

SLUMBERING GOLD

By Aubrey Boyd

14th INSTALLMENT

"What did you hear, Bud?" Speed spoke low to prevent his voice from carrying to Pete, indoors. It was before dawn of the second morning.

Maitland told him.

"Do you reckon we're both hearin' things?" Speed muttered. "It listened to me more like a louder sound way off. An echo of gunfire.

Or else froze trees snapping in the thaw."

Motionless, they listened again. The silence of the shadowed chasm mocked them.

Speed stirred abruptly. "You stay here, Bud, and watch with Pete. I may be gone awhile, but keep that cliff covered with the rifle. I'll call you when I come back round it."

Speed's reconnaissance took him over a wider range than he had expected. When he paused, halfway down a lofty slope, it was to survey a long and unobstructed view of white headlands, shining in the dawn. In the center of one of the ravines, about two miles away, a pair of dark moving specks came into view. They were men; one of them carried what might be a rifle.

Very slowly, so as not to betray himself by a quick movement, he sank in the snow. The advantage of view was in his favor, since he looked down on them from above.

They were too far to be recognized as anything but men, but the image of Fallon had somehow leaped into his mind's eye at the first dim glimpse of them.

He lay along the base of a boulder, raising his head just high enough to bring the figures into view. He fired the gun once, at random in their direction, and immediately covered it to prevent even a wisp of smoke from showing.

They kept moving for an interval before the sound reached their ears. They stopped, as he had expected. But instead of looking up in his general direction, they turned to stare the other way.

Yet, in spite of the advantage this gave him for observation, some vague and nameless instinct made him sink back out of sight between the boulder and snow trough. This wary sense did not leave him; but after lying hidden some thirty seconds, he looked over the rim again. Strange to say, the two figures had vanished.

Slowly he rose into clear view by the boulder, to tempt them to declare themselves with a bullet.

The shot that did come was an utter and confounding surprise. The roar of it burst in his ears from directly behind him! He dropped back instantly into his shelter. The bullet had flattened against the inner side of the boulder right next to his arm, in the same flash of time as the gun's roar. This marksman was not more than a hundred yards away.

Nothing showed behind him, either. He waited for a gun-muzzle to show; for some tremor, however slight, in the snow above. Why didn't the fellow shoot? His ear, close to the snow, detected the crunch of running feet, receding from him.

He jumped up and ran to the near-by point from which the shot had seemed to come. There he found a hollow in the snow where the sniper had lain concealed, and the marks of his feet leading up from below to this depression, and running away from it. The fugitive was headed for the cabin and had left a moccasin track!

There was a spreading dark pink stain in the snow where he had hidden, and a blood trail all along his course!

A wild scramble along canyon brinks and ledges brought him to the head of the jackpine gulch, and the absence of a blood trace in it assured him that he had arrived in time.

Maitland stood waiting with the carbine and with Pete close by. He motioned them to back in close to the cliff, in silence. They had caught the alarm of the shots, but had no notion of what was about to happen.

After a still wait, a voice spoke abruptly from around the cliff and close at hand—a husky, broken voice. "Don't shoot," it said weakly. "It's

your game. I'm out of shells." Along the cliff wall and into view, covered by Speed's guns, a fur-clad and moccasin-clad figure groped its way, twisted with agony. Maitland recognized at a glance the man who had held them up at their winter camp.

He held a revolver in his right hand. The other hand clutched at his side, and dripped blood. When he raised his head and looked at them, his eyes changed strangely from the look of a fighting animal brought to bay, to an expression of wild astonishment.

"Pete!" he murmured, almost under his breath. "How did they find this?"

"They found your lead dog on the lakes," said Pete. "It brought us here."

The deepening wonder in his face was a thing to see. "The dog!" he muttered huskily. There was a choking in his throat like a chuckle—it became a desperate, blood-chilling, mortally exhausted laugh. "We've won now, kid!" he chortled in a hard elation. "Beat the game with—a damn—Siwash!"

When they would have caught him, he waved them off again. "Get this—Pete," he mumbled thickly. "Somethin' else—I've got to tell ye, kid. And I will. But give me time—but first—get this. The gold is—" He lost his voice and found it by sheer force of will—"I saw it—just now. Two men—in the gulch. In bright snow—" His voice ebbed from him. His discolored and racked face turned gray with a deathly pallor of weakness and stupefaction at the failure of his tongue and his brain to answer his will. "The gold—"

With an agonized, astonished curse at his defeat, he slumped, held rigid an instant against the wall, and then with a slow, lurching slide, sank down.

Speed, who had taken a step to break his fall, caught him, and leaned over the still body.

"He told the truth about his last shell," Speed mused aloud. "He was tryin' to reach the cabin and his shells for a last stand. But he saw our marks in the gulch. Who did he think it was at first? And where did he get that wound?"

The two men in the gulch he spoke of—"said Maitland. "It's what I was wonderin'. I saw them, too. About four miles off, from here. He must have dodged 'em. But they'll pick up his blood trail. In half an hour from now, they'll—"

Here Speed unaccountably broke off short, spun about with a gun drawn, and in a flash had leaped round the narrow cliff ledge out of Maitland's sight.

"Hand's up!" he shouted, "or I blast you into the canyon. Throw that gun down!"

A man with his arms raised came around the cliff ledge by which Dalton had approached so short a time before. Maitland was too confounded to utter a sound. He wore the uniform of the Mounted Police.

There are no braver men than the Canadian Northwest Mounted, but they are neither immortal nor impervious to the menace of .45 six-shooters at blank range.

Speed emptied the mounty's holster and kicked the gun behind him into the snow.

"This only makes it worse for you," said the officer. "I demand that you and your partner surrender to arrest."

Here was just the vicious turn of fate that Speed had feared, with an extra twist to make it worse. After evading the suspicion of Cathcart, who had mistaken Dalton for a Siwash, were they now, by a climax of irony, to be charged with the murder of Dalton himself?

"This looks compromisin', I'll concede," he said. "But you boys is on the wrong track. While you're stakin us, the real game is likely beatin' to cover. There's two more men in these mountains and they're worth trailin'."

"Where did you see them?" the officer asked, without belief.

Speed pointed his gun. "Four miles that way."

"You saw me and an officer who trailed with me, perhaps, though we didn't come from

that direction. You've got our distance and bearings twisted. If you have a hope of setting us on a false trail, you can drop it. The game's up for both of you. Should you refuse to return our guns and have heard the warrant, you'll be hunted down to a finish."

Speed picked up the police revolvers, emptied them and threw them into the chasm. "It's a difference of opinion that makes gamblin'," he said. "Get me two lengths of rawhide, Bud."

The request brought Maitland out of a trance. "Don't do it, Speed," he said quickly. "Let the Law straighten this out. Investigations will clear us of what they suspect."

"You've got delusions about the Law, Bud. I can't argue with you. I ain't got no words but a low-down gambler's lingo, and it don't just fit with what I'm tryin' to show. But I've got a hunch, and I'm askin' you now, if ever you trusted a partner's word to take mine when I say you ain't fixed to deal with the law. Later maybe—not now."

Maitland was moved by the appeal, but not by its logic. His eyes were wet when he spoke. "We've reached that junction, Speed, you once talk of. God knows I'll never have a truer partner. You know if this charge were made against you alone, and there was no other way out than the one you say, I'd travel any road to help you. But to escape by using force against the police isn't just a crime that would outlaw us for life; it's a needless crime. We'd be giving them the real case against us that they haven't got. That isn't all. We couldn't take Pete over that route, and I can't leave her to face this alone."

Pete would have spoken, but Speed's brooding look at her checked the words. "How do you figure it?"

"I don't know," said Pete, unhappily. "I feel that Bud's right though when he says you'd give the Law a case."

"You're an ornery young pair of cubs," Speed muttered. "... Reckon you can't help it, coming from where you do. Now it's the same junction, turned backwards, and I can be just as damned ornery."

He pressed back the gun hammers, tensely watched by the police officer who had followed his argument with a fateful interest. Speed's eyes, however, strayed to a long pendent spruce cone on a tree near the ledge. Without aiming, he fired. The cone fell, clipped from the branch, and before it reached the snow, four quick bullets had broken it to fragments. The remaining shells blazed at these pieces as they spun down the slope.

The outlaw waited, listening till the last echo died out of the canyon. Slowly then, he looked at the guns, and rubbed a spot from one of the clean blue barrels. They were still smoking when he handed them to the police officer.

"Well, go ahead and read your warrant about our supposed shootin' of this man," said Speed, indicating Dalton's body.

"We have a warrant for your arrest," said the mounty, "but not for killing that man. Since you've surrendered, I want you to understand that we don't railroad men, or even arrest them on merely presumptive charges. We had a brush with this fugitive—nodding toward Dalton, "down the creek. It's more than possible he was wounded by one of our guns. The inquest will show. My warrant is to arrest you and your partner for the murder of a Siwash on Lake Lebarge, on or about the twentieth of last November. The native's body was disposed of through a hole in the ice, and has been recovered since the thaw."

Speed's eyes sought those of his partner and Pete, who looked dumbfounded.

"Your own warrant?" he demanded.

"Mine would be sufficient. This one happens to be signed by Cathcart of the Mounted Police."

"Well, I'm a son of a—!" Speed mumbled to the hollow chasm with a note of doom.

ARE YOU COLOR BLIND?

An ingenious color chart devised by a distinguished scientist is printed in many colors in the American Weekly, the big magazine which comes with the BALTIMORE AMERICAN, issue of May 19. An unusual feature. Don't miss it. Your favorite newsdealer or newsboy has your copy.—Adv.

CO-OPS TO STAGE THIRD ANNUAL COTTON BALL

Raleigh, May 7.—Ellison D. Smith, Jr., son of Senator "Cotton Ed" Smith of South Carolina, will fly from Washington to Raleigh to attend the Third Annual North Carolina Cotton Ball which will be held in the Memorial Auditorium here on Friday evening, May 10, it was announced today.

He will serve as the marshal of Miss Mary B. Patterson, a Roanoke Rapids girl who is now living at the Mayflower in Washington and who is a popular member of the social set in the nation's capitol. Miss Patterson is one of the 200 socially prominent young ladies who have been invited to sponsor the Cotton Ball.

"Looks like young Smith is following in the footsteps of his dad," remarked an official of the cotton ball, as he pointed out that the keen interest Senator Smith has shown in the welfare of the cotton farmer has won for him the sobriquet of "Cotton Ed." The Cotton Ball is being staged in conjunction with the celebration

of National Cotton Week through the cooperation of a number of agencies interested in stimulating an increased use of cotton.

Although all of the sponsors are North Carolinians, a number of the marshals are from out of the State and a check-up shows that young men from New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Atlanta, Washington, Richmond, Columbia, Memphis and other out-of-state cities will attend as marshals.

Two outstanding orchestras—Red Kibler and his Casanova Orchestra and the Original McKinney's Cotton Pickers—have been secured to play for the Cotton Ball. The ball is formal with cotton suits considered formal.

Mrs. J. C. B. Ehringhaus is again honorary chairman of the Cotton Ball, and a large number of people from all over the State are expected to attend.

SUMMER SESSION OF W.C.U.N.C. BEGINS JUNE 13

Greensboro, May 8.—The summer session of the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina will begin June 13, Thursday with the registration of all students. It is to close July 24.

WATCH AND JEWELRY REPAIRING - ENGRAVING

Diamonds - Watches - Jewelry

A. J. CAVENAUGH

Wallace, N. C.

Brighter Joke

The outlook is for brighter jokes in the magazines. Congress has voted the absent-minded professors five billions in new spending money.—Morning Oregonian.

Don't Prolong The Agony!

Next time you suffer from Gas on Stomach, Headache, Sour Stomach, a Cold, Muscular, Rheumatic, Sciatic or Periodic Pains; That Tired Feeling, That "Morning After" Feeling. Get a glass of water and drop in one or two tablets of

Alka-Seltzer

The New Pain-Relieving, Alkalizing, Effervescent Tablet

Watch it bubble up, then drink it. You will be amazed at the almost instant relief.

It is called Alka-Seltzer because it makes a sparkling alkaline drink, and as it contains an analgesic (Acetyl-Salicylate) it first relieves the pain of everyday ailments and then by restoring the alkaline balance corrects the cause when due to excess acid.

After trying many brands of medicines—so-called relief for gas, and all of them a failure, I gave up hopes. By chance I tried Alka-Seltzer—I am more than satisfied. Geo. Bennett, New York, N. Y.

Get a glass at your drug store soda fountain. Take home a 30 cent or 60 cent package.

THE V-8 SETS ANOTHER RECORD

May 1st brought 1935 Ford V-8 sales up to total all-year 1933 Ford sales (Total 1932 Ford sales were equalled by April 10th last)

ISN'T IT TIME YOU TRIED THIS NEW FORD V-8

SOMETHING has happened to the automobile world today. And that something is the 1935 Ford V-8.

It is a car that upsets accepted standards of motor car practice—by ignoring them.

With its eleven extra inches of springbase (123 inches between the springs) it exceeds all standards for its size as to roominess and riding comfort. With the only V-8 engine short of a \$2300 car, it exceeds standards of performance at its price—yet its 85 horsepower engine runs more thrifly than ever.

In safety, too, it exceeds expected limits—with more effective braking surface per pound of car weight than you find elsewhere below \$1095—and with welded all-steel body, welded steel-spoke wheels, safety glass all around at no extra cost.

It's a car that you ought to try. Not just because it is setting sales records everywhere—but because the reasons behind those sales records are so straight-to-the-point. You may come "to look over a new car"—you'll remain to approve a whole new set of value standards for your automobile dollar.

May we show you the 1935 Ford V-8?

\$495 and up F. O. B. Detroit. Easy terms through Universal Credit Co., the Authorized Ford Finance Plan.

IN NORFOLK TERRITORY

Sales of new Ford V-8's, so far this year are

864% ahead of '32
509% ahead of '33
85% ahead of '34

and local industry benefits with this rise.

FORD DEALERS OF NORFOLK TERRITORY

ON THE AIR—Ford Symphony Orchestra. Sunday Evenings—Fred Waring, Thursday Evenings—Columbia Network.