

# Cavanagh, Forest Ranger

The Great Conservation  
Novel

By HAMLIN GARLAND

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## CHAPTER XV.

### SHADOWS ON THE MIST.

THE decision which Cavanagh made between love and duty distinguished the officer from the man, the soldier from the civilian. He did not hesitate to act, and yet he suffered a mental conflict as he rode back toward the scene of that inhuman sacrifice on the altar of greed.

"It will be hours before any part of the sheriff's posse can reach the falls, even though they take to the swiftest motors, and then other long hours must intervene before I can ride down to her. Yes, at least a day and a night must drag their slow course before I can hope to be of service to her." And the thought drew a groan of anxiety from him. At such moments of mental stress the trail is a torture and the mountain side an inexorable barrier.

Halfway to the hills he was intercepted by an old man who was at work on an irrigating ditch beside the road. He seemed very nervous and very inquisitive, and as he questioned the ranger his eyes were like those of a dog that fears his master's hand. Ross wondered about this afterward, but at the moment his mind was busy with the significance of this patient toiler with a spade. He was a prophetic figure in the most picturesque and sterile land of the stockman. "Here, within twenty miles of this peaceful fruit grower," he said, "is the crowning infamy of the freebooting cowboy."

He wondered as he rode on whether the papers of the state would make a jest of this deed. "Will this be made the theme for caustic comment in the eastern press for a day and then be forgotten?"

As his hot blood cooled he lost faith in even this sacrifice. Could anything change the leopard west into the tamed and serene of the ox? "No," he decided; "nothing but death will do that. This generation, these fierce and bloody hearts, must die. Only in that way can the tradition of violence be overcome and a new state reared."

At the foot of the tollsome, upward winding trail he dismounted and led his weary horse. Over his head and about halfway to the first hilltop lay a roof of fleecy vapor, faint purple in color and seamless in texture. Through this he must pass, and it symbolized to him the line of demarcation between order and violence.

Slowly he led his horse along the mountain side, grasping with eager desire at every changing aspect of the marvelous mountain scene. It was infinitely more gorgeous, more compelling, than his moonlight experience the night before.

As he led his horse out upon a projecting point of rocky ledge to rest his love for the range came back upon him with such power that tears misted his eyes and his throat ached. "Where else will I find such scenes as this?" he asked himself. "Where in all the lowlands could such splendors shine? How can I leave this high world in which these wonders come and go? I will not! Here will I bring my bride and build my home. This is my world."

But the mist grew gray, the aureole of fire faded, the sun went down behind the hills, and the chill of evening deepened on the trail, and as he approached the scene of man's inhumanity to man the thought of camping

there beside those charred limbs called for heroic resolution. He was hungry, too, and as the air pinched he shivered.

"At the best the sheriff cannot reach here before midnight," he said, and settled down to his unsought, revolting vigil.

His one relief lay in the mental composition of a long letter to Lee Virginia, whose life at that moment was a comfort to him. "If such purity, such sweetness, can come from violence and vulgarity then surely a new and splendid state can rise even out of the ashes of these murdered men. Perhaps this is the end of the old," he mused, "perhaps this is the beginning of the new," and as he pondered the last faint crimson died out of the west. "So must the hate and violence die out of America," he said, "leaving the clear, sweet air of liberty behind."

He was near to the poet at the moment, for he was also the lover. His allegiance to the great republic stood the test. His faith in democracy was shaken, but not destroyed. "I will wait," he decided. "This shall be the sign. If this deed goes unavenged then will I put off my badge and my uniform and go back to the land where for a hundred years at least such deeds as these have been impossible."

He built a fire as night fell to serve both as a beacon and as a defense against the cold. He felt himself weirdly remote in this vigil. From his far height he looked abroad upon the tumbled plain as if upon an ocean dimly perceptible, yet august. "At this

moment," he said, "curious and perhaps guilty eyes are wondering what my spark of firelight may mean."

His mind went again and again to that tall old man in the ditch. What was the meaning of his scared and sorrowful glance? Why should one so peacefully employed at such a time and in such a place wear the look of a hunted deer? What meant the tremor in his voice?

Was it possible that one so gentle should have taken part in this deed? "Preposterous suspicion, and yet he had a guilty look."

At last, far in the night, he heard the snort of a horse and the sound of voices. The law (such as it was) was creeping up the mountain side in the person of the sheriff of Chauvenet county and was about to relieve the ranger from his painful responsibility as guardian of the dead.

At last he came, this officer of the law, attended (like a Cheyenne chief) by a dozen lesser warriors of various conditions and kinds, but among them—indeed, second only to the sheriff—was Hugh Redfield, the forest supervisor, hot and eager with haste.

As they rode up to the fire the officer called out: "Howdy, ranger? How about it?"

Ross stated briefly, succinctly, what he had discovered, and as he talked other riders came up the hill and gathered closely around to listen in wordless silence—in guilty silence, the ranger could not help believing.

Redfield spoke. "Sheriff Van Horn, you and I have been running cattle in this country for nearly thirty years, and we've witnessed all kinds of shooting and several kinds of hanging, but when it comes to chopping and burning men I get off. I shall personally offer a reward of \$1,000 for the apprehension of these miscreants, and I hope you'll make it your solemn duty to hunt them to earth."

"You won't have far to go," remarked Ross significantly.

"What do you mean?" asked the sheriff.

"I mean this slaughter, like the others that have taken place, was the work of cattlemen who claim this range. Their names are known to us all."

A silence followed—so deep a silence that the ranger was convinced of the fact that in the circle of his listeners stood those who, if they had not shared in the slaughter, at least knew the names of the guilty men.

At last the sheriff spoke, this time with a sigh. "I hope you're all wrong, Cavanagh. I'd hate to think any constituent of mine had sanctioned this job. Give me that lantern, Curtis."

The group of ranchers dismounted and followed the sheriff over to the gruesome spot, but Redfield stayed with the ranger.

"Have you any suspicion, Ross?"

"No, hardly a suspicion. However, you know as well as I that this was not a sudden outbreak. This deed was planned. It represents the feeling of many cattlemen—in everything but the extra horror of its execution. That was the work of drunken, infuriated men. But I am more deeply concerned over Miss Wetherford's distress. Did she reach you by telephone tonight?"

"No. What's the trouble?"

"Her mother is down again. I telephoned her, and she asked me to come to her, but I cannot go, for I have a case of smallpox up on the hill. Am bro, the Basque herder, is down with it, and another herder is up there alone with him. I must go back to them. But meanwhile I wish you would go to the fork and see what you can do for her."

His voice, filled with emotion, touched Redfield, and he said, "Can't I go to the relief of the herder?"

"No; you must not think of it. You are a man with a family. But if you can find any one who has had the smallpox send him up. The old herder who is nursing the patient is not strong and may drop at any moment. Then it's up to me."

The men came back to the campfire conversing in low tones, some of them cursing in tones of awe. One or two of them were small farmers from Deer Creek, recent comers to the state, or men with bunches of milk cows, and to them this deed was awesome.

The sheriff followed, saying: "Well, there's nothing to do but wait till morning. The rest of you men better go home. You can't be of any use here."

For more than three hours the sheriff and Redfield sat with the ranger, waiting for daylight, and during this time the name of every man in the region was brought up and discussed. Among others, Ross mentioned the old man in the ditch.

"He wouldn't hurt a bumblebee," declared the sheriff. "He's got a bunch of cattle, but he's the mildest old man in the state. He's the last rancher in the country to even stand for such work. What made you mention him?"

"I passed him as I was riding back," replied Cavanagh, "and he had a scared look in his eyes."

The sheriff granted. "You imagined all that. The old chap always has a kind of meek look."

It was nearly noon of a glorious day as Cavanagh, very tired and very hungry, rode up to the sheep herder's tent. Wetherford was sitting in the sun calmly smoking his pipe, the sheep were feeding not far away, attended by the dog, and an air of peace covered his sunlit rocky world.

"How is the Basque?" asked the ranger.

Wetherford pointed upward. "All over."

"Then it wasn't smallpox?"

"I reckon that's what it was; it sure was fierce. I judge it's a case of lujan burial—no ceremony—right

here in the rocks. To let you dig the hole (I'm just about all in, but mind you keep to the windward all the time. I don't want you spotted."

Cavanagh understood the necessity for these precautions, but first of all came his own need of food and rest. Turning his tired horse to grass, he stretched himself along a grassy, sunny cranny between the rocks and there ate and afterward slept, while all about him the lambs called and the conies whined.

He was awakened by a pebble tossed upon him, and when he arose, stiff and sore, but feeling stronger and in better temper, the sun was wearing low. Setting to work at his task, he threw the loose rock out of a hollow in the ledge near by, and to this rude separator Wetherford dragged the dead man, refusing all aid, and there piled a cairn of rocks above his grave.

The ranger took a hand at the end and rolled some huge boulders upon the grave to insure the wolves' defeat.

"Now burn the bedding," he commanded. "The whole camp has got to go, and your clothing, too, after we get down the hill."

"What will we do with the sheep?"

"Drive them over the divide and leave them."

All these things Wetherford did, and, leaving the camp in ashes behind him, Cavanagh drove the sheep before him on his homeward way. As night fell the dog, at his command, rounded them up and put them to bed, and the men went on down the valley, leaving the brave brute on guard, pathetic figure of faithful guardianship.

"It hurts me to desert you, old fellow," called the ranger, looking back, "but there's no help for it. I'll come up in the morning and bring you some biscuit."

It was long after dark when they entered the canyon just above the cabin, and Wetherford was shivering from cold and weakness.

"Now, you pull up just outside the gate and wait there till I bring out some blankets. Then you'll get to strip to the skin and start the world



"ALL OVER"

all over again," said Cavanagh. "I'll build a fire here, and we'll cremate your past. How about it?"

"I'm willing," responded Wetherford. "You can burn everything that belongs to me but my wife and my girl."

All through the ceremony which followed ran this self banter. "I'll be all ranger, barring a commission," he said, with a grin as he put on the olive yellow shirt and a pair of dusty green trousers. "And here goes my past!" he added as he tossed his contaminated rags upon the fire.

"What a corking opportunity to make a fresh start," commented Cavanagh. "I hope you see it."

"I see it, but it's hard to live up to your mark."

When every precaution had been taken the ranger led the freshly scrubbed, scoured and transformed fugitive to his cabin.

"Why, man, you're fit for the state legislature," he exclaimed as they came into the full light. "My clothes don't precisely meet every demand you make upon them, but they give you an air of command. I wish your wife could see you now." Then, seeing that Wetherford was really in earnest, he added: "You can stay with me as long as you wish. Perhaps in time you might be able to work into the service as a guard, although the chief is getting more and more insistent on real foresters."

There were tears in Wetherford's eyes as he said: "You cannot realize what this clean, warm uniform means to me. For nine years I wore the prison stripes. It is ten years since I was dressed like a man."

"You need not worry about food or shelter for the present," replied Cavanagh gently. "Grub is not costly here, and house rent is less than nominal, so make yourself at home and get strong."

Wetherford lifted his head. "But I want to do something. I want to redeem myself in some way. I don't want my girl to know who I am, but I'd like to win her respect. I can't be what you say she thinks I was, but if I had a chance I might show myself a man again. I wouldn't mind Liza knowing that I am alive. It might be a comfort to her. But I don't want even her to be told till I can go to her in my own duds."

"She's pretty sick," said Cavanagh. "I telephoned Lee Virginia last night, and if you wish you may ride down with me tomorrow and see her."

The old man fell a tremble. "I daren't do that. I can't bear to—her where I've been."

"She needn't know. I will tell her you've been out of your mind. I'll say anything you wish. You can go to her in the clothes you have on if you like

## SOME OF THE REASONS WHY THE

# United States Separator

### IS THE BEST IN THE WORLD!

The United States Separator employs a feeding device to deliver the whole milk beyond the cream zone—preventing any remixing of cream and skim milk and any conflict of currents. No other device of any other Separator will do this work so well, as the records show. This device is patented and can be used on no other Separator.

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# JOHN BAUER,

Plattsmouth, Nebraska. THE HARDWARE MAN

## LOCAL NEWS

From Wednesday's Daily.

Harry Graves, wife and baby of Union took in the celebration here on the Fourth.

Mr. W. H. Hesselflow of Cedar Creek celebrated the Fourth in Plattsmouth.

O. V. Bailey and family of Eight Mile Grove came in on the Fourth to see the sights.

George Lehnhof of Omaha celebrated the Fourth in this city with his mother and sister.

Mrs. H. A. Schneider and children are at Sterling, Nebraska, visiting relatives for a few days.

Mr. Philip Meisinger and wife of Benson visited relatives and celebrated the Fourth in Plattsmouth.

James Gilmore of Omaha returned to his home this afternoon, having visited Sam Gilmore over the Fourth.

Misses Mabel and Una Erwin of Union were Plattsmouth visitors over the Fourth and registered at the Perkins.

Park Criswiser of Dunbar came in Monday afternoon to visit his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bennett Criswiser, over the Fourth.

Miss Flossie Neil of Waterloo, Nebraska, who has been a guest of the Wolfarth home for a few days, departed for her home this morning.

Mr. R. A. Flanagan, cashier of the Union bank, and J. W. Banning, merchant, of Union, were in the city yesterday taking in the huge celebration.

Don C. Rhoden, democratic candidate for the nomination for sheriff, and Mae Churchill were in town last evening, coming up on the evening train.

Miss Katherine Howland of Wymore, who has been a guest of her brother, Mr. William Howland, and family for a short time, returned to her home this morning.

John Doughty, wife and daughter of near Union spent the Fourth in this city and were accompanied by a brother of Mr. Doughty's from Pennsylvania, who is spending the summer at the Doughty home.

R. C. Bailey and children of Maple Grove were in the city to see the sights on the Fourth. Mr. Bailey is the Maple Grove blacksmith, and while shoeing a horse Monday was kicked in the head and was carrying a patch over the left eye in consequence.

George Lloyd, a prosperous farmer and an elegant gentleman, residing two miles southwest of Murray, was in the city to see the sights on the Fourth, and while here called and renewed his faith in the Old Reliable for another year.

Harry Medler and Walter Salberg of Cedar Creek and F. C. Peterson and Will Ingram of Louisville were guests of the Riley yesterday, having come down to witness the Fourth of July parade and join in the celebration.

George P. Barton, democratic candidate for sheriff, and Mr. Roy Plannagan, assistant cashier of the Union bank of Union, were here to take in the sights on the Fourth. Mr. Plannagan is a Silver City, Iowa, boy and a friend of the publisher of the

## HOW A RELIANCE POLICY WORKS

Great Feature of the Policies Issued by the Reliance Life Insurance Co. of Pittsburg.

John M. Patterson, a railroad conductor, of Sedalia, Missouri, took a policy with the Reliance for \$2,000 on the 15-Year Endowment Plan, April 13, 1907. A note by the inspector received at the time says: "Mr. Patterson has a family; he is a healthy, stout man."

In September, 1907, Mr. Patterson had a stroke of paralysis, which totally disabled him. Subsequently his Reliance Policy was either destroyed or lost, as it was considered of no value. Recently Mr. W. L. Phipps, of the Renewing Division, while in Sedalia, discovered this situation. The attention of Mrs. Patterson was called to the fact that her husband's policy had not lapsed, but was still in force under the Total and Permanent Disability Clause. Her own letter is more eloquent praise of the Reliance policy than anything else can be. It says:

"Sedalia, Mo.

"Mr. Scott—Dear Sir: Mr. Patterson is unable to write. He was running out of Jefferson City at the time he took out the policy, and I did not know anything about it. The policy is either lost or misplaced. I feel sure Mr. Patterson will never be able to work again. He has been under the doctor's care nearly all the time since September, 1907. It will surely be a great benefit to me and the children. Please advise me what to do. We, neither of us, knew of the Disability Clause. It is very kind of you to look us up and tell us of it, and I surely appreciate it. This has been a trying ordeal to me to see my husband fighting so hard to regain his health. Thanking you again for your kindness. Respectfully yours,

"Mrs. J. M. Patterson,

"305 W. 5th St., Sedalia, Mo."

The company, upon receipt of affidavit that policy had been lost, issued a duplicate endorsed fully paid up.

A Reliance Policy may be lost, destroyed or forgotten. It works just the same, BECAUSE it is the policy of the Reliance Life Insurance Company to see that it does.

The Reliance Life Insurance Company of Pittsburg is represented in Plattsmouth and southeastern Nebraska by General Agent W. J. Thomas. They refer, by permission, to H. N. Dovey, Cashier of the First National Bank of Plattsmouth.

Thomas Amick of Louisville was among the number who came from Louisville to help make the eagle scream in the county seat.

Frank McNurlin and wife of Mt. Pleasant precinct were here to spend the Fourth. They were met here by Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Barrett and little son of Havenlock, who came down from Havenlock to celebrate. Mrs. Barrett is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. McNurlin.

## Happiest Girl in Lincoln.

A Lincoln, Neb., girl writes: "I had been ailing for some time with chronic constipation and stomach trouble. I began taking Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets and in three days I was able to be up and got better right along. I am the proudest girl in Lincoln to find such a good medicine." For sale by F. G. Fricke & Co.

## NEW WORLD'S RECORD FOR AUTO RACES

### Burman Makes Circuit of Mile Track in 48.72 Seconds.

New York, July 5.—A new world's automobile record for one mile was established by Bob Burman at the Brighton Beach motordrome at the conclusion of the two days' race meeting. Burman, in his Blitzen Benz, with a flying start, made a circuit of the mile track in 48.72 seconds, one-fifth of a second better than De Palma in a Fiat car, made last year at Syracuse.

Burman also won the Remy-Brasard trophy by taking two straight heats of three miles each with the Benz car, his best time being 2:37:38. Nine events were on the program.

Len Seagle, driving a National of 500 inches displacement, won the ton-mile event and also the Austrian purse race, after covering nearly twenty-four miles.

Never leave home on a journey without a bottle of Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy. It is almost certain to be needed and cannot be obtained when on board the cars or steamships. For sale by F. G. Fricke & Co.

## New Discus Record.

Kansas City, July 5.—Lee Talbot, weightman with the American team to the Olympic games in London in 1908, established a new discus record here. In a local track and field meet he hurled the weight 141 feet and 2 inches, bettering the former Olympic mark of 138 feet 8 inches, held by Martin Sheridan of New York.

## Prisoner Kills Deputy Sheriff.

Liberty, Mo., July 5.—Andrew King, a deputy sheriff, died as the result of a blow dealt him by John Cannon in the jail here. Cannon, who gave Leavenworth as his home, was arrested for fighting.

Sprains require careful treatment. Keep quiet and apply Chamberlain's Liniment freely. It will remove the soreness and quickly restore the parts to a healthy condition. For sale by F. G. Fricke & Co.

Miss Kathryn Windham went to Omaha yesterday to meet a number of her sister members of the Kappa Alpha Thate, who are on their way from the east to California to spend the summer.