

Among the Moonshiners

In the Ozark mountains there is a spring that could tell some startling tales and explain away the mystery surrounding the disappearance of more than one human being.

Jack Warner thought that he had made an important discovery, and the next minute he found that he had made two of them.

In the first place, he had discovered a "moonshine" distillery, which was important, but not interesting to him. In the next place, he was a prisoner in the hands of the "moonshiners" themselves, which was both important and interesting.

For two long hours in the stormiest of nights Jack had toiled wearily up a narrow ravine in the wildest of the Ozark range. He was wet, cold, exhausted and, worse than all else, lost. So when at last a little speck of light suddenly shone out of the darkness he hailed it as a harbinger of shelter and rest and hurried forward with renewed hope.

He had taken less than a dozen steps, however, when he found himself face to face with a tall, determined-looking man and a gun.

The two men scrutinized each other narrowly, while half a dozen ruffians gathered round. The man with the gun finally broke the silence by saying:

"It's a bad business, your coming here, young fellow; but since you have come we'll have to attend to you, I guess."

With that he made a motion to the other men, and they speedily bound Jack hand and foot.

"What does this mean?" Warner demanded.

"Oh, nothing much," the man with the gun replied. "About all it means is that you will have to take a bath in the Big Spring, and anything that goes in there never comes out."

Warner comprehended the man's meaning now and, aghast with horror, cried:

"Great God! Do you mean to drown me?"

"We mean to put you where you won't never tell no tales," was the cool reply.

Warner tried to collect his reasoning faculties and speak calmly.

"Before going any further let's sit down and talk this matter over. There is a misunderstanding," he began.

The other slowly shook his head.

"I guess," he replied, "there ain't no misunderstanding—on our part, at least. You made the mistake when you came here to spy on us."

"Right there you are wrong," Warner said. "I did not come here to spy on you."

"Ah, come! You can't fool us. If you ain't one of them revenuers sneaking round to locate our still, what are you doing here at this time of night and in all this storm?"

"Well, in the first place I am the new schoolteacher in this district. I've been here a week, and you have probably heard of me. In the second place, this being Saturday, I spent the day fishing, remained too late, and with rainstorm I lost my way. In the third place in my wanderings around this morning I accidentally stumbled on this spot. Now there's the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me."

After a pause the man with the gun replied:

"That may be so, but still I don't see that it changes matters any. You'd be most sure to report on us for the sake of the reward."

"I'll pledge you my word of honor that I will never whisper to any living mortal a word of all this."

"Maybe you won't; but, you see, we can't tell about that. Sometimes a man's word and honor don't amount to much, and we can't afford to take no great chances. There's no use of all this talk. We know our duty to ourselves, and we propose to do it. Boys, bring him on and let's settle it."

Two men advanced and took Warner by the arms to lead him away to the Big Spring. Pale with terror, he cried:

"Great God! Would you murder me?"

"It is better for you to go that way than for us to go at the end of a rope. Loosen his feet, boys, so he can step along."

They cut the cord about Warner's legs and started forward into the woods. But a woman, her face white and anxious, her hair flying wildly in the wind, barred their way.

"For God's sake, Liz," the man with the gun cried, "what's up?"

"They're here!" she gasped. Then, clasping her hands and looking into his face appealingly, she added: "Go, quick, Jake! Fly before they get you."

"What are you talking about?" Jake demanded. "Who is at? Not the?"

"Yes, yes; the revenuers! The

cabin's surrounded, and they're searching the woods. I slipped away, but most likely they seen me. Don't wait, Jake, but go quick!"

His face darkened, and a dangerous light came into his eyes.

"D—'em!" he said bitterly. "Let 'em come! I'll get some of 'em before they get me." Then, turning to his men, he added: "Stand back out of the light, boys, so that you can't be seen. Wait a minute! This man has been spying on us, and we'll fix him for it first."

With that he struck off into the woods, commanding two of his men to follow with Warner and the others, with Liz, to hide.

After covering about thirty yards along the side of the mountain he stopped on the brink of a dark hole. It was the Big Spring, that greedily swallows up everything that falls a prey to it and gives nothing back.

A cold chill of horror went over Warner as he heard the water boiling and bubbling down there in the dark.

"Throw him in, boys," Jake said coolly.

The men began to push Warner forward. In his struggles the rope slipped from his arms. Finding his hands free, he wrenched himself from the grasp of one of the men and, striking him a quick blow, sent him reeling back toward the spring.

There was a scream, a heavy splash in the water and then silence. Quickly following up his advantage, he struggled to free himself from the other man and had almost succeeded when Jake gave him a push that sent him flying over the brink of the spring and clear to the opposite side, where he struck against the bank.

As he began to sink down into the hole he clutched frantically in search of a support. When half his body was in the water, his fingers grasped a jutting stone that checked his fall. There he hung, his whole weight on his fingers and the waters tugging at him as if angrily determined to tear him away.

By a flash of lightning Jake saw him clinging to the wall and, with an oath, started around to that side of the spring. In another flash Warner saw Jake with his gun raised to strike him.

At the same instant there was a pistol report, and in the darkness Warner felt a heavy body plunge past him and heard a great splash in the water. Then, just as his fingers had begun to relax their hold, a pair of strong hands grasped his wrists and saved him from sinking. For the first time in his life he fainted.

When he returned to consciousness he was lying before a fire in the shelter of the still with a dozen detectives. Three of the "moonshiners" were in irons.

The detectives, guided by the scream of the man who had first met his fate in the spring, had arrived just in time to give Jake to the spring, which no doubt hid much of his guilty past. Afterward they had captured the rest of the gang, killing one in the fight. The woman Liz had escaped.

Want Shorter Hours.

Chicago, March 1.—Members of Typographical Union No. 16 have decided to make a demand for an eight-hour day with the present scale of wages in the job shops of Chicago. The shops are run under the nine-hour system at present, but the printers desire a shorter working day.

The propositions were submitted to the members of Typographical Unions through the referendum recently made. The first called for shorter hours at the present scale, the second for a nine-hour day at an increased scale and the third for shorter hours and an increased scale. The first proposition was carried by a large majority.

Takes Zola to Task.

Paris, March 1.—A criticism of M. Zola by M. Sienkiewicz is exciting much comment in literary circles.

The author of "Quo Vadis" remarked that any one taking the trouble to tabulate the women in Zola's books would find that ninety-nine out of every hundred are abandoned creatures and that such a literature of lies, exaggeration and love of filth was a libel on the French national life.

M. Zola's enemies are more than delighted at the Polish author's denunciation, saying it undermines the tenet that the realist is regarded abroad as France's representative novelist.

"So your horse was distanced, was he?"

"Yes."

"Did you have anything on him?"

"I thought I had a jockey on him, but it seems I didn't."—Richmond Dispatch.

Job Printing at Nugget office.

ELECTRIC RAILROAD

Is Planned for the Great Wheat Belt

Of Eastern Washington—Will Be Sixty Miles Long and Built by Subsidy.

Spokane, March 11.—Sixty miles of electric railroad, tapping one of the richest farming sections of the famous Big Bend country, is one of the possibilities of the near future, if the plans of H. Q. Wright and J. E. Moses of Seattle are consummated, as now seems altogether probable. Their plans have already been submitted to the residents of the section through which the proposed road will pass, and the farmers are said to have given the project their almost unanimous approval and signified their willingness to grant the right of way and pay the subsidy asked for.

The route for the new road as selected will start from Rock Island, on the line of the Great Northern, thence up Moses Coulee to Moses creek, thence to Waterville, thence northeast to within a mile of the town of Bucksport, eighteen miles south of Bridgeport. This will tap a section of the country which is given up almost entirely to wheat raising, and the grade will be an easy one. As to who are behind the promoters of the project or how much capital they expect to employ is not known here, the communications which have been received by the farmers simply bearing the signatures of Wright and Moses. The power for the road will be brought from Chelan Falls, about fifteen miles from Waterville. The gauge will be a standard one, so that the cars for the new road can be run in over the Great Northern. The farmers of that section are to hold a meeting at Waterville next week for the purpose of further considering

the proposition and taking the necessary steps to obtain the required signatures to the contract, the form of which has already been drawn up, but which, it is understood, will be changed in some respects before it is finally submitted for signatures.

The agreement submitted by Wright and Moses calls for a right of way of 100 feet, which must be donated by the property owners along the proposed route. It also contains a provision for the paying of a subsidy, each person owning property within ten miles of the line paying a certain sum, according to the distance his property is from the road. Every quarter section of land lying within one mile must pay \$50, within two miles \$45, within three miles \$40, within four miles \$35, within five miles \$30, within six miles \$25, within seven miles \$20, within eight miles \$15, within nine miles \$10 and within ten miles \$5.

It also binds the farmers to ship all of their wheat over this road for a period of ten years, the rates being fixed as follows: First year, 1 cent per bushel; second year, 3/4 cent per bushel; third year, 3/4 cent per bushel; fourth year, 3/4 cent per bushel; each year thereafter during the life of the contract, 3 cents per bushel.

If the farmers accept these terms it is proposed to begin work on the survey of the road at once, and complete it within thirty days. The grade for the first thirty miles is to be completed within six months and the road for that distance in operation within a year. The entire road is to be completed by December, 1905.

Ripley Breaks Down.

Chicago, March 1.—After being under the care of physicians since the recent meeting of the classification committee of the Eastern Railroad Freight Association, of which organization he is chairman, J. T. Ripley has been taken to the sanitarium at Wauwatosa, Wis. It became evident during the meeting of the committee that Mr. Ripley was suffering from some mental trouble, doubtless the result of too close attention to his work, and while his derangement is not of a violent nature, it has been thought best that he be given a long rest.

Differences between various railroads over classification have given Mr. Ripley an unusual amount of extra work since last December. He

grieved greatly over the Boer war and the Philippine and Cuban questions and was melancholy most of the time. Then came the committee meeting and his breakdown. Mr. Ripley is 52 years old, a man of family, and a member of the Oak Park Unity Church. He is prominent in railroad circles, having been connected with various transportation lines for nearly twenty-five years.

"I hear your club is going to give an entertainment. Do you think it will be a success?"

"Sure to be. We've arranged it so that every member is chairman of at least one committee."—Ex.

Mr. Timmid—Some doctors, you know, say that, er—kissing is often responsible for the spread of disease. Miss Koy—Is that so? By the way, did you know I had been vaccinated?—Philadelphia Press.

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