

# Men Marooned

By GEORGE MARSH

## STORY FROM THE START

Garth Guthrie, Canadian war veteran, having been driven into the open on account of weakened lungs, is factor of a Hudson's Bay post at Elkwan. He came back from the conflict with a permanently scarred face, which he realizes cost him the love of his fiancée, Edith Falconer. Sir Charles Guthrie, his brother, is a millionaire war profiteer. With Etienne Savanne, half-breed, his firm friend, Garth meets Doctor Quarrier, geologist, and his sister Joan. Their schooner has drifted ashore. Quarrier complains he has been robbed by a man known as "Laughing McDonald." At Elkwan an Indian girl, Ninda, tuberculosis victim, whom Garth has befriended, is dying. Joan, training war nurse, cares for Ninda, but the girl dies. Charles Guthrie writes reproaching his brother for not coming home. Charles' wife assures him Ethel still loves him, but Garth in his heart knows better. Three of McDonald's party visit Elkwan seeking to buy gun shells. From them Garth learns of evil talk among the Indians concerning him and Ninda.

## CHAPTER V

The winter wood cut, the geese salted and cached, the whitefish platform grooming with the spoil of the nets which would not be lifted until the ice, Guthrie and Etienne sat in council of war.

"How many of our people are wintering on the island?" asked Garth.

The half-breed closed his small eyes, his face contracted into a network of lines as he counted the families which had, through the summer, crossed the strait to hunt on the great island, instead of taking the river trail for the forest and muskges of the Elkwan headwaters.

"We got twelve-fifteen hunter dere, Attawapiskat and Kapiskau got more dan dat."

"That means a lot of fox pelts if the mice and rabbits are plentiful, and the litters came through the summer," Etienne scowled. "We not get mooch of est," he muttered. "Dem peopl' geese de hunter beeg price."

It was true. Cut off from the island until the ice set hard, as the post was, while the hunters could reach the schooner wintering at Seal Cove and get more for their fur, the outlook was indeed gloomy. But Garth had no idea of allowing these strangers to come into his territory and take the valuable fox trade of Akimiski away from him without a struggle. While he remained in the employ of the company, he would give the best that he had of loyalty and service. His pride was involved; and as he searched for a solution of the problem which the presence of this schooner presented, the desire to beat this free-trader in his bold try for the priceless silver and black fox of Akimiski obsessed his thoughts.

From Graham at Attawapiskat and Boucher at Kapiskau, he anticipated little aid or comfort. The former was an inactive, oldish man with a large up-river trade, and Boucher, according to Cameron at Albany, already in a panic over the rumor of the machine guns aboard McDonald's schooner. So Garth had decided that he would ignore his colleagues on the coast south of him and play a lone hand.

For a space the two men nursed their pipes in silence; then the face of the white man suddenly lighted.

"Saul Souci!" he cried. "Why didn't we think of him before? Etienne, we'll hunt up old Saul and send him up winter on the island. He's got two three sons there, and besides being Treaty Chief of the Crees, is a sort of medicine man, shaman, isn't he?"

Blowing a cloud of smoke through his teeth, the half-breed granted his disapproval. "He winter on de Little Elkwan—up een de Winkis country. Eet weel tak' long tam to find heem."

"Oh, I know it will be difficult to get him across the strait before the ice, but we'll put him over somehow."

"We get frozen een wid our cano' up riviere," protested the hard-headed bushman.

"We'll take a birch canoe and leave it—carry the little toboggan to come out with—the dogs can follow the shore going up," urged the enthusiastic Guthrie.

Knowing the country, Etienne realized only too well the difficulty of traveling between seasons; breaking the young ice in the quiet reaches of the river until compelled to abandon the canoe; then the wait for the closing of the stream and the snow. For weeks the thin ice of the Elkwan would be a trap for the unwary dog team. To the trail-wise Etienne, it was a foolish venture; to the man whose only thought was the salvage of the fox trade, a necessity.

"How you get heem to de island?"

"If the channel and strait are open, we'll take him in the York boat. We can wait for the wind and if there isn't too much flow ice, we'll get him across."

Etienne knocked out his pipe. His bright eyes snapped as he looked at Guthrie. "Eet you say so, I go. But we are two dam' fool."

"But we've got to give these people a fight for that fur—it's worth thousands to us."

"All right, boss, we fight." But when the veteran voyager told his wife of the mad purpose of Guthrie,

her dark face grayed with fear at the thought of the November journey over the thin ice of the Elkwan.

For a week, with his two best huskies, Castor and Pollux, and Shot, following opposite banks of the river to avoid fighting, Garth and Etienne poled and paddled and tracked past black spruce and poplar grown shores from the latter of which the frost had stripped the leaves.

At the mouth of the Little Elkwan the winter suddenly shut down, locking lakes and deadwaters with a shell too thick for their battering poles to break a channel through for their canoe, and the men in search of Saul Souci were prisoners. Somewhere up the little Elkwan ran the trap-lines of the man, to reach whom they had slaved for days with ice-cruising poles and paddles, and freezing hands, while their hot breaths rose in columns on the keen air; but until a fall of snow, or some bitter nights to bridge the river trail, they could not move. However, there were five hungry mouths to feed, so they hunted back in the muskge for caribou. At last, when severe frost had sealed the slower flowing reaches of the river with three-inch ice, they hitched the huskies, and started. Shot, who the winter previous had learned to draw Garth's trapping sled, refusing to team with the larger dogs, ran loose.

The second day out they learned from an Indian that Souci's main camp was two sleeps up the river. And thanks to the trained eyes of Etienne, the sled avoided the traps of shell ice over the swift water and the second night turned in to a winter camp.

At the challenge of his dogs, Saul Souci, Treaty Chief of the Elkwan Crees, lean, grizzled, taciturn, with bony features, over which leather-like skin lined with wrinkles was tightly drawn, pushed through the flap of his tipi.

"Kequay!" he said, showing no surprise at the strange appearance of the Elkwan people one hundred and fifty miles inland at a time when no sane Indian traveled the river. The three shook hands and, first feeding and chaining the dogs to trees, entered the smoky tent where Saul's wife and two sons were eating from a copper kettle.

Not until his guests had been served with caribou stew and tea did Souci question them as to the purpose of their coming. Then he told in Crese, which Etienne interpreted to Garth: "You take a hard moon to travel up the Elkwan."

"We could not wait, so started in the canoe," replied Etienne in the same language.

"You did not break through the ice?"

"No."

"The geese have passed: it will not be long now until the big snow," vouchsafed the hunter, lighting his pipe.

"How are the game signs since the snow?"

"There are plenty of mink and otter, but the lynx and fox seem to have left the valley."

Etienne's eyes brightened at the remark.

"There is much fox sign on Akimiski." This was hearsay over a month old, but the half-breed knew he would need every possible argument to gain Souci's ear to his proposition.

"My sons will be glad. Three of them are there."

"We have come to talk to you about the island."

Souci's bony face clouded as he met the frowning look of his wife.

"I told you at the spring trade I would not go."

"But there is much news since then," replied Etienne in the same colorless tones as the other.

"News? What has happened?"

Then the astute Savanne displayed his knowledge of the Indian temperament. Slowly, without emotion, he described the coming of McDonald, the free-trader, to the west coast, with a ship full of cheap trade goods, and inferior flour, tea and sugar. It was sudden wealth he was after, and to get it he would bribe the hunters, receive them with what looked like better prices in trade for their furs. But in a year—two years—he would be through—would not return, and they would come to the company again, begging for a "debt." But the company, who had taken care of their fathers and grandfathers through many lean years, would remember who had gone to the free-trader. There would be no "advantage" for these in the years to come, and their women and children would whimper through the long snows.

He, Saul Souci, a man held in great esteem by the company, could save these hunters from the cheap guns and trade goods of McDonald, who cared nothing for the Crees. The company, whose goods were honest, as he knew, whose sugar was not sanded, whose powder never failed, and whose tea soothed the stomachs of the Crees, was as ancient as the hills, and as permanent. It would always remain on the bay to trade with the Indians with goods that never changed. He, Saul Souci, his father and his father's father had been the friend of the Hudson's Bay—had never failed it. Would he fail it now when he was needed to turn the young hunters at Akimiski from their folly?

For a long time the smoke-filled tipi was silent as the swart face of Souci was grave with thought. Avoiding the anxious eyes of his wife, he sat cross-legged staring into the small fire in the center of the wigwam. With eyes red and throat raw from the smoke of the tipi fire, Garth impatiently watched the old Indian's stolid face.

The wife of Saul, unable to stifle her fear, at length loosed upon him a torrent of reproach—only to be silenced by a stern command. At last, the Indian, evidently having come to a decision, turned to the half-breed who waited for his answer.

"My trap-lines reach far into the four winds. My fish and meat cache is heavy. There are many caribou in the muskge; at Akimiski there are none—only rabbits and wolves and foxes."

Ignorant of the drift of Souci's remarks, Garth watched Etienne's impassive face. Suddenly his heart quickened, as a faint gleam entered

the all-time eyes of his friend. Would old Souci coast, after all?

"It is true," continued the Indian, "the company is my friend. It was the friend of my father. It is better that the young men trade with it than with these people who come and go. If I go, how shall I live, for I have no cache at Akimiski? How shall I cross the water if the ice has not set?"

Etienne's dark face wrinkled with pleasure. Souci would go. "The company will make you its man. If you will go," he said. "We will set you across the open water in the York boat and give you supplies for the winter, and your sons—what they need. And if you hold the young men, there will be new guns for you and your sons and a debt double the hunt your family brings in." Etienne extended his hand to seal the bargain.

"We may not cross the water before the Christmas trade—then we will lose the fur, for the trade will go to their camps," suggested Saul.

"We will cross you to the island at once, if you will return with us now."

The wife of Saul was already walking in protest at his decision, but the dark faces of his sons betrayed no feeling.

"My sons and my wife will stay here," said the Indian without a glance at the protesting wife. "I will go down river with you, for the winter will not wait."

Etienne turned to the smiling Guthrie. "You see, he will go with us at once. Now, we will make do trouble for McDonald! Ha! Ha! to get all those fox skins." And he repeated his conversation with Saul.

Through the stinging air of the blue dawn, two dog teams hurried down river. On the second night, arriving at the cache of caribou hung in a tree at the return trip, they found that wolverines had destroyed the meat. To feed seven dogs it was necessary to hunt, for Saul had come with a light sled.

The following morning, as the east grayed, the men started for the neighboring muskge in search of the early feeding caribou. With Shot, whose rigid war training to absolute silence and obedience made it possible to take him on a still hunt, which was out of the question with the yelping and uncontrollable huskies, Garth waited on the edge of a barren for the light.

"Smell something, Shot?" he asked the dog, who stood beside him in the spruce scrub, dilating his nostrils as he sniffed the keen air. As yet the dusk hung over the white barren in a gray blur. If the blue-cold deer of the north were out there scraping with round-tipped hoofs the snow from the moss, the light would soon betray them. Trembling with excitement, for the great alreale had served his novitiate the winter previous on the Raft, and knew for what they waited, Shot tested the air. The man whose mittened hand rested on the shaggy back beside him wondered, as the two crouched waiting for the daylight, in the memory of his dog returned the ghosts of similar watches in Finnish shellholes and listening posts. As his eyes strained to pierce the gray blanket which shrouded the muskge, Guthrie found himself tracing the parapets of imagined trenches—listening for suspicious sounds. Then the first light filtered over the barren, and he searched for the gray-blue shapes against the snow.

Suddenly the dog at his side stiffened on his toes, his iron dorsal muscles set, and the tremor which swept the shaggy body, with the suppressed whine, signaled the taint in the air.

"Steady, Shot!"

The trained war dog crouched mute—athrill with the scent of game in his nostrils. Gradually the exploring eyes of the hunter made out dim shapes, a long rifle shot distant. Slowly, with his dog at his heels, Garth circled the barren up-wind under cover of the scrub, until he had an easy shot at two cows and a bull.

"Steady, Shot!" he whispered, and took careful aim. At the flash of the loss, the bull leaped into the air, a few feet into the wind and crumpled on the snow. As the bewildered cows circled up-wind, Guthrie fired again. A hurt cow plunged forward, seeking the scrub edging the barren, and reaching it, disappeared.

"Go get 'em, Shot!" Like a wrath, the alreale crossed the barren in pursuit, as Guthrie followed, upbriding himself for his poor shooting. A hundred yards inside the scrub he found the caribou pulled down and dispatched by the dog.

Replacing his rifle in its skin case and resting it against a spruce, Garth was hastily dressing out the meat before the hide froze, while Shot explored the game trails of the vicinity, when a low laugh sounded behind him. Looking up, he saw, watching him, the Ojibwa, Joe Mokoman, who called himself the father of Ninda.

Guthrie casually rose to his feet, skinning knife in hand, as he measured the sinister face of the man who faced him, fingering the action of his gun. It was clear from the glint in the small eyes that the Ojibwa still nursed the memory of his expulsion from the trade-house. How far would he dare go? Garth asked himself.

"Bo-jo!" The caribou are fat this year," he said coolly, moving toward the Indian. But the Ojibwa pointed the muzzle of his rifle at Garth's chest as he stepped forward.

"You move, I shoot!"

The threat of the despised Indian deeply flicked the pride of the Canadian veteran, but he was helpless. It was inconceivable that Mokoman meant to wreak personal vengeance of such a nature on a Hudson's Bay factor—shoot him in cold blood. Yet what was he after, then?

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# Foolish to Boast of Great Descent

"Tracing one's ancestry is a rank fallacy," declares Albert Fayson Terhune, who has just completed a year's study of genealogical research for the American Magazine and is now attacking the growing fad.

"In the first place few people realize that perhaps millions of ancestors, good and bad, have intervened between themselves and the illustrious person from whom they claim to have descended," he says in summing up his studies. "Secondly, several million other people, if they took the trouble, could boast of the same lineage. Thirdly, boasting of a great ancestor is a confession of inferiority if the descendant has not lived up to the repute of his forebear.

"The most common ancestral claim," says Mr. Terhune, illustrating the weakness of the average case, "is relationship to William the Conqueror. Simple arithmetic shows these facts: 'Science allows about thirty-three years to each generation, which shows that there have been 26 or more generations between a person living today and William the Conqueror, who was in his prime in 1066.

"If we take of one New Englander, I know of one New Englander who succeeded in tracing his ancestry directly to Adam with just as much accuracy as many have traced theirs back to Charlemagne or other historical figures.

"Another barrier to effective genealogical research is the old-time system of family names adopted from residence or occupation. Thus John Hill, who lives on a hill, and John Church, who lived by the church, may have been the closest relatives, yet their descendants go off on wide tangents in tracing two families."

It is far better, says Mr. Terhune, to decree: "I had no ancestors to boast of, but you can bet my descendants are going to have."

# Earliest Lifeboat

In 1785 Lionel Lukin, a coachmaker of an inland town near London, put afloat on the Thames a Norway yawl which he had fitted with water-tight compartments, a heavy iron keel and other essentials in buoyancy and stability, which are the cardinal and requisite features of the lifeboat of today.

# Business in Poland

Like most governments of countries in economic difficulty, the Polish government has tried to improve matters by a network of regulations and prohibitions. Goods can still only be imported with a license and until lately it was very hard to send money out of the country. Such regulations, if applied at all by a not too well-coordinated or experienced administration, must apparently affect the small as well as the great.

When the London Daily News correspondent was sent a pipe as a birthday present, which had probably cost \$1 or so, to receive it he had first to trudge off to the ministry of trade and industry for a special import license. One lady wanted to send 25 cents in currency to cover postage of a parcel, to a friend in England. She asked a post office official how to do this and he is said to have replied, gravely and politely: "First, madame, you must have the permission of the minister of finance."

Nature fits all her children with something to do.—Lowell.

Usually, the devil appears in the guise of some agreeable human being.

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# Progress Being Made in War on Bacteria

Disease-causing bacteria have many devices to perpetuate their kind in an adverse world. Bacteriologists of the Hooper Foundation for Medical Research, University of California, have shown that tetanus spores may resist the temperature of boiling water for sixty minutes, botulism in vegetable juices for five and one-half hours and those of a closely related but harmless species, of eight and one-half hours. Other workers have proved that typhoid and other organisms may remain alive for years at refrigerator or lower temperatures. This constitutes a factor of great danger for man and animals which it is the function of scientific research to obviate, says Dr. George E. Coleman, of the Hooper foundation. "The brilliant success," he states, "that has been attained already, in which the experimental use of mice and guinea pigs has played a large part, is constantly being proclaimed by statistical evidence of fewer food poisonings and typhoid outbreaks as well as by increased protection from many of our other micro-scopic foes."

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