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J. H. Hulett Editor

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HULETT'S TRIP

Fixing that leak was a short matter. All I had to do was to thump the carburetor a time or two and the thing was as good as new. That time I had some idea of what the matter was. Sometimes the float valve sticks and the chamber where the float is runs over. Nothing at all to it.

At Caldwell the lads and lassies were out on the street in considerable numbers; seemed to be some sort of college town. We debated going west there to Vale but decided that the shortest way home was probably preferable. So we negotiated the 22 miles between Caldwell and New Plymouth rapidly, that is rapidly for us.

At New Plymouth we came into the Idaho apple country. Here there were apples and more apples, piles of them. When we went east the trees had been loaded. Now the harvest, piled high on the ground, was something to marvel at. But the price, they told us, was so low that much of the crop would never be moved but would just lie there on the ground and rot. What a pity! But we suppose that is just one of those items of over-production. The trouble with the new deal, to our notion is that it concerns itself with the production end and takes little thought of distribution. It seems to me that distribution has as great a place in the modern scheme of things as has the matter of production. If distribution was what it should be I could go out and get a new auto and next time I take a trip back to the home state I'd be taking it in a new machine. But there is little chance of my getting it for although Ford and Chrysler and General Motors may each have produced me a car, the matter of distribution stands in the way of my ever getting my hands on that car's wheel.

So the apples lay on the ground in Idaho and the boys and girls of Portland go without an apple for lunch, no matter how much they desire one. Distribution, looked after will automatically take care of the production.

All day we had been watching the weather closely. The sun shone while we were in Meridian, and Caldwell but at New Plymouth the sky had begun to overcast and it looked like rain or snow. Whew, to get caught in a snow storm there on that road! But we shook the dust off and stopped only for necessities. When we crossed the Snake river between Payette and Huntington (you see we did not go either to Weiser or to Ontario) we found the sun shining on the Oregon side.

When we left the Snake River, we stopped to read a "Historical Note" that is printed on a big sign board where the Oregon Trail leaves the Snake river. The sign read: "Farewell Bend, is memorable in the annals of the Old Oregon Trail as the last camp on the weary journey across the Snake River Plains. Here camped the following expeditions: Wilson Price Hunt, December 23, 1811; Captain Bonneville, January 10, 1834; Nathaniel J. Wyeth, August 25, 1834; Lt. John C. Fremont, October 13, 1843."

Here we began the climb away from the Snake River. We followed up the course of Burnt River for several hours and finally decided that we would have to stop and lunch. It must have been well past noon when we ate, there in the car pulled just off the road one of the poorest stretches of road we had found on U.S. 30; that it is narrow and crooked but the pavement was good and though hardly room for two rigs to pass, there were few travellers so that we did not need a wide road.

CODE OF THE NORTH

... By HAROLD TITUS ...

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WNU Service

SYNOPSIS

Stephen Drake, with his 17-year-old son, is rescued from a blizzard by Jim Flynn, big timber operator. Drake, until his death, impresses on the boy, Steve, the debt they owe "Old Jim." Twenty years later, Steve meets "Young Jim" Flynn, his benefactor's son. Sent by Old Jim, incapacitated through an accident in which Kate, his daughter, is temporarily blinded, to take charge of the company's—the Polaris—woods operations, the youth is indulging in a drunken spree. Polaris is in dire straits, and hoping to do something for Old Jim, Steve hastens to the company's headquarters. Worshipping Franz, a plotting enemy of the Polaris, in a flat fight, the Polaris crew assumes Steve is Flynn's son, and he takes charge as "Young Jim." A photograph of Kate Flynn, which he finds, immensely increases his desire to aid Old Jim. Steve gains the warm friendship of LaFane, queer woods scout, and adds to Franz's hate by driving him away from Mary Wolf, young Indian girl whom he has been abusing. Drake escapes a death trap set for him. Franz discovers Steve's impersonation. Steve accuses Franz of setting the death trap, exhibiting evidence, and the man dare not act. Steve sends LaFane to find Young Jim and sober him up. Steve wins the friendship of MacDonald, owner of timber land the Flynnas greatly need.

CHAPTER VI—Continued

—17—

The option in his pocket was a warm, living weight against his breast, a charge to keep, a trust to guard. Where his own safety was concerned he would have laughed at any menace Franz might present, but more than his personal safety was at stake, now. He bore the hopes of Old Jim Flynn in his pocket and until he had it safely recorded in public files he could not rest.

His canoe was waiting, having been brought down-stream from where he had fished by one of the Laird's Indians, and as he launched for the first stage of the journey he had a flash of a pursuer, ruthless and determined. Drake was unarmed; he well knew that the shoulder holster beneath the other's shirt was not empty.

He knew the country and the trails well enough, but Franz knew them more intimately than he. The landing above Twenty Mile rapid was the obvious place for one to leave the river and take to his legs for transport. To run the white water, of course, would cut miles from the journey but the risk of tragic disaster was great.

He speculated as he speeded along, trying to put himself in Franz's position, trying to reason as Franz would reason. When he reached his decision he commenced to smile with tongue in cheek. He relaxed his paddling and chuckled and sat back, drifting with the current.

He could hear the grumble of the treacherous water below, and ran his canoe into a shallows where it was screened by overhanging alders and waited, looking backward.

Of course, Franz might not do what Steve expected of him, but he was proceeding on the belief that to block the recording of that all-important document he would be forced to follow.

"Right!" Drake muttered aloud as a canoe shot into sight far behind, coming fast.

He shoved off and bent to the paddle and in a moment from the tail of his eye he saw the other sweep into sight of him, and then he was rounding a bend with the voice of shaggy old Twenty Mile growling louder in his ears.

He looked over his shoulder just once. Franz had not rounded the

bend yet. A leaning cedar was fifty feet beyond him. He rose to one knee, dropped his paddle and balanced there, arms raised.

The cedar rushed at him. The first twigs brushed his hands. His right closed on a stout, green branch. He snatched at another with his left, missed, and grappled at a dry stub. He gave these holds his weight, gambling they would bear it, lifted his feet and let the canoe shoot on. Wriggling, kicking, he let it go and grasped living wood and with a heave swung himself sideways and up, until he lay along the bole, panting furiously.

He could see his canoe, tossing like a chip, enter the first white water and disappear around the sharp bend.

So much accomplished! Now, he turned his face up-stream. Franz was approaching, making in toward the trail landing. He leaped out as the bow touched rock and stopped to grasp the thwart and lift the canoe out and checked all movement, then moved slowly into the trail, scanning the rocks and earth.

Steve chuckled. No sign was there for him to see! Even at the distance he could detect Franz's bewilderment. A moment before he



Down into the Rushing Maw of the River Went Franz.

had had Drake in sight. The only place he could have left the river was at that trail; leaving it, he could not have failed to leave signs. Easy!

Franz evidently made up his mind. He stepped into his canoe again and started down the current. Balancing gingerly, Drake worked his way toward shore and ran along the ledge to the trail, feeling his breast pocket to be certain that the precious paper was still there.

The sun was sinking into the forest beyond LaFane's meager camp. LaFane himself lounged beside the fire, smoking indolently. Young Jim Flynn sat with his back against a tree, glowering.

"Going to starve me next?" he blurted.

The other shook his head. "No. Whatever is done to you, you do. Within limits, that is. You're sober, now; you've been sober most of a week. There's a little rifle yonder. In this birch sits a grouse. If you weren't ashamed to show how shaky you still are you'd try to get him because you're hungry. When you are able to take your living from the country, we'll feed. Not before. I can stand it longer than you can." After a time he said:

"I'm glad you're ashamed."

"Go to h—!"

LaFane smoked on.

"He was depending on you and you turned him down. Think of that! An old man, laid up with smashed bones, his back to the wall, and you turned him down . . . I recall how gentle he always was with kids. I should think they'd break their necks to do things for him."

"Shut up!" the boy snapped and averted his face.

"No. I'll keep reminding you of it, and of what you might have been able to do to me, and of what you can do for him and to me if you make up your mind to do it. A fine man, your father; not the kind most men would turn down. . . ."

Young Jim winced and LaFane's lips twitched as if he wanted to smile.

CHAPTER VII

DOWN into the rushing maw of the river went Franz. Spray lashed his face, the canoe bucked and reared like a frightened living creature. He shot between protruding boulders with scarcely a hand's breadth to spare and straightened out for the run down a stretch that was white from cliff to cliff.

He was forced to work frantically to keep himself in shallows because protruding rocks were so thick outside that no craft could thread them. For a long moment it seemed as though the pull of the river would defy his efforts and that the canoe surely must capsize, but he put into the paddle every energy of his splendid body, and he won. Won by inches. He was in safe water.

At the foot of the rapid a big eddy swirled monotonously. As Franz came abreast the eddy, his jaw dropped because along its outer edge, beside a half-submerged log, floated a heavily listed, water-weighted canoe.

He altered his course and went close, saw the shattered bottom where a rock had impaled the water-weighted craft, observed the Polaris star branded on the bow and let a long breath slip through his lips.

"So!" he said and laughed, somewhat uncertainly. "So, Young Jim Flynn, or whoever-you-are! Old Twenty-Mile got you, eh? You, and your d—d option!"

Meanwhile, along the trail that led through the timber out to the Shoestring road, Steve Drake covered the miles at a woodsman's swift pace. At dawn he entered Shoestring and breakfasted. Inquiry developed no news of Franz. He had a moment of wonder, of doubt. If the other had met death in the rapid . . . But he shrugged that off. To prevent his arrival Franz would have shot him down without compunction, concerned only with escaping suspicion for such an act.

Later, he lingered in the register's office until he saw that the entry had been properly made and then, drawing the first really long breath it seemed he had enjoyed since he first stepped into the store at Good-Bye and picked up the gage hurled by Old Jim Flynn's enemies, he walked down to the telegraph office. Franz thwarted, might try for vengeance, now, but all he could do would be to harm Steve Drake's body, and that was a trifling consideration.

"Sleep well!" LaFane asked that morning.

"No,"—shortly.

"I heard you rolling around. A boy in your shape, who's done to himself and his father what you have done, shouldn't expect to sleep very—"

"For the love of God, LaFane, won't you please let up?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

on," said Russel; "Ah-h, whatda we wanta stop here for?" quoth Aletha; "We can make it all right!" quoth the Mrs., and Joy, when asked what she thought said that she "wanted to do just what the others wanted to do." So there were four votes to go on and only one to stay.

"Besides there is no place to camp here" they all chimed in for we had pulled out beside the road to settle the question. I chuckled in the gears and seething with impotence to stem the tide of an obdurate family I started that climb. I suppose that in the next thirty miles I did more beefing and sputtering than was done on all the rest of the trip put together. But the weather did not look good. The time was late, too late for the stranger to attempt to negotiate one of the steepest, the crookiest, the slipperiest forty miles on pavement that we find on a highway in Oregon carrying so much traffic and existing under such meteorological conditions. Of course the east slope that we were climbing was slippery.

Four or five miles out of La Grande there is an auto camp just off the road with the way marked to it. I hadn't got the wheel turned to enter the driveway before there arose a clamor: "I thought we were going on over the summit." We went over the summit that night, and such a drive as it was.

For a time we followed the course of the Grande Ronde river, crossing and re-crossing it at intervals sometimes of a fraction of a mile, and then at longer intervals. By the time we left the course of the river, the darkness had settled in, and almost at once we came to snow-covered ground. The tracks of the cars we met made black marks that we tried to follow. The lights were bad. We had never got a new battery though we had expected to get one soon after leaving for Michigan. But expenses were high there and means were low. The payments we expected from the sale of the Review failed to materialize. My sister, Lucy, said "Aha! Didn't I tell you so? A man who has so lit-

tle to pay down on a thing will seldom make the grade." And so on ad infinitum.

But that night we climbed the Blue Mountains, it was dark, and the snow was the only light thing visible. It really helped show us the way as we found out before getting to the summit.

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