

J. Wesley Crœsus

There had been no accident. The big touring-car, yellow with the dust of the Buckskin, stood intact on the sand flat where it had been backed and turned and headed toward the desert. Wading in the shallows of the river with a linen dust robe for a seine, the two younger men of the party were gathering the choicest of the dead mountain trout with which the eddy was thickly dotted. Coming toward him on the upward trail and climbing laboriously to gain the easier path among the pines, were the two remaining members of the party—an elderly, pudgy, stockily built man with a gray face, stiff gray mustaches and sandy-gray eyes to match, and the young woman, booted, gauntleted, veiled, and bulked into shapelessness by her touring coat, and yet triumphing exuberantly over all of these handicaps in an ebullient excess of captivating beauty and attractiveness.

Being a fisherman of mark and a true sportsman, Brouillard had a sudden rush of blood to the anger cells when he realized that the alarm which had brought him two hard-breathing miles out of his way had been the discharge of a stick of dynamite thrown into the Niquoia for the fish-killing purpose. In his code the dynamiting of a stream figured as a high crime. But the two on the trail had come up, and his protest was forestalled by