

Cavanagh, Forest Ranger

The Great Conservation
Novel

By HAMLIN GARLAND

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CHAPTER XXI.

WETHERFORD PASSES ON.

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

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

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

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

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

"I beg of you go back."

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

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

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

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

At sunset Redfield returned, bringing with him medicine, but no nurse. "Nobody will come up here," he said. "I reckon Ross is doomed to fight it out alone. The solitude, the long trail, scares the bravest of them away. I tried and tried—no use. Eleanor would have come, of course—demanded to come—but I would not permit that. She commissioned me to bring you both down to the ranch."

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

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

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

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

"I'll do the best I can," responded Redfield, "but meanwhile you must not think of getting out of the forest service. I have some cheering news for you. The president has put a good man into the chief's place."

Cavanagh's face lighted up. "That'll help some," he exclaimed. "But who's the man?"

Redfield named him. "He was a student under the chief, and the chief says he's all right, which satisfies me. Furthermore, he's a real forester and not a political jobber or a corporation attorney."

"That's good," repeated Cavanagh, "and yet," he said sadly, "it leaves the chief out just the same."

"No; the chief is not out. He's where he can fight for the idea to better advantage than when he was a subordinate under another man. Anyhow, he asks us all to line up for the work and not to mind him. The work, he says, is bigger than any man. Here's that resignation of yours," he said, taking Cavanagh's letter from his pocket. "I didn't put it on file. What shall I do with it?"

"Throw it to me," said Cavanagh curtly.

Redfield tossed it over the hitching pole, and Ross took it up, looked at it for a moment in silence, then tore it into bits and threw it on the ground.

"What are your orders, Mr. Supervisor?" he asked, with a faint, quizzical smile around his eyes.

"There's nothing you can do but take care of this man. But as soon as you are able to ride again I've got some special work for you. I want you to join with young Bingham, the ranger on Rock creek, and line up the Triangle cattle. Murphy is reported to have thrown on the forest nearly a thousand head more than his permit calls for. I want you to see about that. Then complete your maps so that I can turn them in on the 1st of November, and about the middle of

December you are to take charge of this forest in my stead. Eleanor has decided to take the children abroad for a couple of years, and as I am to be over there part of the time I don't feel justified in holding down the supervisor's position. I shall resign in your favor. Wait now!" he called warningly. "The district forester and I framed all this up as we rode down the hill yesterday, and it goes. Oh, yes, there's one thing more. Old man Dunn—"

"I know."

"How did you learn it?"

"A reporter came boiling over the ridge about noon today wanting me to give him the names which Dunn had given me. I was strongly tempted to do as he asked me to—you know these newspaper men are sometimes the best kind of detectives for running down criminals—but on second thought I concluded to wait until I had discussed the matter with you. I haven't much faith in the county authorities."

"Ordinarily I would have my doubts myself," replied Redfield, "but the whole country is roused, and we're going to round up these men this time sure. The best men and the big papers all over the west are demanding an exercise of the law, and the reward we have offered"—He passed suddenly. "By the way, that reward will come to you if you can bring about the arrest of the criminals."

"The reward should go to Dunn's family," replied the ranger soberly. "Poor chap, he's sacrificed himself for the good of the state."

"That's true. His family is left in bad shape—"

Cavanagh broke off the conversation suddenly. "I must go back to"—He had almost said "back to Wetherford."

"My patient needs me!" he exclaimed. "How does he seem?"

"He's surely dying. In my judgment he can't last the night, but so long as he's conscious it's up to me to be on the spot."

Redfield walked slowly back across the river, thinking on the patient courage of the ranger.

"It isn't the obvious kind of thing, but it's courage all the same," he said to himself.

Meanwhile Lize and Virginia, left alone beside the fire, had drawn closer together.

The girl's face, so sweet and so sensitive, wrought strongly upon the older woman's sympathy. Something of her own girlhood came back to her. Being freed from the town and all its associations, she became more considerate, more thoughtful. She wished to speak, and yet she found it very hard to begin. At last she said, with a touch of mockery in her tone, "You like Ross Cavanagh almost as well as I do myself, don't you?"

The girl flushed a little, but her eyes remained steady. "I would not be here if I did not," she replied.

"Neither would I. Well, now, I have got something to tell you—something I ought to have told you long ago, something that Ross ought to know. I intended to tell you that first day you came back, but I couldn't somehow get to it, and I kept putting it off till—well, then I got fond of you, and every day made it harder." Here she made her supreme effort. "Child, I'm an old bluff. I'm not your mother at all."

Lee stared at her in amazement. "What do you mean?" she asked.

"I mean your real mother died when you was a tiny little babe. You see, I was your father's second wife—in fact, you weren't a year old when we married. Ed made me promise never to let you know. We were to bring

you up just the same as if you was a child to both of us. Nobody knows but Reddy. I told him the day we started up here."

The girl's mind ran swiftly over the past as she listened. The truth of the revelation reached her instantly, explaining a hundred strange things which had puzzled her all her life. The absence of deep affection between herself and Lize was explained. Their difference in habit, temperament, thought—all became plain. "But my mother," she said at last—"who was my mother?"

"I never saw her. You see, Ed came into the country, bringing you, a little, motherless babe. He always said your mother was a fine woman, but I never so much as saw a picture of her. She was an educated woman, he said—a southern woman—and her name was Virginia, but that's about all I can tell you of her. Now I am going to let Ross know all of this as soon as I can. It will make a whole lot of difference in what he thinks of you."

She uttered all this much as a man would have done, with steady voice and with bright eyes, but Lee Virginia could feel beneath her harsh inflections the deep emotion which vibrated there, and her heart went out

toward the lonely woman in a new rush of tenderness. Now that she was released from the necessity of excusing her mother's faults—faults she could now ignore—now that she could look upon her as a loyal friend, she was moved to pity and to love, and, rising, she went to her and put her arms about her neck and said: "This won't make any difference. I am going to stay with you and help you just the same."

The tears came to the old woman's eyes, and her voice broke as she replied: "I knew you would say that, Lee Virginia, but all the same I don't intend to have you do any such thing. You've got to cut loose from me altogether, because some fine chap is going to come along one of these days, and he won't want me even as a step-mother-in-law. No; I have decided that you and me had better live apart. I'll get you a place to live up in Sulphur, where I can visit you now and again, but I guess I am elected to stay right here in the Fork. They don't like me, and I don't like them, but I have kind of got used to their ways of looking at me sideways. They don't matter as much as it would up there in the city."

Lee turned back wistfully toward the story of her mother. "Where did my mother meet my father? Do you know that?"

"No, I don't. It was a runaway match, Ed said. I never did know who her folks were, only I know they thought she was marrying the wrong man."

The girl sighed as her mind took in the significance of her mother's coming to this wild country, leaving all that she knew and loved behind. "Poor little mother! It must have been very hard for her."

"I am afraid she did have a hard time, for Ed admitted to me that he hadn't so much as a saddle when he landed in the state. He hadn't much when I met him first, but everybody liked him. He was one of the hand-somest men that ever jumped a saddle. But he was close mouthed. You never could get anything out of him that he didn't want to tell, and I was never able to discover what he had been doing in the southern part of the state."

As she pondered on her changed relationship to Lize, Lee's heart lightened. It would make a difference to Ross. It would make a difference to the Redfields. Traitorous as it seemed, it was a great relief, a joy, to know that her own mother—her real mother—had been "nice." "She must have been nice or Lize would not have said so," she reasoned, recalling that her stepmother had admitted her feeling of jealousy.

At last Lize rose. "Well, now, dearie, I reckon we had better turn in. It is getting chilly and late."

As they were about to part at the door of the tent Virginia took Lize's face between her hands. "Good night, mother," she said and kissed her to show her that what she had said would not make any difference.

But Lize was not deceived. This unwonted caress made perfectly plain to her the relief which filled the girl's heart.

Lee Virginia was awakened some hours later by a roaring, crackling sound and by the flare of a yellow light upon her tent. Peering out, she saw flames shooting up through the roof of the ranger's cabin, while beside it, wrapped in a blanket, calmly contemplating it, stood Cavanagh with folded arms. A little nearer to the bridge Redfield was sitting upon an upturned box.

With a cry of alarm she aroused her mother and Lize, heavy eyed, laggard with sleep, rose slowly and peered out at the scene with eyes of dull amazement. "Why don't they try to put it out?" she demanded as she took in the import of the passive figures.

Dressing with tremulous haste, Lee stepped from the tent just in time to see Swenson come from behind the burning building and join the others in silent contemplation of the scene. There was something uncanny in the calm inaction of the three strong men.

Slowly, wonderingly, the girl drew near and called to Cavanagh, who turned quickly, crying out: "Don't come too close and don't be frightened. I set the place on fire myself. The poor old herder died last night and is decently buried in the earth, and now we are burning the cabin and every thread it contains to prevent the spread of the plague. Hugh and Swenson have divided their garments with me, and this blanket which I wear is my only coat. All that I have in that cabin now going up in smoke—my guns, pictures, everything."

"How could you do it?" she cried out, understanding what his sacrifice had been.

"I couldn't," he replied. "The supervisor did it. They had to go. The cabin was saturated with poison. It had become to me a plague spot, and there was no other way to stamp it out. I should never have felt safe if I had carried out even so much as a letter."

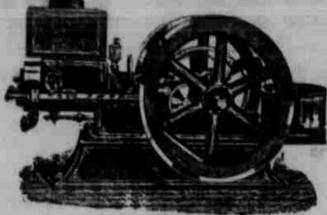
Dumb and shivering with the chill of the morning, Lee Virginia drew nearer, ever nearer. "I am so sorry," she said and yearned toward him, eager to comfort him, but he warningly motioned her away.

"Please don't come any nearer, for I dare not touch you."

"But you are not ill?" she cried out, with a note of apprehension in her voice.

He smiled in response to her question. "No; I feel nothing but weariness and a little depression. I can't help feeling somehow as if I were burning up a part of myself in that fire—the saddle I have ridden for years, my guns, ropes, spurs. Everything relating to the forest is gone, and with it my youth. I have been something of a careless freebooter myself. I fear, but that is all over with

Waterloo Boy



Gasoline Engine

A gasoline engine is the biggest labor saver ever used. They will run all the small machines, such as cream separator, washing machine, churn, corn sheller, small fodder cutter, dynamo, milking machine, ice cream freezer, etc. All this work can be done with the Waterloo Boy Gasoline Engine.

This engine is of the first grade material throughout, and entire engine is guaranteed for a period of five years. Engine has throttle control, which also releases all compression when starting, making it start easy, in fact can be started by any woman or child.

We deliver all engines and take care of you in case you have any trouble, until you get familiar with the engine and can locate your trouble should any ever happen to occur. Let us show you this excellent engine.

JOHN BAUER,

Plattsmouth, Nebraska.

THE HARDWARE MAN

now." He looked her in the face with a sad and resolute glance. "The forest service made a man of me, taught me to regard the future. I never accepted responsibility till I became a ranger, and in thinking it all over I have decided to stay with it, as the boys say, 'till the spring rains.'" "I am very glad of that," she said.

"Yes; Dalton thinks I can qualify for the position of supervisor, and Redfield may offer me the supervision of this forest. If he does I will accept it— if you will go with me and share the small home which the supervisor's pay provides. Will you go?"

In the light of his burning cabin and in the shadow of the great peaks Lee Virginia could not fall of a certain largeness and dignity of mood. She neither blushed nor stammered as she responded, "I will go anywhere in the world with you."

He could not touch so much as the hem of her garment, but his eyes embraced her as he said, "God bless you for the faith you seem to have in me!"

Redfield's voice interrupted with hearty clamor. "And now, Miss Virginia, you go back and rustle some breakfast for us all. Swenson, bring the horses in and harness my team. I'm going to take these women down the canyon. And, Ross, you'd better saddle up as soon as you feel rested and ride across the divide and go into camp in that little old cabin by the dam above my house. You'll have to be sequestered for a few days, I reckon, till we see how you're coming out. I'll telephone over to the Fork and have the place made ready for you, and I'll have the doctor go up there to meet you and put you straight. If you're going to be sick we'll want you where we can look after you. Isn't that so, Lee Virginia?"

"Indeed it is," replied the girl earnestly.

"But I'm not going to be sick," retorted Cavanagh. "I refuse to be sick."

"Quite right," replied Redfield, "but all the same we want you where we can get at you and where medical aid of the right sort is accessible. I'm going to fetch my bed over here and put you into it. You need rest."

Lee still lingered after Redfield left them. "Please do as Mr. Redfield tells you," she pleaded, "for I shall be very anxious till you get safely down the mountains. If that poor old man has any relatives they ought to be told how kind you have been. You could not have been kinder to one of your own people."

These words from her had a poignancy of meaning which made his reply difficult. His tone was designedly light as he retorted: "I would be a fraud if I stood here listening to your praise without saying, without confessing, how dandy weary I got of the whole business. It was simply that there was nothing else to do. I had to go on."

Her mind still dwelt on the tragic event. "I wish he could have had some kind of service. It seems sort of barbarous to bury him without any

one to say a prayer over him. But I suppose that was impossible. Surely some one ought to mark his grave, for some of his people may come and want to know where he lies."

He led her thoughts to pleasanter paths. "I am glad you are going with the supervisor. You are going, are you not?"

"Yes, for a few days, till I'm sure you're safe."

"I shall be tempted to pretend being sick just to keep you near me," he was saying when Redfield returned, bringing his sleeping couch. Unrolling this under a tree beside the creek, the supervisor said, "Now, get into that."

Cavanagh resigned Lee with a smile. "Good night," he said. "Oh, but it's good to remember that I shall see you tomorrow!"

With a happy glance and a low "Goodby" she turned away.

Laying aside his blanket and his shoes, Cavanagh crept into the snug little camp bed. "Ah," he breathed, with a delicious sense of relief, "I feel as if I could sleep a week!" And in an instant his eyes closed in slumber so profound that it was barren even of dreams.

(To Be Continued.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

For County Treasurer.

Editor Journal: Please announce my name as a candidate for the office of county treasurer of Cass county, subject to the will of the democratic voters at the primary election Tuesday, August 15, 1911.

Carl G. Fricke.

For County Treasurer.

I hereby announce my candidacy on the republican ticket for the office of county treasurer, subject to the decision of the republican voters at the August 15, 1911, primaries.

L. B. Egenberger.

For County Treasurer.

I hereby announce my candidacy for the nomination on the republican ticket for the office of county treasurer, subject to the decision of the voters at the primaries to be held August 15 next.

Charles Warner.

For Commissioner.

We are authorized to announce C. M. Seybert of Louisville as a candidate for commissioner from the Second district, subject to the will of the democratic voters at the primary election in August.

For Commissioner.

I hereby announce myself as a candidate on the republican ticket for the nomination for the office of county commissioner of the Second Commissioner district, subject to the decision of the voters at the coming primary election.

C. E. Heebner.

For County Judge.

I take this method of informing the voters of Cass county that I am a candidate for the nomination to the office of county judge on the republican ticket, subject to the will of the voters at the primaries August 15.

Wm. Delles Dernier.

For District Clerk.

I hereby announce my candidacy for the nomination of district clerk on the republican ticket, subject to the will of the voters of Cass county at the primaries to be held on August 15.

James Robertson.

For Clerk of the District Court.

I hereby announce myself a candidate for the office of Clerk of the District Court, subject to

the will of the republican voters, expressed at the primary August 15, 1911.

J. E. Douglass.

District Clerk.

At the solicitation of numerous friends, and after due consideration, I have finally decided to become a candidate for clerk of the district court, subject to the will of the democratic voters of Cass county at the primary on August 15, 1911, and solicit the support of my friends.

James T. Reynolds.

For Sheriff.

I hereby announce myself as a candidate for the nomination of the office of sheriff, subject to the decision of the voters at the coming primary. I ask them to place me in nomination on the democratic ticket.

D. C. Rhoden.

For Sheriff.

I hereby announce myself as a candidate for the nomination for the office of sheriff of Cass county, Nebraska, subject to the decision of the voters at the coming primary election. I ask the voters to place me in nomination on the democratic ticket.

G. P. Barton, Union, Neb.

False Representation.

Plattsmouth, Neb., July 14, 1911. To the Public:

Certain representatives of other makes of gasoline engines have spread abroad in this vicinity many falsehoods and misrepresentations as to "The Chopie Gasoline Engine," and "The Gasoline Engine company." Therefore, we, the undersigned Board of Directors of the Plattsmouth Commercial club, hereby inform the public that "The Chopie Gasoline Engine Company" is permanently located here. "The Chopie" gasoline engines are guaranteed in workmanship, material and horsepower rating. If it is not as represented your money will be refunded by the company. We have no hesitancy in giving "The Chopie" gasoline engine our full and best endorsement.

T. H. Pollock, President.

J. P. Falter, Vice President.

E. H. Wescott, Secretary.

R. F. Patterson, Treasurer.

C. C. Parmele.

E. A. Wurl.

Philip Thierolf.

H. A. Schneider.

J. H. McMacken.

A. S. Tidd.

Board of Directors.

7-14-3td-4tw.

Mr. John Beckman and wife and children of near Murray were in the city today on a business mission.



The Best Flour in the Market. Sold by all Leading Dealers



"I'M NOT YOUR MOTHER AT ALL."

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