

# ROBBERS' ROOST

SYNOPSIS

Jim Wall, young cowpuncher from Wyoming, in the early days of the cattle industry, seeks a new field in Utah. He meets Hank Hays, who admits being a robber, and tells Wall he is working for an Englishman, Herrick, who has located a big ranch in the mountains. Herrick has employed a small army of gun-fighters, and Hays and others are plotting to steal their employer's cattle and money. Wall saves Hank's life by bluffing a gambler out of shooting. With Hays and two other rustlers, Happy Jack and Lincoln, Jim Wall goes to Herrick's ranch.

## CHAPTER III—Continued

Herrick had selected a site for his home that was undoubtedly the most picturesque point in the valley. If not one that had the most utility for the conducting of a ranch business. Ten miles down from the head of the valley a pine-wooded bench, almost reaching the dignity of a promontory, projected from the great slope of the mountain. Here where the pines straggled down stood the long, low cabin of peeled logs, yellow in the sunlight. Below, on the flat, extended the numerous barns, sheds, corrals. A stream poured off the mountain, white in exposed places, and ran along under the bench and out to join the main brook of the valley.

Somewhat apart from both the corrals and outbuildings on the flat stood a new log cabin, hurriedly built, with chinks still unfilled. The roof extended out on three sides over wide porches, where Wall observed three or four beds, a number of saddles and other riders' paraphernalia. The rear of the cabin backed against the rocks. Jim understood that Hays had thrown up this abode, rather than dwell too close to the other employees of Herrick. From the front porch one could drop a stone into the brook, or fish for trout. The pines trooped down to the edge of the brook.

Naturally no single place in all that valley could have been utterly devoid of the charm and beauty nature had lavished there, but this situation was ideal for riders. Hays even had a private corral. As Jim rode up to this habitation his quick eye caught sight of curious, still-eyed men on the porch. Also he observed that there was a store of cut wood stowed away under the porch.

"Wal, here we air," announced Hays. "An' if you don't like it you're shore hard to please. Finest of water, beef, lamb, venison, bear meat. Butter for our biscuits. An' milk! An' best of all—not very much work. Haw! Haw!"

"Where do we bunk?" asked Jim, presently.

"On the porch. I took to the attic myself."

"If you don't mind I'll keep my pack inside, but sleep out under the pines," responded Wall.

When at length Jim carried his effects up on the porch Hays spoke up: "Jim, here's the rest of my outfit. . . . Fellers, scrape acquaintance with Jim Wall, late of Wyoming."

That was all the introduction Hays volunteered. Jim replied: "Howdy," and left a return of their hard scrutiny until some other time.

Hays went at once into low-voiced conference with these four men. Happy Jack hauled up the supplies. Brad Lincoln occupied himself with his pack. Jim brought his own outfit to a far corner of the porch. Then he strolled among the pines seeking a satisfactory nook to unroll his bed.

Jim, from long habit, generated by a decided need of vigilance, preferred to sleep in coverts like a rabbit, or any other animal that required protection. At length he found a niche between two rocks, one of which was shelving, where pine needles furnished a soft mat underneath and the murmur of the brook just faintly reached him. Jim would not throw his bed where the noise of rushing water, or anything else, might preclude the service of his keen ears. There was no step on his trail now, but he instinctively distrusted Lincoln, and would undoubtedly distrust one or more of these other men.

Hays exemplified the fact of honor among thieves. Jim had come to that conviction. This robber might turn out big in some ways. But could even he be trusted? Jim resolved to take no chances.

Not until the following morning did Jim Wall get a satisfactory scrutiny of the four members of Hays' outfit.

The eldest, who answered to the name of Mac, was a cadaverous-faced man, with eyes like a ghoul.

"Whar you from?" he asked Wall.

"Wyoming, last," replied Jim, agreeably.

Jeff Bridges, a sturdy, tow-headed man of forty or thereabouts, had a bluff, hearty manner and seemed not to pry under the surface.

"Glad Hank took you on," he said.

"We need one cattleman in this outfit, an' that's no joke."

Sparrowhawk Latimer, the third of the four, greatly resembled a horse thief Wall had once seen hanged.

Hays had said to Slocum, the fourth member of this quartet: "Smoky, you an' Wall shore ought to make a pair to draw to."

"You mean a pair to draw on," retorted the other. He was slight, wiry, freckled of face and hands, with a cast in one of his light, cold-blue eyes.

"No!" snorted the robber. "Not on! . . . Smoky, do you recollect that gambler Stud Smith, who works the stage towns, an' is somethin' of a gun-slinger?"

by ZANE GREY

Copyright—WNU Service.

"I ain't forgot him."

"Wal, we set in a poker game with him one night. I was lucky. Stud took his losin' to heart, an' he shore tried to pick a fight. First he was goin' to draw on me, then shifted to Jim. An' Jim bluffed him out of throwin' a gun."

"How?"

"Jim just said for Stud not to draw, as there wasn't a man livin' who could set at a table an' beat him to a gun."

"Most oblige an' kind of you, Wall," remarked Smoky, with sarcasm, as he looked Jim over with unsatisfied eyes. "If you was so all-fired certain of that, why'd you tip him off?"

"I never shoot a man just because the chance offers," rejoined Jim coldly. There was a subtle intimation in this, probably not lost upon Slocum. The greatest of gentlemen who never sought quarrels. Jim knew that his reply would make an enemy, even if Slocum were not instinctively one on sight. Respect could scarcely be felt by men like Slocum. Like a weasel he sniffed around Jim.

"You don't, eh?" he queried. "Wal, you strike me unfavorable."

"Thanks for being honest, if not complimentary," returned Jim.

Hays swore at his lieutenant: "Unfavorable, huh? Now why do you have to pop up with a dislike for him?"

"I didn't say it was dislike. Just unfavorable. No offense meant."

"Smoky," said Hays, "I won't have no grudges in this outfit. I've got the biggest deal on I ever worked out. There's got to be harmony among us."



Jim Gleaned Information From This Rancher.

But Smoky bobbin' up again my new man—that's serious. Now let's lay the cards on the table. . . . Jim, do you want to declare yourself?"

"I'm willing to answer questions—unless they get nasty," replied Jim, frankly.

"You got run out of Wyoming?"

"No. But if I'd stayed on I'd probably stretched hemp."

"Hold up a stage or somebody?"

"No. Once I helped hold up a bank. That was years ago."

"Bank robber! You're out of our class, Jim."

"Hardly that. It was my first and only crack at a bank. Two of us got away. Then we held up a train—blew open the safe in the express car."

"Smoky, I call it square of Wall, spoke up Hays. "He shore didn't need to come clean as that."

"It's all right," agreed Slocum, as if forced to fair judgment.

Hays plumped off the porch rail. "Now, fellers, we can get to work. Herrick puts a lot of things up to me, an' I ain't no cattleman. Jim, do you know the cattle game?"

"From A to Z," smiled Wall.

"Say, but I'm in luck. We'll run the ranch now."

"What'll I do, Hank?" asked Jim.

"Wal, you look the whole diggin's over."

Jim lost no time in complying with his first order from the superintendent of Star ranch. What a monstrous and incredible hoax was being perpetrated upon some foreigner!

Evidently there had been ranchers here in this valley before Herrick. Old log cabins and corrals adjoining the new ones attested to this.

Jim passed cowboys with only a word or a nod. He talked with an old man who said he had owned a homestead across the valley, one of those Herrick had gathered in.

Jim gleaned information from this rancher. Herrick had bought out all the cattle men in the valley, and on round the foothill line to Limestone Springs, where the big X Bar outfit began. Riders for these small ranches had gone to work for Herrick. He was told that Heeseman, with ten men, was out on the range.

Presently Jim encountered Hays, accompanied by a tall, floridly blond man, garbed as no westerner had ever been. This, of course, must be the Englishman. He was young, hardy over thirty, and handsome in a fleshy way.

"Mr. Herrick, this is my new hand I

was tellin' you about," announced Hays, glibly. "Jim Wall, late of Wyoming. . . . Jim, meet the boss."

"How do you do, Mr. Wall," returned Herrick. "I understand you've had wide experience on ranches?"

"Yes, sir. I've been riding the range since I was a boy," replied Jim.

"Hays has suggested making you his foreman."

"That is satisfactory to me."

"You are better educated than these other men. It will be part of your duties to keep my books."

"I've tackled that job before."

"So I was tellin' the boys," interposed Hays.

"As I understand ranching," went on Herrick, "a foreman handles the riders. Now, as this ranching game is strange to me I'm glad to have a foreman of experience. My idea was to hire some gunmen along with the cowboys. Hays' name was given me at Grand Junction as the hardest nut in eastern Utah. It got noised about, I presume, for other men with reputations calculated to intimidate thieves applied to me. I took on Heeseman and his friends."

"But you really did not need go to the expense—and risk, I might add—of hiring Heeseman's outfit."

"Expense is no object. Risk, however—what do you mean by risk?"

"Between ourselves, I strongly suspect that Heeseman is a rustler."

"By Jove! You don't say? This is ripping. Heeseman said the identical thing about Hays."

"Wal, Mr. Herrick, don't you worry none," interposed Hays, suavely. "Shore I don't take kind to what Heeseman called me to your face, but I can overlook it for the present. You see, if Heeseman is workin' for you he can't rustle as many cattle as if he wasn't. Anythin' come of that deal you had on with the Grand Junction outfit?"

"Yes. I received their reply the other day," rejoined Herrick. "By Jove, that reminds me. I had word from my sister, Helen. It came from St. Louis. She is coming through Denver and will arrive at Grand Junction about the fifteenth."

"Young girl—if I may ask?" added Jim.

"Young woman. Helen is twenty-two."

"Comin' for a little visit?" asked Hays.

"By Jove, it bids fair to be a life-long one," declared Herrick, as if pleased. "She wants to make Star ranch her home. We are devoted to each other. If she can stick it out in this bush I'll be jolly glad. Can you drive from Grand Junction in one day?"

"Shore. Easy with a buckboard an' a good team," replied Hays.

Herrick resumed his walk with Hays, leaving Jim to his own devices. Jim strolled around the corrals, the sheds, down the lane between the pastures, out to the open range.

This Englishman's sister—this Helen Herrick—she would be coming to a remote, wild and beautiful valley. What would the girl be like? Twenty-two years old, strong, a horsewoman, and handsome—very likely blond, as was her brother! And Jim made a mental calculation of the rustlers in Herrick's employ. Eighteen!

After supper Hays leaned back and surveyed the company. "Fellers, we've a pow-wow on hand. Clear the table. Fetch another lamp. We'll lay out the cards an' some coin, so we can pretend to be settin' in a little game if anybody happens along. But the game were really settin' in is the biggest ever dealt in Utah."

"Talk low, everybody," instructed Hays. "An' one of you step out on the porch now an' then. Heeseman might be sick enough to send a scout over here. 'Cause we're goin' to do that little thing to him. . . . Happy, dig up that box of cigars I've been savin'."

"Hank, trot out some champagne," jeered Brad Lincoln.

"Nothin' to drink, fellers," returned Hays. "We're a robber outfit. No arguin' or fightin'. . . . Any of you who doesn't like that can walk out now."

They were impressed by his cool force.

"All right. Wal an' good. We're set," he went on. "Today I changed my mind about goin' slow with this job."

Jim Wall had a flash of divination as to this sudden right-about-face.

"Herrick reckons there are upwards of ten thousand head of stock on the range. Some of these ranchers he bought out sold without a count. I bought half a dozen herds for Herrick. An' I underestimated say, rough calculatin', around two thousand head. So there's twelve thousand good. That's a herd, fellers. All there any of you who wouldn't care to play a game for twelve thousand head of cattle at forty dollars per?"

"There did not appear to be a single one."

"Abuh. Wal, that's okay. Now, can we drive such a big herd?"

"Bosa, listen to this idee," spoke up Smoky. "Most of these Star cattle range down the valley twenty miles below here. How'd it do for, say, five of us to quit Herrick an' hide below someplace? Meantime you go to Grand Junction an' arrange to have your buyers expect a bunch of cattle every week. A thousand to two thousand head. We'd make the drives an' keep it up as long as it worked. You're boss, an' Wall here is foreman. You could keep the cowboys close to the ranch."

TO BE CONTINUED.

## News Review of Current Events the World Over

### Probing the Morro Castle Disaster—Textile Strike Mediation Fails and Rioting Is Resumed—Profits in War Munitions.

By EDWARD W. PICKARD

© by Western Newspaper Union.

NEARLY always in the case of a marine disaster persons come forward with accusations of negligence and misbehavior on the part of the officers and crew of the vessel concerned.



George W. Rogers

This is true now of the Morro Castle, the Ward liner which burned eight miles off the New Jersey coast with a loss of 135 lives.

The Morro Castle, large, swift, and luxurious in its appointments, was returning from a seven-day cruise to Havana.

The ship's master, Capt. Robert Wilcott, had died of heart disease only a few hours before the tragedy, and William F. Warme, chief officer, was in command. With 12 other officers and members of the crew he stood by the blazing ship until the bulk was towed to Asbury Park and beached.

Several of the surviving passengers testified before the federal steamboat inspection board that no alarm was sounded and little or no aid was given panic-stricken passengers by the members of the crew. Then George W. Rogers, chief radio operator, and his first assistant, George I. Alagna, told of the delay in sending out the SOS call, asserting they could not obtain an order for it from the bridge. This, of course, was explained by the usual reluctance of steamship officers to call for help because the salvage charges are heavy.

Alagna was put under arrest as a material witness after he had told his story to a federal grand jury. The value of his testimony was somewhat lessened by Rogers' admission to both the board and the grand jury that Alagna had been distrusted by Captain Wilcott as a radical and an agitator, and that Alagna some months ago tried to instigate a riot on the ship as a protest against the food served the crew.

The first actual evidence indicating that the fire was of incendiary origin was furnished by Quartermaster Gus Harmon.

"It was like the flash of a 16-inch gun," he declared. "It couldn't have been gasoline because it traveled much faster. It might have been some sort of chemical, all of which would light up when one point of it started. There was a funny, acrid smoke coming out of the flash."

Other officers of the ship testified that they believed the fire was of incendiary origin and was fed by gasoline or chemicals, but they could suggest no motive for such a horrible crime. Acting Captain Warme said he based his opinion that the blaze was incendiary on two facts: First, because on August 27, on a previous voyage to Havana, there was a suspicious blaze in the No. 5 hold; second, because reports to him indicated that the writing room locker, in which the fatal fire started, exploded. The flames, he explained further, acted "like gasoline or kerosene," and fire extinguishers had no effect on them.

The chief of the secret police in Havana declares the burning of the Morro Castle was an act of sabotage by members of a secret international maritime association that takes its orders from the Communists of Moscow.

THE International Typographical union, in convention at Chicago, defeated a proposal by delegates representing local No. 6 of New York for a four day thirty hour week, to be optional with each local by a referendum vote. Charges were made that the plan had been instigated by Communists in control of the New York local, who are seeking to wreck the international organization and vilify its officers.

The accusation was denied by the president of the local, which has a membership of 10,500 union printers in New York. Other delegates supplied the convention with circulars setting forth the charges of communistic interference.

EFFORTS of President Roosevelt's mediation board to bring about a peaceful settlement of the textile strike failed when the employers, according to the board, refused to make any concessions that would open the way to arbitration. The strike leaders had insisted that all the mills must remain closed pending arbitration, and this was rejected by the mill owners. The cotton textile employers then declared flatly that they did not believe the issues at stake are "appropriate subjects for arbitration."

The immediate result of this breakdown in negotiations was the resumption of violence and disorder, especially in Rhode Island. Thousands of strikers and their sympathizers fought with National Guard detachments in Saylesville and Woonsocket, driving back the greatly outnumbered soldiers. Tear gas, nausea gas and finally bullets were used to check the rioters and many persons were wounded, some fatally. Governor Green made concessions to the Saylesville strikers and

ordered that there should be no more shooting. But at Woonsocket conditions grew momentarily worse and the police commissioner of the city asked the governor to obtain federal troops to stop the rioting. The major in command of the National Guardsmen there admitted the situation was out of control. Great crowds were looting shops in the downtown section and others were threatening the Woonsocket Rayon company's plant.

Fearing major bloodshed and death, Governor Green read the riot act and asked President Thomas F. McMahon of the United Textile Workers of America to hasten there from Washington. The governor also ordered the mobilization of 1,000 World War veterans and a statewide roundup of Communist agitators.

Explaining the employers' refusal to compromise, the cotton textile code authority pointed out that the hours and wages and other conditions against which the union is striking are set forth in an NRA code. This code, the employers say, was set up to be the "law merchant" for the industry, and the strike, therefore, is an attempt to change the industrial law by violence and intimidation.

FOUR members of the Du Pont family, Pierre, Irene, Felix and Lamont, appeared before the senate munitions inquiry committee and told of the huge business the Du Pont corporation has done in supplying war material. Between 1914 and 1918 the company, which was founded in 1802 to manufacture black powder, filed \$1,245,000,000 worth of war orders. In that time it did about 35 times the business it had in the year just before the World War, when its sales amounted to \$36,000,000.

Irene du Pont testified that the corporation subscribed to preferred stock in the German dye patents seized during the war by the United States. He said these patents had resulted in a "great service" to America. The corporation entered the dye business after the war as a licensee of the Chemical foundation, Du Pont said.

There did not seem to be anything very sensational or scandalous in the facts elicited from the Du Ponts, but previous witnesses had told a lot about the deals of airplane companies and other corporations with foreign nations in which it was alleged they had been aided by United States diplomats and army and navy officers. There was a lot, too, about graft on the part of South American government officials. One of the stories told brought in the name of King George of England, and this resulted in official protests by British diplomats both in Washington and in London.

Just what Senator Nye and his committee expect to do with the information they are gathering is not certain. There are suggestions of government ownership or at least government control of all war munition manufacturing and selling. Plenty of evidence was brought out to prove that the makers of these wares sell to both sides in warfare.

IN the fifth installment of the senate banking committee on its stock market investigation internal revenue agents were charged with "laxity in enforcement" for accepting, without examination, income tax returns prepared by J. P. Morgan & Co.



J. P. Morgan

The committee presented a long review of evidence that officials of the Morgan company, Kuhn, Loeb & Co., and the National City bank of New York "avoided" income taxes by "a variety of methods."

"Many returns, particularly of partners in large banking houses, were exempted from adequate scrutiny," the committee said.

"When examinations were made the time devoted to them was comparatively short, in view of the wealth of the taxpayers and the complex nature of their transactions."

"Thus, in 1936, according to the bureau's own records, one day was spent in checking the partnership return of J. P. Morgan & Co. and Drexel & Co.—the most powerful banking group in the world."

"This return was not subjected to any field examination and apparently the agent's explanation was sufficient to satisfy the internal revenue bureau that none was necessary."

SENATOR HUEY LONG won handsomely in his fight for absolute control of Louisiana, his candidates for congress, state supreme court and public service commissioner defeating those of the "old guard." The election was quite peaceful despite the predictions of bloody "civil war." The Kingfish is now expected to press his investigation of graft and corruption in the affairs of New Orleans and to undertake to have his arch enemy, Mayor T. Semmes Walmisley, ousted from office through action by the legislature, which he controls. Huey is now the virtual dictator of the state, but his opponents have not given up the fight.

NEW DEALERS rejoiced in the results of the Maine election, though their victory was incomplete. Gov. Louis J. Brann, Democrat, was re-elected by a substantial majority over the Republican candidate, Alfred K. Ames, a wealthy and aged retired lumberman. Senator Frederick Hale, veteran Republican, was returned to the upper house for his fourth term, but his majority over F. Harold DuBord, dynamic Democratic nominee, was so slender that Hale must have felt rather humiliated. The New Dealers won two of the three congressional seats.

William A. Comstock lost the Democratic nomination to succeed himself as governor of Michigan, being defeated by Arthur J. Lacey. The Republicans named Frank B. Fitzgerald, now secretary of state.

In South Carolina the textile strike injected itself into the election. In a runoff election Olin D. Johnston, union sympathizer and former mill hand, won the Democratic nomination over Cole Blaise.

In Arizona the Democrats renominated Senator Ashurst and Congressman-at-large Isabella Greenway. The New Dealers tried to get the gubernatorial nomination in Colorado for Miss Josephine Roach, coal mine operator and social worker, but she was beaten by Edward C. Johnston, the incumbent. In Washington, also, the New Dealers lost out when J. C. Stephenson was defeated by Lewis Schwellenbach for the Democratic senatorial nomination.

QUARTERLY financial reports from the national committees show that between June 1 and September 1 the Republican receipts were \$105,673 and the Democrats collected \$121,088. Republican expenditures aggregated \$149,920 and Democratic outlays were \$106,337. The Republican deficit was fixed at \$81,435, against Democratic unpaid obligations of \$497,959.

Among the generous contributors to the Democratic fund were Col. Jacob Ruppert, George F. Trommer and William Piel of New York and Fred Fabst of Milwaukee, all identified with the brewing industry. Irene and Lamont du Pont and their associates gave largely to the Republican fund.

NATIONWIDE distribution has been started on a poster pledging the public to support Blue Eagle business establishments. Four inches square, it is gummed for pasting in windows. Code authorities and local NRA committees are counted upon to aid its distribution.

This agitation is to accompany the temporary internal reorganization of the recovery administration, as decided upon by President Roosevelt and Hugh S. Johnson, the NRA administrator.

Authority is to be split three ways instead of the present one-man control. General Johnson is expected to continue in an important post. Separate agencies will be in charge of policy-framing, administration, and deciding controversies.

IF YOU can believe the foreign office in Tokio, Japan is ready to scrap all powerful weapons of offense and is likely to propose, at the forthcoming naval reduction conference, the abolition of battleships and plane carriers.

"It is not Japan's intention to enter a naval competition which will result in an increase in armaments and heavier burdens for the people of the world," the foreign office spokesman said. "Our plan is to have a navy insufficient for offensive purposes but sufficient for defense. We hope others also will work towards this end."

WHEN the League of Nations met in Geneva an invitation to Russia to join the league was circulated, signed and sent to Moscow. The council then announced that an accord had been reached to grant Russia a permanent seat on the council, and it was expected that only Portugal and Argentina would continue to oppose this.

Richard Sandier of Sweden was elected president of the league assembly by an almost unanimous vote. Poland gave a jolt to the league by announcing that it will no longer abide by the general treaty for the protection of minority peoples. Joseph Beck, foreign minister, told the assembly that until all states protect the rights of minorities Poland would refuse any control by an international organization of its treatment of minority groups.

CATHERINE BRUSHKOVSAKAYA, "grandmother of the Russian revolution," died at her home near Prague. During most of the ninety years of her life she struggled to free Russia and she spent 23 years in exile in Siberia. Her contribution toward the downfall of the Romanoffs was considerable.

FROM the American Federation of Labor comes a suggestion that the government create a "central agency, representing organized business, labor, consumers and the government, to lay out a production program and carry it through."