

# ane Cable

By **George Barr McCutcheon**  
Author of "Beverly of Graustark," Etc.

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(Continued.)

He was, in truth, one who had asked him to do with the money as he saw fit. He had no idea of the value of the money, but he had no objection to giving up the money. His salary was managed to save for a rainy day. He had no other income. He had no other resources. He had no other means of support. He had no other way of life. He had no other hope. He had no other dream. He had no other goal. He had no other purpose. He had no other meaning. He had no other value. He had no other worth. He had no other honor. He had no other glory. He had no other fame. He had no other power. He had no other influence. He had no other authority. He had no other jurisdiction. He had no other dominion. He had no other sovereignty. He had no other supremacy. He had no other pre-eminence. He had no other excellence. He had no other superiority. He had no other grandeur. He had no other magnificence. He had no other splendor. He had no other majesty. He had no other grandeur. He had no other magnificence. He had no other splendor. He had no other majesty.



## CHAPTER VII.

**JAMES BANSEMER** had not recklessly rushed into Mrs. Cable's presence with threats of exposure; but, on the contrary, he had calmly, craftily waited. It suited his purpose to let her wonder, dread and finally develop the trust that her secret was safe with him. Occasionally he had visited the Cable box in the theater, not infrequently he had dined with them in the downtown cafes and at the homes of mutual acquaintances, but this was the first time that James Bansemer had enjoyed the hospitality of Frances Cable's home. His son, on the best of terms with their daughter, was a frequent visitor there.

There was a rare bump of progressiveness in the character of Graydon Bansemer. He was good looking enough beyond doubt, and there was a vast degree of personal magnetism about him. It seemed but natural that he should readily establish himself as a friend and a favorite of the fair Miss Cable. For some time James Bansemer had watched his son's progress with the Cable family, not once allowing his personal interest to manifest itself. It was but a question of time until Mrs. Cable's suspense and anxiety would bring her to him one way or another. Every word that fell from the lips of his son regarding the Cables held his attention, and it was not long before he saw the family history as clearly as though it were an open book, and he knew far more than the open book revealed.

Frances Cable was not deluded by his silence and aloofness. But she was unable to devise means to circumvent him. Constant fear of his power to crush lurked near her day and night. Conscious of her weakness, but eager to have done with the strife, sometimes she longed for the enemy to advance. At first she distrusted and despised the son, but his very fairness battered down the barriers of prejudice, and real admiration succeeded. Her husband liked him immensely, and Jane was his ablest ally. David Cable regarded him as one of the brightest young men on the stock exchange and predicted that some day he would be an influential member of the great brokerage firm for which he now acted as confidential clerk. Mr. Clegg, the senior member of the firm of Clegg, Groll & Davidson, his employers, personally had recommended young Bansemer to Cable, and he was properly impressed.

Graydon's devotion to Jane did not go unnoticed. This very condition should have assured Mrs. Cable that James Bansemer had kept her secret zealously. There was nothing to indicate that the young man knew the story of the founding.

It was not until some weeks after the chance meeting in Hooley's theater that Mrs. Cable came into direct contact with James Bansemer's designs. She had met him at two or three formal affairs, but their conversations had been of the most conventional character. On the other hand, her husband had lunched and dined at the club with the lawyer. At first she dreaded the outcome of these meetings, but as Cable's attitude toward her remained unchanged she began to realize that Bansemer, whatever his purpose, was loyal.

They met at last quite informally at Mrs. Clegg's dinner, a small and congenial affair. When the men came into the drawing room after the cigars Mrs. Cable, with not a little trepidation, motioned to Mr. Bansemer to draw up his chair beside her. "I have been looking forward with pleasure to this opportunity, Mr. Bansemer," she said in a courteously accented way. "It has been so long in coming."

his words was quickly nullified by the smile with which she was almost instantly favored. "Twenty years, I believe—it certainly came very near being 'never,'" he went on, abruptly changing from harsh to the sweetest of tones. "No one could believe that you—you're simply wonderful!" and added pointedly, "But your daughter is even more beautiful, if such is possible, than her—her mother."

Apparently the innuendo passed unnoticed. In reality, it required all her courage to appear calm. "How very nice of you," she said softly. And looking him full in the face, "Her mother thanks you for the compliment."

It was a brave little speech. Such bravery would have softened a man of another mold—changed his purpose. Not so with Bansemer. A sinister gleam came into his eyes, and his attack became more brutally direct.

"But the husband—has he never mistreated?"

The blow told, though her reply was given with rippling laughter and for the benefit of any chance listeners. "For shame, Mr. Bansemer!" she cried lightly. "After flatterer me so delightfully you're surely not going to spoil it all?"

Despite his growing annoyance, admiration shone clearly from Bansemer's eyes. His memory carried him back some twenty years to the scene in his office. Was it possible, he was thinking, that the charming woman before him exercising so cleverly all the arts of society, as if born to the purple, and the light hearted, frivolous little wife of the Central's engineer were one and the same person? The metamorphosis seemed incredible.

Unwittingly his manner lost some of its aggressiveness, and the woman, perceiving the altered conditions, quick to take advantage, resolved to learn if possible his intentions. Presently, going right to the point, she asked: "Is that extraordinary looking creature you had in your office still with you, Mr. Bansemer?"

"Extraordinary!" He laughed loudly. "He is certainly that and more. Indeed, the English language does not supply us with an adjective that adequately describes the man."

The people nearest to them by this time had moved away to another part of the large drawing room. Practically the couple were by themselves. She had been thinking for a moment, reasoning with a woman's logic that it was always well to know one's enemy. When she next spoke it was almost in a whisper.

"How much does that horrible man know?"

"He is not supposed to know anything," and then, with an enigmatical smile, promptly admitted, "However, I'm afraid that he does."

"You have told him? And yet you promised nobody should know. How could?"

"My dear Mrs. Cable, he was not told. If he has found out I could not prevent his discovering the truth through his own efforts," he interrupted in a tone more assuaging than convincing to her, and then, hitching his chair closer and lowering his voice a note, he continued: "The papers had to be taken out. But you must not worry about him. You can depend on me."

pride for the clean, vigorous manhood of his son awaiting to receive welcome from the adorable Jane; the other, long since conscious of the splendid beauty of his daughter, mentally declaring that she never had appeared so well as when standing beside this gallant figure.

Other guests arrived before Mrs. Cable made her appearance in the drawing room.



She was in imminent danger of a complete breakdown.

ing room. She had taken more time than usual with her toilet. It was impossible for her to hide the fact that the strain was telling on her perceptibly. The face that looked back into her eyes from the mirror on her dressing table was not the fresh, warm one that had needed so little care a few short months before. There was a heaviness about the eyes, and there were strange, persistent lines gathering under the soft, white tissues of her skin. But when she at last stepped into the presence of her guests, with ample apologies for her tardiness, she was the picture of life and nerve. So much for the excellent resources of her will.

Bansemer was the last to present himself for her welcome, lingering in the background until the others had passed. "I'm so glad you could come. Indeed, it's a pleasure to—" She spoke clearly and distinctly as she extended her hand, but as she looked squarely into his eyes she thought him the ugliest man she ever had seen. Every other woman in the party was saying to herself that James Bansemer was strikingly handsome.

"Most pleasures come late in life to some of us," he returned gallantly, and even Graydon Bansemer wished that he could have said it.

"Your father is a perfect dear," Jane said to him softly. "It was not what he said just then that pleased me, but what he left unsaid."

"Father's no end of a good fellow, Jane. I'm glad you admire him."

"You are not a bit like him," she said reflectively.

"Thanks," he exclaimed. "You are not very flattering."

"But you are a different sort of a good fellow; that's what I mean. Don't be absurd," she cried in some little confusion.

"I'm like my mother, they say, though I don't remember her at all."

"Oh, how terrible it must be never to have known one's mother!" said she tenderly.

"Or one's father," added James Bansemer, who was passing at that instant with Mrs. Cable. "Please include the father, Miss Cable," he pleaded, with mock seriousness. Turning to Mrs. Cable, who had stopped beside him, he added, "You, the most charming of mothers, will defend the father's, won't you?"

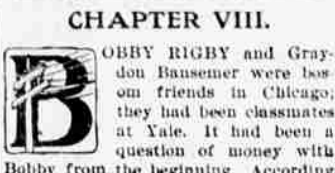
"With all my heart," she answered so steadily that he was surprised.

"I will include the father, Mr. Bansemer," said Jane. "If it is guaranteed that he possibly could be as nice and dear as one's mother. In that case I think it would be, oh, dreadfully terrible never to have known him."

"And to think, Miss Cable, of the unfortunates who have known neither father nor mother," said Bansemer senior, slowly, relentlessly. "How much they have missed of life and love!"

truly and knowingly when he saw that he had been out of cleverly from the Cables.

"Tomorrow night, then, Jane?" said Graydon at parting. No one was near enough to catch the tender eagerness in his voice nor to see the happy flush in her cheek as she called after him: "Tomorrow night!"



## CHAPTER VIII.

**BOBBY RIGBY** and Graydon Bansemer were bosom friends in Chicago; they had been classmates at Yale. It had been a question of money with Bobby from the beginning. According to his own admission, his money was a source of great annoyance to him. He was not out of debt but once and then before he fully realized it. So unusual was the condition that he could not sleep. The first thing he did in the morning was to borrow right and left for fear another attack of insomnia might interfere with his training for the football eleven.

Robertson Ray Rigby, immortalized as Bobby, had gone in for athletics, where he learned to think and act quickly. He was called one of the lightest but headiest quarterbacks in the east. No gridiron idol ever escaped his "Jimmy" or "Tippy" or "Pop" or "Johnny." When finally he hung out his shingle in Chicago—"Robertson R. Rigby, Attorney at Law"—he lost his identity even among his classmates. It was weeks before the fact became generally known that it was Bobby who waited for clients behind the deceptive shingle.

The indulgent aunt who had supplied him with funds in college was rich in business blocks and apartment buildings, and now Mr. Robertson R. Rigby was her man of affairs. When he went in for business, the old push of the football field did not desert him. He was very much alive and very vigorous, and it did not take him long to "learn the signals."

With his aunt's unflinching prosperity, his own ready wit and unbridled versatility he was not long in establishing himself safely in his profession and in society. Everybody liked him, though no one took him seriously except when they came to transact business with him. Then the wittiness of the drawing room turned into shrewdness as it crossed the office threshold.

The day after the Cable dinner Bobby yawned and stretched through his morning mail. He had slept but little the night before, and all on account of a certain, or rather uncertain, Miss Clegg. That petite and aggravating young woman had been especially exasperating at the Cable dinner. Mr. Rigby, superbly confident of his standing with her, encountered difficulties which put him very much out of temper. For the first time there was an apparent rift in her constancy. Never before had she shown such signs of fluctuating. He could not understand it—in fact, he dared not understand it. "She was a most annoying young person," said Mr. Rigby to himself wrathfully more than once after he went to bed that night. Anyhow, he could not see what there was about Howard Medford for my girl to countenance, much less to admire. Mr. Medford certainly had ruined the Cable dinner party for Mr. Rigby, and he was full of resentment.

"Miss Keating," called Mr. Rigby for the third time, "may I interrupt your conversation with Mr. Deever long enough to ask a question that has been on my mind for twenty minutes?"

Mr. Deever was the raw young gentleman who had law in the office of Judge Smith next door. Bobby maintained that if he read law at all it was at night, for he was too busy with other occupations during the day.

Miss Keating, startled, turned round about promptly. "Yes, sir," at last came from the pert young woman near the window.

"I guess I'll be going," said Mr. Deever resentfully, rising slowly from the side of her desk on which he had been lounging.

"Wait a minute, Eddie," protested Miss Keating. "What's your hurry?" And then she almost snapped out, "What is it, Mr. Rigby?"

"I merely wanted to ask if you have sufficient time to let me dictate a few short letters that ought to go out today," said Bobby sarcastically. And then added with mock apology: "Don't move, Mr. Deever. If you're not in Miss Keating's way, you're certainly not in mine."

dent to drive out even the Redguard thoughts concerning one Miss Keating. For the life of him Bobby Rigby could not immediately frame a reply to the startling missive. Eddie Deever stirred restlessly on the window ledge.

"Don't hurry, Eddie!" called Miss Keating distinctly and insinuatingly. "Oh, I guess I'll be going," he called back, beginning to roll a cigarette. "I have some reading to do today." Mr. Deever was tall, awkward and homely and a lot of other things that would have discouraged a less self-satisfied "lady's man." Judge Smith said he was hopeless, but that he might do better after he was twenty-one.

"What are you reading now, Eddie?" asked Miss Keating, complacently eyeing Mr. Rigby. "Haldes?"

"Law, you idiot!" said Eddie scornfully, going out of the door.

"Oh! Well, the law is never in a hurry, don't you know? It's like justice—the slowest thing in town!" she called after him as his footsteps died away.

"Ready?" said Bobby, resolutely. "Take this, please." And slowly and carefully he proceeded to dictate: Mr. Denis Harbert, New York: Dear Denis—I cannot tell you how much your letter surprised me. What you say seems prosperous. There must be a mistake. It cannot be this man. I know him quite well, and he seems as straight as a string and a gentleman too. His son you know as well as I. There isn't a better fellow in the world. Mr. R. has a fairly good business here. His transactions open and aboveboard. I'm sure I have never heard a word said against him or his methods. You are mistaken; that's all there is about it.

You might investigate a little further and, assuring yourself, do all in your power to check such stories as you relate. Of course I'll do as you suggest, but I'm positive I can find nothing discreditable in his dealings here. Keep me posted on everything. As ever, yours.

(Continued Next Friday.)

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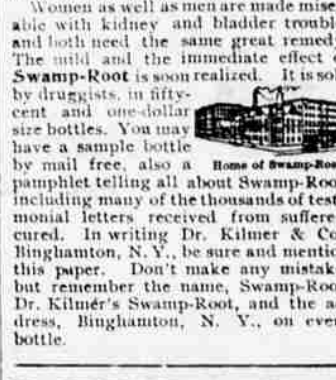
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