

# The Valley of Voices

By GEORGE MARSH

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## CHAPTER XVI—Continued

At length, by a supreme effort, the under man reached the knife beneath his back with the hand of a pinioned arm. With a heave the hand was free and the blade turned into the body above him. But in a flash the right hand of the Iroquois shifted from the throat to the menacing wrist. There was a wrench—a groan as the bone snapped, and the knife slipped to the snow.

Again, like the fangs of a wolf, the long fingers of Michel clamped on the throat of the man in whose bulging eyes shone the fear of the death which neared.

"Dis'ees for her!" snarled the head-man, as he struck with his free hand the purpled face. "Dees ees for me!" and he struck again.

Slowly the bloodshot eyes of the assassin, who had so confidently shied from the ambush, flamed; for the last time his mouth gaped wide for the air denied him by the vise on his throat—with a quiver he relaxed on the snow.

Picking up his rifle and slipping his hands into the rabbit-skin mittens which hung from his neck by thongs, Michel bent and closely scrutinized the knotted feature of his enemy. Satisfied with his work, he rasped: "Bo-jo! Tete-Boule! You are poor shot! You mak' no more trouble een dis valley!" and started for camp.

He found his friends at breakfast. Silently he accepted the dipper of steaming tea and the heaped plate of fried moose and beans, and began to eat.

"Well, what luck, Michel? Are they still leaving?" asked Steele, when his eyes suddenly focused on the shoulder of Michel's capote. "Where'd you get that tear?"

The face of the Iroquois was wooden. "I meet old frien' een de bush. Ah-hah!"

Curious, Steele rose and examined his friend's shoulder. "Why, there's caked blood here! You have been shot at!" he cried. "Take off that coat!" "Wen I feenish de moose and bean," laughed the stoic. "Hees gun shake wen he fire!"

To his relief Steele found that the bullet had grazed the shoulder blade of his friend, barely breaking the skin. When the scratch was dressed, Michel gave him the story of the ambush.

With the sting of the bullet across his shoulder, the cool-headed Indian had sensed that he was not badly hurt, and made the only move that would check a swift second shot from a concealed foe—dropped as if killed or mortally hurt. Sprawled on his face, a knee drawn up to give purchase for a lunge, he had waited for the man in ambush to approach within reach. Had there been two, it would have been a knife fight, with the odds heavily against the man compelled to start from the soft snow.

"Good old Michel!" applauded Steele, as the Iroquois finished. "They can't beat you! He was scared when he fired. Had you ever seen this Indian before?"

Michel's black eyes snapped tantalizingly, as he played on his chief's curiosity.

"Wal, he look lak' man I see one tam."

"Traded once at Walling River, you mean?"

"Ah-hah! he come to de post."

"When?"

"He was dere dis summer. He got leg lak' bow or snowshoe. Hees eye look lak' de mink. He—"

"You mean—good Lord! It wasn't Tete-Boule?" cried the surprised American.

"Ah hah!" admitted the head-man, blowing a cloud of smoke from his mouth. "Eet was Tete-Boule. I tink Charlotte be happy snow, now."

"He found your trail leading to the lake and took a chance you would backtrack—which you did." Delightedly Steele shook the hand of the Indian until the sore shoulder protested.

"Tomorrow night we go to de post."

"Yes," agreed Steele, his eyes reflecting the joy of victory, hard won. "Send one of the boys for David at once."

## CHAPTER XVII

Behind the slab counter in the trade-room at Ogoke a man sat at a table. On the table stood a glass and two bottles—one empty. For hours the man had not moved, except to fill and drain the glass. Although it was barely three o'clock, candle lanterns dimly lit the room, for the sun had died in cloud banks and the light had faded early. In the air outside there was snow and the night would be thick.

The yelping of dogs aroused the man from his bitter thoughts. The door of the room opened and a bulky figure entered. The muscles of his hooded face, disfigured by a long scar, twitched nervously. In his eyes was fear.

"I found him," gasped the big man, in French, breathing hard, for he had raced the dusk to the post. "Choked!

Not a mark on him—his tongue out and his eyes bulging like a pike's you squeeze in your hand! Ambushed!"

"So they got him, too?" nodded Lafamme, chin on chest.

"It's no good, I tell you," whined Antoine, his voice vibrant with panic. "That makes nine—nine who have gone out. It'll be our turn next. Tonight I leave for the Rouge."

The hard eyes of the trader, lined by worry and red from drink, lit with contempt. "You've gone like the rest. Why didn't you run away with Rose? Want to desert sixty thousand dollars' worth of fur, do you?"

The heavy features of the other filled with blood at the taunt. He leaned and struck the table with his fist, overturning the bottles.

"Soft, an I?" he snarled, "because I leave this hell before they close in and take us—hang us from the rafters here or cut our throats, you call me soft! I tell you we're done! They caught Pierre and the whole valley's after us. They're out there now, waiting." He pointed a shaking finger toward the forest. "It may be tonight—they come."

Ruined by the mystery—the menace of the inscrutable forest from which no man returned, which for weeks had ringed the post, sapping the nerve of his people until they fled in the night, Lafamme sat, numb with despair. Slowly the whisky from the overturned bottle dripped to the floor. Then he said: "That tale Tete-Boule brought from down-river was true. The men we sent to the Jackfish to stop him lied."

Antoine nodded. "Steele got through and came back on the snow," continued the trader. "The police are not in this. They'd come straight here."

"This Steele caught Pierre himself," added the other. "When the Indians learned how we had fooled them, they took the trail. The whole valley was ours—until he got the Windigo." Suddenly the speaker faced the door, listening. "What's that?"

As the two watched the door apprehensively, it opened to admit a half-breed with drink-sodden face.

"What you eat tonight, m'sieu?" The dull eyes of the cook shifted uneasily from Antoine to his chief.

"You here still, Philippe?" sneered Lafamme. "I thought you and Jean would hit the Rouge river trail when it got dark. All the rats have left."

"They'll hang on while the whisky lasts," muttered Antoine. "You find Tete-Boule?" The face of the cook, mottled-gray in the half light, turned to the man who had gone out that morning on the trail over which none had returned.

"He found him—with his tongue out," Lafamme laughed bitterly. "You'd make a pretty picture, Philippe, hanging from that hook, with your throat cut. You'd bleed straight Scotch; you've lived on it for months."

The stark terror in the eyes of the half-breed seemed to appease his chief, who went on: "We'll have bacon and potatoes—if they give us time to eat them. Bring that jug."

The jug was placed on the table between the two men, and the cook, muttering incoherently, shuffled to the door.

"Two left, out of the lot; and they stay for the whisky!" commented Lafamme, filling a glass and showing the jug across the table. "My friend, I'll give you a toast," he added, as the nerve-shattered Antoine gulped down his drink. "May that d—d American rot in h—!"

Lafamme's glass was at his lips when a chorus of howls rose from the clearing.

The startled eyes of the men met across the table. "What's that?" demanded the trader, slowly lowering his glass, untouched.

"The dogs—hear something—out there!" The hoarse voice of the other quavered as he went to the door.

From the murk, the whimpering of the awed huskies reached the straining ears of the two at the door, who stood, nerves strung with suspense—one thought in their brains.

Then from the invisible forest beyond rose a wail—demon-like, blood-freezing, the voice of no clawed creature of the night—to die away, into silence.

"They have come!" warned Antoine, seizing the arm of his chief.

"Quick! Harness the dogs while I get the fur and the grub!" was the low answer.

The nerve of Lafamme had snapped. Racing desperately against the closing in of a ring of ruthless foes, Antoine caught and harnessed the dogs. At the trade-house door, grub-bag, robes, and the precious pack of black fox were thrown on the sled. The whip cracked at the head of the lead-dog. "Marche, Pete!" rasped the Frenchman, and the team plunged into their collars at a gallop. Then the voice of a dog-driver out on the lake trail drifted back through the thick night.

"There go the last of the rats!" muttered Lafamme. "Now the ship can sink." And they lashed the swift, six-dog team out to the lake ice, and through the gloom that masked the Rouge river trail.

## CHAPTER XVIII

From the blackness of the clearing at Ogoke rose a low whistle, which was answered from the gloom behind the trader's quarters, where the kitchen windows shone, yellow patches in the thick dark night.

The whistle was repeated and, simultaneously, swart faces appeared at the windows of both buildings. Eyes, glittering with hate and the pent excitement of the stalk, searched the rooms for signs of life. But they looked on emptiness—on a table splashed with spilled liquor, a jug, an untouched glass of whisky; on a stove from which smoked a frying pan with its burning bacon.

"I knew you would stampede them, Michel," said Steele, looking quizzically at the happy Iroquois. "They got out just ahead of us. You did that for David, you rascal!"

The hour of the man from Nepigon had struck. Like a hound at leash he yearned for the Rouge river trail—and the man who traveled it.

Steele gripped the hard hand of his friend in silence. There was nothing to say—no turning the Ojibway from his heart's desire. With a word to Michel, David left them to get his dogs.

"What shall we do with last year's hunt, if we find he hasn't shipped it?" queried Steele.

"Give eet to de Indian. Dey trade eet at Walling Riviere."

"Yes, he got most of it with his whisky—by fraud. It ought to go back to them."

To the surprise of the men as they reached the fur-storing loft, the candles lighted row on row of otter and mink, lynx and fox, marten and fisher pelts, hanging from the rafters.

"Here's his whole last year's trade!" cried Steele. "He's never shipped it!"

The yellow light of his candle lit eyes snapping with delight, as Michel looked at his chief. "Much fur here for M'sieu St. Onge! He be happy man, now. De pos' not close."

"Yes, they will trade it at Walling River, unless—" The Indian waited, wondering at the qualification—"unless Lascelles refuses to sign a certain paper."

"Ah-hah! He not get her—now!" The grave eyes of the Iroquois questioned Steele's.

"Not if I can help it!" Satisfied, the Indian turned to examine the fur. Steele began counting the rows of rich pelts, in an endeavor to make a rough estimate of their value. He had reached the far end of the loft when the dim light of the candle fell on some bulky shapes on the floor in a corner. Curious, he bent over the lashed bundles. On the canvas covering of the nearest there was lettering. He lowered his candle to read it.

"R—F," he said aloud; then, with a gasp, "Walling River!"

"Michel!" he called. "Revelion Feres, Walling River! Well, I'll be—The fur-packs from the lost canoe! Murdered—ambushed, they were, for the fur!"

Michel knelt beside Steele. "By gar! our fur!" he said, peering at the wrappings, his voice hoarse with excitement. "Dey keel our men at de Devil's mile!" The muscles of his lean face knotted. "But Lafamme ees dead man now. Tonight Daveed take his trail."

They rolled out the fur-packs with the eighteen thousand dollars in pelts, which had left the post in the spring only to vanish on the lower Walling.

"M'sieu St. Onge be happy man dis night, eef he know dis."

"He'll know it as soon as one of the boys can reach him," replied Steele jubilantly. "We'll send him this present in the morning." After the gray days the sun was indeed breaking through. She seemed nearer—more possible of attainment, there in the dark fur-loft at Ogoke, than she had been for weeks, to the man who toiled for her.

In the morning Steele gathered his red henchmen together in the trade-room and talked to them, through Michel.

### (TO BE CONTINUED.)

#### Cast Iron and Steel

To know the proper definition of everyday substances is sometimes very useful in argument. The latest for steel and cast iron are given us by a Japanese chemist in the Imperial University of Tohoku. Steel he defines as "an iron-carbon alloy with a content of carbon lying between 0.025 and 1.7 per cent." Cast iron is similarly "an iron-carbon alloy" but with a carbon content of "between 1.7 and 6.7 per cent."

#### Sunlit Minds

Studies by physicians and scientists in England reported at the congress of the Royal Institute of Public Health, held at Brighton, England, indicate that sunlight, "either natural or artificial, when properly administered, may have a definitely beneficial effect on mental activity." It was found that children handicapped in school work by illness, when cured with the aid of sunlight caught up with and even outdistanced their classmates.

### IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

## Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D.D., Dean of the Evening School, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)  
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### Lesson for May 2

#### GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH

LESSON TEXT—Genesis 8:20; 9:27. GOLDEN TEXT—I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.—Gen. 9:13.

PRIMARY TOPIC—The Promise of the Rainbow. JUNIOR TOPIC—God's Promise to Noah. INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—The Story of Noah. YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—God's Dealing With Noah.

In order to grasp the meaning of God's covenant with Noah, the whole story of the flood should be clearly in the mind of the teacher and the pupil.

I. The Cause of the Flood (6:1-8). It was apostasy from God. The two types of men we saw in Cain and Abel (the one of proud self-will, the other of humble faith), developed on diverging lines, but as they multiplied they came into contact and intermarried.

II. The Ark the Way of Salvation (6:14-7:24). Although all flesh had corrupted its way before God, in His mercy provision was made for such as would avail themselves of it. Christ is the ark into which all who enter are eternally saved. As all outside of the ark perished, so all outside the redemption of Christ shall perish (Mark 16:16; II Thess. 1:8, 9; John 3:18, 19, 36; I Pet. 3:18-22).

Observe in connection with this judgment and provision of salvation:

1. The long-suffering God—He waited 120 years.

2. Noah, a preacher of righteousness (II Pet. 2:5).

God not only waited long, but through Noah sounded forth intelligent warnings.

3. God will not withhold His anger forever. At the appointed time the flood came and everything perished outside of the ark.

III. Beginning Life Upon a New World (Gen. 8:20).

This was a most solemn hour for Noah. With the fresh consciousness of God's hatred and judgment of sin, Noah faced the responsibility of giving shape to the life which was beginning upon the cleansed earth. He was to replenish the earth. Happily Noah began right, for he began with the act of worship.

IV. The Covenant With Noah (8:21; 9:27).

God was well pleased with Noah's act of devotion. Because of this He entered into a covenant with him embracing the following elements:

1. Assurance of the perpetuity of the race (8:21, cf. 9:8-17).

The bow was set in the cloud as a token or guarantee of this.

2. The security of the order of nature (8:22).

We know of the succession of the seasons and the ongoing of the system of nature only because of the guarantee of Him who controls them all.

3. Establishing the privileges and responsibilities of Noah and his descendants in their relation to the earth (9:1-4).

(1) The earth to be replenished (v. 1).

(2) Dominion restored. The dominion which was lost through the fall of man was now restored, but on the ground of fear.

(3) Animal food given. Heretofore man subsisted on a vegetable diet (Gen. 1:29).

4. Human government established (9:4-6).

The sword of justice was placed in man's hands and man was to be ruled by man. This sword has never been removed (Rom. 13:1-7).

5. The destinies and interrelations of the three great branches of the race fixed (9:18-27).

(1) Cursed be Canaan (v. 25). The descendants of Ham were reduced to the lowest condition of servitude. This was partly fulfilled in the time of Joshua in their being partly exterminated and partly reduced to the lowest form of servitude, and also in the time of Solomon (Josh. 9:23; I Kings 9:20, 21), and it is still in the process of fulfillment in that for the most part Canaan's descendants are the world's servants.

(2) Blessed shall be Shem (v. 26). This was fulfilled in making the Jewish race the repository of religious truth and ultimately in Christ the promised seed.

(3) Enlargement of Japheth (v. 27). This was fulfilled in making him the progenitor of peoples and multitudes (10:5); also in the civilization which has been brought to the world through him.

#### Christ and the Resurrection

Let the science of historical investigation be rigorously applied to the resurrection of Jesus. Christianity will not fear the proof. For it has pleased God that this crowning seal put to His Son's life should be sustained and guarded by an amount of proof such as no other fact in ancient history can boast; so that no honest searcher for truth might be left in doubt that Jesus of Nazareth has been declared to be the Son of God with power.—J. Oswald Dykes.

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#### Plants' Duration of Life

With respect to duration of life there are three classes of plants, annuals, biennials and perennials. An annual comes up from seed, bears flowers and seeds and dies within the year. A biennial grows from a seed, but produces only leaves the first year. The second summer a flower stalk comes up, seeds are produced and the plant dies. A perennial has roots which live on from year to year unless killed. Depending upon conditions, the plant may or may not produce seeds every year.

When a young man discovers he can speak in public, it is a talent he always cultivates.

#### Canadians Egg Eaters

Canadians last year ate an average of 312 eggs apiece, according to statistics made public by the Dominion department of agriculture. Domestic production totaled 237,000,000 dozen, representing an increase of 10,000,000 over the previous year.

#### Would Find Out

"Paw, what is meekness?" "Oh, you'll have to get married before you understand that, son."

#### Educated Flies

"What have you there?" "Flypaper." "I never knew they could read."

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