

Treasure Trail

By Frederick Niven

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CHAPTER VI.

Piccolo Manages To Tell

Piccolo, who had been out with Tremaine all the afternoon riding the fence, drew off his work gloves, marching into the house, and laid them on the table deliberately, wire-pilers on top. Angus's "last of the cowpunchers" in those parts and the modern epoch, though still competent to build a pole corral, or the lazy snake fence, was well acquainted with wire.

He stood there sniffing slightly and staring round to see if anything was missing. The little clock tick-tocked, like a mechanical friend. It was still there! He slowly scratched a temple, the books were. One had been put in upside down. It was his atlas. He took it in hand absently to put it in correctly and then stood holding it, frowning.

"Now," he thought, "we left that sketch map sticking in this atlas last night. I remember well. It stuck right out. He slowly scratched a temple, the books were. Or did Angus take it with him at the end? No, I'm sure I remember seeing him put it in. He only pocketed the ore sample. I saw him do that sure. But what did that fellow Movie Bill want with the map? Why has he stolen it? Maps and the smell of wood-smoke," by heck! What does he know?"

He sniffed strongly. He too, like Movie Bill, had not been smoking, so his olfactory nerves were alert to the odor of the tobacco smoke of others. He smelt the odour of a rank cigar. Rotten stinkadors of a cigar he smokes too," he said.

To be quite sure, however, utterly sure, to make assurance doubly sure, he rang up Angus on the 'phone. He was going to say: "Did you, or did you not, take that little map with you last night?" but just as he got the connection, up came in the ascendancy the Piccolo who was timid about showing himself in a scrape. He thought he would find out by substitute instead of asking direct.

So he merely said: "Say, Mr. MacPherson, how about my coming over to fix up our hitting the trail?"

"Speak louder," rumbled Angus's voice.

Piccolo repeated his words, high and shrill.

"Oh, it's you, Pic," said Angus. "Then speak lower."

Piccolo tried again.

"The sooner the better," came the old prospector's voice accentuated basso-profundo and no shout, as if to show Piccolo how to talk on the wire; and to Thomas he carried the suggestion (whether Angus meant them that way or not) that MacPherson thought his last of the cowpunchers might blab the whole secret away if they did not speedily depart.

"All right," said Piccolo. "I quite agree. I'll come after supper."

And to the preparation of supper, for which he had come home in advance of Tremaine, he set himself. Jack came in when its odours were drifting out to blend with the faint aromatic scent of the early spring sage—yellow sage they have there; but to his partner Piccolo said not a word of their recent visitor and what, in his mind, he had classed as a "hot-air spile."

So that night Angus MacPherson and Piccolo sat with heads together under the hanging lamp and growled and piped one at the other.

Angus wet the end of a pencil and wrote on a sheet of paper: "Flour, bacon, sugar, tea—"

"Do you care for coffee?" he asked.

"Oh, not specially, thank you," answered Piccolo.

Angus's mouth twitched at the "thank you". His sense of humour was very much of the dry "pawky" Scots order. It sounded as if Piccolo was responding to an invitation.

"Tea is the dope, ye ken," said Angus in blend of his two languages.

"Yes," agreed Piccolo.

"Blankets. I think a couple of blankets would suffice. I have my Hudson Bay four-point that served me at forty below on the Parsnip River. Two pair of four-points, and a bed of balsam boughs; one ply of the blanket under me, three layers on top, a wind-screen of boughs and a fire in front, and I slept fine."

"It's not like that up there," said Piccolo.

"No, no, I know. I'm no' saying it is. Man, I'm not outfitting now—I'm being reminiscental."

"Oh, I see," said Piccolo.

"By the way," said Angus, "that map I drew. Have ye it on yet?"

So Piccolo did not require adroitness to work the conversation round to that.

"Well, no. Er—didn't you bring it with you last night?"

"Bring it? No!" answered Angus. "I put it in the atlas for safety. I just wondered if we had brought it along."

"No," said Piccolo.

"No matter," said Angus. "Let me see. We'll have to consider how long we may be gone so as to compute the amounts."

"Pardon me, sir—"

"That map—"

"Oh, it's of no amount. Now bacon. Let me see."

Piccolo wondered if he should say anything of the fact that it had gone blanking out later, and getting into a foolish position by being blamed for not having said it had been taken. He frowned. He scratched his temple vigorously.

"It's not in the shack, that map," he said.

Angus sat back.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

TWO-PIECE FROCK OF GRAY KASHA FOR SPRING



There is a decided vogue for two piece dresses for sports and street wear. Consequently, there are several popular versions of the simple two-piece dress, but none more attractive than the model shown here.

There is a straight skirt, and over this a slip-on blouse which pulls down close about the hips. A feature of the blouse is seen in the set-on band which ends at either side in front, where it is held down by a row of buttons. From these buttons extend narrow ties, terminating in a bow in front. The buttons are covered with black, as black and gray is one of the new color combinations.

This model would also be attractive in white kasha for sports wear.

that made me forget. It's Kokanee—for all reasons. But obviously someone, maybe several, are already cognizant of your find. Now, keep your mouth shut till we go. There's a stage starts tomorrow for the railroad, and there we'll get on the train to Spokane. Then we'll go on to the Landing, and take the river steamer. All ye have to let out of your mouth is that Mr. Angus MacPherson has been reading in the papers about the excitement over the gold strike at Kokanee, and being too old to go out alone has asked you accompany him. We start tomorrow. The stage goes daily to Eagle Bend now. Repeat your lesson."

At these words the parrot, covered though he was with a bandanna handkerchief, in a sleepy voice said: "Search me! Search me! Search me!" Piccolo started.

"It's just the bird," said Angus. "Repeat your lesson."

"I'm going out with you," said Piccolo. "You have been shooting off your trap about the mining excitement and all about prospecting and the old

days, and I'm going to have a flutter at it anyhow, for the fun of it if not for the fortune. Here's jus for the Kokanee boom?"

"Fine!" said Angus. "Fine."

But after Piccolo had gone he sat a long while pulling his short beard and musing on old stories, in his experience, of more than one man seeking for the same treasure; musing also on what he had heard of Movie Bill in the T. T. ranch house, and the missing map.

"I wonder if that man Movie Bill is not the kind of man I imagined," he thought. "It's awful to be disappointed in our friends and he is a man I like. He has an interest in more than poker and bridge. Ye do not need to bring out the cards when he calls. He has a gusto for the world God gave us to live in. He can talk, and he can listen. I wonder who the other man was, if there was another man. Maybe if I tell him I'm interested in Piccolo he'll tell me the full significance of Piccolo's story."

To be continued.

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Be it enacted by the Governor, Council and Assembly, as follows:

1.—Section 7 of Chapter 77 of the Revised Statutes, 1923, the "Load of Vehicles Act", is repealed and the following substituted therefor:

7.—(1) No person shall operate a motor vehicle that is subject to the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act on any highway in any municipality after the first day of March and before the first day of June following without the permission of the Superintendent of Highways or of such other officer as may be appointed by the Provincial Highways Board for that purpose first had and obtained.

(2) The Provincial Highways Board from time to time in each year may, and is hereby authorized and empowered with the approval of the Minister of Highways, to exempt from the provisions of Sub-section 1 of this section, for the whole or any part of the period between the first day of March and the first day of June following in the year and for which the exemption is granted, every person operating any motor vehicle or a motor vehicle of any particular class that is subject to the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act, on all highways within any municipality or municipalities which highways in the opinion of the Provincial Highways Board will not be unreasonably damaged by reason of the granting of such exemption.

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