

The Trail from Tim's Place

BY CHARLES CLARK MURFIN
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SYNOPSIS.

Chip, a 15-year-old girl living at Tim's place in the Maine woods is half-bred. She runs away and reaches the camp of Martin Fribble, occupied by Martin, his wife, nephew, and a young boy, and guides. She tells her story and is cared for by Mrs. Fribble. Formerly Fribble's party into woods to visit her.

CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

Then, Chip's presence was an added danger. If once this brute found that she was here, there was no limit to what he would do to secure her and take revenge. They had smuggled her past Tim's Place, but concealment here was impossible; if ever the brute returned, she would be discovered, and then what?

There were three people at Birch Camp—as Angie had called it—namely, herself, Ray, and Chip, who did not share Martin's suspicion of danger. A firm belief that a woman's aid in such a complication was of no value, coupled with a desire to save her anxiety, had kept her lips closed as to the situation.

Life here at all hours soon settled itself into a certain daily routine of work, amusement, and, on Chip's part, of study. True to her philanthropic sense of duty toward this waif, Angie had at once set about her much-needed education. A rough, old-fashioned spelling book suitable for a child of eight had been secured at the settlement, and now "lessons" occupied a few hours of each day.

It was only a beginning, of course, and yet with constant reminders as to pronunciation, this was all that Angie could do. The idiom of Tim's Place, with all its profanity, still adhered to Chip's speech. This latter, especially, would now and then crop out in spite of all admonitions; and so Angie found that her pupil made slow progress.

There was also another reason for this. Chip was afraid of her, and off reproved for her lapses in speech, soon ceased all unnecessary talk when with Angie.

But with Ray it was different. He was near her own age, the companionship of youth was theirs, and with him Chip's speech was ready enough. This, of course, answered all the purposes of benefit by association, and so Angie was well satisfied that they should be together. Beyond that she had no thought that any might accrue from this association.

Chip, while fair of face and form, and at a sentimental age, was crude of speech, so grossly ignorant, and so allied to the ways and manners of Tim's Place, that, according to Angie's reasoning, Ray's feelings were safe enough. He was well bred and refined, a happy, natural boy now versing upon manhood in the woods, he had never shown much interest in girl's society, and while he now showed a playmate enjoyment of Chip's company, there was all that was likely to happen.

But the winged god rots not of speech or manners. A youth of 18 and a maid of 16 are the same the world over, and so out of sight of Angie, and unsuspected by her, the play of heart-interest went on.

And what a glorious golden summer opportunity these two had! Back of the camp and tending northwest to southeast was a low ridge of outcropping slate, bare in spots—a log-back, in wilderness phrase. Beyond this lay a mile-long "blow-down," where a tornado had leveled the tall timber. A fire, sweeping this when dry, left the crisp-corn confusion of charred logs, blueberry bushes had followed fast, and now those luscious berries were ripest in limitless profusion. Every fair day Ray and Chip came here to pick, to eat, to hear the birds sing, to gather flowers and be happy.

They watched the rippled lake with now and then a deer upon its shores. From this ridge they climbed up or down it, hand in hand; they fished in the lake or canoed about it, time and again; and many a summer evening, when the moon soared, Chip handed the paddle, while Ray picked his hunk and sang his dinky songs all around this placid sheet of water.

And what a wondrous charm this combination of moonlight on the lake and soft songs sounded and made tender by the still water held for Chip! As those melodies had done on that first evening under the camp fire, so now they filled her soul with a strange, new-born, and wonderful sense of joy and gladness.

The black forest, enclosing them now was sombre and silent. Stiles

still lurked in its depths and doubtless were watching; but a protector was near, his arm was strong; back at the landing were kind friends, and the undulating path of silvered light, the roiling, smiling orb, above, the twinkling stars, and this matchless music became a new wonder-world to her.

Her eyes glistened and grew tender with pathos. She had no more idea than a child why she was happy. Each day spent by on wings of wind, each hour, with her one best companion, the most joyful, and so, day by day, poor Chip learned the sad lesson of loving.

But never a word or hint of this fell from her lips. Ray was so far above her and such a young hero, that she, a homeless outcast, tainted by the fifth and service of Tim's Place, could only look to him as she did to the moon.

Not for one instant did he realize the growing independence and self-reliance of this wilderness waif, or how the first feeling that she was a burden upon these kind people would chafe and vex her defiant nature, until she would scorn even love, to escape it.

Just now the tender impulse of love was all Ray felt or considered. This girl of sweet sixteen and utter confidence in him was so entrancing in spite of her crude speech and lack of education, her kisses were so much like to take whenever chance offered, and himself such a young hero in his right, that he thought of naught else.

In this, or at least so far as his reasoning went, they were like two

compartments—was erected and ready for occupation.

Working as all the men had done from dawn until dark to complete this cabin, no recreation had been had by anyone, except Ray and Chip; and now Martin, a keen sportsman, felt that his turn had come. The trout were rising high and morn all over the lake, partridges so tame that they would scarce fly were as plenty as sparrows, a half-dozen could be seen every time along the lake shore—in fact, one had already furnished them venison—and so Martin was anticipated some relaxation and sport.

But Fate willed otherwise. One of Old Cy's first and most fastidious bits of work, after being left with the hermit the previous autumn, had been the erection of an ice-house out of large saplings. It stood at the foot of a high bank on the north of the knoll and close to the lake, and here, out of the sunbath, yet handy to fill, stood his creation. Its double walls of poles were stuffed with moss, its roof chinked with blue clay, a sliding door gave ingress, and even now, with summer almost gone, an ample supply of ice remained in it.

In the division of duties among these campers, Levi usually started the morning fire while Old Cy visited the ice-house for anything needed. One morning after the new cabin was completed, he came here as usual.

As he string of trout caught by Martin and Ray the day before were hanging in this ice-house, and securing what was needed, Old Cy closed the door and turned away. As usual with him, he glanced up and down the narrow beach to see if a deer had wandered along there that morning, and in doing so he now saw, close to the water's edge and distinctly outlined in the damp sand, the print of a moose's foot.

It was of extra large size, and as Old Cy bent over it, he saw it had recently been made. Glancing along toward the head of this cove, he saw more tracks, and two rods away, a sliding door gave ingress, and even now, with summer almost gone, an ample supply of ice remained in it.

"That's peaky half-breed, sure's a gun," he muttered, stooping over the

creeping, crawling beast, impossible to trail, yet certain to hide his time, seize Chip, or average her loss upon her protectors.

Now another complication arose as Martin, Old Cy, and Levi left the spot, and these their enemy had watched them—that to do about Angie and the boy. From the moment that Martin and Levi that they were in danger from the half-breed, Martin had avoided all hint of it to them. Now they must be told, and all peace of mind at once destroyed. Concealment was no longer possible, however, and when Angie was told, she was pale. Her first intuition, and as the sequel proved, a wise one, was for them to at once pack up and quit the woods as speedily as possible.

But Martin was of different fibre. To run away like this was cowardly, and besides he cherished only contempt for a wretch who had played the role of this fellow, and was so vile of instinct. With no desire to do wrong, he yet felt that if sufficient provocation and the need of self-defense arose, he would not shrink from such conditions might mean killing!

Such a desperate creature. Then Levi's advice carried weight. "We'll start out of the woods now. Most likely he's got his eye on us as this minute. He has every rod of the way out what we'd be likely to camp. He'd sure follow, an' if he didn't get out in pieces some night, he'd watch his chance 'n' grab the gal 'n' make off under cover of darkness. We've got to get out of here quick, an' believe in turnin' tail first 'n' go." "We may get a chance to wing the cuss, like 'n' not," said Levi, "but he'll be eyeing you."

He would not hesitate to shoot this half-breed if the chance presented itself.

Old Cy's opinion is also worth quoting: "My notion is this here's a coward, 'n' like 'n' never show himself by daylight. He knows we've got guns 'n' 'n' know how to use 'em. The cuss is as good as a fort. One on us in all this on guard duty, an' when it's time to go out—'n' I don't want to go in 'n' have 'n'uff 'n' one thing must be done, though, 'n' that is, keep the gal close. 'Twon't do to let her get over the back of the lake no more."

And now began a state of semi-seclusion at Birch camp.

Chip was kept an almost prisoner, hardly ever permitted out of Angie's sight. One of the men, always with rifle hand, remained on guard—usually Old Cy, and for a few nights he had the same duty. It was to see if perchance this enemy would steal up again.

With all these precautions against surprise, came a certain feeling of defiance in Martin. With Ray for company he went fishing once or twice, and was never so level as pilot he craved for game.

Only a few weeks of his outing remained, and so, sober second thought, he didn't mean to let this sneaking enemy spoil those.

But Old Cy, who never related his vigil, told him of the wilderness and her pitiful position appealed to him even more than to Angie, and from the more than that had made all Greenleaf's children love him, so now did Chip and him a kind and protecting father.

With now a change had come, and now he glanced across the lake to a narrow valley through which a stream came as the heavy brook reached the lake, and far up in this vale, rising above the dense woods, was a faint column of smoke.

The morning was damp, cloudy and still—conditions suitable for smoke rising, and yet so faint and distant was this that none but the keen, observant eyes of a woodsman would have noticed it. Yet there it was, a thin white pillar, clearly outlined against the dark green of the foliage.

Old Cy hurried back, motioned to Levi, and the two watched it from the front of the camp. Martin soon joined them, then Angie and Chip, and all stood and studied this smoke sign.

"Can you locate it?" queried Martin of his guide, as the delicate column of white slowly faded.

"It's partly well up the brook," Levi answered; "that's a sort of Rocky Dundar that, 'n' probably a cave. I call it 'n' it's him," he's expected a storm, 'n' so he's looking for it."

And now, as if to prove this, a few drops of rain began to patter on the medicinal lake; thicker, faster they came, and as the little group hurried to shelter, a torrent, almost, descended. For weeks not a drop of rain had fallen here. Each morn the sun had risen in undimmed splendor, to vanish at night, a ball of glorious red.

But now a change had come. Wind followed the rain, and all that day the storm raged and roared through the lake and all the woods. The lake was white with driving sleet, the cabin rocked, trees creaked, and outdoor life was impossible. When night came, it was a thousand demons were wailing, moaning, and screeching in the forest, and as the little party now rounded about the open store, the new cabin watched it, the fire rose and fell in union with the blasts.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

ART LONG, CREDIT SHORT.



"What does your brother do for a living?"

"He's a 'farrier.'"

"I know 'n' am I. But what does he do for a 'living'?"

"But Not the Same."

Mushy!—Indeed, yes, he's a tender-hearted. I really believe if a beggar approached him and he had no money about him he'd actually take off his coat and give it to him.

Crabbe—Well, I'm not tender-hearted, but some of these merry beggars make me feel like taking off my coat and giving it to them—good and proper.

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—Lippincott.

So may heaven's grace clear away the foam from thy conscience, that the river of thy thoughts may roll limp! therefore—Dan.

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A Spying Enemy Stood and Watched Them.

grew-up children entering a new world—the enchanted garden of love. Or like two souls merged into one in impulse, yet in no wise conscious why or for what all-wise purpose.

For them alone the sun shone, the birds sang, leaves rustled, flowers bloomed, and the blue lake rippled. For them alone was all this charm in chance given, with all that made it entrancing. For them alone was life, love, and lips that met in ecstasy. Oh, wondrous beauty! Oh, heaven-born joy! Oh, divine illusion that builds the world anew! and builds in thus, believes its secret safe!

But Old Cy, wise old observer of all things human, from the natural attraction of two children to the philistine play of content, saw and understood.

Not for worlds would he hint this to Angie or Martin. Pull well he knew how soon this "weavin' o' the threads o' affection" would be frowned upon by them; but he loved children as few men do.

This summer-day budding of romance would end in a few weeks, these two were happy now—let those who might prove the one best incentive for her own improvement.

turn, "for a good bit" of his legs was turned up to walk on, and he wore moccasins in some way."

Curious now, and whether started, he looked along where the narrow beach curved out and around to the landing, and saw the tracks led that way. Then picking his way so as not to obscure them, he followed until not three rods from the new cabin they left the beach and were plainly visible behind a couple of spruces. In the soft bed of needles, which was crushed for a small space, where some one had stood.

Returning to camp, Old Cy motioned to Levi and Martin. All three returned to the ice-house, looked where the canoe had cut its furrow, took up the trail to its ending beside the two trees, and then glanced into the other eyes with serious, sober, troubled faces.

And well they might; for the evening previous they had all been grouped upon the piazza of this new cabin until late, while scarce three rods away a spying enemy, presumably the half-breed, had stood and watched them.

CHAPTER VI.

An enemy we can meet in the open need not appal us; but an enemy who creeps up to us by day, or still worse by night, in a vast wilderness, becomes a panther and an Indian combined.

Such a one had spied upon Martin's camp that night, and all the tales of this half-breed's cunning and fierce nature, told by Levi, were now recalled. Like a human brute whose fangs were tobacco-stained, whose one evil eye glared at them out of darkness, the half-breed had now become



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