

The Voice of the Pack

By EDISON MARSHALL

SYNOPSIS.

Warned by his physician that he has not more than six months to live, Felling sits despondently on a park bench, wondering where he should spend those six months. A friendly squirrel practically decides the matter for him. His blood is pioneer blood, and he decides to end his days in the forests of Oregon. Memories of his grandfather and a deep love for all things of the wild help him in reaching a decision. In a large southern Oregon city he meets people who had known and loved his grandfather, a famous frontiersman. He makes his home with Silas Lennox, a typical westerner. The only other members of the household are Lennox's son, "Bill," and daughter, "Snowbird." Their abode is many miles from "civilization." In the Umpqua divide, and there Felling plans to live out the short span of life which he has been told is his. His extreme weakness in the face of even a slight exertion convinces him that the doctor had made a correct diagnosis of his case.

CHAPTER II—Continued.

Yes, Steele knew Bill. Bill weighed two hundred pounds, and he would choose the biggest of the steers he drove down to the lower levels in the winter and, twisting its horns, would make it lay over on its side. Besides, both of the men assumed that Dan must be only in the first stages of his malady.

And even as the men talked, the train that bore Dan Felling to the home of his ancestors was entering for the first time the dark forests of pine and fir that make the eternal background of the Northwest. He was wholly unable to understand the strange feeling of familiarity that he had with them, a sensation that in his dreams he had known them always, and that he must never go out of the range of them again.

Dan didn't see his host at first. For the first instant he was entirely engrossed by a surging sense of disappointment—a feeling that he had been tricked and had only come to another city after all. He got down onto the gravel of the station yard, and out on the gray street pavement he heard the clang of a trolley car. Many automobiles were parked just beside the station, some of them foreign cars of expensive makes, such as he supposed would be wholly unknown on the frontier. A man in golf clothes brushed his shoulder.

Dan looked up to the hills, and he felt better. He couldn't see them plainly. The faint smoke of a distant forest fire half obscured them. Yet he saw fold on fold of ridges of a rather peculiar blue in color, and even his



"You're Dan Felling's Grandson, Aren't You?"

untrained eyes could see that they were clothed in forests of evergreen. Over the heads of the green hills Dan could see a few great peaks; McLaughlin, even and regular as a painted mountain; Wagner, with queer white gashes where the snow still lay in its ravines, and to the southeast the misty range of snow-covered hills that were the Sikekyous. He felt decidedly better. And when he saw old

Silas Lennox waiting patiently beside the station, he felt he had come to the right place.

It would be interesting to explain why Dan at once recognized the older man for the breed he was. Silas Lennox was not dressed in a way that would distinguish him. It was true that he wore a flannel shirt, riding trousers and rather heavy, leathern boots. But sportsmen all over the face of the earth wear this costume at sundry times. Mountain men have a peculiar stride by which experienced persons can occasionally recognize them; but Silas Lennox was standing still when Dan got his first glimpse of him. The case resolves itself into a simple matter of the things that could be read in Lennox's face.

Dan disbelieved wholly in a book that told how to read characters at sight. Yet at the first glance of the lean, bronzed face his heart gave a curious little bound. A pair of gray eyes met his—two fine black points in a rather hard gray iris. They didn't look past him, or at either side of him, or at his chin or his forehead. They looked right at his own eyes. The skin around the eyes was burned brown by the sun, and the flesh was so lean that the cheekbones showed plainly. The mouth was straight; but yet it was neither savage nor cruel. It was simply determined.

Lennox came up with a light, silent tread and extended his hand. "You're Dan Felling's grandson, aren't you?" he asked. "I'm Silas Lennox, who used to know him when he lived on the Divide. You are coming to spend the summer and fall on my ranch."

The immediate result of these words, besides relief, was to set Dan wondering how the old mountaineer had recognized him. He wondered if he had any physical resemblance to his grandfather. But this hope was shot to earth at once. His telegram had explained about his malady, and of course the mountaineer had picked him out simply because he had the mark of the disease on his face. As he shook hands, he tried his best to read the mountaineer's expression. It was all too plain: an undeniable look of disappointment.

The truth was that even in spite of all the Chamber of Commerce head had told him, Lennox had still hoped to find some image of the elder Dan Felling in the face and body of his grandson. Because of the thick glasses, Lennox could not see the young man's eyes; but he didn't think it likely they were at all like the eyes with which the elder Felling saw his way through the wilderness at night. Of course he was tall, just as the famous frontiersman had been, but while the elder weighed one hundred and ninety pounds, bone and muscle, this man did not touch one hundred and thirty. Evidently the years had brought degeneracy to the Felling clan. Lennox was desolated by the thought.

He helped Dan with his bag to a little wry automobile that waited beside the station. They got into the two front seats, and a moment later were starting up the long, curved road that led to the Divide.

During the hour that they were crossing over the foothills, on the way to the big timber, Silas Lennox talked a great deal about the frontiersman that had been Dan's grandfather. A mountain man does not use profuse adjectives. He talks very simply and very straight, and often there are long silences between his sentences. Yet he conveys his ideas with entire clearness.

Dan realized at once that if he could be, in Lennox's eyes, one-fifth of the man his grandfather had been, he would never have to fear again the look of disappointment with which his host had greeted him at the station. But instead of reaching that high place, he had only—death. He knew what his destiny was in these quiet hills. And it was true that he began to have secret regrets that he had come. But it wasn't that he was disappointed in the land that was opening up before him. It fulfilled every promise. His sole reason for regrets lay in the fact that now the whole mountain world would know of the decay that had come upon his people. Perhaps it would have been better to have left them to their traditions.

He had never dreamed that the fame of his grandfather had spread so far. For the first ten miles Dan listened to stories—legends of a cold nerve that simply could not be shaken; of a powerful, tireless physique; of moral and physical strength that was seemingly without limit. Then, as the foothills began to give way to the

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higher ridges, and the shadow of the deeper forests fell upon the narrow, brown road, there began to be long gaps in the talk. And soon they rode in utter silence, evidently both of them absorbed in their own thoughts.

Dan did not feel oppressed at all. He merely seemed to fall into the spirit of the woods, and no words came to his lips. Every mile was an added delight to him. Not even wine could have brought a brighter sparkle to his eyes. He had begun to experience a vague sort of excitement, an emotion that was almost kin to exultation, over the constant stir and movement of the forest life. Once, as they stopped the car to refill the ra-



"You'd Better Wait Till Tomorrow, Dan."

diator from a mountain stream, Lennox looked at him with sudden curiosity. "You are getting a thrill out of this, aren't you?" he asked wonderingly.

It was a curious tone. Perhaps it was a hopeful tone, too. He spoke as if he hardly understood.

"A thrill!" Dan echoed. He spoke as a man speaks in the presence of some great wonder. "Good Heavens, I never saw anything like it in my life."

"In this very stream," the mountaineer told him joyously, "you may occasionally catch trout that weigh three pounds."

But as he got back into the car the look of interest died out of Lennox's eyes. Of course any man would be somewhat excited by his first glimpse of the wilderness. It was not that he had inherited any of the traits of his grandfather. It was absurd to hope that he had. And he would soon get tired of the silences and want to go back to his cities. He told his thought—that it would all soon grow old to him; and Dan turned almost in anger. "You don't know," he said. "I didn't know myself, how I would feel about it. I'm never going to leave the hills again."

"You don't mean that?" "But I do." He tried to speak further, but he coughed instead. "But I couldn't if I wanted to. That cough tells you why, I guess."

"You mean to say—" Silas Lennox turned in amazement. "You mean that you're a— a gonorr?" That you've given up hope of recovering?"

"That's the impression I meant to convey. I've got a little over four months—though I don't see that I'm any weaker than I was when the doctor said I had six months. Those four will take me all through the fall and the early winter. And I hope you won't feel that you've been imposed upon—to have a dying man on your hands."

"It isn't that." Silas Lennox threw his car into gear and started up the long grade. And he drove clear to the top of it and into another glen before he spoke again. Then he pointed to what looked to Dan like a brown streak that melted into the thick brush. "That was a deer," he said slowly. "Just a glimpse, but your grandfather could have got him between the eyes. Most like as not, though, he'd have let him go. He

never killed except when he needed meat. But that—as you say—ain't the impression I'm trying to convey."

He seemed to be groping for words. "What is it, Mr. Lennox?" Dan asked.

"Instead of being sorry, I'm mighty glad you've come," Lennox told him. "It's not that I expect you to be like your grandfather. You haven't had his chance. But it's always the way of true men, the world over, to come back to their own kind to die. That deer we just saw—he's your people, and so are all these ranchers that grub their lives out of the forests—they are your people, too. And you couldn't have pleased the old man's old friends any better, or done more for his memory, than to come back to his own land for your last days."

The words were strange, yet Dan intuitively understood. It was as if a prodigal son had returned at last, and although his birthright was squandered and he came only to die, the people of his home would give him kindness and forgiveness, even though they could not give him their respect.

CHAPTER III.

The Lennox house was a typical mountain ranch-house—square, solid, comforting in storm and wind. Bill was out to the gate when the car drove up. He was a son of his father, a strong man in body and personality. He too had heard of the elder Felling, and he opened his eyes when he saw the slender youth that was his grandson. And he led the way into the white-walled living room.

"You must be chilly and worn out from the long ride," Lennox suggested quietly. He spoke in the tone a strong man invariably uses toward an invalid. Dan felt a curious resentment at the words.

"I'm not cold," he said. "It's hardly dark yet. I'd sooner go outdoors and look around."

The elder man regarded him curiously, perhaps with the faintest glimmer of admiration. "You'd better wait till tomorrow, Dan," he replied. "Bill will have supper soon, anyway. You don't want to overdo too much, right at first."

"But, good heavens! I'm not going to try to spare myself while I'm here. It's too late for that."

Dan Felling is introduced to "Snowbird," who proves to be a decidedly interesting member of the Lennox family, and Dan shows new interest in life in the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HUMOR SUPERIOR TO WIT

Former Quality Always Kindly, While the Latter is Inclined to Be Caustic.

Both wit and humor, like art, poetry and love, are quite indefinable. But humor is the more elusive of the two. There are national types of wit, an English wit, a French wit, a German wit, an Irish wit, and—yes—a Scottish wit.

But humor is something universal, the curious and blessed gift that man has, all the world over, of discerning the incongruous in most things, remarks a writer in the Edinburgh Scotsman. Wit is related to the superficial, but humor dwells deep down in the inmost heart of us. Wit may be caustic; humor is kindly. Wit is the accompaniment of comedy and draws forth the loud guffaw of the top gallery of the music halls. But humor is not divorced from tragedy, and its laughter may be very close to tears.

Scottish "wit" is not English wit, but a sense of humor is the same in kind all the world over. Scottish wit, of both the deliberate and the accidental kind, consists very largely in a certain dry way of saying something so simple and obvious that it is least expected.

Crowning Triumph.

Little Norman and his two playfellows were boasting about their parents and their belongings. "My father," said Norman, "is going to build a fine house with a steeple on it."

"That's nothing!" exclaimed Willie scornfully. "My father has just built a house with a flagpole on it."

Conrad, who had been listening intently, was silent for a moment, then burst out triumphantly: "Oh, that's nothing! My father is going to build a house with a mortgage on it!"

Watch Expenditures.

If he who is always hard up will but keep a record of his expenditures he may find that he is more lacking in sense than in dollars.

Or a "Situation."

When a statesman runs into a brick wall and sees no way to get over or under, he emits a few sharp yelps and calls it a crisis.—Baltimore Sun.

The wives of Slavese noblemen cut their hair so that it stands straight up on their heads. The average length is about one inch and a half.

IMPROVED ROADS

ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN 1920

Cost Was About Twice as Much as in 1917 on Account of Distinct Shortage of Labor.

(Prepared by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.)

Every kind of road cost about twice as much to build in 1920 as it did in 1917, according to the chief of the bureau of public roads, United States Department of Agriculture, and highway construction suffered more than any other class of work through railroad congestion, strikes, labor troubles and material shortages.

After the war there was a great public demand for improved roads. Many roads had been seriously damaged by war traffic, and it appeared that the return of men from military service would provide an abundance of labor. The army of laborers which was expected to apply for the work did not, however, materialize. On the contrary, there was a distinct shortage



Well Kept Roadside Where Weeds Are Controlled by Frequent Mowing.

of labor, and wages reached the highest levels attained in the history of the country. In 1917, competent labor could be secured for from \$1.50 to \$3 per day, but the corresponding wages in 1920 were from \$3 to \$5 for a shorter day's work.

In proportion to this demand there was also a pronounced scarcity of construction materials. Sand, gravel, stone, and cement, and materials commonly used in road work increased in price between 1917 and 1920 from 50 to 100 per cent. Naturally, these increases in cost were reflected in the prices paid to contractors for road work. Gravel roads increased from \$4,535 to \$7,250 per mile; concrete from \$21,165 to upward of \$40,000 per mile, and brick roads from \$33,000 to \$55,000 per mile.

As funds available for road construction are largely limited by statute, or by the returns from taxation, a majority of the states this year have deliberately withheld work, the plans for which had been completed, until they could obtain a greater return for their expenditure.

SCOTS USED FIRST MACADAM

Resident of Ayrshire Made His First Experiments About 1814—Roads Now Common.

Macadam roads are so common in America that national pride may well lead us to look upon them as a domestic product.

But John MacAdam was a Scot, resident in Ayrshire, where he made his first experiments about 1814, according to the New York Sun. Five years later the first public roads were laid with the pavement and a grateful parliament awarded the inventor a grant of \$50,000.

In 1827, after the new pavement had been thoroughly tested, MacAdam was made surveyor general of all metropolitan roads in and about London and the use of his method became general throughout the United Kingdom.

HARDING LAUDS GOOD ROADS

President in First Message to Congress Deplores Money Wasted in Improved Highways.

In no uncertain terms, President Harding expressed his opinion of the automobile, motor transport and good roads in his first message to congress. He said: "The motorcar has become an indispensable instrument in our political, social and industrial life. . . . I know of nothing more shocking than the millions of public funds wasted in improved highways—wasted because there is no policy of maintenance. Highways must be patrolled and constantly repaired."