

The VALLEY OF THE GIANTS

BY PETER B. KYNE
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"FOR MY SAKE!"

Synopsis.—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-year-old Bryce Cardigan. At fourteen Bryce makes the acquaintance of Shirley Sumner, a visitor at 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. While Bryce is at college John Cardigan meets with heavy business losses and for the first time views the future with uncertainty. 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, Colonel Pennington. Bryce learns that his father's eyesight has failed and that Colonel Pennington is seeking to take advantage of the old man's business misfortunes. John Cardigan is despairing, but Bryce is full of fight. Bryce finds a buried redwood tree across his mother's grave. He goes to dinner at Pennington's on Shirley's invitation and finds the dining room paneled with burl from the tree. Bryce and Pennington declare war, though Shirley does not know it. Bryce beats Jules Rondeau, Pennington's fighting logging boss, and forces him to confess that Pennington ordered the burl tree cut. Pennington butts into the fight and gets hurt.

CHAPTER VII—Continued.

The helpless bulk of the woods-boss descended upon the Colonel's expansive chest and sent him crashing earthward. Then Bryce, war-mad, turned to face the ring of Laguna Grande employees about him.

"Next!" he roared. "Singly, in pairs, or the whole damned pack!"

"Mr. Cardigan!"

He turned. Colonel Pennington's breath had been knocked out of his body by the impact of his semi-conscious woods-boss, and he lay inert, gasping like a hooked fish. Beside him Shirley Sumner was kneeling, her hands clasping her uncle's, but with her violet eyes blazing fiercely on Bryce Cardigan.

"How dare you?" she cried. "You coward! To hurt my uncle!"

He gazed at her for a moment, fiercely, defiantly, his chest rising and falling from his recent exertions, his knotted fists gory with the blood of his enemy. Then the light of battle died, and he hung his head. "I'm sorry," he murmured, "not for his sake, but yours. I didn't know you were here. I forgot—myself."

"I'll never speak to you again so long as I live," she burst out passionately.

He advanced a step and stood gazing down upon her. Her angry glance met his unflinchingly; and presently for him the light went out of the world.

"Very well," he murmured. "Good-bye." And with bowed head he turned and made off through the open timber toward his own logging-camp five miles distant.

With the descent upon his breast of the limp body of his big woods-bully, Colonel Pennington had been struck to earth as effectually as if a fair-sized tree had fallen on him, the last whiff of breath had been driven from his lungs; and for the space of a minute, during which Jules Rondeau lay heavily across his midriff, the Colonel was quite unable to get it back. Pale, gasping, and jarred from soul to suspenders, he was merely aware that something unexpected and disconcerting had occurred.

While the Colonel fought for his breath, his woodsman remained in the odorous, paralyzed inactivity by reason of the swiftness and thoroughness of Bryce Cardigan's work; then Shirley motioned to them to remove the wreckage, and they hastened to obey.

Freed from the weight on the geometric center of his being, Colonel Pennington stretched his legs, rolled his head from side to side, and snorted violently several times like a buck. After the sixth snort he felt so much better that a clear understanding of the exact nature of the catastrophe came to him; he struggled and sat up, looking around him a little wildly.

"Where—did—Cardigan—go?" he gasped.

One of his men pointed to the timber into which the enemy had just disappeared.

"Surround him—take him," Pennington ordered. "I'll give a month's pay to each of the six men that bring—that scoundrel to me. Get him—quickly! Understand?"

Not a man moved. Pennington shook with fury. "Get him," he croaked. "There are enough of you to do—"

the job. Close in on him—everybody. I'll give a month's pay to everybody."

A man of that indiscriminate mixture of Spanish and Indian known in California as cholo swept the circle of men with an alert and knowing glance. His name was Flavio Arletan, but his straight black hair, dark russet complexion, beady eyes, and hawk nose gave him such a resemblance to a fowl that he was known among his fellows as the Black Minorca, regardless of the fact that this sobriquet was scarcely fair to a very excellent breed of chicken. "That offer's good enough for me," he remarked in businesslike tones. "Come on—everybody. A month's pay for five minutes' work. I wouldn't tackle the job with six men, but there are twenty of us here."

"Hurry," the Colonel urged them. Shirley Sumner's flashing glance rested upon the Black Minorca. "Don't you dare!" she cried. "Twenty to one! For shame!"

"For a month's pay," he replied impudently, and grinned evilly. "And I'm takin' orders from my boss." He started on a dog-trot for the timber, and a dozen men trailed after him.

Shirley turned helplessly on her uncle, seized his arm and shook it frantically. "Call them back! Call them back!" she pleaded.

Her uncle got uncertainly to his feet. "Not on your life!" he growled, and in his cold gray eyes there danced the lights of a thousand devils. "I told you the fellow was a ruffian. Now, perhaps, you'll believe me. We'll hold him until Rondeau revives, and then—"

Shirley guessed the rest, and she realized that it was useless to plead—that she was only wasting time. "Bryce! Bryce!" she called. "Run! Run—after you, Twenty of them! Run, run—for my sake!"

His voice answered her from the timber: "Run? From those cattle? Not from man or devil." A silence. Then: "So you've changed your mind, have you? You've spoken to me again!" There was triumph, exultation in his voice. "The timber's too thick, Shirley, I couldn't get away anyhow—so I'm coming back."

She saw him burst through a thicket of alder saplings into the clearing, saw a half dozen of her uncle's men close in around him like wolves around a sick steer; and at the shock of their contact, she moaned and hid her face in her trembling hands.

Half man and half tiger that he was, the Black Minorca, as self-appointed leader, reached Bryce first. The cholo was a squat, powerful little man, with more bounce to him than a rubber ball; leading his men by a dozen yards, he hesitated not an instant but dodged under the blow Bryce lashed out at him and came up inside the latter's guard, feeling for Bryce's throat. Instead he met Bryce's knee in his abdomen, and forthwith he folded up like an accordion.

The next instant Bryce had stooped, caught him by the slack of the trousers and the scruff of the neck and



"Get Off My Property, You Savage!" He Shrieked.

thrown him, as he had thrown Rondeau, into the midst of the men advancing to his aid. Three of them went down backward; and Bryce, charging over them, stretched two more with well-placed blows from left to right, and continued on across the clearing, running at top speed, for he realized that for all the desperation of his fight and the losses already inflicted on his assailants, the odds against him were insurmountable.

Seeing him running away, the Laguna Grande woodsmen took heart and hope and pursued him. Straight for the loading donkey at the dog-landing Bryce ran. Beside the donkey stood a neat tier of firewood; in the chopping block, where the donkey-fighter had driven it prior to abandoning his post to view the contest between Bryce and Jules Rondeau, was a double-bitted axe. Bryce jerked it loose, swung it, whirled on his pursuers, and rushed them. Like turkeys scattering before the raid of a coyote they fled in divers directions and from a safe distance turned to gaze apprehensively upon this demon they had been ordered to bring in.

Bryce lowered the axe, removed his hat, and mopped his moist brow. From the center of the clearing men were crawling or staggering to safety—with the exception of the Black Minorca, who lay moaning softly. Colonel Pennington, seeing his fondest hopes expire, lost his head completely. "Get off my property, you savage!" he shrieked.

"Don't be a nut, Colonel," Bryce returned soothingly. "I'll get off—when I get good and ready, and not a second sooner. In fact, I was trying to get off as rapidly as I could when you sent your men to bring me back. Prithree why, old thing? Didst crave more conversation with me, or didst want thy camp cleaned out?"

He started toward Pennington, who backed hastily away. Shirley stood her ground, bending upon Bryce, as he approached her, a cold and disapproving glance. "I'll get you yet," the Colonel declared from the shelter of an old stump behind which he had taken refuge.

"Barking dogs never bite, Colonel. And that reminds me: I've heard enough from you. One more cheep out of you, my friend, and I'll go up to my logging-camp, return here with a crew of bluenoses and wild Irish and run your wops, bohunks, and cholos out of the county. I don't fancy the class of labor you're importing into this county, anyhow."

The Colonel, evidently deciding that discretion was the better part of valor, promptly subsided, although Bryce could see that he was mumbling threats to himself, though not in an audible voice.

The demon Cardigan halted beside Shirley and stood gazing down at her. He was smiling at her whimsically. She met his glance for a few seconds; then her lids were lowered and she bit her lip with vexation.

"Shirley," he said. "You are presumptuous," she quavered.

"You set me an example in presumption," he retorted good humoredly. "Did you not call me by my first name a minute ago?" The heir to Cardigan's redwoods bent over the girl. "You spoke to me—after your promise not to, Shirley," he said gently. "You will always speak to me."

She commenced to cry softly. "I loathe you," she sobbed.

"For you I have the utmost respect and admiration," he replied.

"No, you haven't. If you had, you wouldn't hurt my uncle—the only human being in all this world who is dear to me."

"Gosh!" he murmured plaintively. "I'm jealous of that man. However, I'm sorry I hurt him. I give you my word I came here to fight fairly—"

"He merely tried to stop you from fighting."

"No, he didn't, Shirley. He interfered and fouled me. Still, despite that, if I had known you were a spectator I think I should have controlled myself and refrained from pulling off my vengeance in your presence. I shall never cease to regret that I subjected you to such a distressing spectacle. I do hope, however, that you will believe me when I tell you I am not a bully, although when there is a fight worth while, I never dodge it. And this time I fought for the honor of the House of Cardigan."

"If you want me to believe that, you will beg my uncle's pardon."

"I can't do that. He is my enemy and I shall hate him forever; I shall fight him and his way of doing business until he reforms or I am exhausted."

"You realize, of course, what your insistence on that plan means, Mr. Cardigan?"

"Call me Bryce," he pleaded. "You're going to call me that some day anyhow, so why not start now?"

"You are altogether insufferable, sir. Please go away and never presume to address me again. You are quite impossible."

He shook his head. "I do not give up that readily, Shirley. I didn't know how dear—that your friendship meant to me, until you sent me away; I didn't think there was any hope until you warned me those dogs were hunting me—and called me Bryce." He held out his hand. "God gave us our relations," he quoted, "but, thank God, we can choose our friends." And I'll be a good friend to you, Shirley Sumner, until I have earned the right to be something more. Won't you shake hands with me? Remember, this fight to-day is only the first skirmish in a war to the finish—and I am leading a forlorn hope. If I lose—well, this will be good-bye."

"I hate you," she answered drearily. "All our fine friendship—smashed—and you growling stupidly sentimental. I didn't think it of you. Please go away. You are distressing me."

He smiled at her tenderly, forgivingly, wistfully, but she did not see it. "Then it is really good-bye," he murmured with mock dourness.

She nodded her bowed head. "Yes," she whispered. "After all, I have some pride, you know. You mustn't presume to be the butterfly preaching

contentment to the toad in the dust." "As you will it, Shirley." He turned away. "I'll send your axe back with the first trainload of logs from my camp, Colonel," he called to Pennington.

Once more he strode away into the timber. Shirley watched him pass out of her life, and gloried in what she conceived to be his agony, for she had both temper and spirit, and Bryce Cardigan calmly, blunderingly, rather stupidly (she thought) had presumed flagrantly on brief acquaintance.

The Colonel's voice broke in upon her bitter reflections. "That fellow Cardigan is a hard nut to crack—I'll say that for him." He had crossed the clearing to her side and was addressing her with his customary air of expansiveness. "I think, my dear, you had better go back into the caboose, away from the prying eyes of these rough fellows. I'm sorry you came, Shirley. I'll never forgive myself for bringing you. If I had thought—but how could I know that scoundrel was coming here to raise a disturbance? And only last night he was at our house for dinner!"

"I wonder what could have occurred to make such a madman out of him?" the girl queried wonderingly. "He acted more like a demon than a human being."

"Just like his old father," the Colonel purred benevolently. "When he can't get what he wants, he sulks. I'll tell you what got on his confounded



"Is Mr. McTavish at Home?"

nerves. I've been freighting logs for the senior Cardigan over my railroad; the contract for hauling them was a heritage from Bill Henderson, from whom I bought the mill and timberlands; and of course as his assignee it was incumbent upon me to fulfill Henderson's contract with Cardigan, even though the freight-rate was ruinous.

"Well, this morning young Cardigan came to my office, reminded me that the contract would expire by limitation next year and asked me to renew it, and at the same freight-rate. I offered to renew the contract but at a higher freight-rate, and explained to him that I could not possibly continue to haul his logs at a loss. Well, right away he flew in a rage and called me a robber; whereupon I informed him that since he thought me a robber, perhaps he had better not attempt to have any business dealings with each other—that I really didn't want his contract at any price, having scarce'y sufficient rolling stock to handle my own logs. That made him calm down, but in a little while he lost his head again and grew snarling and abusive—to such an extent, indeed, that finally I was forced to ask him to leave my office."

"Nevertheless, Uncle Seth, I cannot understand why he should make such a furious attack upon your employee."

The Colonel laughed with a fair imitation of sincerity and tolerant amusement. "My dear, that is no mystery to me. Cardigan picked on Rondeau for the reason that a few days ago he tried to hire Rondeau away from me—offered him twenty-five dollars a month more than I was paying him, by George! Of course when Rondeau came to me with Cardigan's proposition, I promptly met Cardigan's bid and retained Rondeau; consequently Cardigan hates us both and took the earliest opportunity to vent his spite on us."

The Colonel sighed and brushed the dirt and leaves from his tweeds. "Thunder!" he continued philosophically. "It's all in the game, so why worry over it? And why continue to discuss an unpleasant topic, my dear?" Her uncle took her gently by the arm and steered her toward the caboose. "Well, what do you think of your company now?" he demanded gayly.

"I think," she answered soberly, "that you have gained an enemy worth while and that it behooves you not to underestimate him."

CHAPTER VIII

Through the green timber Bryce Cardigan strode, and there was a lilt in his heart now. Already he had forgotten the desperate situation from which he had just escaped; he thought only of Shirley Sumner's face, tear-stained with terror; and because he knew that at least some of those tears had been inspired by the gravest apprehensions as to his physical well-being, because in his ears there still resounded her frantic warning, he

realized that however stern her decree of banishment had been, she was nevertheless not indifferent to him.

The climax had been reached—and passed; and the result had been far from the disaster he had painted in his mind's eye ever since the knowledge had come to him that he was doomed to battle to a knockout with Colonel Pennington, and that one of the earliest fruits of hostilities would doubtless be the loss of Shirley Sumner's prized friendship. Well, he had lost her friendship, but a still small voice whispered to him that the loss was not irreparable—whereat he swung his axe as a bandmaster swings his baton; he was glad that he had started the war and was now free to fight it out unhampered.

Up hill and down dale he went. Within two hours his long, tireless stride brought him out into a clearing in the valley where his own logging camp stood. He went directly to the log-landing, where in a listless and half-hearted manner the loading crew were piling logs on Pennington's logging trucks.

Bryce looked at his watch. It was two o'clock; at two-fifteen Pennington's locomotive would appear, to back in and couple to the long line of trucks. And the train was only half loaded.

"Where's McTavish?" Bryce demanded of the donkey-driver.

The man mouthed his quid, spat copiously, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, and pointed. "Up at his shanty," he made answer, and grinned at Bryce knowingly.

Up through the camp's single short street, flanked on each side with the woodsmen's shanties, Bryce went. At the most pretentious shanty on the street Bryce turned in. He had never seen it before, but he knew it to be the woods-boss's home, for unlike its neighbors the house was painted with the coarse red paint that is used on box-cars, while a fence, made of fancy pointed pickets painted white, inclosed a tiny garden in front of the house. As Bryce came through the gate, a young girl rose from where she knelt in a bed of freshly transplanted pansies.

Bryce lifted his hat. "Is Mr. McTavish at home?" he asked.

She nodded. "He cannot see any body," she hastened to add. "He's sick."

"I think he'll see me. And I wonder if you're Moira McTavish."

"Yes, I'm Moira."

"I'm Bryce Cardigan."

A look of fright crept into the girl's eyes. "Are you—Bryce Cardigan?" she faltered, and looked at him more closely. "Yes, you're Mr. Bryce. You've changed—but then it's six years since we saw you last, Mr. Bryce."

He came toward her with outstretched hand. "And you were a little girl when I saw you last. Now—you're a woman." She grasped his hand with the frank heartiness of a man.

"I'm twenty years old," she informed him.

"Stand right where you are until I have looked at you," he commanded, and backed off a few feet, the better to contemplate her.

He saw a girl slightly above medium height, tanned, robust, simply gowned in a gingham dress. Her hands were soiled from her recent labors in the pansy-bed, and her shoes were heavy and coarse; yet neither hands nor feet were large or ungraceful. Her head was well formed; her hair, jet black and of unusual lustre and abundance, was parted in the middle and held in an old-fashioned coil at the nape of a neck the beauty of which was revealed by the low cut of her simple frock. Her nose was patrician, her face oval; her lips, full and red, were slightly parted in the adorable Cupid's box, which is the inevitable heritage of a short upper lip; her teeth were white as Parian marble; and her full breast was rising and falling swiftly, as if she labored under suppressed excitement.

So delightful a picture did Moira McTavish make that Bryce forgot all his troubles in her sweet presence. "By the gods, Moira," he declared earnestly, "you're a peach! When I saw you last, you were awkward and leggy, like a colt. I'm sure you weren't a bit good-looking. And now you're the most ravishing young lady in seventeen counties. By jingo, Moira, you're a strapper and no mistake. Are you married?"

She shook her head, blushing pleasantly at his unpolished but sincere compliments.

"What? Not married. Why, what the deuce can be the matter with the eligible young fellows hereabouts?"

"There aren't any eligible young fellows hereabouts, Mr. Bryce. And I've lived in these woods all my life."

"Are you lonely, Moira?"

She nodded.

"Poor Moira!" he murmured absently.

Moira McTavish and her "Prince Charming."
(TO BE CONTINUED.)
Movies Aid the Styles.
A prominent designer and importer of women's gowns has stated that the films have had an important effect on the demand for certain styles, particularly gowns of simple classic lines and "intriguing fabrics." A druggist reports that the sale of cosmetics has increased 25 per cent since the movies became popular.
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