



With the Clock Turned Back

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(Continued)

By Courtney Ryley Cooper

Late that night, after many a stop, after many gruntings and changes of mind on the part of Thomas Brent, Freck led his employer up a little narrow runway from Indian creek and then to the mouth of a large cave.

The next day was one in which Thomas Brent of the Amalgamated Foundry company merely sat at the edge of the cave and closely watched his companion at the work of catching fish and gathering the game which would provide the food for the next few meals.

When he did move it was to the accompaniment of groans and grunts, for the effect of Brent's extraordinary exertions were beginning to make themselves felt in the form of muscles that grew more and more sore with every hour. Another day came—then another; and another, and Thomas Brent as said a little trip to the creek where he watched Freck catch fish.

Then he hobbled back to the cave to sit exceedingly still and nurse his muscles. But all things must eud, and within a week Thomas Brent discovered that his muscles were not only well again, but that he was possessed of a strength he did not realize he owned; also that a certain spirit of dare-devilry was beginning to make itself felt throughout his system. One thing he realized was that for a solid week he had slept as he never had slept before and that he had eaten more than he had in years.

He rolled out of his blanket, thumped down to the creek for his morning ablutions. A Jay bird called at him as he went along. He shouted back at it happily. A lazy mud turtle rolled off a dry log into the water as he approached, and Thomas Brent chuckled at the picture.

"Freck," he said when he had returned and begun the demolition of a fried sun fish, "Wonder how far that cave runs back. Have we got any candles, Freck?"

"Yes—you had me get two dozen; don't you remember?"

"That's right. Well, we'll fish a while and then we'll see what this cave looks like."

So it was that two hours later, supplied with candles and luncheon, Thomas Brent and Freck started on their tour of exploration. After the first great cavern the cave lengthened into a long, tunnel-like affair where stalactites and stalagmites met and where the candles caused strange, gleaming reflections to sparkle before the eyes of the man and the boy as they went along. At last, after a long time of walking, a small white something showed ahead—the light of day.

"We're going through it," Freck announced as he saw the speck of white in the distance.



"We're Going Through It," Freck Announced as He Saw the Speck of White in the Distance.

As they kept on toward the light the space grew smaller. The sides of the tunnel narrowed down until Brent and his boy companion were forced to crawl on their hands and knees; but they did, for with Thomas Brent going to the end of a thing was a religion. Slowly they approached the outlet before which showed a dense growth of underbrush and weeds.

Freck was first. He stuck his head out into the open air and started to penetrate the underbrush. Suddenly, however, he drew quickly back into

the cave pumph against Mr. Brent. "There's somebody out there right in front of the hole," he whispered. "It's two men. Listen! You can hear 'em talking."

The sound of voices had broken in and Mr. Brent strained his ears to catch the words:

"Well, if they ain't at that cave, they must be at the one around the bend. Them's the only two around here that the kid knows anything about, and if they've gone from the other, they must be here."

"Hear that, Freck?" Mr. Brent asked quickly. "Yes. It's old Daddy Bill from Dodson," Freck whispered back. "I forgot all about him. He'll find us sure as shootin'. Wonder who else is with him."

"I've got a pretty good idea," Brent growled. "Hang that man! I don't want him to find me. First of all, I've got too much against him, and secondly I'm having too good a time."

"Look here, Freck, I want you to get those people out of the way. You understand? Here's ten dollars. Don't give it up unless you have to, but if it's necessary, hand it to Daddy Bill and tell him to keep his mouth shut. Understand? He doesn't see ten dollars every day in the week, does he?" Freck only gasped.

Mr. Brent went on: "The other fellow that's with him is named Scotties. He wants to find me and I don't want him to do it. More than that, I'd like to keep him chasing around the country just for his general health," he added sarcastically. "Do they know anything about this end of the cave?" "Nobody does, I reckon," Freck answered.

"All right. Good! I'll get the stuff and move it up toward this end where it can't be found. You stay here until those fellows get a little bit off. Then you run out and catch up with them. Tell 'em I left here last night and have gone to St. Louis. Freck, I want you to show me you're a real sport by getting that Scotties fellow to follow me to St. Louis. Tell him that if he wants you to you'll go along with him, but find a way to get out of it, Freck. Tell him he'll have to pay your fare."

Thomas Brent chuckled to himself. "Tell 'em I got pneumonia out here and went to a hospital in St. Louis—or anything of the kind. If you get 'em on the train for St. Louis, you can stick that ten dollars in your pocket. Understand me?"

"Sure do!" Freck answered. "And, Freck, if you see that young Edwards fellow, bring him back with you. I want to talk to him about something."

After a few more instructions they parted. Mr. Brent watched Freck sink out of the cave, dart here and there through the underbrush, and at last catch up with the two men. He saw them converse; he saw Freck point vaguely into the distance. He chuckled to himself, slowly at first, then harder.

Philip Scotties had listened attentively to Freck's story and was busily following him back toward town. Thomas Brent watched them out of sight and then, whistling to himself, he started back through the long tunnel.

"Skin me out of a hundred thousand, will he?" He laughed. "Not if I know it!"

CHAPTER VI

Around the Bend

Thomas Brent sat on a log beside Indian creek earnestly watching a bobbing cork in the stream. It had been three days since he and Freck had beheld Scotties and Daddy Bill. What had happened he did not know, but he felt sure that Freck had succeeded in a way, else he would have been back long before this.

"That kid's got a lot of sense in his head," he ruminated. "If I had a plant full of people like that instead of a bunch of thieves, I'd be a millionaire today." Suddenly he stopped. "Come to think of it," he mused, "what's a lot of money? It doesn't do you much good. Just keeps you worrying all the time trying to get more. That's the trouble with a man when he's making money. He always wants to keep making a lot more. Tom Brent, if you'd realized that fifteen years ago, you wouldn't be a wind-broken old horse now. By George! I wonder if that doctor knew what he was talking about? Wonder if this crazy stunt is doing me any good? Come to think of it, I've been having a whaling good time. There he goes again."

Mr. Brent was addressing his remarks to the water now. "There he goes again—he'll nibble a little bit too much in a minute. Take it under, take it under—Wow! I got you!" A fish

was glittering in the air. Mr. Brent bent to detach it from the hook. Then he turned and looked up with a boyish laugh at the sound of a voice behind him.

"Catching many, Mr. Brent?" It was Freck standing there with his hands in his pockets as though he had been gone an hour instead of three days.

"Hello, kid. What luck?" Freck grinned. "I sent him to Cincinnati," he said. "I thought he might get back too soon if he went to St. Louis. Cincinnati must be eight or ten thousand miles off, ain't it?"

Mr. Brent laughed. "Well, it's not that far, but it's some distance," he answered. "Freck, you're a wonder!" "There was another fellow with him," Freck rejoined. "A tall fellow; wore one of those long coats and a big silk hat."

"Brady!" burst out Mr. Brent. "Brady! Well, of all things, Freck, you're a wizard. When did they go?" "Last night. They didn't believe me at first. They seemed to think I wasn't telling them the truth until I finally got Daddy Bill aside and gave him half of that ten dollars. Then he broke down and confessed that he was putting up a job on them. So they kicked him out and gave me a dollar for my information and—here I am."

A wild whoop burst from Thomas Brent. He let his feet slide from the rock and dangle in the water. A sunfish, which had involuntarily hooked itself, bobbed the cork here and there in vain.

"Gave you a dollar for your information, did they? Well, can you beat it? Here's a ten to top it."

Freck gasped. "Sixteen dollars! Oh, snakes! That'll buy me her rug!" "That just reminds me," said Mr. Brent. "How about that Edwards fellow?"

"Ma's going to keep her eye on him and send him out when he comes. I told ma about you. She'll keep her mouth shut all right."

"Does Edwards know how to get here?" "Yes. His aunt lives right over here about a mile or two, and every night or so I'll go over and see if he's come out. If he has, I'll bring him over."

"Again I repeat," said Mr. Brent. "You're a wizard, Freck."

He turned and scrutinized the boy. "What have you got under your arm?" Freck grinned. "Something for you. I want to take you swimming, but I knew you wouldn't go unless you had something to go in. So I thought I'd bring you a bathing suit. I couldn't find anything but the trunks though. They'll do, won't they?"

"I guess so. Where do we go, Freck?" Mr. Brent found himself taking quite an interest in the thing. "Depends whether you can swim or not," Freck answered. "There's a mudhole where we can make a slippery slide and just play around if we want to. And then there's a deep hole farther on where we can do some regular swimming."

"Well, we'll take the slippery slide," came the answer. "I never went swimming in my life."

"You never went—Oh, snakes!" Freck gazed at the man before him with wonder in his face. "You honest about that, Mr. Brent? Didn't you ever go swimming and play slippery slide and wild man or anything of the kind?"

"Never in my life."

"Hub!" Freck voiced his disapproval of such a mode of living in one short ejaculation. "We'll go after dinner," he said shortly.

Thereupon the fishing progressed until Mr. Brent felt he had enough fny morsels to satisfy his steadily growing appetite and that of Freck. Then he motioned the boy to sit down.

"I'm going to do this cooking for a while," he said. "You sit around and look wise. What's that you got there?"

Freck was busily threading a resined string through a hole in a tin can. "It's a lion yeller," he announced. "Wait until I finish it and you'll see."

He ended his operation and then, with a long, steady jerk, he drew the string through the can. An unearthly, growling roar was the response.

"Sounds just like a lion, doesn't it?" Freck asked. "I heard one once in a circus. Sounds just like it. I can have lots of fun with this thing when I go back to town. We'll take it along with us this afternoon when we go swimming and when we're playing wild man we can have this for the bears and lions and things."

"Well, how do you know I'm going to play any wild man?" Brent asked with a chuckle as he turned the fish in the skillet.

"You've got to play wild man if you go swimming in a slippery slide," Freck said.

"Well, I guess I'll have to do it, then," Mr. Brent answered. "Freck cut some bread."

Dinner over, they lazed about in the sun a while and slept on the warm logs for an hour or two. Then, doffing their clothes and donning the trunks they started for the swimming hole.

An hour later two grotesque figures lay on the sand on the banks of Indian creek. Each was striped and circled with mud until all resemblance to humanity was lost. Freck resembled somewhat a painted pygmy of the African jungles, while Thomas Brent, president of the Amalgamated Foundry company, looked like a cross between a Malay savage and a Fiji islander. His face, his arms, his legs, and his body were ringed and crossed with mud lines. His head was plastered with a muddy crown into which was stuck a decoration of pokeberries. He carried a large piece of bark as a shield and a long branch of pawpaw for a spear.

"Freck," he said with a momentary

return to dignity, "this is a fool stunt—but it's lots of fun."

"Sure it is," said Freck; "but we ain't danced the war dance yet."

"Well, let's have it."

Freck let out a yelp and started in a circle. Thomas Brent, forgetful of the fact that he was fighting a half-million-dollar battle against Scotties and the Kelly-Griggs company, forgetful of the fact that he was a man of forty-five, overweight, with a bad set of nerves, digestion that two weeks before had been extraordinarily poor, and a temper that had made him famous, dropped his shield and started to join in the festivities. Suddenly, however, he stopped and gasped.

Around the bend he had seen something fluttering.

"Freck," he said, "your eyes are better than mine. What's that? It's a white something, and it's moving this way."

The pygmy savage of the African jungles looked intently ahead. Then he whirled and grasped his resin can "lion yeller." "Oh, snakes!" he exclaimed. "Quick! We got to hide ourselves."

"Hide ourselves?" Freck looked here and there anxiously, then started toward a thick clump of brush. "Come on. We'll hide in here. We haven't got time to get up to the cave." He started ahead and Mr. Brent followed.

"What's the row, Freck? Hide ourselves? What—"

Freck answered anxiously over his shoulder as he hurried toward the brush clump: "It's a Sunday school picnic."

When he and Freck gained the protection of the shrubbery, Brent, panting a bit, turned to look about him. The boy had been right. It was a picnic coming from goodness only knows where, but determined, it seemed, to pass exactly the spot where the boy and man were hiding. There were about fifty persons in the group, mostly women, with a sprinkling of men to carry the baskets. Brent pressed himself as closely as he could to the ground and turned a bewildered pair of eyes toward Freck.

"Think they'll see us?" he asked. "No," Freck answered. "They're too busy thinking where they're going to stop and eat."

"Well, I hope to goodness they don't stop here," Brent said soulfully, and settled down to watch again.

The party approached slowly with its vanguard of women looking here and there anxiously for a place to stop and spread the afternoon meal.

Brent saw them pause, point, and then hurry forward. He groaned. "We're gone," he said; "we're gone."

And in truth the party had selected for a stopping place a green sward not thirty feet from where the refugees were hiding. They circled about, laughing and talking, and began to spread the tablecloth on the ground, while the men carried water from the creek. Freck looked at Brent with eyes that spoke much. Brent returned the gaze, but neither uttered a word.

Slowly the preparations for the picnic meal went forward while Brent and the boy, in strained positions in the shrubbery, looked on and prayed that something might happen to drive the party away. But no thunder rolled, no lightning flashed, no miracle came floating out of the sky, nothing happened to end the muscular agony of the two cramped and straining bodies doubled up in the shrubbery.

Brent's breath began to come hard. His muscles were rebelling against the unusual strain without relaxation. His eyes sought Freck's appealingly. "Boy, we got to do something," he whispered. "I'm about to break in two."

"Go on and move. They won't hear you," Freck answered.

Brent cast another look in the direction of the party. The backs of most of them were turned. He decided to take the chance and to spread out on his stomach. He moved.

And an unfortunate move it was, for in some way the string of Freck's "lion yeller" had become firmly wedged between two of Mr. Brent's toes while the can itself was fairly implanted behind a fork of brush. With the first motion there issued forth a screeching roar which sounded like the wall of a thousand lost souls.

It frightened Mr. Brent. With a half yelp he jumped to his feet just in time to see a greatly surprised picnic party scrambling up and looking amazedly at him. His hands went into the air. "Woof!" he crouted, and with the first instinct of protection strong within him, leaped to one side and ran.

(To be continued)

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ABE'S PLACE

NOTICE OF Appointment of Executrix

Notice is hereby given that, the undersigned, by an order of the County Court of Linn County, Oregon, has been appointed Executrix of the last will and testament of Richard C. Farwell, deceased.

All persons having claims against said estate are required to present them within six months from the date of this notice, with the proper vouchers, to the undersigned, at her residence, about three miles east of Sheida, in Linn County, Oregon.

Dated and first published this 28th day of April, 1927.

Grace Farwell, Executrix aforesaid.
Tussing & Tussing, Attys. for Exrs.

Albany Directory

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Flower phone 456-J.

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The place to buy good groceries at the right price. On the corner, plenty of room to park. Albany.

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Everything in the line of eats
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REFEREE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, That pursuant to an order of sale made and entered in the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for the County of Linn, Dept. No. 2, on the 28th Day of April, 1927, in that certain suit therein wherein Jesse B. Schroll, Annie M. Schroll his wife, and Clara L. Carlson and C. E. Carlson her husband, were plaintiffs, and Emory Wallace Schroll, Ruby Almon, H. L. Almon her husband, Pearl P. Sturgis, J. H. Sturgis her husband, and George W. Schroll and Ruth Schroll his wife, were defendants, and appointing and directing the undersigned as sole referee to sell the real property hereinafter described, I, the undersigned referee will, on Saturday, the 4th Day of June, 1927, at the hour of One o'clock P. M. of said day, at the front door of the courthouse at Albany in Linn County, Oregon, offer and sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash, in the manner required for sale of real property on execution, subject to confirmation of said court, all the following real property, to-wit:—All of Blocks 22, 39 and 40 of the City of Halsey in Linn County, Oregon; also beginning 60 Ft. West of the S. W. corner of Block 38 in the City of Halsey in Linn County, Oregon, and running from thence North 720 Ft. to the county road; Thence West 123 Ft.; Thence South 720 Ft. to a point due W. of the place of beginning; and thence East 123 Ft. to beginning; as said blocks are numbered, designated and described on the maps and plats of said city of record in the office of the County Recorder of said County. Dated and first published May 6, 1927.

FRANK RICHARD,
Sole Referee.
Tussing & Tussing, Attys. for Plffs.
Hewitt & Son,
Attys for Dfts. Emory Wallace Schroll et al.

How Little It Costs to Start!

By a printer's error the Mountain States Power company's advertisement of Hot Point electric ranges last week was made to offer those wonderful labor savers for an initial payment of \$18. This would be a very favorable opportunity to get them, but the company makes the astonishing offer of one of these ranges for only \$8.50 down and the balance in easy payments.

At Mrs. S. J. Smith's Thursday the Study club elected Mrs. C. P. Moody president, Mrs. T. I. Marks vice president, Mrs. Lyman W. Patton secretary and Mrs. George Laubner treasurer. "Something I especially like that mother made" was the subject of answers at rollcall. Fifteen members were present.

Oregon is the only Pacific coast state from which federal income tax collections decreased during the nine months ending March 31. — Oregon Voter.

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