



***HARRY LEON  
WILSON***

***THE SPENDERS:  
A TALE OF THE THIRD  
GENERATION***

**Harry Leon Wilson**

# **The Spenders: A Tale of the Third Generation**

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## FOREWORD

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The wanderers of earth turned to her—outcast of the older lands—

With a promise and hope in their pleading, and she reached them pitying hands;

And she cried to the Old-World cities that drowse by the Eastern main:

"Send me your weary, house-worn broods and I'll send you Men again!

Lo, here in my wind-swept reaches, by my marshalled peaks of snow,

Is room for a larger reaping than your o'ertilled fields can grow.

Seed of the Main Seed springing to stature and strength in my sun,

Free with a limitless freedom no battles of men have won,"

For men, like the grain of the corn fields, grow small in the huddled crowd,

And weak for the breath of spaces where a soul may speak aloud;

For hills, like stairways to heaven, shaming the level track,

And sick with the clang of pavements and the marts of the trafficking pack.

Greatness is born of greatness, and breadth of a breadth profound;

The old Antaeus fable of strength renewed from the ground  
Was a human truth for the ages; since the hour of the Edenbirth

That man among men was strongest who stood with his feet on the earth!

SHARLOT MABRIDTH HALL.

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"The fair and sometimes uncertain daughter of the house of Milbrey"

"'Well, Billy Brue,--what's doin'?'"

"The spell was broken"

"'Why, you'd be Lady Casselthorpe, with dukes and counts takin' off their crowns to you'"

"'Remember that saying of your pa's, "it takes all kinds of fools to make a world'"'"

"'Say it that way--" Miss Milbrey is engaged with Mr. Bines, and can't see you'"'"

# THE SPENDERS

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# CHAPTER I.

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## **The Second Generation is Removed**

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When Daniel J. Bines died of apoplexy in his private car at Kaslo Junction no one knew just where to reach either his old father or his young son with the news of his death. Somewhere up the eastern slope of the Sierras the old man would be leading, as he had long chosen to lead each summer, the lonely life of a prospector. The young man, two years out of Harvard, and but recently back from an extended European tour, was at some point on the North Atlantic coast, beginning the season's pursuit of happiness as he listed.

Only in a land so young that almost the present dwellers therein have made it might we find individualities which so decisively failed to blend. So little congruous was the family of Bines in root, branch, and blossom, that it might, indeed, be taken to picture an epic of Western life as the romancer would tell it. First of the line stands the figure of Peter Bines, the pioneer, contemporary with the stirring days of Frémont, of Kit Carson, of Harney, and Bridger; the fearless strivers toward an ever-receding West, fascinating for its untried dangers as for its fabled wealth,—the sturdy, grave men who fought and toiled and hoped, and realised in varying measure, but who led in sober truth a life such as the colours of no tale-teller shall ever be high enough to reproduce.

Next came Daniel J. Bines, a type of the builder and organiser who followed the trail blazed by the earlier pioneer; the genius who, finding the magic realm opened, forthwith became its exploiter to its vast renown and his own large profit, coining its wealth of minerals, lumber, cattle, and grain, and adventurously building the railroads that must always be had to drain a new land of savagery.

Nor would there be wanting a third—a figure of this present day, containing, in potency at least, the stanch qualities of his two rugged forbears,—the venturesome spirit that set his restless grandsire to roving westward, the power to group and coordinate, to "think three moves ahead" which had made his father a man of affairs; and, further, he had something modern of his own that neither of the others possessed, and yet which came as the just fruit of the parent vine: a disposition perhaps a bit less strenuous, turning back to the risen rather than forward to the setting sun; a tendency to rest a little from the toil and tumult; to cultivate some graces subtler than those of adventure and commercialism; to make the most of what had been done rather than strain to the doing of needless more; to live, in short, like a philosopher and a gentleman who has more golden dollars a year than either philosophers or gentlemen are wont to enjoy.

And now the central figure had gone suddenly at the age of fifty-two, after the way of certain men who are quick, ardent, and generous in their living. From his luxurious private car, lying on the side-track at the dreary little station, Toler, private secretary to the millionaire, had telegraphed to the headquarters of one important railway

company the death of its president, and to various mining, milling, and lumbering companies the death of their president, vice-president, or managing director as the case might be. For the widow and only daughter word of the calamity had gone to a mountain resort not far from the family home at Montana City.

There promised to be delay in reaching the other two. The son would early read the news, Toler decided, unless perchance he were off at sea, since the death of a figure like Bines would be told by every daily newspaper in the country. He telegraphed, however, to the young man's New York apartments and to a Newport address, on the chance of finding him.

Locating old Peter Bines at this season of the year was a feat never lightly to be undertaken, nor for any trivial end. It being now the 10th of June, it could be known with certainty only that in one of four States he was prowling through some wooded canon, toiling over a windy pass, or scaling a mountain sheerly, in his ancient and best loved sport of prospecting. Knowing his habits, the rashest guesser would not have attempted to say more definitely where the old man might be.

The most promising plan Toler could devise was to wire the superintendent of the "One Girl" Mine at Skiplap. The elder Bines, he knew, had passed through Skiplap about June 1st, and had left, perhaps, some inkling of his proposed route; if it chanced, indeed, that he had taken the trouble to propose one.

Pangburn, the mine superintendent, on receipt of the news, despatched five men on the search in as many

different directions. The old man was now seventy-four, and Pangburn had noted when last they met that he appeared to be somewhat less agile and vigorous than he had been twenty years before; from which it was fair to reason that he might be playing his solitary game at a leisurely pace, and would have tramped no great distance in the ten days he had been gone. The searchers, therefore, were directed to beat up the near-by country. To Billy Brue was allotted the easiest as being the most probable route. He was to follow up Paddle Creek to Four Forks, thence over the Bitter Root trail to Eden, on to Oro Fino, and up over Little Pass to Hellandgone. He was to proceed slowly, to be alert for signs along the way, and to make inquiries of all he met.

"You're likely to get track of Uncle Peter," said Pangburn, "over along the west side of Horseback Ridge, just beyond Eden. When he pulled out he was talking about some likely float-rock he'd picked up over that way last summer. You'd ought to make that by to-morrow, seeing you've got a good horse and the trail's been mended this spring. Now you spread yourself out, Billy, and when you get on to the Ridge make a special look all around there."

Besides these directions and the telegram from Toler, Billy Brue took with him a copy of the *Skiplap Weekly Ledge*, damp from the press and containing the death notice of Daniel J. Bines, a notice sent out by the News Association, which Billy Brue read with interest as he started up the trail. The item concluded thus:

"The young and beautiful Mrs. Bines, who had been accompanying her husband on his trip of inspection over the

Sierra Northern, is prostrated with grief at the shock of his sudden death."

Billy Brue mastered this piece of intelligence after six readings, but he refrained from comment, beyond thanking God, in thought, that he could mind his own business under excessive provocation to do otherwise. He considered it no meddling, however, to remember that Mrs. Daniel J. Bines, widow of his late employer, could appear neither young nor beautiful to the most sanguine of newsgatherers; nor to remember that he happened to know she had not accompanied her husband on his last trip of inspection over the Kaslo Division of the Sierra Northern Railway.



## **CHAPTER II.**

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### **How the First Generation Once Righted Itself**

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By some philosophers unhappiness is believed—rather than coming from deprivation or infliction—to result from the individual's failure to select from a number of possible occupations one that would afford him entire satisfaction with life and himself. To this perverse blindness they attribute the dissatisfaction with great wealth traditional of men who have it. The fault, they contend, is not with wealth inherently. The most they will admit against money is that the possession of much of it tends to destroy that judicial calm necessary to a wise choice of recreations; to incline the possessor, perhaps, toward those that are unsalutary.

Concerning the old man that Billy Brue now sought with his news of death, a philosopher of this school would unhesitatingly declare that he had sounded the last note of human wisdom. Far up in some mountain solitude old Peter Bines, multimillionaire, with a lone pack-mule to bear his meagre outfit, picked up float-rock, tapped and scanned ledges, and chipped at boulders with the same ardour that had fired him in his penniless youth.

Back in 1850, a young man of twenty-four, he had joined the rush to California, working his passage as deck-hand on a vessel that doubled the Horn. Landing without capital at San Francisco, the little seaport settlement among the

shifting yellow sand-dunes, he had worked six weeks along the docks as roustabout for money to take him back into the hills whence came the big fortunes and the bigger tales of fortunes. For six years he worked over the gravelly benches of the California creeks for vagrant particles of gold. Then, in the late fifties, he joined a mad stampede to the Frazer River gold-fields in British Columbia, still wild over its first knowledge of silver sulphurets, he was drawn back by the wonder-tales of the Comstock lode.

Joining the bedraggled caravan over the Carson trail, he continued his course of bitter hardship in the Washoe Valley. From a patch of barren sun-baked rock and earth, three miles long and a third of a mile wide, high up on the eastern slope of Mount Davidson, he beheld more millions taken out than the wildest enthusiast had ever before ventured to dream of. But Peter Bines was a luckless unit of the majority that had perforce to live on the hope produced by others' findings. The time for his strike had not come.

For ten years more, half-clad in flannel shirt and overalls, he lived in flimsy tents, tattered canvas houses, and sometimes holes in the ground. One abode of luxury, long cherished in memory, was a ten-by-twelve redwood shanty on Feather River. It not only boasted a window, but there was a round hole in the "shake" roof, fastidiously cut to fit a stove-pipe. That he never possessed a stove-pipe had made this feature of the architecture not less sumptuous and engaging. He lived chiefly on salt pork and beans, cooked over smoky camp-fires.

Through it all he was the determined, eager, confident prospector, never for an instant prey to even the suggestion

of a doubt that he would not shortly be rich. Whether he washed the golden specks from the sand of a sage-brush plain, or sought the mother-ledge of some wandering golden child, or dug with his pick to follow a promising surface lead, he knew it to be only the matter of time when his day should dawn. He was of the make that wears unbending hope as its birthright.

Some day the inexhaustible placer would be found; or, on a mountainside where the porphyry was stained, he would carelessly chip off a fragment of rock, turn it up to the sun, and behold it rich in ruby silver; or, some day, the vein instead of pinching out would widen; there would be pay ore almost from the grass-roots—rich, yellow, free-milling gold, so that he could put up a little arastra, beat out enough in a week to buy a small stamp-mill, and then, in six months—ten years more of this fruitless but nourishing certainty were his,—ten years of the awful solitudes, shared sometimes by his hardy and equally confident wife, and, at the last, by his boy, who had become old enough to endure with his father the snow and ice of the mountain tops and the withering heat of the alkali wastes.

Footsore, hungry most of the time, alternately burned and frozen, he lived the life cheerfully and tirelessly, with an enthusiasm that never faltered.

When his day came it brought no surprise, so freshly certain had he kept of its coming through the twenty years of search.

At his feet, one July morning in 1870, he noticed a piece of dark-stained rock in a mass of driftstones. So small was it that to have gone a few feet to either side would have been

to miss it. He picked it up and examined it leisurely. It was rich in silver.

Somewhere, then, between him and the mountain top was the parent stock from which this precious fragment had been broken. The sun beat hotly upon him as it had on other days through all the hard years when certainty, after all, was nothing more than a temperamental faith. All day he climbed and searched methodically, stopping at noon to eat with an appetite unaffected by his prospect.

At sunset he would have stopped for the day, camping on the spot. He looked above to estimate the ground he could cover on the morrow. Almost in front of him, a few yards up the mountainside, he looked squarely at the mother of his float: a huge boulder of projecting silicate. It was there.

During the following week he ascertained the dimensions of his vein of silver ore, and located two claims. He named them "The Stars and Stripes" and "The American Boy," paying thereby what he considered tributes, equally deserved, to his native land and to his only son, Daniel, in whom were centred his fondest hopes.

A year of European travel had followed for the family, a year of spending the new money lavishly for strange, long-dreamed-of luxuries—a year in which the money was joyously proved to be real. Then came a year of tentative residence in the East. That year was less satisfactory. The novelty of being sufficiently fed, clad, and sheltered was losing its fine edge.

Penniless and constrained to a life of privation, Peter Bines had been strangely happy. Rich and of consequence in a community where the ways were all of pleasantness and

peace, Peter Bines became restless, discontented, and, at last, unmistakably miserable.

"It can't be because I'm rich," he argued; "it's a sure thing my money can't keep me from doin' jest what I want to do."

Then a suspicion pricked him; for he had, in his years of solitude, formed the habit of considering, in a leisurely and hospitable manner, even the reverse sides of propositions that are commonly accepted by men without question.

"The money *can't* prevent me from doin' what I jest want to—certain—but, maybe, *don't* it? If I didn't have it I'd fur sure be back in the hills and happy, and so would Evalina, that ain't had hardly what you could call a good day since we made the strike."

On this line of reasoning it took Peter Bines no long time to conclude that he ought now to enjoy as a luxury what he had once been constrained to as a necessity.

"Even when I was poor and had to hit the trail I jest loved them hills, so why ain't it crafty to pike back to 'em now when I don't have to?"

His triumphant finale was:

"When you come to think about it, a rich man ain't really got any more excuse fur bein' mis'able than a poor man has!"

Back to the big hills that called him had he gone; away from the cities where people lived "too close together and too far apart;" back to the green, rough earth where the air was free and quick and a man could see a hundred miles, and the people lived far enough apart to be neighbourly.

There content had blessed him again; content not slothful but inciting; a content that embraced his own beloved West, fashioning first in fancy and then by deed, its own proud future. He had never ceased to plan and stimulate its growth. He not only became one with its manifold interests, but proudly dedicated the young Daniel to its further making. He became an ardent and bigoted Westerner, with a scorn for the East so profound that no Easterner's scorn for the West hath ever by any chance equalled it.

Prospecting with the simple outfit of old became his relaxation, his sport, and, as he aged, his hobby. It was said that he had exalted prospecting to the dignity of an art, and no longer hunted gold as a pot-hunter. He was even reputed to have valuable deposits "covered," and certain it is that after Creede made his rich find on Mammoth Mountain in 1890, Peter Bines met him in Denver and gave him particulars about the vein which as yet Creede had divulged to no one. Questioned later concerning this, Peter Bines evaded answering directly, but suggested that a man who already had plenty of money might have done wisely to cover up the find and be still about it; that Nat Creede himself proved as much by going crazy over his wealth and blowing out his brains.

To a tamely prosperous Easterner who, some years after his return to the West, made the conventional remark, "And isn't it amazing that you were happy through those hard years of toil when you were so poor?" Peter Bines had replied, to his questioner's hopeless bewilderment: "No. But

it *is* surprisin' that I kept happy after I got rich—after I got what I wanted.

"I reckon you'll find," he added, by way of explaining, "that the proportion of happy rich to unhappy rich is a mighty sight smaller than the proportion of happy poor to the unhappy poor. I'm one of the former minority, all right,—but, by cripes! it's because I know how to be rich and still enjoy all the little comforts of poverty!"

## CHAPTER III.

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### **Billy Brue Finds His Man**

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Each spring the old man grew restive and raw like an unbroken colt. And when the distant mountain peaks began to swim in their summer haze, and the little rushing rivers sang to him, pleading that he come once more to follow them up, he became uncontrollable. Every year at this time he alleged, with a show of irritation, that his health was being sapped by the pernicious indulgence of sleeping on a bed inside a house. He alleged, further, that stocks and bonds were but shadows of wealth, that the old mines might any day become exhausted, and that security for the future lay only in having one member of the family, at least, looking up new pay-rock against the ever possible time of adversity.

"They ain't got to makin' calendars yet with the rainy day marked on 'em," he would say. "A'most any one of them innocent lookin' Mondays or Tuesdays or Wednesdays is liable to be *it* when you get right up on to it. I'll have to start my old bones out again, I see that. Things are beginnin' to green up a'ready." When he did go it was always understood to be positively for not more than two weeks. A list of his reasons for extending the time each year to three or four months would constitute the ideal monograph on human duplicity. When hard-pushed on his return, he had once or twice been even brazen enough to assert that he had lost



his way in the mountain fastnesses. But, for all his protestations, no one when he left in June expected to see him again before September at the earliest. In these solitary tours he was busy and happy, working and playing. "Work," he would say, "is something you want to get done; play is something you jest like to be doin'. Snoopin' up these gulches is both of 'em to me."

And so he loitered through the mountains, resting here, climbing there, making always a shrewd, close reading of the rocks.

It was thus Billy Brue found him at the end of his second day's search. A little off the trail, at the entrance to a pocket of the cañon, he towered erect to peer down when he heard the noise of the messenger's ascent. Standing beside a boulder of grey granite, before a background of the gnarled dwarf-cedars, his hat off, his blue shirt open at the neck, his bare forearms brown, hairy, and muscular, a hammer in his right hand, his left resting lightly on his hip, he might have been the Titan that had forged the boulder at his side, pausing now for breath before another mighty task. Well over six feet tall, still straight as any of the pines before him, his head and broad shoulders in the easy poise of power, there was about him from a little distance no sign of age. His lines were gracefully full, his bearing had still the alertness of youth. One must have come as near as Billy Brue now came to detect the marks of time in his face. Not of age—merely of time; for here was no senility, no quavering or fretful lines. The grey eyes shone bright and clear from far under the heavy, unbroken line of brow, and the mouth was still straight and firmly held, a mouth under

sure control from corner to corner. A little had the years brought out the rugged squareness of the chin and the deadly set of the jaws; a little had they pressed in the cheeks to throw the high bones into broad relief. But these were the utmost of their devastations. Otherwise Peter Bines showed his seventy-four years only by the marks of a well-ordered maturity. His eyes, it is true, had that look of *knowing* which to the young seems always to betoken the futility of, and to warn against the folly of, struggle against what must be; yet they were kind eyes, and humourous, with many of the small lines of laughter at their corners. Reading the eyes and mouth together one perceived gentleness and sternness to be well matched, working to any given end in amiable and effective compromise. "Uncle Peter" he had long been called by the public that knew him, and his own grandchildren had come to call him by the same term, finding him too young to meet their ideal of a grandfather. Billy Brue, riding up the trail, halted, nodded, and was silent. The old man returned his salutation as briefly. These things by men who stay much alone come to be managed with verbal economy. They would talk presently, but greetings were awkward.

Billy Brue took one foot from its stirrup and turned in his saddle, pulling the leg up to a restful position. Then he spat, musingly, and looked back down the cañon aimlessly, throwing his eyes from side to side where the grey granite ledges showed through the tall spruce and pine trees.

But the old man knew he had been sent for.

"Well, Billy Brue,—what's doin'?"

Billy Brue squirmed in the saddle, spat again, as with sudden resolve, and said:

"Why,—uh—Dan'l J.—*he's* dead."

The old man repeated the words, dazedly.

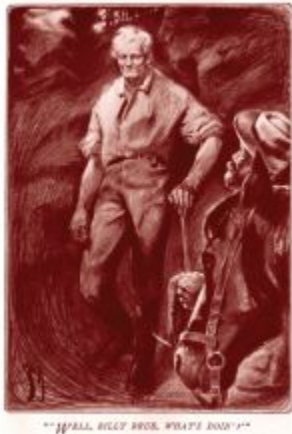
"Dan'l J.—*he's* dead;—why, who else is dead, too?"

Billy Brue's emphasis, cunningly contrived by him to avoid giving prominence to the word "dead," had suggested this inquiry in the first moment of stupefaction.

"Nobody else dead—jest Dan'l J.—*he's* dead."

"Jest Dan'l J.—my boy—my boy Dan'l dead!"

His mighty shape was stricken with a curious rigidity, erected there as if it were a part of the mountain, flung up of old from the earth's inner tragedy, confounded, desolate, ancient.



Billy Brue turned from the stony interrogation of his eyes and took a few steps away, waiting. A little wind sprang up among the higher trees, the moments passed, and still the great figure stood transfixed in its curious silence. The leathers creaked as the horse turned. The messenger, with an air of surveying the canon, stole an anxious glance at the old face. The sorrowful old eyes were fixed on things that were not; they looked vaguely as if in search.

"Dan'l!" he said.

It was not a cry; there was nothing plaintive in it. It was only the old man calling his son: David calling upon Absalom. Then there was a change. He came sternly forward.

"Who killed my boy?"

"Nobody, Uncle Peter; 'twas a stroke. He was goin' over the line and they'd laid out at Kaslo fer a day so's Dan'l J. could see about a spur the 'Lucky Cuss' people wanted—and maybe it was the climbin' brought it on."

The old man looked his years. As he came nearer Billy Brue saw tears tremble in his eyes and roll unnoted down his cheeks. Yet his voice was unbroken and he was, indeed, unconscious of the tears.

"I was afraid of that. He lived too high. He et too much and he drank too much and was too soft—was Dan'l.—too soft—"

The old voice trembled a bit and he stopped to look aside into the little pocket he had been exploring. Billy Brue looked back down the canon, where the swift stream brawled itself into white foam far below.

"He wouldn't use his legs; I prodded him about it constant—"

He stopped again to brace himself against the shock. Billy Brue still looked away.

"I told him high altitudes and high livin' would do any man—" Again he was silent.

"But all he'd ever say was that times had changed since my day, and I wasn't to mind him." He had himself better in hand now.

"Why, I nursed that boy when he was a dear, funny little red baby with big round eyes rollin' around to take notice; he took notice awful quick—fur a baby. Oh, my! Oh, dear! Dan'!"

Again he stopped.

"And it don't seem more'n yesterday that I was a-teachin' him to throw the diamond hitch; he could throw the diamond hitch with his eyes shut —I reckon by the time he was nine or ten. He had his faults, but they didn't hurt him none; Dan' J. was a man, now—" He halted once more.

"The dead millionaire," began Billy Brue, reading from the obituary in the *Skiplap Weekly Ledge*, "was in his fifty-second year. Genial, generous to a fault, quick to resent a wrong, but unfailing in his loyalty to a friend, a man of large ideas, with a genius for large operations, he was the type of indefatigable enterprise that has builded this Western empire in a wilderness and given rich sustenance and luxurious homes to millions of prosperous, happy American citizens. Peace to his ashes! And a safe trip to his immortal soul over the one-way trail!"

"Yes, yes—it's Dan' J. fur sure—they got my boy Dan' that time. Is that all it says, Billy? Any one with him?"

"Why, this here despatch is signed by young Toler—that's his confidential man."

"Nobody else?"

The old man was peering at him sharply from under the grey protruding brows.

"Well, if you must know, Uncle Peter, this is what the notice says that come by wire to the *Ledge* office," and he read doggedly:

"The young and beautiful Mrs. Bines, who had been accompanying her husband on his trip of inspection over the Sierra Northern, is prostrated by the shock of his sudden death."

The old man became for the first time conscious of the tears in his eyes, and, pulling down one of the blue woollen shirt sleeves, wiped his wet cheeks. The slow, painful blush of age crept up across the iron strength of his face, and passed. He looked away as he spoke.

"I knew it; I knew that. My Dan'l was like all that Frisco bunch. They get tangled with women sooner or later. I taxed Dan'l with it. I splened against it and let him know it. But he was a man and his own master—if you can rightly call a man his own master that does them things. Do you know what-fur woman this one was, Billy?"

"Well, last time Dan'l J. was up to Skiplap, there was a swell party on the car—kind of a coppery-lookin' blonde. Allie Ash, the brakeman on No. 4, he tells me she used to be in Spokane, and now she'd got her hooks on to some minin' property up in the Coeur d'Alene. Course, this mightn't be the one."

The old man had ceased to listen. He was aroused to the need for action.

"Get movin', Billy! We can get down to Eden to-night; we'll have the moon fur two hours on the trail soon's the sun's gone. I can get 'em to drive me over to Skiplap first thing to-morrow, and I can have 'em make me up a train there fur Montana City. Was he—"

"Dan'l J. has been took home—the noozepaper says."