

# SLUMBERING GOLD

By Aubrey Boyd AUTOCASTER SERV.

## FIRST INSTALMENT

Fog veiled the timbers of Yesler's Wharf that July morning in a ghostly sparkle, which quivered to the roar of trucks and freshly shod hooves and to the skirling invisible flight of gulls around a phantom ship.

The spectre alongside was the ghost of a ship once dead. On the hood of one of her wheels, as it wavered above the stringpiece, the faded letters of "George E. Starr, Seattle," strickled through an ancient glaze of rust and soot. They identified all that was mortal of a condemned side-wheel ferry-boat, which had been dragged from the boneyard to make a first, and in a way a posthumous, voyage beyond the Sound.

But to the men on the wharf, that derelict was an argosy. Her musty reek of creosote, bilge and old ropes was the aroma of romance. The brawl of the trucks that loaded her with a song of gold.

And there was, in fact, a weaving lilt of music in the roar. It came from a quieter eddy in the fog where a man was playing an accordion, as he leaned against an upturned bale of hay near the ship's side. Ignored by the crowd and ignoring them, he poured into the din a lazing melody that dissolved there as vaguely as the mist—so skillfully pitched that its source was hardly noticeable. His frayed corduroy clothes, the barked leather of his riding boots, his lean, rangy figure and sun-browned skin, did not distinguish him in that weathered company. Clearer light might have drawn attention of an odd scar that cut the corner of his mouth, accenting his look of high temper and daring.

Gun scars were not a special matter for comment in this crowd. Until the varied mob that followed them later, the men who blazed the Yukon trails in the early fall of '97, were almost all hard-living men of the open; miners, cattlemen, railroaders and lumberjacks from the Northwest and the Southwest; men who knew little of the Sea, but every hazard of mountain and desert.

Not far from him, however, stood a younger man, scintillating like himself, whose serious eyes traced the fog maze curiously, and seemed to find less novelty in the ship than in his fellow-voyagers. Some dunnage bags, tied in sailor fashion, lay on the wharf at the feet of the young observer. A faded reefer jacket fitted his broad shoulders with the snug effect that sailors call "seagoing," and the same stamp of the sea showed in his salt-stiffened boots, his firm poise, and that unconscious gallantry of bearing which lends grace to old clothes.

As the fog did not hide the two men from each other's view it had the effect of bringing them nearer, while sharpening the contrast between them. They were strongly built in different ways; as oak and steel are different. The younger man looked sturdier; the man with the accordion concealed under his idle posture the quick resilience of tempered metal. Both were sun-tanned—if the ruddy brown of sea-sun can be compared to the dry bronze of the desert and the range. The boy's hair was dark and curly; the other's of a sun-rusted color, and cut close, like a trooper's. Both had steady eyes, but where the boy's blue eyes reflected a sober discipline and the positive clarity of youth, the other's held a shade of half-mocking tolerance, as if he took the world as he found it, and had found it mixed.

Some sense of this, perhaps, drew the musician's eyes for a curious instant on his listener. Looking away again into the veiled shimmer beyond the wharf, he began playing the tune of an old sea ballad:

"In eighteen hundred and seventy-six . . ."

At the quick light of recognition in the boy's face, he masked a gleam of amused interest.

"It that a Boston song?" he asked. The boy smiled. "My people used to sail ships out of Boston. I've heard the song since I was a nipper."

"Figured it was a line shot you come from the coast," said the accordion player.

"I'd take you to be from the Northwest," he ventured, uncertainly.

"Your eye's good, Bud," replied the musician with a twinkle, as he improvised a series of chords. "But I been up and down a few. Ever hear this . . .?" and he began, after a deep intake of the accordion, the chesty ballad of Jack Donahue the Highwayman. Then it drifted into music, unfamiliar to him; half barbaric and half-devotional melodies of the Western ranges, such as "Bill Roy," and "Montana Kid."

In the midst of this repertory the pipping cry of a newsboy who came down the wharf shouting.

"Extra! Buck Solo Make His Last Stand! Posse Surrounds Bandit in Mountain Pass! Extra!"

The accordion player lifted his head but did not pause in his playing, though the newsy's cry echoed a story which had been as keenly argued in the West that month as the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight. An unidentified gunman on a buckskin horse had ridden into Nevada mining camp at night, trailing a man whom he seemed to have mistaken for some enemy. The mistake had caused a blazing gun battle in the dark street, from which he escaped. Not

long afterwards the buckskin reappeared on the Deer's Lodge trail in Montana, where its rider had stopped a stage to search the passengers. Strange to say, no money had been taken, but an express messenger, trying to catch him off guard, had been shot. Dodging a posse of marshals and heading west, he had earned the sobriquet of "Solo" in a camp on the Montana border, having halted there long enough to show a gifted group of Solo players some unexpected phases of that game. When the posse rode in, an hour behind him, the gamblers he had entertained were sketchy in their description. As he had changed horses the marshals had little to guide them, but they suspected him of being a wide-ranging gambler and outlaw known of in the Northwest as "Buck Tracy." His trail, lost at Clark's Fork, had been pieked up again crossing the Coeur D'Alenes through Idaho, and the interest excited by the long and desperate chase began to close a net around him.

The boy bought a paper and read the news bulletin. "They've got him cornered in the Okanagan country," he said to the man with the accordion. "He won't escape now."

"Kind of hope he don't?" asked the other, without looking up from his playing.

"I hope he gets the full penalty of the law," was the boy's uncompromising answer. "He deserves it."

The Westerner glanced at him. This maverick is worth a cuss. But quietly, "Full penalty of the law, Bud, would leave 'em kind of short of lawyers, if you rammed it home. Not that this maverick is worth an cuss. But neither is the outfit that's doggin' him, and neither was the express rider he downed. I ain't so dead set on seein' him hanged. Hope he dies shootin'."

The fog had lightened a little, and a gangplank now lumbered down from the steamer's boat deck. As the boy was assembling his dunnage bags, he found himself under the scrutiny of an official-looking person who had appeared abruptly out of the mist, and stood framed in it, a few yards away. The officer's eyes grew less sharp on meeting his, and turned in a more casual way on his companion, who had closed the accordion case and was leaning over to fasten it.

"You two together?" The boy nodded. It seemed unnecessary to explain that he and the accordion player were only chance acquaintances. Some official for the shipping company, he thought, was making a check-up of passengers.

With another glance at the man with the accordion, the officer passed on.

The Westerner threw a roll of blankets over his arm, put his accordion under it, and lifting one of the boy's packs with his free hand, wedged through the crowd that was swarming up the gangway. They found the cabin and covered parts of the deck already claimed, but there was a sheltered space under a lifeboat aft of the main cabin, where the boy stowed his burden. Noticing that his companion still kept the blankets on his shoulder, he pushed his stuff aside to make more room. The other considered him soberly.

"You listen to me like a good gun, Bud, in spite of them stern ideas about the law," he said. "Ever hit a boggy crossin' I'll stand by ye. My name's Speed Malone." And he held out his hand.

"Mine's Ed Maitland," the boy answered, somewhat puzzled at his earnestness.

Dropping his light pack in the cleared space, the man rolled a cigarette, and while crimping the edge of the paper, took a roving look along the deck. Then he made a back-rest of the blankets, and stretched himself comfortably, relaxing as from a long physical strain while he smoked and watched the crowd through half-closed eyes—still somehow as observant as ever of each approach.

A deep shudder ran through the ship, as the gates rattled shut. Hawfers, thrown from the bits, splashed into the gloomy chasm between ship and wharf, and the side-wheeler cast off in a ponderous churning of white water, dropping a veil between herself and the pier with a swiftness that owed less to her pick-up than to the opacity of the fog.

As if the uncertainties of the venture were not high enough, she was no sooner in the channel than the click of dice, chips and coins began to rattle a careless measure above the voices of the mist. Embarked for the realms of gold, the miners were "shootin'" their money with an easy mind.

The Westerner shifted his attention from the rotted stay lines of the lifeboat, and sat up to roll a fresh cigarette. Maitland noticed that two men, a little to their right, had turned a tarpaulined bale into a card table. One of them looked his way, with an invitation to join the game. When he declined, the man called over to Speed. "Play a hand of cawrds, neighbor?" Those oddly broadened vowels were as clear as a state boundary.

"What kind of cards?" asked Speed, with mild interest.

"We figure they's on'y one kind. If you kin play Solo, the tune is whur you want to set it."

A faint reserve which had shown in Speed's face at mention of the game

vanished in a smile. "I on'y play that game by ear," he said. "Didn't aim to scare ye none," was the condescending answer.

"Which you gets me wrong," amended Speed, in the present tense of polite discourse. "What I shrink from is exposin' your gifted Mormon duet to the cold air without his pants, coat and vest."

"Stim'lated a heap," rejoined the man from Utah, "we stoffles ever'scoop and stawrts the play. Stack 'em up, Bill. Gent allows he's a Solo player."

On the point of rising, Speed said to Maitland in an undertone, "Stake me ten dollars, Bud."

Ten dollars happened to be half the boy's cash, and the idea that the man called Speed had started north with neither outfit nor money was almost incredible. But the request was made so candidly that after a moment's hesitation he shook a gold piece from his purse.

With a curious pause before accepting it, the Westerner asked, "You figure these shorthorns can outplay me?"

"I was only thinkin'," Maitland said, "that gambalin' is a loser's game." His companion grinned. "If you was not a natural-born gambler, Bud, you wouldn't be on this ship. Watch us lose."

The sweet singers preluded their harmony with a considerate warning. "Removin' gold mines from gamblers is our daily routine, stranger. We'll set a quarter point, unless you feel hankerin' for ruin in a bigger way."

"Quarter suits me," said Speed modestly, and made a precarious club bid which they passed with becoming gravity. On the completion of the final trick, however, their attention became more exact.

TO BE CONTINUED

## Double Value From Winter Cover Crops

### Negro Farmer Nets Nice Profit; Garden Campaign Gets Close Attention; 4-H Negro Club Work

L. P. Peace will get double value from land by planting winter cover crops last fall. Peace seeded about two acres and a half to clover and barley in the early fall and went ahead with his regular duties as does the usual farmer. This crop got a good start before the winter months came. In the spring the crop grew vigorously, but did not attract unusual attention until a few days ago, then the field was the center of attraction by many farmers, buying plots of feed.

The plots are staked off in \$20.00, \$11.00, \$6.00 and \$5.00 plots. C. J. Ford states that Peace sowed about \$25.00 worth of seed and will receive well over \$100.00 for hay that has already been engaged, besides feeding his stock. This same land will be planted in tobacco just as soon as the feed is harvested.

As the terracing season is being replaced by the planting season local Agent Ford makes good report on the

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## The Circus Comes To Town Again



NEW YORK . . . Final proof that another open air season is here, is the arrival of the circus with animals and clowns. Two famous twins, the Woods boys, celebrated their third birthday by being presented to a real live clown, Edward Polidor, as shown above.

terracing. He states that over three hundred acres of land have been terraced for Negro farmers in all sections of the county. One farmer stated that he had been trying to get some terracing done on his farm for the past twelve years. All terraces, which have been checked or reported on, are giving very good results.

The garden campaign, started by Ford in the early spring is being given very close attention at the present. All farmers, who have received one of the five hundred letters concerning the garden contest, are requested to sign the information blank accompanying the letter and return it to the Agent. Gardens will be judged at the time stated on the blank, by you. A GOOD GARDEN FOR HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND PLEASURE.

Twelve demonstrators have been selected to conduct corn projects, in various parts of the county. This group of farmers is competing with other farmers in the state, in growing the most corn on an acre at least cost. The winning farmers will be given a trip to the Nation's capitol, Washington, D. C. The contest is sponsored by the state.

4-H Club work among colored boys has gotten off to a good start. Several organizations have been organized and are planning a wide-awake program for the summer states Ford. All members of the club must be sons of farmers or their guardians must be farmers. If there is a boy in a community where there is an organization and he is a son of a farmer he should connect himself with the club at once. "4H Club boys meet together work together, play together, cooperate and achieve."

## Negro Teachers Close Extension Work At Reception

Thirty-five Negro Teachers, Their Instructor, And Guests Hold Reception At P. C. T. S.

For the past seven months thirty five Negro teachers of Person County have taken extension work in history and political science under the direction of Prof. L. A. Wise, of Greensboro.

This group of teachers express much enthusiasm and interest in these courses, and on April 26 this work closed with a reception given at Person County Training School with all members of the class and the instructor present. Prof. J. R. Thomas, Prin of P. C. T. S. was special guest of the occasion. A delicious salad course, ice cream and cake were served.

## Colored Ministers Union Organized

Roxboro Colored Ministers Met Monday To Organize Union; Will Meet Again Monday

The colored ministers of this city met at the First Baptist Church last Monday for the purpose of organizing a minister's union of Roxboro and vicinity. A large number of ministers were present. Every thing was done decently and in order. The union will meet next Monday morning at the First Baptist church at eleven o'clock. The order of the day will be a paper by Rev. L. W. Easterling.

Rev. L. W. Easterling, Pres.  
Rev. T. B. Wilson, Secy.

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