

Catan Sanderson

By HALLIE ERMINE RIVES,
Author of "Hearts Courageous," Etc.

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Chapter 23

HE bell was tapping in the steeple of the little Catholic church on the edge of the town, and the mellow tone came clearly up the slope of the mountain which once more the one-time partner of Prendergast stood on the threshold of the lovely cabin, scattered over the mounds of yellow gravel that marked his toil.

The returned wanderer had met with a distinct surprise in the one-time partner of Prendergast. As he passed through the streets more than one had nodded or had spoken his name, and the recognition had sent a glow to his cheek and a lightness to his step.

Since the daring feat in the automobile the tone of the gossip had changed. His name was no longer connected with the stive robberies. The lucky find, too, constituted a material boom for Smoky Mountain and lattered the stock in its hydraulic enterprises, and this had been written on the outside of the ledger. Opinion, so all powerful in this community, had altered. All in all he had been the outcast could not guess, but he felt the change with satisfaction.

Till the sun was low he sat in the cabin thinking. At length he called the dog and fastened it in the accustomed place and began slowly to climb the steep ascent toward the Knob. When he came to a certain way grown trail that met the main path he turned aside. Here lay the spot where he had first spoken with her, face to face. Here she had told him there was nothing in his past which could not be buried and forgotten.

As he halted the bushes and stepped into the narrow space beside the jutting ledge he stopped short with an exclamation. The place was no longer a tangle of vines. A grave had been lately made there, and behind it, fresh chiseled in the rock, was a simple structure, seated, chin on hand, as if regarding the nearby mound. As in a dream he realized that its features were his own. Awestruck, the living man drew near.

It was Jessica's conception of the prodigal son she had modeled it in Aniston in her blindness, after Hugh's early return to the house in the "spoons." David Stires had noticed the structure and returned to the distant Knob as a spot in which he would choose to be buried, and the wish had been observed. Her sorrow for his death had been deepened by the desire to learn the name of the man who had come too suddenly for David Stires to have reinstated his son.

This sorrow had possessed her with a comfort that she had known at the last and had forgiven Hugh. Of this she could assure him when he returned, for she could not really believe so deep is the heart of a woman—that he would not return. In the days of vigil she had found relief in the rough, hard work of the mill. None had intruded in that out of the way spot, save that one day Mrs. Halloran, led by curiosity to see the grave of the rich man whose wealth had been to be buried on the mountain side, had found her at her work, and her Jessica had pledged to silence. She was no fool, was Mrs. Halloran, and to put two and two together she had thought of the girl who worked each day at that self-appointed task. Only the afternoon before Jessica had finished carving the words on the stone, and she had seen which the look of the startled man was now resting: "I will arise and go unto my father."

The gaze turned from the words, with quick question to the mound. He came close and in the fading light looked at the marble on the low headstone. So he had come too late! If he could only have learned the truth earlier! If he might only put back the hands of the clock!

Hours went by. At length he rose to his feet, his limbs cramped and stiff, and made his way back to the lonely cabin on the hillside. There he found food, kindled a fire in the fireplace and cooked his first supper. He thought of the girl who had been laid there once before, when tempter struck without the battle which had ended in defeat. He thought of the will he had seen, now resting with the great head of death. He was the chosen heggert, she the chosen father. What duty she had owed his father was ended now. Resolute she might be in need of a hand to guide and guard—but she was beyond the reach of punance and the fading light looked at the marble on the low headstone. So he had come too late! If he could only have learned the truth earlier! If he might only put back the hands of the clock!

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"The prodigal is home!"

I have guessed who it is that lies there. I know I shined against him and against my wife and left him to the forgiving. That is what the statue said to me, as he must have said, I am no more worthy to be called thy son.

"Ah," she cried, "he knew and he forgave you, Hugh! His last thought was of your coming. That is why I carved the figure there."

"You carved it?" he exclaimed. She bent her forehead to his hands as they clasped her own.

"The prodigal is yourself," she said. "I modeled it once before when you came back to him, in the time you have forgotten. But I destroyed it—the words were very low now—on my wedding day."

His hands released hers, and, looking up, she saw, even in the moonlight, that with the last word his face had come ghostly white. At the sight timidity, maidenly reserve, fell, and all the woman in her rushed upon him. She lifted her arms and clasped his face.

"Hugh," she cried, "can't you remember? Don't you understand? Think! I was blind, dear blind. A white bandage was across my eyes, and you came to me in a shrouded form. Why did you come to me?"

A spark seemed to dart through his brain like the prickling discharge from a Leyden jar. He saw himself standing, facing a figure with bandaged eyes. He saw the bandage torn off, and that yielding body in his arms heard a voice—her voice—crying: "Hugh, Hugh! My husband!" and felt those lips pressed to his own in the tense air of a darkened room.

A very broke from his lips: "Yes, yes, remember, Jessica, my wife!" and his arms went round her, and with a little sob, she nestled close to him on the doorstep.

That hour on the mountain side under the stars had left Harry possessed of a melody of perplexity and dream. Dreaming and waking Jessica's face hung before his eyes, her voice sounded in his ear. The future held no longer any doubt; it held only her. Where was that fancy that had led him to the city to which his painful curiosity had so lately driven him? This lay no longer in his own choice. It was for her to decide now—Jessica, his wife.

He looked up transfixed, for she stood there, her face deep in a brown whirlwind of leaves from a frost-stung oak, her head to her cheek in an adorable gesture that he knew, her lips parted and eager.

"I wanted to see you," she said, "I have no more to think of now."

"It is all wonderfully strange and new," he said. "It is as though I had rubbed Aladdin's lamp and suddenly had my heart's desire. How could I have thought my pearl away?"

"We are not to think of that," she protested, "never, never any more."

"You are right," he rejoined cheerfully. "It is what is to come that we must think of." He paused an instant; then he said:

"Last night when you told me the secret of the will she did not tell you that I had just come from there—Aniston."

She made an exclamation of wonder. "Tell me!" she said, "tell me!"

Sitting with her hand in his, he told of that night's experiences, the fear that had held him as he gazed at her portrait in the library, the secret of the Korean desk that had soiled his misery and sent him back to the father's house to die.

At mention of the will she threw out her hand with a passionate gesture. "The money is not mine!" she cried. "It is yours! He intended to change it! He told me so the day he died!"

"No, no," he said gently. "There is no resentment, no false pride, in my love, Jessica. I am thinking of you and of Aniston. You would have me go back, would you not?"

She looked up smiling and slowly shook her head. "Yes, yes, this is what I want. You are a blind guesser," she said. "Don't you think I know what is in your mind? Not Aniston, Hugh. Come time, but not now—not yet. It is nearer than that."

His eyes bowed low. "You understand me, yes, it is love. This is where I must take my flight first. Yesterday I would have left Smoky Mountain forever because you were here. Now—"

"I will help you," she said. "All the world besides counts nothing if only we are together. I could live in a cabin here on the mountain always, in a forest of Arden. If I grow old and want nothing but that—and you."

As he did not answer, she faced him with crimson cheeks, then, reading his look, she suddenly threw her arms about his neck.

"Hugh," she cried, "we belong to each other now! There is no one else to consider, is there? I want to be with you when I have! I want to hear things with you and help you!"

He kissed her eyes and hair. "You have helped, you do help me, Jessica!"

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Jessica had seen the bustling crowd from the hotel entrance. Mrs. Halloran had welcomed her errand that day and given her best room, a chamber overlooking the street. She had persuaded her visitor to spend the afternoon and insisted that she stay to supper, "just to see how she would like it for a steady diet." Now, as she passed along toward the mountain road the spectacle chained her to the outskirts of the gathering. She watched and listened with a pre-occupied mind.

Hallelujah Jones was in his element. He was thinking that on her way to the sanitarium she would cross to the cabin for a good night with the man upon whom her every thought centered.

As it happened, however, Harry was at that moment very near her. Alone on the mountain, the perplexing conflict of feeling had again descended upon him. He had fought it, but it had prevailed and at nightfall had driven him down to the town, where the street preacher now held forth. He stood alone, unnoted, a little distance away near the courthouse steps. He had passed along by reason of the crowd's desire, but he could see neither him nor the dog which sniffed at the heels of the circle of bystanders as if to inquire casually of salvation.

Numbers were swelling now, and the street preacher, shaking back his long hair, drew a premonitory, wavering chord from his melodion and struck up a gospel song. The song ended, he mounted his camp stool to preach in a fervent way.

The watcher by the steps was gazing with a strange, alert intensity. Something in the scene held him enthralled. Hallelujah Jones knew the melodramatic value of contrast. As his mood called he passed abruptly from exterior to interior, and he embellished his language with anecdotes drawn from his lifelong campaign against the arch enemy of souls. Of what he had said the solitary observer had been quite unconscious. It was the ensemble—the repetition of something experienced somewhere before—that appealed to him. Suddenly, however, a chance phrase pierced to his understanding.

Another moment and he was leaning forward, his eyes fixed, his breath straining at his breast. For each word of the speaker now was knocking a sledge hammer blow upon the blank wall in his brain. Hallelujah Jones had launched into the recital of a story which, though the stern charge of a bishop had kept him silent as to name and locality, yet, possessing the vividness of an actual experience, had fastened in the telling. It was the tale of an evening when he had peered through the tilted window of a chapel and seen its dissolute rector gambling on the table of the Lord.

He shivered and shrank himself through Harry's brain. Harry Sanderson, not Hugh Stires! Not an outcast! Not a criminal, thief and murderer! The curtain was rent. The dead wall in his brain was down, and the real past swept over him in an un-governable flood. Hallelujah Jones had furnished the clue to the maze. His fortuitous concurrence, only a dream last great war, which had crumbled all at once the cliff of oblivion that had been the normal process of the recovered mind had been stealthily undermining. Harry Sanderson at last knew his past and all of puzzlement and distress that had held him.

Shaking in every limb and feeling all about the courthouse wall like a drunk man, he made his way to the further deserted street. A passerby who had shrunk at sight of his face and his burning eyes.

For three months he, the Rev. Henry Sanderson, disgraced, had suffered eclipse, had been sunk out of sight and touch and hearing like a stone in a pool. For these months—through an accidental facial resemblance and a telling resemblance to the man whose name he had owned the name and ignominy of Hugh Stires. And Jessica? Deceived no less than he, dating her pious error from that mistaken man when she had torn from the wall the wreath of her wedding day, she had never seen the real Hugh in Smoky Mountain. She must learn the truth. Yet how to tell her? How could he tell her?

At any hour yesterday, had as the telling must have been, he could have told her. Last night the hour passed. How could he tell her now? Yet she was the real Hugh's wife by law and right. He himself could not marry her. If God would, but turn back the wheels of time, he would have done so. His feet dragging as though from cold, he climbed the mountain road.

As he walked he took from his pocket the little gold cross, and his fingers, numb with misery, tied it to his watch guard. It had been only a bauble, a pocket-piece acquired he knew not when or how. He knew it for the badge of his calling. Whether now that, pressed a certain way, it would open, and engraved inside were his name and the date of his ordination.

He might shut the cabin door, but he could not forbid the torturer that came with him across the threshold. He might throw himself upon his knees and bury his face in the rough skin of the couch, but he could not shut out the voice that he had heard in the lettered flashes across his throbbing eyeballs. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife."

So he crouched, a man under whose feet had crashed, leaving him pinched beneath the wreath of his wedding fire that must creep nearer and nearer.

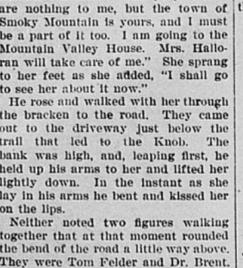
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Ahead of her a muffled puff-puff sound, and the dark bulk of an automobile was moving slowly in the same direction, and the quickened her pace, glad of the quiet company.

A little way up the ascent a cumbersome shadow started her. She saw in a moment that it was the automobile, halted at the side of the road. Her footsteps made no sound, and she was close upon it when she saw the three men it had carried standing near by. She made to pass them and had crossed half the intervening space, when some instinct sent her to the shade of the trees. They had stopped opposite the hydrant concession, where a side path led the main road. It was the same path by which she and August Prendergast had taken their unconscious burden on a night long ago, leading along the hillside, overlooking the twinkling flames of the furnace, a steeper short cut to the cabin above. They were conversing in low tones, and as they talked they pointed, she thought, toward it.

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EATING TOO MUCH.

Overnutrition is just as harmful as Malnutrition.

It is an acknowledged fact that almost every soul of us eats too much. The digestive organs are constantly overstrained and finally weakened. When wisely followed, the practice of fasting can be most beneficial. An expert on the food question has said that one should rise from the table with the feeling of hunger, which is an experience known to very few of us. On the contrary, the majority of people leave the board with a sense of burden, with only an hour's sleaze can alleviate. This is not so much owing to the fact that the food is unhealthfully rich, for the rule of the simple life obtains now in the fashionable cuisine, but it is the quantity taken. There is a large community at the present moment which fasts from breakfast till dinner at night. It is a question if it is wise to leave the stomach entirely without food during all these hours, but there is no question that the lighter the lunch taken the better will be the health of the individual. By a "right lunch" in this instance is meant what most people would not call a lunch at all—that is to say, a few crackers with cheese (a much maligned article of diet), a few nuts and a bit of fruit or a cup of cocoa with dry toast. Such a "feast" prevents the craving for food and in no way taxes the digestive organs. Overnutrition is just as harmful as malnutrition and is far more frequently the cause of malaise. With judicious fasting the system recovers its lost tone, and mental vigor would find that the brain works with surprising lightness, for the brain is one of the chief sufferers from over-eating.—New York American.

BRITISH PRINCES.

Very Different From the King in Exemption From Law.

So privileged is the king of England in his exemption from any and every law that one would naturally expect his children might do pretty much as they like. But Englishmen have always been very jealous of royal prerogatives, and the fact is that princes enjoy very few privileges indeed. A prince of the royal blood may be fined, like any ordinary mortal, if his motor car exceeds the legal limit of speed. The Prince of Wales cannot be sued personally for debt. If the debt is not paid the creditor may take out a summons, but he must summon the treasurer, not the prince. If the case goes against the treasurer the money is paid out of the prince's assets.

No child of the king who is under twenty-five can marry without the king's consent. Supposing, however, a prince over twenty-five desired to marry and the king refused his consent, then the prince could give notice of his intention to the privy council. After that he would have to restrain his patience for a whole year. If during that time either the house of lords or the house of commons disapproved of the marriage he could not take place. But if both houses of parliament were satisfied the prince could marry the woman of his choice.

A prince has not even the right to educate his own children, for it was long laid down that the king had the care and education of his grandchildren while they are minors.—London Telegraph.

How to Settle Bills.

There is a young Hatlem matron whose mental equilibrium is upset the first of each month by the prospect of settling her bills. Her husband's bills that come in for food, drink and for her own personal adornment. Her four-year-old daughter offered her a valuable suggestion the other day as to the simplest means of settling bills.

"The small child, seeing her mother examining with a clouded brow a bit of paper, inquired:

"Is it a nice letter, mamma?"

"No; it's a nasty big bill, dearie."

The child's bright eyes closed as if she were searching her innermost soul for some word of comfort. Suddenly she flashed a glad look at her mother, and her voice had all the brilliancy of one voicing an aspiration:

"Mamma, let's tear it up. Then you don't have to pay it!"—New York Press.

The Return Acquiesce.

Even in the midst of horror there is occasionally a rift of humor. It is said that at the time of the Jehnstown tragedy a group of who one of the citizens went for an overcoat to a small branch store for provisions while floating on a raft made of two window blinds and a skylight caught sight of his deluged neighbor whirling around in one of the boats of the eddying current clinging to a large loghead.

"Ah, there you are!" cried the grocery businesslike to the last. "Been looking for you for several days. When are you going to pay me?"

"Can't say just now, Sandy, old man," returned the unhappy debtor. "I'm having all I can do to keep my head above water these times."—Harper's Weekly.

An Anecdote of Renan.

Renan while traveling alighted at Naples. One morning a servant of the hotel came to him and said that as she had heard the preacher at the cathedral make use of his name many times she would be thankful if he would choose for her a number in the lottery about to be drawn. "If you are a saint," said she, "the number is sure to be a good one; if you are a devil, it will be still better." Renan smiled and chose a number, but he never knew if the servant was lucky.

An Occident Tiger.

"How entire," remarks the London Globe, "is the confidence of the native people in the government may be gathered from the following anecdote which comes from Lahore: A tiger had escaped from the zoological gardens, and its keeper, hoping to lure it back followed it. When all other inducements had failed, he lifted up his voice and solemnly declared it in the name of the British government, to which it belonged, to come back to its cage. The tiger, it is needless to add, obeyed at once."

Fool or Fair Weather.

Small Wallace accepted an invitation to a party, as follows:

"Dear Louis—I will come to your party if it don't rain" (then, thinking that he might have to stay at home in that case, "and if it does"—Delineator.

A Real Tumbler.

"I saw a goblet today made of bone."

"Pshaw! I saw a tumbler made of flesh and blood last night."

"Where?"

"At the circus."

GO YEARS' EXPERIENCE

PATENTS

TRADE MARKS

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Foley's Honey and Tar clears the air passages, stops the irritation in the throat soothes the inflamed membranes, and the most obstinate cough disappears. Sore and inflamed lungs are healed and strengthened, and the cold is expelled from the system. Refuse any but the genuine in the yellow package. Anders & Phillips.

FOR SALE.

200 acres of CHOICE FARM LAND, within seven miles of Manchester at \$60.00 per acre. Easy terms. One half of this years crop can go with place.

For particulars apply to Bronson, Carr & Sons, 194 1/2 Manchester, Iowa.

IOWA LEGISLATURE OFFER.

With a few days, the Iowa Legislature will assemble for what promises to be a very interesting session. Many important measures are proposed.

If you desire to keep reliably informed on the proceedings of the Legislature, subscribe for The Des Moines Register and Leader which will publish a complete, unbiased report each day. For only \$1.00, The Daily Register and Leader will be mailed to any new subscriber from now to April 15, 1909—through the entire session. Daily and Sunday to the same date, \$1.50. The Register and Leader brings the news first—it is only daily newspaper that can be delivered on almost all rural routes in Iowa on the same morning it is printed. Subscribe with your postmaster, the publisher of this paper, or remit direct to The Register and Leader Company, Des Moines, Iowa.

HEXAMETHYLENETETRAMINE.

The above is the name of a German chemical, which is one of the many valuable ingredients of Foley's Kidney Remedy. Hexamethylenetetramine is recognized by medical text books and authorities as a uric acid solvent and antiseptic for the urine. Take Foley's Kidney Remedy as soon as you notice any irregularities, and avoid a serious malady. Anders & Phillips.

The Magnet.

"Yes, she advertised for a husband and got 2,700 replies."

"Careless! She must have advertised her name as very beautiful."

"No, she didn't. She just said she had \$700 in the bank"—Kansas City Independent.

Not Far.

"Don't you think the humor of the man who spoke last was rather far-fetched?"

"Not so very. I read most of it in this morning's paper."—New York Life.

Just Punishment.

The "open door" in China may be quite proper, but—

"If we could only catch the 'mutt' who leaves the door wide open when the mercury is down to ten."

"We'd chain him to the knob with glue and with a red-hot iron."

"That would make him keep it shut."

—Chicago News.

A Difficult Task.

One of the greatest tasks, said a member of parliament, is how to concede the most worthy and honorable intentions to an opponent, how to profess an unwavering and unflinching fidelity in his uncompromising veracity and at the same time and at the same time to convey a distinct conviction that he is an impostor and a humbug of the first water and an accomplished Anaxias carrying a veil of thirteen stone seven pounds on the ineffectual hand-cap.—London Opinion.

RAILROAD Time Cards.

Manchester & Oneida RY

TIME TABLE.

Le. Manchester	Time and	Connect with	Arrive at	Time
No. 2	6:15 a.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	12:45 p.m.
No. 5	6:15 a.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	12:45 p.m.
No. 4	7:15 a.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	1:45 p.m.
No. 6	7:15 a.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	1:45 p.m.
No. 3	8:15 a.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	2:45 p.m.
No. 7	8:15 a.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	2:45 p.m.
No. 8	9:15 a.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	3:45 p.m.
No. 9	9:15 a.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	3:45 p.m.
No. 10	10:15 a.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	4:45 p.m.
No. 11	10:15 a.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	4:45 p.m.
No. 12	11:15 a.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	5:45 p.m.
No. 13	11:15 a.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	5:45 p.m.
No. 14	12:15 p.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	6:45 p.m.
No. 15	12:15 p.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	6:45 p.m.
No. 16	1:15 p.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	7:45 p.m.
No. 17	1:15 p.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	7:45 p.m.
No. 18	2:15 p.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	8:45 p.m.
No. 19	2:15 p.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	8:45 p.m.
No. 20	3:15 p.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	9:45 p.m.
No. 21	3:15 p.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	9:45 p.m.
No. 22	4:15 p.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	10:45 p.m.
No. 23	4:15 p.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	10:45 p.m.
No. 24	5:15 p.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	11:45 p.m.
No. 25	5:15 p.m.	C. G. W. Orleans	Orleans	11:45 p.m.

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