

New Serial Starting This Week in Cottage Grove Sentinel

GUNLOCK RANCH

by FRANK H. SPEARMAN

CHAPTER I

IT WAS the Fourth of July, and Sleepy Cat—that sunswept little desert town bordering on the Very Bad Lands of the arid Southwest—was dusty.

Dust was not unusual in Sleepy Cat; to be dusty was its normal condition; when not dusty, Sleepy Cat was dead.

"But you needn't be scared of this kind of dust," explained Doctor Carpy, who, sitting with his feet up against the porch handrail of his Sleepy Cat hotel, was talking to Jane Van Tambel. "It's not dirt, this dust—not like your Chicago dust. It's clean volcanic ash that drifts up from the Spanish Sinks.

"But toward sundown when the ash settles over the Superstition Range and the sun shines through it, the air shows every color of the rainbow. That snow on Music mountain—Dr. Carpy pointed—"looks pink and red and purple. You'll like it out here."

Jane disagreed vigorously. "Oh, no! It's going to be awfully lonesome after city life," she declared positively.

"You'll never be lonesome in Sleepy Cat—unless you're good," observed the doctor cynically. "Otherwise you'll find things generally kum in Sleepy Cat."

"It certainly is lively today," conceded the dissatisfied city girl.

It was, horsemen, not a few of them cowmen, clattered up and down Front street and River street, chiefly to hear their own noise. And a mob of miners and prospectors from Thief River had come up for the celebration and the horse races.

"Been out on the Fairgrounds yet?" asked the doctor, continuing his chat with Jane. "Seen any of the races?"

"I saw the Indian races this morning—such yipping and yelling! And those Texans that rode into town yesterday—they yelled louder than the Indians."

"That outfit has just delivered four thousand head of cattle to the Gunlock Agency. They checked them in yesterday. Some old-time Sleepy Catters in that bunch—Henry Sawdy and John Lefever made the drive with the outfit—all the way up from the Rio Grande. Hello," exclaimed the doctor lazily, "here comes Sawdy now."

A rather tall man, well rounded out, somewhat bow-legged, strongly built and confident, if not aggressive, in manner, was coming up the wooden steps leading from the sidewalk to the hotel office. Carpy halted him, Sawdy poised under an overwhelming sombrero, turned and walked toward the doctor and his guest.

"Henry!" exclaimed the doctor. "You blamed old longhorn, I never looked to see you back in Sleepy Cat."

"Ain't no warrants out agin me, are there?" asked Sawdy in calm, blunt, but spirited fashion.

"There must be one or more agin you down along the Rio Grande, Henry," retorted the doctor, "or you wouldn't be so far from the tinkle of the guitar with winter coming on. Meet Miss Van Tambel—newcomer since you went south. Mr. Sawdy, Miss Jane."

Hat in hand, Sawdy stared: "Miss Van Tambel?" he echoed. "Did I get the name right?" he asked as Jane nodded to his greeting.

"You got it right," remarked Carpy dryly.

"Well," returned Sawdy, swallowing. "If you could get a few more newcomers like this, Doc, you'd have a live town. She's no relation to—"

"Gus Van Tambel? Yes," nodded Carpy, easily anticipative. "She's his daughter—only daughter; only child, in fact."

Sawdy swallowed again. "Well,

"I'll say any man might be proud to claim her. I used to work for your father. Is he alive yet?"

"Alive, yes," interposed Carpy. "but a sick man. Have you had a horse race this morning, Henry?" asked Carpy in teasing fashion.

Sawdy snorted. "Hintin' at that sell yesterday, eh? No horse race at all," he went on angrily. "It was just a plain steal, Doc—beggin' pardon, miss—a steal put up by this saloon keeper, Boland, and a crooked cowman, McCrossen, and that Thief River butcher, Clubfoot."

Jane started. McCrossen was the Van Tambel foreman at Gunlock Ranch.

"Tell us about that race," interposed Carpy.

"Well," began the cowman reluctantly, "right before last we bedded the herd down about three miles below Thief River town. About sundown Clubfoot rode into camp on a good-lookin' bay mare. I didn't see him, I was on guard. He said he was on his way up to Sleepy Cat, John Lefever, our foreman, invited him to take supper and bunk for the night."

"He said he was a prospector goin' out on the Gunlock range. He started talkin' horses and said he wanted to sell his pony—claimed he had the fastest mare along the Sinks. He blowed about that pony until John got touchy about his own little chestnut gelding, and John finally promised him a race when we got to Sleepy Cat. Nobody in our bunch not havin' seen the fellow's horse run, John waited till everybody got to sleep and takes Clubfoot's mare off her picket rope for a tryout. Shucks! She had no speed at all."

"Next day they arranged the race, and we boys put up our dough—every dollar in the outfit. What do you think of us for suckers? When the race started, that cussed prospector—beggin' your pardon, miss—run in a ringer on us—another bay mare, looked exactly like the one he rode into camp. That mare run like a streak—covered five hundred yards before John's gelding got his feet picked up. Then we got the story."

"Clubfoot turned out to be a side-swipe for this saloon keeper Boland here."

"Henry, I thought you and John were too wise to get stung like that. How you going to get even? Smashing glassware won't do it."

"I don't know, Doc, I don't know."

"Henry," observed Carpy, "what you mean is you know but you won't tell."

"The races ain't all over yet. Then there's the ropin' and throwin'—"

Carpy nodded.

"—nd the trick ridin'. All I'll say is—" Sawdy hesitated.

"Say all you want to before this young lady. She won't spill. I'll guarantee her," said Carpy.

"Well, if that's so, miss—and you certainly look up to the brag—I'll say McCrossen, that new foreman of yours, was in on that skinnin' we took—at least, we think so. That's nothin' in the world against you."

Jane spoke frankly: "Oh, I'm glad, Mr. Sawdy, you don't bring me into it, for I really don't know any more about it than a babe unborn."

"I hear McCrossen is quite a rider," observed Sawdy tentatively.

"That's what everybody says," returned Jane. "He certainly is wonderful in the saddle."

Sawdy nodded wisely, as if merely to say, "It is well."

"Sawdy," demanded Carpy, "what you got up your sleeve?"

"Nothin' at all, Doc—not a thing in the world."

"You can't fool me, you old desert rat," persisted Carpy.

"Well, Doc, since you're so smart,

will you back what I've got up my sleeve for fifty dollars? Will you do it, Doc? I've just come from Jake Spotts' place. He lent me fifty—"

Carpy reached into his trousers pocket and drew out a roll of bills. "Go along, you critter!" he exclaimed indignantly. "I might have known your long winded story would cost me money. But I didn't look for it to be fifty dollars."

"Make it a hundred, Doc," ventured Sawdy in his rich, persuasive voice.

"Not on your life, Henry. You'll lose this, anyway."

"We get paid tomorrow—cough up for me."

"Go hang! I haven't got it to spare. Want to do some betting myself."

Jane held out her purse. "Why, here, Mr. Sawdy. There's over fifty in this that I'm sure I don't need. Take it."

Sawdy stared dumbfounded. "I couldn't do that, young miss. I couldn't."

Jane, still smiling, had opened her purse, taken from it five gold eagles, and held them out. "If you refuse to let me accommodate you, it won't be much of a compliment to me," she protested.

"I know blamed well I ought not to do it," muttered the big fellow. "Doc—what shall I do?"

"Take it!" said Carpy gruffly. "You'll lose it—then you can work it out for Jane on the ranch this summer—she's running things out there while her father's sick."

Sawdy reluctantly let the trim young lady drop the gold pieces into his horny hand—she laughing.

"But if you go to work at Gunlock," remarked the doctor, "make no mistake. Keep off the grass. Don't aspire to the hand of this young princess. I've got a bid in there myself."

"Why, doctor!" exclaimed Jane, all rosy in protest and rising to go.

"Just the same, girl, any man that bids for you has got to face a major operation at my hands. Will you be back for dinner?" he asked of Jane as she made ready to leave.

"We're having watermelon today."

"I'm not going to miss that. But I must go over to Rubido's to order some supplies. By the way, I forgot to ask: What shall I do with that medicine you gave me last time?"

"Throw it out the window and ride horseback. You're coming along wonderful for six weeks out here."

"Hold on, miss, just a minute, please," begged Sawdy as the party broke up. "You'll be at the Fairgrounds this afternoon for the races?"

"Of course I'll be there," responded Jane pertly.

"You've done me a kind, good turn. I want to do you a good one. This goes for this old medicine man, too," Sawdy nodded toward the doctor.

"What is it?" asked Jane coolly. Sawdy was solemn.

"You won't neither of you spill it? All right. Don't bet no money on the trick ridin' this afternoon."

By two o'clock that day the Fairgrounds were sizzling hot and tremendously crowded. Frontier Day celebration was combined with the national holiday and the county fair of a county bigger than most eastern states. A gathering of horsemen, cowmen, mining men, railroad men, gamblers, prospectors, desert rats, and frontier adventurers milled about the rickety little grandstand.

On an occasion such as this, when a local celebration combined with the arrival of a goodly outfit of cowmen, there was reason to look forward to a lively round-up by proprietors of thirst parlors, gamblers, clothiers, merchants, and barbers. On this particular Fourth of July there was every reason but one for such a hope—the cow outfit had been thoroughly skinned by the advance guard of Sleepy Cat sharpers in the person of Harry Boland and Clubfoot and Company.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

STATE CAPITOL NEWS LETTER

Salem, Ore., July 14. — Distribution of \$31,964 among the counties and cities of the state, representing the second quarterly allocation of beer and wine taxes, was completed this week by Secretary of State Snell. The little community of Cornucopia in Baker county received the smallest check, 34 cents. Portland's share amounted to \$10,114.68.

Lane county's share amounted to \$986.05. The city of Cottage Grove received \$82.88; Eugene, \$633.43; Coburg, \$8.81; Creswell, \$11.56; Florence, \$11.36; Junction City, \$30.90; Springfield, \$79.92.

Claims totalling \$81,120.75 against the several counties for the care of non-violent insane under the so-called "ward" act of 1931 were wiped off the books by the board of control this week. The claims were based upon the arbitrary charges of \$20 per month which the counties protested as excessive inasmuch as it was more than the actual cost of the care of these wards to the state. In wiping out these claims the board of control conceded this point. Charges against the counties wiped out by the board action include: Benton, \$1122; Columbia, \$526; Coos, \$769; Deschutes, \$512.34; Lane, \$3001.83; Linn, \$2316; Marion, \$19,740.62; Morrow, \$70.67; Multnomah, \$44,572.96; Polk, \$636.66; Umatilla, \$180.33; Wasco, \$123.99; Washington, \$1,444.68; Yamhill, \$1224.46.

Governor Martin wants the "back seat drivers" who are continually knocking the government to quit their croaking and get out and push. The "defeatist" attitude which he declares to be so deep rooted in the Willamette is especially scored by the governor who declares that what western Oregon needs most of all is some of the fighting spirit which he found to abound in eastern Oregon in his recent visit to that section of the state.

State officials and employes who are not satisfied with the kind of automobiles the state buys for them must either swallow their pride or buy their own cars, the board of control declared this week in turning down requisitions for three new cars of more expensive make. The board has been confining its automobile purchases to the lighter and less expensive models on the theory that the primary interest of the state is to provide economical transportation.

After taking up the \$250,000 in certificates of indebtedness issued to finance June and July relief

PROVERB NUMBER 6



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needs the state liquor commission will have only \$630,000 available for the relief work during the remainder of the year according to an estimate by A. K. McMahan, chairman of the liquor commission. With five months to go that means the state's share of relief expenditures must be kept below \$150,000 a month if the work is to be kept on a pay-as-you-go basis as Governor Martin insists that it must. Approximately \$200,000 of the anticipated revenues for this year will come in for annual license renewals during the last two weeks in December, McMahan said.

If the State Industrial Accident commission expects to avoid payment of the state "tithe" it must look to the courts for relief. Attorney General Van Winkle has advised the commission that in the absence of a Supreme Court ruling to the contrary it must be assumed that the act requiring self-supporting boards and commissions to pay

a "tithe" into the general fund, is valid. The commission had sought to evade the tithe on the ground that the workmen's compensation fund is a trust fund and not subject to state regulation.

More than 80 law school graduates participated in the annual bar examinations here this week. This was a smaller class than usual. Last year 103 applicants for admission to the bar took the tests.

To Corvallis on Vacation.

Robert Zahm, in charge of the market at Safeway Stores, and family are attending a family reunion this week at Corvallis. During his absence Carl Hagen, formerly with the local store and now with the company in Eugene, is in charge of the market. Mr. Zahm is expected home Friday.

Eggs are hatched grown and are working at the age of 15 minutes.



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