

# SLUMBERING GOLD

By Aubrey Boyd

AUTOCASTER SERV.

SITEENTH INSTALLMENT

"In Nevada, the woman in the saloon told me my fingering wasn't so good; took the guitar and showed me. That interested me a lot. I ask her to have supper with me.

"She had sung in the camps in the Seventies, when mining was a big game on both sides of the Sierras. In Placerville, on the California side, she had met a young adventurer named Dalton. She took him at first to be a prospector, and he did prospect to some extent. But a little later, when she became his sweetheart, she learned that he often took the road with a route agent he called Reeves. They worked the mountain passes, holding up back trains and wagon shipments of gold till the country got too hot for them, and they disappeared.

"So May's love affair didn't last long. I gathered it was she who did most of the loving. Dalton was a swaggering young rascal, with a lot of life and good looks, and no heart to speak of. It was that, I think that attracted her. She was used to being courted.

"After Dalton left her she had a baby girl. Whether it was his or not, she didn't know for certain. She'd known him that short a time. It interfered with her work, so she sent it away to be cared for, shut it out of her life and forgot about it, as she tried to forget about Dalton.

"Then she met a rancher named Owens, who was taking up a grazing claim on the Nevada side, south of the Carson Valley. So she married Owens, and went with him to Nevada, to settle down and be a faithful wife.

"Her marriage to Owens was unhappy. He was ungenerous and unsociable—almost a miser. The ranch was a day's journey from any neighbor. No one, hardly, came near it. He was jealous of that old life of hers—had suspected, when he married her, what it had been. He worked the ranch himself, so there was no one to talk to but him, and he didn't talk.

"One night in summer, when Owens had watered the stock and she was watching him for the umpteenth time draw a lamp alongside the table, fix the wick and read some month-old newspapers, she heard a faint tapping on the door. She opened it, and there stood a visitor. For her!

"A little visitor about three years old, and small for her age, with a cute, solemn baby face, and wet eyes blinking in the lamplight, looking lost.

"Nice mans said you know where

is my Daddy?"

"The woman gave a smothered cry and gathered the child hungrily in her arms, not asking yet how nor why it had come there.

"Owens lit a lantern to go out and see who had brought the little one to the door. The rider was out of earshot now, but on the porch was a sack of gold and a note saying, 'This baby wandered off a train during a hold-up. Keep her till the posse comes looking for her. The gold is from the robbed train, and is yours if you want pay for your trouble.'

"That was all. The rest they tried to piece together from what they could make of the child's talk.

"For hours Owens pored over that note and over the gold, handling it, counting it. . . . And the woman was yearning over the treasure in her arms. Suppose, by some great fall of chance, it was never claimed?

"Neither of them slept that night, and the next day they waited and watched the trails. The same hope was in their minds; though their reasons for hoping were far apart.

"Several days passed with no sign of the posse. Finally Owens made a trip to the nearest freight station to get the news. In his absence, the woman started making a little suit of overalls for the girl.

"Toward sundown she went into the barn to look for eggs for the baby's supper. While she was groping for nests in the hay, she caught hold of a man's boot. She didn't scream. The first thought that flashed through her mind was that 'this was the man who'd brought the child and the gold.'

"But the man sat up and smiled at her, and then he knees almost gave away. It was Dalton—whom she'd never expected to see again. He'd probably learned she was married to the rancher, and had counted on her helping him, if it came to that.

"It was his turn to be surprised when she spoke about the child and the gold. He hadn't had anything to do with leaving them there. But after thinking it over, he told her how it must have happened.

"He and the man he called Reeves had been waiting by a lonely stretch of railway track in the desert to stop a pay train, when a stranger on a bay horse rode by place they were hiding. He looked like a good gun hand, and they cut him in. During the hold-up the child strayed off the train. When it pulled out and they found her, Reeves wanted to leave her there.

They split on that; the man with bay horse picked her up and rode south alone, with his share of the loot. Dalton believed he had happened on Owen's ranch by letting his horse hunt water.

"The other two struck west for the mountains. Dalton's horse had gone lame, and Reeves took all the gold on his mount to lighten its weight. But it still lagged and when the posse caught their trail, Reeves was far ahead and kept going. Dalton left the lamed horse on some rocky ground, so he would seem to have gone on with Reeves, riding double, and after several days trailing on foot by a roundabout way, came to Owen's ranch.

"As to the child, Dalton thought it was a bad break to find her there, but he encouraged May's desire to keep her—since giving her up would ruin his hideout. So the baby had its hair cut, as well as being put in overalls.

"Just after May had done this rash thing, Owens came in that night with the news. The posse seemed to have lost the trail of all three of the fugitives, but the father of the missing child had been killed in the hold-up, and—worse than that—was a United States marshal."

"The man in the barn had plenty of time to take stock of Owen's character and of his own position. As the pursuit died away and no word came from Reeves, Dalton realized that his partner had deserted him. He had also done some thinking about the way the posse had been mistracked.

"Dalton proposed staying at the ranch as a hired man until the trail was cold, and calling himself the father of the little 'boy.' The very daring of the scheme would protect them.

"Though the police had given up hope of finding the lost child, there was no slacking in the hunt for the three road agents involved in the killing of the Federal marshal, and Dalton knew that there would be none.

"Deciding to leave the country, he demanded a grubstake from Owens, to take him prospecting in the North. The rancher grudgingly gave him the money, but was anxious to get rid of him.

"Owens' jealousy got worse after the man was gone. In his brooding rages, he spoke of Dalton's willingness to appear as the child's father as if that were a deeper sign of understanding between them. His fury drove him to charges that may have bordered on a truth he didn't know.

"He gave her such a terrible time that finally she left him and her adopted baby, and went back to her old life, where I found her, in the dregs of it.

"Some years later I came into Carson City, just before the rumor broke about the big gold strike in the North. And there the thing happened that begins to tie this up with—"

Fallon, twisting in his chair, caught her eyes now, squarely.

"You don't face dare!" he blurted out with a dark menace.

"Do you dare threaten a witness in Her Majesty's Court?" Judge Dugas demanded.

Muttering something, Fallon bit his tongue and waited.

"I was crossing a planked sidewalk," continued Rose, "when I almost bumped into a man stepping down from the porch of the Nevada Hotel. His face came back to me over a long gap of time as well as distance. He'd changed some. I passed him blank.

"We met again in a place where I sang, and he invited me to drink something. I did, because it was rather funny to talk to a man who'd trickled me with April Fool candy the way he'd done and not be remembered.

"So I said, 'Your face looks kind

of familiar. Haven't I seen it tacked up in the post office or somewhere?"

"He almost jumped. I hadn't had a notice how near the truth a reward poster might be. When I smiled, he gave a laugh that sounded flat.

"You've got the start on me, baby," he said, patting my hand.

"The nearest I ever come to imaginin' you was a fool kid I met once in Frisco. You're pretty nice and you've been around. Maybe as a woman, you can answer a question that got me curious once. It just come into my mind. Do you believe a girl could be brought up as a boy without anyone on the outside guessin' it?"

"It depends on the girl and the surroundings," I said, still not suspecting anything in particular. "I think it could happen case without seeing the boy you suppose to be a girl."

"Well, you'll never see him," Fallon said, a little too offhand. "It just come into my mind."

"He started his meaningless love-making again and I left him.

"What he'd said chimed with something else in my memory. Though I didn't recall right at first what it was, I kept looking as I played the camp for a baby who might not be so boyish except for the clothes. The only one I noticed was a boy with gold hair. He didn't look girish—wore his clothes, I mean, as if he had a right to them. But it struck me that I could have dressed him up as a stunning girl, and it was a crime to see hair like his wasted on a boy. He was with an older, whisky-faced man I'd never seen in the camps before, and whose name I learned to be Owens. The man was buying an outfit to go to Alaska.


"Owens are uncommon, but it was the name of the rancher May had married, and with that I remembered, in a shock of understanding, that the child left at the ranch house had blonde hair and had been dressed as a boy.

"Dalton had gone North. Owens had staked him. A man like May's Owens wouldn't make that trip without a solid lead to go on. I remembered his passion for gold. Dalton must have made a strike and sent for him.

"Certain this was the same man, I wondered how much Fallon had guessed. Maybe he just suspected a girl in boy's clothes and was curious. She was young and innocent, and he liked them that way. Her name, 'Pete' was as boy-like as possible, but since it didn't fit her appearance, it was a kind of giveaway."

The chortling voice of the river rippled through the silence as Rose paused. Speed leaned on the bar of the prisoners' dock, intently

### Ginger A Poppy Girl



LOS ANGELES . . . Ginger Rogers (above), of serene fame, is Hollywood's "1935 Buddy Poppy Girl". She won the right to be because her father, John Logan Rogers, is Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post at Quenemo, Kansas and Ginger belongs to the Auxiliary.

watching her across the red-coated shoulder of the police guard. Fallon half-reclined in his chair, in a smouldering silence—the sheathed fire of one who holds a final answer in reserve.

"That some night, the big Yukon news came down on the wires from Seattle. Prospectors who had been waiting and ready were pulling stakes for San Francisco and the first steamers. Owens beat the gun by starting ahead of them and showed that he'd had a definite lead on something.

"I caught a train for Seattle, and overtook Fallon's steamer there. He was wary enough to keep Owens out of my way. Pete talking to Fallon may have given her the idea I was a friend of his, and she mistrusted him by instinct.

"Fallon started the rancher Owens drinking and gambling—a first sign that he had guessed true about the gold. That it was true, I made sure in a more direct way."

Wade rose to object.

"Your Honor," he said, "I have listened to the witness's vivid story without offering an objection till now. I feel it my duty, as counsel for the Crown, to object to it as theoretical and move that it be thrown out."

Judge Dugas looked reflectively at Rose. "How did you prove, Miss Valery, that there was a gold mine at stake?"

FINAL CHAPTER ON PAGE 2

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### Plan Hog Pastures For Next Summer

The need for summer pastures becomes apparent in the month of June, especially to those farmers who failed to provide adequate summer grazing for their hogs.

During this time when the lack of good pastures is particularly noticeable, farmers will do well to plan for growing a satisfactory pasture next year, said W. W. Shay, swine specialist at State College.

He discontinued the belief, held by some farmers, that permanent pasture crops should be avoided. Some of the permanent crops are ideal for hogs, he pointed out.

There is no better hog pasture than alfalfa, he stated. Medium red clover, where it can be raised successfully, is a close second. Alsike clover is almost as good; on acid soils it is better. White Dutch can be raised almost anywhere if the land is not acid. Although not quite so palatable, lespedeza makes a good pasture.

Grasses are far better than broomsedge, he continued. All the pasture crops named above should be mowed occasionally to keep the weeds down and to keep the pasture tender and succulent for frowing shoats.

When hogs are placed on full feed preparatory to marketing, he added, the variety of pasture used is not very important, but for the breeding stock, legumes are preferable.

Among the temporary pastures, soybeans are perhaps the best, Shay observed. But they should not be fed to hogs being finished for the market, since they have an undesirable affect on the quality of the meat.

### Poultry Problems Increase In Summer

Summer brings a number of

problems to the poultryman.

Hot weather tends to decrease egg production and to increase the spread of disease, warns Roy S. Dearstyne, head of the State College poultry department.

He advises the marketing of early moulters and other hens not kept for breeders should be sold when they reach broiler size.

Non-layers and unneeded cockerels increase the feed bill and crowd the laying birds. Only late moulters should be used for breeding purposes.

Portable range shelters are a help in providing adequate ventilation, and should be moved to new grazing sites when necessary. See that the birds have plenty of feed and fresh water.

Do not try to reduce costs by skimping on feed, Dearstyne points out, as this will tend to keep the birds from developing farge frames and building up the needed body reserve for future production.

Worms and parasites, internal and external, flourish in summer. When parasites are found, immediate treatment should be given. Poor development, leg weakness, and drawn face-parts are symptoms of worms. County Agents or other agricultural advisers may be consulted in regard to parasite control.

Vaccinating against fowl pox is an inexpensive form of insurance against this disease, Dearstyne says. Weak or poorly developed birds are possible sources of disease and are seldom profitable. Remove them from the flock.

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GENE SARAZEN, champion golfer

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