THE VALLEY of the GIANTS

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CHAPTER XIV—Continued.
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For the space of a minute the mayor weighed his son's future as a corporation attorney against his own future as mayor of Sequoia and Hicks lost.

"It might be arranged, Colonel," he murmured in a low voice the voice of shame.

"It is already arranged," the Colonel replied electrically. "Leave your car at the front gate and drive home in Shirley's car. I'll arrange matters with her." He laughed shortly. "If tonight, of course, that I'll have to telegraph to San Francisco tomorrow and buy her a later model. Thank goodness, she has a birthday tomorrow." He gave a fresh cigar to Hicks.

Colonel Pennington had little difficulty in explaining the need to Shirley, who was sleepy and tired of self-control. The Pennington line had come to extinction, and upon her mother's assurance that she would have to remain within a week, she consented to wait for the next time it was convenient for her to have a baby.

Shortly thereafter the Colonel sought his own virtuous couch and proceeded to surrender himself to the first good sleep in three weeks. He had the determination to be up early in the morning to have a good talk with Cardigan and to get him a good start from a married man's point of view. At seven o'clock next day, Jack, the young Pennington who had helped rail-out of the Lumber Creek gang, was aroused from his slumbers by a cross to accompany the Colonel to the office. Jack's mother was in court to secure nothing.

He was doing so, which is a sample of the ways in which a wide range of interests can be headed off in one direction and grew hopeful as he heard the preceding Sequoia gang turn out to work in every direction.

Suddenly, as of the dispersion of a flock of sparrows by a hawk, the gang scattered, one and all, and the train pulled out for Sequoia. Jack's mother knew that they had driven Water Street and had a good night at the intersection of B street.

"Now, Jack," she said to a grinning half at the intersection of B street.

"Thank you, young man," the Colonel answered, and there was a metallic ring in his voice. He looked at his watch in the glare of a torch. "Plenty of time," he murmured. "Our few shall not run long enough." Quickly and he climbed into the mayor's late source of woe and breezed away.

Suddenly a queer, harsh and strident with passion, rose above the thud of the pick and the clang of metal.

"Where in charge here and what in blazes do you mean by cutting my trestle?"

Bryce turned in time to behold Colonel Pennington leap from an auto, unlock and advance upon Buck Ogilvy. Ogilvy held a lantern up to the Colonel's face and surveyed Pennington coldly.

"Colonel," he began with exceptional politeness, "I presume you are Colonel Pennington—my name is Buchanan P. Ogilvy and I am in charge of these operations. I am the vice president and general manager of the N. C. O., and I am engaged in the filthe task of making a jump crossing of your rails. Have a cigar." And he thrust a perfecto under the Colonel's nose. Pennington struck it to the ground, and on the instant, half a dozen rough rascals emptied their shovels over him. He was deluged with dirt.

"Stand back, Colonel, stand back, if you please. You're in the way of the shovelers," Buck Ogilvy warned him soothingly.

Bryce Cardigan came over, and at sight of him Pennington choked with fury. "You—you—" he spluttered, unable to say more.

"I'm the N. C. O." Bryce replied. "Nice little fiction that of yours about the switch-engine being laid up in the shops and the Lamed creek bridge being unsafe for this big mogul." He looked Pennington over with frank admiration. "You're certainly one fine Colonel. I'll say that much for you."

"You've stolen my engine," Pennington almost screamed. "I'll have the law on you for grand larceny."

"Tut-tut. You don't know who stole your engine. For all you know, some one of your own crews may have run it away from you."

"This is perfectly amazing pardner," Buck Ogilvy comforted, "but don't be one of my only friends, perhaps somebody I did a favor for once and then when I was requesting [illegible] to show the same to me, he [illegible] to the limit of the power [illegible] to thank me. In fact [illegible] a prospect [illegible] Bryce [illegible] and [illegible] Pennington [illegible] Bryce [illegible] Pennington [illegible] Bryce [illegible] Pennington [illegible] Bryce