



NOVEMBER JOE

The Detective of the Woods
by Hesketh Prichard.

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Continued

"How many bottles of whisky had you?" said he.
"Nary one," answered Thompson. "There isn't one nearer than Lavalotte, as you well know. We wasn't drunk, we was drugged. We in st' a' been, though how it was done beats me, for we had nothing but bread and bacon and tea, and I made the tea myself."
"Where's the kettle?"
"We left that and the frying pan back at the hut, for we was going to hunt the country for the nary one. You'll come along, Nov?"
"On my own condition, or I'll have nothing to do with it."
"What's that?"
"That nary a man of you goes back to Tideseon's bridge hut till I give you leave."
"But we want to catch the robber."
"Very well. Go and try if you think you can do it."

An outburst of argument arose, but soon one and another began to say: "We'll leave it to you, Nov." "Mind you fetch my \$100 back for me, Nov." "Leave Nov alone." "Go on, Nov."
November laughed. "I suppose you all slept with your money on you?"
It appeared they all had, and Lars and Chris, who possessed pocketbooks, and found them hung empty, in a corner of the hut.
"Well, Mr. Quarteb and me'll be getting along, boys. I'll let you know if I've any luck." Then suddenly November turned to the big spokesman and said, "By the way, Thompson, did you fill that kettle at the brook before you found you'd lost your cash?"
"No, I run right back."
"That's lucky," said November, and we walked away in a row of shouted questions to the canoe placed at our disposal by Close. By water we could run down to Tideseon's bridge in an hour or two.

"Do you think this is the work of the same man that held up Dan Michaels?"
"Guess so. Can't be sure. The ground's fine and soft, and we ought to get the answer to a good many questions down there."
Thanks to the canoe and a short cut known to November, we arrived at our destination in admirable time.
First of all, skirting the path, we went to the hut where the six had slept. A few articles dropped from the hastily made packs lay about, the frying pan beside the stove and the kettle on its side by the door. November moved round examining everything in his deft, light way. Lastly, he picked up the kettle and peered inside.
"What's in it?" said I.
"Nothing," returned November.
"Well, Thompson told you he hadn't filled it," I reminded him.
He gave me a queer little smile. "Just so," said he and strolled for fifty yards or so up the tote road.
"I've been along looking at the footmarks of them six mossbacks," he volunteered. "Now we'll look around here."

The inspection of the tracks was naturally a somewhat lengthy business. November had studied the trail of the six men to some purpose, for, though he hardly paused as he ranged the trodden ground, so swift were his eyes that he named each of the men to me as he pointed to their several tracks. As we approached the bank he indicated a distinct set of footprints, which we followed to the hut and back again to the water.

"He's the chap that did it," said November. "That's pretty plain."
"He is a heavier man than I am, and he walks rather on his heels."
November nodded, and began to follow the trail, which went down into the stream. He stood at the water's edge examining some stones which had been recently displaced, then waded down into it.
"Where was his boat?" I asked.
But November had by now reached a large flat stone some feet out in the water, and this he was looking round and over with great care. Then he beckoned to me. The stone was a large, flat one, as I have said, and he showed me some scratches upon its farther surface. The scratches were deep and irregular. I stared at them, but to me they conveyed nothing.
"I don't look like the mark of a boat," I ventured.
"They aren't. But that chap made them all right," he said.
"But how or why?"
November laughed. "I won't answer that yet, but I'll tell you this, the robbery was done between 2 and 3 o'clock last night."
"What makes you say that?"
November pointed to a grove of birch on the nearer bank.
"Those trees," he answered, then, on seeing my look of bewilderment, he added, "and he wasn't a 200 pound man an' heavier than you, but a little thin chap, and he hadn't a boat."
"Then how did he get away—by

wading?"
"Maybe he waded."
"If he did he must have left the stream somewhere," I exclaimed.
"Sure."
"Then you'll be able to find his tracks where he landed."
"No need to."
"Why?"
"Because I'm sure of my man."
"Is it the same who held up Dan Michaels?"
"Yes."
With that I had to be satisfied. It was late at night when we approached Camp C. We jumped ashore and went silently straight to the office, where the manager lived. A crowd stood round, and two men were holding the door; one was the burly Thompson.
"Hello! You needn't bother no more, Nov," he shouted. "We've got him."
"Who've you got?"
"The blackguard that robbed us."
"Good!" said November. "Who is it?"



November Had Reached a Large Flat Stone.

"Look at him!" Thompson banged open the office door and showed us the manager, Close, sitting on a chair by the fire, looking a good deal disheveled.
"Mr. Close?" exclaimed November.
"Yes, the boss—no other!"
"Got evidence?" inquired November, staring at Close.
"Tiptop! No one seen him from dark to dawn. And we got the boots. Found 'em in a biscuit tin on a shelf in the shanty just behind here where he sleeps."
"You fool! I was at my accounts all night!" cried Close to Thompson. November took no notice.
"Who found the boots?" said he.
"Cooke, when he was cleaning up. Found a bottle of sleeping stuff, too—nearly empty!" shouted two or three together.
November whistled. "Good for Cooke. Has he owned up?" he nodded at Close. "Was they your boots, Mr. Close?"
"Yes," roared Close.
"But he denies the robbery!" said Thompson excitedly.
"Of course I deny it!" cried Close.
"Let's see them boots," put in November.
"The boys took 'em to the bunk house," said Thompson. "Say, Nov, think of him paying us with one hand and robbing us with the other, the—"
"Wonderful!" observed November in his dry way. He continued to stare hard at Close, who at last looked up, and I could have sworn I saw November Joe's dark lashed eyelid droop slightly in his direction.
A change came over the manager. "Get out of here," he cried angrily. "Get out of here, you and your woods detective!" and some uncommonly warm language charged out at the back of the closing door.
The men who had been robbed and their comrades closed round as November examined the boots.
"Seventeen in one heel and fifteen in the other—cowhide boots," said Chris. "That's what he that robbed us wore, and I'll swear to that."
"I could swear to it too," agreed November.
"Take them and the sleeping stuff," pursued Chris. "It's a silver for skin to a red on a conviction, eh, November?"
"Have you sent for the police?"

"Not yet. We'd waited till you come up. We'll send now."
"The sooner the better," said November. "And whoever goes'll find four chaps from Camp B in the bar by Tideseon's bridge. They've orders to knock it down and take the roof off and carry the stove into D."
I listened to November making this astonishing statement, and I hoped I showed no surprise. What on earth was the game that he was playing?
"Hurry up, boys, and send for the police or there may be trouble. Who's going?"
"I don't mind if I go," offered Chris. "I'll start right now. The sooner we get Mr. Close safe in jail the better."
We all saw Chris off, and then the men took us back into the bunk house where they talked and argued for an hour. November had relapsed into his usual taciturnity. But when at length he spoke again his words acted like a bombshell.
"Say, boys," he said, and the cadence of his accent was very marked. "It's about time we let the boss out."
Every head jerked round in his direction. "Let him out?" shouted a dozen voices. "Before the police come?"
"Best so," replied November in his gentle manner. "You see, it wasn't him held you up, boys."
"Who was it then?"
November stood up.
"Come, and I'll show you."
Finally four of us boarded the big canoe and set off.

I lost all sense of direction in the darkness until we came out on the banks of the brook near Tideseon's bridge. We crossed, and at four of us crouched in the shadow of a big rock not twenty yards from the hut. We had been forewarned by November to keep very quiet and to watch the hut.
The pale forelights of dawn were already in the air when I felt November move slightly, and a moment later I heard a stick break, then footfalls on the bridge. A bluish shadow came cautiously down the bank, hesitating at every step, but always approaching the hut, until at last it passed within it. Then a match flared inside. I saw it pass the broken window. There was a pause. The door creaked faintly and the figure stole out again.
I put out my hands toward November—he was gone.

To Be Continued.

TRADE BALANCE GROWS BIG

Huge Exports Continue to Shift Scale Heavily in Our Favor
New York, Nov. 10.—The balance of trade in favor of the United States continues to grow. Exports from the port of New York yesterday had a money value of \$4,189,599, while the imports were valued at only \$2,614,378.

Cotton exports were 30,787 bales, making a total thus far this season of 733,257 bales, against 3,092,113 last year. While this is a great discrepancy, it must be remembered that practically no cotton was exported during August and September.

The feature of the cotton market has been the heavy buying by Japan. So far this year the Japanese have brought 108,810 bales, as compared with 80,720 bales last year.



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