### The Whig's Big Serial Story

# A Story of Mountain Railroad FRANKH-SPEARMAN

AUTHOR OF "WHISPERING SMITH," "THE MOUNTAIN DIVIDE," "STRATEGY OF GREAT RAILROADS," ETC.

SYNOPSIS.

Little Helen Holmes, daughter of Genimminent danger on a scenic railby George Storm, a newsboy. Grown oung womanhood, Helen saves Storm, nelander, financier, and Robert Safebreakers employed by Seagrue steal General Holmes' survey plans of the cut-off line for the Tidewater, fatally wound the general and escape. Her death, Helen goes to work on the Tide-Helen recovers the survey plans from Seagrue, and though they are taken from her, finds an accidentally made proof of the survey blueprint. Storm is employed by Rhinelander. Spike, befriended Helen, in his turn saves her and the right-of-way contracts when Seagrue kidhands her. Helen and Storm win for Rhine-lander a race against Seagrue for rightof-way. Helen, Storm and Rhinelander rescue Spike from Seagrue's men. Spike steals records to protect Rhinelander, and Storm and Helen save Spike from death Superstition mine pinches out. Seagrue saits it and sells it to Rhinelander. mine is relocated. Rhinelander gives Hel en and George each one-third of the Superstition mine stock. Seagrue's scheme to prevent payment for the mine in spoiled. Helen, restored to home and social position, saves her departing guests from a threatened collision by a wild ride.

### FIFTEENTH INSTALLMENT DRIVING THE LAST SPIKE

It was a week later that there were social activities again in Helen's Rhinelander had come down from the mountains with Storm to announce to Helen the completion of the Superstition cut-off, the cause of so much enmity and bitterness between the rival roads that had striven to achieve its successful building.

Helen was making ready, when they arrived, to join her two friends, and all returned to the station to take the special train that was to carry them with a party up the line to celebrate the driving of the last spikea responsibility that Rhinelander had assigned, over all her protests, to Helen herself.

The train, gayly decorated, pulled in early and the party-railroad men, constructionists and personal friends of the builders-getting out on the platform at Signal, gave it for a moment an air of social gayety. The stop was made only long enough to exchange greetings, and the party, enlarged by the Signal contingent, again boarded the train to continue the journe to the cut-off.

The morning newspapers at Oceanside had contained articles descriptive of the prospective celebration, and it fell under Seagrue's eye as he sat in his living room reading his paper.

CUT-OFF TO SUPERSTITION MINE

Helen Holmes to Drive Last Spike.

today Helen Holmes, daughter of the late General Holmes, assisted by Superintendent A. Rhinelander and Construction Engineer George Storm, will drive the spike that marks the completion of the Superstition cut-off.

Seagrue read with anger. To his disordered mind, now victimized by drink, it seemed as if the celebration were intended to signalize his own

In a furious mood, he struck the bell to summon Adams, his servant. When the latter appeared his master said curtly. "Bring Ward here at once," and turned to the decanter that had latterly become his most intimate

The moment Ward came in with Adms. Seagrue picked up the newspaper. "Look at that," he said, without preliminary words. Ward read the headlines hastily. "You see what's going on," exclaimed Seagrue, laboring apparently under excitement. "I

want you to get busy.' He spoke the last words in a tone that left no doubt of his meaning. And Ward, old in ways of intrigue need to add what he did: "This is my himself before his captors should rewant them both. Get them. I'll make you rich."

quick to act, and after conferring hur- a long career of doubtful enterprises riedly on details Seagrue started the and close squeaks-Spike struggled two men out. In the street, Ward | wildly for freedom and life, and thus and Adams boarded a taxicab, gave engaged he heard the footsteps of men their orders to the driver and were | running along the track. whirled rapidly out on the desert.

was fired from an adjoining hill.

the interesting ceremony. A golden bled away into hiding. And the senior roadmaster, acting as Adams, searching with sharp eyes her lover. It was too late to signal the open eyes.

NOVELIZED FROM THE MOV-ING PICTURE PLAY OF THE SAME NAME. PRODUCED BY THE SIGNAL FILM CORPORA-

TION. COPYRIGHT, 1913. BY FRANK IL SPEARMAN the master of ceremonies, was leading the way to where she was to officiate. On the spot where the last rail joint awaited its completion at her hands, Rhinelander handed to Helen the spike and the maul. And Helen, placing the golden emblem into position,

struck the spike the first blow. "You know," she said, looking up after she had given it a few more taps, "that part of the agreement is, George must finish this."

Storm took hold of the maul with a mogul as many miles as I have, this ought to be easy."

Friends crowded up as the spike went home and congratulations fell thick and fast on the winners of the long-drawn struggle. Rhinelander still had something to propose. "While we are all here together," he said, "we'll complete the celebration by starting the first train. I want to see whether Miss Holmes and Mr. Storm can drive a spike that will hold a rail joint for an engine to run over it. If it fails, it shows them both up. Throw the switch for the main line, George, and let Helen start the first train over the cut-off."

Storm walked toward the switch, some distance away, followed by Spike. Standing together they threw it and signaled that all was right.

Helen, quite at home inside an engine cab, pulled the throttle slightly and the drivers began to revolve; the engineer then handed her carefully down from the gangway and the train

At the switch, Spike and Storm en gaged thus intently, failed to notice two men crossing up behind them, ropes in hand. Taken unawares, nooses were thrown suddenly over their heads and before they could make the least defense, they were throttled, felled and dragged back from the switch. So swiftly and expertly was the attack made that Spike and Storm were choked almost at once and dragged down out of sight before anyone noticed their disappear-

Tying their hands expeditiously, Ward speculated for a moment on what to do with them. Adams' proposal to throw them from the bridge he negatived. "They would find them too quick. We'll put them into the ore cars," he said cunningly. "When the cars are loaded at the mine the ore will do the rest."

The two picked Storm up, unconwas in one of these that a headline scious, and carried him along the track, laying him beside it to await the coming of the freight train, Returning to bring Spike in like fashion, they were surprised and upset to find he had disappeared.

Spike had, in fact-overhearing the fate in store for him-rolled, gagged and bound as he was, along the track to the bridge below. Gaining this, he continued to roll over and tried to drop out of sight underneath. But in getting down, helpless as he was, his hands caught by the rope with which he was fastened on the head of a projecting spike and instead of dropping to where he speedily could have hidden himself, he hung quite helpless in the air suspended by his wrists,

The ore train, meantime, had come along the mine spur and Ward and Adams, watching their opportunity, flung Storm into a gondola.

"We've got to get after Spike," de clared Ward, now alarmed for the safety of himself and his companion. Indeed, Spike was having a close call for his life in more than one di-

rection. A single slender chance gave him hope of escape. The cord with last gondola spotted for loading under the day but a second special had come which his hands had been bound; he thought, might be sawed in two or the spike against which it had caught. Act- into? The question racked her nerves ing on this thought, he threw himself from side to side to saw the cord against the iron. In spite of the intense pain suffered in sustaining the taking a fresh chew of tobacco, sigentire weight of his body on the thongs that bound his wrists, he kept desperately busy in the hope of releasing turn. For he had no doubt that Ward, as assistant director, would not hesitate to kill him on sight. With a resource and cunning developed through

but a moment left to effect his escape. | tately into space; the world was fall- came over him. An Oceanside lady, an Turning on his heel, he left them. The of the Tidewater line were in waiting | Jerking himself convulsively, arms, | ing around him. Overhead, a mighty | old acquaintance, was the first to ex- two murderers looked uncertainty for the special. When it reached the legs and body-the cord cutting and roar crashed on his hearing-con- tend greetings. She noticed the strained each other. Something of his uneasiscene a salute, arranged by an in- sawing every moment into the quick sciousness left him. genious railroad man with dynamite, around his wrists-he threw such a What had happened was that Helen, made on it by his recent dissipation. force on the rope that the strands leaping from the gangway of the en- She was, indeed, shocked. "I haven't Storm were conversing with guests. sion, might have seen Spike seated. But from a second hill, across from | finally parted on the sharp from face gine, almost before the Special, its seen you for an age," she declared. The guests left the room as Seagrue | book in hand, in the garden, reading where the improvised salute had nois and Spike dropped exhausted to the wheels ground by the brakes, fully "And you're not looking a bit well came in and he returned, somewhat an account of a marriage ceremony. ily greeted the gay special, two men ground. But he had hardly struck it stopped, had run swiftly up the switch either, I can tell you. What's the matlooked with unfriendly eyes down on before he rolled, bounced and scram- track beside the gondola in which ter?" she demanded. A shudder

These latter saw a bareheaded man dashing down the track, waving his "They've got Storm," exclaimed Spike. "They carried him off first, to

throw him into an ore car. They

meant to throw us both in. If they've

thrown George into one of those cars, the minute it's loaded, he'll be killed!". Helen blanched. To threaten Storm's life was to touch her heart. "We must get aboard," she cried to those about her, "and run the train up to the mine without losing a minute. Hurry," she

cried, "everybody!" Rhinelander hastened the excited guests into the cars, signaled the conductor, and the Special, swiftly gathering speed, started to catch the freight train at the mine.

In the gondola into which he had been flung, Storm, pounded and shaken over the rough rail joints, gradually recovered consciousness.

He knew he was in no danger until he should reach the mine, not even then, if he were only able to cry out. 'smile. "For a man that's driven a But struggle as he would, he could not release his hands and feet nor the gag that half choked him. Every movement of the train was so familiar to him that it added to the horror of his situation.

He was hoping it might stop before it should reach the deadly chute, for it was this that constituted his peril.

Revolving rapidly in his mind the features of his situation, he felt the car rolling slowly and monotonously on until it seemed as if the train must have traversed twice the length of the switch-the track of which he was familiar with-and the farther he was pulled, the worse his predicament looked.

He knew well what the engineer was continued Seagrue, "and I must change doing: pulling ahead to spot the last for the evening now. Adams has two gondola under the chute. Storm saw, as the condemned man sees the blade table." of the guillotine poised above him. the chute itself come into sight. The next moment his own gondola drew preparations and were dismissed with under it and stopped.

place in the cab where she could urge

every place of concealment, came on. I leverman, too late for him to avert the Their hurry, however, was too great, disaster, if one were impending from and the very place where they should his action-the chute was coming have looked, they passed. Even be- down. But at the instant the monster fore they were well out of the way, maw was opened and tons of heavy Spike had released his feet and gain- quartz shot into the gondola, Helen, ing the track was running at full outside the car, turned the dumping speed back to where Helen was wait- key and Storm dropped through the ing beside the Special with her friends. opened car bottom under the trestle.

When the young engineer returned to consciousness, Helen was raining tears and kisses on his upturned face. He lay under the trestle, freed from the cords that had so nearly caused his death, mine men and the guests of the day crowding around. He staggered to his feet and greeted his de

"They had Spike, too," he said speaking rapidly to Helen. "We must find him before he is smothered."

There was no need for her to answer. Spike spoke for himself. "And what I want to do," he said with heat, when he had told Storm the story, "is to get that Special back to the bridge and get after the guy that roped me."

The neighborhood was scoured for a sign of their assailants. They found where the taxicab had stood in which Seagrue's pair had come up. But the two had long ago made their escape and were running back to town to report to their employer.

Hastening up the stairs, looking guiltily over their shoulders as if fearful of immediate apprehension for their crime, Ward and Adams burst into Seagrue's room.

Seagrue was in waiting. "We got Storm," Ward began.

"Good!" cried Seagrue. "Spike got away!"

Seagrue struck his fist into his open hand. "I wanted that fellow worse than the other," he muttered between his teeth. For another moment he stood deep in thought. Then he turned savagely on Ward. "If Spike escaped, he will be at Helen's home. We will get him there." Ward nodded as coolly as if a further crime were a mere The car rolled slower and slower, detail. "I'm going up there tonight," guns. Stop! There they are, on the

Seagrue, a little later, came in dressed. His tools had made their the injunction to eat their dinners be-Helen, on the Special, had taken her fore the murder was committed.

When the special, on its return



"Part of the Agreement Is That George Shall Finish This."

you can, won't you?" she pleaded.

strain, Helen, staring through the open cab window, had only eyes for the ore cars, which in another moment she

and clutched at her heart.

With Storm still struggling on the car floor, the foreman of the ore plant. naled: "Ore on!" A man below threw the lever and the jagged quartz rock tumbled with a roar into the chute.

Storm, working to free himself, had heard the foreman's order, heard the deadly rush of the falling rock. It was only as the great chute—the one which he, himself, had helped to install and which worked with such fatal efficiency-slowly descended that he gave up

ly roused him from his stupor. But the a few minutes." This might mean help; it might next moment he felt a great shock. It

his machine was capable of. "One | nappy over the fortunate outcome minute," she reminded him pathetical- the day that the evening festivities ly, and more than once, "may mean a at Helen's home were looked forward life very dear to me. Do the very best to with pleasurable excitement. It was an open secret among her friends Tense and collected under the that this occasion was to signalize the public announcement of her engagement to George Storm.

The evening assemblage was bril saw stood in on the switch with the liant. Not alone with the guests of from the city bringing another car of What car had Storm been thrown friends and a procession of motor cars brought to the door guests from the neighboring estates.

In the house, Helen, radiant in evening attire, was descending the stairs. Storm waited at the foot to meet her and after receiving her guests she left the scene for a few moments with her lover. The last among the laggards eemed to have arrived when a big limousine, turning in from the highway, was driven rapidly through the grounds, and stopped in front of Helen's door. The car contained three men-Seagrue, Ward and Adams.

"Wait in the garden," was Seagrue's his plans, and with oaths gave them command to his companions. "I will A cry outside, a woman's voice, hard- go in, look the field over and report in

mean a knock on the head. There was seemed as if he were launched precipi- threshold that night, a strange feeling last, "I'll drop my handkerchief." expression of his face and the ravages hess communicated itself to them. Storm lay. She had 'no means of seemed to pass over him as she spoke. spike had been provided for Helen. It was none too soon. Ward and knowing shether this car contained "Are you ill?" she asked with wide-



"Nothing whatever. It's a little cold ered curtain. outside tonight. Perhaps," in added And Storm's trifling act of hospitalone's walking over my grave."

superstitious?"

everything in it. Where is Helen?"

She would have led him into the The white square of linen, partly unlibrary. He stopped on the threshold folded, fluttered to the ground. tect a heart beat. And he saw the sur- servatory. geon's face as he looked up and gravely said: "General Holmes is dead!"

again. He shook it off and braced he said brusquely, "I won't go in there again and fell headlong to the floor. -too much of a crowd for me. try the reception room." Turning, he crowd to the conservatory doors. men greeted each other briefly.

Rhinelander spoke with kindness to his nephew. He tried to tell him that he wanted him to do differently. He hysterical, told where the shots had assured him that neither he nor Helen | come and Storm, followed by her, ran cherished any lasting resentment for what had gone before and now that they two were the winners, they meant to be generous to the losers and to him in especial.

"I am willing," declared Rhinelander, "and I think that Helen will stand in the mine-it is big enough to make a dozen millionaires. Make a man of yourself. Earl, that's all we ask. We'll do the rest."

Seagrue regarded him with an expression so terrible that it shocked Rhinelander, but what was passing through Seagrue's mind, he could not

"Tomorrow," Seagrue muttered, like one hardly in possession of his senses "not tonight-I'll talk to you tomor row. Where's Helen?"

"She left here this moment for the conservatory with George Storm." Seagrue took a step forward, as i to go to her. Then he stopped and turned away: Someone took Rhinelander's attention and he lost sight of his nephew, but the woman who had first spoken to Seagrue afterward related what she saw. Seagrue looked once more toward the library. He directed his steps toward it. On the threshold he halted abruptly again, as if rudely checked by an unseen hand. He looked about as if he say and heard what others did not see and hear. Then, shaking himself loose from the seeming clutch of invisible fingers, he took a determined step. strode into the library as one who accepts a challenge, walked defiantly through the room and out of the French doors he himself had opened

on a midnight to a murderer. He disappeared from sight in the shrubbery of the garden and walked ome distance before he encountered those whom he had gone out to meet. Even the two hiding men saw the emotion under which he was laboring. He told them what he had seen, told them of Storm's escape, the thwarting of do it. He trembled with furious emphasis as he spoke on. "And when When Seagrue crossed Helen's the coast is clear," he exclaimed, at

bowl and filling glasses, crossed the | wife of George Storm. conservatory with them to serve



smile. "Not a thing," he insisted. saw his silhouetted figure on the low-

with a restless laugh, his eyes wander- ity was to prove his salvation and ing over the gay faces all about, "some | Seagrue's undoing. Having seen that the punch bowl was nearly empty he "Oh." exclaimed his friend. "Are you | excused himself and stepped into the next room to summon a maid to refill "No." returned Seagrue, almost it. The door of this room-a breakflercely, "only tired of the world and fast room - opening on the garden, stood, for the evening, ajar. The panion. "You're awful late. Let's go a napkin, when Storm spoke to her, let it fall from her hand as she turned. She would have ded him total the The white sweet of the state of the state

and refused to enter. He saw, as in Where she stood, the maid could a vision, what others-now that the not be seen from Ward's hiding place a large number of farms for sale. room was filled with laughing men and in the garden. Only the figure of We are thoroughly posted on farm comen-did not see. He saw mid- Storm beside her was visible, and the values in Kingston district. If you night within it and his own accom- highwaymen mistook his figure for wish to buy or sell it would be to plices in a death grapple with an old Seagrue's. When the napkin fluttered your advantage to consult us. man. He saw that old man laid out to the floor, Ward, mistaking it for the a few moments later on a couch, a doc- handkerchief, watched intently the tor bending anxiously over him to de- two silhouetted figures in the con-

Despite his reckless bravado, a night air. Seagrue, stricken, clutched shudder gripped him for an instant his heart. With a ghastly expression Phone 1035 or 1020 he looked at Helen. And as she himself with angry resentment. "No," screamed, he clutched at his heart Helen's frantic cries brought a encountered Rhinelander. The two Storm, nearest at hand, held back the others and entered the room first. He turned, lifted Seagrue from the floor and asked for a doctor. Helen, half

Seagrue, at Helen's side, rose to

his feet. Two shots rang through the

out into the garden. The murderers had made good their escape. Hurrying to where their machine was hiding, they jumped into it and started at breakneck speed for Oceanside. It was Spike's keen ear that detected the faint hum of their notor. "They're making their getaway in a car," he cried. "If we are to get them, we've got to work quick."

Commandeering the first car parked in the driveway and accompanied by Helen and Storm. Spike drove rapidly down the highway after the fleeing taxicab. No lights were visible on it, but some moonlight made it possible to follow the murderers accurately. Below the bridge at Signal, the high-

way, turning sharply, crossed the railroad. It is a bell crossing and the signals were ringing for the Oceanside express when Ward and Adams, looking behind at the headlights of Spike's car, saw they were hotly pursued. They opened fire with their revolvers on the pursuing car, but Helen, Storm and Spike, keeping under cover as best they could, did not slacken speed. The criminals thus pressed, saw there was a chance to put the railroad crossing between them and their pursuers. The express was close upon them, but desperate men cannot be choosers. Ward took a chance. Crowding his machine to the limit, he tried for the crossing ahead of the train. The engineer seeing a collision unavoidable, checked his train heavily. It was too late. The engine was almost on the taxicab and the next instant the pilot, striking it squarely in the middle, threw the heavy limousine fifty feet in the air. When Helen, Storm and Spike reached the spot, the engineer was backing down to investigate the catastrophe.

Lanterns and searchlights were brought into play where the moon left the landscape in shadow. Adams' body was found in a borrow pit. The shock had killed him. Ward, flung against a tree, lay at the foot of it, mutilated beyond recognition. . In Helen's conservatory, a doctor

bent over Seagrue, but the wretched victim of his own 'criminal intent lay The sun rose happily after the

events of that tragic night. It rose nowhere on two people more gratetion that Helen and Storm. Within In the conservatory, Helen and night, had they been gifted with vi-Storm, resolved now to be generous given away by her foster uncle, Amos with his enemy, stepped to the punch | Rhinelander, Helen had become the

(THE END.)

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