

POOR MAN'S GOLD
Courtney Ryley Cooper

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SYNOPSIS

Jack Hammond, gold prospector, returns to Prince Rupert after a spree in Seattle and learns that a gold rush is starting as a result of some careless remarks he had dropped at a party concerning a gold discovery. He finds that his partner, McKenzie Joe Britton, has gone on north to protect their claims. Bewildered, Hammond decides to lead the would-be prospectors how to reach the new gold fields. Around the World Annie, a frontier dance hall proprietor, has assembled a troupe of girls and is bent on starting a dance hall at the new camp. Jack muses about Kay Joyce, the girl in Seattle whom he loves and to whom he confided the secret of his gold strike. Going to his lawyer's office, he passes a young girl on the stairs. Jack asks Barstow the lawyer about the girl and learns that she is a volunteer client. Jack tells him about Kay, Timmy Moon, a mutual acquaintance, had brought them together. Kay was chilly at first, but when she saw some of his gold nuggets they got along beautifully. He had met her mother and a friend of the family, Bruce Kenning, a geologist. Sergeant Terry of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police joins the gold-seekers on their trip north. Jack encounters the girl, Jeanne Towers, and she asks him to lend her a team of dogs and supplies. He consents. The next day the trek to the new bonanza begins. Later, on the trail, Jeanne is lost and Hammond saves her. The gold seekers arrive and the new camp is soon in full swing.

CHAPTER IV—Continued

"Well, let 'em work down creek all they want," said Joe. "The real gold's somewhere else. The Big Moose didn't always ride along over against those mountains. It traveled over here somewhere—and here's where we'll find the bonanza."

"Big as hen's eggs!" Hammond laughed.

"Make it a goose; it's just as easy."

They returned to work, finally, to clean out the pit. It was a test job—the first of dozens, maybe a hundred, which they knew they must sink in their search for an age-old river bed, long covered by the overburden of erosion. At last, with the moosehide bucket raised, they started back toward "town."

The days were growing longer. Spring already had arrived in climates farther south; summer was on the way. But up here, everything remained under a burden of white. Hammond glanced far to the right.

"One less moose," he said. "There's Olson with a supply of meat! The pack that man can carry!"

They watched him angle across the drifts toward the main trail, his rifle dragging, the hind quarters of an Alaskan moose on his back.

"Think I'll go beg some of that," McKenzie Joe said. "The way those wild men are coming into this country, there won't be a lot of game left."

"Get an extra piece, will you?"

"Sure. For that girl?" McKenzie Joe started away. "Guess you're right—guess she's just like the rest of us—tired of her own grub and fed up with the stuff they hand out at the Slumgullion."

Soon McKenzie Joe, two great hunks of moose meat freezing in his grasp, halted beside his partner.

"Well, here's the meat and there's the last of the snow burners," he said. "Sergeant Terry came along with 'em. Break-up's hit below. Wet snow most of the way until the last forty or fifty miles."

Hammond took the unwrapped meat and started away. His course led through a maze of tents, dog hutsches, dirty snow piles, hastily shoveled away to reveal the foundation for a moss-chinked cabin or shacks and uprights of new buildings, the latter an output from a portable sawmill brought in over the snow. At last, he sighted a tiny log cabin; he and Joe had built it for Jeanne Towers. Then he saw the girl.

She broke from the door at his approach, running, almost sprawling over the crusted snow. She cried out; Hammond saw that she waved something in one hand. In the doorway behind her was framed the bulky figure of a man. On came the girl; she stumbled, straightened, and continued to run.

"I've got two hundred dollars!" she cried out. "I've got two hundred dollars!"

She was transformed; almost childish in her excitement. There were tears on her cheeks.

"I've got two hundred dollars!" came again, as she reached him. "I can begin to pay you back." Hammond stared down at the money in her hand. "Oh, it isn't counterfeit. It's all good money—see—it's real."

He caught her by the arm, laughing.

"Of course, Jeanne. But where did you get it?"

"I've sold my claim. You told me it wasn't any good. But I got

two hundred dollars for it—see it—she waved the money again. Then turning, as the stranger came to them from the doorway, "Here's the man—"

The sentence was cut short. Hammond had said:

"You look like someone I met in Seattle."

"And you look like—why, you're Hammond, aren't you? My name's Bruce Kenning."

"Yes, I remember." For an instant Hammond traveled far away, back to the dock in Seattle, with the sun throwing its morning gleam on smooth waters, with Kay in his arms—

"You didn't happen to bring me a letter—or anything?"

Kenning laughed. He was a sure-appearing man, muscular, at home in breeks and boots, just as he had been at home in dinner clothes.

"No letter—but a lot of messages. Do you know each other?" Jeanne Towers asked.

"We're old friends of the same family," Kenning explained. "Good to see you after this long trip—well I have to spend some time together."

"Just in, eh?"

"Yes, with today's bunch. I tried to fight the gold fever. Couldn't. So here I am."

Hammond glanced again at the money, clutched in Jeanne's white hands.

"I'll say this for you. You work fast."

"Don't I?" His smile was disarming. "Queer how it turned out. I went into Miss Towers' store for some tobacco. Got to talking about the district, of course. I asked what you were doing."

Hammond laughed.

"Always check up on the fellow who's made the strike?"

"Certainly—first job of a good geologist."

"You know your mining, eh?" Jack jerked his head. "My cabin's right here. Walk over?"

"Glad to," Kenning answered.

"Fine. I've a drop or two of Scotch left." Impulsively he laid a hand on the shoulder of Jeanne Towers, as she took the moose meat he had brought her. "You'd better sharpen up your pencil and see what you're going to buy for your store when break-up comes."

"But I wanted to pay you—"

"That can wait." He patted her shoulder again. Still somewhat dazed by sudden wealth Jeanne Towers returned to her cabin. Hammond caught eagerly at his companion's arm.

"Listen," he said. "I can't wait. Tell me all about Kay. Is she well? Is she coming up here? Dreading she really mean it—you know—treating me like she cared something about me?"

Weeks later, he still was asking the same questions. He and Kenning stood on a side hill, where forget-me-nots bloomed at the edge of retreating drifts, and the blue of lupin contrasted with the first buds of mountain rhododendron.

Spring had come as if a book had been opened and a chapter turned. The streams, only ten days before constricted by mounds of ice, now roared to the outpouring of a thousand mountain sides. Every gully contributed its rivulets, every rock slide sprayed a plumelike waterfall. Below in the village, the sound of hammers echoed endlessly. With waters at flood stage, halting much of the gold-seeking, the thoughts of a new civilization had turned to building. That is why Hammond and Kenning had come up here on the hill. Back of them stood a new cabin—the one Hammond had promised Kay Joyce he would build for her.

"Great view from up here," Kenning said at last.

They could look down on the big lake; a moose feeding in a far-away, shallow bay, a few miners fishing in the clear water just off the inlet.

"You can't kick on the one you get from your place," Hammond answered. Kenning had built his cabin on the next hill.

They went there for a drink, the last of Kenning's supply. Then, with another prideful survey of Kay's house, Hammond dropped down the hill. At last, he walked through the lush grass along the bubbling course of Loon creek and toward Jeanne's tiny store. She was alone there.

He paused at the door to watch her, sitting on a rough bench. Then she noticed Hammond's presence, and with a quick smile disentangled herself.

"Hello!" she said. It was a welcome, a greeting and an obeisance all in one.

"Hello," he answered casually. "Still got your two hundred dollars?"

"Oh, I've hidden it." Then, "You missed the excitement. Sergeant Terry just got a customer for the new jail."

"No!" This was news. "Who?"

"Oh, that Jorgeson fellow. He got in a fight with his wife. He must have beaten her up terribly."

"Too bad. She complained, eh?" Jeanne shook her head.

"No—she stood for it. Somebody else told Terry. Her kind is always afraid to complain. People say they're not married."

Jack laughed.

"Well, she's lucky at that. Not being tied to him."

Jeanne came forward and leaned against the door. The brightness was gone temporarily from her features, she looked thoughtfully toward the new, raw camp.

times a woman who isn't married is tied tighter to a man than if she were his wife. You see, she hasn't anything else—she lost it when she went with him. Maybe that's why she stands for so much—"

She halted suddenly and attentively turned her head upward.

"What's that?"

"Sounds like a motor boat. It couldn't be—"

Then a faint shout came from far away. It was picked up by a dozen voices. The fishermen, down at the inlet, cried out—faintly, Jack caught the words:

"Airplane! Airplane coming! There's an airplane!"

Doors were banging as Jeanne and Hammond ran from the store. Everyone was running, for that matter, or standing, hands over eyes. Far down the valley, where Lake Sapphire merged with the sky, a great, wide-winged bird was limned against the sunset, moving swiftly into sharper delineation.

It circled the town and traveled far down the lake, dropping lower, lower. At last, with its trailing edge-flaps cutting down its speed, it slipped still nearer the lake; its engine snarled anew, and cut off again. Spray scattered like plumes of jetting steam from its pontoons; swishing and splashing, it skipped the water in great leaps, settled again, ploughed onward; then, with the engine roaring anew, began to taxi toward shore.

Men ran into the marshy shallows to greet it, pawing wildly about, then wading frantically to get out of its way. The pilot rose in his cockpit, to motion furiously, warning excited watchers against the danger of the propeller. Jack Hammond gave an exultant shout. He leaped from the side of Jeanne Towers and splashed into the water without even feeling it.

"Hello, Timmy!" he yelled. "You made it, Timmy!"

The man in the cockpit, veering from side to side as he watched the water depths about him, raised a hand in answer, then swiftly returned to his task.

Now Jack could see the cabin windows. Two persons were inside; Hammond saw that Kay was one of them. He cupped his hands to his mouth and shouted at the height of his lungs. He jumped up and down in the water until he was dripping. He waved his arms. He jerked off his hat and threw it at the cabin door—at last it opened.

Kay Joyce, trim in polo shirt, fawn-colored breeches, riding boots and red nails of an equal luster, leaned out.

"Jack!" she called. "Don't splash around like that. How in the world will you ever carry mother and me ashore? We'll be simply dripping, you old silly!"

It was Bruce Kenning, however, who finally carried Kay and her mother ashore. Hammond, all of a sudden, had realized that he was a sodden mess. Then, with the landing of the party, everything became confused; gold seekers crowded about, placer miners waded out to catch the rope which Timmy Moon had tossed to them, that they might knot it to a pontoon and anchor the ship. Now Hammond was back in his own cabin, talking excitedly as he changed his clothes.

"Kay's crazy about the cottage," he volunteered.

McKenzie Joe, squatted on the doorstep, turned his beaverlike head.

"I figured she would be, for awhile."

"What do you mean awhile?"

"They're city people," said McKenzie Joe quietly.

Hammond laughed, tightened his belt, stood immobile a moment, then clawed about him in the half-dark room for a necktie.

"Don't you worry about that. Kay can take it. So can her mother. They like the outdoors."

McKenzie made no direct reply. He only eyed his partner.

"Kind of dressing up, aren't you?"

"Well," said Jack with a grin. "You know—their first night here. We're all going to the Slumgullion to eat. Come along?"

"Nope." Joe said it half brusquely.

"Little abrupt, aren't you, Joe?" he said at last.

"Not particularly."

A queer feeling of resentment shot through Hammond.

"Joe," he said finally, "what's been eating on you?"

"Nothin' but mosquitoes, I reckon."

"Let's not joke," the younger man said suddenly. "You've been different ever since we came back here."

"Me different? I ain't noticed it, Jack."

"You haven't seemed yourself. Moody—thinking about something all the time. Grouchy, like you had a chip on your shoulder."

"When?" asked Joe.

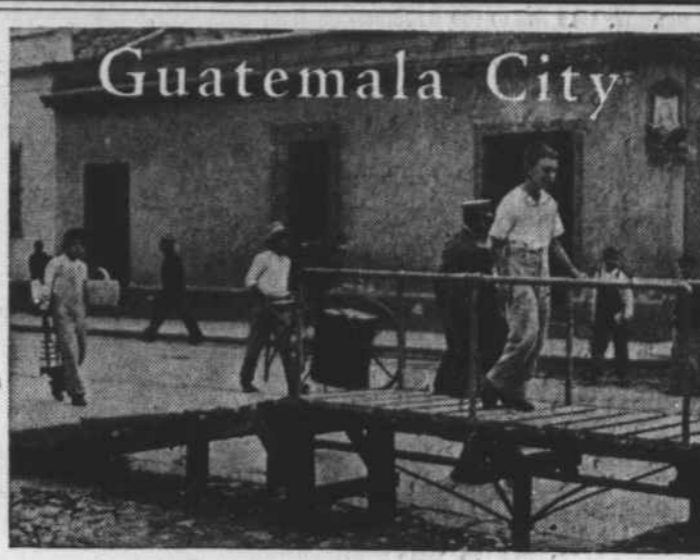
"The other day, for instance, when Bruce Kenning dropped by our test pit."

"He was asking a lot of questions, wasn't he?"

Hammond spread his hands.

"Oh, Joe—suppose he was? Can't a man be interested in what a friend's doing? You'd think he was going to jump our claims, the way you act."

"That wouldn't do him much good," the old prospector said, with a masked smile. "Not the way they're turning out."



Rainy Season Bridge in Guatemala City.

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WHEN you enter Guatemala City, you are in the most populous place in all Central America. With a population of 120,000, including about 6,000 foreigners, Guatemala City is a thriving metropolis of well-paved streets, department stores, luxury shops, cafes, country clubs, busy factories, garages, and modern hotels. Its motion picture theaters, showing mostly American "talkies" with Spanish subtitles, advertise with big electric signs overhanging the streets in Broadway style.

At the capital's covered central market, the largest in the country, the array of foodstuffs, textiles, utensils, furniture, and other commodities is endless. Its long aisles, and the streets adjoining the market building and cathedral, are always jammed with a noisy, restless throng of merchants and buyers.

And the odors, strange, spicy and heavy! The fresh scents of vegetables and exotic flowers mingle with the greasy smell of cooking food, the aroma of roasted coffee, and the balmy fragrance of copal incense.

Those with weak stomachs may not like the appearance or odor of freshly slaughtered meat. Nor will they find appetizing the leached corn mash for tortillas; or armadillos roasted in their shells; or crude brown sugar pressed into dirty blocks and balls. But visitors are delighted with bright tropical fruits piled in artistic displays, graceful baskets and glazed pottery, and gay textiles woven on primitive hand looms.

Guatemalans are proud, and justly so, of the fine coffee grown in their highlands. Placards in English and Spanish remind the visitor at every turn that "Guatemala Grows the Best Coffee in the World."

On the days when tourist trains arrive in Guatemala City, the department of agriculture holds open house. Small packages of freshly roasted coffee, wrapped in glazed paper, are presented to each visitor. They are appropriate souvenirs of a nation which is the sixth most important coffee grower in the world, being exceeded only by Brazil, Colombia, the Netherlands Indies, Venezuela and El Salvador.

The second most important export is the banana, grown in the coastal plains bordering the Gulf of Honduras and the Pacific.

Airport a Busy Spot.

One of the busiest spots today in this busiest of Central American capitals is La Aurora airport. Here the trunk line of the Pan American Airways from Brownsville, Texas, to Panama connects with a half-dozen local air services to distant parts of the republic.

Many who do not come to Guatemala City by plane, come by boat, and dock at San Jose, a sleepy little tropical port. Between steamers the "back door" to Guatemala drowns in the shade of tall breadfruit trees and coconut palms, and carries on a desultory commerce with the Indians of the coastal lagoons.

Its dingy water front, stuffed porters and fishermen, rigging heat, and main street pre-empted by railroad tracks give no promise of the color and activity of Guatemala's gay, modern capital, high up in the cool central plateau.

The first part of the 73-mile journey to Guatemala City follows a gently rising plain, whose black volcanic soil is planted thickly in bananas, sugar cane, cotton, cacao, and fruit trees. Guatemala City is nearly a mile above sea level, in the cool and healthful tierra templada, or temperate zone, and the train must gain most of this altitude in the last fifty miles.

Not far beyond Palin the line creeps through a narrow valley between two towering peaks and comes out on the edge of mountain-rimmed Lake Amatitlan. For several miles the railroad winds along the shore, passing groups of Indian women washing clothes in hot springs at the water's edge. It is a convenient laundry, for clothes may be boiled in the springs and rinsed in the cold fresh water of the lake without taking a step!

The train approaches Guatemala City through verdant suburbs which give way to warehouses and railroad yards, indicating the commercial activity of this busy Latin American capital.

"Winter" Means Rainy Season.

From the terminal, taxis whisk visitors over smoothly paved streets to their hotel, frequently a grandiose structure with a glass-covered

patio, mahogany floors and furniture, and very high ceilings.

If one remarks to the clerk that the air seems a trifle chilly, "Yes, the winter is just beginning," he may reply.

"Winter? In the tropics? And in May?"

He explains that "winter" in Guatemala is the rainy season, May to October, a period of clouds, dampness, and dismal rains, although, he hastens to add, "part of every day is fair and sunny." In "summer," November to April, there is little or no rain, the sun shines throughout the day, and the people are healthier and happier.

One may be awakened in the morning by the clamor of church bells, the rumble of heavy oxcars, and the musical chimes of carriages bearing worshippers to early mass.

Guatemala City is compactly built. Stand on the roof of one of its modern buildings and you see a clean and pleasant community, most of whose white, blue, pink, and buff-colored houses and shops are one or two stories high. Only a few concrete business buildings and stone church towers rise above the prevailing flat, red-tiled roofs.

Founded in the year the United States declared its independence, Guatemala City is a comparative youngster among the communities of Latin America. Several times it has been damaged by earthquakes, and in 1917 almost the entire city was destroyed. It has lost its Old World air, although it still has many Moorish-type homes with iron-grilled windows and patios aglow with flowers.

Fascinating as is Guatemala City, however, it is but a prelude to that native Guatemala which is older in race, culture, and traditions. High in the Sierra Madre west and north of the capital, pure-blooded Indians still dress as did their ancestors, worship their old gods as well as the new, and live their lives almost unaffected by modern civilization.

Until a few years ago, when the government launched an extensive road-building program, travel in the highlands of Guatemala was slow and arduous. Now one may motor from the capital westward to the Mexican border and east to El Salvador.

Motoring Through the Country.

Speeding along the floor of the valley, one passes a steady stream of Indians and vehicles bound for the markets of Guatemala City. Stolid, earnest-faced men trot by at a half run, their heads held rigid by a tumpine across the forehead that supports the heavy loads on their backs. For miles, they have been jogging along at this peculiar, forward-falling gait. In cactuses, or wooden frames, they carry goods of all kinds—earthen jars, furniture, bags of grain, or fresh vegetables.

Their women hurry along beside or behind them, arms swinging freely, their burdens on their heads. Sometimes it is a basket of live chickens, a fat roll of clothing, woven fabrics, or a bundle of firewood. Almost always a baby bobs up and down in a shawl slung across the mother's back.

Each tribe, and almost every village, in the highlands has a distinctive costume. Designs have not changed in hundreds of years. To those who know the different costumes, the Indians of the highlands might be carrying signs around their necks reading, "I am from Solola," or "I am from Chichicastenango," et cetera.

It is regrettable, however, that many of these costumes are disappearing. Native garb has been replaced by blue denim and cheap imported cotton goods throughout most of El Salvador, and these materials are now penetrating Guatemala. Under the harsh treatment of the Indian's daily toil, such fabrics are quickly reduced to tatters.

Unlike the half-naked aborigines of the jungle lowlands, or the itinerant tradesmen and servants of the cities, the Indians of the highlands of Guatemala have maintained a proud semi-independence as farmers, weavers and pottery makers.

Conquered but never assimilated, they are aristocrats among the native peoples of Central America, and they are sufficiently well organized to make mass petitions to the central government when local conditions demand it. They have had much less contact with other races than Indians elsewhere have had, and are not badly scourged with alcohol. Consequently, they have retained their self-respect and are neither subservient nor cringing.

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By REV. HAROLD L. LUNDQUIST, Dean of the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, Western Newspaper Union.

Lesson for April 25

THE OBEDIENCE OF NOAH

LESSON TEXT—Genesis 6:20-22; 9:1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT—By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Heb. 11:7.

PRIMARY TOPIC—The Meaning of the Rainbow.

JUNIOR TOPIC—The Rainbow's Message.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—Following God's Plan.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Deliverance through Obedience.

The "book of beginnings" (Genesis) has already brought before us the creation of the world, the origin of man, the entrance of sin into the world, and God's judgment upon that sin. In chapter 4 we find the first murder. Cain, who brought an offering before God which was not acceptable, murdered his brother Abel, whose offering pleased God.

Strange it is that man has it in his heart to hate those who expose his sin by their godly life. God does not leave himself without a witness in the earth. The God-fearing line of Seth appears. There are always those who have not bowed the knee to the Adversary. Consider the astonishment of Soviet officials at the deep-seated and wide-spread faith in God revealed in their recent census.

But sin again lifts its ugly head and ere long God is driven to the necessity of judgment upon mankind. Read the terrific indictment of humanity in Genesis 6:5-7. It is still true that the heart of man apart from God's grace is "desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9). Well does a contemporary writer say that even modern "psychology has unveiled the dismal and sinister depths in human nature. Man can no longer flee from reality into the romantic refuge of his own heart; for the human heart has become a house of horrors in whose murky recesses man cannot erect for his solace either a shrine or a citadel. Man is bad; he is a sinner. The depths of his meanness are being unveiled in a ghastly way in individual and social life in these times. What a contemporary ring there is about these old biblical judgments on mankind! (Gen. 6:5, 6; Isa. 1:6.) What a tremendous arraignment of sinful human nature is Paul's prologue in Romans 1" (Mackay).

So God sent a flood upon the earth. It used to be fashionable to doubt the story of the flood, but archaeology has joined hands with geology and history to agree with Scripture. The facts are available; let us use them.

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" and prepared an ark at God's command. Here again it can be demonstrated that the ark was sufficiently large to meet the need of Noah and all his family, with the animals and their food, and with room to spare. It is significant that the proportions of the ark were those of a well-planned boat. God knows how to build, and man does well to obey his instructions.

The rain came, the fountains of the deep were opened, and all the living perished, except those within the ark. What an instructive type of our safety in Christ is the ark!

But our lesson concerns primarily what occurred after Noah came forth from the ark and presented himself before God.

I. An Obedient Man (8:20-22). To come before God with acceptable worship, man must come with clean hands. The question is not whether he is brilliant, learned, or of high position. The one thing that counts is obedience. When such a man offers the worship of his heart before God, it goes up to him like a sweet savor.

II. A Covenant-Keeping God (9:8-17). The beautiful rainbow in the cloud became a token of God's promise, and the visible assurance to "all flesh" that the judgment of the flood will not be repeated. Never again will seed time and harvest, nor any of the orderly processes of nature, fail throughout the whole earth.

What a gracious God we have! And what a pity that men presume upon his goodness. Because he "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45), men not only forget that he is the giver of all things, but assume that they may sin against him with impunity. Let us remind them that it is the clear teaching of Scripture that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).

Well Spent Days. Oh, what a glory doth this world put on, for him who with a fervent heart goes forth under the bright and glorious sky, and looks on duties well performed, and days well spent.—Longfellow.

Purity of Heart. A holy life is the very gate of heaven; but let us always remember that holiness does not consist in doing uncommon things, but in doing everything with purity of heart.—Cardinal Manning.

Household Questions

For Steamed or Boiled Puddings—Puddings will not stick to the basin if two strips of grease-proof paper are put crosswise in the basin before the mixture is poured in.

Frying Eggs—Eggs are less liable to break or stick to the pan if a little flour is added to the frying fat.

Shrink the Cord—When loose covers for chairs, etc., are being made, boil the piping cord before using. This little precaution prevents unsightly puckers after the cover is washed.

Boiling Old Potatoes—Old potatoes sometimes turn black during boiling. To prevent this add a squeeze of lemon juice to the water in which they are boiled.