



CEDAR SWAMP

by Michael J. Phillips

Illustrations by Henry Jay Lee
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THE LEADING CHARACTERS

Edison Forbes, a young resident of Scottsdale with an inherent craving for liquor, is held for the death of a woman who has been killed by a bootlegging truck. Circumstantial evidence points to Forbes and rather than tell the truth of the episode which would clear him but cast another friend in a bad light, he stands trial and is sentenced to a long term in prison. The governor of the state, an old friend of Eddie's father, believes him innocent and pardons him shortly after his arrival at the jail.

Scotts Libbey, a worthless character, who has smashed his machine into another car, killing its lone occupant, a woman. Forbes' companion and Libbey quit the scene hurriedly, leaving the former alone to face a constable who reasons that Eddie, with the scent of whiskey about him must be connected in some way with the accident. Accordingly, Forbes is arrested.

Patsy Jane, Eddie's pretty wife, agrees that public sentiment runs too high against him. Accordingly they migrate up north to some land that has been in the family for years. Settled in their log cabin

Isaiah Sealman, a neighbor, pays the Forbes a visit and intimates that there are some back taxes for the young couple to pay. Sealman offers to give Eddie a job after he goes down to Long Portage, a nearby town, and learns about the taxes.

The next day while walking about their property they discover a mysterious mound that contains outcrops similar to salt. At the tax office Forbes learns that the back taxes amount to over eight hundred dollars and that the certificates are held by a Chicago capitalist who is eager to obtain the property. Eddie has five months to pay. A few days later he helps a booze truck out of the mud and is presented with a bottle of whiskey which he hides before walking over to interview Sealman.

Not finding him in, Eddie imbibes too freely of his liquor and as a result Patsy warns him that the next occurrence of a similar nature will result in her departure. Sealman hears of the trip to the tax office and makes a generous offer for their place, but Eddie, scenting something in the air, declines. Sealman refuses him work and several weeks pass. Then one day, Eddie's resolves weaken and he accepts a ride aboard another liquor truck. He drinks heavily.

**CHAPTER XI.
Shanghai'd**

Eddie lay for hours in a stupor so profound it was deathlike. For other hours he was in a delirium shot through with the misery of real illness. His head ached. His flesh protested as though it were being torn from his bones. The bones themselves seemed packed with pain. He was immured in a violently-moving hell which screeched and clattered beneath him, and tossed him unfeelingly about.

It was early night of the second day before consciousness returned. He was very weak, and his head throbbled violently. He was able after many attempts to sit up, bracing himself against the wall or partition while he groped in the maze that netted him.

First, he was in darkness, clangorous and complete. Second, he was in a railway freight car in full motion. How he got there he could not recall. Think as he would, his head between his hands, he could remember nothing after the first drink in the rum-cruiser.

It was a long time before he could stand up. His trembling fingers revealed that he was prisoned in a narrow space running between the two doors in the center of the car. There were cross wise partitions holding in place a cargo that pounded and rasped with the motion of the train. Further explorations told him the cargo was hardened bolts about four feet in length.

He tried the two doors. He was able to slide one of them a little way. He could not open them because they were sealed. It was apparent that they were now in the outskirts of a most ideal railroad centre. Pencils twilight from successive streetlamps plorced the darkness of the prison fleetingly. The train rattled interminably over switchpoints. The droning sound of taelr progress proved that

long lines of cars paralleled them on sidings.

Resolution overcame weakness. He had to get out! He crawled up the partition on his left. There was space for his body between the topmost layerw of bolts and the car roof. He wriggled forward, toward the little door, high up, in the end of the car.

He found it, but it, too, was locked. He could not budge it. He inched backward to the centre of the car, crossed the open space, and mounted the other partition to the piles of timber in the rear half. These tiers were not piled so high. He was soon examining the rear end door. It was fastened, but seemed weak. He found a slender bolt which could be handled as a battering-ram.

Half-sitting, half-crouching, he drove it against the little door which had been cracked across in the past by shifting cargoes. Soon he had broken away two of the boards composing it, so that he could reach out, twist off the seal and remove the hasp. The door slid back easily.

He was free. But another problem presented itself. The train puffed steadily onward. The wheels made evil noises on the many curves, and the cars leaned sharply to the new direction. How could he, in his weakened condition, crawl out the narrow doorway, find the grab-irons and descend them to safety? He was sure to fall between the cars and be ground to pieces.

Fortune inclined to him in friendly fashion. There was a long whistle-train slowed, stopped. He could hear blast from the locomotive, and the men, calling to one another. The train was staiding by a long freight shed, whose platform was illumined by many arclights. Seals were being broken; there was a rattling of hand trucks. The stop was a permanent one.

He crawled out of the little end door dizzily, he found the grab irons, and descended in the darkness on the side opposite the platform. He was in a narrow aisle between two lines of cars. He turned in the direction from whence he had come.

The terminal was Chicago. This he learned from electric signs when the yards broadened out beyond the end of the train. He was several hundred miles from Long Portage. The first problem was food; the second to get back to Patsy Jane as soon as possible. Remorse soured him as he thought of her alone in the cabin in the wilderness, worrying over him, torn with suspense at his absence.

He thrust his hands into his pockets. Suspicion became a certainty. The rum-runners had drugged and shanghai'd him. To make results more effective, they had robbed him of the few dollars he had had. Their

motive was a mystery which could be left to the future for solution. Meantime, there was satisfaction in the thought that he had opened an account in the Long Portage State bank, a few days previously, and deposited nearly all his money.

He carried a dollar bill for emergencies in a small pocket of his trousers, and this had been overlooked. When, on the windows of a dingy store on the street beside the railroad



He clinched still more tightly, his head burrowing downward and inward

grade he was invited to "Eat Here," he descended. He spent seventy cents for coarse filling food.

It revived him wonderfully. When he took to the grade again his aches and pains had grown more subdued. His head was clearer; he was no longer so terrifyingly dizzy. Fortunately the night was warm for April. After two hours of walking a lumberyard invited him. He crawled through strands of barbed wire and laid down on some sheltered planks, odorous with the scent of the north. He slept soundly.

Winning his way home was not easy. He was inexperienced in stealing rides. He walked many miles. Eating was a problem, though not a

serious one. When he asked for food at back doors, he offered so earnestly to work for it that he was rarely refused. When the work was sufficiently and eagerly performed, the grateful housewife, usually gave his a package of food for the coming meal.

He passed through Scottdale at night on the bumpers of a fast freight. It was early, but the little town slumbered peacefully, its area illumined empty streets. Nostalgia and self-pity possessed him as he clung to a breakbeam and rumbled through the place where he was born. He yearned toward it, even though it regarded him as a criminal, an outcast and a failure.

He dropped from an empty car at daybreak, the sixth day of his absence, in the Long Portage yards. He was tired and hungry and dirty; but he could not wait. He hurried up the cement sidewalk which flanked the broad main street. His footsteps clicked hollowly in the hush that settles on the world just before sunrise. He was well beyond the town when the sun appeared on the winding sandy track ahead of him, sentinelled in its arising by two stubs of what had once been giant pines.

Fatigue slowed his footsteps in the

a job, redeem his home in the wilderness they had both come to love. And he would never drink again!

**CHAPTER XII.
A Fight**

He began to note ominous signs. The place had a down-at-the-heel and neglected air. There was an unsightly litter by the woodshed. Papers were strewn about the sandy yard. Something was wrong. He veered cautiously to bring the garage between the open back door and himself. He did this after a cry of greeting had died unuttered on his lips. This didn't look like Patsy Jane. It was as squalid as a city slum.

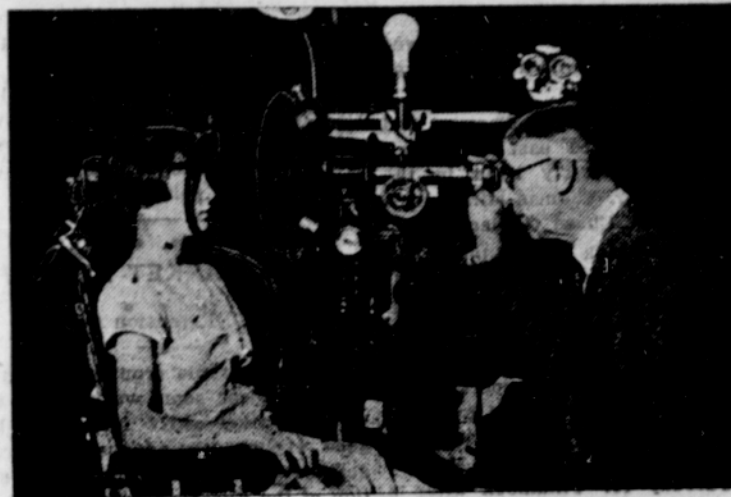
His teeth set themselves when he noted the composition of the heaps about the woodshed. It was his own furniture and bedding, bundled out, unsheltered. He applied his eyes to a crack in the rear of the garage. A small car, much more battered and rusty than his own with soiled gunny

sack bundles on the sagging running boards was within.

He guessed correctly that the occupant of the cabin was cooking a late breakfast in the kitchen. The door of the kitchen opened to the south and there was no window on the west side, from which he approached. The sand stilled his footsteps. He gained the door without detection.

As his shadow fell across it, the sole occupant of the small room looked up from his task. He was a mean-faced, narrow-eyed man with a stubble of beard on his lined cheeks. He was in the garb of the motor-tramp, soiled cotton shirt, the sleeves rolled up; khaki breeches, stained with grease; worn canvas leggings; and stubby brown shoes. A cigarette hung from his lip. He was in the act of turning a strip of bacon in the frying pan.

The man was startled, but his
(Continued on Page 6)



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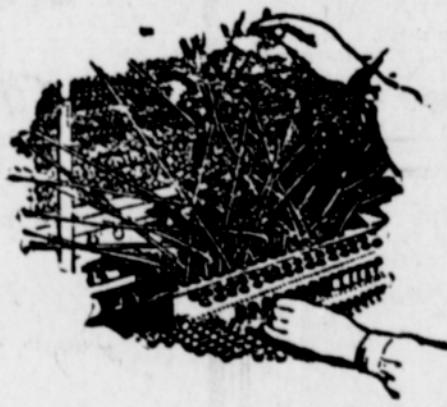
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