

The Blazed Trail

By STEWART EDWARD WHITE

Copyright, 1903, by Stewart Edward White

LAY THIS PAPER AWAY. YOU WILL VERY PROBABLY WANT TO READ THE BLAZED TRAIL LATER IF NOT NOW.

CHAPTER I. IN the network of streams draining the eastern portion of Michigan and known as the Saginaw waters the great firm of Morrison & Daly had for many years carried on extensive logging operations in the wilderness.

Now at last, in the early eighties, they reached the end of their holdings. Another winter would finish the cut.

At this juncture Mr. Daly called to him John Radway, a man whom he knew to possess extensive experience, a little capital and a desire for more of both.

"Radway," said he when the two found themselves alone in the mill office, "we expect to cut this year some 50,000,000, which will finish our pine holdings in the Saginaw waters. Most of this timber lies over in the Crooked Lake district, and that we expect to put in ourselves. We own, however, 5,000,000 on the Coss branch which we would like to log on contract. Would you care to take the job?"

"How much a thousand do you give?" asked Radway.

"Four dollars," replied the lumberman.

"I'll look at it," replied the jobber. So Radway got the "descriptions" and a little map divided into townships, sections and quarter sections and went out to look at it.

He searched until he found a "blaze" on a tree, the marking on which indicated it as the corner of a section. From this corner the boundary lines were blazed at right angles in either direction. Radway followed the blazed line. Thus he was able accurately to locate isolated "forties" (forty acres), "eighties," quarter sections and sections in a primeval wilderness. The feat, however, required considerable woodcraft, an exact sense of direction and a pocket compass.

These resources were still further drawn upon for the next task. Radway tramped the woods, hills and valleys to determine the most practical route over which to build a logging road from the standing timber to the shores of Coss branch. He found it to be an affair of some magnitude.

The pines stood on a country rolling with hills, deep with pot holes. It became necessary to dodge in and out, here and there, between the knolls, around and through the swamps, still keeping, however, in the same general direction and preserving always the requisite level or down grade. Radway had no vantage point from which to survey the country. A city man would promptly have lost himself in the tangle, but the woodsman emerged at last on the banks of a stream, leaving behind him a meandering trail of clipped trees.

"I'll take it," said he to Daly.

Daly now proceeded to drive a sharp bargain with him.

Customarily a jobber is paid a certain proportion of the agreed price as each stage of the work is completed. Daly objected to this method of procedure.

"You see, Radway," he explained, "it's our last season in the country. When this lot is in we want to pull up stakes, so we can't take any chances on not getting that timber in. If you don't finish your job, it keeps us here another season. There can be no doubt, therefore, that you finish your job. In other words, we can't take any chances. If you start the thing, you've got to carry it 'way through."

"I think I can, Mr. Daly," the jobber assured him.

"For that reason," went on Daly, "we object to paying you as the work progresses. We've got to have a guarantee that you don't quit on us and that those logs will be driven down the branch as far as the river in time to catch our drive. Therefore I'm going to make you a good price per thousand, but payable only when the logs are delivered to our river men."

Radway, with his usual mental attitude of one anxious to justify the other man, ended by seeing only his employer's argument. He did not perceive that the latter's proposition introduced into the transaction a gambling element. It became possible for Morrison & Daly to get a certain amount of work short of absolute completion done for nothing.

All this was in August. Radway, who was a good, practical woodsman, set about the job immediately. He gathered a crew, established a camp and began at once to cut roads through the country he had already blazed on his former trip.

Radway's task was not merely to level out and ballast the six feet of a roadbed already constructed, but to cut a way for five miles through the unbroken wilderness. The way had, moreover, to be not less than twenty-five feet wide, needed to be absolutely level and free from any kind of obstructions and required in the swamps liberal ballasting with poles, called corduroys. Not only must the growth be removed, but the roots must be cut out and the inequalities of the ground leveled up. Reflect further that Radway had but a brief time at his disposal, but that he was in a position to gauge the best disposition of those

American pioneer expects to encounter as a matter of course.

The jobber of course pushed his reads as rapidly as possible, but was greatly handicapped by lack of men. Winter set in early and surprised him with several of the smaller branches yet to finish. The main line, however, was done.

At intervals squares were cut out alongside. In them two long timbers or skids were laid endwise for the reception of the piles of logs which would be dragged from the fallen trees. They were called skidways. Then finally the season's cut began.

The men who were to fell the trees Radway distributed along one boundary of a "forty." They were instructed to move forward across the forty in a straight line, felling every pine tree over eight inches in diameter. While the saw gangs, three in number, prepared to fell the first tree, other men called swampers were busy cutting and clearing of roots narrow little trails down through the forest from the place to the skidway at the edge of the logging road. The trails were perhaps three feet wide and marvels of smoothness, although no attempt was made to level mere inequalities of the ground.

They were called travoy roads (French travois). Down them the logs would be dragged and hauled either by means of heavy steel logs or a short sledge on which one end of the timber would be chained.

Meantime the swampers were busy. Each pair of men selected a tree, the first they encountered over the blazed line of their forty. After determining in which direction it was to fall they set to work to chop a deep gash in that side of the trunk.

Tom Broadhead and Henry Paul picked out a tremendous pine, which they determined to throw across a little open space in proximity to the travoy road. One stood to right, the other left, and alternately their axes bit deep. Tom glanced up as a sailor looks aloft.

"She'll do, Hank," he said. The two then with a dozen half clips of the ax removed the inequalities of the bark from the saw's path. The long flexible ribbon of steel began to sing, bending or adapting to the lands and motions of the men manipulating that it did not seem possible so mobile an instrument could cut the rough pine. In a moment the song changed timbre. Without a word the men straightened their backs. Tom dived along the blade a thin stream of kerosene oil from a bottle in his hip pocket, and the swampers again bent to their work, swaying back and forth rhythmically, their muscles rippling under the texture of their woollen like those of a panther under its skin. The outer edge of the saw blade disappeared.

"Better wedge her, Tom," advised Hank. They paused while, with a heavy sledge, Tom drove a triangle of steel into the crack made by the sawing. This prevented the weight of the tree from pinching the saw. Then the rhythmic s-s-s, s-s-s, again took up its song.

When the trunk was nearly severed Tom drove another and thicker wedge. "Timber!" bellowed Hank in a long drawn melodious call that melted through the woods into the distance. The swampers ceased work and withdrew to safety.

"Crack!" called the tree. Hank coolly unhooked his saw handle, and Tom drew the blade through and out the other side.

The tree slivered, then leaped ever so slightly from the perpendicular, then fell at first gently, afterward with a crescendo rush, tearing through the branches of other trees, bending the small timber, breaking the smallest and at last hitting with a tremendous crash and bang which filled the air with a fog of small twigs, needles and the powder of snow.

Then the swampers, who have by now slashed the travoy road, trimmed the prostrate trunk clear of all protruberances. It required fairly skillful ax work. The branches had to be shaved close and clear, and at the same time the trunk must not be gashed. And often a man was forced to wield his instrument from a constrained position.

The clipped branches and limbs had now to be dragged clear and piled. While this was being finished Tom and Hank marked off and sawed the log lengths, paying due attention to the necessity of avoiding knots, forks and rotten places. Thus some of the logs were sixteen, some sixteen or fourteen and some only twelve feet in length.

Next appeared the teamsters with their little wooden sledges, their steel chains and their teams. They had been helping the skidders to place the parallel and level beams, or skids, on which the logs were to be piled by the side of the road. The tree which Tom and Hank had just felled lay up a gentle slope from the new travoy road, so little Fabian Laveque, the teamster, clamped the bits of his tongue to the end of the largest or butt log.

"Allez, Molly," he cried. A horse, heavy, elephantine, her head down, nose close to her chest, intelligently spying her steps, moved. The log half rolled over, slid three feet and succumbed a stump.

"Gee!" cried Laveque. Molly stepped twice directly sideways, planted her forefoot on a root she had seen and pulled sharply. The end of the log slid around the stump. "All!" commanded Laveque.

"All!" Molly started gingerly down the hill. She pulled the timber, heavy as an iron safe, here and there through the brush, making no noise, making no false moves, backing and finally getting out of the way of an unexpected mill with the ease and intelligence of Laveque himself. In five minutes the burden lay by the travoy road. In two minutes more one end of it had been rolled on the little flat wooden sledge and, the other end dragging, it was winding majestically down through the ancient forest.

When Molly and Fabian had travoyed the log to the skidway they drew it with a bump across the two parallel skids and left it there to be rolled to the top of the pile.

Then Mike McGovern and Hob Stratton and Jim Gladys took charge of it. Mike and Hob were running the cast hooks, while Jim stood on top of the great pile of logs already docked. A slender, pliable steel chain like a gray snake ran over the top of the pile and disappeared through a pulley to an invisible horse-Jenny, the mate of Molly. Jim threw the end of this chain down. Hob passed it over and under the log and returned it to Jim, who reached down after it with the hook of his implement. Thus the stick of timber rested in a long loop, one end of which led to the invisible horse, and the other Jim made fast to the top of the pile. He did so by jamming into another leg the steel swamp hook with which the chain was armed. When all was made fast the horse started.

"Let's a bumper," said Bob. "Look out, Mike!"

The log slid to the foot of the two parallel poles laid slanting the face of the pile. Then it trembled on the ascent. But one end struck for an instant, and at once the log took on a dangerous slant. Quick as light Bob and Mike sprang forward, gripped the hooks of the cast hooks like great thumbs and forefingers, and while one held with all his power, the other gave a sharp twist upward. The log straightened. It was a manner feat of power and the knack of applying strength justly.

At the top of the little incline the timber heaved for a second. "One more!" sang out Jim to the driver. He poised, stepped lightly up and down and avoided by the safe halfbreath being crushed when the log rolled. But it did not. He quite straight or even. So Mike cut a short, thick block and all three stirred the heavy timber sufficiently to admit of the billet's insertion.

Then the chain was thrown down for another. Jenny, harnessed only to a short, straight bar with a hook in it, leaned to her collar and dug her hoofs at the word of command. The driver, close to her tail, held fast the slender steel chain of an ingenious hitch about the over useful swamp hook. When Jim shouted "Whoa!" from the top of the skidway the driver did not trouble to stop the horse; he merely let go the hook. So the power was shut off suddenly, as in meet and proper in such ticklish business. He turned and walked back, and Jenny, like a dog, without the necessity of command, followed him in slow patience.

Now came Dyer, a sceler, rapidly down the logging road, a small, slender man with a little, turned up mustache. The men disliked him because of his affectation of a city smartness and because he never ate with them, even when there was plenty of room. The sceler's duty at present was to measure the diameter of the logs in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der. He stepped to the side of the log, and with a tape measure he measured the diameter of the log in each skid-

der power of the actual skidding. In a moment he moved on to the next scene of operations without having said a word to any of the men.

"A fine thing," said Mike, spitting. So day after day the work went on. Radway spent his time tramping through the woods, figuring on new ways, showing the men how to do things better or differently, discussing minute questions with the blacksmith, the carpenter, the cook.

He was not without his troubles. First he had not enough men, the snow lacked and then came too abundantly, horses fell sick of colic or calmed themselves, mules ran low unexpectedly, trees turned out "punk," a certain bit of ground proved soft for travoying, and so on. At election time, of course, a number of the men went out.

And one evening, two days after election time, another and important character entered the North woods and our story.

(TO BE CONTINUED.) A FISH OUT OF WATER The Unfortunate Plover That Caught His Country's Death.

A German scientist—he could only have been a German—once conceived, we are told, a plan to train a fish to live out of water. He placed a thriving little carp in a small tank and with infinite patience and great exactness removed from the tank one quartful of water every day, at the same time increasing gradually the amount of oxygen in the water. In time the water barely covered the carp, and still it thrived. The quantity of water continued to diminish, and, by slowly adapting its method of breathing to the new conditions, the fish began to breathe air and indeed became quite terrestrial in its habits before the tank was entirely dry. The scientist had grown to love the carp. He fed it from his own hand, and now that it was living in the same element with himself he took it from the tank and left it as free to follow its own device as was the family cat. The little fish adored its master. It followed him about from place to place, stopping along after him, stopping only occasionally to leap for a passing fly. One day the scientist was crossing a bridge. The carp, as usual, was at his heels, enjoying the pleasant air of the countryside and uttering from time to time a little sound expressive of delight and contentment. About the middle of the bridge a fat housefly was sunning itself on the rail. The carp spied the fly and jumped for it, but miscalculating the distance went over the rail into the river—and was drowned.—Great Round World.

Language. Language is the subtlest instrument ever played on by man. Its variations are limitless—that is, they are limited only by the powers of the human mind and soul in all possible situations. The power of words or speech exceeds that of music because language is more than music and even includes music. Language in the hands of a master is pregnant with every meaning.

A nation's language is at once an expression and a mold of its character, reflecting from century to century the development of its civilization and its advance in intellectual and moral culture, its training and refinement. The flexible Greek tongue was the product and the instrument of the subtle Greek intellect. The distinctive qualities of the classic speech of the Roman declare the dignity and the virile energy which were inseparable from the old Roman.—Portland Oregonian.

Scattered Two Weeks. "It always pays to be conservative," said the careful man. "Now, I recall the case of the man from Dyer'sville, Dyer county, Tenn.

"I can lick any man in Dyer'sville," he announced one day in the main street of that village.

"There was no response. 'I can lick any man in Dyer county,' he then proclaimed.

"Still there was no reply to the challenge. Emboldened by the success of his bluff, the man shouted, 'I can lick any man in Tennessee!'

"At that a long, lank mountaineer peered off his coat and wiped up the sweat with his boater.

"Gentlemen," said the braggart, as he brushed off his clothes, 'the trouble with me is that I scatter too darn much!'

Exhausted Brain Cells. Nerve specialists say that a great many suicides are the direct result of exhausted brain cells. When you find yourself becoming morose and despondent, when you are conscious that the best of life is evaporating, that you are losing the edge of your former keen interest in things generally and that your life is becoming a bore, you may be pretty sure that you need more sleep; that you need country or outdoor exercise. If you get these, you will find that all the old enthusiasm will return. A few days of exercise in the country rambles over the hills and meadows will erase the dark pictures which haunt you and will restore buoyancy to your animal spirits.—Success.

Getting Into a Lids Swoy. The average person in danger of freezing usually attempts to lift a life buoy over his head, with the result that he is immediately swamped deeper into the water. A good swimmer can do this with a sudden upward jerk, but with the nonswimmer it is almost an impossible feat.

What he should do when he has seized the buoy is to place both hands, palms downward, on the buoy on the part nearest the body, pressing it downward and slightly away, when the farther part of the buoy will rise out of the water and actually fall over the head. The arms can then be put through easily, "and there you are."

A MARINE AUTOCRAT.

The Captain of the Battleship and His Associate Authority.

Over the vast establishment rules the captain in supreme and isolated authority. All his accomplishments must be those of the seaman, for he directs the movements of the ship in all evolutions, and his decision upon all professional points is final. His responsibility at all times is grave and exacting. In time of war it will strain the stoutest nerves. In the hour of battle it is nothing short of appalling when he stands alone in his command tower, having control of all the tremendous forces lying latent in his ship only to be released at the proper moment by a touch of his hand. He is the guiding spirit of an enormous projectile of 15,000 tons that rushes through the water at a speed, it may be of fifteen knots, and he knows that the slightest mistake of his hand or heart may mean a national disaster.

But besides being the naval and military chief of the establishment he is a lawyer—a kind of justice of the peace, as it were, who holds court every morning, investigates reports of misdemeanors and then punishes to the full the guilty. The delinquents are brought to the "mast"—the quarter deck—with their accusers. Both sides are heard, and swift judgment usually follows. In this capacity it will be noted that the captain is court, judge and jury. Not infrequently he acts as clergyman, and as such is the bishop of his diocese, acknowledging no ecclesiastical superior, officiating at the burial of his dead and in the old days occasionally marrying lovers.—Louisiana Commander Gleaves in World's Work.

A Case of Interpretation. "What shall we do with the prisoner?" demanded the spokesman of the mob. "Do thou, O royal chamberlain, heed to the presence of his majesty and learn his wish."

The royal chamberlain hurried to the presence and bowed himself thrice to the floor; then he asked the monarch's pleasure regarding the desperate outlaw.

"Away with him!" said the king in a loud, harsh voice. But the chamberlain was something of a humorist, and when he returned to the mob he laughingly announced that in regard to the maledictions with the prisoner the king had said only that it was "a way with him."

Whereupon the mob reluctantly released their quarry. But in trying to explain the joke to the obtuse king the royal chamberlain became confused and completely lost his head.—Baltimore American.

COLOR OF JUDAS' HAIR.

In very early times all pictures of Judas were shown with great shades of red hair falling down well on the shoulders. This and the fact that the Jews in the "Miracle Plays" was provided with a red hairnet worked the superstitious people of the middle ages up to such a degree that it was actually unsafe for a red haired person to appear in company. Seeing that things were coming to a serious pass, writers of all classes began to rebuke and denounce "the senseless prejudice against those of lively colored hair." Cyrano de Bergerac in his "States and Empires of the Sun" boldly praised and glorified the despised color in the following words: "A brave head covered with red hair is nothing else but the sun in the midst of his rays, yet many speak ill of it because few have the honor to be so."

SOME EXAMPLES OF "HOTTER."

In a recent big libel case the foreman of the jury received a letter from a publican, apparently otherwise sane, asking him to insure that the jury should find for the defendant because he had a heavy bet on the result, and this astonishing epistle was read in court. It is interesting to note that the writer lost his bet anyhow. Equally bland was the request once made to Mr. Balfour during his premiership to have dismissed from the commission of the peace a justice who had very properly sentenced the author of the request, a notorious ruffian, to a still term of imprisonment for sending begging letters.—London Answers.

COURTESY.

A lawyer happened to be acquainted with a juror in a petty civil case, and he met him during a recess of the court. The lawyer was just "lighting up," and under ordinary circumstances he would have offered the other a cigar unhesitatingly, but it occurred to him that it might not look right.

"I suppose," he said guardedly, "that a cigar would not influence your verdict?" The juror was equally cautious. "A good one wouldn't," he replied, "but a poor one might prejudice us." He got a good cigar.—Brooklyn Eagle.

THE OLD RELIABLE



Absolutely Pure THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE

FURS, COATS, MILLINERY.

Clearing out stock. Prices will interest, goods will captivate the holiday buyer. Prices, quality, and pleased customers will make a clean sweep of these goods.

Walking Skirts Down.

Don't forget that walking skirts are now reduced to \$2.50 and \$3.50. They'll not stay here long.

Peco Petticoats.

Regular prices: 95c, \$1, \$1.25, \$1.50, \$2.25, \$3.50, and \$6.00. Matchless garments at the prices.

We thank our customers for a very generous patronage during the year now closing, and wish for them all a very pleasant Christmas.

JAS. F. YEAGER.

OPENING AN ACCOUNT



with the GASTONIA SAVINGS BANK should follow the opening of the NEW YEAR

as soon as the opening of our doors will permit. This is a time of new resolutions, new efforts. Correct business methods and money saving are synonymous terms. After closing up the week's or the month's business, place your balance with us. Another New Year will find you in better shape. Only \$1.00 required to start.

GASTONIA SAVINGS BANK.

L. L. JENKINS, Pres. L. L. HARDIN, Cashier.

Gastonia Banking Co.

Gastonia, N. C.

CAPITAL AND SURPLUS, \$75,000.00

State Bank Incorporated May 13, 1903

STATE AND COUNTY DEPOSITORY

Table with 2 columns: OFFICERS and DIRECTORS. OFFICERS: JNO. F. LOVE, President; R. C. G. LOVE, Vice Pres.; JAS. A. PAGE, Cashier. DIRECTORS: S. C. G. LOVE, JNO. F. LOVE, EDGAR LOVE, ROBT. A. LOVE.

THE PROBLEM

One of the most perplexing questions of the year is what to buy as a Christmas gift. What is more useful for a Christmas present than something in Clothing or Men's Furnishings? If you want something that will please your husband, your son, or your sweetheart nothing will more fully meet this requirement than a nice...

Silk Muller.

Neck Tie, a pair of Silk Suspenders, Gloves, Handkerchiefs, and a thousand other things to be had at the...

W. A. SLATER COMPANY

Up-to-date HATS AND... Cor. Main & South Streets... Tailored Buildings