

The Free Press Short Story

The Bridge Across Glory Gap

By JOHN SCOTT DOUGLAS

MEADE TRAVIS sat idly strumming a guitar and singing college songs he had learned at the University of Washington, when a huge figure of a man suddenly loomed in the doorway of the construction camp shack Meade occupied. The likable blue eyes of the youth lighted as he sat up on his bunk; but the smile forming on his wide mouth froze at the moment of birth at the stony hardness of the big man's rugged brown face and the coldness of his eyes which reminded Meade of the blue ice he had observed that summer in Alaskan glaciers.

The youth opened his mouth to greet the superintendent of construction, Daniel Coffin, but the old construction man's savage outburst silenced him. "Baby stuff!" exploded Daniel Coffin. "Playing a guitar when you should be working! Why they have to send me babies to do my engineering work is beyond me! A regular rah-rah boy, aren't you?"

Meade flushed to the roots of his red hair. "Work is through for the day," he faltered. "I didn't know you objected to me playing a guitar out of working hours."

The superintendent cut in, his voice vitriolic with scorn. "You think you have to work by the clock, do you? It's never occurred to you that the best part of an engineer's work is done in his shack after labor's ceased? Well, no baby stuff goes around me, Travis. You're not paid to be your nurse. Either grow up or get out—take your choice!"

With those words the superintendent turned on his heel and was gone. Meade's throat felt painfully constricted. Daniel Coffin's outburst seemed so out of proportion to any fault of his that the young engineer felt the red coals of anger smoldering within. He picked up the plans from the rough board table of the shack, but the instruction sheet blurred before his eyes.

Unable to concentrate on the details before him, he stared with pain-filled eyes out of the door at the saw-toothed ranges of green-clad mountains, now tinted reds and yellows at their lips as the fiery ball of the sun sank below the ragged western sky line. Youth is sensitive and the superintendent's sharp words had pricked Meade's bubble of pride. The young man sought balm for wounded feelings in reviewing the past. He had completed his second year of the difficult University of Washington engineering course at nineteen, which was something of which to be proud. His parents lacked sufficient money to send his two sisters and his younger brother through high school while keeping Meade in college, so he had sought work for a year to earn enough to pay his expenses in college his remaining two years. His instructors had held no hesitancy in recommending Meade to the company, building a railroad into the interior of Alaska, since he had proved an apt student. He had taken an Alaskan-bound boat for Skagway, therefore, leaving the boat to take the trail over the White-Horse Pass into the interior. Now, after completing his first day's work, he had received such a jolt to his self-esteem that his blood still boiled in contemplation of it.

"He'll never get a chance to raze me again!" declared Meade with sudden resolution, as he placed his guitar in its case and picked up his plans again. "The idea of telling me I need a nurse!" Still, smoldering under the lash of the rebuff, Meade concentrated on the plans for the morrow's work. It soon became evident that there were numerous things he did not understand. Twelve o'clock had struck before he realized, certain that he could direct the next day's operations without recourse to his detail sheets.

sharpness with spirals in the Alaska Central Railway. "What's your grade?" snapped the superintendent. "I get the point," said Meade faintly. "I'm making a steeper grade than the Alaska Central Railway."

"You're building a cable-car track!" growled the superintendent, his voice tinged with irony. "You're probably playing that guitar when you should be watching your grade. Now lay off his baby stuff and try to keep what mind you possess on the job!"

Travis were close to the surface of his sure eyes and his throat was so dry and aching that Meade could not reply. The rough-hewn superintendent stood watching the youth's twitching face for several silent moments, his nut-brown face almost softening. He turned on his heel as before, however, stalking out of the board shack.

There was a dismaying emptiness within Meade as he stared at his plans again with aching eyes. He could not believe he was as far off as the "super" had suggested until he went out with his flashlight to verify the truth. He came back with a dead feeling within; the superintendent was right. In his haste to push forward the work, he had neglected his grade! A train could hardly crawl up that track; his work would have to be undone.

In the hard days to follow, Jamison, the small, bow-legged foreman, proved of incalculable help to Meade, saving him several costly blunders. His help, however, caused the young man to feel rather insecure; he should not have made those mistakes to begin with.

Try as he would to please, however, Meade found his inadequate knowledge driving him into errors which brought the lash of Daniel Coffin's anger down on his head. "I'm not making good," Meade would think to himself, a dozen times a day; then he would try harder. He never made the same mistake twice, but there seemed to be so many a fellow could make in building a section of railroad.

Once it was his luckless lot to have the superintendent inspecting the track when a bear, crawling along the ragged crests above, started a rock cascading down the slope. The rock struck a small avalanche which grew in size, gathering shale, boulders, and small stones in its path. The slide covered a new cut.

"Anyway," said Meade with feeling, "there's one thing I'm not responsible for, Mr. Coffin."

"The superintendent bored him with his sharp eyes. 'Baby stuff! Trying to make excuses for your own carelessness! You should have had houses there. We're going to have snow mighty soon now, and if that rock hadn't covered the track, snow would have. Didn't you learn anything but baby stuff in college, Travis?"

Meade saw slightly red. Daniel Coffin observed with approval that the youth held back the angry torrent of words which leaped to his lips. So it went, Meade poring over the next day's work until his head ached, only to find that some details always escaped him.

Winter came with its howling blast of wind, drifting snows and blizzards; yet the work had to continue to complete the connection with the main track by spring. The company was counting on spring traffic. Nails and tools must be heated so that they would not tear the flesh of the workmen handling them, often without gloves. Crews went out on short shifts, working half an hour, thawing out for ten minutes. Meade, however, was always on the job. His strip ended with the building of a bridge across Glory Gap. It was a race against the spring break-up. The blue-gray ribbons gashing the mountain side crossed the top of the gap to make a little bridge joining the first two steel piles. Before the last two pillars of steel could be driven through the river bottom, however, a hot day started the break-up. Jamison came running to tell Meade, who was inspecting a slide at the time.

Meade sat down, removing his boots; then he began crossing the treacherous logs, pulses pounding. Something black materialized out of the creaming waters for an instant. Bracing himself, he looked for the foreman, but Jamison was nowhere to be seen. Eyes straining for another glimpse of that black speck, Meade saw a log close over the spot where it had last appeared. Something splashed in the foam, and he hurried forward, clutching Jamison's coat as the gasping foreman appeared again. One strong heave which dipped the log under him, and the drenched foreman stood beside him.

"You shouldn't take chances like this!" gasped the young man. "I appreciate your loyalty, Jamison. But this bridge may crash any moment!"

Realizing the imminence of the danger, Jamison hurried toward shore. "About to follow him, Meade glanced at the trembling spans of steel, something tightening in his throat. His work would go down to destruction. Daniel Coffin would say again, "Baby stuff!"

At that instant, he saw Jamison's forgotten pike-stick floating in the water, a dozen feet away. "He won't say 'Baby stuff' to me again!" said Meade brokenly.

He retrieved the pike; then he saw the key log, the log on which Jamison had been working when he fell into the water. Meade pried away desperately, disregarding the ringing steel of the shaken spans. Suddenly he felt the logs moving under him like lava. The key log on which he had been laboring was whirling in the current. The jam was broken.

How he ever managed to clamber across that moving sea of logs was never quite clear to Meade. Haste almost proved his undoing, however, when he neared shore. He slipped and fell, and something heavy struck his head. Blackness was closing over the horizon of his mind when a strong arm suddenly seized his clothing.

"Thanks, Jamison," he said huskily. "It's I, Dan Coffin," said a gruff voice.

Pain and anger struggled for expression in his face as Meade opened his blue eyes. "Don't 'Baby stuff' me again!" he said tersely, his voice shaking with emotion. "I know you despise me—"

"Despise you?" The superintendent laughed softly. "You're crazy, Travis. I've liked you immensely for a long time. But you came here a green, overconfident lad. I saw the makings of a fine man in you, and I know the only way you'd develop was to make you feel you didn't know it all. But I won't need to 'Baby stuff' you any longer! You've proved yourself a man to-day."

Meade's eyes widened, and a new understanding came into them. This young engineer read for the first time the kindness in the superintendent's strong brown face. His mouth broke into a broad grin as he reached out to shake Daniel Coffin's extended hand.

Meade sat on the farm—Every farmer and stock-raiser should keep a supply of Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil on hand, not only as a ready remedy for ills in the family, but because it is a horse and cattle medicine of great potency. As a substitute for sweet oil for horses and cattle affected by colic it far surpasses anything that can be administered.

PEST OF THE PICNIC

The annual debates about immunity from poison ivy are now in full swing among campers, picnickers and holiday makers in the woods. Some persons may be immune at some time but no person is immune from ivy poisoning all the time, as for example when the pores of the skin are perspiring freely. Contrary to popular opinion also, a person who has once been poisoned is not immune to further attacks but is rendered more susceptible than ever. Neither does a recurrence of poisoning symptoms take place year by year without fresh exposure to the poison ivy. Indeed, the only sure method of avoiding poisoning is to give the ivy a wide berth. That is easier said than done, but a person who has read the pamphlet on poison ivy issued by the Dominion Department of Agriculture can be fore-armed with the knowledge of where poison ivy is most likely to be found and what is best to do in cases of casualties. While poison ivy is widely distributed across Canada, complaints are most numerous from Ontario and Quebec, especially from the lake and highland regions so attractive to campers and summer colonists. The ivy may be found growing under a variety of conditions, wet or dry, shaded or open, and in all soils from pure sand to rocky ground. On farmed land, the pest is confined to fence borders and places not reached by tillage. Various treatments are given in the pamphlet. In very severe cases, the advice of a physician is advisable, but in slight cases where the irritant oil of the ivy has not yet penetrated the skin, scrubbing with laundry soap will remove the danger.

NO CHANCES TAKEN

A dusky highwayman stepped out into the road and called to another dusky: "Throw up yo' hands, brudder." "Can't do it, 'cause Ah get rheumatism in mah hands," was the reply. "Nebber mind dat. Ah's got automatics in mine!" "Yo' wint brudder, yo' wint."

DOMINION EXPERIMENTAL FARMS Weekly News Letter

Improvement of Pastures

The improvement of grasses for both hay and pasture is being given a great deal of attention by the Division of Forage Crops at the present time. A notable advance during recent years has been the discovery of the remarkably high feeding value of fresh young grass. So rich is young grass in protein that it may be regarded as a high protein concentrate. It is also rich in vitamin content and in the essential minerals which are so important in feeding milk producing animals. No other crop is capable of maintaining live stock for five months of the year at so low a feed and labor cost. The digestibility of young grass is considerably greater than that of hay and there is no loss of nutrients in curing, which in hay may amount to from 30 to 50 per cent. The discovery of these facts has led to a new appreciation of pastures, and to a closer study of the factors which influence their productivity.

An Egg Investigation There has recently been started at the Central Experimental Farm a project designated to elucidate the causes of variations in the quality of new laid eggs. The birds in the experiment are confined in individual cages and fed from individual troughs, making it possible to keep a record of the amount of feed eaten by each. The eggs are collected within two hours of being laid and are taken to a laboratory where they are subjected to very minute examination and analysis.

Tests of Foreign Oats More than five hundred varieties of oats which have been introduced from many foreign countries are being studied by the Central Division in the hope of finding some that may be adapted to Canadian conditions or possess certain qualities that would make them useful for breeding purposes.

Useful in Camp.—Explorers, surveyors, prospectors and hunters will find Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil very useful in camp. When the feet and legs are wet and cold it is well to rub them freely with the Oil and the result will be the prevention of pains in the muscles, and should a cut, or contusion, or sprain be sustained, nothing could be better as a dressing or lotion.

JUNE DISHES FOR BRIDES AND GRADUATES

Have you a little bride to entertain? Or a stalwart graduate with his diploma on display? Either calls for a luncheon out of the ordinary—dishes that are unusual.

CHICKEN RING

- 1/2 cup elodee mushroom stems
3 tablespoons butter
1 1/2 cups chopped chicken
1 1/2 cups chopped veal
3/4 cup diced celery
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
3 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
1/2 teaspoon salt
Dash of pepper
1/2 teaspoon onion juice
3/4 cup stock or milk
Creamed mushrooms
Saute mushroom stems in butter, combine with remaining ingredients in order given. Turn into well-greased ring mold and bake in hot oven (450 degrees F.) 30 minutes, or until done. Let stand 2 minutes before removing from mold. Unmold and fill centre with creamed mushrooms. Or fill centre with any desired creamed vegetable or combination of vegetables. Serves 6.

TROPICAL SHERBET

- 2 1/2 cup pineapple juice
1 cup sugar
3 egg whites
1/2 cup shredded coconut
2 green maraschino cherries—chopped coarse
2 red maraschino cherries—chopped coarse
1/2 tablespoon each of chopped almonds, roasted; pecans, Brazil nuts, walnuts and cashew nuts
Mix pineapple juice and sugar, stir until dissolved, place in freezer and freeze to a mush. Add stiffly beaten egg whites and other ingredients and finish freezing. Serve with wafers or lady fingers in fancy sherbet glasses.

ALUMINUM RUST

Pure aluminum is a highly reactive metal and is much more subject to rust than iron. But aluminum rust, which is white, instead of flaking off and exposing fresh metal, forms a thin, tough, and almost invisible coating which protects the metal beneath from the ravages of air and weather. By means of a process this coating can be made of microscopic thickness and quite invisible, so that the metal remains bright for an indefinite time.

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CANADA'S FARM REVENUES UP

Reaching the highest level since 1930, Canada's gross agricultural revenue in 1934, according to preliminary estimate, is given as \$931,347,000 and compared with the revised estimate of \$892,948,000 for 1933 shows a gain of \$38,400,000, or 4.3 per cent. Increases are reported in revenues from all farm products, the greatest gains being shown in field crops, farm animals and dairy products. After deductions from the gross revenue for such items as feed for farm animals and poultry, seed and unmarketable grain, and vegetables produced on farms for home use, a preliminary estimate of the net revenue from agriculture for 1934 is given as \$569,014,000, and compared with \$510,410,000, the revised estimate for 1933, an increase of \$58,604,000, or 11.5 per cent., is shown.

Due to the increased value of farm production, Canada's gross agricultural wealth, according to preliminary estimate, rose from \$5,543,700,000 in 1933 to \$5,698,167,000 in 1934. At the same time land values are placed \$98,708,000 lower than in 1933. The agricultural wealth is made up of lands valued at \$2,226,368,000, buildings, \$1,342,924,000, implements and machinery \$650,664,000, live stock \$413,837,000, poultry \$35,308,000, and agricultural production \$931,347,000.

Enjoy the Best Tea "SALADA" TEA



SPIRIT!

[James Mangan]

For five years we have been waiting for the depression to depart. Why is it still with us? Simply because we have waited --- and no one ever waited with Spirit.

Spirit moves mountains, accomplishes the impossible---in business, in science, in the arts. You hear of a firm that puts up a great sales record. You say: "They've got Spirit!" Or you ask, "Who's the moving Spirit?" You know that winning streak came out of Spirit, nothing else.

Let's show some Spirit in 1935. Show some advertising spirit! When you advertise you place a bet on yourself, and on your product. The only real test of sincerity is money laid on the line. When you lay it on the line with advertising, you prove to the world that you believe what you say.

It takes Spirit to be an advertiser. Spirit is the essence of advertising. For advertising is life, is speed, is business vibration. Vibrate in 1935 --- advertise! To ignore the fact that people don't care about you is not Spirit.

Spirit soars high, shouts loud, glows intensely. So does good advertising.

Put some Spirit into your business --- into your job. Spirit is invincible, irresistible, universal.

Good-bye to the Depression in 1935 ---if enough of us will only put enough Spirit into it!