



# THE RIVER of SKULLS

by George Marsh

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WNU SERVICE

CHAPTER XV—Continued

Nearing the camp of McQueen, Alan and Noel separated to close in with cocked rifles from different angles.

At last Alan stood where he commanded a view of the fire which lit the surrounding trees with its flickering glow. Near the fire a tarpaulin, banked with snow, had been stretched across two saplings to reflect the heat. In the snow hole, beside the fire, huddled a bulky figure in hooded parka. Beyond, in the trail from the shore, stood the loaded sled. The four dogs, too exhausted to note the silent approach of the stalkers, lay somewhere asleep in the snow.

The shed tent faced away from the anxious eyes of the man who sought the girl's familiar parka. He could not see her. Under that snow-banked canvas Heather doubtless slept, dead with fatigue. He moved closer through the black murk of the spruce and stood directly behind the man hunched at the fire. This was McQueen. Where was Slade?

"Well, Tom," mumbled the man in the parka, "y' wouldn't listen 'r reason. Got tricky! Now you're lyin' out tonight—payin' for it! It's a cold bed out there, eh Tom?" A belowlow of a laugh followed.

"Figgered on John McCord's gold and his girl, too, Tom, old pal!" chuckled McQueen. "I said: 'Hands off her!' But y' were too smart—got tricky! Well, Trudeau got his and now—y' got yours! The gold's mine—all mine, Tom—and her, too!"

McQueen twisted around where he sat and faced the river shore. "Sleepin' warm, Tom?" he jeered. "If you're cold, I'll bring your bag!"

For a space he muttered into his hood before he went on, aloud, talking into the fire: "With this Indian fish and meat I'll reach the cache. Then, Cameron, good-by to you! Heavy chance you had—with four dogs! We started with six," he chuckled, "and got a present of six more with fish and meat thrown in. Pity you didn't get what the Indians got at the bend! Too bad it wasn't you, Cameron—too bad!"

Thirty feet from the man raving at the fire a rifle covered the middle of his back. But the shed tent, beyond, was in the line of fire.

Then a husky somewhere in the snow suddenly waked and snarled. The husky yelped feebly, then was silent. There was no sound from the other dogs, too dead to stir from their beds.

McQueen got stiffly to his feet and fumbled in his parka as he squinted into the blackness beyond the circle of fire glow, listening. He swung around and stared toward the river shore.

The rifle now covered his heart. "You here, Cameron?" he roared. "Well, you're too late!" Drawing a black automatic from his parka, he started toward the snow-banked tent. "Come and get her, now!"

Before the man in the murk could fire, a black body lunged from the gloom and catapulted onto McQueen's back hurling him headlong into the snow. There was the muffled explosion of the pistol as a knife flashed in the firelight, flashed again and again. Then the dogs broke loose from the spruce beyond the shed.

A girl's voice cried: "Alan! Alan!" And the yearning arms of Cameron reached her.

Above the sprawled body of McQueen a Montagnais, hollow eyes glittering, stood, stiff as a spruce, while he held the haft of his knife to his forehead and repeated:

"Sleep well, John McCord and Naylor!"

"Heather!" Alan held the girl in the sleeping bag to his pounding heart.

"You came—at last!" she sobbed, hysterically, clinging to his neck. "It's been so long, Alan—so long! I was asleep! Then I heard your name and saw Noel leap."

Dumb with the wild joy and emotion that choked him, he gripped her in his shaking arms, as if he feared he would lose her, kissing her thin face again and again.

"I've loved you every minute—through those awful days," she whispered, "hoping and praying that you'd come—come soon! It was so awful to leave poor Dad—lying there in the snow! They shot him but he fought them until—he died. And I had to leave him there! Oh, it was so hard to leave him!"

"He was unconscious—not dead," said Alan. "That night he died in my arms. Before he died, he smiled and whispered, 'Heather!'"

"Dear, dear old Dad!" The stricken girl gave herself up to her grief. When the paroxysm of sobbing ceased, she said, wearily: "I'm so tired—so tired! I walked and ran—most all the way—except on the big lake. They let me ride there!"

"You're going to rest now—for days, dear. We're all going to rest."

"You're so thin, Alan! You and Noel and the dogs must have killed yourselves to reach us. Rough and He pressed his face close to hers as he said: "You'd always think of them—our dogs! They're down the

shore—worked out, but all right. Now you stay here and keep warm while I bring up the dogs."

Before he left he asked her: "Do you believe I love you, now?"

She impulsively drew him close to her. "I knew you did, that day at the camp when you took me in your arms, but I'd been so hurt. I've loved you so long—ever since you left us on the ice to go to Fort George."

He kissed her, then pushed back her hood to touch the thick gold of her hair. Replacing the hood he suddenly sensed the ugliness of the sprawled shape beyond them in the snow. Standing by the fire on which he had placed fresh wood, Noel waited to speak to her, but Heather spoke first.

"Noel, Noel!" she cried. "Noel, come here!"

Heather impulsively reached and hugged the embarrassed Montagnais.

"Thank you, Noel! Oh, thank you for what you've done for me! You're both so thin; you've worked so hard! It makes me cry!" And she burst into tears.

"'Eet was wort' all de work, Heather—to get you!" Noel's bony face shaped a grin, but there were tears in his winking eyes.

The men placed McQueen down on the river shore beside the body of



A black body lunged from the gloom and catapulted onto McQueen's back.

the partner he had shot while Heather slept, then Alan went for his dogs. Somewhere back in the bush the Indian huskies again lay quiet, indifferent to the actions of the strange masters.

When Alan brought his weary and stiff dogs up to the camp with the sled, a hooded figure stood on the ice.

"We'll have to wire the dogs away from the camp, tonight, Noel," he said. "They'll pitch on those Indian scrubs if they're loose."

With a laugh the hooded shape moved through the gloom to the Ungavas.

"Rough! It's Heather!" she cried, dropping her mittens and thrusting her hands at the doubtful lead-dog. "Powder! Shot! Rogue! It's Heather! Don't you know Heather?"

Sniffs, whines, then a mad chorus of yelps greeted her as the dogs recognized their old playmate. Trail stiff as they were, the four emaciated Ungavas overwhelmed her with the pawing of fore-feet, nuzzling muzzles and the swift thrusts of red tongues.

In the crook of Alan's right arm, she walked slowly back to camp where Noel had steaming tea and caribou broth waiting for them.

For two days the happy man and girl and the gaunt Ungavas ate and rested in a new camp across the river for there was plenty of Naskapi dried caribou and fish on McQueen's sled with the eight bags of gold. There, while Heather rested in her sleeping bag before the fire, she and Alan talked of John McCord and the long race up the Koksoak.

"You see they didn't know I had a pistol, Alan," she explained. "I had no chance to help Dad, that morning. They caught me in my sleeping bag. But, somehow, poor Dad broke away from the tent and shot it out with them. When they took me away, I had my pistol under my coat. I knew I'd need it."

"Then, during that drifter," she went on, "while McQueen and Slade slept, I waked up in my bag to see that evil-faced halfbreed watching me. I tried to wake the others, but they were dead with sleep. I had to shoot—him—Alan!"

"Slade was scared and wanted to take my gun," she continued, "but McQueen wouldn't let him. He told me to shoot Slade if he bothered me. I wouldn't have given it up—I'd have shot, first! At the last they were both out of their heads—always watching the back trail, afraid you were coming. Yet they insisted they were fifty miles ahead of you. That's how they ambushed the Naskapi—watching for you."

"When we reached the Naskapi

trail, Heather, I was almost kisk-wew, as Noel says."

"They were terribly afraid of you, Alan," she said. "They had heard at Fort George that you were the best shot on the coast. We had such a long start it seemed almost impossible for you to catch us, and I grew so tired. The last day I lost hope and decided to shoot myself, as McQueen and Slade quarreled. They went mad, both of them. I knew I'd have to use my gun—some day, soon. Then I waked to hear McQueen call your name and saw Noel leap from the shadows."

With the bribe of frequent feedings of fish, Noel had won over the shy Indian dogs and, when the party started leisurely for the cache on the big lake, he followed Heather and the gold on Alan's sled with a team of his own. At the cache they rested again while they revelled in flour, sugar and pemmican, and dogs and men rapidly put on weight. Slowly but surely the superb vitality of the exhausted girl was working its cure. By the time they reached the cabin on the Talking, which, to their surprise, McQueen had not burned, she had recovered her strength. The shadows had left her violet eyes and the dimples were again in her cheeks.

There they waited two weeks to hunt deer and net fish, under the ice, for dog-food for the long trip to the coast.

One night when the stars swarmed low over the valley and the aurora glowed in the north, Heather, Alan and Rough stood on the river ice as the frozen feather of a moon hung above the western tundra.

The girl in the hooded parka

gazed for a space at the flickering lights on the horizon.

"He wanted this, Alan. Dad told me, more than once, he wanted it. He almost worshiped you. He wanted you and me to have this gold together—to be rich."

"He knew before he died, I loved you," said the man. "I told him, and I promised him I'd get you. He smiled. It comforted him."

"Daddy! Daddy!" For a space the girl's grief swept her. Then she regained her self-control in the refuge of his circling arms.

"And now I've got you, Miss Heather McCord. No matter how hard you struggle you can never get away from me. Whether you like it or not, you're bound straight for Fort George with eight bags of nuggets and gold dust. What a terrible fate!"

"It sounds pretty wonderful to me!" she whispered. "But I haven't told you the worst of it. A friend of mine by the name of Stanton, an awful man who wears black clothes, is going to take your name away from you. When he's through talking, you'll be poor Heather Cameron."

"Heather Cameron," she repeated, her face radiant with happiness. "What a beautiful name!"

Noel, at the water hole, smiled, as he saw, above him on the river, a hooded shape take another hooded shape in its arms while two wolf-rimmed hoods were blended into one, and a great, black dog, standing on his hind legs, pawed at the motionless figures, demanding attention from the two humans he loved.

(THE END.)

## American Sucker, a Unique Fish Which Carries Own Bait, Greed and Dishonesty

Although more than 25,000 different varieties of fish already have been catalogued and new types constantly are being brought to light there is only one species, which carries its own bait.

This unique fish is commonly known as the sucker and the bait is a mixture of greed and dishonesty, says a writer in the Chicago Daily News.

Thousands of these fish are hooked every year by con men who, although using a variety of lines, toss out the same old hook which has caught the over-greedy suckers for generations. The fishermen themselves have a very low code of morals but they live up to it and do not class themselves with crooks or thieves.

"We just work the suckers," one remarked, "and if the fish wasn't perfectly willing to grab off some other sucker's kale he wouldn't take the hook."

"Farmers bite? I should say not," he replied in answer to a query as to where the best fishing grounds were. "Country folk work hard for their money and want to investigate before they lay out a dollar. The big cities are filled with fish that have the bait in plain sight and all one needs to land them is a good line and a fairly strong hook."

"What chance would a guy have to take a roll of 'silk,' cut it up into dress lengths, and then go to some little country town and try to sell

these dress goods as material which had been smuggled through the customs. The dear old lady would go to the phone and give three long rings and a short one and the entire town would know that a smuggler was sitting in her kitchen and the town marshal would be on the scene before you could say Jack Robinson with your mouth open."

"When the 'silk' was taken down to the general store, and found to have been grown in the Carolinas, the fisherman would be called on to change his line and hook for a heavy sledge hammer and be sentenced to make canary bird tombstones out of big granite rocks."

"I can take those same 'silks' into New York, Chicago or almost any other big town, put on some oily, soiled overalls and a blue flannel shirt and hand out a line about having just come off an ocean steamship and succeeded in smuggling goods through the customs and I will hook from 10 to 20 fish in a couple of hours."

Con men who invent new tackle look in scorn on those who persist in employing lines and hooks which have been used for generations. It is almost unbelievable that a man who had made a success of a legitimate business to the extent of a net egg of \$20,000 to \$50,000 would lay his entire savings on the line in some game which has received so much publicity in the press that the average reader should recognize "line and hook" at once.

## She was beautiful

... but not dumb. Marne Van Stratten won a national beauty contest and a \$500-per-week movie contract not because she was more beautiful than the others but because of her haughty indifference. The boss of Purity Pictures called it the "Park avenue manner." He showered her with diamonds and orchids and got rebuffs in return. Was her cold indifference a pose, or was she capable of affection when the right man came along? You'll find out in "MAIDEN EFFORT," by Samuel Hopkins Adams, who wrote "It Happened One Night."

Starts next issue

# WHAT to EAT and WHY

## C. Houston Goudiss Describes Correct Diet for Cool Weather; Explains How to Keep Warm and Well

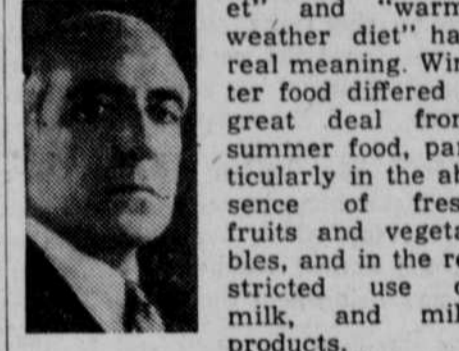
By C. HOUSTON GOUDISS

MANY people look upon fall weather with foreboding. They cannot observe leaves on the ground without a feeling of vague uneasiness—and the sight of brown and barren fields fills them with desolation.

This, I think, is a throwback to an earlier day when the advent of cool weather foretold long months of bitterly cold days in draughty, inadequately heated houses. And the lack of adequate heat was only one of many difficulties. The principal reason for fearing cold weather is another heritage from the past.

### Limited Diet of an Earlier Day

There was a time within memory of many of us when the terms



"cold-weather diet" and "warm-weather diet" had real meaning. Winter food differed a great deal from summer food, particularly in the absence of fresh fruits and vegetables, and in the restricted use of milk, and milk products.

The limited diet of winter was enforced by conditions of that period. Methods of production, transportation, refrigeration and storage of foods, which are commonplace today, were then unknown.

Fruits and vegetables were consumed when and where they were grown, and when cold weather prevented their growth, they were not available. The canning industry was young and the grocery store in cold weather presented a far different appearance from the modern food store in which the shelves are lined, row upon row, with shining cans of the finest fruits and vegetables to be found anywhere in the world, plus an amazing assortment of prepared milks.

It was an accepted fact that fruits, vegetables, and the generous use of milk belonged to the summer months, while in winter everyone ate an unbalanced diet. As a result of lacking these essential protective foods, health went down rapidly from late fall to early spring.

The winter diet was deficient in minerals and vitamins, which science has proven to be the protectors of health, barriers against disease, sustainers of life. But in those days, vitamins were unknown and very little had been learned about minerals. Therefore, when people became ill during cold weather, the natural conclusion was that sickness was inevitable during the winter season.

### Cold Weather Really a Tonic

Times have changed. Scientific knowledge has increased. The genius of man has asserted itself in mechanical advancement. The expressions, "cold-weather diet" and "warm-weather diet," have lost their former meaning.

Almost without exception, the protective foods are available throughout the year, no matter where we live.

It is therefore possible to protect the health by a balanced diet all the year 'round, and to benefit by the tonic effect of cold weather. For, contrary to popular belief, cold weather is beneficial, and not harmful, to healthy people.

Cold speeds up all the activities of the body. The circulation is improved, muscle tone is increased, and digestion, absorption and elimination are stimulated. Even prolonged cold is thus a tonic to health, provided we do not weaken our bodies by an unbalanced diet.

It is partly because so many people continue to eat improperly, in spite of our newer knowledge of nutrition, that we still find an increasing amount of sickness in the fall, which mounts steadily until it reaches its peak in the months of January, February and March.

### Dangers of an Improper Diet

Yet winter need have no terrors for the fit. Only the weak, the unfit, surrender and become its victims. That the number of victims is large each winter merely

indicates how many people neglect their health through careless living, and especially through careless eating.

Measures to protect one's self against the attack of winter should be taken during the summer and early fall. A sturdy resistance against the ills of winter should be built up by means of a balanced diet which assures an abundant supply of the minerals and vitamins.

When a person is undernourished or improperly nourished, he is denied of every defense. He is chilled by the slightest drop in temperature. He offers fertile soil for every kind of disease germs. He can neither resist their invasion, nor fight them off after they have attacked.

Thus, the first rule for keeping warm and well in winter is to live and eat in a manner that helps to maintain health and strength. The correct winter diet differs in one important respect—and one only—from the correct diet at other seasons.

## Your Health May Depend on Your Teeth

An Editorial by C. Houston Goudiss

The reason why some men and women in their middle years look and feel younger today than their parents did at the same age, is because they have learned something of the importance of caring properly for their teeth. In recent years, dentists have discovered that sound teeth are in truth a passport to good health, and that there is as close a relationship between healthy teeth and healthy bodies as between decayed teeth and sickly bodies.

Unfortunately, however, only a small percentage of our population is yet aware of the far-reaching effects of teeth upon health, and a distinguished scientist is so disturbed over our national ignorance in this respect that he has said that unless this trend is reversed, the course of human evolution will lead downward to extinction. That statement is no exaggeration. For it would be difficult to over-estimate the influence of the teeth on human health and happiness.

For many years I have endeavored to explain that a neglected tooth—which soon becomes a decayed tooth—is a poison factory, distributing its noxious products to every part of the body, and that it may lead indirectly to neuritis, rheumatic ailments, dyspepsia, and other obscure complaints.

In many of the "WHAT TO EAT AND WHY" articles, which have appeared in this newspaper over my signature, I have endeavored to point out the close relationship between diet and dental disease; between frequent and thorough brushing of the teeth with an efficient dentifrice so as to remove all food particles, and strong, beautiful teeth.

As a result of these articles, I have received many letters, showing that homemakers are eager for sound, authoritative advice on the proper care of the teeth. To help these and other readers how to properly care for their teeth, I have prepared a booklet on—"BUILDING AND PLANNING HEALTH" which I am offering FREE, because I feel so strongly that this information should be in every home, knowing as I do, that the salvation of the human race may lie in saving their teeth.

Address, C. Houston Goudiss, 210 S. Desplaines St. Chicago, Ill.

### Circumstances

There are no circumstances, however unfortunate, that clever people do not extract some advantages from; and none, however fortunate, that the imprudent can not turn to their own prejudice.

As a rule, people are more energetic in cold weather and it is therefore necessary to increase the amount of energy-producing foods. Nearly all children, and adults who spend much of their time out doors, should consume more high caloric foods which may be provided in the form of easily digested carbohydrates, such as rice, macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, potatoes, cereals and breadstuffs.

In the case of adults, the amount of fats may also be increased and in some circumstances, more sweets may likewise be taken.

To summarize, the cold weather diet should include a quart of milk daily for every child, a pint for each adult; two fruits daily, or one fruit and one fruit juice—and while one serving may be a dried fruit, such as prunes, apricots or figs, there should be one serving of a citrus fruit, or tomatoes, to provide vitamin C; two vegetables besides potatoes, one of which should be of the green, leafy variety, either fresh or canned; an egg daily, or at least three or four weekly; one daily serving of meat, fish or chicken, and a second protein food such as cheese, dried peas or beans or nuts; and enough of the fuel foods including whole grain cereals, to keep the body warm and comfortable.

If you eat correctly and dress sensibly so that you are neither too warmly clad indoors nor too thinly clad out of doors, you can enjoy cold weather and benefit by it to the extent of increased health and happiness.

### Questions Answered

Mrs. F. L. B.—Egg white is a solution of pure protein. The egg yolk contains minerals, vitamins and fats, in addition to protein.

Miss C. M. R.—In general, whole raw fruits, especially those with skins and seeds, provide a slightly harsher residue than that of cooked fruits, or the pulp of raw fruits with skin and seeds removed.

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