

“THE FIGHTING TRAIL.”

The entrance to the main shaft of the mine was all bustle and hurry. Ore cars were travelling in and out with unusual speed, making up for the time that had been lost. Nan and Casey stood near the entrance talking quietly, enjoying the first relax in days, now that the excitement had died down. Gwyn, with a shift of workmen, was down in the mine. Then with an abruptness that was startling, Nan's voice broke off in the middle of a sentence. There was a rumbling, terrifying sound from within the mine, followed by several sharp explosions coming in rapid succession. Both Casey and Nan started in fright. What did this unexpected turn of affairs mean? Was it more of von Bleck's work? Their minds were working with lightning quickness. Suddenly the signal for the cage to be lowered worked frantically. Casey ran to the donkey engine and ordered it to be sent down immediately.

The five minutes which followed, before the cage was lifted, were filled with mental agony and suspense for both Casey and Nan. They were nervously trying to imagine the scene when the men from below, who had

given the signal, would reach the surface. And then, wrapped in a little film of smoke, the cage appeared at the top of the shaft. The forms of half a score of staggering, weakened men, almost fell forward. Casey and Nan rushed forward to meet them and saw, lying prone on the floor of the cage, the forms of a dozen unconscious victims of the catastrophe. To these they went and brought them out, one by one, where miners could work over and revive them. As Casey carried the last man out of the shaft, Nan, her eyes wet with tears, cried: "Gwyn! Where is Gwyn? He did not come up in the cage!"

"We tried to make him come up," one of those who had been rescued answered, "but he wouldn't. He said he'd rather stay down and try to save some others. Better send the cage right down again to him."

"What happened?" Casey demanded. "Big explosion," was the reply. "Tried to wreck the mine, I guess. Most of it was in the old part, where no one was working. The biggest danger's from the smoke. That's what got us—the smoke—heavy, black stuff that'd smother you in a second!"

The words seemed to burn Nan's very soul. The thought of her husband imprisoned below in the suffocating smoke terrified her. She rushed to the cage, but it was already descending for another load of humans. Standing beside the pit, where the cage was located, Casey and Nan waited many anxious minutes for it to rise again, hoping that Gwyn would be among those in the second load. But when at last the cage was again hoisted to the surface, Gwyn was not to be seen. Only a mass of huddled men, more dead than alive, emerged. One of them told Nan that Gwyn had saved the majority of them and, when the cage had been lifted, he had gone back for more of the imprisoned miners.

"I'm going down," she screamed at Casey. "He's down there and I'm going to help him! Don't stop me!" "Don't!" Casey shouted back to her. "Let me go. I can give him more help than you can."

But Nan, as he spoke, had already run to the cage and vanished in the smoke that now curled out of the shaft in heavy clouds. Her voice was heard coming from the cage as Casey rushed forward to check her brave but seemingly futile descent.

"All right! Let me down! Quick!" The man in charge of the donkey engine which controlled the cage, obeyed the order. Hogan's dog, attracted by the sound of Nan's voice,

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rushed into the smoke and when Casey reached the shaft, he arrived just in time to see it being lowered, enveloped in smoke, to the bottom of the mine.

The dense, black smoke rolled through the web-work of tunnels that wove and interwove under the ground until every subterranean passage of the mine seemed filled. To one imprisoned there, escape seemed impossible. Even should he escape asphyxiation, the task of finding the way through the black tunnels, lighted only hazily by the burning wood of the shoring, was a practically hopeless one. Yet for over an hour Gwyn, exhausted almost to insensibility, had staggered along with faltering steps. He had wandered away from the cage and had been unable to return to it. He was lost in the blinding, suffocating curtain of smoke that enveloped him. Now, by an effort that was superhuman and which sapped every ounce of his energy, he braced himself and hurried. He had thought, a moment before, that he had heard

Nan's voice calling for help in one of the passages which led off from that in which he was trapped. Floundering along as quickly as his weak legs would permit, and feeling his way with his hands, more than seeing, he reached a turn and halted to listen. The smoke here, driven on by the draft where the two tunnels met, was less dense. He was able to breathe more freely and regain some of the strength which had left him. As Gwyn stood there, wondering which way to proceed and listening attentively to every little sound, with the hope of again hearing Nan's voice, another sound, almost as encouraging, reached his ears. It was a sharp, hollow bark—the bark of Hogan's dog, and it came from the direction of the tunnel in front of Gwyn.

Without listening further, Gwyn made his way along, guided by the barking of the dog. At length, when the barking grew distinct and closer, Gwyn stopped again. When he resumed his walking, it was to advance slowly and cautiously. It seemed to him now, that the dog must be lower, perhaps in one of the galleries or ledges in the same tunnel, but deeper. In another moment, he discovered that this was a fact, for directly ahead of him, he could see the drop which led to the lower gallery. He advanced carefully, making sure of his footing, and peered over the ledge. The smoke at this point was well cleared away, and there remained but a thin veil of it. Below, however, it was darker, and Gwyn could not see distinctly. As he looked, the figure

of the dog, moving about and clawing at the wall in an attempt to get up to the higher level, could plainly be discerned. And beside the dog, stretched out on the ground, Gwyn could see as his eyes became accustomed to the darkness, a human form. It was too dark below for recognition, but the sight filled Gwyn with horror.

Gwyn raised himself to his feet—he had been lying flat as he peered

over the ledge, and made his way around to a point where the floor of the tunnel sloped more gradually to the lower gallery. Here he went down and reached the dog and the body. As he leaned over to look more closely at the form lying on the ground, he started up in surprise. Instead of the body of Nan, he had found that of Shoestring Drap, lying

(Continued on page 3.)

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It will be well on in February before any large supplies of raw sugar reach Canada, and in the meantime the supply will be limited owing to the small stocks on hand.

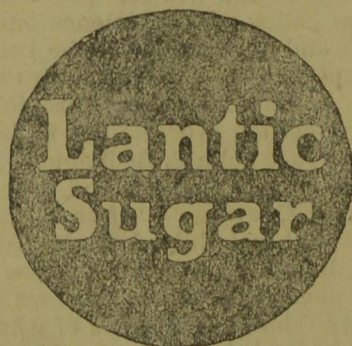
During 1917 this Company has operated its Refinery continuously, the only interruption being two days at Christmas time. We believe this record has not been equalled by any refinery in the United States or Canada.

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