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The Indian Drum
By William MacFarland
and Edwin Belmer
Illustrations by IRVIN MYERS
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(Continued from last week.)
Constance grew suddenly cold. For
twenty lives, the woman said, the
Drum had beat; that meant to her,
and to Constance too now, that seven
were left. Indefinite, desperate denial
that all from the ferry must be dead—
that denial which had been strength-
ened by the news that at least one
boat had been adrift near Beaver—
altered in Constance to conviction of
a boat with seven men from the ferry,
seven dying, perhaps, but not yet
dead. Seven out of twenty-seven;
The score were gone; the Drum had
beat for them in little groups as they
died. When the Drum beat again,
would it beat beyond the score?
Having finished the tea, Constance
returned to the door and reopened it;
the sounds outside were the same. A
solitary figure appeared moving along
the edge of the ice—the figure of a
tall man, walking on snowshoes;
moonlight distorted the figure, and it
was muffled, too, in a great coat which
made it unrecognizable. He halted
and stood looking out at the lake and
then, with a sudden movement, strode
on; he halted again, and now Con-
stance got the knowledge that he was
not looking; he was listening as she
was.
"Is the Drum sounding now?" she
asked the woman.
"No."
Constance gazed again at the man
and found his motion quite unmis-
takable; he was counting—if not counting
something that he heard, or thought he
heard, he was recounting and review-
ing within himself something that he
had heard before—some irregular
rhythm which had become so much a
part of him that it sounded now con-
tinually within his own brain; so that,
instinctively, he moved in cadence to
it. He stepped forward again now,
and turned toward the house.
Her breath caught as she spoke to
the woman. "Mr. Spearman is coming
here now!"
Her impulse was to remain where
she was, lest he should think she was
afraid of him; but realization came to
her that there might be advantage in
seeing him before he knew that she
was there, so she reclosed the door and
drew back into the cabin.

CHAPTER XIX
The Sounding of the Drum.
Notes of the wind and the roaring
of the lake made inaudible any sound
of his approach to the cabin; she
heard his snowshoes, however, scrape
the cabin wall as, after taking them off,
he leaned them beside the door. He
thrust the door open then and came
in; he did not see her at first and, as
he turned to force the door shut again
against the wind she watched him
quietly.
He saw her now and started and,
as though slight of her confused him,
he looked from the woman and then
back to Constance before he seemed
certain of her.
"Hello!" he said tentatively. "Hel-
lo!"
"I'm here, Henry."
"Oh; you are! You are!" He stood
drawn up, swaying a little as he
stared at her; whisky was upon his
breath, and it became evident in the
heat of the room; but whisky could
not account for this condition she
knew in him. Neither could it con-
ceal that condition; some turmoil and
strain within him made him immune
to its effects.
She had realized on her way up here
what, vaguely, that strain within him
must be. Guilt—guilt of some awful
sort connected him, and had connected
Uncle Benny, with the Miwaka—the
lost ship for which the Drum had
beaten the roll of the dead. Guilt was

in his thought now—racking, tearing
at him. But there was something
more than that; what she had seen in
him when he first caught sight of her
was fear—fear of her, of Constance
Sherrill.
"You came up here about Ben Cor-
vet?" he challenged.
"Yes—no!"
"Which do you mean?"
"No."
"I know, then. For him, then—eh!
For him?"
"For Alan Conrad? Yes," she said.
"I knew it!" he repeated. "He's been
the trouble between you and me all
the time!"
She made no denial of that; she had
begun to know during the last two
days that it was so.
"So you came to find him?" Henry
went on.
"He'll be found!" she defied him.
"Be found?"
"Some are dead," she admitted, "but
not all. Twenty are dead; but seven
are not!"
"Seven?" he echoed. "You say
seven are not! How do you know?"
"The Drum has been beating for
twenty, but not for more!" Constance
said. "The Drum you've been listen-
ing to all day upon the beach—the
Indian Drum that sounded for the
dead of the Miwaka; sounded, one by
one, for all who died! But it didn't
sound for him! It's been sounding again,
you know; but, again, it doesn't sound
for him, Henry, not for him!"
"The Miwaka! What do you mean
by that? What's that got to do with
this?" His swollen face was thrust
forward at her; there was threat
against her in his tense muscles and
his bloodshot eyes.
She did not shrink back from him,
or move; and now he was not waiting
for her answer. Something—a sound
—had caught him about. Once it
echoed, low in its reverberation but
penetrating and quite distinct. It
came, so far as direction could be as-
signed to it, from the trees toward the
shore; but it was like no forest sound.
Distinct, too, was it from any noise of
the lake. It was like a Drum! Yet,
when the echo had gone, it was a sen-
sation easy to deny—a hallucination,
that was all. But now, low and distinct
it came again; and, as before, Con-
stance saw it catch Henry and hold
him. His lips moved, but he did not
speak; he was counting. "Two," she
saw his lips form.
The sound of the Drum was contin-
ing, the beats a few seconds apart.
"Twelve," Constance counted to her-
self. The beats had seemed to be
quite measured and regular at first;
but now Constance knew that this was
only roughly true; they beat rather in
rhythm than at regular intervals.
"Twenty—twenty-one — twenty-two!"
Constance caught breath and waited
for the next beat; the time of the in-
terval between the measures of the
rhythm passed, and still only the
whistle of the wind and the undertone
of water sounded. The Drum had
beaten its roll and, for the moment,
was done.
Twenty-two had been her count, as
nearly as she could count at all; the
reckoning agreed with what the Indian
woman had heard. Two had died,
then, since the Drum last had beat,
when its roll was twenty. Two more
than before; that meant five were left!
Constance caught up her woolen
hood from the table and put it on. Her
action seemed to call Henry to him-
self.
"What are you going to do?" he de-
manded.
"I'm going out."
He moved between her and the door.
"Not alone, you're not!" His heavy
voice had a deep tone of menace in it;
he seemed to consider and decide
something about her. "There's a farm-
house about a mile back; I'm going to
take you over there and leave you with
those people."
"I will not go there!"
He swore. "I'll carry you, then!"
She shrank back from him as he
lurched toward her with hands out-
stretched to seize her; he followed
her, and she avoided him again; if his
guilt and terror had given her mental
ascendency over him, his physical
strength could still force her to his
will and, realizing the impossibility
of evading him or overcoming him,
she stopped.
"Not that!" she cried. "Don't touch
me!"
"Come with me, then!" he command-
ed; and he went to the door and laid
his snowshoes on the snow and
stepped into them, stooping and tight-
ening the straps; he stood by while
she put on hers. He did not attempt
again to put hands upon her as they
moved away from the little cabin to-
ward the woods back of the clearing;
but went ahead, breaking the trail for
her with his snowshoes. He moved
forward slowly; he could travel, if he
had wished, three feet to every two
that she could cover, but he seemed
not wishing for speed but rather for
delay. A deep, dull resonance was
booming above the wood; it boomed
again and ran into a rhythm. No
longer was it above; at least it was not
only above; it was all about them—
here, there, to right and to left, before,
behind—the booming of the Drum.
Doem was the substance of that sound
of the Drum beating the roll of the
dead.
Henry had stopped in front of her,
half turned her way; his body swayed
and bent to the booming of the Drum,
as his swollen lips counted its sound-
ings. She could see him plainly in the
moonlight, yet she drew nearer to him
as she followed his count. "Twenty-
one," he counted—"Twenty-two!"
The drum was still going on. "Twenty-
four—twenty-five—twenty-six!" Would
he count another?
He did not; and her pulses, which
had halted, leaped with relief. He
moved on again, descending the steep
side of a little ravine, and she fol-
lowed. One of his snowshoes caught
in a protruding root and, instead of

slowing to free it with care, he pulled
it violently out, and she heard the dry,
seasoned wood crack. He looked down,
swore; saw that the wood was not
broken through and went on; but as
he reached the bottom of the slope, she
leaped downward from a little height
behind him and crashed down upon his
trailing snowshoe just behind the heel.
The rending snap of the wood came
beneath her feet. Had she broken
through his shoe or snapped her own?
She sprang back, as he cried out and
swung in an attempt to grasp her; he
lunged to follow her, and she ran a
few steps away and stopped. At his
next step his foot entangled in the
mesh of the broken snowshoe, and he
stooped, cursing, to strip it off and
hurl it from him; then he tore off the
one from the other foot, and threw it
away, and lurched after her again; but
now he sank above his knees and floun-
dered in the snow. She stood for a
moment while the half-mad, half-
drunken figure struggled toward her
along the side of the ravine; then she
ran to where the tree trunks hid her
from him. He gained the top of the
slope and turned in the direction she
had gone; assured then, apparently,
that she had flown in fear of him, he
started back more swiftly toward the
beach. She followed, keeping out of
his sight among the trees.
To twenty-six, he had counted—to
twenty-six, each time! That told that
he knew one was living among those
who had been upon the ferry! What
one? It could only be one of two to
dismay him so; there had been only
two on the ferry whose rescue he had
feared; only two who, living, he would
have let lie upon this beach which he
had chosen and set aside for his pa-
trol, while he waited for him to die!
(Continued Next Week.)

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to have felt that congress was en-

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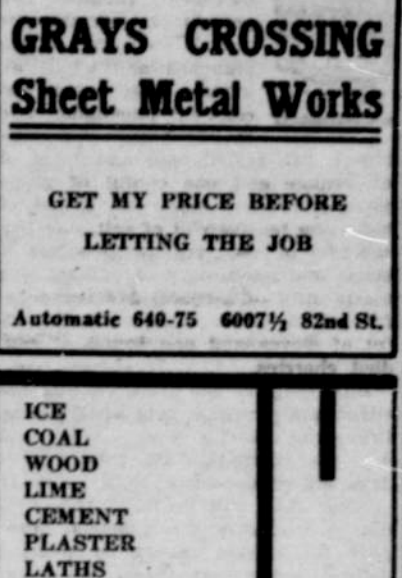
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