THE CENTRE REPORTER, CENTRE HALL, PA.

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CHAPTER V

-8-Still, something did turn up.

Just at breakfast time, while Ben was prowling the mill, admitting to himself that perhaps it was time to look at his Lole card-the letter that the old cruiser had sent to him with its intriguing inscription-a stranger behind a light driving team swung into the mill-yard, stopped and tied his horses.

"Well, you had a fire !" he said as Ben approached. "See you've still got a mill standing, though."

"Standing, yes. But that's all you can say for it." "That's tough !" The man eyed him in genuine concern. "Are you by any

chance Ben Elllott?" "I am."

"Elliott, my name's Blackmore. Glad to see you! I was in here and talked with Harrington week before last and he was saving out some veneer logs for me. I'm with the Veneer Exporting corporation and we're in the market for quite a few cars of stuff. Wonder if I could interest you in a deal. Market's right good and we're in need of some more stuff to fill out a shipment. Maybe with your mill shut down you might be interested." "That's a close guess. Shoot!"

"I'll pay you a hundred and twenty dollars a thousand for bird's eye maple and ninety dollars for veneer birch; standard specifications and delivery inside of two weeks on, say, thirty thousand. I know you're busy, so I name the top and pass any dickering."

A hundred and twenty. . . . And ninety for birch! Ben's heart leaped but he gave no outward indication of the great relief that surged through him

"Two weeks?" he asked,

"Yes, and less. Let's see. . . . I'll have to have thirty thousand delivered in just eleven days to be safe in getting 'em to Montreal on time. I'll take fifty thousand at the price but the thirty will have to be loaded and on track first."

"That'll be fast production."

"All of that! But if I can't get the stuff from you I can from Brandon by going up a few dollars a thousand. My cards are on the table, Elliott. Can we deal?"

my neck !" "What are you getting at, Benny?"

Able demanded. "This." Ben hitched his chair close to the table and with a relish which indicated the love of battle, sketched his plan.

By noon that plan was in partial operation. Bird-Eye Blaine, his duties as barn boss temporarily delegated to another, and Ben Elliott cruised through the timber north of camp, belt axes in their hands. And in the morning the camp crew, augmented by fifteen men from the mill, left off the work of felling timber in strips, scattered through the woods and dropped marked you all I can but I've got kids to trees. Swampers were with them, clearing the way for teams that followed close on the sawyers' heels and drayed these high quality logs out to the railroad. Ben Elliott was everywhere. Bird-

Eye knew his specialty, he determined, and Ben let the little Irishman go it | stake." alone. Without help Blaine could find more veneer trees in a day than the crew could drop and get out to the decking grounds.

"But it's a man's sized job to keep your eye on such an operation !" Ben declared to Able. "I've got to watch Buller and the mill, too. I've got to think about markets so we'll be all set when we commence to saw again. And the devil of it is I'm only one hand and there are only twenty-four hours in a day!" He grinned. "Where's this good man you told me about? Jeffers? Is that his name?"

"Tim Jeffers? Over in the next town! But I doubt he'll even listen. He hasn't wanted a job in three years." "Doubting isn't knowing," Ben said grimly and the next afternoon drove

hard for Jeffers' little farm clearing. The old logger met Elliott with an eye that seemed at first to be hostile but which on closer observation proved to be only one of severe appraisal. "So you're after a camp foreman," he said. "No, I've guit the timber for good, Elliott. I'm through. A man I'm not a young man, son. I've no years nor strength any more to put into another man's losing fight." "We won't lose. Brandon's tried

everything up to and including fire and so I measured again. Somethin' was Ben considered, rubbing his chin he hasn't got me licked yet. Come wrong, sure. We looked her over and knuckle. He looked up the road along with me, Tim Jeffers, and we'll found where a piece had been cut off

the three thousand by the first or break | be out of a job between days and don't | came on a place where the one he folyou forget it!" "Oh, I see." Ben looked at a calhis way. endar. "It took them five days to get

it back to me. Can't wait that long. Give me a telegraph blank. I'll have 'em notify me by wire when they ship and if I have to meet trains myself . . . why, I can do that, too."

The other nodded and gave Ben a worried look. "I sort of liked the way you did up

Duval in that log rollin'; and I heard about the trimmin' you gave him at camp. And I'm . . . Well, I've seen enough raw stuff go on around this man's town to feed me up. I'll help think about."

Ben made a wry face.

"Even children don't seem safe," he said. "Some of us have got only our dander invested in the particular fracus I'm mixing in, but everything the little McManus girl has got is at

> "Yup. You're- Little girl?" "Yes. The McManus girl. She owns the Hoot Owl."

"Oh," the agent said with a queer look

The following morning, a half hour after the men had gone to the woods, a sawyer came running toward the camp office just in time to catch Ben before he left for the mill.

"Hi, Elliott !" he called. "Hold on minute !"

He came breathlessly up to the sleigh.

"Somebody cut three inches offen the measures last night. Thought you ought to know. Logs three inches short might be thrown out."

"Somebody cut- How'd you find that out?" "Well, we left the measuring stick layin' on a tree we'd dropped last night. I'd marked it myself, figurin' on making one more log before we quit and then we decided not to. It snowed just a mite durin' the night. I laid the measure down again this morning and made another mark, forhas trouble enough without hunting it. getting about the first which was covered up with snow, you see. When I marked, it knocked the snow off the

lowed had stopped and stood a moment, turned around and then resumed Ben went faster, breaking into a jog trot where the going was good. A half hour later he saw the moving figure before him. Ben saw him turn

wind which blew from the northwest and swing and go with it. Not completely lost, as a greenhorn might be; not floundering in panic and traveling meaningless circles, but still far from certain in directions.

Ben feit a tightening in his throat. This, the chances were, would be an encounter with one of the men who, most certainly acting on Brandon's orders, sought to hamper and hamstring him. A savage anticipation ran his veins with that; to meet this prowler would be a greater satisfaction, even, than throwing Bull Duval out of his

camp had been. Elliott pushed on, moving faster than the other, cutting down the distance between them as the thickening gloom made it impossible for him to see clearly at any distance.

The man before him stopped suddenly and faced about. Elliott hesitated, wondering whether he had been seen or not. If not, he wanted to trail secretly; if so-

He had no doubt, now, that he had been seen, so he went forward resolutely, intent on meeting the wanderer with challenge.

He dipped into a sharp ravine, climbed the other slope . . . and came

log, showing up my first one three inches off. I thought that was funny



When a girl leaves the house before nine every morning, whether she's off to school or to work, she needs at least one well-tailored frock in her wardrobe, one that will take her smartly through long busy hours and bring her home at night looking as freshly dressed as when she started. Designed along tailored lines, this frock adds a becoming "little boy" collar to its youthful yoke and tops its smart front bodice pleats with buttoned-down tabs that look for all the world like two perky little pockets. The skirt boasts a panel in front which ends in two inverted pleats, and there is another inverted pleat at the back. The full back gathered to the yoke is the last word in chic.

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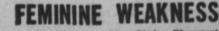


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15-35

WNU-4





headaches. I got very lith rest at night and felt ter-tibly weak. After taking te Prescription all my suf-I have been in spiendid. gists. liquid \$1.00.

which led toward camp to see a man approaching with that quick, space-devouring stride of the woodsman. "Had breakfast?" he asked.

"No." "Blanket your team and go eat. I'll have an answer for you by the time you're through."

As the veneer buyer entered the boarding house Bird-Eye Blaine-the traveler from camp-had reached the mill-yard.

"For the love av-" he began, turning his amazed stare from the mill to Elliott.

"Yes, a fire, Bird-Eye. Never mind that now. Where'd you get your name?"

"Me name! Say, where does anny man-" "I mean 'Bird-Eye.' Why do they

call you that?" "Oh, that! Why, I looked veneer

stuff from Brandon for years ontil I got sick with disgust fer th' mon."

"I see. And you've been on the Hoot Owl for three years, haven't you? Know the timber pretty well?"

"I know ivery quarter stake by its first name!"

"How much bird's-eye and veneer birch is there within draying distance of the steel? Let's get down to cases, Do you think there's ten thousand? you."

Or fifty?" "Fifty Naw! Tin?"-twisting his head. "Twict that, annyhow. 'Nd on twinty-three the' 's another bunch av ut. Scattered all through, too, but

bunched, Misther Elliott, lolke ye don't see ut frequent. That makes ut easy to git out."

"What I'm getting at is this: With the crew I've got could we get thirty thousand out in ten days?" Bird-Eye shrugged.

"Domn, b'y, but that's a chore! With this crew av hay tossers?" He shook his head. "Mebby you could . . . you 'nd Paul Bunyan. Most men couldn't even so much as start." "Wait here. I'll see you in a few

minutes."

He entered Buller's house where Able Armitage sipped coffee gloomily. neglecting the food on his plate.

"This is the nineteenth," Ben said. "With what bank balance we have, how much must we get together to meet the payroll, that one note that you think

can't be renewed and interest on others that'll be due? My figures are all up at camp."

Able considered at length. "Three thousand might let us out.

Why?" He put that question dryly.

"I just wondered." Ben turned to Buller. "How many men will you need to get the mill in shape? I mean, how many can you use and not have them falling over each other?"

"Oh, four or five besides myself." Ben nodded. "That'll give me fifteen of the mill crew to throw into the woods." His eyes snapped as he looked back at Able. "A half hour ago I was feeling about half licked. I'll make

run him into his hole!"

tracks-' But the man was obdurate and Ben left him, chagrined and a bit angered as he turned his team back toward the at his failure. barn.

"Brandon's got a crimp in the whole country," he muttered as he drove on toward camp. "And here I am, trying to do four men's work. Tough nut?

and only a few under-length logs had I'll tell the world !" been made. However, it proved to Ben In Tincup he drove to the express that menacing influences struck in unoffice to inquire for the new piston expected ways and from all quarters. head for the locomotive which was An unexplained snowshoe trail was due. He wanted to start loading his found which led in from the north veneer logs and getting them out to and none knew who had made it. The the siding as rapidly as they came from the woods. He had signed a contract visitor evidently had gone out by road in the dead of night. with the time for delivery specified and wanted to run no chance of de-

lay. But the repair part was not there.

"Got the bill of it," the station agent said. "But it hasn't shown up. Ought to be along tomorrow."

However, the next day did not bring the repairs and the driver of Ben's supply team reported the fact to him. "And the agent, he wants to see you,"

the man added enigmatically. "Didn't that piston head come yet?" Ben demanded angrily of the supply teamster after the man's next trip to

town. "I told you the agent wanted to see

The other's manner was doggedly mysterious and Elliott, without further questioning, harnessed and drove to

Tincup. The agent shook hands cordially and drew him inside the tiny ticket office. He spoke in a cautious tone, although they were alone.

"The messenger on the train says he put that engine part off for me the night the bill came through. It ain't here and I'm takin' a chance of losing my job just telling you even that much."

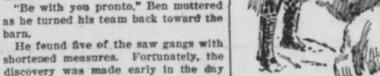
Ben frowned, "What are you driving at? It's not here and you'll lose- You mean, the express company'll hold you responsi- that. ble for an article lost out of the de-

pot?" "That don't worry me. The shipment came in and I never saw it and told you that much the railroad would lay in them.

THE STORY FROM THE BEGINNING

Ben Elliott-from "Yonder"-arrives at the lumbering town of Tincup, with Don Stuart, old, very sick man, whom he has befriended. He defeats Bull Duval, "king of the river," and town bully, in a log-birling contest. Nicholas Brandon, the town's leading clitzen, resents Stuart's presence, trying to force him to leave town and Elliott, resenting the act, knocks him down. Elliott is arrested and finds a friend in Judge Able Armitage. The judge hires him to run the one lum-ber camp, the Hoot Owl, that Brandon has not been able to grab. This belongs to Dawn McManus, daughter of Brandon's old partner, who has disappeared with a murder charge hanging over his head. Brandon sends Duval to beat up Ben, and Ben worsts him in a fist fight and throws him out of camp. Don Stuart dies, leaving a letter for Elliott "to be used when the going becomes too tough." Ben refuses to open the letter, believing he can win the fight by his own efforts. Fire threats out in the mill. Ben, leading the victorious fight against the flames that threatened to win the fight for Brandon, discovers the fire was started with gasoline. gasoline.

the stick and then we saw "Be with you pronto," Ben muttered



"Good Afternoon," She Said Brusquely.

face to face with the most lovely girl he could then or afterward remember having seen in his life,

Great brown eyes looked at him. The nose was small, aristocratic; the mouth red lipped, mobile, he imagined, but now it was set rather grimly into an expression of extreme petulance,

He did not register consciously the knitted toque of soft maroon wool, nor the well-tailored jumper and knickers. Impressions leaped at him in ensemble, rather than detail: a trim, trig, competent little figure.

"Oh !" he said, when she did not speak. "Oh . . . Why, hello!"

He grinned, then, but no responsive smile changed the girl's face or even lighted her eyes.

"Good afternoon," she said brusquely, almost sharply.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Sparrow Hawk, Smallest,

Family's Most Beautiful During late fall and winter field and house mice form the main diet of the Sparrow Hawk, the smallest and most beautiful of our hawk family, according to a writer in the Missouri Farmer. Money standing on end for an orphan Exceedingly brave and aggressive, it will sit in a nearby tree while the enough to outlast Nicholas Brandon's farmer shucks corn out of the shock or when he is hauling fodder out of the field, watching for mice which run out of the shock.

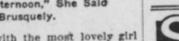
This hawk has an amazing sense of sight; with a graceful swoop, he catches a mouse on the run that is scurrying away from a corn shock, having seen his prey emerge from the shock from his vantage point many yards distant. His skill and his value to the farmer can best be noted when snow is on the ground; his food supply is then low and he is braver than usual. At such a time he will catch mice very near the farmer who is working at the corn shock.

Occasionally the sparrow hawk attacks small birds and chickens. These depredations usually occur during the nesting period or when other food is scarce, but these irregularities are so infrequent that they are more than outweighed by its good services in destroying mice and insects.

Foods Contain Water

All foods contain water. The dryest bread or biscuit may contain 5 to 10 per cent water, and some fruits and vegetables, like tomatoes, melons, lettuce, cauliflower and strawberries, may contain as much as 90 per cent.







PIGS AND PATRONAGE "How do you stand on the hog-

slaughtering program?" "It has been of no use to me," answered Senator Sorghum. "I haven't sufficient sophistry at command to make it look to my constituents like an excuse for not bringing home the bacon."

May Have Seen Double

Proud Father (somewhat tipsy)-Congrashalate me, gennelmun, I wanna register twins.

Record Clerk-What makes you say gentlemen? I'm the only one here. Proud Father-Say, hold everything (hic), till I can go home and take another look (hic) at them 11 tikes .-- Capper's Weekly.

Commercial Candor

Customer-How do you sell this fimburger?

Grocer-I often wonder myself, ma'am.



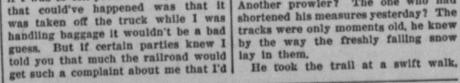
"Seems to me." Bird-Eye said that night, "that I heard 'bout two fellys trappin' over ferninst Squaw lake. Moight be they ain't trappers a-tall, a-tall !" Shortly after dinner on the follow ing day Ben Elliott set out to investigate this story of a trappers' camp on

Things were going swimmingly on the job. He was a bit ahead even of the stiff schedule of production he had set for himself and if the weather held

lake but he did not follow the most direct route. Swung right and left now and then, smiling when he came on a particularly fine piece of timber. Certainly, the Hoot Owl stuff looked better every time he went through it. girl if he, Ben Elliott, should be strong ruthlessness and persistence! He wondered about Dawn McManus, known and marked as the daughter of a mur-

derer. Tough, he told himself, for a child to grow up under a cloud like

He started back after a fruitless investigation, and had not gone more than half-way to camp when he came suddenly upon a fresh snowshoe trail. if I was to tell you that the only thing He stopped short with a little thrill. that could've happened was that it Another prowler? The one who had



Squaw lake, which lay to the northward of Hoot Owl.

reasonably good and he could frustrate these attempts to slow him up, he would turn the trick which engaged him for the present.

It was a good six miles to Squaw