## WEB OF STEEL By CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY FATHER AND SON

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## CHAPTER XIX-Continued. -12-

"I don't see him. He's not there," to its owner.

"If he were there, you'd see him all

distance," said Rodney, after he had Yet if he were there, he certainly tind. You look, Dick."

ng to save that dam."

"Will it hold?" asked the woman. "Impossible," said Rodney.

handing over the glass,

yourself, Miss Illing vorth."

the roof of the world, they were spec- of the mesa and disappeared in the would fail, tators of a great battle, witnesses of plnes at its feet. effort, desperate courage, human will, other.

of continuous and frenzied endeavor, woman's heart. The spirit of reckless continuance had Even as he spoke, Helen Iflingworth the combination so greatly increased quences to him, he was bound to save blind intensity of determination that through the pines on the old trail. The ration when being carried. he gallops on until he drops dead, going was bad enough, but it was nothso these men gave their all in unmatchmble persistence.

"They'd better get off that dam," said the woods and ran along the greasy, fall against the rocks, slippery and tempt grandly and dare greatly for carefully covered with the raincoat, he Rodney. "When it once fails it'll go with a rush and then it'll be too Inte." valley from the ravine. "Look at them. They're not going to get off," said Winters, "They're going down with it, Fools, God bless could only stare and stare at the rap- of detonators in his pocket, the pack- well as general. If he died, whether And then? Would the dynamite go

arms in exuitation over manhood and in the lead, and the others following and carried the dynamite bag in his his endeavor. She would hear. It action at best, and although these We aren't beat yet." courage and determination. after. There Winters joined her. "Perhaps you had better go back,

Miss Illingworth," said Rodney, thinking of the horror she might witness at watch the dam for his paper." any moment.

bearded. From the angle at which it had difficulty in keeping their foot- words as they ran, they had both of he unfolded the paper about one of the they saw him it was impossible to rec- ing on the broken, rocky bottom, them learned what he would be at. cartridges and placed the detonator, ognize him, nor was he in his frantic When they reached the other side, They both realized that they were the he said at last, handing the glass back progress assuming the usual attitude Meade should above the storm:

and bearing of a man under ordinary "Murphy, bring your pick and shov- save the dam nobody and nothing this way with the greatest care. conditions which sometimes betray el; take that iron range-pole, too, could. And there was a trace of the ght," said Winters enthusiastically, him to those who know him well, Nor Here, Funaro, you take your shovel age-loag rivalry between the Celt and slits in the covering of the cartridges, because he'd be in the thick of the could Helen Illingworth with her and these."

trembling hands focus the glass, which As he spoke he ran into the office and the son of the barbarian who had hole, forcing them gently into place "I doubt if you can recognize any- she took from Rodney before the strug- shack and wrecked a transit tripod, fought together in the dawn of history with the butt ends of the tripod stakes ie, even through the glass, at such a gling adventurers had passed; and yet ruthlessly separating the legs from one vied with each other then. Again and and compressing them so that they there was something in the figure be- another by main force and pitching again Meade had to order them back. filled the holes completely. Then ocused it and taken a look himself. low that made her heart beat faster. two of them into the little Italian's He was keenly sensible of his danger. Meade placed his two prepared sticks She pressed her hand to the wet gar- outstretched arms,

would be in the thick of it. He's that ments over her heart and stared. Sud- Without a question, both men com- mite struck the ground violently, it four. He cut the fuse to the proper dealy Rodney raised his voice and plied with his directions. In a huge might explode. He knew that the un- length in each case, and, keeping it "I can't see him," said Winters in should at the very top of it. Winters crevice, almost a small cave, in the urn. "But what a fight they are mak- joined in, and even Helen Illingworth spur of the mesa which overhung the detonators might go off at any fimefound herself screaming. The three east end of the dam the explosives perhaps that was the greater dangermen below were not more than five or were stored. The dynamite was kept but he never checked his pace or heslsix hundred feet away, but evidently in oilskin bags, the detonating caps in tated in a leap or sought an easy way "I give it one hour," said Winters, they could not possibly hear in that waterproof boxes. There were six- for a second. His soul was rising and tumult of nature. No voices would teen sticks or cartridges in each bag. his heart was beating as they had "Not more than that," assented the carry through any such rain and wind. Each stick was an inch and a half in never risen or beaten in his life. And other, after another look. "See for They were too intent on their paths diameter and eight inches long. One the hearts of his men beat with his and on what they had to do to look bagful should be ample. Indeed, if own, From where they stood, high up on upward. They rounded the shoulder that did not do the work, the attempt He knew, of course, if the dam went

t terrible contest, in which herculean The three on the top looked at each ed a bag of dynamite, a box of detona- and everything and everybody would

generated into blind, mechanical habit quite unsuspecting what was in the and detonating caps should never be International. But whether that were

got into them and moved them to the turned away. She ran heavily in her the risk of premature explosion, them. The weight of every man, the impossible. As men in a battle charge sodden garments along the broken The fulminate of mercury in the weight of every woman, the weight of go on even with wounds enough to kill mesa top past the house to the upper detonators was very volatile, highly ex- every child in the valley, the weight them in ordinary circumstances, as sol- edge. There below her were the three plosive and immensely destructive, con- of all the business enterprises of the diers at Winchester, though shot in the men just emerging from the fringe of sidering its size. One such cap could town, the weight of the great viaduct heart, actually struggled after Sheri- trees. Rounding the end of the mesa, blow off a man's hand, or even his of steel, the weight of the huge dam dan until they fell, or even as a com- they had at last struck firmer ground, head, and in its explosion might deto- itself, was on his shoulders as he ran. mon horse may so be imbued with Helen Illingworth could see them nate the dynamite. Hence the sepa- He carried the burden lightly, as Atlas

ing compared to what they had passed knew how perilous was the undertak- tion and haste, he had in his heart the

he feels that he must stay back and Carried by the other men.

"Look," said Helen, pointing far he noted these preparations. He hap- pelling him to look up, but a presence was good-by dam-good-by everything.

stable fulminate of mercury in the

out the railroad, the bridge, the town, The men walted while Meade select- the citizens, the women and children, tors, and a package of fuses. It was a go. If he could save them, his act all exerted to the limit, finally de- "The dam still holds," said Rodney, cardinal rule that dynamite cartridges might be set off against the loss of the carried by the same person, because true or not, whatever the consemight have upborne the world with Meade decided to take that risk. He laughter. For, despite his determina-

over and presently they burst out of lng, how liable he was in his hurry to great joy that comes when men at-

asida

working since four in the morning at the dom, they had made that difficult run at headlong speed, yet they ishored like men possessen. They even wasted breath to call challengingly and provokingly and to set forth their progress each to the other. In almost less time He stepped quickly toward it, and as than it takes to tell it, they had completed the holes and so informed the engineer triumphantly.

Mende, as usual, had reserved to himself the more dangerous, if less arduous task. Covering himself with big Murphy's discarded slicker, which fell over him like a shelter tent as he knelt down, he opened the box of detonators, selected one, and attached wrapping the paper around it thereforlorn hope, that if they could not after. He prepared two cartridges

The men rapidly but carefully cut the Roman. The scion of the legionary and lowered four cartridges down each He knew that if he fell, if the dyna- with the detonators on top of the other



## He Was as One Dead.

well-rounded hogback that divided the half submerged in that pouring rain, their fellow-men. If he could only by held it while the others filled in the "em I" he shouted, throwing up his idly moving far-off figure indomitably age of fuses inside his flannel shirt, successful or not, men would tell about off? With fuses it was uncertain in its hand. He would need his free hand to came to him afterward, when he fuses were supposed to be so prepared "Rodney sent me to look after you; protect himself, so all the tools were learned how she had looked down upon as to be independent of weather conhim as he ran, that he had somehow ditions, more often than not rain The little Italian shook his head as felt her presence, not a presence im- spoiled a blast. If this blast failed it his flannel shirt a box of matches. He

"Don't go," cried Murphy,

"It ees danger," shouted Funaro, But Meade shook them off and bade them keep back. What was his danger compared to the issue involved? That last charge had to be exploded. he did so he threw his eyes up toward the gray, rain-filled heaven in one last appeal.

Did he hear the blind roar, did he see the upbursting masses of sodden earth, was he conscious of the fact that the whole side of the hillock had been blown away, that the last explosion had completed the shattering work of the first-that they had succeeded? the fuse in position carefully. Then Did he mark the whirling water, driven backward at first by the violence of the explosion, returning and rolling in vast mass through the great opening, did he see it plunging down the slope, through the trees and bushes, and pour thunderously into the bed of the ravine? Did he see the tremendous rush of the water from the great lake that man had created tear earth from earth, and ever widen and deepen the opening as it crashed in a fonming, terrible, red cataract through the outlet, striking down great trees, rowring, bolling wildly to the bottom of the gorge far below?

No, he saw nothing. Broken, beaten down by a huge bowlder that had been thrown upward by the explosion and had struck him on the breast, and lying battered under a rain of smaller stones and earth, he was as one dead. "By heavens !" cried Winters in great excitement on the crest of the hill. "he's done it. He's saved the dam; that's a man!"

"Don't you know him?" screamed Helen Illingworth in his ear. "No."

"Meade !"

Winters caught her by the arm.

"He's dead," she cried high and shrill, "but he saved the dam and the bridge and the town. He's made atonement."

"Yes, yes; don't faint," cried Winters.

"Faint! I'm going to him." "How?"

"The nearest way," screamed the woman, letting herself down over the cliff wall to the broken rocks, by which only the hardy could reach the lower level.

. . . . . .

What of the dam below in the vallev?

"Hold it, men, hold it; for God's sake, hold it," shouted Vandeventer, He knew what the consequences of and by see his hopes justified by sue- holes and the excavations and care- rising from his crouching position The woman had no idea what was such a fall would be. He would center cess, his happiness would be complete. fully tamped down the earth. All that against the pallsade to resume it toward, what was their purpose. She all risks in himself. He thrust the box And there were thoughts personal as remained was the lighting of the fuse, instantly he had spoken. "Keep it up. If it goes down, let's go down with it. Hang on-hang on! We'll hold it.

Broken words, oaths, protestations, curses, cheers, expletives in strange languages from the polyglot mob of men burst forth. Even cowards had been turned into heroes because they "I wouldn't be elsewhere for the down. The men halted at the very pened to be one of the explosive force, driving him on. He lost his hat, he tore Meade drew out from the pocket of had fought by the side of men. Here and there a man not weaker physically, perhaps, but less resolute, less spiritually consecrated, less divinely obsessed, dropped out of the rank that pitted Itself in furious, futile, but sublime fury against the wavering wall. Some of them fell backward and lay still. Some had fainted and some of them were half dead. A few here and there sank down on the trampled, muddy embankment and buried their heads in their hands, sobbing hysterically. But most still blind, mad, sublime, held on. And the palisade did not fall. It did not bend back any further. The throb that told of the tremendous pressure of the waves, the quiver that experience could feel the prelude to failure, began to die away, to stop, What did it mean? The thunder grew still, the rain diminished, it ceased, the clouds broke. Some great hand as of God, swiftly fore the black vault of the heavens apart. Faint light began to glow over the sodden land. Through the rift they saw dimly one great peak of mighty range. What had happened? "Here," said Vandeventer. How white he looked, how haggard, streaks of gray in his black hair that had not been there before, but his eves were blazing. He was still the indomitable chief of the Spartan band. The nearest men gave him a hand. He clambered up to his former vantage point on top of the highest log of the stockade and stared down. The rise of the water had stopped! He could not believe it, yet it was true. The rain had ceased again, but by every natural law the drainage from the hills would continue for some time in full volume. Yes, by all rights the dam was doomed. The water still trickled through the palisades in many small streams. That had been a gallant effort they had made, even if a vain one. For ten minutes he stood silent, exhausted. Then he saw. The water was not rising. No, it was falling; only a trifle, but enough. Presently it had stopped filtering through the revetment. He looked back. Not a drop ran on the other side of the palisade. Vandeventer knew that the water must be discharging somewhere. The lake must have broken through somewhere. He only needed that hint to recall the hogback, and then Meade. He saw it all now. "We've won, the dam's saved," he back of the palisade staring at him. "Roberts has blown up the hogback. The water's falling. See for your-Every man sprang up the palisade. They made these holes about four feet dous risk in a nearer approach. The Someone laughed and then someone deep below the excavation, driving in fuse might be alight still. At any sec- raised a cheer, and those mud-covered, and twisting and churning the stakes ond the finme might flash to the deto- sodden, worn-out men, who had been nator and then- Yet Meade had to about to die, saluted in heroic acclaim (TO BE CONTINUED.)

world." suid the brave girl, white but with firm lips-she was made of the were clustered together. The bag lay same stuff as the fighting men, it on the ground behind them. One man seemed-"even if he were there, fight- bent over it, evidently opening it. ing that great battle, I should wait to Another man swung the shovel vicioussee the end."

wilderness. Look yonder !" cried Win-Sers.

He pointed down through the ceaseiess rain toward the lower edge of the mesa. There, far below him, were three sodden figures. The water in the lake had flooded the slope of the hill, and on that side it was lapping the they were trying to the utmost limit. was perhaps due to the fact that he

One man carried a miner's pick, a had noted the situation later and had spade and a surveyor's range pole, the studied the conditions more recently. other another spade and two long Those solltary rambles of his, those stakes which looked like the separate careful inspections of the terrain of legs of a tripod. The bareheaded man, the valley, had been made long after who had thrown his rubber coat down the original surveys and the results of in the reddish-yellow water, carried a his observations were still fresh in his good-sized ollskin bag. He was the mind,

most hurried of the three. He ran The water was rising so rapidly some distance in front of the others, since the cloudburst and he saw the They noticed how carefully he sought inevitableness of the failure so clearly to protect the bag. When he slipped that he did not dare to waste time to or seemed about to fail, he always look up Vandeventer, tell him his plan, thrust it frantically away from the and get his permission. Every second was of the utmost value. When the rock with outstretched arm.

derstand.

What the three men would be at of thought came, he acted instantly. He course no one knew. It was obvious was in the position of the commander that they were in a desperate hurry of a small force to whom is suddenly and that the thing in the bag must be presented the bare possibility of wrestcarefully carried. Naturally the watch- ing victory from defeat by some spleners connected the men with the dam didly daring and unforeseen undertakbuilders. They were dressed as the ing. And he was the man to seize such men engaged in such labor would be a possibility find make the most of it, dressed. The pick, the spades and the He had endeared himself to some of pole and stakes hore but that conclu- the men and the respect in which he was held by Vandeventer was shared sion.

"What's in the bag?" asked the by the others. When he called two WODUUD.

"He carries it as though it might a big, burly Irishman and a stout little be gold or diamonds," said Winters. Italian, to follow him, they did it Rodney shook his head. Suddenly without a moment's hesitation. he divined the reason for the extreme care with which the bag was carried. The men were immediately below the shape of the objects that bulged the waterproof bag.

"I have it," he shouted. "Dynaralte !" ""What for?"

Rodney shook his head again. The man in front was in plain view. Me was a tail figure, his face was heavily three

narrowest part of the hogback. They ly, the third grabbed the pick. Win-"We're not the only people in this ters had been too far removed from engineering even yet to figure out what

was toward. They could only watch and wonder.

CHAPTER XX.

The Victors.

Meade knew that they were fighting base of the cliff. The trail had, of a losing battle. Every one of the course, been covered, and there was no higher grade men knew it also. The way of progress except by taking ad- spillway was entirely inadequate, but vantage of the broken rock at the foot it suddenly flashed into his mind, with of the cliff, which here and there still that consciousness of the hopelessness stood above the water. It was a place of the struggle, that perhaps there was where men could only pass by carefully another way to discharge the flood. choosing their way and calculating the The same idea might have come to distance of the next point toward any other of the more intelligent of the which to leap. These three were mov- men from Vandeventer down if they Ing like madmen, splashing through had taken a moment for reflection. If he could have managed it in fifteen crest. The rain was coming down When they ran back they saw that the water, hurling themselves from they had not been so frantically, so rock to rock, falling against the wall, frightfully engrossed in their present clutching a tree or shrub, slipping into puny but gallant efforts to save the the lake, saving themselves from dam, they certainly would have rememdrowning apparently only by the ca- bered. That the possibility came to price of complacent fortune, which Meade rather than to any of the others

hurrying his preparations, "but it's our only chance." ian gallantly. "No, I'll take both." "It ees danger," "Yes, but come on."

ald Eunaro impressively.

Meade, wasting no more words, sprang at what was left of the trail,



## His Soul Was Rising and His Heart Was Beating-

minutes; as it was, they made it in thirty. The extreme possibility of the of the most capable of the workmen, life of the dam seemed to Meade not much greater. He went in the lead, and by his direction the others kept "The rest of you keep on here," he

some distance behind him. "If I fall and explode this dynamite, shouted as he left the gang. "Murphy there's no need of all three of us beand Funaro, come with me. Keep it three watchers now. He could make up; I think I know a way to help," he ing blown up," he had said, and it was out pratty well what was the size and yelled back through the rain as he no reflection on their courage that they scrambled off the dam up the rocks to complied with his direction.

the spillway. It was not his fault that Indeed a storn command was necesthey could not hear and could not un- sary to keep the two men back. They had caught something of the gallant The water was rushing through the spirit of the engineer, and the big splilway about knee deep, and the Irishman and the little Italian were as

ose whose duty it was to do the off his long coat and threw blasting. In his practical way he knew as he plunged on with his precious bag had to light the farther cartridge fuse, a great deal about the properties and in his hand. He did not dare to look then run fifteen feet and light the possibilities of usefulness of the dyna- at his watch, he did not stop for anymite. Meade's purpose was obvious, thing, but it seemed that he must have He had made the nearer fuse a little even to Murphy, who was only a la- spent hours in that mad scramble over orer, though where he proposed to the water-covered rocks. He heaved a ork neither man had any idea at all. deep breath of relief when he rounded the mesa and struck the trail. Bad as lantly. "Dynamita no work in zis weather." was the going, it was nothing to what "Probably not," answered Meade, they had passed over.

Presently he broke out into the open slope and there before him was the "Give me ze caps," urged the Ital- rounded curve of the hogback, to gain which he had risked so much. Were they in time? Yes, the water in the in striking a match. lake was not flowing, it was only rising. Evidently the dam still held. He

ran along it till he reached the narrowest part of it, twenty feet wide and the two men gallantly followed between water-covered valley and alming was perhaps a little more than est separation between Picket Wire

he made his instant plan.

He laid the dynamite down just as Murphy and Funaro reached him and joining in his triumphant shout. "Now, stood panting, their heavy breathing, another hole right there," he pointed to the sweat mingling with the rain in the foot of the bank. "Drive it in their wet faces, evidencing their ex- slanting and it will do the job." haustion. From Murphy, who had been "Will the dam be after holdin' yit, legs, stout oak staves about an inch pick. and a half thick, with sharp metal points. He jammed them down into hurry." the ground about five feet from the about fifteen feet apart.

mough for five cartridges."

what to do. Murphy had often seen simple. Seizing their spades, the two caught and ran as before. men cut into the sod, using the pick

to dislodge small bowlders and break

bigger tripod stakes to follow, they rain. made two deep holes in the ground. forcing the pole and then the stake Meade desperately. into the earth, which the continuing

by main strength.

men plunging forward prough eager as he Helped by a few basty energy they applied. They had been far and worked so hard to fall now.

nearer one, and then make his escape. shorter so as to secure a simultaneous explosion if possible,

Tony Funaro now interposed gal-

"Giva me da light," he demanded, extending his hand.

"G'wan wid ye," shouted the big Irishman eagerly; "lemme do it, sor." "Stand back, both of you," cried Meade, succeeding after some trouble

He had cut off a shorter length of fuse for a torch, the better to carry the fire from one blast to another. As it sputtered into flame, he touched the first fuse, then the second, and turned him. The hogback at which he was sharply descending ravine. The short- and ran for his life after Murphy and Funaro. They had just got a safe distwo miles from the dam. On the ordi- and the Kicking Horse! The water in tance away when with a muffled roar nary trail and prepared for the run. the lake was within three feet of the the two blasts went off nearly together. steadily. He could realize by the wa- two-thirds of the hillock on that side ter level where he stood that it must of the ravine had gone. A wall of be lapping the top of the dam now, earth through which water was already or a little above it. He had five min- trickling rose between the great gap utes-ten at most. He was still in they had blown out and the lake, the time. The thoughts came to him as he upper level of which was much higher ran. And as he saw the place again than the bottom of the great crater they had opened.

"Hurrah," yelled Meade, the others

the faster, Meade took the two tripod sor?" asked Mike Murphy, seizing his

"I hope so, but, for God's sake,

With two men working, the last hole edge of the Kicking Horse ravine and was completed before Meade was ready. Funaro, indeed, came to his "Holes, there," he shouted, "deep assistance in preparing the cartridge. Presently all was completed. Reject-Funaro nodded. He knew exactly ing the pleas of both men, Meade struck the match, and this time, since the explosive gang at work. He was there was but one blast to be fired, he quick-witted and he had only to follow touched it directly to the fuse and the Italian's actions. The work was waited a second to see that it had

At a safe distance they drew back and walted. Nothing happened, A few up the earth. The soil was light and seconds dragged on. They saw no sign porous, and it had been well soaked of life in the fuse, no light. In spite by the rain. After they had made an of the care they had taken, it had got excavation about two feet deep, they wet. It would not work. The precious laid aside their shovels, and with the moments were flying. They stared iron range pole as a starter and the agonizingly at the fuse through the cried greatly to the men who stood

"TH have to take a look at it," said

Funaro and Murphy caught him by selves." rain tended to soften more and more, the arms. They all knew the tremen-

They could by no means have accom- go. That charge had to be exploded if him who had led them to victory and plished this save for the softening as- he detonated it by hand, he thought by implication him who had made that sistance of the rain and the furious desperately, and he had not come so triumph possible.