

# The VALLEY of the GIANTS

By PETER B. KYNE

Author of "Cappy Ricks"

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## "SOMETHING NICE—"

Synopsis.—Pioneer in the California redwood region, John Cardigan, at forty-seven, is the leading citizen of Sequoia, owner of mills, shipls, and many acres of timber, a widower after three years of married life, and father of two-year-old Bryce Cardigan. At fourteen Bryce makes the acquaintance of Shirley Sumner, a visitor at Sequoia, and his junior by a few years. Together they visit the Valley of the Giants, sacred to John Cardigan and his son as the burial place of Bryce's mother, and part with mutual regret. While Bryce is at college John Cardigan meets with heavy business losses and for the first time views the future with uncertainty. After graduation from college, and a trip abroad, Bryce Cardigan comes home. On the train he meets Shirley Sumner, on her way to Sequoia to make her home there with her uncle, Colonel Pennington. Bryce learns that his father's eyesight has failed and that Colonel Pennington is seeking to take advantage of the old man's business misfortunes. John Cardigan is despairing, but Bryce is full of fight. Bryce finds a hurt redwood felled across his mother's grave. He goes to dinner at Pennington's on Shirley's invitation and finds the dining room paneled with bark from the tree. In a diplomatic way, unperceived by Shirley, the two men declare war. Pennington refuses to renew his logging contract with the Cardigans, believing his action means bankruptcy for the latter. Bryce forces Redwood to confess he felled the tree in the Valley of the Giants, at Pennington's order. After punishing the man Bryce hurls him at Colonel Pennington, who has tried to foul him in the fight. Pennington is humiliated, and the girl, indignant, orders Bryce to leave and forget their friendship. He leaves, but refuses to accept dismissal. Returning to Sequoia, the logging train on which Shirley and her uncle and Bryce are traveling breaks away from the locomotive, and Bryce, who could have escaped, at the risk of his life cuts out the caboose and saves them from certain death, being painfully injured in doing so. Shirley tries to put their friendship back on its old basis, but Bryce tells her he intends to smash her uncle at all costs. So it's all off again between them. Bryce renews acquaintance with Moira McTavish, daughter of his woods-boss.

## CHAPTER IX—Continued.

"I think so, Mr. Bryce. I copied it from Colonel Pennington's niece, Miss Sumner."

"Oh," he replied briefly. "You've met her, have you? I didn't know she was in Sequoia still."

"She's been away, but she came back last week. I went to the Valley of the Giants last Saturday afternoon—"

Bryce interrupted. "You didn't tell my father about the tree that was cut, did you?" he demanded sharply.

"No."

"Good girl! He mustn't know. Go on, Moira. What was she doing in our timber?"

"She told me that once, when she was a little girl, you had taken her for a ride on your pony up to your mother's grave. And it seems she had a great curiosity to see that spot again."

"I've met Miss Sumner three or four times. That was when she first came to Sequoia. She's a stunning girl, isn't she?"

"Perfectly, Mr. Bryce. She's the first lady I've ever met. She's different."

"No doubt! Her kind are not a product of homely little communities like Sequoia. And for that matter, neither is her wolf of an uncle. What did Miss Sumner have to say to you, Moira?"

"She told me all about herself—and she said a lot of nice things about you, Mr. Bryce, after I told her I worked for you. And she insisted that I should walk home with her. So I did—and the butler served us with tea and toast and marmalade. Then she showed me all her wonderful things—and gave me some of them. Oh, Mr. Bryce, she's so sweet."

"I can see that you and Miss Sumner evidently hit it off just right with each other. Are you going to call on her again?"

"Oh, yes! She begged me to. She says she's lonesome."

"I dare say she is, Moira. I'm glad you've gotten to know each other. I've no doubt you find life a little lonely sometimes."

"Sometimes, Mr. Bryce."

"How's my father?"

"Splendid. I've taken good care of him for you."

"Moira, you're a sweetheart of a girl. I don't know how we ever managed to wiggle along without you." Fraternally—almost paternally—he gave her radiant cheek three light little pats as he strode past her to the private office. He was in a hurry to get to his desk, upon which he could see through the open door a pile of letters and orders, and a moment later he was deep in a perusal of them, oblivious to the fact that ever and anon the girl turned upon him her brooding, Madonna-like glance.

That night Bryce and his father, as was their custom after dinner, repaired to the library, where the

hustling and motherly Mrs. Tully served their coffee, John Cardigan opened the conversation with a contented grunt:

"I believe you have something on your mind."

Bryce clipped a cigar and held a lighted match while his father "smoked up." Then he slipped into the easy chair beside the old man.

"Well, John Cardigan," he began eagerly, "fate ripped a big hole in our dark cloud the other day and showed me some of the silver lining. I've been making bad medicine for Colonel Pennington."

"What's in the wind, boy?"

"We're going to parallel Pennington's logging-road."

"Inasmuch as that will cost close to three-quarters of a million dollars, I'm



"We're Going to Parallel Pennington's Logging Road."

of the opinion that we're not going to do anything of the sort."

"Perhaps. Nevertheless, if I can demonstrate to a certain party that it will not cost more than three-quarters of a million, he'll loan me the money."

The old man shook his head. "I don't believe it, Bryce. Who's the crazy man?"

"His name is Gregory. He's Scotch."

"Now I know he's crazy. When he hands you the money, you'll find he's talking real money but thinking of Confederate greenbacks."

Bryce laughed. "No," he declared, "if you and I have any brains, they must roll around in our skulls like buckshot in a tin pan. Listen, now, with all your ears. When Bill Henderson wanted to build the logging railroad which he afterward sold to Pennington, and which Pennington is now using as a club to beat our brains out, did he have the money to build it?"

"No. I loaned it to him."

"How did he pay you back?"

"Why, he gave me a ten-year contract for hauling our logs at a dollar and a half a thousand feet, and I merely credited his account with the amount of the freight bills he sent me until he'd squared up the loan, principal and interest."

"Well, if Bill Henderson financed himself on that plan, why didn't we think of using the same time-honored plan for financing a road to parallel Pennington's?"

John Cardigan sat up with a jerk. "By thunder!" he murmured. "That was as close as he ever came to uttering an oath."

"All right, John Cardigan, I forgive you. Now, then, continue to listen: To the north of that great block of timber held by you and Pennington lie the redwood holdings of the Trinidad Redwood Timber company."

"Never heard of them before."

"Well, timber away in there in back of beyond has never been well advertised, because it is regarded as practically inaccessible. You will remember that some ten years ago a company was incorporated with the idea of building a railroad from Grant's Pass, Ore., on the line of the Southern Pacific, down the Oregon and California coast to tap the redwood belt."

"I remember. There was a big whoop and hurrah and then the proposition died abornin'. The engineers found that the cost of construction through that mountainous country was prohibitive."

"Well, before the project died, Gregory and his associates believed that it was going to survive. They quietly gathered together thirty thousand acres of good stuff and then sat down to wait for the railroad. And they are still waiting. Gregory, by the way, is the president of the Trinidad Redwood Timber company. He's an Edinburgh man, and the fly American promoters got him to put up the price of the timber and then mortgaged their interests to him as security for the advance. He foreclosed on their notes five years ago."

"And there he is with his useless timber!" John Cardigan murmured thoughtfully. "The poor Scotch sucker!"

"He isn't poor. The purchase of that timber didn't even dent his bank roll. But he would like to sell his timber, and being Scotch, naturally he desires to sell it at a profit. In order to create a market for it, however, he has to have an outlet to that market. We supply the outlet—with his help; and what happens? Why, timber that cost him fifty and seventy-five cents per thousand feet stumpage—and the actual timber will overrun the cruiser's estimate every time—will be worth two dollars and fifty cents—perhaps more."

"He loans us the money to build our road. We build it—on through our timber and into his. The collateral security which we put up will be a twenty-five-year contract to haul his logs to tidewater on Humboldt bay, at a base freight rate of one dollar and fifty cents, with an increase of twenty-five cents per thousand every five years thereafter, and an option for a renewal of the contract upon expiration, at the rate of freight last paid. In addition we sell him, at a reasonable figure, sufficient land fronting on tidewater to enable him to erect a sawmill, lay out his yards, and build a dock out into the deep water."

"Thus Gregory will have that which he hasn't got now—an outlet to his market by water; and when the railroad to Sequoia builds in from the south, it will connect with the road which we have built from Sequoia up into Township nine to the north; hence Gregory will also have an outlet to his market by rail. He can easily get a good manager to run his lumber business until he finds a customer for it, and in the meantime we will be charging his account with our freight bills against him and gradually pay off the loan without pinching ourselves."

John Cardigan's old hand came gropingly forth and rested affectionately upon his boy's. "You forget, my son, that we cannot last in business long enough to get that road built, even though Gregory should agree to finance the building of it. The interest on our bonded indebtedness is payable on the first—"

"We can meet it, sir."

"Aye, but we can't meet the fifty thousand dollars which, under the terms of our deed of trust, we are required to pay in on July first of each year as a sinking fund toward the retirement of our bonds. Bryce, it just can't be done. We'd have our road about half completed when we'd bust up in business; indeed, the minute Pennington suspected we were paralleling his line, he'd choke off our wind. I tell you it can't be done."

But Bryce contradicted him earnestly. "It can be done," he said. "If we can start building our road and have it half completed before Pennington jumps on us, Gregory will simply have to come to our aid in self-defense. Once he ties up with us, he's committed to the task of seeing us through. I can do it, I tell you."

John Cardigan raised his hand. "No," he said firmly, "I will not allow you to do this. That way—that is the Pennington method. If we fail, my son, we pass out like gentlemen, not blackguards. We will not take advantage of this man Gregory's faith. If he joins forces with us, we lay our hand on the table and let him look."

"Then he'll never join hands with us, partner. We're done."

"We're not done, my son. We have one alternative, and I'm going to take it. I've got to—for your sake. Moreover, your mother would have wished it so."

"You don't mean—"

"Yes, I do. I'm going to sell Pennington my Valley of the Giants. It is my personal property, and it is not mortgaged. Pennington can never foreclose on it—and until he gets it, twenty-five hundred acres of virgin timber on Squaw creek are valueless—nay, a source of expense to him. Bryce, he has to have it; and he'll pay the price, when he knows I mean business."

With a sweeping gesture he waved aside the arguments that rose to his son's lips. "Lead me to the telephone," he commanded; and Bryce, recognizing his sire's unalterable determination, obeyed.

"Find Pennington's number in the telephone book," John Cardigan commanded next.

Bryce found it, and his father proceeded to get the Colonel on the wire. "Pennington," he said hoarsely, "this is John Cardigan speaking. I've decided to sell you that quarter-section that blocks your timber on Squaw creek."

"Indeed," the Colonel purred. "I had an idea you were going to present it to the city for a natural park."

"I've changed my mind. I've decided to sell at your last offer."

"I've changed my mind, too. I've decided not to buy—at my last offer. Good-night."

Slowly John Cardigan hung the re-

ceiver on the hook, turned and groped for his son. When he found him, the old man held him for a moment in his arms. "Lead me upstairs, son," he murmured presently. "I'm tired. I'm going to bed."

When Colonel Seth Pennington turned from the telephone and faced his niece, Shirley read his triumph in his face. "Old Cardigan has capitulated at last," he cried exultingly. "He just telephoned to say he'd accept my last offer for his Valley of the Giants."

"But you're not going to buy it. You told him so, Uncle Seth."

"Of course I'm not going to buy it, at my last offer. It's worth five thousand dollars in the open market, and once I offered him fifty thousand for it. Now I'll give him five."

"I wonder why he wants to sell," Shirley mused. "From what Bryce Cardigan told me once, his father attaches a sentimental value to that strip of woods; his wife is buried there."

"He's selling it because he's desperate. If he wasn't teetering on the verge of bankruptcy, he'd never let me outgame him," Pennington replied gayly. "I'll wait until he has gone bust—and save twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars."

"I think you're biting off your nose to spite your face, Uncle Seth. The Laguna Grande Lumber company needs that outlet. In dollars and cents, what is it worth to the company?"

"If I thought I couldn't get it from Cardigan a few months from now, I'd go as high as a hundred thousand for it tonight," he answered coolly.

"In that event, I advise you to take it for fifty thousand. It's terribly hard on old Mr. Cardigan to have to sell it, even at that price."

"You do not understand these matters, Shirley. Don't try. And don't waste your sympathy on that old humbug. He has to dig up fifty thousand dollars to pay on his bonded indebtedness, and he's finding it a difficult job. He's just sparing for time, but he'll lose out."

As if to indicate that he considered the matter closed, the Colonel drew his chair toward the fire, picked up a magazine, and commenced idly to slit the pages. Shirley studied the back of his head for some time, then got out some fancy work and commenced plying her needle. And as she plied it, a thought, nebulous at first, gradually took form in her head until eventually she murmured loud enough for the Colonel to hear:

"I'll do it."

"Do what?" Pennington queried.

"Something nice for somebody who did something nice for me," she answered.

About two o'clock the following afternoon old Judge Moore of the Superior court of Humboldt county, drifted into Bryce Cardigan's office, sat down uninvited, and lifted his long legs to the top of an adjacent chair.

"Well, Bryce, my boy," he began, "a little bird tells me your daddy is considering the sale of Cardigan's Redwoods, or the Valley of the Giants. How about it?"

Bryce stared at him a moment questioningly. "Yes, judge," he replied, "we'll sell, if we get our price."

"Well," his visitor drawled, "I have a client who might be persuaded. I'm here to talk turkey. What's your price?"

"Before we talk price," Bryce parried, "I want you to answer a question."

"Let her fly," said Judge Moore.

"Are you, directly or indirectly, acting for Colonel Pennington?"

"That's none of your business, young man—at least, it would be none of your business if I were, directly or in-



"The Lord Loveth a Quick Trader," He Declared.

directly, acting for that unconvinced thief. To the best of my information and belief, Colonel Pennington doesn't figure in this deal in any way, shape or manner; and as you know, I've been your daddy's friend for thirty years."

Still Bryce was not convinced, notwithstanding the fact that he would have staked his honor on the judge's veracity. Nobody knew better than he in what devious ways the Colonel worked, his wondrous to perform.

"Well," he said, "I can name you a price. I will state frankly, however, that I believe it to be over your head. We have several times refused to sell to Colonel Pennington for a hundred thousand dollars."

"Naturally that little dab of timber is worth more to Pennington than to anybody else. However, my client has given me instructions to go as high as a hundred thousand if necessary to get the property."

"What?"

"I said it. One hundred thousand dollars of the present standard weight and fineness."

Judge Moore's last statement swept away Bryce's suspicions. He required now no further evidence that, regardless of the identity of the judge's client, that client could not possibly be Col. Seth Pennington or anyone acting for him, since only the night before Pennington had curtly refused to buy the property for fifty thousand dollars. For a moment Bryce stared stupidly at his visitor. Then he recovered his wits.

"Sold!" he almost shouted, and after the fashion of the West extended his hand to clench the bargain. The judge shook it solemnly. "The Lord loveth a quick trader," he declared. "Here's the deed already made out in favor of myself, as trustee." He winked knowingly.

"Client's a bit modest, I take it," Bryce suggested.

"Oh, very. Of course I'm only hazarding a guess, but that guess is that the Colonel is in for a razzooing at the hands of somebody with a small grouch against him."

"May the Lord strengthen that somebody's arm," Bryce breathed fervently. "If your client can afford to hold out long enough, he'll be able to buy Pennington's Squaw creek timber at a bargain."

"My understanding is that such is the program."

Bryce reached for the deed, then reached for his hat. "If you'll be good enough to wait here, Judge Moore, I'll run up to the house and get my father to sign this deed. The Valley of the Giants is his personal property, you know. He didn't include it in his assets when incorporating the Cardigan Redwood Lumber company."

A quarter of an hour later he returned with the deed duly signed by John Cardigan and witnessed by Bryce; whereupon the judge carelessly tossed his certified check for a hundred thousand dollars on Bryce's desk and departed whistling "Turkey in the Straw." Bryce reached for the telephone and called up Colonel Pennington.

"Bryce Cardigan speaking," he began, but the Colonel cut him short.

"My dear, impulsive young friend," he interrupted in obsequious tones, "how often do you have to be told that I am not quite ready to buy that quarter-section?"

"Oh," Bryce retorted, "I merely called up to tell you that every dollar and every asset you have in the world, including your heart's blood, isn't sufficient to buy the Valley of the Giants from me now."

"Eh? What's that? Why?"

"Because, my dear, overcautious and thoroughly unprincipled enemy, it was sold five minutes ago for the tidy sum of one hundred thousand dollars, and if you don't believe me, come over to my office and I'll let you feast your eyes on the certified check."

He could hear a distinct gasp. After an interval of five seconds, however, the Colonel recovered his poise. "I congratulate you," he purred. "I suppose I'll have to wait a little longer now, won't I? Well—patience is my middle name. Au revoir."

The Colonel hung up. His hard face was ashen with rage, and he stared at a calendar on the wall with his cold phidlian stare. However, he was not without a generous stock of optimism. "Somebody has learned of the low state of the Cardigan fortune," he mused, "and taken advantage of it to induce the old man to sell at last. They're figuring on selling to me at a neat profit. And I certainly did overplay my hand last night. However, there's nothing to do now except sit tight and wait for the new owner's next move."

Meanwhile, in the general office of the Cardigan Redwood Lumber company, joy was rampant. Bryce Cardigan was doing a buck and wing dance around the room, while Moira McTavish, with her back to her tall desk, watched him, in her eyes a tremendous joy and a sweet, yearning glow of adoration that Bryce was too happy and excited to notice.

Suddenly he paused before her. "Moira, you're a lucky girl," he declared. "I thought this morning you were going back to a kitchen in a logging camp. It almost broke my heart to think of fate's swindling you like that." He put his arm around her and gave her a brotherly hug. "It's autumn in the woods, Moira, and all the underbrush is golden."

She smiled, though it was winter in her heart.

"Stop it, boys. No fighting, if you please."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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