

The Valley of Voices

By GEORGE MARSH

Author of "Tollers of the Trail," "The Whelps of the Wolf"

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THE WINDIGO

You never saw a windigo, that's sure. The chances are that you never heard one. But have you ever heard a superstitious Indian or half-breed of the Canadian wild tell of its horrors? He certainly makes a blood-curdling thing out of the windigo. Anyway, this is the story of a windigo that was real enough to leave tracks like those of a great bear and to kill a big bloodhound. It is also the story of a factor's daughter and an American naturalist. The girl is beautiful and educated and a wonderful violinist. The man is brave and strong. And when Brent Steele gets into the "Valley of Voices" and sees the charm of Denise St. Onze and realizes that the mysterious windigo is working for her destruction—why, he drops everything else and starts in to solve the malign mystery. There's a fierce rivalry between trading posts—which complicates the situation. And Denise, to save her father, has been forced into a promise of marriage. So Brent Steele's job is a he-man's job. But he does the job—and gets his reward.

CHAPTER I

Steele stopped in his tracks. With his right hand he freed his ear from the head-piece of his tump-line and stood listening. Surely, he thought, those were the unmistakable notes of a violin, clear above the noise of the rapids. Curious, he continued up the steep portage; now convinced that faintly through the beat of broken waters, which the trail paralleled, floated eerie music, now doubting his senses. At length his alert ears failed to capture the strains of the magic violin and he dismissed his illusion as the vagary of nerves overtaken from the toll of the trail over which he had come.

For a space he went on, engrossed in other thoughts, when through the roar of the waters a violin sobbed up to a wild crescendo . . . then ceased.

Easing the top bag to the ground, Steele swung the lower pack, with its attached tump-line, beside it, and waited. These were no fancied melodies of summer whitewaters. It was no wraith music which a shift in the August breeze had brought him—this mad playing.

Again the notes of the violin were audible; clearer now. Some magician out there on the neighboring shore was baring his soul. It was unbelievable—here, in this lost valley of the north—pure wizardry. Enchanted, Steele listened as the violin sang of yearning and despair, unutterable, which genius has voiced to the world through the magic of its strings. And as he listened he wondered what tragedy lay behind that playing, what trick of fate had buried this master of the bow in a fur-post on the Walling river.

"What you hear, de Windigo seeng in de strong-water?"

"Turning, Steele smiled at the blocky figure of the speaker standing in the trail, his head and shoulders bent under a canoe.

"No, David, but I've been listening to the violin of a shaman—a medicine man conjuring up the spirits of the rapids. Someone at this French post is a sorcerer."

"Maybe you hear Windigo all de same," dryly suggested the half-breed, easing the stern of the canoe to the trail to uncover a broad, swart face wrinkled with amusement. "Up at Fort Hope de peopl' scared of dis river for sure. Dey tell me de strong-water by de French post had place for de devils an' de Windigo."

"Yes, I heard that too, the valley has a bad name on the Albany. Francois, at Martin's Falls, says it was called the Walling river because of the moaning of the rapids here in winter. I told him it was only the wind, but he wouldn't have it—insisted that the place was 'bad country,' bewitched."

"Dey say plenty peopl' drown there, long tam ago," gravely added David.

"So old Pierre once told me, down at Henley house. He was traveling from Ogoke to the Albany one winter and struck this gorge about sunset. But the spirits scared him so with their wailing that he drove his dogs ten miles before he dared to make camp. I can't understand why the French built a place on a tabooed river. They must have known its reputation."

"Wal," replied David with a grimace, "I nevalre hear one of dese Windigo howl een de night, but eef I see him now I eat beem for sure. I call dis de Starvin' riviere."

Steele laughed loudly at the remark of his hard-headed companion, whose legacy of superstition from an Ojibwa mother had been heavily diluted by the blood of a Scotch father.

"I could eat a caribou myself," he said, "but we'll have a big feed at the post tonight. You take the canoe over while I find out who's playing that violin. Who would guess that there was a man within a thousand miles

of these bad-lands who could play like that?"

The half-breed started over the portage while Steele turned into the thick scrub toward the river. From the foot of the rapids the trail had swung away from the broken banks of the gorge, but shortly Steele saw patches of foam through the spruce. He stopped to listen, and again the notes of the violin shrilled above the monotone of the broken waters. Slowly he worked his way along the shoulder of the shore, then, forced back to circle a gash in the eroded cliff, stumbled upon a trail, and following it a short distance, suddenly stiffened.

The path led to a huge, flat-topped boulder thrusting out into the stream. On the rock, her dark head nestling a violin to her cheek, stood a woman.

Surprise held the man motionless. To eyes which for months had not looked upon a comely white woman, the picture of the lithe figure of the musician, a crown of dusky hair half masking the face turned to the river, was a delight he hesitated to cut short by a betrayal of his presence.

From the passionate hopelessness of Massenet's "Elegie" the violin swung into a deathless lament of Grieg, grim with the eternal tragedy of his own gray north sea. As she played, the girl turned, exposing her face. On her cheeks were tears. But she did not see the listener for her eyes were closed.

She ceased playing. With a sense of awe at having heard the cry of



"I Come Here to Play, Monsieur—Often," She Replied in a Tense, Uneven Voice.

stark despair, the trespasser, conclusions of sacrifice, had turned to retreat when he was stopped by:

"Qui vient la? Who is there?"

Caught, the eavesdropper faced about, hat in hand.

"Mademoiselle," he began, reddening under the questioning gaze which swept him from moccasins to tattered shirt, then fearfully searched his eyes as if seeking a sinister meaning in his sudden appearance, "I am packing up the carry to the post. I-I heard your marvelous playing—and came. You will pardon my listening?"

The dark face of the girl in turn flushed. The guilty man blunely awaited the revelation of her just anger. That meant for the forest and waters only the naked anguish of a soul—a stranger had heard. It was right that he should pay.

"I come here to play—moussieur—often," she replied in a tense, uneven voice. "I was startled! We see no more—but the Indians. There is nothing to pardon."

She spoke in English, with a flavor of accent which Steele had heard before, but not in French Canada.

Relieved at his reprieve, he hastened to explain his presence on that bush-grown portage of the Walling river.

"My man David and I are bound from the Albany to Ogoke lake and the Nepegon. We've been in the bush since May," he laughed, painfully aware of a three-days' growth of beard, with a deprecatory gesture toward his frayed clothes, "and have some trading to do at the post, as you see. Is it far?"

"Only a short distance, moussieur. My father will welcome the sight of a white man; for him it is so lonely here."

"But surely," he protested, "it is more lonely for a woman." So she was the daughter of the French factor, and he wondered what force of circumstances had driven the father of this talented girl into the fur trade as an employee of the French company; this girl with the somber eyes who came to the white-waters with her violin—and her grief. Was it tragedy he had chanced upon, or mere loneliness?

"Lonely here for a woman? Surely, moussieur, you speak as a man of the world—with understanding." The sensitive mouth of the girl shaped a

faint smile, but the dark eyes did not change as she continued: "Yet I have my father and my violin, while he— he has only his memories."

"But," he gallantly protested, "your father, mademoiselle, has the companionship of a very—" he hesitated and finished weakly—"his daughter."

She laughed in his face. "Ah, moussieur, you have French blood in your veins. But the very—his daughter," she mocked, "is a dull substitute for a 'world of men,' as your Browning says. My father will be much pleased at the coming to Walling river of Monsieur—"

"Steele," he prompted, "my name is Brent Steele. I am in the field for the American Museum of Natural History."

She bowed low with mock gravity. "Monsieur Steele, my father, Col. Hilaire St. Onze, will be honored in offering the poor hospitality of Walling River to a learned American scientist."

Smilingly Steele raised protesting hands at her characterization. How charmingly, he thought, this strange girl, whose violin had sung so poignantly of despair, whose face had reflected fear, of the stranger, now lapsed into rallery.

"Oh, pardon, moussieur," she went on, "I forgot myself; I am Denise St. Onze. Now that the conventions have been satisfied, will you follow me to our chateau—of logs?"

"Thank you!"

Her simple muslin gown and beaded moccasins seemed but to authenticate the stamp of race in the figure and carriage of the girl who led the curious man over the river trail to the carry. At the portage she stopped.

"My packs are below here, where I left them to follow the Lorelei of the Walling," he said smiling.

Her face swiftly sobered.

"Ah, Monsieur," she replied almost inaudibly, "do not make jest of this terrible river." Then, with a shrug, as if ridding her mind of an oppressive weight, added, "I shall not wait for you, the post is very near," and walked swiftly up the portage, followed by the quizzical eyes of the man.

He stood in the trail watching the retreating figure of the girl until a bend shut it from sight.

What eyes and hair, he mused, and what playing! It was clear she was breaking her heart over something; the look in her eyes proved that. To think of such a glorious creature buried in this country! Her father probably was a retired French officer. Heaps of them marooned between Labrador and the Peace! But why, he asked himself, didn't they mention her over at Hope—this charming daughter of the factor at Walling River?

Yes, he decided, she certainly had been frightened at his appearance—had looked him over as if he were a ghost. Then she had seemed superstitious; but she couldn't really believe in this tradition of the valley—this Windigo and spirit stuff. That was inconceivable. She was not afraid to come here alone and yet she called the river terrible. What had happened here anyway? Whom could she fear, and why?

Thus speculated the intrigued Steele. Then swinging his bags to his back, he started for the post known as Walling River.

As Steele left the forest to cross the clearing the dogs of the post started the usual uproar. Half way to the group of log buildings he was met by an Indian, sent by the factor, and relieved of his packs.

Evidently Walling River has a mystery and one that challenges a brave man and the girl!

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Nicotine in Tobacco

Nicotine is a colorless, intensely poisonous liquid. If exposed to the air, it absorbs oxygen and becomes brown and ultimately solid. The quantity of nicotine contained in tobacco varies from two to eight per cent, the coarser kinds containing the larger quantity, while the best Havana cigars seldom contain more than two per cent, and often less. Nicotine does not appear in tobacco smoke. It is split into pyridine and colidine. Of these, the latter is said to be the less active and to predominate in cigar smoke, while the smoke from pipes contains a larger amount of pyridine.

Marvelous Precocity

The precocious infant was being submitted to the psychological tests in order to determine the degree of his genius. He had already picked out numbers, arranged blocks and distinguished colors. Then came the supreme test, the identification of various coins. The investigator tossed a nickel on the floor. The precocious infant bent over it while the proud parents held their breath.

Then the precocious infant winked at his dad and cried exultantly, "Heads!"—Pathfinder Magazine.

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. F. B. FITZGERALD, D.D., Dean of the Theological Seminary, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
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November 15
PAUL'S ARREST IN JERUSALEM

LESSON TEXT—Acts 21:15-23:31.
GOLDEN TEXT—"If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed."
PRIMARY TOPIC—Paul is Brave in Danger.
JUNIOR TOPIC—Paul and the Jerusalem Mob.
INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—Paul Faces a Mob.
YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—The Spirit of the Mob.

I. Paul's Vow (21:15-26).
Upon Paul's arrival at Jerusalem, representatives of the church there gave him a most cordial reception. In order that the brethren in Jerusalem might graciously receive him, it was proposed to him by the elders that he was in no way opposed to the law. The effort was to remove prejudice. They recognized that such an act would in no way compromise or involve the Gentile brethren. Furthermore this would not compromise his own principles of action, viz., to the Jews he became a Jew, and to the Gentiles, a Gentile; all things to all men in order to gain them for Christ.

II. Paul's Arrest (21:27-40).
How far this act conciliated the Jews we are not told, but it only engaged the unbelieving Jews, causing them to resort to mob law. These madmen on the basis of a supposition seized him and dragged him from the temple and beat him mercilessly intending to put him to death. Paul was rescued from the mob by the Roman guard. The chief captain, not being able to get any information from the howling mob, bound Paul and started for the castle. In order to protect him from the murderous frenzy of the mob, the soldiers lifted him upon their shoulders and bore him up the stairs. Paul kept himself under control, and politely asked permission of the captain to speak to the people. When he addressed him in Greek and quoted his Roman citizenship, the captain granted his request.

III. Paul's Defense (22:1-27).
Paul's chief concern was not his own safety. He used this opportunity to witness unto them of Christ.

1. His Claim for a Rightful Hearing (vv. 1-3).
He was a Jew born in Tarsus, a city of no mean reputation.

2. His Education (v. 3).
He was educated under Gamaliel and instructed "according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers."

3. His Zeal (v. 3).
He was as zealous toward God as those Jews who were trying to destroy him.

2. His Attitude Toward Jesus (vv. 4-5).
"I persecuted this way unto the death," so that his attitude was one of hatred as was that of the Jews.

3. How His Attitude Was Changed (vv. 6-16).
While on his way to Damascus with authority to bind the Christians at Jerusalem, he was smitten to the ground by a light from heaven, and the voice of the Lord said, "Why persecutest thou me?" When Paul inquired what he was to do, he was told to go to Damascus where he would be told what to do.

4. The Lord Commissioned Him to Go to the Gentiles (17-21).
IV. Paul Before the Sanhedrin (23:1-10).
The Roman officer, in order to learn why Paul was arrested, commanded the chief council to assemble, and brought Paul before them.

1. Paul's Earnest Look at the Council (vv. 1-2).
This was a solicitation of their honor to give him a fair hearing, and also a look of conscious integrity and unflinching courage.

2. Paul's Stern Rebuke of the Head of the Council (v. 3).
"God shall smite thee, thou whited wall."

3. Paul's Appeal to the Pharisees (vv. 6-10).
Seeing that he could not get a fair hearing, and perceiving that the body before him was made up of Pharisees and Sadducees, he appealed to the Pharisees hoping to get their attention, for his preaching had something in common with their belief.

V. The Lord Stood by Paul (v. 11).
This assured him that his course was right, and thus comfort was brought to him.

VI. The Conspiracy to Kill Paul (vv. 18-22).
More than forty men placed themselves under a curse to abstain from eating and drinking until they had murdered him. God defeated their plan without a miracle.

Darkness

The darkness which is the result of the absence of the light which others ought to shed is bad enough; but how great is the darkness of disbelief and unbelief into which some will voluntarily plunge!—The Mennonite.

The Stream of Life

The stream of life for the broad-minded man flows steadily forward without rush and roar in ways of peace and good will.—Western Christian Advocate.

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This Week's Short Story
She sank into the chair and gazed straight in front of her. Slowly, ever so slowly, the man crept nearer. His hands sought her throat. . . . Then he stepped back, a gleam of satisfaction in his eyes. "Now keep quite still," he said, "while I take the photo."
This Week's "Added" Ad: Wanted—Domestic servant, small house, family of two, one agreeable and obliging.—Buffalo Express.

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Safety First
They were as busy as bees at the downtown restaurant. A portly woman visitor hurriedly approached the serving counter and demanded of the startled waiter:
"Where is the kitchen? I want to see how the meats are prepared before I order mine."—Indianapolis News.

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A Reminder
New—Why do you keep so many old magazines scattered around your room?
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