

# The Snowshoe Trail

By EDISON MARSHALL

## CHAPTER XIV. (Cont'd.)

"You can claim half of it," Harold was whispering eagerly into Virginia's ear. "You were with Bill when he found it."

"I can—but I won't," she replied coldly. "Gold, gold, gold," he whispered to himself. "Heaps and heaps of it—what I've always hunted. And Bill had to find it. That devil had to walk right into it."

He was sickened by the thought that except for his own cowardice he would have accompanied them into the den. Then he would have been in a position to claim half the mine—and get it, too.

He found a match. The white skein lay just at his feet.

He drew back startled, but instantly regained his poise. He knelt with unexplainable intensity. He saw the ghastly wound and its grim connection with the rusted pick. And he bent, slowly, like a man who is trying to control an unwanted eagerness, lifting the pick in his arms.

Oh, it was easy to handle and lift! How naturally it swung in his arms! What a deadly blow the cruel point could inflict!

## CHAPTER XV.

Bill made plans for an early start to his Twenty-three Mile cabin.

"I'll leave before dawn—as soon as it gets gray," he told Virginia as he bade her good night. "I'll come back the next day, with a backload of supplies. And with the little we have left, we will have enough to go on. We can start for Bradleyburg the day after that."

Virginia took no pleasure in bidding him goodbye.

Her voice sank almost to a whisper, and her tones were sober and earnest. "I'll pray for you. Here's my hand, Bill."

He groped for it, found it at last; it was swallowed in his own palm, and the heart of the man raced and thrilled and turned.

He pushed on, his snowshoes crunching on the white crust. The powers of the wilderness gave him good speed—almost to the noon hour.

Then he was suddenly aware that the fine edge of the wilderness silence had been dulled. There was a faint stir at his ear drums. The stir grew to a faint and distant murmur, the murmur to a long swish like a million rustling garments. A tree fell with a crash, far away. Then the wind smote him.

It was from the southeast.

No man of the Northwest provinces is unacquainted with this wind. It is prayed for in the spring because its breath melts the drifts swiftly, but it is hated to death by the traveler caught far from his cabin on snowshoes.

It did not occur to Bill to turn back. Already he was nearly halfway to his destination. The food supplies had to be secured, sooner or later; and when the Chinook comes no man knows when it will go away. He pushed on through the softening snow.

The truth suddenly dawned upon him that he was face to face with one of the most uncomfortable situations of all his years in the forest. He didn't believe he would be able to make the cabin before the fall of night.

His woodsman's senses predicted a bitter night.

Through the black hours he would have to fight off sleep so that he could men the fire and cut fuel.

Late afternoon: already the shadows lay strange and heavy in the distant tree aisles. And all at once he paused, thrilled, in his tracks.

A little way to the east, on the bank of a small creek, his father and his traitorous partner had once had a mining claim—a mine they had tried unsuccessfully to operate before Bronson had made his big strike.

They had built a small cabin, and for nearly thirty years it had stood moldering and forgotten.

Exultant and thankful, Bill turned in his tracks and rushed over to ward it.

## CHAPTER XVI.

There was plenty of heart-breaking work to do when Bill finally reached the little cabin. He couldn't force open the door, so he hacked a hole in it through which he entered.

After looking about, he turned to his toil of making a fire just outside the hole.

Tired out, he climbed inside again and lay down on the dry dirt, putting his arm under his head.

All at once he was aware that his eyes were fastened upon an old cigar box on a shelf against the wall.

As he reached to seize it, he had a distinct premonition of misfortune. It contained a single photograph.

It was a typical old-fashioned photograph—two men standing in stiff and awkward poses in an old-fashioned picture gallery—printed in the time-worn way.

One of the men was his own father. And he stared at the other face—a rather handsome, thin-lipped, sardonic-eyed face—as if he were looking at a ghost.

"It's Harold Lounsbury!" he cried. But instantly he knew it could not be Harold Lounsbury. Already he knew. It was no other than Rutheford, the man who slew his father.

His deductions followed with deadly and remorseless certainty. He knew now why Harold Lounsbury had come into Clearwater. Virginia had told Bill that her lover had seemed to have some definite place in view for his prospecting; he had simply come to search for the same lost mine that Bill had discovered the previous day.

He knew now why Kenly Lounsbury had been willing to finance Virginia's trip into the North—not in hopes of finding his lost nephew, but to find the mine of which he also had some knowledge.

In the same sweep of realization he knew why Harold Lounsbury's face had always haunted him and filled him with hazy, uncertain memories. Harold Lounsbury was Rutheford's son—the son of his father's murderer. Kenly Lounsbury was Rutheford's brother.

All at once the smoke from the fire began to pour in upon him, choking his lungs and filling his eyes with tears.

## CHAPTER XVII.

For a moment Bill gave little attention to the deepening clouds of pungent, biting wood smoke that the wind, suddenly shifting, whipped in through the hole he had cut in the door.

This was the most bitter moment of his life, and he was lost and remote in his dark broodings. The smoke didn't matter.

The fight for life no longer seemed worth while.

The smoke deepened in the cabin. It seemed to be affecting his power to stand erect. He tried to think of some way to save himself; his mind was slow and dull.

He knew that he couldn't get out of the cabin.

There was only a little hole in the door; to crawl through it, inch by inch, as he had entered, would subject him to the full fury of the flames.

Meanwhile the fire burned higher, the wind blew the clouds of smoke from the green wood through the hole as if it were high pressure steam.

It soon was impossible for Bill to see—even to hold his eyes open, the cruel smoke tortured them so.

If ever a man were caught in a terrible trap of his own making that man was Bill Bronson.

His ax! With his ax he could chop the door away. His hand fumbled at his belt. But he remembered now; he had left his ax outside the cabin, its blade thrust into the spruce log that had supplied his fuel.

Suddenly he saw himself face to face with seemingly certain death. The smoke clouds were swiftly and surely strangling him. Already his consciousness was departing. He leaped for the opening again and fell sprawling on the dirt floor. He started to spring up—

But he suddenly grew inert, breathing deeply. There was still air close to the ground. Strange he hadn't thought of it before—just to lie still, face close to the dirt. It pained him to breathe; his eyes throbbled and burned, but at least it was life. Then all was confused—oblivion.

When Bill awakened again, the last pale glimmer of the lighted smoke was gone.

The fire had evidently burned down and out.

His fumbling hands encountered the log walls; then he groped about till he found the plank door. His hands smarted, but their sense of touch did not seem blunted.

He had never known a darker night! His muscles were more at his command now; with a great lurch he prang up and thrust head and shoulders through the hole in the door.

The hot ashes punished his face, and his hands encountered hot coals as he thrust them through. Yet with a mighty effort he pushed on until his wrists touched the icy snow. He knew that he was safe.

He stood erect, scarcely believing in his deliverance. The wind still blew the snow just a stinging lash from the north and west. It was curious that a cloudy night could be so cold. Yet he could not see the stars.

The coat of the fire, however, smothered and smothered in ashes, stopped toward him, and he could not see them for such heat as they could yield.

Presently he halted, gasping with amazement at the ground.

He was suddenly struck with a ghastly and terrible possibility. His hand groped for a match.

He heard it crack in the silence, but evidently it was a dud! The darkness before his eyes remained unbroken.

Filled with a sick fear, he removed his glove and passed his hand over the upland match. There was no longer a possibility for doubt. The tiny flame smarted his flesh.

"Blind!" he cried. "Out here in the snow and the forest—blind!"

It was true. The pungent wood smoke had done a cruel work.

(To be continued.)

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### GOING HOME

A rush to enter bus or tram, A scrum to reach the train; Umbrellas dripping down your neck Their rivulets of rain; A jolting, shaky, noisy ride, Packed like a tin of sardines— Two people standing on your feet And two more in between!

A station, and a grinding stop; A blessed breath of air; A villa gate, a shaded lamp, Soft slippers, and a chair; The evening paper, supper, too, At someone's kindly call; A little peace, one evening long! At home! And worth it all!

Answers—A.M.F.

News of motorcars which cry out when anyone tries to steal them, and of automobiles that operate traffic lights themselves, encourages the hope that a car may yet be invented whose "soft answer" will turn away the wrath of a traffic officer, or that will even pay the fine imposed for violation of traffic regulations.

Minard's Liniment for all Strains.

## St. Bernard of Alps Ousted by Progress

Shaggy Life Saver Has Rival in Thermos Bottle and Telephone

Tourists returning from the kind of the friendly St. Bernard dog have said that his life-saving days are numbered. Science with its thermos bottles, they say, is triumphing over the shaggy hero who for generations has been carried by his little band of alpine hounds to despatching wayward storm-bound in the Alps. Recently three travelers, lost during a Swiss snowstorm, were rescued by a monk from the St. Bernard monastery and were revived with hot coffee poured from a thermos bottle carried in the rescuer's knapsack. Vegetable capsules, and concentrated meats, completed the resuscitation of these three adventuring alpinists.

Despite scientific achievements threatening his romantic career, however, the St. Bernard is still cherished by dog lovers for his benign and gentle manner and his dependability in time of crisis. Dog authorities assert that a St. Bernard cannot be stamped. And St. Bernard puppies continue to frisk clumsily and to yap boisterously around the hospice at St. Bernard Pass, where patient monks continue to train the dogs to search out travellers lost in Alpine snow-drifts.

### Origin of the Strain

The original St. Bernard of the Alps, it is said, was probably the Swiss sheepdog bred with a mastiff in order to obtain greater strength.

For centuries the monks specialized in the breeding of these dogs and eventually got a strain which was one of the finest, if not the finest, in the world. But tragedy came to the monastery kennels. First a bad epidemic of distemper wiped out a large number of the dogs, later an avalanche demolished part of the kennels and killed the dogs. In order to replenish the kennels, the monks then brought dogs from the Pyrenees and bred them with the bloodhound. The result was not the rugged breed for which the monastery had long been notable. According to dog fanciers, its kennels do not to-day produce the fine strain of former years. In fact, England is now said to have the finest St. Bernards in the world. This is due to a strain brought to that country from Switzerland in the seventeenth century. Careful breeding has strengthened and improved the strain.

## Idaho Ranchman Uses Plane to Herd Sheep

Scott Anderson, of Rupert, Idaho, is perhaps the first man in the West to use an airplane in herding his vast flock of sheep. Anderson owns three planes which he uses to visit his different sheep camps, many miles apart, to which he takes supplies for his sheep herders.

The long journeys across mountains and plains to the various sheep camps which require days for wagons and even trucks can be made by airplane in a few hours. The sheep have become used to the airplanes and do not become scared or stampeded when they land near them.

## Death Notices in Italy Advertised on Billboards

Rome—Tourists who see posters on billboards printed in mournful types, with heavy black borders, even though they cannot read the Italian, may recognize Italy's characteristic death notices.

They are paid notices and call upon friends to offer prayers and attend funeral services at a given time and place. Newspapers here do not print death-notice columns. Relatives or friends, however, pay for advertisements similar to them on the outdoor boards.

## See Europe this Autumn for less money

The famous Passion Play is drawing added thousands. In August and September, the crowd has passed—there's greater comfort and better choice of accommodations everywhere. Your travel dollars buy the utmost.

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## Man Aspires Ever To Reach Summits

Mechanical Age Does Not Yet Hold Complete Sway Over Mankind

We are told that this is the age of the machine. Aviators span oceans; another flies over two poles; a modern Apollo, space-weight miles above the earth; all by the aid of the multitude of devices which man has triumphantly put to his service—elaborate, highly sensitive, costly. Yet how decadent it is to realize that six men, on their own legs and by their own unassisted effort, have climbed and pulled themselves into the same upper strata of the atmosphere as were reached by the modern Apollo. Six members of the Kanchenjunga expedition have climbed the highest mountain ever ascended by man, Kanchenjunga Peak in the Himalayas, according to dispatches received from their camp. Men have climbed higher on the slopes of Mount Everest, both by the use of artificial oxygen and by their own efforts, but never before, so far as is known, have men stood on a summit as high as Jongsong.

Defeat is a word forbidden to your genuine mountaineer. To be discouraged by temporary setbacks and to be a mountaineer at the same time is utterly impossible. Climbing mountains is a matter of unflinching purpose and clear, confident intelligence far more than it is a matter of muscles and lungs. So the serious, calculated purpose with which the Dyhrenfurth expedition set out for Kanchenjunga made one believe that, even if they failed this season to conquer Kanchenjunga—a acknowledged to be the most difficult mountain in the whole world—they would at least record some notable success.

The expedition has exceeded reasonable expectation. Climbing on two separate days, six of the party of

mountaineers, who were appropriately drawn from five different European countries, and two Nepalese porters, reached the summit of Jongsong Peak, which rises to 24,140 feet in the Himalayas between Sikkim and Nepal. Frau Dyhrenfurth, too, distinguished herself in single-handed supervision of the bringing up of supplies.

The mountaineers constantly give inspiration to mere groundlings. They do not climb for sheer glory or the glamour of conquest. They symbolize the eternal spiritual aspiration of men, always lifting their eyes from the ground and seeking to overcome with each successive peak a further barrier of physical limitation. As men lift up their eyes to the hills, so do they set their feet on the paths of the mountains.



"At a restaurant the other night George asked Miss Wink how she would like a little wild duck." "What did she answer?" "She changed color, and said, 'Oh, this is so sudden!'"

For Blisters—Minard's Liniment.

Hardened Old Investor: "Did you know wheat was down to a dollar?" Green One: "You don't say, I'd buy some if I had any place to keep it."

"The political machine triumphs because it is a united minority acting against a divided majority."—WILL DURANT.



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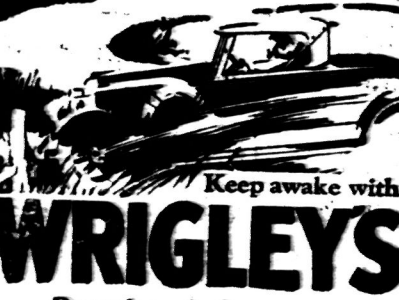
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