

The Trippers

This was the wording of it; and at the evening hour of train-changing in Council Bluffs, Ballard was sixteen hundred miles on his way, racing definitely to a conference with the president of Arcadia Irrigation in Denver, with the warning telegram from Lassley no more than a vague disturbing underthought.

What would lie beyond the conference he knew only in the large. As an industrial captain in touch with the moving world of great projects, he was familiar with the plan for the reclamation of the Arcadian desert. A dam was in process of construction, the waters of a mountain torrent were to be impounded, a system of irrigating canals opened, and a connecting link of railway built. Much of the work, he understood, was already done; and he was to take charge as chief of construction and carry it to its conclusion.

So much President Pelham's summons made clear. But what was the mystery hinted at in Lassley's telegram? And did it have any connection with that phrase in President Pelham's wire: "We need a fighting man"?

These queries, not yet satisfactorily answered, were presenting themselves afresh when Ballard followed the porter to the section reserved for him in the Denver sleeper. The car was well filled; and when he could break away from the specula-