

# THE CRAFTERS

By FRANCIS LYNDE

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Chapter I.—Story opens at Gaston. Beginning of political campaign with Bucks as candidate for governor. Was mayor of Gaston during boom days when town was terminus of Trans-Western Railway.

Chapter II.—Kent and Loring attend political meeting. Kent gives his opinion of Bucks. Loring leaves for capital, and train pulls out on the way to the east.

Chapter III.—Mrs. Brentwood and daughters, Elinor and Penelope, of Boston, start on journey to west. Choose Trans-Western route as they own stock in the line. Millionaire Brooks Ormsby, in love with Elinor, goes with them.

Chapter IV.—Ormsby makes love to Elinor on train. She is in love with Kent. Penelope telegraphs Kent that party is to pass through Gaston. He gets on train then to go to the capital and meets them.

Chapter V.—Loring appointed general manager of Trans-Western. Kent advises Ormsby to get Mrs. Brentwood to sell her stock in road. Kent and Ormsby become friends and rivals.

Chapter VI.—Bucks and his crowd in charge of state government. House Twenty-nine carries bill without granting corporations, including Trans-Western, is passed by legislature. Miss Portia Van Brock introduced into story.

Chapter VII.—Kent and Ormsby attempt to get Mrs. Brentwood to sell her Trans-Western stock, but without success. Elinor turns Kent's thoughts from money-getting to a higher kind of success.

Chapter VIII.—Bucks lays plans for wrecking of Trans-Western for benefit of competing line by throwing road into the hands of a syndicate of speculators of Gaston, to do the job. Buck visits Gaston and arranges plan.

Chapter IX.—State's attorney at Gaston files petition for receivership of Trans-Western. Preliminary hearing to be had next day.

Chapter X.—Kent unsuccessful in reaching Gaston with evidence to prevent appointment of receiver for road. Major Jim Guilford named as receiver for James MacFarlane.

Chapter XI.—Kent and MacFarlane have words and MacFarlane leaves for an indefinite vacation without granting a rehearing of the Trans-Western case.

Chapter XII.—Guilford starts in to wreck Trans-Western. Loring goes east to form pool of stock to prevent its being bought up at small price by competing line. Kent stays to fight road's legal battles. Ormsby asks Kent to give up race to Elinor Brentwood, and Kent actually announces their engagement. Kent refuses.

Chapter XIII.—Gaston booms again. Kent meets Judge Marston, lieutenant-governor on train, and gets a tip on how to defeat Bucks' plan and remove receiver of Trans-Western.

Chapter XIV.—Kent tries to follow Marston's tip but his plans are thwarted by Bucks. Miss Van Brock tells him mysteries of Bucks' plans. Mrs. Brentwood wants to sell her Trans-Western stock. Stopped from doing so by Kent and Elinor.

Chapter XV.—Bucks, Guilford and friends journey in private car to Breezeland. Ormsby and Brentwoods there. Ormsby sees a race across the state line for the train, and governor's party returns to capital. Miss Van Brock gives Kent a tip as to boodle in connection with all fields of the state.

Chapter XVI.—Kent confers with Hildreth, editor of the Argus, relative to publishing expose of boodle plans of governor when he gets them.

Chapter XVII.—Kent discusses love and politics with Elinor Brentwood. On way home he sees light in the state house and walks into office where details of boodle oil franchise are being perfected, and gets on the inside of things without being seen.

Chapter XVIII.—Kent breaks into Senator Duval's house and secures from that official a full confession of the oil scheme which he proposes to use to force the governor to let up on the Trans-Western.

Chapter XIX.—Ormsby breaks his engagement with Elinor Brentwood, then starts in to force her again. She is free to choose between him and Kent.

Chapter XX.—Meigs, attorney general, proposes to Kent a means of breaking the Trans-Western receivership provided Kent will surrender the evidence he has against the governor in the oil scheme. Kent refuses. Ormsby tells Kent there is no engagement between him and Elinor, but says he is still Kent's rival for her hand.

Chapter XXI.—Elinor proves to Kent that to use his knowledge of the governor's misdoings in the oil scheme as a means of forcing him to let up on the Trans-Western would be to betray and arouse his New-England conscience.

Chapter XXII.—Bad management causes dissatisfaction of employees on Trans-Western and a strike is threatened. Employees offer any assistance in their power to old management to break receivership.

Chapter XXIII.—The governor visits Kent and attempts to force him to give him the incriminating papers which he secured from Senator Duval. Kent refuses.

When Loring was gone Kent went back to the wicket in the grille; but M'Tosh, who was always a busy man at train-time, had disappeared again.

It was a standing mystery to the trainmaster, and to the rank and file, why Receiver Guilford had elected to ignore the fact that he was within three hours of a strike which promised to include at least four-fifths of his operatives; had taken no steps for defense, and had not confided, as it appeared, in the members of his own official staff.

But Kent was at no loss to account for the official silence. If the secret could be kept for a few hours longer, the junto would unload the Trans-Western, strike, tie-up and general demoralization, upon an unsuspecting Overland management.

None the less, there were other things unexplainable even to Kent; for one, this night fitting to Gaston to put the finishing touch on an edifice of fraud which had been built shamelessly in the light of day.

Kent had not the key to unlock this door of mystery; but here the master spirit of the junto was doing, not what he would, but what he could. The negotiations for the lease had consumed much time at a crisis when time was precious. Judge MacFarlane had to be recalled and once more bullied into submission; and Falkland, acting for the Plantagould interest, had insisted upon some formal compliance with the letter of the law.

when the telegram came from Falkland with the welcome news that the Overland officials were on their way from Midland City to keep the appointment in Gaston.

Of all this Kent knew nothing, and was anxious in just proportion as the minutes elapsed and the time for the departure of the eastbound express drew near. For the success of the desperate venture turned upon this: that the receiver's special must leave ahead of the passenger train. With the express blocking the way the difficulties became insurmountable.

Kent was still standing at the trainmen's wicket when Callahan sent the private car gently up to the trackhead of track eight. M'Tosh had been telephoning again, and the receiver and his party were on the way to the station.

"I was afraid you'd have to let the express go first," said Kent, when the trainmaster came his way again.

"How much time have we?"

"Five minutes more; and they are on the way down—there they come."

Kent looked and saw a group of six men making for the nearest exit in the grille. Then he smote his fist into his palm.

"Damn!" he muttered; "they've got the vice president of the Overland with them! That's bad."

"It's bad for Mr. Callahan," growled M'Tosh. "We're in too deep now to back down on his account."

Kent moved nearer and stood in the shadow of the gate-keeper's box, leaving M'Tosh, who was on the track platform, free to show himself. From his new point of vantage Kent checked off the members of the party. When Maj. Guilford left it to come back for a word with M'Tosh, there were five others: the governor, his private secretary, Hawk, Halkett, the general superintendent, and the Overland's vice president.

"All ready, M'Tosh?" said the receiver.

"Ready and waiting, Major," was the bland reply.

"Who is our engineer?"

"Patrick Callahan."

"That wild Irishman? The governor says he'd as soon ride behind the devil."

"Callahan will get you there," said the trainmaster, with deliberate emphasis. Then he asked a question of his own. "Is Mr. Callahan going with you?"

"No. He came down to see us off. How is the fast mail to-night?"

"She's just in—an hour and thirty-five minutes late."

The major swore pathetically. He was of the generation of railway officials, happily fast passing, which cursed and swore itself into authority.

"That's another \$500 forfeit to the post office department! Who's taking it west?"

"Tischer."

"Give him orders to cut out all the stops. If he is more than 55 minutes late at Bighorn, he can come in and get his time."

Tischer had just got the word to go, and was pulling out on the yard main line.

"I'll catch him with the wire at yard limits," said M'Tosh. Then: "Would you mind hurrying your people a little, major? The express is due to leave."

Guilford was a heavy man for his weight, and he waddled back to the others, waving his arms as a signal for them to board the car.

Kent saw the vice president of the Overland Short Line shake hands with Bucks and take his leave, and was so intent upon watching the tableau of departure that he failed to notice the small boy in Western Union blue who was trying to thrust a telegram, damp from the copying rolls, into his hand.

"It's a rush, sir," said the boy, panting from his quick dash across the track platforms.

It was Ormsby's message from Breezeland; and while Kent was trying to grasp the tremendous import of it, M'Tosh was giving Callahan the signal to go. Kent sprang past the gate-keeper and gave the square of damp paper to the train-master.

"My God! read that!" he gasped, with a dry sob of excitement. "It was our chance—one chance in a million—and we've lost it!"

M'Tosh was a man for a crisis. The red tail-lights of the private-car special were yet within a sprinter's dash of the trackhead, but the train-master lost no time chasing a ten-wheel flyer with "Red" Callahan at the throttle.

"Up to my office!" he shouted; and ten seconds later Kent was leaning breathless over the desk in the dispatcher's room while M'Tosh called Durgan over the yard limits telephone.

on his key; and then followed an interval of waiting more terrible than a battle. Kent tried to speak, but his lips were parched and his tongue was like a dry stick between his teeth. What was doing in the lower yard? Would Durgan fail at the pinch and mismanage it so as to rive the alarm? The minutes dragged leaden-winged, and even the sounders on the dispatcher's table were silent.

Suddenly the clicking began again. The operator at "yard limits" was sending the O. K. to the two train orders. So far, so good. Now if Callahan could get safely out on the Western Division.

But there was a hitch in the lower yard. Durgan had obeyed orders promptly and precisely, and had succeeded in stopping Callahan. Durgan climbed to the cab of the 1,010, and the changed plan was explained in a dozen words. But now came the crunch.

"If I stand here till you'd be bringing me my orders, I'll have the whole kit av thim-buzzin' round to know f'what's the matter," said Callahan; but there was no other thing to do, and Durgan hurried back to the telegraph office to play the messenger.

He was too long about it. Before he got back, Halkett was under the cab window of the 1,010, demanding to know—with many objurgations—why Callahan had stopped in the middle of the yards.

"Get a move on you!" he shouted. "The express is right behind us, and it'll run us down, you damned bog-trotter!"

Callahan's gauntleted hand shot up to the throttle-bar.

"I'm 'avin', Misher Halkett," he said mildly. "Will yez go back to the car, or ride wit' me?"

The general superintendent took no chance of catching the Naught-seven's hand-rails in the darkness, and he whipped up into the cab at the first sharp cough of the exhaust.

"I'll go back when you stop for your orders," he said; but a shadowy figure had leaped upon the engine-step a



"MY GOD! READ THAT! IT WAS OUR CHANCE AND WE HAVE LOST IT!"

scant half-second behind him, and Callahan was stuffing the crumpled copy of the order into the sweat-band of his cap. The next instant the big 1,010 leaped forward like a blooded horse under an unmerited cut of the whip, slid past the yard limits telegraph office and shot out upon the main line of the Western Division.

"Sit down, Misher Halkett, an' make yerself aisy!" yelled Callahan across the cab. "'Tis small use Jimmy Shovel 'll have for his box this night."

"Shut off, you Irish madman!" was the shouted command. "Don't you see you're on the wrong division?"

Callahan gave the throttle-bar another outward hitch, tipped his seat and took a hammer from the toolbox.

"I know where I'm goin', an' that's more than you know, ye blandhand-derin' divil! Up on that box wit' you, an' kape out av Jimmy Shovel's road, or I'll be the death av yez! Climb now!"

It was at this moment that the tense strain of suspense was broken in the dispatcher's room on the second floor of the Union station. The telephone skirled joyously, and the train-master snatched up the ear-piece.

"What does he say?" asked Kent.

"It's all right. He says Callahan is out on the Western Division, with Tischer chasing him according to programme. Halkett's in the cab of the 1,010 with Patsy, and—hold—on By George! he says one of them jumped the car as it was passing the limits station!"

"Which one was it?" asked Kent; and he had to wait till the reply came from Durgan.

"It was Hawk, the right-of-way man. He broke and ran for the nearest electric car line the minute he hit the ground, Durgan says. Does he count?"

"No," said Kent; but it is always a mistake to underrate an enemy's caliber—even that of his small arms.

CHAPTER XXVII. THE NIGHT OF ALARMS.

If Editor Hildreth had said nothing in his evening edition about the impending strike on the Trans-Western, it was not because public interest was waning. For a fortnight the newspapers in the territory tributary to the road had been full of strike talk, and Hildreth had said his say, deprecating the threatened appeal to force as fearlessly as he condemned the mismanagement which was provoking it.

But it was Kent who was responsible for the death of news on the eve of the event. Early in the morning

of the last day of the month he had sought out the editor and begged him to close the columns of the Evening Argus to strike news, no matter what should come in during the course of the day.

"I can't go into the reasons as deeply now as I hope to a little later,"

he had said, his secretive habit holding good to the final fathom of the slipping hawser of events. "But you must bear with me once more, and whatever you hear between now and the time you go to press, don't comment on it. I have one more chance to win out, and it hangs in a balance that a feather's weight might tip the wrong way. I'll be with you between 10 and 12 to-night, and you can safely save two columns of the morning paper for the sensation I'm going to give you."

It was in fulfillment of this promise that Kent bestirred himself after he had sent a wire to Ormsby, and M'Tosh had settled down to the task of smoothing Callahan's way westward over a division already twitching in the preliminary rigor of the strike convulsion.

"I am going to set the fuse for the newspaper explosion," he said to his ally. "Barring accidents, there is no reason why we shouldn't begin to figure definitely upon the result, is there?"

M'Tosh was leaning over Dispatcher Donahue's shoulder. He had slipped Donahue's fingers aside from the key to cut in with a peremptory "G. S." order suspending, in favor of the fast mail, the rule which requires a station operator to drop his board on a following section that is less than ten minutes behind its file-leader.

"The fun is beginning," said the train-master. "Tischer has his tip from Durgan to keep Callahan's tail-lights in sight. With the mail treading on their heels the gentlemen in the Naught-seven will be chary about pulling Patsy down too suddenly in mid career. They have just passed Morning Dew, and the operator reports Tischer for disregarding his slow signal."

"Can't you fix that?" asked Kent.

"Oh, yes; that is one of the things I can fix. But there are going to be plenty of others."

"Still we must take something for granted, Mr. M'Tosh. What I have to do up-town won't wait until Callahan has finished his run. I thought the main difficulty was safely overcome."

"Umph!" said the train-master; "the troubles are barely getting themselves born. You must remember that we swapped horses at the last minute. We were ready for the race to the east. Everybody on the Prairie Division had been notified that a special was to go through to-night without stop from Lesterville to A. & T. junction."

"Well?"

"Now we have it all to straighten out by wire on another division; meeting points to make, slow trains to side-track, fool operators to hold down; all on the dizzy edge of a strike that is making every man on the line lose his balance. But you go ahead with your newspaper business. I'll do what a man can here. And if you come across that right-of-way agent, I wish you'd make it a case of assault and battery and get him locked up. I'm leery about him."

Kent went his way dubiously reflective. In the moment of triumph, when Durgan had announced the success of the bold change in the programme, he had made light of Hawk's escape. But now he saw possibilities. True, the junto was leaderless for the moment, and Bucks had no very able lieutenants. But Hawk would give the alarm; and there was the rank and file of the machine to reckon with. And for weapons, the ring controlled the police power of the state and of the city. Let the word be passed that the employees of the Trans-Western were kidnapping their receiver and the governor, and many things might happen before "Red" Callahan should finish his long race to the westward.

Thinking of these things, David Kent walked uptown when he might have taken a car. When the toxin of panic is in the air there is no antidote like vigorous action.

Passing the Western Union central office, he stopped to send Ormsby a second telegram, reporting progress and asking him to be present in person at the denouement to put the facts on the wire at the earliest possible instant of time. "Everything depends upon this," he added, when he had made the message otherwise emphatic. "If we miss the morning papers, we are done."

While he was pocketing his change at the receiving clerk's pigeon-hole, a cab rattled up with a horse at a gallop, and Stephen Hawk sprang out. Kent saw him through the plate-glass front and turned quickly to the public writing-desk, hoping to be overlooked. He was. For once in a way the ex-district attorney was too nearly rattled to be fully alert to his surroundings. There were others at the standing desk; and Hawk wrote his message, after two or three false starts, almost at Kent's elbow.

Kent heard the chink of coin and the low-spoken urgings for haste at the receiving clerk's window; but he forbore to move until the cab had rattled away. Then he gathered up the spoiled blanks left behind by Hawk and smoothed them out. Two of them bore nothing but the date line, made illegible, it would seem, by the writer's haste and nervousness. But at the third attempt Hawk had got as far as the address: "To All Trans-Western Agents on Western Division."

To be Continued.

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**C. M. & ST. P. RAILROAD.**

Arrive from	Depart for
11:55 a.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	6:30 a.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis
7:30 p.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	7:30 a.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis
6:30 a.m. Cresco, Calmar, Chicago	7:30 p.m. Cresco, Calmar, Chicago
6:30 a.m. Cresco, Calmar, Kan. City	7:30 p.m. Cresco, Calmar, Kan. City
6:30 a.m. Peoria, Mason City	7:30 p.m. Peoria, Mason City
6:30 a.m. St. Louis, Mason City	7:30 p.m. St. Louis, Mason City
6:30 a.m. Albert Lea, Jackson	7:30 p.m. Albert Lea, Jackson
6:30 a.m. Madison, S. D.	7:30 p.m. Madison, S. D.
6:30 a.m. LaCrosse, Milw., Chicago	7:30 p.m. LaCrosse, Milw., Chicago

**FREIGHT TRAINS CARRYING PASSENGERS**

Arrive from	Depart for
6:30 p.m. Owatonna, Faribault and	6:30 a.m. Owatonna, Faribault and
6:30 p.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	6:30 a.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis
7:10 p.m. Owatonna and Faribault	6:15 p.m. Owatonna and Faribault
6:30 p.m. LeRoy, Calmar	8:30 a.m. LeRoy, Calmar
6:30 p.m. LeRoy, Calmar	8:30 a.m. LeRoy, Calmar
6:30 p.m. Lytle and Mason City	8:45 a.m. Lytle and Mason City
6:30 p.m. Lytle and Mason City	8:45 a.m. Lytle and Mason City
6:30 p.m. Center, Spr. Val., LaCrosse	8:40 a.m. Center, Spr. Val., LaCrosse
6:30 p.m. A. Lea, Wellis, Mankato	8:45 a.m. A. Lea, Wellis, Mankato
6:30 p.m. A. Lea, Wellis, Mankato	6:00 p.m. A. Lea, Wellis, Mankato

**Iowa Central Railway.**

Time of arrival and departure of trains of Iowa Central R'y., at Mason City, Ia. Ticket office at depot, East Eighth street. Corrected to January 26, 1904.

PRINCIPAL CITIES.	LEAVE	ARRIVE
Marshalltown, Oskaloosa, Albia, Kansas City and St. Louis	2:40 p.m.	1:05 p.m.
Marshalltown, Oskaloosa, Albia, Monmouth and Peoria	12:00 a.m.	8:40 a.m.
Hampton, Ackley, Eldora and Marshalltown	5:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m.
and Albert Lea	10:05 a.m.	4:30 p.m.
	1:05 p.m.	9:35 a.m.

**CHICAGO GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY**  
Maple Leaf Route

IN EFFECT JAN. 8, 1905

GOING SOUTH AND WEST FOR LYLE, MASON CITY, FORT DODGE, OMAHA.

City	Pass'gr	Pass'gr
Lv Minneapolis	daily 7:30 a.m.	8:00 p.m.
Lv St. Paul	8:10 a.m.	8:30 p.m.
Lv Hayfield	11:00 a.m.	11:00 p.m.
Lv Waltham	11:10 a.m.	11:10 p.m.
Lv Austin	11:34 a	