

# The Valley of Voices

By GEORGE MARSH

Author of

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

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## THE FACTOR

SYNOPSIS—With David, half-breed guide, Brent Steele, of the American Museum of Natural History, is traveling in northern Canada. By a stream he hears Denise, daughter of Col. Hilaire St. Onge, factor at Walling River, play the violin superbly. He introduces himself and accepts an invitation to make the post his home during his stay.

### CHAPTER I—Continued

In front of the trade-house, in conversation with David, stood a tall, military-looking man, with iron-gray hair and mustache. Around the door lounged a group of curious company Indians. Advancing and gripping the newcomer's hand, the factor of Walling River exclaimed:

"Bon jour, Monsieur Steele! Welcome to Walling River! My daughter and David have told me of our good fortune."

As the old soldier continued, with a slight French accent, Steele was aware of being secretly appraised by the keen eyes of the other.

"You are to be our guest for as long as you will honor us. In this valley, for a man of science, there is much of interest."

"You are very good to a stranger, sir. David and I have been out from Nepigon since May. We need supplies and my stuff should also be overhauled. Some of it got wet bucking this river of yours."

"Too bad! You found it a hard river to pole and track?"

"We certainly did. David has a nose for quick water as keen as a mink's for fish, but we took too long a chance in the big white-water."

At the mention of the rapid the face of St. Onge hardened. He leaned eagerly toward the speaker.

"The Devil's mile! It got you too?"

"Oh, we pulled out of it with a wetting. You see, I was with the best bow-man on the Nepigon, so we saved the canoe and our own skins as well."

Slowly the Frenchman shook his head; then suddenly asked:

"You saw nothing on your way up river—nothing peculiar, no signs of a canoe?"

Steele wondered at the question as he answered:

"No, we met no one. I imagine the Indians don't travel it, too much strong water, and then there's the taboo—they're shy of the lower river, aren't they?"

At the words, the narrowed eyes of St. Onge shifted to the ground. He made no answer to the man who watched his set face, wondering, as it vitally affected the trade, why the factor avoided this subject of the Indians' fear of the Windigo. Presently St. Onge broke his silence.

"You will pardon me, Monsieur Steele, I am a poor host. If you were in the water you spoiled your flour—you are hungry?"

Steele glanced at the grinning David who plaintively placed a sinewy hand on his stomach.

"Yes, we lost our flour and we saw no game, had to fish our way up the river, so, colonel, we are a bit hungry."

Snapping his fingers with impatience at his seeming lack of hospitality, the factor called to the loungers at the trade-house door:

"Michel, Tete-Boule! Bring up Monsieur Steele's stuff from the foot of the portage; and, Michel, David here will eat with you. See that there's plenty of caribou stew for supper. He's starved out." Turning to Steele, the factor added: "My daughter is now overseeing the cooking of our dinner, monsieur. I trust you will find it to your taste."

"You are mighty kind to a couple of bush-battered strangers, Colonel St. Onge. We are not exactly starved, you know. We travel with a net, but a straight diet of pike and trout grows a bit tiresome. You can sell us supplies to take us through to Nepigon?"

"You will not need to outfit for Nepigon," the factor's eyes grew bitter. "You will pass Lafamme's post at Lake Ogoke."

"Monsieur Steele will desire to—"

shown his room, father, before we dine," called a woman's voice. Turning, Steele saw, opening the gate in the dog-stockade surrounding the factor's quarters, Denise St. Onge, trim in white serge. Casting an embarrassed look at his frayed jeans, his hand sought his unshaven chin as she joined them.

"Welcome, again, to Walling River, monsieur," she said cordially, giving him her hand.

"My daughter seems to need no introduction. She has told me of your meeting at the river. Denise, Monsieur Steele is bound for the Nepigon by the Ogoke trail. The eyes of father and daughter met in a significant look. "Lafamme, monsieur, can give you anything you wish—including Scotch whisky."

The girl's dark eyebrows contract at the mention of the Ogoke trader's name.

"So he's giving the Indians whisky, is he?" said Steele.

"You are surprised?" laughed the factor bitterly. "For Monsieur Lafamme it seems that Canadian law does not exist. With his whisky he will soon have the fur trade of the whole district."

"They said as much at Fort Hope. But the authorities—why don't they act?"

St. Onge shrugged eloquently. "I do not know. He is running things with a high hand—has support of the strongest at Ottawa."

Steele turned with a smile to David who had been an interested listener to the conversation.

"I think that we shall have to pay Monsieur Lafamme a visit, David."

St. Onge and his daughter exchanged glances.

"Davede like to shake de han' of Mister Lafamme," replied the Ojibway, dryly.

"I pity Lafamme when you do. He'll carry his arm in a sling for a month if he ever falls into that wolf-trap of yours."

"You see, colonel, David is under the impression that Lafamme is an old friend," Steele enlightened his host, whose face reflected acute interest. "Sometimes in meeting old friends he forgets in his joy that his hand-shake is famous from Nepigon to Norway House. In this case, David," he added grimly, "you'll have to remember that we're not on the Nepigon and must not mistake Monsieur Lafamme's throat for his hand."

Steele smiled inwardly as St. Onge's eyes shifted to meet those of his daughter, then focused quizzically on the grinning face of the half-breed. If the situation at Walling River was a source of mystification to St. Onge's guest, Steele was satisfied that the guests had now balanced the score, to the truth of which surmise the face of the Frenchman patently testified.

"But come, I forget my manners, monsieur. We have a room and bed for you as long as you will honor us. My head man, Michel, will take care of David."

"Thank you, sir!" And picking up the bag containing his personal belongings, Steele followed his host.

The house of the factor of Walling River was built of square-hewn spruce logs, carefully chinked against the January winds of the Height-of-Land country. In front, a roofed porch of hewn slabs commanded a view of the river which here gave no intimation of the swift metamorphosis which,

third of a mile below, turned it into a riot of white rapids. Beside the porch a bed of violets and wood anemone were now blossoming, but beyond, in their second flowering, white Canadian violets and the blue of fringed gentian and harebells against a background of northern golden rod bore gay witness to the care of one who loved flowers.

Familiar with the bare and uninviting interiors of the houses at the fur posts, often presided over by an Indian or half-breed, wife of the factor,

the living-room Steele now entered bore resemblance to those he had seen solely in its huge sheet-iron stove. The rough walls hung sparingly with small French etchings framed in white birch, the rustic furniture shaped from spruce and cedar poles, the shelves of books, and the rugs of moose and bear and wolf, had, by the alchemy of taste, been fused into a room—a home.

"I did not know there was a room like this north of Winnipeg, mademoiselle," Steele said in frank admiration.

"Oh, monsieur! would you have us live like the Indians? But you are laughing at our poor little home."

"Please don't," he begged. "It is charming—this room. And all the books!"

"It was hard on our packers," broke in St. Onge, "but I insisted on having the books if I was to be marooned up here in this valley. The winter would be long without them—and the violin."

"I envy you the winters here with that violin, sir," said Steele, smiling at his hostess. "I hope to hear it again, mademoiselle—your superb playing."

Her face brightened. "It was only a mood—today at the rapids, monsieur. I go there when lonely, to play to the troubled waters. You thought me sad—I saw it in your face; but I was only homesick for Touraine. Tonight we shall have something gay."

But Steele felt that it was not loneliness which had driven Denise St. Onge to the restless waters.

"Monsieur, you will wish to see your room. Our Ojibway servant, Charlotte, will bring you hot water." And St. Onge led Steele to a room on the second floor of the house, the capacity of which was strained by a cot and washstand, whither a square-bull, half-breed woman followed shortly with a steaming bucket.

Steele was thankful that his duffe bag contained a change of clothes and moccasins. Hot water, a shave and fresh clothes speedily worked a miracle in the tattered stranger who had started Denise St. Onge at the rapids.

When Steele rejoined his hostess he felt more at ease. He even had a suspicion that she approved his changed appearance. At the thought, something like a thrill swept him—to be followed by a shrug of annoyance. He had not seen an attractive woman in months and was paying the penalty. Yet, as he watched her pour the tea while her father dispensed caribou stew and fried trout, a quality—rarer than mere comeliness; an evident fineness of fiber, a savor of personality in this factor's daughter, which meant race and background—impressed itself upon him, and a strong curiosity to know the history of these people whom he had stumbled upon in the bad-lands south of the Albany—to learn the cause of the fear and heartache which this lonely girl had so poignantly revealed in the gorge, possessed him.

"You are collecting Indian relics and utensils for the American museum?" asked the Frenchman. "You are an ethnologist?"

"Yes, I have been in the field four years for the museum."

"You have found much of interest?"

"Last year and this summer, I shipped by Hudson's Bay canoes considerable stuff from Fort Hope and Henley House. Lake Makakibetan on the Albany has some remarkable burial places, unlike anything I've seen. And the Ojibways up there are still very wild and superstitious—medicine men, sorcerers, fear of spirits and the Windigo, and all that."

The factor paused, fork in air. Slowly he replaced it on his plate, untouched; then asked:

"You have never been in this valley before?"

"No," replied Steele, puzzled at his host's tense manner, "but what I heard on the Albany interested me. It seems to be Windigo country among the Albany Ojibways—under a sort of taboo. It must be a serious handicap to your trade, although the very fact that you're here proves that it is not generally considered haunted."

"That is our problem, monsieur. The company rashly builds a post on this river which, for a hundred miles below the rapids here, is to the Ojibways a place of spirits; then sends me here to get the fur of the upper country. At Albany, they laugh at this talk of Windigo and spirits keeping the Indians from trading here. They even order me to send hunters to trap the valley below us—when they have avoided it for generations."

"They only betray their ignorance by belittling Indian superstition, sir. I was, followed and shot at on the Albany this summer for photographing some Ojibway children. They believed the lens was an evil eye and that the children would be bewitched."

the factor has his troubles, evidently, and is worried by them. What is the true inwardness?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

# DAIRY FACTS

## SANITARY FLOORS FOR DAIRY BARN

Sanitary floors are a first requirement to a cleanly dairy. Non-absorbent material and without crevices where dirt and filth can lodge is recommended. It should be easily washed and disinfected.

In building a dairy barn floor, all rubbish and refuse within the enclosure should be removed and the floor area graded to the required level, allowing, of course, for the thickness of the floor. The soil should be thoroughly compacted. If it is possible for water to get under the floor at any time, this possibility should be reduced by using a fill of clean gravel, cinders or crushed stone and providing suitable drainage. The gravel or cinder sub-base, if used, must be thoroughly compacted and consolidated by tamping or rolling.

Forms for defining floor slabs, alleys or other areas to be concreted should be of smooth lumber, rigidly braced in line and carefully set to proper grade. The manger curb is usually placed first. It should be not less than four inches thick and is usually made about six inches high on the stall side. Uprights supporting stanchions are of several types. Some are attached to anchors which are set in the curb and others are embedded in the concrete. Feed and litter alleys are usually placed after the curb, then the stall platform and manger are placed.

The length of stall platform, that is, the distance from manger curb to gutter, will depend upon the breed of cattle kept. For Jerseys or Guernseys the average length is about four feet eight inches; for Holsteins about five feet is necessary. The platform should be pitched about one inch from the curb toward the gutter.

The surface of the manger should be finished smooth, with corners carefully rounded to make cleaning out easy and to provide a comfortable surface for the animals to eat from. Litter and feed alleys should be finished with a wood float to secure an even but gritty surface, thus providing secure footing for the animals.

## Good Appearing Cows Not Always Most Profitable

In dairying it is entirely possible to get nothing for something. This is the conclusion of the New Jersey state dairy specialist after reviewing records of dairy herds in the Mercer County Cow-Testing association. It was found that though some cows had unsatiable appetites and good appearance they were niggardly in their milk output, whereas other cows eating but little more would give four and one-half times as much milk.

Three cows ate \$79 worth of feed apiece in one year and returned their owners 3,292 pounds of milk each. Two other cows each ate \$108 worth of feed and gave their owners 14,817 pounds of milk each. Thus, for 2.1 times as much feed the good cows gave four and one-half times as much milk.

By calculating further, the specialist found that it cost the owners of the poor cows \$2.40 in feed for each 100 pounds of milk, against \$1.13 for an equal amount of milk from the good cows. When labor, housing and haulage expenses were added, it was found that the cost of producing 100 pounds of milk with the poor cows was greater than prevailing sale prices. Hence, these low-yielding animals were eating up the profits made on the high-producers.

This is a clear case, concludes the state specialist, of wasting feed, labor and barn space on worthless cows, or of getting nothing for something.

## Save Young Live Stock to Increase Net Profit

Cutting down the high and costly death rate among infant live stock is one of the farm problems for which the farmer must apply the solution himself. The causes of early deaths in live stock fall into three general classes:

1. Conditions little influenced by treatment: Malformation, extreme feebleness or extreme prematurity, certain accidents during birth.

2. Conditions capable of considerable reduction, chiefly through proper hygiene sanitary isolation, and medical treatment: Tuberculosis, acute respiratory diseases, certain acute contagious diseases, some forms of animal parasitism.

3. Conditions capable of a very great reduction through proper feeding, care, and sanitation: Acute gastrointestinal diseases, colic troubles, prematurity (if not extreme), many forms of animal parasitism.

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## Some Bucket of Water

Robert M. Seebree alleges in a suit for \$3,000 damages against the Missouri Pacific that the station mistress at Nearman, Mo., threw a bucket of water out of the station door.

That the water scared a mule tied to the rear of his wagon.

That the mule then kicked a horse tied beside it.

That the horse then reared, scaring another horse hitched to his wagon.

That before it was stopped he was thrown from the wagon and his leg was broken.

One of the defenses of the railroad is that the water was dishwater. Therefore, it was not used in scrubbing the station and the railroad is not responsible for the long chain of circumstances alleged by Seebree.

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## Woodman Runs Wild

A woodsman in a Tokyo suburb suddenly stopped chopping down a tree and ran wildly down a street, waving his ax. Before he was overpowered he had killed one man and wounded twelve others with his weepen.

## Why Is This?

Although most people insist their feet grow hotter in warm weather when they wear shoes with composition soles, tests by the bureau of standards indicate the composite material does not conduct any more heat than leather.

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