

ERSKINE DALE—PIONEER

By JOHN FOX, Jr.

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CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

"My son spoke words of truth," he proclaimed sonorously. "He warned us against the king over the waters and told us to make friends with the Americans. We did not heed his words, and so he brought the great chief of the Long Knives, who stood without fear among warriors more numerous than leaves and spoke the same words to all. We are friends of the Long Knives. My son is the true prophet. Bring out the false one and Crooked Lightning and Black Wolf, whose life my son saved though the two were enemies. My son shall do with them as he pleases."

Many young braves sprang willingly forward and the three were hailed before Erskine. Old Kahtoo waved his hand toward them and sat down. Erskine rose and fixed his eyes sternly on the cowering prophet:

"He shall go forth from the village and shall never return. For his words work mischief, he does foolish things, and his drumming frightens the game. He is a false prophet and he must go." He turned to Crooked Lightning:

"The Indians have made peace with the Long Knives and White Arrow would make peace with any Indian, though an enemy. Crooked Lightning shall go or stay, as he pleases. Black Wolf shall stay, for the tribe will need him as a hunter and a warrior against the English foes of the Long Knives. White Arrow does not ask another to spare an enemy's life and then take it away himself."

The braves granted approval. Black Wolf and Crooked Lightning averted their faces and the prophet shambled uneasily away. Again old Kahtoo proclaimed sonorously, "It is well!" and went back with Erskine to his tent. There he sank wearily on a buffalo-skin and pleaded with the boy to stay with them as chief in his stead. He was very old, and now that peace was made with the Long Knives he was willing to die. If Erskine would but give his promise, he would never rise again from where he lay.

Erskine shook his head and the old man sorrowfully turned his face. And yet Erskine lingered on and on at the village. Of the white woman he had learned little other than that she had been bought from another tribe and adopted by old Kahtoo; but it was plain that since the threatened burning of her she had been held in high respect by the whole tribe. He began to wonder about her and whether she might not wish to go back to her own people. He had never talked with her, but he never seemed to feel her eyes upon him. And Early Morn's big soft eyes, too, never seemed to leave him. She brought him food, she sat at the door of his tent, she followed him about the village and bore herself openly as his slave. At last old Kahtoo, who would not give up his great hope, pleaded with him to marry her, and while he was talking the girl stood at the door of the tent and interrupted them. Her mother's eyes were growing dim, she said. Her mother wanted to talk with White Arrow and look upon his face before her sight should altogether pass. Nor could Erskine know that the white woman wanted to look into the eyes of the man she hoped would become her daughter's husband, but Kahtoo did, and he bade Erskine go. His foster mother, coming upon the scene, scowled, but Erskine rose and went to the white woman's tent. She sat just inside the opening, with a blanket across the lower half of her face, nor did she look at him. Instead she pined him with questions, and listened eagerly to his every word, and drew from him every detail of his life as far back as he could remember. Poor soul, it was the first opportunity for many years that she had had to talk with any white person who had been in the eastern world, and freely and frankly he held nothing back.

All the while the girl had crouched near, looking at Erskine with doglike eyes, and when he rose to go the woman dropped the blanket from her face and got to her feet. Shyly she lifted her hands, took his face between them, bent close, and studied it searchingly:

"What is your name?"

"Erskine Dale."

Without a word she turned back into her tent.

At dusk Erskine stood by the river's brim, with his eyes lifted to a rising moon and his thoughts with Barbara on the bank of the James. Behind him he heard a rustle and, turning, he saw the girl, her breast throbbing and her eyes burning with a light he had never seen before.

"Black Wolf will kill you," she whispered. "Black Wolf wants Early Morn and he knows that Early Morn wants White Arrow." Erskine put both hands on her shoulders and looked down into her eyes. She trembled, and when his arms went about her she surged closer to him and the touch of her warm, supple body went through him like fire. And then with a triumphant smile she sprang back.

"Black Wolf will see," she whispered, and fled. Erskine sank to the

ground, with his head in his hands. The girl ran back to her tent, and the mother, peering at the flushed face and shining eyes, clove to the truth. She said nothing, but when the girl was asleep and faintly smiling, the white woman sat staring out into the moonlit woods, softly beating her breast.

CHAPTER XIV

Erskine had given Black Wolf his life, and the young brave had accepted the debt and fretted under it sorely. And when Erskine had begun to show some heed to Early Morn a fierce jealousy seized the savage, and his old hatred was reborn a thousandfold more strong—and that, too, Erskine now knew. Meat ran low and a hunting party went abroad. Game was scarce and only after the second day was there a kill. Erskine had sighted a huge buck, had fired quickly and at close range, wounded, the buck had charged, Erskine's knife was twisted in his belt, and the buck was upon him before he could get it out. He tried to dart for a tree, stumbled, turned, and caught the infuriated beast by the horns. He uttered no cry, but the angry bellow of the stag reached the ears of Black Wolf through the woods, and he darted toward the sound. And he came none too soon. Erskine heard the crack of a rifle, the stag toppled over, and he saw Black Wolf standing over him with a curiously triumphant look on his saturnine face. In Erskine, when he rose, the white man was predominant, and he thrust out his hand, but Black Wolf ignored it.

"White Arrow gave Black Wolf his life. The debt is paid."

Erskine looked at his enemy, nodded, and the two bore the stag away. Instantly a marked change was plain in Black Wolf. He told the story of the fight with the buck to all. Boldly he threw off the mantle

of shame, stalked haughtily through the village, and went back to open enmity with Erskine. At dusk a day or two later, when he was coming down the path from the white woman's wigwam, Black Wolf confronted him, scowling.

"Early Morn shall belong to Black Wolf," he said insolently. Erskine met his baleful, half-drunken eyes scornfully.

"We will leave that to Early Morn," he said coolly, and then thundered suddenly:

"Out of my way!"

Black Wolf hesitated and gave way, but ever thereafter Erskine was on guard.

In the white woman, too, Erskine now saw a change. Once she had encouraged him to stay with the Indians; now she lost no opportunity to urge against it. She had heard that Hamilton would try to retake Vincennes, that he was forming a great force with which to march south, sweep through Kentucky, batter down the wooden forts, and force the Kentuckians behind the great mountain wall. Erskine would be needed by the whites, who would never understand or trust him if he should stay with the Indians. All this she spoke one day when Erskine came to her tent to talk. Her face had blanched, she had argued passionately that he must go, and Erskine was sorely puzzled. The girl, too, had grown rebellious and disobedient, for the change in her mother was plain also to her, and she could not understand. Moreover, Erskine's stubbornness grew, and he began to flame within at the staking insolence of Black Wolf, who slipped through the shadows of day and the dusk to spy on the two wherever they came together. And one day when the sun was midway, and in the open of the village, the clash



Erskine Put Both Hands on Her Shoulders and Looked Down into Her Eyes.

came. Black Wolf darted forth from his wigwam, his eyes bloodshot with rage and drink, and his hunting knife in his hand. A cry from Early Morn warned Erskine and he wheeled. As Black Wolf made a vicious slash at him he sprang aside, and with his fist caught the savage in the jaw. Black Wolf fell heavily and Erskine was upon him with his own knife at his enemy's throat.

"Stop them!" old Kahtoo cried sternly, but it was the terrified shriek of the white woman that stayed Erskine's hand. Two young braves disarmed the fallen Indian, and Kahtoo looked inquiringly at his adopted son.

"Turn him loose!" Erskine scorned. "I have no fear of him. He is a woman and drunk, but next time I shall kill him."

The white woman had run down, caught Early Morn, and was leading her back to her tent. From inside presently came low, passionate pleading from the woman and an occasional sob from the girl. And when an hour later, at dusk, Erskine turned upward toward the tent, the girl gave a horrified cry, flashed from the tent, and darted for the high cliff over the river.

"Catch her!" cried the mother.

"Quick!" Erskine fled after her, overtook her with her hands upraised for the plunge on the very edge of the cliff, and half carried her, struggling and sobbing, back to the tent. Within the girl dropped in a weeping heap, and with her face covered, and the woman turned to Erskine, agonized.

"I told her," she whispered, "and she was going to kill herself. You are my son!"

CHAPTER XV

Dawned 1781. The war was coming into Virginia at last. Virginia falling would thrust a great wedge through the center of the confederacy, feed the British armies and end the fight. Cornwallis was to drive the wedge, and never had the opening seemed easier. Virginia was drained of her fighting men, and south of the mountains was protected only by a militia, for the most part, of old men and boys. North and south ran despair. The soldiers had no pay, little food, and only old worn-out coats, tattered linen overalls, and one blanket between three men, to protect them from drifting snow and icy wind. Even the great Washington was near despair, and in foreign help his sole hope lay. Already the traitor, Arnold, had taken Richmond, burned warehouses, and returned, but little harassed, to Portsmouth.

Cornwallis was coming on. Tarleton's white rangers were bedeviling the land, and it was at this time that Erskine Dale once more rode firefly to the river James.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

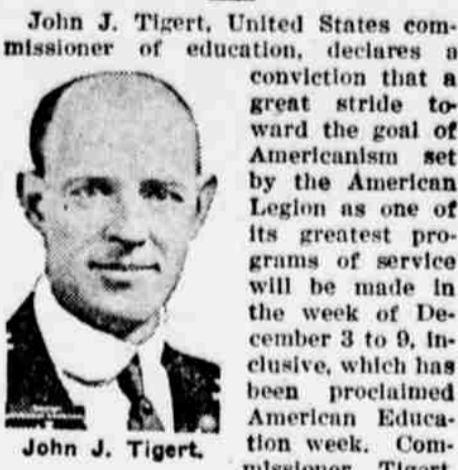
Public Time Compulsory.
Twenty-four-hour time is used in many Latin-American countries and is compulsory in Argentina in connection with public documents.

The AMERICAN LEGION

(Copy for this Department Supplied by the American Legion News Service.)

AMERICANISM WEEK, DEC. 3-9

Government, Legion and National Education Association Co-Operating to Make Program Successful.



John J. Tigert, United States Commissioner of Education, declares a conviction that a great stride toward the goal of Americanism set by the American Legion as one of its greatest programs of service will be made in the week of December 3 to 9, inclusive, which has been proclaimed American Education week.

Commissioner Tigert and the National Education Association are co-operating with the American Legion in making the week a success. Announcement proclaiming the American Education week followed a conference in Washington between President Harding, Commissioner Tigert and Garland W. Powell, assistant national director of the Americanism Commission. President Harding announced he would issue an official proclamation, followed by similar ones from governors of the states.

Commissioner Tigert, through the United States bureau of education, will request state and county superintendents of schools to devote the week to the American Legion program, which will start Sunday, December 3. Ministers of all denominations will be asked to preach sermons morning and evening that day on the benefits of education. Mass meetings will be held throughout the United States, at which speakers will be supplied by the American Legion.

Monday will have its special slogan—"Americans All by 1927"—with its drive throughout the country to assist immigrants and aliens to become good Americans, and starting their education in the duties of citizenship. Tuesday will be devoted to patriotism, with such subjects as "Universal Use of the English Language," "Music As a Nation Builder," "The Flag, Emblem of Freedom," and "The Citizen's Duty to Vote," emphasized. Wednesday, better pay for teachers and better schoolhouses will be featured. Thursday will be devoted particularly to the cure of illiteracy. Thursday will be a mighty war on Bolshevism, the strengthening of the fight to eradicate radicalism. Friday will be devoted to "An Equal Opportunity for All in Education," and Saturday, December 9, will be given over to the subject of physical education, the need of more and better playgrounds, the nation's need to develop our forests, the conservation of our soil and places of play in every community.

AUXILIARY MAY ADOPT THIS

Headress Fronted With Blue or Gold Star May Be Approved by the Women's Organization.

When pretty Thelma Sines of Loganport, Ind., donned the headpiece that she's wearing in the accompanying picture, and naively asked if it wasn't a perfectly wonderful creation for members of the American Legion Auxiliary to wear at conventions, conferences, etc., it hasn't been recorded what the Indiana women's reply was, but it is known that all the American Legion fellows who saw the picture immediately voted aye and urged its unanimous adoption.

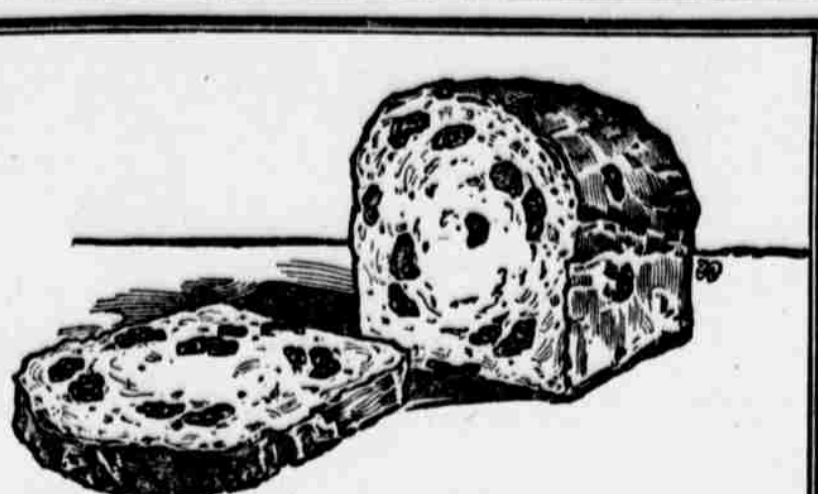
Miss Sines' Auxiliary unit, No. 3 of Loganport, submitted the headpiece as the official one to be worn, but frankly confessed that the idea was really born at Columbus, Neb., where that city's American Legion Auxiliary unit presented it, and then Columbus replied that it really was the idea of some of the women of Louisiana. At any rate, it seemed to be a popular idea—made more so, perhaps, by the wearer herewith shown. Miss Sines says she likes it, that it's cool and comfortable, and affords a distinctive headress for the organization.

It will be noted that the headress is fronted with a star. A gold star can be substituted for the outlined blue by those who lost loved ones in the service.

Details, Please.
Old Man Matthews' daughter was reputed to be the slowest witted and laziest girl in the state. One day her father came in to find her sprawled in a chair with her feet in dangerous proximity to the blazing fireplace.
"Git up, gal," he yelled. "You're practically standin' on a red-hot coal."
"Which foot, paw?" drawled Sal, opening one eye.—American Legion Weekly



Miss Thelma Sines, of Loganport, Ind., donned the headpiece that she's wearing in the accompanying picture.



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Just Think of It!
If they had had gland treatments in Methusalem's time he might have been living yet.—Pittsburgh Gazette Times.

Too Bad.
"Radium is extremely valuable." "Yes, but it is so dangerous you can't wear it."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

They that govern must make the east noise. What women sigh for is long life without old age.



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