



The Riverman

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By Stewart Edward White

(Chapter Eleven, Continued)

"Good!" approved Newmark briefly. "It was really pretty decent of the little Dutchman. He agreed to let us put up our stock as security. Of course that security is good only if we win out, and if we win out, why, then he'll get his logs, so he won't have any use for security. So it's just a way of beating the devil around the bush. He evidently wanted to give us the business, but he hated like the devil to pass up his rules—you know how those old shellbacks are."

"H'm—yes," said Newmark. "I got into your department a little too."

"How's that?" asked Newmark, spearing a baked potato.

"Heinzman said he'd buy some of our stock. He seems to think we have a pretty good show."

Newmark paused, his potato halfway to his plate.

"Kind of him," said he after a moment. "Did he sign a contract?"

"It wasn't made out," Orde reminded him. "I am to bring it in Monday."

They ate hungrily, then drifted out into the office again, where Orde lit a cigar.

"Now, let's see your memoranda," said Newmark.

He frowned over the three simple items for some time.

"It's got me," he confessed.

"What do you mean?" asked Orde in surprise.

"It all looks queer to me. Heinzman's got something up his sleeve. Why should he take a bond with that security from us? If we can't deliver the logs, our company fails; that makes the stock worthless; that makes the bond worthless—just when it is needed. Of course, it's as plain as the nose on your face that he thinks the proposition a good one and is trying to get control."

"Oh, no," cried Orde, astounded.

"Orde, you're all right on the river," laughed Newmark, "but you're a babe at this game."

"But Heinzman is honest," cried Orde. "Why, he is a church member and has a class in Sunday school."

The corners of Newmark's mouth were twitching quietly with amusement.

"Besides, he is going to buy some stock," added Orde after a moment.

"He was bluffing," said Newmark. "Because he wanted to find out how much stock would be issued. You told him it would be a hundred thousand dollars, didn't you?"

"Why—yes, I did," Newmark laughed.

"So now he knows that if we forfeit the bond he'll have controlling interest," he pointed out. "But what I can't make out is why he's so sure we'll have to forfeit."

"I think he's just taking a long shot at it," suggested Orde, who seemed finally to have decided against Newmark's opinion.

"Not he. He has some good reason for thinking we won't deliver the logs. Why does he insist on putting in a date for delivery? None of the others does."

"I don't know," replied Orde.

"You say you surely can get the drive through by then?"

Orde laughed.

"Sure! Why, it gives me two weeks' leeway over the worst possible luck I could have. You're too almighty suspicious, Joe."

Newmark shook his head.

"You let me figure this out," said he. "But bedtime found him without a solution. He retired to his room under fire of Orde's good natured rallery. Orde himself shut his door, the smile still on his lips. With a sigh he fell asleep. Some time in the night he was awakened by a persistent tapping on the door. He lit the gas and admitted Newmark in his nightgown.

"Orde," said he briefly, "didn't you tell me the other day that rollways were piled both on the banks and in the river?"

"Yes, sometimes," said Orde. "Why?"

"Then they might obstruct the river?"

"Certainly."

"I thought so," cried Newmark, with an ear approach to extortion as he never permitted himself. "Now, just one other thing. Aren't Heinzman's rollways below most of the others?"

"Yes, I believe they are," said Orde.

"And, of course it was agreed, as usual, that Heinzman was to break out his own rollways?"

"I see," said Orde slowly. "You think he intends to delay things enough so we can't deliver on the date agreed on."

"I know it," stated Newmark positively. "But if he refuses to deliver the logs no court of law will!"

"Law!" cried Newmark. "Refuse to deliver! You don't know that kind. He won't refuse to deliver. There'll just be a lot of inevitable delays, and his foreman will misunderstand, and all that."

Orde nodded, his eye abstracted.



Chapter 12

SUNDAY afternoon Orde, leaving Newmark to devices of his own, walked slowly up the main street, turned to the right down one of the shaded side residence streets that ended finally in a beautiful glistening sand hill. Orde seated himself on the smooth, clean sand and removed his hat. He saw these things and in imagination the far upper stretches of the river, with the mills and yards and booms extending for miles, and still above them the marshes and the flats where the river widened below the Big Bend. That would be the location for the booms of the new company—a cheap property on which the partners had already secured a valuation. To right and left stretched the long Michigan coast, with hills topped with the green of twisted pines, firs and beeches, with always its beach of sand, deep and dry to the very edge.

After he had cooled he arose and made his way back to a pleasant hardwood forest of maple and beech. Orde walked slowly farther and farther into the forest.

A fresh breeze darkened the blue velvet surface of the water, tumbled the white foam hissing up the beach, blew forward over the dunes a fine hurrying wist of sand and bore to Orde at last the refreshment of the wide spaces. A woman, walking slowly, bent her head against the force of this wind.

Orde watched her idly. He caught himself admiring the grace of her deft and sudden movements and the sway of her willowy figure.

As though directed by some unseen guide, her course veered more and more until it led directly to the spot where Orde stood.

When she was within ten feet of him she raised her head so the young man could see something besides the top of her hat. Orde looked down into her eyes.

"Hello!" she said cheerfully and unsharply, and sank down crosslegged at his feet.

Orde stood quite motionless, overcome by astonishment. Her face, its long oval framed in the bands of the gray veil and the down turned brim of the hat, looked up smiling into his.

"Why, Miss Bishop?" cried Orde, finding his voice. "What are you doing here?"

A faint shade of annoyance crossed her brow.

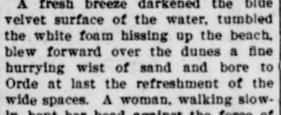
"Oh, I could ask the same of you, and then we'd talk about how surprised we are, world without end," said she. "The important thing is that here is sand to play in, and there is the lake, and here are we, and the day is charming, and it's good to be alive. Sit down and dig a hole! We're all the common days to explain things in."

Orde laughed and seated himself to face her. Without further talk and quite gravely they commenced to scoop out an excavation between them, piling the sand over themselves and on either side as was most convenient. As the hole grew deeper they had to lean over more and more. Their heads sometimes brushed ever so lightly; their hands perforce touched. She looked up happily at Orde, trusting the loose hair from in front of her eyes.

She arose to her feet, shaking the sand free from her skirts. "Now let's go somewhere else," she said. "I think through these woods. Can we get back to town this way?"

"Yes," replied Orde. "The lumberjacks say that the woods are the poor man's overcoat."

Orde followed her in silence. She seemed to be quite without responsibility in regard to him, and yet an occasional random remark threw in his



Chapter 13

"I HAVE Heinzman's contract all drawn," said Newmark the next morning, "and I think I'll go around with you to the office."

They found the little German awaiting them. Newmark immediately took charge of the interview.

"I have executed here the contract and the bonds secured by Mr. Orde's, and my shares of stock in the new company," he explained.

Heinzman reached his hands for the papers, beaming over his glasses at the two young men. As he read, however, his smile vanished.

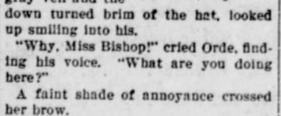
"What is this?" he inquired, crispness in his voice. "You told me," he accused Orde, "that you were not prepared to break out the rollways. You told me you would expect me to do that for myself. Well, why do you put in this?" reading from the paper in his hand:

"In case said rollways belonging to said parties of the second part are not broken out by the time the drive has reached them, and in case on demand said parties of the second part do refuse or do not exercise due diligence in breaking out said rollways, the said parties of the first part shall themselves break out said rollways, and the said parties of the second part do hereby agree to reimburse said parties of the first part at the rate of a dollar per thousand board feet."

"That is merely to protect ourselves," struck in Newmark.

"But!" exploded Heinzman, his face purpling, "a dollar a thousand is absurd!"

"Of course," agreed Newmark. "We expect it to be. It is intended as a penalty in case you don't break out your own rollways in time."



Chapter 14

ON his return home late Monday afternoon Grandma Orde informed the river boss with a shrewd twinkle that she wanted him surely at home the following evening.

"I've asked three or four of the young people for a candy pull," said she.

"Who, mother?" asked Orde.

"Your crowd—the Smiths, Collinses, Jane Hubbard and Her," said Grandma Orde.

The young people straggled in at an early hour after supper. Orde stepped into the hall to help them with their wraps. He was surprised as he approached Carroll Bishop to lift her cloak from her shoulders to find that the top of her daintily poised head, with its soft, fine hair, came well below the level of his eyes. Somehow her poise, her slender grace of movement and of attitude, had lent her the impression of a stature she did not possess.

"Oh, it is so quaint and delightful," Carroll exhaled slowly. "This dear old house with its low ceilings and its old



direction proved that he was not forgotten. Finally they emerged from the beech woods.

She turned and waved her hat at the beech woods falling somber against the lowering sun.

"Goodbye," she said gravely, "and pleasant dreams to you. I hope those very saucy little birds won't keep you awake." She looked up at Orde. "He was rather nice to us this afternoon," she explained, "and it's always well to be polite to them anyway." She gazed steadily at Orde for signs of amusement. He resolutely held his face sympathetic.

"Now I think we'll go home," said she.

They made their way to the edge of the sand hill. The low slanting sun cast across the vista a sleepy light of evening.

"How would you like to live in a place like that all your life?" asked Orde.

"I don't know." She weighed her words carefully. "It would depend."

"Which seems to settle that?" said Newmark to Orde after they had left.

"Now," said Newmark as they trudged back to their hotel, "this proposition of Heinzman's has given me an idea. I'm not going to try to sell this stock outside, but to the men who own timber along the river. Then they won't be objecting to the tolls, for if the company makes any profits part will go to them. I'll take these contracts to show we can do the business, and I'll see about incorporation and get a proper office and equipments. Of course we'll have to make this our headquarters."

"I suppose so," said Orde a little blankly. After an instant he laughed. "Do you know, I hadn't thought of that!"

"Also," went on Newmark calmly, "I'll buy the supplies to the best advantage I can."

"And I?" inquired Orde.

"Get the boats built and improve the river. Begin to get your crew. You can start right off. We have my money to begin on."

Orde laughed.

"My! She's a nice big job, isn't she?" he cried joyously.



Chapter 15

THE new firm plunged busily into pressing activities. Orde constantly interviewed men of all kinds—rivermen, mill men, contractors, boat builders, hardware dealers, pile driver captains, builders, wholesale grocery men, cooks, axmen, chow boys—all a little world in itself.

Downstream eight miles, below the mills, and just beyond where the drawbridge crossed over to Monrovia, Duncan McLeod's shipyards steamed and bent and bolted away at two tugboats.

The spring burst into leaf and settled into summer. Orde was constantly on the move. As soon as low water came with midsummer he departed to Redding. Here he joined a crew which Tom North had collected and went to the head of the river. Far back on the headwaters he built a dam. The gate operated simply and could be raised to let loose an entire flood. And, indeed, this was the whole purpose of the dam. It created a reservoir from which could be freed new supplies of water to eke out the dropping spring freshets.

The crew next moved down ten miles to where the river dropped over a rapids full of bowlders. Here were built a row of stone filled log cribs in a double row downstream to define the channel and to hold the drive in and away from the shallows. At the falls twenty-five miles below Orde purposed his most elaborate bit of rough engineering. The falls, only about fifteen feet high, fell straight to a bed of sheer rock. This had been eaten by the eddies into potholes and crannies until a jagged irregular scoop hollow had formed immediately underneath the fall.

In flood time the water roared through this obstruction in a torrent. The logs plunged end on into the scoop hollow, hit with a crash and were spewed out below more or less battered. Sometimes, when the drive brought down a hundred logs together, they failed to shoot over the barrier of the ledge. Then followed a jam, a bad jam, difficult and dangerous to possess.

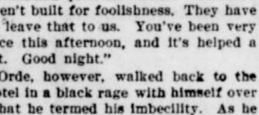
This condition of affairs Orde had determined, if possible, to obviate.

"If," said he to North, "we could carry an apron on a slant from just under the crest and over the potholes it would shoot both the water and the logs off a better angle."

"Sure," agreed North, "but you'll have to place your apron with all that water running through. Why, it would drown us!"

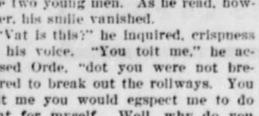
"I've got a notion on that," said Orde.

Into the forest went the axmen. The straightest trees they felled, trimmed and dragged down travoy trails they constructed, on sleds they built for the purpose, to the banks of the river. Here they bored the two holes through either end to receive the bolts when later they should be locked together side by side in their places. As fast as they were prepared men with cant-hooks rolled them down the slope to a flat below the falls.



Chapter 16

THE next time he saw her was at



Chapter 17

THE next time he saw her was at

"I will not stand for such foolishness!" pounded Heinzman.

"Very well," said Newmark crisply, reaching for the contract.

But Heinzman clung to it.

"It is absurd," he repeated in a milder tone. "See, I will strike it out." He did so with a few dashes of the pen.

"We have no intention," stated Newmark, with decision, "of giving you the chance to hang up our drive."

Heinzman caught his breath.

"So that is what you think?" he shouted. He tore the contract in pieces and threw it in the wastebasket. "Get out of here!" he cried.

Orde's hands twitched nervously.

"You to refuse our offer?"

"Refuse! Yes—you and your whole capoodle!" yelled Heinzman.

Once in the open street Orde drew a deep breath of relief.

"Whew!" said he. "That was a terror! We've gone off the wrong foot that time."

Newmark was amused.

"You don't mean to say that fooled you?" he marveled.

"What?" asked Orde.

"It was all rubbish. He saw we had spotted his little scheme, and he had to retreat. It was as plain as the nose on your face. We've got an enemy on our hands in any case and one we'll have to look out for. He'll try to make trouble on the river. Perhaps he'll try to block the stream by not breaking his rollways."

The partners hunted out the little frame building in which Johnson conducted his business.

"I see no use in it," said Johnson. "I can run me own without help from any man."

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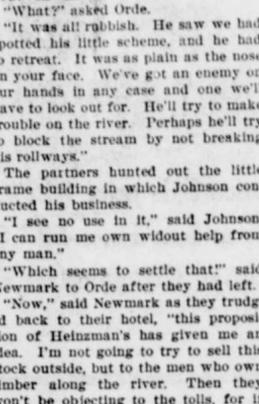
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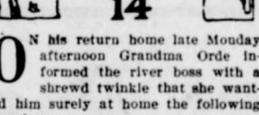
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"My! She's a nice big job, isn't she?" he cried joyously.



Chapter 18

THE next time he saw her was at



Chapter 19

THE next time he saw her was at



Chapter 20

THE next time he saw her was at

the "case" of the friend she visited. Orde was lucky enough to find the girls home and alone. Jane made an excuse and went out. They talked with a considerable approach toward intimacy. Not until nearly time to go did Orde stumble upon the vital point of the evening. He had said something about a plan for the week following.

"But you forget that by that time I shall be gone," said she.

"Gone?" he echoed blankly. "Where?"

"Home," said she. "Don't you remember I am to go Sunday morning?"

"I thought you were going to stay a month."

"I was, but I—certain things came up that made it necessary for me to leave sooner."

"Will you write me occasionally?" he begged.

"As to that"—she began—"I'm a very poor correspondent. I do not make it a custom to write to young men."

"Oh!" he cried, believing himself enlightened. "Will you answer if I write you?"

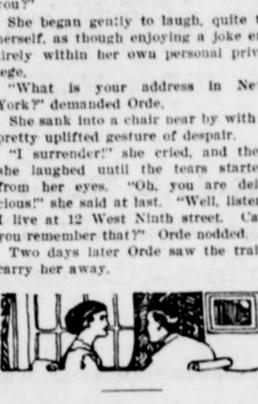
She began gently to laugh, quite to herself, as though enjoying a joke entirely within her own personal privilege.

"What is your address in New York?" demanded Orde.

She sank into a chair near by with a pretty uplifted gesture of despair.

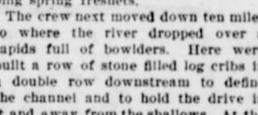
"I surrender!" she cried, and then she laughed until the tears started from her eyes. "Oh, you are delicious!" she said at last. "Well, listen. I live at 12 West Ninth street. Can you remember that?" Orde nodded.

Two days later Orde saw the train carry her away.



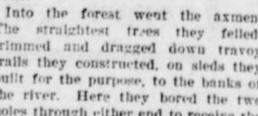
Chapter 21

THE next time he saw her was at



Chapter 22

THE next time he saw her was at



Chapter 23

THE next time he saw her was at

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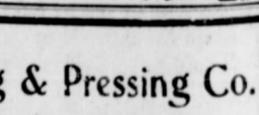
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