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The Lost Line

Representative William S. Ware of Philadelphia said on the Atlantic City boardwalk:

"Look at those champion girl swimmers in their one-piece bathing suits doing swallow dives. There, in that wheel chair, are a couple of girl horse-back riders in white riding breeches. And there goes a girl in knickers—off for an all-day tramp, no doubt."

Representative Ware smiled and added:

"The one dividing line between the sexes is disappearing—the clothes line."

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W. N. U., San Francisco, No. 48-1925

The Valley of Voices

By GEORGE MARSH



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

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CHAPTER VI—Continued

"Will you promise me—that you will not—" He hardly knew what he wished to ask from the girl who so tensely listened. There had been nothing between them. He had no right—but in spite of his diffidence found himself begging: "You will not destroy yourself—that beautiful talent, that—soul, because you think to save your father?" He was talking recklessly now, all reticence gone. "No matter what happens to the post—what Lascelles tries to do, promise me that you will not throw your happiness, your life, to the winds. It is not necessary, as you may think. I have ample means, I will gladly finance your father—I have influence; I'll take it up with headquarters in Montreal. We'll beat Lascelles! Don't—don't destroy yourself, mademoiselle!"

As he finished, she was smiling at him through mist-blurred eyes, then rose and went to the window.

"You have not already?" he faltered, thinking of her letter to Albany.

From the window came the low answer, "I am the fiancée of Monsieur Lascelles."

"You are mad—mad," he groaned, stunned, unable to accept, now that he had heard it, what he had feared. "I had no right to ask you—what I did. But I could not help it, mademoiselle. I might have known—the heart of you—was dead. You have killed a beautiful thing."

She suddenly turned a tragic face. "Monsieur, you may wonder why I let you say these things, but you have guessed the reason," and she placed her hands on her breast, "the heart of me—is dead." And she left the room.

To remain longer under the factor's roof, to sit at dinner with this hopeless girl, who had bartered her happiness for her father's welfare, and the man who was brute enough to accept the sacrifice, was unthinkable, so Steele went to the little room which had been his since his coming, to pack his duffel bag. There he found Charlotte, waiting.

"You weesh for to maree ma'm'selle?" the Indian abruptly demanded. The question was startling, but did honor to the loyalty of the grave-faced woman who confronted him.

"She is to marry Monsieur Lascelles," said Steele gently, touched by the evident friendliness which prompted Charlotte to seek him out.

"She hate M'sieu Lascelles!" vehemently protested the Ojibway. "She cry an' cry w'en she send beam de letter. You are de good man, Michel say. Daveed tell you have beeg house, far away sout'. You tak' ma'm'selle, she t'ink you good man, she weel go wid you for your woman!"

Steele's pulse quickened at the thought. "Would she go with me, would she go with me?" he repeated to himself. "If I were man enough to take her from her father? She could never face a future with Lascelles!" Then his knowledge of Denise St. Onge asserted itself. "But no, she has given her word; and she'll keep it. She's that kind. She would never desert her father, and she's found herself to Lascelles. It's too late!"

Searching his face with eager eyes Charlotte waited for his answer.

"It's too late—Charlotte. Mademoiselle has already told the Frenchman that she will marry him."

The scowl of contempt which greeted his reply transformed the dark face of the Ojibway into that of a fury. She had placed her faith in this American, and he had failed her.

"Daveed tell me you are good man to fight—have de strong heart," she hurled at him. "Why you have de fear of dat leetle Frenchmans—are you leeg rabbit? Why you not tak' her away een de cano'? She weel go!"

Again, a fierce exultation swept him. Charlotte must know her mistress' secret thoughts to speak so confidently. What he had of late felt—sensed—in the presence of Denise St. Onge; what he had put aside as impossible, unbelievable—an illusion, based on his own emotions—might, after all, have been her instinctive call for help; the unvoiced reaching out of her heart to one who would understand her need. But he had failed her. The victim of his own lack of vanity, he had gone off up-

river and left her to solve her problem alone, to bind herself definitely to Lascelles, when, had he acted on his instincts, he might have saved her from herself. He had been blind—and lost.

"We must wait, Charlotte. What you tell me—about mademoiselle—did not—know. But don't lose heart. First, I've work to do. I'm going to catch that Windigo. Then—"

Steele did not finish, for the scowling face of the Ojibway woman went a sickly gray at the mention of the dread name, and she disappeared through the door.

As he hastily threw his clothes into the canvas bag, the words of Charlotte, "She weel go wid you for your woman," returned to mock him. Did the Indian really know, after all, or was she trying to force his hand? That this exquisite girl whom he had found in the northern forests, as one finds a jewel in the grass, should have come to care for a man of whom she knew so little, seemed unbelievable. And yet more than once since that day on the mountain he had surprised a look in her eyes which had strangely sent his pulses racing. And now that he knew he had been loving her all those precious days which he might have made indelible in memory—he faced the bitter conviction that Denise St. Onge, once she had given her word, would keep it.

He carried his bag to Michel's shack and announced to the surprised owner that he would eat and sleep there; then, while in search of David, he ran into St. Onge.

"Monsieur Steele," the old soldier gripped his guest's hand and vigorously shook it. "You have my extreme admiration—and gratitude. Mon Dieu! But you were magnificent. To see you my friend and guest, insulted before my eyes—and how you made him ridiculous!"

Steele's face hardened.

"But your daughter—what of her?" he demanded, almost fiercely, of



"You Forget That You Have No Right to Ask Anything of Me."

man whose eyes wavered before his cold glance.

"You have seen her?"

"Yes, she has told me. She's ruined herself—thrown away her happiness—her life."

"And all for me," sighed the father, "all for me!"

"But you knew she would do it—to protect your future with the company; and you allowed her to." Steele continued pitilessly, in a voice, low, but carrying the bitterness of gall in its tones. "Colonel St. Onge, you have permitted a beautiful soul to destroy itself. You—"

"Stop, monsieur!" St. Onge interrupted, in a voice broken with passion. "You do not know—and you are my friend, therefore I forget what you say. I have begged her not to do this—am prepared to leave the company. I will not allow such a thing. Why," and the factor shook his clenched fists in Steele's face. "I would kill that pig Lascelles before I gave her to him."

"But she has given herself to him, of her own free will, today. And she is a thoroughbred; she will keep her word."

St. Onge glared into Steele's immobile face. "She will never marry that canaille, Monsieur Steele," he said pointedly, "the St. Onges have always known how to defend their honor."

The two were interrupted by the appearance of Lascelles crossing the clearing, and Steele, in no mood to meet the subject of the conversation, left the excited factor awaiting the approach of the man who was exulting in his hard-won victory. As he turned away, he said: "I have moved my stuff to Michel's shack. It is needless for me to tell you how much I appreciate your hospitality and that of your daughter. You understand of course that I could not stay."

"Yes, monsieur. It would only be embarrassing to you and to me, but I regret deeply to have you go."

CHAPTER VII

The following morning the people of Walling River were at the river shore where three men stood beside a loaded canoe near which rested a company birch bark.

Then approaching from the factor's house appeared the figure of Denise St. Onge.

He had seen her for a moment that morning, for his contemplated journey to the Feather lakes and the autumn camps of the Ojibways, interrupted by their discovery of the day before, might admit of no return to the post before starting south. It all depended how early the winter broke. So he had called at the factor's to say good-by until the sled trails were hard in November. For late into the previous night he had sat with his two swart-faced companions planning many things, and the first of these was an early return to Walling River with the fastest team of dogs that money would buy in the Neptigon country. Another was a systematic running down of the mysterious marauder, on the snow, where his trail could not escape them; the last, and most vital to Brent Steele he touched upon only to the extent of assuring Michel that Lascelles should never succeed in his plan to force Denise St. Onge into a marriage to protect her father's future with the Revillon Freres, notwithstanding the fact that she had already assented to his wishes. And the lean half-breed had sprung to his feet with an oath, and wringing Steele's hand, cried: "Eef you do not come back, m'sieu, and he cum to tak' her to Albany, dey weel fin' dead man by name of Lascelles een hees bed at Wallin' Riviere."

"Never fear," Steele had answered, "David and I are coming back after Messieurs Lascelles and Windigo."

Steele was keenly curious of Denise St. Onge's motive in coming to the beach when he had already bade her good-by that morning at the house. He had said: "Mademoiselle, I am started again with David and may not return to Walling River before going south. Will you promise me this one thing?"

"Monsieur Steele," she had replied, so patently fearing what the American might say that she lost control of her voice. "You forget that you have no right to ask anything of me."

But he had boldly ignored her protest. "I ask you, Denise St. Onge, not to throw away your future—your life—if you must—until spring. I am coming back on the snow, in November, to clear up this mystery and—to save you from yourself." And without waiting for her reply, for he did not dare trust himself, had left her.

And now for some reason she was hurrying toward them, on a mission seemingly urgent. Brent Steele watched the approaching girl with high hope. David and Michel exchanged curious glances. Then she reached them.

"I could not have you go, Monsieur Steele," she said in her low, throaty voice, "without wishing you bon voyage." In her haste, a vagrant lock of black hair had loosed itself and she caught it up with her left hand, as she extended her right to Steele.

To her embarrassment he held the hand overlong in his as his eyes questioned hers.

"You asked me to make you a promise, monsieur," she said in a voice barely audible, looking from him to the hills to the south. "Well, I've come to say, au revoir. You have—my promise." And she swiftly disengaged her hand and had reached the clearing before Steele sensed to the full what her words had meant.

Then to Steele's brain, dazed with surprise and joy, returned the words of Charlotte: "She t'ink you good man, she weel go wid you for your woman." And he lifted his chest high with a deep breath, for he now believed Charlotte had known.

St. Onge and Lascelles left the trade-house and approached the waiting canoes.

"Good morning, gentlemen, you are late," greeted the man still in the clouds with the thought and picture of the girl who had but that moment entered her house.

"Good morning, monsieur," returned St. Onge. "Monsieur Lascelles has decided that he will not have time to go upriver."

Steele smiled sarcastically at his rival. The temptation to turn the tables was overpowering.

"Possibly Monsieur Lascelles hee too tender a heart to desire to look at a dead man—or is it his nose?"

Lascelles' face went purple. He choked, made an impulsive movement toward Steele who stood grinning, then gulped down his anger as David laughed outright in his face, while Michel turned his back. Too clever to make a scene in which he was bound to appear at a disadvantage, the inspector, now in control of himself, proceeded to take his revenge by saying:

"No, monsieur, but a soldier and gentleman always gives precedence to the ladies. I have but a few days to stay here and I have decided to spend them all in the company of a very lovely lady, my fiancée, Mademoiselle St. Onge."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Pimples



"Oh, why can't I have a skin like other girls? Why do I have to have these ugly pimples, blotches and blackheads?"

"If I could only find something that would clear up my skin and give me back my soft, rosy complexion, I know I would be the happiest girl in the world! What can I do?"

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And then this rich, red, pure blood feeds and nourishes the tissues of the skin and keeps it looking healthy.

That's all there is to it. Healthy, vigorous, red blood such as S. S. S. helps Nature build makes you healthy all over. It beautifies your skin—drives away pimples, blackheads, blotches, rash, boils and eczema—gives you back your appetite—builds firm, plump flesh and fills you full of new life and energy.

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