

# SLUMBERING GOLD

By AUBREY BOYD

### FINAL INSTALMENT

"There was a light-fingered person on the ship," Rose said, "who had come North to dip for gold in miner's pockets. I suggested that he try Owens, and so I obtained Dalton's own letter."

"Where is the letter now?" the Judge asked, when the hum caused by this strange admission subsided.

"I still have it."

Judge Dugas tugged meditatively at the white linen neckpiece under his chin.

Rose continued carefully. She had resolved to outplay Fallon for the gold. If Owens had been dependable, she might have told him the truth about Fallon and planned the counter-move with him. As it was, she laid her own plans.

She knew—as Owens did not—that while Fallon could threaten the rancher with exposure of the Nevada crime, he couldn't carry the bluff through without exposing himself as Reeves.

When Speed and his partner arrived at Skagway, she chose them on sight as the kind of men she needed, and made them a blind proposition to do a trailing job for her—persisting in the intention after they refused.

Her account of what followed explained several questions that had puzzled them. She ascribed Owens' death to fear. The drunken rancher had crumpled under Fallon's threat, told everything he knew, and then between fear of judgment and more drink to drown his fear, had drowned himself.

With Owens gone, Fallon had tried to hold Pete, believing she might know more than he had learned from Owens, and realizing that she herself was a very desirable, unclaimed prize. These points Rose conveyed by suggestion rather than direct statement, but they were none the less clear. She described the peculiar turn that had thrown Speed and Maitland into a clash of their own with Fallon on the trail, allowing Pete to win free over the pass. The first idea she drew from this was that Pete had taken them into her confidence, but—as she now reminded Wade and the court—if they had been interested in the gold at that time, they could have killed Fallon without incurring blame, and with a big saving of trouble to themselves.

On their return to Skagway for their horses and outfit, she had been all the more determined to use them because of their feud with Fallon, and had tried to interest them in the gold. Her warning about the shell-dealer was due to a tip she received from Lefty, who had shadowed the man for her. Remembering how the stranger had been killed in Carson, she suspected Fallon of having prompted this ambush.

"It was only two weeks ago," she explained, "that I heard of their being held here for the murder of a Swish on Lake LeBerge last November. I knew they were innocent; knew it, among other reasons, because I had Dalton's letter to Owens, and a readable proof of who was guilty. There was a joker in the game."

Wade stirred in his chair. The crowd murmured, fearing another objection.

"Part of Dalton's letter read," Rose quoted evenly, "You wouldn't recognize me on sight. I've been living native style, to keep the prospect and so on covered. Wait at the head of Lake LeBerge till the trail's clear after the freeze-up. If we miss connections on the lakes, camp there until spring, and if you don't hear from me before then, float the outfit down to the creek the drawing shows."

"That's how I know the accused men are innocent. My motive in explaining this is to turn the Law's vengeance where it belongs, on a man who has taken human life, the man who shot the U. S. Marshal in the train hold-up. I mean Fallon. My motive is to see him ride into his own deadfall and laugh in his face!"

Her eyes flashed at Fallon's clenched hand. "If it takes proof to open—" the low, vibrant tone of his words seemed to fill the room—"it's in his hand. The lucky, clover-leaf nugget. He was afraid of Malone's interest in that piece of gold. It disappeared from the marshal's safe when he left Skagway. A telltale bit of evidence he couldn't leave at large. But a fascinating keepsake he wouldn't destroy. He's trying to shift it now! The luck piece—the proof that outplays and hangs him! Do I win?" Her voice lifted with an indescribable taunting challenge.

Fallon was on his feet—savage,

hate-maddened, yet somehow still commanding himself and the mute attention of the Court. "You'll hear my answer now!" he said, in a hoarse, rasping shout. "If I hang, I don't swing alone. That man—" he pointed at Speed in the dock—"was the partner of the stranger who rode the bay. I've figured his trail. He's thought to be drowned off the George E. Starr. He calls himself 'Speed Malone.' Since we're talkin' of right names, that man is Buck Tracy, sometimes known as Buck Solo—the most notorious desperado and gunman that ever come out of the Northwest."

While his hearers stiffened under the shock of the announcement he flung at them, he wheeled on Rose with a movement as swift as light.

"As for you, you b— —!" he yelled.

Only one pair of eyes caught the lightning gleam of the drawn gun. There was a stunning double report. Fallon's gun went out of his hand, as if he had thrown it away. With a blankly staring look he sagged in a crumpling fall, dropped by a bullet in the brain from a gun which Speed had jerked from the holster of the belated police guard.

It seemed that his body was still falling when Speed jumped the courtroom floor and leaped for the open window.

The fractional margin of another instant or of one wild shot might have carried him through. Then, with the river before him and a long shore line of wharves and docked barges, there is no telling what the Mounted Police might have had to write on their flawless man-getting record.

But the odds were too steep. A gun crashed as his boot touched the sill, and Speed fell backward into the courtroom.

For an instant the court stood dazed in the swirling smoke.

The bar of the prisoner's dock broke in splinters; Maitland was struggling in the hold of two police guards, to reach his partner.

Yet even in that frozen moment the wheel of Justice turned. Judge Dugas looked down on the fallen outlaw with a curious stillness, and then at Wade, whose response, though no one heard it, was translated to the police guards.

"Release the prisoner."

Half-lifting Speed out of a widening pool of blood, Maitland had a blurred awareness of Pete on his other side. The outlaw leaned against their supporting arms, deeply breathing the cool breeze from snowy peaks that came through the open window.

"A doctor—" Maitland tried to say, but his heart strangled the words in his throat, and tears rained on his partner's reddened shirt.

Speed looked up at him mistily and shook his head. "I don't ask for no better—run of luck than this, Bud. Always figured I'd fall in some mountain pass alone—and here—" He paused at something beyond his power to say. "We both got what we looked for—and more—only not where we was lookin'." His eyes rested on the sun-burnished gold of Pete's hair, and strayed back to his partner with a ghost of his old-time ruminating sniffe. "Gold is where you find it, like Steiner said."

The strength seemed to ebb from him; he looked dimly at the wavering pools of light and shadow on the wall and then in wonder at a bright glory of cloud floating across the far azure glimpse that showed through the window opening. It was as if a mirage had crossed his eyes in their last gleam of life.

But something of that same tenacity of will which had held Dalton against the cliff brought him back for a moment, and Maitland heard him say, as he drifted out on that last trail, "Give Rose a hand, Bud—she run a great bluff for ye. Tell her—I was plumb wrong about women. Tell her—how much I liked the singin'!"

THE END

Wild Animals in Switzerland  
Among the animals found in Switzerland are bears, wolves, chamois, goats, boars, stags, badgers, foxes, fures, otters, squirrels, birds of prey of large dimensions, and snipe, henhecock, cuckoo, blackbird and woodpecker.

Cannot Breathe Through Mouth  
The whale is the only adult mammal unable to breathe through its mouth, the respiratory system being especially adapted to prolonged periods of submergence. Newly born mammals also are unable to breathe through their mouths.

### McDERMID SAYS COUNTY AGENTS DO GREAT WORK

Writing in the July-August issue of the official magazine of the Potash Institute, Better Crops with Plant Food, Jeff McDermid reminds the nation that the county farm agents were given an emergency job when the AAA field work was organized and that the agents came thru in a highly acceptable manner, says Dean I. O. Schaub, director of agricultural extension at State College.

The Dean quotes the magazine as follows:

"Thoughtful surveys of the Extension Service in these recent years of farm credit and crop adjustment, drought hazards and super-organization in a crisis, convince anyone that the machine ran smoothly. In a few days more than 70,000 production-control committeemen were hitched into the harness and ready to drive ahead in the greatest single piece of social engineering that American farming has witnessed. County agents did it.

"There were enough delay, legal fog, and contrary orders to put the average untrained fellow into the filbert class in short order; but somehow, trained as they were in patience and endurance, the majority of the agents hung on like grim death and saw it through. They had to.

"Unless they carried on, the whole bundle of contracts would have gone amiss, the radical rooters would have taken the reservation and the extension system itself might have vanished. . . . My thesis is that the whole business, despite the grief and gunplay, has been a good boost for the system. The service depended primarily on the welfare of agriculture and it could not last through a few more years of poverty and dismay. The team-work between the county agents and specialists and the farmers developed in these later seasons ought to command mutual respect in most cases. . . ."

Skating in 1685  
In 1685, when the River Thames was frozen over in London, the residents of that city went in for skating with great enthusiasm. English gentlemen of the Nineteenth century went skating arrayed in frock coats and top hats.

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### STORK AID AT 100

#### 1800 "Babies" Celebrate Anniversary of Physician.



BETHEL, OHIO.—Dr. William E. Thompson (above), had a lot of help this month in celebrating his 100th birthday. Scores of the more than 1800 babies he helped bring in the world during his long years of practice, thronging the town for the event.

### EFFORT BEING MADE TO CURB THE DYNAMITING OF FISH

Officials of the Department of Conservation and Development at Raleigh have expressed their purpose to wage a determined campaign against the use of dynamite in streams for the purpose of taking fish.

John D. Chaff, State game and fisheries commissioner, Monday commended Game Protector G. C. Platt, of Haywood County, for his work in the conviction of five defendants recently on charges of dynamiting fish in the waters of Haywood County.

The defendants were found guilty in Superior Court and were fined \$100 each and costs with 30-day suspended sentences in each case.

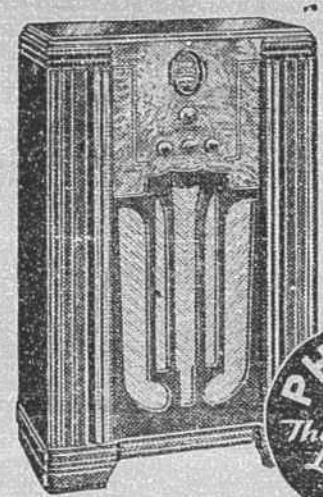
"Dynamiting fish is one of the most serious offenses against the natural resources of our State," commented Commissioner Chaff, "and the division of game and inland fisheries is doing all within its power to check such practices wherever they might occur. It is most gratifying, however, to note that dynamiting of streams is seldom indulged in but in every case where evidence can be obtained these cases are prosecuted vigorously.

"Beyond doubt, public sentiment is against such inexcusable practices as dynamiting fish. Such is certainly the case in Western North Carolina where the Department of Conserva-

tion and Development has for many years carried on an intensive restocking program. Dynamiting of such streams not only destroys the natural stock, including all types of fish large and small, but makes ineffective the long-time efforts to restore good angling. Dynamiters, in addition to destroying their own facilities for fishing, injure the sport for others and detract from the general attractions of the community."

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