

The VALLEY of the GIANTS

By PETER B. KYNE
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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Pioneer in the California redwood region, John Cardigan, at forty-seven, is the leading citizen of Sequoia, owner of mills, ships, and many acres of timber, a widower after three years of married life, and father of two-day-old Bryce Cardigan.

CHAPTER II.—At fourteen Bryce makes the acquaintance of Shirley Sumner, a visitor to 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.

CHAPTER III.—While Bryce is at college John Cardigan meets with heavy business losses and for the first time views the future with uncertainty.

CHAPTER IV.—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, Col. Pennington. Bryce learns that his father's eyesight has failed and that Col. Pennington is seeking to take advantage of the old man's business misfortunes.

"May I have one all for myself, Mrs. Tully?"

"Indeed you may, my dear."

"Thank you, but I do not want it for myself. Mrs. Tully, will you please wrap one of those wonderful pies in a napkin and the Instant George Sea Otter comes in with the car, tell him to take the pie over to Colonel Pennington's house and deliver it to Miss Sumner? There's a girl who doubtless thinks she has tasted pie in her day, and I want to prove to her that she hasn't." He selected a card from his card-case, sat down and wrote:

"Dear Miss Sumner:

"Here is a priceless hot wild-black-berry pie, especially manufactured in my honor. It is so good I wanted you to have some. In all your life you have never tasted anything like it."

"Sincerely,
"Bryce Cardigan."

Some twenty minutes later his unusual votive offering was delivered by George Sea Otter to Colonel Pennington's Swedish maid, who promptly brought it in to the Colonel and Shirley Sumner, who were even then at dinner in the Colonel's fine burled-wood-paneled dining room. Miss Sumner's amazement was so profound that for fully a minute she was mute, contenting herself with scrutinizing alternately the pie and the card that accompanied it. Presently she handed the card to her uncle, who affixed his pin-nez and read the epistle with deliberation.

"Isn't this young Cardigan a truly remarkable young man, Shirley?" he declared. "Why, I have never heard of anything like his astounding action. If he had sent you over an armful of American Beauty roses from his father's old-fashioned garden, I could understand it, but an infernal black-berry pie! Good heavens!"

"I told you he was different," she replied. To the Colonel's amazement



"I Told You He Was Different."

she did not appear at all amused. "Bryce Cardigan is a man with the heart and soul of a boy, and I think it was mighty sweet of him to share his pie with me. If he had sent roses, I should have suspected him of trying to 'rush' me, but the fact that he sent a black-berry pie proves that he's just a natural, simple, sane, original citi-

zen—just the kind of person a girl can have for a dear friend without incurring the risk of having to marry him."

The Colonel noticed a calm little smile fringing her generous mouth. He wished he could tell, by intuition, what she was thinking about—and what effect a hot wild-black-berry pie was ultimately to have upon the value of his minority holding in the Laguna Grande Lumber company.

Not until dinner was finished and father and son had repaired to the library for their coffee and cigars did Bryce Cardigan advert to the subject of his father's business affairs.

"Well, John Cardigan," he declared comfortably. "Suppose you start at the beginning and tell me everything right to the end. George Sea Otter informed me that you've been having trouble with this Johnny-come-lately, Colonel Pennington. Is he the man who has us where the hair is short?"

The old man nodded.

"The Squaw creek timber deal, eh?"

Bryce suggested. "Again the old man nodded. 'You wrote me all about that,' Bryce continued. 'You had him blocked whichever way he turned—so effectually blocked, in fact, that the only pleasure he has derived from his investment since is the knowledge that he owns two thousand acres of timber with the exclusive right to pay taxes on it, walk in it, look at it and admire it—in fact, do everything except log it, mill it, and realize on his investment. It must make him feel like a badly jackedass.'"

"On the other hand," his father reminded him, "no matter what the Colonel's feeling on that score may be, misery loves company, and not until I had pulled out of the Squaw creek country and started logging in the San Hedrin watershed, did I realize that I had been considerable of a jackedass myself."

"Yes," Bryce admitted, "there can be no doubt but that you cut off your nose to spite your face."

His thoughts harked back to that first season of logging in the San Hedrin, when the cloud-burst had caught the river filled with Cardigan logs and whirled them down to the bay, to crash through the log-boom at tidewater and continue out to the open sea.

The old man appeared to divine the trend of his son's thoughts. "Yes, Bryce, that was a disastrous year," he declared. "The mere loss of the logs was a severe blow, but in addition I had to pay out quite a little money to settle with my customers. I was loaded up with low-priced orders that year, although I didn't expect to make any money. The orders were merely to keep the men employed. You understand, Bryce! I had a good crew, the finest in the country; and if I had shut down, my men would have scattered and—well, you know how hard it is to get that kind of a crew together again. Besides, I had never failed my boys before, and I couldn't bear the thought of falling then. Half the mills in the country were shut down at the time, and there was a lot of distress among the unemployed. I couldn't do it, Bryce."

Bryce nodded. "And when you lost the logs, you couldn't fill those low-priced orders. Then the market commenced to jump and advanced three dollars in three months—"

"Exactly, my son. And my customers began to crowd me to fill those old orders. I couldn't expect them to suffer with me; my failure to perform my contracts, while unavoidable, nevertheless would have caused them a serious loss, and when they were forced to buy elsewhere, I paid them the difference between the price they paid my competitors and the price at which they originally placed their orders with me. And the delay caused them further loss."

He smoked meditatively for a minute. "I've always been land-poor," he explained apologetically. "Whenever I had idle money, I put it into timber in the San Hedrin watershed, because I realized that some day the railroad would build in from the south, tap that timber and double its value. I've not as yet found reason to doubt the wisdom of my course; but"—he sighed—"the railroad is a long time coming!"

John Cardigan here spoke of a most important factor in the situation. The crying need of the country was a feeder to some transcontinental railroad. By reason of natural barriers, Humboldt county was not easily accessible to the outside world except from the sea, and even this avenue of ingress and egress would be closed for days at a stretch when the harbor bar was on a rampage. With the exception of a strip of level, fertile land, perhaps five miles wide and thirty miles long and contiguous to the seacoast, the heavily timbered mountains to the north, east, and south rendered the building of a railroad that would connect Humboldt county with the outside world a profoundly difficult and expensive task.

"Don't worry, Dad. It will come," Bryce assured his father. "It's bound to."

"Yes, but not in my day. And when it comes, a stranger may own your San Hedrin timber and reap the reward of my lifetime of labor."

Again a silence fell between them, broken presently by the old man. "That was a mistake—logging in the San Hedrin," he observed. "I had my lesson that first year, but I didn't heed it. If I had abandoned my camps there, pocketed my pride, paid Colonel Pennington two dollars for his Squaw creek timber, and rebuilt

my old logging road, I would have been safe to-day. But I was stubborn; I'd played the game so long, you know—I didn't want to let that man Pennington outgame me. It's hard to teach an old dog new tricks, and besides, I was obsessed with the need of protecting your heritage from attack in any direction."

John Cardigan straightened up in his chair and laid the tip of his right index finger in the center of the palm of his left hand. "Here was the situation, Bryce: The center of my palm represents Sequoia; the ends of my fingers represent the San Hedrin timber twenty miles south. Now, if the railroad built in from the south, you would win. But if it built in from Grant's Pass, Oregon, on the north from the base of my hand, the terminus of the line would be Sequoia, twenty miles from your timber in the San Hedrin watershed!"

Bryce nodded. "In which event," he replied, "we would be in much the same position with our San Hedrin timber as Colonel Pennington is with his Squaw creek timber. We would have the comforting knowledge that we owned it and paid taxes on it but couldn't do a darned thing with it!"

"Right you are! The thing to do, then, as I viewed the situation, Bryce, was to acquire a body of timber north of Sequoia and be prepared for either eventuality. And this I did."

Since again descended upon them; and Bryce, gazing into the open fireplace, recalled an event in that period of his father's activities: Old Bill Henderson had come up to their house to dinner one night, and quite suddenly, in the midst of his soup, the

Continued on Page Six.

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