

## "The Fighting Trail"

"I'm sorry," said the commissioner, "but I can do nothing for you." The sheriff gave him a significant wink and he went on. "You see, they have staked out a claim. Possession is nine points of the law."

He was an old man, the commissioner, a cringing soul to whom the petty clerkship meant the very means of existence. He owed that job to Causley, and paid the debt by sacrificing his honest convictions when the sheriff said the word. Nevertheless a look of mingled discomfiture and regret showed in his face as he watched Nan's plucky effort to restore her husband's courage.

Hogan drove up at the door as they emerged, the brave piece of bunting on the rear of his car still flapping in the wind. The placard above it read:

For Sheriff

"SQUARE DEAL" HOGAN

It was Nan who saw the opportunity, no Gwyn. She pointed eagerly.

"Look, dear, look! Half the voters in Loost Mine were at the wreck today. They saw a good example then of the Causley brand of justice, and now is our chance to show the people that he really is a scoundrel. I'm going to make a speech!"

Standing in the back of the bright red machine, one hand above her head and hair flying in the wind, Nan made a picture that drew the sympathy of every man in the crowd. Carried away by the emotion of a great cause, eyes bright almost to tears, she told her story with dramatic effect. Even the commissioner, listening behind

his closed door, could sense the rising enthusiasm. In it he read a significant message for himself.

"Who will vote for Hogan?" she cried, and the call was greeted with a gusty chorus of approval. Hats waved wildly as she stood looking down into the surging sea of faces about her impromptu platform.

"Good work, little girl!" called a big fellow over at the edge of the crowd. "Righto! We're for you!" came the answering shout from another.

Nan raised her hand for silence, ready to continue her speech, but as the cheering subsided, the distant rapping of rifle fire came to their ears. Mingled with the single shots came now and then what sounded like a sustained volley. The firing seemed to come from the direction of the mine.

When von Bleck drove off he did so with a definite purpose. Now that he had the deed recorded he must also gain possession of the mine. With double claim of title and possession he knew there would be no danger of his plans hanging fire. But he must have both to be safe. Straight to Brown's saloon he drove, and there in the rear room, gathered in a tense circle around the rolling dice, he found his hand whirling away the time at their accustomed pursuits. They sprang up as he entered, eager at the prospect of another fight.

"Well," announced von Bleck, "this afternoon we'll capture the mine. Get busy now. I want results. Have a drink on me and then get to work! I will join you later." Five minutes afterward the band was on its way to the attack, with Rawls in command. Von Bleck, Shoestring and One-Lung re-entered the car and drove to the station, where a long heavy box was taken aboard and carried off into the seclusion of the forest near the track.

Back at the mine Casey's men were preparing the midday meal. The two men who had been left as sentries came in from their posts, and everyone was sitting down for a comfortable hour when Rawls' first shot knocked the kettle from its hook. Taken completely by surprise, Casey's men were so demoralized that instead of defending the engine house they took shelter behind an ore train outside.

"Take the engine house," shouted Rawls, in command, and half a dozen of the bandits dashed in through the door and took position to defend the entrance.

But Casey was not trying to take the engine house just now. First he must get his men out of the trap. He worked along the side of the train until he reached the engine, mounted the

step and crouched behind the cab. "Hold tight," he called. "Lie down behind the ore in the cars!" and with this he grasped the throttle and started the train. Protected by the piles of ore, which served as a sort of entrenchment, Casey's men beat off all attacks as the train gained headway and crawled faster and faster toward the incline.

But Rawls was alive to the situation. What he desired was not a retreat, with the possibility of a counter attack, but a decisive victory, a stunning defeat of Casey's entire force. Another train with its engine pointed in the opposite direction to that in which Casey was established, stood on a siding. His decision was instantaneous. Summoning his men to climb aboard, he backed the train on to the track and started in pursuit.

The race was even till they struck the grade, and then Rawls' train, with every car loaded, had a greater motive power than any engine—gravity. As the two trains slid down the mountain the distance between grew less and less. Both sides were firing as rapidly and continuously as human fingers could load and press the triggers. Narrower and narrower grew the intervening space till the trains seemed to couple and lock. And now, back and forth over the swaying ore cars, there waged a hand-to-hand battle. First one side would take the upper hand, then the other, in a desperate rush, would carry the fighting back.

But this could not last. As Casey turned the bend leading down to the burned bridge he knew in his heart that defeat was very close. Outnumbered, his men would be virtually surrounded as soon as the train came to a stop. The only way out was across the bridge itself, trusting to a higher power that the supports and sleepers would bear their weight. Word was therefore passed along that all hands were to make for the bridge as soon as the engine halted. A moment later Casey closed the throttle, and calling to his men to follow, leaped to the ground and started over the flimsy framework toward safety. It was a costly opera-

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tion, but most of the men had made their way unhurt to the centre of the bridge and were holding off their assailants with fair success when a new enemy appeared in the rear.

Von Bleck, Shoestring and One-Lung had mounted a gatling gun on the front of an engine and were bearing down on Casey from the other side of the bridge. The fire had been less severe on this side and the engine crept out over the sleepers with its deadly weapon pouring forth a flying fusillade of bullets. It was only by swinging their bodies beneath and hanging by the beams that the stout-hearted little band of defenders could save themselves.

Election Day dawned bright and clear, and Hogan, his red machine conspicuous with campaign banners, was greeted with cheers wherever he went. The events of the day before had turned the tide, and Causley's defeat was a foregone conclusion. But the candidate dropped his campaign smile for a hearty laugh when he suddenly came upon Casey twisting his hat with boyish embarrassment before a young lady's praise.

"Isn't he—I mean it perfectly lovely?" she exclaimed with enthusiasm as Hogan drove up. "Do you know what Mr. Casey did last night? Captured a brand new gatling gun! Von Bleck had shipped from east. Isn't that simply magnificent?" She was beaming on the big Irishman with frank admiration, clapping her hands and murmuring those girlish exclamations which so often prove fatal to any man's self-possession. Casey welcomed the newcomer as a providential diversion.

"The Von came too far, that's all," he explained. "We worked along the side of the engine, and the gat could not turn on so wide an angle. But they still have the mine, and a gang of men is working now rebuilding the bridge. Gwyn and I decided we too could use the bridge, so we are not disturbing them. And now tell me how the election is going?"

"Fine," grinned Hogan. "Mrs. Gwyn here is the best little politician I've seen in many a day. And by the way, old man Taylor, the poor old skeleton that keeps the deeds, told me this morning that he had changed his mind about the title to the mine and corrected the records in her ladyship's favor. I wouldn't wonder if he were something of a politician himself, eh?"

By noon the ballot was almost complete, with Hogan leading by a good majority.

"Well," he told Gwyn, "your wife fought for me and I'll repay the favor. The boys are having a holiday today and I don't know any kind of a celebration that'd please them better than a stiff little scrap. Let's drive those bandits out of the mine before supper time. What d'you say?"

Hogan cupped his hands and gave a shrill signal. In a few moments every man on the block had gathered to know what it was all about.

"All I have to say is this," he told them. "Gwyn and Casey and I are going after the bandits at the mine. Anybody with a good gun who wants some excitement is invited. The line forms on the left."

Half an hour later the new sheriff and his first posse were on their way up the mountain.

(Continued next week.)

## MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES

(Canadian Press direct wire.) London, Dec. 31.—Over seven hundred Canadians are mentioned in Sir Douglas Haig's despatch of Saturday night. The list embraces all branches of the service from General Sir Arthur Currie to privates and nurses. Cable congestion renders immediate transmission impossible but they will appear later.

## HEART BEAT SO FAST

Could Not Sleep.  
HAD TO SIT UP IN BED.

Heart trouble has of late years become very prevalent. Sometimes a pain catches you in the region of the heart, now and then your heart skips beats, palpitates, throbs, or beats with such rapidity and violence you think it will burst. You have weak and dizzy spells, are nervous, irritable and depressed, and if you attempt to walk upstairs or any distance you get all out of breath.

There is no other remedy will do you so much good, restore your heart

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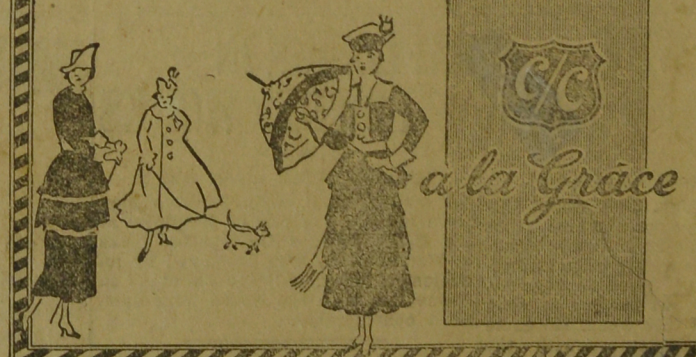
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to a natural condition, build up your strength and give you back vigor and vitality as Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills.

Mrs. A. Russell, Niagara Falls, Ont., writes: "At nights I could not sleep, and had to sit up in bed, my heart would beat so fast.

"When I went to walk very far I would get all out of breath, and would

have to sit down and rest before I could go any farther. I was advised to get Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills and before I had used two boxes could sleep and walk as far as I liked without any trouble."

Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills are 50c per box at all dealers, or mailed direct on receipt of price by The T. Milburn Co., Limited, Toronto, Ont.