

Vanished Men

By GEORGE MARSH

Penn. Publishing Co.
W.N.U. Service

INSTALLMENT FOUR

THE STORY SO FAR: Bound for the Chibougamau gold country, six men lost their lives on the Nottaway river. Red Malone, Garrett Finlay, brother of one of the six, and Blaise, half-breed guide, arrive at Nottaway posing as surveyors.

As the approaching canoe neared the Peterboro Garry said: "It's a birchbark, as you said, Blaise. We'll stop for a talk. Ask them if they ever saw any of the white men who have passed through here bound for Chibougamau."

The birchbark in the distance moved in an uncertain course toward the Peterboro.

"What's the matter with those birds?" demanded Red. "Never saw Indians travel in a zig-zag like that. They're always too saving of their elbow grease."

"Nor I," agreed the curious Finlay. "They're yawning all over the lake."

As he paddled Blaise was slowly nodding his black head, at the air-dale who lay at his knees. "Flame," he said with a chuckle, "w'at you tink de matter wid dose Injuns comin' in dat canoe, eh?"

The air-dale looked into Brassard's swart face with its twinkling eyes.

"If you keep your mou' shut, I tell you, Flame," laughed Blaise. "Now don't say notin' to Garry and Red. Dose Injuns comin' in dat canoe bin up to have a look at M'sieu' Isadore and he give dem somet'in' dat come in a bottle."

"By golly! You're right, Blaise!" Garry threw back from the bow. "It looks like Isadore's fire-water."

The canoes were soon within hailing distance and Blaise called:

"Kekway! The Montagnais and Cree salutation."

He was answered by a chorus of "Kekways" from the birchbark, in which sat two men, a squaw and a child. The eyes of the men were bloodshot and swollen. As the canoes stopped alongside of each other Blaise began a rapid questioning. Shortly he turned a face black with anger and disgust and announced to the curious Garry and Red:

"Dey are Matagami hunter but dey go to Isadore to trade deer winter hunt for fur, instead of de Hudson Bay, becuz he sell dem whiskey. But only half dey trade for flour, sugar and tea dey will need. De rest dey trade for whiskey."

The muscles of Finlay's face tightened as he asked: "Did they see any of the men who went through bound for Chibougamau?"

"No," answered Blaise, "dey see no white man pass tru de lake last two year."

Brassard talked rapidly for some time while the Montagnais grew excited, often interrupting him.

"What is it?" demanded Garry.

"Dey say dere is moch talk at Waswanipi. Dere is troubl' between Chief Wabistan and a shaman by name of Kinebik. Dis Kinebik is fr'en of Tete-Blanche. Chief Wabistan fight wid Tete-Blanche at the trade ovtir whiskey he give to Injun. Dey say dat de Injun like de whiskey and are scare of Tete-Blanche. He is ver' bad fallar. Dey are scare of Isadore, also. Dey are scare of de big bird from de sout'."

"Big bird from the south?"

"Ah-hah! It come tru de sky from de sout', each summer. Dey are ver' moch scare of it."

"Airplane, eh? So he has a plane come from the south every summer? That, Red, is the way he brings in his whiskey."

"Sure as you live, boss! Have these people ever seen the plane, Blaise?"

"No, but oders have and dey tell strange story."

"Ask them if Batoche, with the scarred face, and Flambeau have reached Isadore's post."

Blaise put the question and after a lengthy answer, from the talkative Montagnais, replied: "Dey say dat Batoche and Flambeau reach Waswanipi w'ile dey trade de fur. Wan night, Batoche, he get drunk, and he say: 'Tree man wid dog leave de steel for Chibougamau Trail, but de Long Sault of de Nottaway swallow dem. Batoche he say he saw de big wood canoe' of white man all stove up below rapid and wan drown man on shore."

Blaise grinned widely as he continued: "But dis Montagnais, here in de bow, his name is Mahigan, de wolf, say dat we are tree men with dog in wooden canoe, and wan wid bullet mark on hees head, and he ask me if we run de Long Sault. I say we did, for sure, and are live man, also. Den he say dat Batoche is ver' damn liar. I tell him dat Batoche is worse dan liar. He is dead man if I eivar put my hand on him. Mahigan say dere is too many man at Isadore for tree man to fight. We bettir go home."

"What was your answer?" demanded Garry.

"I say dat we hear dat Waswanipi is ver' fine lake and Isadore ver' fine man and we go take a look at dem bot'."

"Okay!" laughed Garry. "Well, let's go!"

CHAPTER V

Flanked by hills somber with the olive green of spruce splashed by the lighter hardwoods, the great Waswanipi Lake blazed like a floor of fire in the afternoon sun. The Peterboro rounded a long point and the maple blades trailed.

They find the Nottaway settlement people strangely averse to discussing the tragedies. The name of Isadore, rich fur man, when brought by Finlay, causes an immediate cessation of further conversation along that line. Isadore,

"There it is!" exclaimed Finlay. "Let's have a look at Monsieur Isadore's outfit!" He raised his binoculars and gazed curiously at the group of buildings on the distant shore.

"Why, Red, he's got living quarters fit for a king! Have a squint!"

Malone took the proffered glasses and studied the fur post miles across the burnished lake at the foot of a ridge of black spruce. "Fanciest log job I've seen east of the Rockies!" muttered Red.

Shortly Blaise returned the glasses with a grunt. "Ah-hah! Big place! Some day fox bark in dat clearin' and h'owl nest in de chimney."

"They will," agreed Finlay, "if we're worth our salt. See that group of islands about a mile offshore? We'll camp right there, leave Blaise and Flame, and, like polite surveyors in the bush, pay a call on Isadore."

"Come on!" urged Red, making the water boil behind his paddle. "This job begins to look interesting."

After a clean-up and shave Finlay and Malone left Blaise at their camp on the island and started for the post less than a mile distant. As they approached the shore the log residence of the trader compelled their admiration.

The stir of people in the post clearing indicated that the approach of the Peterboro was creating unusual interest. In front of the big log house a group of three were leveling glasses on the approaching boat.

"He's got living quarters fit for a king!"

Down at the landing men were evidently discussing the strangers. Garry raised his binoculars. "Two women in sporting togs, Red, giving us the once over! The man with them must be his highness, Czar Isadore, of Waswanipi."

"A bird just left the landing," exclaimed Malone. "and called Isadore away from the women! By the way he's waving his arms he's having an argument. Now he's gone back. Did you notice it?"

"Do you know who that was?"

"No."

"That was Batoche. I spotted him by his walk."

"The scar-faced rat!"

"We'll check up before we land," said Finlay, casing his glasses. "You've got extra shells in your pocket and the spare gun on your hip?"

"O-ka!"

"No identifying papers! Not a scrap to show who we are?"

"Check!"

"Our orders are to map this chain of big lakes, then the lower Nottaway, joining the main party in September."

"Right!"

"Now we haven't scratched the surface of this situation. So far it's been pure guesswork. We believe we're dealing with a cold-blooded killer and a clever one. When we land here today to buy flour and bacon, what is he going to do? Batoche has told him that he wiped us out in the Long Sault. So our appearance has whipsawed him. That was probably the cause of the argument we noticed just now on the shore. Isadore's a worried man for he's in a jam with Ottawa if any of us get out alive."

"I'll say he's worried," agreed Red.

"If Batoche tells him what happened at the railroad, he knows we'll suspect that scar-faced crook. Although we can't tie Isadore up personally with that ambush, he realizes we can make it hot for him, for Batoche is his man."

Red nodded gravely as he studied his freckled fist. "To save his bacon," he said, "three more men have got to disappear on the Chibougamau Trail."

"That's the picture, Red."

"He'll ask us to supper; that's certain. He'll want to look us over before he makes his plans."

"We'll do some mindreading, our-

It is thought, has made a gold strike and aims to keep prospectors out. Finlay and Blaise are wounded in an ambush on the Nottaway. Proceeding, they saw a band of Indians approaching in their canoes.

selves. Then, after tonight, it's a case of wolf eat wolf, our brains and our luck against his." Finlay's face grew bitter as he stared across the miles of quiet water to a blue ridge. "He got Bob! I'm going to get him!"

The Peterboro slid in to the stony beach where two men now awaited its coming. Up at the trade-house others watched while the girls in front of the house laughed as they talked.

"Welcome to Waswanipi, gentlemen!" A man of medium height with a black moustache and hair graying at the temples of a hawk-like face advanced with outstretched hand as Garry and Red left the canoe. "We see so few white men here that your visit is an event. I am Jules Isadore. This is my head man, Pierre Labelle."

"I'm Finlay, in charge of the survey," said Garry, shaking hands with the two men. "My assistant, Neil Malone! We need flour and bacon, Mr. Isadore. I suppose you can sell us some?"

The eyes of the two clashed in a look of mutual appraisal. "Delighted to, Mr. Finlay, and you'll join us at dinner? It will be a treat to my wife and daughter to talk to two handsome young men from the outside."

Garry laughed. "If the ladies will pardon our woolen shirts and bush clothes, we'll be glad to accept your hospitality, Mr. Isadore. You have a magnificent place here," he observed.

"The marten and black fox did it," Isadore answered. "We beat the Hudson's Bay at their own game. It's been a gold mine."

A gold mine! Garry's blood heated with his sudden anger. Was Isadore fishing—trying to draw him out so early? He watched from the tail of his eye the wooden face of Isadore's head man as he threw out:

"Speaking of gold, they tell me there's a big rush on for the Chibougamau." But Labelle's face was vacant of expression.

"So I hear," replied Isadore. "Last year and the year before poor fellows tried to get in by the Waswanipi but were drowned. Bad river that!"

"You're a cool proposition, Isadore," thought Garry. Then he said: "Yes, so your man Batoche told me at the railroad."

As Garry limped beside him, Isadore commented: "Hurt your leg?"

"Yes, slipped on a rock and twisted my knee!"

"Too bad!" Then Isadore's face lit as they reached the waiting girls. "Well, here's what makes life possible at Waswanipi. Corinne, this is Mr. Finlay and Mr. Malone, on the government survey. My wife, gentlemen, and my daughter, Lise."

Garrett Finlay was startled by the dark beauty of the two girls.

"Welcome to Waswanipi, Meestair Feenlay and Meestair—what was it?"

"Malone" said the elder and smaller of the two with a slight accent as she extended her hand with a thrust of smoldering eyes.

Red Malone beamed like a boy with a new toy into Corinne Isadore's vivacious face, framed by a blue-black bob.

"What a break for two bored females!" As Lise gave him her firm hand, Finlay felt that he had never looked into a lovelier face or one more baffling. "Corinne and I were about ready to call it a summer in this fly-infested bush and scam, if Jules would send us." Her short upper lip curled as she archly added: "But if you're going to survey the lake we might—"

"Might stay awhile if you prove as nice as you look!" There was frank challenge in her brilliant eyes. "I like your smile, Mr. Surveyor." Miss Isadore surprised him with. "Your teeth are flawless, aren't they? And how you know it! You have cute, crinkly hair and swell shoulders and, doubtless leave a trail of wailing women behind wherever you operate. But—" her eyes suddenly clouded. "I'd have you know that my name is Lise Demaris. He married my mother when I was very young. My name is Lise Demaris."

Garry raised a hand in protest. "Instead of an engineer who spends most of his time in the bush," he laughed, "you suggest I'm a lounge lizard. I object to the title. But I'll forgive you, Lise Demaris." He repeated, studying her vivid face with its warm undertone of color. "It's somehow like you."

Suddenly she grew silent while his eyes furtively sought the ripples of her dusky hair, the short nose with its delicate nostrils and the sensitive, full-lipped mouth. He had a feeling that her gaiety had been forced—that she was under a strain. Had he and Red walked into a trap and did Lise know it?

They reached the house and with a wave of the hand Lise joined Corinne Isadore. Finlay watched the little figure of the girl disappear through the door. Had his judgment been wrong? Was Jules Isadore planning something for that evening and did she know it?

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Kathleen Norris Says:

Time Heals All Wounds

(Bell Syndicate—WNU Service.)



Ted's mother came to stay with us and ran me out. We lived at an army post and I became intimate with an army officer who was a married man. I was carried away by his devotion to a lonely girl.

By KATHLEEN NORRIS

ONE of the hardest lessons for an American woman to learn is to leave anything to time. We are an impatient people, and whatever we do must be accomplished in a very hurry.

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HOME DEFENSE

Far more terrifying than the possibility of invasion by a foreign army, says Kathleen Norris, is the menace of divorce, which is breaking up our homes. More sinister than Hitler's legions is the army of children of divorced parents. But how are we to prevent divorce? Patience will help. Impatience is probably our greatest national weakness.

We leap from one mistake to another; we plunge into ill-considered marriage and hasty divorce. . . . Don't fail to read Kathleen Norris' uncompromising discussion of the part women can play in building one of our first lines of national defense, happy homes.

who has made a series of hasty mistakes, and who feels that to make a fresh series would be the way out.

"I am 28," writes Em-Bee, from Indianapolis. "I was married at 19, and have two sons, seven and four. That first marriage was a girl's mistake; Ted seemed to me the epitome of everything that was wonderful, but I was too much of a kid really to judge a man as a husband. We were miserable from the start, quarreling, making it up, quarreling again. One of my babies was delicate and the other unmanageable, and we had very little money."

Ted's mother came to stay with us and ran things generally. She ran them so well that she ran me out and I went home to my step-mother, as I cannot stand the man my own mother married after divorcing my father. We lived at an army post and I became intimate with an officer who was a married man. I don't excuse this, but I was carried away by his devotion to a lonely, bewildered girl of 24. This gave Ted an excuse to ask for complete guardianship of the boys, which was granted him. Floyd's wife divorced him and we were married."

Ted died last December and his mother has my boys. They come to see me now and then, but we are strangers. My husband does not understand how a mother feels about her children. We have been married three years and as yet I have no hope of another child. Ted's mother, who is well fixed, says she is going to take the boys to another city and place them in school, and Floyd feels that that is a good thing for them. But they are mine, mine, mine, and I will not have them carted about as if they had no mother.

Can't Help Her.

"On the other hand, we have only Floyd's pay, not sufficient for the many expenses connected with two growing boys. I feel strongly that I have made many mistakes in handling my life, and am anxious not to make any more."

"What do you think of my present plan of going to Reno for a divorce, asking an alimony that will permit me to learn a profession that will support my children, and suing my mother-in-law for their custody? Does that seem the best thing?"

Em-Bee is not speaking honestly when she says this, nor when she speaks of a mother's feeling for her children. Having broken up her own life and Floyd's and Ted's and the children's, no advice will save her now from crashing ahead into further mistakes.

Here is a letter from a woman

who has made a series of hasty mistakes, and who feels that to make a fresh series would be the way out.

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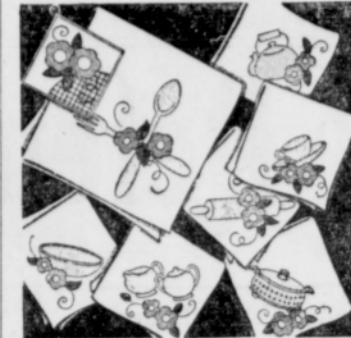
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THINGS for You TO MAKE



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