

# The Girl and the Gun

## A STORY OF MOUNTAIN RAILROAD LIFE

### By FRANK H. SPEARMAN

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#### Eleventh Installment.

**Synopsis.**  
Little Helen Holmes, daughter of General Holmes, railroad man, is rescued from imminent danger on a scenic railroad by George Storm, a bewitching young man. Helen's father, General Holmes, is a powerful man, and his friends, Amos Rhineland, finance officer, and Robert Seagrue, promoter, from a threatened collision. Seagrue's survey plans of the cut-off line for the Tidewater, fatally wound the general's escape. Her father's estate is involved by his death. Helen goes to work on the Tidewater. Helen recovers the survey plans from Seagrue, and though they are taken from her, finds an accidentally made proof of the general's identity. Storm, employed by Rhineland, Spike, befriended by Helen, in turn saves her from a general's contract when Seagrue kidnaps her. Helen and Storm win for Rhineland a sum that Seagrue had planned to use. Helen, Storm and Rhineland rescue Spike from Seagrue's men. Spike steals a train, but Helen and Storm save him from death in the burning court house.

(Continued from Last Monday.)

**Suiting of the Superstition Mine.**  
Outwitted in his effort to obtain possession of the coveted right-of-way records and defeated once more in his plans to betray the failure of Spike to betray those who had befriended him, Seagrue's wrath concentrated on Spike as being chiefly responsible for his discomfiture. But standing in the room which had just been the scene of his last defeat, Seagrue felt that he could at least enjoy revenge. Helen, Storm and Rhineland were still in the room, and he wanted to see the sheriff was just leaving the room when Seagrue called to him. As he did so, he drew from his pocket a worn pamphlet and handed it ostentatiously to the sheriff. "There's something of interest to you!"

"What do you mean?" returned the official. "The pamphlet, saw set forth on the cover a reward of \$500 for the apprehension of Spike and he laughed: 'We see these things every day,' said he, handing it back to Seagrue. 'If I were to chase up all the pointers I get like that, my salary wouldn't buy my gasoline.' 'You don't have to burn any gasoline to get this money,' retorted Seagrue. 'Your man is right here.' 'Where?' demanded the sheriff, skeptically. 'Seagrue pointed to Spike. 'That is the man,' he said, coldly. Spike decided the game was up. He made a bolt for the door. The sheriff stopped him. The moment was an unpleasant one. Helen was furious. 'Of all the mean things you've ever done,' she said to Seagrue, hotly, 'this is about the meanest. I should think you would want to go and hide yourself.' She exclaimed with cutting emphasis, 'from the sight of this man!'

Seagrue retorted in like: "That sounds fine from your lips, Miss Helen Holmes! It's a new role for you to become the champion of prison birds like this fellow." He nodded insolently toward Spike. "Especially," he added, "since this very man has just pointed a finger of reprobation at you. This very man, as I almost thought, was implicated in the death of your own father!" He meant, with his retort, to beat poor Helen into the ground. He almost did so. Breathless, unable to speak, she looked helplessly from Seagrue to accused, Storm and Rhineland. Rhineland, looking at Seagrue like one stunned, Helen could only gasp: "My father!" "Yes, your father," repeated Seagrue, angrily. "How do you like your hero now?" he concluded, tauntingly. Helen looked toward Spike. He could not even look at her. He turned to the sheriff and in a voice such as no man ever had heard from him before, muttered: "I'm ready."



1—Made His Way Hand Over Hand to the Train. 2—The Bandits Held the Party Up. 3—Bill Suddenly Gave In.

You go right out with me to the mine!" And when the expert asked how soon they should start, Seagrue answered, "At once."

While the mining man was getting his hat and coat, Bill and Lug appeared with the car. The next moment the four drove rapidly away.

At the mine the foreman was still examining the walls. He looked at his watch and directing the men to look after the work, he left the tunnel to see whether his messenger had returned. He had hardly reached the surface when the car with Seagrue and his party drove up. Alighting, the new arrivals lost no time in following the foreman into the tunnel. He showed Seagrue the lost beams. The latter examined the spot carefully and turned to question the head driver. This man pointed to the last spot at which they had got high grade quarries. The expert stooped and took up a handful of rock from the ground. Answering Seagrue, in reply to a hopeful question, he shook his head. "I doubt very much," said he, after the two had canvassed the matter from all sides, "if it is possible to recover the vein."

At the entrance to the shaft, Seagrue dismissed his own two men and turned to the expert. They talked together a few moments. The mining man saw what was in Seagrue's mind and was not surprised a moment later to hear him say, without further beating about the bush: "If I can get a bidder for the mine, I'll pay \$50,000 for a good report on it."

Seagrue never would have ventured such a proposal to one he was not sure of. Bill, like most of the men Seagrue did business with, this particular fellow had his price. He affected to consider the proposal. "Of course," he mused, "if we could recover the vein there is a mine there yet." He looked toward Seagrue for approval of this self-evident proposition.

Seagrue nodded in kind. Each understood the other as they left the scene together. And summoning his men, Bill and Lug, and getting into his motor car with the expert, Seagrue drove away toward Las Vegas. The machine was stopped a little distance from Rhineland's camp and Seagrue on a scratch pad wrote a note to Amos Rhineland. Giving this to Lug, he directed him to deliver it. He then told Bill to drive back to town; there were still a few details of the dishonest arrangement to be discussed and on these Seagrue and the expert agreed during the drive to the city.

Helen sat in pieces over the disclosure of Spike's complicity in the death of her father, returned with Rhineland and Storm to the construction camp. Storm offered such consolation as he could, but this was very little. And it was almost a relief to him when Rhineland directed him to see about getting the men to work. Rhineland, himself, was watching the progress of the construction a little while later, when Lug handed him Seagrue's note:

"Dear Rhineland—Without a cutoff, we cannot operate the Superstition mine profitably. This would make a good investment for your company and I am giving you the first chance to bid for it. Yours, SEAGRUE."

Rhineland, somewhat puzzled, read the note over two or three times. He dismissed Lug with the verbal message to Seagrue that he would look into it, and calling Storm and Helen into conference, Rhineland read them the note and its contents were put under discussion.

"Do you suppose," asked Rhineland, "that he means what he says?" "It might be," ventured Helen, reflectively. "Certainly we know he is about defeated in his construction race. And if he's beaten of the railroad proposition, why shouldn't he want to get rid of his mining property?"

"The Superstition mine," observed Rhineland, "has always been a good producer."

The usual bargaining, Rhineland proposed to take the property, including the ore ready for the wagons, at \$10,000-\$25,000 to be paid down. Seagrue accepted, Rhineland made out his check and the transaction was complete, Rhineland only requesting that the foreman keep the men at work until he should have a chance to get started. This was assented to and Storm was placed temporarily in charge of the mine.

While the negotiations had been taking shape, a freight train had pulled in a few miles distant at Valley Station, where the crew set out an empty box car for loading. A teamster from the mine was summoned by the agent who handed him a note for the mine foreman. When the teamster reached the mine, the new purchasers were taking possession. He handed the message to the foreman. The foreman read: "Have empty box car here for high-grade ore. Send it down right away and local will pick the car up this p. m."

"LEN."

He turned to Rhineland, showing him the message and pointing to the sacks ready for shipment.

Rhineland was willing to ship the ore ready for the wagons at once. "All right," he said, nodding to the foreman. "Send what you have to the smelter right away."

Storm was given authority to put this part of the job through as quickly as possible. While the details were being talked over between Rhineland and his assistant, neither of them noticed that they were overheard by Seagrue's tools, Bill and Lug, who now decided that there might be a chance to break into the mining business at their own proper risk and for their own private account. When Seagrue called them from the discussion of their ambitious project, he gave orders to Bill to drive back to Las Vegas, reaching the station he took the train for the city.

With their boss out of the way, his two worthies thought the moment opportune for their own plans and taking the machine they started back for the mine. Wagons, conveyed by two guards, carrying sawed-off shotguns—had been loaded at the mine with the valuable quartz ore. They had reached Valley and while the teamsters were loading the sacks into the box car the two swards found a shady spot under the car door.

The wagon had been under surveillance for some time by the Seagrue crooks, Bill and Lug, who were secreted a mile away in the bed of a wash. The two waited patiently until the wagon had been unloaded and started back to the mine. Then scouting their way cautiously under the siding, the thieves creeping under the farther side of the box car, surprised the guards, disarmed and bound them. Having done this without loss of time they went to work loading the last of the quartz into the car.

But the guards, though taken unawares, proved no fools. One of them, working quickly and unobtrusively, being his hands partly loose, in the next moment he had freed his feet. Without betraying himself, he rolled close to his companion—a fat man—bade him to turn him back to back and was releasing him when a shout from Bill warned him he had been seen.

There was no time for hesitation. Springing to his feet the free guard dashed down the road, Bill opening fire on him as he fled.

Bill and Lug, dragged the fat guard down hill, hid him in a ravine near the side track. The two then hiding in turn, watched the train as it stopped at the station below. The agent came out of the office after a few minutes. When the conductor asked about the car the agent and he walked together over to it. They saw it would not be ready to start for some time.

The predicament in which the thieves now found themselves was an awkward

one. They knew full well that Storm, the minute the escaped guard reached the mine, would be after them with men as fast as horses could travel.

But Bill, the craftier of the pair, thought that by working quick they still might make it. Between the siding and the main line were two cables used by the teamsters to switch cars with and they gave him an idea. Pointing to the cables on the ground, he outlined his suggestion to Lug: "There's one way to work it, Lug, and just one—"

Lug, like another Watson, stared at his companion until he should hear more. "We must drop this car into the train," explained Bill. "Throw the ore out on the right-of-way as we run along and pick it up afterwards with the machine. See?" Together they creased over to where the train stood, pulled a pin in the middle of the swing and attached the longer of the cables securely between the two sections of the train thus cut in two. The second cable was attached to the hind end of the first cut, and fastened to the partly loaded box car on the side track. The plotters then rested.

The conductor, deciding there was no use waiting longer for the box car, was making ready to go without it. The head-end brakeman signaled the cab and the train pulled out. As the slack was taken up the box car answered first to the strain on the shorter cable and with a jerk started down the siding. Approaching the switch, as its momentum increased, it sprung the connecting rods and swung in on the main line contact, as Bill had intended, between the two sections of the train.

When the engineer shut off to coast down the grade, the three sections came together and the train, except for the absence of air in the hind end of the train line pipe, was complete.

The escaped guard, running every step of the way to sound the alarm, had by this time arrived exhausted at the mine. At the foot of the aerial railway he found Storm with Helen watching the ore come down. Grappling the situation from the disconnected words the man was able to utter, Storm dashed into the chemist's office close at hand and seized a Winchester rifle. Helen sprang to a team and empty wagon, waiting for a load, and climbing to the seat seized the reins at the moment the train, rife in hand, ran out of the office to the siding, and the horses forward and headed with a very different load from what they had expected, for Valley.

Bill and his confederate in the box car, elated by their huge success, looked out of the side door for observers and seeing none, began to dump the sacks of precious quartz one after another out on the right-of-way.

But it was a day of surprises for everybody. The agent at Valley—who had asked to be sent out to the desert on account of his rheumatism—was peacefully fighting his pipe, after the great event of the day—the departure of the local freight—when he heard somewhere out of doors an unwonted rumble. It grew and still it grew and the next moment a team, better skelter on the run, dashed down toward the depot. The man behind the dundumfounded to recognize in the man behind the threatening rifle as he drew close, his old acquaintance in the Ocean-side yards, George Storm, the ex-engineer.

"Could George Storm have turned bandit? Was he running amuck? Would he take the life of an old and unoffending friend without provocation. These and similar queries raced through his mind when Storm, addressing him with a shout by an old-time familiar nickname, asked where the boxcar of ore was that had stood on the siding."

The agent now saw everything double, but look as he would he could see no car. Not until now had he given the presence of the boxcar a thought. He knew the train had not taken it because it was not ready. He knew the conductor had started without it—but where was it? The disappearance of Storm and Helen, came to their aid. The freight train stopped at Arden for water. This embarrassed Lug and Bill, who perceiving at every pore, were caching sacksful of quartz as fast as they could along the track. What was of more moment, the engineer's stop for water enabled Helen and Storm with their team to gain on the train.

"Helen, look in the seat," "Drive close, George," she cried, "I can make the train from here and give the alarm."

Before he could make a successful effort to stop her she jumped from the

teamster's seat to the side ladder of the nearest boxcar.

The watchful thieves, whose attention had already been drawn to the pursuing wagon, decided it was time to make a getaway. Bill started out of the car, but a shot from Storm, who saw the move and recognized the criminal, was warning enough to Bill. He hastily dodged inside and led the way to the little square door at the end of the car. Out of this, followed by Lug, he crawled to make the top of the train.

Storm, determined to be in at the finish, saw only one way of compassing his resolve. He took from the box seat the driver's rope and as the team dashed alongside the train Storm swung the rope in a loop over the nearest brake-wheel, secured his rifle and swinging over from the wagon made his way hand over hand to the train before it had quite pulled away from the running horses.

Helen was springing along toward the head end of the train. Gaining it she made explanation to the crew and with them started back.

Bill and Lug gained the top of a car just as Helen and the engine crew came back. The bandits whipped out their guns, held the party up and drove them in the same manner. But there were too many now for the two men to watch and while they were forcing the engine crew with Helen back to the cab, the train crew fell on Bill and Lug. This fight on the top of the train was vicious. Bill managed to break away from his captors, but both men in the scrimmage had lost their guns and with Lug after him Bill ran forward. The engine crew, seeing the move, put on all speed to hold the men if possible to the deck.

Helen had started back to help when she saw the desperadoes coming her way. Dropping in between two cars she cut off the head end and it pulled rapidly away from the train. With hope of

escape in that direction defeated Bill and Lug turned on their pursuers. The engine, seeing the issue of the fight behind, now slowed down. Helen, followed by the train crew, led the chase for Bill. He turned on her with an angry oath, but for all his threats she sprang into him, like a wild cat and he found it impossible to get successfully away from her. She was on his heels every minute, delaying his flight, while with oaths and blows he endeavored to be rid of her. By the time he had finally overpowered her the train crew was on his back. And at their heels came Storm with his Winchester.

Exhausted by the struggle against too many odds, Bill suddenly gave in. The conductor stopped the brakeman from mauling him further and with their prisoners in front and Storm as guard, the party started back for the train. Helen waited to see the discomfited thieves placed safely in custody within the caboose and boarding it herself with Storm's assistance, laughingly, as was her wont, received the congratulations of her companions on her success. The engineer already had his orders as to what to do and when the last of the party climbed aboard, the train was started slowly back to find the team and the fat fellow who had been tumbled into the ravine. It was feared he had been hurt, but on being released he asked for nothing more than a fresh chew of tobacco. When Lug and Bill were tied and thrown into the wagon to be taken back to the mine, he had his revenge by sitting on the two malefactors alternately.

(To Be Continued Next Monday.)

## Great Mysteries of Nature

### Rotation of Earth Can Only Be Explained by Going Back to Beginning of Solar System.

By GARRETT F. SERVISS.

"Kindly explain what causes the earth to rotate.—S. E. P."

Of course you mean to ask, what started the earth's rotation? Once turning, it must continue to turn unless some force interferes to arrest its motion.

Science, at present, is unable to give a definite answer to this question. Perhaps it never will be able to give such an answer. It is a part of the great problem of the origin of the earth and of the whole solar system, which consists of the sun; eight planets, including the earth; some twenty-five or twenty-six satellites, or moons, belonging to the planets; hundreds of planetoids; a large number of comets, and many swarms of meteors.

All these things together make up a gigantic mechanism of which the sun is the motor, or governor, which keeps it running. The entire system revolves round and round the sun, and each of the planets rotates round its own axis, like a spinning ball, the direction of both the general revolution of the system and the particular rotation of the individual planets being the same, with certain exceptions, which can be accounted for as due to particular causes.

Since the rotation within the solar system are linked together and have a certain concord, it is to be inferred that they must have had a common origin. We may say, then, that the earth rotates because a motion of rotation was impressed upon it when it came into existence, together with the other members of the system. Revolution around a common center (the sun) and rotation around their own axes are effects of a great fundamental, mechanical law controlling all of the planets.

The sun itself, which exceeds in mass of quantity of matter hundreds of times all the other members of the system combined, also obeys the law and rotates on its axis in the direction in which the planets revolve around it.

Whatever force set the entire system into revolution was, no doubt, the fundamental source of all the revolutions and rotations that we find among its members. That force acted when the system was created. According to the general belief of astronomers the start was made on a nebula, a nebula is a cloud of gas, or perhaps a cloud of dust or of small meteors, which is capable by condensation of being shaped into stars or suns.

The great French mathematician Laplace invented a celebrated theory to explain the origin of the solar system which is known as the Nebular Hypothesis. He supposed that there was once a nebulous mass (and the telescope and photography show many such now in the sky) which, under the attraction of its own particles for one another, contracted and assumed a globular shape. In consequence of some lack of balance among the motions of the particles in the nebula the entire mass, as it contracted, got into rotation, somewhat as the water in a vessel sets itself into a whirl when a stopcock is opened at the bottom. Some irregularity in the flow starts a motion in a particular direction, and then all the water begins to move that way.

As the nebula continued to contract it became more and more dense at the center until a globular condensation was formed there which ultimately became the sun. At the same time the rotation of the entire nebula increased in velocity, as the laws of mechanics would require it to do, as a result of the shrinking of the mass and then the centrifugal forces flattened it out into the shape of a disk. When the rotation became still swifter rings of matter began to separate off from the whirling disk, and these rings, when they broke, rolled themselves up, so to speak, into nebulous balls, which ultimately condensed into the earth and the other planets.

The globes, or planets, thus formed would rotate in consequence of the original

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—621—

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