

The Valley of Voices

By GEORGE MARSH

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

(W. N. U. Service.)

(Copyright by the Penn Publishing Co.)

CHAPTER XIII—Continued

"I have nothing to say," she answered, sitting with chin cupped in hand, face averted.

"Oh, do you mean to say that you prefer selling yourself to that store-keeper, Lascelles, to living in luxury in Montreal, Winnipeg—?"

"You may insult me, monsieur, I have no means of defending myself," she broke in, coldly.

Then Lafamme lost all self-control and stormed:

"Insult you? Oh, yes! But that is the truth, is it not? You do not love this man, do you? To save your father's future you have agreed to marry him—this man you despise! Oh, I know! He's not fit to look at you—you beauty!"

White-faced, the girl sat with eyes on the floor—silent, as if she did not hear.

"True, you think you hate me now, but you would change," he ran on, talking as if to himself. "You may have heard hard things said of me, but I swear to you, if you will marry me, Denise St. Onge, I'll show you what love is. I'll make your father independent—make you," his voice broke with emotion, "yes, make you happy! I've loved you ever since you played for us that night at Albany—years ago."

Lafamme stopped and looked down with a gesture of helplessness at the woman of stone in the chair. Then he heard the low words: "You forget, monsieur, someone who is still at Ogoko."

"I know how that looks to you," he defended, "but that was over, years ago—years. I've given her a home—couldn't turn her out. But she hates me, tried to knife me, wanted to run away with that American, Steele, this October! She put on black the day she heard he had been drowned on the way home."

There was a long silence, then: "Why were you afraid to have him reach Nepigon?"

Lafamme started, then laughed. "Afraid to have him reach Nepigon? That's funny! He got some supplies and went on. What do you mean?"

"Then the girl countered: 'Your Indians are not faithful to their master, monsieur. We learned that you had Monsieur Steele ambushed after stealing his ammunition, and forced him to go to his death.'"

"Do you believe that?" demanded Lafamme, puzzled.

"Is it true?"

"No!"

The room was again silent while the man, fumed for his cold nerve, his resource, bit his lips in impotency before the icy calm of this strange girl who so offended him. Then he played his trump card.

"So you insist on casting your lot with that rat at Albany? Then it is for me to save you from yourself. I have brought an extra sled. Pack your clothes at once!"

The girl rose to her full height and met his cynical look with resolute eyes, but in her heart was fear.

"You do not dare!" she cried. "They would hunt you from Fort Hope, from Albany, from Nepigon House. In three weeks the police would be at Ogoko. But before the police teams arrived, do you know what they would do to you? They would burn you in your trade-house! You do not dare!"

With open admiration Lafamme watched the play of color and emotion in the face of the frightened girl who confronted him.

"If you'd flush that way when I say I love you," he cried, "I'd give all I have in the world. Why, girl, I'd sell my soul, if you'd look at me, just once, and say you loved me!"

"I despise you!"

The sting of the words cut like the lash of a whip. His self-control, already at the breaking point, crumbled. "Despise me, do you?" he snarled. "Hate me to do my worst? Suppose I take you to your word? Mon Dieu! I'm mad enough about you to do anything! Who is it, then, you love? He thrust his passionate face close to hers. "You hate me—you don't want Lascelles! It must be that d-d dead American you're moaning about! Well, he's at the bottom of the Jackfish, and he forgot you before he had been at Ogoko two hours—forgot even your name when he saw Rose!"

She faced his anger proudly, contempt in her bloodless face, until he mentioned Steele, then slowly her knees gave way and she sank in a chair.

"It was that American!" he stormed. "Pity I didn't finish him myself!"

"Then something on the table caught his eye—held it! His face went dark with his sinister purpose when, with a quick movement, he seized the violin, raised it above his head, and brought it down with a crash on the table, then dropped it to the floor and trampled it under his feet.

With a groan the girl fell to her knees and, gathering the splintered shell of the violin to her breast, moaned over it as a mother over a stricken child.

At last he had reached her.

At the sound there was a guttural exclamation from the door, and with

lifted knife, a wild-eyed Ojibway woman threw herself upon the surprised Lafamme. Leaping back, he caught and parried the thrust with his forearm, then, with his uninjured hand, wrenched the knife from the maddened squaw and hurled her across the room to the floor."

Seizing his coat, he stood for an instant over the kneeling girl, clasping her beloved violin, and touched her hair—then left the room.

The dazed Ojibway crawled to the pitiful figure on the floor, and circled her with her arms.

"De music gone—all gone," she crooned. "Poor m'm'selle!"

While they huddled there on the floor—the girl, the light of whose life had been ruthlessly snuffed out, and the woman of the dark skin, who understood—dog-bells jingled in the clearing as two sleds took up the river trail.

Late that afternoon, St. Onge reached the fork of the Stopping river, but the spruce, already blue with shadow, gave back his call, unanswered. He turned into the mouth of the stream and took the Portage lake trail, searching the silent shores for the camp of Michel, but the headman was not there.

"This is very strange," he said, and cut his wood to camp alone.

Deep in the night, St. Onge waked in his blankets, as his dogs gave back the husky challenge to creatures whose scent the freezing air had carried to their nostrils. But the drowsy man did not know that two sled teams were passing below him on the Walling-River trail.

CHAPTER XIV

On the night of Little Jacques' return to Portage lake the four men sat by the fire planning their future movements. It had been a week since the beast had howled or visited the traplines in the district, for David had arranged with the uplake hunters to relay the news of his appearance immediately.

"I'd give ten years of my life if that old bird would sing up there on that ridge this evening," said Steele.

"I got plenty shell 'en de bag," added David. "I get 'dre' waitin' to shoot dat little gus ov mine."

"You'll get your chance before we're done, don't worry. How would you like to draw a bead on your friend Lafamme this evening?"

The Ojibway shook his head. "W'en I tak' Lafamme's trail I feel heem wid de han'. I use no gun on heem. Eef I got hol' dat Black Dapliste, too, I break sometin' more dan hees fing—" "Leesten!" interrupted Michel.

Our over the silent forest drifted a faint call like the voice of some furred night hunter. The four figures at the fire stiffened. Again the call, louder now, rose on the biting air.

"Where is it?" asked Steele, in doubt of the direction.

"On de beeg ridge," replied Michel.

"Dat not soun' like heem."

But the men at the fire sat with ears alert, hoping that at last their waiting was over.

Then, when they were convinced that yet another night they were to roll into their blankets, disappointed, a long wall from the ridge behind the camp brought them to their feet, every nerve alive.

There was a swift stepping into the frozen thongs of snow-shoes and drawing of rifles from skin cases, then taking the bloodhound on the leash, Steele started with his men for the ridge. The huskies, though savage fighters, were left chained to trees, as at night they would cut off on the first game trail and their bedlam of yelping would prevent David and Michel from making the still hunt decided on. Steele with the hound was to circle and pick up the trail of the beast if they missed him.

As they swung through the blue gloom of spruce and fir, the voice shifted from its walling to the hunting screams of the great cats, then as swiftly dropped to the yowling and mewling of the mating season, climaxing, as at Walling River and Big Feather lake, in shrieks of agony, in moans of a creature tortured beyond endurance of blood and flesh and nerve.

Three of the men who hunted the voice on the ridge had tolled long and suffered much for this moment, but at their heels moved a short figure whose flesh was cold with the chill of fear. Little Jacques gripped his rifle grimly and followed, thinking of the wife and children back at Walling River.

At the foot of the ridge Michel and David left Steele to make their stalk from two directions while he worked to the rear with the dog and Little Jacques. Once on a fresh trail the hound would hang until he ran down his quarry. In the soft snow his pace would be slow, so the men on shoes in time would come up with him. And he would need them if the thing turned and waited at bay—how great would be his necessity the torn body at Stopping river only too well indicated.

They had traveled for an hour when the hound abruptly stopped, sniffed

the snow at his feet, and excitedly strained at his leash. To Steele's eyes the flat floor of the snow lay unbroken in the darkness, but the Indian on his knees whispered in terror: "Eet ces beeg trail!"

"Good!" And the hound free, plunged ahead into the dark. Shortly, his deep voice boomed through the forest and the hunt was on.

As they swung through, the blue gloom of spruce was less deep, the great dog left them. Again, as they followed, the voice on the shoulder of the hill defied the night. As it rose in crescendo, a rifle shot sliced it short off. Far above, the hound gave voice. Then silence fell on the forest.

"They've seen 'im!" said Steele. "He may back track; keep a lookout. Don't shoot too quick or we'll turn him!"

There was no reply. He looked for his companion, but Little Jacques had gone.

Throwing the bolt of his Mannlicher to clear it of frost and ease the action, Steele kept on up the ridge. For minutes now, he had not heard the voice of the hound, when again the resonant bass boomed through the silence above him. The dog had turned. The thing was headed back. Loosing his skinning-knife in its sheath, the man cocked his rifle and waited, kneeling on a shoe, his eyes boring into the blackness.

Near him, and below, was an opening in the timber. Again, the hound bayed—closer now. The beast was raking his back tracks. Then Steele saw it.

Bounding from the cover of the scrub on the edge of the opening, a dark shape stopped, and reared upright, as if listening—when the Mannlicher spat.

The beast leaped back into the black wall of spruce. Again, the rifle flamed into the dark.

Still crouched on a knee, the man listened, rifle rigid. Sights useless, he had fired by instinct. There had been no thud of bullet in flesh. Could he have missed?

Slipping two shells into the magazine, he circled in the timber, lifting his shoes to avoid the click. Blind now, for the moon was masked, he listened for heavy breathing in the scrub he faced—then the hound plunged past and he knew he had missed.

Following the dog, Steele turned down the ridge, but in an hour was distanced. So he stopped in a cedar swamp, cut wood with his belt ax, and scooping out the snow with his shoe, lighted a fire.

In the cover of the thick cedar the hot fire soon warmed him and with back against a trunk he dozed, only to waken with a start as a hand touched his shoulder. He blinked into the faces of David and Michel.

"Fooled us again!" groaned the disheartened Steele.

"At daylight we take de trail and see heem soon. De dog weel tree heem."

Heaping up the fire the three men dozed until daylight, then took the trail of the beast and his pursuer through the snow.

Somewhere ahead, Steele felt that the pursuit was over. Somewhere, miles away, the beast had tired in the black hours and turned at bay to battle in the snow with his relentless foe; or else in terror of the voice of the thunder which he could not shake from his heels, had treed.

Up over ridges and into creek bottoms traveled the anxious men, stopping to listen for the voice of the dog. But the cold silence of sunrise gripped the forest.

At last the tracks led into a heavy stand of young spruce. The men separated, and cautiously made their way through the close growth.

Suddenly the blood of Steele chilled as he heard the voice of Michel. "By gar! Poor of Pete!"

Forcing his way through the saplings, he found the Iroquois bending over a blood-smeared shape, stiff in death. The hide of the dog hung in strips from the slashes of terrible claws, while a torn throat marked the death snap of the fangs of the Windigo.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Novel Nest

At the last meeting of the British Ornithologists' club, Mr. A. L. Butler exhibited a "nest" from Trinidad, which was merely a hollow formed by the rotting out of the soft pith at the top of a broken-off sapling. The breadth of the top of the stump was only just sufficient to contain the single egg, and the egg, on the cup-and-ball principle, fitted the cavity so neatly that it could not be lifted out with the fingers. The bird incubates in a perfectly erect position with its head and neck stretched stiffly upwards, and its tail pressed to the side of the stump, of which its upright figure seems to form a part. The species have adopted the habit of sitting bolt upright on similar stumps whether incubating or not.

The Association of American Bank Women, organized only three years ago, has members in 150 cities.

HUMAN DERELICTS FLOODING MEXICO

Beg Money for Food, Then Purchase Liquor.

Mexico City.—There are many white derelicts who perch like carrion crows on the docks of Mayatlan, Mexico, known among seamen as "The Port of Missing Men."

They eke their living from the sailors aloft and ashore; somehow a sailor man can't turn 'em down.

When the officers go below to mess, the perching crows, suddenly animated, rush aboard and dart to the forecastle galley and, feeding rapidly of the sailors' food, wipe the grease from their faces with their sleeves and rush ashore to resume their perches before the officers reappear.

Catching a sailor ashore, they eke him for money to "buy something to eat." Knowing full well that the beggars lie and will buy gin with it, the sailor gives it to him, often with sarcastic witticisms, but nevertheless he gives.

These missing men, according to Capt. Edward J. Minister, master of the steamship Managua, out of Glasgow, have all seen better days.

"Most of them, I'm sorry to say, are Britishers, and not a few Germans; they have lost all self-respect. They are carrion crows in human form," he said.

"One dies and the seamen bury him—the only decent thing we can do. Now and then the consuls will get letters about these men, but it is next to impossible to locate them, for they have enough decency remaining to change their names, and their lives have changed their appearances."

"Most of these men, I think," Captain Minister continued, "are trying to forget lost loves; refugees from disappointment; men without moral fiber, the most hopeless lot, utterly without ambition, trying to forget in the Port of Missing Men, the Land of Manana. They are lost to their world, to their friends and loved ones never communicating or going back."

Cornered by Coyote, Chokes Beast to Death

Lakeside, Neb.—The dramatic fight between Joe Pozza of Lakeside and a coyote, in which Pozza succeeded in choking the hunger-stricken animal with his bare hands is being told here.

For some time the coyotes, usually cowardly animals, have started ranchers with their boldness, plying up to ranch houses, snatching poultry and stock and attacking people. The heavy snow has made food scarce and the coyotes bolder.

Pozza says he and his woman friend were cornered by a large coyote one mile east of Lakeside. The animal, he relates leaped at them and grabbed the woman's dress, ripping it and scratching her. Fortunately, however, the animal's teeth became enmeshed in the dress just long enough for Pozza to grab him by the neck, choking it to death with his hands.

Shoots Blind Brother, Then Asks for Death

Allentown, Pa.—After shooting his blind brother as he lay sleeping in bed, Norman Farrell, twenty-eight-year-old newspaper vender, told the police, "I would be better off if I were dead and then I would have rest."

The wounded brother, Raymond, thirty-three, is in a critical condition in the Allentown hospital with a bullet wound through his right lung.

Norman has sold papers for the last 15 years at this city's busiest corner. A little more than a year ago he had saved \$21,000 and purchased the home in which he lived with his parents and brother, and also bought several building lots. He also owned an automobile. Today his bank balance is only \$100. Police said excessive drinking had affected his mind.

Bear Eats Dynamite

Great Falls, Mont.—Some men building a road are going to be very careful about shooting bears. A big fellow ambled into their camp, ate some dynamite with relish, then vanished in the timber.

Hidden Cash Revealed When Hotel Is Razed

Philadelphia.—When the old Overbrook hotel, for years a landmark on the White Horse pike near Lindenwald, N. J., was sold, \$4,545 in cash was removed from mattresses and cupboard corners throughout the old hostelry.

The money, property of Mrs. George Thomas, proprietress, was discovered by a realty agent helping Mrs. Thomas remove her personal belongings from the hotel after its sale. The agent pulled five ten-dollar bills from a mattress, the sight of which seemed to jog Mrs. Thomas' memory.



ACCOMMODATING

"I don't suppose you keep anything so civilized as dog biscuits in this one-horse, run-down jay town, do you?" the tourist snarled.

READING MATTER



Phillippa—I'm going to take a course in mind reading.

Aunt Lucy—Don't do it, dear. Most modern minds are unfit for a young girl to read.

Art and Reality

There comes a sorrow, truth to tell, Which must impress us sadly. When people who can act so well Sometimes Behave so badly!

Quite So

It seems there were two Irishmen, Pat and Mike. They met one day on the street and the following conversation took place:

"Pat, you owe me \$10."

"Begorra, Molke, this is the first time that two Irishmen named Pat and Mike ever met and there was no joke."

Needed It

"My word, I'm badly overworked."

"What are you doing?"

"Oh, this and that."

"When?"

"Now and then."

"Where?"

"Here or there."

"Well, you must need a holiday."

Hopeful

First Knut—Is it true that you proposed to Freda and she rejected you?

Second Ditto—Not exactly rejected. She said that when she felt like making a fool of herself she'd let me know.

Modern Version

Riter—Let's see, how does that quotation run: "Who steals my purse—"

Friend—I suppose it goes on to say that he gets ahead of the landlord and the tax collector.

SOME MOVE AHEAD

"Do you believe all men are born equal?"

"Of course I do—but they don't all stay that way."

Wise Guy

At trying to meet expenses he was never known to shirk. He looked until he found a job—Then sent his wife to work.

Even

Girl (slipping on new engagement ring)—You've hit on my favorite stone, old thing, which is more than the others did.

Man—It's the same kind I usually buy.

Rare Days Nowadays

"A dull day," remarked mild Mr. Good Citizen.

"Eh?"

"Nobody has asked me to contribute money for anything."

A Surprise

Sutor—I hope my proposal for the hand of your daughter hasn't taken you by surprise, sir.

Father—Well, to tell the truth, it has. You've been so jolly slow in getting around to it that I thought it wasn't coming at all.

Good Advice

"What kind of a husband would you advise me to get?"

"You get a single man and let the husbands alone."

MOTHER OF SEVEN CHILDREN

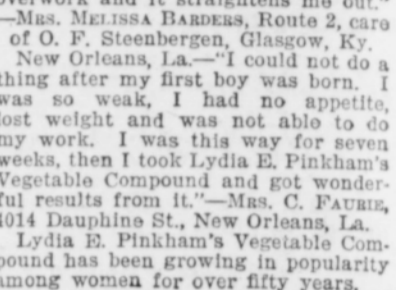
Helped in Caring for them by Taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound

Glasgow, Ky.—"I am the mother of seven children, the eldest being only 12 years, and I feel that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has helped to pull me through the roughest places of my married life. At one time I was so downhearted that life was a misery. A friend in Indianapolis, Indiana, told me of the Vegetable Compound, and after taking a few bottles of it I became myself again and it was a pleasure to do my housework and gardening. Since then I always use your medicine when I feel weak from overwork and it straightens me out."

—Mrs. MELISSA BARBERS, Route 2, care of O. F. Steenbergen, Glasgow, Ky.

New Orleans, La.—"I could not do a thing after my first boy was born. I was so weak, I had no appetite, lost weight and was not able to do my work. I was this way for seven weeks, then I took Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and got wonderful results from it."—Mrs. C. PATRICK, 4014 Dauphine St., New Orleans, La.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has been growing in popularity among women for over fifty years.



SPOHN'S
Best for 30 Years
Croup, Pink Eye, Influenza, Ear-ache, Catarrhal Fever, Epizootic Coughs or Colic
For Horses, Mules & Dogs
SPOHN MEDICAL CO. DORRIS, ILL.
DISTERMPER COMPOUND

DR. STAFFORD'S
LIVELY TAR
for your Children's COLDS

Garfield Tea
Was Your Grandmother's Remedy
For every stomach and intestinal ill. This good old-fashioned herb home remedy for constipation, stomach ills and other derangements of the system so prevalent these days is in even greater favor as a family medicine than in your grandmother's day.

IRRITATING RASHES
For quick, lasting relief from itching and burning, doctors prescribe
Resinol

Green's August Flower
for Constipation, Indigestion and Torpid Liver
Relieves that feeling of having eaten unwisely. 30c and 90c bottles. AT ALL DRUGGISTS.

Keep a sheep and you won't have to keep a lawn mower.
DEMAND "BAYER" ASPIRIN

Aspirin Marked With "Bayer Cross" Has Been Proved Safe by Millions.
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.

A plowman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees.—Franklin.
Sure Relief
BELLANS INDIGESTION 25 CENTS
6 BELLANS Hot Water Sure Relief

BELLANS FOR INDIGESTION
25c and 75c Pkgs. Sold Everywhere

Lumbago!
Musterole—clean, white, ointment made with oil of mustard—dissolves pain and soothes every last rub it on. Better than a Mustard Plaster.