

# THE RIVERMAN

(Continued from Page 8.)  
sheets. The riverman, Tom North, entered.

"The river's rising," he said.  
"You're crazy," muttered Orde.  
"There have been no rains reported."  
"It's rising," insisted North.

An hour later Orde walked out over the booms. The water certainly had risen. He called a boy.

"Here, Jimmy," said he, "mark one of these piles and keep track of how fast the water rises."  
The river slowly rose.

"I don't like June floods," Orde told Tom North. "A fellow can understand an ordinary spring freshet and knows about how far it will go, but these summer floods are so confounded mysterious I can't figure out what's struck the old stream unless they're having almighty heavy rains up near headwaters."

By 3 o'clock in the afternoon Jimmy Powers reported a rise since morning of six inches.

"Tom," said Orde to the old riverman, "I'm going to send Marsh down for the pile drivers and some cable."  
"What in blazes do you expect to do with that?" he inquired.

"We may need them," Orde stated, with conviction. "If those logs ever break through they'll go on out to Lake Michigan and wouldn't be worth the salvage."

"That's a mighty long chance," North commented.

"If this drive goes out it surely busts me," replied Orde, "and I'm not taking even long chances."

A cloudburst in the China creek district followed by continued heavy rains was responsible for the increased water. The evening papers mentioned this only incidentally. Their columns were filled with an account of the big log jam that had formed above the Iron Railroad bridge. The planing mill's booms had given way under pressure, and the contents had piled downstream against the buttresses.

Orde slept that night at the booms. The water by morning had crept so far up the piles that there began to be danger that it would overflow their tops. In that case, of course, the logs in the booms would also run out.

Orde set a crew of men to raising the height of the piling by tying logs firmly to the bolted timbers atop. This would take care of an extra two feet of water, a two feet beyond all previous records. Another crew stretched the fifteen inch manila cables across the field of logs in order to segregate them into several units of mass.

About two hours later the pile driver moved up. The swing was opened, and the men began to drive clumps of piles in such a position as to strengthen the swing when the latter should be shut. It was a slow job. Each pile had to be taken from the raft at the stern of the scow, erected in the "carrier," and pounded into place by the heavy hammer raised and let drop in the derrick at the bow.

Long before the task was finished the logs in the temporary booms had begun to slide atop one another, to cross and tangle, until at last the river bed inside the booms was filled with a jam of formidable dimensions. From beneath it the water boiled in eddies. Orde, looking at it, roused himself to sudden activity.

"Get a move on," he advised Captain Aspinwall of the driver. "If that jam breaks on us we want to be ready, and if it don't break before you get this swing strengthened maybe we can hold her where she is. There's no earthly doubt that those boom piles will never stand up when they get the full pressure of the freshet."

The driver's crew labored desperately, hoisting the piles into the carriage, tripping the heavy hammer, binding feverishly the clumps of piles together by means of cables.

Two of the clumps had been placed and bound when suddenly, with a roar, the upper booms gave way, projecting their logs upon the opening and the driver.

The half dozen members of the crew were scattered by the winds of a panic. Two or three hung themselves on their faces; one leaped into the river. Instant destruction seemed upon them.

Tom North, at the winch that operated the arm of the swing, however, retained his presence of mind. At the first snag outward of the boom piles he set in operation the machinery that closed the gate. Clumsy and slow as was his mechanism, he nevertheless succeeded in getting the long arm started. The logs, rushing in back of it, hurried it shut. Immediately they jammed again and heaped up in a formidable tangle behind the barrier.

Tom North, his little black pipe between his teeth, stood calm, the lover of his winch in his hand. A short three feet from the spot on which he stood the first saw log of the many that might have overwhelmed him thrust forward its ugly head. The wash of the water lifted the huge pile driver bodily and deposited it with a crash half on the bank and half in the water.

Instantly after the first break Orde had commenced running out over the booms from the shore.

"Good boy, Tom!" he shot at North. Across the jam he hurried to where the pile driver lay. Captain Aspinwall examined the supports of the derrick on deck.

"That was lucky," said Orde briefly. "Stove you in?"  
"I-I don't think so," replied the captain.

"That's good. I'll send over the tug to help get her afloat. We've got our work cut out for us now."  
"You don't expect me to work my driver under the face of that jam!" cried the captain.

"What's the matter?" asked Orde. "It isn't safe," replied the captain, "and I don't intend to risk my men or my driver."

Orde, with a snort of anger, seized the man and thrust him bodily over the side to the bank.

"Safe, you white livered skunk!" he roared. "Safe! Go over in the middle of that ten acre lot and lie down on your face and see if you feel safe there! Get out the whole pack of you! I'm in charge here now!"

Aspinwall picked himself up. "Get off my driver!" he snarled.  
"This driver is requisitioned!" cried Orde. "Get out! I've got to save my

logs!"  
Tom North and some others of the crew came running across the jam.

"Get a cable to the winch!" Orde shouted at these, as soon as they were within hearing. "And get Marsh up here with the Sprite. We've got to get afloat."

He paid no more attention to the ejected crew.

A few minutes' hard work put the driver afloat. Fortunately its raft of piles had not become detached in the upheaval.

"Tom," said Orde briskly to North, "you know the pile driving business. Pick out your crew and take charge."

Orde took charge of the situation in its entirety, as a general might. He set North immediately to driving clumps each of sixteen piles, bound to solidity by chains, and so arranged in angles and slants as to direct the enormous pressure toward either bank, thus splitting the enemy's boom company drove similar clumps here, there and everywhere that need arose or weakness developed. Seventy-five men opposed to the weight of 20,000,000 tons of logs and a river of water the expedients invented by determination and desperation.

Orde gave over formal defenses and threw his energies to saving the weak places which rapidly developed. By the most tremendous exertions he seemed but just able to keep even. Piles advanced, he it slowly outward. Immediately, before the logs behind them could stir, the pile driver must do its work. Back and forth darted the Sprite and a her sister tug, the Spray, towing the pile drivers or the strings of piles.

Under the crowding destruction the crews had to do their work. And if ever a break should come there would be no escape. Crushed and buried, the men would be borne to an unknown grave in the lake. Every man knew it. Darkness came. No one stopped for food.

Morning found no change in the situation. The water rose steadily. The logs grew more and more restive; the defenses weaker and more inadequate.

Chapter 33

ALL that day and the next night the fight was hard to hand without the opportunity of a breathing space. Then Orde bareheaded and disheveled, strung to a high excitement, began to be harassed by annoyances. The piles gave out. Newmark left, ostensibly to purchase more. He did not return. Tom North and Jim Denning, their eyes burning deep in their heads for lack of sleep, came to Orde, holding to him sympathetically their empty hands.

"No more piles," they said briefly.

"Get 'em," said Orde with equal brevity. "Newmark will have enough here shortly. In the meantime get them."

North and his friend disappeared, taking with them the crews of the drivers and the two tugs. After an interval they returned towing small rafts of the long timbers. Orde did not make any inquiries, nor until days later did he see a copy of the newspaper telling how a lawless gang of rivermen had driven away the railroad men and stolen the railroad's property.

Orde was everywhere. Miles and miles he traveled, running along the tops of the booms, over the surface of the jam, spying the weakening places and hurrying to them a rescue.

Toward noon the piles gave out again.

"Where in h— is Newmark?" exploded Orde. He sent North and a crew of men to cut piles from standing timber in farm wood lots near the river.

"If the owners object stand them off with your peavies!"  
Down river the various mill owners were busy with what men they had left in stringing defenses across the river in case Orde's works should go out. When Orde heard this he swore vigorously.

"Crazy fool!" he spat out. "They'd be a lot better off helping here. If this goes out their little booms won't amount to a whiff of wind."

He sent word to that effect; but, lacking the enforcement of his personal presence, his messages did not carry conviction, and the panic stricken owners continued to labor, each according to his ideas. However, Welton answered the summons. Orde hailed his coming with a shout.

"I want a dredge!" he yelled as soon as the lumberman was within distance. "I believe we can relieve the pressure somewhat by a channel into Stearns' bayou. Get that government dredge up and through the bayou as soon as you can."

"All right," said Welton briefly. "Can you hold her?"  
"I've got to hold her," replied Orde between clenched teeth. "Where in h— is Newmark? I need him for fifty things, and he's disappeared off the face of the earth! Purdy, that second cable! She's snipped a strand! Get a reinforcing line on her!" He ran without another thought of Welton.

To be Continued.

James Riley, a mason, living on Stratford Avenue, Stratford, died last evening at his residence after an extended illness, aged 59 years. He is survived by one brother, Arthur, of Williamsett, Mass., and one sister, Hattie, of Holyoke, Mass.

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**RAILROADS**  
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Trains Leave Bridgeport as Follows:

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FOR WASHINGTON, via Harlem River—\*12:30 (daily) A. M.; \*1:13 P. M.