

The Mountain Divide

the young operator's eyes. "Not for everybody—sometimes not for strangers. Strangers have to get used to it. There is a river here," added the lineman sententiously. "It's pretty swift, too."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean you have got to be careful how you do things out in this country."

"But, Bill," persisted the lad, "if there is going to be any business done in this office we have got to have order, haven't we?" The lineman snorted and the operator saw that his appeal had fallen flat. "My batteries, Bill," he added, changing the subject, "are no good at all. I sent for you because I want you to go over them now, to-night, and start me right. What are you going to do?"

Dancing had begun to poke at the ashes in the stove. "Build a fire," he returned, looking about for material. He gathered up what waste paper was at hand, pushed it into the stove, and catching up the way-bills from the desk, threw them in on the paper and began to feel in his wet pockets for matches.