THE BIG MUSKEG

By

VICTOR ROUSSEAU

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"MOLLY, DEAR!"

—7—

SYNOPSIS.—Looking over Big Muskeg, a seemingly impassable swamp in the path of the Missabi railroad, Joe Bostock, builder of the line, and Wilton Carruthers, chief of engineers, are considering the difficulties. A rifle shot instantly kills Bostock and breaks Carruthers' arm. Carruthers tries to carry the body to a post of the Hudson's Bay company, where McDonald is the factor. McDonald's daughter, Molly, sees Carruthers struggling in the muskeg and drags him from the swamp, with his burden. Unconsciously, her father objects to her saving Carruthers. Weakened by his wound and exertions, Carruthers is disturbed by the appearance of Tom Bowyer, Bostock's business rival and personal enemy. Bowyer insults Molly, and Carruthers strikes him. Carruthers declares his love for Molly. She promises to be his wife. Carruthers has to reach the town of Clayton to attend a meeting at which Bostock's enemies plan to wrest control of the Missabi from him. Molly goes with him. They are delayed by a storm. Attacked by his dogs, Carruthers' life is saved by Molly, who is forced to kill the animals. "The snow, the snow!" They set out on foot for Clayton, reaching it with Carruthers in an almost delirious condition. He is in time to foil Bostock's enemies and keep control of the line for Mrs. Bostock.

CHAPTER VI—Continued.

—7—

Wilton was astonished. "Live at Big Muskeg?" he cried.

"Until the work is finished. Don't refuse me, Will!" She clasped her hands together in her childish, pleading way that Joe had always found irresistible. Joe would have let me. I won't hamper you, Will," she begged.

"Kitty, you're a trump!" cried Wilton. "But you can't—there is love. The loneliness would be awful. And there isn't a house anywhere. And besides—"

He did not dare suggest the thought that came to him, that people would gossip about her. That, he felt, rested with her.

"It won't be lonely with—with the work, Will," she answered. "And I've already made my plans. I'm having a bungalow built there. And there will be Molly. Don't you want me to come, Will?"

Kitty's pleas were irresistible. Wilton yielded, and he was glad for one thing; her presence at the portage would mean much to Molly. During the next few days he was in constant consultation with the directors as representing Kitty, who had given him her power of attorney to act for her. He went carefully over the books. He was quite satisfied with their showing. If Big Muskeg could be crossed, the company could remain solvent without increasing its capital.

He devoted his attention to the personnel, taking on new men and weeding out, a thing Joe had hated doing, until he was satisfied that Bowyer had no representative on the staff.

Wilton and Betts had been named executors in Joe's will. Wilton had already gone through Joe's papers; but his task was much less satisfactory; for Joe, who was a capital director, seemed to have no personal system at all. Everything was in confusion—papers were missing, records mixed up together. He had left Kitty two thousand shares in the Missabi, and a comfortable little capital of about forty thousand dollars, together with the house in Clayton and some property in Winnipeg.

The Missabi shares, amounting to two million dollars at their par value, represented the bulk of his fortune, and were in a safety-deposit box in the bank's vault. The receipt, however, could not be found.

This was not of much importance, but Wilton went with Kitty to look in Joe's box. Clark, the manager, took them below, opened the vault, and put in the master-key. Wilton completed the opening. To his astonishment there were only fifteen hundred shares.

"Five hundred shares are missing," he said to the manager.

Clark looked at him in some surprise. "You are not forgetting that Mr. Bostock hypothecated five hundred shares with us as security for the loan?" he asked.

Wilton looked at Kitty. "Did you know that Joe borrowed on the security of those shares?" he asked.

Kitty shook her head. Joe had not told her many of the details of his business. And the papers had shown no record of the transaction.

"Mr. Phayre has just come in," said the manager.

They went up to the president's office. Phayre asked them to sit down, and listened to Wilton's statement.

"Mr. Clark, will you get Mr. Bostock's blank transfer of the shares?" he asked.

The paper was brought. The signature appeared perfectly genuine. Joe Bostock had made out a transfer in blank for five hundred shares, in return for a loan of three hundred and fifty thousand dollars, due the 15th of December.

Unless the loan was repaid by that date, the control of the Missabi would swing to the Bowyer interests.

Wilton was almost stunned by the discovery. Joe had spoken as if his control was iron-clad.

He went home with Kitty and telephoned to Betts to come. They went through all Joe's papers again.

Even Jim Betts was forced to admit that the transaction appeared regular.

"Jest watch them snakes, boy; that's all," he counseled. "I don't say Phayre forged Joe's signature and broke into his box, because it's a bigger risk than he's got the nerve to take, but I guess Bowyer wants the Missabi mighty bad."

"Once I get the line across Big Muskeg, Jim, it'll be easy to raise enough money to pay off the loan," said Wilton.

He arranged with Kitty to have all Joe's papers placed in the safe which held the engineering records, and sent up in it to Big Muskeg. Only Kitty and he knew the combination.

Two days later Wilton, now completely recovered, started for the bush.

The sub-contractor had practically completed the camp at Big Muskeg, and there was quite a gang of men there, principally engaged in hauling the cut timber. Wilton had taken Anderson from the cache and made him the foreman. The Swede was one of the best foremen in the line's employ, but had fallen from his estate owing to repeated lapses into drunkenness.

Wilton planned to reach Big Muskeg on Saturday night, in order to meet his men on the Sunday, when they would all be in camp. He took a new engineer with him, a young fellow named Digby, who had come with excellent recommendations from an English institute. He was particularly anxious to reach his destination, for he had had no letter from Molly since his recovery.

To his surprise, Wilton found the camp absolutely empty, though there were plenty of signs of an abundant population. But stores from one of

"What Have You Got to Say?" Demanded Wilton.

the benches in the dining room betrayed the presence of a solitary occupant. A man was lying full length behind the table, his hat tilted over his face.

Wilton shook him to his feet, and disclosed Andersen, dead drunk.

The foreman, rudely awakened, stood reeling and blinking at him.

"What have you got to say?" demanded Wilton, furious at this lapse on the part of the man whom he had trusted.

"I say—d—n poor whisky for a respectable camp!" hiccoughed the Swede.

"Where did you get it?" shouted Wilton, shaking him by the shoulders.

"Over yander," answered Andersen, jerking his thumb in the direction of the portage.

"Where are the men gone?"

"Over yander," repeated Andersen, with another jerk.

Wilton strode from the dining-room, his heart burning with indignation. Who had brought liquor into the camp? It was a thing dreaded by employers of labor, almost more than the occasional typhoid epidemics. While liquor was to be obtained within a radius of five and twenty miles, work would be practically suspended.

With Digby at his heels, he strode fiercely out toward the swamp. Big Muskeg was less than three miles away by the new road which had been cut from the camp to the portage.

Wilton's heart sank at the thought of the men in the factor's place with Molly. The laborers were chiefly Hunkies and Galicians, docile as sheep when sober, but changed by drink into wild beasts.

As they gained the opposite bank they heard wild shouts of drunken laughter, and, in a momentary interval, McDonald's angry protest—and then a cry from Molly.

They ran at the top of their speed. Wilton leading.

He burst into the store. It was filled with men, roaring and shouting; they were drinking from their tin pannikins, which they had evidently brought designedly from the cookhouse, and filling them from a hogshead of liquor that stood in the center of the room.

The old factor, wedged in behind the counter, his right arm limp at his side, was pushing his left into the faces of the grinning Hunkies.

Molly, at the door of her room, her lips parted, her eyes dilated with fear, was surrounded by a ring of men. One of them had his huge paws on her shoulders, and, standing a little behind, was trying to bend her back ward toward him.

Wilton took in the scene instantaneously through the thick haze of stinking tobacco-smoke. Everything swam before his eyes. With a hoarse roar of rage he leaped into the center of the crowd, caught the man who had his handsom Molly, and, spinning him round, dashed his fists into his face again and again until he was unrecognizable from the blood that covered his broken features.

Screaming with pain, the man broke from him. Before the astonished Hunkies could collect their wits Wilton was in their midst again. He drove them before him; he snatched up a bottle containing a guttered candle end, and, armed with this terrible weapon, brought it smashing down on their heads till he held only the splinters in his bleeding hands.

Stupefied by this onslaught, the men ran for the door. But, jumping in the entrance, the remainder turned and faced him. Three men set on him, dealing savage kicks, and rushing at him, head down, like battering-rams. One caught him in the pit of the stomach and sent him toppling against the counter.

Instantly the whole mob was upon him with knives, screaming with rage. Wilton leaned against the counter, sick and weak for the moment, and unable to defend himself. But suddenly the mob was flung violently away, and he saw Digby, his fists flying like flails, striking out right and left, and felling a man at every blow.

The respite enabled him to regain his feet, snatch up another bottle, and go to the Englishman's assistance. The Hunkies had no stomach for any more. This time they made the doorway, and ran at the top of their speed toward the portage, leaving Wilton and his assistant panting and exhausted in their wake.

Wilton was about to go back to Molly when suddenly he caught sight of two men who looked like Canadians slinking into the kitchen, which opened upon the side of the store. He recognized them instantly as the two fake policemen, Hackett and Tonguay, and it was evident enough that they had brought the liquor to the portage.

Shouting to Digby, he rushed after them. But they were through the kitchen and had gained the open before he could get within a dozen paces. Digby had evidently not understood Wilton's shout.

"Good work, what?" he ejaculated. "Do you have much of this sort, Mr. Carruthers?"

"I don't know," answered Wilton. "It'll be part of our business to see that there isn't any more."

"It wasn't on our school curriculum," said the Englishman thoughtfully.

Wilton only glanced at him, and went into the store. Molly was on her knees before her father, who had sunk into a chair. The old man's face was ashen white, but, as Wilton approached, he opened his eyes and glared at him.

"I—a ve" he hissed with untmagin able fury. "This is your work! Get out of my store and never let me see your face again!"

He turned, and began to shuffle away, dragging his paralyzed leg, his right arm dangling. Wilton fell back, and McDonald began to make his way upstairs.

Wilton went up to Molly and took her in his arms.

"Molly—Molly, dear, it's all right now," he said anxiously. "Forgive me! I couldn't have guessed those men would have been wild beasts like that. I thought Anderson could keep them in control. Thank God, I came when I did!"

"You weren't to blame, Will," sobbed the girl; "and the men weren't. I don't think they would have done me any harm. It was the sight of you. Will and the fight. I thought they had stabbed you—"

"I shall be in camp as long as it's open," answered Wilton. "Don't be afraid any more. I'll see that no more of this stuff finds its way here. And tomorrow I'll make an example of the worst of them that won't be forgotten."

He soothed her and soon brought her back to her normal condition. As he grew cooler he began to realize that, as Molly had said, the men were not to blame. In the morning few of them would have more than the vaguest remembrance of the affair. It was the alcohol acting as a physical and moral poison on them.

"How did it happen?" he asked presently. "And how long have those two outlaws been in the camp?"

"They came here a week ago, Will," she answered. "They were very insolent, and said that trouble was coming; they made all sorts of vague threats against you. They seemed to want to make trouble for us."

"They're here for some object, Molly," said Wilton. "It's to hinder the work, of course, but—there's more to it than that."

"I think they want to frighten us away from the portage, Will," said Molly. "Tom Bowyer has been here since I returned. He told me that my father was very ill; that he was using his influence to get him pensioned, and that the best thing we could do would be to leave the portage as soon as possible.

"He wanted me to go to Winnipeg and study stenography, or anything else I chose. But I told him I couldn't take any steps without consulting you."

"Good for you, Molly, dear!" said Wilton.

"He hadn't guessed how things were between us, for he changed instantly. He began to threaten me. He swore that I should never marry you, and that he'd drive us from the portage. He went away mad with rage. When those two men came I connected their appearance with him."

"You were right," said Wilton. "But I don't think they'll show their faces here again. And I'll see you every day now, Molly, dear, why didn't you write to me? I hoped for a letter every day. Why didn't you write?"

"I wasn't quite sure—you'd want me to," she answered shyly. "You see, Will, it—our engagement—came about after I nursed you. And I thought, after you got back to Clayton—I thought—that I'd just wait."

"You thought that I might change, Molly?" cried Wilton.

She nestled close to him. "Not really, Will. But I—I don't know, but sometimes I wanted to wait. I hated so to come back here, with you lying so ill, and I was so worried when Kitty didn't answer my letters."

"Kitty didn't answer you?"

"Only once, when you were nearly out of danger. Perhaps that made me feel that—that I'd better not write to you, Will. But, of course, all her time was taken up with caring for you."

"She ought to have written you," said Wilton. "That doesn't sound like Kitty. And—Molly, dear," he continued, thinking of Kitty's projected stay at Big Muskeg, "I've got a surprise for you next month. Just about the thing that would please you best in the world."

And as she looked at him in inquiry he drew her into his arms and kissed her again. "Promise me, dear, that you will never doubt my love for you," he pleaded.

"I promise, Will," she answered, looking at him with shining eyes. "Never—never, dear!"

"I'll have to go, Molly," said Wilton. "Only until tomorrow, dear. And sleep quietly, because I'll give those men the lesson of their lives in the morning."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MONSTERS IN THE DISTANT PAST

Proof That Birds Capable of Lifting and Carrying Off Full-Grown Men Once Existed.

Recent scientific discoveries in various parts of the world go to prove that in times long gone by there were birds big enough to lift a man into the air without difficulty, observes a London Tit-Bits writer.

It is well known that an eagle with a five-foot spread of wings can lift a lamb weighing ten pounds, and that a bird can generally lift one-half more than its own weight. Many of the enormous birds of ancient times weighed many hundreds of pounds, and some of them had a spread of wings which would cover a present-day street car.

There once lived in the Rocky mountains of America a race of parrots seven feet high. One nearly complete skeleton of this remarkable species has been preserved, and fragments of others have recently been dug up. These parrots are supposed to have trodden the earth about 3,000,000 years ago.

Another amazing creature was a running bird of prey of the heron family. It had a head larger than that of a horse, with a huge sharp beak, and was eight feet high. Like the parrot, it could not fly to any height, as its wings were not large enough to support it.

In the island of Madagascar there used to be an enormous bird called the aepyornis. This creature was ten feet high and laid eggs thirteen inches long and three feet in circumference. It is supposed to have become extinct only little more than a century ago.

Although the aepyornis must have been a sufficiently awe-inspiring sight, the "giant moa" of New Zealand, which stood 14 feet high and weighed at least half a ton, must have been even more so.

His Wife.

"I am useless to her," Manuel said forlornly, "and I do not like to hurt the poor, foolish heart of her by going against her foolish notions; and besides I am a little afraid of her because she is always able to make me uncomfortable. And above all, of course, the hero of a famous love affair such as ours has become, with those d—d poets everywhere making rhymes about my fidelity and devotion, has to preserve appearances. So I get through each day, somehow, by never listening very attentively to the interminable things she tells me about. But, I often wonder, as I am sure all husbands wonder, why heaven ever made a creature so tedious and so unreasonably dull of wit and so opinionated. And when I think that for the rest of time this creature is to be my companion, I usually go out and kill somebody. Then I come back, because she knows the way I like my toast."—From "Figures of Earth" by James Branch Cabell.

Called White House "Barn-like."

The letters written by Mrs. John Adams, the first First Lady of the Land to be hostess at 1600 Pennsylvania avenue, in which she described the "Palace" as being "barn-like" and "half furnished" have been a source of historical interest in comparison to the newspaper accounts of the comforts and luxuries of the White House as it stands today. However, Mrs. Adams had made the executive mansion more home-like by the time Thomas Jefferson and his many daughters came to occupy it from his magnificent homestead at Monticello, Va.

"Well, Men," he said. "I'm your new boss!"

Indigestion and Dyspepsia Overcome

Victims of stomach trouble, indigestion, dyspepsia and their allied complaints find Tanlac an ever-ready source of relief and cure. Thousands of people have refound the joys of health by its use after everything else they tried had failed.

"Tanlac helped me wonderfully," said Mrs. W. H. Hocker, 84 Rose Ave., Clifton Forge, Va. "For over a year I suffered tortures from indigestion, and had to live on the simplest foods. I became almost a nervous wreck. Tanlac restored me to the best of health."

Tanlac helps the stomach digest the food properly and eliminate waste. Soon the whole system is built up; the blood is purified and the entire body takes on new tone, vitality and energy. Get a bottle today and start on the road to health. For sale by all good druggists.—Advertisement.

Possible, but Not Probable.

Little Mamie had been a careful observer of her parents' conversation. Accompanied by her mother she was walking one day last spring when two girls wearing galoshes passed them. Stopping suddenly, Mamie said, "Look, mother, are they some of the 'hoot-eggers' daddy was talking about?"

Important to Mothers

Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, that famous old remedy for infants and children, and see that it Bears the Signature of Chas. H. Fletcher
In Use for Over 30 Years.
Children Cry for Fletcher's Castoria

The Men Closed In.

"Your window exhibit of bathing suits worn by live models made a hit, I hear."

"It was poor business," replied the merchant, gloomily. "Our object was to sell the suits to women. No woman got within forty feet of that window."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Freshen a Heavy Skin

With the antiseptic, fascinating Cuticura Talcum Powder, an exquisitely scented, economical face, skin, baby and dusting powder and perfume. Renders other perfumes superfluous. One of the Cuticura Toilet Trio (Soap, Ointment, Talcum).—Advertisement.

ALWAYS HIS UNLUCKY DAY

Dr. Rathenau, German Statesman, Had Dread of Saturday Which His Tragic Fate Justified.

Two weeks before his murder M. Rathenau was chatting with a few friends after dinner in the living room of his villa at Grunwald. The talk had been about the popular superstition which attaches to Friday, a day of evil repute.

"My unlucky day," M. Rathenau remarked, "has always been Saturday. Twice in my life I have nearly been killed. Once, when a child, I was badly injured in a runaway. This was on a Saturday. Then years later I was almost killed in a fall down a stairway—on a Saturday. It's my bad day."

M. Rathenau was assassinated on Saturday.—Le Petit Parisien, Paris.

Will Clean Historic Edifice.

Westminster abbey, London, is going to have its first bath for many a year.

Prominent experts in old wood carvings of the Gothic and Norman periods have discovered a preparation which can be run over the wood of the old choir stalls and on the alabaster of tombs, which will take off the dirt, without harming the beautiful work, bringing to light the wonderful color effects of the old paints beneath the dirt layers.

A preparation of lime, which will give the historic abbey the effect of having been whitewashed when first applied, will be painted on the outside stone work of the abbey, to clean the gray stone back to its original colors. At present the outside is, in places, black.

The Leisurely Unrighteous.

"Are there any moonshiners in this part of the country?"

"Not any more," replied Farmer Corntossel.

"You run them out?"

"No. They got rich and moved away."

10c Makes Old Waists Like New

Putnam Fadeless Dyes—dyes or tints as you wish

LUCKY STRIKE CIGARETTE
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It's toasted. This one extra process gives a delightful quality that can not be duplicated

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YOU can prepare for a high-grade office position in a short time under our instructions. Write for bulletin AA, explaining courses and tuition rates. Opportunities to work for board and room while attending. "The School that places its graduates in 'better positions.'"

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By the Use of Nujol

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SAVE HALF
Made for A-5 cars. Send for estimate. State Name and Year of car. $9.50. This Foot Top and back curtain $9.50. COMFORT AUTO TOP COMPANY 1619 Germantown Ave., Phila., Penna.

Fords Run 34 Miles Per Gallon
on cheapest gasoline or half kerosene using our 1923 carburetor. Increased power, quick to start, no carbon, attach yourself. Money back guarantee; 30 days' trial. Big profits to agents. AIR FRICTION CARBURETOR CO., 486 Madison Street, Dayton, Ohio

THICK, SWOLLEN GLANDS
that make a horse **Wheeze, Roar,** have **Thick Wind or Choke-down** can be reduced with
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HARD TO GET BELOW THAT

Once at Least Golfer Had a Chance to Turn in a Score His Opponent Could Not Beat.

Eugene G. Grace, president of the Bethlehem Steel company, plays a first-class game of golf. Between him and his "big chief," Charles M. Schwab, exists a keen friendly rivalry, the two playing regularly together.

In the steel trade, they tell the story of a match once played between the two. On the first hole, the story goes, Schwab, who was keeping score, asked Grace how many shots he had taken, and was told five. "I took a four," said Schwab. At the next hole, Grace had a four and Schwab claimed a three. As he holed out at the third, Schwab asked: "Gene, how many did you have?"

"One," replied Grace. "Now beat that if you can!"—Wall Street Journal.

Giddap.

A modest high school girl in an Oregon town while copying a passage from Sir Walter Scott, came to the line: "The horses stepped into the stream up their bellies."

And this is how her teacher found the line written when the copy was turned in:

"The horses stepped into the stream up to their waists."

Joy.

At the wedding there were three happy persons:

The father, who passed the cost of one daughter to a perfect stranger.

The preacher's wife, who got the wedding fee.

The best man, who had been rejected for the last time by the bride.—Richmond Times-Dispatch.

WANT TO MAKE SOME REAL MONEY
In a straight, legitimate business, dealing in one of the basic resources of this country, located on the rapidly growing Pacific Coast? A wonderful opportunity in which we have invested in our final property completely paid for, no bonds or other similar forms of speculation. Will stand rigid investigation. We take this means of interesting a few rather than employing expensive brokers. We can't make you rich quick, but we can show some wonderful profit possibilities. F. H. Lantz Co., Smith Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

NO DYE
To restore gray or faded hair to original color, don't use a dye—it's dangerous—Get a bottle of Q-Ban Hair Color Restorer—Safe as water—apply it and watch results. At all good druggists, $2, or direct from HESSIG-ELLIS Chemists, Memphis, Tenn.

ROOM FOR BUT ONE THOUGHT

Quite Impossible for Glutton's Ideas to Rise Above Consideration of His Stomach.

"Henry Watterson," said a Louisville editor, "was a gourmand—a fin gourmet, as the French put it—but he hated gluttony like sin.

"Gluttony, he claimed, couldn't keep their minds off their stomachs. He said he once visited an English lord, and the smoking room of the castle was crowded with trophies of the lord's skill in the hunting field.

"A fat glutton was among the party. He, with the rest, admired the fine display of antlers—horns of the mountain sheep, the elk, the antelope, the wild goat, moose and so on. Then there were skins—bear skins, bison skins, tiger skins. And stuffed birds—pheasants, woodcock, wild turkey, wild duck.

"'My lord,' said the glutton, 'tell me—did you eat all this yourself?'"

For Physical Education.

Representatives of twenty-five organizations devoted to athletics, physical education, health and education called upon President Harding recently to ask his support securing universal physical education in the schools of the country. Although no new legislation was urged, the need for strong federal interest was brought out. At present only one-fifth of the school children of the United States are given physical training.

Wanted the Cheapest.

"How much vas dose collars?"

"Two for a quarter."

"How much for van?"

"Fifteen cents."

"Giff me de odder vun."—Yale Record.

Help Wanted

WANTED: Male help over 18 for automobile machine shop and assembly work. Experience not necessary. Ideal living conditions in best resort town on Lake Michigan.

Apply or write Employment Department,

Continental Motors Corp.
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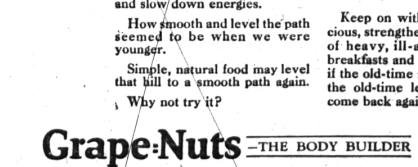

Maybe that hill is not there, after all—

VERY often the hill we seem to be climbing is made out of the common mistakes of diet which starve tissues and nerves and slow down energies.

How smooth and level the path seemed to be when we were younger.

Simple, natural food may level that hill to a smooth path again.

Why not try it?

Begin today with a dish of Grape-Nuts with cream or milk—and fresh or preserved fruit added if you like.

Keep on with this crisp, delicious, strengthening food in place of heavy, ill-assorted, starchy breakfasts and lunches—and see if the old-time zest and speed on the old-time level path doesn't come back again.

Grape-Nuts—THE BODY BUILDER

"There's a Reason"

Made by Postum Cereal Company, Inc., Battle Creek, Michigan