

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

WITH Thorpe there could be no half-way measure. He saw that the rupture with his sister was final, and the thrust attained him in one of his unprotected points. It was not as though he felt either himself or his sister consciously in the wrong. He acquitted her of all fault, except as to the deadly one of misreading and misunderstanding. The fact argued not a perversion but a lack in her character. She was other than he had thought her.

As for himself, he had schemed, worked, lived only for her. He had come to her from the battle expecting rest and refreshment. To the world he had shown the hard, unyielding front of the unemotional; he had looked ever keenly outward; he had braced his muscles in the constant tension of endeavor. So much the more reason why, in the hearts of the few he loved, he, the man of action, should find repose; the man of sternness should discover that absolute peace of the spirit in which not the slightest motion of the will is necessary; the man of repression should be permitted affectionate, care-free expansion of the natural affection, of the full sympathy which will understand and not mis-

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take for weakness. Instead of this, he was forced into refusing where he would rather have given; into denying where he would rather have assented; and finally into commanding where he longed most ardently to lay aside the cloak of authority. His motives were misread; his intentions misjudged; his love doubted.

But worst of all, Thorpe's mind could see no possibility of an explanation. If she could not see of her own accord how much he loved her, surely it was a hopeless task to attempt an explanation through mere words. If, after all, she was capable of misconceiving the entire set of his motives during the past two years, expostulation would be futile. In his thoughts of her he fell into a great spiritual dumbness. Never, even in his moments of most theoretical imaginings, did he see himself setting before her fully and calmly the hopes and ambitions of which she had been the mainspring. And before a reconciliation, many such rehearsals must take place in the secret recesses of a man's being.

Thorpe did not cry out, nor confide in a friend, nor do anything even so mild as pacing the floor. The only outward and visible sign a close observer might have noted was a certain dumb pain lurking in the depths of his eyes like those of a wounded spaniel. He was hurt, but did not understand. He suffered in silence, but without anger. This is at

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once the noblest and the most pathetic of human suffering.

At first the spring of his life seemed broken. He did not care for money; and at present disappointment had numbed his interest in the game. It seemed hardly worth the candle.

Then in a few days, after his thoughts had ceased to dwell constantly on the one subject, he began to look about him mentally. Beneath his other interests he still felt constantly a dull ache, something unpleasant, uncomfortable. Strangely enough it was almost identical in quality with the uneasiness that always underlay his surface-thoughts when he was worried about some detail of his business. Unconsciously—again as in his business—the combative instinct aroused. In lack of other object on which to expend itself, Thorpe's fighting spirit turned with energy to the subject of the lawsuit.

Under the unwonted stress of the psychological condition just described, he thought at white heat. His ideas were clear, and followed each other quickly, almost feverishly.

After his sister left the Renwicks, Thorpe himself went to Detroit, where he interviewed at once Northrop, the brilliant young lawyer whom the firm had engaged to defend its case.

"I'm afraid we have no show," he replied to Thorpe's question. "You see, you fellows were on the wrong side of the fence in trying to enforce the

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law yourselves. Of course you may well say that justice was all on your side. That does not count. The only recourse recognized for injustice lies in the law courts. I'm afraid you are due to lose your case."

"Well," said Thorpe, "they can't prove much damage."

"I don't expect that they will be able to procure a very heavy judgment," replied Northrop. "The facts I shall be able to adduce will cut down damages. But the costs will be very heavy."

"Yes," agreed Thorpe.

"And," then pursued Northrop with a dry smile, "they practically own Sherman. You may be in for contempt of court—at their instigation. As I understand it, they are trying rather to injure you than to get anything out of it themselves."

"That's it," nodded Thorpe.

"In other words, it's a case for compromise."

"Just what I wanted to get at," said Thorpe with satisfaction. "Now answer me a question. Suppose a man injures Government or State land by trespass. The land is afterward bought by another party. Has the latter any claim for damage against the trespasser? Understand me, the purchaser bought *after* the trespass was committed."

"Certainly," answered Northrop without hesitation. "Provided suit is brought within six years of the time the trespass was committed."

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"Good! Now see here. These M. & D. people stole about a section of Government pine up on that river, and I don't believe they've ever bought in the land it stood on. In fact I don't believe they suspect that any one knows they've been stealing. How would it do, if I were to buy that section at the Land Office, and threaten to sue them for the value of the pine that originally stood on it?"

The lawyer's eyes glimmered behind the lenses of his pince-nez; but, with the caution of the professional man he made no other sign of satisfaction.

"It would do very well indeed," he replied, "but you'd have to prove they did the cutting, and you'll have to pay experts to estimate the probable amount of the timber. Have you the description of the section?"

"No," responded Thorpe, "but I can get it; and I can pick up witnesses from the woodsmen as to the cutting."

"The more the better. It is rather easy to discredit the testimony of one or two. How much, on a broad guess, would you estimate the timber to come to?"

"There ought to be about eight or ten million," guessed Thorpe after an instant's silence, "worth in the stump anywhere from sixteen to twenty thousand dollars. It would cost me only eight hundred to buy it."

"Do so, by all means. Get your documents and

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evidence all in shape, and let me have them. I'll see that the suit is discontinued then. Will you sue them?"

"No, I think not," replied Thorpe. "I'll just hold it back as a sort of club to keep them in line."

The next day, he took the train north. He had something definite and urgent to do, and, as always with practical affairs demanding attention and resource, he threw himself whole-souled into the accomplishment of it. By the time he had bought the sixteen forties constituting the section, searched out a dozen witnesses to the theft, and spent a week with the Marquette expert in looking over the ground, he had fallen into the swing of work again. His experience still ached; but dully.

Only now he possessed no interests outside of those in the new country; no affections save the half-protecting, good-natured comradeship with Wallace, the mutual self-reliant respect that subsisted between Tim Shearer and himself, and the dumb, unreasoning dog-liking he shared with Injin Charley. His eye became clearer and steadier; his methods more simple and direct. The taciturnity of his mood redoubled in thickness. He was less charitable to failure on the part of subordinates. And the new firm on the Ossawinamakee prospered.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

FIVE years passed. In that time Thorpe had succeeded in cutting a hundred million feet of pine. The money received for this had all been turned back into the Company's funds. From a single camp of twenty-five men, with ten horses and a short haul of half a mile, the concern had increased to six large, well-equipped communities of eighty to a hundred men apiece, using nearly two hundred horses, and hauling as far as eight or nine miles.

Near the port stood a mammoth sawmill capable of taking care of twenty-two million feet a year, about which a lumber town had sprung up. Lake schooners lay in a long row during the summer months, while busy loaders passed the planks from one to the other into the deep holds. Besides its original holding, the company had acquired about a hundred and fifty million more, back near the headwaters of tributaries to the Ossawinamakee. In the spring and early summer months, the drive was a wonderful affair.

During the four years in which the Morrison & Daly Company shared the stream with Thorpe, the

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two firms lived in complete amity and understanding. Northrop had played his cards skillfully. The older capitalists had withdrawn suit. Afterward they kept scrupulously within their rights, and saw to it that no more careless openings were left for Thorpe's shrewdness. They were keen enough business men, but had made the mistake, common enough to established power, of underrating the strength of an apparently insignificant opponent. Once they understood Thorpe's capacity, that young man had no more chance to catch them napping.

And as the younger man, on his side, never attempted to overstep his own rights, the interests of the rival firms rarely clashed. As to the few disputes that did arise, Thorpe found Mr. Daly singularly anxious to please. In the desire was no friendliness, however. Thorpe was watchful for treachery, and could hardly believe the affair finished when at the end of the fourth year the M. & D. sold out the remainder of its pine to a firm from Manistee, and transferred its operations to another stream a few miles east, where it had acquired more considerable holdings.

"They're altogether too confounded anxious to help us on that freight, Wallace," said Thorpe wrinkling his brow uneasily. "I don't like it. It isn't natural."

"No," laughed Wallace, "neither is it natural for a dog to draw a sledge. But he does it—when

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he has to. They're afraid of you, Harry: that's all."

Thorpe shook his head, but had to acknowledge that he could evidence no grounds for his mistrust.

The conversation took place at Camp One, which was celebrated in three states. Thorpe had set out to gather around him a band of good woodsmen. Except on a pinch he would employ no others.

"I don't care if I get in only two thousand feet this winter, and if a boy does that," he answered Shearer's expostulations, "it's got to be a good boy."

The result of his policy began to show even in the second year. Men were a little proud to say that they had put in a winter at "Thorpe's One." Those who had worked there during the first year were loyally enthusiastic over their boss's grit and resourcefulness, their camp's order, their cook's good "grub." As they were authorities, others perforce had to accept the dictum. There grew a desire among the better class to see what Thorpe's "One" might be like. In the autumn Harry had more applicants than he knew what to do with. Eighteen of the old men returned. He took them all, but when it came to distribution, three found themselves assigned to one or the other of the new camps. And quietly the rumor gained that these three had shown the least willing spirit during the previous winter. The other fifteen were sobered to the industry which their importance as veterans might have impaired.

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Tim Shearer was foreman of Camp One; Scotty Parsons was drafted from the veterans to take charge of Two; Thorpe engaged two men known to Tim to boss Three and Four. But in selecting the "push" for Five he displayed most strikingly his keen appreciation of a man's relation to his environment. He sought out John Radway and induced him to accept the commission.

"You can do it, John," said he, "and I know it. I want you to try; and if you don't make her go, I'll call it nobody's fault but my own."

"I don't see how you dare risk it, after that Cass Branch deal, Mr. Thorpe," replied Radway, almost brokenly. "But I would like to tackle it, I'm dead sick of loafing. Sometimes it seems like I'd die, if I don't get out in the woods again."

"We'll call it a deal, then," answered Thorpe.

The result proved his sagacity. Radway was one of the best foremen in the outfit. He got more out of his men, he rose better to emergencies, and he accomplished more with the same resources than any of the others, excepting Tim Shearer. As long as the work was done for some one else, he was capable and efficient. Only when he was called upon to demand on his own account did the paralyzing shyness affect him.

But the one feature that did more to attract the very best element among woodsmen, and so make possible the practice of Thorpe's theory of success,

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was Camp One. The men's accommodations at the other five were no different and but little better than those in a thousand other typical lumber camps of both peninsulas. They slept in box-like bunks filled with hay or straw over which blankets were spread; they sat on a narrow hard bench or on the floor; they read by the dim light of a lamp fastened against the big cross beam; they warmed themselves at a huge iron stove in the centre of the room around which suspended wires and poles offered space for the drying of socks; they washed their clothes when the mood struck them. It was warm and comparatively clean. But it was dark, without ornament, cheerless.

The lumber-jack never expects anything different. In fact, if he were pampered to the extent of ordinary comforts, he would be apt at once to conclude himself indispensable; whereupon he would become worthless.

Thorpe, however, spent a little money—not much—and transformed Camp One. Every bunk was provided with a tick, which the men could fill with hay, balsam, or hemlock, as suited them. Cheap but attractive curtains on wires at once brightened the room and shut each man's "bedroom" from the main hall. The deacon seat remained, but was supplemented by a half-dozen simple and comfortable chairs. In the centre of the room stood a big round table over which glowed two hanging lamps. The

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table was littered with papers and magazines. Home life was still further suggested by a canary bird in a gilt cage, a sleepy cat, and two pots of red geraniums. Thorpe had further imported a washer-woman who dwelt in a separate little cabin under the hill. She washed the men's belongings at twenty-five cents a week, which amount Thorpe deducted from each man's wages, whether he had the washing done or not. This encouraged cleanliness. Phil scrubbed out every day, while the men were in the woods.

Such was Thorpe's famous Camp One in the days of its splendor. Old woodsmen will still tell you about it, with a longing reminiscent glimmer in the corners of their eyes as they recall its glories and the men who worked in it. To have "put in" a winter in Camp One was the mark of a master; and the ambition of every raw recruit to the forest. Probably Thorpe's name is remembered to-day more on account of the intrepid, skillful, loyal men his strange genius gathered about it, than for the herculean feat of having carved a great fortune from the wilderness in but five years' time.

But Camp One was a privilege. A man entered it only after having proved himself; he remained in it only as long as his efficiency deserved the honor. Its members were invariably recruited from one of the other four camps; never from applicants who had not been in Thorpe's employ. A raw man was

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sent to Scotty, or Jack Hyland, or Radway, or Kerlie. There he was given a job, if he happened to suit, and men were needed. By and by, perhaps, when a member of Camp One fell sick or was given his time, Tim Shearer would send word to one of the other five that he needed an axe-man or a sawyer, or a loader, or teamster, as the case might be. The best man in the other camps was sent up.

So Shearer was foreman of a picked crew. Probably no finer body of men was ever gathered at one camp. In them one could study at his best the American pioneer. It was said at that time that you had never seen logging done as it should be until you had visited Thorpe's Camp One on the Ossawinamakee.

Of these men Thorpe demanded one thing—success. He tried never to ask of them anything he did not believe to be thoroughly possible; but he expected always that in some manner, by hook or crook, they would carry the affair through. No matter how good the excuse, it was never accepted. Accidents would happen, there as elsewhere; a way to arrive in spite of them always exists, if only a man is willing to use his wits, unflagging energy, and time. Bad luck is a reality; but much of what is called bad luck is nothing but a want of careful foresight, and Thorpe could better afford to be harsh occasionally to the genuine for the sake of elim-

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inating the false. If a man failed, he left Camp One.

The procedure was very simple. Thorpe never explained his reasons even to Shearer.

"Ask Tom to step in a moment," he requested of the latter.

"Tom," he said to that individual, "I think I can use you better at Four. Report to Kerlie there."

And strangely enough, few even of these proud and independent men ever asked for their time, or preferred to quit rather than to work up again to the glories of their prize camp.

For while new recruits were never accepted at Camp One, neither was a man ever discharged there. He was merely transferred to one of the other foremen.

It is necessary to be thus minute in order that the reader may understand exactly the class of men Thorpe had about his immediate person. Some of them had the reputation of being the hardest citizens in three States, others were mild as turtle doves. They were all pioneers. They had the independence, the unabashed eye, the insubordination even, of the man who has drawn his intellectual and moral nourishment at the breast of a wild nature. They were afraid of nothing alive. From no one, were he chore-boy or president, would they take a single word—with the exception always of Tim Shearer and Thorpe. The former they respected because in

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their picturesque guild he was a master craftsman. The latter they adored and quoted and fought for in distant saloons, because he represented to them their own ideal, what they would be if freed from the heavy gyves of vice and executive incapacity that weighed them down.

And they were loyal. It was a point of honor with them to stay "until the last dog was hung." He who deserted in the hour of need was not only a renegade, but a fool. For he thus earned a magnificent licking if ever he ran up against a member of the "Fighting Forty." A band of soldiers they were, ready to attempt anything their commander ordered, devoted, enthusiastically admiring. And, it must be confessed, they were also somewhat on the order of a band of pirates. Marquette thought so each spring after the drive, when, hat-tilted, they surged swearing and shouting down to Denny Hogan's saloon. Denny had to buy new fixtures when they went away; but it was worth it.

Proud! it was no name for it. Boast! the fame of Camp One spread abroad over the land, and was believed in to about twenty per cent. of the anecdotes detailed of it—which was near enough the actual truth. Anecdotes disbelieved, the class of men from it would have given it a reputation. The latter was varied enough, in truth. Some people thought Camp One must be a sort of hell-hole of roaring, fighting devils. Others sighed and made

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rapid calculations of the number of logs they could put in, if only they could get hold of help like that.

Thorpe himself, of course, made his headquarters at Camp One. Thence he visited at least once a week all the other camps, inspecting the minutest details, not only of the work, but of the every-day life. For this purpose he maintained a light box sleigh and a pair of bays, though often, when the snow became deep, he was forced to snowshoes.

During the five years he had never crossed the Straits of Mackinaw. The rupture with his sister had made repugnant to him all the southern country. He preferred to remain in the woods. All winter long he was more than busy at his logging. Summers he spent at the mill. Occasionally he visited Marquette, but always on business. He became used to seeing only the rough faces of men. The vision of softer graces and beauties lost its distinctness before this strong, hardy northland, whose gentler moods were like velvet over iron, or like its own summer leaves veiling the eternal darkness of the pines.

He was happy because he was too busy to be anything else. The insistent need of success which he had created for himself absorbed all other sentiments. He demanded it of others rigorously. He could do no less than demand it of himself. It had practically become one of his tenets of belief. The chief end of any man, as he saw it, was to do well

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and successfully what his life found ready. Anything to further this fore-ordained activity was good; anything else was bad. These thoughts, aided by a disposition naturally fervent and single in purpose, hereditarily ascetic and conscientious—for his mother was of old New England stock—gave to him in the course of six years' striving a sort of daily and familiar religion to which he conformed his life.

Success, success, success. Nothing could be of more importance. Its attainment argued a man's efficiency in the Scheme of Things, his worthy fulfillment of the end for which a divine Providence had placed him on earth. Anything that interfered with it—personal comfort, inclination, affection, desire, love of ease, individual liking—was bad.

Luckily for Thorpe's peace of mind, his habit of looking on men as things helped him keep to this attitude of mind. His lumbermen were tools—good, sharp, efficient tools, to be sure, but only because he had made them so. Their loyalty aroused in his breast no pride nor gratitude. He expected loyalty. He would have discharged at once a man who did not show it. The same with zeal, intelligence, effort—they were the things he took for granted. As for the admiration and affection which the Fighting Forty displayed for him personally, he gave not a thought to it. And the men knew it, and loved him the more from the fact.

Thorpe cared for just three people, and none of

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them happened to clash with his machine. They were Wallace Carpenter, little Phil, and Injin Charley.

Wallace, for reasons already explained at length, was always personally agreeable to Thorpe. Latterly, since the erection of the mill, he had developed unexpected acumen in the disposal of the season's cut to wholesale dealers in Chicago. Nothing could have been better for the firm. Thereafter he was often in the woods, both for pleasure and to get his partner's ideas on what the firm would have to offer. The entire responsibility of the city end of the business was in his hands.

Injin Charley continued to hunt and trap in the country round about. Between him and Thorpe had grown a friendship the more solid in that its increase had been mysteriously without outward cause. Once or twice a month the lumberman would snowshoe down to the little cabin at the forks. Entering, he would nod briefly and seat himself on a cracker-box.

"How do, Charley," said he.

"How do," replied Charley.

They filled pipes and smoked. At rare intervals one of them made a remark, tersely.

"Catch um three beaver las' week," remarked Charley.

"Good haul," commented Thorpe.

Or:

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"I saw a mink track by the big boulder," offered Thorpe.

"H'm!" responded Charley in a long-drawn falsetto whine.

Yet somehow the men came to know each other better and better; and each felt that in an emergency he could depend on the other to the uttermost in spite of the difference in race.

As for Phil, he was like some strange, shy animal, retaining all its wild instincts, but led by affection to become domestic. He drew the water, cut the wood—none better. In the evening he played atrociously his violin—none worse—bending his great white brow forward with the wolf-glare in his eyes, swaying his shoulders with a fierce delight in the subtle dissonances, the swaggering exactitude of time, the vulgar rendition of the horrible tunes he played. And often he went into the forest and gazed wondering through his liquid poet's eyes at occult things. Above all, he worshipped Thorpe. And in turn the lumberman accorded him a good-natured affection. He was as indispensable to Camp One as the beagles.

And the beagles were most indispensable. No one could have got along without them. In the course of events and natural selection they had increased to eleven. At night they slept in the men's camp underneath or very near the stove. By daylight in the morning they were clamoring at the

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door. Never had they caught a hare. Never for a moment did their hopes sink. The men used sometimes to amuse themselves by refusing the requested exit. The little dogs agonized. They leaped and yelped, falling over each other like a tangle of angle-worms. Then finally, when the door at last flung wide, they precipitated themselves eagerly and silently through the opening. A few moments later a single yelp rose in the direction of the swamp; the band took up the cry. From then until dark the glade was musical with baying. At supper time they returned straggling, their expression pleased, six inches of red tongue hanging from the corners of their mouths, ravenously ready for supper.

Strangely enough the big white hares never left the swamp. Perhaps the same one was never chased two days in succession. Or it is possible that the quarry enjoyed the harmless game as much as did the little dogs.

Once only while the snow lasted was the hunt abandoned for a few days. Wallace Carpenter announced his intention of joining forces with the diminutive hounds.

"It's a shame, so it is, doggies!" he laughed at the tried pack. "We'll get one to-morrow."

So he took his shotgun to the swamp, and after a half-hour's wait, succeeded in killing the hare. From that moment he was the hero of those ecstasized canines. They tangled about him everywhere. He

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hardly dared take a step for fear of crushing one of the open faces and expectant, pleading eyes looking up at him. It grew to be a nuisance. Wallace always claimed his trip was considerably shortened because he could not get away from his admirers.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

FINANCIALLY the Company was rated high, and yet was heavily in debt. This condition of affairs by no means constitutes an anomaly in the lumbering business.

The profits of the first five years had been immediately reinvested in the business. Thorpe, with the foresight that had originally led him into this new country, saw farther than the instant's gain. He intended to establish in a few years more a big plant which would be returning benefices in proportion not only to the capital originally invested, but also in ratio to the energy, time, and genius he had himself expended. It was not the affair of a moment. It was not the affair of half-measures, of timidity.

Thorpe knew that he could play safely, cutting a few millions a year, expanding cautiously. By this method he would arrive, but only after a long period.

Or he could do as many other firms have done; start on borrowed money.

In the latter case he had only one thing to fear, and that was fire. Every cent, and many times over.