

The VALLEY OF THE GIANTS

BY PETER B. KYNE
AUTHOR OF "CAPPY RICKS"
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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 child 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.

CHAPTER V.—In the Valley of the Giants young Cardigan finds a tree felled directly across his mother's grave. Indications are that it was cut down to secure the burl, and evidence seems to show that Pennington and his woods-boss, Jules Roudeau, are implicated in the outrage.

CHAPTER VI.—Dining with Col. Pennington and his niece, Bryce finds the room paneled with redwood burl, confirming his suspicions of Pennington's guilt. In a diplomatic way, unperceived by Shirley, the two men declare war.

CHAPTER VII.—Pennington refuses to renew his logging contract with the Cardigans, believing his action means bankruptcy for the latter. Bryce forces Roudeau to confess he felled the tree in the Valley of the Giants, at Pennington's order. After punishing the man, Bryce hurries him at Col. Pennington, who, with Shirley, had witnessed the fight. Pennington is humiliated, and the girl, indignant, orders Bryce to leave her and forget their friendship. He leaves, but refuses to accept dismissal.

CHAPTER VIII.—Returning to Sequoia, the train on which Shirley, 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.

CHAPTER IX.—Moira McTavish, childhood friend of Bryce and employed in his office, makes Shirley's acquaintance and the two become friends. Needing money badly, John Cardigan offers to sell Pennington the Valley of the Giants, but the Colonel, confident the property must soon be his through the bankruptcy of his enemies, contemptuously refuses. Unwilling to her uncle, Shirley buys the Valley and the Cardigans have a new lease of business life. They interest capital and decide on a scheme to parallel Pennington's logging railroad.

CHAPTER X.—Buchanan Ogilvy, railroad contractor and Bryce's college friend, is decided on by the Cardigans as the man to figure as the builder of the proposed railroad. Bryce goes to San Francisco to meet him.

CHAPTER XI.—Ogilvy ostentatiously begins work of surveying for the line, which is announced as a proposed through route. Pennington, vaguely alarmed, decides to block operations by making it impossible to secure a franchise for the line through Sequoia. In this he plans to enlist the aid of the mayor, Poundstone.

CHAPTER XII.—"Buck" Ogilvy, as builder of the projected Northern California and Oregon railroad, meets Moira McTavish and is much impressed. Bryce and his father make plans for securing a franchise for the line from the city council.

CHAPTER XIII.—Ogilvy, in a business interview, favorably impresses the Mayor, and later engages that official's son as attorney for the new road. Through him they obtain the temporary franchise. Pennington, finally convinced that the Cardigan interests are behind the scheme, gets to work to balk them.

CHAPTER XIV.

The dictograph which Shirley had asked Bryce to obtain for her in San Francisco arrived on the regular passenger steamer on Thursday morning and Bryce called her up to ask when she desired it sent over.

"Good morning, Mr. Cardigan," she greeted him cheerily. "How do you feel this morning? Any worse for having permitted yourself to be a human being last night?"

"Why, I feel pretty fine, Shirley. I think it did me a lot of good to crawl out of my shell last night."

"You feel encouraged to go on logging, eh?"

"Yes."

"And fighting?"

"By all means."

"Then something has occurred of late to give you new courage?"

"Oh, many things. By the way, Shirley, you may inform your uncle at breakfast Friday morning about my connection with the N. C. O. In fact, I think it would be far better for you if you made it a point to do so."

"Why?"

"Because both Ogilvy and myself have a very strong suspicion that your uncle has a detective or two on our trails. I judge your uncle will learn today that you dined with Ogilvy, Moira and me last night."

"Oh, dear! That's terrible." He could sense her distress.

"Ashamed of having been seen in my company, eh?"

"Please don't. Are you quite serious in this matter?"

"Quite."

"Uncle Seth will think it so—so strange."

"He'll probably tell you about it. Better beat him to the issue by 'fessing up, Shirley. Doubtless his suspicions are already aroused, and if you inform him that you know I am the real builder of the N. C. O., he'll think you're a smart woman and that you've been doing a little private gum-shoe work of your own on behalf of the Laguna Grande Lumber company."

"Which is exactly what I have been doing," she reminded him.

"I know. But then, I'm not afraid of you, Shirley—that is, any more. And after Friday morning I'll not be afraid of your uncle."

"I feel as if I were a conspirator."

"I believe you are one. Your dictograph has arrived. Shall I send George Sea Otter over with it? And have you somebody to install it?"

"Oh, bother! Does it have to be installed?"

"It does. You place the contraption—hide it, rather—in the room where the conspirators conspire; then you run wires from it into another room where the detectives listen in on the receivers."

"Could George Sea Otter install it?"

"I think he could. There is a printed card of instructions, and I dare say George would find the job no more baffling than the ignition system on the Napier."

"Will he tell anybody?"

"Not if you ask him not to."

"Very well, then. Please send him over. Thank you so much, Bryce Cardigan. You're an awful good old sort, after all. Really, it hurts me to have to oppose you. It would be so much nicer if we didn't have all those redwood trees to protect, wouldn't it?"

"Let us not argue the question, Shirley. I think I have my redwood trees protected. Good-by."

He had scarcely finished telephoning his home to instruct George Sea Otter to report with the express package to Shirley when Buck Ogilvy strolled into the office and tossed a document on his desk. "There's your little old temporary franchise, old thing," he announced; and with many a hearty laugh he related to Bryce the ingenious means by which he had obtained it. "And now if you will phone up to your logging camp and instruct the woods-boss to lay off about fifty men to rest for the day, pending a hard night's work, and arrange to send them down on the last log train today, I'll drop around after dinner and we'll fly to that jump-crossing."

"I'll telephone Colonel Pennington's manager and ask him to kick a switch-engine in on the Laurel creek spur and snake those flat cars with my rails aboard out to the junction with the main line," Bryce replied. And he called up the Laguna Grande Lumber company—only to be informed by no less a person than Colonel Pennington himself that it would be impossible to send the switch-engine in until the following afternoon. The Colonel was sorry, but the switch-engine was in the shop having the brick in her firebox renewed, while the mogul that hauled the log trains would not have time to attend to the matter, since the flats would have to be spotted on the sidetrack at Cardigan's log landing in the woods, and this could not be done until the last loaded log train for the day had been hauled out to make room.

"Why not switch back with the mogul after the log train has been hauled out on the main line?" Bryce demanded pointedly.

Pennington, however, was not trapped. "My dear fellow," he replied patronizingly, "quite impossible, I assure you. That old trestle across the creek, my boy—it hasn't been looked at for years. While I'd send the light switch-engine over it and have no fears—"

"I happen to know, Colonel, that the big mogul kicked those flats in to load the rails!"

"I know it. And what happened? Why, that old trestle squeaked and shook and gave every evidence of being about to buckle in the center. My engineer threatened to quit if I sent him in again."

"Very well. I suppose I'll have to wait until the switch-engine comes out of the shop," Bryce replied resignedly, and hung up. He turned a troubled face to Ogilvy. "Check-

perior person, opened the door. The Poundstones entered. At the entrance to the living room the butler announced: "The Colonel is lying, Buck, and I've caught him at it. As a matter of fact, the mogul didn't kick those flats in at all. The switch-engine did—and I know it. Now I'm going to send a man over to snoop around Pennington's roundhouse and verify his report about the switch-engine being in the shop."

He did so. Half an hour later the messenger returned with the information that not only was the switch-engine not in the shop but her firebox had been overhauled the week before and was reported to be in excellent condition.

"That settles it," Buck Ogilvy mourned. "The Colonel is as suspicious as a rhino. He doesn't know anything, but he smells danger just the same."

"Exactly, Buck. So he is delaying the game until he can learn something definite." He drummed idly on his desk for several minutes. Then: "Buck, can you run a locomotive?"

"With one hand, old man."

"Fine business! Well, I guess we'll put in that crossing tomorrow night. The switch-engine will be in the roundhouse at Pennington's mill tomorrow night, so we can't steal that; but we can steal the mogul. I'll just send word up to my woods boss not to have his train loaded when the mogul comes up late tomorrow afternoon to haul it down to our log landing. Of course, the engine crew won't bother to run down to Sequoia for the night—that is, they won't run the mogul down. They'll just leave her at our log landing all night and put up for the night at our camp."

"But how do you know they will put up at your camp all night, Bryce?"

"My men will make them comfortable, and it means they can lie abed until seven o'clock instead of having to roll out at five o'clock, which would be the case if they spent the night at this end of the line. There is a slight grade at our log landing. I know that, because the air leaked out of the brakes on a log train I was on a short time ago, and the train ran away with me. Now, the engine crew will set the airbrakes on the mogul and leave her with steam up to throff all night; they'll not blow her down, for that would mean work firing her in the morning. Our task, Buck, will be to throw off the airbrakes and let her glide silently out of our log landing. About a mile down the road we'll stop, get up steam, run down to the junction with the main line, back in on the Laurel Creek spur, couple onto those flat cars and breeze merrily down to Sequoia with them. They'll be loaded waiting for us; our men will be congregated in our dry-dock just off Water street near B, waiting for us to arrive with the rails—and bingo—we go to it. After we drop the flats, we'll run the engine back to the woods, leave it where we found it, return a-flying. You can get back in ample time to superintend the cutting of the crossing!"

"Spoken like a man!" quoth Buck Ogilvy. "You're the one man in this world for whom I'd steal a locomotive. 'At-a-boy!'"

Had either of the conspirators known of Pennington's plans to entertain Mayor Poundstone at dinner on Thursday night, it is probable they would not have cheered until those flat cars were out of the woods.

Mayor Poundstone and his wife arrived at the Pennington home in Redwood boulevard at six forty-five Thursday evening. It was with a profound feeling of relief that his honor lifted the lady from their modest little "divver," for once inside the Pennington house, he felt, he would be free from a peculiarly devilish brand of persecution inaugurated by his wife about three months previously. Mrs. Poundstone wanted a new automobile. And she had entered upon a campaign of nagging and complaint, hoping to wear Poundstone's resistance down to the point where he would be willing to barter his hope of salvation in return for a guarantee of peace on earth.

"I feel like a perfect fool, calling upon these people in this filthy rattletrap," Mrs. Poundstone protested.

Mayor Poundstone paused. "In pity's name, woman," he growled, "talk about something else. Give me one night of peace. Let me enjoy my dinner and this visit."

"I can't help it," Mrs. P.—retorted with asperity. She pointed to Shirley Sumner's car parked under the portecochere. "If I had a sedan like that, I could die happy. And it only cost thirty-two hundred and fifty dollars."

"I paid six hundred and fifty for the rattletrap, and I couldn't afford that," he almost whimpered. "You were happy with it until I was elected mayor."

"You forget our social position, my dear," she purred sweetly.

He could have struck her. "Hang your social position," he gritted savagely. "Shut up, will you? Social position in a sawmill town! Damn it, you'll drive me crazy yet!" Poundstone growled, and subsided.

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"I paid six hundred and fifty for the rattletrap, and I couldn't afford that," he almost whimpered. "You were happy with it until I was elected mayor."

"You forget our social position, my dear," she purred sweetly.

He could have struck her. "Hang your social position," he gritted savagely. "Shut up, will you? Social position in a sawmill town! Damn it, you'll drive me crazy yet!" Poundstone growled, and subsided.

The Pennington butler, a very su-

perior person, opened the door. The Poundstones entered. At the entrance to the living room the butler announced: "The Colonel is lying, Buck, and I've caught him at it. As a matter of fact, the mogul didn't kick those flats in at all. The switch-engine did—and I know it. Now I'm going to send a man over to snoop around Pennington's roundhouse and verify his report about the switch-engine being in the shop."

He did so. Half an hour later the messenger returned with the information that not only was the switch-engine not in the shop but her firebox had been overhauled the week before and was reported to be in excellent condition.

"That settles it," Buck Ogilvy mourned. "The Colonel is as suspicious as a rhino. He doesn't know anything, but he smells danger just the same."

"Exactly, Buck. So he is delaying the game until he can learn something definite." He drummed idly on his desk for several minutes. Then: "Buck, can you run a locomotive?"

"With one hand, old man."

"Fine business! Well, I guess we'll put in that crossing tomorrow night. The switch-engine will be in the roundhouse at Pennington's mill tomorrow night, so we can't steal that; but we can steal the mogul. I'll just send word up to my woods boss not to have his train loaded when the mogul comes up late tomorrow afternoon to haul it down to our log landing. Of course, the engine crew won't bother to run down to Sequoia for the night—that is, they won't run the mogul down. They'll just leave her at our log landing all night and put up for the night at our camp."

"But how do you know they will put up at your camp all night, Bryce?"

"My men will make them comfortable, and it means they can lie abed until seven o'clock instead of having to roll out at five o'clock, which would be the case if they spent the night at this end of the line. There is a slight grade at our log landing. I know that, because the air leaked out of the brakes on a log train I was on a short time ago, and the train ran away with me. Now, the engine crew will set the airbrakes on the mogul and leave her with steam up to throff all night; they'll not blow her down, for that would mean work firing her in the morning. Our task, Buck, will be to throw off the airbrakes and let her glide silently out of our log landing. About a mile down the road we'll stop, get up steam, run down to the junction with the main line, back in on the Laurel Creek spur, couple onto those flat cars and breeze merrily down to Sequoia with them. They'll be loaded waiting for us; our men will be congregated in our dry-dock just off Water street near B, waiting for us to arrive with the rails—and bingo—we go to it. After we drop the flats, we'll run the engine back to the woods, leave it where we found it, return a-flying. You can get back in ample time to superintend the cutting of the crossing!"

"Spoken like a man!" quoth Buck Ogilvy. "You're the one man in this world for whom I'd steal a locomotive. 'At-a-boy!'"

Had either of the conspirators known of Pennington's plans to entertain Mayor Poundstone at dinner on Thursday night, it is probable they would not have cheered until those flat cars were out of the woods.

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