THE BLAZED TRAIL

(Continued from Last Sunday.)

"Somebody in town will give us away," suggested Shorty, the chore-boy.

"No, they won't; they're all here," assured Kerlie.

It was true. Except for the women and children, who were not yet about, the entire village had assembled. Even old Vanderhoof, the fire-catcher of the yard, hobbled along breathlessly on his rheumatic legs. In a moment the masks were fitted. In a moment more the little band had emerged from the shelter of the swamp, and so came into full view of its objective point.

Shingleville consisted of a big mill; the yards, now nearly empty of lumber; the large frame boarding house, the office, the stable, a store, two saloons and a dozen dwellings. The party at once fixed its eyes on this collection of buildings, and trudged on down the right of way with unhastening grimness.

Their approach was not unobserved. Daly saw them; and Baker, his foreman, saw them. The two at once went forth to organize opposition. When the attacking party reached the mill yard it found the boss and the foreman standing alone on the sawdust, revolvers drawn.

Daly traced a line with his toe.

"The first man that crosses that line gets it," said he.

They knew he meant what he said. An instant's pause ensued, while the big man and the little faced a mob. Daly's rivermen were still on a drive. He knew the millmen too well to depend on them. Truth to tell, the possibility of such a raid as this had not occurred to him, for the simple reason that he did not anticipate the discovery of his complicity with the forces of nature. Skilfully carried out, the plan was a good one. No one need know of the weakened link, and it was the most natural thing in the world that Sadler & Smith's drive should go out with the increase of water.

The men grouped swiftly and silently on the other side of the sawdust line. The pause did not mean that Daly's defense was good. I have known of a crew of striking millmen being so bluffed down, but not such men as these.

"Do you know what's going to happen to you?" said a voice from the group. The speaker was Radway, but the contractor kept himself well in the background. "We're going to burn your mill; we're going to burn your yards; we're going to burn your whole shooting match, you low-lived whelp!"

"Yes, and we're going to string you to your own trestle!" growled another voice harshly.

"Dyer," said Injin Charley, simply, shaking the wet scalp arm's length toward the lumbermen.

At this grim interruption a silence fell. The owner paled slightly; his foreman chewed a nonchalant straw. Down the still deserted street crossed and recrossed the subtle, occult influences of a half-hundred concealed watchers. Daly and his subordinate were very much alone, and very much in danger. Their last hour had come, and they knew it.

With the recognition of the fact, they immediately raised their weapons in the resolve to do as much damage as possible before being overpowered.

Then suddenly, full in the back, a heavy stream of water knocked them completely off their feet, rolled them over on the wet sawdust, and finally jammed them both against the trestle, where it held them, kicking and gasping for breath, in a choking cataract of water. The pistols flew harmlessly into the air. For an instant the Fighting Forty stared in paralyzed astonishment. Then a tremendous roar of laughter saluted their easy vanquishment of a formidable enemy.

Daly and Baker were pounced upon and captured. There was no resistance. They were too nearly strangled for that. Little Solly and old Vanderhoof turned off the water in the fire hydrant and disconnected the hose they had so effectively employed.

"There, damn you!" said Rollway Charley, jerking the millman to his feet. "How do you like too much water, hey?"

The unexpected comedy changed the party's mood. It was no longer a question of killing. A number broke into the store, and shortly emerged, bearing pails of kerosene with which they deluged the slabs on the windward side of the mill. The flames caught the structure instantly. A thousand sparks, borne by the off-shore breeze, fastened like so many stinging insects on the lumber in the yard.

It burned as dried balsam thrown on a campfire. The heat of it drove the onlookers far back in the village, where in silence they watched the destruction. From behind locked doors the inhabitants watched with them.

The billow of white smoke filled the northern sky. A whirl of gray ashes, light as air, floated on and ever on over Superior. The site of the mill, the squares where the piles of lumber had stood, glowed incandescence over which already a white film was forming.

Daly and his man were slapped and cuffed hither and thither at the men's will. Their faces bled, their bodies ached as one bruise.

"That squares us," said the men. "If we can't cut this year, neither kin you. It's up to you now!"

Then, like a destroying horde of locusts, they gutted the office and the store, smashing what they could not carry to the fire. The dwellings and saloons they did not disturb. Finally, about noon, they kicked their two prisoners into the river, and took their way stragglingly back along the right of way.

"I surmise we took that town apart some!" remarked Shorty, with satisfaction.

"I should rise to remark," replied Kerlie. Big Junko said nothing, but his cavernous little animal eyes glowed with satisfaction. He had been the first to lay hands on Daly; he had helped to carry the petroleum; he had struck the first match; he had even administered the final kick.

At the boarding house they found Wallace Carpenter and Hamilton seated on the veranda. It was now afternoon. The wind had abated somewhat, and the sun was struggling with the still flying scuds.

"Hello, boys," said Wallace, "been for a little walk in the woods?"

"Yes, sir," replied Hyland, "we—"

"I'd rather not hear," interrupted Wallace. "There's quite a fire over east. I suppose you haven't noticed it."

Hyland looked gravely eastward.

"Sure 'nough!" said he.

"Better get some grub," suggested Wallace.

After the men had gone in, he turned to the journalist.

"Hamilton," he began, "write all you know about the drive, and the break, and the rescue, but as to the burning of the mill—"

The other held out his hand.

"Good," said Wallace, offering his own.

And that was as far as the famous Shingleville raid ever got. Daly did his best to collect even circumstantial evidence against the participants, but in vain. He could not even get anyone to say that a single member of the village of Carpenter had absented himself from town that morning. This might have been from loyalty, or it might have been from fear of the vengeance the Fighting Forty would surely visit on a traitor. Probably it was a combination of both. The fact remains, however, that Daly never knew surely of but one man implicated in the destruction of the plant. That man was Injin Charley, but Injin Charley promptly disappeared.

After an interval, Tim Shearer, Radway and Kerlie came out again.

"Where's the boss?" asked Shearer.

"I don't know, Tim," replied Wallace seriously. "I've looked everywhere. He's gone. He must have been all cut up. I think he went out in the woods to get over it. I am not worrying. Harry has lots of sense. He'll come in about dark."

"Sure!" said Tim.

"How about the boy's stakes?" queried Radway. "I hear this is a bad smash for the firm."

"We'll see that the men get their wages all right," replied Carpenter, a little disappointed that such a question should be asked at such a time.

"All right," rejoined the contractor. "We're all going to need our money this summer."

CHAPTER LVI.

Thorpe walked through the silent group of men without seeing them. He had no thought for what he had done, but for the triumphant discovery he had made in spite of himself.

It was then about 6 o'clock in the morning. Thorpe passed the boarding house, the store and the office, to take himself as far as the little open shed that served as a railway station. There he set the semaphore to flag the eastbound train from Duluth. At 6:32, the train happening on time, he climbed aboard. He dropped heavily into a seat and stared straight in front of him until the conductor had spoken to him twice.

"Where to, Mr. Thorpe?" he asked.

The latter gazed at him uncomprehendingly.

"Oh! Mackinaw City," he replied at last.

The act of paying for his fare brought to his consciousness that he had but a little over $10 with him. He thrust the change back into his pocket and took up his contemplation of nothing. The river water dripped slowly from his "cork" boots to form a pool on the car floor. The heavy wool of his short driving trousers steamed in the car's warmth. His shoulders dried in a little cloud of vapor. He noticed none of these things, but stared ahead, his gaze vacant, the bronze of his face set in the lines of a brown study, his strong, capable hands hanging purposeless between his knees. The ride to Mackinaw City was six hours long, and the train lost some ninety minutes, but in all this distance Thorpe never altered his pose.

Thorpe descended at Mackinaw City to find that the noon train had gone. He ate a lunch at the hotel, borrowed $100 from the agent of Louis Sands, a lumberman of his acquaintance, and seated himself rigidly in the little waiting room, there to remain until the nine-twenty that night. When the cars were backed down from the siding he boarded the sleeper. In the doorway stood a disapproving colored porter.

"You'll fin' the smokin' cah up fo'wu'd, suh," said the latter, firmly barring the way.

"It's generally forward," answered Thorpe.

"This yeah's th' sleepah," protested the functionary. "You pays extry."

"I am aware of it," replied Thorpe curtly. "Give me a lower."

"Yessah!" acquiesced the darky, giving way, but still in doubt. He followed Thorpe curiously, peering into the smoking room on him from time to time. At a little after 12 his patience gave out. The stolid, gloomy man of lower six seemed to intend sitting up all night.

"Yo' berth is ready, sah," he delicately suggested.

Thorpe arose obediently, walked to lower six, and, without undressing, threw himself on the bed. Afterwards the porter, in conscientious discharge of his duty, looked diligently beneath the seat for boots to polish. Happening to glance up, after fruitless search, he discovered the boots still adorning the feet of their owner.

"Well, for th' lands sake!" ejaculated the scandalized negro, beating a hasty retreat.

He was still more scandalized when, the following noon, his strange fare brushed by him without bestowing the expected tip.

Thorpe descended at Twelfth street in Chicago without any clear notion of where he was going. For a moment he faced the long, park-like expanse of the lake front, then turned sharp to his left and picked his way south up the interminable reaches of Michigan avenue. Block after block he clicked along, the caulks of his boots striking fire from the pavement. Some people stared at him a little curiously. Others merely glanced in his direction, attracted more by the expression of his face than the peculiarity of his dress. At that time rivermen were not an uncommon sight along the water front.

After an interval he seemed to have left the smoke and dirt behind. The street became quieter. Boarding houses and tailors' shops ceased. Here and there appeared a bit of lawn, shrubbery, flowers. The residences established an uptown crescendo of magnificence. Policemen seemed trimmer, better-gloved. Occasionally he might have noticed in front of one of the sandstone piles a besilvered pair champing before a stylish vehicle. By and by he came to himself to find that he was staring at the deep-carved lettering in a stone horse-block before a large dwelling.

His mind took the letters in one after the other, perceiving them plainly before it accorded them recognition. Finally he had completed the word "Farrand." He whirled sharp on his heel, mounted the broad white stone steps and rang the bell.

It was answered almost immediately by a clean-shaven, portly and dignified man with the most impassive countenance in the world. This man looked upon Thorpe with lofty disapproval.

"Is Miss Hilda Farrand at home?" he asked.

"I cannot say," replied the man. "If you will step to the back door, I will ascertain.

"The flowers will do. Now see that the south room is ready, Annie," floated a voice from within.

Without a word, but with deadly earnestness, Thorpe reached forward, seized the astonished servant by the collar, yanked him bodily outside the door, stepped inside, and strode across the hall toward a closed portiere whence had come the voice. The riverman's long spikes cut little triangular pieces from the hardwood floor. Thorpe did not notice that. He thrust aside the portiere.

Before him he saw a young and beautiful girl. She was seated, and her lap was filled with flowers. At his sudden apparition, her hands flew to her heart, and her lips slightly parted. For a second the two stood looking at each other, just as nearly a year before their eyes had crossed over the old pole trail.

To Thorpe the girl seemed more beautiful than ever. The red of this violent, unexpected encounter rushed to her face, her bosom rose and fell in a fluttering catch for breath; but her eyes were steady and inquiring.

The butler pounced on Thorpe from behind with the intent to do great bodily harm.

"Morris!" commanded Hilda sharply, "what are you doing?"

The man cut short his heroism in confusion.

"You may go," concluded Hilda.

Thorpe stood straight and unwinking by the straight portiere. After a moment he spoke.

"I have come to tell you that you were right and I was wrong," said he steadily. "You told me there could be nothing better than love. In the pride of my strength I told you this was not so. I was wrong."

He stood for another instant, looking directly at her, then turned sharply, and, head erect, walked from the room.

Before he had reached the outer door the girl was at his side.

"Why are you going?" she asked.

"I have nothing more to say."

"Nothing?"

"Nothing at all."

She laughed happily to herself.

"But I have—much. Come back."

They returned to the little morning room, Thorpe's caulked boots gouging out the little triangular furrows in the hardwood floor. Neither noticed that.

"What are you going to do now," she catechised, facing him in the middle of the room. A long tendril of her beautiful corn-silk hair fell across her eyes; her rid lips parted in a faint wistful smile; beneath the draperies of her loose gown the pure slender lines of her figure leaned toward him.

"I am going back," he replied patiently.

"I knew you would come," said she. "I have been expecting you."

"Oh, Harry," she breathed, with a sudden flash of insight, "you are a man born to be much misunderstood."

He held himself rigid, but in his veins was creeping a molten fire, and the fire was beginning to glow dully in his eye. Her whole being called him. His heart leaped, his breath came fast, his eyes swam. He tried to steady himself, and by an effort that left him weak he succeeded. For a moment it seemed to him that he was going to faint.

And still she stood there before him, saying nothing, leaning slightly toward him, her red lips half parted, her eyes fixed almost wistfully on his face.

"Go away," he whispered hoarsely at last. The voice was not his own. "Go away! Go away!"

Suddenly she swayed to him.

"Oh, Harry, Harry," she whispered, "must I tell you? Don't you see?"

The flood broke through him. He seized her hungrily. He crushed her to him until she gasped; he pressed his lips against hers until she all but cried out with pain of it; he ran his great brown hands blindly through her hair until it came down about them both in a cloud of spun light.

"Tell me!" he whispered. "Tell me!"

"Oh! oh!" she cried. "Please! What is it?"

"I do not believe it," he murmured savagely.

She drew herself from him with gentle dignity.

"I am not worthy to say it," she said soberly, "but I love you with all my heart and soul!"

Then for the first and only time in his life, Thorpe fell to weeping, while she, understanding, stood by and comforted him.

The few moments of Thorpe's tears eased the emotional strain under which, perhaps unconsciously, he had been laboring for nearly a year past. The tenseness of his nerves relaxed. He savored deliberately the joy of a luxurious couch, rich hangings, polished floor, subdued light, warmed atmosphere. He watched with soul-deep gratitude the soft girlish curves of Hilda's body, the poise of her flower head, the piquant, half-wistful, half-childish set of her red lips, the clear starlike glimmer of her dusky eyes. It was all near to him; his.

"Kiss me, dear," she said.

She leaned her cheeks against her hand, and her hand against his shoulder.

"I have been reading a story lately," said she, "that has interested me very much. It was about a man who renounced all he held most dear to shield a friend."

"Yes," said Thorpe.

"Then he renounced all his most valuable possessions because a poor, common man needed the sacrifice."

"Sounds like a medieval story," said he with unconscious humor.

"It happened recently," rejoined Hilda, "I read it in the papers."

"Well he blazed a good trail," was Thorpe's sighing comment. "Probably he had his chance. We don't all of us get that. Things go crooked and get tangled up, so we have to do the best we can. I don't believe I'd have done it."

"Oh, you are delicious!" she cried.

After a time she said very humbly: "I want to beg your pardon for misunderstanding you and causing you so much suffering. I was very stupid, and didn't see why you could not do as I wanted you to."

"That is nothing to forgive. I acted like a fool."

"I have known about you," she went on. "It has all come out in the Telegram. It has been very exciting. Poor boy, you look tired."

He straightened himself suddenly. "I have forgotten—actually forgotten," he cried, a little bitterly. "Why, I am a pauper, a bankrupt, I——"

"Harry," she interrupted gently, but very firmly, "you must not say what you were going to say. I cannot allow it. Money came between us before. It must not do so again. Am I not right, dear?"

She smiled at him with the lips of a child and the eyes of a woman.

"Yes," he agreed after a struggle, "you are right. But now I must begin all over again. It will be a long time before I shall be able to claim you. I have my way to make."

"Yes," she said diplomatically.

"But you!" he cried suddenly. "The papers remind me. How about that Morton?"

"What about him?" asked the girl, astonished. "He is very happily engaged."

Thorpe's face slowly filled with blood. "You'll break the engagement at once," he commanded a little harshly.

"Why should I break the engagement?" demanded Hilda, eying him with some alarm.

"You actually don't think he's engaged to me!" she burst out finally.

"Isn't he?" asked Thorpe.

"Why, no, stupid! He's engaged to Elizabeth Carpenter, Wallace's sister. Now where did you get that silly idea?"

"I saw it in the paper."

"And you believe all you see! Why didn't you ask Wallace—but of course you wouldn't. Harry, you are the most incoherent dumb old brute I ever saw! I could shake you! You need a wife to interpret things for you. You speak a different language from most people." She said this between laughing and crying; between a sense of the ridiculous uselessness of withholding a single timely word, and a tender pathetic intuition of the suffering such a nature must endure.

Suddenly she jumped to her feet with an exclamation.

"Oh, Harry! I'd forgotten utterly!" she cried in laughing consternation. "I have a luncheon here at half past one! It's almost that now. I must run and dress. Just look at me; just look! You did that!"

"I'll wait here until the confounded thing is over," said Thorpe.

"Oh, no, you won't," replied Hilda, decidedly. "You are going downtown right now and get something to put on. Then you are coming back here to stay."

Thorpe glanced in surprise at his driver's clothes and his spiked boots.

"Heavens and earth!" he exclaimed. "I should think so! How am I to get out without ruining the floor?"

Hilda laughed and drew aside the portieres.

"Don't you think you have done that pretty well already?" she asked. "There, don't look so solemn. We're not going to be sorry for a single thing we've done today, are we?" She stood close to him, searching his face wistfully with her fathomless dusky eyes.

"No, sweetheart, we are not," replied Thorpe, soberly.

CHAPTER LVII.

Surely it is useless to follow the sequel in detail, to tell how Hilda persuaded Thorpe to take her money. To a woman such as she this was not a very difficult task in the long run. A few scruples of pride; that was all.

"I hate to do it," he said, "it doesn't look right."

"You must," she insisted. "I will not take the position of rich wife to a poor man; it is humiliating to both. I will not marry you until you have made your success."

"That is right," said Thorpe, heartily.

"Well, then, are you going to be so selfish as to keep me waiting while you make an entirely new start, when a little help on my part will bring your plans to completion?"

She saw the shadow of assent in his eyes.

"How much do you need?" she asked, swiftly.

"I must take up the notes," he explained. "I must pay the men. I may need something on the stock market. If I go in on this thing, I'm going in for keeps. I'll get after those fellows who have been swindling Wallace. Say $100,000."

"Why, it's nothing," she cried.

"I'm glad you think so," he replied, grimly.

She ran to her dainty escritoire, where she scribbled eagerly for a few moments.

"There," she cried, her eyes shining, "there is my check book all signed in blank. I'll see that the money is there."

So it was that Hilda Farrand gave her lover confidence, brought him out from his fanaticism, launched him afresh into the current of events. He remained in Chicago all that summer, giving orders that all work at the village of Carpenter should cease. With his affairs that summer we have little to do. His common-sense treatment of the stock market, by which a policy of quiescence following an outright buying of the stock which he had previously held on margin, retrieved the losses already sustained, and finally put both partners on a firm financial footing. That is another story. So, too, is his reconciliation with an understanding of his sister. It came about through Hilda, of course. Perhaps in the inscrutable way of Providence the estrangement was of benefit—even necessary—for it had thrown him entirely within himself during his militant years.

Let us rather look to the end of the summer. It now became a question of reopening the camps. Thorpe wrote to Shearer and Radway, whom he had retained, that he would arrive on Saturday noon, and suggested that the two begin to look about for men. Friday, himself, Wallace Carpenter, Elizabeth Carpenter, Morton, Helen Thorpe and Hilda Farrand boarded the northbound train.

CHAPTER LVIII.

The train of the South Shore railroad shot its way across the broad reaches of the northern peninsula. On either side of the right of way lay mystery in the shape of thickets so dense and overgrown that the eye could penetrate them but a few feet at most. Beyond them stood the forests. Thus Nature screened her intimacies from the impertinent eye of the new order of things.

Thorpe welcomed the smell of the north land. He became almost eager, explaining, indicating to the girl at his side.

"There is the Canada balsam," he cried. "Do you remember how I showed it to you first? And yonder the spruce. How stuck up your teeth were when you tried to chew the gum before it had been heated. Do you remember? Look! Look there! It's a white pine! Isn't it a grand tree? It's the finest tree in the forest, by my way of thinking, so tall, so straight, so feathery and so dignified. See, Hilda, look quick! There's an old logging road all filled with raspberry vines. We'll find lots of partridges there and perhaps a bear. Wouldn't you just like to walk down it about sunset?"

"Yes, Harry."

"I wonder what we're stopping for. Seems to me they are stopping at every squirrel's trail. Oh, this must be Seney. Yes, it is. Queer little place, isn't it? but sort of attractive. Good deal like our town. You have never seen Carpenter, have you? Location's fine, anyway; and to me it's sort of picturesque. You'll like Mrs. Hathaway. She's a buxom, motherly woman who runs the boarding house for eighty men, and still finds time to mend my clothes for me. And you'll like Solly. Solly's the tug captain, a mighty good fellow, true as a gunbarrel. We'll have him take us out, some still day. We'll be there in a few minutes now. See the cranberry marshes. Sometimes there's a good deal of pine on little islands scattered over it, but it's very hard to log, unless you get a good winter. We had just such a proposition when I worked for Radway. Oh, you'll like Radway, he's as good as gold. Helen!"

"Yes," replied his sister.

"I want you to know Radway. He's the man who gave me my start."

"All right, Harry," laughed Helen. "I'll meet anybody or anything from bears to Indians."

"I know an Indian, too—Geezigut, an Ojibwa—we call him Injin Charley. He was my first friend in the north woods. He helped me get my timber. This spring he killed a man—a good job, too—and is hiding now. I wish I knew where he is. But we'll see him some day. He'll come back when the thing blows over. See! See!"

"What?" they all asked, breathless.

"It's gone. Over beyond the hills there I caught a glimpse of Superior."

"You are ridiculous, Harry," protested Helen Thorpe laughingly. "I never saw you so. You are a regular boy!"

"Do you like boys?" he asked, gravely, of Hilda.

"Adore them!" she cried.

"All right, I don't care," he answered his sister in triumph.

The air brakes began to make themselves felt, and shortly the train came to a grinding stop.

"What station is this?" Thorpe asked the colored porter.

"Shingleville, sah," the latter replied. "I thought so. Wallace, when did their mill burn, anyway? I haven't heard about it."

"Last spring, about the time you went down."

"Is that so? How did it happen?"

"They claim incendiarism," parried Wallace, cautiously.

Thorpe pondered a moment, then laughed. "I am in the mixed attitude of the small boy," he observed, "who isn't near enough to wish anybody's property destroyed, but who wishes that if there is a fire, to be where he can see it. I am sorry those fellows had to lose their mill, but it was a good thing for us. The man who set that fire did us a good turn. If it hadn't been for the burning of their mill they would have made a stronger fight against us in the stock market."

Wallace and Hilda exchanged glances. The girl was long since aware of the inside history of those days.

"You'll have to tell them that," she whispered over the back of her seat. "It will please them."

"Our station is next!" cried Thorpe, "and it's only a little ways. Come, get ready!"

They all crowded into the narrow passageway near the door, for the train barely paused.

"All right, sah," said the porter, swinging down his little step.

Thorpe ran down to help the ladies. He was nearly taken from his feet by a wildcat yell, and a moment later that result was actually accomplished by a rush of men that tossed him bodily onto its shoulders. At the same moment the mill and tug whistles began to screech, miscellaneous firearms exploded. Even the locomotive engineer, in the spirit of the occasion, leaned down heartily on his whistle rope. The sawdust street was filled with screaming, jostling men. The homes of the town were brilliantly draped with cheesecloth, flags and bunting.

For a moment Thorpe could not make out what had happened. This turmoil was so different from the dead quiet of desertion he had expected, that he was unable to gather his faculties. All about him were familiar faces upturned to his own. He distinguished the broad, square shoulders of Scotty Parsons, Jack Hyland, Kerlie, Bryan, Moloney. Ellis grinned at him from the press; Billy Camp, the fat and shiny drive cook; Mason, the foreman of the mill. Over beyond howled Solly, the tug captain, Rollway Charley; Shorty, the chore boy; everywhere were features that he knew. As his dimming eyes traveled here and there, one by one the Fighting Forty, the best crew of men ever gathered in the northland, impressed themselves in his consciousness. Saginaw birlers, Flat river drivers, woodsmen from the forests of lower Canada, bully boys out of the Muskegon waters, peavey men from Au Sable, white-water daredevils from the rapids of the Menominee—all were there to do him honor, him in whom they had learned to see the supreme qualities of their calling. On the outskirts sauntered the tall form of Tim Shearer, a straw peeping from beneath his flax-white mustache, his eyes glimmering under his flax-white eyebrows. He did not evidence as much excitement as the others, but the very bearing of the man expressed the deepest satisfaction. Perhaps he remembered that zero morning so many years before when he had watched the thinly clad, shivering chore boy set his face for the first time towards the dark forest.

Big Junko and Anderson deposited their burden on the raised platform of the office steps. Thorpe turned and fronted the crowd.

The men looked upon their leader and gave voice to the enthusiasm that was in them. He stood alone there, straight and tall, the muscles of his brown face set to hide his emotions, his head thrust back proudly, the lines of his strong figure tense with power—the glorification in finer matter of the hardy, reliant men who did him honor.

"Oh, aren't you proud of him?" gasped Hilda, squeezing Helen's arm with a little sob.

In a moment Wallace Carpenter, his countenance glowing with pride and pleasure, mounted the platform and stood beside his friend, while Morton and the two young ladies stopped half way up the steps.

At once the racket ceased. Everyone stood at attention.

"Mr. Thorpe," Wallace began, "at the request of your friends here, I have a most pleasant duty to fulfill. They have asked me to tell you how glad they are to see you; that is surely unnecessary. They have also asked me to congratulate you on having won the fight with our rivals."

"You done 'em good." "Can't down the Old Fellow," muttered joyous voices.

"But," said Wallace, "I think that I first have a story to tell on my own account.

"At the time the jam broke this spring, we owed the men here for a year's work. At that time I considered their demand for wages ill-timed and grasping. I wish to apologize. After the money was paid them, instead of scattering they set to work under Jack Radway and Tim Shearer to salvage your logs. They have worked long hours all summer. They have invested every cent of their year's earnings in supplies and tools, and now they are prepared to show you in the company's booms three million feet of logs, rescued by their grit and hard labor from total loss."

At this point the speaker was interrupted. "Saw off." "Shut up." "Give us a rest," growled the audience. "Three million feet ain't worth talkin' about." "You make me tired." "Say your little say the way you oughter." "Found purty nigh two millions pocketed on Mare's island, or he wouldn't a had that much." "Damn fool undertaking, anyhow."

"Men," cried Thorpe. "I have been very fortunate. From failure success has come. But never have I been more fortunate than in my friends. The firm is now on its feet. It could afford to lose three times the logs it lost this year——"

He paused and scanned their faces.

"But," he continued suddenly, "it cannot now, nor ever can offord to lose what those three million feet represent—the friends it has made. I can pay you back the money you have spent and the time you have put in——" Again he looked them over, and then for the first time since they have known him his face lighted up with a rare and tender smile of affection. "But, comrades, I shall not offer to do it; the gift is accepted in the spirit with which it was offered——"

He got no further. The air was rent with sound. Even the members of his own party cheered. From every direction the crowd surged inward. The women and Morton were forced up the platform to Thorpe. The latter motioned for silence.

"Now, boys, we have done it," said he, "and so will go back to work. From now on you are my comrades in the fight."

His eyes were dim; his breast heaved; his voice shook. Hilda was weeping from excitement. Through the tears she saw them all looking at their leader, and in the worn, hard faces glowed the affection and admiration of a dog for its master. Something there was especially touching in this, for strong men rarely show it. She felt a great wave of excitement sweep over her. Instantly, she was standing by Thorpe, her eyes streaming, her breast throbbing with emotion.

"Oh!" she cried, stretching her arms out to them passionately. "Oh! I love you; I love you all!"

(The End.)

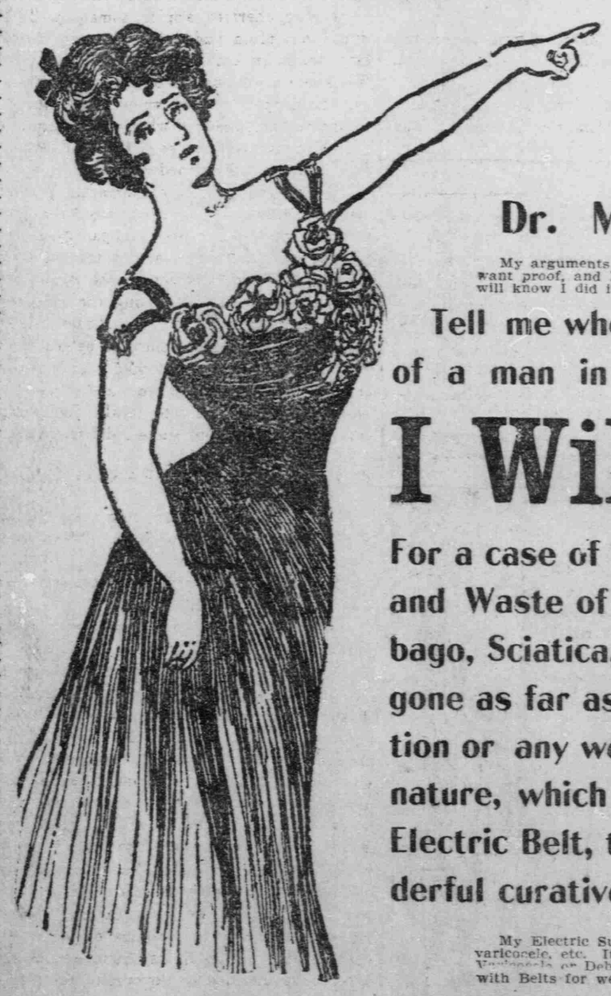
Men! Read It!

Dr. McLaughlin's Electric Belt Will Do This for You.

Dr. McLaughlin:

Dear Sir—I have worn your Belt for three months and thirteen days, and I will say that its name is clearly enough to demonstrate its merits, and its use, to establish a complete and permanent cure, as it has effected for my case. And I join the 50,000 happy praises as to its merits, for any man who is in need of your advice and remedy should immediately procure it. Any sufferer of Rheumatism, Loss of Vitality or other disease should have it, as it is a never-failing remedy when nightly applied and your advice heeded. Your firm is a firm of strict honesty and integrity, and its business should increase ten-fold. You may refer to me anyone you wish, as I consider the money I expended in your Belt well invested. I remain, yours most respectfully,

E. R. ELDRIDGE, 263 Twenty-fifth St., Ogden, Utah.



What would you give to have your old vim back again? What would you not sacrifice to feel as you did a few years ago; to have the same snap and energy, the same gladsome, joyous, light-hearted spirit and the physical strength you used to have? You know you are not the same man, and you know you would like to be. You might as well be. It's easy. I am making men out of wrecks every day, and I can make you as good a man as you ever were with

Dr. McLaughlin's Electric Belt

My arguments are good, my system is good, but I know you haven't time to study these. You want proof, and I give you that, and lots of it. When your own neighbor tells you I cured him you will know I did it.

Tell me where you are and I'll give you the name of a man in your own town I've cured.

I Will Pay $1,000

For a case of Nervous Debility, Varicocele, Early Decay and Waste of Power, Rheumatism, Lame Back, Lumbago, Sciatica, any case of Kidney Disease that has not gone as far as Bright's Disease, Indigestion, Constipation or any weakness caused by ignoring the laws of nature, which I cannot cure with my new improved Electric Belt, the marvel of electricians, the most wonderful curative device that has ever been introduced.

My Electric Suspensory carries the current direct to the weak parts and cures all weakness of men, varicocele, etc. It develops all weak organs and checks unnatural drains. No case of Failing Vigor, Nervous or Debility can resist the powerful Electric Suspensory. It never fails to cure. It is free with Belts for weak men.

No man should be weak, no man should suffer the loss of that vital element which renders his life worth living. No man should allow himself to become less a man than nature intended him; no man should suffer when there is at hand a certain cure for his weakness, a check to his waste of power.

Most of the pains, most of the weakness of stomach, heart, brain and nerves, from which men suffer, are due to an early loss of nature's reserve power through mistakes of youth. You need not suffer for this. You can be restored. The very element which you have lost you can get back, and you may be as happy as any man that lives. My Belt has

Free Electric Suspensory for Weak Men.

I know that no man remains a weakling because he wants to; I am sure you want to overcome every indication of early decay that has shown itself on you. I don't think the man lives who would not like to feel as big and strong as a Sandow, and I know that if you have a reasonable foundation to build upon I can make you a bigger man than you ever hoped to be. I want you to know that, you who can't believe it, and I want you to have my book in which I describe how I learned that strength was only electricity, and how I learned to restore it; also I want to tell you the names of some men who will tell you that when they came to me they were physical wrecks and are now among the finest specimens of physical manhood.

I want you to read this book and learn the truth about my arguments. If you are not as vigorous as you would like to be, if you have rheumatic pains, weak kidneys, loss of vitality, prostatic troubles, nervous spells, varicocele, or any ailment of that kind that unmans you, it would assure you of future happiness if you would look into this method of mine. Don't delay it; your best days are slipping by. If you want this book I send it closely sealed, free, if you send this ad.

DR. M. B. McLAUGHLIN, 931 Sixteenth Street,

Denver, Colo.