

Jane Cable

... By ...
GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON,
Author of "Beverly of Graustark," Etc.

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CHAPTER XXVI—Continued

"That's good of you, dear, but you forget your mother's statements and all that Rigby says—all that. Oh, I've gone over all of it, and I am convinced. I wonder what has become of him. He was afraid of—of—well, there was talk of an arrest before I left. I have not looked at a newspaper since I saw the headlines that awful morning. God, how they must have hurt you!"

"I, too, have not looked at a newspaper since then, Graydon," she said simply. He smiled wearily, and there was response in her eyes.

He took her hand in his, and they sat silently side by side on the bench for half an hour, their thoughts far away, but of one another.

"Graydon," she said at last, "are you going to remain in the army?"

"No; I am through with it. My discharge is to be recommended. I'm disabled."

"You will be as strong as ever, dear."

"Do you want me to stick to the army? I am only a private."

"You can do greater things out in the world. I know. You will be a great man if you don't lose heart, Graydon."



"Jane, this can't go on any longer."

"I can't be a soldier, dear, and support a wife on the pay I get," he said with a smile.

"You shouldn't marry."

"But I am going to marry," he said.

"I have decided to become a nurse. It is my intention to give my whole life to—"

CHAPTER XXVII

mother, and she forgot herself and said the same thing. They were quarrelling about it when I left the hotel. It was an awful far to father. For two cents I'd elope with Harry."

"It would be pretty difficult for an officer on duty to elope, don't you think?" asked Graydon, amused.

"Not if he loved the girl. He does too. But I haven't told you the worst. Mother says I am being absolutely spoiled out here in Manila, and she says flatly that she's going to take me back to the States. Isn't it awful?"

"Back to the fellow in New York?" smiled Jane encouragingly.

Ethel thought for a moment, and a dear little smile came into her troubled eyes.

"I hope he hasn't gone and fallen in love with some other girl," she said.

It was true, as Jane soon learned, that Mrs. Harbin had concluded to return to the United States with Ethel. Jane's aunt had grown immeasurably tired of Manila—and perhaps a little more tired of the colonel. It was she who aroused the colonel's antipathy to little Lieutenant Soper. She dwelt upon the dire misfortune that was possible if Ethel continued to bask in the society of "those young nineties." The colonel developed a towering rage and a great fear that Ethel might become fatally contaminated before she could be whisked off of the island. It was decided that Mrs. Harbin and Ethel should return to the United States soon after the first of March to take up their residence in New York city.

"Mother wants to be a soldier's widow—on parole," sniffed Ethel, almost audibly enough for her father's ears.

Mrs. Harbin at once informed Jane that she was expected to return with them. She demurred at first, purely for the sake of appearances, but in the end agreed to tender her resignation to the Red Cross society. The knowledge that Graydon Bansemmer's discharge was soon forthcoming and that he intended to return to America in the spring had more to do with this decision than she was willing to admit. She therefore announced her ambition to become a trained nurse and gave no heed to Mrs. Harbin's insinuating smiles.

Letters of late from Mrs. Cable had been urging her to return to Chicago.

David Cable was far from well, breaking fast, and he was wearing out his heart in silent longing for her return. He wrote to her himself that he expected to retire from active business early in the year and that his time and fortune from that day on would be devoted to his family. He held out attractive visions of travel, of residence abroad, of endless pleasure which they could enjoy together.

Jane had written to them that she would not live in Chicago—any place else in the world, she said—and they understood. There was no word of James Bansemmer in all these letters. She was always daughter to them, and they were father and mother.

Graydon Bansemmer one day received three letters, all from Chicago. He knew the handwriting on the envelope of each. Three men had written to him—his father, Elias Droom and Rigby. A dark scowl came over his face as he looked at the Rigby envelope. It was the first letter that he opened and read. Jane was sitting near by watching the expression on his face.

"It's from Rigby," he said as he finished.

"What does he say?" she asked anxiously.

"He says he is my devoted friend for life," replied Graydon bitterly. "I cannot forget, though, Jane. He is not the sort of friend I want."

"He thought it was for the best, Graydon."

"Yes, and he may have thought he was my friend too. This letter says as much. But I like an enemy better, dear. You know what to expect of an enemy at all times. Here's one from Elias Droom—old Elias." Droom scrawled a few words of cheer to the young soldier, urging him not to resent, but to come home at the end of his two years. He inclosed a letter from Mr. Clegg, in which that gentleman promised to put Graydon in charge of their New York office if he would take the place. This news sent his spirits bounding. Tears of a gratefulness he never expected to feel sprang to his eyes. Jane's happiness was a reflection of his own.

James Bansemmer's letter was not read aloud to Jane. When he had finished the perusal of the long epistle he folded it and stuck it away in his pocket. His eyes seemed a bit wistful and his face drawn, but there was no word to let her know what had been written by the man who had denounced her.

"He is well," was all he said. He did not tell her that his father had urged him to go into business in the Philippines, saying that he would provide ample means with which to begin and carry on any enterprise he cared to exploit. One paragraph cut Graydon to the quick:

"I'd advise you to steer clear of Chicago. If they don't kill you in the Philippines you're better off there. They have us here."

though compassionate expression in his eyes. He and Jane were ready to confront the customs officers.

"I wonder if he knows about his father," mused he. Jane caught her breath and looked at him with some thing like terror in her eyes. He abruptly changed the subject, deploring his lapse into the past from which they were trying to shield her.

The following morning Graydon received a note from Cable, a frank but carefully worded message, in which he was invited to take the trip east in the private car of the president of the Pacific, Lakes and Atlantic. Mrs. Cable joined her husband in the invitation. One of the sore spots in Graydon's conscience was healed by this exhibition of kindness. Moreover, Cable stated that his party would delay departure until Graydon's papers were passed upon and he was free from red tape restrictions.

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He went directly to the Palace hotel, where he knew the Cables were stopping. David Cable came down in response to his card. The two men shook hands, each eyeing the other inquiringly for an instant.

"I want you to understand, Graydon, that I am your friend. Nothing has altered my esteem for you."

"Thank you, Mr. Cable. I hardly expected it."

"I don't see why, my boy. But we'll let all that pass. Mrs. Cable wants to see you."

"Before we go any farther I want to make myself clear to you. I still hope to marry Jane. She says she cannot become my wife. You understand why, sir. I only want to tell you that her objections are not objections to me. She is Jane, and I love her, sir, because she is."

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"It doesn't matter, so far as I am concerned."

"I know, my boy. You'll never know how it hurt me to find that I had no daughter. It hurts her worse a thousandfold to learn that she has no mother. I trust it may not happen that you will lose her as a wife."

"If I really thought I couldn't win her, sir, it would ruin my ambition in life. She loves me, I'm sure."

"By the way, Clegg tells me he has offered you the New York office. It is a splendid chance for you. You will take it, of course."

"I expect to talk it over with Mr. Clegg when I get to Chicago."

"Come up to our apartments. Oh, pardon me, Graydon, I want to ask you if you have sufficient money to carry you through? I know the pay of a private is not great."

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"And then I did give something in Chicago, strange as it may seem," said Bansemmer, with a smile. "I have a few of your 5 per cents. I trust the road is all right."

The Cables left San Francisco on the following day, accompanied by the Harbins and Graydon Bansemmer. There was no mistaking the joy which lay under restraint in the faces and attitude of the Cables. David Cable had grown younger and less gray, it seemed, and his wife was glowing with a new and subdued happiness. Graydon, sitting with the excited Ethel, who was rejoicing in the prospect of New York and the other young man, studied the faces of the three people who sat at the other end of the coach.

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"You'll find I am right in the end," she said stubbornly.

"I can't bear the thought of your going out as a trained nurse, dear," protested Frances Cable. "There is no necessity. You can have the best of homes and in any place you like. Why waste your life in—"

"Waste, mother? It would be wasting my life if I did not find an occupation for it. I can't be idle. I can't exist forever in your love and devotion."

"Good Lord, child, don't be foolish!" exclaimed Cable. "That hurts me more than you think. Everything we have is yours."

"I'm sorry I said it, daddy. I did not mean it in that way. It isn't the money, you know, and it isn't the home, either. No; you must let me choose my own way of living the rest of my life. I came from a foundling hospital. A good and tender nurse found me there and gave me the happiest years of my life. I shall go back there and give the rest of my years to children who are less fortunate than I was. I want to help them, mother, just as you did—only it is different with me."

"You'll see it differently some day," said Mrs. Cable earnestly.

"I don't object to your helping the foundlings, Jane," said Cable, "but I don't see why you have to be a nurse to do it. Other women support such causes, and not as nurses, either. It's—"

"It's my way, daddy, that's all," she said firmly.

"Then why, in the name of heaven, were you so unkind as to keep that poor boy over there alive when he might have died and ended his misery? You nursed him back to life only to give him a wound that cannot be healed. You would ruin his life, Jane. Is it fair? I'm uncoth and hard in many ways—I had a hard, unkind beginning—but I really believe I've got more heart in me than you have."

"David!" exclaimed his wife. Jane looked at the exasperated man in surprise.

"Now, here's what I intend you to do: You owe me something for the love that I give to you; you owe Graydon something for keeping him from dying. If you want to go into the nursing business, all right. But I'm

going to demand some of your devotion for my own sake before that time comes. I've loved you all of your life."

"And I've loved you, daddy," she gasped.

"And I'm going to ask you to begin your nursing career by attending to me. I'm sick for want of your love. I'm giving up business for the sake of enjoying it unrestrained. Your mother and I expect it. We are going abroad for our health, and we are going to take you with us. Right now is where you begin your career as a nurse. You've got to begin by taking care of the love that is sick and miserable. We want it to live, my dear. Now, I want a direct decision—at once: Will you take charge of two patients on a long contemplated trip in search of love and rest—wages paid in advance?"

She looked at him, white faced and stunned. He was putting it before her fluently and in a new light. She saw what it was that he considered that she owed to them—the love of a daughter, after all.

An hour later she stood with Graydon on the rear platform of the car. He was trying to talk calmly of the country through which they were rushing, and she was looking pensively down the rails that slipped out behind them.

"We'll be in Chicago in three days," he remarked.

"Graydon, I have decided to go abroad for five or six months before starting upon my work. They want me so much, you see," she said, her voice a trifle uncertain.

"I wish I could have some power to persuade you," he said. Changing his tone to one of brisk interest, he went on. "It is right, dear. It will do you great good, and it will be a joy to them. I'll miss you."

"And I shall miss you, Graydon," she said, her eyes very solemn and wistful.

"Won't you—won't you give me the promise I want, Jane?" he asked eagerly. She placed her hand upon his and shook her head.

"Won't you be good to me, Graydon? Don't make it so hard for me. Please, please don't tell me again that you love me."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE spring floods delayed the eastern express, bringing the party to Chicago nearly a day late. The Cables and the Harbins went at once to the Annex, where David Cable had taken rooms. They had given up their north side home some months before, both he and his wife retiring into the seclusion that a great hotel can afford when necessary.

Graydon hurried off to his father's office, eager, yet half fearing, to meet the man who was responsible for the broken link in his life—this old year. He recalled as he drove across town that a full year had elapsed since he spent that unforgettable night in Elias Droom's uncanny home. Was he never to forget that night—that night when his soul seemed even more aquid than the home of the recluse?

All of his baggage except a suit case had been left at the station. He did not know what had become of his belongings in the former home of his father, nor, for that matter, did he care.

At the U— building he ventured a diffident greeting to the elevator boy, whom he remembered. The boy looked at him quizzically and nodded with customary aloofness. Graydon found himself hoping that he would not meet Bobby Rigby. He also wondered as the car shot up how his father had managed to escape from the meshes that were drawn about him on the eve of his departure. His chances had looked black and hopeless enough then, yet he still maintained the same old offices in the building. His name was on the directory board downstairs. Graydon's heart gave a quick bound with the thought that his father had proved the charges false after all.

Elias Droom was busy directing the labors of two abedolled men and a charwoman, all of whom were toiling as they had never toiled before. The woman was dusting law books, and the men were packing them away in boxes. The front room of the suit was in a state of devastation. A dozen boxes stood about the floor; rugs and furniture were huddled in the most remote corner awaiting the arrival of the "secondhand man"; the floor was littered with paper. Droom was directing operations with a broken umbrella. It seemed like a lash to the toilers.

"Now let's get through with this room," he was saying in his most imploring way. "The men will be here

the boxes at— I don't want 'em to wait. This back room stuff we'll put in the trunks. Look out there! Don't you see that nail?"

Eddie Deever, with his usual indolence, was seated upon the edge of the writing table in the corner, smoking his cigarette and commenting with rash freedom upon the efforts of the perspiring slaves.

"How long are you going to keep these things in the warehouse?" he asked of Droom.

"I'm not going to keep them there at all. They belong to Mr. Bansemmer. He'll take them out when he has the time."

"He's getting all the time he wants now. I guess," commented Eddie.

"Say, talking about time, I'll be twenty-one next Tuesday."

"Old enough to marry."

"I don't know about that. I'm getting pretty wise. Do you know, I've just found out how old Rosie Keating is. She's twenty-nine. Gee, it's funny how a fellow always gets stuck on a girl older than himself! Still, she's all right. I'm not saying a word against her. She wouldn't be twenty-nine if she could help it."

"I suppose it's off between you, then."

"I don't know about that either. We lunched at Rector's today. That don't look like it's off, does it? Four, six, five, including the tip. She don't look twenty-nine, does she?"

"I've never noticed her."

"Never! Well, holy mackerel! You must be blind then. She says she's seen you in the elevator a thousand times. Never noticed her? Gee?"

"I mean I've never noticed any one who looked less than twenty-nine. By the way, do you ever see Mr. Rigby? I believe she is in his office."

"I don't go to Rigby's any more," said Eddie, with sudden stiffness. "He's a cheap skate."

"I heard he threw you out of the office one day," with a dry cackle.

"He did not! We couldn't agree in certain things regarding the Bansemmer affair, that's all. I told him to go to the devil, or words to that effect."

(Continued Next Saturday.)



CHAPTER XXVII

ARLY in March a great transport sailed from Manila laden with sick and disabled soldiers—the lame, the healthless and the mad. It was not a merry shipload, although hundreds were rejoicing in the escape from the hardships of life in the islands. Graydon Bansemmer was among them, weak and distrustful of his own future, albeit a medal of honor and the prospect of an excellent position were ahead of him. His discharge was assured. He had served his country bravely, but well, and he was not loath to rest on his insignificant laurels and to respect the memory of the impulse which had driven him into service. In his heart he felt that time would make him as strong as ever, despite the ugly scar in his side. It was a question with him, however, whether time could revive the ambition that had been smothered during the first days of despair. He looked ahead with keen inquiry, speculating on the uncertain whirl of fortune's wheel.

Jane was obduracy itself in respect to his pleadings. A certain light in her eyes had at last brought conviction to his soul. He began to fear, with a mighty pain, that she would not retreat from the stand she had taken.

She went on board with Mrs. Harbin and Ethel. There were other wives on board who had found temporary release from irksome but voluntary enlistment. Jane's resignation from the Red Cross society deprived her of the privileges which would have permitted her to see much of Graydon. They were kept separated by the transport's regulations—he was a common soldier, she of the officers' mess. The restrictions were cruel and relentless. They saw but little of one another during the thirty days, but their thoughts were busy with the days to come. Graydon grew stronger and more confident as the ship forged nearer to the Golden Gate, Jane more wistful and resigned to the new purpose which was to give life another coloring, if possible. They were but one day out from San Francisco when he found the opportunity to converse with her as she passed through the quarters of the luckless ones.

"Jane, I want to ask you for an answer to my question," he whispered eagerly. "You must consent. Do you want to ruin both of our lives?"

"Why will you persist, Graydon? You know I cannot."

"You can. Consider me as well as yourself. I want you. Isn't that enough? You can't ask for more love than I will give. Tomorrow we'll be on shore. I have many things to do before I am liberty to go my way. Won't you wait for me? It won't be long. We can be married in San Francisco. Mr. and Mrs. Cable are to meet you. Tell them, dearest, that you want to go home with me. The home won't be in Chicago, but it will be home just the same."

"Dear Graydon, I am sorry, I am heartily, but I cannot, I dare not."

Graydon Bansemmer was a man as well as a lover. He gave utterance to a perfectly manlike expression, coming from the bottom of his tried soul:

"It's d—d nonsense, Jane!" He said it so feelingly that she smiled even as she shook her head and moved away. "I'll see you tomorrow on shore!" he called, repentant and anxious.

"Yes!"

The next day they landed. Graydon waved an anxious farewell to her as he was hurried off with the lame, the halt and the blind. He saw David Cable and his wife on the pier, and in spite of himself he could not repress an eager, half fearful glance through the crowd of faces. Although he did not expect his father to meet him, he dreaded the thought that he might be there, after all. To his surprise, as he stood waiting with his comrades he saw David Cable turn suddenly and after a moment's hesitation wave his hand to him, the utmost friendship in his now haggard face. His heart thumped joyously at this sign of amity. As the soldiers moved away Cable paused and looked after him, a grin

though compassionate expression in his eyes. He and Jane were ready to confront the customs officers.

"I wonder if he knows about his father," mused he. Jane caught her breath and looked at him with some thing like terror in her eyes. He abruptly changed the subject, deploring his lapse into the past from which they were trying to shield her.

The following morning Graydon received a note from Cable, a frank but carefully worded message, in which he was invited to take the trip east in the private car of the president of the Pacific, Lakes and Atlantic. Mrs. Cable joined her husband in the invitation. One of the sore spots in Graydon's conscience was healed by this exhibition of kindness. Moreover, Cable stated that his party would delay departure until Graydon's papers were passed upon and he was free from red tape restrictions.

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going to demand some of your devotion for my own sake before that time comes. I've loved you all of your life."

"And I've loved you, daddy," she gasped.

"And I'm going to ask you to begin your nursing career by attending to me. I'm sick for want of your love. I'm giving up business for the sake of enjoying it unrestrained. Your mother and I expect it. We are going abroad for our health, and we are going to take you with us. Right now is where you begin your career as a nurse. You've got to begin by taking care of the love that is sick and miserable. We want it to live, my dear. Now, I want a direct decision—at once: Will you take charge of two patients on a long contemplated trip in search of love and rest—wages paid in advance?"

She looked at him, white faced and stunned. He was putting it before her fluently and in a new light. She saw what it was that he considered that she owed to them—the love of a daughter, after all.

An hour later she stood with Graydon on the rear platform of the car. He was trying to talk calmly of the country through which they were rushing, and she was looking pensively down the rails that slipped out behind them.

"We'll be in Chicago in three days," he remarked.

"Graydon, I have decided to go abroad for five or six months before starting upon my work. They want me so much, you see," she said, her voice a trifle uncertain.

"I wish I could have some power to persuade you," he said. Changing his tone to one of brisk interest, he went on. "It is right, dear. It will do you great good, and it will be a joy to them. I'll miss you."

"And I shall miss you, Graydon," she said, her eyes very solemn and wistful.

"Won't you—won't you give me the promise I want, Jane?" he asked eagerly. She placed her hand upon his and shook her head.

"Won't you be good to me, Graydon? Don't make it so hard for me. Please, please don't tell me again that you love me."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE spring floods delayed the eastern express, bringing the party to Chicago nearly a day late. The Cables and the Harbins went at once to the Annex, where David Cable had taken rooms. They had given up their north side home some months before, both he and his wife retiring into the seclusion that a great hotel can afford when necessary.

Graydon hurried off to his father's office, eager, yet half fearing, to meet the man who was responsible for the broken link in his life—this old year. He recalled as he drove across town that a full year had elapsed since he spent that unforgettable night in Elias Droom's uncanny home. Was he never to forget that night—that night when his soul seemed even more aquid than the home of the recluse?

All of his baggage except a suit case had been left at the station. He did not know what had become of his belongings in the former home of his father, nor, for that matter, did he care.

At the U— building he ventured a diffident greeting to the elevator boy, whom he remembered. The boy looked at him quizzically and nodded with customary aloofness. Graydon found himself hoping that he would not meet Bobby Rigby. He also wondered as the car shot up how his father had managed to escape from the meshes that were drawn about him on the eve of his departure. His chances had looked black and hopeless enough then, yet he still maintained the same old offices in the building. His name was on the directory board downstairs. Graydon's heart gave a quick bound with the thought that his father had proved the charges false after all.

Elias Droom was busy directing the labors of two abedolled men and a charwoman, all of whom were toiling as they had never toiled before. The woman was dusting law books, and the men were packing them away in boxes. The front room of the suit was in a state of devastation. A dozen boxes stood about the floor; rugs and furniture were huddled in the most remote corner awaiting the arrival of the "secondhand man"; the floor was littered with paper. Droom was directing operations with a broken umbrella. It seemed like a lash to the toilers.

"Now let's get through with this room," he was saying in his most imploring way. "The men will be here

the boxes at— I don't want 'em to wait. This back room stuff we'll put in the trunks. Look out there! Don't you see that nail?"

Eddie Deever, with his usual indolence, was seated upon the edge of the writing table in the corner, smoking his cigarette and commenting with rash freedom upon the efforts of the perspiring slaves.

"How long are you going to keep these things in the warehouse?" he asked of Droom.

"I'm not going to keep them there at all. They belong to Mr. Bansemmer. He'll take them out when he has the time."

"He's getting all the time he wants now. I guess," commented Eddie.

"Say, talking about time, I'll be twenty-one next Tuesday."

"Old enough to marry."

"I don't know about that. I'm getting pretty wise. Do you know, I've just found out how old Rosie Keating is. She's twenty-nine. Gee, it's funny how a fellow always gets stuck on a girl older than himself! Still, she's all right. I'm not saying a word against her. She wouldn't be twenty-nine if she could help it."

"I suppose it's off between you, then."

"I don't know about that either. We lunched at Rector's today. That don't look like it's off, does it? Four, six, five, including the tip. She don't look twenty-nine, does she?"

"I've never noticed her."

"Never! Well, holy mackerel! You must be blind then. She says she's seen you in the elevator a thousand times. Never noticed her? Gee?"

"I mean I've never noticed any one who looked less than twenty-nine. By the way, do you ever see Mr. Rigby? I believe she is in his office."

"I don't go to Rigby's any more," said Eddie, with sudden stiffness. "He's a cheap skate."

"I heard he threw you out of the office one day," with a dry cackle.

"He did not! We couldn't agree in certain things regarding the Bansemmer affair, that's all. I told him to go to the devil, or words to that effect."

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