

**THE VALLEY OF
GOLD: A TALE OF
THE SASKATCHEWAN**

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The valley of gold: a tale of the Saskatchewan by David Howarth

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DAVID HOWARTH

**THE VALLEY OF
GOLD: A TALE OF
THE SASKATCHEWAN**



"Bridges are all burned. To-morrow I begin teaching—where do you think?"

The Valley of Gold

By DAVID HOWARTH

A Tale of the Saskatchewan



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TO MY MOTHER

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I

HEAVY ODDS

THE east wind blew furiously, beating gray sheets down the streaming panes. Along the village street flowed a turbid torrent, the squalid wash of an "old-timer-three-days'-blow" from the Great Lakes. Threshing was hung up. Every wheel was stopped for a thousand miles across the prairies.

Sparrow's pool-room was a cavern of smoke. Through the blue-ringed mists of tobacco moved the unkempt silhouettes of boisterous threshermen. Suddenly over the hubbub rose a jeering cry.

Ned Pullar leaned down and knocked the ashes out of his briar. His immobile face gave no sign that the cry was an insulting challenge. Opening his knife he slowly scooped out the bowl of his pipe. Tapping the inverted briar on the palm of his hand, he proceeded leisurely to fill in the tobacco. This act duly completed, he turned about and looked McClure in the face. In his eyes was a faint twinkle, but he elected to hold his tongue. His deliberate silence provoked his tormentor. Hitherto McClure had addressed him in a low