

The Valley of Voices

By GEORGE MARSH

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"Tollers of the Trail"
"The Whelps of the Wolf"
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LAFLAMME

SYNOPSIS—With David, half-breed guide, Brent Steele, of the American Museum of Natural History, is traveling in northern Canada. By a stream he hears Denise, daughter of Col. Hilaire St. Onge, factor at Walling River, play the violin superbly. He introduces himself and accepts an invitation to make the post his home during his stay. He finds the factor worried and mystified. The "log chateau" is a real home. From St. Onge he learns of the mysterious creature of evil, the Windigo, and the disappearance of a canoe and its crew, with the season's take of furs. Then at night the Windigo gives a weird performance. Even Steele is mystified. David, Steele's Indian, and Michel, St. Onge's head-man, leave for the scene of the canoe's disappearance in an attempt to solve the mystery. St. Onge tells Steele that Lascelles, the company's manager at Fort Albany, seeks his ruin in order to compel Denise to marry him to save her father. Steele and Denise fall in love. Steele finds the track of the Windigo—huge and much like a bear's. David finds the same thing. Tete-Boule, Indian in St. Onge's employ, is caught listening to Steele's talk with David and Michel, and roughly handled.

CHAPTER IV—Continued

"What you told me has been respected, sir," interrupted Steele, irritated at the manner of the older man.

"Yes, monsieur," mollified the factor, "we have found you a gentleman. But for a time I suspected you of being a member of the provincial police, and that would have complicated matters."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, if it were ever known up river that the police had stayed here with me for some time before acting against Lafamme, the post might be burned over our heads. They are a lawless crowd, monsieur."

"According to your story you are bound to lose the post whatever happens."

"Yes, but there is Denise."

"I don't understand."

"Monsieur, Lafamme has never stopped at anything. He might not stop there."

"You mean that he is in love with Mademoiselle St. Onge?"

"Precisely!"

"And might attempt to take her by force?"

"He might attempt anything. He has never respected the law—is a desperate man."

"But they would hunt him down. He could not get away in this country. He would be a madman to attempt it."

"He is a madman, monsieur."

Steele was tempted to laugh in the face of his host. He would shortly have the opportunity of measuring this madman with his own eyes. St. Onge certainly was painting him in strong colors. But they had wandered from the point.

"I have asked you for your confidence," he began abruptly, "if you cannot see your way clear to allow me to aid you, I shall regret it." He was thinking of the girl up at the house.

"Monsieur Steele, we have decided that you deserve our confidence—Denise and I; but I fear it will do no good now. They have got us."

"They?" demanded the American.

"Yes," and the blood mounted to St. Onge's bronzed face as he talked.

"I told you that Lascelles had pursued my daughter since the winter we spent at Albany. And now, with the disappearance of this fur, the post can be closed, as it shows a loss under my management. He can force me from the company's service—ruin me. In France I have no property left; it is all gone, and I am an old man, monsieur."

The face of St. Onge was yellow and wrinkled.

"But you will not consent to your daughter—" vehemently protested the younger man, when he was interrupted, with:

"Ah, monsieur, you do not know her. I fear that already she may have involved herself. I have just learned that she sent a letter by the last canoe to Albany."

Steele's deepest instincts revolted at the thought. It was monstrous—unbelievable! Small wonder he had found her playing her heart out at the rapids. He knew now just what hopelessness, what heartache, lay beneath the "farewell" she had played on the hill. To shield her father's old age from the bitterness of failure and possible penury here, in this new land, she had deliberately offered to destroy that glorious youth of hers—at last capitulated to this intriguing cur of an inspector.

"But that is not all," went on St. Onge. "Shortly before your arrival a canoe brought this letter from Ogoke."

Steele's lean face lighted with curiosity as he started to read the letter handed him by the factor. Then the muscles of his jaw bulged as his teeth ground in anger.

"Monsieur St. Onge,

"Reville Freres, Walling River.

"For the third and last time I am writing you in an attempt to make you see the light as a sensible man. I have reason to know that Lascelles is now ready to force your hand. The post has proved a failure, as he intended it should, and you have now

to decide between leaving the company or giving your daughter to a man you despise.

"The offer I have made to you, I repeat. From Ogoke Lake we can keep the Reville Freres, and the Hudson's Bay company out of the Walling River valley, and control the Swift Current and Drowning River trade as well. In five years we will retire rich."

"I offer your daughter a name honored for generations in Three Rivers. Although I have spent my life in the North, my education has been of the best—not picked up in the barrack room like that of Lascelles. Monsieur le Colonel, the time has come when you are forced to make a choice between us. Join with me, and in a few years your daughter will live in luxury in Montreal or Quebec, and your old age will be provided for; choose Lascelles and you will never see the ice break up on the Walling, for your Indians will leave you. I have loved your daughter since I saw her at Albany, and can make her happy. Consider carefully before you decide to become the dog of Lascelles. If it is to be that rat of a sous-lieutenant, I warn you now that you will find my arm long. Until the snow flies I will wait for your canoe."

"LOUIS LAFLAMME."

Steele returned the letter to St. Onge with the comment, "Monsieur, you were a soldier of France. To a letter like this there is but one reply—for a soldier." There was a glitter in the eyes of the American as they met those of the older man.

"For a soldier," repeated the Frenchman with excitement, "there is but

one reply, 'On guard!' I would kill her with my own hand before giving her to that renegade. Why, there is a white woman now at Ogoke—and to write this insult!"

The American leaped to his feet. "Colonel," he cried, "Lafamme says you won't see the ice leave the Walling. Let's call that bluff! With your leave, I'll come back on the snow, and we'll watch the ice go out together!"

The hands of the two men met as they silently pledged each other. Then Steele's face sobered as his mind turned to the greater problem that confronted him.

"But Lascelles—how does Lafamme know so much about him?"

"Lafamme was at Fort Albany, four years ago, attempting to make a deal with Lascelles. He was suspected of trying to lure him from the Reville Freres' employ. It was there he first saw Denise. Since then he has written us many letters. Once he stopped here on his way up river, and threatened to take her away by force if she did not listen to him. She lives in constant fear of him."

"That explains much," replied Steele. "And the letter she sent to Lascelles—when did it go downriver?"

"With the search party from Albany. Long before you reached here—as much as two weeks."

"And this letter evidently accounts for her depression—her sadness."

"Yes. This matter—and her fear of Lafamme. She believes that he will keep his word—try to use force. As for the letter, she refuses to tell me what she wrote, but I can guess."

"And of course Lascelles will show up here before the river closes, since she has at last listened to him?" Her inexplicable, "There is no way out for the lost," was now clear.

"That is what I fear—"

"But what do you intend to do, monsieur? You must have some plan," impatiently demanded Steele.

"What can I do? I've told her that I shall never consent to it; that I would kill her and myself first."

"There was no solution of this problem in the mind of the American. It was a situation which seemed hopeless indeed. If she refused to listen to her father she surely was too proud to brook interference from a stranger. She had burned her bridges, yet something must be done—something to prevent her self-destruction. But what? And then, he remembered with a start, there was this Windigo matter.

"Pierre also apparently has a part in the conspiracy. Is Lafamme back of the Windigo scare?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Changes in Men's Dress

The wig and the pigtails went out of fashion early in the Nineteenth century and gentlemen wore their hair rather long and freely oiled. Loose crosscut trousers, high-waisted vests, and voluminous cravats were in fashion. The shirt collar was often worn turned up with the points showing above the cravat. The coat cut away squarely in front went out of date late in the Nineteenth century.

CHAPTER V

The following morning the three friends were loading their canoe preparatory to ascending the river on a round of the fall camps of Indians trading at the post, when the flash of a paddle far upstream aroused their interest.

"Dat ees queer t'ing," commented Michel, scowling darkly. "Eet M'sieu Lafamme come to mak' trouble, he weel fin' plenty here."

At the mention of Lafamme, David's small eyes narrowed; the muscles of his thick forearms worked nervously as though he already felt his fingers at the throat of the free-trader. Steele's curiosity was keenly aroused, for it was too late in the year for the canoe of a trading hunter to visit the post; this boat was undoubtedly from Ogoke. What new scheme had Lafamme in mind? It would be four weeks before the winter would break—the limit he had given St. Onge for his answer.

It was not long before the hard-driven craft was close enough to disclose but a single occupant. And shortly, as it neared the shore, Michel called:

"Bo'jo! bo'jo! Pierre! What you do here so far from de Feather lake?"

The Indian grounded his boat on the beach and shaking the hand of the head-man, replied in Ojibway as David and Steele joined them:

"Bo'jo, Michel! The hunters at the Medicine Hills country. For three nights the Windigo howled on the burnt ridge by Big Feather lake. The people are weak with fear; they will not trap there this winter."

"Did you hear the voice of the Windigo, Pierre?" asked Michel gravely.

"No, I was netting whitefish at the Lake of the Deep Water. When I returned to the camp they were leaving. There will be no trap lines in that valley this long snows."

"Did the people see the tracks of the Windigo?"

"No, their blood was cold in their veins. They did not stay to look for a trail. Why should they? They were afraid."

"But why did you leave your family for the Windigo to eat and come here; last spring you traded your fur at Ogoke?" rasped Michel so savagely that the Ojibway backed away, for the raw-boned Iroquois was feared the length of the Walling.

"I need shells for my gun, and Ogoke is far," weakly replied the other, his eyes shifting uneasily.

The swart features of Michel twisted with anger. "You lie, you have plenty shell!" he replied, fiercely, returning to English for Steele's benefit. "You travel here to mak' trouble wid your beeg talk of de Windigo." And the long arm of the exasperated headman shot out a crushing blow in the face of the Ojibway.

As the Indian staggered back with a cry from the attack of the infuriated Iroquois, Steele stepped between them, and pushing Michel aside, ordered sternly:

"That's enough!"

The cowed Indian, nursing his bleeding lips, and protesting his innocence, left the men on the beach and joined the post people who were excitedly discussing the coming of the stranger and his reception at the hands of Michel.

"Evidently you don't like that Pierre," laughed Steele. "What made you so mad?"

"I tink he cum here to talk to Tete-Boule," was the significant reply. "Dey weel mak' de medicine tonight to scare de Windigo."

"What, is he a shaman—a conjuror, too?"

"He claim he ees beeg medicine man, one of de Mideewin, so I tink he put de devil en me now." Then Michel related what had passed between him and Pierre.

"But you can't blame him for fearing the Windigo, or for coming here if it is nearer his hunting grounds than Ogoke."

The inscrutable Iroquois faced Steele with snapping eyes.

"Many long snows fall, m'sieu, seence de Jibway starve out on de Walling riviere. Maybe ten—maybe more. Many die all tr dees countree dat long snows, for eet was de year of de rabbit plague and dere were no moose. Dees Pierre cum to Fort Mamatawan dat spreeng an' say hees woman die, but I go to hees camp dat summer, an' I fin' her bones eon de bush eon two, three place—all round. He keel hees woman—and left her in de snow for de volverines an' fox—she nevaire starve. He ees no good. He cum here to mak' de trouble an' scare our people."

Pierre also apparently has a part in the conspiracy. Is Lafamme back of the Windigo scare?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Pearls of Little Price

In this day of mergers no combination is surprising. The newest one, however, is the combination earring and necklace. Instead of passing around the throat, the necklace part of this costume accessory passes from one long dangling earring to the other under the chin of the wearer.

Scarfs Expand

The modern woman would sneer vigorously if asked to wear a shawl, but the newer scarfs are so nearly shawl proportions that the only difference is in the name. They are fully a yard wide and eight feet long, but are of such light material as chiffon, flit lace and net that they may be wrapped around the throat without suggestion of bulkiness.

Light in Weight

An interesting effect is achieved by plaiting georgette crepe capes and binding them with duffy fur.

THE CROSS OF CHIVALRY

By ALFRED B. OSGOODBY

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EDITH LOWERRE sat with her elbows on her knees and her face resting between her delicate hands. Her eyes wereazing straight at the man in front of her and there was more than friendliness in their expression. Her cheeks were flushed and her entire attitude denoted intense interest and obvious pleasure.

"I am so glad to see you again. You don't know how often I have thought of you. We were such good friends once," and a little sigh, almost inaudible, followed.

"Yes, good friends," Hugh Broughton responded, and with slight hesitation, in a lower tone, he added, "almost lovers."

Then, noting her heightened color, he said quickly, "Forgive me, I spoke heedlessly."

"But only the truth," she said daintily.

"A kind of truth that is dangerous," he rejoined.

"Not necessarily. The fact that I am another man's wife eliminates any possible danger in retrospect, and surely there is no harm in egzeable reminiscence."

"Agreeable?" He smiled.

The flush of her cheeks crept closer to her temples.

"Would you have me admit more?"

"You need not admit anything," he answered. "We both understand. But, believe me, I did not come here tonight with any intention of discussing the past. I expected to meet your husband. To be frank, I wanted to know the man you preferred to me."

"I don't want you to meet Gerald," she replied quickly. "He knows I loved you—once," hesitatingly, with her eyes downcast.

"Why should that interfere with our being friends? You belong to him, and I respect his right of possession. I am sure he would be magnanimous under the circumstances."

"You are wrong. He hates you. If he knew you were here tonight he would kill both you and me. He hates every man who was even my friend, and you more than others, because—perhaps,"—she spoke slowly, "I foolishly told him once, in a spirit of pique, that he was not the first man who had loved me. He flew into a perfect rage at my admission, and demanded your name. I recklessly told him."

"Your statement does not alter my desire to meet him—to be friends. That was my primary object in coming here tonight—at the first opportunity offered me since your marriage. Why, from the very moment I learned that business would bring me from New York to Savannah, my sole thought has been to look you up, and," he added, "to meet the man who won you away from me—the man whom I have always thought must have been born under a lucky star."

The compliment, impulsively uttered, intensified the expression in her eyes.

"Fate regulates these things better than we can," she replied, "and it is fortunate for both of us that your visit was unconsciously timed during his absence. Gerald will return tomorrow and for my sake you must not see me again." Her eyes glistened.

"I am sorry to say that."

"It is my portion," he replied in a tone of resignation.

"But you do not understand," she said. "Gerald loves me, and I love him—anyway I am his wife. It is his disposition to be wildly jealous of me at the slightest provocation. He is a Southerner, with the temperament true to a man of the South—love of family honor—strict adherence to moral principles—abhorring even the semblance of sexual stigma—demanding the strictest allegiance of his wife—"

she clasped her hands nervously, and avoiding her companion's eyes, added slowly—"and receiving it."

"I see it all clearly," he responded. "You are very happy with him—I am glad. You know me well enough to believe that I would not, if I could, do aught that would risk your happiness. And yet, you will also understand that I am glad to have you remember other days." His voice was low, and became reminiscent. He leaned closer, and there came into his eyes a look she had almost forgotten. "Those were the happiest days of my life; and you will forgive me for telling you that is the reason I have never married."

Her eyes were looking straight into his; their faces were close together. She could almost feel his breath upon her cheek. Her eyes half closed, and the memory of their love-days drifted slowly, with insidious effect, through her mind. Instinctively her hand reached his, and closed over it with soft pressure. Her momentary weakness infected him; his veins were throbbing, and his senses blinded. The mad impulse to seize her, kiss her, and to pour out his love of long years,

possessed him; but only for an instant. Their eyes met again, and each suddenly recognized the weakness of the other. His man's strength asserted itself first. He arose and strolled across the room, and his action served to restore her self-possession. For a moment he stood before her escritoire. Something shining diverted his attention. He picked up a small, pearl-handled revolver, and, turning toward her, inquired:

"Is this dangerous plaything yours?"

She had quite recovered herself, and with a smile came to his side.

"Gerald's frequent absences from home cause him great concern for my safety; and he has tried to teach me how to use this 'plaything' in an emergency, in case of intrusion." Then laughingly, "I am almost afraid to touch it."

She turned away, and seated herself at the piano.

"There is an old song I should like to sing to you. Would you care to hear it?"

Before he could answer there was a sudden sound at the door. A startled look came into her eyes and she arose quickly.

There was the noise of a key turning in the lock. Her face blanched with fear. He saw and understood, even before he heard her whisper:

"Gerald!"

The next moment she felt the cold barrel of the "plaything" pressed close to her hand; and the voice of her companion commanding:

"Point it at me! Quick!"

She had no power to resist the suggestion, and in her state of sudden fear obeyed.

Gerald Lowerre's figure appeared in the doorway. Before him was a dramatic picture. His wife, her face deadly white, with arm outstretched, clutched in her nervous fingers the revolver pointed at a stranger, who merely smiled and said:

"Fairly caught."

In a moment Gerald Lowerre was at his wife's side. One arm supported her swaying figure, while he gently took the revolver from her hand, and continuing to cover the intruder, said to her:

"In the nick of time. I will relieve you of the care of this gentleman." And then directing his remarks to Broughton, he inquired in a tone that was savagely polite:

"Will you be good enough to explain your presence here?"

Still smiling, Broughton answered:

"With pleasure. I am a connoisseur of diamonds; a collector of gold and silver plate—not plated—pray, don't misunderstand me."

"I should say you had accumulated considerable brass in your calling," retorted Lowerre.

"My calling at the present moment is evidently not suited to your convenience," replied the other, "and your permission, I shall take my leave."

"You'll take your leave in the custody of a policeman," exclaimed Lowerre, exasperated at the coolness of the supposed burglar.

At these words, Edith, still trembling, even under her husband's support, said quickly:

"Don't, Gerald; please don't. Let him go."

"You are as kind as you are brave, Edith," responded Lowerre. "But this fellow needs strenuous treatment, to prevent him from intruding, in the pursuit of his profession, on lone women."

She, half fainting from fright, slipped into a chair, while Lowerre, still pointing the revolver at Broughton, quietly remarked:

"If you attempt to move, I'll shoot you," at the same time, crossing the room to the telephone, without relaxing his vigilance for a moment, he called the nearest police station, and briefly explained the situation.

Edith was speechless, and the smile faded from Broughton's face, but his determination to shield her from any suspicion never wavered and he resolutely avoided her appealing eyes.

Ten minutes later, Broughton was taken a prisoner from the Lowerre home.

It was about a year afterward that the Savannah News, in its daily issue, recorded this item:

"Convict No. 1921, sentenced for attempting to burglarize the home of Mr. Gerald Lowerre, of Savannah, and about whom there has been considerable mystery, his identity never having been established by the authorities, was found dead early this morning in his cell at the state's prison. He will be buried in the prison cemetery, and his grave will be marked only with his convict number."

Strangely coincident, there appeared, in the same issue an announcement of the sudden death of Edith Lowerre, the cause being given as heart failure.

Grocer Was Right, but—

Death to the man who would laugh at this pathetic incident.

The young bride and bridegroom were having their first dinner guests in their love nest.

"What are all these strings in the chicken, darling?" asked the bridegroom of his bride as he carved the fowl.

"Why, the groceryman said it would be best to have 'em."



Just a Little Smile

AN EXCEPTION

Husband—This tomato soup tastes just like that my mother used to make.

Wife—I'm glad to hear it. You have never said before that anything of mine was as good as your mother's. She was a fine cook, I suppose?

Husband—Yes. There was only one thing she couldn't make properly. Wife—What was that?

Husband—Tomato soup!—Stockholm Kasper.

Unto This End

"By the way," said the lawyer who was drawing up the will, "I notice that you've named six bankers to be your pollbearers. Would you rather choose some friends with whom you are on better terms?"

"No, that's all right," was the quick reply. "Those fellows have carried me so long they might as well finish 'be job.'"—Boston Transcript.

HARD CASH



First Citizen—Has Zero made much money in the ice cream business.

The Other One—He made a cool million.

She Wants to Know

He said he had never loved before. As he gave the girl a kiss. "Then how," asked the girl, "with her head in a whirl."

"Did you learn to love like this?"

Showed Her New Steps

Hostess (at dance)—What have you and Arthur been doing outside all this time?

Dolly—Oh, he showed me some new steps.

"But I thought he didn't dance." "He doesn't. We sat on them."

Willing to Swap.

Wealthy Judge (lecturing a prisoner)—A clear conscience, my man, is more to be desired than riches.

Prisoner—All right, sir, I'll swap with you.

Love's Labor

The man who loves his little wife. And heeds her every call and beck. Has still another duty now— He shaves the back of dearie's neck.

Dangerous Sport