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# The Valley of Voices

By GEORGE MARSH

Author of "Toilers of the Trail" "The Whelps of the Wolf"

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(W. N. U. Service.)

#### CHAPTER XX

\_27\_ One bitter day in the middle of January six lean dogs, heads down, limped painfully across the clearing at Wailing River. At the tail of the sled followed two men, whose haggard eyes and frost-cracked faces bore the scars of the barrage of the January blizzards.

"We have worried much, Michel and I," said the factor, as Steele and David thawed out before the trade-house stove. "You struck terrible weather.

Did your rations hold out?" "Yes, by cutting them in two," reolied Steele with a grimace.

"We'll give you your fill as soon as it can be cooked. And your mission-It was successful?" hazarded the curlous St. Onge, ignorant of the purpose of the six-hundred-mile midwinter lourney.

"It was," and Steele handed the factor the oil-skin envelope. "Read that!" St. Onge read the release in openmouthed amazement.

"Man, man! How did you get it?" he gasped. Steele described his meeting at Al-

bany with Lascelles. Unchecked tears slowly gathered in the eyes of the overjoyed old man. "My boy," he said brokenly. "It would be the proudest day of my life. You still care for her, don't you?" he de-

manded anxiously. "You know I care for her," Steele gently answered, "but I went to Albany for her-not for myself. You must promise me that she hears nothing of this until I have left. She would think she had to pay-feel honor bound. I know her, monsieur. You

"But if she cares? I feel, in her heart, that she does," protested St.

must not tell her."

"She must be a free agent," insisted Steele. "I go south as soon as the dogs are rested. I shall talk to her

"I'm sorry, but as you wish it, I shall not tell her."

That night, after what, to the hungry Steele, was a sumptuous meal, consisting largely of caribou, St. Onge left his guest and daughter alone.

During the meal the girl had furtively noted the frostbitten fingers of the American, the drawn cheeks, blackened and cracked by the wind of the Albany trail, the strained look in the gray eyes. Steele had warmed to the sincerity of her welcome, the evident pleasure in her greeting. Exhausted as he was, the days before his departure were too few to waste one evening by seeking rest, so he watched her with hungry eyes as they talked, wondering whether her heart had thanged. But she gave no sign, and he was too proud to ask.

On the evening before he left with David for Nepigon, he again sat alone with the woman for whose welfare he had given the best that was in himfor whom he had toiled and planned, faced the sting of the norther and the pinch of the searing cold; the woman he loved too deeply to make himself the recipient of her gratitude.

"You have never told me, monsieur, why you took that terrible journey to Albany," she said, after a silence in which her black brows were drawn to-

gether in evident abstraction. The man's eyes softened as they lingered on the clean lines of her profile, the masses of her dusky hair, for she had asked the question with avert-

ed face as if fearing his answer, "I went to Albany," he said, "to test my judgment of human nature."

"And you found-?" "I found—that I was a mind reader," he answered with a smile.

"Is it a very great secret?" she asked with a wistful look in the dark eyes that searched his.

"No, you will hear-tomorrow." "But, tomorrow-you go?" "Yes."

have gone? So that is it?" "You will understand-tomorrow,"

he put her off with. For a long interval she sat gazing at the rug at her feet, then leaned toward him, her face tense with feeling. "What must you think of me?" she demanded. "You have planned and worked for us, my father and megiven-given-given! And we - we wilderness. This," and she held aloft have sat with folded hands while you tolled-and won. Oh, I want you to know how fine you have been through It all-want you to sense my gratitude

-before you go." She had risen and was pacing the

floor-restraint gone.

"I have been selfish-inhospitable," she stumbled on, her eyes avoiding his, "but I want you to know that there is nothing-nothing which I will not Together with brief mention of the ar- took out a bunch of letters and rundo-to prove my gratitude for what rival of the fur from the Stooping, St. you have done." She turned from him | Onge had profusely thanked his

weeping.

"There are some things without price," he said gently. "What I have done, I have not done-for reward. I know-that I have your gratitude-it is enough."

She turned swiftly upon him with: "But if you knew-"; seemingly confused, checked by a surge of emotion she could not centrol, she stood for an instant, inarticulate; then left him alone.

Late in February, long after the last of the fur cached at the Stooping had been traded with St. Onge, a dog-team driven by a strange Indian arrived at Walling River. To the surprised questions of the factor the driver answered that he had come from Nepigon station with a package and a letter addressed to Mademoiselle Denise St. Onge. The factor took the long, wooden box and the letter to his quarters. where he found his daughter with Charlotte in the kitchen.

"A packet has arrived from Nepigon," announced the excited St. Onge. "with a box and a letter for you, my child."

"A letter for me?" she said, a wave of color sweeping her face, while St. Onge watched her curiously.

In the living room Denise St. Onge opened the letter, postmarked Kenora. and read: "Mademoiselle St. Onge:

"Wailing River. "What I wrote you at Ogoke last autumn was a lie. I am sorry.

"Rose Bernard, formerly Laflamme." The paper slowly slipped from the fingers of the numbed girl and fluttered to the floor.

"What is it? Who is it from?" denanded her father.

The face of Denise St. Onge was the color of chalk as she raised her hopeless eyes. "He went to Albany for



He Had Come From Nepigon Station With a Package and a Letter Addressed to Mademoiselle Denise St.

my gratitude. And now-I receive

"But what is it?" "Read for yourself, father," and the stunned girl walked to a window, and from him. Presently she tilted her gazed with dry-eyed emorse out on the white valley.

"All, I deserve-all," she said, turning from the window. "But you are wrong when you think I did not know why he went to Albany-I knew. And I knew I was free the night before he to pay. He is proud-oh, so proud!"

"He is a gallant gentleman, and did not know you cared," murmured the old man. "But what is in this box?" While the girl at the window gazed on the desolate hills as on the white ruin of her happiness, the factor flock passed overhead, waved her bow. opened the cover of the box. Removing the heavy wrappings of paper protecting the contents, he gasped in sur-

"Mon Dieu, mon Dieu!" The girl turned from her bitter retrospection. "What is it?"

"Come here!" She joined him and bent over the box. In its wrappings lay the ebony case of a violin. On the lid of the case letters of gold spelled: "Nicolo Amati, Cremona."

"An Amati!" she cried in her joy. 'A priceless Amati!" Then, brokenly, 'Father, father! I am paying-I am paying!"

With feverish haste the key was found and the case opened. She ten-"And I am not to know until you derly lifted the rare handiwork of the world-famous maker from its bed of velvet and impulsively caressed it with her cheek.

"And he sends no word-no letter?" cried the perplexed St. Onge. She smiled at his naivete. "There is no word to send, father. He is sorry there, in his gay New York, for the lonely woman he once knew in the the violin, "is his anodyne for the desolate-the symbol of his pity."

It was May, and Brent Steele had been hard at work at the museum for three months. In March he had received two letters brought from Walling River by the messenger sent with the violin. The letter from the factor was strained and self-conscious. and he knew by the convulsive move- friend for the costly gift which had fishing.—Capper's Weekly,

ment of her shoulders that she was I made the long evenings again bright with music. But of Denise he said little, except that she was well and played incessantly. So much had happened that the winter seemed unusually long-was, in fact, a bit on their nerves, and the spring would be most welcome. Some day, St. Onge suggested, it might be possible for Steele to revisit the valley of the Walling. He knew the way and his friends there would live for that day.

The other letter was shorter. It ran:

'Dear Monsieur Steele:

"A violin-and a Nicolo Amati! Your generosity and your thought of me make these words but feetle things. You, to whom gratitude is distasteful, must yet endure my heartfelt thanks, not only for the rare gift, but for the journey you made for my peace of mind through that terrible wind and cold. The violin will ever be a living memory of one who came, a stranger, to two lonely and hopeless creatures, and left them, facing the future with courage.

"Denise St. Onge."

If only the letter had given him a sign that she wanted him-needed him, instead of dwelling on her gratirude. She was so proud and so brave. If only he had taken her in his arms that last night, and learned from her eyes, the blood in her face, the beat of her heart, whether she was paying a

debt of honor or-loved him. Then, late in May, came a letteraddressed by a hand unused to the pen, and postmarked at Nepigon station on the Canadian Pacific. David doubtless had news and some one had written for him. Steele opened the envelope and read with increasing wonder and delight:

"Miseu Steele-"Iv you weesh mamsel you burn up de trail to Wailing Reever queek. All de long snow she have play an play de sad museec an cry on her bed. Wen we go on hill first tam she lift her arm to de sout an say, Cum bak to me. Dat mean you. You cum lak de win. Michel tak dis to de railroad, he an me get marry wen meesnary Charlotte." cum in june.

It was from the faithful Ojibway woman who had for so long faithfully served Denise.

That night the Montreal sleeper out of New York carried a man whose gray eyes were strangely happy. A week later two friends were poling the nose of a canoe into the spring freshet of the Jackfish as if pursued y a Windigo. Farther on they recklessly ran in succession each whitewater of the swollen Rouge. Down Ogoke, the measured churn-swish, churn-swish of lunging blades marked off the miles to the outlet. Then riding the flood water of the racing Walling, one afternoon the canoe slid into

In the trade-house Steele and David found St. Onge and his head-man. There were surprised greetings, then: "I have come for her," announced the "Where is she

"She has gone to the ridge," answered St. Onge with shining eyes. "You will find her with her violinalone."

At the edge of the scrub, below the bare brow of the hill, Steele stopped, with a heart which jarred him with its me," she said, as if to herself, "and beat. He wanted to watch her-listen would not tell me I was free, fearing to her playing-before making his coming known. With a shaking hand he parted the spruce and looked.

> Silhouetted against the soft May sky, she stood with her violin, facing head and drew the bow across the strings. Faintly drifted down to him the haunting minors of the "Elegie" he first heard at the rapids-the symbol of her fears and despair.

Then, of a sudden, the far call of errant Canadas troke in on the strains left, when-when I tried to tell him of the violin. The girl stopped short that-I loved him. But he thought it off and searched the sky for the wedge was gratitude-thought I was trying of geese. Out of the south she saw them coming and opened her arms. Then, as the violin changed its mood -broke into her own, "When Spring Comes North," he noiselessly approached her.

> "Goodby! goodby!" she called, as the wanderers faded into the north.

> "I have followed them back to you," spoke a low voice behind her.

The girl turned startled eyes on the hours under 14 feet of water. man who stood smiling. Over her throat and face up to the dusky hair

mounted the blood. "You!" she faltered. "It's not a dream?" "I have come back," he said, "for

your gratitude." "My gratitude?" She smiled through mist-veiled eyes, as he stood beside her. "You ask no more?" And she was in his arms, his face buried in the raven hair.

"Denise! Denise!" She raised her flaming face to his, and there on the hilltop they stood, oblivious of the world.

"Do you think this gratitude?" she murmured at length. "No-paradise!" "At last - my spring - has come

north," she sighed, "after the long

[THE END]

snows."

No Mail for Him

The postal service is laughing at the story of a post-office inspector who went into the hills of Arkansas to check up a village post office. The neighbors said the P. M. had gone fishing. Finding him, the inspector asked, "Are you the postmaster?" After a minute the P. M. said, "Yep. What's your name?" "P. D. Smith." The P. M. reached into his back pocket, ning over them for the addresses, said, "Nope Nothing fer ye," and went on



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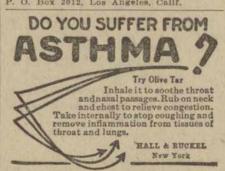
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She finished, and as the last of the | W. N. U., San Francisco, No. 45-1926.

Motor Kept on Working When a flood in Oil City, Pa., recently abated it was found that a motor had been running steadily for 45 Not Welcome

Marjorle did not like the idea of a new baby brother. When her mother returned home from the hospital their meeting was a joyful one, and as Marjorie settled herself on the bed for a happy chat she noticed the little stranger on the other side of her mother.

With a small forefinger pointed at the unwanted playmate, Marjorie demanded, "When is that hospital baby going back to the hospital?"

## Clean Kidneys By Drinking Lots of Water

Take Salts to Flush Kidneys If Bladder Bothers or Back Hurts

Eating too much rich food may produce kidney trouble in some form, says a well-known authority, because the acids created excite the kidneys. Then they become overworked, get sluggish, clog up and cause all sorts of distress, particularly backache and misery in the kidney region, rheumatic twinges, severe headaches, acid stomach, constipation, torpid liver, sleeplessness, bladder and urinary irri-

tation. The moment your back hurts or kidneys aren't acting right, or if bladder bothers you, begin drinking lots of good water and also get about four ounces of Jad Salts from any good pharmacy; take a tablespoonful in a glass of water before breakfast for a few days and your kidneys may then act fine. This famous salts is made from the acid of grapes and lemon juice, combined with lithia, and has been used for years to flush clogged kidneys and stimulate them to activity; also to neutralize the acids in the system so that they no longer irritate, thus often relieving bladder

disorders. Jad Salts can not injure anyone; makes a delightful effervescent lithiawater drink which millions of men and women take now and then to help keep the kidneys and urinary organs clean, thus often avoiding serious kidney disorders.

Assessors Use Airplanes

The Connecticut tax assessors are using with good effect photographs of interior lands to help in their assessments. In one county the tax list recorded 1,551 barns, garages and sheds, but when the air photographers had finished their task it was found there were 2.902 such buildings in that area, with the result that the tax list increased in value more than \$10,-

. Why buy many bottles of other vermifuges when one bottle of Dr. Peery's "Dead Shot" will work without fail? Adv.

A Hint

"Does your sister swim, Harold?" "Depends on who's with her, Mr. Shye."



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