shot' and knows there's trouble."

Thorpe listened in silence. Shearer asked a few questions. After the low voiced conversation Thorpe arose abruptly. "Where you going?" asked Shearer. "But the young man did not reply. He swung, with the same long, nervous stride, into the down river trail.

Until late that night the three men—for Ellis insisted on accompanying them—hurried through the forest. Thorpe walked tirelessly, upheld by his violent but repressed excitement. Shearer noted the fire in his eyes and, from the coolness of his greater age, counseled moderation.

"I wouldn't stir the boys up," he panted, for the pace was very swift. "They'll kill some one over there; it'll be murder on both sides."

He received no answer. About midnight they came to the camp. Two great fires leaped among the trees, and the men were grouped between them, talking. Evening had brought its accumulation of slow anger against the perpetrators of the outrage. Even as the woodsmen joined their group they had reached the intensity of execution. Across their purpose Thorpe threw violently his personality. "You must not go!" he commanded.

Through their anger they looked at him askance. "I forbid it!" Thorpe cried. "They shugged their indifference and arose. This was an affair of caste brotherhood, and the blood of their mates cried out to them.

"The work!" Thorpe shouted hoarsely. "The work! We must get those logs out! We haven't time!"

Then swiftly between the white, strained face of the madman trying to convince his heart that his mind had been right and the fanatically excited river men interposed the sanity of Red-Jacket. The old jobber faced the men calmly, almost humorously, and somehow the very vigors of the man commanded attention.

"You fellows make me sick," said he. "You haven't got the sense God gave a rooster. Don't you see you're playing right in those fellows' hands? What do you suppose they dynamited them dams for? To kill our boys? They never dreamed we was dry pickin' that dam. They sent some low lived white

down there to hang our drive, and it looks like they was going to succeed, thanks to you mutton heads.

"S'pose you go over and take 'em apart. What then? Then have a scrap. Probably you lick 'em. You whole day lights out of a lot of men who probably don't know any more about this here, shooting of our dams than 'log does about a ruffled shirt. Meanwhile you drive hangs. Well? Well, do you suppose the men who were back of that shooting—do you suppose Morrison & Daly give a thicker's dam how many men of theirs you lick? What they want is to hang our drive. If they hang our drive, it's cheap at the price of a few black eyes."

The speaker paused and grinned good humoredly at the men's attentive faces. Then suddenly his own became grave.

"Do you want to know how to get even?" he asked. "Do you want to know how to make those fellows sing so small you can't hear them? Well, I'll tell you. Take out this drive! Do it in spite of them. Show them they're no good when they buck up against Thorpe's One. Our boys died doing their duty, the way a river man ought to. Now hump yourselves! Don't let them die in vain!"

The crew stirred uneasily, looking at each other for approval of the conversion each had experienced. Red-Jacket turned easily toward the blaze.

"Better turn in, boys, and get some sleep," he said. "We've got a hard day tomorrow." He stooped to light his pipe at the fire. When he had again straightened his back after rather a prolonged interval the group had already disintegrated. A few minutes later the cookey scattered the brands of the fire from before a sleeping camp.

Before daylight Injun Charley drifted into camp to find Thorpe already out. With a curt nod the Indian seated himself by the fire and, producing a square plug of tobacco and a knife, began leisurely to fill his pipe. Finally Injun Charley spoke in the red man's clear cut, imitative English, a pause between each sentence.

"I find trail three men. One man go down river. Those men have cork boot. One man no have cork boot. He boss."

The Indian suddenly threw his chin out, his head back, and half closed his eyes in a cynical squint. As by a flash Dyer, the scaler, leered insolently from behind the Indian's stolid mask.

"How do you know?" said Thorpe. "For answer the Indian threw his shoulders forward in Dyer's nervous fashion.

"He make trail big by the toe, light by the heel. He make trail big on inside."

Charley arose and walked after Dyer's springy fashion, illustrating his point in the soft wood ashes of the immediate forest.

Thorpe looked doubtful. "I believe you are right, Charley," said he. "But it is mighty little to go on. You can't be sure."

"I sure," replied Charley. "I pulled straight up the heel of my smock, then arose and without foreword disappeared in the forest."

Then began the wonderful struggle against circumstances, which has become a legend among the river men, where a forty day drive had to go out in ten. A freshet had to meet 50,000,000 feet of logs. It was tedious. Fourteen, sixteen, something

eighteen hours a day the men or undriving crew worked like demons. Jams had no chance to form. Of course under the pressure the lower dam had gone out. Nothing was to be depended on but sheer dogged grit. Far up river Sadler & Smith had hung their drive for the season, and so had resigned themselves to a definite but not extraordinary loss. Thorpe had at least a clear river.

Wallace Carpenter could not understand how human flesh and blood endured. The men themselves had long since reached the point of practical exhaustion, but were carried through by the fire of their leader. Work was dogged until he stormed into sight then it became frenzied. When he looked at a man from his cavernous burning eyes, that man jumped.

Impossibilities were puffed aside like chisties. The men went at them headlong. They gave way before the rush Thorpe always led. Not for a single instant of the day nor for many at night was he at rest. Instinctively he seemed to realize that a let down would mean collapse.

After the camp had fallen asleep he would often lie awake half of the few hours of their night, every muscle tense, staring at the sky. His mind saw definitely every detail of the situation as he had viewed it. In advance his imagination stooped and sweated to the work which his body was to accomplish the next morning. Thus he did everything twice. Then at last the tension would relax. He would fall into uneasy sleep. But twice that did not follow. Through the dissolving iron mist of his striving a sharp thought cleaved like an arrow. It was that, after all, he did not care. Sub-consciousness, the other influence, was growing like a weed. Perhaps there were greater things than to succeed greater things than success. And then the keen, poignant memory of the dream girl stole into the young man's mind and in agony was immediately thrust forth. He would not think of her. He had given her up. He refused to believe that he had been wrong in the still darkness of the night he would rise and steal to the edge of the dully roaring stream. There, his eyes blinded and his throat choked with a longing more manly than tears, he would reach out and smooth the round round coats of the great logs.

"We'll do it," he whispered to them and to himself. "We'll do it. We can't be wrong."

**The Retort Disdainful.** Ellen Terry, the famous English actress, in the kindness of her heart once took a girl out of the poorhouse to train as a servant. But she was altogether hopeless and was continually breaking plates, dishes and everything she laid hands on, until Miss Terry thought that in time she might break her, so she dismissed her. But, not wishing the girl to come to any harm, when she was going away she asked her what she was going to do for a living. "Oh," she said disdainfully, "if the wust come to the wust, I can go on the stage."

**The Color Violet.** It is said that of all colors violet is the one most stimulating to the eye coats and that the electric light, and more especially that given out by the large lamps used in many public places, is rich in violet rays. It is claimed violet dresses and draperies are responsible for many eye "cases" and for not a few of the skin troubles about which the dermatologist is frequently consulted.

**Look Up.** The troubles of people are unnecessarily multiplied by the fact that they are forever looking down instead of up, which is only another way of saying that they live on a low plane instead of on a high one; that they breathe the miasmatic airs of the swamps instead of the pure ozone of the hills, and so miss the real meaning of the true happiness of life.

**What He Wanted.** "A tall bride is the best looking, isn't it?" "Well," replied the titled Englishman who had caught on to a little American slang, "so far as I am personally concerned I certainly am not looking for one who is 'short.'"—Chicago Post.

**Knocking Him.** "Carrie—I'm sure you misjudge Mr. Webster, papa. He is a man of great ambitions. You should hear him tell of the things he is going to do. Carrie's papa—And I suppose I'm one of 'em, but I'll reckon he'll find it harder to accomplish than he fancies it is."

**George Francis Train's Wit.** One of George Francis Train's sayings was: "People call me insane. I don't wonder. What would a village of peanuts say if a coconut rolled in among them?"

**Teeth.** How strange it is that you tell a horse's age by the horse's teeth, but a chicken's age by your own!—Town Topics.

**Don't say a man is shiftless.** Be polite and say that he is too contented to ever get rich.—Chicago Globe.

**Not For the Cannibals.** There was a fair maid from Decatur who was known as a red-hot potato. "I don't know what she meant," the cannibal work boys, "but she does fat savages star."—Mount Morris (Ill.) Index.

**Not Exciting.** "I had had such a slow time of it, I had had that night." "I heard you were playing cards with my wife, your wife's sister. Not in earnest, but just for fun."—Philadelphia Press.

## A CONVERTED ANARCHIST

(Original.)

The man who told me this story is dead or I could not tell it without almost surely occasioning his death:

"I was a poor man, though I belonged to a good family and had been well educated. At college I imbibed revolutionary, not to say communistic, doctrines which influenced me, but not seriously, until on coming out of the university I lost my father and the assistance he had given me; then, facing the world with no means, I was drawn to embrace anarchism. There was no excuse for me. I was young, and the world was before me. I was one of the impractical, theorizing kind who prefer trying to revolutionize natural laws rather than work. Added to this, I had the faculty of inspiring others. I joined a band of anarchists and became a leader among them.

"My mother had a brother of whom I had never heard. He was considered the black sheep of the family and was never spoken of to me, the only child of his only sister. He had run away as a boy and had broken his mother's heart by never writing a line. Up to the time I became an anarchist he had never been heard from. Judge of my surprise one day to learn through solicitors that this uncle had died in South America and left a fortune of \$850,000 to me.

"How quickly my theories of the world's wrongs vanished! I did not dare to break my connection with anarchists, but gradually ceased to attend meetings. One day I was horrified at receiving an order to assassinate one of the crowned heads of Europe. I knew well that should I refuse I would be myself assassinated. One advantage I would have in disobeying the order—I was rich and could isolate myself from any one who might attempt to kill me. I turned my fortune into gold and disappeared. A few weeks later I turned up in one of the southern states. My hair, which had been a light brown, was black. My beard, which had been but a few tufts, was now luxuriant. My name was changed. Indeed, as little of my old self remained as I could help. I bought a small plantation and pretended to raise cotton. In its center was my house, and no one could reach me without passing a number of my employees, whose duty it was to keep off an enemy.

"I lived for my several years without hearing from my old associates, but this only assured me that at the outset I had eluded them. I knew that I had been condemned and some one had been appointed to kill me. The only question was, Would my executioner fire of the work or be withdrawn for lack of funds or other causes?"

"One day I noticed that a new candy store had been opened in the village. I went inside and looked over the stock. It was very meager, and I bought nothing. A young woman who stood behind the counter looked disappointed and asked me to give an order for anything I liked and she would execute it. I am fond of chocolate and told her to make me some chocolate creams. She promised to have them ready the next day and sent them to me. Instead of sending she brought them. When she was announced I told my guards to admit her. She was a very attractive looking person, and I did not desire to keep her away. She asked me to try her chocolates and tell her wherein they did not please me. I ate a few of them and pronounced them excellent. That seemed to satisfy her, and she left at once, though I would have been glad to have her remain longer.

"In a week I went by the candy shop, stopped and gave her an order for some more chocolates. She told me that she knew of a new kind that was sure I had never eaten. I gave her an order for some of them, telling her that I would not put her to the trouble of sending them, but would call for them. I did so, but they were not ready. I called again, but still they had not been made. The woman told me that certain ingredients were required, for which she had been obliged to send to the city. She would bring them when they were ready.

"Meanwhile I never relaxed my vigilance in keeping any suspicious person from my house, and both there and when I went out I was secretly armed to the teeth.

"One day the candy woman was announced, and I ordered her to be admitted. She handed me the box of chocolates, and while I tried them she amused herself with an Italian greyhound I had always with me. The dog was lying on a rug at the other end of the room, and she went over to him and patted him. On opening the box I found the chocolates in layers of four large, flat squares. I ate two and found them delicious. The third I threw to the dog, who caught it in his teeth and swallowed it. I noticed that the woman turned pale. I was about to eat the fourth when I saw the dog looking at it longingly. I tossed it to him. As I did so the woman gave a shriek. The dog caught it, as before. There was an explosion, and his head was splattered over the room.

"The secret was out. The woman had been condemned to murder me! She was knocked senseless by the explosion. I was unhurt."

An arrangement was made between the ex-anarchist and the woman. She wrote that she had killed her mother, a coffin full of stems was buried, and the man was never again seen on his plantation. Then a notice was published of the woman's death, caused by wounds which she had received in a fall from a tree. The man and wife then lived together as man and wife till the husband's death a few years ago.

A BIRD THAT IS FEARED. The elster (Pica candata) is a bird that is respected and feared throughout south Germany. It belongs to the raven tribe and is about the size of a dove, with black and white feathers and long, pointed tail. It builds its nest in orchards, and its life is sacred. If it is seen three times in succession on the same house top in a place remote from its home it is believed to be a sure sign of death in that house. If it flies and gives its peculiar cry the sick person is sure to die, but if it does not scream the patient may recover. It is better for the sick person if the bird does not come near. No one could be hired to bother these birds for fear they might seek revenge, and if by chance one of them should die it is a sign of bad luck to the owner of the property where it is found. The bird is a valuable insect destroyer and in this way probably more than compensates for the fear it occasions among the farmers.

Animals Become Insane. Insanity in the human subject is supposed by some to have no analogue in the lower animals. Yet many cases, according to Dr. Snelson, will lead to the permanent loss of self control. Cattle driven from the country through a crowded town will often work themselves into a frenzy. Horses have gone mad on the battlefield. At Balaklava an Arabian horse turned on its attendant, threw him down and, kneeling on him, attacked him like an infuriated dog. An instance is related of a docile horse suddenly going mad on a hot day. Everything that came in its way it seized in its teeth and shook as a terrier does a rat. A scientist of authority even goes so far as to prove by what appears to be incontrovertible evidence that cats, dogs and monkeys have been observed to have delusions very similar to those of insane people.—London Globe.

Dividing the Sexes. While worshipping in a little chapel-of-ease a few miles from Ruthia, in the Wrexham road, the sexes are so strictly divided that they cannot even see one another. The building forms a right angle, in one arm of which the men sit and the women in the other. It was built and endowed by a misogynist of the Stuart period who objected to having his devotions distracted by the sight of the hated sex and, sympathizing with male posterity, stipulated expressly for this division in his deed of endowment.—London Standard.

The Cuban Workman. The Cuban workman is a kind husband and a fond father of a family usually of patriarchal size. He lives simply. At the bedchamber he buys his tasajo (jerked beef), rice, vegetables and cheap wine, and very savory are the stews his meek little wife prepares at the one hearty meal of the day, about 5:30 p. m. The Cuban eats but twice daily. He has coffee at 7 a. m., a light breakfast at 11 a. m. and eats his chief meal at twilight.—Southern Workman.

Rapid Typewriting. An official stenographer, Deming, at Albany, years ago reported court proceedings on a typewriter at the rate of 150 and 170 words a minute. He eliminated the vowels, using consonants only, with a dot to separate words. His typewriter was incased in glass to deaden the noise. The paper was run into the machine from a roll. Lawyers could read the notes.

Happiness. "I am sometimes accused," writes Sir John Lubbock, "of being too optimistic. But I have never ignored nor denied the troubles and sorrows of life. I have never said that men are happy, but only that they might be; that if they are not so the fault is generally their own; that most of us throw away more happiness than we enjoy."

Too Deserving. A young village maiden had obtained the modest prize. "I suppose then, my child," said a Parisian lady addressing her, "you are the most modest girl in the parish?"

"There is not the slightest doubt about that, madam, and it's a downright shame I didn't get all the other prizes!"—Paris Journal.

A Hard Competition. One of the hardest things for a man to do when he has some home late from the club and had to go to bed without taking off his coat is to explain to his wife in the morning that it was a good cure for sore throat.—New York Press.

The man that makes character makes faces.—Young.



"You must not go!" he commanded.