

The Voice of the Pack

By EDISON MARSHALL

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CHAPTER IV—Continued.

He called once to Lennox, snatched the shotgun that still stood where he had placed it in the corner of the room, and hastened to the corral. The mare whickered plaintively when he took her from her food.

When Snowbird first heard the step in the thickets beside her, she halted bravely and held her lantern high. She understood at last. The very extremity of the beams found a reflection in two very curious circles of greenish fire: a fire that was old upon the world before man ever rubbed two sticks together to strike a flame. Of course the dim rays had simply been reflected on the eyes of some great beast of prey.

She identified it at once. Only the eyes of the felines, with vertical pupils, have this identical greenish glare. The eyes of the wolves glow in the darkness, but the circles are usually bright points. Of course it was a cougar.

She didn't cry out again. Realizing at last the reality of her peril, her long training in the mountains came to her aid. That did not mean she was not truly and terribly afraid. The beast was hunting her. She couldn't doubt this fact. Curiosity might make a lion follow her, but it would never beset such a wild light of madness in his eyes as this she had just seen. She simply clamped down all her moral strength on her rising hysteria and looked her situation in the face. Her hand flew instinctively to her side, and the pistol leaped in the lantern light.

But the eyes had already blinked out before she could raise the weapon. She shot twice. The echoes roared back, unbelievably loud in the silence, and then abruptly died; and the only sound was a rustling of leaves as the cougar crouched. She sobbed once, then hurried on.

She was afraid to listen at first. She wanted to believe that her pistol fire would frighten the animal from her trail. She knew, under ordinary conditions, that it would. If he still followed, it could mean but one thing—that some unheard-of incident had occurred to destroy his fear of men. It would mean that he had knowingly set upon her trail and was hunting her with all the age-old remorselessness that is the code of the mountains.

For a little while all was silence. Then out of the hush the thickets suddenly crashed and shook on the opposite side of the trail. She fled blindly into the thicket. Then she caught herself with a sob. But two shells remained in her pistol, and they must be saved for the test.

Whisperfoot the cougar, remembering the lessons of his youth, turned from the trail when he had first heard Snowbird's step. He had crouched and let her pass. She was walking into the wind; and as she was at the closest point a message had blown back to him.

The hair went straight on his shoulders and along his spine. His blood, running cold an instant before from fear, made a great leap in his veins. A picture came in his dark mind: the chase for a deer when the moon had set, the stir of a living thing that broke twigs in the thickets, and the leap he had made. There had been blood, that night—the wildness and the madness and the exultation of the kill. Of course there had been terror first, but the terror had soon departed and left something lying warm and still in the thickets. It was the same game that walked his trail in front—game that died easily and yet, in a vague way he did not understand, the noblest game of all. It was living flesh, to tear with talon and fang.

All his training, all the instincts inbred in him by a thousand generations of cougars who knew this greatest fear, were simply obliterated by the sudden violence of his hunting-madness. He had tasted this blood once, and it could never be forgotten. The flame leaped in his eyes. And then he began the stalk.

A cougar, trying to creep silently on its game, does not move quickly. It simply steals, as a serpent steals through the grass. Whisperfoot stalked for a period of five minutes, to learn that the prey was farther away from him at every step.

He trotted forward until he came close, and again he stalked. Again he found, after a few minutes of silent creeping through the thickets, that he had lost distance. Evidently this game did not feed slowly, like the deer. It was to be a chase, then. Again he trotted within one hundred feet of the girl.

Three times more he tried to stalk before he finally gave it up altogether. This game was like the porcupine—simply to be chased down and taken. And in the case of all animals that hunt their game by overtaking it, there was no longer any occasion for going silently. The thing to do was to come close and spring from the trail behind.

Though the fear was mostly gone, the cougar retained enough of that caution that most wild animals ex-

hibit when hunting a new game so that he didn't attempt to strike Snowbird down at once. But as the chase went on, his passion grew upon him. Ever he crept nearer. And at last he sprang full into the thickets beside her.

At that instant she had shot for the first time. Because the light had left his eyes before she could find aim, both shots had been clean misses. And terrible as the reports were, he was too engrossed in the chase to be frightened away by mere sound. This was the cry the man-pack always made—these sudden, startling sounds in the silence. But he felt no pain. He crouched a moment, shivering. Then he bounded on again.

The third shot was a miss too; in fact, there had been no chance for a hit. A sound in the darkness is as unreliable a target as can possibly be imagined. And it didn't frighten him as much as the others. He waited, crouching, and the girl started on.

She was making other sounds now—queer, whimpering sounds not greatly different from the bleat that the fawn utters when it dies. It was a fear-sound, and if there is one emotion with which the wild beasts are acquainted, in all its phases, it is fear. She was afraid of him, then, and that meant he need no longer be in the least afraid of her. His skin began to twitch all over with that terrible madness and passion of the flesh-hunters.

This game was like the deer, and the thing to do was lie in wait. There was only one trail. He wasn't afraid of losing her in the darkness. She was neither fleet like the deer nor courageous like Wolf the bear. He had only to wait and leap from the darkness when she passed.

When Dan Felling, riding like mad over the mountain trail, heard the third shot from Snowbird's pistol, he felt that one of the debts he owed had come due at last. He seemed to know,



She Shot Twice.

as the darkness pressed around him, that he was to be tried in the fire, and the horse staggered beneath him as he tried to hasten.

He showed no mercy to his mount. Horse-flesh isn't made for carrying a heavy man over such a trail as this, and she was red-nosed and lathered before half a mile had been covered. He made her leap up the rocks, and on fairly level stretches he lashed the reins and lashed her into a gallop. Only a mountain horse could have stood that test. He gave no thought to his own safety. His courage was at the test, and no risk of his own life must interfere with his attempt to save Snowbird from the danger that threatened her. He didn't know when the horse would fall with him and precipitate him down a precipice, and he was perfectly aware that to crash into a low-hanging limb of one of the great trees beside the trail would probably crush his skull. But he took the chance. And before the ride was done he found himself pleading with the horse, even as he lashed her sides with his whip.

The lesser forest creatures sprang from his trail; and once the mare leaped high to miss a dark shadow that crossed in front. As she caught her stride, Dan heard a squeal and a rattle of quills that identified the creature as a porcupine.

By now he had passed the first of the worst grades, coming out upon a long, easy slope of open forest. Again he urged his horse, leaving to her keen senses alone the choosing of the path between the great tree trunks.

Then he heard Snowbird fire for the fourth time; and he knew that he had almost overtaken her. The report seemed to smash the air. And he lashed his horse into the fastest run

she knew—a wild, sobbing figure in the darkness.

"She's only got one shot more," he said. He knew how many bullets her pistol carried; and the danger—whatever it was—must be just at hand. Underbrush cracked beneath him. And then the horse drew up with a jerk that almost hurled him from the saddle.

He lashed at her in vain. She was not afraid in the darkness and the rocks of the trail, but some Terror in the woods in front had in an instant broken his control over her. She reared, snorting; then danced in an impotent circle. Meanwhile, precious seconds were fleeing.

He understood now. The horse stood still, shivering beneath him, but would not advance a step. The silence deepened. Somewhere in the darkness before him a great cougar was waiting by the trail, and Snowbird, hoping for the moment that it had given up the chase, was hastening through the shadows squarely into its ambush.

Whisperfoot crouched lower; and again his long serpent of a tail began the little vertical motion that always precedes his leap. He had not forgotten the wild rapture of that moment he had inadvertently sprung on Landy Hildreth—or how, after his terror had died, he had come creeping back. He hunted his own way, waiting on the trail; and his madness was at its height. He was not just Whisperfoot the coward, that runs at the shadow of a tall form in the thickets. The consummation was complete, and that single experience of a month before had made of him a hunter of men. His muscles set for the leap.

So intent was he that his keen senses didn't detect the fact that there was a curious echo to the girl's footsteps. Dan Felling had slipped down from his terrified horse and was running up the trail behind her, praying that he could be in time.

Snowbird heard the pat of his feet; but at first she did not dare to hope that aid had come to her. She had thought of Dan as on the far-away marshes; and her father, the only other living occupant of this part of the Divide, might even now be lying dead in his house. In her terror, she had lost all power of interpretation of events. The sound might be the cougar's mate, or even the wolf pack, jealous of his game. Sobbing, she hurried on into Whisperfoot's ambush.

Then she heard a voice, and it seemed to be calling to her. "Snowbird—I'm coming, Snowbird," a man's strong voice was shouting. She whirled with a sob of thankfulness.

At that instant the cougar sprang. Terrified though she was, Snowbird's reflexes had kept sure and true. Even as the great cat leaped, a long, lithe shadow out of the shadow, her finger pressed back against the trigger of her pistol. She had been carrying her gun in front of her, and she fired it, this last time, with no conscious effort. It was just a last instinctive effort to defend herself.

One other element affected the issue. She had whirled to answer Dan's cry just as the cougar left the ground. But she had still been in range. The only effect was to lessen, in some degree, the accuracy of the spring. The bullet caught the beast in mid-air; but even if it had reached its heart, the momentum of the attack was too great to be completely overcome. Snowbird only knew that some vast, resistless power had struck her, and that the darkness seemed to roar and explode about her.

Hurled to her face in the trail, she did not see the cougar sprawl on the earth beside her. The flame in the lantern almost flicked out as it fell from her hand, then flashed up and down, from the deepest gloom to a vivid glare with something of the effect of lightning flickering in the sky. Nor did she hear the first frenzied thrashing of the wounded animal. Kindly unconsciousness had fallen, obscuring this and also the sight of the great cat, in the agony of its wound, creeping with broken shoulder and bared claws across the pine needles toward her defenseless body.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Correct Way to Receive Burglar.

The old plan of offering a burglar a cigarette and asking him to take a chair while you telephone to the police is not now so successful as in the past. The best plan is to tackle the fellow right away. For this purpose you should step behind him, take hold of his coat and force it over his face. Then tie his left arm to his right leg across the back. Properly carried out, this method rarely fails.—London Punch.

The Astrologer in China.

From the earliest times astrology has been one of the arts surrounded by mystery. But in China it is a very perilous profession. When a so-called prophet predicts an event which does not occur, he loses his head.

Many a man has risked acquiring a wife in order to acquire a sister.



Preparing Thanksgiving Feast
The kitchen has an incense sweet,
And pies bedeck the window seat.
The good things cooking seem to whet
The awful appetite we get.

Thanksgiving in Verse

The poets of the present and of the past have embodied their gratitude for the blessings of the year in verse. At times the burden of their song has incorporated the time-honored custom by which one day of the year is set apart for the giving of thanks.

Perhaps Thanksgiving recalls to them mother's ingenuity and skill in making pumpkin pies, and so in a quaintly humorous way the poet pays tribute to the pumpkin and the product thereof.

Again the spirit of these November poems embodies a Thanksgiving joy and freedom from sorrow; for health and happiness; for things spiritual and physical.

At any rate, ever since Thanksgiving has been proclaimed a national holiday the poet has found inspiration for his art and by means of his verses has awakened a sympathetic chord in the breasts of many men and women.

Although nearly all of the poems of James Whitcomb Riley contain an essence of this spirit of gratitude with the existing order of things, some of these are specifically devoted to the day itself. Among these the poem entitled "Thanksgiving" is one of the best.

Let us be thankful—not only because
Since last our universal thanks were told
We have grown greater in the world's
applause,
And fortune's newer smiles surpass the
old—
But thankful for all things that come as
alms
From out the open hand of Providence,
The winter clouds and storms—the sum-
mer calms—
The sleepless dread—the drowse of in-
dolence.

Let us be thankful—thankful for the
prayers
Whose gracious answers were long
long delayed,
That they might fall upon us unawares,
And bless us, as in greater need we
prayed.

Let us be thankful for the loyal hand
That love held out in welcome to our
own.
When love, and only love, could under-
stand
The need of touches we had never
known.

Let us be thankful for the longing eyes
That gave their secret to us as they
wept,
Yet in return found, with a sweet sur-
prise,
Love's touch upon their lids, and, smil-
ing, slept.

And let us, too, be thankful that the
tears
Of sorrow have not all been drained
away,
That through them still, for all the com-
ing years,
We may look on the dead face of today.

Will Carleton, the New England poet, strikes the universal note of thanks in his hymn, part of which follows:

We thank Thee, Father, for all that is
bright—
The gleam of the day and the stars of
the night;
The flowers of our youth and the fruits
of our prime,
And the blessings that march down the
pathways of time.

We thank Thee, O Father, for all that
is drear—
The sob of the tempest, the flow of the
tear;
For never in blindness and never in vain
Thy mercy permitted a sorrow or pain.

The spirit of unembittered resigna-
tion at approaching death is ex-
pressed in a poem by Edith M. Thomas
on "A Last Thanksgiving."

When it is time for me to go—
Time of the rose—or falling snow—
Or when new winds wake vernal strife,
This to the world I've cherished so—
"I have been thankful for my life."

When night and shade together flow,
When dawns some scene I not yet know,
Let me draw back one fluttering breath,
To say, to all I've loved below,
"I have been thankful—in my death!"

"How John Quit the Farm" is a
narrative poem by the Hoosier poet,
and combines pathos as well as quaint

humor. The son John has gone to the city to get an education and for the time being he is caught by the glamour of city life. But the concluding stanza in which he tells of his return on Thanksgiving day shows that the luster of the city offered him but a fleeting inducement.

And so the summer faded out, and the
autumn wore away,
And a keener winter never fetched around
Thanksgiving's day!

And as I turned and looked around, some
one riz up and bent
And put his arms round Mother's neck,
and laughed in low content.

"It's me," he says—"your fool boy John—
come back to shake your hand;
Set down with you, and talk with you,
and make you understand
How dearer yet than all the world is this
old home that we
Will spend Thanksgiving in fer life—jest
Mother, you and me!"

John Greenleaf Whittier wrote of
the pumpkin, and in the poem of that
title he says, in part:

Ah, on Thanksgiving day, when from
East and from West,
From North and from South come the
pilgrim and guest,
When the gray-haired New Englander
sees round his board
The old broken links of affection restored;
When the care-wearied man seeks his
mother once more,
And the worn matron smiles where the
girl smiled before;
What moistens the lips and what bright-
ens the eye?
What calls back the past, like the rich
pumpkin pie?

The object of Thanksgiving
day is to take us back of the
goods of life to the supreme
good. The tendency is to get
absorbed in things and forget
their spiritual value. Thank-
sgiving day reminds us of spir-
itual values.

Then thanks for the present, none
sweeter nor better
E'er smoked from an oven or circled a
platter.
Fairer hands never wrought art on
pastry
more fine,
Brighter eyes never watched o'er its bak-
ing than thine;
And the prayer which my mouth is too
full to express
Swells my heart that thy shadow may
never grow less;
That the days of thy lot may be strength-
ened below,
And the fame of thy worth, like the
pumpkin vine, grow
And thy life be as sweet and its last sun-
set sky
Golden-tinted and fair as thy own pump-
kin pie.

The poem, "For an Autumn Festi-
val," by the same author, is of a more
serious and devout nature, as several
of the stanzas will testify.

Once more the liberal year laughs out
O'er richer stores than gems of gold;
Once more with harvest song and shout
Is Nature's bloodless triumph told.
Who murmurs at his lot today?
Who scorns his native fruit and bloom?
Or sighs for dainties far away,
Beside the bounteous board at home?

And let these altars, wreathed with
flowers
And piled with fruits awake again
Thanksgiving for the golden hours,
The early and the latter rain!

One of the simplest and most beau-

tiful of Thanksgiving poems is "We Thank Thee," by Emerson. It runs:

For flowers that bloom about our feet;
For tender grass, so fresh, so sweet;
For song of birds and hum of bee;
For all things fair we hear or see,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee.

For blue of stream and blue of sky;
For pleasant shade of branches high;
For fragrant air and cooling breeze;
For beauty of the blooming trees,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee.

As in most of her poems, a devout religious spirit pervades Phoebe Cary's poem on Thanksgiving. It is an appeal to the grown-ups on this day to make a trip back to their childhood, and is marked by the felicitous simplicity of the writer:

O men, grown sick with toil and care,
Leave for a while the crowded mart.
O women, sinking with despair,
Weary of limbs and faint of heart,
Forget your years today and come
As children back to childhood's home.

Following again the winding rills,
Go to the places where you went
When, climbing up the summer hills,
In their green laps you sat content
And softly leaned your head to rest
On Nature's calm and peaceful breast.

Then the old lady of the poem goes on to tell that she has just come from Sarah's, who lives in a sort of a palace in the city, and his creams and salads, made by a French cook, that "cost a fortune." However, things didn't quite suit her at her niece's, and an invitation to an old-fashioned "Thanksgiving dinner suits her well.

How I run on, Well, thank you, neigh-
bor; I see you want to go.
I'm comin' to Thanksgiving; your good
old ways I know!
An' my mouth waters; dear old friend,
there's tears in these dim eyes,
For I shall taste the flavor of mother's
pumpkin pie.

Another poetess, Mrs. Margaret Sangster, wrote this verse on the "Thanksgiving Pumpkin Pies":

So you bid me to Thanksgiving. Thank
you, neighbor; it is kind
To keep a plain old body like myself so
much in mind.
Here I've been sittin' all alone, and a
mist before my eyes,
A-thinkin', like a simpleton, on mother's
pumpkin pie.

A toast by Ida E. S. Noyes is very appropriate, since it has Thanksgiving for a subject.

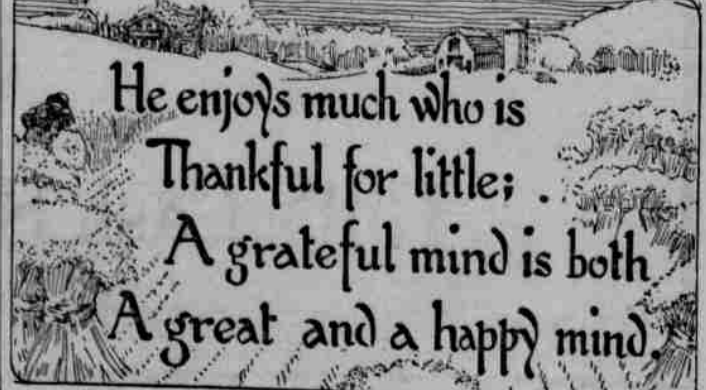
For every day of life we're living,
Thanksgiving!
For friends assembled 'round the board,
Thanks we're giving,
For every blessing, great and small,
Thanks give we all!

While it was not written especially in reference to our national feast of Thanksgiving, Keats' "Ode to Autumn" is generally considered a poem of the season. The first stanza runs:

Season of mists and yellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and
bless
With fruit the vines that round the
thatch-aves run
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage
trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel
shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never
cease,
For summer has o'erbrimmed their
clammy cells.

These Go Well With the Turkey.

To caramelize sweet potatoes after they have been parboiled, slice, dip in sirup or sprinkle with sugar and brown in the oven. Or small sections may be dipped in caramel sirup prepared as for caramel custard by browning the sugar and adding enough water to make a thick sirup. Another way is to bake the sweet potatoes, mash, season with butter and pack in their half skins. Then pour a teaspoonful of caramel sirup over each and put in the oven to reheat.



He enjoys much who is
Thankful for little;
A grateful mind is both
A great and a happy mind.