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Time Table

The steamers of this line will arrive and leave this port as hereunder:

FROM SAN FRANCISCO.	
Alameda	July 22
Sonoma	August 8
Alameda	August 12
Ventura	August 24
Alameda	September 2
Sierra	September 14
Alameda	September 23
Sonoma	October 5
Alameda	October 14
Ventura	October 26
Alameda	November 4
Sierra	November 16
Alameda	November 25
Sonoma	December 7
Alameda	December 16

FOR SAN FRANCISCO.	
Alameda	July 27
Ventura	August 2
Alameda	August 17
Sierra	August 23
Alameda	September 7
Sonoma	September 13
Alameda	September 28
Ventura	October 4
Alameda	October 19
Sierra	October 25
Alameda	November 9
Sonoma	November 15
Alameda	November 30
Ventura	December 6
Alameda	December 21

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The Blazed Trail

By STEWART EDWARD WHITE

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That afternoon Thorpe met the other members of the party, offered his apologies and explanations and was graciously forgiven. He found the person to consist of first of all Mrs. Cary, the chaperon, a very young married woman of twenty-two or thereabout; her husband, a youth of three years older, clean shaven, light haired, quiet mannered; Miss Elizabeth Carpenter, who resembled her brother in the characteristics of good looks, vivacious disposition and curly hair; an attendant satellite of the masculine persuasion called Morton, and last of all the girl whom Thorpe had already so variously encountered and whom he now met as Miss Hilda Farrand. Besides these were Ginger, a squat negro built to fit the galley of a yacht, and three Indian guides. They inhabited tents, which made quite a little encampment.

Thorpe was received with enthusiasm. Wallace Carpenter's stories of his woods partner, while never doing more than justice to the truth, had been warm. One and all owned a lively curiosity to see what a real woodsman might be like. When he proved to be handsome and well mannered as well as picturesque his reception was no longer in doubt.

Nothing could exceed his solicitude as to their comfort and amusement. He inspected personally the arrangement of the tents and suggested one or two changes conducive to the latter comforts. Simple things enough they were—it was as though a city man were to direct a newcomer to Central park—yet Thorpe's new friends were profoundly impressed with his knowledge of occult things. The forest was to them, as to most, more or less of a mystery unfathomable except to the favored of genius. A man who could interpret it even a little into the speech of everyday comfort and expediency possessed a strong claim to their imaginations. When he had finished these practical affairs they wanted him to sit down and tell them more things—to dine with them, to smoke about their camp fire in the evening. But here they encountered a decided check. Thorpe became silent, almost morose. He talked in monosyllables and soon went away. They did not know what to make of him and so were of course the more profoundly interested. The truth was his habitual reticence would not have permitted a great degree of expansion in any case, but now the presence of Hilda made any but an attitude of hushed waiting for her words utterly impossible to him. However, when he discovered that Hilda had ceased visiting the clump of pines near the pole trail his desire forced him back among these people. He used to walk in swiftly at almost any time of day, casting quick glances here and there in search of his divinity.

"How do, Mrs. Cary," he would say. "Nice weather. Enjoying yourself?" On receiving the reply he would answer heartily, "That's good," and lapse into silence. When Hilda was about he followed every movement of hers with his eyes, so that his strange conduct lacked no explanation or interpretation, in the minds of the women at least. Thrice he redeemed his reputation for being an interesting character by conducting the party on little expeditions here and there about the country. Then his woodcraft and resourcefulness spoke for him. They asked him about the lumbering operations, but he seemed indifferent.

"Nothing to interest you," he affirmed. "We're just cutting roads now. You ought to be here for the drive." Once he took them over to see Camp One. They were immensely pleased and were correspondingly loud in exclamations. Thorpe's comments were brief and dry. On the way back for the first time Thorpe found that chance—and Mrs. Cary—had allotted Hilda to his care.

A hundred yards down the trail they encountered Phil. The dwarf stopped short, looked attentively at the girl and then softly approached. When quite near to her he again stopped, gazing at her with his soul in his liquid eyes.

"You are more beautiful than the sea at night," he said directly. The others laughed. "There's sincerity for you, Miss Hilda," said young Mr. Morton.

"Who is he?" asked the girl after they had moved on.

"Our chore boy," answered Thorpe, with great brevity.

The rest of the party had gone ahead, leaving them sauntering more slowly down the trail.

"Why don't you come to the pine grove any more?" he asked bluntly.

"Why?" countered Hilda in the manner of women.

"I want to see you there. I want to talk with you. I can't talk with all that crowd about."

"I'll come tomorrow," she said; then with a little mischievous laugh, "if that'll make you talk."

"You must think I'm awfully stupid," agreed Thorpe bitterly.

"Ah, no; ah, no!" she protested softly. "You must not say that."

She was looking at him very tenderly, if he had only known it, but he did not, for his face was set in discontented lines straight before him.

"It is true," he replied.

before sunset a hush falls on nature. The wind has died; the birds have not yet begun their evening songs; the light itself seems to have left off sparkling and to lie still across the landscape. Such a hush now lay on their spirits. Over the way a creeper was droning sleepily a little chant, the only voice in the wilderness. In the heart of the man, too, a little voice raised itself alone.

"Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart!" it breathed over and over again. After awhile he said it gently in a half voice. "No, no; hush!" said the girl. And she laid the soft, warm fingers of one hand across his lips and looked at him from a height of superior soft eyed tenderness as a woman might look at a child. "You must not. It is not right."

Then he kissed the fingers very gently before they were withdrawn, and she said nothing at all in rebuke, but looked straight before her with troubled eyes.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THORPE returned to Camp One shortly after dark. He found there a number of letters, among which was one from Wallace Carpenter.

After commending the camping party to his companion's care the young fellow went on to say that affairs were going badly on the board.

"Some interest that I haven't been able to make out yet has been hammering our stocks down day after day," he wrote. "I don't understand it, for the stocks are good and intrinsically are worth more than is bid for them right now. Some powerful concern is beating them down for a purpose of its own. Sooner or later they will let up, and then we'll get things back in good shape. I am simply protected now, thanks to you, and am not at all afraid of losing my holdings. The only difficulty is that I am unable to predict exactly when the other fellows will decide that they have accomplished whatever they are about and let up. It may not be before next year. In that case I couldn't help you out on those notes when they come due. So put in your best leeks, old man. You may have to pony up for a little while, though of course sooner or later I can put it all back. Then, you bet your life, I keep out of it. Lumbering's good enough for yours truly."

"By the way, you might shine up to Hilda Farrand and join the rest of the fortune hunters. She's got it to throw to the birds and in her own right. Seriously, old fellow, don't put yourself into a false position through ignorance; not that there is any danger to a hardened old woodsman like you."

Thorpe told the group of pines by the pole trail the following afternoon because he had said he would, but with a new attitude of mind. He had come into contact with the artificiality of conventional relations, and it stiffened him.

They sat down on a log. Hilda turned to him with her graceful air of confidence.

"Now talk to me," said she.

"Certainly," replied Thorpe in a jocular tone of voice. "What do you want me to talk about?"

She shot a swift, troubled glance at him, concluded herself mistaken and said:

"Tell me about what you do up here—your life—all about it."

"Well," replied Thorpe formally, "we haven't much to interest a girl like you. It is a question of saw logs with us." And he went on in his driest, most technical manner to detail the process of manufacture. It might as well have been bricks.

The girl did not understand. She was hurt. As surely as the sun tugged in the distant pine frond, she had seen in his eyes a great passion. Now it was coldly withdrawn.

"What has happened to you?" she asked finally out of her great sincerity.

"Me? Nothing," replied Thorpe.

A forced silence fell upon him. Hilda seemed gradually to lose herself in reverie. After a time she said softly:

"Don't you love this woods?"

"It's an excellent bunch of pine," replied Thorpe bluntly. "It'll cut 3,000,000 at least."

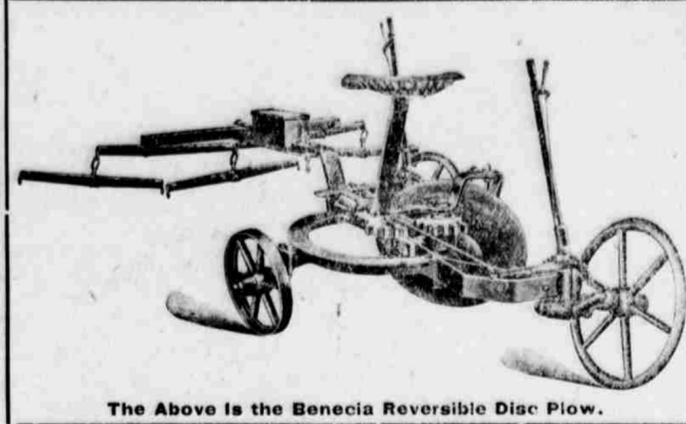
"Oh!" she cried, drawing back, her hands pressed against the log either side of her, her eyes wide.

After a moment she caught her breath convulsively, and Thorpe became conscious that she was studying him furiously with a quickening doubt.

After that, by the mercy of God, there was no more talk between them. Unconsciously the first strain of opposition and of hurt surprise relaxed. Each thought vaguely his thoughts. Then in the depths of the forest, perhaps near at hand, perhaps far away, a single hermit thrush began to sing. His song was of three solemn, deep, liquid notes, followed by a slight rhetorical pause as of contemplation, and then deliberately three notes more on a different key. It is the most dignified, the most spiritual, the holiest of woods utterances. Combined with the evening shadows and the warm soft air it offered to the heart an almost irresistible appeal. The man's artificial antagonism modified, the woman's disenchantment began to seem unreal.

Then subtly over and through the bird song another sound became audi-

On Steep Hill-Side

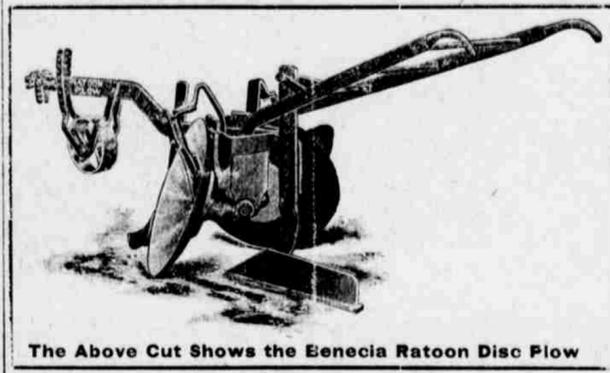


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