

The Valley of Voices

By GEORGE MARSH

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

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LASCELLES

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. Louis Lafamme, factor at Ogoke, makes application for the hand of Denise. Pierre, Indian from Ogoke, visits the Walling River post.

CHAPTER V—Continued

"But why should he come so far to make trouble here, as you say? What is behind it all?"

For an instant, Michel seemed on the point of making a revelation. Then, evidently changing his mind, with a shrug of his bony shoulders, he answered: "We see some day."

Steele and David exchanged puzzled looks. What could Michel have in the back of his head?

With the coming of the canoe with news from Feather lakes, Walling River was again thrown into a panic of fear of the night prowler. After a hurried talk with St. Onge, Steele started up the river, bound for Big Feather lake. He had little hope of discovering anything which would throw light on the mystery. But one thing piqued the curiosity of the three men. They were keenly interested in finding tracks similar to those near the post, for they carried the exact measurements of the latter, and in case they talked with those at the Feather lakes, forty miles away, they would have discovered a new and most peculiar trait in animal habits, namely, a beast with feet strangely like a bear's, which had ranged forty miles within a few days.

On the morning of the second day the canoe was traveling in the easier water inshore, when Michel, poing in the bow, suddenly exclaimed: "Kequay! Look!"

On the shore, ahead, were the remains of a fire and near it what resembled the body of a man. With a few strong thrusts of the poles, the canoe was driven to the beach. The men leaped ashore. Before them, stretched beside the dead fire, lay an Indian, hideously mutilated.

"He has been literally torn to pieces," muttered Steele. "A bear alone could have done this, and yet I never heard of such a thing."

David was on his knees searching for tracks in the dry leaves, when a cry from Michel drew the attention of the others.

"Look! Track on de shore!" and the Iroquois pointed to a patch of mud clearly marked by the prints of huge feet.

"They're ringer for the tracks near the post," said Steele, and he took from his pocket strips of rawhide of the dimensions of the footprints which had frightened Charlotte. In breadth, length and character, the tracks in the mud were identical with those near Walling River. The three friends looked blankly at each other.

"It's the same bird," said Steele. David removed his felt hat and scratched his broad forehead. "No bear travel forty mile and back twenty onless some'ting drive heem," he insisted.

"But bears don't mutilate bodies like this," added Steele.

"Wal," muttered the Ojibway, "does one mak' de mess ov dees poor feller all de same. Wat you goin' do?"

As the features were obliterated, Michel was busy examining the kit of the dead man in an attempt to identify him as an Indian trading at the post.

"De gun ees French company gun, but de kettle and knife I neva'r see before. I tink eet ees not Walling Riviere hunter."

"Who could he be, then, traveling on this river so late in the year?"

"Eet ees ver' strange," muttered the headman.

"Eef dat bear ees de Windigo," David's wide face contracted in a network of wrinkles, as he grinned at Steele, "wat we do den?"

"Windigo or no Windigo, David, he's our meat if he steps in front of my Mannlicher—or yours. Why, what's the matter, Michel?"

The grave face of the Indian had suddenly assumed an expression so sinister as to arouse the white man's curiosity.

"By zar! We are de fool!"

"What d'you mean?"

For answer, Michel leaped into the canoe and poled rapidly upstream for a few hundred yards, while the puzzled Steele looked on. Then the Indian swung the nose of the boat down river and paddled past them in mid-stream.

"What in thunder is he driving at, David?"

"We are de fool for sure," was the laconic answer as Michel swept by with his eyes on his friends, then threw the bow of the canoe to the shore and landed.

"He nevaire pass here widout seel' dis camp."

Michel's maneuver was explained.

"Dat Pierre pass here two sleeps back," said Michel, joining Steele. "Dees man bin dead t'ree, four day an' de tracks on de shore are old one. De riviere rise after de rain two sleeps back. De Windigo mak' dem tracks here before de rain," and Michel pointed to some footprints which were barely covered by water.

"Suppose he did not notice this camp, what then?"

"He was hongree an' hunt for game; he sees dees camp for sure."

David nodded in agreement.

"Then why did he not tell us?"

"Dat ees w'at I ask heem tonight at Wallin' Riviere."

CHAPTER VI

The twenty miles of hard running river down to the fort was covered by the three skilled canoe men in a few hours. On arriving, they hastened to the trade house. Steele opened the ponderous slab door and entered, followed by the two half-breeds, to learn that Walling River had a visitor.



With a Smile Steele Extended His Hand.

Seated with St. Onge behind the trade counter was a short, thick-set stranger, wearing a cap with an insignia in gold braid.

"M'sieu Lascelles," whispered Michel over the shoulder of the American.

St. Onge and Lascelles were evidently in the midst of a heated conversation in French, for they ignored Steele's entrance.

"You are as superstitious as you claim the Indians to be. I am not interested in this Windigo stuff," Lascelles said irritably, when St. Onge, glancing toward the door, saw Steele.

"You are back so soon, monsieur? And you have news?" The factor appeared relieved at the appearance of the man he thought far upriver.

Brent Steele's back stiffened as he advanced to meet the man who had the power in his hands to crush the girl over in the factor's quarters, whose rare quality he would never sense, whose soul he would never know. As he walked around behind the trade-counter, there was a set to his heavy shoulders, a glint in the gray eyes, which did not pass unnoticed by the men he approached.

"Monsieur Steele, this is Inspector Lascelles of the Revillon Freres."

With a smile Steele extended a hand, hard as a spruce knot, and grasped the fingers of the puzzled and curious Lascelles.

"I missed meeting you at Albany, inspector, in August. You were over at Moose when I called."

The black eyebrows of Lascelles rose as he now identified the stranger whose presence at Walling River he found most annoying for his plans.

"Oh, yes, Monsieur Steele, the American scientist; I thought you left Albany weeks ago bound for the Nepegon," he suggested pointedly.

"I did, monsieur, but I stumbled on a most interesting situation here—right in my line, you know. I found what I have been searching for, for years." Steele was losing no time rub-

bing it into the skeptical Lascelles. "You have a bona-fide Windigo in this valley, monsieur—a most interesting situation to a scientist, I assure you. The Indians are in a panic and you will have difficulty in keeping them on their trap-lines this winter."

"You, a scientist, believe in Indian sorcery and superstition?" demanded the Frenchman, sarcastically.

"Well, now, that is somewhat difficult to answer, monsieur," badgered Steele, to the delight of the two swart-faced men with whom he had entered.

"I have heard the Windigo wail in the night; I have seen his tracks; and I have just returned to report to Monsieur St. Onge that we have found up near the mouth of Stopping river the remains of an Indian torn to pieces, evidently by this same Windigo."

"What do you say?" St. Onge was on his feet.

"This morning we found the camp and body of a strange Indian—the tracks were identical with those you saw near here on the trail." Then Steele suddenly changed the subject.

"Where is that Pierre who came here from the Feather lakes the day we left? Michel wishes to ask him some questions."

"He left this morning. Didn't you pass him on the river?"

A muttered curse from Michel met Steele's backward glance.

"Too bad!" exclaimed the American.

"I suppose, monsieur, you attribute the loss of our furs to this same Windigo?" broke in Lascelles.

"Oh, undoubtedly, inspector," replied Steele, with a suspicious curl of the lip, his blood slowly rising at the tone used by the man from Albany. However, above all things, he had to consider St. Onge and Denise, he told himself, and not to allow this fellow to lure him into a hostile attitude.

"I see you are joking," rejoined the Frenchman, flushing.

"On the contrary, I am very far from joking when I tell you that there are mysterious things afoot in this valley—which neither my experience nor scientific knowledge are able to fathom. You had better go upriver tomorrow and see for yourself. You seem skeptical regarding the whole matter."

"Have you never seen a dead man before, monsieur?" derided Lascelles. "I fear it has gone to your head—this Windigo matter."

St. Onge excitedly half rose from his chair, as the cool gray eyes of his guest slowly surveyed the man from Albany, from moecastis to hair; and then fell back relieved, when the American, flushed, but in control of himself, drawled:

"Monsieur, you were formerly a man of war, a soldier, while I am only a peaceful man of science. To you it is but natural that violent death should be a familiar sight, while to me it is most terrifying. Why, I find it most repulsive even to clean a fish. So innocuous was Steele's smile, and so guileless his manner, that Lascelles, conscious of being played with by the rugged American, found no words to reply, but sat in impotent rage. Then the retreating backs of Michel and David, whose shaking shoulders betrayed their suppressed mirth, spurred the Revillon man to answer:

"If you are so afraid of blood," he spluttered, "why are you hunting this man-eating Windigo?"

Steele smiled down good-naturedly at the man he would have blithely battered with his fists, and leaving the two men at the trade-house, sought out Denise St. Onge.

"Oh, welcome back! Monsieur Steele," she said, forcing a smile, "I have just heard that you have made a terrible discovery."

"Please, we will not talk of that," he insisted. "I have something to say to you before I go, tomorrow. Tonight there will be no opportunity." He wondered if Lascelles had seen her privately since his arrival that afternoon, but it did not matter. "We are to make a wide circle of the country," he went on, "and will be away until I leave for Nepegon."

Her sensitive face quickened with emotion as she listened.

"Mademoiselle St. Onge," he began, "I have no right to ask this from you, but in justice to yourself I must."

She started to speak, as if in protest, then her troubled eyes squarely met his.

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Is Winter Time Your Backache Time?

Does Your Back Foretell Every Change of the Weather? Do You Feel Old and Stiff and Suffer Sharp, Rheumatic Pains? Then Look to Your Kidneys!

DOES every cold, chill or attack of grip leave you lame, stiff and aching? Are you nervous and depressed; feel tired, worn out and miserable? Does your back throb and ache until it seems you just can't keep going? Then look to your kidneys! Colds and chills throw a heavy strain on the kidneys. They overload the blood with impurities that the kidneys have to filter off. The kidneys are apt to weaken under this rush of new

work, become congested and inflamed. It's little wonder, then, that every cold finds so many folks suffering with torturing backache, rheumatic pains, headaches, dizziness and annoying kidney irregularities.

If this is the case with you, don't risk neglect! Help your weakened kidneys with a stimulant diuretic. Begin using Doan's Pills. Doan's have helped thousands. Local users testify to their worth. Ask your neighbor!

"Use Doan's," Say These Good People:

G. W. FITCH, retired farmer, Atlantic St., Roseville, Calif., says: "When I took cold, it settled on my kidneys and caused backache. I could hardly stoop, I had such pains in my back. I had to pass the kidney secretions frequently at night, and they were highly colored and burned like hot coals. I also had dizzy spells. Doan's Pills soon cured me of the attack."

MRS. M. E. SPANGER, 701 Oak St., Roseville, Calif., says: "The flu left my kidneys in bad shape. I had a weak feeling in my back and when I tried to stoop I had catches in my kidneys and was hardly able to get around. My kidneys acted too often. My head ached and I was so nervous, I nearly flew to pieces. After using Doan's Pills, I was cured."

Doan's Pills

Stimulant Diuretic to the Kidneys

At all dealers, 60c a box. Foster-Milburn Co., Mfg. Chemists, Buffalo, N. Y.

Blue Sky Average

Charles W. Sutoro of Sutoro & Co., San Francisco financial house, tells a story about President Mortimer Fleishacker of the Anglo-California Trust company.

It seems that Mr. Fleishacker asked a Pullman porter the amount of his average tip. The negro replied that the average amount was one dollar. Mr. Fleishacker handed him a dollar. The porter crossed the silver coin affectionately and said: "Yas-suh, boss, but you is de fust pulson what has come up to the average."—The Coast Banker.

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When red, rough and itching, by hot baths of Cuticura Soap and touches of Cuticura Ointment. Also make use now and then of that exquisitely scented dusting powder, Cuticura Talcum, one of the indispensable Cuticura Toilet Trio.—Advertisement.

An Injustice

"America is now called in Europe the World Shylock," said Oscar Wells, the new president of the American Bankers' association, during the convention at Atlantic City. "Europe is as unjust to America as Nagg was unjust to matrimony."

"George," said Mrs. Nagg, "have you read this book, 'How to Be Happy Though Married'?"

"Nope," said Nagg. "I don't need to. I know how already."

"Well, how, then?" said—"Get a divorce," said he."

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Warning! Unless you see the name "Bayer" on package or on tablets you are not getting the genuine Bayer Aspirin proved safe by millions and prescribed by physicians for 25 years. Say "Bayer" when you buy Aspirin. Imitations may prove dangerous.—Adv.

Start Alike, Anyway

A teacher in the junior high school of Anderson was giving a lesson recently in the study of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence. In the course of the lesson she called for an explanation of the statement that all men are created equal. A small lad, overflowing with the ginger of youth, answered:

"Well, they all weigh about the same when they are born."—Indianapolis News.

Woman Has "Made Good"

Among women who have made good in local politics may be mentioned Miss Grace Schiska of Eugene, Ore. Miss Schiska made her political debut as a candidate for city recorder and was elected. Later she became a police judge and now she has been appointed to the office of county treasurer.

Despot's Hairless Decree

Sir Harti Singh Bahadur, new maharajah of Kashmir, began his rule with an order that all his male subjects shave forthwith—beards, mustaches and the hair on their heads. This curious command was made as a mark of honor to his uncle, the late ruler, so that the whole country might assume a sort of hairless mourning in his memory. Dispatches from Kashmir do not tell how well the people obey the edict, but every dispatch points out the well-known fact that the new maharajah is known to the western world by another name, "Mister A."

Two Discoveries

"A naturalist has found that there are about 33,000 ants in an ant hill two feet high," solemnly stated Professor Pate.

"And I have found," snarled J. Fuller Gloom, the human hyena, "what the average naturalist is good for—to count ants."—Kansas City Star.



"Those bilious headaches can be prevented"

"I know how agonizing they are. For years I was a chronic sufferer. And the headaches were not the worst part of it. The strong drugs I used to take to relieve the pain upset my stomach and slowly but surely undermined my general health. Finally I found out that my headaches were due to constipation. My doctor advised Nujol. After taking it regularly a few weeks the trouble disappeared. Since then I have never had another headache. There is no reason why I should, for the cause has been corrected."

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Constipation is dangerous for anybody. Nujol is safe for everybody. Nujol simply softens the waste matter and thus permits regular and thorough elimination without overtaxing the intestinal muscles. Medical authorities approve Nujol because it is gentle, safe and natural in its action. You can take Nujol for any length of time without ill effects. To insure internal cleanliness, it should be taken regularly. Unlike laxatives, it does not form a habit and can be discontinued at any time. Ask your druggist for Nujol today and begin to enjoy the perfect health that is possible only when elimination is normal and regular.

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