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GOLD CACHE OLD JOHN BARKER but Even Kann File to für Fate. No austro-

OLD JOHN PARKER had seen the three men a week ago. Either they fighted they were asle, or thought his eyes weren't too good, but he had seen them and their horses as they roude the upper ratial look-ing ower his comp site. But John Parker was far from worried. He had ridden the trails and lived in the hills too long to late a few pack-cass bother him. He knew what they were

after, all right, Word had

reached town that he had hit

a rich vein of cold at last, and right now there would probably he cold fever in every town from ocean to ocean. Two days ago he had found tracks leading to the clearing around his shack. Today the three men were up on the rock above. They sure wren't careful, he thought. Not cood mountain men at all. They guessed that he had never sported them and were making up their minds what to do. Old John knew what they were waiting for . . , waiting for him to lead them to his cache of gold to they could kill him and be off with it. If it weren't for the

shack, he would have been dead a week ago.

They code in just after dark, three scowling men who packed six guns around their waists, tied down with thongs from the bottom of the holsters. Old John kney them, He should.

fact that he hadn't left his

From Kansas City to San Francisco their pictures hung in every post office and along every trail. The heavy guy leading the trio dismounted and walked over to the campfire. His voice was rapy as he said, "Howdy. We just rode a long trail. Mind if we use you't layout here?" It would the useless to argue.

Old John grinned and cocked his head. "Sure! Leave your horses on the other side of the shack where there's grass and grab some stew."

Two men fed the forers away, but one was careful to stay with him, Old John noticed. Maybe they guessed he recognized them, maybe not. At any rate. John didn't care much. He had seen enough violence in his day to saistly him, and if he had to die; . well, he had itwed a good logo lite and finally made a strike. That was all he ever asked for anyway.

The tall guy's name was Bud Masker. He, was wanted for nurder, robbers and a duzen other things. He was a man who took what he wanted and got away with it on the strength of a fast gun. When he squatted by the fire, he said, "You the feller that hit it risch up here?"

"Yep." John Parker lit his pipe, drawing on it slowly. "I worked into a vein that everyone thought had petered out. Not a bad strike. Figger to take it easy the reat of my life." "None, just me. Used to have

"Nope, just me. Used to a partner, but he died."

Maxier looked at the old man carefully, trying to read his face, When the other two men came back, he remarked, "Guess you got sech a pile now you can't tote it to town in one load." Old John nodded solemaly.

"That's right. Need a buckboard." The three men exchanged glances burriedly, their eyes alight with the knowledge that all the yellow metal would ason be theirs.

When they had filled their places from the cookpot, the small, swarthy one rasped, "Where do ya keep it all?"

John grinned at him. "Not where soyone can find it so quick, you can bet!" His eyes went around the three and centered on Maxier.

The outlaw snarted, "Till take that betti" Old John knew it had to come sooner or later. One of the men get up and washed to his bedroll, pulling his ancient rifle from the packed out the shells and threw them into the brush. Bud Maxler said, "Want to still rough the said, "Want to tell to where it is or do we have to kill you?"

John played it smart. "Kill me and you'll never find it, Bud!" The outlaw jumped at the mention of his name, his eyes shifting toward the others beside the fire.

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The little one stared hard at an i

The little one stared hard at the prospector. "We have to kill you now, old man, We don't want it known that we're in the country, so you're practically dead right now."

Bud nodded agreement.
"Take your choice," he said.
"You can get it fast if you tell
us where the pile is. Try to hold'
out and you'll wish you didn't.
It am't good to die alow-like."

It ain't good to die alow-like." I John's voice was sharp. "I'm mot telling anything, You can I stick my hand in the fire, and I still won't tell you. You crooks won't get away with this. By sun-up, a pack train will-be up this way and a posse on your basels."

backs."
"We'll have time enough to be on our way." His voice was ominous as his tone implied what was coming. "I think you had a good idea about sticking your hand in that fire. I'm ready

John was squirming as he watched Bud. The outlaw ancered, "Just once, that's all I'm gonna ask you. Where is

that gold dust?"

There was silence for a long moment, then, "Find it!" Old John leaped to hus feet and scrambled into the darkness, but he wann! take mough Bud's hand grabbed hu ankle, bringing him down with a thud. A heavy fist crashed against his jaw, sapping, his head back. The old man couldn't take that kind of treatment any more. His bead fell on his sleoulders and huns limin.

When he came to, he was lying beside the fire with Bud Maxler straddling his body. The smaller guy grabbed his arm in an iron grip. The outlaw said, "You're gonns talk now, pop.
The sooner the better!" They didn't bother to strip off his glove or roll up his sleeve. . . the fire would do that quickly enough, With a sudden inovement the one outlaw thrust his hand and forearm into the

burning embers of the fire!

The old man clamped his lips together and fought them, but his strength was gone. Suddenly he lay slack and groaned, "No more . . . the gold is in the trunk of the big oak . . . right



up the path by the shack." That was as far as he got. His head turned and he passed out.

Bud Maxler shouted his pleasure and leaped to his feet. "Come on, let's get at!" Without another word the three raced up the path in the darkness. It took them through the brush and up the side of the mountain. Only once did Bud hestate to say, "Think he was telling the truth?"

"Yer dang tootin," the small guy told him. "So would you if you had your mitt in a fire!" Once again the path rose until it was merely a series of handholds cut in live rock, then at the top was a level plain with brush wast ligh. Bud saw the oak then, silhouetted against the night sky, a tree that rose majestically above all the others.

marestically above all the others. "He wasn't lying! There she is!" The other two chorused the ery, then ran toward the hidden gold as fast as their feet would take them. They ripped aside the brush as they ran, smashing down saplings and grass . . . then without a warning the earth gave way beneath them. Three men screamed their fears as they felt themselves falling. As one, they reallized that they had been trucked. In their mad rush for that hidden gold they had been trapped into plunging headlong into a ravine!

John Parker found them there a half hour later. Strangey enough, there were no signa of pain marking his face. The sand that had been held in the fire hung at his side as if noth ng had happened. He looked at the smashed bodies of the outlaws as he stripped off the fragments of the burned glove, exposing the blackened surface of an artificial hand. He grinned at what had been Bud Maxler and shook his head "Tough luck, feller," he said. "Thirty years ago Injuns pulled that same stunt on me but they made it stick. I lost my hand? Good thing you fell for my remark about sticking it in the fire. Didn't hurt a hit!"

fire, Didn't hurt a bit!"

He left them there; tomorrow he'd have to go to town and get a new wooden hand. The old one was cetting worn any.

way.

THE END SL-5270



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"Suce. I meet late of girls who look cute at first glance. But if, on that second glance, I see dingy blackheads, it's good wight !! Or can you blame the girl who conferen. "I hate to go out with a fellow who has blackbeads. If he's careless about

that you're sure he'll embarrass you in other wars, too to But you - are YOUR care burning? Well, res/ve company and, sai to say, good company. There are left of othern ine attractive fellows and airlawho could date anyone they like if they'd only realise how offensive blackheads are . . and how easily and quickly they could get rid of them . . . if they must to?

"He-Man" Often Guilty of Blackhead Crime

Take your "be-man", super at track, games, sports of all kinds who throke that after just a shower be's ready to go accurated. And won't the guit all advers to muscles! Sure they would! But not many dis-Sure they would! But not many dis-force are set up for burdle more! You can't show off your mappy left hook when only cakes are in the rang. The "he man" who's also cleanerst, will get the brasks wherever he in

Even Cute Girls

Recome Careless y, too easy, for a girl to think that if has the latest in clothes and hair-do needn't bother about Markhand the man the latest in clother and har-de she needn't bother about blackheads. A stills more make up, the guesses, will take are of that BUT MAKEUP WON'T HIOE BLACKHEADS! No works. HOE BLACKHEADS! Not unless the laster of parts, maybe! And even good take-up "slips" at a dance! So don't take hances, cute though you may be!

TAVE THESE TIRE TO BANISH BLACKHEADS

Keen alde clean by washing recycling sight with marm almost her Lise good some and electy of tract every blackhead as soon to see it—with a SAFE extrac-Ous't was frager nails. Don't ree. That may mean infection, ured tissues, a marred slore.

I say be clean! Bs quick! And be



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