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THE RIVERMAN

BY STEWART EDWARD WHITE Copyright, 1918, by the McClure Company



JACK ORDE was the youngest and most energetic of a large family that had long since scattered to diverse cities and industries.



Chapter 8

GIN PILLS FOR THE KIDNEYS. 50¢ a box. 6 boxes for \$2.50. RHEUMATISM, 75¢.

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had paid. Grandma Orde herself answered the door.

Newmark took of his gray top hat. "Will you kindly tell me where Mr. Orde lives?"

"Parsonage," persisted Newmark. "I am looking for Mr. Jack Orde. I am sorry to have troubled you."

"Mr. Jack Orde lives here," returned Grandma Orde. "He is my son. Would you like to see him?"

"If you please," assented Newmark gravely, his thin, shrewd face masking itself with its usual expression of quizzical cynicism.

Newmark entered the cool, dusky interior and was shown to the left into a dim, long room.

He perched on a mahogany chair and had time to notice a bookcase with a white owl atop, an old piano with the yellowing keys, hair-cloth sofa and chairs, steel engraving and two oil portraits when Orde appeared.

Newmark had known Orde only as riverman. Like most easterners, he was unable to imagine a man in rough clothes as being anything but a rough man.

The figure he saw before him was correctly dressed in what was then the proper Sunday costume.

"Oh, it's you," Mr. Newmark cried Orde. "I'm glad to see you." He led the way into the hall and into another brighter room.

In which Grandma Orde sat, a canary singing above her head.

"Mother," said Orde, "this is Mr. Newmark, who was with us on the drive this spring."

"Mr. Newmark and I spoke at the door," said she, extending her frail hand.

"We'll have to figure that very closely. You know where these different drives would start from and how long each of them would take?"

"Oh, yes?"

"Well, then we'll figure how many days driving there is for each, and how many men there are, and what it costs for wages, grub, tools. We'll just have to make a margin for the actual cost and then add a margin for profit and for interest on our investment."

Amanda now announced dinner. Newmark looked puzzled and as he arose glanced surreptitiously at his watch.

Orde seemed to take the summons as time to be expiring, however. In fact, the strange hour was the usual Sunday custom in the Redding of that day and had to do with the late church freedom of Amanda and her like.

"Come in and eat with us," invited Orde.

But Newmark declined. "I'll come up tomorrow night, then, at half past 6 for supper," Orde urged him. "We can figure on these things a little."

"Oh, I'm not bashful about my career," laughed Orde.

"How old are you?" inquired Newmark abruptly.

"Thirty."

"How long have you been log driving?"

"About six years."

"Why did you go into it?"

"Because there's nothing ahead of shoveling dirt," Orde replied, with a quaint grin.

"I see," said Newmark after a pause. "Then you think there's more future to that sort of thing than the sort of thing the rest of your friends go in for—law and wholesale groceries and banking and the rest of it?"

"There is for me," replied Orde simply.

"You're merely river driving on a salary at thirty?"

Orde flushed slowly and shifted his position.

"I'm not asking all this out of idle curiosity. I've got a scheme in my head, and I think may work out big for us both."

"Well," assented Orde reservedly, "in that case—I'm foreman on this drive because my outfit went bankrupt two years ago and I'm making a fresh go at it."

"Failed?" inquired Newmark.

"Partner shaddled," replied Orde.

"Now, suppose you tell me what the devil you're driving at."

"Look here," said Newmark, abruptly changing the subject, "you know that rapids up river flanked by shallows, where the logs are always going aground?"

"I do."

"Well, why wouldn't it help to put a string of piers down both sides, with booms between them to hold the logs in the deeper water?"

"It would," said Orde.

"Why isn't it done, then?"

"Who would do it?" countered Orde.

"If Daly did it, for instance, then all the rest of the drivers would get the advantage of it for nothing."

"Get them to pay their share."

Orde grinned. "I'd like to see you get any three men to agree to anything on this river."

"How many firms drive logs on this stream?"

"Ten," replied Orde without hesitation.

"How many do they employ?"

"About 500 men."

"Now, suppose—suppose a firm should be organized to drive all the logs on the river. Suppose it improved the river with piers and dams, so that the driving would be easier. Couldn't it drive with less than 500 men and save money?"

"It might," agreed Orde.

"If such a firm should be organized to drive the logs for these ten firms at so much a thousand, do you suppose it would get the business?"

"It would depend on the driving firm," said Orde. "You see, mill men

indeed, so you couldn't have any more conversation from him. Besides, I want to talk to you myself."

"Do you always get what you want?" inquired the girl.

"Any one can get anything he wants if only he wants it bad enough," he asserted.

"Some people," she amended. "However, I forgive you. I will even flatter you by saying I am glad you came. You look to have reached the age of discretion. I venture to say that these boys' idea of a lively evening is to throw bread about the table."

Orde flushed a little. "The last time he had supper at Jane Hubbard's that was exactly what they did do."

"They are young, of course," he said, "and you and I are very old and wise."

"Now, tell me, what do you do?"

"What do I do?" asked Orde, puzzled.

"Yes. Everybody does something out west here."

"Is a river driver just now?"

"A river driver?" she repeated. "Why, I've just been hearing a great deal about you from Mrs. Bagan."

"Oh!" said Orde. "Then you know what a drunken, swearing, worthless lot of toughs we are, don't you?"

"There is Hell's Half Mile," she reminded him.

"Oh, yes," said Orde bitterly, "there's Hell's Half Mile! Whose fault is that? My rivermen's—my boys? Look here! I suppose you couldn't understand if I tried to talk to you about it, now?"

"You were working out in the woods nine months of the year. Suppose you slept in rough blankets on the ground or in a large pile of logs, with the big river roaring behind just waiting to swallow you; saw nothing but woods and river, were cold and hungry and wet, and so tired you couldn't wiggle. And then suppose you hit town, where there were all the things you hadn't had, and the first thing you struck was Hell's Half Mile. Say, you've seen war, where it has wheels to turn, but behind a jam it just rips things. Oh, what's the use talking? A girl doesn't know what it means. She couldn't understand."

"I think I begin to understand a little," she said softly. "But there are a heartless class in spite of all their courage, aren't they?"

"Heartless!" exploded Orde. "There's a kinder lot out there. There isn't a man on that river who doesn't chip in five or ten dollars when a man is hurt or killed, and that means three dollars at home for his wife and children. They may not know or like the injured man at all. Why?"

"What's all the excitement?" drawled Jane Hubbard, behind them, "that you make it a to be continued in our next? We're most starved."

"Yes, indeed," chimed the incubus. "The company trooped out to the dining room where the table, spread with all the good things, awaited them."

To Orde's relief no one threw any bread, although the whole-hearted fun grew boisterous enough before the close of the meal.

In spite of her half scornful references to "bread throwing" Miss Bishop looked with evident pleasure in the badinage.

After the meal was finished Orde, with determination, made his way to Miss Bishop's side. She turned to the piano, struck a few chords, and then, her long hands wandering idly and softly up and down the keys, she smiled at them over her shoulder.

Some followed song, at first quickly, then at longer intervals. The girl still sat at the piano, her head thrown back idly, her hands wandering softly in and out of melodies and modulations.

The mocking had gone from her eyes and mouth.

Orde finally saw only the shimmer of her white figure and the white outline of her head and throat. She sat looking straight ahead of her.

Orde came to her.

"That was a wonderfully beautiful thing," said he. "What was it?"

She turned to him, and he saw that the mocking had gone from her eyes and mouth, leaving them quite simple, like a child's.

He hesitated and stammered awkwardly. "It was so still and soothing it made me think of the river sometimes about dusk. What was it?"

"It wasn't anything. I was improvising."

"You made it up yourself?"

"It was myself, I suppose. I love to build myself a garden and wander on until I lose myself in it. I'm glad there was a river in the garden—a nice, still, twilight river."

At this moment the outside door opened to admit Mr. and Mrs. Hubbard, who had, according to their usual Sunday custom, been spending the

evening with a neighbor. The company began to break up.

Orde pushed his broad shoulders in to screen Carroll Bishop from the others.

"Are you staying here?" he asked.

"I'm visiting Jane."

"Are you going to be here long?" was Orde's next question.

"About a month."

"I am coming to see you," announced Orde. "Good night."

He took her hand, dropped it and followed the others into the hall, leaving her standing by the lamp. She watched him until the outer door had closed behind him.

Jane Hubbard returning after a moment from the hall, found her at the piano again, her head slightly on one side, playing with painful and accurate exactness a simple one finger melody.

Beaching his home, Orde walked confidently to the narrow stairs and ascended them. Subconsciously he avoided the creaking step, but outside his mother's door he stopped, arrested by a greeting from within.

"That you, Jack?" queried Grandma Orde.

For answer Orde entered. He made out the great square bed and divined the tiny figure of his mother.

"Mother," said he, abruptly, "I've met the girl I want for my wife."

Grandma Orde sat up in bed.

"Who is she?" she demanded.

"Her name is Carroll Bishop," said Orde, "and she's visiting Jane Hubbard."

"Yes, but who is she?" insisted Grandma Orde. "Where is she from?"

Orde started at her in the dim light. "Why, mother, bless if I know that!"

"One column of chapter 8 of this story was inserted by mistake in chapter 7 in last week's issue. It now appears in its correct position."

A Constipation Cure. A druggist says: "For nearly thirty years I have commended the Extract of Roots, known as Mother Selge's Curative Syrup, for the radical cure of constipation and indigestion. It is an old reliable remedy that never fails to do the work in 30 drops, three times daily. Get the Genuine, at druggists."

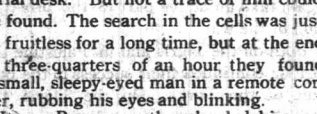
A LOST SHEEP

Consternation was caused in the drunk court this am. by the mysterious disappearance of Roman Hrivick, a Pole, who should have answered a charge of drunkenness.

But the Roman could nowhere be found. They searched the dock, the corridors, the Crown Attorney's den, the magistrate's sanctum, the clerk looked into the ink pots, and Mr. Cohen, J.P. moved his legs restlessly, as if the missing gentleman might happen to be under the magistrate's desk. But not a trace of him could be found.

The search in the cells was just as fruitless for a long time, but at the end of three-quarters of an hour they found a small, sleepy-eyed man in a remote corner, rubbing his eyes and blinking.

It was Roman; so they hauled him upstairs, propped him against the dock rail, handed him his hat, straightened his coat collar, recited the official "piece," then fined him \$10.—Toronto Telegram.



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