jacks. He has big ideas of respect, so he 'calls' Tim dignified like.

"Tim didn't hit him; but I guess he felt like th' man who met the bear without any weapon—even a newspaper would 'a' come handy. He hands in his time t' once and quits. Sence then he's been as mad as a bar-keep with a lead quarter, which ain't usual for Tim. He's been filin' his teeth for M. & D. right along. Somethin's behind it all, I reckon."

"Where'll I find him?" asked Thorpe.

Jackson gave the name of a small boarding-house. Shortly after, Thorpe left him to amuse the others with his unique conversation, and hunted up Shearer's stopping-place.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

THE boarding-house proved to be of the typical lumber-jack class—a narrow "stoop," a hallway and stairs in the centre, and an office and bar on either side. Shearer and a half dozen other men about his own age sat, their chairs on two legs and their "cork" boots on the rounds of the chairs, smoking placidly in the tepid evening air. The light came from inside the building, so that while Thorpe was in plain view, he could not make out which of the dark figures on the piazza was the man he wanted. He approached, and attempted an identifying scrutiny. The men, with the taciturnity of their class in the presence of a stranger, said nothing.

"Well, bub," finally drawled a voice from the corner, "blowed that stake you made out of Radway, yet?"

"That you, Shearer?" inquired Thorpe advancing. "You're the man I'm looking for."

"You've found me," replied the old man dryly.

Thorpe was requested elaborately to "shake hands" with the owners of six names. Then he had a chance to intimate quietly to Shearer that he wanted a word with him alone. The riverman rose silently and led the way up the straight, uncarpeted

stairs, along a narrow, uncarpeted hall, to a square, uncarpeted bedroom. The walls and ceiling of this apartment were of unpainted planed pine. It contained a cheap bureau, one chair, and a bed and washstand to match the bureau. Shearer lit the lamp and sat on the bed.

"What is it?" he asked.

"I have a little pine up in the northern peninsula within walking distance of Marquette," said Thorpe, "and I want to get a crew of about twenty men. It occurred to me that you might be willing to help me."

The riverman frowned steadily at his interlocutor from under his bushy brows.

"How much pine you got?" he asked finally.

"About three hundred millions," replied Thorpe quietly.

The old man's blue eyes fixed themselves with unwavering steadiness on Thorpe's face.

"You're jobbing some of it, eh?" he submitted finally as the only probable conclusion. "Do you think you know enough about it? Who does it belong to?"

"It belongs to a man named Carpenter and myself."

The riverman pondered this slowly for an appreciable interval, and then shot out another question.

"How'd you get it?"

Thorpe told him simply, omitting nothing except the name of the firm up-river. When he had finished, Shearer evinced no astonishment nor approval.

"You done well," he commented finally. Then after another interval:

"Have you found out who was the men stealin' the pine?"

"Yes," replied Thorpe quietly, "it was Morrison & Daly."

The old man flickered not an eyelid. He slowly filled his pipe and lit it.

"I'll get you a crew of men," said he, "if you'll take me as foreman."

"But it's a little job at first," protested Thorpe. "I only want a camp of twenty. It wouldn't be worth your while."

"That's my look-out. I'll take th' job," replied the logger grimly. "You got three hundred million there, ain't you? And you're goin' to cut it? It ain't such a small job."

Thorpe could hardly believe his good-fortune in having gained so important a recruit. With a practical man as foreman, his mind would be relieved of a great deal of worry over unfamiliar detail. He saw at once that he would himself be able to perform all the duties of scaler, keep in touch with the needs of the camp, and supervise the campaign. Nevertheless he answered the older man's glance with one as keen, and said:

"Look here, Shearer, if you take this job, we may as well understand each other at the start. This is going to be my camp, and I'm going to be boss. I don't know much about logging, and I shall want you to take charge of all that, but I shall want to know just why you do each thing, and if my judgment advises otherwise, my judgment goes. If I want to discharge a man, he *walks* without any question. I know about what I shall expect of each man; and I intend to get it out of him. And in questions of policy mine is the say-so every trip. Now I know you're a good man—one of the best there is—and I presume I shall find your judgment the best, but I don't want any mistakes to start with. If you want to be my foreman on those terms, just say so, and I'll be tickled to death to have you."

For the first time the lumberman's face lost, during a single instant, its mask of immobility. His steel-blue eyes flashed, his mouth twitched with some strong emotion. For the first time, too, he spoke without his contemplative pause of preparation.

"That's th' way to talk!" he cried. "Go with you? Well I should rise to remark! You're the boss; and I always said it. I'll get you a gang of bully boys that will roll logs till there's skating in hell!"

Thorpe left, after making an appointment at his

own hotel for the following day, more than pleased with his luck. Although he had by now fairly good and practical ideas in regard to the logging of a bunch of pine, he felt himself to be very deficient in the details. In fact, he anticipated his next step with shaky confidence. He would now be called upon to buy four or five teams of horses, and enough feed to last them the entire winter; he would have to arrange for provisions in abundance and variety for his men; he would have to figure on blankets, harness, cook-camp utensils, stoves, blacksmith tools, iron, axes, chains, cant-hooks, van-goods, pails, lamps, oil, matches, all sorts of hardware—in short, all the thousand and one things, from needles to court-plaster, of which a self-sufficing community might come in need. And he would have to figure out his requirements for the entire winter. After navigation closed, he could import nothing more.

How could he know what to buy—how many barrels of flour, how much coffee, raisins, baking powder, soda, pork, beans, dried apples, sugar, nutmeg, pepper, salt, crackers, molasses, ginger, lard, tea, corned beef, catsup, mustard—to last twenty men five or six months? How could he be expected to think of each item of a list of two hundred, the lack of which meant measureless bother, and the desirability of which suggested itself only when the necessity arose? It is easy, when the mind is occupied with multitudinous detail, to forget simple things,

like brooms or iron shovels. With Tim Shearer to help his inexperience, he felt easy. He knew he could attend to advantageous buying, and to making arrangements with the steamship line to Marquette for the landing of his goods at the mouth of the Ossawinamakee.

Deep in these thoughts, he wandered on at random. He suddenly came to himself in the toughest quarter of Bay City.

Through the summer night shrilled the sound of cachinations painted to the colors of mirth. A cheap piano rattled and thumped through an open window. Men's and women's voices mingled in rising and falling gradations of harshness. Lights streamed irregularly across the dark.

Thorpe became aware of a figure crouched in the doorway almost at his feet. The sill lay in shadow so the bulk was lost, but the flickering rays of a distant street lamp threw into relief the high-lights of a violin, and a head. The face upturned to him was thin and white and wolfish under a broad white brow. Dark eyes gleamed at him with the expression of a fierce animal. Across the forehead ran a long but shallow cut from which blood dripped. The creature clasped both arms around a violin. He crouched there and stared up at Thorpe, who stared down at him.

"What's the matter?" asked the latter finally.

The creature made no reply, but drew his arms

closer about his instrument, and blinked his wolf eyes.

Moved by some strange, half-tolerant whim of compassion, Thorpe made a sign to the unknown to rise.

"Come with me," said he, "and I'll have your forehead attended to."

The wolf eyes gleamed into his with a sudden savage concentration. Then their owner obediently arose.

Thorpe now saw that the body before him was of a cripple, short-legged, hunch-backed, long-armed, pigeon-breasted. The large head sat strangely top-heavy between even the broad shoulders. It confirmed the hopeless but sullen despair that brooded on the white countenance.

At the hotel Thorpe, examining the cut, found it more serious in appearance than in reality. With a few pieces of sticking plaster he drew its edges together.

Then he attempted to interrogate his find.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Phil."

"Phil what?"

Silence.

"How did you get hurt?"

No reply.

"Were you playing your fiddle in one of those houses?"

The cripple nodded slowly.

"Are you hungry?" asked Thorpe, with a sudden thoughtfulness.

"Yes," replied the cripple, with a lightning gleam in his wolf eyes.

Thorpe rang the bell. To the boy who answered it he said:

"Bring me half a dozen beef sandwiches and a glass of milk, and be quick about it."

"Do you play the fiddle much?" continued Thorpe.

The cripple nodded again.

"Let's hear what you can do."

"They cut my strings!" cried Phil with a passionate wail.

The cry came from the heart, and Thorpe was touched by it. The price of strings was evidently a big sum.

"I'll get you more in the morning," said he. "Would you like to leave Bay City?"

"Yes!" cried the boy with passion.

"You would have to work. You would have to be chore-boy in a lumber camp, and play fiddle for the men when they wanted you to."

"I'll do it," said the cripple.

"Are you sure you could? You will have to split all the wood for the men, the cook, and the office; you will have to draw the water, and fill the lamps, and keep the camps clean. You will be paid

for it, but it is quite a job. And you would have to do it well. If you did not do it well, I would discharge you."

"I will do it!" repeated the cripple with a shade more earnestness.

"All right, then I'll take you," replied Thorpe.

The cripple said nothing, nor moved a muscle of his face, but the gleam of the wolf faded to give place to the soft, affectionate glow seen in the eyes of a setter dog. Thorpe was startled at the change.

A knock announced the sandwiches and milk. The cripple fell upon them with both hands in a sudden ecstasy of hunger. When he had finished, he looked again at Thorpe, and this time there were tears in his eyes.

A little later Thorpe interviewed the proprietor of the hotel.

"I wish you'd give this boy a good cheap room and charge his keep to me," said he. "He's going north with me."

Phil was led away by the irreverent porter, hugging tightly his unstrung violin to his bosom.

Thorpe lay awake for some time after retiring. Phil claimed a share of his thoughts.

Thorpe's winter in the woods had impressed upon him that a good cook and a fiddler will do more to keep men contented than high wages and easy work. So his protection of the cripple was not entirely disinterested. But his imagination persisted in occupy-

ing itself with the boy. What terrible life of want and vicious associates had he led in this terrible town? What treatment could have lit that wolf-gleam in his eyes? What hell had he inhabited that he was so eager to get away? In an hour or so he dozed. He dreamed that the cripple had grown to enormous proportions and was overshadowing his life. A slight noise outside his bedroom door brought him to his feet.

He opened the door and found that in the stillness of the night the poor deformed creature had taken the blankets from his bed and had spread them across the door-sill of the man who had befriended him.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

THREE weeks later the steam barge *Pole Star* sailed down the reach of Saginaw Bay.

Thorpe had received letters from Carpenter advising him of a credit to him at a Marquette bank, and enclosing a draft sufficient for current expenses. Tim Shearer had helped make out the list of necessaries. In time everything was loaded, the gang-plank hauled in, and the little band of Argonauts set their faces toward the point where the Big Dipper swings.

The weather was beautiful. Each morning the sun rose out of the frosty blue lake water, and set in a sea of deep purple. The moon, once again at the full, drew broad paths across the pathless waste. From the southeast blew daily the lake trades, to die at sunset, and then to return in the soft still nights from the west. A more propitious beginning for the adventure could not be imagined.

The ten horses in the hold munched their hay and oats as peaceably as though at home in their own stables. Jackson Hines had helped select them from the stocks of firms changing locality or going out of business. His judgment in such matters was in-

fallible, but he had resolutely refused to take the position of barn-boss which Thorpe offered him.

"No," said he, "she's too far north. I'm gettin' old, and the rheumatics ain't what you might call abandonin' of me. Up there it's colder than hell on a stoker's holiday."

So Shearer had picked out a barn-boss of his own. This man was important, for the horses are the main-stay of logging operations. He had selected also a blacksmith, a cook, four teamsters, half a dozen cant-hook men, and as many handy with axe or saw.

"The blacksmith is also a good wood-butcher (carpenter)," explained Shearer. "Four teams is all we ought to keep going at a clip. If we need a few axe-men, we can pick 'em up at Marquette. I think this gang'll stick. I picked 'em."

There was not a young man in the lot. They were most of them in the prime of middle life, between thirty and forty, rugged in appearance, "cocky" in manner, with the swagger and the oath of so many buccaneers, hard as nails. Altogether Thorpe thought them about as rough a set of customers as he had ever seen. Throughout the day they played cards on deck, and spat tobacco juice abroad, and swore incessantly. Toward himself and Shearer their manner was an odd mixture of independent equality and a slight deference. It was as much as to say, "You're the boss, but I'm as good a man as you any day." They would be a rough,

turbulent, unruly mob to handle, but under a strong man they might accomplish wonders.

Constituting the élite of the profession, as it were —whose swagger every lad new to the woods and river tried to emulate, to whom lesser lights looked up as heroes and models, and whose lofty, half-contemptuous scorn of everything and everybody outside their circle of "bully boys" was truly the aristocracy of class—Thorpe might have wondered at their consenting to work for an obscure little camp belonging to a greenhorn. Loyalty to and pride in the firm for which he works is a strong characteristic of the lumber-jack. He will fight at the drop of a hat on behalf of his "Old Fellows"; brag loud and long of the season's cut, the big loads, the smart methods of his camps; and even after he has been discharged for some flagrant debauch, he cherishes no rancor, but speaks with soft reminiscence to the end of his days concerning "that winter in '81 when the Old Fellows put in sixty million on Flat River."

For this reason he feels that he owes it to his reputation to ally himself only with firms of creditable size and efficiency. The small camps are for the youngsters. Occasionally you will see two or three of the veterans in such a camp, but it is generally a case of lacking something better.

The truth is, Shearer had managed to inspire in the minds of his cronies an idea that they were about to participate in a fight. He re-told Thorpe's story

artistically, shading the yellows and the reds. He detailed the situation as it existed. The men agreed that the " young fellow had sand enough for a lake front." After that there needed but a little skillful maneuvring to inspire them with the idea that it would be a great thing to take a hand, to " make a camp " in spite of the big concern up-river.

Shearer knew that this attitude was tentative. Everything depended on how well Thorpe lived up to his reputation at the outset—how good a first impression of force and virility he would manage to convey—for the first impression possessed the power of transmuting the present rather ill-defined enthusiasm into loyalty or dissatisfaction. But Tim himself believed in Thorpe blindly. So he had no fears.

A little incident at the beginning of the voyage did much to reassure him. It was on the old question of whiskey.

Thorpe had given orders that no whiskey was to be brought aboard, as he intended to tolerate no high-sea orgies. Soon after leaving dock he saw one of the teamsters drinking from a pint flask. Without a word he stepped briskly forward, snatched the bottle from the man's lips, and threw it overboard. Then he turned sharp on his heel and walked away, without troubling himself as to how the fellow was going to take it.

The occurrence pleased the men, for it showed them they had made no mistake. But it meant little

else. The chief danger really was lest they become too settled in the protective attitude. As they took it, they were about, good-naturedly, to help along a worthy greenhorn. This they considered exceedingly generous on their part, and in their own minds they were inclined to look on Thorpe much as a grown man would look on a child. There needed an occasion for him to prove himself bigger than they.

Fine weather followed them up the long blue reach of Lake Huron; into the noble breadth of the Detour Passage, past the opening through the Thousand Islands of the Georgian Bay; into the St. Mary's River. They were locked through after some delay on account of the grain barges from Duluth, and at last turned their prow westward in the Big Sea Water, beyond which lay Hiawatha's Po-ne-mah, the Land of the Hereafter.

Thorpe was about late that night, drinking in the mystic beauty of the scene. Northern lights, pale and dim, stretched their arc across beneath the Dipper. The air, soft as the dead leaves of spring, fanned his cheek. By and by the moon, like a red fire at sea, lifted itself from the waves. Thorpe made his way to the stern, beyond the square deck-house, where he intended to lean on the rail in silent contemplation of the moon-path.

He found another before him. Phil, the little cripple, was peering into the wonderful east, its light

in his eyes. He did not look at Thorpe when the latter approached, but seemed aware of his presence, for he moved swiftly to give room.

"It is very beautiful; isn't it, Phil?" said Thorpe after a moment.

"It is the Heart Song of the Sea," replied the cripple in a hushed voice.

Thorpe looked down surprised.

"Who told you that?" he asked.

But the cripple, repeating the words of a chance preacher, could explain himself no further. In a dim way the ready-made phrase had expressed the smothered poetic craving of his heart—the belief that the sea, the sky, the woods, the men and women, you, I, all have our Heart Songs, the Song which is most beautiful.

"The Heart Song of the Sea," he repeated gropingly. "I don't know . . . I play it," and he made the motion of drawing a bow across strings, "very still and low." And this was all Thorpe's question could elicit.

Thorpe fell silent in the spell of the night, and pondered over the chances of life which had cast on the shores of the deep as driftwood the soul of a poet.

"Your Song," said the cripple timidly, "some day I will hear it. Not yet. That night in Bay City, when you took me in, I heard it very dim. But I cannot play it yet on my violin."

"Has your violin a song of its own?" queried the man.

"I cannot hear it. It tries to sing, but there is something in the way. I cannot. Some day I will hear it and play it, but"—and he drew nearer Thorpe and touched his arm—"that day will be very bad for me. I lose something." His eyes of the wistful dog were big and wondering.

"Queer little Phil!" cried Thorpe laughing whimsically. "Who tells you these things?"

"Nobody," said the cripple dreamily, "they come when it is like to-night. In Bay City they do not come."

At this moment a third voice broke in on them.

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Thorpe," said the captain of the vessel. "Thought it was some of them lumber-jacks, and I was going to fire 'em below. Fine night."

"It is that," answered Thorpe, again the cold, unresponsive man of reticence. "When do you expect to get in, Captain?"

"About to-morrow noon," replied the captain, moving away. Thorpe followed him a short distance, discussing the landing. The cripple stood all night, his bright, luminous eyes gazing clear and unwinking at the moonlight, listening to his Heart Song of the Sea.