Jane Cable

...By...

GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON,

Author of "Beverly of Graustark," Etc.

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CHAPTER IX—(Continued.)

"Then I may have her?" he cried. She looked up at her husband, and he nodded his head.

"Our little girl," he murmured. It all came back to her like a flash. Her deception, her imposition, her years of stealth—and she shuddered. Her hand trembled, and her eyes grew wide with repugnance as they turned again upon Graydon Bansemer. Both men drew back in amazement.

"Oh, no; it cannot, cannot be!" she moaned, without taking her eyes from Graydon's face. In the same instant she recovered herself and craved his pardon. "I am distressed—it is so hard to give her up, Graydon," she panted, smiling again. The thought had come suddenly to her that James Bansemer had a very strong purpose in letting his son marry Jane Cable. She never had ceased to believe that Bansemer knew the parents of the child she had adopted. It had dawned upon her in the flash of that moment that the marriage might mean a great deal to this calculating father. "David, won't you leave us for a few minutes? There is something I want to say to Graydon."

David Cable hesitated for an instant and then slowly left the room, closing the door behind him. He was strangely puzzled over that momentary exposition of emotion on the part of his wife. He was a man of the world, and he knew its vices from the dregs up, but it was many days before the startling suspicion struck in to explain her uncalled for display of feeling. It did not strike in until after he noticed that James Bansemer was paying marked attention to his wife.

Left alone with Graydon, Mrs. Cable nervously hurried to the point. She was determined to satisfy herself that the son did not share her secret with his father.

"Does your father know that you want to marry Jane?" she asked.

"Of course—er—I mean he suspects, Mrs. Cable. He has teased me not a little, you know. I'm going to tell him tonight."

"He has not known Jane very long, you know."

"Long enough to admire her above all others. He has often told me that she is the finest girl he's ever met. Oh, I'm sure father will be pleased, Mrs. Cable."

"I met your father in New York, of course—years ago. I presume he has told you."

"I think not. Oh, yes; I believe he did tell me after we met you at Hooley's that night. He had never seen Mr. Cable."

"Nor Jane, I dare say."

"Oh, no! I knew Jane long before dad ever laid eyes on her." The look in his eyes satisfied her over all that he knew nothing more.

"You love her enough to sacrifice anything on earth for her?" she asked suddenly.

"Yes, Mrs. Cable," he answered simply.

"You would renounce all else in the world for her sake?"

"I believe that's part of the service," he said, with a smile. "Jane is worth all of that and more. She shall be first in my heart, in my mind, for all time, if that is what you mean, Mrs. Cable. Believe me, I mean that."

"Mr. Bansemer says that you are like your mother," she mused wistfully.

"That's why he loves me, he also says. I'm sorry I'm not like father," he said earnestly. "He's great!" She turned her face away so that he might not see the look in her eyes. "I think Jane is like"— He paused in confusion. "Like her father," he concluded. She arose abruptly and took his hand in hers.

"Go to her, Graydon," she said. "Tell her that Mr. Cable and I want you to be our son. Good night and God bless you." She preceded him to the stairway and again shook hands with him. David Cable was ascending.

"Graydon," said the latter, pausing halfway up as the other came down, "you were ready to congratulate me in advance on the prospect of becoming president of the P., L. and A. Do you know that I was once an ordinary fireman?"

"Certainly, Mr. Cable. The rise of David Cable is known to every one."

"That's all. I just wanted to be sure. Jane was not born with a silver spoon, you know."

"And yet she is Jane Cable," said the young man proudly. Then he hurried on down to the expectant, throbbing Jane.

Frances Cable sat at her escritoire for an hour, her brain working with feverish energy. She was seeking out the right step to take in advance of James Bansemer. Her husband sat alone in his den and smoked long after she had taken her step and retired to rest, but not to sleep. On her desk lay half a dozen invitations, two of them from the exclusive set to whose inner circles her ambitious, vigorous aspirations were forcing her. She pushed them aside and with narrowed eyes wrote to James Bansemer—wrote the note of the diplomat who seeks to forestall:

"Dear Mr. Bansemer—Doubtless Graydon will have told you his good news before this reaches you, but Mr. Cable and I feel that we cannot permit the hour to pass without assuring you of our own happiness and of our complete approval. Will you dine with us this evening—en famille—at seven-thirty. FRANCES CABLE."

David Cable read the note and sent it early the next morning by special messenger to James Bansemer. The engagement of Jane Cable and Graydon Bansemer was announced in the evening papers.

CHAPTER X.

THE offices of James Bansemer were two floors above those of Robertson Ray Rigby in the U—— building. The morning after Graydon Bansemer's important visit to the home of the Cables, Eddie Deever lounged into Rigby's presence. He seemed relieved to find that the stenographer was ill and would not be down that day. The lanky youngster studiously inspected the array of law books in the cases for some time, occasionally casting a sly glance at Bobby. At last he ventured a remark somewhat out of the ordinary—for him:

"That old man up in Bansemer's office gets on my nerves," said he, settling his long frame in a chair and breaking in upon Rigby's attention so suddenly that the lawyer was startled into a quick look of interest.

"Old Droom? What do you know about him?"

"Nothing in particular, of course. Only he sort of jars me when he talks." Rigby saw that the young man had something on his mind.

"I did not know that you were personal friends," ventured Rigby.

"Friends!" snorted Eddie. "Holy mackerel! He scares the life out of me. I know him in a business way, that's all. He came down here three weeks ago and borrowed some books for Bansemer. I had to go up and get 'em yesterday. He told me to sit down while he looked up the books. I was there half an hour, and he talked all the time. By jing! He makes your blood run cold. He said he had set aside in his will the sum of a hundred dollars to build a church for the honest man. 'That will be a pretty small church,' says I. 'It will be a small congregation, my son,' says he. 'What few real honest men we have will hesitate to attend for fear of being ostracised by society.' 'Gee whiz, Mr. Droom, that's pretty hard on society!' says I, laughing. 'Oh, for that matter, I have already delivered my eulogy on society,' says he. 'But it ain't dead,' says I. 'Oh, yes. It's so rotten it must surely be dead,' says he in the nastiest way I ever heard. He's a fearful old man, Mr. Rigby. He made a mean remark about that Mrs. David Cable."

"What sort of business does Mr. Bansemer handle?"

"What did he say?" quickly demanded Bobby.

"He said he'd been reading in the papers about how she was breaking into society. 'I knew her in New York years ago,' says he. 'She wasn't fashionable then. Now she's so swell that she'll soon be asking Cable to build a mansion at Rose Lawn cemetery, because all of the fashionables go there.' Pretty raw, eh, Mr. Rigby?"

"Oh, he's an old blatherskite, Eddie. They talk that way when they get old and grouchy. So he knew Mrs. Cable in New York, eh? What else did he say about her?"

"Nothing much. Oh, yes, he did say—in that nasty way of his—that he saw her on the street the other day chatting with one of the richest swells in Chicago. He didn't say who he was, except that he was the man who once made his wife sit up all night in the day coach while he slept in the only berth to be had on the train. Do you know who that could be?"

"I'm afraid Droom was romancing," said Bobby, with a smile.

"Say, Mr. Rigby," said Eddie earnestly, "what sort of business does Mr. Bansemer handle?" Rigby had difficulty in controlling his expression. "I was wondering, because while I was there yesterday a girl I know came out of the back room where she had been talking to Bansemer. She's no good."

"Very likely she was consulting him about something," said Rigby quietly.

"She soaked a friend of mine for a thousand when she was singing in the chorus in one of the theaters here."

"Do you know her well?"

"I—er—did see something of her at one time. Say, don't mention it to Rosie, will you? She's not strong for chorus girls," said Eddie anxiously. "A few days ago I saw a woman come out of his office heavily veiled. She was crying, because I could hear the sobs. I don't go much on Bansemer, Mr. Rigby. Darn him, he called me a pup one day when I took a message up for Judge Smith."

"See here, Eddie," said Rigby, leaning forward suddenly, "I've heard two or three queer things about Bansemer. I want you to tell me all you hear from Droom and all that you see. Don't you think you could cultivate Droom's acquaintance a bit? Keep this very quiet—not a word to anybody. It may mean something in the end."

"Gee whiz!" murmured Eddie, his eyes wide with interest. From that day on he and Bobby Rigby were allies—even conspirators.

Later in the day Rigby had a telephone message from Graydon Bansemer suggesting that they lunch together. All he would say over the wire was that he would some day soon expect Rigby to perform a happy service for him. Bobby understood and was troubled. He suspected that Graydon had asked Jane Cable to marry him and that she had consented. He loved Graydon Bansemer, but for the first time in their acquaintance he found himself wondering if the son were not playing into the father's hands in this most desirable matrimonial venture. With a shudder of repugnance he put the thought from him, loyal to that good friend and comrade.

James Bansemer came into his office late that morning. He had not seen Graydon the night before, but at breakfast the young man announced his good fortune and asked for his blessing. To his son's surprise the elder man did not at once express his approval. For a long time he sat silent and preoccupied to all appearance, narrowly studying his son's face until the young man was constrained to laugh in his nervousness.

"You love her, you are very sure?" asked the father at last.

"Better than my life," cried Graydon warmly.

"She has good blood in her," said Bansemer senior slowly, almost absently.

"I should say so. Her father is a wonderful man."

"Yes, I dare say," agreed the other, without taking his eyes from the son's face.

"But you don't say whether you approve or disapprove," complained Graydon.

"Would it change matters if I disapproved?"

"Not in the least, father. I love her. I'd hate to displease you in"—

"Then, of course, I approve," said the other, with his warmest smile. "Jane is a beauty, and—I am proud of her."

"She is too good for me," lamented Graydon happily.

"I can't very well contradict her future husband," said the lawyer. There was a hungry look in his eyes as he glanced from time to time at the face of the boy who had his mother's unforgettable eyes.

A messenger brought Mrs. Cable's note to Bansemer soon after his arrival at the office. He and Elias Droom were in the back office when the boy came. They had been discussing the contents of a letter that came in the early mail. The lawyer accepted the note and dismissed the boy with the curt remark that he would telephone an answer in person.

"It looks to me as though this is going to be a rather ticklish affair," Droom resumed after the boy had closed the outer door behind him. Bansemer's mind was on Mrs. Cable's note. A queer smile hung on his lips.

"I'm rather touched by her astuteness," he said. "She's cleverer than I thought. Oh," suddenly remembering that it was not Mrs. Cable's letter they were discussing, "you always see the dreary side of things, Elias!"

"I haven't forgotten New York," said the clerk dryly.

"Ah, but Chicago isn't New York, you know."

"Well, I was just reminding you. This man is going to fight back, that is plain."

"That's what Mrs. Norwood promised to do also, Elias. But she was like a lamb in the end."

"I wouldn't be very proud of that affair if I were you."

"See here, Droom, you're getting a trifle too familiar of late. I don't like it," said Bansemer sharply.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Bansemer," said Droom, scraping his foot across the floor and looking straight past his master's head. "It's for the good of the cause, that's all. It wouldn't do on Graydon's account for you to be driven from Chicago at this time. You see, he thinks you are beyond reproach."

"Curse your impudence, Droom! I won't be spoken to in that way," exclaimed Bansemer, white with sudden rage and loathing.

"Am I to expect my discharge, sir?" asked Droom, rubbing his hands nervously, but looking squarely into Bansemer's eyes for the first time in their acquaintance. Bansemer glared back for an instant and then shrugged his shoulders, with a nervous laugh.

"We shan't quarrel, Elias," he said. "Speaking of Graydon, he is to be married before long."

"I trust he is to do well, sir. Graydon is a fine boy."

"He is to marry David Cable's daughter."

"Indeed! I did not know that David Cable had a daughter."

"You know whom I mean—Jane Cable." He turned rather restlessly, conscious that Droom's eyes were following him to the window. He glanced again at Mrs. Cable's note and waited.

"I suppose you are pleased," said Droom after a long pause.

"Certainly! Jane is a splendid girl. She's beautiful, accomplished and—well, she's thoroughbred," said Bansemer steadily, turning to face the old man.

"It is not necessary to remind you that her parents are unknown," said Droom.

"Still," said Bansemer, and he sat down and leaned forward eagerly, "she has good blood from both sides."

"Yes—the so called best."

"You speak as if you know the truth."

"I think—yes, I'm sure I know. I have known for twenty years, Mr. Bansemer. I had the same means as you of finding out whose child she was."

"That's more than Mrs. Cable knows."

"She did not take the trouble to investigate. It's too late now."

"I don't believe you really know the names of her father and mother," said Bansemer shrewdly. "You are trying to trick me into telling you what I do know."

"There are portraits of her ancestors hanging in Fifth avenue," said Droom promptly. "Here," and he picked up a pencil, "I'll write the initials of her parents. You do the same, and we'll see that they tally." He quickly scratched four letters on a pad of paper. Bansemer hesitated and then slowly wrote the initials on the back of an envelope. Without a word they exchanged the papers. After a moment they both smiled in relief. Neither had been tricked. The initials were identical.

"I imagine the ancestors hanging in Fifth avenue would be amazed if they knew the story of Jane," said Droom, with a chuckle.

"I doubt it, Droom. Ancestors have stories, too, and they hide them."

"By the way, now that your son is to marry her, I'd like to know just what your game is."

Bansemer turned on him like a tiger, his steely eyes blazing.

"Game? There is no game. Listen to me, Droom. We'll settle this now. I'm a bad man, but I've tried to be a good father. People have called me heartless. So be it. But I love that boy of mine. What little heart I have belongs to him. There can be no game where he is concerned. Some day perhaps he'll find out the kind of a man I've been to others, but can always remember that I was fair and honest with him. He'll despise my methods, and he'll spurn my money, but he'll have to love me. Jane Cable is not the girl I would have chosen for him, but she is good and true, and he loves her."

For the first time in his life Elias Droom shrank beneath the eyes of his master. He hated James Bansemer from the bottom of his wretched soul, but he could not but feel at this moment a touch of admiration.

Through all the years of their association Elias Droom had hated Bansemer because he was qualified to be the master, because he was successful and forceful, because he had loved and been loved, because they had been classmates, but not equals. In the bitterness of his heart he had lain awake on countless nights praying—but not to his God—that the time would come when he could stand ascendant over this steely master. Only his unswerving loyalty to a duty once assumed kept him from crushing Bansemer with exposure years before. But Droom was not a traitor. He remained standing, lifting his eyes after a brief, shifting study of his bony hands.

"You have nothing to fear from me," he said. "Your boy is the only being in the world that I care for. He hates me. Everybody hates me. But it doesn't matter. I asked what your game was because we know Jane's father and mother. That's all. Mrs. David Cable, I presume, can be preyed upon with safety."

"Mrs. Cable has much to lose," significantly.

"And how much to pay?" with a meaning look.

"That is her affair, Droom."

"I wouldn't press her too hard," cautioned Droom. "She's a woman."

"Never fear. I'm going there for dinner tonight. It's a family affair. By the way, here's a letter from a distinguished political leader. He suggests that I act on the city central committee for the coming year."

They heard some one at the outer door at that moment, and Droom glided forth from the inner room to greet the visitor. It was Eddie Deever.

"Say, Mr. Droom, do you suppose Mr. Bansemer would object if I sat down for a few minutes to look over his books on 'Famous Crimes In History?' Old Smith hasn't got 'em."

"Go ahead," said Droom, taking his seat at the desk.

CHAPTER XI.

SEVERAL weeks later Eddie Deever announced quite breathlessly to Rigby that he was going to visit Droom in his Wells street rooms. The two had found a joint affinity in Napoleon, although it became necessary for the law student to sit up late at night, neglecting other literature, in order to established anything like an adequate acquaintance with the lamented Corsican.

Rigby was now morally certain that James Bansemer was all that Harbert had painted. To his surprise, however, the man was not openly suspected by other members of the bar. He had been accepted as a man of power and ability. Certainly he was too clever to expose himself and too wary to leave peepholes for others engaged in that business. Rigby was debating the wisdom of going to Bansemer with his accusations and the secret advice to leave the city before anything happened that might throw shame upon Graydon. The courage to do the thing alone was lacking.

Graydon was full of his happiness. He had asked Rigby to act as his "best man" in September, and Bobby had promised. On occasions when the two young men discussed the coming event with Jane and Miss Clegg, Rigby's preoccupied air was strangely in contrast with the animation of the others. Graydon accused his friend and advised him to go to French Lick. Far from that, the old quarterback was gradually preparing himself to go to James Bansemer. To himself he was saying as he put off the disagreeable task from day to day: "He'll kick me out of the office, and that's all the reward I'll get for my pains. Graydon will hate me in the end."

(Continued Next Friday.)

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Notice to Contractors and Property Owners.

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the terms of Ordinance No. 784, passed by the common council of the City of Eugene, August 31st, 1908, bids will be received by the Street Committee of the Council in the office of the City Recorder of the City of Eugene until 7:30 o'clock p. m., on Monday, September 14th, 1908, for the improvement of Twelfth street between Lawrence and Jefferson streets, in the City of Eugene, by grading and graveling the same in accordance with the plans and specifications therefor now on file in the office of the City Recorder.

Bidders are required to state the price in detail in accordance with the specifications. Separate contracts will be awarded to the lowest bidder for the grading and for the graveling of said street. The earthwork to be completed within thirty days and the graveling within forty-five days from the date of letting the contracts therefor.

The work to be done under the supervision of the Street Committee and to be approved by them. An approved bond will be required for the faithful performance of the contract. A certified check in a sum equal to five per cent of the amount bid, payable to J. D. Matlock, Mayor, is required to accompany each bid. The Street Committee reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

By order of the Common Council.

R. S. BRYSON, Act'g Recorder.

Dated at Eugene, Oregon, Sept. 3rd, 1908.

Notice to Contractors and Property Owners.

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the terms of Ordinance No. 783, passed by the Common Council of the City of Eugene, August 31st, 1908, bids will be received by the Street Committee of the Council in the office of the City Recorder of the City of Eugene until 7:30 o'clock p. m., on Monday, September 14th, 1908, for the improvement of West Eleventh street, from Jefferson street to the West Side of Van Buren street in the City of Eugene, by grading and graveling the said street in accordance with the plans and specifications therefor now on file in the office of the City Recorder.

Bidders are required to state the price in detail, in accordance with the specifications. Separate contracts will be awarded to the lowest bidder for the grading and for the graveling of said street. The earthwork shall be completed within thirty days and the graveling within sixty days from the date of letting the contracts therefor.

The work to be done under the supervision of the street committee, and to be approved by them. An approved bond will be required to be furnished by each contractor for the faithful performance of the contract. A certified check in a sum equal to five per cent of the amount bid, payable to J. D. Matlock, Mayor, is required to accompany each bid. The Street Committee reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

By order of the Common Council.

R. S. BRYSON, Act'g Recorder.

Dated at Eugene, Oregon, September 3rd, 1908.

Notice to Creditors.

Notice is hereby given that, by an order of the County Court of Lane County, Oregon, duly made and entered of record on the 2nd day of September, 1908, the undersigned was duly appointed administrator of the estate of Luella A. Peabody, deceased. All persons having claims against said estate are hereby notified to present them with the proper vouchers to the undersigned at the law office of Woodcock & Potter, in Eugene, Oregon, within six months from the date of this notice.

Dated 1908 3rd day of September, 1908.

RICHARD EASTON,
Administrator of the Estate of Luella A. Peabody, deceased.
Woodcock & Potter, attorneys for Estate.

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS AND PROPERTY

Notice is hereby given ant to the terms of 778, passed by the August 13th, 1908, Ordinance no. 782, common council of the gene August 31st, bids ceived by the street council in the office of corder of the city of 7:30 o'clock p. m. on tember 14th, 1908, for ment of Eighth street side of Charnelton street east line of Monroe street of Eugene by the ment, curbing along said street and by the street by paving the said points with or other hard surface accordance with plans tions therefor now on fice of the city recorder.

Bidders are required price in detail in accordance specifications, and on pared by the city engineer.

Separate contracts will to the lowest bidder for tion of said curbing; and for the drainage improvement shall be ninety days from the date the contract therefor.

The work to be done pervision of the street to be approved by them proved bond will be required contractor for the faithful ance of the contract. check in a sum equal cent of the amount bid, J. D. Matlock, Mayor, accompany each bid. committee reserves the ject any and all bids.

By order of the council.

R. S. B.

Acting

Dated September 3rd

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS AND PROPERTY

Notice is hereby given ant to the terms of 786, passed by the of the city of Eugene 1908, bids will be street committee of the the office of the city city of Eugene, until m. m. on Monday, 1908, for the improvement enth street from Oak street in the city of construction of sewers both sides of said by paving the said points with or other hard surface accordance with plans tions therefor now on fice of the city recorder.

Bidders are required price in detail in accordance specifications, and on pared by the city engineer.

Separate contracts will to the lowest bidder for tion of said curbing; and for the drainage improvement shall be ninety days from the date the contract therefor.

The work to be done pervision of the street to be approved by them proved bond will be required contractor for the faithful ance of the contract. check in a sum equal cent of the amount bid, J. D. Matlock, Mayor, accompany each bid. committee reserves the ject any and all bids.

By order of the council.

R. S. B.

Acting

Dated at Eugene, Oregon, September 2d, 1908.

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