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# Red Saunders

... By ...  
**HENRY WALLACE PHILLIPS**

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(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK)  
All got out of the way but a three-  
year-old, forgotten in the excitement.  
Upon this small lad, fallen flat in the  
road, bore the powerful man and  
horse. Then there were frantic cries  
of warning. Fifty feet between the  
youngster and those mangling hoofs—  
twenty-five! The crowd gasped. They  
were blotted together! Not so. A  
mighty hand had snatched the boy  
away in that instant of time. He was  
safe and very indignant in a howling,  
huddled heap in the ditch by the road-  
side, but alas for horse and rider!  
The buckskin was not used to such  
feats, and when Red's weight was  
thrown to the side for the reach he  
missed his stride, struck his feet to-  
gether, and down they went, while the  
foot deep dust sprang into the air like  
an explosion.

Miss Mattie rushed to the scene of  
the accident, followed by everybody.  
Young Lettis, equally frightened, was  
close beside her.  
"Oh, Will, are you killed?" she cried.  
And then a voice devoid of any signs  
of weakness, but loaded to the break-  
ing point with wrath, told in such lan-  
guage as had never been heard in  
Fairfield that the owner was still  
much alive.

"Run away, Mattie! Run away and  
let me cuss!" shrieked Red. Miss  
Mattie collapsed into the arms of Let-  
tis.  
The dust settled enough so that the  
anxious villagers could see horse and  
man; the former resting easily as if  
he had had enough athletics for one  
day and the latter sitting in the road.  
Neither showed any intention of ris-  
ing.

"What's the matter, Mr. Saunders,  
are you hurt?" inquired the fussy post-  
mistress.  
"Please go 'way, ma'am," said Red,  
waving his arm.  
"I'm sure you're hurt—I'm perfectly  
sure you're hurt," she persisted, hold-  
ing her ground. "Now, do tell us  
what can possibly be the matter with  
you."

"Very well," returned the exas-  
perated cowpuncher, "I will. My  
pant, ma'am, have suffered in this  
turn up, and they're now in a con-  
dition to make my appearance in po-  
lite society difficult, if not impossi-  
ble; now please go 'way, and somebody  
fetch me a horse blanket."  
It is regrettable that the discom-  
fiture of the postmistress was received  
with undisguised hilarity. The blan-  
ket was produced, and Red staked off  
in Indian dignity, marred by a limp  
in his left leg, for he had come upon  
Mother Earth with a force which made  
itself felt through all that foot of  
soft dust.

"Bring that darn fool horse along,"  
he called over his shoulder. "Buckskin  
rose and followed his owner. There  
was no light in his eye now; he looked  
thoughtful. He, too, limped, and  
there was a trickle of blood down his  
nose. Verily it had been a hard  
fought field.

As both men were anxious to see the  
lay of the land as soon as possible  
Red took his place in the wagon that  
day, after the damages were re-  
paired, content to wait until his leg  
was less sore for horseback riding.  
There followed a busy two weeks  
for them. Mr. Demitt had some money  
he wished to put into the enterprise,  
but his most valuable assistance was,  
of course, his thorough knowledge of  
the resources of the country.

They found an admirable site for the  
mill in an old stone barn which had  
stood the ravages of desolation almost  
unimpaird. Red's mining experience  
told him that the creek could easily  
be dumed to the barn, and as that was  
the only objection of the others to  
this location they wrote the owner of  
the property for a price. They were  
astonished when they received the fig-  
ures. It had come by inheritance to  
a man to whom it was a white ele-  
phant of the most exasperating sort,  
and he was glad to get rid of it for  
almost a song. They were a jubilant  
three at the news. It saved the cost  
of building a mill, and, including that,  
the price was as low per acre as any  
land they could have obtained. Red  
closed the bargain instantly.

Lettis' part of the business was  
chiefly to arrange for the disposal of  
their product, and when he explained  
to his partners what he could reason-  
ably hope to do in that line the affair  
lost its last tint of unreality and be-  
came a good proposition, for Lettis  
had an excellent business acquaint-  
ance who would be glad to deal with  
the straightforward young fellow.  
The night after the signing of the  
deeds Red said to Miss Mattie: "We  
ought to have a stockholders' dinner  
tomorrow night, Mattie. If you could  
hire that scow built girl who wears  
her hair scrambled to come in and  
give you a lift, would you feel equal  
to it?"

"You always put it that I'm doing  
you a great favor in such things, Will,  
but you know perfectly well there's  
nothing I'd rather do," replied Miss  
Mattie, with a dimpling smile. "How-  
ever, it adds to the pleasure of it to  
have it put in that way, so I won't  
complain. I'll just have my supper  
first and then you men can talk over  
your business undisturbed."

"You will not—you'll eat with the  
rest of us!"  
"Yes, but you stockholders"—The  
word had an import to Miss Mattie,  
something, if not regal, at least a kin-  
ship to the king. Under her democra-  
cy lay a respect for the founded insti-  
tution, impersonal, an integral part of  
the law of the state—in fact, a minor  
sovereignty within an empire.

"Stockholder yourself!" retorted Red.  
"Don't you call me names."  
"What do you mean, Will?" asked  
Miss Mattie, with wide opened eyes.  
"I mean you're a stockholder as good  
as anybody. You've got half my stock.  
Now, hold on! Just listen. This is a  
queer run, Mattie, from the regulation  
point of view, this company of ours.  
I know enough about fillin' and back-  
in to know that. You ought to have  
seen the pryin' and pokin' and nosin'  
around them Boston men did before  
they took hold of the Chanta Seechee  
and made it a stock company! One  
feller was the abiest darn fool I ever  
come across. I used to let on I didn't  
savy anything about it. 'Now, ex-  
plain to me,' says I to him. 'You say  
you have so many shares of them  
stock,' waving my hand to a bunch of  
critters in the distance. 'What part  
do you take? I mean, what's your  
share of each annual? and does the  
last man get the hoofs and the tail?'  
'Oh, you don't understand,' says he.  
'I'll explain it to you.' So he starts  
in to tell me that 'stock didn't neces-  
sarily mean beef critters' and a lot  
more things, whilst old man Ferguson,  
who was putting the deal through,  
stood listening and chewing his teeth,  
thinking I was going to give our friend  
the frolicsome hee-hee at the wind-  
up. But I stood solemn and never  
even drew a smile, for fear of queer-  
ing Ferguson. Well, that's the proper  
way to start a company—make it as  
dreary and long winded as possible.  
We ain't done that, and perhaps we'll  
give for breaking the rules, and  
then your stock won't be worth a cuss.  
So don't you get excited about it. I  
wanted the Saunders family to be re-  
presented. Pretty soon the old lad with  
the nose will be around, and you'll  
have a chance to read about the 'par-  
ties of the first part' and 'second parts  
of the party' and 'afresoids' and 'be-  
hindsoids' and the rest of the yappi  
them lawyers swing so that honest  
men won't know what the devil they're  
up to."

"Oh, Will! How can I ever thank  
you?" cried Miss Mattie, her eyes fill-  
ing, at seemed a great and responsible  
position to the gentle lady to be a  
stockholder in the corporation. It  
wasn't the monetary value of the  
thing; it was the pride of place.  
"If you don't know how, don't try,"  
returned Red. "You give the other  
three stockholders a good feed to-mor-  
row and the thanks will be up to you.  
Hello! There's the old lad now!" as a  
trumpet blast rang out from the  
front porch. "It must take some prac-  
tice to blow your nose like that. I've  
heard jackasses that could not bray  
in the same class with that little old  
gent—come in. Come in! You needn't  
sound the rally again."

Thus adjured the lawyer made his  
entrance, and Miss Mattie became in  
due and involved course of law a  
stockholder in the Fairfield Straw-  
board Manufacturing company.

Fairfield rose to activity like a very  
small giant refreshed. Teams and  
their heavy loads kept the respect-  
able dust in constant commotion. A  
grist mill was added to the intended  
plant, thus offering an inducement to  
the farmer to raise grain, and incident-  
ally straw, "So we can catch 'em on  
both ends, too," as Red put it.

The time seemed like enchantment to  
Miss Mattie. As a bringer of the tid-  
ings and a stockholder in the company  
she had risen to be a person of im-  
portance, with the result that she was  
even more modestly shy than before,  
although in her heart she liked it;  
but more delightful yet was the spirit  
of holiday activity which inspired and  
permeated the place.

Red had insisted on operating on  
the lines that are laid down with rail-

road spikes in the western communi-  
ties—to patronize home industries as  
much as possible. Therefore the ma-



"Yes, ma'am, but we don't want that paint."

chinery orders went through Mr. Far-  
rel, the blacksmith, initiating that  
worthy man into the mysteries of  
making money without doing anything  
for it, which seemed little less than a  
miracle to him. Everything that could  
be bought through local people was ob-  
tained in that way. It cost a trifle  
more, but it brought more money into  
the place and enabled the villagers to  
partake of the enlightenment without  
the feeling that it was a Barmecide  
feast. The postmistress furnished the  
paint, and it is painful to add that  
she tried to furnish a No. 3 paint for  
a No. 1 price, arguing that she was a  
poor, lone woman struggling through  
an uncharitable world and that the  
increased profit would be her consid-  
erable good, a view which Red did not  
share. He would willingly have made  
her a present of the difference, but he  
did not in the least intend to be  
choused out of it by man or woman.  
They had a very funny debate in pri-  
vate, wherein the feminine tried to  
dominate the masculine principle by  
sheer volubility and found to its dis-  
gust that the method didn't work. Red  
listened most respectfully and always  
replied: "Yes, ma'am, but we don't  
want that paint. Get us some good  
paint—bully old paint with stickum in  
it. This stuff is like whitewash, only  
feebler. We're going to put on a  
swell front up at the mill, and we've  
got to have the right thing." And at  
last the postmistress said that she  
would, her respect for the ex-cow  
puncher having risen noticeably in the  
meantime.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE work on the mill was push-  
ed, and in spite of the usual  
amount of unforeseen delays it  
was ready for business by the  
latter part of September. The official  
opening was set for the 27th, Miss  
Mattie's birthday, and the village of  
Fairfield was invited to a picnic to be  
held at the mill in honor of the oc-  
casion. It is needless to say that the  
Fairfield Strawboard Manufacturing  
company did the thing up in shape.  
Wagons loaded with straw and drawn  
by four horse teams went the rounds  
of the village collecting the guests. It  
is doubtful if Fairfield was ever more  
surprised than at the realization of  
how much there was of her, using the  
pronoun out of respect to the majority,  
"when she was bunched," as Red said.  
You would not have believed that  
struggling, lonesome looking place held  
so many people. As Red could discover  
no means in the town's resources to  
provide a meal for 300 people, it was  
necessarily a basket party, which  
struck Mr. Saunders as being grievous-  
ly like a Swede treat. He made up  
for it in a measure by having barrels  
of lemonade and cider on tap at the  
grounds, stronger beverages being bar-  
red, and by hiring a quartet of strings  
"clear from town."

At half past 2 on a resplendent but  
hot September afternoon the caravan  
started for the mill grounds, the women  
dressed in the most unpenicly cos-  
tumes imaginable, and the men osten-  
tationously at ease in their store clothes.  
Every one was in the best of spirits,  
keen for the excitement and pleasure  
that was sure to mark the occasion.

Red rode old Buckskin, who had  
succumbed to the inevitable and only  
"jumped around a little," as Red put  
it, on being mounted. It was pretty  
lively "jumping around," but perhaps  
Mr. Saunders found some satisfaction  
in sitting perfectly at his ease, smok-  
ing his cigarette, while Buck jumped  
and Fairfield admired. And, at any  
rate, Buck had legs of iron and the  
wind of a locomotive, carrying Red all  
day and willing to kick at anything  
which bothered him when night came.  
He was a splendid beast through and  
through, from forelock to tail tip, but  
he had learned who was his master  
and obeyed him accordingly.

It was a fine ride, mostly under  
the shade of fine old trees. The road  
wound around the hills; here and there  
a break in the arboreal border showed  
views of rolling country, well shaped  
and pleasing, winding up grassy slopes  
in groves of verdure. Of course most  
of the freshness of leaf was past, yet  
the modest gray green gave a silvery  
sheen to the landscape that brought it  
into unity.

One member of the party felt that  
his heart was very full as he looked at  
it. That was Lettis. "Blast the old  
office!" he kept saying to himself.

"Blast its six dingy windows and the  
clock at the end! Doesn't this look  
good, and doesn't it smell good, dust  
and all?" and then he'd howl at the  
horses in sheer exuberance of good  
feeling, making the mild old brutes  
put a better foot of it to the front.  
Red centered up beside his wagon.  
"Well, Lettis," he said, "here we go  
for the opening overture with the full  
strength of the company—we're great  
people this day, ain't we?" And the  
big man smiled like a pleased big boy.

"Oh, what a bully old fellow you  
are!" thought Lettis as he looked at  
him. Lettis was thinking of other  
qualities than flesh, but the physical  
Red Saunders on horseback was de-  
serving of a glance from anybody; the  
massive figure so well poised; the clear  
cut, proud profile; the shapely head  
with its crown of red gold hair; the  
easy grace of him by virtue of his  
strength—it would be a remarkable  
crowd in which Chanta Seechee Red  
couldn't pass for a man. He was ev-  
ery inch of that from the ground up.

Lettis had come to bow down to him  
in adoration, with all an affectionate  
boy's worship. To those eyes Red  
was just right in every particular;  
likewise to Miss Mattie, who even  
now was filling her eyes with him  
from behind the vantage of a broad  
brimmed straw hat.

At last the whole party disembarked  
at the flat before the mill and made  
ready for the official starting of the  
machinery. The big doors were thrown  
open, so that the company could see  
within while resting outside in the  
shade, and under the cooling influence  
of what breeze there was. The mill  
was officially started. Red climbed  
the bank to the flume and raised the  
gate. The crowd cheered as the im-  
prisoned waters leaped to freedom  
with a hollow roar, raising in pitch as  
the penstock filled and the wheels be-  
gan to go round. Speech was called  
for, and the vigorously protesting Red  
was forced to the front by his former  
friends, Demitt and Lettis. Thus be-  
trayed by those he trusted, Red made  
the best of it.

"Ladies and gentlemen, fellow citi-  
zens," said he, "the mill is now open  
to all comers. We hope to make this  
thing a success. We hope to see every  
horny handed, hump backed farmer in  
the country rosin the soles of his moc-  
casins and shove his plow through  
twice as much ground as he ever did  
before, and if he comes here with his  
plunder we'll give him a square shake.  
We'll pay him as much as we daft  
and not let him in on the ground floor,  
so he can crawl out through the coal  
hole, as is sometimes done. Now, ev-  
erybody run away and have a good  
time, for I don't like to talk this yappi  
any more than you like to hear it.  
Kola zeus! By-by!"

(CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK)

Secretary Wilson of the department  
of agriculture says that the unbounded  
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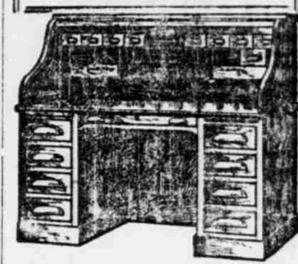
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