The Blazed Trail

By STEWART EDWARD WHITE

CONTINUED

CHAPTER XXX.

WALLACE CARPENTER'S search expedition had proved a failure, as Thorpe had foreseen, but at the end of the week, when the water began to recede, they came upon a mass of flesh and bones. The man was unrecognizable. The remains were wrapped in canvas and sent for interment to the cemetery at Marquette. Three of the others were never found. The last did not come to light until after the drive had quite finished.

Down at the booms the jam crew received the drive as fast as it came down. From one crib to another across the broad extent of the river's mouth heavy booms were chained end to end effectually to close the exit to Lake Superior. Against these the logs caromed softly in the slackened current and stopped. The cribs were very heavy, with slanting instead of square tops, in order that the pressure might be downward instead of sidewise. In a short time the surface of the lagoon was covered by a brown carpet of logs running in strange patterns like windrows of fallen grain. The drive was all but over.

Up till now the weather had been clear, but oppressively hot for this time of year. The heat had come suddenly and maintained itself well. The men had worked for the most part in undershirts. They were as much in the water as out of it, for the icy bath had become almost grateful. Hamilton, the journalist, who had attached himself definitely to the drive, distributed bunches of papers, in which the men read that the unseasonable conditions prevailed all over the country.

At length, however, it gave signs of breaking. The sky, which had been of a steel blue, harbored great piled thunder heads. Toward evening the thunder heads shifted and finally dissipated, to be sure, but the portent was there.

Hamilton's papers began to tell of washouts and cloudbursts in the south and west. The men wished they had some of that water here.

So finally the drive approached its end and all concerned began in anticipation to taste the weariness that awaited them. The few remaining tasks still confronting them all at once seemed more formidable than what they had accomplished. The work for the first time became dogged, distasteful. Even Thorpe was infected. He, too, wanted more than anything else to drop on the bed in Mrs. Hathaway's boarding house. There remained but a few things to do. A mile of sacking would carry the drive beyond the influence of freshet water. After that there would be no hurry.

He looked round at the hard, fatigue worn faces of the men about him, and he suddenly felt a great rush of affection for these comrades who had so unreservedly spent themselves for his affair. Their features showed exhaustion, it is true, but their eyes gleamed still with the steady, half humorous purpose of the pioneer. When they caught his glance they grinned good humoredly.

All at once Thorpe turned and started for the bank.

"That 'll do, boys," he said quietly to the nearest group. "She's down."

It was noon. The sackers looked up in surprise. Behind them, to their very feet, rushed the soft smooth slope of Hemlock rapids. Below them flowed a broad, peaceful river. The drive had passed its last obstruction. To all intents and purposes it was over.

Calmly, with matter of fact directness, as though they had not achieved the impossible, they shouldered their peaveys and struck into the broad wagon road. In the middle distance loomed the tall stacks of the mill, with the little board town about it. Across the eye spun the thread of the railroad. Far away gleamed the broad expanses of Lake Superior.

"I've changed, Junko," said he

The men paired off naturally and fell into a dragging, dogged walk. Thorpe found himself unexpectedly with Big Junko. For a time they plodded on without conversation. Then the big man ventured a remark.

"I'm glad she's over," said he. "I got a good stake comin'."

"Yes," replied Thorpe indifferently.

"I got most $600 comin'," persisted Junko.

"Might as well be 600 cents," commented Thorpe. "It 'd make you just as drunk."

Big Junko laughed self consciously, but without the slightest resentment

"That's all right," said he, "but you betcher life I don't blow this stake."

"I've heard that talk before," shrugged Thorpe.

"Yes, but this is different. I'm goin' to git married on this. How's that?"

Thorpe, his attention struck at last, stared at his companion.

"Who is she?" he asked abruptly.

"She used to wash at Camp Four."

Thorpe dimly remembered the woman now—an overweighted creature with a certain attraction of elfishly blowing hair, with a certain pleasing, full cheeked, full bosomed health.

The two walked on in re-established silence. Finally the giant, unable to contain himself longer, broke out again.

"I do like that woman," said he with a quaintly deliberate seriousness. "That's the finest woman in this district."

Thorpe felt the quick moisture rush to his eyes. There was something inexpressibly touching in those simple words as Big Junko uttered them.

"And when you are married," he asked, "what are you going to do? Are you going to stay on the river?"

"No, I'm goin' to clear a farm. The woman says that's the thing to do. I like the river too. But you bet when Carrie says a thing that's plenty good enough for Big Junko."

Thorpe looked at his companion fixedly. He remembered Big Junko as a wild beast when his passions were aroused, as a man whose honesty had been doubted.

"You've changed, Junko," said he.

"I know," said the big man. "I been a scalawag all right. I quit it. I don't know much, but Carrie she's smart, and I'm goin' to do what she says. When you get stuck on a good woman like Carrie, Mr. Thorpe, you don't give much for anything else. Sure. That's right. It's the biggest thing top of earth."

Here it was again—the opposing creed. And from such a source! Thorpe's iron will contracted again.

"A woman is no excuse for a man's neglecting his work," he snapped.

"Shorely not," agreed Junko serenely. "I aim to finish out my time all right, Mr. Thorpe. Don't you worry none about that. I done my best for you. And," went on the river man in the expansion of this unwonted confidence with his employer, "I'd like to rise to remark that you're the best boss I ever had, and we boys wants to stay with her till there's skating in hades."

"All right," murmured Thorpe indifferently. Suddenly the remaining half mile to town seemed very long indeed.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WALLACE CARPENTER and Hamilton, the journalist, seated against the sun warmed bench of Mrs. Hathaway's boarding house, commented on the band as it stumbled into the wash-room. Their conversation was interrupted by the approach of Thorpe and Big Junko. The former looked twenty years older after his winter. His eye was dull, his shoulders drooped, his gait was inelastic. The whole bearing of the man was that of one weary to the bone.

"I've got something here to show you, Harry!" cried Wallace Carpenter, waving a newspaper. "It was a great drive, and here's something to remember it by."

"All right, Wallace, by and by," replied Thorpe dully. "I'm dead. I'm going to turn in for awhile. I need sleep more than anything else."

He passed through the little passage into the "parlor bedroom," which Mrs. Hathaway always kept in readiness for members of the firm. There he fell heavily asleep almost before his body had met the bed.

In the long dining room the river men consumed a belated dinner. They had no comments to make. It was over.

The two on the veranda smoked. To the right, at the end of the sawdust street, the mill sang its varying and lulling keys. The odor of fresh sawed pine perfumed the air. Not a hundred yards away the river slipped silently to the distant blue Superior, escaping between the slanting stone filled cribs which held back the logs. Down the south and west the huge thunder heads gathered and flashed and grumbled, as they had done every afternoon for days.

"Queer thing," commented Hamilton finally, "these cold streaks in the air. They are just as distinct as though they had partitions around them."

"Queer climate anyway," agreed Carpenter.

Excepting always for the mill, the little settlement appeared asleep. The main booms were quite deserted. After awhile Hamilton noticed something.

"Look here, Carpenter," said he. "What's happening out there? Have some of your confounded logs sunk, or what? There don't seem to be near so many of them somehow."

"No; it isn't that," proffered Carpenter after a moment's scrutiny. "There are just as many logs, but they are getting separated a little so you can see the open water between them."

"Guess you're right. Say, look here. I believe that the river is rising."

"Nonsense! We haven't had any rain."

"She's rising just the same. You see that spile over there near the left hand crib? Well, I sat on the boom this morning watching the crew, and I whittled the spile with my knife. You can see the marks from here. I cut the thing about two feet above the water. Look at it now."

"She's pretty near the water line, that's right," admitted Carpenter.

About an hour later the younger man in his turn made a discovery.

"She's been rising right along," he submitted. "Your marks are nearer the water, and, do you know, I believe the logs are beginning to feel it. See, they've closed up the little openings between them, and they are beginning to crowd down to the lower end of the pond."

"I don't know anything about this business," hazarded the journalist, "but I should think there was a good deal of pressure on that same lower end. By Jove, look here! See those logs up-end. I believe you're going to have a jam right here in your own booms."

"I don't know," hesitated Wallace. "I never heard of its happening."

"You'd better let some one know."

"I hate to bother Harry or any of the river men. I'll just step down to the mill. Mason—he's our mill foreman—he'll know."

Mason came to the edge of the high trestle and took one look.

"Jumping fishhooks!" he cried. "Why, the river's up six inches and still a-comin'! Here you, Tom!" he called to one of the yard hands. "You tell Solly to get steam on that tug double quick and have Dave hustle together his driver crew!"

"What are you going to do?" asked Wallace.

"I got to strengthen the booms," explained the mill foreman. "We'll drive some piles across the cribs."

"Is there any danger?"

"Oh, no. The river would have to rise a good deal higher than she is now to make current enough to hurt. They've had a hard rain up above. This will go down in a few hours."

After a time the tug puffed up to the booms, escorting the pile driver. The latter towed a little raft of long, sharpened piles, which it at once began to drive in such positions as would most effectually strengthen the booms. In the meantime the thunder heads had slyly climbed the heavens, so that a sudden deluge of rain surprised the workmen. For an hour it poured down in torrents, then settled to a steady gray beat. Immediately the aspect had changed.

Solly, the tug captain, looked at his mooring hawsers and then at the nearest crib.

"She's riz two inches in th' last two hours," he announced, "and she's runnin' like a mill race." Solly was a typical north country tug captain, short and broad, with a brown, clear face and the steadiest and calmest of steel blue eyes. "When she begins to feel th' pressure behind," he went on, "there's goin' to be trouble."

Toward dusk she began to feel that pressure. Through the rainy twilight the logs could be seen raising their ghostly arms of protest. Slowly, without tumult, the jam formed. In the rear they pressed in, were sucked under in the swift water and came to rest at the bottom of the river. The current of the river began to protest, pressing its hydraulics through the narrowing crevices. The situation demanded attention.

A breeze began to pull offshore in the body of rain. Little by little it increased, sending the water by in gusts, ruffling the already hurrying river into greater haste, raising far from the shore dimly perceived whitecaps. Between the roaring of the wind, the dash of rain and the rush of the stream men had to shout to make themselves heard.

"Guess you'd better rout out the boss," screamed Solly to Wallace Carpenter. "This water's comin' up an inch an hour right along. When she backs up once she'll push this jam out sure."

Wallace ran to the boarding house and roused his partner from a heavy sleep. The latter understood the situation at a word. While dressing he explained to the younger man wherein lay the danger.

"If the jam breaks once," said he, "nothing top of earth can prevent it from going out into the lake, and there it 'll scatter heaven knows where. Once scattered it is practically a total loss."

They felt blindly through the rain in the direction of the lights on the tug and pile driver. Shearer, the water dripping from his flaxen mustache, joined them like a shadow. At the river he announced his opinion. "We can hold her all right," he assured them. "It 'll take a few more piles, but by morning the storm 'll be over, and she'll begin to go down again."

The three picked their way over the creaking, swaying timber. But when they reached the pile driver they found trouble afoot. The crew had mutinied and refused longer to drive piles under the face of the jam.

"If she breaks away she's going to bury us," said they.

"She won't break," snapped Shearer. "Get to work."

"It's dangerous," they objected sullenly.

"You get off this driver!" shouted Solly. "Go over and lie down in a ten acre lot and see if you feel safe there!"

He drove them ashore with a storm of profanity and a multitude of kicks, his steel blue eyes blazing.

"There's nothing for it but to get the boys out again," said Tim. "I kinder hate to do it."

But when the Fighting Forty, half asleep but dauntless, took charge of the driver a catastrophe made itself known. One of the ejected men had tripped the lifting chain of the hammer after another had knocked away the heavy preventing block, and so the hammer had fallen into the river and was lost. None other was to be had. The pile driver was useless.

A dozen men were at once dispatched for cables, chains and wire ropes from the supply at the warehouse.

"It's part of the same trick," said Thorpe grimly. "Those fellows have their men everywhere among us. I don't know whom to trust."

"You think it's Morrison & Daly?" queried Carpenter, astonished.

"Think? I know it. They know as well as you or I that if we save these logs we'll win out in the Stock Exchange, and they're not such fools as to let us save them if it can be helped."

"What are you going to do now?"

"The only thing there is to be done. We'll string heavy booms chained together between the cribs and then trust to heaven they'll hold. I think we can hold the jam. The water will begin to flow over the bank before long, so there won't be much increase of pressure over what we have now, and as there won't be any shock to withstand I think our heavy booms will do the business."

He turned to direct the boring of some long boom logs in preparation for the chains. Suddenly he whirled again to Wallace with so strange an expression in his face that the young man almost cried out. The uncertain light of the lanterns showed dimly the streaks of rain across his countenance, and his eye flared with a look almost of panic.

"I never thought of it," he said in a low voice. "Fool that I am! I don't see how I missed it. Wallace, don't you see what those devils will do next?"

"No. What do you mean?" gasped the younger man.

"There are 12,000,000 feet of logs up river in Sadler & Smith's drive. Don't you see what they'll do?"

"No, I don't believe"—

"Just as soon as they find out that the river is booming and that we are going to have a hard time to hold our jam, they'll let loose those 12,000,000 on us. They'll break the jam or dynamite it, or something. And let me tell you that a very few logs hitting the tail of our jam will start the whole shooting match so that no power on earth can stop it."

"I don't imagine they'd think of doing that," began Wallace by way of assurance.

"Think of it! You don't know them. They've thought of everything. You don't know that man Daly. Ask Tim. He'll tell you."

"Well, the"—

"I've got to send a man up there right away. Perhaps we can get there in time to head them off. They have to send their man over"— He cast his eye rapidly over the men.

"I don't know just who to send. There isn't a good enough woodsman in the lot to make Siscoe Falls through the woods a night like this. The river trail is too long, and a cut through the woods is blind."

With infinite difficulty and caution they reached the shore. Across the gleaming logs shone dimly the lanterns at the scene of work, ghostly through the rain. Beyond, on either side, lay impenetrable, drenched darkness racked by the wind.

"I wouldn't want to tackle it," panted Thorpe. "If it wasn't for that cursed tote road between Sadler & Smith's I wouldn't worry. It's just too easy for them."

Behind them the jam cracked and shrieked and groaned. Occasionally was heard beneath the sharper noises a dull boom as one of the heavy timbers, forced by the pressure from its resting place, shot into the air and fell back on the bristling surface.

"Tim Shearer might do it," suggested Thorpe, "but I hate to spare him."

He picked his rifle from its rack and thrust the magazine full of cartridges.

"Come on, Wallace," said he. "We'll hunt him up."

They stepped again into the shriek and roar of the storm, bending their heads to its power, but indifferent to the rain. The sawdust street was saturated like a sponge. They could feel the quick water rise about the pressure at their feet. From the invisible houses they heard a steady monotone of flowing from the roofs. Far ahead, dim in the mist, sprayed the light of lanterns.

Suddenly Thorpe felt a touch on his arm. Faintly he perceived at his elbow a face from which the water streamed.

"Injun Charley!" he cried. "The very man!"

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The United Organ and Carriage Factory is now at work on hacks, turning out a fine grade of vehicles. The organ factory is not yet ready for operation. Twenty or thirty organs made at Corvallis are being finished up and will be put on the market before the Albany organ department of the factory is ready for running.—Albany Democrat. This is the factory that Eugene could have easily secured.

order to swell the profits of manipulators and stock jobbers.

It is the duty of the Democratic party to ally itself with the legitimate business interests of the country, and with their aid to overthrow the Republican party, which has sold itself to the criminal trusts.

None will welcome Democratic success more gladly than the legitimate business man, who finds it more and more difficult to exist under the throttling influence of the trusts and their growing control of legislation, money and opportunity.

To the commercial traveler, the business man, the mechanic whose wages are cut, the local banker in constant danger, to every family that has had its living expenses increased or its savings absorbed by the criminal trusts, I would recommend a study of the character of Andrew Jackson and his political methods.

To all Democrats and Democratic leaders Andrew Jackson stands a proof of the value of principle in the winning of victory.

If it were possible in the coming campaign to choose our candidates in the history of the past, I should not advocate the choice of some so called "conservative" nonentity, without motive or inspiration save desire for office; I should urge the nomination of Andrew Jackson, because he was not afraid of money illegally intrenched, because he knew how to fight and how to win.

WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST.

Industrial Economics.

Trustworthy statistics declare that the productive capacity of every individual American who works has been multiplied 125 times in the past century by the perfection of labor saving machinery.

Government experts who compile industrial data assert that wealth is increased in America at the rate of $10 a day for every person who works.

Many trust managers now eliminate consideration of workmen as individuals. The mechanic is considered an automaton—a part of the high speed machine—and the longer it runs the more profit is made.

The manager of the Homestead (Pa.) Rolling mills, the armor plate factory of the steel trust, said in congress recently, "We have only three laborers in our mills—fire, water and electricity."

"I find no difficulty in running my newspapers and starting new ones on the eight hour day," said Representative William Randolph Hearst in congress. "My establishments run twenty-four hours a day, but the individual employees work only eight hours."

A congressional resolution to investigate the beef trust brought out these facts: Stock raisers get too little for cattle, consumers pay too much for meat, ranchers are robbed by the combination which keeps down the price of beef on the hoof, retail butchers cannot sell at a profit, dressed beef is higher than three years ago and the producer gets less, the cost of handling meats from ranch to block is reduced. Who gets the benefit?

Votes Show Popularity.

Election returns are true measures of a man's personal or political popularity. In districts where all elements of society are resident the canvass shows the esteem in which candidates are held. The Eleventh congressional district of New York is a typical, representative cosmopolitan community. Within its boundaries is part of the west side, whose residents work hard; part of Fifth avenue, where wealth and ease abound, and part of the Broadway business section.

This is the district that elected William Randolph Hearst as its representative in congress by the largest majority ever given to a representative in Greater New York. The figures are interesting. Representative Hearst received 26,953 votes, 16,112 more than his Republican opponent. The same percentage given to Bird S. Coler, the candidate for governor on the same ticket, would have elected a Democratic governor of the Empire state. Mr. Hearst's majority was 6,000 greater than Mayor McClellan's one year later, and the same precincts gave Mr. Hearst 3,000 more votes than Judge Alton B. Parker received, and the latter had the advantage in that the Republicans did not nominate any one against him.

Selling and Buying.

The department of commerce and labor recently published the statement that the average cost of living in America has increased 16 2-3 per cent. This statement is based undoubtedly on wholesale market quotations.

Since Nov. 1, 1903, there has been an average reduction of wages throughout the manufacturing centers of the east of 10 to 20 per cent. Flour and other foodstuffs have increased in price since the same date.

The price of newspapers in the great cities has been reduced two-thirds in fifteen years. The cost of producing them has increased. "Notwithstanding these conditions," says William Randolph Hearst, "my papers pay handsome profits, and wages are higher and the hours of toil reduced."

Americans Want Them.

Among the earnest and powerful supporters of the Panama canal and the greater navy for America none did more than Representative William Randolph Hearst to bring about the accomplishment of these two distinctly American projects.

Alaska's Product.

In thirty-six years Alaska has produced in gold, furs and fish $150,000,000. The revenues and taxes collected by the government since the purchase of the territory from Russia amount to $8,000,000.

Harrisburg Items.

(Guard Special Service.)

Harrisburg April 21.—Wheeler McMahon departed last Friday for Southern Oregon, where he will work during the summer.

Mrs. Louis Maxson, of Seattle, is visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. M. W. Carter, of this city.

The remains of Miss Edith Cunningham, who died in Albany Thursday, were brought to Harrisburg and laid to best in the Masonic cemetery Saturday.

Dr. T. C. Mackey is making a business trip in California. The doctor is undecided where he will locate.

Mr. Prior is treating his residence to a fresh coat of paint.

The Harrisburg drama was postponed until April 23d, on account of the death of Miss Cunningham.

Mrs. Tyler and Miss Minnie Evans visited in Junction City Sunday.

Miss Luella Brewster visited her parents in Eugene Saturday and Sunday.

Quite a number of the ladies of the local Degree of Honor are attending the convention of that order in Albany this week.

Arthur Senders is on a business trip in Southern Oregon.

Miss Kittie Baker is visiting in Albany this week.

Coburg Items.

(Guard Special Service.)

Coburg, April 22.—Mr. Louis Ingram, of Coquille, Or., is visiting with his brother, Robert, of this place.

Mr. Bridges, of Lebanon, visited with F. B. Sackett yesterday.

F. B. Sackett and wife expect to start next Tuesday for Los Angeles, California, to attend the general conference of the M. E. church, which meets in that place May 1st.

The Rebekah lodge of this place entertained the members of Lone Fir Circle, No. 136, W. O. W., at their hall Tuesday evening. Games of various kinds were indulged in, after which ice cream and cake were served.

A very pleasant party was held Saturday afternoon at the home of Mrs. Geo. A. Drury, in honor of the seventh birthday of her daughter, Emma. A merry time was enjoyed by the little folks, who numbered about thirty. Lunch was served by the hostess, assisted by Mrs. A. C. Dixon and Mrs. W. M. Duryea, to which the guests did ample justice.

Lone Fir Circle, No. 136, W. O. W., will give a shadow social in a short time for the benefit of the order. A general good time is promised, as the members of that order are always able to do.

Hat and Cloak Taken.

If the person who took the ladies' hat and cloak by mistake from the I. O. O. F. hall last evening will return the same to No. 80 West Fifth street, they will confer a favor on the owner.

Married.

At Anlauf, Douglas county, Ore., April 20th, 1904, at the residence of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Wood, E. B. Handsaker to Miss Mattie May Wood, Rev. T. S. Handsaker, officiating.

Born.

To Mr. and Mrs. Mark T. Flemming near Irving, April 10, 1904, a 12-pound daughter.

Estray Notice.

The following described horses came to my place about April 12th: One dark bay mare, wieght 1050, brand "C S" on right hip, shod; one sorrel horse, weight 900, shod; one small bay horse, no brand. Owner can have the same by calling at my place, 1¼ miles above Hendricks' ferry on the south side of McKenzie river, and pay for their keeping.

A. TUPPER.

Walterville, Oregon.