



Copyright, 1914, by the Wheeler Syndicate.

"You'd better pick out a wife and have a fire of your own. You will be more comfortable than with those young bucks. The maidens' fires—a sort of feast of the virgins, you know—are not lighted until full summer and the salmon, but I can give orders earlier if you say the word."

Smoke laughed and shook his head. "Remember," Snass concluded quietly, "Auton is the only one that ever got away. He was lucky, unusually lucky."

Her father had a will of iron, Labiskwee told Smoke. Everybody feared him. He was terrible when angry. There were the Porcupines. It was through them and through the Lusk-was that Snass traded his skins at the posts and got his supplies of ammunition and tobacco. He was always fair, but the chief of the Porcupines began to cheat, and after Snass had warned him twice he turned his log village, and over a dozen of the Porcupines were killed in the fight. But there was no more cheating. Once when she was a little girl there was one white man killed while trying to escape. No; her father did not do it, but he gave the order to the young men. No Indian ever disobeyed her father.

And the more Smoke learned from her the more the mystery of Snass deepened.

"And tell me if it is true," the girl was saying, "that there was a man and a woman whose names were Paolo and Francesca and who greatly loved each other?"

Smoke nodded. "Four Eyes told me all about it," she beamed happily. "And so he didn't make it up, after all. Then there is Tristan and Isolt, two Isoltas. It was very sad. But I should like to love that way. Do all the young men and women in the world do that? They don't here. They just get married. They don't seem to have time."

"I am English, and I will never marry an Indian. Would you? That is why I have not lighted my maiden's fire. Some of the young men are bothering father to make me do it. Libnah is one of them. He is a great hunter. And Mahkok comes around, singing songs. He is funny. Tonight, if you come by my tent after dark, you will hear him singing out in the cold. But father says I can do as I please, and so I shall not light my fire. You see when a girl makes up her mind to get married that is the way she lets young men know. And now do you know when you are in love-like Paolo and Francesca, I mean?"

Smoke was disconcerted by the clear gaze of her blue eyes. "Why, they say," he stammered, "those who are in love say it, that love is dearer than life. When one finds out that he or she likes somebody better than everybody else in the world—why, then, they know they are in love. You just know it; that's all."

"Once we hit out we'll sure have some tall runnin'," Shorty said dismally.

"The place is a big trap," Smoke agreed.

From the crest of a bald knob they gazed out over Snass' snowy domain. "What's entin' me is Danny McCan," Shorty confided to Smoke. "He's a weak brother on any trail. But he wears he knows the way out to the westward, and so we got to pull up with him or you'll sure get yours. It's a-comin' to you straight down the pike."

"What is it?" "You ain't heard the news? The bachelors told me. They just got the word. Tonight it comes off, though it's months ahead of the calendar."

"I'm waiting to hear."

"Well, Danny's wife just told the bachelors. An' the bachelors told me, of course, that the maidens' fire is due to be lighted tonight. That's all. Now how do you like it?"

"I don't get your drift, Shorty."

"Don't, eh? Why, it's plain open and shut. They's a skirt after you, an' that skirt is goin' to light a fire, an' that skirt's name is Labiskwee. Oh, I've been watchin' her watch you when you ain't lookin'. She ain't never lighted her fire. She said she wouldn't marry an Indian. An' now, when she lights her fire, it's a cinch it's my poor old friend Smoke."

"It sounds like a syllogism," Smoke said with a sinking heart, reviewing Labiskwee's actions of the past several days.

"Cinch is shorter to pronounce," Shorty returned. "An' that's always the way—just as we're workin' up our getaway—along comes a skirt to complicate everything. Hey! Listen!"

Three ancient squaws had halted midway between the bachelors' camp and the camp of McCan, and the oldest was declaiming in shrill falsetto: "Labiskwee, the daughter of Snass, the Mainmaker, the great chief, lights her first maidens' fire tonight. Maka, the daughter of Owit, the Wolf Kuo-nor—"

The recital ran through the names of a dozen maidens, and then the three heralds tottered on their way to make announcement at the next fires.

The bachelors, who had sworn youthful oaths to speak to no maiden, were uninterested in the approaching ceremony, and to show their disdain they made preparations for immediate departure on a mission set them by Snass and upon which they had planned to start the following morning. Not satisfied with the old hunters' estimates of the caribou, Snass had decided that the run was split. The task set the bachelors was to scout to the north and west in quest of the second division of the great herd.

Smoke, troubled by Labiskwee's fire lighting, announced that he would accompany the bachelors. But first he talked with Shorty and with McCan. "You be there on the third day, Smoke," Shorty said. "We'll have the outfit an' the dogs."

"But remember," Smoke cautioned, "if there is any slipup in meeting me, you keep on going and get out to the westward."

The damnable part of it was that Labiskwee was so delightful. She was good to look upon. Despite the hurt to his self-esteem of every moment spent with her, he pleased in every such moment. For the first time in his life he was really learning woman, and so clear was Labiskwee's soul, so appalling in its innocence and ignorance, that he could not misread a line of it. All the pristine goodness of her sex was in her, uncluttered by the conventionality of knowledge or the deceit of self-protection.

And Smoke looked back to himself. He remembered back to all he knew of Joy Gastell and he knew that he loved her. Yet he delighted in Labiskwee. And what was this feeling of delight but love? He could demure it by no less a name. Love it was. Love it must be. And he was shocked to the roots of his soul by the discovery of this polygamist strain in his nature.

"There must be many women in the world," she said one day. "And women like me. Many women must have liked you. Tell me."

He did not reply. "Tell me," she insisted, "is it not so?" "I have never married," he evaded. "And there is no one else? No other Isolt out there beyond the mountains?"

Then it was that Smoke knew himself a coward. He lied. Reluctantly he did it, but he lied. He shook his head with a slow, indolent smile, and in his face was more of fondness than he dreamed as he noted Labiskwee's swift joy transfiguration.

He excused himself to himself. His reasoning was deceitful beyond dispute, and yet he was not Spartan enough to strike this child woman a quivering heart stroke.

Snass, too, was a perturbing factor in the problem. Little escaped his keen black eyes, and he spoke significantly. "No man cares to see his daughter married," he said to Smoke. "At least, no man of imagination. Just the same in the natural order of life Margaret must marry some time."

A pause fell. There was a burst of chiding and sly laughter from Labiskwee's tent, where she played with a new caught wolf cub. A spasm of pain twitched Snass' face.

"I can stand it," he muttered grimly. "Margaret must be married, and it is my fortune, and hers, that you are here. I had little hopes of Four Eyes. McCan was so hopeless I turned him over to a squaw who had lighted her twenty seasons. If it hadn't been you it would have been an Indian. Labiskwee might have become the father of my grand-children."

And then Labiskwee came from her tent to the fire, the wolf cub in her arms, drawn, as by a magnet, to gaze upon the man in her eyes the love that art had never taught her to hide.

world. Better than my father I love. It is very strange. I love as Francesca loved, as Isent loved. Old Four Eyes spoke true. Indians do not love this way. But my eyes are blue, and I am white. We are white, you and I."

Smoke had never been proposed to in his life, and he was unable to meet the situation. Worse, it was not even a proposal. His acceptance was taken for granted. So thoroughly was it all arranged in Labiskwee's mind, so warm was the light in her eyes that he was amazed that she did not throw her arms around him and rest her head on his shoulder. Then he realized, despite her candor of love, that she did not know the pretty ways of love. Among the primitive savages such ways did not obtain. She had had no chance to learn.

She prattled on, chanting the happy burden of her love, while he strove to grip himself in the effort somehow to wound her with the truth. And then Snass strode in to the fire through the falling snowflakes, and Smoke's opportunity was lost.

"Good evening," Snass burred gruffly. "Your partner has made a mess of it. I am glad you had better sense."

"You might tell me what's happened," Smoke urged.

The dash of white teeth through the stained beard was not pleasant. "Certainly, I'll tell you. Your partner has killed one of my people. That sniveling shrimp, McCan, deserted at the first shot. He'll never run away again. But my hunters have got your partner in the mountains, and they'll get him. He'll never make the Yukon basin. As for you, from now on you sleep at my fire. And there'll be no more scouting with the young men. I shall have my eye on you."

Smoke's new situation at Snass' fire was embarrassing. He saw more of Labiskwee than ever. In its sweetness and innocence the frankness of her love glances. Every look was a caress. A score of times he nervously tried to tell her of Joy Gastell, and a score of times he discovered that he was a coward.

Smoke found it was in the morning. Labiskwee rejoined him and led him on through the sleeping camp.

"Now we can talk," she said when the last fire had been left half a mile behind.

In the starlight, feeling him, Smoke noted for the first time that her arms were burdened, and on feeling, discovered she carried his snowshoes, a rifle, two belts of ammunition and his sleeping robes.

"I have everything fixed," she said, with a happy little laugh. "I have been two days making the cache. There is meat, even flour, matches and skis, which go best on the hard crust, and, when they break through, the webs will hold on longer. Oh, I do know snow travel, and we shall go fast, my lover."

Smoke checked his speech. That she had been arranging his escape was surprise enough, but that she had planned to go with him was more than he was prepared for. Unable to plan immediate action, he gently, one by one, took her burdens from her. He put his arms around her and pressed her close, and still he could not think what to do.

"God is good," she whispered. "He sent me a lover."

Yet Smoke was brave enough not to suggest his going alone. And ere he spoke he saw all his memory of the bright world reel and fade.

"We will go back, Labiskwee," he said. "You will be my wife, and we shall live always with the Caribou people."

"No no!" And her body, in the circle of his arm, resisted his proposal. "I know, I have thought much. The hunger for the world would come upon you, and in the long nights it would devour your heart. Four Eyes died of hunger for the world, so would you die. And I will not have you die. We will go on across the snow mountains on the south traverse."

"Dear, listen," he urged. "We must go back."

She pressed her mitten against his lips to prevent further speech. "You love me. Say that you love me."

"I do love you, Labiskwee. You are my wonderful sweetheart."

Again the mitten was a caressing obstacle to utterance. "We shall go on to the cache," she said with decision. "It would be a great wrong to you to go back. I—I am only a wild girl, and I am afraid of the world, but I am more afraid for you. You see, it is as you told me. I love you more than anybody else in the world. I love you more than myself. The Indian language is not a good language. The English language is not a good language. The thoughts in my heart for you, as bright and as many as the stars—there is no language for them. How can I tell you them? They are there—see?"

As she spoke she slipped the mitten from her hand and thrust the hand inside the warmth of her parka until it rested against her breast. Tightly and steadily she pressed his hand in its position. And in the long silence he felt the beat, beat of her heart and knew that every beat of it was love. And then slowly, almost imperceptibly, still holding his hand, her body began to incline away from his and toward the direction of the cache. Nor would he resist. It was as if he were drawn by her heart itself, so nearly lay in the hollow of his hand.

So firm was the crust that they slid along rapidly on their skis.

"Just here, in the trees, is the cache," Labiskwee told Smoke.

The next moment she caught his arm with a startle of surprise. The flames of a small fire were dancing merrily, and crouched by the fire was McCan. "I was minded you'd run without me," McCan explained when they came up, his small peering eyes glimmering

with cunning. "So I kept an eye on the girl, an' when I seen her cabin' skis an' grub I was on. I've brought my own skis an' webs an' grub. Will we be startin' now?"

Labiskwee looked swift consternation at Smoke, as swiftly achieved a judgment on the matter and spoke.

"McCan, you are a dog!" she hissed, and her eyes were savage with anger. "I know it is in your heart to raise the camp if we don't take you. Very well. We must take you. But you know my father. I am like my father. You will do your share of the work. You will obey. And if you play one dirty trick it would be better for you if you had never run."

Daylight found them in the belt of foothills that lay between the rolling country and the mountains. McCan suggested breakfast, but they held on.

Labiskwee explained to Smoke her knowledge of the country and the way she planned to baffle pursuit. There were but two ways out, one west, the other south. Snass would immediately dispatch parties of young men to guard the two trails. But there was another way south. True, it did no more than penetrate halfway into the high mountains; then, twisting to the west and crossing three divides, it joined the regular trail. When the young men found no traces on the regular trail they would turn back in the belief that the escape had been made by the west traverse, never dreaming that the runners had ventured the harder and longer way around.

Glancing back at McCan, in the rear, Labiskwee spoke in an undertone to Smoke. "He is eating," she said. "It is not good."

Smoke looked. The man was secretly munching carbon smut from the pocketful he carried.

"No eating between meals," he commanded. "There's no game in the country ahead, and the grub will have to be whacked in equal rations from the start. The only way you can travel with us is by playing fair."

By 1 o'clock the crust had thawed so that the skis broke through, and before 2 o'clock the web shoes were breaking through. Camp was made and the first meal eaten. Smoke took stock of the food. McCan's supply was a disappointment. So many silver fox skins had he stuffed into the bottom of the meat bag that there was little space left for meat.

Enough food for a month, with careful husbanding and appetites that never blunted their edge, was Smoke's and Labiskwee's judgment. Smoke apportioned the weight and bulk of the packs, yielding in the end to Labiskwee's insistence that she, too, should carry a pack.

Next day the stream shallowed out to a wide mountain valley, and they were already breaking through the crust on the flats when they gained the harder surface of the slope of the divide.

"Ten minutes later, and we wouldn't be caught in Smoke's arms, where she surrendered herself, sobbing with the futility of her rage."

"Oh, lover, it is not the food!" she panted. "It is you, your life. The dog! He is eating you, he is eating you!"

It was a morning start, still, clear blue above, with white sun dazzle on the snow. The way led up a long wide slope of crust. They moved like weary ghosts in a dead world.

"Something is going to happen," Labiskwee said. Her hand fumbled and groped in the hood of her parka, and she drew forth a pouch that she placed in his hand. "And now your lips, my lover. Your lips on my lips and your hand on my heart."

And in that long kiss darkness came upon him again, and when again he was conscious he knew that he was to die. He was wearily glad that he was to die.

"The young men," said Labiskwee. "They are waiting to their lips." Smoke said. "They will never gain the hard footing this day. We have hours the start of them. Come on, McCan. Buck up. We don't eat till we can't travel."

In the higher valley in which they now found themselves the crust did not break till 3 in the afternoon, at which time they managed to gain the shadow of a mountain where the crust was already freezing again.

Black darkness came on, after a long twilight, at 9 o'clock, when they made camp in a clump of dwarf spruce. McCan was helpless. The day's march had been exhausting, but in addition, despite his nine years' experience in the arctic, he had been eating snow and was in agony with his parched and burning mouth. He crouched by the fire and groaned while they made the camp.

In the night came wind and snow, and through the day of blizzard they fought their way blindly, missing the turn of the way that led up a small stream and crossed a divide to the west. For two more days they wandered, crossing other and wrong di-

vides, and in those two days they dropped spring behind and climbed up into the abode of winter.

"The young men have lost our trail, an' what's to stop us restin' a day?" McCan begged.

But no rest was accorded. Smoke and Labiskwee knew their danger. They were lost in the high mountains, and they had seen no game nor signs of game. Day after day they struggled on through an iron configuration of landscape that compelled them to labyrinthine canyons and valleys that led rarely to the west. The terrible toll and the cold ate up energy, yet they cut down the size of the ration they permitted themselves.

One night Smoke was awakened by a sound of struggling. Distinctly he heard a gasping and strangling from where McCan slept. Kicking the fire into flame, by its light he saw Labiskwee, her hands at the man's throat and forcing from his mouth a chunk of partly chewed meat. Even as Smoke saw this her hand went to her hip and flashed with the sheath knife in it.

"Labiskwee!" Smoke cried, and his voice was peremptory.

The hand hesitated.

"Don't!" he said, coming to her side. She was shaking with anger, but the hand, after hesitating a moment longer, descended reluctantly to the sheath.

McCan sat up, whimpering and snarling. "Where did you get it?" Smoke demanded.

"Feel around his body," Labiskwee said.

CHAPTER XXIV. Like Weary Ghosts in a Dead World.

McCan strove to struggle, but Smoke gripped him cruelly and searched him, drawing forth from under his arm-pit, where it had been thawed by the heat of his body, a strip of caribou ment. A quick exclamation from Labiskwee drew Smoke's attention. She had sprung to McCan's pack and was opening it. Instead of ment out poured moss, spruce needles, chips—all the light refuse that had taken the place of the meat and given the pack its due proportion minus its weight.

Again Labiskwee's hand went to her hip, and she flew at the culprit, only to

be caught in Smoke's arms, where she surrendered herself, sobbing with the futility of her rage.

"Oh, lover, it is not the food!" she panted. "It is you, your life. The dog! He is eating you, he is eating you!"

It was a morning start, still, clear blue above, with white sun dazzle on the snow. The way led up a long wide slope of crust. They moved like weary ghosts in a dead world.

"Something is going to happen," Labiskwee said. Her hand fumbled and groped in the hood of her parka, and she drew forth a pouch that she placed in his hand. "And now your lips, my lover. Your lips on my lips and your hand on my heart."

And in that long kiss darkness came upon him again, and when again he was conscious he knew that he was to die. He was wearily glad that he was to die.

"The young men," said Labiskwee. "They are waiting to their lips." Smoke said. "They will never gain the hard footing this day. We have hours the start of them. Come on, McCan. Buck up. We don't eat till we can't travel."

In the higher valley in which they now found themselves the crust did not break till 3 in the afternoon, at which time they managed to gain the shadow of a mountain where the crust was already freezing again.

Black darkness came on, after a long twilight, at 9 o'clock, when they made camp in a clump of dwarf spruce. McCan was helpless. The day's march had been exhausting, but in addition, despite his nine years' experience in the arctic, he had been eating snow and was in agony with his parched and burning mouth. He crouched by the fire and groaned while they made the camp.

In the night came wind and snow, and through the day of blizzard they fought their way blindly, missing the turn of the way that led up a small stream and crossed a divide to the west. For two more days they wandered, crossing other and wrong di-

vides, and in those two days they dropped spring behind and climbed up into the abode of winter.

"The young men have lost our trail, an' what's to stop us restin' a day?" McCan begged.

vides, and in those two days they dropped spring behind and climbed up into the abode of winter.

"The young men have lost our trail, an' what's to stop us restin' a day?" McCan begged.

But no rest was accorded. Smoke and Labiskwee knew their danger. They were lost in the high mountains, and they had seen no game nor signs of game. Day after day they struggled on through an iron configuration of landscape that compelled them to labyrinthine canyons and valleys that led rarely to the west. The terrible toll and the cold ate up energy, yet they cut down the size of the ration they permitted themselves.

One night Smoke was awakened by a sound of struggling. Distinctly he heard a gasping and strangling from where McCan slept. Kicking the fire into flame, by its light he saw Labiskwee, her hands at the man's throat and forcing from his mouth a chunk of partly chewed meat. Even as Smoke saw this her hand went to her hip and flashed with the sheath knife in it.

"Labiskwee!" Smoke cried, and his voice was peremptory.

The hand hesitated.

"Don't!" he said, coming to her side. She was shaking with anger, but the hand, after hesitating a moment longer, descended reluctantly to the sheath.

McCan sat up, whimpering and snarling. "Where did you get it?" Smoke demanded.

"Feel around his body," Labiskwee said.

CHAPTER XXIV. Like Weary Ghosts in a Dead World.

McCan strove to struggle, but Smoke gripped him cruelly and searched him, drawing forth from under his arm-pit, where it had been thawed by the heat of his body, a strip of caribou ment. A quick exclamation from Labiskwee drew Smoke's attention. She had sprung to McCan's pack and was opening it. Instead of ment out poured moss, spruce needles, chips—all the light refuse that had taken the place of the meat and given the pack its due proportion minus its weight.

Again Labiskwee's hand went to her hip, and she flew at the culprit, only to

be caught in Smoke's arms, where she surrendered herself, sobbing with the futility of her rage.

"Oh, lover, it is not the food!" she panted. "It is you, your life. The dog! He is eating you, he is eating you!"

It was a morning start, still, clear blue above, with white sun dazzle on the snow. The way led up a long wide slope of crust. They moved like weary ghosts in a dead world.

"Something is going to happen," Labiskwee said. Her hand fumbled and groped in the hood of her parka, and she drew forth a pouch that she placed in his hand. "And now your lips, my lover. Your lips on my lips and your hand on my heart."

And in that long kiss darkness came upon him again, and when again he was conscious he knew that he was to die. He was wearily glad that he was to die.

"The young men," said Labiskwee. "They are waiting to their lips." Smoke said. "They will never gain the hard footing this day. We have hours the start of them. Come on, McCan. Buck up. We don't eat till we can't travel."

In the higher valley in which they now found themselves the crust did not break till 3 in the afternoon, at which time they managed to gain the shadow of a mountain where the crust was already freezing again.

Black darkness came on, after a long twilight, at 9 o'clock, when they made camp in a clump of dwarf spruce. McCan was helpless. The day's march had been exhausting, but in addition, despite his nine years' experience in the arctic, he had been eating snow and was in agony with his parched and burning mouth. He crouched by the fire and groaned while they made the camp.

In the night came wind and snow, and through the day of blizzard they fought their way blindly, missing the turn of the way that led up a small stream and crossed a divide to the west. For two more days they wandered, crossing other and wrong di-



A Galley o' Fun!

THE AVERAGE. The average man proposes once. The average woman takes him. If he won't propose (Lord only knows) just how 'tis done) she makes him.

The newest fashion, like any other new thing, will always arouse somebody's misgivings. Once, no doubt there were those to whom even a fig-leaf looked extreme.

VERY LIKELY.



Cousin Silas (reading)—It says in his here paper that a flea kin jump two thousand times its own length. Uncle Heck—That's probably why we never hear of a flea getting run over by an automobile!

HOW TO KEEP A FRIEND.

Always ask him how much he won at poker, and express surprise if he says he lost.

Tell him he looks well in any old hat if he asks your opinion of his new headpiece.

Agree with him that his home town is a good place to come from, and don't emphasize "come."

Never try to borrow money.

Don't criticize his neckties or his moustache.

Don't correct his French.

Laugh when he tells a joke, but don't try to tell him any.

Let him alone when he becomes foolish about some girl.

Ask him why he never pursued the study of music when he tries to show you how the latest song-hit goes, and don't smile when you do it.

Assure him that you couldn't think of presuming to advise him if he asks your opinion on any weighty subject or the stock market, for example.

Obey these rules, and he will tell your acquaintances that you are a Good Guy, but absolutely colorless.

ROY R. ATKINSON.

EXPLAINED.

Chinese Guide—There is a legend, sir, that at certain times the god rains money upon this region.

American Tourist—Huh! Get the idea out of your head right now. That's only the money that's been sunk in American gold mines coming through!



Seeing America First.

IN LILAC TIME.

Just such a day as this, perhaps, Of mist and driving rain, A hundred years ago they stood By this old window-pane: Two lovers leaning here to gaze Together at the rain.

Perhaps it was the lilac storm As now. Look! Do you see The lilac branches toss and wave Their plumes on every tree? Whom are they beckoning? Two ghosts Unseen by you and me.

I think the fire blazed on the heart's As now, right cheerily, You portraits on the wall, then fresh Looked down benignantly, And then, I think, she raised her eyes To his quite suddenly.

Two lovers leaning here to look Out of the self-same pane Down the broad old gravel walk, Splashed with the drops of rain That dripped from off the lilacs, Or dashed against the pane.

And when they dropped, as suddenly, Upon the window-pane, His heart began to beat so fast He could not hear the rain, Or see the purple lilacs brush Against the window-pane.

There, drop the curtain, dear! We have No right to look again At those old lovers leaning there Forgetful of the rain. Yet, see! Two names—and here's a date Scratched on the window-pane.

NO CLUE. Stranger—Yes, I have the general location of my friend's building, and the name of the street, but I can't find the place.

Citizen—Haven't you anything more definite?

Stranger—Nothing except the architect's print of how the finished building would look.

Our Want Ads are Worth Crowing About Because they are bound to bring the Results you want Try One to-Morrow

Marshfield Record: Henry Sengstacken, this morning was in receipt of a message from E. H. Dodd, the head of all Mare Island wireless matters, saying Lieutenant Blankenship and Engineer Hascomb were leaving San Francisco and would likely be here tomorrow. The gentlemen are coming with instructions to look over