THE VALLEY *of the* GIANTS

By PETER B. KYNE

Author of "Cappy Ricks"

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CHAPTER XV.—Continued.

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"This is the first I've heard about any franchise," Sam Perkins replied suspiciously. "Seems to me you been mighty secret about this job. How do I know this ain't a forgery?"

"Call up the mayor and ask him," Bryce suggested.

"I'll do that," quoth Mr. Perkins ponderously. "And in the meantime, don't do any more digging or railroading." He hurried away to his automobile, leaving a lieutenant in charge of the squad.

"Also in the meantime, young man," Colonel Pennington announced, "you will pardon me if I take possession of my locomotive and that cars. I observe you have finished unloading those rails."

"Help yourself, Colonel," Bryce replied with an assumption of heartiness he was far from feeling.

"Thank you so much, Cardigan." With the greatest good nature in life, Pennington climbed into the cab, wrenched for the bell cord, and rang the bell vigorously.

Then he permitted himself a triumphant nod of the head, after which he threw off the air and gently opened the throttle. He was not a locomotive engineer but he had ridden in the cab of his own locomotive and felt quite confident of his ability in a pinch.

With a creak and a bump the train started and the Colonel ran slowly up until the locomotive stood on the tracks exactly where Buck Ogilvy had been cutting in his crossing, where upon the Colonel locked the brakes, opened his exhaust, and lifted the reverser down. And when the locomotive steam had ceased, he descended and smilingly accosted Bryce Cardigan.

"That engine belongs properly to me," announced, "if I'm the kind of an old any bet you care to make, young man, that it will sit on those tracks until your temporary franchise expires. Cut in your business card now if you can, you wholly unabashed, for I've got you blocked proper."

"I rather imagine this nice gentleman has it on us, old dear," chirped Buck Ogilvy plaintively. "Well? We did our dandiest, which angels can't do no more. Let us gather up our tools and go home, my son, for something tells me that if I hang around here I'll bust one of two things—this sleek scoundrel's gray head or one of my bellicose veins! Hello! Whom have we here?"

Bryce turned and found himself facing Shirley Sumner. Her under lip was quivering, and the tears shone in her blue eyes. He stared at her in silence.

"My friend," she murmured tremulously, "didn't I tell you I would not permit you to build the N. C. O.?"

He bowed his head in rage and shame at his defeat. Buck Ogilvy took him by the arm. "Bryce, old chap, this is one of those occasions where silence is golden. Speak not. I'll do it for you. Miss Sumner," he continued, "and Colonel Pennington, favoring that triumphant rascal with an equally gracious bow, "we leave you in possession of the field—temporarily. However, if anybody should drive up in a hack and lean out and ask you, just tell him Buck Ogilvy has another trump tucked away in his kimono."

Bryce turned to go, but with a sudden impulse Shirley laid her hand on his arm—his left arm. "Bryce!" she murmured.

He lifted her hand gently from his forearm, led her to the front of the

"Your Uncle's Killer Did That, Shirley."

locomotive, and held her hand up to the headlight. Her fingers were crimson with blood.

"Your uncle's killer did that, Shirley," he said ironically. "It's only a slight flesh wound, but that is no fault of your allies. Good-night."

And he left her standing, pale of face and trembling, in the white glare of the headlight.

He walked to his car and climbed into it. Ogilvy remained merely long enough to give orders to the foreman to gather up the tools, store them in the machine-shop of Cardigan's mill, and dismiss his gang; then he, too, entered the automobile, and at a word from Bryce the car slid noiselessly away into the darkness. The track-cutting crew departed a few minutes later, and often Shirley found herself alone with her uncle, the tumult in her heart gave way to the tears she could no longer repress. Pennington stood by, watching her curiously, coldly.

Presently Shirley mastered her emotion and glanced toward him.

"Well, my dear?" he queried.

"I—I think I had better go home," she said without spirit.

"I think so, too," he answered. "Get into the mayor's flivver, my dear, and I'll drive you. And perhaps the least said about this affair the better, Shirley. There are many things that you do not understand and which cannot be elucidated by discussion."

"I can understand an attempt at assassination, Uncle Seth."

"That blackguard Minorca! I should have known better than to put him on such a job. I told him to bluff and threaten—nothing more. I know would-be murderers, and I'm sure Bryce Cardigan's not one. Because the Black Minorca failed to kill him, and for that reason I figured the gunman was the only man who could blow him. While I gave him orders to shoot, I told him distinctly not to hit anybody good Lord, Shirley, surely you do not think I would wink at a murder——"

"Oh, I don't know," she answered passionately. "With Bryce Cardigan out of the way you would have a clear field before you."

"Oh, my dear, my dear! Surely you do not realize what you are saying. You are beside yourself. Shirley, you are beside yourself. Shirley, my child, I suggested by some [illegible] that you go to Los Angeles for a visit, but I'm sure you will not go now. Your place is here, and I shall expect you to remain here. Now, I must go to the mill and see what damage has been done by the Black Minorca's gang. Get into the flivver, my dear, and wait for me."

CHAPTER XVI.

Quite oblivious of her uncle's departure for San Francisco, Shirley lay awake throughout the remainder of the night, turning over and over in her mind the various aspects of the Cardigan-Pennington imbroglio. Of one thing she was quite certain: peace must be declared at all hazards. She realized that she had permitted matters to go too far. A revulsion of feeling toward her uncle, induced by the memory of Bryce Cardigan's blood on her white linen slips, convinced the girl that, at all hazards to her financial future, henceforth she and her uncle must tread separate paths. She had found him out at last, and because in her nature there was some of his own fixity of purpose, the resolution cost her no particular pang.

She had been obsessed of a desire, rather unusual in her sex, to see a fight worth while; she had planned to permit it to go to a knockout, to see Bryce Cardigan's dominance, because she believed Bryce Cardigan would be vanquished—and she had desired to see him smashed—but not beyond repair, for her joy in the conflict was to lie in the task of putting the pieces together afterward.

It was fruitful relief, therefore, when the importunable James handed her at breakfast the following note:

"Shirley Dear:

"After leaving you last night I decided that in your present frame of mind my absence for a few days might tend to an calmer and clearer perception on your part of the necessary motives which in a moment of desperation, I saw fit, with regret, to pursue last night. And in the hope that you will have attained your old attitude toward me before my return, I am leaving the matter for the present. Perhaps you will decide to sustain me to the extent that I do not feel compelled to the task of contesting your title in a more official manner. If you can truly absolve me of the charge of willing to do away with young Cardigan,

"Your affectionate

"UNCLE SETH."

Shirley smiled faintly. With a sense of relief she realized that the crisis had passed, that the breach between her and her uncle was healed.

"Will you go to San Francisco for the week-end, Miss Shirley?" she asked herself. "Why, no, I couldn't—I couldn't! I'm not going to run away from anything. I'm going to stay right here and see this matter through to the end. I'm not going to be a quitter."

"Very well, neighborly. While you're away I shall manufacture a few hurdles myself."

After breakfast she left the house and walked to the intersection of B with Water street. Julius Rondeau and his crew of lumberjacks were there at work, two policemen guarded the crossing.

Shirley looked from the woods bully to the locomotive and back to Rondeau.

"Rondeau," she said, "Mr. Cardigan is a bad man to fight. You fought him once. Are you going to do it again?"

He nodded.

"By whose orders?"

"Mr. Sexton, she tell me to do it."

"Well, Rondeau, some day I'll be boss of Laguna Grande and there'll be no more fighting," she replied, and then passed on down B street to the office of the Cardigan Redwood Lumber company. Moira McTavish looked up as she entered.

"Where is he, dear?" Shirley asked. "I must see him."

"In that office," Miss Shirley." Moira replied, and pointed to the door. Shirley stepped to the door, knocked, and then entered. Bryce Cardigan, seated at his desk, looked up as she came in. His left arm was in a sling, and he looked haggard and dejected.

"I can't get up, Bryce," she said as he attempted to rise. "I know you're quite ill. You look ill." She sat down. "I'm so sorry," she said softly.

His dull glance brightened. "It doesn't amount to that, Shirley." And he snapped his fingers. "It throbs a little and it's stiff and sore, so I carry it in a sling. That is all. Here is a little bullet hole, but did you want to see me about it?"

"I wanted to tell you," said Shirley, "that that last night's affair was not of my making." He sniffed compassionately. "I—I couldn't bear to have you think I'd break my word and fail you."

"It never occurred to me that you had dealt me a hand from the bottom of the deck, Shirley. Please don't worry about it. Your uncle has had two private detectives watching Ogilvy and me."

"Oh!" she breathed, much relieved. A glint of the old taunting smile lighted her whole features. "Well, then," she challenged, "I suppose you don't hate me."

"On the contrary, I love you," he answered. "However, since you must have known this for some time past, I suppose it is superfluous to mention it. Moreover, I haven't the right—yet."

She had cast her eyes down modestly. She raised them now and looked at him searchingly. "I suppose you'll acknowledge yourself whipped at last, Bryce?" she ventured.

"Would it please you to have me surrender?" He was very serious.

"Indeed it would, Bryce. I'm tired of fighting. I want peace. I'm—I'm afraid to let this matter go any further. I'm truly afraid."

"I think I want peace, too," he answered. "I'd be glad to quit—with honor. And I'll do it, too, if you can induce your uncle to give me the kind of logging contract I want with his road."

"I couldn't do that, Bryce. He has you whipped—and he is not merciful to the fallen. You'll have to—surrender unconditionally." Again she laid her little hand timidly on his wounded forearm. "Please give up, Bryce—for my sake."

"I suppose I'll have to," he murmured sadly. "I dare say you're right, though one should never admit defeat until he is counted out, I suppose," he continued bitterly, "your uncle is in high feather this morning."

"I don't know, Bryce. He left in his motor for San Francisco about one o'clock this morning."

For an instant Bryce Cardigan stared at her; then a slow, mocking

"I Suppose You'll Acknowledge Yourself Whipped at Last, Bryce?"

smile crept around the corners of his mouth, and his eyes lighted with mirth.

"Glorious news, my dear Shirley, perfectly glorious! So the old fox has gone to San Francisco, eh? Left in a hurry and via the overland route! Couldn't wait for the regular passenger-steamer tomorrow, eh? Great jumping Jehoshaphat! He must have had important business to attend to." And Bryce commenced to chuckle. "Oh, the poor old Colonel," he continued presently, "the dear old pirate! What a horrible right swing he's running into! And you want me to acknowledge defeat! 'My dear girl, in the language of the classic, there is nothing doing. I shall put in my time Sunday hunting, and if you don't believe it, drop around and see me in action."

"You mustn't try," protested Shirley. "Rondeau is there with his crew—and he has orders to stop you. Besides, you can't expect help from the police. Uncle Seth has made a deal with the mayor. I came prepared to suggest a compromise, Bryce," she declared, but he interrupted her with a wave of his hand.

"That for the police and that very Mayor Poundstone!" Bryce retorted.

He sat musing for a long time. "Yes," he concluded presently, "old Poundstone has double-crossed us—and Pennington made it worth his while. And the Colonel sold the mayor his niece's automobile. It's worth twenty-five hundred dollars, at least, and since old Poundstone's business will not permit such an extravagance, I'm wondering how Pennington expects him to pay for it. I smell a rat as big as a kangaroo. In this case two and two don't make four. They make six. Guess I'll build a fire under old Poundstone."

He took down the telephone receiver and called up the mayor. "Bryce Cardigan speaking. Mr. Poundstone," he greeted the chief executive of Sequoia.

"Oh, hello, Bryce, my boy," Poundstone boomed affably. "How's cricks?"

"Sore," I hear you've bought that sedan from old Pennington's niece. Wish I'd known it was for sale. I'd have outbid you. Want to make a profit on your bargain?"

"No, not this morning, Bryce. I think we'll keep it. Mrs. P—— has been wanting a closed car for a long time, and when the Colonel offered me this one at a bargain, I snapped it up."

"And you don't care to get rid of it at a profit?" Bryce repeated.

"No, sirree."

"Oh, you're mistaken, Mr. Mayor. I think you do. I would suggest that you take that car back to Pennington's garage—I have it there. That would be the most profitable thing you could do."

"What's that, what in blue blazes are you driving at?" the mayor sputtered.

"I wouldn't care to discuss it over the telephone. I take it, however, that a hint to the wise is sufficient, and I assure you that if you keep that car it will bring you bad luck. Today is Friday, and Friday is an unlucky day. I'd get rid of that sedan before noon, if I were you."

There was a long, fateful silence. Then the mayor's voice came, hoarse and strained: "Is that the straight goods, Bryce? Is it a frame-up?"

"I'm telling you what I know, Mayor Poundstone. I suggest that you consult with Shirley Sumner. She is at the Redwood Inn. Good-by."

When Shirley arrived home at noon, she found her car parked in front of the house, and a note from Mrs. Poundstone informing her that Mr. Poundstone had decided that Pennington had been guilty of such an extravagance in selling the car to the city's purchasing agent at such a ridiculously low price that he could not permit the car up in the garage. When she returned to the house she found Fiedina informed her that Mr. Bryce Cardigan had been calling her on the telephone. So she called Bryce up at once.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

UNIQUE SCHEME OF REVENGE

Sardonic Humor in Tale of How Frenchman "Got Even" With His Fellow-Citizens.

A quaint short story by Rodolphe Bringer, a marvel of French brevity, appeared not long ago in L'Humanite. It is entitled "Thog Bonefactor's Revenge," and the tale is of a millionaire in a small town who was piqued because he was not elected mayor. Presently he died, hurriedly and unexpectedly, and the funeral was magnificent, but the townsfolk did not attend. They distrusted the millionaire. Imagine the shock of pleasure, then, when they learned that he had bequeathed 3,000,000 francs to them for municipality! It was given on condition that the town should undertake to nourish and sustain all the poor, without distinction of age, sex or nationality, who lived within its boundaries. At once the popularity of the deceased took a new bound. A philanthropist; he had been misjudged. A pedestal was prepared for his statue. Today the pedestal still remains unerowned. A town that was hard working and unknown to poverty and misery became the mecca for all the scoundrels of France, from which the will was proclaimed, tramps, rogues and apaches have not ceased to pour through its gates. At last it awoke to the dark intention of its benefactor.—Boston Post.

Many Species of Asters.

About 120 different species of asters are native in the United States, and 54 of these are found in northeastern America. All but a dozen are purple or blue and even botanists find it requires patient study to distinguish the many species. The New England aster is the most striking of the group. It has a stout, hardy stem, sometimes eight feet high, and large violet-purple and sometimes pinkish flowers, and is found in the swamps in late autumn. Great Britain has only one native aster. Many American species are cultivated in English gardens under the name of Michaelmas daisies. The Swiss species is the beautiful purple aster which is found in such quantities along the New England highways in the autumn, and which, with the goldenrod, makes a radiant display of purple and gold.

Untrue Courage.

There is a sort of courage, which, I frankly confess it, do not respire, a bold courage, to which I dare not aspire, a valor which I cannot covet. I cannot lay myself down in the way of the welfare and happiness of my country. That, I cannot—I have not the courage to do. I cannot interpose the power with which I may be invested—a power conferred, not for my personal benefit, nor for my aggrandizement, but for my country's good—to check her onward march to greatness and glory. I have not courage enough, I am too cowardly for that.—Henry Clay.

Dangers in Quinine.

Many cases of malaria are really quinine poisoning. The amount of quinine administered is often large and the smaller doses are continued for too long.

This is said to be the land of the free, yet the owner of real estate has to pay taxes on it.

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"But it's game."

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"CORNS"

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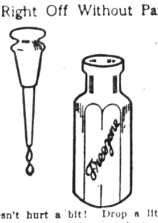

Doesn't hurt a bit! Drop a little "Freezone" on an aching corn, instantly that corn stops hurting, then shortly you lift it right off with fingers. Truly!

Your druggist sells a tiny bottle of "Freezone" for a few cents, sufficient to remove every hard corn, soft corn, or corn between the toes, and the calluses, without soreness or irritation.

To succeed one must be patient. The penitentiaries are full of people who were impatient.