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Probate Court Sessions.

THE PROBATE COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF ESSEX will hold its regular sessions at the first and third Mondays of each month, at 10 o'clock, at the court house in Island Pond, Vermont. Any person desiring to file a petition or to be heard in any matter in the probate court should appear at the session at which the same is to be heard, or at any place in the county where the probate court is held, at least ten days before the session at which the same is to be heard.

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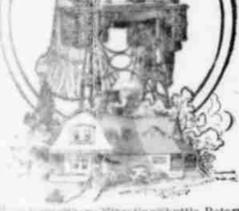
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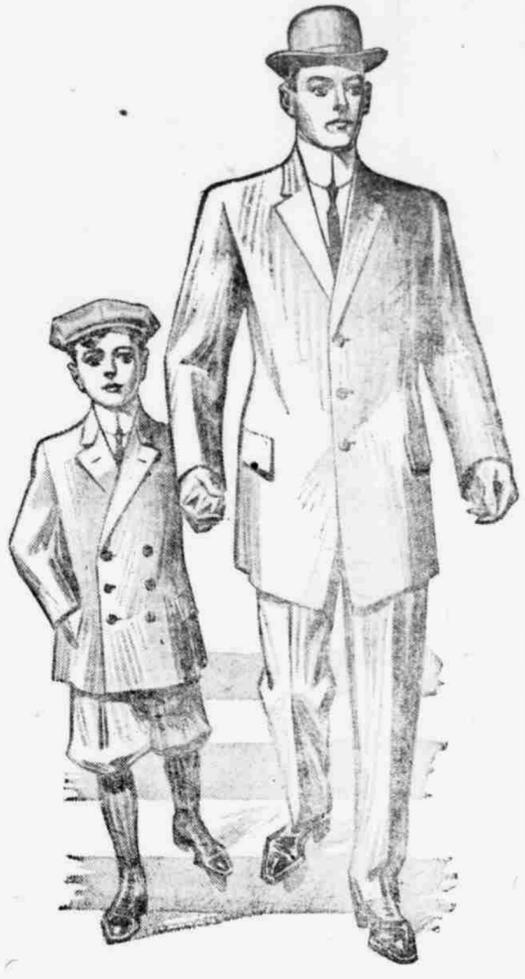
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Cavanagh, Forest Ranger

The Great Conservation Novel
By **HAMLIN GARLAND**
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CHAPTER XX.
WITH THE AID OF THE PRESS.

LEE VIRGINIA was now living a romance stranger and more startling than any she had ever read. In imagination she was able to look back and down upon the Fork as if she had been carried into another world—a world that was at once primeval, yet peaceful; a world of dreaming trees, singing streams and silent peaks; a realm in which law and order reigned, maintained by one determined man whose power was derived from the president himself. She felt safe—entirely safe—for just across the roaring mountain torrent the two intrepid guardians of the forest were encamped. One of them it is true, came of Swedish parentage, and the other was a native of England, but they were both American in the high sense of being loyal to the federal will, and she trusted them more unquestioningly than any other men in all that vast west only Redfield. She had no doubt there were others equally loyal, equally to be trusted, but she did not know them.

She rose to a complete understanding of Cavanagh's love for "the high country" and his enthusiasm for the cause, a cause which was able to bring together the student from Yale and the graduates of Bergen and of Oxford and make them comrades in preserving the trees and streams of the mountain states against the encroachments of some of their own citizens, who were openly, shortsightedly and cynically bent upon destruction, spoliation and abuse.

She had listened to the talk of the forester and the supervisor, and she had learned from them that Cavanagh was sure of swift advancement now that he had shown his courage and his skill, and the thought that he might leave the state to take charge of another forest brought her some uneasiness, for she and Lize had planned to go to Sulphur City. She had consented to this because it still left to her the possibility of occasionally seeing or hearing from Cavanagh. But the thought that he might go away altogether took some of the music out of the sound of the stream and made the future vaguely sad.

For the next two days Cavanagh slept but little, for his patient grew steadily worse. As the flame of his fever mounted, Wetherford pleaded for air. The ranger threw open the doors, admitting freely the cool, sweet mountain wind. "He might as well

die of a draft as smother," was his thought, and by the use of cold cloths he tried to allay the itching and the pain.

With the coming of the third night Wetherford was unconscious and unrecognizable to any one who had known him in the days of "the free range." He was going as the wild west was going, disordered, unlearned, possessed, incapable of rebirth, yet carrying something fine to his grave. He had acted the part of a brave man; that shall be said of him. He had gone to the rescue of the poor Basque instinctively, with the same reckless disregard of consequences to himself which marked his character when as a cow boss on the range he had set aside the most difficult tasks for his own rope or gun. His regard for the ranger into whose care he was now about to commit his wife and daughter persisted in spite of his suffering. In him was his hope, his stay. Once again, in a lucid moment, he reverted to the promise which he had drawn from Cavanagh.

"If I go you must take care—of my girl—take care of Lize too. Promise me that. Do you promise?" he insisted.

"I promise—on honor," Ross repeated, and, with a faint pressure of his hand so slender and weak, Wetherford sank away into the drowsy which deepened hour by hour, broken now and then by convulsions, which wrung the stern heart of the ranger till his hands trembled for pity.

The day was well advanced when the sound of rattling pebbles on the hill back of his cabin drew his attention, and a few moments later a man on a weary horse rode up to his door and dropped heavily from the saddle. It was a small, dark individual, with spectacles, plump of the city.

"Beware! Sunstroke," called Ross as his visitor drew near the door.

The newcomer waived his hand contemptuously. "I've had it. Are you Ross Cavanagh?"

"I am."

"My name is Hartley. I represent the Denver Roundup. I'm interested

"No."

"They found him shot through the neck and dying—this morning. As he was gasping his last breath he said, 'The ranger knows' and when they asked, 'What ranger?' he said, 'Cavanagh.' When I heard that I jumped a horse and beat 'em all over here. Is this true? Did he tell you who the murderers are?"

Cavanagh did not answer at once. He was like a man caught on a swinging bridge, and his first instinct was to catch the swing to get his balance.

"Wait a minute. What is it all to you?"

Again that peculiar grin lighted the small man's dark, wrinkled face.

"It's a fine detective stunt, and, besides, it means \$20 per column and maybe a 'house.' I can't wait; you can't wait. It's up to us to strike now. If these men know you have their names they'd like for Texas or the high seas. Come now! Everybody tells me you're one of these idealistic highbrow rangers who care more for the future of the west than most natural born westerners. What's your plan? If you'll yoke up with me we'll run these devils into the earth and win great fame and you'll be doing the whole country a service."

The ranger studied the small figure before him with penetrating gaze. There was deliberate fearlessness in the stranger's face and eyes, and, notwithstanding his calm, almost languid movement, restless energy could be detected in his voice.

"What is your plan?" the ranger asked.

"Get ourselves deputized by the court and jump these men before they realize that there's anything doing. They count the whole country on their side, but they're mistaken. They've outdone themselves this time, and a tremendous reaction has set in. Everybody knows you've had an even hand over those warring Picts and Scots, and the court will be glad to deputize you to bring them to justice. The old sheriff is paralyzed. Everybody knows that the assassins are prominent cattle ranchers, and yet no one dares move. It's up to you fellows, who represent law and order, to act quick."

Cavanagh followed him with complete comprehension, and a desire to carry out the plan seized upon him.

"I'd do it if I could," he said, "but it happens I am nursing a sick man. I am perhaps already exposed to the same disease. I can't leave here for a week or more. It would not be right for me to expose others."

"Don't worry about that. Take a hot bath, fumigate your clothing, shave your head. I'll fix you up, and I'll get some one to take your place." Catching sight of Swenson and Lize on the bridge, he asked: "Who are those people? Can't they take your nursing job?"

"No," answered Cavanagh bluntly. "It's no use. I can't join you in this, at least not now."

"But you'll give me the names which Dunn gave you?"

"No! I can't do that. I shall tell the supervisor, and he can act as he sees fit. For the present I'm locked up here."

The other man looked the disappointment he felt. "I'm sorry you don't feel like opening up. You know perfectly well that nothing will ever be done about this thing unless the names light upon it. It's up to you

and me in representing the conscience of the east"—here he winked an eye—"and you federal authorities to do what we can to bring these men to their punishment. Better reconsider. I'm speaking now as a citizen as well as a reporter."

There was much truth in what he said, but Cavanagh refused to go further in the matter until he had consulted with Redfield.

"Very well," replied Hartley. "That's settled. By the way, who is your patient?"

Eloquently, concisely, Ross told the story. "Just a poor old mounted hobo, a survivor of the cowboy west," he said, "but he had the heart of a hero in him, and I'm doing my best to save him."

"Keep him in the dark—that's the best theory—or under a red light White light brings out the sinners."

"He hates darkness. That's one reason why I've opened the doors and windows."

"All wrong. According to Flinern, he wouldn't put in the dark. However, it doesn't matter on a cowboy. You've a great story yourself. There's a fine situation here, which I'll play up if you don't object."

Cavanagh smiled. "Would my objection have any weight?"

The reporter laughed. "Not much. I've got to carry back some sort of game. Well, so long. I must hit the trail over the hills."

Cavanagh made no answer and returned to his patient more than half convinced that Hartley was right. The "patron of the press" might prove to be a very real force in this pursuit.

As the journalist was about to mount his horse he discovered Lee Virginia on the other side of the creek. "Hello," said he. "I wonder what this pretty maiden means." And, dropping his bridle rein again, he walked down to the bridge.

Swenson interposed his tall figure. "What do you want?" he asked bluntly. "You don't want to get too close. You've been talking to the ranger."

Hartley studied him coolly. "Are you a ranger too?"

"No, only a guard."

"Why are you leaving Cavanagh to play it alone in there?"

Lee explained. "He won't let any of us come near him."

"Quite right," retorted Hartley promptly. "They say smallpox has lost its terrors, but when you're eight hours' hard trail from a doctor or a hospital it's still what I'd call a formidable enemy. However, Cavanagh's immune, so he says."

"We don't know that," Lee said, and her hands came together in a spasm of fear. "Are you a doctor?"

"No; I'm only a newspaper man, but I've had a lot of experience with plagues of all sorts—had the yellow fever in Porto Rico and the typhoid in South Africa; that's why I'm out here ricocheting over the hills. But who are you, may I ask? You look like the rose of Sharon."

"My name is Lee Wetherford," she answered, with childish directness, for there was something compelling in the man's voice and eyes. "And this is my mother." She indicated Lize, who was approaching.

"You are not out here for your health," he stated, rather thoughtfully. "How happens it you're here?"

"It was born here—in the Fork."

His face remained expressionless. "I don't believe it. Can such maidens come out of Rouring Fork? No! But I don't mean that. What are you doing up here in this wilderness?"

Lize took a part in the conversation. "Another inspector?" she asked as she unbuttoned up.

"That's me," he replied—"Sherlock Holmes, Vidocq, all rolled into one."

"My mother," again volunteered Lee. Hartley's eyes expressed incredulity, but he did not put his feelings into words, for he perceived in Lize a type with which he was entirely familiar—one to be handled with care. "What are you two women doing here? Are you related to one of these rangers?"

Lize resented this. "You're asking a good many questions, Mr. Man."

"That's my trade," was the unabashed reply, "and I'm not so old but that I can rise to a romantic situation." Whereupon he dropped all direct interrogation and with an air of candor told the story of his mission. Lize, entirely sympathetic, invited him to lunch, and he was soon in possession of their story, even to the tender relationship between Lee Virginia and the plague besieged forest ranger.

"We're not so mighty disinterested," he said, referring to his paper. "The Roundup represents the new west in part, but to some the new west means opportunity to loot water sites and pile up unearned increment. Oh, yes, we're on the side of the fruit and alfalfa grower, because it pays. If the loss of my paper happened to be in the sheep business, as Senator Blank White is, we would sling a different tune, or if I were a congressman representing a district of cattlemen I'd be very slow about helping to build up any system that would make me pay for my grass. As it is, I'm commissioned to make it hot for the ranchers that killed those dogs, and I'm going to do it. If this country had a man like Cavanagh for sheriff we'd have the murderers in two days. He knows who the butchers are, and I'd like his help. But he's nailed down here, and there's no hope of his getting away. A few men like him could civilize this country."

Thereupon he drew from three pairs of lips a statement of the kind of man Ross Cavanagh was, but most significant of all were the few words of the girl to whom this man of the pad and spurs was a magdalen, capable of exciting her hero and of advancing light and civilization by the mere motion of his hand. She liked him and grew

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more and more willing to communicate, and as prevailing in her something unusual, tinged on, questioning. Lize for Ross. "I must be going," he said to Lee. "You've given me a lovely afternoon."

Lee Virginia was all too ignorant of the ways of reporters to resent his note taking, and she accepted his hand, believing him to be a sincere admirer of her father. "What are you going to do?" she asked.

"I'm going back to Sulphur to spread the report of Cavanagh's quarantine." Again that meaning smile. "I don't want any other newspaper men mixed up in my game. I'm Lonesome Ned in stunts like this, and I hope if they do come up you'll be judiciously silent. Goodby."

CHAPTER XXI.
WETHERFORD PASSES ON.

SOON after the reporter left Cavanagh called to Swenson: "The old man can't last through another such night as last night was, and I wish you would persuade Mrs. Wetherford and her daughter to return to the valley. They can do nothing here—absolutely nothing. Please say that."

Swenson repeated his commands with all the emphasis he could give them, but neither Lize nor Lee would consent to go. "It would be heathenish to leave him alone in this lonesome hole," protested Lize.

"I shall stay till he is free," added Lee. And with uneasy heart she crossed the bridge and walked on and on toward the cabin till she was close enough to detect the lines of care on her lover's haggard face.

"Stop!" he called sharply. "Keep away! Why don't you obey me? Why don't you go back to the valley?"

"Because I will not leave you alone—I can't! Please let me stay."

"I beg of you go back."

The roar of the stream made it necessary to speak loudly, and he could not put into his voice the tenderness he felt at the moment, but his face was knotted with pain as he asked, "Don't you see you add to my uneasiness—my pain?"

"We're so anxious about you," she answered, "it seems as though we should be doing something to help you."

He understood and was grateful for the tenderness which brought her so near to him, but he was forced to be stern.

"There is nothing you can do—nothing more than you are doing. It helps me to know that you are here, but you must not cross the bridge. Please go back!" There was pleading as well as command in his voice, and with a realization of the passion his voice conveyed she retraced her steps, her heart beating quickly with the joy which his words conveyed.

At sunset Redfield returned, bringing with him medicine, but no nurse. "No body will come up here," he said. "I reckon Ross is doomed to fight it out alone. The solitude, the long trail, scares the bravest of them away. I tried and tried—no use. Eleanor would have come, of course—demanded to come—but I would not permit that. She commissioned me to bring you both down to the ranch."

Lee Virginia thanked him, but reiterated her wish to stay until all possible danger to Cavanagh was over.

Redfield crossed the bridge and laid the medicines down outside the door.

"The nurse from Sulphur refused to come when she found that her patient was in a mountain cabin. I'm sorry, old man, I did the best I could."

"Never mind," replied Cavanagh. "I'm still free from any touch of fever. I'm tired, of course, but good for another night of it. My main anxiety concerns Lee. Get her to go home with you if you can."

"I'll do the best I can," responded Redfield, "but meanwhile you must not think of getting out of the forest service. I have some cheering news

[TO BE CONTINUED.]