A LASS OF THE LUMBERLANDS

by E. ALEXANDER POWELL

NOVELIZED FROM THE MOTION PICTURE SERIAL OF THE SAME NAME PRODUCED BY THE SIGNAL FILM CORP.

Fourth Episode.

The dramatic coup by which Helen acquired title to the timber lands of the Oregonia and thereby frustrated the schemes of the Amalgamated, made her a popular heroine in the camps of the independent lumbermen, who came to regard league their champion in the unequal struggle they were waging with the great monopoly.

With the boom rights in undisputed possession of one so avowedly friendly to their cause, the independents now felt that they were reasonably secure from the machinations of the trust. But in this confidence she failed to make allowance for the wiles of Satan, which, in the newer, wilder regions, frequently prevail over more serious and vindictive men in settled country.

The summer and autumn which followed the flood of Helen's triumph was the driest that the lumberjacks had known in a generation. Day after day the heliotrope sun blazed down from a cloudless sky, and there was little or no rain. The cultivated lands, ordinarily a vivid green, were now brown from drouth. Forest rangers watched night and day for fires in the tinder-like woods. Where, in normal years, leaping torrents ran, there were now stony, dried-up watercourses, even the larger rivers such as the Calapooia and the Oregonia having dwindled to insignificant streams.

The question that confronted the lumbermen was how to get their logs to get their logs from the forest to the river at Cloverdale, and to this question there was but one answer possible. They must have a boom and a log ship over the railway owned by the Amalgamated.

This they might have been permitted to do without protest had they built the raise permitted them to rezone river bounding, had not Rupert Holmes, returning from New York, learned by the merest chance that his competitors were doing. Then he got busy.

Hood Carruthers made the next move in the magnate.

"What's happened, Carruthers?" demanded Holmes, as the manager appeared. "I see the railroad has actually been making money.

"Account of the Independents," grunted Carruthers. "They've been forced to ship over our road, and, how it does hurt 'em to do it. This is only beginning business. Soon as there's enough water in the river they'll begin booming again."

For some moments Holmes sat silent, drumming on his desk with a pencil.

"Carruthers," he said at last, "we're not going to carry any more logs for those fellows. We're only playing the game. They're not going to borrow this money when they've got to pay it back smoothly with their mouths full of lies. Get me Cleary at Cloverdale. Send a wire to Cleary at Cloverdale that he's not to accept any more shipments of logs from the Independents."

"Think that's safe?" protested Carruthers. "It would be just like the scrappy bunch to drag us into court on a conspiracy charge or something of that kind . . . Besides, if you send a wire Black will on the job, you know."

"That's right," agreed Holmes, "it wouldn't be safe. If she put half of a message it would make things very uncomfortable for us. Much as I hate Carruthers, there's a d—— clever woman, and I think I'll run down to Jeanville tonight. You'd better come along and, while I think of it, have Dickens to meet us there."

"A wire from Miss Holmes, sir," announced the private secretary, entering an Cloverdale office.

The message informed Holmes that his wife would leave Tacoma Tuesday by night train and arrive in Seattle in the morning.

"Fits," grunted the lumberman. "Miss Helen is the only person I'd let put a message it would make things very uncomfortable for Mort to get. Mort