

# Cavanagh, Forest Ranger

The Great Conservation Novel

By HAMLIN GARLAND

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### PLAGUE AND MURDER.

UPON leaving timber line Cavanagh and Wetherford entered upon a wide and sterile slope high on the rocky breast of the great peak whose splintered crest lorded the range. Snow fields lay all about, and a few feet higher up the canyons were filled with ice. It was a savage and tempest swept spot in which to pitch a tent, but there among the rocks shivered the minute canvas home of the shepherd, and close beside it, guarded by a lone dog and lying like a thick spread flock of rimy bowlders (almost unnoticeable in their silent immobility) huddled the sheep.

"There's your house," shouted Ross to Wetherford.

The older man, with white face of dismay, looked about him, unable to make reply.

"Hello, there!" shouted Ross, wondering at the absence of human life about the camp. "Hello, the house!"

Receiving no answer to his hail, he turned to Wetherford. "Looks as if Amro has pulled out and left the collic to tend the flock. He's been kind of seedy for some days."

Dismounting, he approached the tent. The collic, who knew him, seemed to understand his errand, for he leaped upon him as if to kiss his cheek. Ross put him down gently. "You're almost too glad to see me, old fellow. I wonder how long you've been left here alone."

Thereupon he opened the tied flap, but started back with instant perception of something wrong, for there, on his pile of ragged quilts, lay the Basque herder, with flushed face and rolling eyes, crazed with fever and entirely helpless. "You'd better not come in here, Wetherford," Ross warned. "Joe is here, horribly sick, and I'm afraid it's something contagious. It may be smallpox."

Wetherford recoiled a step. "Smallpox! What makes you think that?"

"Well, these Basques have been having it over in their settlement, and, besides, it smells like it." He listened a moment. "I'm afraid Joe's in for it. He's crazy with it. But he's a human being, and we can't let him die here alone. You rustle some wood for the stove, and I'll see what I can do for him."

Wetherford was old and wasted and thin blooded, but he had never been a coward, and in his heart there still burned a small flame of his youthful, reckless, generous daring. Pushing Cavanagh one side, he said with firm decision: "You keep out of there. I'm the one to play nurse. This is my job."

"Nonsense! I am younger and stronger than you."

"Get away!" shouted the older man. "Gregg hired me to do this work, and it don't matter whether I live or die. But you've got something to do in the world. My girl needs you, and she don't need me, so get out of here and stay out. Go bring me that wood and I'll go in and see what's the matter."

Cavanagh looked him in the face an instant. "Very well," said he, "I'll do as you say. There's no use of our both taking chances."

It was beginning to rain, and the tent was dark and desolate, but as the fire in the little stove commenced to snarl and the smoke to pour out of the pipe the small domicile took on cheer. Wetherford knew how to care for the sick and in the shelter of the canvas wall developed unforeseen vigor and decision. It was amazing to Cavanagh to witness his change of manner.

Soon a pan of water was steaming, and some hot stones were at the sufferer's feet, and when Wetherford appeared at the door of the tent his face was almost happy. "Kill a sheep. There isn't a thing but a heel of bacon and a little flour in the place."

Twenty miles of most difficult trail lay between Cavanagh's cabin and this spot. To carry the sick man on his horse would not only be painful to the sufferer, but dangerous to the rescuer, for if the Basque were really ill of smallpox contagion would surely follow. On the other hand, to leave him to die here unaided seemed inhuman, if possible.

"There's only one thing to do," he called to Wetherford, "and that is for me to ride back to the station and bring up some extra bedding and my own tent and so camp down beside you."

"All right, but remember I've established a quarantine. I'll crack your head if you break over the line an inch."

There was no longer any feeling of reaching up or reaching down between the two men—they were equals. Wetherford, altogether admirable, seemed to have regained his manhood as he stood in the door of the tent confronting the ranger. "This Basque ain't

much of a find; but, as you say, he's human, and we can't let him die here and die. I'll stay with him till you can find a doctor or till he dies."

"I take off my hat to you," responded Cavanagh. "You are a man."

Once back at his cabin after leaving Wetherford, Cavanagh set himself to cooking some food to take back with him to the peak. He brought in his pack horse and burdened him with camp outfit and utensils and extra clothing. He filled his pockets with such medicines as he possessed, and so at last, just as night was falling, he started back over his difficult trail.

Wetherford met him at the door, no longer the poor old tramp, but a priest, one who has devoted himself to Christ's service.

"How is he?" asked the ranger.

"Delirious," replied the herder. "I've had to hold him to his bed. I'm glad you've come. It's lonesome up here. Don't come too near. Set your tent down there by the trees. I can't have you infected. Keep clear of me and this camp."

"I've got some food and some extra clothing for you."

"Put 'em down here, and in the morning drive these sheep away. That noise disturbs the dago, and I don't like it myself; they sound lonesome and helpless. That dog took 'em away for awhile, but brought 'em back again. Poor devil, he don't know what to think of it all."

Ross did as Wetherford commanded him to do and withdrew a little way down the slope and without putting up his tent rolled himself in his blankets and went to sleep.

The ranger's first duty in the morning was to feed the faithful collic and to send him forth with the flock. His next was to build a fire and cook some breakfast for Wetherford, and as he put it down beside the tent door he heard the wild pleading of the Basque, who was struggling with his nurse, doubtless in the belief that he was being kept a prisoner. Only a few words like "go home" and "sheep" were intelligible to either the nurse or the ranger.

Cavanagh waited till a silence came, then called softly, "Here's your breakfast, Wetherford."

"Move away," retorted the man within. "Keep your distance."

Ross walked away a little space, and Wetherford came to the door. "The dago is sure sick. There's no two ways about that. How far is it to the nearest doctor?"

"I could reach one by phone from the Kettle ranch, about twenty miles below here."

"If he don't get better today I reckon we'll have to have a doctor." He looked so white and old that Cavanagh said:

"You need rest. Now, I think I've had the smallpox. I know I've been vaccinated, and if you go to bed—"

"If you're saying all that preliminary to offering to come in here you're wasting your breath. I don't intend to let you come any nearer than you are. There is work for you to do. Besides, there's my girl. You're detailed to look after her."

"Would a doctor come?" asked Ross quite huskily, moved by Wetherford's words. "It's a hard climb. Would they think the dago worth it?"

Wetherford's face darkened with a look of doubt. "It is a hard trip for a city man, but maybe he would come for you—for the government."

"I doubt it, even if I were to offer my next month's salary as a fee. These hills are very remote to the townsfolk and one dago more or less of no importance, but I'll see what I can do."

Ross was really more concerned for Wetherford himself than for the Basque. "If the fever is something malignant we must have medical aid," he said and went slowly back to his own camp to ponder his puzzling problem.

One thing could certainly be done, and that was to inform Gregg and Murphy of their herder's illness. Surely they would come to the rescue of the collic and his flock. To reach a telephone involved either a ride over into Deer Creek or a return to the Fork. He was tempted to ride all the way to the Fork, for to do so would permit another meeting with Lee. But to do this would require many hours longer, and half a day's delay might prove fatal to the Basque, and, besides, each hour of loneliness and toil rendered Wetherford just so much more open to the deadly attack of the disease.

It was hard to leave an old and broken man in such a drear and wild contested spot, and yet it had to be done; so, fastening his tent securely behind a clump of junipers, Cavanagh mounted his horse and rode away across the boundary of the forest into Deer Creek basin, which had been the bone of much contention for nearly four years. It had once been a part of the forest, but under pressure the president had permitted it to be restored to the public lands open for entry. It was not "agricultural grounds," as certain ranchers claimed, but it was excellent summer pasture, and the sheepmen and cattlemen had leaped at once into warfare to possess it. Sheep were beaten to death with clubs by hundreds, herders were hustled out of the park with ropes about their necks and their outfits destroyed, and all this within a few miles of the forest boundary, where one small sentinel kept effective watch and ward.

Cavanagh had never been over this trail but once, and he was trying to locate the cliff from which a flock of sheep had been hurled by cattlemen some years before when he perceived a thin column of smoke rising from a rocky hillside. With habitual watch-

fulness as to fire, he raised his glass to his eyes and studied the spot. It was evidently a campfire and smoldering dangerously, and, turning his



HE PERCEIVED A CHARR'D HAND!

horse's head, he rode toward it to stamp it out. It was not upon his patrol, but that did not matter. His duty was clear.

As he drew near he began to perceive signs of a broken camp. The ground was littered with utensils. It was not an ordinary campfire, and the ranger's heart quickened. "Another sheep herder has been driven out and his tent and provisions burned!" he exclaimed wrathfully.

His horse snorted and shied as he rode nearer, and then a shudder passed through the ranger's heart as he perceived in the edge of the smoldering embers a boot heel and then—a charred hand! In the smoke of that fire was the reek of human flesh.

For a long time the ranger sat on his horse, peering down into those ashes until at last it became evident to his eyes that at least two sheep herders had been sacrificed on the cattlemen's altar of hate and greed.

All about on the sod the story was written all too plain. Two men, possibly three, had been murdered, cut to pieces and burned not many hours before. There stood the bloody spade with which the bodies had been dismembered, and there lay an empty can whose oil had been poured upon the mingled camp utensils, tent and wagon of the herders in the attempt to incinerate the hacked and dismembered limbs of the victims. The lawlessness of the range had culminated. The ferocity of the herder had gone beyond the savage. Here in the sweet autumn air the reek of the cattlemen's vengeance rose like some hideous vapor, poisonous and obscene.

The ranger sickened as the bloody tale unfolded itself before him. Then a fierce hate of such warfare flamed in his heart. Could this enormity be committed under any other civilized flag? Would any other government futterle so foolishly, so childishly, its state and federal authority as to permit such diabolism?

In his horror, his sense of revolt, he cursed the state of which he was a citizen. He would have resigned his commission at the moment, so intense was his resentment of the supine, careless, jocular, slattern government under which he was serving.

"By the Lord," he breathed, with solemn intensity, "if this does not shame the people of this state into revolt, if these fiends are not bound and hung, I will myself harry them. I cannot live and do my duty here unless this crime is avenged by law."

Chilled, shaking and numb, he set spurs to his horse and rode furiously down the trail toward the nearest town, so eager to spread the alarm that he could scarcely breathe a deep breath. On the steep slopes he was forced to walk, and his horse led so badly that his agony of impatience was deepened. He had a vision of the murderers riding fast into far countries. Each hour made their apprehension progressively the more difficult.

"Who were they?" he asked himself again and again. "What kind of man did this thing? Was the leader a man like Ballard? Even so, he was hired. By whom? By ranchers covetous of the range; that was absolutely certain."

It was long after noon before he came to the end of the telephone line in a little store and postoffice at the upper falls of Deer creek. The telephone had a booth fortunately, and he soon had Redfield's ear, but his voice was so strained and unnatural that his chief did not recognize it.

"Is that you, Ross? What's the matter? Your voice sounds hoarse."

Ross composed himself and told his story briefly. "I'm at Kettle Ranch postoffice. Now listen. The limit of the cattlemen's ferocity has been reached. As I rode down here to get into communication with a doctor for a sick herder I came upon the scene of another murder and burning. The fire is still smoldering. At least two bodies are in the embers."

At last, bit by bit, from hurried speech, the supervisor derived the fact, the location, the hour, and directed the herder to ride back and guard the remains till the sheriff arrived.

"Keep it all quiet," warned Ross, "and get the sheriff and a doctor to come up here as quick as you can. What is this country coming to?" he cried in despair. "Will this deed go unpunished like the rest?"

Redfield's voice had lost its optimistic ring. "I don't know; I am stunned by it all. Don't do anything rash, Ross. Wait till I come. Perhaps this is the turning point out here. I'll be up at the earliest moment."

The embittered and disheartened ranger then called up Lee Virginia, and the sound of her sweet voice turn-

ed his thoughts to other and in a sense more important matters, for when she heard his name she cried out with such eager longing and appeal that his heart leaped. "Oh, I wish you were here! Mother has been worse today. She is asking for you. Can't you come down and see us? She wants to tell you something."

"I can't—I can't!" he stammered. "I—I'm a long way off, and I have important work to do. Tell her I will come tomorrow. Dear girl, there is a sick man far up on the mountain side with no one to care for him but a poor old herder who is in danger of falling sick himself. I must go back to them; but, believe me, I will come just as soon as my duties will let me. You understand me, don't you?"

Her voice was fainter as she said, "Yes, but I—it seems hard to wait."

"I know. Your voice has helped me. I was in a black mood when I came here. I'm going back now to do my work, and then I will come to you. Goodbye."

Strangely beautiful and very subtle was the vibrant stir of that wire as it conveyed back to his ear the little sigh with which she made answer to his plea. He took his way upward in a mood which was meditative, but no longer bitter.

(To Be Continued.)

## THE BOYS TOO SMART FOR BRIDE AND GROOM

Made Up Their Minds They Could Serenade as Well One Place as Another.

From Friday's Daily.

Mr. Robert Gibson and wife, nee Miss Nettie Smith, were tendered an impromptu reception and serenade by a party of young gentlemen friends, who played various sorts and conditions of musical instruments. The serenade was not wholly unexpected, though somewhat of a surprise, taking place some time after the band concert closed last evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Gibson were down town when the serenaders organized and selected a drum major, and had started home with their valises and had reached the residence of Mr. C. G. Wescott, who was industriously sprinkling his lawn, while conversing with the bride and groom. Mrs. Gibson was dressed in white, while Mr. Gibson was without his coat, and both were easily discerned in the dim moonlight. Before their chat with Mr. Wescott ended a party of men, marching in double column, were heard stepping with military tread upon the pavement near the Rife. The company kept its course right on up the walk, keeping step and with measured stride. Mr. Gibson was at once an interested spectator, for he was young once himself. But in order that he might not attract too much attention he retired into the shadow of Mr. Wescott's dwelling and awaited developments, never suspecting that the eagle eye of the leader of the band had discovered him and Mrs. Gibson.

The company of young men kept the even tenor of their march until they were directly opposite the church, when the column made a quarter wheel left and marched directly across the street. Mr. Gibson and wife still thought that it was merely a freak of the party desiring to change sides of the street, but when the marchers reached the pavement on the south side of the street they did not turn, but kept right on across the lawn until within a few feet of Mr. and Mrs. Gibson, when, at a word of command from the drum major, the musical instruments were given full play.

There were bells, pans, kettles, guns and other such musical instruments, which, when set in motion, awoke Mr. Wescott's wife and children. After a few blasts and strains the instruments were all placed in the cases and the whole band escorted Mr. and Mrs. Gibson to their home, where a goodly quantity of cigars were passed out to the boys and all went away happy.

Mrs. R. H. Cowles and children of Watson, Missouri, arrived today and will spend the Fourth with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Andrews.

## PROBATE NOTICE.

IN COUNTY COURT, State of Nebraska, County of Cass, ss.

In the matter of the estate of Albert Eugene Lewis, deceased. To All Persons Interested:

You are hereby notified that there has been filed in this court a report of the administrator of said estate, together with his petition for final settlement thereof.

That a hearing will be had upon said report and petition before this court in the County Court Rooms at Plattsmouth, in said County, on the 3rd day of July, 1911, at 9 o'clock a. m. That all objections thereto, if any, must be filed on or before said day and hour of hearing.

Witness my hand and seal of the County Court of said County this 8th day of June, 1911.

(SEAL) Allen J. Beeson, County Judge.

## Band Concert Last Night.

From Friday's Daily. The band concert, which commenced an hour later last night, was attended by a large crowd of enthusiastic auditors. The people turned out more numerously and seemed to appreciate the music more than ever before, the only comment heard being that it did not last long enough. There were five numbers on the program, some of them classical music. The public was not backward in applauding after each selection.

## Horses Strayed.

Three head of horses strayed from the Parmele ranch, near Cedar Creek, this week—a black mare with sucking colt, and a bay 2-year-old colt with star in forehead and head halter on. Leave information concerning them with Fred Ohlenhausen, Independent phone 8 R; or with Bank of Cass County. 6-30-d61-w2t.

## Do you want an AUCTIONEER?

If you do, get one who has Experience, Ability, Judgement. Telegraph or write

ROBERT WIKINSON, Dunbar, Neb. Dates made at this office or the Murray State Bank. Good Service at a Reasonable Rate

## A DELIGHTFUL AFTERNOON SPENT AT THE GADE HOME

Ladies' Auxiliary of Presbyterian Church Enjoy a Fine Meeting Wednesday Afternoon.

From Thursday's Daily.

The Ladies' auxiliary of the Presbyterian church held a most delightful meeting at the home of Mrs. L. W. Gade yesterday afternoon. The Woman's Missionary society of this church met with the ladies of the auxiliary and there was a large number of the ladies of both organizations in attendance, there being about fifty present.

During the early part of the afternoon the ladies of the auxiliary held their regular business session, which was made as brief as possible in order that they might adjourn and listen to the fine program which the ladies of the Missionary society had prepared. Mrs. Gade had charge of the program on this occasion and the subject for the afternoon was that of "Alaska and Mexico." Mrs. Thomas Pollock gave a splendid talk on "Alaska," the talk being of the study of Alaska, where she both attended and taught school many years ago. Her talk was most thoroughly enjoyed by those fortunate enough to be present. Reading of clippings from magazines and selected portions of books on both Alaska and Mexico were given by Mrs. F. B. Shopp and Mrs. D. C. Morgan, which were likewise as interesting. Miss Gladys Marshall gave a charming number in the shape of a beautiful vocal solo, entitled "Moment by Moment." The scripture lesson was read by Mrs. J. T. Baird.

Following this splendid program the ladies spent a few very pleasant moments in a social way, after which most delicious refreshments were served. Mrs. Gade was assisted in serving by Misses Gertrude Morgan and Crete Briggs. At the usual time the ladies dispersed, very much indebted to the hostess for the enjoyable afternoon spent.

## MEXICAN WAR VETERAN DIES

William R. Keep of Harlan Passes Away at Age of Eighty-Seven.

Harlan, Ia., June 30.—William R. Keep, eighty-seven years old, a resident of Shelby county for more than thirty years and the only surviving veteran of the Mexican war in this county, is dead. He was a second lieutenant in the war. A widow and eight children survive. Funeral services were held from the family home under the auspices of Harlan G. A. R. post.

## Young Farmer is Arrested.

Iowa City, Ia., June 30.—Charged with attempting to break into the room of Miss Barbara Bremerman, daughter of a prominent farmer living near Iowa City, Jonas Graber was arrested, brought here and placed in jail. He alleges that the farmer locked up his daughter, who desired the young man to release her. He denies he made an effort to break down the door.

## State Bar Association Meets.

Oskaloosa, Ia., June 30.—The seventeenth annual convention of the Iowa State Bar association opened here. Papers were read by Justice John G. Sherwin of the supreme court and F. P. Dawley of Cedar Rapids. President J. L. Carney of Marshalltown delivered his annual address.

## County Attorneys Elect Officers.

Oskaloosa, Ia., June 30.—The Iowa County Attorneys' association closed its convention here with the election of officers, as follows: President, W. C. Ratcliff of Red Oak; vice president, W. H. Palmer of Maquoketa; secretary-treasurer, A. J. Bort of Emmetsburg.

## Treynor Celebrates First Railroad.

Council Bluffs, Ia., June 30.—The people of Treynor celebrated the advent of a railroad to their town. Trains over the new railroad were run every two hours all day to accommodate the throng of visitors, hundreds of whom had never seen the town before.

## "Wets" Win at Decorah.

Decorah, Ia., June 30.—The board of supervisors declared the late saloon petition sufficient and consequently the saloons will open July 1. Whether or not the anti-saloon element will appeal the case is not known. The saloon men had eleven names majority.

## Ottumwa Conductor Killed.

Davenport, Ia., June 30.—George Gilbert of Ottumwa, a conductor on the Milwaukee railroad, fell from the rear of an engine which was backing up near Buffalo and was run over. He died at a hospital in Davenport.

## Will Appeal License Case.

Iowa City, Ia., June 30.—The Iowa City license war goes to the supreme court. Judge Howell has affirmed the rulings of Mayor George W. Koontz and upholds the \$500 license for peddlers.

## Atlantic Pioneer Stricken.

Atlantic, Ia., June 30.—A. G. Beech, one of the pioneer merchants of Atlantic, suffered a stroke of apoplexy. It is feared he may not recover, as he is still in a serious condition.

## Big Blaze at Van Horne.

Van Horne, Ia., June 30.—Fire of unknown origin threatened the entire business district and destroyed the electric light plant. The loss will exceed \$14,000.

## NEW TOWN NEAR FORT DES MOINES

Election Called to Vote on Its Incorporation.

## MAIL BOXES ON STREET CARS

New Departure to Be Put in Force for Collection of Letters—Number of Saloons in Iowa Will Not Exceed Seven Hundred This Year.

Des Moines, June 30.—In the district court an order was entered for an election to be held by residents of a large tract of land lying between Des Moines and Fort Des Moines on the question of incorporating a new town to be called South Fort Des Moines. A commission was named to take charge of the incorporation and it is declared the election will carry unanimously. The new town is settling up rapidly.

## Number of Saloons Less.

The Anti-Saloon league has made a compilation of results of the year's canvass for saloon petitions in Iowa and finds that not to exceed 700 saloons will be legally operated after July 1. This is a very large reduction in the number and is due to the change in public sentiment in many of the smaller cities of the state. Eighty-six licenses were granted in Des Moines.

## Mail Boxes on Cars.

General Manager Harrigan of the city railway has been notified that the postoffice department has accepted his proposition regarding the payment for mail boxes carried on the street cars of Des Moines. This proposition is for a mail box on every street car at an annual cost of \$4,100 a year, for a period of four years.

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