

10¢

THE FEDERALS IN ACTION

G-MEN

NOV.

BLOODY GOLD

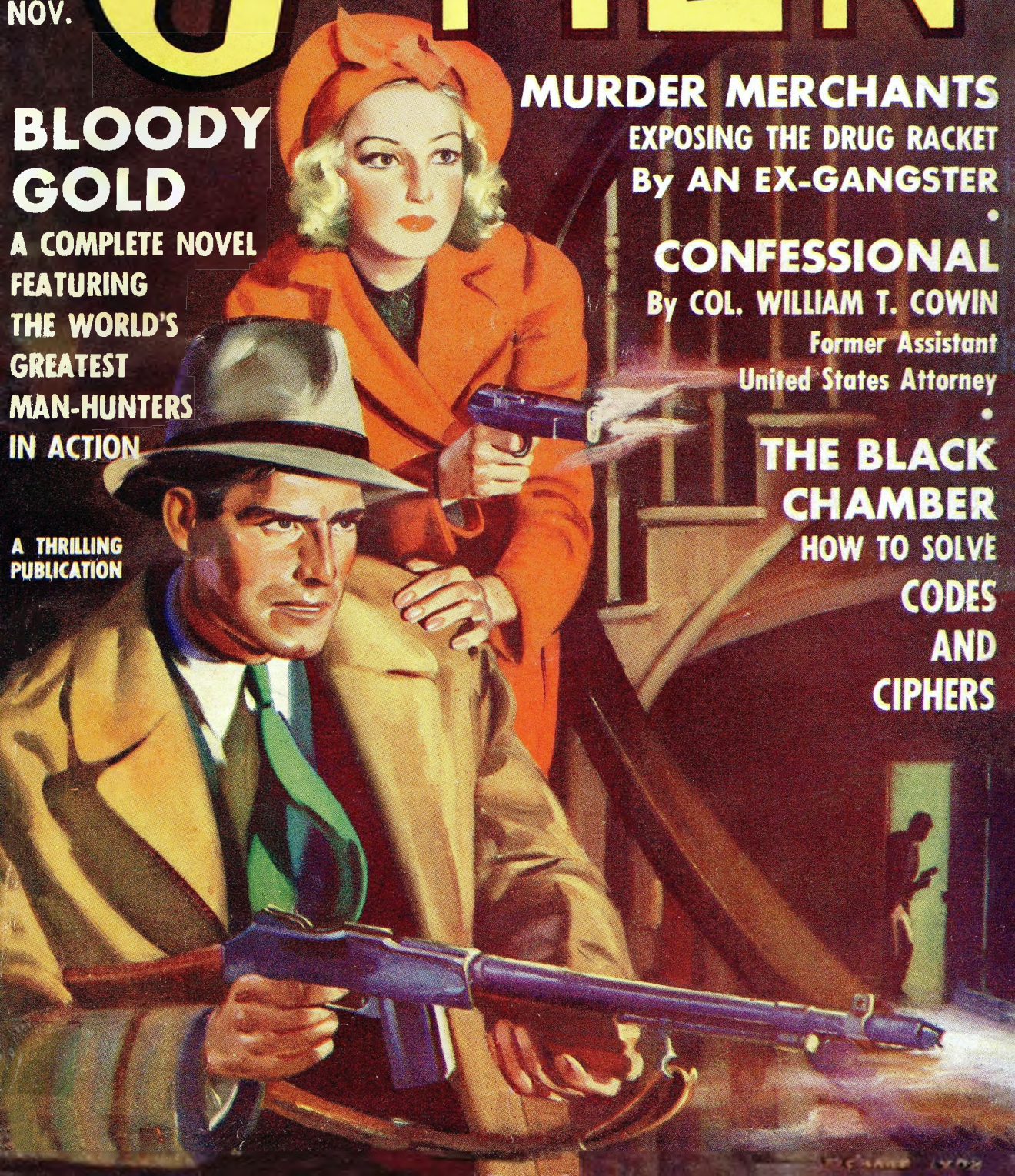
A COMPLETE NOVEL
FEATURING
THE WORLD'S
GREATEST
MAN-HUNTERS
IN ACTION

A THRILLING
PUBLICATION

MURDER MERCHANTS
EXPOSING THE DRUG RACKET
By AN EX-GANGSTER

CONFESSIONAL
By COL. WILLIAM T. COWIN
Former Assistant
United States Attorney

THE BLACK CHAMBER
HOW TO SOLVE
CODES
AND
CIPHERS



Missing Page



Choose Now!

ANY OF THESE GREAT
Genuine Jewelry Values
 SEND ONLY \$1.00 NOW

not over
10c
 A DAY

10 MONTHS to PAY

HERE they are! The "people's choice" by an overwhelming majority. The MOST POPULAR JEWELRY ITEMS — offered by Royal — America's Largest Mail Order Credit Jewelers — at money-saving lowest 'root cash prices — and on ROYAL'S EASY TERMS. ELECT YOUR CHOICE NOW! You're sure to win lasting joy and happiness in owning a fine, genuine Blue-White Diamond or a Nationally Famous Wristwatch. Cast your vote for greater jewelry values by sending your order AT ONCE!

10 DAYS FREE TRIAL — You're appointed sole judge! If you're fully satisfied, after 10 DAY TRIAL period pay only the small amount stated each month. If you decide you can surpass these values anywhere just return your selection and we will immediately refund your entire deposit. That's our "Square Deal" plan!

\$1.00 is all you need now! — 10 MONTHS TO PAY — It's easy to open an account with Royal. All you need is a good character and a steady wage or income. Send only \$1.00 to show good faith and a few personal facts such as age, occupation, etc. No security — no red tape — no interest. No direct inquiries. We ship promptly PREPAID. NO C.O.D. to pay on arrival.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED — Every item is sold with ROYAL'S written gold bond guarantee Backed by 40 years of nationally known fair and square dealing. Elect Your Choice at Once!

Both
\$29⁷⁵
 \$2.88 a month
4 Diamonds

LF-1 . . . "Queen of Hearts" — Perfectly matched engagement and wedding ring ensemble of 14K Solid White or Yellow Gold. The engagement ring is set with a fiery, genuine blue-white diamond of maximum size — the wedding ring with 3 matched diamonds. Specially gold designed. Both for only \$29.75. Only \$2.88 a month — less than 10c a day

\$27⁵⁰

7 Diamond Square Cluster
 You Save \$12.25

LF-2 . . . A dazzling, new, lady's cluster, expertly set with seven finely matched, brilliant, genuine blue-white diamonds. Looks like a \$450.00 square prong solitaire! Hand engraved 14K Solid Yellow Gold ring. A big "flash" and a \$39.75 value! Very specially priced now at only \$27.50. Only \$2.65 a month — less than 6c a day.

Only
\$16⁵⁰
 less than
 6c a day

LF-3 . . . A brand new, gent's ring of richly engraved 10K solid yellow gold: set with fiery, genuine diamond and a Cabuchon style, intaglio engraved Hematite. Very good looking! Only \$1.65 a month — less than 6c a day.

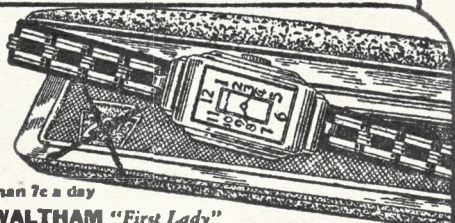
AMERICA'S LARGEST MAIL ORDER CREDIT JEWELERS

Sale

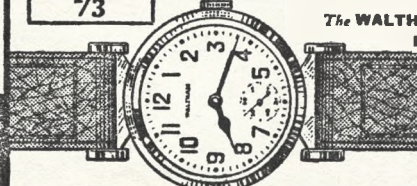
WALTHAM WATCHES

Only **\$19⁷⁵**

SAVE UP TO **1/3**



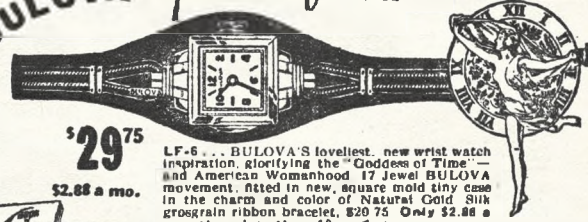
Less than 7c a day
The WALTHAM "First Lady"
 LF-4 . . . The WALTHAM "First Lady" — An extraordinary value! Lovely baguette type, rectangular, white chromium finished case. Factory guaranteed, dependable WALTHAM movement. Link bracelet to match. Designed to sell at \$29.75. Now only \$14.75. Only \$1.88 a month — less than 7c a day.



The WALTHAM "CANDIDATE" \$18⁷⁵
 Less than 6c a day
 Only **\$18⁷⁵**

LF-5 . . . A great WALTHAM value! Round case in the charm and color of natural gold, with new special stainless steel, rust-resistant back. Factory guaranteed 9-Jewel WALTHAM Movement. Genuine leather strap. Made to sell at \$27.50. Now Only \$18.75. Only \$1.76 a month — less than 6c a day.

BULOVA Goddess of Time



\$29⁷⁵
 \$2.88 a mo.

LF-6 . . . BULOVA'S loveliest, new wrist watch inspiration, glorifying the "Goddess of Time" and American Womanhood. Jewel BULOVA movement, fitted in new, square mold tiny case in the charm and color of Natural Gold. Silk grosgrain ribbon bracelet, \$29.75. Only \$2.88 a month — less than 10c a day.

LF-7 . . . "Goddess of Time" in engraved Natural Gold, matched link bracelet \$33.75 — only \$3.27 a month.



Send for **FREE CATALOG**
 New 32 page "Book of Gems"
 Hundreds of special values in genuine blue-white diamonds, standard watches, fine jewelry, silverware, cameras, radios and gift novelties. Each fully described and pictured. Adults send for your copy today.

ROYAL DIAMOND & WATCH CO. INC.
 Established 1895
 Address-DEPT. 141-N 170 BROADWAY N.Y.C.

G-MEN

Vol. V. No. 2

November, 1936

Price, 10c

FEATURING DAN FOWLER, MAN-HUNTER
IN

A Full Book-Length Novel


BLOODY GOLD

By C. K. M. SCANLON

Precious Bars of Yellow Metal, Stained with the Blood of Men, are the Loot of Human Wolves Who Band Together in a Gigantic Conspiracy of World-Shaking Crime..... 14

Other Thrilling G-Men Stories

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| <i>G-Man Milstead Transforms Two Clues into Steel Manacles!</i> | | |
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| <i>Catrone Had Never Reckoned with the Muted Lips of a Corpse!</i> | | |
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G-MEN, published monthly by Beacon Magazines, Inc., at 22 W. 48th St., New York, N. Y. N. L. Pines, President. Subscription yearly, \$1.20; single copies, \$.10. Foreign and Canadian postage extra. Entered as second-class matter July 12, 1935, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1936, by Beacon Magazines, Inc.  Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelope, and are submitted at the author's risk.

Read our companion magazines: *Popular Western, Thrilling Mystery, Thrilling Western, Thrilling Detective, Thrilling Adventures, Thrilling Love, The Phantom Detective, The Lone Eagle, Sky Fighters, Popular Detective, Thrilling Ranch Stories, Thrilling Sports, Thrilling Wonder Stories, Texas Rangers*

HE THOUGHT HE WAS LICKED—THEN A TIP GOT BILL A GOOD JOB!

MY RAISE DIDN'T COME THROUGH MARY—I MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP. IT ALL LOOKS SO HOPELESS.

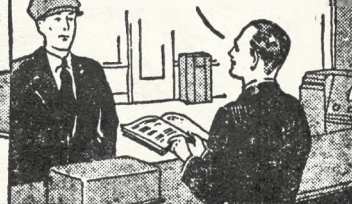


IT ISN'T HOPELESS EITHER BILL. WHY DON'T YOU TRY A NEW FIELD LIKE RADIO?

TOM GREEN WENT INTO RADIO AND HE'S MAKING GOOD MONEY, TOO. I'LL SEE HIM RIGHT AWAY.



BILL. JUST MAILING THAT COUPON GAVE ME A QUICK START TO SUCCESS IN RADIO. MAIL THIS ONE TONIGHT



TOM'S RIGHT—AN UNTRAINED MAN HASN'T A CHANCE. I'M GOING TO TRAIN FOR RADIO TOO. IT'S TODAY'S FIELD OF GOOD PAY OPPORTUNITIES



TRAINING FOR RADIO IS EASY AND I'M GETTING ALONG FAST--

SOON I CAN GET A JOB SERVICING SETS— OR IN A BROADCASTING STATION
OR INSTALLING LOUD SPEAKER SYSTEMS

THERE'S NO END TO THE GOOD JOBS FOR THE TRAINED RADIO MAN



YOU SURE KNOW RADIO—MY SET NEVER SOUNDED BETTER

THAT'S \$15 I'VE MADE THIS WEEK IN SPARE TIME



N.R.I. TRAINING CERTAINLY PAYS OUR MONEY WORRIES ARE OVER AND WE'VE A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD IN RADIO.



OH BILL, ITS WONDERFUL YOU'VE GONE AHEAD SO FAST IN RADIO.

I'LL TRAIN YOU AT HOME In Your Spare Time For A GOOD RADIO JOB

Many Radio Experts Make \$30, \$50, \$75 a Week

Do you want to make more money! Broadcasting stations employ engineers, operators, station managers and pay up to \$5,000 a year. Spare time Radio set servicing pays as much as \$200 to \$500 a year—full time servicing jobs pay as much as \$30, \$50, \$75 a week. Many Radio Experts own their own full or part time Radio businesses. Radio manufacturers and jobbers employ testers, inspectors, foremen, engineers, servicemen, paying up to \$6,000 a year. Radio operators on ships get good pay and see the world. Automobile, police, aviation, commercial Radio, and loud speaker systems offer good opportunities now and for the future. Television promises many good jobs soon. Men I trained have good jobs in these branches of Radio.



J. E. SMITH, President National Radio Institute
The man who has directed the home study training of more men for Radio than any other man in America.

Many Make \$5, \$10, \$15 a Week Extra
in Spare Time While Learning

Practically every neighborhood needs a good spare time serviceman. The day you enroll I start sending you Extra Money Job Sheets. They show you how to do Radio repair jobs that you can cash in on quickly. Throughout your training I send plans and ideas that have made good spare time money for hundreds of fellows. I send special equipment which gives you practical experience—shows you how to conduct experiments and build circuits which illustrate important Radio principles.

Find Out What Radio Offers You

Mail the coupon now for "Rich Rewards in Radio." It's free to any fellow over 16 years old. It describes Radio's spare time and full time opportunities, also those coming in Television; tells about my training in Radio and Television; shows you actual letters from men I have trained, telling what they are doing and earning; tells about my Money Back Agreement. MAIL COUPON in an envelope, or paste on a post card—NOW!

J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 6M09
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 6M09
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Smith: Without obligating me, send "Rich Rewards in Radio," which points out the spare time and full time opportunities in Radio and explains your 60-60 method of training men at home in spare time to become Radio Experts. (Please Write Plainly.)



HERE'S PROOF THAT MY TRAINING PAYS



N.R.I. Training Increases Yearly Salary \$1,200!

\$10 to \$25 a Week in Spare Time



"Since securing my operator's license through N. R. I. Training, I've been regularly employed and am now chief engineer with WJBY. My salary has increased \$1,200 in Radio."—JULIUS O. VESSELS, Station WJBY, Gadsden, Alabama.

"I am making from \$10 to \$25 a week in spare time while still holding my regular job as a machinist. I owe my success to N. R. I."—WM. F. RUPP, 180 W. 6th St., Conshohocken, Pa.



\$3,500 a Year in Own Business

"After completing the N. R. I. Course I became Radio Editor of the Buffalo Courier. Later I started a Radio service business of my own, and have averaged over \$3,500 a year."—T. J. TELAAR, 48 Broadway, New York City.



NAME.....AGE.....

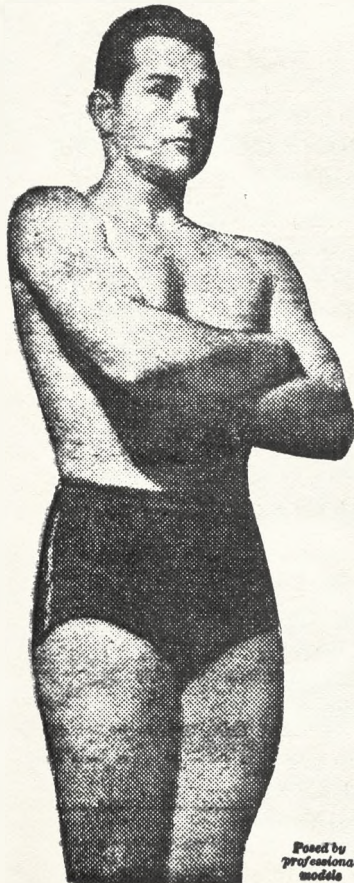
ADDRESS.....

CITY.....STATE.....

THERE'S A MAN I'D LIKE TO MEET!



Yet a few weeks ago they laughed at his skinny shape



Posed by professional models

NEW "7-POWER" ALE YEAST OFTEN ADDS 5 TO 15 LBS. — in a few weeks!

NOW there's no need for thousands to be "skinny" and friendless, even if they never could gain an ounce before. Here's a new easy treatment for them that puts on pounds of solid, naturally attractive flesh — in just a few weeks!

Doctors now know that the real reason why many find it hard to gain weight is they do not get enough digestion-strengthening Vitamin B and blood-building iron in their daily food. Now with this new discovery which combines these two vital elements in little concentrated tablets, hosts of people have put on pounds of firm flesh — in a very short time.

Not only are thousands quickly gaining normal good-looking pounds, but also naturally clear skin, freedom from indigestion and constipation, glorious new health and pep.

7 times more powerful

This amazing new product, Ironized Yeast, is made from special cultured ale yeast imported from Europe, the richest known source of Vitamin B. By a new process this yeast is concentrated 7 times — made 7 times more powerful. Then it is ironized with 3 kinds of iron.

If you, too, need Vitamin B and iron to build you up, get Ironized Yeast tablets from your druggist at once. Day after day, as you take them, watch fat chest and skinny limbs round out to normal attractiveness, skin clear to natural beauty — you're a new person.

Money-back guarantee

No matter how skinny and rundown you may be from lack of enough Vitamin B and iron, this new Ironized Yeast should build you up in a few short weeks as it has thousands. If not delighted with the results of the very first package, your money instantly refunded.

Only don't be deceived by the many cheaply prepared "Yeast and Iron" tablets sold in imitation of Ironized Yeast. These cheap counterfeits usually contain only the lowest grade of ordinary yeast and iron, and cannot give the same results as Ironized Yeast. Be sure you get the genuine. Look for "IY" stamped on each tablet.

Special FREE offer!

To start you building up your health right away, we make this absolutely FREE offer. Purchase a package of Ironized Yeast tablets at once, cut out the seal on the box and mail it to us with a clipping of this paragraph. We will send you a fascinating new book on health, "New Facts About Your Body." Remember, results with the very first package — or money refunded. At all druggists. Ironized Yeast Co., Inc., Dept. 7711, Atlanta, Ga.

MEN* WANTED

for **TEA and COFFEE ROUTES**

MAKING REGULAR WEEKLY CALLS Pays

UP TO \$60.00 IN A WEEK



I WILL GIVE YOU A FORD CAR AS A BONUS

In addition to your cash profits, I offer you a brand New Ford car as a special bonus or extra reward. This car becomes your personal property with no strings attached. Don't delay—send for full, free facts today.

IF YOU want to make money I'll help you start a fine-paying Tea and Coffee Route of your own. My sensational new starting plan offers you an opportunity for big profits—up to \$60.00 in a single week for full time, and up to \$6.50 in a day for spare time. The business is pleasant, you set your own hours, and the opportunity for making big money is really exceptional.

Permanent Routes Pay Big Profits

Everybody uses Coffee, Tea, Spices, Flavoring Extracts, Baking Powder, Flour, Cocoa, Canned Goods, and other foods every day. They **MUST BUY** these things to live. You simply take care of a regular route right in your locality—make calls on your customers once a week and keep them supplied with the things they need. You handle all the money and pocket a big share of it for yourself. You keep all the profits—you don't divide up with anyone. Hundreds of housewives in many localities are waiting, right now, to be served with these nationally famous products.

Make Money Fast!

Look in the box on the right. See how fast these men and women made money. They used this same plan that I will now send you. You read it; then if you see the possibilities, I'll help you start without asking you to risk a penny of your own money.

I Send Everything

Just as soon as I hear from you I will send you complete details—tell you all the inside workings of this nation-wide Tea and Coffee Route Plan. I will explain just how to establish your customers; how to service your route to make money every week. You can plan it so you give only 5 days a week to your route, collect your profits on Friday, and have all day Saturday and Sunday for vacation or rest. The plans I give you took years to perfect. You know they must be good because they have brought quick help to hundreds who needed money.

FREE WITHOUT OBLIGATION

Don't send me a cent. Just rush me your name and address on the Free Offer Coupon printed below. I will mail you all the facts Free. Then you can decide for yourself. You positively will not be obligated to go ahead unless you see big possibilities for money making fast. Send me your name on the coupon or a penny postcard. By this time next week you can be on your way to big money. Don't waste a minute—send this coupon at once.



POSITIVE PROOF

OF BIG EARNING POSSIBILITIES
Can you make money with a Tea and Coffee Route? Yes. Here's a way to make it **FAST!** If only three or four people had made money as fast as this, you might call it an accident. But many have done it! Here are only a few—if space permitted I could print scores of exceptional earnings. Wouldn't money like this give you a thrill? Plenty of money to spend—more where that came from—ample money for the necessities of life and still some left over for the luxuries.

Amount earned in One Week

F. J. Mosher.....	Wyo.....	\$60.00
Wilbur W. Whitcomb.....	Ohio.....	146.00
Clare C. Wellman.....	N. J.....	96.00
Geo. W. Wright.....	Maine.....	63.75
A. Pardini.....	Calif.....	69.09
Norman Geisler.....	Mich.....	129.00
Albert Becker.....	Mich.....	100.00
Gunson R. Wood.....	N. Y.....	65.00
Lamar C. Cooper.....	Mich.....	90.00
*Helen V. Woolmington.....	Pa.....	46.09
*Ruby Hannon.....	W. Va.....	73.00
Hans Coordes.....	Neb.....	96.40
Lambert Wilson.....	Mich.....	79.00
W. J. Way.....	Kan.....	73.15

These exceptional earnings show the amazing possibilities of my offer. Don't let this opportunity pass—send me your name today for FREE plans.

MAIL COUPON *Now*

Send No Money—Plans Are Free

ALBERT MILLS, Route Manager,
8658 Monmouth Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Please send me—FREE—complete details for operating a fine paying Tea and Coffee Route of my own. I understand that this will not obligate me in any way.

Name

Address

City, State

(Please print or write plainly)

ALBERT MILLS, Route Manager
8658 Monmouth Ave., Cincinnati, O.

* LADIES WANTED TOO!

Many ladies have had unusually good success with Tea and Coffee Routes. They say that it is possible to make as much as the men do—up to \$10 in a day and more for full time, and as high as \$6.50 in a day for spare time. Don't hesitate because you are a woman. Send for this information. I will be glad to send it to you free.

No one ever noticed Bill... until....



YOU'VE GOT TO INVITE BILL SMITH TO YOUR PARTY... JIM BROUGHT HIM OVER LAST NIGHT AND HE PLAYS THE PIANO MARVELOUSLY

BILL SMITH? I NEVER KNEW HE PLAYED... HE'S ALWAYS SO QUIET I'VE HARDLY NOTICED HIM... I WONDER HOW HE LEARNED

LET MUSIC MAKE YOU POPULAR

it's easy to learn this "short cut" way

ONLY a few short months ago Bill was a back number socially. At parties no one ever noticed him. Then suddenly, Bill amazed all his friends. Almost overnight it seemed, he became the most popular man in his crowd.

The big chance in Bill's life began at Dot Webster's party—and quite by accident, too.

As the party got under way, Bill took his usual place in the corner. But this time he had a strange grin on his face—a smile half impish, half determined. "What's Bill snickering about?" someone whispered. "There's nothing funny about a party without our prize piano player."

Dot's face flushed.

"I'm sorry, folks, but Dave Gordon, our pianist, couldn't come. Isn't there someone here who can play?"

For a moment no one answered. Then suddenly Bill rose and strode to the piano. "Do you mind if I fill in?" he said. Everyone burst out laughing. "What's Bill doing? Trying to make a fool of himself?" someone asked. But Bill pretended not to hear.

As he struck the first few chords, everyone leaned forward spell-bound. For Bill was playing as Dave Gordon had never played. Playing with the fire and soul of a master musician, while everyone sat in awed silence until the last dreamy chord had

centered away. In a moment Bill was the center of an admiring throng. In answer to their eager questions, he told them how he had always wanted to play, but never had the time or the money to realize his ambition. And then one day he read about the wonderful U. S. School of Music course, and how anyone could learn, at home, without a teacher, in half the time, and at one-third the cost of ordinary old-fashioned methods. "That day," said Bill, "was a lucky day for me. I sent for the course, and when it arrived, I was amazed! I never dreamed that learning music could be so easy. The course was as much fun as a game, and in a few short months I had mastered some of the most popular pieces. That's the whole secret. There's no mystery about it. Learning to play is actually as easy as A B C, this 'Short-Cut' way."

This story is typical of thousands who have found this easy way to popularity and who want to be popular, if you have always wanted to play but have the notion that learning requires years of practice, and expensive teachers, here is your opportunity.

PICK YOUR INSTRUMENT

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Piano | Violin |
| Organ | Clarinet |
| Ukulele | Flute |
| Cornet | Saxophone |
| Trombone | Harp |
| Piccolo | Mandolin |
| Guitar | Cello |
| Hawaiian Steel Guitar | Trumpet |
| | Piano Accordion |
| | Italian and German Accordion |
| | Voice and Speech Culture |
| | Harmony and Composition |
| | Drums and Traps |
| | Banjo (Plectrum, 6-String or Tenor) |

NO TALENT NEEDED

You don't need any special musical ability to play. If you can learn a tune, you can learn to play your favorite instrument, this easy as A B C way. The secret lies in the amazing print and picture method, perfected by the U. S. School of Music. With this simplified, "short-cut" system, you are first told how a thing is done, then an illustration shows you how, and then you play it and hear it. Studying is fun, and in almost no time, you are playing your favorite pieces, by actual notes.

Easy as A-B-C



If you can read the alphabet you can learn to play your favorite instrument in just a few months.

Free Booklet and Demonstration Lesson

In order that you may see how really simple and easy this course is, the U. S. School of Music will send you a free demonstration lesson and explanatory booklet. No matter what instrument you want to play, the booklet will show you the amazingly simple principle on which this method is built. You will readily see how it will enable you to become an accomplished musician in a short time—and at a cost of only a few cents a day.

If you have always envied people who played, if you have always wished that you might entertain your friends with their favorite melodies—Fill in and mail the coupon below. Don't delay. Act at once. U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC, 29411 Brunswick Bldg., New York City, N. Y. Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit.

U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC
29411 Brunswick Building, New York City

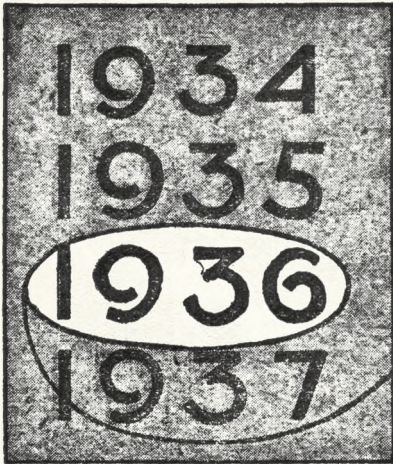
Please send me your free book, "How You Can Master Music in Your Own Home," with inspiring message by Dr. Frank Crane, Free Demonstration Lesson and particulars of your easy payment plan. I am interested in the following course:

Have you
..... Instrument?

Name

Address

City..... State.....



Now
is the time!

**Business is Searching
for YOU, if**

RIGHT now, in many lines, there is a search for really *good* men—managers, leaders—men who can take charge of departments, businesses, branch offices, and get things humming.

As always, there are not enough ordinary jobs to go 'round—but rarely before, in the history of American business, has there been so much room at the *top!* New jobs are being created by the business pick-up in almost all lines—jobs that pay splendidly and that open the way to lifetime success.

Ordinarily, there would be plenty of men to fill these jobs—men in junior positions who had been studying in spare time. But most men have been letting their training slide during these dark years of depression . . . “What’s the use?”—You have heard them say. Perhaps there has been some excuse for sticking to any old kind of a job one could get the past few years—but the door is wide open for the man with ambition and ability *NOW!*

And don’t let anyone tell you that “Opportunity Only Knocks Once”—that’s one of the most untruthful sayings ever circulated. Op-

portunities flourish for *every* American every day of his life.

Far more to the point is to be ready—to be *prepared*—to make yourself *interesting* to the big-time employer—and LaSalle offers you a short-cut method of qualifying for opportunity jobs in accounting, law, traffic, executive management, and kindred occupations.

LaSalle Extension University is 28 years old—averages 40,000 enrollments a year—60 American firms each employ 500 or more LaSalle-trained men—surveys show that LaSalle students attain 40% average salary increase after graduation—10% of all C. P. A.’s in the U. S. A. are LaSalle-trained.

Why not find out what LaSalle has done and is doing for men in *your* position? Send and get the facts; see what LaSalle can do for you, personally!

There’s no question about it—business is picking up—jobs are looking for *men*—the time has come for you to *qualify* for prosperity. Mail this coupon today!

LA SALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY, Dept. 11329-R, Chicago
I am in earnest about my success and I would like to have your special booklet—without any cost or obligation to me—about my opportunities and your success training in the business field I have checked.

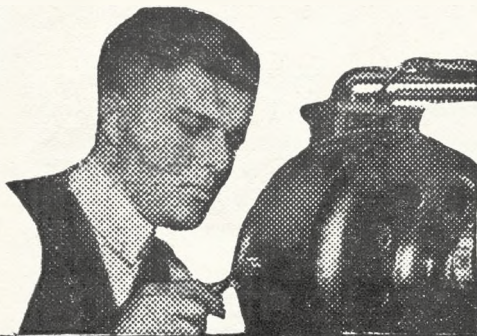
- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Accountancy | <input type="checkbox"/> Modern Foremanship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Modern Salesmanship | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Correspondence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Business English |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Law: Degree of LL. B. | <input type="checkbox"/> Effective Speaking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expert Bookkeeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Office Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C. P. A. Coaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Stenotypy |

Ask for one of these booklets—or a similar one on your own field of business. They are free!



Name.....Age.....
Position.....Address.....

LaSalle Extension University



Amazingly Easy Way
to get into
ELECTRICITY

**Learn to Earn A
Good Salary Every
Week—or Go Into
Your Own Business**

Whether your age is 16 or 40. Let us train you to prepare for positions that lead to good salaries in Electricity — NOT by correspondence, but by an amazing modern method right here in the great Coyne Shops that gives you a practical Training in 90 days! Getting into Electricity is easier than you imagine if you choose the right method. You don't need previous experience or need a lot of book learning. Start any time.

Finance Your Training!

Mail the coupon below and I'll send you all details of my finance plan. Under this plan you can pay for your tuition in small monthly payments extending over an 18-month period, starting 5 months after you start school.

**LEARN BY DOING—IN 90 DAYS
IN THE GREAT COYNE SHOPS**

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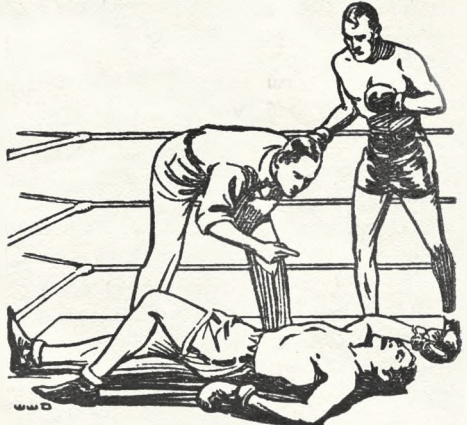
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FEDERAL FLASHES

J. EDGAR HOOVER, Director of the Bureau of Investigation of the United States Department of Justice, recently made this bold and challenging statement:

"Millions of dollars are squandered every year because of ill-considered, ignorant, or politically-controlled parole and clemency actions which release dangerous men and women to prey upon society, after they have been caught and convicted."

In pointing out the menace of unwise parole, Mr. Hoover made it clear that he was not opposed to the legitimate parole of worthy prisoners, under proper supervision.

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TERROR FLAMES, the inside story of the arson racket, is another unusual feature in next month's issue. Also, another Chinese G-Man story—**THE SPINNING DEATH**, by Lee Fredericks. In addition, **THE BLACK CHAMBER** and a varied fare of other articles and stories.

JOIN THE G-MEN CLUB

Readers, attention! If you haven't yet done so, join the G-MEN CLUB. No dues. No fees. We simply require that you express your loyalty to the law. There's a coupon on this page.

To obtain your club emblem, it is necessary to clip, fill in and mail in the coupon, enclosing the small required amount to cover mailing, etc. Also enclose the name-strip from the cover of this magazine.

Here are excerpts from some readers' letters recently received:

G-MEN is the best magazine I ever read.—W. H. Stout, Lexington, Ky.

This magazine affords valuable information and gives hints in anti-crime activities. Your club deserves cooperation.—Jenaro M. Benn, Rio Piedras, P. R.

I am a fingerprint expert devoted to the war on crime, and am glad of the opportunity to join G-MEN CLUB.—Pedro Escobedo, Maxwell, Cal.

It was with immeasurable pride that I received my membership card and emblem. I am endeavoring to fit myself for the task of helping to

make this country safer, saner and more law-abiding.—Buddy Colman, Miami, Fla.

I'm a constant reader and hope you won't be averse to accepting a Canadian in your club.—George Clark, Ont., Can. (You are welcome. Members from all over the world are in the G-MEN CLUB.—Editor.)

Among thousands of other letters recently received, those from the following were especially interesting:

J. E. Mulconery, Houston, Tex.; Eli G. Zeman, Detroit; John Vasquez, Daggett, Cal.; Eileen Quinn, New Haven, Ct.; Howland Matteson, Utica, N. Y.; Allen Teel, Wind Gap, Pa.; M. B. Johnson, Bradenton, Fla.; Preston Smith, Ansonia, Ct.; H. Rexford, Lombard, Ill.; Haywood Parker, Chicago; J. W. Bridger, Niagara Falls, N. Y.; Paul J. Walton, Los Angeles; Cecil Higdon, Louisville, Ky.; Homer Ducherme, Jr., So. Deerfield, Mass.; S. B. Moran, Fremont, Neb.; C. Woodruff, Surrey, Eng.; Paul Ratcliffe, Middlesex, Eng.; Norman Layfield, Suffolk, Eng.; Gordon Gray, Socorro, N. M.; Bernard Hurwitz, Philadelphia, and William Oakes, Louisville, Ky.

Remember—I'd like to get a letter a month from every reader. I want your ideas, suggestions and opinions. A postcard will do as well as a sealed letter—but write! Thanks to all.

—THE EDITOR.

G-MEN CLUB,
22 West 48th St.,
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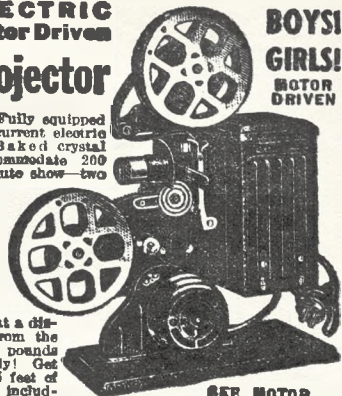
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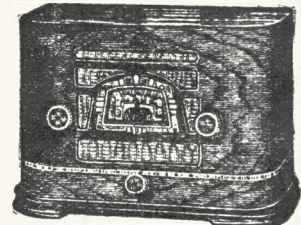
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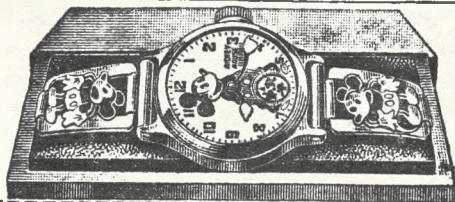
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BLOODY



"Let them have it," Dan shouted. (Page 77)

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By C. K. M. SCANLON

Author of "Tropic Terror," "Hollywood Czar," etc.

CHAPTER I

Murder

A DESERT, grey and lifeless as the sweepings from a ghouled grave. With jagged mountains fanging up from its edges like snaggy teeth in a bleached jawbone. Mountains whose splintered crests rake the shrinking curve of a brassy-blue sky. Their sinister shadow reaches down to swallow the white ribbon of road that writhes across the desert.

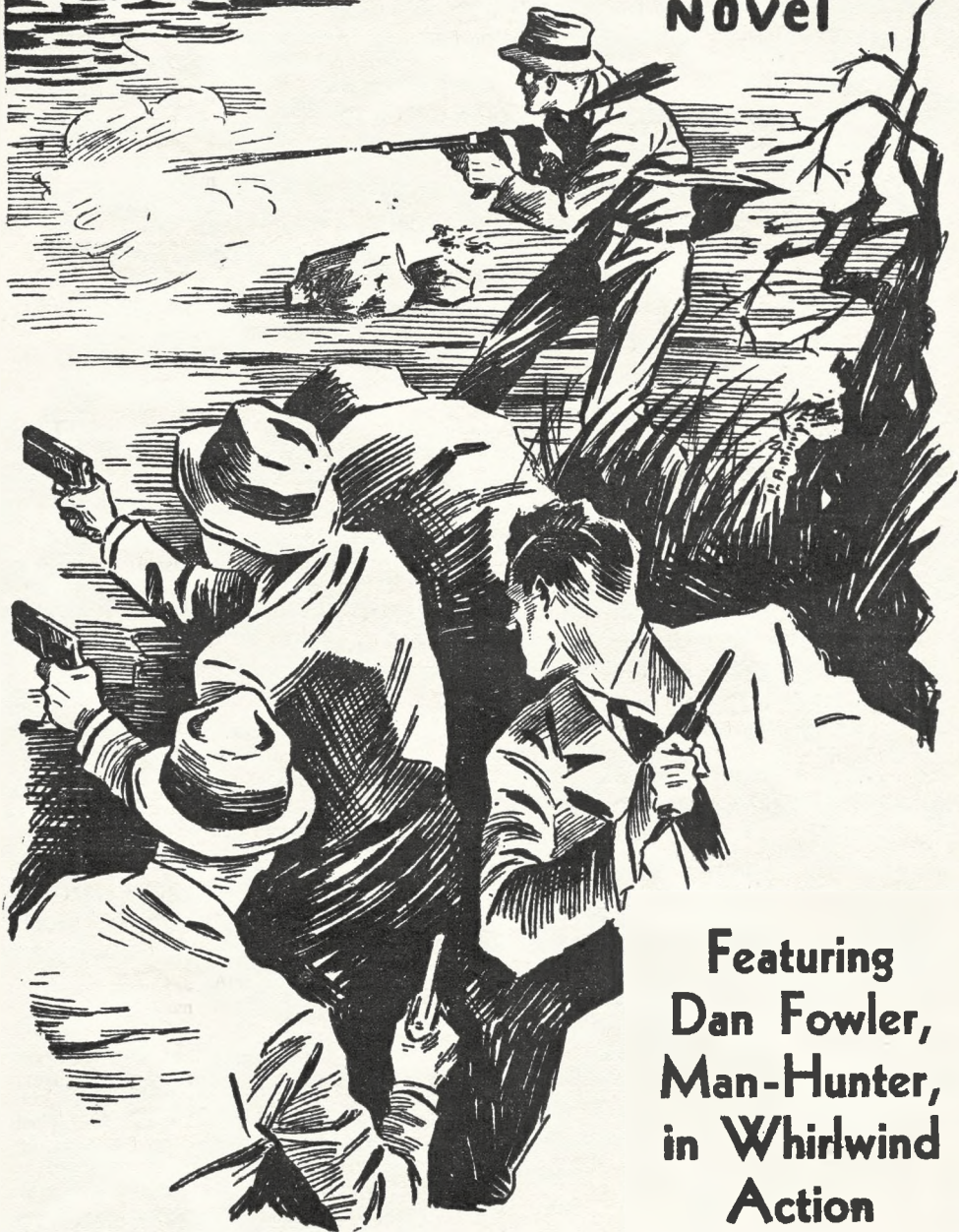
Along the road a man rides with loose rein and busy spur. He is tall and rangy, with keen eyes and a tight mouth. John Crandall, special investigator and friend of Wade Carter, the vigorous young junior United States Senator from Arizona, rides as if death is his pacemaker. He reaches the edge of that sinister mountain shadow and sighs with relief at the welcome coolness. Relaxing in his saddle, he reaches for a cigarette.

Cr-r-r-r-rack!

John Crandall did not hear that

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Man-Hunter,
in Whirlwind
Action

crackling screech that split the dry air. The crash of the heavy bullet ripping through his chest plunged the sound out of his ears in a welter of roaring blood and numbing pain. He reeled to the ground as if swept from his saddle by a giant club, to lie, a huddled heap, in the dust of the trail.

High up on the frowning mountain, the hidden rifleman gazed intently at the sprawled form. With cold ruthlessness, he lined his rifle sights again. The man in the dust twitched slightly as a second bullet plowed its way through his flesh. Then lay motionless. The rifleman gazed for a long moment, and faded away along the brush-grown mountain side.

In the blue well of hard sky floated a dark speck, drifting lower and lower. Others joined it, and still others, with planing wings and outstretched, naked heads.

But John Crandall was not dead. Life was flowing swiftly out of the hole in his chest; there was a jagged furrow just above his left temple; but before the sinking vultures reached him, he had raised himself to hands and knees and was dragging his broken body to where his patient horse stood waiting.

TWO wandering cowboys found him, reeling drunkenly in his saddle, mouthing unintelligible gibberish. The mining town of Gold City was but a few miles distant. They took him there and to the hospital. Over and over he whispered a name.

"Wade Carter," repeated one of the cowboys. "Bill, that's the Senator, ain't it? Yeah, I thought so. He lives right here in Gold City. Guess we'd better tell him 'bout this feller."

Senator Carter reached Crandall's side before he died. He listened to the investigator's gasped story and his big face set like rock.

"They knew I'd caught onto something," Crandall finished. "I thought I'd given him the slip by riding south and circling back; but they figured what I'd do and were waiting in the mountains. They got me, Wade, but

you—know—you know what's—going—on!"

Back in his office, Senator Carter savagely paced the floor with muttering lips.

"Big!" he grunted back of his clenched teeth. "The biggest racket anybody ever dreamed of! No use to go to the sheriff or the police. There's only one man can handle this!"

Impatiently he looked at his watch. His secretary, absent on an errand, would not be back for an hour yet. Growling, irritably, he pecked out a letter on the office typewriter, signed it and affixed an air mail stamp. He was just returning from posting the letter when his secretary arrived.

Henry Blunt, the secretary, was nearly as tall as the tall senator, but of slighter build. He had deep-set eyes, a bloodless mouth, and greying hair. His voice was soft and pleasant. He listened to Carter's rumbled sentences with a shocked expression on his thin, regular features. He clucked sympathetically at the account of John Crandall's death.

"I'm flying to Washington tomorrow evening," the senator concluded. "This matter is too big for me to handle by myself. Keep your ears and eyes open while I'm gone, Blunt; perhaps you can learn something additional. I'm going home now and get some rest. I'll not see you again before I leave."

As the senator's footsteps died away down the corridor, Henry Blunt reached for the telephone. He called long distance, got a New York number and held an earnest conversation. A smile of satisfaction wreathed his thin lips as he hung up. His eyes remained cold.

"A train in twenty minutes, then an eastbound plane at ten o'clock," he muttered.

It was dusk when the senator's plane roared down to the landing field in Washington two days later. A fast car whisked him to his hotel. Behind it, unnoticed by either passenger or driver, scudded a big blue limousine. The limousine was parked across the street a moment after the senator arrived at his hotel. Three

men got out, bought cigarettes at a nearby cigar stand and separated casually. They were in the hotel dining room, seated at different tables, when the senator came down for his dinner.

Senator Carter enjoyed a good meal, smoked a cigar and sauntered into the lobby. He paused to chat a moment with an acquaintance.

"Believe I'll take a little stroll through the park before I turn in," he told the other man. "Join me?"

The other declined, pleading an engagement, and the senator left the hotel. He did not see the sinister figures that dogged his footsteps.

IT was lonely in the park at that hour, which suited the senator's mood precisely. He wanted to think, to prepare his mind for the interview which awaited him on the morrow, and he could always think better out of doors. He followed a winding walk that shouldered its way between luxuriant shrubbery. As he rounded a turn, three figures loomed before him. With silent ferocity they leaped.

But the big Westerner was no set-up. He was strong and he was fast. One of the hoods went down from the smash of a fist like a blacksmith's sledge. Another reeled back, spitting blood and teeth; the senator reached for his gun.

It was half way out of the shoulder holster when the third gangster closed with him, striking savagely with a knife. The man on the ground rolled over, clutching and clawing. He got a grip on the cuff of the senator's right trouser-leg and jerked with all his strength.

Senator Carter went down, the knife-wielder on top of him. He managed to get his gun out in that last flickering gasp of life and pulled the trigger twice. The bullets whined harmlessly through the treetops and the long knife plunged home.

Blood dimmed the shining steel, the senator's gasping breath rattled noisily in his throat, his voice croaked out a single bubbling cry. Again the knife thudded; its point screamed shrilly on a bone. Senator Carter

shivered convulsively, stiffened and lay still.

Attracted by the shots, police cars were shrilling their sirens and roaring through the park. The three hoods, bloody, battered and disheveled, scrambled to their feet and dashed along a side wall. They reached their parked car and dived into it as the first police car rounded a turn on two wheels. Away roared the limousine, the police car screeching behind it. Flame flickered over the windshield and a bullet thudded solidly into the body of the blue car.

From the back of the limousine thrust the stubby muzzle of a sub-machine gun. It lined with the pursuing police car, steadied, spouted orange flame.

Shot through the heart by that first thundering burst, the driver's hands dropped from the wheel. The speeding car bucked, leaped and slewed sideways. Another roar from the machine-gun and the second policeman died. The car turned over with a clang of breaking metal and splintering glass. The blue limousine flashed out of the park and careened into a side street. Behind wailed the baffled sirens of the pursuers.

The blue car whisked from street to street until it reached an exclusive residential district. There it pulled to the curb and the three hoods got out. Handkerchiefs wiped every speck of metal and upholstery where fingerprints might possibly be left. One man carried the machine-gun in a harmless looking guitar case. The street was deserted.

The hoods walked swiftly along it, keeping in the shadow of the shrubbery as much as possible. They turned a corner, walked half a block farther and turned into a gloomy driveway.

THE house they approached was dark. One thrust a key in the lock of the front door, opened it to reveal a wide hall bare of furnishings. They eased along it and knocked three evenly spaced raps at a door.

"Come in," said a voice. They shoved open the door and entered a

lighted room furnished with a flat-topped desk and a few chairs.

Behind the desk sat a man with an automatic pistol in each hand. He laid the big guns on the desk as the door closed and locked behind the last of the three hoods. His pale, deep-set eyes ran over their bloody, battered, disheveled figures, and his hard mouth tightened very slightly. His voice, however, was casual as he asked a question:

"Have trouble?"

"Yeah," snarled the leading gorilla, "that was one tough baby, I hope to tell you! Blinky lost a coupla tusks and I don't think my jaw's ever goin' to be right again."

The man behind the desk asked another question:

"Did you do the job?"

"Hell, yes," replied the hood. "Whatcha think we went out for?"

The other ignored the retort. "Did you leave anything behind that might identify you?" he asked.

All three of the hoods shook their heads. "I brought my shiv along with me," said the one who had spoken, exhibiting the bloody knife, "and nobody lost no gats. We took care of the car before we ditched it. Say, did that mug do things to my rags, or didn't he? He rolled me all over the gravel fore I handed it to him right! Here's what happened—"

As he detailed the murder and the subsequent pursuit, the man behind the desk listened intently, his gaze still taking in the evidences of the furious struggle that had taken place. As the other finished, he stood up.

"A good job," he said. "Here's the money you were promised. Count it." He tossed three packets of bills across the desk.

The hoods seized the money, rifled it expertly and stowed it away with grins of satisfaction. The crooked-lipped knife-wielder spoke.

"All to the good, boss. Now what?"

The other seemed to ponder. "Everything looks all right," he said slowly. "There shouldn't be any rumble; but just the same I think it would be wise for you boys to drift out of this section for a while. Head

west, and keep in touch with me at the address I gave you. You have it, Slim."

The knife man nodded, puffing hard on a cigarette. The man behind the desk sat down again. He opened a drawer and took out a bottle and glasses.

"A drink won't do any of us any harm," he said. The others nodded eager agreement. With a steady hand he filled all four glasses to the brim. He alone could see the dusting of white crystals on the bottoms of three of them. He shoved three of the glasses across the desk and picked up the fourth.

"Here's to more good clean jobs," he toasted, raising his glass.

FOUR glasses tipped together; the liquor disappeared at a gulp. The man behind the desk smiled thinly and set down his glass.

The broken-toothed Blinky gave a sudden gasp. His bloody mouth opened, his eyes rolled, wild and staring. With a queer, gurgling croak he slumped out of his chair onto the floor. The man beside him started to rise and pitched forward on his face. Slim, the knife man, surged to his feet.

"Damn you!" he screeched. He lunged forward; the glittering knife buried an inch of its blade in the desk top and stood shimmering in the light. Slim crashed against the desk and shivered over on his back.

The man behind the desk stood up, smiling thinly.

"Cyanide works swiftly," he murmured, staring down at the silent forms. "Perhaps it wasn't really necessary; perhaps they did not leave prints or any other evidence by which they could be traced, but it doesn't pay to take chances. I know the chief will approve."

There was a telephone on the desk. He picked it up, dialed a number and spoke a few words. Then he carefully wiped telephone, bottle, glasses, desk top and all else he had touched, holstered his two guns and, with a last glance at the stiffening bodies of the hoods, slipped through the

door and closed it behind him. The dying rays of the oil lamp cast a sickly light over the scene of stark horror.

And in a mahogany office high above the roar of New York's streets, a man picked up his telephone and listened to a message relayed him from the nation's capital.

"Well, that fool's out of the way," he growled with a sigh of relief as he dropped the receiver back on the hook. "If he had gotten to those damn bloodhounds with what he knew! Well, there won't be any more slips!"

CHAPTER II

The F. B. I. Steps In



AMAN, young for his forty-odd years, with curly black hair slightly touched with grey, clean-cut features and alert eyes, sat at his desk in the great Department of Justice Building. Spread on the desk was a de-

tailed account of the death of Senator Carter. In his hand he held a letter. Laying the letter on the report, he lifted one of his telephones and asked a question:

"Has Special Agent Fowler arrived yet? Good! Send him in at once."

A moment later Dan Fowler entered the presence of his chief, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice. His clear grey eyes lighted as they rested on the man he liked and admired above all others, the man who had built up the Department to its present astounding efficiency.

The director, in turn, ran an approving gaze over the tall, rawboned young man he had come to look upon as his most trusted and capable agent.

Dan Fowler was not a handsome man, according to classic standards, with his wide, good-humored mouth, his prominent nose, and high cheekbones set wide apart; but there was a rugged power stamped on his face that caused women, and men, to turn



Fowler

for a second glance at him. He had grey eyes that at times were almost blue, at others the chill greenish-grey of windswept ice. There was a sifting of dreams in the depths of those clear eyes, and kindness, and understanding. The eyes of a man with a bit of the poet in him and much of the crusader.

"Read the morning papers?" asked the director.

Dan nodded, wonderingly.

"Then you no doubt read about the murder of Senator Carter last night. We're interested in that killing, Dan."

Fowler nodded, saying nothing; he knew that there was more to come. The murder was an affair to be handled by the Washington police.

The director seemed to read his thought. "Yes, I know," he said, "it is a local police case, but we're interested. Read this letter."

The letter was addressed to the di-

rector and signed by the late Senator Carter. Dan read with interest:

I am in the possession of information of the gravest import, that I must place in your hands at the earliest possible moment. I urgently request an interview with you Wednesday, the 27th.

"Wednesday. That's today," commented Dan.

"Yes," said his chief. "Senator Carter sent this letter by air mail the day before he left Arizona, knowing it would be on my desk this morning at the very latest. He flew to Washington in his private plane and arrived last night. Before he had a chance to talk to anyone he was murdered. Why? It was just possible that robbery might have been the motive and the murderers were frightened away by the approaching police, but it doesn't look probable.

"There appears to be no other motive. The question that interests me is, was Senator Carter killed to shut his mouth? What did he want to talk to me about? What was the information he possessed?"

DAN FOWLER nodded emphatically. "I'll say we're interested!" he exclaimed. "Chief, that letter makes this an F. B. I. case."

"It does," said the director. "It is the duty of the Washington police to find out who killed Senator Carter. It is up to us to find out why they killed him. The assignment is yours, Fowler."

Dan Fowler had had plenty of tough assignments during his long term with the F. B. I. The smashing of the Purple Shirts, the sinister organization that had menaced the very life of the Republic; the capture of the Hollywood Czar, who had terrorized the movie colony; the destruction of the horrible School for Murder were but a few of his exploits. But Dan considered the matter in hand to be, in some ways, the most perplexing problem he had yet tackled. He was trying to run down a supposition. Even were the murderers of Senator Carter speedily cap-

tured and their motive proved to be robbery, the mysterious hint in the dead senator's letter must still be investigated. The senator had undoubtedly known something, but what?

"We couldn't find a clue," the police chief told Dan. "They got away in a car all right, but nobody saw it except those two poor devils that chased them. We couldn't even find where it was parked, so the chance to identify the car through its tire patterns is out. No, there wasn't a fingerprint that wasn't hopelessly smudged. We hoped to find one on his collar, but we didn't."

"You tried the Hudson method?" Dan asked.

"Yes," said the officer, "on his collar, overcoat and shoes, the only garments that might have been touched. We got nothing."

"How about his trousers?" Dan asked.

"Hell, there wouldn't be anything on them!" the chief snorted. "It was cold last night and he wore a long overcoat that reached below his knees."

The F. B. I. teaches its men to be thorough.

"Twelve inches of trouser-leg below the skirt of a long overcoat," Dan observed.

The police officer growled under his breath. "Why are you fellows so interested?" he demanded. "This isn't a federal case. Oh, all right, though. I'll string along with you and not ask questions. You're usually right, even when you're wrong."

A grin split his obstinate but good-humored face. "We'll just give those pants the Hudson process. Maybe they were playing leap-frog when the row started!"

The newly-tried Hudson process of treating cloth with silver nitrate and other reagents to bring out the body salts which fingerprints deposit was again brought into play. An excited officer came storming out of the laboratory.

"We got it, Chief!" he shouted. "On the inside of the right leg cuff! Plain as anything!"

"Now how in hell did they come to

get hold of him there?" wondered the chief. "Fowler, you fellows think of everything."

SCANT minutes later the man-hunting machine at the Bureau of Investigation Headquarters was searching rapidly through the more than four million prints on file. In less than five minutes the machine had matched the print.

"Index finger of Blinky Morton, who served a term in Sing Sing prison for robbery with violence," said the report, further amplifying Blinky's record.

"I know him," exclaimed the police chief. "We ran him and a couple of his pals out of town last month. Ought not to be hard to locate him in a hurry."

A subordinate brought in a report. The chief read it with interest.

"Looks like they've located the escape car," he told Dan. "Blue limousine, bullet hole in back of body. Over in the exclusive North section. They're going over it for prints, but it appears to have been wiped carefully."

Dan got the street location and drove over to have a look at the car himself. A policeman guarded it.

"They sure picked a snooty district to ditch it in," he observed after Dan had identified himself. "I figure they had another one waiting for them; they wouldn't have a hangout around here anywhere. Only rich people live in this neighborhood."

Dan did not argue with the policeman, but long experience had taught him that crooks in some ways are like gold—they're apt to be *where* you find them, and the "where" is as likely to be one place as another. Leaving his car, he strolled about the district, apparently aimlessly, but missing nothing.

"Looks like that cop had the right idea," he mused. "Certainly nothing here to indicate a hideout."

He turned a corner and midway along the block paused before a big house set well back from the street. Unlike the other homes in the neighborhood, it had a desolate look. Dan

saw a "For Sale" sign pegged on the lawn.

"An old crook trick—locating a vacant house and using it for a hangout for a short time," he muttered. "No reason in the world to believe this house was used for such a purpose, except that whoever abandoned that car went somewhere, and they would want to get off the street as quickly as possible."

He turned into the graveled driveway and walked slowly toward the wide veranda. A thrill ran through him as he saw the faint outlines left by damp footprints on the dusty floor of the porch. They might have been made by prospective tenants looking the property over, but they might have been made by—

Dan's keen eyes narrowed, his mouth set in a hard line. The big front door stood slightly ajar! Hand close to the heavy Colt snugging in its shoulder holster, he stepped softly to the door and shoved it open.

The wide wall was shadowy and silent and had the musty odor of long vacancy. Dan entered it, alert and watchful. He shoved a door open softly and stared at emptiness. Another door opposite revealed nothing more startling. With noiseless steps he passed down the hall.

SUDDENLY he halted and sniffed sharply. To his nostrils had come a rank odor of burned kerosene—the kind of odor left behind by a lamp that had smoked itself out and stood with charred and smoldering wick.

Dan's gaze noted another door to the left and almost at the end of the hall. As he approached it, the quieting odor grew stronger. He reached a hand to the knob, turned it softly.

The door gave readily and swung back, but the closely shuttered room was swathed in gloom. Dan switched on his pocket flashlight and gave a low whistle.

Men who have died of cyanide poisoning are not a pretty sight, especially if they have been pretty well beaten up beforehand. The three

corpses on the floor gave Dan the shivers. The evil glitter of the blood-stained knife stuck in the table top did not make the scene more pleasing. The stench of the burned-out lamp was like the seepings from a too shallow grave.

The desk top gleamed brightly under the flash, as did the smooth black enamel of the telephone. Dan played the beam over the glasses and got the same smooth shimmer.

"Everything wiped clean after it was touched," he decided. "Well, we'll do what we can with them."

He did not touch the telephone, although he felt sure that it was connected and workable.

Dan had noted a call box on the corner. There he got in touch with the chief of police. "Send a fingerprint outfit along with the boys," he directed. "Maybe they'll be able to get something."

With painstaking care, the police experts went over the room, and found nothing. After they had finished, Dan Fowler sat down in the chair behind the desk. For some time he sat perfectly still, studying the nearly full bottle of whiskey and the four glasses.

"Men don't keep whiskey sitting on a top desk, motion pictures to the contrary," he mused. "Before the drinks were poured, that bottle was in a drawer, I'd be willing to bet." Dan reopened the top one and carefully went over the inside with a magnifying glass.

"Come here," he told the fingerprint man. "Powder the bottom of this drawer, right where I'm pointing."

Muttering excitedly under his breath, the expert got busy with his fine camel's hair brush, using powdered graphite on the almost white surface.

"They'll photograph fine," he exclaimed. "I believe we'll get four fingers. How in hell did you figure that one out, Fowler?"

"Easy," Dan told him. "The bottle was lying in the drawer. Whoever reached in to grasp it, would almost inevitably touch the bottom of the drawer with at least three, maybe

four, of his fingers. Try it yourself and see. If we can find one of those prints in the files, we'll have the fellow that bumped off these three hoods, and maybe we'll find out who was back of the murder of Senator Carter."

"You figure, these are the mugs that handed it to Carter?" asked a detective.

Dan nodded. "You'll find that skinny one over beside the chair is Blinky Morton," he stated with complete confidence.

Dan was right. Morton's prints checked perfectly, but the three clearly defined prints photographed on the bottom of the desk drawer had no counterpart in the F. B. I. files. That meant "no record." But if the triple murderer should make a slip in the future, the photograph of his prints would prove invaluable.

CHAPTER III

The Escape



DAN FOWLER left the police department laboratory after hearing the toxicologist confirm his opinion that the death of the three hoods had been due to cyanide poisoning. He headed directly for the Hotel Perry,

where Senator Carter had stopped. Dusk was falling when he reached it. After identifying himself, he had no difficulty in obtaining a pass key to the senator's room. The police, leaning to the theory that Carter had been slugged following an attempt to rob him, had not examined the dead statesman's effects.

The room was on the third floor. Dan located it without difficulty and slipped the pass key into the lock. The bolt moved back noiselessly, but when he turned the knob and shoved, the door refused to open.

"What the blazes?" he grunted, and shoved harder. The door creaked slightly, but still stood fast.

Inside the room there was a sudden,

abrupt sound, as of a light object being dropped to the floor; then came a slight rustling.

Dan leaped back to the far side of the hallway and lunged forward with a big shoulder. He hit the door with a bang. There was a rattling crackle of splintering wood, the door burst open and Dan sprawled over the fragments of the chair which had been wedged under the knob.

Crash! Flame lanced across the shadowy room and a bullet whizzed past the prostrate G-man. He rolled over, dragging at his gun as a dim form vanished through a far doorway. As he scrambled to his feet, he heard a clattering jangle of breaking glass.

Dan bounded across the room, caught a glint of metal, and slewed sideways. Eyes blinded by the flash of the gun, his ears ringing with the roar of the report, he stumbled against the wall, blood pouring down his face from the furrow the bullet had ploughed in his scalp. For a moment he clung to the wall, sick and giddy; then his head cleared and he glided, crouching, into the other room.

A blast of cold air from the smashed window swept the numbness from his brain. He ran to the window and leaned out.

A figure was just swinging to the ground from the lowest rung of the fire escape. Dan sent three shots screeching after the man as he zig-zagged along the wall. Apparently unharmed, the quarry vanished through a door that opened on the inner court upon which the suite of rooms faced.

The hall was a bedlam of screams and shouts. Heads were popping from open doors. Scared faces stared at the bloody G-man as he bounded to the elevator.

"Down!" he barked at the pop-eyed operator.

Dan had the outer plan of the hotel photographed on his brain as he dashed through the lobby. He rounded the corner and reached the service door just as a cab was pulling into an empty parking space.



Blunt

"Did a car pull out of here just now?" he demanded of the driver.

"Uh-huh," the cabman replied. "Just left her vacant—that's why I'm pullin' in. Nope, I didn't notice which way he went. Was a black car, or maybe it was brown."

DAN went back to the hotel, mopping the blood from his face. No use in running around trying to get a line on the car in which the quarry had escaped.

Nobody appeared to have seen the fugitive.

The fat hotel manager was wringing his hands and wailing. Dan shut him up with a snapped word and hurried to the room he had just quitted.

Senator Carter had brought with him on his trip only a large traveling bag and a briefcase. The contents of the bag appeared to be intact, but papers from the briefcase were scattered over the floor. They consisted of commonplace letters and memo-

randa, as far as Dan could make out.

"Looks like whoever it was got what he was after," Dan muttered, and entered the inner room. He snapped on the lights and his quick eyes noticed something lying on the floor beside the window. He picked it up, examined it swiftly, and his lean jaw tightened. For a long moment he stood staring through the splintered window, and in the depths of his grey eyes was a flickering light of dawning understanding. Dan Fowler was pretty sure now that he knew why Senator Carter was murdered.

Fingerprint men and photographers went to work on the rooms of the dead Senator Carter, and they got results.

The man Dan had interrupted searching the room had worn gloves, but when he had gone through the window, he had been forced to grip the rail of the fire escape with great force. Enough force, in fact, to split a finger of the thin glove. Minute specks of glove fibre had wrenched off and, left clinging to the rough iron, showed the experts the trail they must follow. Farther along the rail they found a perfect index fingerprint which quickly established the fact that the murderer of the three hoods and the prowler in Senator Carter's room was the same individual.

"That makes twice," mused the G-man. "Maybe the third time'll be the charm and we'll have something besides prints to look over. He's thorough, all right, but he'll slip. They all do, sooner or later. If this business turns out to be what I think it is, he'll be just an underling. Yes, he'll slip. He did—a little bit—when he overlooked the prints on the bottom of the drawer. Tearing his glove was an accident, but accidents have a habit of happening more than once.

"He was smooth enough to wait until the excitement died down before raiding the senator's room. He figured the police would interpret the killing as the result of attempted robbery, and hence would not meddle with the senator's baggage. Pretty cool and calculating on his part, and

it very nearly worked. Well, guess I'd better get this scratch attended to next."

The wound was only a slight one, and a pad and a strip or two of plaster took care of it.

As he left the doctor's office, Dan's eye was caught by a screaming black headline. He bought a paper and read the article with interest.

LA TE as it was, the director was still in his office. Dan announced himself and was told to come in.

"Let's have it," his chief said tersely.

Dan recounted what had happened during the afternoon. As he finished, he laid the open newspaper on the director's desk and pointed to the black headline.

"I've read it," said the director, "another gold robbery. That makes something like a dozen of them in the past six months, all very much alike—bulldozed from the mines, taken en route from mines to banks or shipping points. Local matters concerning the local authorities; not coming under our jurisdiction. But in relation to that, here is a matter which—"

"Pardon me just a moment, sir," Dan interrupted, "but I showed you that article to introduce something else, something that vitally concerns the Carter case, I believe. Look at this, sir."

He handed the director the thing he had picked up beside the window through which the unknown looter of Senator Carter's apartment had fled. It was a little packet of newspaper clippings held together by a rubber band, with a penciled memorandum attached.

The director gave Dan a keen glance, took the packet and riffled through the clippings.

"Hmm!" he grunted, "accounts of the various gold robberies that have taken place during recent months. Where did you get these, Fowler, and what about them?"

Dan told him. "And that, sir, I believe is what Senator Carter came to Washington to see you about," he concluded. "I believe the senator had

some knowledge concerning those robberies, and furthermore I believe that was why he was murdered."

The director's dark eyes snapped. His words shot out like bullets.

"On just what do you base that deduction?"

Dan's answer was prompt and without hesitation. "On this, sir—Senator Carter undoubtedly carried that packet of clippings with him to Washington. Why should he do so if he were not vitally interested in their subject matter? And why should the man who burglarized his room take that packet, of all things, from the senator's briefcase if it were not connected with whatever he was searching for? Of course the burglar might have been carrying the packet himself, dropped it in his flight; but the other theory is much more reasonable. Yes, sir, I'm convinced that there is a tie-up between those robberies and the murder."

The director nodded thoughtfully. "It looks reasonable," he conceded. "Now as to this memorandum—"

He stared at the penciled words.

The *Empress*—\$17,000,000. Prepare to handle.

The director let out a low whistle. "The *Empress* sails on the second of next month on her maiden voyage across the Atlantic."

"Yes," said Dan. "She's the new queen of the seas, the biggest of them all. Everybody knows that."

"WHAT is not generally known," went on the director, "is that she carries the largest shipment of gold bullion ever consigned to the United States treasury. Dan, the British authorities have received two undercover tips, which they insist are authentic, that an attempt will be made to steal the bullion.

"It sounds preposterous, of course. The *Empress* carries a crew of more than a thousand and nearly three thousand passengers. The gold will be in the strong room and guarded. The strong room cannot be unlocked until the ship docks in New York.

Every precaution will be taken to safeguard it when it is loaded on the other side and when it is loaded here.

"Just the same the British are worried, and they have consulted with us. Now you dig up this additional bit of information that ties up perfectly with what the British suspect."

Dan Fowler did not look incredulous. Instead, he looked very grave.

"You will recall, sir," he said, "that there have been more than a dozen gold robberies in this country during the past six months. They were, one and all, so cleverly planned and executed that not only was every one successful, but not one of the robbers has been caught. None of the gold has been recovered, and no trace of its whereabouts has come to light. Which, to my mind, implies a national organization headed by some master mind of unusual ability. If that is so, an attempt on the *Empress* may not be so absurd as it sounds."

"Exactly," said the director. "Wait until I get the Secretary of the Treasury on the phone."

For several moments he talked earnestly with the secretary. "Yes, sir," he concluded, "I think myself it is the wise thing to do. I will attend to it immediately. Thank you, sir."

He whirled back to face Dan, his keen eyes glowing.

"Fowler," he barked, "you're going places."

"Going places?"

"Yes, we are taking no chances. If there is an attempt, I believe it will take place either in Portsmouth or Cherbourg harbor and not in New York; and that is where you come in. I'm sending you to England to sail on the *Empress*. You leave for England tomorrow."

"Alone, sir?"

The director's eyes twinkled. "I suppose you would like to take Kendal with you."

"Yes, sir," Dan replied eagerly. "There's nobody I'd rather have along on such a trip than Larry Kendal."

"Nobody?" The director smiled.

Under his twinkling gaze, Dan Fowler colored and an embarrassed

grin spread across his strong features.

"Well, sir—" he began.

The director chuckled at the eager expression on the face of his ace.

"It has been thought wise," he interrupted, "to include a woman on the mission. You know, an attractive young lady with brains sometimes gets to see and hear things that would never be revealed to a man. Is there anyone in the department you might recommend?"

Dan knew that his chief was poking fun at him with that question. He did not hesitate an instant in replying.

"Yes, sir. Miss Vane," he said.

"Miss Vane is flying to New York tonight at nine," the director said. "Larry Kendal leaves on the two o'clock plane. You will leave tomorrow morning at six. You will all three sail on the *Brittany* tomorrow at midnight. You will become 'acquainted' on the *Empress*. Your passage on the *Empress* has been arranged, so you will have no difficulty getting on the list, even if it is crowded. That's all, the rest is up to you."

CHAPTER IV

Blazing Guns



His blood was thrilling in his veins when Dan left the director's room. Here was something worthwhile! Here was a brand new field for the exercise of his talents.

In some ways, Larry Kendal was as unlike Dan Fowler as day is from night. Dapper, debonair, Larry Kendal was handsome and perfectly groomed. He had the suave, easy-going manner of a man-about-town. Two things he and Dan had in common—they thought fast and shot straight. On a fifty-fifty basis, they had gone through more than one propped-up section of hell together. They made a perfect team.

Sally Vane was supposedly only a

clerk in the department. She was actually a field operative and the chief reason the precedent against appointing female special agents was going the way of most precedents. She was blonde, blue-eyed, and slim, with curves where curves were in order. Perhaps she didn't actually say her prayers to Dan Fowler, but the question is open to debate.

She was, incidentally, the reason why Dan Fowler couldn't even see any other woman. She had been orphaned when her father, a midwestern sheriff, had been slain by the Northshire gang, which Dan Fowler finally smashed. Since then she had worked with Dan and Larry on a number of difficult and dangerous cases and had conclusively proved her worth.

Dan Fowler made no secrecy of his trip to New York. A big black Linkard sedan—low-slung, silent, one of the new F. B. I cars, geared to do ninety—met him at the Newark airport and whisked him under the river to the mighty city that roared and thundered along the placid Hudson.

THE big plane howling down the sky lanes from Washington was fast; but faster still were the words that whispered over the wires to the mahogany office in Manhattan where the grey-haired man with the cold blue eyes sat, telephone in hand.

"He left here on the six o'clock plane," said the voice from Washington. "His name is Fowler and he's the top-notch of those damn college boy detectives. I don't know yet how he came to get mixed up in the Carter business, but he very nearly trapped me in Carter's room and I'm afraid he might have picked up that bunch of clippings I mentioned last night.

"If he did, it might give him an idea, and an idea is all those hellions need to make trouble. He may be in New York on other business, but then again he may not. I thought you should know, sir."

In the New York office, six words were spoken, and heard in distant Washington:

"He will be taken care of!"

Which was the reason why an emi-



There was a ripping smash, as the shell burst (Page 35)

nently respectable-looking limousine cruised casually in the wake of the big Linkard as it rolled up Lexington Avenue to the New York field offices of the F. B. I. The occupants of the limousine also appeared respectable, at first glance, for they were carefully dressed and barbered. There was a shiftiness to the eyes shielded by the brims of soft hats, however, and a cruel twist to the lips that would have interested an alert police officer.

The Linkard pulled up at an office building. The limousine glided on, turned the corner and shortly afterward reappeared on the avenue, traveling in the opposite direction. It parked in front of a restaurant almost opposite the building which housed the F. B. I. offices. Three of its occupants got out, strolled into the restaurant and took seats at a

table near the window. The uniformed chauffeur sat stiffly at his post, apparently staring straight ahead of him, but with eyes glinting sideward toward the entrance of the F. B. I. building. The men in the restaurant had the entrance under observance at all times.

Hal Whitten, the special agent in charge of the field offices, had Dan's ticket ready for him.

"Kendal and Miss Vane are already aboard the *Brittany*," said Whitten. "I feel confident nobody has an inkling that they are F. B. I. agents. Larry, with his usual combination of luck and brains, struck up an acquaintance with three young business men going across for a vacation and the four of them have been on shipboard all afternoon, celebrating. Miss Vane has credentials as a buyer for a

large midwestern department store. What's your cover, Dan?"

"Lawyer on vacation," replied the G-man, and added with a twinkle of his deep-set eyes: "I am one, all right—that's what I took up in college—and this trip is sure a vacation for me."

"Huh!" grunted the elderly Whitten, "anything that promises trouble and excitement is a vacation for you! You aren't ever happy unless you're on a tough assignment!"

WHITTEN sent out for food and he and Dan had dinner together in the office.

"Eleven o'clock," said Dan, finishing his coffee, "time for me to be moving."

Dan did not take the F. B. I. car from the office. His chief desire now was *not* to attract attention. He hailed a passing taxi.

"Pennsylvania Station," he told the driver. His plan was to enter the great railroad terminal, buy a ticket to Newark, and then slip out again through one of the numerous exits.

The cab swung down Lexington Avenue. Behind it rolled the big limousine. The men in the restaurant, watching the F. B. I. office building like hawks, had not been fooled by Dan's maneuver.

"I haven't any time to waste," Dan told the taxi driver.

The driver put on speed and began to zigzag across town to Seventh Avenue. He got caught in the after-theatre jam at Fifty-third and Fifth Avenue. Finally he wriggled his way free, shot across to Sixth Avenue and turned south.

"We'll make some time, now," he called back to his passenger. "Nobody much uses this pike at this time of the night."

The cab scudded swiftly down Sixth between the massive steel pillars of the elevated. Dan glanced at his watch and leaned back comfortably against the cushions. He had plenty of time to make the *Brittany* at Fourteenth Street before sailing time. Glancing up, he saw that they were passing through the deserted fur

trading district below Thirty-fourth Street.

With a roar of churning cylinders, a big black limousine shot up alongside the speeding cab.

"Pull over!" a harsh voice yelled at the driver.

The startled driver glanced in the direction of the voice, saw a bristle of gun barrels and lost his head completely. He spun his wheel frantically—and wrapped his cab around one of the steel E1 pillars! His dying yell knifed through the screech of ripped metal and the sound of smashing glass.

Dan was hurled to the floor and against the door. His two hundred pounds of hard muscle ripped the door from its hinges and he went end over end into the street. For a moment he lay writhing, the breath knocked out of him, blood from the reopened wound in his head streaming down his face.

The driver of the limousine swerved away from the wreck, skidded down the avenue for half a block and spun his big car about on a dime. In an instant he came roaring back toward the prostrate G-man, smoke and flame spurting from the side windows.

Bullets were spitting all around Dan, showering him with fragments of stone and splinters of lead. The headlights of the car blazed in his eyes like the glare of some unearthly monster.

Still gasping for breath, he hurled himself out of the car's path and behind an E1 pillar. As the car roared past him, his guns slid from their shoulder holsters. The big .45's crashed deafeningly.

Dan heard his bullets thud solidly into the body of the car as it slowed down with screaming brakes. He saw blurred splotches appear on the glass of its windows, but that was all. No splinters of steel nor fragments of glass flew under the pounding of the copper-jackets. Dan threw down on the rear tires, knew he didn't miss, but got no results.

"Armored body, bullet-proof glass, and tires filled with non-puncture

fluid!" he panted, staggering to his feet.

THE limousine had stopped, but so close to a pillar it was forced to back up before it could turn. Dan saw his chance and took it. As the gangster car backed and sidled, he scudded down the avenue at a dead run. He could hear the hoods in the limousine yelling curses. Their guns cracked behind him. Bullets whined past.

Dan was beyond Thirtieth Street before the limousine got around and roared in pursuit. Somewhere in the direction of Seventh Avenue he could hear the wail of police prowler car sirens; but he knew the big black car would catch up with him before the police arrived on the scene. Besides, police help and publicity was the last thing he desired.

He dared not turn into a side street, and he knew the pursuing car would run him down before he had gone another block. Ahead, at Twenty-eighth Street, loomed an El station and he could hear the thunder of an approaching southbound train, but the station might as well be a million miles away for all the good it would do him.

The F. B. I. teaches its men to think fast and to recognize opportunity when they see it. Opportunity loomed beside Dan Fowler in the shape of a squat El pillar. He grasped both opportunity and the pillar.

In an instant he was swarming up the latticed side of the pillar. Just as his hand reached for the projecting end of a cross-tie above his head, the pursuing car boomed past. Too late the bewildered hoods had seen and understood his maneuver. They leaned out the windows and sprayed lead in his direction, but the intervening pillar, the tricky light and the sprawling shadows of the spidery El were all in his favor.

Steely fingers gripped the cross-tie, arms like bands of iron drew his lithe body up and flung it onto the ties, inches from the deadly third rail. On the opposite track, the southbound train crashed past, slowing for the

nearby Twenty-eighth Street station.

Dan dashed across the ties as the last car flashed by. He lunged for the rear platform rail, caught it and was jerked off his feet. But he clung like grim death to the rail and as the train ground into the station, he hauled his battered body over the railing and onto the platform. Bloody, disheveled, he slipped into the car and sank gasping into a seat.

The few passengers stared at him in horror and amazement. Feet were pounding on the station stairs as the train pulled out, and police sirens were wailing toward Sixth Avenue.

Crouching low in his seat, Dan slipped fresh clips of cartridges into his guns and took a chance on riding past the Twenty-third and Eighteenth Street stops. At Fourteenth Street he slipped from the car and hurried through the station.

A glance at the clock showed the hands crawling past midnight. He went down the steps four at a time. A hand gripped his shoulder as he reached the street.

BEFORE him loomed a big figure in blue. "Just a minute, buddy," said a voice.

Dan didn't have time to argue. He tripped the policeman before that astounded and indignant individual knew what it was all about, and took to his heels.

There was plenty of traffic on Fourteenth Street. Dan leaped onto the running board of a passing cab, swung the door open and floundered inside. A dignified old gentleman who was the single occupant gave a squawk of dismay.

"Shut up," Dan told him, and added to the driver, "Drive straight west, like hell!"

The driver took one glance at the steely eyes glaring out of the blood-streaked face and did not argue. He shot by a red light at Seventh Avenue, grazed a southbound bus and skinned the paint from a milk truck. Behind him shrilled an outraged police whistle.

"If that cop got my number I'll be put away for a week!" wailed the

driver in tones of dismal despair.

Dan fumbled a crisp bill from his pocket and dropped it on the front seat.

"That'll pay your fine and leave something over," he told the driver. "This gentleman here will tell the judge it wasn't your fault. Faster, now!"

The old gentleman snorted in his beard. "By gad, sir!" he exclaimed, "that's sporting! I suppose you should be hanged, but I hope you won't be!"

"Never can tell," Dan grinned at him as the cab flashed past another red at Eighth Avenue.

The light at Ninth was green and the taxi streaked it toward Tenth Avenue and the *Brittany's* pier. The air was trembling with a deep-throated bellow. The *Brittany* was whistling: "Gangplank!"

Tenth Avenue and a line of parked cabs, past which north and south-bound trucks whizzed! Dan's taxi went between them like a zigzag streak of yellow lightning, to the accompaniment of grinding brakes and cursing drivers.

"Dead end!" bawled the taxi man. "I can't go no farther!"

"Far enough!" Dan flung at him and dashed under the overhead roadway to the pier door, running like a blue streak.

"Just a delayed passenger endeavoring to catch his ship!" exclaimed the old gentleman disgustedly. "I'd thought he was an escaping brigand or something romantic!"

"Don't you be so sure," grunted the driver, pocketing the big bill, "hear them radio cars squallin' over on the avenoo?"

Past shouting guards at the pier door, Dan dashed. The gangplank was already being raised. Tugs were snorting and puffing. Dan made the *Brittany's* deck with a final mighty leap, lost his footing and sprawled amid the cheers of fellow passengers. A protesting steward hurried up but was quickly mollified by something over which his fat fingers closed tightly. Smiling and clucking, he conducted Dan to his cabin.

CHAPTER V

Sinister Travelers



AFTER the hectic turmoil of the past few days, Dan found the uneventful trip across the Atlantic a welcome respite. The morning after sailing, he read in the ship's paper news of "the desperate battle between rival gangster outfits" that had taken place on Sixth Avenue the night before, during which a taxicab had been wrecked and the driver killed. Police had pursued one of the cars down Sixth Avenue, the account stated, but lost it in the twisty streets of Greenwich Village.

"Guess those folks on the El didn't tie me up with the row in the streets," Dan mused. "Chances are they figured I was a drunk who had gone to sleep on the rear platform and bumped his head. That cop at Fourteenth Street didn't get more than a glimpse of me, and the cab driver who drove me to the pier wouldn't be doing any unnecessary talking. Looks like I got a break."

He saw Larry and Sally on shipboard, and knew that they saw him, but it was not part of his plan to recognize them, no matter how strongly he might desire to personally.

Dan spent a pleasant week loafing about England, filling to perfection his rôle of a young lawyer vacationing on his first trip abroad. Larry and his three boon companions hilariously discovered London.

Sally Vane, in her character of department store buyer, actually visited manufacturing establishments and the offices of exporters. Only certain high government officials and Sir Basil Loring, commodore of the line and acting captain of the *Empress* on her maiden voyage, knew the truth. They purchased tickets for the return trip to America on the *Empress*, apparently through the regular channels. Dan casually encountered a Scotland Yard inspector in a pub, and

over a pitcher of ale learned that the rumor of an attempt on the gold shipment persisted.

"We've taken every possible precaution," said the inspector, "and the whole bally business looks absurd, but we'll take no chances. The bullion will be loaded at Southampton tomorrow."

The gold was loaded. Dan watched it brought to the pier in armored trucks, guarded so carefully that an army could not have captured it. In the steel-walled strong room, deep in the ship's hold, the time locks were set so that the ponderous doors could not be swung open until the *Empress* docked in New York harbor.

"If they don't try here in the harbor or at Cherbourg, it's all off," he decided. "Of course they might smuggle some of their men on board without much trouble, but to capture that ship would be like taking over a cruiser or a dreadnaught, and New York is out of the question. Well, it's been a nice trip!"

He went aboard soon after the gold was loaded. Larry and Sally showed up a little later. The three were seated at the captain's table and that night at dinner, Sir Basil gravely made them known to each other.

FLAGS flying, siren bellowing, the mighty liner nosed out of Southampton harbor and headed down the Solent toward the English Channel. Whistles shrieked, cannon boomed. Half a million cheering Britons waved the new queen of the seas *bon voyage*. The sky was a tender blue, the water peaceful and golden with sunshine.

Dan and Larry and Sally watched the Isle of Wight slide past, and the restless blue waters of the Channel appear. The great ship turned majestically and, far, far ahead was a dim and distant white cloud upon the blue water. It was the fringe of France.

"We won't get to see it, though," murmured Sally Vane.

Dan gave the blue-eyed girl a glance that sent the color to her soft cheeks.

"Not this time," he said, "but some day—"

Lithe, handsome Larry Kendal chuckled to himself and tactfully moved along the rail a little ways.

Cherbourg, with more bands, more salutes, more flags and more passengers. And then the *Empress* glided past the breakwater and pointed her bow to the broad Atlantic. The thunder of her mighty engines took on a deeper note. Their tempo quickened. The blue rollers were sheared aside as by a giant knife, while behind her stern a mile-long wake tossed and churned.

"She's going to try for a record!" ran the excited comment of the passengers.

Dan and Sally and Larry separated, each in search of possible sources of information. They met again the following evening and conversed cheerily. Under the stream of idle talk, however, slipped terse sentences spoken with scarcely moving lips and inaudible to other passengers but a few feet distant.

"Some funny characters on board," said Larry. "I ran across several in the bars that aren't my idea of the kind of folks that travel on this kind of a ship. Of course they may be gamblers—you always find them during such a crossing—but they don't look exactly the part."

"I had lunch with a very charming



young man I met while playing shuffleboard," reported Sally. "He was refined and courteous, but when a waiter spilled a drop of water on his coat sleeve, he snarled something out of the corner of his mouth in a way that was rather out of character.

I pretended not to notice, however."

"I toured the ship with an official party," Dan said, "and in the engine room I saw a face that certainly looked familiar. Larry, didn't Chuck Quinlan, who was paroled from Leavenworth last month, have a small star-shaped scar just below his left eye?"

LARRY Kendal shut his eyes. Pictures fled across his photographic brain.

"He did," he stated positively.

Dan's grey eyes flashed, his wide mouth tightened.

"Then it was Chuck," he declared. "Now what does that mean? How did an American mobster get a job oiling on this fancy British ship? Why is he here? I'm beginning to think we may not have such a pleasant trip after all."

"What are you going to do, Dan?" asked Larry.

"I don't know just yet," Dan admitted. Later he had another talk with Larry.

"I've spotted three more of those fellows," he told Kendal. "They are continually sweeping the sea with glasses. Yes, I know lots of passengers do that, but these three are peculiarly persistent. I'm going to have a talk with Sir Basil."

Dan's interview with the acting captain was anything but satisfactory. The old martinet regarded him with scant favor.

"Your theory is preposterous, Mr. Fowler," he said. "Such things just don't happen any more. Piracy on the high seas in this day and age! Sir, the British navy freed the seas of pirates years ago."

"Just the same, sir," persisted Dan, "I am convinced that if an attempt is made on the gold shipment, it will be from the sea, and not by criminals aboard us."

"The whole business is poppy-cock!" snorted Sir Basil. "I have been instructed by my foreign office to cooperate with you people, but in what manner is left solely to my judgment. We have men from Scotland Yard aboard, sir, and officers from our own

company. They are competent men and in need of no outside assistance."

That ended it. After all, the *Empress* was a British ship and Sir Basil was in command.

CHAPTER VI

Piracy



THREE days out, and the *Empress* crashing across the North Atlantic to break the all-time record for the western crossing. Nothing out of the ordinary had happened and had it not been for the fact that there were undoubtedly a number of queer characters on the ship, Dan would have felt sure that he was following a cold trail. Not that there was any untoward act to sharpen his suspicions. Dan was convinced that the stocky oiler he had spotted was Chuck Quinlan, ex-convict, but Quinlan did nothing to attract attention to himself.

He was not in a position, Dan knew, to do serious injury to the ship's mighty engines, if that was his purpose in the engine room; and, for that matter, what would be gained by disabling or delaying the vessel? Nothing that the G-man could see.

Neither Larry nor Sally had anything of outstanding interest to report that night. Dan slept soundly.

The morning of the fourth day out dawned with such beauty as only the Atlantic in one of its peaceful moods can show. The sea was deepest blue flecked with dancing gold. The sky was a sapphire bowl with saffron edges and a glowing yellow orange at the bottom. Gulls like balls of white light skimmed the glancing wave crests. The *Empress* was a ship of molten brass and scarlet flame. She was alone on the broad ocean.

Not quite alone. Against the palely golden line of the horizon showed a dark dot. It grew in size momentarily. Above it floated a feathery plume of trailing shadow.

Dan Fowler, standing on the upper



Dan's gun spat flame (Page 34)

deck with Larry Kendal, noticed the ship that came rushing out of the blankness behind them. He gave a low whistle of amazement as he watched it grow in size.

"Good Lord! watch that fellow come!" he exclaimed. "We're doing thirty knots and he's overhauling us as if we were standing still!"

Larry shielded his eyes against the sun glare and peered with puckered lids.

"Must be a destroyer," he said "Look at the smoke roll out of those funnels."

"Must be," Dan agreed. "Nothing else can make that speed. Funny thing, though, she isn't painted grey; almost black in color."

"Some other navy than ours," guessed Larry. "They don't all paint 'em grey, do they?"

Dan didn't know for sure. Together they watched the slim dark ship come roaring toward them at a long diagonal.

Others on the *Empress* had noticed the approach of the strange vessel. Officers on the bridge were training glasses on her.

"Perhaps she's got a message for us, or a passenger," said Larry. "Certainly looks like she's trying to catch up with us."

"She isn't trying to—she *is*," muttered Dan, his grey eyes narrowing. For no reason at all, there was a chilling sensation gathering inside his breast as he watched the mysterious stranger rip through the long rollers at locomotive speed. The trained F. B. I. agent comes to know things before they happen. Dan was vaguely disquieted.

THE ship was almost on them. She was belching black smoke in rolling clouds. A white wave curled back from her prow and seemed to lap her low deck. And from that deck burst a puff of white smoke. To the amazed hearers on board the liner came the sharp smack of the report as a shell went skipping across the *Empress'* bows. Which meant in any language: "Heave to!"

An instant later the astounded offi-

cers of the liner saw a string of signal flags go fluttering aloft; and those flags spelled out the same ominous message.

Utterly scandalized, outraged, maddened, Sir Basil Loring did nothing of the sort. Snorting with anger, his white mustache bristling, he rang for full speed ahead! The roar of the *Empress'* engines deepened, their mighty pulse quickened.

Dan Fowler blazed out a helpless curse. "The damned old fool!" Like bullets his words shot at Larry Kendal. "Find Sally, and stand by! Hell's going to break here in a minute! This is it, Larry! It's a raid! The nerve of those hellions! Who would have thought it possible!"

"Where you going?" shouted Larry as Dan bounded from his side.

"Radio room!" the G-man shot back. "Find Sally!"

As Dan hurtled along the deck, he heard the crack of a shot. Glancing over his shoulder, he saw Sir Basil Loring pitch forward, to lie a huddled corpse on his own bridge. A thin-faced man with a smoking gun was running toward him. Other gunmen were converging upon the bewildered officers on the bridge.

On such a ship as the *Empress*, distances are great. Dan had to run almost a city block before he reached the radio room. Bullets were spitting around him as he barged through the door.

Inside the radio room was a strange sight. The operator on duty and the chief operator stood against the wall with their hands raised. A hard-faced young man Dan had noticed playing cards steadily during the voyage covered them with a tommy-gun. He whirled as the G-man entered, swinging the machine-gun around.

He didn't swing it quickly enough. Dan's guns were out as he plunged through the door. They spat flame as the hood's finger curled on the trigger. The tommy-gun roared a burst that ripped splinters from the door; then it clattered to the floor with the dead gangster on top of it.

Dan blazed an order to the white-faced operator. "Send out a call—

quick! Ask for help! Tell everybody that can hear you the ship's attacked by pirates! I said *pirates!* Hurry, while I hold them off! Say we're sinking. We're liable to be in a minute! Hurry!"

Galvanized into action by the G-man's dynamic force, the operator leaped to his table. An instant later the astounding message was pouring into receiving sets all over the world. The operator repeated it, over and over. The snap and crackle of the wireless filled the room as the chief operator began hurling out dots and dashes in code. Outside sounded yells and running feet.

Crouched in the doorway, Dan let go with both guns. He blasted a man off his feet and sent another to the deck howling with a smashed shoulder. Grim, nerveless, eyes blazing in his bronzed face, he stopped the rush to the wireless room.

BUT he couldn't stop the charge of that lean, black ship tearing toward the doomed liner. A roaring volcano, flame blasting the black smoke from her funnels, white water curling over her forward rail, she ripped the heaving Atlantic apart as she overtook the straining leviathan. Less than a quarter of a mile distant she changed her course like a skater flickering across smooth ice and thundered along parallel to the *Empress*. Again that ominous ball of white smoke puffed from her deck.

This time the chilled-steel bolt did not go skipping in front of the knife-like prow. There was a ripping smash, then a roar as the shell burst in the bowels of the liner. Another puff of smoke and another roar. Again and again.

Dan felt the mighty ship reel beneath him like a stricken thing. The throb of her engines ceased, she quickly lost way. Another crash, followed by a mightier explosion than any that had gone before.

"Damn!" muttered the G-man. "There went a boiler! Set still working?" he asked the operator.

"Independent of engine room power," the other flung back.

Dan was hardly conscious of the bullets that whined about him. A yell of agony inside the room brought his head about. The operator lay in a bloody huddle, moaning and retching. One of the slugs had ripped through his stomach. The chief was swearing hysterically, and still sending.

The great liner was a pandemonium of horrible sound. Men yelled and cursed. Women screamed. On the bridge was a confused bellowing of orders. Fire had broken out somewhere and the ominous crackle of the flames grew louder and louder. Far ahead, the lean attacker whipped about and came roaring back toward her helpless quarry.

This time, however, she ran in close with slackening speed. Boats hit the water as precisely as from the decks of a man-of-war. Oars flashed in the sunlight. A man with a megaphone stood in the lead boat.

"Drop a ladder!" he boomed, "and no funny business! Make a move and we'll blow you out of the water!"

The firing above and below decks had ceased. Evidently all resistance had ended. Dan slipped back from the door and hauled the tommy-gun from beneath the dead gangster. Wedging the door shut on a crack, he waited. No further attack came, however.

Men were pouring over the rail from the boats, men in natty uniforms and heavily armed. Something wrapped and bulky was hoisted up and handled gingerly. The men who carried it vanished below decks.

Tingling with suspense, Dan waited. He wondered where Larry was, and Sally, but he did not dare go look for them. The chief operator was still sending and Dan knew it was up to him to hold the radio room as long as there was a breath in his body.

"Keep giving them our position," he told the chief. "I'm afraid we're going to need help badly before this is finished."

There was an ominous list to the great ship and she tossed sluggishly. She was no armored cruiser, built to resist cannon fire, and those shells had doubtless ripped the sides out of her.

Dan knew that she was built with water-tight compartments and, theoretically, unsinkable, but her designers had never figured for any such test as she had just undergone.

BELOW decks sounded another explosion, muffled, heavy. Minutes passed and laden men began to appear on deck. They passed their burdens overside to the waiting boats and trooped back to the hold. They were stokers, stewards, seamen and others of the *Empress'* crew. They were guarded and driven to their task by the hard-faced men in uniform who had come in the boats from the attacking ship.

Dan knew what those unwilling bearers carried.

"They've blown the strong-room and are looting the gold," he told the chief operator. "That's what they were after!"

"It couldn't happen!" yammered the pallid Britisher. "This is the twentieth century! This isn't sixteen hundred and the Spanish Main. It can't be!"

"Maybe not," Dan told him grimly, "but it did and is!"

Gold worth millions runs to a great weight, but it didn't take the pirates long to transfer it to their waiting ship. Before Dan would have believed it possible, the uniformed men were streaming overside once more. With them went fully two-score of the planted passengers who had helped capture the ship.

"Guess that settles it," said the G-man, straightening up. "They're leaving."

A woman's scream, shrill, piercing, whirled him about. The radio room had a window and through that window glared a murderous face. Dan Fowler saw eyes glinting across the sights of a heavy automatic lined with his breast.

Crash!

The automatic exploded, but the bullet slammed harmlessly into the floor. Over the face at the window spread an expression of vast astonishment. An instant and it vanished. In that instant Dan recognized Chuck

Quinlan, the ex-convict oiler. He leaped to the window, then turned quickly as steps sounded outside the door.

"It's me, Dan!" yelled a voice he recognized. A second later Larry Kendal dashed in, a still smoking gun in his hand. Behind him was Sally Vane.

"Sally saw him just in time and yelled to me," panted Larry. "I was afraid he'd got you before I drilled him. Are you all right, Dan?"

"Yes, thanks to you two," Dan told them gratefully. "That was Quinlan. It was I who got him his term in Leavenworth, you remember, and he hated me enough to chance slipping back here and bumping me off after the others were leaving the ship. He must have recognized me when I was down in the engine room."

There was a sudden roar as the pirate ship got under way. She spun about like a dancer and went racing toward the southern horizon.

"There goes seventeen million," muttered Dan. "How many did they kill, Larry?"

"Only Sir Basil and that poor devil of an operator there," Larry said. "Everybody was so taken by surprise that there was hardly any resistance. The British government men on board never had a chance, and after that first shell the officers gave orders to surrender. There was nothing else to do. You're the one that put a crimp in their style, Dan. They thought they had the radio room captured and intended to smash it first thing. Then they could have taken their time and had nothing to worry about. As it is, everything on the ocean will be looking for them."

"**I**'M broadcasting the best description I can," put in the radio man.

"Keep it up," Dan told him, "and keep telling them we need help; I don't like the feel of this ship. Did you get a good look at any of that crowd, Larry, or you, Sally?"

"Yes," said the girl. "I'm sure I'd recognize the man who led the boarding party, if I ever saw him again. He

was the one who stopped the attack on the radio room. He told them the damage had already been done and not to waste any more time."

"Keep his description in mind," Dan directed, "and when we get to Washington you go over all the photos on file and see if you can place him. Quinlan is another line—we'll trace his connections and perhaps that will tell us something. Wait until I give him the once-over."

Quinlan's pockets gave up little of interest. Crumpled in the bottom of one, however, Dan found a torn envelope addressed to:

Charles Quinlan,
972 W. 19th St., New York City.

The sender's return address had been torn away, leaving only a fragment:

... bra Mine ... City

Dan stowed it away carefully. "Come on," he told the others, "let's get outside and see what's going on."

The ship was still in wildest confusion. Captain Beatty, who had relinquished his command on the maiden voyage in deference to Sir Basil Loring, had now taken over the ship and was striving to bring order out of chaos. The chief engineer reported the engines hopelessly wrecked. The intricate machinery of communication over the vast vessel was no longer functioning. Fire was raging in the after part. The lower hold was already full of water. As Dan and his two aids reached the outer deck, they heard a command:

"Stand by for lifeboats!"

CHAPTER VII

In the Tradition



OWLER glanced anxiously at the sky. He suddenly realized that the golden morning had given place to a grey forenoon. The sea was no longer bright and sparkling but had assumed a dull, leaden hue. A chill wind moaned through the superstructure, adding fury to the

flames which raged in the after part of the ship. Scanning the horizon with keen eyes, Dan saw a faint white line far to the north.

"Real wind coming over there," he muttered. "Larry, things look bad. But I believe help's coming, too."

There was a smudge against the eastern horizon; another a little farther south. Those darker clouds against the wall of grey meant that ships were racing toward the stricken liner.

"Storm'll beat 'em to it, though," said Dan. "Come on, Larry, there's liable to be work for us to do. Stick with us, Sally."

There was work for all hands. Many of the almost three thousand passengers were in a state close to panic. They had to be got into line and kept that way. To overload the boats would be fatal. There was vital need for haste, but haste with order.

Without hesitation, Dan and Larry joined the grim-faced officers who guarded the approaches to the lifeboats. Again and again rang out that cry so in keeping with the finest traditions of the sea:

"Women and children first! Women and children first!"

With the appalling suddenness of the North Atlantic, the storm struck. Level lances of rain, sweeping before an icy wind, struck the sluggishly tossing wreck. The liner, already listing dangerously, heeled over still farther. A dreary grey twilight crawled down off the wings of the wind and spread itself over the surface of the waters. An ugly sea was swiftly kicking up, and the wind grew in force.

Flares and rockets began to soar up from the bridge. Captain Beatty was endeavoring to guide the approaching rescue ships to his stricken vessel. The radio operators sent their clicketing voices winging through the storm.

"Coming fast as we can!" whispered back the voices from the unseen distances. "Hold on, we're coming!"

A terrifying mutter began spreading among the passengers and crew.

"There aren't enough boats!" The

officers shouted an anxious denial.

"Room for all!" they insisted. "Room for all! Keep in line and don't swamp them."

But the mutter rose to a cry, the cry to a scream, the scream to a screech of terror. Maddened men rushed the boats, and were beaten back. They rushed again, sweeping the thin line of officers and seamen off their feet. A boat was crushed against the steel side. Another went down stern first, spilling its shrieking load into the churning water. The officers began to shoot over the heads of the crowd.

DAN FOWLER found himself in the midst of a maddened mob that had lost all reason. Face bleak, mouth set in a grim line, he fought those panic-stricken passengers as he had fought snarling public enemies all over broad America. His iron-hard fists sent men reeling and senseless. His big arms swept them back by twos and threes.

Beside him fought Larry Kendal, no longer a dapper fashion-plate, but with his garments ripped to shreds, and blood streaking his face, though a whimsical grin still quirked his lips.

Sally Vane might have been a slim boy swinging a black pistol barrel, had it not been for the startling whiteness of the flesh that gleamed through the tatters of what had been a modish and becoming gown. For breathless, bloody minutes the battle raged; then it was over as quickly as it had begun. Men huddled back, muttering and shamefaced, the panic pounded out of them and their senses jarred back into their skulls.

"Line up beside us, boys, and help keep order!" Dan shouted to the foremost.

The response was instant. Above the roar of the storm and the still more ominous roar of exploding boilers in the depths of the doomed vessel, again sounded that cry:

"Women and children first. Women and children first!"

Wiping the blood from his face, Dan Fowler turned to Sally.

"Into the next boat for you," he or-

dered. "There aren't many more left."

Sally turned startled blue eyes toward him. "And you?"

Dan shrugged his wide shoulders. "Larry and I are taking our chances, of course," he replied.

"I'm taking my chances, too," said Sally, very calmly.

Dan's big jaw set hard. "I'm in charge of this outfit," he told her, "and I'm ordering you into that boat."

The slim blonde girl faced him and her blue eyes looked squarely into his. "And for the first time, I'm not obeying orders," she said. "I'm *not* going!"

For a long moment their eyes locked; then Dan Fowler nodded his understanding.

"Women and children first!" That's in the tradition. But just as a Captain stays with his ship, a woman stays with her man. That, *too*, is in the tradition!

Sirens were wailing through the storm now. Two great liners flying starry flags were smashing their way through the slaty, white-crested waves. The foremost roared a final blast of triumph and hove to. Boats hit the water with thrilling disregard for the reaching fingers of death, and fought their way toward the stricken vessel. Loaded lifeboats were picked up and their shivering occupants whisked below to warmth and restoratives.

The last lifeboat swung down from the *Empress'* slanting deck. Seamen passed out life preservers to the little group left huddled in the driving rain. Dan fitted one close about Sally, the only woman left aboard.

Men began leaping into the sea. The deck was so steeply slanted that it was a perpetual scramble to keep footing. Dan glanced about, and down at the tossing water.

"All right," he told Larry. "You first—jump away from the side, so she won't smash you when she rolls back. Now!"

Larry leaped as their side of the ship rolled low. He was in the clear before the slow upward heave of the water-logged wreck began. A few moments after he hit the water, a boat

rescued him from the cold grey sea. "Ready," Dan told the girl. "I'm following right after you."

SALLY leaped and went rushing down like a slim and graceful spirit of the storm. Dan followed her almost instantly and saw the water close over her bright head while he was still in mid-air.

He broke water, gasping with the icy cold, and saw Sally nearby. A few powerful strokes took her to his side. An awful moaning rose above the roar of the storm. Dan knew what it was—the death cry of the stricken liner. In scant minutes she would vanish beneath the waves. Supporting the girl with one arm, he fought frantically to get beyond the pull of the mighty vortex that would swirl anything within its grasp to the icy depths when the ship made the final plunge.

With despair gripping his heart, he knew that he could never make it. His arms were leaden, the chill of the water bit into his bones. Wave crests smashed him in the face. The mighty swells rolled him over, strangled him. His brain was growing numb, his senses leaving.

Suddenly something gripped him, hauled him above the surface.

"Come in outa that, buddy!" roared a deep voice. He could hear the clank of oarlocks and the hiss of the long blades straining to back water. Up he went, and over the side of the boat.

"Careful, Pete!" shouted another voice. "He's got a gal in that arm! Here, help me to pry it loose—he's got a grip like a turn in a hawser!"

Shaking the crowding blackness from his mind, Dan slackened his hold on Sally. He managed to sit up.

"I knew we'd find them sofnewhere around!" shouted Larry Kendal's voice. "That mug's too tough to drown!"

Dan Fowler shook the water from his eyes and gazed about. Between the ravening waters and the reeling sky loomed the upreared bow of the *Empress*; she was going down by the stern. More than half of her mighty shape had already vanished. Down



Dan guarded the door with both guns
(Page 35)

she rushed, swiftly and more swiftly. And high on her slanted bridge stood a single white-haired figure, lance-straight, heroic, indomitable. Captain Allan Edward Beatty was standing the last watch alone with his ship—in the tradition!

CHAPTER VIII

Death in the Sky



APPEARING older than the scant weeks of absence warranted, Dan stood before his chief a few days later. There were lines in his face that had not been there when he left so jauntily for his trip across the sea.

"Yes, sir, I saw things I can't forget," he repeated at the completion of his report. "There was something about what happened out there that gets you as no ordinary crime could. It was a harking back to the old days of black flags and skulls-and-cross-bones, when human life was cheap and man's finest creations just something to destroy. Such things just naturally don't belong in an age of decency, sir, and the brain that could conceive such a thing doesn't belong, either."

The director drummed on his desk with nervous fingers. "It sent a thrill of horror over the entire world," he agreed. "The British Government is wild, and no wonder. Our own doesn't feel very happy over it."

"No news of that ship?"

"A small sailing vessel reported sighting such a ship in the Gulf of Mexico," said the director, "but destroyers sent to investigate found nothing."

"She's very nearly a destroyer herself," Dan said gravely. "She certainly has the speed. Doesn't seem possible that such a vessel could be on the seas and not noticed; but paint and false work make wonderful changes in a ship's appearance."

He leaned forward and placed both muscular hands flat on the desk.

"But the ship doesn't count, sir," he said earnestly. "It did what was required of it—what it was doubtless built and equipped for. I wouldn't be surprised if it was sunk once it had unloaded its cargo. What we want is the man who is at the head of this business.

"He is, of course, one of those mad egoists who think themselves shrewder and more powerful than any power on earth; but he is, in my opinion, one of the most dangerous men we have ever encountered. He has brains and utter daring. He won't stop at this. He will strike, and strike again."

The director nodded. "I think you're right. You want to get him, don't you, Dan?" he added.

For more than a minute Dan Fowler stood looking at something etched on the screen of memory. He was seeing a white-haired, lance-straight figure standing on a reeling bridge with face upturned to a storm-wrecked sky. Drawing a deep breath, he answered the director's question:

"Yes, sir!"

That was all, but the director understood. He picked up a sheaf of papers and motioned Dan to a chair.

"You will notice from these accounts that they did not desist from minor operations while pulling the big job," he remarked, handing the papers to Dan.

THE G-man read item after item dealing with gold robberies in various parts of the country. In the sheaf also were foreign dispatches detailing depredations startlingly similar to those taking place in the United States. He whistled as his eye lit on one item.

"That one pulled on the Alhambra mine in Arizona was a real haul," he remarked.

"Something over half a million," the director said. "The Alhambra people let out an awful howl. That's just about the biggest and best producing mine in Arizona. It is turning out plenty of gold regularly. Most of the other mines in the district make little more than expenses. They

all keep hanging on, however, hoping to strike it rich like the Alhambra."

"Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't," Dan observed. "The Tombstone silver mines came in in flocks; but at Virginia City and Goldhill, Colorado, there was hardly anything worthwhile except right on the Comstock lode. Those fellows in the Alhambra district may be throwing good money after bad, but then again they may be headed for fortunes."

"The Alhambra stock is chiefly owned by a New York bank, the Hunter National," said the director.

"That bank! No wonder a howl went up. It's one of the city's biggest."

Something in the card-index of his memory suddenly clicked. "Alhambra Mine, Gold City," he muttered. "I wonder—"

He fished out a smeary, water-faded bit of torn envelope and laid it on the director's desk. It was the fragment he had taken from Chuck Quinlan's pocket.

"Look at that, sir!" he exclaimed eagerly. "See how it reads—'. . . bra Mine . . . City! Couldn't that be made to read 'Alhambra Mine, Gold City'? It looks to me as if someone connected with the Alhambra Mine job was pretty close to Quinlan—and Quinlan was one of the leaders on the *Empress* job."

The director nodded. "Everything considered," he said, "I believe it would be a good idea for you to make a little trip to Arizona and look over the Alhambra ground. Half a million in gold isn't easy to transport. There ought to be some clew as to where that shipment went."

Dan walked over to a big map hung on the wall and studied it.

"Gold City is mighty near the Mexican border," he commented.

"I have thought of that," admitted the director.

"It's a wild and desolate stretch of country just south of the border there," Dan said. "If they have a way to run the gold across the line into Mexico, there would be plenty of places where it could be hidden until an opportunity turns up to put it into

circulation. You mentioned that the pirate ship was sighted in the Gulf of Mexico. The thing sort of ties up, you see.

"Gold can't be sold in this country at present except to the government, and of course that market is out of the question for the thieves. The foreign market is limited and any undue quantity appearing from other than known legitimate sources would occasion comment. I am of the opinion they are carefully caching their loot until an opportunity presents for disposing of it."

"I DON'T doubt that you have the right idea," agreed the director, "and that makes it doubly difficult to catch up with them.

"I don't need to remind you of the importance of this case, Dan," he went on. "The sinking of the *Empress* has kicked up a terrific row and may be fraught with the gravest consequences."

"Yes, it's up to us," Dan muttered. "Up to us to show the world that, after all, they're just another gang of yellow rats creeping from their holes to murder and destroy when the odds are all in their favor, and to scurry away squealing when those odds turn against them. Yes, it's up to us!"

After discussing the matter further with the director, Dan decided to fly to New York and interview officials of the Hunter National Bank before making the western trip. He was convinced that the Alhambra robbery was his best lead at present. The pirate ship angle was already being covered by ace men of two governments. Dan knew that a thorough check would be made wherever ships were built, in an endeavor to run down the owner of the sinister vessel. He knew that F. B. I. men were looking up all known connections of Chuck Quinlan, the gangster Dan had recognized on board the *Empress*. Larry Kendal and Sally were assisting in this work at present.

"What we want is the weak link," he told himself. "There's always one in this kind of a chain. Once that's found, the whole chain breaks. If we

can just crack down on one gang that's pulled a gold robbery, we'll have a lead and something to work on."

Dan visited the Hunter National in its sky-high shaft of steel and stone. "Mr. Butler, the president, will see you," he was told, and an elevator whisked him up to a pretentious suite of offices overlooking Manhattan's bustling canyons.

Carrington Butler was a big man, astonishingly handsome, with iron-grey hair, deep-set blue eyes, and a patrician cast of countenance. His manners were polished and assured. He greeted Dan courteously and plunged into the business at hand.

"It is not the loss, considerable though it is, Mr. Fowler, over which we are most indignant," he said. "It is the insolent arrogance of those scoundrels and their callousness toward human life. The driver of that truck and the men assigned to guard the gold shipment received no more consideration than so many rats."

"Did any of them give a description of the robbers?" Dan asked.

"I see that you are not yet familiar with the details," said Butler. "Mr. Fowler, not one of the men to whose care that shipment was entrusted is alive. They were shot down like dogs, their bodies riddled by machine-gun bullets and left in the dust of the road! It was atrocious!"

"Just where did the robbery occur?" Dan asked.

Carrington Butler glanced over a sheaf of typewritten sheets. "About thirty miles southwest of Gold City, where the Alhambra mine is located," he replied. "The shipment had been sent out secretly by truck instead of being loaded directly at the railroad station. The manager of the mine had received a tip that a train robbery was planned and used that method to circumvent the robbers. It didn't work."

"Looks like there was an inside tip-off," commented Dan. Butler nodded agreement.

DAN received letters of introduction to the manager and business manager of the Alhambra mine.

He shook hands with the bank president and left the office. He found that he could make a plane connection for the southwest within the hour. An F.B.I. car whirled him under the river and he was safe on board minutes before the big ship clawed her way up the long ladder of the sky and pointed her nose toward the setting sun.

The red sun vanished in a riot of scarlet and gold. Stars like silver needlepoints pricked through the blue-black velvet of the sky, wheeled across it in time with the endless march of the hours, and vanished again when the east flamed from dawn-grey to the crimson and rose of a new day. And still the great air liner roared on.

Above her was an arch of tender blue. Beneath was the lifeless grey of a desert with fangs of dark mountains flinging up from its edges. Dan Fowler, weary with hours of intense thinking, glanced down at the dreary expanse spread out like a dusty map. His eyes focused on a black dot rising from behind a shadowy hill. It grew larger, took the form of a giant soaring bird.

"Looks like a plane," murmured the G-man. "What in the devil is a plane taking off in this forsaken tail-end of creation for?"

It was a plane, a swift, slim craft with stubby wings and a snub nose. It zoomed upward at an astonishingly sharp angle, climbing toward the thundering transcontinental liner. It was a mile or two in the rear. Suddenly it leveled off and came darting forward like a swift-winged Falcon swooping toward a lordly heron.

"Whew! but he's fast!" exclaimed Dan, craning his neck as the tiny craft *hurrummed* toward the giant ship on a sharp diagonal. Abruptly it vanished from his range of vision. It was riding the liner's tail!

Brr-r-rp! Brr-r-r-r-rp!

The ominous sound cut through the roar of the liner's motors. There was a crash of ripping steel and wood, a yell of agony and a scream of terror. Dan saw the pilot rise to his feet and pitch sideward. The co-pilot grabbed frantically for the controls.

Brr-r-r-rrp! Brr-r-r-r-rrp!

Again it came, the rippling chatter of a machine-gun. Again the hail of bullets stormed through the great plane. The co-pilot died without a groan. A passenger slumped forward in a moaning heap. The huge plane rocked and reeled.

Br-r-r-rrp! Brr-r-r-r-r-rrp!

And the liner was swirling downward like a falling leaf!

Through a thousand feet of screaming, whirling, up-rushing air the big plane fell, helpless, hopeless, utterly out of control. Shrieking passengers were hurled about like peas in a running rooster's crop. The moan of the wounded man wailed upward in a thin streamer of sound. The snub-nosed ship sheered off, rocking on its wings, a wisp of smoke from the deadly machine-gun coiling and vanishing in its wake. The earth was a giant merry-go-round expanding with astonishing speed.

Dan Fowler was hurled to the floor and rolled over and over. A yelling fat man landed on top of him, knocking most of the breath out of him. A madly screaming woman clawed at his face. Gasping, swearing, he got to hands and knees and lunged toward the nose of the plane. His hand skidded on a wet and slippery surface and his fingers dripped red with the dead pilot's blood. He sprawled on his face, rolled over, lurched forward again and scrambled into the pilot's seat.

DAN could handle a plane, and with every trick he knew or had ever heard of, he fought to stop that deadly spin. He closed the throttle, centered the stick and threw the full weight of his big body against rudders and ailerons, pressing them hard against the perimeter of the whirling circle. The terrific vibration of the stricken ship threatened to tear the whole structure to pieces. And the plane continued to swirl downward.

There was just one thing left to do, and if that failed, in another instant the plane would be a crushed and flaming funeral pyre on the desert's floor. He reached out and gave the

engine full throttle. The already incredible speed of the falling plane was yanked to a new high by the terrific surge of hundreds of horsepower adding their might to the pull of gravity.

Dan stiffened in his seat and sat rigid. There was nothing he could do now but ride all the way down. Were he to attempt to bail out with his 'chute, the wind, howling past like a million demons, would snap his neck against a window ledge like a rotten stick. In fact, he didn't give that phase of the situation a thought. He had no intention of leaving the helpless, panic-stricken passengers in the careening liner. There was always the chance of a last-second opportunity to save the ship, and he alone was in a condition to seize that opportunity should it present itself.

So he just sat there, rigid, tense, waiting for some sign that the thundering engines might lift the bow of the ship.

Abruptly faint hope stirred in Dan's breast. The terrific pull of the engines was lifting the bow slightly. But much more swiftly, the ground was roaring up to meet him. It was but a matter of scant feet. A few feet too much and he would smash a hole in the ground big enough to sink the Woolworth building! A few feet too little and he would pancake down to a belly-flop that would kill the lot of them as surely and swiftly as a headlong dive.

He reached down to cut the switch. The floor of the desert leaped hungrily for the hurtling ship. Now the bow was almost level—not quite. Fangs of stone blurred past a wing tip. Gaunt cactus plants groped upward, passed in a grey-green blur. Dan braced himself and waited.

He felt the jar as the wheels struck the sand, a little off the proper angle. He felt the undercarriage sweep off and crash away behind him. The propellers dipped, wound themselves into screeching knots of metal. The underbelly of the plane touched the earth and skipped like a flat stone across water.

Dan's hands and feet worked automatically without messages from his

brain. The plane careened upward in a prodigious bounce, skipping over a hundred yards of sand and rock before it touched and bounced again.

It touched a third time. Wood crumpled, metal sheared. Over she went, crashed onto her back, turned another cartwheel and lay still.

STUNNED, bleeding, half-dazed from the terrific buffeting he had received, Dan Fowler groped erect, smashed his way through a window and sprawled on the sand. The wrecked ship itself was lying in a tingling pool of silence, but outside and overhead was a roaring clamor that Dan knew to be the attacking plane swooping down to finish the job.

Yes, there it came—a howling air-fiend crashing its way through the sunlight. Not fifty feet above the ground it leveled out, sweeping past the wreck.

Br-r-r-r-rrp! Br-r-r-r-rrp!

The machine-gun was at it again! Bullets stormed about the fallen plane and kicked up smoke like puffs of sand.

Dan's senses were clearing. He jerked both his .45 automatics from their shoulder holsters and cut loose at the screaming plane, firing well ahead of the flying shape. He saw splinters flash in the sunlight, had a blurred impression of a ducking figure in the narrow cockpit. The stubby plane wobbled.

Then it was up and away, climbing the slant of the sky like the side of a house. Dan watched it dwindle to a humming dragonfly in the direction of Mexico's purple mountains. He holstered his guns with a sigh of relief.

"Either I hit him or he fired his last belt," the G-man muttered as he turned back toward the fallen plane, from which groans and yells were now issuing.

"Hello!" he exclaimed abruptly, "maybe that's why he ran for it!"

Galloping across the desert came horses. Dan could see men swaying lithely in the saddles. There were half a dozen of them and they were headed for the wreck at a fast gallop.

"Take 'em five minutes to get here,"

Dan calculated, turning back to the plane again.

There had been six passengers—two of them women—in the plane other than himself. All were cut and bruised and shocked, but aside from the man who had been struck by a machine-gun bullet and had a smashed shoulder, none of them was seriously injured. The pilot and the co-pilot were dead.

The wounded man was lifted out, and the others clambered after him. Dan was showered with hysterical praise. The horsemen—lean, bronzed cowboys—thundered up.

"We saw you fallin' and headed for you," one told Dan. "Say, didn't we hear shootin' as we come up?"

Dan told them as much as he deemed necessary. "These passengers, especially the man who is shot, need attention," he concluded. "Can you help get them to the nearest town?"

"That'll be Gold City, thirty miles southwest," said the first cowboy. "Yeah, we can get them there. Our chuck wagon is t'other side that rise; we're drivin' a trail herd to Gold City. We'll jest load 'em in the wagon and take 'em to town with us. You can have a hoss if you want it, feller. You look like you could ride."

Dan thanked the punchers and accepted the horse. Without waiting for the slower wagon, he set out for Gold City. He was anxious to report the attack on the plane as quickly as possible.

CHAPTER IX

Did John Quinn Lie?



WEST of the town, mountains were veiling their mighty shoulders in royal purple when Dan reached Gold City. He immediately got in touch with Washington by long distance telephone and talked with the director.

"I'm all right save for a few scratches," he concluded. "This thing

is getting worse all the time. Yes, it looked like that plane was heading for Mexico, all right. Perhaps the authorities down there can get a line on it. If I *did* by any chance wing the pilot, he may have to make a forced landing somewhere."

Dan next air-mailed a small package to Hempstead of the technical laboratory. The package contained a jagged splinter of wood. Dan had searched over a wide area of sun scorched sand to find that splinter, one that his bullet had knocked from the body of the attacking plane. It was going to the laboratory for a qualitative and quantitative analysis on the chance that some peculiarity of the wood would furnish a lead by which it could be traced to the manufacturer of the plane and from thence to the purchaser. In the package was also a battered machine-gun bullet he had dug from the body of the wrecked liner. Through it the gun from which it had been fired might be found.

These urgent matters attended to, he hunted up a doctor and had a number of painful cuts and bruises dressed. Then, thoroughly worn out, he registered at a nearby hotel and went to bed. Before lying down, he carefully bolted the door, placed a chair so that any tampering with the lock would knock it over, and assured himself that the only window was inaccessible from the outside. He was taking no chances.

"Looks like somebody is watching every move I make," he decided. "There was no earthly reason for wrecking that plane except to get me. I must have been tailed in New York and word sent on ahead that the plane would make the Gold City stop. They'd know then that the ship would have to cross that desolate stretch of desert, which was the ideal place for an attack. Those hellions sure have a system. Only the highest officials of the transportation company knew that unscheduled stop was to be made.

"The pilots didn't get their instructions until the moment of taking off. I thought Butler was just nervous when he feared an attempt might be

made to keep me from reaching the Alhambra mine, but it looks like he wasn't so dumb."

Dan was at the Alhambra offices early the next morning. He presented his letters of introduction and was immediately ushered into the office of the business manager. He gave a start of surprise at sight of the lean grey man with the bloodless mouth and deep-set eyes who sat behind a big desk.

"Aren't you the Mr. Blunt who used to be secretary to Senator Wade Carter?" Dan asked.

HENRY BLUNT stood up and extended a hand like a spearhead. He smiled with his thin lips, but the smile did not flow up to his cold eyes.

"Yes, Mr. Fowler," he replied. "I recall your visit to the late senator while the Harkness investigation was going on. The senator often spoke of you in terms of warmest regard." He shook his head sadly and continued, his voice tinged with regret.

"A fine man, the senator, a wonderful man. It was a terrible shock to me when I was informed of his untimely end. I could not understand how anybody could have done such a thing to him. He was the essence of kindness, Mr. Fowler, always considerate of those in his employ, irreproachably honest and utterly fearless. His political campaigns were always clean and he had a habit of making friends even with his opponents. I repeat, Mr. Fowler, I cannot understand it."

"Rats are not swayed by sentiments of morality or decency, Mr. Blunt," Dan replied. "The senator got between them and their prey and they wiped him out, that is all.

"You doubtless know why I am here," he went on. "Mr. Butler said I could count on you for any assistance it might be in your power to render."

"You certainly can," said Henry Blunt vigorously. "I will go over the details of the robbery with you and then we will visit Mr. Quinn, the general manager, and see if he has anything to add."

When Dan left the office in com-

pany of Henry Blunt, he knew all there was to know concerning the Alhambra gold robbery. The information was stored in the filing cabinets of his mind, ready to be called forth by his photographic memory whenever occasion arose.

They found John Quinn in the great stamp mill, where tall, upright rods of iron, as large as a man's ankle, and heavily shod with a mass of iron and steel at their lower ends, were framed together like a gate. These rose and fell, one after the other, in a ponderous dance, in an iron box called a battery. Each of the stamps weighed more than six hundred pounds and their ceaseless dance pulverized the masses of gold-bearing rock shoveled into the battery box. A stream of water trickling into the battery turned this to a creamy paste. From this paste the gold and silver were extracted by chemical means.

Dan found the process interesting. More interesting still, to his mind, was General Manager John Quinn.

Quinn was a big, coarse-featured man with enormous shoulders, hairy red hands and keen little grey eyes. He had a rat-trap mouth and a ponderous jaw. He read Carrington Butler's letter with an expression of irritation.

"Carry Butler gives me a pain in the neck!" he growled in a harsh, unpleasant voice. "He's always got some half-baked notion that won't hold water. Anybody with a brain in his head knows that stickup was pulled by a gang of Mexican hijackers from below the line. Weren't two Mexican *sombreros* picked up right where it happened? Wasn't there a greaser hair rope left behind, too? Weren't the machine-gun bullets in those dead guards found to have been fired from an old-fashioned Browning like they use down there? Hell! it's an open and shut case! And Butler goes yammering about some sort of an international gang that's pulling gold robberies all over the world! Maybe there is, but I'll bet my bottom dollar they didn't have anything to do with the Alhambra stickup!"

DAN then asked a quiet question: "Who ordered the change in routing the shipment, Mr. Quinn?"

"I did," Quinn barked, and added frankly, "but it was a mistake. There had been whispers going around that an attempt was to be made on one of the big cleanups from the mill. I figured I'd steal a march on them if they did try it. At the last minute I had the shipment loaded on a heavily guarded truck and headed for Gila, the railroad junction, forty miles northeast of here. How the word traveled ahead of that fast truck and enabled those blankety-blanks to be ready and waiting for it in Skull Canyon is beyond me."

"How did you learn of the robbery?" Dan asked.

"When the truck did not arrive in Gila on schedule, I sent out searching parties," replied Quinn. "I had given the driver strict orders to telephone me the moment he arrived at the depot in Gila. I waited half an hour longer than I figured it would take him to get there and then started things moving in both directions. The posse from here got to Skull Canyon first and found a shambles. The driver and all six of the guards were dead, shot to pieces, and the truck had vanished. Tire tracks showed that it had headed for Mexico. The boys hadn't had a chance to fire a shot. Most of them even wore their guns still holstered."

Dan looked into Quinn's worried little eyes and asked a final question:

"With whom did you discuss your change of plan relative to the shipment, Mr. Quinn?"

Quinn hesitated a moment before replying. "The fact of the matter is, I discussed it with no one," he admitted at length. "The truck was loaded and ready to start for the Gold City railroad station. Just as it was ready to pull out, I told the driver to head north instead of south and cut into the Gila trail. Neither he nor the guards knew until that moment that the change of route was anticipated."

Dan Fowler nodded, but said nothing. Henry Blunt smiled the thin

shadow of a smile—a mocking smile.

Back in his hotel room, Dan sat down to think. He frankly admitted that the whole business here had him puzzled. It was more than ever apparent that there had been an inside tip-off which made pulling the job possible. But who had that tip-off come from? Quinn had insisted that nobody other than himself had known the route of the truck was to be changed. If that was so, how could it have been tipped off? That is unless Quinn himself did the tipping. And if he did, would he have not told the G-man that the dead driver or the guards knew of the change? That would have let Quinn out; whereas the story he did tell, as he must very well know, laid him open to suspicion.

"Uh-huh, but maybe that's just what he wanted me to think," Dan told himself. "Perhaps he wanted the yarn to sound like what an honest man would tell because it was the truth."

WHILE Dan was eating lunch in the hotel dining room Henry Blunt came in and took a seat at the same table. In the course of the ensuing conversation, Dan asked Blunt how he came to be connected with the Alhambra mine.

"John Quinn gave me my job," said the business manager. "I have known Quinn for years and after Senator Carter died I was sort of at loose ends—I started doing secretarial work for him when he was in the state senate, ten years ago. Before that I was a mining man and I am thoroughly conversant with the business. Senator Carter owned quite a block of Alhambra stock, you know. In fact he owned practically all that is not controlled by the Hunter National. John Quinn owns it now, he being Wade Carter's only near living relative."

"Quinn related to Senator Carter?" Dan interrupted.

"Yes," said Blunt, "his half-brother. They never got along together. Just a short time before the senator was killed they had a violent quarrel relative to some matter of business concerning the mine."

Dan whistled under his breath. Here was a new angle that would stand some investigating.

"That place where the robbery was committed—Skull Canyon, I believe you called it—where is it?" he asked aloud.

"On the Gila trail," Blunt replied. "The Gila trail runs through it, in fact. That's the road the Mexican smugglers used to travel in the old days. Cattle rustlers on this side of the line drove their stolen herds along it, also. Just this side of Skull Canyon the trail branches, one fork turning straight south toward Mexico, the other running southwest and passing through Gold City. There have been a great many killings in Skull Canyon."

"Thanks," said Dan as Blunt arose to return to his office. The business manager nodded acknowledgment, gave him a keen glance and left the dining room. He wore a thoughtful expression as he walked up the hill to the mine.

CHAPTER X

Trapped



FEARFUL ghosts lurk in Skull Canyon. Too many men have died violent deaths there for the canyon to be without them. The length and breadth of the sinister gorge is salted blue with their bones. That eerie wail that shudders up from the black depths when a bloody moon rakes its way across the jagged crests of the rock walls *may* be but the hunting call of a hungry cougar; but then again it *may* be the returning echo of the last despairing yell of some poor devil who died there in powder-blasted agony. It isn't hard to think so, at least when the sun sinks behind the western mountains and the winding gorge is full of purple shadows.

Dan Fowler felt somewhat that way about it as he walked his horse along the trail, even though the sun had not

yet set but was pouring its red rays into the canyon.

"The whole darn place looks like it was smeared with blood," he muttered, pulling up beside the queer formation of cathedral rocks known as the Devil's Kitchen. It was from behind those towering spires and pinnacles that the hidden machine-gunners had poured their hail of death upon the unsuspecting driver and guards of the gold shipment.

Dan wanted to see the spot for himself. He knew that there is always a chance that some important clue may be overlooked by initial investigators. After all, only the sheriff and his possemen had gone over the ground and, Dan reasoned, their survey was apt to have been but the sketchiest.

"Might be something worthwhile here," he mused as he turned from the trail and rode toward the rocks. He passed the first formation and skirted a little thicket. A fraction of a second too late he heard the ominous *swish* in the air behind him.

From out the thick growth shot a snaky coil. A close loop settled over the G-man's shoulders and was instantly jerked tight. Dan left the saddle as if he had taken unto himself wings. He hit the flinty trail with a bone-jarring crash and for a moment lay stunned, while the rope rippled about him in questing spirals. By the time the stars and pinwheels had stopped revolving inside his head, he was trussed as securely as a hogtied steer. He could only lie on his back and stare helplessly up at the reddening evening sky.

A shadow fell athwart the sky and a dark, saturnine face gazed down into his.

"So this is one of them there G-men," said a drawling voice. "Don't look so tough to me."

"I ain't never seen anythin' what couldn't have the toughness took out by the right kind of handlin'," said another voice. A stocky, broad-shouldered man with muddy brown eyes joined the first speaker, who was tall and gangling.

"You said it, Hank," nodded the other. "Well, let's heave this detectin'

gent back aboard his hoss and get goin'. We got quite a bit of travelin' to do t'night."

They roped Dan securely to his saddle with his hands still tied. The tall man relieved him of his guns and rifled his pockets.

"You won't be needin' none of these here things," he drawled, "not where you're goin'."

HE overlooked the small silver shield bearing the arms of the United States and the name of the Department of Justice, which was pinned inside the G-man's shirt. For which Dan was thankful.

Horses were led from the thicket and just as the last sunlight faded from the canyon, the two mounted and headed back toward Gold City, leading Dan's horse with its helpless burden.

They did not follow the trail to Gold City for long, however. At the forks they turned due south toward the shadowy land of *manana*. Dan wondered if they were going to take him to Mexico.

They didn't. A mile or so farther on they left the well defined trail and followed a narrow track that wound about through the hills like a snake in a barrel of fishhooks. Dan estimated they had covered at least two more miles when a halt was called. He was cut loose from his horse and, his ankles securely fastened together, dumped on the ground. Craning his neck he could make out the indistinct loom of a tall cliff. In the cliff was a dark opening. A ramshackle cabin stood nearby.

The two men entered the cabin. A light flared and there came a sound of breaking wood. A little later a thin thread of smoke coiled up from the mud-and-stick chimney. The two men came out again. One carried a bundle which he handled gingerly. The other loosened Dan's ankles until he could take hobbling steps and jerked him to his feet.

"All right, feller, inter that mine tunnel," he growled.

Dan obeyed. There was nothing else he could do. Ever since his

hands had been tied he had strained and worked at his bonds. His wrists were cut and bruised and felt as if coiled about by a ring of fire; he could feel a trickle of blood running down his fingers; but the tough thongs didn't budge the fraction of an inch. These men had been used to hogtying calves for branding and what they didn't know about knots and lashings could be written on a postage stamp with a whitewash brush.

Into the damp and dripping tunnel he went. He hesitated as the dank air



chilled about him, but the prod of a gun barrel against his back started him moving again.

"Don't wanta get rough if we don't hafta," said the tall man, "but I'll bend this hawglaig over your haid and carry you if necessary."

The impersonal, matter-of-fact tone in which the statement was made convinced Dan that he meant just what he said.

"I guess they're going to shut me up in here," Dan reasoned. "My best bet is to take it easy and watch for a chance."

They followed the tunnel for a hundred yards or more, the way lighted by a sputtering torch the short man carried.

"In here," he ordered as a dark opening broke the damp glisten of the wall.

DAN shuffled into a little room cut out of the living rock of the mountain. The instant he entered his feet were kicked from under him and he crashed to the rock floor. A red blaze of anger swept through his brain and he went into action, bound

as he was. He managed to get his knees up and as the short man bent over him he kicked him violently in the stomach with both feet. It was a blow that would have knocked an ordinary man cold, but his feet struck corded muscle tough as rubber. The fellow was knocked sprawling and his breath shot out of him with a resounding *whoosh*, but he bounded to his feet again in almost the same movement.

The tall man hurled himself at Dan and was butted in the jaw. For a minute or so the little room was a whirling pinwheel of arms and legs and fists and feet. The torch flared and sputtered in a corner, casting grotesque, dancing shadows over the walls and ceiling. Curses, grunts and growls split the murky air. Dan Fowler was fighting like a caged devil.

But the odds were too great. A crashing blow against his jaw half stunned him. Fingers like rods of nickel steel closed about his thrashing ankles. The thongs were jerked tight and knotted. His captors, panting and swearing, got to their feet and glared down at him. The short man's expression was one of murderous rage, but the gangling fellow chuckled throatily between labored breaths.

"I done changed my 'pinion 'bout them there G-men," he grunted. "If this one is a sample, from now on I'm gonna figger 'em tougher than a bull's hide in fly time."

"He won't be so tough an hour from now," snarled the squat man, wiping blood from his face. "C'mon, Sime, let's get busy. We got that Golconda job to handle yet t'night. It'll be midnight now 'fore we get to Gold City. I'm gonna cook a snack and eat fust even if that gold stays in the damn mill till res'rection day."

"Yes, we got this job to do, so guess we might as well get it over with," agreed the tall man. He spoke as if he didn't relish the job in question.

With smooth efficiency the pair got to work. The bundle was unwrapped and disclosed half a dozen stubby, greasy cylinders and a coil of fuse.

"It's a hell's wonder this damn dynamite didn't get bumped and blow us all clean to Mexico," growled the man called Hank as he crimped percussion caps onto the sticks and attached short lengths of fuse.

Slanting his eyes sideward, Dan could see that the back wall of the little room was drilled with holes. When the mine was abandoned, this chamber had already been prepared for a shot which would bring down more of the supposedly gold-bearing rock. As he watched with a queer crawling sensation at the back of his neck, the two men loaded the holes with the dynamite sticks. They stepped back and surveyed their handiwork. Three snaky lengths of fuse dangled from the holes. The short man bound the ends together and attached the remainder of the coil of fuse.

"Nigh onto enough to reach to the mouth of the tunnel," he said. "After we eat, we'll light her jest before we ride. Then when she burns up to the charges and they let go, this here tough detector'll have a sizeable hunk of mountain on top of him. It'll be a nice clean job with no evidence left layin' 'round."

"We got three sticks left," said the tall man. "What'll we do with 'em?"

"Dump 'em 'longside the rock," said the other. "They'll go off with the rest and make a bigger bang. C'mon, let's get goin'."

He picked up the torch and headed for the tunnel. The tall man cast a last look at the bound and helpless G-man. There was an intonation of regret in his voice as he spoke a last word:

"It sorta goes agin' my grain to do this, feller. No matter what else you are, you're a fightin' man. Good luck to you where you're goin'."

The torch winked out of sight. The sound of retreating footsteps died away along the tunnel as the pair made for the outside, unwinding the long length of fuse as they went. A ghostly silence settled over the old mine, broken only by the steady plash of falling drops of water into a shallow pool against the side wall.

CHAPTER XI

In the Dark



IN CONSEQUENCE

of a long series of dangerous and difficult exploits carried to successful consummation, Special Agent Dan Fowler had gained an enviable reputation in the F.B.I. He was admired and liked by his fellow workers. By America's ten thousand public enemies he was hated and feared. It would be a happy day for the underworld when it learned that Dan Fowler was wiped out.

So it was but natural that Dan had found himself in more than one tight place. Time after time he had looked across into eternity—and it wasn't far! But here, he felt, he was in just about the tightest place of his career. During those terrible moments alone in the black dark, Dan realized exactly what he was up against. Doubtless he had been spied upon from the moment he had set foot in Gold City. He must have been under surveillance, for otherwise how could it have become known that he contemplated visiting Skull Canyon? He had confided his intentions to no one; in fact he had made the decision to look over the spot of the robbery on the spur of the moment, while talking with Henry Blunt in the dining room of the Gold City hotel.

After finishing his lunch he had walked to a nearby livery stable, hired a horse, and set out. The watchers had doubtless fathomed his intentions when he had ridden north on the Gila trail. They had then taken some shorter route, arriving at Skull Canyon before him. There they had awaited his arrival with a carefully worked-out plan for his disposal.

The plan had been carried through without a hitch, so far, and it looked to Dan like it would keep on functioning until its blazing end.

But Dan Fowler was determined to go out fighting. With all his sinewy strength, he tugged and hauled at his

bonds, but with no other result than scorching agony for himself. His wrists were cut to the bone and the swelling flesh was lapping over the fiery thongs that bit deeper and deeper. Cold sweat stood out on his face; his mouth and throat seemed made of dusty leather. With an inward shuddering he strained his ears to catch the first faint hissing that would signal fire eating along the fuse.

"They're in a hurry," he croaked between his aching lips, not realizing that he spoke aloud. "It won't take them more than half an hour or so to cook and eat; then it's curtains!"

He thought he heard a sound in the tunnel. For tense moments he lay motionless, listening, glaring toward the opening through which would come that crawling flower of fire. He heard nothing but the faint splash of the drops falling with undeviating regularity into the pool.

"Lord! What wouldn't I give for a drink!" he gasped. "Maybe I can get to that water."

As he flopped over onto his stomach, something bit sharply into his chest. At first he was at a loss to know what it was. Then he remembered the little metal match box he carried in his breast pocket. He writhed away from its sharp corner, and started inching toward the water.

SUDDENLY he stopped, a wild thought surging through his brain. He tried to get his bound hands up to the pocket which held the match box, but couldn't quite make it. Again he tried, sweat pouring from him, his cut wrists sending fiery throbs through his body. With the tip of a straining finger he touched the match box, prodded it, shuffled his breast against the ground, got the box against a protruberance and inched back. With a thrill of exultation he heard the little metal container tinkle on the stone.

Followed a period of painful groping. Finally he located the box, got it between his cramped fingers and tried to open it. After a long and painful struggle, he succeeded. The

matches spilled out in a little heap. With infinite pains he managed to pick one up; but he could not rub it against the ignition surface of the box. Again and again he tried, with no success, his arms aching, the pain in his wrists driving him mad.

Writhing and twisting, he got the match box into his mouth. With trembling fingers he held the match and raked it across the ignition surface. There was a hint of a spark, the fragile stick bent. Dan scratched again. Flame burst forth and seared his lips. With desperate haste he dropped the feebly burning wood onto the little heap of matches. There was a sputter, a puff of smoke and a burst of flame.

Sweating with the agony of seared flesh already torn raw, he held his bound wrists over the flame. His nostrils were full of the odor of scorched flesh, but the smell of charring rope made him forget it in a burst of elation.

The matches burned down to a dim glow, flickered and went out. And the rope had not burned through! With all his strength, Dan strained at the weakened fiber. He knew that scant minutes stood between him and horrible death, and he was determined to make the most of those minutes.

Seconds raced past like windblown leaves in a storm. In terms of pain endured they were sky-stretching eternities.

To Dan's ears came a faint hissing sound that steadily grew louder. With utter desperation he strained at his bonds, for he knew the sound he heard was the lighted fuse burning along the tunnel; and the rope seemed tight as ever.

No, not quite! With a thrill of new hope, he realized that he could move his wrists slightly. Again he put forth his strength, and again. He could distinctly wriggle one hand now, but not enough to free it.

A glowing ember appeared in the doorway, and a shower of glittering sparks. The hissing was now like an angry snake. Despair began to well up and drown the hope in Dan's heart. He put forth a last tormented burst of

strength. The rope held stubbornly, then abruptly parted like rotten rubber. A mad wriggle and his hands were free!

Floundering, scrabbling with his bound feet, he lunged toward the dancing flower of fire. He gripped the fuse with numb fingers and tried to pinch it out. There was no time to get his ankles free and before he could squirm far enough along the tunnel, the blast would let go. And he knew for certain that the terrific explosion would bring down a long stretch of the tunnel roof.

THE spurting sparks blistered his fingers, but the tight fuse resisted his efforts. His knife was gone and to attempt to jerk the fuse loose from the caps was madness. The ends were bound together with rawhide thongs. He gripped the fuse between his teeth and chewed frantically.

The tough fiber gave slowly, but it did give. Dan felt his teeth cutting through the outer covering. A shower of sparks gushed against the roof of his mouth and seared his lips; the fire raced on.

He lunged forward and gripped the fuse almost to where it was bound to the short lengths. Again he chewed, his mouth full of blood, the burns smarting unmercifully. Choking, gasping, he tore at the tough fiber.

It gave, ripped apart, hung by a frazzly strand. Dan put forth all his strength in a wrenching jerk.

The fuse parted. The rain of sparks fluffed out in a last angry sparkle. Utterly exhausted, Dan Fowler sank to the floor and lay like a dead man.

Pain brought him back to consciousness—pain that flowed through his body in fiery waves. It seemed to him that his tormented body belonged to someone else but the pain centered and whirled in a brain that was surely his own. Sick, trembling he sat up, groping in the black dark. After ages of fumbling he got his ankles free. Then he rubbed and massaged them until the blood tingled and needled back through the flesh and he could stand.

Through Dan Fowler's brain rang

and repeated the words of the stocky man with the muddy eyes—"The Golconda job!" Dan knew very well what that meant.

The Golconda mine was the only mine in the district, other than the Alhambra, that really paid. It was no bonanza like the Alhambra, but its big mill crushed out a good figure in gold each month. Dan did not know how often the gold was shipped from Gold City, but evidently others did.

Without a doubt, a raid was contemplated on the Golconda's stamp mill, where the gold was either stored for safekeeping or was now ready for shipment. This bit of chance information that had been dropped by his two captors, careless of a man they already considered as good as dead, might break the case and show him the weak link by which the whole fiendish chain could be snapped in two and so destroyed.

Standing in the silent darkness, flexing his burning wrists to drive the numbness from them, Dan Fowler thought furiously.

He was, he estimated, at least fifteen miles from Gold City. Two or three of that was the roughest sort of going. He had no weapon and he was far from being in the best of physical condition. But he thought nothing of that. He was determined to balk the contemplated raid on the Golconda mill. Just how, he didn't as yet know. The paramount problem at present was how to get to Gold City before the job was pulled. From his captors' remarks he judged that the time would be after midnight.

Well, there was only one way to get to Gold City—walk. Or run. For time pressed. Dan gave his wrists a last twitch and turned toward the tunnel.

Suddenly he remembered something and came groping back along the wall. His hands encountered the three greasy sticks of dynamite that had been dumped there. He picked them up. More groping, and he found the sack in which the dynamite had been wrapped as well as the cord that had bound the bundle. He sacked the sticks again and with the cord con-

trived a sling by which to hang the bundle around his neck like a haversack. Then he headed for the tunnel again.

CHAPTER XII

Balked



DARK and deserted, the shack at the mouth of the tunnel smelled of coffee and burned wood. Dan jogged past it and found the winding trail. Stumbling and groping, he followed it through the shadowy hills.

Overhead the bonfire stars of Arizona blazed in splendor. A lonesome little wind chuckled about the tree tops and scrabbled its fingers in the grass. Far off somewhere a coyote yipped and yammered. The rocky, stubby track squirmed through a last manzanita thicket and the dusty Gila trail lay grey in the starlight.

Activity and the cool night air were bringing Dan's strength back. As he turned into the Gold City trail he lengthened and quickened his stride. Soon he was running, head up and back, arms bent at the elbows, his big chest arching, his breath coming easily.

Dan Fowler got his second wind and the miles poured beneath his pounding feet, as the long ribbon of the trail unwound before him. A glance at the stars told him that it lacked at least a couple of hours of midnight.

Minute after minute passed, and still he ran. Sweat streamed down his lean, bronzed face now and his breathing was not so easy; but the steady drive of his sinewy legs never faltered. Ahead twinkled the lights of Gold City. Between him and those twinkling lights bulked the black shadow of the Golconda stamp mill and other mine buildings. It was well after midnight. Eyes bulging with fatigue, his breath whistling between his teeth, he raced toward the great mill.

A familiar sound came to his ears as he slogged into the shadow of the big building—the purr of an idling motor. There was an abrupt grating of gears as a heavy truck got under way. Running without lights, it came straight toward him. Dan let out a stentorian shout:

"Halt! in the name of the law!"

The answer was immediate and convincing. A burst of orange flame ripped the darkness to shreds. The blaring roar of a machine-gun shivered the quiet of the night. Bullets stormed down the road.

Dan had expected that. Even as he shouted, he was slewing sideward, fumbling at his bundle as he left the trail. He heard shouts and the howl of the racing motor. The truck thundered forward.

"Get the stupid so-and-so!" yelled a voice. The machine-gun chattered again.

Dan Fowler did not hesitate. Face grim, eyes cold flares of grey fire, his sinewy right arm went back, then up and over. Something shot from his hand and hurtled to meet the charging truck.

There was a terrific roar, a blaze of yellowish light. Dan was knocked flat by the shock of the explosion. A mighty wind howled about him and through its thin shriek he could hear the thud and patter of falling objects.

BY some rare chance, the stick of dynamite Dan had held in reserve did not explode. Shaken, dazed, the G-man picked himself up. He could hear distant shouts that drew nearer. Somewhere in the darkness sounded a moaning cry, then silence.

Lights flared in the mine buildings. To the shouts was added the patter of running feet. Lanterns began to bob toward the scene of the explosion.

The truck was a shattered, twisted mass of wood and metal. All about were scattered fifty-pound ingots of gold. Amid the wreckage were three horribly mutilated bodies. Two others lay at a little distance. An unconscious man with a lump on the side of his head sprawled in the dust

of the trail. It was the squat, muddy-eyed Hank.

Men crowded around, bawling questions. The clatter of a galloping horse clip-clopped up the hill from the town. It foamed to a stop and a heavy man with a fat and placid face swung to the ground. On his sagging vest he wore a silver star.

"Here's the sheriff," shouted somebody. "He'll know what to do."

Dan was not particularly impressed by the sheriff's appearance. He drew the mumbling officer to one side and showed him his F. B. I. shield. The sheriff was impressed.

"That fellow with the lump on his head," said Dan. "It looks like he's the only one left alive. I want him locked up until I can talk to him. He isn't hurt much and ought to come around in a little while."

"But what's it all about?" demanded the bewildered sheriff.

"Tell you later—no time now," Dan said. "Better set a guard over this gold. I want that truck, what's left of it, guarded, too. I'll help you take this fellow to jail and then I've got to hunt up a doctor. I've stood about all I can."

They draped the unconscious Hank across the sheriff's horse and trundled him to the little one-room jail. As they dumped him on a bunk, Hank opened his muddy eyes and stared about him in a bewildered way. Stark terror blanched his face as his gaze met Dan Fowler's.

"W-what the hell!" he gasped. "You're dead!"

Dan struck while the iron was hot. "Where was that gold to be taken, Hank?" he demanded. "To Mexico?"

Hank, still more than half dazed, mumbled out unsteady words. "To Mexico fust—not to stay—"

Outside sounded a bawling voice: "We found the watchman they belted over the haid, sheriff. He ain't much hurt. The fellers workin' the night shift was tied up!"

The racket seemed to shatter the fog that shrouded Hank's brain. His eyes snapped wide open and an expression of maniacal terror twisted his coarse face.

"I ain't tellin' you nothin' more!" he screamed. "I don't know nothin'! They'll get me! They'll—"

Foam flecked his lips, his eyes rolled and he fell back on the bunk. Groans and mumbles came from his throat.

DAN studied the half-unconscious bandit. "He's just about out again," he told the sheriff, "and he's scared stiff. No use trying to get anything more out of him tonight. I'll have the doctor come up and look him over. Tomorrow we'll give him the works right. He's a weak link, all right."

They locked Hank securely in the cell. As he left the jail, Dan gave the sheriff a final word of warning.

"Hold him tight, sheriff; he's an ace in the hole right now. What he's already told me is mighty valuable information."

Neither Dan nor the sheriff saw the figure lurking in the shadow of a big cottonwood that grew near the jail.

Dan hunted up a doctor without delay. The G-man's numerous cuts and bruises gave the physician little concern, but he was grave over the lacerated wrists, which were puffed and swollen and causing a great deal of pain. He carefully dressed and bandaged the wounds and then mixed some medicine in a glass of water.

"You drink this," he told Dan. "It'll deaden the pain somewhat and let you sleep. You've got to be careful with those wrists or you are liable to have serious trouble."

Dan swallowed the draught, and, after requesting the doctor to run up to the jail and look Hank over, stumbled to his hotel room and went to bed. He slept like a log and it was broad daylight when he was awakened by a prodigious pounding on his door. He sat up in bed, glancing at his watch as he did so. It was nearly afternoon.

"It's the sheriff and Judge Perkins," bawled a voice. "Lemme in!"

Dan opened the door, and in marched the sheriff, red and perspiring. After him limped a very angry old gentleman with bristling white

whiskers. His eyes were bloodshot.

"What's the matter?" Dan asked.

"Matter!" rumbled the sheriff. "There's plenty the matter! That slippery cuss sneaked outa jail this morning!"

"You mean Hank?" Dan's voice was clipped. The little old man started to speak, but the sheriff beat him to it.

"Uh-huh," he rumbled. "They fooled me plenty. That feller got better after the doctor visited him, and went to sleep. I slept in the office with a Winchester across my legs. I wasn't taking no chances. Along 'bout eight o'clock, here comes a jigger poundin' on the outside door. He said he was a lawyer and he had a writ all signed proper by Judge Perkins orderin' me to release the prisoner Hank in his custody."

"And you turned him loose?" asked Dan.

The sheriff nodded. "Nothing else I could do."

Dan swung around to face the judge, who was already erupting profanity. "They came to my room, tied me up and burned the soles of my feet with matches until I signed that writ," sputtered the judge.

DAN did not waste time in useless recriminations. "Give me a description of the men who assaulted you, Judge," he ordered.

"Both of 'em were tall," said the old jurist. "One was gangling and slouchy and looked like a cowboy. The other wore a moustache and a short beard and was neatly dressed."

"That was the one who came to the jail and said he was a lawyer," cut in the sheriff.

"He had a mean looking pair of eyes—mighty cold," said the judge. "He was the one who ordered my feet burned; the other fellow didn't seem to want to do it, but he was scared of the one with whiskers."

Dan nodded. He recalled that the man Hank called "Sime" had not appeared overly enthusiastic about the dynamiting job in the old mine. He felt sure that Sime and the gangling man who visited the judge were the same person.

"Some day Sime is going to balk at something they set him to do, and that may give us a lead," he reasoned. The sheriff was speaking again.

"They left a note in the judge's room; he brought it to me as soon as he managed to wiggle loose."

"Which was hours later," interrupted the jurist.

Dan took the scrawled paper and read:

You'll find your prisoner at Cactus Flats.

"Where's Cactus Flats?" he asked the sheriff.

"Ten miles southwest of here—close to the Mex line," replied the sheriff.

Dan began to dress as swiftly as his swollen wrists would permit. "Get horses," he told the sheriff. "The chances are we'll be too late, but we'll do what we can."

"You mean—" the sheriff began.

"I mean they figured Hank talked," Dan cut in impatiently. "That outfit doesn't take any chances with squealers. I'm afraid we won't find much left of Hank."

The sheriff clumped out, swearing vermilion curses with bright purple edges. After him limped the judge, who was doing somewhat better with a more extensive vocabulary.

Dan found riding anything but pleasant, but he set his lips grimly and endured the torture of bruises and sore muscles.

"There's Cactus Flats," said the sheriff, pointing to a scorched expanse of sand sweltering under the slanting rays of the westering sun.

FOWLER wiped the sweat from his face and stared at the dreary expanse of cactus and greasewood striving to get a grip in the stringy soil.

He saw Ocotillos with curving, graceful wands like green jets springing from a fairy fountain; and chollas armed with needle-sharp spines, brandishing weirdly deformed arms. Green and yellow mesal plants shot thirty feet into the air and exploded in starry white blooms. And on a

barren hillock his keen eyes caught a glimpse of movement.

He clipped a sentence to the sheriff and they rode swiftly toward the spot, the old judge, who had insisted on coming with them, pounding along in the rear.

During his brilliant and bitter career with the F. B. I., Dan Fowler had become accustomed to gruesome sights; but the thing upon that little hill chilled the sweat on his face and whitened his lips.

The low, rounded mound was an ant hill, and upon it, in the blazing sun, was pegged something that had once been a man. The skull was but a shapeless, bloody mass, devoid of hair or flesh. Lips, cheeks and eyes were gone, and as Dan gazed in horror, an ant scurried into one empty eye socket and out the other. And the man still lived!

The sheriff was swearing hoarsely and tugging at his revolver.

Even as the big blue Colt lined with the lolling, tortured head, the thing that had been Hank stiffened, shuddered and relaxed. The sheriff holstered his gun with a trembling hand.

"Poor devil, he surely paid heavily," muttered Dan, riding over to where something white fluttered on a nearby cactus spine. He plucked the dirty bit of paper and read the words written on it:

This is what happens to people who talk too much, and to ones who mess into things that don't concern them.

CHAPTER XIII

Phantom Gold



CAREFULLY Dan went over Judge Perkins' room. He picked up the half-burned cigarettes that had been used to torture the judge and carefully stored them away. He also secured the rope with which the judge had been tied. It might be possible to trace the bit of cord to

the factory that made it and thence to the purchaser. He found fingerprints on the bed rail and on the smooth surface of the judge's desk. These he managed to bring out and study. All but one held no significance for him, but that one was a clearly defined print of an index finger that appeared strangely familiar in its pattern of radial loops. It seemed to Dan that he had studied that very print recently.

Abruptly he recalled both time and place. He had first seen it on the dusty bottom of a desk drawer in a room where three poisoned men lay in starkly grotesque attitudes. He had next seen it on the cold iron of the fire escape down which the man he interrupted searching Senator Carter's room had escaped. When Dan got back to his hotel, there was mail awaiting him. The envelope contained a detailed history of Chuck Quinlan, the gangster who had tried to kill Dan aboard the *Empress*. Quinlan's record, which was long and lurid, was dealt with. Among other things the report said:

Quinlan was born in Tombstone, Arizona. Real name Charles Quina. Mother and father dead. A brother, John, reported living somewhere in the west. The Quinn brothers were at one time miners and prospectors. In company with a man named Burke Carson they were tried for killing a man named Clark but were acquitted for lack of evidence. The Quinns, Clark and Carson were partners in a mining venture at the time. Carson and John Quinn dropped out of sight soon afterward, but Charles Quinn, under various aliases, continued a life of crime.

For some time, Dan sat pondering the report. "John Quinn," he repeated. "Same name, all right. Begins to look like the manager of the Alhambra mine is worth keeping an eye on. He might have been the lawyer who helped torture the judge. False whiskers make a lot of difference, and Quinn has eyes that fit the judge's description. Then, too, Quinn knew I was interested in Skull Canyon, where the Alhambra robbery took place. He probably figured I'd

go there sooner or later. It would have been easy for him to have had the place watched on the chance that I would turn up there. I think I'll find out what Carrington Butler, the Hunter National president, knows about Quinn."

WISHING an opportunity to study Quinn further, Dan visited the mine again. Quinn still wore his worried, harassed look, but was affable enough. He showed Dan the various workings, including the stacks of gold bricks.

Dan examined the hefty ingots with interest. Gazing at two piles side by side, Fowler was struck by a peculiarity of the metal. With little effort he picked up a fifty-pound ingot, laid it down and scrutinized another. As he told John Quinn good-by, there was a look in his grey eyes that his associates had long ago come to respect. When Fowler's eyes took on that look, he was left strictly alone.

"The thing sounds ridiculous," he told himself, "but it's a hunch and I'm going to play it. The whole business ties up perfectly, only there are a great many bits missing. It's up to me to find them and weave them into the pattern. I've got to have help, though. I know the chief will play along with me, even though he may think I've gone batty."

That night Dan sent an airmail letter to Washington and a telegram to New York. He received an answer to the telegram the following morning. Signed by Mr. Butler's secretary, the message gave John Quinn an excellent character and emphasized the fact that Quinn enjoyed Mr. Butler's fullest confidence.

The statement preceding this, however, brought the crease back between Dan's grey eyes. Wrestling with still another knotty problem built around a rapidly crystallizing suspicion, he waited impatiently for results from Washington.

The first result came, a few days later, when a slim, blonde girl applied at the Alhambra employment offices for a stenographic position. Dan knew that the Alhambra had trouble

getting competent office help to stay in the turbulent mining town, and he had sent word to Sally Vane accordingly.

Another day passed and Larry Kendal wandered into town on a freight train, showed the Alhambra employment manager that he knew something about keeping books and got a job as payroll clerk.

Sally brought with her the best of references from a San Francisco business office. Larry brought only his boyish grin and a personality that made friends of strangers on sight.

Dan told no one concerning his plans. Henry Blunt, the thin-faced business manager had never seen Larry Kendal and did not even notice him in his obscure position; but one day while passing through the outer office, his cold gaze fell on the trim, blue-eyed stenographer busy at her typewriter. He did not pause and his expression did not change, other than a slight tightening of his already too tight mouth.

But the following day, Sally was called into the business manager's presence, questioned as to her ability and assigned a desk in his private office. Henry Blunt had often journeyed to Washington in his capacity of secretary to Senator Wade Carter and while there had more than once had occasion to visit the great Department of Justice Building; and Henry Blunt never forgot a face.

THERE was an assayer in Gold City, a querulous old fellow who had forgotten more about mining and metallurgy than most men ever learn. Dan Fowler visited him and asked a few questions.

"It might happen," said the assayer in reply. "I don't say it isn't possible for red gold and yellow gold to be produced by the same mine, but it would be durned unusual. Red gold is gold with a lot of copper or iron in it. Yellow gold has silver."

Dan continued to hang around Gold City, much of the time in the company of Sheriff Bart Sawyer. They visited Skull Canyon and tried, too, to trace the men who kidnaped Hank, with

small results. The days went by.

These activities were largely a blind. Dan's chief concern was to keep in touch with Larry Kendal and Sally Vane. Larry had a room in the same hotel and late at night he would slip into Dan's room and make his report.

"One funny thing I've noticed," he told Dan a week or so after getting his job with the Alhambra, "all the workers in the stamp mill are the most ignorant of foreign born. I don't believe a half dozen among the whole outfit even speak English. They know just enough to handle the job assigned them. Each man knows his own particular job, and that's absolutely all."

"How about the bosses?" Dan asked.

"They're different," Larry replied quickly. "The superintendent and his foremen are hard-looking eggs with plenty of brains. They handle those poor palookas as if they were so many cattle, and they know their business. They don't want anybody fooling around in there, either. I've had to go into the mill a few times on business, and there was one of those birds on my tail every minute, and as soon as I was finished with what I came for, he'd shoo me out. They say it's a dangerous place for loafers and I guess it is, but you'd think it was a powder factory, the way they keep tabs on you."

Larry was excited when he relayed a report from Sally a couple of days later.

"She got a chance to look at some lists of figures," said Kendal. "She tells me that without a doubt the Alhambra has shipped a lot more gold during recent months than the ore output warranted."

Dan digested this bit of news. "But that may only mean they are shipping gold that had been stored for a time for some reason," he pointed out.

"Sally thought of that," Larry told him. "She's going to work on that angle."

Before the week was out, Dan's comment had been justified.

"We've proved pretty conclusively that the gold shipped came from the

stamp mill, all right," he was forced to admit. "It looks as if the ore is really richer than is generally known. Sally managed to check up on the amount of ore that went through the mill last week. Between us we got an accurate check on the metal that came from under the stamps. It runs much higher than what is generally supposed.

"The output of the stamp mill and the amount of gold shipped for the week balance exactly. I guess the Alhambra people have their own reasons for keeping the richness of the ore in the dark. Well, after losing a half million or so to bandits, you can't blame them."

"WHAT have you learned about Quinn?" Dan asked.

"Quinn appears to have very little to do with the stamp mill," Larry replied. "He is essentially a hard rock man and spends most of his time in the mine. He knows that end of the work from A to Z and prefers to leave the refining end to his mill superintendent, who is undoubtedly an expert in his line. Blunt handles most of the business details, subject to Quinn's check. It's an efficient organization, all right, but if anybody is crooked, he's sure covering up."

Dan nodded slowly. "We may be barking up the wrong tree," he admitted, "but I've still got a hunch, Larry. Remember, we've played them before, when we had less to go on than we have this time."

Before forty-eight hours had passed both felt that Dan's optimism was justified. Larry showed up in a state of excitement.

"Remember me telling you about the old German who works on Number Two stamp?" he exclaimed. "You know I spent quite a bit of time in Germany and I speak the language pretty well. I ran into old Hans in a saloon tonight and we got to talking. He isn't nearly as dumb as he appears to be and he spilled something interesting. He says he's worked in lots of mills and never before saw such queer goings-on. He swears that for the past ten days they have been shovel-

ing plain casing rock—rock with about as much gold content as a piece of grindstone—into the Number Two's battery box. But when the battery and pans were cleaned up this week and the quicksilver pulp was roasted, Number Two showed a gold and silver output equal to the other stamps!"

Dan whistled through his teeth. "Now we're getting somewhere," he said. "Let's see, now—in the stamp mill, the ore is first shoveled into the battery box of the stamps. The stamps churn up and down and rotate at the same time, grinding the ore to dust. Water flows into the battery box and changes this dust to a paste.

"The particles of the paste are washed into big tubs warmed by super-heated steam—amalgamating pans. The mass of pulp is kept stirred by revolving mullers. They put quicksilver in the battery box and in the pans and the quicksilver catches the particles of gold and silver. When the quicksilver has all the gold it can hold, it becomes crisp and firm.

"Then they clean up the pans, take the quicksilver out and roast it in a retort. The quicksilver turns to vapor, passes through a pipe into a container of water and is condensed again into good quicksilver. The gold and silver remain in the retort and are later melted down and cast into bricks or ingots. Have I got the process right?"

"You certainly have," nodded Larry. "Barring a few minor details, that's just the way it's done."

"So if rock without gold content is introduced under the stamps, there should be no gold in the battery box and amalgamating pans for the quicksilver to catch," Dan finished.

"But according to my Dutchman's story, there is," Larry pointed out.

DAN FOWLER'S eyes glowed. "All we need to find out is how that gold gets into the pans, and where it comes from," he said.

"Uh-huh," Larry agreed dryly, "that's all. Shall we take a chance on getting a search warrant and raiding the place?"

Dan vetoed that suggestion instantly. "Not enough evidence. And if we did find something off color, we'd never be able to pin it onto the big guys at the head of this. We'd hook some minor official and the ones we really want would wriggle loose. This case has got to be airtight before we break it."

For some time he sat pondering. "I'm going to drop out of sight for a while," he said at last. "You and Sally carry on; I'll get in touch with you when necessary."

At the same moment there was a conference in the Alhambra offices. Henry Blunt sat facing a big bearded man whose iron-grey hair shone in the lamplight.

"I don't like it, sir," Blunt was saying. "That infernal government man has been snooping around persistently. He has one of his assistants—a girl—planted in my office. I recall seeing her in the Criminal Identification Division of the F. B. I. when I was in Washington. She does not know that I recognized her. I brought her into my private office so that I could keep an eye on her. I have noticed lately that she is pretty friendly with a young payroll clerk we recently hired. I wonder if there is any particular reason for that?"

"Get him into your office also," said the big man, "and then—"

He looked steadily at Blunt, who nodded his understanding, a red gleam in his cold eyes.

Dan visited Blunt the next day. The big man, dressed in rough working garb sat in his office, holding a battered hat between his knees.

"Meet Mr. Bowles, the new foreman of the lower levels," remarked Blunt casually, introducing Dan.

Bowles ducked his shaggy head and mumbled something. His deep-set eyes met the G-man's level gaze unflinchingly.

"Now where have I seen that fellow before?" Dan asked himself. He turned back to Blunt.

"I'm leaving," he told the business manager. "There's nothing more to be done around here; I feel that I'm just wasting my time. That stolen

gold undoubtedly went to Mexico, and the fellows who pulled the job went with it. The Mexican authorities are trying to run them down."

"Perhaps you are right," agreed Blunt. "Well, good luck, Mr. Fowler."

After Dan left the office, Blunt and the big man eyed each other with satisfaction.

"Well, we showed the G-man a cold trail," said the latter. "Can't be too sure, though," he added. "Those fellows are tricky. Well, we'll soon take care of the one left here, and her boy friend."

Dan Fowler traveled east by plane. Not even the steward knew at which stop he left the big ship.

CHAPTER XIV

Underground



OUT of the red of the sunset plodded a burro and a man. The burro was old and grey and very wise. The man was tall and lean and bronzed. Long, lithe muscles played over his big, rawboned frame and he moved with the easy grace that comes only with perfect physical fitness. A short but heavy growth of black beard covered most of his face and his keen grey eyes were shaded by the brim of a wide hat drawn low over his forehead. He wore faded blue overalls and the heavy boots of the miner.

"Desert rat," the casual observer would catalog him instantly. One of these roving prospectors who eternally follow the will-of-the-wisp of a rich gold strike, over mountain and plain and sun-blasted desert. He was not yet bowed by years of gazing at the inscrutable earth, but was straight as a lance. His eyes narrowed slightly and the corners of his wide, good-humored mouth quirked as he gazed on the mining town of Gold City snuggled in the lap of a mighty mountain.

Dan Fowler had spent nearly two

weeks growing a beard and acquiring a coating of desert tan on his already bronzed features. His hair was rather long and slightly unkempt, and his garb, chosen with much care and attention to detail, showed signs of hard wear.

The night before he left Gold City, presumably for the East, Dan Fowler had decided that the solution of the Alhambra mystery lay, not in the stamp mill or the town, but somewhere in the depths of the great mine. It was up to him to get into that mine without anyone suspecting his identity.

He had doubled and twisted like a drunken snake, transferring from airplane to railroad train, to bus, back to the air, and to the railroad once more in order to throw off the tail that he shrewdly deduced was constantly on his track.

The last leg of his roundabout journey had brought him within a hundred miles of Gold City. Here he had purchased his prospecting outfit and headed into the desert, with Gold City his objective.

It was payday at the mines and things were lively in town. From saloon, dance hall and gambling hell came the sound of revelry. There was still a trace of the flavor of the Old West in Gold City and on payday nights there was considerably more than a trace. Music and song blared as the window squares flashed golden, and the yellow beams of light paled the blazing Arizona stars. The bars were lined three deep. The dance floors were crowded with a swirling mass of color.

Miners in blue shirts and muddy boots rubbed shoulders with lithe cowboys in their picturesque garb of chaps, flaming silk shirts and wide hats. Short-skirted girls with eyes brighter than the lights, their lips vivid splashes of color against their white faces, were whirled in brawny arms. Cards slithered one against the other, dice galloped across the green cloth like spotty-eyed devils, roulette wheels clicked and whirled. The boys from the Alhambra and other mines were whooping 'er up!

DAN had a drink at a crowded bar and struck up a conversation with a bewhiskered miner with the mud of the deep levels still clinging to his rough shirt.

"Sure you can get a job here," said the miner in answer to Dan's questioning. "You look husky. They need big men for hard rock work up at the Alhambra. It's a tough job down in the lower drifts—I work there myself. Ever handle a power drill?"

"Know some about it, not much," Dan admitted.

"They'll put you on as a helper," said the miner. "Big young feller like you'll soon be handlin' a drill. That's more pay. Hang on for a few months and you'll have the stake to head for the hills again. Oh, you'll do that, all right. I know your kind—they never stay in one place long."

Dan liked the miner, a placid little man who gave his name as Lowry and said that he was a gang foreman in the Alhambra's lowest level.

"Plenty of tough characters here tonight," he mentioned as they stood at the bar with their drinks. "We've got some hard ones at the Alhambra—they sorta seem to pick foremen for toughness. There isn't much law in this town, especially on pay nights."

Dan learned soon enough that Lowry was right. Three men swaggered through the swinging doors and headed for the bar. They were big men, all three of them powerful of build, and one of them inches taller than six feet.

"It's Samp Weston and the Bulger brothers," whispered Lowry to Dan. "They own a cattle ranch not far from town. Them fellers is bad."

The three men approached the bar near where Dan and the miner were standing, roughly shouldering their way. The tall Weston was close beside Lowry. He gave the miner a shove.

"Out of the way, runt!" he growled.

The little man was no coward. "Don't be pushin' me 'round," he said sturdily.

Weston faced about, a snarl twisting his thick lips. He lashed out with his hand, spun Lowry around.

Dan Fowler spoke, his voice deceptively mild. "That wasn't exactly nice, now was it?"

Weston whirled on him. "You keep your damn lip buttoned or you'll get some of the same!" he roared.

Up went the big fist again.

Dan Fowler let go like a coiled spring. He hit Weston, right and left, quick slashing blows that brought the blood spurting from Weston's face. With a smothered howl the bully crashed to the floor. Bellowing curses, the two Bulger brothers leaped for Dan.

They might as well have leaped for an exceptionally able-bodied flash of lightning. Dan slammed his fist against the foremost's jaw and whirled him sideways against the bar. He jolted the other brother's head with a left hook and followed it up with a right cross that sent him to the floor beside Weston.

WESTON and the squat Bulger came to their feet frothing blood and curses. There was a wild flurry of blows, the smack of fists on flesh and they went down again, this time to stay.

"Look out, feller!" yelled Lowry.

Dan slewed sideways. The Bulger brother he had knocked against the bar was dragging a heavy revolver from its holster. With the gun half drawn he froze in a strained, grotesque attitude.

From apparently nowhere a big, blue Colt .45 automatic had appeared in the G-man's hand. The black muzzle, steady as a rock, yawned at Bulger.

"Drop it," said Dan Fowler quietly. "Now help your friends up and get out of here, the three of you."

Mumbling curses, the three bullies obeyed. The whole affair had taken less than half a minute.

The miner, Lowry, was staring at Dan with wonder and admiration. "Gosh but you're a fightin' man!" he breathed. "And you pull a gun like them fellers the old-timers 'round here talk about. Feller, you're havin' a drink on me, right now!"

"No he ain't," said the bartender,

setting down a bottle of high-priced stuff. "He's havin' one on the house. Them three roughnecks have been needin' a lesson for quite a spell."

Admiring glances followed Dan as he and Larry left the saloon.

"The feller what licked Bill Weston and the Bulger boys," men whispered, nudging each other.

"Big, ain't he?" said one. "Six feet of hefty trouble!"

"I wouldn't mind six feet of good-looking trouble like that, but he never even looked my way," sighed a dance-hall girl.

Outside the saloon, Dan hesitated.

"I've got to look up a place to sleep," he told Lowry.

"No, you ain't," countered the little miner instantly. "You got a place—right over to my shack. There's a empty bunk there that nobody's usin', and I ain't a bad cook. Better than eatin' at the chuck-house in this town. T'morrer I'll take you up to the office and get them to put you in my gang on the low level."

So Dan went to work on the lowest level of the Alhambra mine—an intricate maze of drifts and tunnels, where men flitted about under a winking sparkle of lights. Over their heads towered a vast web of interlocking timbers that held the walls of the gutted gold lode apart.

Dan had been hired as a helper on a roaring, plunging power drill that bit through the iron-hard quartz of the lode. The driller was a lithe young Mexican with even teeth that flashed startlingly white in his dark face when he smiled, which was often. Dan liked him from the beginning and the Mexican, Pedro Gomez, returned the feeling. He was sparing of words at first but after the first few days he talked freely with the G-man.

"Eet ees fony, this mine," he remarked in a low voice. "The ore eet ees not very rich—that I know—but my friend who works in the stamp mill tells me that much gold ees washed out. Me, I do not onderstan' eet."

Dan cautiously questioned Tom Lowry that night and the gang foreman corroborated the Mexican's state-

ment in careful, cautious words.

"It's true," Lowry said. "Some of us old-timers know it, but we don't talk about it." He unconsciously lowered his voice, although the little cabin he and Dan occupied stood quite a distance from all the others.

"We got good jobs here," he said, "and we want to hold 'em. You don't hold 'em if you talk too much, and fellers what get let out here for talkin' seem to have bad luck. They get shot in saloon fights or have rocks fall on 'em or somethin'."

DAN pondered this piece of information. It was another strand in the intricate web he was weaving, the net with which he hoped to snare some really big fish. And it confirmed what Sally Vane and Larry Kendal had already learned.

"I've got to figure a way to get in touch with Larry soon," he told himself. But that was soon to be brought about through no effort on his part, and in a fashion Dan would not have selected if he had planned it beforehand.

Tom Lowry, the gang foreman, was helping Dan and Pedro repair a jammed drill the next day when a big figure passed silently along the gallery.

"That's one of the big bosses," whispered Lowry. "He's the drift foreman and he seems to have plenty of say. Just the other day I heard him givin' orders to Quinn himself. Ain't been here very long, either. Look out, he's comin' back this way."

The drift foreman, whom Dan recognized as Bowles, the new employee he had met in Henry Blunt's office, stopped beside the disabled drill and asked Lowry a few questions in clipped voice. As he did so he rested his hand on the drill.

What Dan Fowler saw in that moment narrowed his eyes with thought. The hand resting on the drill was not the kind of hand a drift foreman would be expected to have. It was large and muscular, but the skin was white and soft, the nails unbroken. Dan's gaze flickered to the foreman's face, against which the overhead

light was beating strongly. He felt his pulse beat quicken.

Bowles suddenly turned and shot a question at him. "What's your name?"

"Farrowe," Dan replied instantly, using the alias he had given when seeking employment with the Alhambra—one he had used while smashing the treasonable ring of the Purple Shirts.

Bowles repeated the name. "Your face looks familiar," he grunted.

"I think you were in the employment office when I was hired, sir," Dan replied, taking a chance.

Bowles nodded. "Perhaps I was." He turned and headed back down the drift. Dan Fowler stared after him.

"Hands like an office worker and wears a false beard!" he breathed. "Now where does *he* come in on this setup?"

CHAPTER XV

Gallery of Doom



LARRY KENDAL had been promoted to Blunt's office. He was elated by the change, for it gave him a much better chance to contact Sally. For days, however, neither had been able to dig up additional information of any value.

Nor had they heard anything from Dan. They knew that he was still at work on the case, but that was all.

"He told me he would get in touch as soon as he could," Larry reassured the girl. "Don't worry about old Daniel—he's all right."

But Sally did worry. She knew that Dan Fowler led a life of constant danger, matching his wits and his daring against men who were not troubled by scruple. This gold-stealing gang had already demonstrated, times without number, that they would stop at nothing. Sally knew that death walked beside Dan Fowler every moment of the day and night. She did not stop to consider that

equally deadly danger was constant companion to herself and Larry. As the days passed, she grew more and more worried and impatient.

"We ought to get a look into the mine itself," she told Larry.

"Wouldn't be a bad idea," agreed Kendal. "Suppose we put it up to Blunt. He'll arrange for a trip through the workings, I'm sure."

Henry Blunt agreed to the suggestion. "Tell Mr. Bowles to have a drift foreman conduct Miss Vane and Mr. Kendal through the mine," he ordered his office boy.

In the company of the foreman, a chunky, silent man, Sally and Larry entered the mine. From level to level they went, lower and lower, to where the timbering stretched upward like the gaunt, cleanly picked bones of some gigantic skeleton.

"We're on the lowest level now," said the taciturn guide. "I'll show you something interesting down here—a worked-out section. We'll have to use hand lamps there."

They had been in the mine several hours and Sally was tired, but the foreman's remarks quickened their interest. A little later, as they trudged along the gallery, they passed two men working a drill. One was a lithe young Mexican, the other a tall, black-bearded fellow with wide shoulders. They did not notice him staring after them as they turned into an unlighted side passage, carrying the little carbide lamps the foreman had brought with him.

"The only thing this section is ever used for is storing powder and tools," the foreman remarked.

On and on they went, into a silence that beat against their eardrums with hammer blows. Suddenly the foreman's lamp began to sputter. A moment later Larry's burned low. The foreman growled an imprecation under his breath.

"Carbide must be giving out," he said. "You people wait here until I run back to that last storeroom and get some more. I'll be back in a jiffy."

Before they had time to protest he was off, trotting back along the way

they had come. Sally and Larry sat down on a timber and waited.

TEN minutes passed, fifteen, and abruptly the air about them quivered to a deep and ominous rumble. Larry and Sally stared questioningly at each other. Kendal's face turned white.

"Come on," he told the girl. Together they hurried down the gallery. "There it is!" Larry exclaimed. "Just what I was afraid of. Sally, it looks like curtains for us!"

Directly in front of them, the passage was blocked by a mass of shattered stone and splintered timbers. Other fragments leaned crazily from the weakened side walls of the gallery. Only a slight jolt would be needed to bring down additional tons of debris.

"W-what does it mean?" gasped the girl.

Larry swore bitterly under his breath. "It means that somebody has been wise to us all the time," he told the girl. "Somebody knew why we were here and planned to get rid of us. When we went into the mine we played directly into his hands. That drift foreman was in on it, of course. He was the one who set off the blast. Doubtless it was prepared while we were working down to the lowest level. They blew the roof down and imprisoned us in this abandoned gallery."

"Mr. Blunt knows we are here; he will have us rescued," said Sally.

Larry nodded cheerfully, but a cold hand was gripping his heart. He knew that Henry Blunt was leaving town that afternoon, to be gone for a week. He felt sure also that the mind which had planned to entomb them in the mine had provided against possible rescue.

A glance told them that to work their way through the mass of stone and rock was out of the question. Larry's mouth felt dry and leathery, but he kept his voice steady; no use for Sally to learn the worst until he could no longer keep it from her.

"Let's go back up the passage a little, where there is less danger from

falling rocks," he suggested. "We may have to wait quite a while until they work through to us."

Dan Fowler had seen Larry and Sally pass by where he and Pedro were working. He had also seen them turn into the side passage, as had Pedro.

"Visitors from the offices," said the Mexican, "But why they go in there?" he wondered. "That ees worked-out drift. Nobody in there."

HANDLING a power drill is a job that requires concentration. Pedro immediately forgot all about the visitors. Not Dan. His eyes kept straying from his work to the passage. It was in the course of one of those swift glances that he saw the drift foreman who had guided Sally and Larry flit past silently, going in the direction of the lifting cages. For some minutes he waited for the man to return, a premonition of evil tugging at his heart. Suddenly he shut off the drill. Pedro glanced at him in surprise.

"What ees the matter?" he asked.

"I don't know," Dan replied, "but I'm going to see. I've a notion something's up. You wait here, Pedro."

His voice was the voice of a man accustomed to command. Pedro obeyed without question.

Dan had only a few matches for light, and he did not care to take the time to get a lamp. Eyes and ears alert, he jogged along through the Stygian darkness of the passage. His footsteps rang hollowly against the rocky floor and their echoes mumbled up the network of shoring timbers until they were lost, high overhead, in a thinning cloud of hissing whispers. Dan trotted, he judged, for close to half a mile, and nothing happened.

"Look like I'm just making a fool of myself," he mumbled. "Chances are that fellow was going back for something he forgot, or to send word—"

Without the slightest warning, the passage gushed yellow and crimson flame. Dan's eyes were blinded. His ears were deafened by a crashing roar. He was hurled to the ground as if by

a giant's hand. A hurricane of displaced air whipped at his garments.

As he lay half stunned, he could dimly hear a growling thunder and a lashing of booming thuds. He staggered to his feet, gasping air laden with acrid dynamite fumes. With shaking fingers he fumbled a match and struck it. The feeble glow reached but a few yards, but it made light enough to reveal a mass of shattered stone and splintered timbers blocking the passage from floor to roof. One glance was enough for the G-man. He turned and ran at top speed back along the passage. He reached the idle drill, with Pedro and Tom Lowry standing beside it, and panted out what he had seen.

"Get men, drills, dynamite," he finished. "There's a man and a girl back of the fall!"

"*Caramba*, yes!" barked Pedro. "Me, I see them turn in the passage!"

A moment later he and Lowry were racing toward the lifting cages, shouting the alarm as they went.

Men came boiling down the gallery. Some carried picks, shovels, bars, drills and lamps. Others dragged lengths of air hose, by means of which they could run a power line up the gallery for the drills. In an incredibly short time they were smashing at the jumbled mass of rock and wood, boring their way toward the prisoners. In the van of the rescuers, the danger spot, labored Dan Fowler, Lowry and Pedro Gomez. Lowry, sticks of dynamite belted about his waist, urged them on.

"No time to waste," he rumbled, guiding the bit of the plunging drill. "A fall like this is liable to weaken the gallery from one end to the other and cause the whole mountain to settle. If that happens, they'll be squashed like rats under a log. Sift sand, you work-dodger! Sift sand!"

ALONG the gallery hurried two men. One was John Quinn, the general manager of the mine. The other was the drift foreman, Bowles. Bowles was speaking and his voice held a bitter edge that lashed the other man like a whip. He was plain-

ly giving Quinn orders and Quinn was protesting, half-heartedly and hopelessly. As they approached the frenzied workers, both men stopped talking. Quinn suddenly raised his foghorn of a voice in a roar of command.

"Get out of this!" he shouted. "That gallery's caved in from end to end. The lot of you will be killed by another fall. Who told you to clear the gallery?"

"There's a man and a gal back of that fall, Mr. Quinn," shouted an excited miner.

"You're crazy!" bellowed Quinn. "There's nobody in there. The man and the girl who visited the mine came above ground an hour ago. The drift foreman who guided them through the mine reported them out and told me they left on a trip with Mr. Blunt. Get back to work, you men."

The miners paused uncertainly, casting inquiring glances at Dan and his two companions. Dan shoved his way through them and faced Quinn.

"That's a damn lie," he said. "I saw that drift foreman come out of this passage, and he came out alone!"

"You're crazy!" sputtered Quinn. "Bert Warren wouldn't lie!"

"He did," said Dan grimly. "Back on the job, boys, we've got to get those people out."

Quinn hesitated, an apprehensive expression shading his heavy features. Bowles, unheard by Dan, hissed a venomous whisper in his ear. Quinn let out a bawl of outraged authority.

"Who the hell you think you are?" he snarled at the G-man. "You get out of this and get your time—you're through!"

Dan wasted no more time in words. He took a step forward, his big fist shot out and landed on Quinn's jaw with a smack like that of a butcher's cleaver hitting a side of beef. Quinn crashed senseless to the rock floor. Dan glided forward another step and faced Bowles.

"You taking it up?" he asked softly.

Under his dark beard, Bowles turned a sickly grey and his cold eyes showed cowardice.

"I'm not arguing with you," he said thickly, "have it your way."

Dan spun on his heel and headed for the fall. "Come along, boys," he said.

With a rumble of approval the miners trooped after him. Once again the gallery echoed to the thud of picks and hammers and the crashing chatter of the drills. Overhead the weakened timbers groaned and cracked as the towering walls of the gutted lode pressed their mighty weight against them.

An hour passed and another. Quinn and Bowles had long since slunk away. The gallery was crowded with excited miners who pressed forward, regardless of danger. Tired men were relieved by eager volunteers. Additional power lines were run. More rock was moved. A shoring of timbers was built to support the roof of the low tunnel driven through the fall.

BUT still the end of the fall was not in sight. Old Tom Lowry, with Dan and Pedro forming the spearhead of the attack, glanced from time to time at the groaning shadows overhead.

"Maybe we'll make it, if we're lucky!" he mumbled, "but it's going to be close."

Another hour passed. It seemed to Dan that the tangled mass in front of them was growing less compact. Suddenly there was a crashing of displaced fragments and a jagged hole gaped in the fall. It was quickly enlarged. Dan, with Lowry, Pedro, and four other miners close at his heels, slipped through and stood erect in the clear passage ahead of the fall. Overhead the ominous groaning deepened to a sullen rumble.

"Look out!" yelled old Tom, "the whole damn mountain's coming down this time. Run for it! Run!"

Up the passage they raced, while behind them crashed and thundered the collapsing walls. Huge timbers, twelve inches square, burst into fragments with a crackling sound, snapping in two with a report like that of field guns. The ground trembled

and the whole gigantic structure of the shoring hummed and vibrated like an immense harp.

"Faster!" panted Dan. "It's gaining on us!"

On they sped, with great fragments of stone thudding at their heels and clouds of rock dust choking and blinding them.

Gradually the uproar lessened. The mountain ceased to rock. The ominous groaning of the shoring died down and ceased.

"There they are!" shouted Pedro as a light winked through the dust clouds. A moment later and the trapped rescuers were beside Sally and Larry.

A babble of questions and answers ensued. Sally raised her lamp and its beam fell full on Dan's face. Neither by word nor gesture did the slim blonde girl betray the fact that she had recognized him. She managed to whisper her discovery to Larry, who also remained expressionless.

"Well, it looks like there are nine of us now instead of three," he remarked when the initial outcry had died down somewhat. "Say, don't I smell smoke?"

He did, pungent, stinging smoke from burning, tinder-dry wood. Little wisps of it were coiling and wavering in the glow of the lamps.

"Somebody drop a lamp back there," said Pedro, jerking his thumb toward the collapsed gallery.

"Tom," exclaimed Dan, "you're an old-timer. Where does this gallery lead to?"

The old miner's face was grey under its coating of dust. He coughed as the heavy, acrid fumes got into his throat.

"Beggin' the lady's pardon, and not wantin' to scare her, but there ain't no use of lyin' about it," he said. "I hates to say it, but I'm afraid we're done for. This is a dead-end drift that runs up against a blank wall. We can't climb up to the upper levels, because it doesn't connect with them, and they'll never be able to cut through to us in time. It's the timberin' what's on fire and when the upper shorin' gets to goin' good, we

might as well be inside a lighted cook stove!"

CHAPTER XVI

Flood and Fire



STUNNED silence reigned for a moment; then Dan Fowler's quiet voice sounded.

"Let's get up to the end of the gallery and see what it looks like," he said. "We'll be farther from the fire there, anyhow."

The head of the gallery was hundreds of yards from where they stood. They reached it and a blank wall of cemented blocks barred their way.

"What's back of that wall, Tom?" exclaimed Dan.

"The old Blue Blazer workin's," replied Lowry. "They been closed down for years."

Dan's eyes brightened. "Why can't we cut through and get out that way?" he asked. "I saw plenty of tools in a side room as we came up here, and you managed to keep that dynamite from exploding."

Lowry shook his head dismally. "No chance. The Blue Blazer mine is plumb worked out and full of water."

"Water!" exclaimed the G-man. "That's just what we need! Smell how thick the smoke is getting? We'll cut through and let the water into the Alhambra. It'll put out the fire and give us a way out at the same time. The Blue Blazer is a small mine, isn't it? The chances are good the water won't reach back up here too far, and we can climb into the timbering while it is running in."

He whirled to face the other miners. "Get going!" he barked at them. "Hammers and drills and picks. We're going out of here!"

The men obeyed him. Tom Lowry was their foreman, but his authority was forgotten before the driving personality of the F. B. I.'s aroused ace. Soon, drills were biting into the stone blocks, picks digging out the mor-

tar. The face of the wall began to come down.

"Smoke's sure getting bad," a miner panted. "Hot, too."

The workers were coughing continually now. They were drenched with sweat. Dan Fowler, his sinewy shoulders bared, his big arms working like pistons, led the attack. He was everywhere at once, lending his great strength where it was most needed, encouraging the men by voice and example. There was little of the dapper about Larry Kendal, now. Wiry, tireless, he wielded pick or bar as if born to such tools.

Sally held lights or handed tools to the men. Her face was pale, but her blue eyes glowed and their expression was strangely happy as she watched Dan Fowler lead the fight on the grim, insensate stone even as she had watched him lead the forces of law and decency against the nation's enemies.

Smoke was rolling up the tunnel in clouds. The heat was terrific. A far-off crackling began to be heard, and a dull roaring.

"Them dry timbers is burnin' like chips," muttered a miner.

"But we're getting through thees wall!" panted Pedro Gomez.

Dan had ordered a drill to be driven always three feet in advance of the pick men. For if the wall should be unduly weakened and come down without warning, the workers would be drowned like rats in a flooded drain.

SUDDENLY the drill shot from the hands of the man who held it and clanged on the floor many feet away. A jet of water as hard as steel followed it, knocking down and bruising several men.

A plug that had been prepared for the emergency was with difficulty driven into the hole. The drenched and panting workers stepped back.

"All right, Lowry," said Dan, "bring along your dynamite; we're ready to shoot."

There was consternation on old Tom's face as he handed out the greasy sticks.

"Here's plenty of powder, all capped and ready to go," he said, "but the fuse is somewhere t'other side the fall. How we gonna set it off?"

The faces of the miners, alive with new hope, went blank. Dan thought swiftly. He noticed that one of the men wore a cartridge belt around his waist. His gun, an old-fashioned single-action Colt .45, had been left above ground during working hours. There were cartridges in the belt, black-powder shells.

"Jerk the lead out of some of those cartridges," he told the man. "Rub the powder fine and make a little pile of it. The rest of you get busy loading those drill holes with the dynamite."

The men obeyed. Dan tore a strip from his soaked shirt, sprinkled it liberally with the crushed powder, twisted it into a squib and with some difficulty affixed the end to one of the dynamite caps. He dried the squib as best he could over the flame of a lamp, taking care to leave it a trifle damp.

Old Tom Lowry stared at him wide-eyed. "Hell," he protested, "the fire's liable to whisk right down that thing and there won't be enough left of whoever lights it to hold a inquest over!"

"That's a chance," admitted Dan, "but I believe it will work. The holes loaded? All right, the rest of you climb up the timbering as high as you can. Somebody give the lady a hand. Give a yelp when you're all set."

Larry Kendal, grimed, sweat-stained, his hands raw and bloody, stepped forward.

"I'll light that fuse," he said. "I'm the one responsible for all this trouble. It was my idea to visit the mine and it's up to me to take that chance."

Pedro Gomez broke in. "Eet ees for me to light the fuse. I am queeck. I run ver' fast. You go with the others and await me, Señor Farrowe."

Dan grinned affectionately at Larry, and the grin included the tall young Mexican. Incidentally, a niche of his mind catalogued and labeled Pedro Gomez for future reference;

the F. B. I. is always on the lookout for the right kind of raw material.

"Up the shoring with you two," he ordered. "I'm running this show. The pair of you look after the lady. Get going, now."

RELUCTANTLY they departed. Sally Vane gave the tall G-man a lingering look, and turned away with trembling lips and tears sparkling in her blue eyes. Dan's glance dwelt on her for a moment, then his mouth set grimly and he turned to the moisture-glistening wall. He waited until a shout came from high up among the web of shoring timbers; then he took the little lamp from his cap and drew a deep breath. Another instant and there was a mighty good chance that he would be blown to pieces by the premature explosion.

"Anyway, Sally and Larry and the boys will have their chance," he muttered as he touched the light to the fuse.

Fire raced along the powder-streaked rag, hesitated, sputtered and raced on. Dan fled down the tunnel, swarmed up the timbers and climbed frantically.

He was but a few feet off the ground when the dynamite let go with a crash that rocked the mountain. Followed a terrific, thundering roar that grew and grew—the water rushing into the Alhambra from the flooded Blue Blazer.

The raging torrent tore at Dan's feet and legs, striving to hurl him to destruction. His fingers slipped, he sagged back.

Sinewy hands gripped him and drew him up to safety. Larry Kendal and Pedro Gomez, legs wrapped around a horizontal beam, steadied him until he was perched securely.

"The water she put out the fire," panted the Mexican. "Hear her hiss!"

Clouds of steam swirled amid the shoring timbers. The heat diminished swiftly. The roar subsided to a low gurgle and after a time that ceased also.

"Guess we can risk it now," Dan told his companions.

A gaping hole led into the Blue

Blazer workings. Staggering, stumbling, oftentimes sloshing through pools up to their waists, the bruised and weary men and the almost exhausted girl made their way through the tunnels of the old mine and to the clean outer air of a world glorious with morning.

Dan had a chance to talk with Larry and Sally during the long walk around a shoulder of the mountain to town.

"I'm quitting the Alhambra as soon as we get back," he told them. "I believe I've learned all there is for me to learn in the mine; and besides, Quinn and Bowles will have it in for me now and they're liable to grow suspicious. You two stay here and carry on. They'll put the blame on that drift foreman and he'll get in the clear. Pretend to agree with them. They'll slip yet. I've got an idea I'm going to follow up, and then I'll be back to Gold City. I'll manage to keep in touch."

Larry in turn relayed some interesting information. One bit dealt with the splinter of wood Dan's bullet had knocked from the airplane that attacked the transcontinental liner which Dan rode west to Gold City. The splinter the G-man had hunted for so painstakingly among the cactus, stones and hot sands.

"Hempstead of the Technical Laboratory gave it the once over," said Larry. "He found it to be a rare South American wood that has but recently come into favor with plane manufacturers. Only a few firms use it as yet. The Department managed to trace it to the maker of the plane. The plane was built to order for a man named Carson and shipped to his order to San Rosalee, Mexico.

"The plane was delivered, all right, and receipted for, but no trace of the man Carson was found in San Rosalee or elsewhere. The bullets you sent with the splinter showed they were fired from the same type of machine-gun used in the Silver City gold robbery that took place three months ago. That looks like a definite tie-up to me. Incidentally it looks as if our investigation is getting some results.

There hasn't been a gold robbery for thirty days. Two were attempted but the boys were on the job and broke them up. This gang is a tough one, all right. They shot it out to a finish in both instances and not a man of them was left alive."

"Any of the boys get it?" Dan asked quietly.

"Three," replied Larry, his voice grim.

Dan Fowler glanced up at the austere beauty of the great mountain hanging over their heads. His eyes were stern, his mouth tight. Three of the boys got it! The lives of men for the lives of rats! Putting the depressing thought from his mind, he asked Larry a question.

"No, nothing heard of that damned speed boat that sank the *Empress*," Larry replied. "The international situation is still tense and will be till this mess is cleaned up and the blame placed where it belongs."

CHAPTER XVII

From Out the Years



NOISY excitement buzzed in Gold City when the bedraggled group got to town. The Alhambra workers declared a holiday to celebrate and every miner with the least respect for himself got drunk.

As Dan had shrewdly predicted, Quinn and Bowles put the blame on the drift foreman, who had completely vanished from sight. An agitator or the holder of a grudge, they said, and were profuse in their apologies to Sally and Larry. The two government agents accepted the explanation and went back to work.

Dan drew what pay he had coming and after saying good-by to Tom Lowry and Pedro, drifted out of town with his decrepit burro. Quinn and Bowles were glad to see him go.

Had they realized who he really was and known his destination, they might not have been so pleased.

Dan knew that Tombstone, the birthplace of the Quinns, Charles and John, had once been a roaring silver city. Now it was a ghost town, living on the memories of departed grandeur, and had been for years.

He knew also that when the silver mines suddenly shut down because an underground lake or river was tapped and flooded them with water that could not be pumped out, many people were stranded in the dying boom town. Particularly people with money invested in small businesses. He was banking heavily on this fact.

As a train whisked him southeast, he mused on what Larry had told him during their walk from the Blue Blazer mine entrance to Gold City.

"Carson," he repeated. "A man named Carson bought that murder plane. A man named Carson was partner to the Quinns in the old days. I've a notion that if I can lay hands on that gentleman named Carson, I'll have the big shot in this slimy nest of rattlers."

Dan loafed about Tombstone all morning. He found that what had once been a romance was now but a town, a sociable, hospitable little community where life jogged along pleasantly and quietly.

Toward noon he found what he had hoped for—a battered little photographer's shop with the old picture maker puttering around inside.

"Uh-huh, I been here for close to forty years," he told Dan in answer to the G-man's question. "I knowed most everybody in the old days—the Earps, Doc Holliday, John Ringo, the Clantons, all them outlaw fellers and sheriffs and sich. Do I rec'lect anybody by the name of Quinn or Carson or Clark?"

"Let's see, now. The Quinns lived over on the north edge of town. Fine old folks, both dead now. Had a coupla boys what never mounted to much so far as anybody knowed. I rec'lect John, the oldest, couldn't read or write. Cal'late he was too dumb to ever learn. All he ever knowed was minin'. Him and Charley, the young un, used to run around with Burke Carson and Jimmy Clark.

"Jimmy was ornery as they make 'em. Carson was considerable of a lady's man. Good lookin' young feller. Never knowed what become of 'em. You say you're gonna write a book 'bout folks 'round here? Wait a minute."

FOR some time he puttered about in drawers, laying aside faded old tintypes and photographs of by-gone days. Dan waited patiently. Finally the old man seemed to find what he was looking for. He grunted his satisfaction and stood up.

"I got pictures of Wyatt Earp and Ike Clanton and a whole lot of famous fellers," he said, "and here's one of the fellers you asked about. The one with the curly hair is Carson. The tall one there is Clark and the other two is the Quinns, John the big one and Charley the little one."

For a long moment Dan Fowler stood and stared at the stained and faded photograph. Taken full twenty years ago, still there was no mistaking the men depicted there. He saw John Quinn's heavy features, the cleaner cut but weaker ones of his brother Charles, who had died "Chuck Quinlan," gangster. There was also no mistaking the mean eyes and rat-trap mouth of Clark.

"The reports had it that hellion was dead," mused Dan. "The others were tried for killing him, but he's very much alive. What's the story back of that, now?"

But it was the fourth man of the group who held his attention—a big, handsome man with a mop of curly hair and cold blue eyes. Dan stared at the likeness in utter astonishment.

Thoughts were racing through his brain. Hitherto unexplainable mysteries were now clear as day. His web was still incomplete, but now he had added enough strands to it to make it strong enough to hold a big fish as well as a number of little ones.

"First I've got to find out where that gold goes, though," he told himself. "I'm damned sure it gets to the Alhambra mine, but how? Mexico is only a blind. They want us to think it goes there. That Alhambra robbery,

was faked to throw suspicion away from the outfit. The Alhambra couldn't keep on being about the only big mine in the country that didn't suffer a loss of some kind. The inhuman devils!

"The driver and the guards were evidently honest and they shot them down like rats so there would be no chance of an identification that might lead to headquarters. Yes, the Alhambra is the clearing house for the stuff, all right; but how does it get into the Alhambra? And just what do they do with it when they get it there?"

Dan did not dare risk what he had discovered to either telephone or telegraph. Although it meant delay, he sent the astounding information to the director of the F. B. I. via air-mail. The final sentence of the letter read:

Please do not neglect to investigate the yacht angle at once!

During the long train ride back to the little border town where he had left his prospector's outfit, Dan went over the entire situation with painstaking care. Finally he arrived at a decision, a decision that had begun to form while he had sloshed through the dreary tunnels of the abandoned Blue Blazer mine.

In short, Dan Fowler had decided that the reason it appeared impossible to detect the stolen bullion shipments entering Gold City was due to a simple explanation—the shipments never reached Gold City! He was confident, however, that they did reach the Alhambra Mine. He knew that the country roundabout the town was honeycombed with abandoned mines. He had pointedly learned that there was possible access from at least one mine—the Blue Blazer—to the Alhambra. That being so, why not a way into the big producer from some other abandoned working? With the tunnel or shaft of that working somewhere amid the lonely hills, what would be simpler than to send the gold to the Alhambra that way under cover of darkness?

Doubtless the gold actually did slip

across the Mexican border on the first leg of the journey, following little used trails through the desolate country.

Dan knew how skillful the underworld is when it comes to transporting stolen property, and this outfit was undoubtedly made up of the cream of the cunning and viciousness of the country.

A wandering prospector once more, he combed the hills and valleys in the neighborhood of Gold City.

For days he wandered through gloomy drifts and tunnels that honeycombed the mountains. The task, it appeared, was endless, but one by one he exhausted the possibilities, and found nothing.

He was about ready to abandon his hunch as nothing but a hunch after all, when he finally did come across something of interest, almost by accident.

CHAPTER XVIII

Into the Depths



IT WAS late one evening, as the western peaks trembled with a flood of color and the purple shadows marched stealthily up their darkening slopes, that he entered a little canyon. He was seeking a place to make camp, and hoped to find water in the gorge. The canyon was a box canyon with sheer walls hemming the sides and one end.

Dan found water, a turbulent stream that came boiling up from under one wall, wiggle-waggled its way diagonally across the canyon floor and swirled into an arched opening in the far wall. It was icy cold and clear as a crystal. He made camp in the shade of a little thicket near its banks. It was while on a trip to the stream for coffee water that he made his discovery.

Rutted deep in the dried mud along the bank was something that, as far as Dan could figure, had no earthly

reason for being there—the tracks of an automobile's tires!

For a long time, Dan Fowler stared at the series of oval figures without sharp corners—Firerock Extra Heavy, he catalogued it. A jagged line at almost right angles crossed the pattern at regular intervals. One tire had evidently come in contact with some sharp object and had been deeply cut.

Dan carried a number of things in his pack that were not part of the usual equipment of a gold seeker; but materials for casting a moulage were not among them. However, he was desperately anxious to preserve that unexpected tire print. With skill and ingenuity, he went to work.

The stream provided water, and under an overhanging cliff he discovered a bank of smooth clay. He chose a double handful free of lumps or rubbish. With the greatest care he mixed it, adding water little by little. Finally he took the plastic lump and pressed it into the tire depression. Painstakingly he removed it, and had his cast—the tire print, distinctive mark and all, in relief.

He placed the cast to set where it would be safe. During the night much of the moisture would evaporate and that would tend to prevent cracking when, on the morrow, it was exposed to the fierce Arizona sun, which would bake it nearly as hard as stone. Dan went to bed with a definite sense of satisfaction after weaving a little covered basket of withes to protect the moulage until he could get it to town and use it as a model for a more permanent cast.

In his little room in Gold City, Dan had all the data he had collected on the gold cases, including reports and descriptions of recent robberies. Checking these, he learned something which fanned his interest to a fever heat.

The pattern of the mysterious tire was a replica of the tire marks left by the getaway car used in two of the more recent gold robberies. His latest report, incidentally, described another robbery committed in a mid-western state.

Dan went back to his hidden valley and waited patiently. Two nights after his arrival his patience was rewarded.

HIS dark camp was hidden carefully in a little thicket near the banks of the stream. Toward midnight he heard the unmistakable sound of an approaching car. He watched it pause a little distance from where he lay. Five men left it, each bearing a heavy burden.

Twice they returned for additional loads. Each time they vanished in the darkness up the canyon. Immediately after their departure for the third time, the driver of the big car spun it about and sped swiftly down the canyon toward the open prairie. Dan heard its engine throb away into the distance.

All through the dark hours he lay quiet, watching and listening. When the golden light of a new day poured like waves of water over the dark walls and flooded the gorge with brilliance, he cautiously left his hiding place and scouted the canyon.

The result left him in a state of bewilderment. He had covered the canyon from one end to the other and detected not a sign either of the men or their burdens. There was no hiding place in the canyon, the walls were sheer and unclimbable and it would have been impossible for the men to pass out through the lower end and not be seen by the sleepless G-man. Dan Fowler squatted in the little thicket that sheltered his camp, and his broad forehead was deeply cleft between his level black brows. The situation required some serious thinking.

Possibility after possibility was discarded until there remained only one, and that, apparently, absurd. Dan got to his feet and painstakingly examined the banks of the little river. Abruptly he ceased his efforts and stood staring. His keen eyes had noted an unusual mark in the soft clay bank at one spot, a mark that river experience told him was made by the bow of a small boat!

For a long while he stood staring at

the swiftly running water. If a boat had rested on that ruffled surface, there had been but one way for it to go—down stream and under the low arch of stone where the river vanished into the bowels of the mountain. Dan glanced up the long slope and his mind's eye traveled over the towering crest and down the slope of the far side. Across that huge shoulder to the left, he knew, lay Gold City and the Alhambra mine. He drew an imaginary line through the mountain.

"I believe I've got it," he grunted at last. "Well, there's only one way to find out if I'm right. If I'm not, it's liable to be a one-way trip for me."

He tested the water with his hands and decided that it was too cold for swimming. There were fallen trees, uprooted by storms, among the scattered growth on the canyon floor. He found one with a solid trunk, and with the ax in his pack managed to cut off a length suitable to his purpose.

After a great deal of effort he rolled and levered the log to the bank of the stream. He shucked off his boots and most of his outer clothing, took a last look at the smiling blue of the sky and plumped the log into the stream. He was astride it before the current could whisk it away. A moment later and he was under the arch of rock, the light of day swiftly fading away behind him.

Soon he was in utter darkness, with the only sound the hiss and grumble of the water against the stone sides of the gloomy cavern that formed its bed.

THE F. B. I. teaches its men to go after the quarry, regardless of danger or consequences; but even a brave man might well have hesitated before what Dan Fowler now faced. He had no means of knowing that the boat had actually gone down the stream. For that matter it was within the realm of possibility that he might have been mistaken and the mark in the mud bank had not been made by a boat at all. For all he knew to the contrary, he might be floating swiftly

toward unknown depths where rapids, falls or other sinister menaces awaited him. Or the stream might wander about inside the mountain until it dried up. And, as he was well aware, he could not send his clumsy craft back up stream; to swim the distance against the current was out of the question.

But Dan had arrived at his conclusions, not through guesswork, but by cool calculation. He felt confident that this was the road the gold smugglers used to get into the Alhambra mine. If they could travel that road, so could he, and he was increasingly confident that the solution of the tantalizing mystery lay at the end of the watery way.

Tense, eager, poised for instant action, he swept through the impenetrable darkness with no thought of fear or personal danger.

From the sound of the water against the side walls, Dan could tell that the stream was narrowing. As it did so, the current increased in strength. Soon it was running like a mill race and the G-man was having plenty of trouble keeping his unsteady craft on an even keel.

Suddenly he felt the log swerve sideward in an eddy's grip. An instant later it hit the rock wall with a terrific crash. Dan was shot from it into the icy water as if from a catapult. The log whirled about and darted away in the darkness.

"Guess this is the finish," Dan told himself grimly as he fought a game but losing fight with the turbulent water and the numbing cold.

Straight into the full grip of the current the eddy whirled him. He was sucked under and came up gasping for breath. With all his sinewy strength he fought to keep his head above water and gain some control over his movements. The stream seemed to roar louder, to gain swiftness as he hurtled on through the sounding dark.

Dan was a strong swimmer, but the buffeting of the current sapped his strength. The chill of the icy water seemed to eat into his bones. He still wore his heavy guns sagging in their

shoulder holsters, and their weight seemed to increase by the second. He tried to shake them loose, but the effort took so much of his little remaining strength that he desisted.

A QUEER numbness was stealing over him, a lulling sensation of irresponsibility. After all, why should he strive and struggle? Why not let himself go to rest in the yielding embrace of the stream? It really didn't much matter. His head went under, and he got it above water again only with the greatest of difficulty.

And then, two faces drifted before his straining eyes. One was of a girl with blue, blue eyes, lips red as a red, red berry, and hair like a forest pool brim full of sunshine. There were tears in the blue eyes and the sweet lips trembled.

The other face was rugged and strong, with flashing eyes, a firm mouth and black hair slightly sprinkled with grey. Dan could almost hear the voice of the director, the man he liked and admired above all other men in the world, shooting tight-lipped words at him:

"Carry on, Fowler! A G-man never gives up!"

Dan Fowler's head came up. There was new strength in his arms as he struck out once more. His mouth was a grim line of suffering and purpose.

But the rushing river was not to be easily cheated of its prey. The charging water smashed his face with clammy hands. The cold was intolerable. Red flashes began to storm before his eyes. In his ears was a vast ringing of bells. His strength was fast ebbing.

Abruptly the current slackened and it seemed to Dan that the water was not so cold. The sound of it chafing against the walls fell away and he knew that the natural tunnel was swiftly widening. He struck out with renewed hope, working diagonally across the current. Suddenly his feet touched bottom. He floundered on, half swimming, half crawling. There was a feel of hard-packed sand beneath his hands and a moment later

he inched out of the water onto the smooth surface of a little sloping beach.

For a long time Dan Fowler lay motionless, his mind in a coma, his exhausted body taking the rest it demanded. Finally he raised his head, tried to pierce the darkness with bloodshot eyes and struggled to his feet.

He knew that he had been in the water a very long time and had traveled an immense distance, but he had not the least idea where he was. With halting steps he stumbled along the sand through an utter darkness.

His ears became conscious of sounds other than those of the rushing water—mechanical sounds, unmistakably man-made. There was a steady crunching and an equally steady grind like a giant coffee mill. Overhead he sensed a monotonous, thundering vibration, as if a colossus were doing a rhythmic dance. Piercing the crunching and the grinding was the eerie whine of prisoned electricity. Motors, big ones, Dan decided.

Light glowed ahead, steadily growing in brightness as he approached it. He was moving with the greatest caution now, searching the shadowy stretches ahead with his eyes, listening for any untoward sound that might be heard above the mechanical uproar. He rounded a shoulder of rock and crouched motionless, tense with interest.

SPREAD before his eyes was a strange scene. A big room, evidently partly natural and partly the work of hands, was crowded with machinery and busy men. To one side ran the underground river and on its surface tossed a trim motor launch tied to a small dock.

"So that's how they got down the river with the gold!" Dan exulted, visualizing the lightless car in the canyon and the men with burdens who had vanished.

"The boat slips out to the canyon whenever a shipment is due, drifts back down with the current and the stuff is unloaded here."

He watched men shoving bars of dully gleaming metal under great shears. The shears shaved off curling fragments which were shoveled into the hopper of a huge grinder. A stream of glittering dust poured into the buckets of a mechanical elevator whose endless chain rose through an opening in the rocky roof of the cave.

Dan realized also the meaning of that ponderous dance going on over his head. The cave was directly under the Alhambra stamp mill, into which the buckets of gold dust were rising. The contents of the buckets were, unseen by the laborers of the mill, dumped into the battery boxes of the stamps.

There it was amalgamated by the quicksilver and later retorted and melted into gold ingots which were, ostensibly, the product of the Alhambra mine and stamped with government approval. No wonder the Alhambra assay showed both red and yellow gold!

"Talk about a scheme!" breathed the G-man. "With a tight organization of competent, close-mouthed hoods who never know very much of what is going on in the first place, and some clever men here at the mine, it couldn't be anything but a sure-fire winner. Especially with a man with real brains at the top. Uh-huh, real brains, but crooked ones."

Hour after hour Dan crouched in the shadows, watching the work go on. He spotted a partitioned space that he decided was used for an office. Out of it came Bowles and Henry Blunt. They talked earnestly together and disappeared in a shadowy corner. There, Dan reasoned, was the exit to the outer air, a stair or an elevator. He saw nothing of John Quinn.

Finally the crunch and grumble of the machinery died away until only the pound of the overhead stamps was to be heard. Lights winked out. An occasional globe cast a dim glow over the scene. The workers disappeared in the direction of the exit. A single broad-shouldered individual, evidently a watchman, appeared and began to make a round of the big room.

Silent as one of the shadows, Dan Fowler glided forward. He gained the shelter of a machine and waited. As the watchman passed, he leaped.

The man was strong, and active as a panther, but the fingers that closed around his throat, stifling his outcry, were like rods of nickel steel. He rocked Dan's head with a wicked blow and groped for the gun at his belt. Dan wrenched with all his strength, forcing the big chin backward and up.

There was a sudden snapping sound as of the breaking of a dry stick, followed by a strange, jerky tapping of heels on the rock floor. The watchman's head lolled hideously on his broken neck. Dan caught the lifeless body up in his arms and strode to the river bank. There was a sullen plunge, and America had one public enemy less!

CONFIDENT that he would be undisturbed, Dan went over the workshop with careful thoroughness. In the partitioned office he found records and accounts that wrinkled his black brows and made his eyes glow with exultation.

Within less than eight hours the G-men would strike in a score of places throughout the nation, and each raid would net its quota of lawbreakers. The method of reaching them as well as the information that would send them to the gallows, the electric chair, or the penitentiary was right here in his hands. Finally his lists were complete and he headed for the exit.

It was in the shadowy corner, as he suspected. A narrow stairway, at the head of it a door operated by a simple catch. It opened into an innocent appearing storeroom, and when Dan closed it behind him, it blended so perfectly with the wall, and was so well joined that he could not tell where it was.

It was the dead hour just before the day shift went on in the mine and the mill, and he got out of the building without detection. Scant minutes later a perplexed telegraph operator was sending message after message in code. Very, very soon afterward the

director of the F. B. I. was poring over the map which was tabbed with the names of more than six hundred agents of the Bureau. And in an incredibly short time, by plane, by train, by fast Department cars, the G-men were speeding to a lonely section of the southwest.

CHAPTER XIX

Blood and Steel



GAUNT and shadowy, the great stamp mill of the Alhambra mine loomed against the night sky. Inside the huge stamps rose and fell in their endless dance. Keen-eyed men, mostly young, with hard faces and tight mouths, supervised the work of the stupid looking laborers who broke up fragments of ore and shoveled them into the battery boxes or added quantities of coarse salt and sulphate of copper from time to time to assist the amalgamation by destroying the base metals which coated the gold and silver and would not let it unite with the quicksilver. The mill was a busy hive of industry.

And underneath its floor and the rock on which it stood was another hive where hard-faced men handled gold that was black with blood and stained by tears. Bloody gold that had been wrenched from its rightful owners at the muzzle of flaming guns and to the accompaniment of death and agony.

Suddenly the outer door of the mill burst open and men poured in—lean, bronzed men armed with machine-guns, rifles, and revolvers. The superintendents and foremen took one look at them and went for their own guns. The mill seemed to explode with crashing reports.

Grim, relentless, steady of hand and eye, the G-men mowed their enemies down. The smoke still streaming from the muzzles of their guns, they charged across the mill and into the storeroom. Axes crashed on the rear

wall, ripping it down, exposing the stairs that led to the lower chamber; but the wall was thick and resisted stubbornly. It took time to make an opening.

Down the stairs charged the special agents, into a silent, deserted room whose machinery stood like crouching monsters of the black depths. No launch rested on the surface of the rushing river now. Only its departing chatter drifted back to the baffled raiders.

"Search all the buildings," ordered the leader. "Take everybody in you find. It'll take time to separate the sheep from the goats."

"But those fellows who were down here—they're getting away, sir," protested an excited young agent.

"Can't be helped," said the grizzled field officer in charge. "We have no way to follow them."

His words sounded discouraged, but a grin twitched his close-clipped mustache.

Crouched in the shadow of the little thicket in which he had made his camp, Dan Fowler, with Larry Kendal and a half dozen other trusted men, strained his eyes toward the short above-ground stretch of the river. Moonlight bright as day poured into the canyon, showing every object in bold relief. The canyon appeared silent and deserted.

Suddenly the silence was shattered by the staccato sputter of a speeding motor boat.

"Here they come!" exclaimed Dan. "Get set, boys!"

FROM under the frowning stone arch shot the slim shape of the launch. It was crowded with men. In the bow, Dan recognized Quinn, Blunt and Bowles. The boat bristled with gun barrels.

The launch swooped across the stream to the near bank. Men leaped ashore.

Dan Fowler stood up, tommy-gun in hand. His voice rang out:

"Hands up! You are under arrest!"

There was an instant of stunned silence. Then flashes of orange flame stabbed the darkness. Bullets

whipped toward the band of G-men.

"Let them have it!" Dan ordered grimly. With a chattering roar his machine-gun let go, pouring a withering fire into the group. He ran forward a step, knelt on one knee and fired carefully. Bullets whined about him. Others cut his clothes.

A well aimed slug burned his cheek and another brought blood from his right arm. Behind him he could hear the pounding of his companions' guns.

Henry Blunt, his thin face a snarling mask of demoniacal rage, ran forward and lined a revolver barrel with Dan's broad chest, and Dan's gun was empty!

Out of the shadows hurtled old John Quinn. He hit Blunt below the knees like a football tackler and catapulted him over his head. Blunt's revolver exploded, and then Dan had him in a grip of iron. A moment later the snarling, cursing business manager of the Alhambra mine felt the bite of cold steel on his wrists.

The fight was over. Dan got to his feet and surveyed the silent figures and the few prisoners. John Quinn was down, coughing and spitting blood. Dan knew he could do nothing.

"Thanks, Quinn," he said simply.

Bowles stood handcuffed between two G-men, his face pasty with fright. Dan strolled over to him.

"Looks like the big shot can't take it when things don't go right," he remarked. "Plenty of brains and no backbone, eh, Carson?"

He reached forward and ripped the heavy black beard from the shrinking man's face. One of the G-men let out an astonished oath—

"Good Lord! Carrington Butler, president of the Hunter National Bank!"

Dan nodded. "Yes, Carrington Butler, who used to be Burke Carson, and who calls himself Bowles when he comes out here to look over his mining property and supervise the crooked work going on. You traveled a long and crooked road and went mighty high, but you're due for a longer trip soon—one with no return

ticket." Butler gaped in fright.

He turned from the cringing bank president and knelt beside John Quinn.

"I'm sorry it had to happen, Quinn," Dan told him. "I know you were largely forced into this business and used as a cat's-paw. It was Carson's hold over your brother that got you into it at the beginning, wasn't it?"

Quinn, choking on blood, gasped a hoarse, "Yes."

While Carrington Butler shivered and moaned and Henry Blunt snarled curses, Quinn talked in gasping sentences.

"I—I can take it," he finished. "I ain't afraid to go, but—but I—I did—wrong—"

His voice choked off in a gurgling moan. Dan spread a handkerchief over the dead face and stood up. Sadness tinged the glow of satisfaction that comes from a difficult task well done.

IN his flag-flanked office the chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation sat across his desk from rugged, broad-shouldered Dan Fowler.

"Carrington Butler was the brains," the G-man was saying. "Blunt supplied the courage and the initiative. The Quinns didn't really count and hardly understood what it was all about. John knew mining and that was all he did know. He did not even know what the real output of the mine was. In fact he didn't learn to read until after he took charge of the mine, and then only a little. Blunt was Butler's field man. It was Blunt who engineered Senator Carter's murder, calling in three of the gang's trigger men who knew nothing and only obeyed orders.

"Blunt poisoned *them* like so many rats when it became apparent that the crime might be traced to them. He ruled the lesser members of the gang by terror. He was the lawyer who rescued Hank and pegged him on an anthill. He despised Butler, but was sensible enough to realize Butler had the brains.

"I got my first line on Blunt when Sally managed to get a set of his fin-

gerprints along with Quinn's. I recognized them as belonging to the man who poisoned the three hoods and looted Senator Carter's room. It was Quinn who accidentally gave Carter a tip that there was something crooked going on at the mine. Carter was related to him, you'll recall.

"Carter sent his private investigator to look things over, and the investigator learned enough to enable Carter to link the epidemic of gold robberies to the Alhambra. They suspected the investigator and bushwhacked him—left him for dead."

The director passed Dan a cigar, lighted one himself and nodded the G-man to continue.

"The whole thing began years ago," Dan said. "Butler, or Carson, Blunt, who called himself Clark then, and the two Quinns were partners. Together they located the Alhambra. Blunt and Butler knew it was a rich property. The Quinns didn't. There was no money to develop it at that time. In that little canyon where the sunken river shows, Charles Quinn and Blunt had a fight.

"Quinn knocked Blunt into the river and he was swept away. Blunt was a strong and active swimmer and managed to make it to the large cave, where there was an opening to the outside. The Quinns thought he was dead. Butler met Blunt soon afterward and together they cooked up a scheme. Blunt kept out of sight. Butler did a little loose talking and the three were picked up for killing Blunt.

"Butler knew what he was doing all along. He kept his mouth shut about the fight and the Quinns thought he was square. He knew that without the body of Blunt the case wouldn't stand. The Quinns didn't know that. They thought everything depended on Butler.

"After the trial they left the country and Butler and Blunt took over the mine. Blunt was always a silent partner. The Quinns drifted back later and Blunt told them how he had been saved but claimed to have wandered about without memory for a couple of years.

"The Quinns went to work for Butler. Charles had already turned definitely crooked. John wanted to be honest. The Alhambra made money. Butler moved east and started his bank. Blunt invested his money in the bank and got in politics.

"**T**HEN all of a sudden the Alhambra vein petered out; the rock became very ordinary. Butler was financially involved. His bank was tottering. He thought up the scheme they put into practice. The stamp mill had been built over the sunken river because of the handy water. Later a spring was opened up on the side of the mountain and water from that was used instead. Everybody forgot about the subterranean river except Butler and Blunt. They started with small robberies, but when they discovered how simple it was, they began to widen out.

"Soon they had a powerful organization and were operating on a nationwide scale. With Butler's brains and Blunt's daring, the thing was easy. The Quinns just trailed along and never knew much. Butler and Blunt had so much on them they didn't dare talk."

"Butler's yacht was a wonder," put in the director. "Its entire rig could be so changed in an hour as to make it unrecognizable. There were guns hidden away on it that would have been a credit to a battle cruiser. And her engines!"

"Yes, I had a hunch it was Butler's yacht, camouflaged, that sank the *Empress* the minute I saw his picture in *Tombstone*," Dan said.

"Was that when you first suspected Butler?" asked the director.

"Well, at first I had a vague feeling that he might be involved after the attack on my plane. It was Butler who had suggested an emergency landing at the Gold City private landing field rather than the regular transfer by train to the mining town. He had gone to a lot of trouble—got in touch with the director via his private banking wire to the Capital and used his influence with the transportation officials to disrupt the schedule.

And I kept that in mind all the time.

"But I first really suspected him when I received the answer to my telegram requesting information on Quinn. His secretary said that Butler had gone away on vacation, without leaving any word as to where he was going. Said it was a practice of his. Sounded queer to me for a man of his vast affairs to do such a thing. I got to thinking about it and then I recalled whom Bowles reminded me of."

"Well, the gang's smashed. Butler,

Blunt and a good many others are headed for the electric chair and the lawyers are trying to figure a scheme to get the stolen gold back to those who own it," said the director. "So that particular battle is all washed up."

"Maybe," Dan replied, "but with a lot of crooks still on the loose who think they can make crime pay, there'll be plenty of others for you and me and the rest of the boys of the Bureau!"

The director grinned at him.



NEXT MONTH'S NOVEL

DAN FOWLER, MAN-HUNTER
IN


THE PAROLE RACKET

A SENSATIONAL EPIC OF CRIME

By C. K. M. SCANLON

Author of "Snatch," "The Purple Shirts," etc.

PACKED WITH ACTION THRILLS ON EVERY PAGE



You Gamble

WHEN YOU BUY THE *unknown*

• Games of chance may be all right in their place—but why risk your money when you buy razor blades! Probak Jr. is produced by the world's largest manufacturer of razor blades. Here is known quality—a double-edge blade that "stands up" for shave after shave—sells at 4 for 10¢!

4 BLADES FOR 10¢

PROBAK JUNIOR

The Lowdown on Dealers
in
"Counterfeit" Medicines

MURDER

BY A FORMER NOTORIOUS

FRANKIE

Author of "Hot Money."

I DON'T mean to go moral on you all of a sudden, but there's one point I would like to have you file away under your hair for handy reference. And this is it: whenever somebody you think a lot of needs medicine—needs it quick and needs it good—go to a store that sells the real

he knew how to handle the customers, and pretty soon his funny little store began to blossom out and amount to something. It was so easy—getting money—that Phil started thinking



"What goes on around here?"

article. You might have to put up a couple more pennies at a right joint, but the few cents you might save the other way wouldn't go very far to put up a nice, big tombstone for them.

Think I'm being morbid? All right. Listen to the one about Phil Bline.

Phil had a "good" store once. The trouble was it was so good the G-boys decided he'd be better off without it. So the rat—and I mean rat—is down south. Not for *his* health, but for other people's.

Phil was a go-getter. It took him about four years of hustling and working for other men to get a store of his own. He was legit then and if he'd stayed that way, he'd been on top of the pile now—instead of just on the rock pile.

Phil was a good-looking guy and

I'd been waiting for that kind of a crack. Suddenly I let him have my fist.



up ways to make it even easier.

I used to drop in his place every once in a while for this and that, and he and I got kind of chummy. We

The Trouble with a "Good" Racket Is,

MERCHANTS

An Exposé
of the
Drug Racket

GANGSTER AND RACKETEER

LEWIS

"Passing the Queer," etc.

were about as much alike as silk and cement, but I had a kind of an idea buzzing around in the back of my noggin about how to put Phil on a paying basis—for me.



It wasn't long before I'd put the bee on him to the tune of a double sawbuck a week for protection. That didn't sit so good with him and he

made a squawk to a couple of East Side gorillas.

His luck wasn't so hot, on account he happened to pick a couple of my particular pals who demonstrated their deep affection for me by kicking his slats nearly in. They told him to smarten up and pay Frankie.



Frankie Lewis

Or they would kick his slats in, and all the way.

That heart-to-heart talk with the boys did Phil a lot of good. He and I got along swell after I'd taught him a little respect on my own hook, by giving him a faceful of my fist the next time I saw him.

"That," says I, placing my knuckles firmly in his mush, "is for trying to go over me. Next time use your head for something else besides a knob to keep your skin from unraveling."

He mumbled he was sorry. He would be nice.

THE twenties came in nice and regular after that. His joint was on the up-stretch. I heard along the

You Never Can Tell When to Lay Off I

grapevine that he was buying a lot of swag. You know, hot aspirin and stuff. I thought I'd better look into that. I was feeling sort of fatherly toward Phil.

When I walked into his place, I saw everything was plastered with SALE signs. Clocks that were two-dollar items, he was offering for six bits. So the tip was okay. He was peddling stolen stuff.

"Look," I said. "What goes on around here?"

He gave me the wink. "Chicken-feed. With your connections, there's an idea we could work—"

He spilled the set-up. There was a certain hair stuff that about two million blondes in New York was using exclusive. Some kind of a shampoo.

"If I could sell that stuff for thirty-five cents a throw," Phil said, "I could clean up. I know the formula and it would cost about four cents to make up. Look, you've sold bootleg rum, haven't you? The government didn't print your labels and make your bottles, I guess. Well?"

I caught. "I can get all the phony bottles and labels you want," I said.

So that's what started it. Everything went off without a hitch. Phil ran a special sale on the shampoo. Sold every bottle and had the frails yipping for more.

We covered ourselves by pulling a wire with a wholesale jobber that supplied us fake bills of sale for the stuff. Of course, our shampoo wasn't exactly as good as the original. But I will say that it wouldn't make your hair fall out the way some of the stuff does that the other boys peddle.

Phil got the idea we should branch out. First we sold our junk to a lot of other druggists with consciences as stretchy as ours. We cleaned up about five grand that way.

"Why make phony hair wash only?" Phil wants to know. "We can duplicate patent medicines too. There'd be gold in *those* hills all right." He mentioned a brand of expensive, high grade baby food, worth every nickel of its pretty steep price. My sister's kids were raised on the stuff.

And all the while he was talking

I kept thinking of those kids—*those* kids and the million other kids in New York. Of course our stuff wouldn't reach them all, but it would reach enough to do plenty harm.

I don't know. I'm no softie. But making money off kids—that didn't set so well with me. I kept seeing their fat, pink, funny faces in front of me. And getting madder and madder.

"Listen, rat," I said, keeping my voice down low, "that's out."

"Nuts," says Phil, cold as last night's supper. "You don't think we're the only mugs in the racket, do you? We ain't got a monopoly on this phony drug business. There's hundreds, maybe thousands, of gyp cut-raters in this town—namin' no names on account of that ain't healthy. Why shouldn't we join the parade? Alongside of some of *them*, we're lilies. I want to cash in—we've got a sweet set-up and all the angles fixed. Let's make gravy while the sun shines."

I don't know how I kept from punching him for so long.

"Nix," I said, just about four degrees madder than I ever remember being. "Nix. I don't make dough by shooting a lot of poison into kids."

"Kids!" He put his tongue between his lips and made a noise with it. "Kids. Phooey, there's too damn many—"

I'D been waiting for that kind of a crack. Suddenly my breadhooks were curled around his fancy lapels. His fishy looking face was about two inches below my shoulder. Then it went away quick—went away on the end of my fist. I pulled him up just for the pleasure of knocking him down again. I went on until when I pulled him up his feet wouldn't stay under him.

"Look," I said, leaning down over him. "I ain't been feelin' right for a long time. I ain't been easy. Maybe it's because this is just about the first time I've ever made jack by cheatin' people who didn't deserve to be cheated. Or maybe it's just because there's a bad smell that hangs around where you are—and I didn't know

what it was until just this minute.

"I'm taking a powder, rat. I'm walkin' right out of this business. But I'm going to keep watching you and if I catch you turning out that baby stuff—I'll separate you into several small pieces."

That was a long speech for me. But after I'd got it off my chest I felt better. Like taking a cold dunk on a hot, sticky day. I walked out, leaving him moaning around the floor.

It was about two weeks later that I saw a headline:

FAKE BABY FOOD KILLS TOT

It might not have been Phil. But if I'd read the look in his eyes right, he'd just been waiting to pull a fast one. And the guy that had sold that rotten stuff probably was like Phil inside. If I put Phil out of the way, there'd been one less baby-killing rat.

So I did something that ain't a habit of mine. And I didn't feel sorry.

Jerry Donovan was the name of the G-boy who had sent me up on my

last trip. He was hard, but square as they come. I told him the whole scheme, and I gave names, dates, and places.

Jerry looked at me and nodded.

"What you've done today," he said, "well—it ought to square things up for you, some." He stuck out his hand and I grabbed it.

"Cut the comedy," I mumbled.

I waited weeks. No word of a pinch. But when it did come, the blow-off was a peach.

Jerry led the raid. They took over the warehouse where Phil kept his phony stuff. They found enough bad medicine to kill off half the city. They found some illegal narcotics too. And that was it. That was what they wanted.

Well, I hope Phil likes Atlanta. I hope he stays healthy too, because Jerry promised me the other day that if Phil was ever taken sick, he'd see to it that Phil was offered some medicine right from his own warehouse. Just a gag, but I'd like to see Phil's face if it ever happens.

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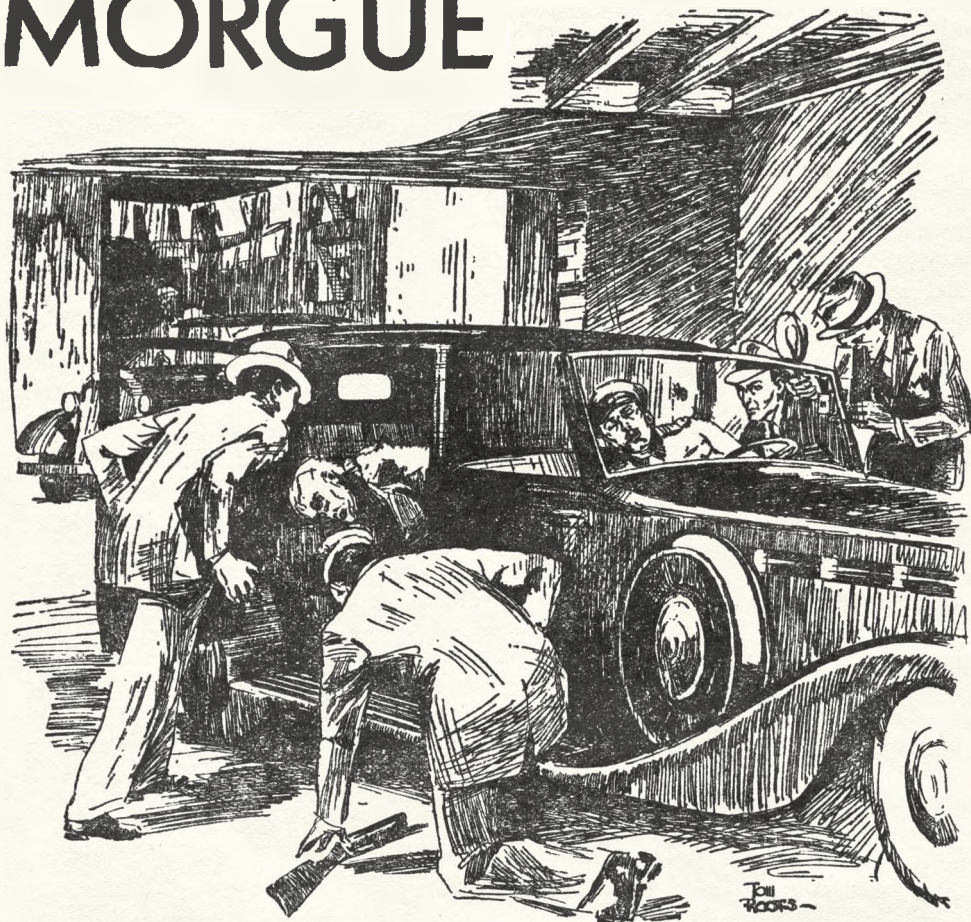
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The ROAD to the MORGUE



The sight caused Milstead's blood to congeal

G-Man Chip Milstead Finds a Pawn Ticket and a Man With a Bad Heart: Two Clues That He Transforms Into Steel Manacles for an Egomaniac Killer!

By JOE ARCHIBALD

Author of "One Drop of Blood," "The Calico Noose," etc.

CHIP MILSTEAD sat in the Congress Hotel in Chicago watching the stream of humanity that poured in and out of the lobby. A hopeless job. Going from

hotel to hotel in an attempt to spot Trigger Perrin, Number One Public Enemy. Worse than hunting for a needle in a haystack.

He snatched a newspaper from a

table and glanced at the front page. A sharp intake of breath caused Milstead's head to jerk up. He saw a tall man with a pointed beard and eyeglasses bracing himself in a chair nearby. The man's teeth were biting into his lower lip and his face was ashen.

"Sick?" the G-men asked quickly, jumping up. He gripped the stranger's arm.

"I—I'll be all right," the man forced out. Meanwhile he was feverishly fumbling in his pockets. Milstead watched him crush something in a handkerchief and then raise the linen cloth to his nose. Soon he showed signs of recovering from the attack and his color began to return.

"How is it? All right now?" queried Chip Milstead solicitously, bending toward the hotel guest.

"Yes—quite all right now, thank you," was the reply. The man then rose from his chair slowly and walked toward the elevators. Eyeing him curiously, Milstead saw that his clothes were a bit threadbare, that his hat and shoes were shabby.

"Huh," commented the G-man as he fell back into his chair. His eyes roved idly. Finally they focused on a little white something on the rich carpet at his feet. He leaned forward and picked it up. It turned out to be a small white pellet. Absently he put the pellet into his pocket. A bell captain walked by.

Milstead addressed him.

"Did you see that man over by the elevators?"

The uniformed attendant turned and nodded.

"Stay here?" asked the G-man.

"N-no, don't believe so. Wait—he does look sort of familiar. Seems as if I've seen him before in the lobby, but I don't think he stops here." The bell captain went on.

CHIP MILSTEAD watched the plainly dressed, bearded gentleman enter the elevator. After a while he got up and walked out of the hotel. In front, he stopped and cast an idle glance at the crowd passing by. A man stopped and tossed a cigarette

butt to the sidewalk. He was about to enter the hotel when he turned and looked back at the discarded smoke.

Milstead and the uniformed doorman exchanged glances as the stranger ground the stub under his heel. Satisfied, apparently, he strode by the G-man and walked inside the hotel.

"Cautious gent, that," grunted the doorman. "Must be scared of startin' another Chicago fire."

"Yeah," agreed Milstead, "that was funny." His mind's eye conjured up a picture of the man he had just watched perform such a meticulous rite. The fellow had been tall, broad-shouldered, and garbed in a hand-me-down suit. This fact was apparent in the extremely poor fit of the blue serge which was likewise sadly in need of pressing.

The man's shoes, however, had occupied the G-man's attention most of all. They were the sort worn by policemen, the broad-toed, rubber-heeled kind that give comfort to a person who of necessity does much walking.

"Observe!" Challoner, chief of the Chicago Bureau, had instructed Chip Milstead when first the young man had arrived for duty. The chief forever harped on that manhunting angle, and Chip Milstead respected Challoner's acumen.

He strove to employ the chief's tactics.

The Congress Hotel was a fashionable hotel. Yet the two men who had awakened Milstead's interest he realized had not been the type who would make the place their headquarters.

The last one had had all the earmarks of a detective. He had even worn the orthodox black derby of the plainclothes man. Yet what had all this to do with the search for Trigger Perrin? Milstead shook his head disgustedly and turned the corner into Monroe Street. There he hailed a cab.

"Hotel Sherman," he said to the driver and sank back into the upholstered seat. Fifteen minutes later he was sitting in a corner of the hotel coffee shop wondering why he could not drive that incident of the

discarded cigarette from his mind. He speculated upon the reason and decided that caution must have been it. Perhaps the man had once been an employee around explosives—or in a garage where gasoline—

The association of ideas progressed and finally welded in one thought that jerked Milstead erect in his chair.

Back in Washington Chip Milstead had heard of the aura of mystery that hovered around Perrin. An ex-war flyer had come into the offices of the Department of Justice weeks before. He had laid a newspaper clipping on a desk in front of the highest mogul in the Department.

"That Perrin?" he had queried.

The Department head had nodded curtly. "The best we could get. Took it from the woman who was shot in an Iowa bank job. Pretty old, I should judge."

"Yeah," the flyer had agreed. "I could swear it is a guy I flew with in France. Jim Garvey his name was. He was shot down behind the lines a month before the Armistice. The likeness got me when I took a good look at it. Thought I'd tell you."

"Thanks," had been the response, "but—'Garvey' or 'Perrin'— he'll be hard to take."

Chip Milstead was breathing hard. "I've got it," he mumbled. His mind had traveled to a transport pilot he had once known. Joe Barker had been like that. Chip had seen him go along the street and flick a cigarette to the sidewalk in front of him. Never had he failed to grind the butt under his heel. Joe Barker had always done it without breaking his stride. Habit. All good pilots in an airdrome—

PEOPLE in the coffee shop stared at Milstead as the G-man jumped out of his chair and uttered a low cry. They watched him weave his way among the tables toward the door, a set look on his face.

"Why didn't I think of that?" he ground out between his teeth.

At the entrance Milstead hailed a taxi. He squirmed impatiently on its cushions and cursed Loop traffic

which held up the cab's progress.

It was five o'clock, the busiest hour in the Windy City. It seemed a century before the G-man's cab pulled up in front of the Congress Hotel. He paid the driver and ran into the hotel lobby, eyes fleeting through the crowds. But Milstead's feverish glance did not light on the man he was looking for.

He went out to the doorman.

"Remember me?" he queried. "You spoke to me about the guy who stepped on a cigarette this afternoon."

"Yeah, sure. I remember."

"Did you see that bird again—when he came out, perhaps?"

"Yeah. He was carryin' a suitcase. Two other gents was with him. One had a beard an' wore eyeglasses. He stops here. The other one was a dick, too, I think. A big limousine come for 'em. I guess every doorman on the Boulevard here knows that boiler. Belongs to P. T. Stokes, the millionaire meat packer. It was his car, all right. I know the chauffeur. A little French guy with a hairline mustache."

"Thanks," Chip said and spun on his heel. He returned to the hotel lobby. At the information desk he found out that the bearded man did stop at the hotel, having registered as "John Stratton, New York."

"Dresses kind of sloppy, doesn't he?" the G-man asked.

"Why, no," was the surprising response; "on the contrary, he was always expensively dressed every time I saw him."

Upon hearing that statement Chip Milstead felt a trifle addled. He walked away without another word and went toward a chair.

"Somethin's screwy," he muttered, flinging himself into the cushioned depths. Suddenly his brain clutched at a bare possibility and the blood pounded in his veins. "Stokes—if Trigger Perrin was snatching Stokes—"

Milstead jumped up and headed for a phone booth. When he had hunted up the number of the packer he dialed the telephone.

A man's voice answered.

Milstead said, "Mr. Stokes?"

"Who is calling Mr. Stokes?"

"Police," the G-man cracked. He heard a stifled exclamation at the other end of the wire. After a moment a second man answered in an impatient, gruff voice.

"Well?"

"This is a Federal man speaking," Milstead said. "Did you send your car to the Congress Hotel? To pick up a man named Stratton?"

"I did! What damned nonsense is—"

"Sorry," Chip Milstead apologized, "but it wouldn't hurt to be on your guard. Be sure it is Stratton before you let him in." He hung up then and left the booth completely at his wits' end.

"Well, if they nab him," he growled, "they can't say I didn't warn him." For a moment the G-man contemplated jumping into a cab headed for Stokes' home on the South Side, but he decided that it would be too late. Instead he had better report to Challoner. He returned to the telephone booth and dialed the Bureau. Challoner responded.

"Number Seventy-three," spoke up Chip Milstead. "May have a lead on Perrin. Something screwy happened. May involve P. T. Stokes and—"

"What!" the answer came like a shot out of a gun. "Listen! Get down to Fifty-third and Stony Island. There's a car—a limousine, the Stokes limousine. Driven into a garage in an alley. Two dead men in it. Follow up your lead! Get going! Scram!"

Chip Milstead almost knocked the doorman over as he ran out of the hotel. The uniformed man cursed as Milstead leaped toward a cab. As it left the curb he leaned forward and shoved something in front of the driver. The man took one look and gaped.

"To hell with traffic!" the G-man cracked. "Get me there—fast!"

"Oke!" The driver stepped on it. Two miles south a traffic cop overhauled the taxi. Milstead talked fast. The cop motioned him on; cleared the way.

STREET lights were blinking when the G-man got to the scene of the murder. Half the men from police headquarters seemed to be on deck. It was a gory sight.

The French chauffeur, whom the doorman at the Congress Hotel had mentioned to Chip Milstead, was slumped over the car wheel, a hole through his temple. The thing in the back seat caused Milstead's blood to congeal. Half the victim's head had been shot away. The remnants of a beard remained on the part of the face spared by the charge of a sawed-off shotgun.

The G-man knew that only such a weapon could have wreaked the havoc his hardening eyes looked upon. Around the body were marks of slugs which Chip Milstead was able to dig out of the upholstery.

"Find anythin' on him?" he inquired of a Headquarters detective who seemed to be in charge.

"Plenty to identify him. Papers—watch—auto license. John Stratton from New York."

Milstead's thoughts returned to the two men as his eyes wandered over the bloody shambles. Suddenly he leaned into the car and picked up a white pellet from the floor. He examined it closely. The detective standing close by volunteered the information that there were several more in the dead Stratton's pocket.

"Carried 'em loose. No box," the Headquarters man said. "Maybe for indigestion."

Chip Milstead turned and an icy smirk appeared on his face.

"Maybe. Not important, I guess."

News photographers crowded in close just before the morgue wagon came for the bodies. Flashlight powder exploded. In the lurid glare Chip Milstead spotted something else that had fallen just under the running board of the car. He put his foot on it while the bodies were being removed in long wicker baskets. The men from Headquarters began to disperse.

"The killer was a clever guy," someone said to Milstead. "The boller's wiped clean of prints."

"So I noticed," acknowledged the G-man. "I see you found the shotgun." He nodded his head toward a uniformed man who was carrying a cloth-wrapped article.

"No prints on that either. Every markin' filed off," the dick informed him. "Not easy to figure out. If Stokes had been in the car—"

"Maybe he'll know what it's all about," Milstead suggested.

The city dick turned away. Chip bent quickly then and picked up the thing he had been standing on. Not until twenty minutes later, in a drug-store six blocks away, did he examine the square piece of pasteboard. It was a pawn ticket bearing the name of a shop at the corner of Clark and Huron Streets.

"That's something," the G-man murmured, his eyes gleaming. "Something to go on at last!" He went to the prescription desk and handed two white pellets to the pharmacist. "Federal business. Tell me what they are."

The man complied by taking the pellets to his desk light and studying them closely. He pressed one of them between his fingers. An alien odor assailed the Federal man's nostrils as he bent over to watch the operation.

"These are perles of amyl-nitrate," the pharmacist said. "They're prescribed by physicians for a heart ailment—angina pectoris. When anyone so afflicted feels an attack coming on, he breaks a perle in his handkerchief and holds it to his nose. Relief is almost immediate."

"So?" the G-man grimaced. "And a guy would lose time if he had to fumble around for a box. Might keep 'em in his pocket loose?"

"No doubt," agreed the druggist. "It would be the natural thing to do."

"Thanks," and Milstead hurried out.

THIS time he headed straight for the Bureau. With Challoner was a police lieutenant and a florid-faced man with grey hair. The chief looked up quizzically at Chip Milstead but did not speak for a moment.

Then, "This is Mr. Stokes," he said. "He tells me somebody called him up

to warn him about something. A Federal man—?"

"I called," Milstead clipped. "I got a flash at a guy this afternoon. He went out later—the doorman told me—with this man, Stratton, who has since been murdered! I'm wondering if it could have been Perrin!"

The expression that passed over the three men's faces was ludicrous.

"You sure?" the chief cracked.

"No—only a hunch," replied Milstead. Challoner gestured impatiently.

The millionaire meat packer spoke then. "I've been down to the morgue. It was Stratton all right."

"We got his fingerprints, Challoner," the police lieutenant put in. "They match up with those we found on various things in his room. No other prints but Stratton's were there."

"That sounds fishy enough in itself," declared Milstead. "What's the checkup in New York?"

Challoner said, "Stratton was working for nobody but Clay Thorne, Milstead. He came to Chicago to dispose of a necklace worth a quarter of a million dollars. Part of the Romanoff crown jewels. Mr. Stokes was a prospective purchaser."

Milstead could not find speech for a moment. "Somebody got wise, then," he finally found voice.

"I don't see how!" Stokes snapped. "We kept it secret. No one knew this transaction was to take place but Mr. Thorne, Stratton and myself. We purposely avoided publicity. You can readily understand why."

"What does Thorne say?"

"He's flying here," Challoner said. "He'll know Stratton if anyone does."

"Oh, yeah? Has he got a record of Stratton's fingerprints?"

"We'll find out. Thorne will be here in six hours."

Stokes rose to leave. "I'll be at home. When Thorne arrives, let me know." The packer was visibly shaken as he walked toward the door. The man from Police Headquarters left with him.

"What do you know?" Challoner thrust at Chip Milstead when the two

were left alone in the G-man's office.

"I won't be able to tell you until Thorne gets here, chief," the man with a Federal number parried. "But I think Perrin is the boy behind this pretty mess. He's partial to sawed-off shotguns."

"Right. He blew the head off that bank guard out in Cleveland with one. You know I'm inclined to believe you're right, Milstead."

"Chief," the G-man said, "when that big guy left the hotel with Stratton, he carried a suitcase. You could put a gun in that, I guess."

"What made you think it was the killer?"

"The way he snuffed out a cigarette," Milstead answered cryptically. He picked up the phone and called a number.

From out in the street came the raucous cries of newsboys. A police car siren shrieked. An ominous lull seemed to have fallen over the mid-west metropolis.

The chief asked, "What've you got now?"

"Maybe a one-way ticket to hell for somebody," replied the G-man coldly, looking at a little bit of pasteboard in his hand. He shifted uneasily as the operator reported no answer.

"I'll be there first thing in the morning, then," he growled and slammed down the instrument. "So that was Thorne's man, Stratton, who got his head blown off? I wonder." He looked at the clock, then leaned back in his chair. For a long time neither man spoke.

CHALLONER sent out for food and drink. The telephone rang continually. One of the calls was from the Commissioner who had hurried down to his office.

"One of my men says you suspect Trigger Perrin, Challoner. That right? Are you holding something back?"

"Have to, don't we?" the chief countered. "If the newspapers get hold of it, we're sunk. Keep Perrin's name out of it. I'd call the newspapers about that."

"Good," exclaimed Milstead. "Those

newshounds might ruin this thing."

At midnight Clay Thorne, New York banker, arrived at Chicago Police Headquarters. The commissioner called Chief Challoner again. He and Milstead reached the edifice that housed the law almost on the heels of Mr. Stokes.

"Stratton murdered!" Thorne was incredulous. "It can't be."

"Let's go to the morgue," suggested the commissioner.

Clay Thorne acquiesced. "I'd like to get the nasty business over with, I'm sure."

Chip Milstead stood back against the wall of the morgue a few minutes later watching a man pull out a big refrigerated tray. He did not want to see that thing again. But he was close enough to hear Clay Thorne draw in his breath sharply.

"From what I can see of him I'd say it's Stratton all right," Thorne declared after a moment.

"Ever have his fingerprints taken?"

Thorne's head swiveled. "Why, I don't know. I never required them. He's been with me a long time. Ever since he failed in the market. I trusted the man. Do you think I'd have let him carry a quarter of a million dollars worth of st—?"

"May I ask a question?" Milstead cut in. "This Stratton—did he have heart trouble? Attacks of angina whatever-it-is?"

Thorne shook his head. "Not that I ever heard of. He was a sound man for his age."

"Funny," commented the G-man. "I found this pill on the floor of the car he was killed in. There were more in his pocket. Examination proved them to be amyl-nitrate perles. You squeeze 'em and hold 'em to your nose when an attack is comin' on. I'd suggest an autopsy on the body there to make sure this Stratton's ticker was all right. If he had suddenly been attacked with angina since leaving New York it would show, wouldn't it? Degeneration of the heart muscles or something like that?"

Challoner and the commissioner looked a bit stunned. The New York man's eyes widened.

"Let me tell you something," Chip Milstead continued. "I saw a man with a beard in the lobby of the Congress Hotel several hours ago. He had one of those attacks right by my chair. His clothes looked kind of ordinary. When I saw him again—when he was dead—he was dressed in a suit made by a Jackson Boulevard tailor. What do you think?"

"Y-you mean—?" the G-man's chief cut in. "Stratton?"

"I'm not sure. But if what I think is true, the real Mr. Stratton is very much alive. Whoever killed those two men and got that necklace, made a little mistake. They should have inquired into the state of the fall guy's health!"

"Good God!" gasped Stokes. "Sounds like fiction."

"Truth beats that stuff," Milstead reminded the millionaire. "With Stratton dead—well, they couldn't suspect him. There's no way of proving the hoax by fingerprints. Nor by his teeth. The killer must have rammed that shotgun down the victim's throat!"

AS the little group of men moved out of the grim filing place of the unknown dead, Chip Milstead addressed Clay Thorne. "Stratton lost his money in the market, didn't he? Perhaps he was used to more than you were paying him, Mr. Thorne. The temptation that assails a man carrying a quarter of a million bucks—?"

"Look here," Thorne bridled, "are you insinuating—" He bit off his words. "Sorry," he muttered. "Maybe you're right, but—"

"Perrin won't get out of town," the police commissioner gritted. "I've spread a net that'll hold a minnow-sized crook!"

The men separated a few moments later. Clay Thorne and P. T. Stokes got into a cab together and sped away. The commissioner hopped a bus, asking Challoner to call him at his home if anything broke before morning. The Department of Justice head for Chicago and his man stood alone on the corner for a while.

"Do you know where he is?" Chal-

loner wanted to know of Milstead.

"No, that's the hell of it," replied Milstead. "But I think I can trace him. You have to give me a few days, maybe a month. He'll hide out, perhaps, until things cool down—until the front pages stop screaming about the killing—and those jewels. I'll give you a ring every once in a while, chief. Let me handle this my way, please."

"Go to it," Challoner indicated confidence in his lieutenant.

Nine o'clock the next morning found Chip Milstead in a pawnshop at Clark and Huron Streets. He handed the pasteboard ticket to a stooped little man behind the counter.

The pawnbroker stared at the G-man quizzically through heavy-lensed spectacles before he produced the article called for on the ticket. The Federal man grinned as he turned a gold watch over in his hands. On the case were engraved the initials J.W.G.

He snapped it open. A low exclamation burst through his set lips. On the inside of the case was the picture of a girl, just a face torn from a snapshot.

"Ten dollars," the pawnbroker said. "You act as if you never saw it before. You find that ticket, huh?" He reached out for the watch.

Milstead drew back. "Not so fast, not so fast." He produced something from his pocket that made the broker's eyes pop. "Remember what the fellow looked like?"

The pawnbroker's eyes clouded with momentary fear. He shrugged his shoulders uncertainly. "Ten days ago, maybe, I got it. I don't know. So many come in."

The G-man returned the watch. "Keep that, see? Until it's called for. You've got a boarder until the guy shows up. Me. I guess your back room there has a place for me to sleep. You live upstairs?"

The old man nodded. "In the back room is a cot. That's all. I store many old things in there. But I don't like this business—"

Milstead cut in sternly. "This is Federal business! Have you any old

clothes I can put on while here?"

The pawnbroker was impressed. "I buy old clothes, too. Come, I'll show you."

"Put that watch in plain sight," Milstead advised his unwilling host with an air of authority. He walked into the back room, convinced now that he was on the right track.

THAT snapshot in the watch. A picture of a square-jawed girl with a boyish bob. The late Tim Draper's moll. Her picture had been spread all over the pages of newspapers from coast to coast when Federal men snuffed out Draper's life in a roadside cabin on the outskirts of Aurora, Illinois.

Perrin, it had been rumored, had not only taken over Draper's title as Public Enemy Number One but the dangerous Nan Lawton as well. The initials J.W.G. seemed to substantiate the suspicions of the man who had claimed Trigger Perrin to be an old war pilot. Jim Garvey!

Chip Milstead knew that someone would be after that watch. Perrin, if it was he who had lost that pawn ticket, could not be sure just where he had lost it. He'd be afraid of the deductions the picture of the girl would so obviously suggest.

The killer would undoubtedly anticipate the possibility of Nan Lawton's capture and its dire results if she decided to talk. The watch itself, through the ingenious methods employed by Federal agents, would be traced back to where it was purchased.

"Yeah," Chip Milstead mumbled, "and maybe J. W. G. enjoyed a respectable family circle once. Maybe he wouldn't want everything uncovered. For instance that he didn't really pass out in a German prison camp—yeah! I'm bettin' somebody makes a try for that watch!"

For two days the G-man haunted the pawnshop. Unshaven, clad in ill-fitting clothes, Milstead's identity would have stumped the chief himself at first glance. Once more he reported to Challoner. He was told that an autopsy had been performed

on the corpse of the man purported to have been Stratton. There had been plenty of evidence to point to the fact that the victim had suffered from a bad heart condition for several years.

"It looks as if your guess was a good one," the chief concluded. "Carry on, Milstead."

With the shop plunged in darkness at the end of the second day the G-man sat on the edge of his rickety cot in the back room and stared into the blackness. The noise of traffic outside began to quiet down. Only a small ray of light from a nearby street lamp penetrated the room where Milstead waited. An ancient clock ticked away the minutes—the hours.

The Federal man slept. He did not know how long. An alien sound pierced his subconscious mind and brought him to a sitting position. His eyes bulged, his mouth snapped open. Every sense alert, Milstead listened—for what?

At first he thought a rat had scampered across a shelf and dislodged a piece of bric-a-brac. A sudden snapping sound sent his fingers groping for his gun. The window catch had been broken. A brief silence—then a rasping noise. Someone was cautiously raising the window.

The G-man slid off the cot noiselessly and hugged the floor. The beam of a small flashlight stabbed into the room. It swept to every corner before it was extinguished. The head and shoulders of a man appeared at the window, silhouetted against the lesser gloom of the alley.

The intruder hitched himself over the sill. Milstead rolled closer to the cot for the man was inside now. He was no amateur in his line, the Federal man knew. An oppressive stillness reigned in the shop's back room for fully a minute. The burglar uttered something under his breath and chuckled. Then he tiptoed into the pawnshop, light playing on his course. Milstead raised himself on one elbow when the intruder went in back of the counter.

The light beam began to move over the heterogeneous collection of stuff under the glass case. Again the G-

man heard a soft murmur of satisfaction. An arm reached into the case, was withdrawn almost immediately.

Milstead got a glimpse of the burglar's face as he held the object he had stolen close to the end of the flashlight. Light reflected from the metal object he held and bathed his pinched little features. He snapped the case open.

"Don't move!" As he spoke, Chip Milstead leaped to his feet. "Keep that light going. Turn it on your mugg! Reach for the ceiling with the other hand! One false step and I'll tear a hole through your carcass!"

The watch fell from the crook's hand as he hastened to obey. The metallic clatter it made against the wooden floor was followed by sounds from above.

"Come on out from behind that counter!" the G-man cracked. "And make it fast!"

NIGHT bathed the big shop as the frightened intruder came close to Chip Milstead. A voice called out, "Who's there?"

"Come on down," the Federal man shouted. "I've got something to show you."

"Listen!" The crook's voice was thick with fright. "I didn't come to steal nothin'. Honest I didn't. A guy sent me in to git a watch. Said it was his anyways. That ain't stealin', is it?"

"No?" drawled Milstead sardonically, switching on an overhead light. "What would a judge think?" He let his eyes feast on his catch. The captive was a short, emaciated bit of riff-raff, a typical penny-ante thief. He had a pointed, bony nose and little ferret-like eyes.

"Lemme go, will ya? Honest t'Gawd they'll gimme the woiks, mister. I didn't take nothin'. They could gimme life just fer gittin' caught like this—with nothin' in my hands. Ya wouldn't—"

The pawnbroker shuffled across the floor, eyes hard. He lifted the telephone.

"Drop it!" Chip Milstead shot out. "I don't want the cops in on this—

yet!" He reached out and hooked his wiry fingers into the front of the man's ragged coat. With a vicious yank he jerked the crook toward him. "Who was it?"

"I—I don't know," the burglar jerked out.

"Give me a piece of rubber hose," the G-man addressed the shop's proprietor.

"No—no! I'd tell ya if I knew. Honest t'Gawd I would. He wouldn't tell me his name. He was a big guy with a pointed black mustache. Yeah, he's got a room in a joint over on East Van Buren Street. He wants the watch, see? He don't want to come after it. It's a cinch, he says. Fifty bucks for me if—"

"Come on, spit it out!" Milstead clipped. "What's the name of the stag joint? You'd better have a good memory."

"Star Hotel," the craven thrust out. "Yeah, he's in Room 81. That's all I know, I'm tellin' ya, mister. A guy come into a flop-house where I'm at. He knows I was a good worker once. He steers me to this gent."

"Get some rope," the G-man gritted to the pawnbroker, stifling a triumphant cry. "We'll tie this rat up plenty. If he told the truth, he can go when I get back. If he lied, he'll get the can at Joliet."

"I tell ya it's the straight goods," the crook protested as Milstead pushed him to the floor and drew his wrists together at the small of his back. With the aid of the pawnbroker the G-man had his captive securely bound in short order. He rolled the fellow into a corner and bent over him.

"What's the rest? What's the name you have to use when you knock on this guy's door? The signal?"

"Four knocks," the prostrate man hastened to reply. "Ya ast fer Lustig."

"Maybe I'll even give you the fifty," Chip Milstead told the penny-ante crook, "if I see this thing through right."

"Yeah? Maybe you're after a big shot, huh?"

Milstead ignored him. He tele-

phoned his superior at the Bureau.

"Get six good men, Challoner," he barked into the mouthpiece. "Have them surround the Star Hotel on East Van Buren. Think I've got 'im cold. Yeah—in about half an hour. Call up Headquarters, will you, chief? Get a carload of cops down there. Plenty of guns is right! Tear gas—all that stuff. Tell 'em to break that damn siren they use, though. Me? I'll handle it up to a certain point. If things get too tough, they'll know it."

"Right," said Challoner and Milstead's eardrums rang as his chief slammed up the receiver at the other end of the wire.

THE G-man went in back of the counter, then, and picked up the watch. He shoved it into his pocket, grinned down at the petty crook.

"I'll deliver this in person," he said. "All I want is to get his door open. Were you in his room long? Anybody with him?"

"I was there maybe five minutes," the captive gasped. "He was alone. But I got a funny feelin' when I was in there, yeah. Seems like they was somebody else in the place but I couldn't see nobody. Maybe it's because I been a li'l screwy the last couple mont's."

Chip Milstead's spine crawled a bit as he watched the cheap crook slide his tongue along thin, dry lips.

"Maybe you only think you were screwy," said the Federal man. "I've an idea there was someone in the room besides your friend Lustig. I better hurry up and do this job." He went out the back door into the dark alley behind the pawnshop, managed to slip out into the street without being observed.

Having boarded a Clark Street trolley, the G-man caught a glimpse of himself in the glass of the door. His reflection was reassuring. He looked like any man down on his luck. At Van Buren Street he got off the car and walked east. The Star Hotel, a squalid fifty-cent hotel, soon drew his gaze.

Milstead did not pause. He knew that anyone watching from a window

would be suspicious of a person who chose to loiter near the place. The G-man walked right through the musty-smelling lobby and up a flight of stairs. Two men sat on the second floor landing.

They wasted but a glance on Milstead as he passed on into a dark hallway. The walls of some of the cheap bedrooms did not reach to the ceiling, consisting merely of partitions. The Federal man heard drunken mutterings; prodigious snores; coarse laughter. His eyes probed for the numbers on the cell-like rooms. At one he stopped, plunged his right hand into the pocket of his coat. With his left fist he rapped on the door which was at the end of the hall. Four times.

After a period of silence someone stirred inside the room. Chip Milstead waited for the door to open, his jaw muscles bulging, eyes set coldly. The rasp of a key in a stubborn lock seemed to make a hellish clatter. The door opened a crack.

"Who ya want?"

"Lustig," the G-man husked.

The door opened slowly. There was no light in the room, but a faint illumination from far down the hall played on the features of the individual who looked closely at Milstead. The G-man saw the expression of that face change.

"You ain't the guy that— Damn ya!"

With a quick lunge Milstead blocked the man's attempt to shut the door. A gun roared. The G-man felt the heat of its stab of flame close to his cheek. Employing a trick he had learned from the jiu-jitsu expert back in Washington, he twisted the weapon loose, sent his man staggering all the way across the room with a terrific blow of his fist.

"I'm taking you, Trigger Perrin!" As he spoke the door of the room slammed shut. The place was plunged into darkness.

"Yeah?" Perrin's venomous voice snarled. "No dirty dick kin take—" The bragging voice was drowned by another roar of his gun. Milstead flattened out and sent bullet in return.

Trigger Perrin was laughing crazily.

"Ha-a-a! Shoot it out! That's my racket, flatfoot!"

A table tumbled over. Milstead knew that Perrin was using it for a screen as he let his gun spit. Simultaneously with firing the G-man rolled over the floor. The killer's slugs chunked into the floor where he had been. Milstead's free hand groped. He knew he was close to the curtained window. A tiny crack of light was visible. Cautiously he raised himself to one knee. His fingers brushed against the dangling ring of a curtain cord.

A snarl shot from Perrin as he took a pot shot. The G-man heard it dig into the wall a foot behind him. He heard something else at the same time. The table was being shoved across the floor. Trigger Perrin was changing his position. Milstead fired again. The murderer snarled and followed that with an icy laugh.

"You'll git plenty, rat!" he clipped through the darkness. "That chopper of mine—"

IN the hall men were yelling. Chip Milstead knew they did not dare to come in. He heard the racing engine of a car out in the street suddenly die. His fingers brushed that curtain ring again. At the opposite side of the room Trigger Perrin's boots scraped against the floor. A hoarse cry of exultation jerked loose. The G-man let the curtain snap up. Abruptly the light from the street lamps bathed the interior of the room. Chip Milstead's gun roared as he spotted Perrin in the act of lifting a machine-gun from a suitcase. The gunman caved as a heavy slug tore through his shoulder.

Sirens screamed now. Car brakes screeched. The pounding of boots and cries of men blended in the uproar. Trigger Perrin, face a mask of diabolical rage, took another bullet through his huge bulk as he swung around with the chopper. He knew that he was through, realized that he was headed for hell, but he was resolved to take a G-man with him.

Now they were coming from the

street. The cops were swarming through the stag flop. Chip Milstead fired again, then dove for the floor as Perrin's machine-gun began its hellish chant. The killer's eyes were filmed a bit. His aim was wild. His knees gave way as the last of his bullets were discharged into the floor.

Trigger Perrin fell face downward as the door crashed open. Chief Challoner stood in the doorway, eyes roving wildly about until they rested on his G-man.

"Hello, kid," he spoke then, relief in his voice. "You got him, I see."

"Yeah," breathed Milstead and tried to get up. He wondered what ailed his right leg. Somebody was sitting on it, was holding it down.

"You've been plugged," a police lieutenant exclaimed. "Stay quiet, fellow. Maybe it's busted."

Men seemed to be pouring into the room now. Two of them wore white coats. One knelt close to the killer, felt of his heart. Turned over on his back, Trigger Perrin opened his eyes slowly and looked up at the internes. His hard lips twitched with terrible effort. Blood trickled from four wounds in his worthless carcass.

"He's still alive," one of the police surgeons declared, "but he'll never get to a hospital."

"Ask him what he did with Stratton!" Chip Milstead said.

Trigger Perrin caught the G-man's words, motioned to be lifted up. His voice was hoarse with death, but he managed to speak.

"Lift me up!"

"Challoner," Chip Milstead said to his chief, "look in the closet there. I think something's in it and I don't think it's pretty."

A moment later the chief of the Chicago Bureau of the Department of Justice stepped back from the closet he had opened. He uttered a choking cry of horror. It was sliced by a gurgling laugh from Trigger Perrin.

"What a sap," the murderer sneered. "I met—him—one night in—the hotel. Looked like dough t'me. Got 'im drunk—he spilt everythin'. Had a plan, he said, to cash in on them stones. But he was too yeller—"

couldn't kill a guy. Wouldn't know where to git a fall guy anyway. Me—I arranged that—it's my business." Even facing death Perrin could brag about his career. "He was givin' me—a cut on the stuff for—my part." He twisted his head to look at the thing Challoner had revealed by opening the closet door.

"Yeah," boasted Perrin, "that's—the real—Stratton. Beard—shaved off an'—hah, think I'd be satisfied with five grand? But he had the stuff hid. I had ta play along with him—till he had 'em uncovered. Then—"

"Sure, we get it," Milstead cut in. "You ever go by the name of Garvey?"

THE dying man's eyes glowed momentarily. His lips twisted into a defiant smirk.

Milstead said, "It doesn't matter, Perrin. Too bad you picked a fall guy with a bad pump. Heart pills and a pawn ticket got you. Wanted to get that watch, didn't you? With that dame's picture in it—those initials—it would—"

"Huh?" The murderer was going fast. His last action was an evil one. With the death pallor spreading over his twisted face, he assembled his re-

maining strength and struck clammy fingers toward a cop's gun. He died with his finger-tips an inch from the officer's hand.

A police surgeon looked at him. "Look here, close to the scalp. A silver plate. Maybe it had something to do with this guy's yen to kill."

Chip Milstead's lips tightened. "Maybe he got it in a crash!" He shot a glance at the newspaper men. "Listen," he snapped, "you never heard of this watch or the name Garvey, get it? He died as Trigger Perrin, nobody else! There are a lot of things just as well forgotten!"

The newspaper men nodded. Challoner made their eyes pop as he unfastened a money belt from the dead Perrin's waist.

They stared, mouths agape as the chief of the Chicago Bureau held up the emeralds.

"Boy," *Tribune* man exclaimed, "what a story! It's worth a guy's right leg any day."

G-man Milstead grinned with effort as the police surgeon applied splints to his injured leg.

"A hell of a place to exercise a sense of humor, isn't it chief?" he said to Challoner.

IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE TERROR FLAMES

An Amazing Inside Story of the Arson Racket



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JOSEPH C. FENNELLY

Founder of the National Youth Movement
DISCUSSES

CRIME'S PAYOFF

—with Startling Frankness!

MAJOR crime cannot exist without political protection. Our experience in the National Youth Movement has convinced us of this. The politician and the criminal need each other and use each other. War against lawlessness is a battle waged on politics.

Popular belief once held that crime was something out of the way—like a cloudburst or an earthquake. But this is not so. Crime is part and parcel of everyday experience. It is organized. No life escapes its blighting, corrosive touch. Criminals strut unchallenged through our marts and meeting places—and flourish unmolested in the hearts of our largest and best policed communities.

Crime is the biggest business in America!

During the prohibition era, crime organized itself on the same footing as any established commercial under-

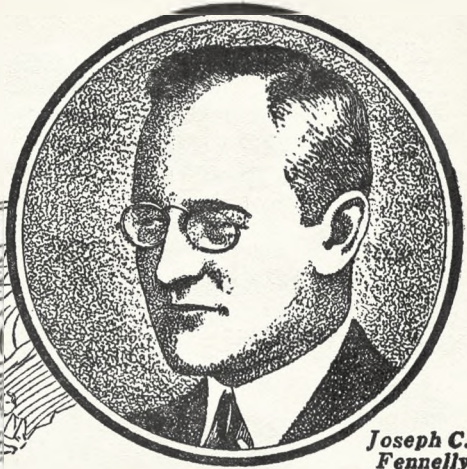


taking. The first star rum-runner who amassed a million dollars began it. He contacted others of his kind. Politicians provided his protection on a percentage basis. For the criminal's purpose, it is neither necessary nor true that every police official or office-holder can be bought. One official on a gangster's payroll any-

When Lawlessness Revels, You Pay the

**"Save democracy from crime,
from politics! That is the new
job for youth!"**

—Joseph C. Fennelly



**Joseph C.
Fennelly**

From a speech by Mr. Fennelly made before the 1936 New York Herald-Tribune Round Table Conference on "Crime and Youth Today," organized and directed by Mrs. Ogden Reid and Mrs. William Brown Meloney.

where along the line can, and does, undermine the honest work of all the law-enforcement agencies about him. Almost invariably crime can find that one needed ally. So the word "pay-off" has become a living part of our language; its function is part of our lives.

CRIME IN ONE CITY

In my own city we saw, in the year 1934, a municipal election become a travesty: precincts casting more votes than there were inhabitants; gunmen roving the streets intimidating voters; citizens afraid to vote their convictions; secrecy of the ballot a farce; the police force doing political duty for the machine; four citizens murdered at the polls; scores beaten and maimed.

It was understood in Kansas City that the law would not be enforced on that day, because the enforcement agencies were controlled by the machine seeking to perpetuate its power by a pretended election.

The politicians on that day used known criminals. Those criminals have since been paid and are still being paid for their political service with grants of immunity from the law.

Gambling is illegal in Missouri as in most states; yet one may gamble

Piper — But You Don't Call the Tune!

on a slot machine or pinball game at most cigar stores. Why? Because the gambling machines are owned by the members of a syndicate to whose political power the police owe their jobs.

HAND IN GLOVE WITH POLITICS

The law will be enforced against a naïve merchant who installs his own slot machine, but he can purchase immunity by putting in a syndicate machine at the expense of fifty percent of the profits. I am not making a point against gambling. I am stating the connection between crime and politics.

A gangster was caught red-handed in a murder on one of our boulevards. The mere motions of a trial ensued. Acquittal occurred almost as if scheduled.

WITNESSES TO MURDER

A half dozen witnesses saw with their own eyes a night club proprietor murder a citizen. Those witnesses went repeatedly to court during continuance after continuance. Fortunately for politics in Kansas City, the prosecuting attorney's office moved to a new courthouse. The records were "lost." "Case dismissed."

These are examples from Kansas

City. There are endless others from every city. Crime is part of the American political system.

THE ATTACK ON CRIME

The war on crime is first and foremost the attack on politics.

The task is no small one. The desire for untrammelled and clean-thinking political organization must be deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of youth, before they will dare to undertake so vast a work.

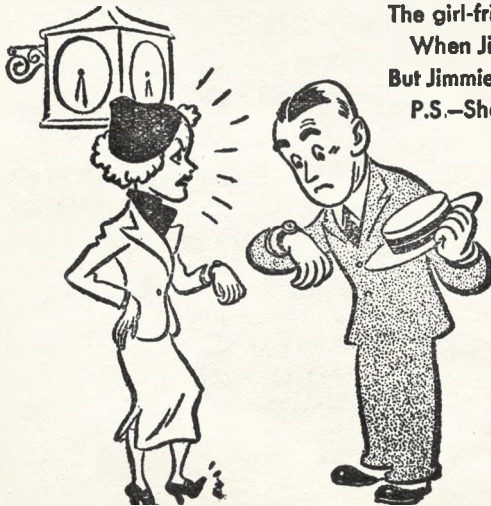
Truly, this is a new job for the young—to rid our government of the crime-spider that weaves its web in the unseen corners of our political structure.

AN UPHILL FIGHT

Confronted by this task, are we encouraged? Do we find a ready source of financial aid? Doesn't the general public give us the impression that it really doesn't care?

Youth, faced with a politically protected system of crime taking its daily toll of several millions of dollars, may well pause to measure its strength.

Youth finds politics a shortcut to power and enrichment, rather than a science of government. Is it any wonder if this ugly spectacle makes youth doubt its faith in democracy?



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has the authority of law and the power to tax. He can place upon our future an insupportable burden of debt.

THE EASY MONEY IDEAL

UNEASY VISTAS

We see that the ideal of the politician is easy money. Youth sees that, whether it be the congressman seeking only to keep his anatomy in contact with official mahogany, or the gangster seeking to keep himself "wired in" with the local chief of police, the ideal is the same—easy money.

We see ahead of use the staggering totals of that debt. Debt for wasted money; debts for misspent money; for relief that didn't relieve; for corrupt politics, for crime in politics and for politics in crime.

The young believe in the future. But they have begun to doubt. May their instinctive courage and hope fight a winning battle with the obstacles that lie before them.

This ideal infests the very heart and soul of democracy itself. Ideals of work, honesty, merit, are ignored. Youth looks in vain for the dignity of the government Youth can't find that public service is a high calling in America.

A CLARION CALL

DEMOCRACY, 1936

I have spent my time upon the practices that are desecrating democracy in our land. I have attacked the practices and not the institution itself. No more clarion call challenges young America than the call to save democracy—save it from crime, from politics. That is the new job for youth.

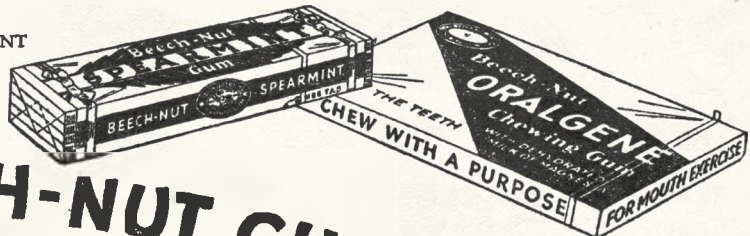
Such is democracy as we see it in the year 1936—inefficient, wasteful, scornful of high standards, committed to the conquest of easy money.

We must grasp again the fundamental virtues: sincerity, honesty and respect. Can we do it? Only the future which is ours will tell. We dare not look back—only forward to the rightful destiny of a truly democratic America.

But is it any wonder that crime flourishes? The racketeer with his gunmen and the politician with his stolen or purchased votes are going to the same place.

There is one difference. The racketeer has only his gun. The politician

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CONFESSIONAL



Gravesend's knee came up, smashed against the man's arm

**Catrone Was a Clever Crooked Lawyer—But He Had
Never Reckoned With the Muted Lips of a
Dead Man**

By COL. WILLIAM T. COWIN

Former Assistant United States Attorney

Author of "Doomsday Snatch," "Murder on Ice," etc.

THE elevator took Gravesend to the top floor of the luxurious hotel. He walked down the thickly carpeted corridor and stopped before a door bearing the legend *Pent-House No. One*.

He rapped on the panel with his left hand. His right hand dropped to his hip pocket. His fingers touched

the butt of his automatic. The door opened cautiously. A hard, saturnine face thrust itself through the door jamb.

"Well," said a gruff voice. "What do you want?"

"Lucio," said Gravesend. "Is he in?"

A pair of glassy, expressionless

From a Law-Officer's Case-Book

eyes regarded him appraisingly. "Maybe. Who are you? What do you want him for?"

Gravesend's left hand dropped into his vest pocket. At the same moment he thrust his shoulder hard against the door. He held out a gold badge as the portal was forced open and he entered the room.

"Federal m a n," he announced blandly. "And I want Lucio."

He was in a modernistically furnished room. Huge full length windows gave out on to a floral terrace. The man who had opened the door stood staring at him. On the other side of the room were two other men.

"Well," said Gravesend again. "Will you tell Lucio I want him or do I have to drag him out."

One of the thugs on the far side of the room stood up. Vague alarm was on his face.

"Lucio," he repeated with the air of a man unfamiliar with the name. "He ain't here."

Gravesend looked at him coolly and his fingers tightened on the automatic.

"You'll have to excuse me for not taking your word," he said, a tinge of mockery in his voice.

Swiftly he crossed the room. His hand turned the knob of a second door. Someone crossed the room behind him, laid a rough hand on his arm.

"Hey, you can't go in there."

Gravesend jerked his arm free. He thrust out a palm full into the other's face. The man reeled backward.

"The hell I can't," said Gravesend. He swung the door open and entered a bedroom.

It was empty. At its far end portières opened on to a hallway. Gravesend headed toward it, then swung around swiftly as he heard the charging feet behind him. He confronted the hard-faced trio from the other room. Rage was in their eyes, and the man nearest him was dragging something black and metallic from his pocket.

Gravesend's left smashed down hard upon the wrist that wielded the gun. His automatic moved from his hip with an incredible rapidity.

"Stay where you are," he rasped. "I'm looking for Lucio, and I'll find him if I have to rip this joint apart."

For a moment they stood frozen in their tracks, staring at him with bitter angry eyes. Then, of a sudden, the man whose wrist he had hit essayed to raise his gun again. Gravesend's automatic moved three inches.

"Don't," he said sharply. "Don't—"

He did not finish the sentence. The thug on his extreme right rushed in recklessly. His fist flailed through the air toward Gravesend's jaw. The G-man ducked, taking the blow on the side of his face. Once again he brought the automatic around. But now a talon-like hand gripped his wrist.

He heard a muttered curse. A voice grated in his ear: "I told you you couldn't go in there."

Desperately, Gravesend swung his right. It smashed hard up against flesh and bone. One of his assailants fell back. The gangster with the .38 swung its black barrel up in a line with Gravesend's heart.

GRAVESEND'S knee came up like a bomb. It smashed against the man's arm, knocking the gun upward. A bullet roared toward the ceiling, bored through the plaster. Gravesend swung the barrel of the automatic through the air. It crashed with terrific force against a skull. Another man went down.

The Federal man took a backward step. The muzzle of his weapon, wet with blood, covered the beaten trio once more.

"Now," he said again. "Perhaps you'll tell Lucio I want to see him."

For a moment none of them answered him. Then from the rear came a flat hard voice.

"Here's Lucio, copper. What do you want him for?"

Gravesend half turned, still keeping the trio covered. Standing beneath the portières that led to the half concealed hallway was a dark tall man of Latin countenance. His eyes were cold and clouded with a lazy arrogance.

"You guys," went on Lucio con-

temptuously. "What the hell's the idea of stopping this copper? Hell, they never get anything on me. Now what is it, flatfoot?"

He was cool and unperturbed. Gravesend reflected that he had a right to be. Lucio had a record of more than twenty arrests. Yet not a single conviction was marked up against him. The racketeer was confident, sure of himself.

Gravesend met the Italian's eye. Calmly he replaced his automatic in his pocket.

"Lucio," he said. "You're under arrest. Cramer wants to see you."

Lucio grinned.

"For what? I've paid my income tax. Paid it every year after I saw what happened to Capone and some of the boys."

"I know you did," said Gravesend grimly. "You're a smart guy, Lucio. But this time we've got you. Cramer's got photostats of your dope running books. He's got evidence that ties you to the vice game, too. Got it out of a safe deposit box in the Second National."

Lucio's expression changed at Gravesend's last words. A little flicker of fear crawled into his eyes. He had believed that no one but himself knew of that safety deposit box. He turned swiftly to the man who had admitted the Federal man to the apartment.

"Ricci," he snapped. "Get Catrone on the wire. Quick! Tell him what's happened."

"Well," said Gravesend, "I don't think Blackstone himself could help you this time, Lucio. Are you ready?"

He stood at the gangster's side. Once more his hand had dropped easily to his automatic.

"All right," Lucio nodded. "Come on. I'll be sprung in an hour."

"Don't bet on that," said Gravesend as he escorted the gang chief from the apartment.

Catrone, the mouthpiece, had already arrived at Cramer's office when Gravesend brought in the prisoner. Cramer, the special Federal Prosecutor smiled triumphantly at Gravesend as they came in.

A firm friendship had grown between these two, ever since Gravesend had been assigned from Washington to aid the lawyer in his investigations of the rackets of the Metropolis. And this, the apprehension of Lucio, was their greatest achievement.

Lucio was as clever as he was crooked. His dirty fingers were in every racketeering pie in the city. And thus far he had been immune. But now that Cramer had discovered the damning documents in the hidden safe deposit box, at last an ironclad case against the gangster was in the making.

CATRONE, the slipperiest shyster in town looked grave as he regarded his client. Lucio, too, had lost some of his confidence.

"Now about bail," Catrone said "Let's have a hearing immediately. We'll probably have to raise about ten thousand."

"Ten thousand?" Cramer laughed. "It'll be ten times that. This isn't one of those put-up jobs, Catrone. This is a castiron case. Your client faces about three hundred years in jail. I've got a closed case. You can't beat this one."

Lucio was pale. He and the Lawyer exchanged a swift glance. Then, as Catrone seemed lost in thought for a moment, Lucio looked up. He met Gravesend's steady eyes, and scowled.

Catrone rose. "All right," he said finally. "Let him stay in jail over night. I've got to think this thing over."

Cramer smiled. "That's all right with me," he said. "It'll take a lot of thinking to beat this case, Catrone. It'll probably take a confession that someone else was responsible for the whole thing. That poor old Lucio was framed."

There was mockery in Cramer's tone. But Catrone did not appear to hear it. He looked up swiftly and there was a gleam of intelligence in his crafty little eyes.

"Confession," he murmured as he walked from the room. "Hmm."

Cramer nodded toward Lucio. "Put

him in the Federal jail," he said. "We'll have him indicted in the morning."

"It'll be a pleasure," said Gravesend as he escorted the scowling gangster from the office.

It was noon, forty-eight hours later, that the Grand Jury indicted Luigi Lucio; and it was less than three hours after that when Gravesend received an excited telephone call from Cramer.

"Gravesend?" The Federal man sensed the anxiety in the lawyer's voice. "I'm at the offices of the National Newsreel Company. On Fifty-ninth Street. Come up here at once. Yes."

Gravesend left his hotel, wondering what his chief was doing at the offices of the motion picture concern. He taxied to the address in less than twenty minutes. Upon inquiring for Cramer he was escorted to a circular foyer.

There he found Cramer and Catrone before a door marked *Projection Room*. Catrone wore the familiar expression of the cat who has just swallowed the canary. Cramer paced the floor angrily. Catrone was speaking as Gravesend came up.

"So, Cramer, if you want to go to trial under these circumstances we are ready. But no matter what your evidence is, there's not a jury in the world that will convict."

Cramer stopped his pacing abruptly. He lifted his head and glared at Catrone.

"Catrone," he said bitterly. "Something's rotten about this. If the man wanted to talk, why didn't you put him on the stand? You've pulled another fast shyster trick and, by God, you'll be disbarred for it. You're more of a menace to society than men of Lucio's stripe."

"What's wrong?" put in Gravesend.

Catrone smiled an oily smile. "It seems that Mr. Cramer's about to lose a case," he said silkily. "He doesn't seem to like it."

"Damn you," snapped Cramer. "Get out of here. I'll deal with you later."

Catrone bowed and walked to the door. "I shall demand either the re-

lease of my client," he announced, "or an immediate trial."

He stalked triumphantly from their presence. Gravesend stared at Cramer in astonishment. In all his months of association with the attorney he had never before seen him lose his temper.

"What's the matter?" he repeated.

CRAMER laughed bitterly, took the G-man's arm. "Come in here and see."

He opened the projection room door. He put his head in the operator's booth at the end of the room.

"Would you please run that off again?"

"Sure," said the operator.

"Sit down," said Cramer. "Sit down and have a look at the damnedest newsreel shot you ever saw."

Bewildered, not having the slightest idea of what was in store for him, Gravesend took a seat at the lawyer's side. A moment later a beam of light traveled through the room, throwing a clear picture on the screen.

The scene was that of an ordinary office. Centered dead in the camera's focus there was a chair. The figure of a man walked across the screen and took his place in the chair. He was a little man, with fearful eyes, and his demeanor were the quivering robes of fear.

For a moment he sat still and silent in the chair. Then his lips twitched nervously, but no words came. He seemed to make a desperate effort to take hold of himself. Then in a thin dry voice he began to talk.

"My name," he began, "is Dennis Cleary. I am twenty-eight years old."

In a trembling voice he continued his recital of biographical matter. His nervous twining fingers were never still and from time to time his voice failed him. His lips quivered apprehensively and his voice was still.

Then of a sudden, Gravesend, bored with the recital, sat bolt upright in his chair. The little man was talking more idly now. And the words that he spoke burned themselves into Gravesend's brain. For the man on the screen was making a complete

confession of the crimes which Cramer intended to prove were committed by Lucio!

He discussed each count in precise detail. He admitted that he had been the ruling power in the dope and vice rackets of the city. He went further than that. He conceded that he had rented the safe deposit box. He claimed that he had hired it under Lucio's name to protect himself; that he had used the Italian's name on the records to divert suspicion from himself. In short, Dennis Cleary admitted that the crime was all his, that Lucio was an innocent angel whom he had attempted to frame.

The sound track died away and the light faded from the screen. Cramer turned to the Federal man.

"Well," he said bitterly. "And what do you think of that?"

"It's a phoney," said Gravesend. "An obvious phoney. So obvious, I don't see why you're worried."

"No? What will a jury say? No matter how complete my evidence is, this picture shown to a jury will queer everything."

"But that man's talking under coercion. It's apparent in his whole manner. Probably had a gun back of the camera. You can bring that out."

"Oh, no I can't. You forget that half a dozen men, the whole moving picture crew were witnesses. There was no gun at his head. If it was coercion it was more subtle than that.

"That newsreel confession will make an impression in any courtroom," Cramer explained irritably. "The only person I can cross-examine on it is Cleary himself. And Catrone is free to introduce it as part of the defense—that the charges against Lucio were committed by Cleary. Oh, I know such things as death-bed confessions bear scant credulity—but this is *not* a death-bed confession. A death-bed confession is one made by a man who knows he is about to die. But, in that damn newsreel, Cleary is obviously, certainly not about to die—and, so far as the jury can see, the confession is made of his own free will, under no threat of violence. And

furthermore, competent, disinterested witnesses—the movie men—will innocently testify in Lucio's favor."

GRAVESEND frowned. However Catrone had contrived this confession, he certainly had done a good job. True, as he had said, the confession was phoney as hell. But it would give a jury pause. Cramer had no rebuttal for such testimony. He had no witnesses to refute the confession, no matter how false it may have been.

"Can't we put this Cleary on the stand?" asked Gravesend.

"And if we do? He told the story before witnesses once. He'll do it again. No. The only thing to do is to prove that he talked under threat. That's the only way to break the case."

Gravesend nodded. "And that, I take it, is my job?"

Cramer shrugged.

"I guess it is. But I don't see what you can do. Catrone has outsmarted us again."

"Wait a minute. Who is this Cleary? What do you know about him?"

"Nothing much. He's been hanging on to the fringe of the underworld for years. Just a punk. Errand boy for Lucio. He lives with his kid brother I think. The kid's a cripple or something. Cleary is supposed to be devoted to him. That's all I know."

Gravesend rose.

"The police will know where I can find him?"

"Undoubtedly."

"All right," said Gravesend. "I'm going to work. I'll keep in touch with you."

Cramer nodded wearily. "Good luck," he said, but there was little hope in his tone.

Gravesend took a cab down to the lower East Side. A telephone call to the detective bureau had given him Dennis Cleary's address. As the cab rolled through the congested streets, the Federal man was rapt in thought.

Lucio was tough and everyone in the underworld was aware of that fact. But the matter of his being able to scare Cleary into taking a lifetime

rap for him was queer. No man would make that sacrifice for another—no matter how great his fear.

As things stood now it seemed that the only way Cramer could make the charges stick was to break down Cleary's confession in open court. Cramer was a savage cross examiner. It was quite possible he could riddle that confession. Cleary had been nervous enough before the motion picture camera. He would be twice as nervous in court.

Then a sudden thought struck hard into Gravesend's consciousness. *Would Cleary ever get to court?*

It was more than possible that Catrone had thought of this very circumstance. Catrone left few things to chance. He would fear to expose Cleary to Cramer's cross examination. And if Catrone decided this, Lucio's guns would see to it that the scared little Irishman never testified.

Gravesend leaned forward in the cab.

"Speed up," he snapped, "as fast as you can go."

The cab lurched forward. Gravesend drummed a nervous tattoo with his fingers on the window sill. He had been a fool not to consider the contingency of Cleary's murder before. Perhaps the man was already dead. Perhaps he had been slain immediately after he had made his amazing confession.

The cab came to a grinding halt before a desolate torment. The street was dark and narrow. The house itself was grim and forbidding.

Gravesend paid the driver and entered the foyer. Among the grimy bell plates he found the name of Cleary. He pressed the button. Then, without waiting for an answer, he tried the door. It was unlocked.

HE entered the house and mounted the stairs, slowly, alert. Then half way up the first flight, he galvanized into swift action. From above had come a sharp staccato cry of pain. Then—the crashing echo of a shot reverberated in his ears.

Gravesend jerked the automatic from his pocket. He raced up the

stairs, two steps at a time. The well was lighted by a single electric bulb at the top floor. But as Gravesend sped upward the light was abruptly extinguished.

He heard footsteps racing down the stairs toward him. He flattened himself against the wall at the third landing. The footfalls sounded nearer. Gravesend thrust his foot out. Something smashed against it. There was a sound of a body falling. An oath fell on his ears out of the darkness.

Gravesend's automatic was pointed in the direction whence the sound had come.

"You're covered," he said, straining his eyes through the darkness to the vague outlines of a human figure at his feet. "Get up, and keep your hands above your head."

There was a moment of awful silence. Then two things happened simultaneously.

A strong arm reached out, twined itself about Gravesend's leg. A shot sounded with hellish noise in that hallway. The bullet whined past the G-man's ear, as the arm jerked at his leg and pulled him to the floor. He pressed the trigger of his own weapon as he fell.

The flash of flame from the muzzle of the automatic showed him a cruel, white face glaring up at him. His bullet smashed into the ancient floor, raising a choking cloud of dust and splinters.

Clawing fingers seized Gravesend's right wrist. The Federal man jabbed into soft flesh with his left. Then he groped for the other's gun arm. He found it and held it away from him.

Neither man dared release the grip that held his adversary's gun away. Panting they fought a silent battle, chest to chest, while desperately striving to jerk their gun hands free.

Gravesend felt his shoulder against the other's face. Swiftly, he jerked it upward into the man's jaw. And in that instant, he felt the grip on his wrist relax. With a terrific wrench he snatched his hand free.

But before he could bring his weapon into play the figure beneath him rolled over in a last desperate at-

tempt to turn the tide of battle. Gravesend was flung to one side. As he crashed to the floor the other jerked loose.

A gun barrel swung above the G-man's head. It crashed thuddingly against his temple. The concussion lit his brain. Jagged pain ran through his temple. He dropped to the floor, his muscles temporarily inert.

Dimly, he heard the other scramble to his feet. A shoe trod agonizingly on his hand as the man reeled forward, resumed his racing journey down the stairs.

It was a full two minutes before Gravesend gathered his reeling senses together. He rose and leaned on the bannister. He slowly started in pursuit of the man who had slugged him, then as his brain began to function properly once more, he turned up the stairs again.

The fugitive was beyond capture now. He had too good a start to be followed. More important was it to discover the meaning of that shot, to see if it had corroborated the fear in Gravesend's heart.

Wiping the blood from his face, the G-man made his way up the last flight of stairs. He came to a halt before a door bearing Cleary's name. The door was ajar.

GRAVESEND pushed into the room. A single light burned in the corner, casting a faint glow on a bloody figure huddled in the center of the floor. Gravesend walked across the room, turned the corpse over. There was a jagged bullet hole in the man's chest. And the man was Dennis Cleary.

Gravesend sighed, and there was bitterness in that sigh. Too late he had thought of Cleary's danger. Now the man was dead. And his confession was recorded forever on a sound track. Cleary would never appear in a courtroom, but the chances were that his image there would acquit Lucio.

Gravesend suddenly froze to immobility. Slow footsteps were coming up the stairs. He glanced around the room. A pair of dirty curtains half

concealed a bed in a alcove to the left. Gun in hand the Federal man took up his position behind the curtains.

Gravesend's eyes were hard as he watched the door slowly open. A man entered the room. His back was turned as he closed the door. He had seen neither the huddled corpse on the floor or the armed G-man who stood on the threshold of the alcove.

Gravesend aimed his weapon at the man's back.

"Put up your hands," he said.

To his astonishment the newcomer paid no attention whatever to his command. The man turned around slowly, completely ignoring Gravesend. Then his gaze struck, riveted to the figure of Dennis Cleary lying on the floor.

An odd gurgling sob escaped his throat. He raced across the room and fell on his knees at the dead man's side. Gravesend was now standing behind him.

"Put up your hands," he said again. "Stand up."

For the second time the man paid not the slightest attention to Gravesend. He burst into a series of eerie sobs, burying his face in his hands. Gravesend bent over him. His hand seized the man's arm.

A startled white face turned to his. It was as if the newcomer was, for the first time, aware of the Federal man's presence. He looked from the gun to the corpse, and his lips contorted in a wild, ugly grimace.

Slowly he rose to his feet, snarling and emitting harsh, inarticulate words, like some frenzied animal.

"Who are you?" demanded Gravesend. "What are you doing here?"

For a long moment the other stared at him, hate and revulsion stamped indelibly on his countenance. It occurred suddenly to Gravesend that this man was perhaps a friend of Cleary's, that he held the G-man responsible for the corpse at their feet.

"Listen," he said soothingly. "I'm a Government man. I want to find out who did this. You needn't be afraid of me. Look."

Gravesend took his gold badge from his pocket and held it out in the palm

of his hand for the other to see. The queer man took a step forward and peered at the emblem. Then the expression on his face underwent a sudden metamorphosis.

He uttered another crazed inarticulate syllable. He snatched a pencil from his pocket and wrote rapidly on the back of an envelope. He handed the scrawl to Gravesend.

Gravesend read the message slowly: and as he did so half a dozen lines of thought started in his mind. Something clicked in his mental mechanism. Memory stirred. Then a light came and flooded his brain with an almost blinding illumination.

He seized the man by the arm.

"Come on," he roared. "Come with me. By God, the enemy is delivered into our hands."

The stranger stared at him with a bewildered, almost anile expression. Docilely he permitted Gravesend to lead him from the room.

ONCE out of the house Gravesend made two telephone calls. One was to the police, informing them that Cleary's body was in the house he had just quitted. The second was to Cramer.

"Listen," he said to the lawyer. "I don't care how late it is. I want you to use all your influence to have another showing of that confession newsreel. Yes, right away! I'll meet you there. If my figuring is right, you not only can send Lucio up for life but you can send his mouthpiece with him. Right! In twenty minutes."

It was long after midnight, and at least two citizens were sleeping the sound sleep of the unworried. Lucio, despite the fact that his bedroom was a cell in the Tombs, reposed peacefully, secure in the knowledge that once again his mouthpiece had accomplished the impossible and rescued him from the law. He knew, notwithstanding the circumstances of his present environment, he would be a free man on the morrow.

Catrone, if anything, was even more pleased with himself than was his client. A huge fee would be his reward for today's work. Lucio was not a niggardly client. Furthermore, Catrone was well aware of the fact that Cramer would like nothing better than having him disbarred. To have achieved a coup against the Federal Attorney was doubly sweet.

It was almost four o'clock in the morning when Catrone was aroused by the persistent ringing of the door bell. He awoke angrily to hear the footsteps of his servant descending the stairs.

Undoubtedly, he reflected, some drunken reveler ringing the wrong bell. He was about to turn over to sleep again when he heard voices outside. He realized that someone had entered the house.

Frowning he got out of bed, donned his robe and slippers. Probably his guests were some of his underworld clients. He would make short work of them.

Then he was aware of his bedroom door opening. An all too familiar voice

[Turn Page]

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was speaking to Catrone's butler.

"It's all right. We'll go in and get him ourselves." Two men crossed the threshold and Cramer's voice continued amiably: "Get dressed Catrone, we want you."

CATRONE stared up at them.

"What does this mean?" he demanded. "How dare you get me out of bed at this hour? How dare you—"

"I suppose we ought to tell you," said Gravesend blandly. "That anything you say will be used against you."

Catrone stared at him.

"Are you mad? Are you—"

"No," said Cramer. "On the other hand he's the sanest man I know. As a matter of fact, you're under arrest."

"Arrest? For what?"

"Kidnaping, accessory before, during, and after the fact of murder; also aiding, abetting and suborning perjury." Cramer was ticking off the counts on his fingers. "That's enough for a start, don't you think?"

"I still say you're crazy," snarled Catrone.

"Not so crazy," said Gravesend. "At least smart enough to solve the mystery of that Cleary confession."

Catrone looked around the room like an animal seeking egress from a trap. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"It was pretty," said Gravesend, "Very pretty. You and Lucio were well aware that the one thing in all the world young Cleary cared for was his kid brother. You know by using that as a weapon you could force him to do anything. So you snatched that kid, that helpless deaf and dumb mute that Cleary's been looking after ever since their parents died."

"It's a lie!" said Catrone. But the veracity of Gravesend's words was corroborated by his own expression.

"Yes," went on the G-man. "You snatched that deaf and dumb kid, held it over Cleary's head that unless he said what you wanted him to say, he'd never see the kid alive again. It worked. Cleary agreed. Then you called the newsreel people, offered them a novel scoop. That of hearing a criminal confess. They snapped up

the offer, at the same time providing you with witnesses that Cleary was under no physical compulsion to confess. Very pretty, Catrone. Very pretty. Then you killed Cleary so he'd never get to court, so that Cramer would never get a chance to drag the truth from him."

Catrone was desperate now. But he did not give up.

"Lies!" he snarled. "All lies! Conjecture, every word of it. Inadmissible as evidence in any court."

"Ah, wait, counselor," said Cramer affably. "You haven't heard it all yet."

"No," said Gravesend. "And I'm afraid it'll be an awful blow to your pride Catrone. That dumb kid from the slums—Cleary—outsmarted you."

"Him? How could he?"

"You must have noticed how nervous he was when they shot that newsreel? How fidgety in the chair? How at times he seemed to be unable to talk, couldn't find his voice? Well, that's natural enough for a man who's talking his way into the Pen for life. But after I discovered Cleary had a deaf mute for a brother, I put a different interpretation on it."

"Cleary hadn't lost his voice through sheer nervousness at all. He was talking all the time. And when he was silent he was talking more distinctly than ever, Catrone. Cleary was talking plainly. Telling everyone with wit enough to understand that he was being railroaded. That his brother was held under a death threat, that his confession was a lie to save the kid's life. Cleary was talking when he was silent, Catrone, talking lip language that a lip reader could understand, talking as he had always talked to his kid brother; talking—Catrone talking you right into a Federal penitentiary."

Catrone stared at him. Despair and defeat were stamped on his countenance. Cramer smiled happily.

"Come on," he said. "Bring him along, Gravesend."

Gravesend carried the hysterical shyster down the stairs. He was a limp, broken figure, certainly in no condition to walk.

Public Enemies

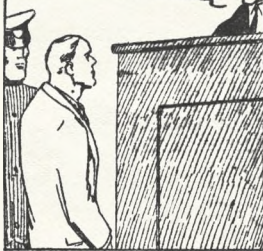


A Regular G-Men Feature

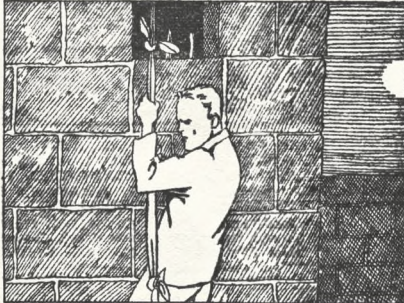
EDWARD WILHELM BENTZ WAS FOR OVER TWENTY FIVE YEARS ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST DANGEROUS BANK ROBBERS. HIS ANNUAL INTAKE AVERAGED ABOUT \$100,000. HE AVOIDED ALL PUBLICITY REGARDING CROOKS LIKE DILLINGER, PRETTY BOY FLOYD AND BABY FACE NELSON AS CHEAP THUGS. ARMED FOR HIS EX-PLOTS, BENTZ ESCAPED ALL SHOOTINGS. HIS WEAPONS WERE USED FOR INTIMIDATION, ONLY. HE WAS A COLLECTOR OF RARE BOOKS AND OLD COINS, DRESSED PERFECTLY AND MOVED ONLY IN THE BEST CIRCLES. TALL, WITH A FRANK, OPEN COUNTENANCE, HE APPEARED TO BE A RESPECTABLE AND WEALTHY BUSINESS MAN... HIS FRIENDS NEVER SUSPECTED HIS OCCUPATION.

AS A YOUTH IN TACOMA, WASH. BENTZ ATTENDED GRADE AND HIGH SCHOOL. IN HIS EARLY TEENS HE WAS CAUGHT BY LOCAL OFFICERS AFTER A SERIES OF PETTY THEFTS.

I SENTENCE YOU, EDWARD BENTZ, TO EIGHTEEN MONTHS IN THE STATE TRAINING SCHOOL AT CHEHALIS, WASHINGTON.



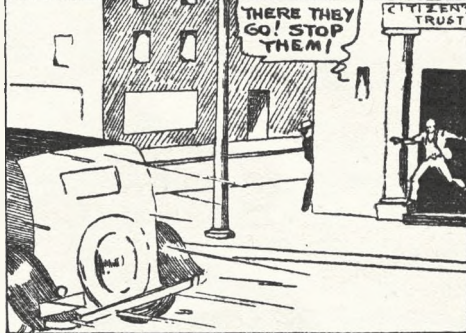
EARLY IN HIS CAREER HE WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE BAR OF JUSTICE FOURTEEN TIMES. THE AGGREGATE OF HIS SENTENCES FOR VARIOUS OFFENSES TOTALLED 34 YEARS, OF WHICH HE SERVED ONLY SEVEN. HE EITHER FORFEITED BOND, TALKED HIS WAY OUT OR WAS PAROLED. TWICE HE ESCAPED BY BREAKING JAIL.



AFTER HIS LAST BRUSH WITH THE LAW, BENTZ DECIDED TO BECOME A BANK ROBBER. HE JOINED UP WITH A GANG OF MID-WESTERN BANK ROBBERS WHO TAUGHT HIM THEIR METHODS OF NIGHT ROBBERY AND THE WAY TO DYNAMITE A SAFE OR VAULT.



BUY TIMES CHANGED. BENTZ TEAMED UP WITH EDDIE DOLL AND JAMES RIPLEY, KNOWN AS THE GOLD DUST TWINS, WHO HAD INVENTED THE GETAWAY CHARIOT, AND HAD ORIGINATED THE MODERN DAYLIGHT BANK ROBBERY WITH ESCAPE IN FAST MOTOR CARS.



BUT GRADUALLY AS THE FEDERALS AND LOCAL OFFICERS ROUNDED UP HIS PALS, EDDIE BENTZ SAW THEIR MISTAKES AND DECIDED TO GO ON HIS OWN. HE RECOGNIZED THE DANGER OF THE LOCAL "FINGER MAN". BENTZ, HIMSELF, WOULD GO TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY, GET OUT THE FILES OF THE LOCAL NEWS PAPER... READ THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE BANK HE INTENDED TO ROB AND THUS LEARN HOW MUCH LOST AWAITED HIM.



THEN HE WOULD SALLY INTO THE BANK HE HAD "FINGERED". OFTEN DRESSED AS A FARMER IN STRAW HAT AND OVERALLS, AND SCOOP UP THE MONEY HE KNEW WAS THERE.



BENTZ BECAME FAMOUS AMONG THE UNDER-WORLD. ROBBERS CAME TO HIM AS AN ADVISER AND HE PLOTTED THEIR HOLDUPS. BY TRAVELING IN THE PROPER CIRCLES, BENTZ LEARNED HOW TO GET RID OF "HOT" BONDS

CERTAINLY, I'LL PLAN THE JOB FOR YOU BOYS. YOU GET THE CASH -- BUT I GET ALL THE BONDS AND SECURITIES!

THAT'S OKAY, EDDIE -- WE'RE AFRAID TO HANDLE THAT STUFF!



BUT EDDIE BENTZ HAD GREAT RESPECT FOR THE G-MEN. HE MADE A STUDY OF THE FEDERAL LAWS AND COMMITTED ONLY THOSE CRIMES THAT FELL WITHIN STATE JURISDICTION

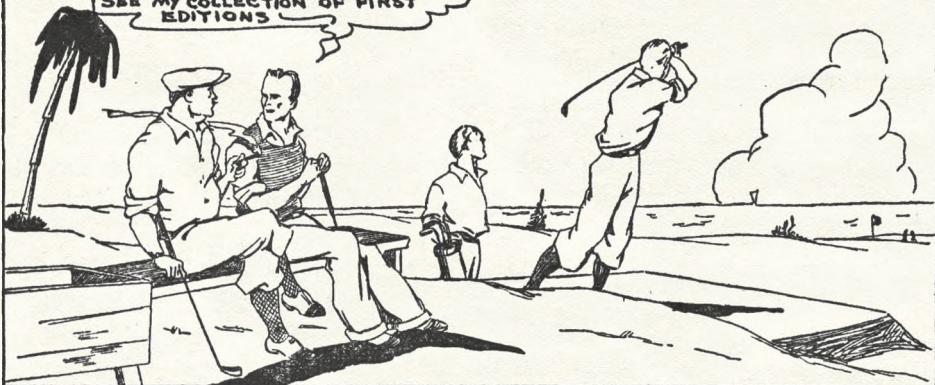
YOU AND I ARE THROUGH, IGNORAMUS. THE G-MEN ARE AFTER YOU. STICK TO STATE CRIME -- AND YOU WON'T BE CAUGHT!

GEE, EDDIE, I DIDN'T KNOW...



BETWEEN HIS FORAYS IN CRIME, BENTZ LIVED IN EXCLUSIVE APARTMENTS AND HOTELS AND STAYED AT EXPENSIVE PLEASURE RESORTS. HE WAS NEVER SUSPECTED AMONG THESE WEALTHY PEOPLE

I NEVER LIKE TO TALK SHOP ON A VACATION, MR. WARREN. COME UP TO MY ROOM AFTER THE GAME AND SEE MY COLLECTION OF FIRST EDITIONS



IN 1930, BENTZ LED A GANG INTO THE LINCOLN NATIONAL BANK AND TRUST CO., AT LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, AND MADE AWAY WITH MORE THAN A MILLION DOLLARS IN CASH, BONDS AND COMMERCIAL PAPER. THIS FORCED THE BANK'S LIQUIDATION

DON'T MAKE A MOVE, GENTLEMEN, OR I'LL SHOOT TO KILL!

OKAY, EDDIE, THE CAR'S READY!



BUT LIKE ALL CRIMINALS, EDDIE HAD TO HAVE A MOLL. IN CHICAGO HE MET A SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL. THEY WERE MARRIED. SHE WANTED A HOME -- EDDIE AGREED. HE GOT OUT A MAP

THERE'S ONLY ONE SECTION OF THE COUNTRY, VERNA, WHERE I'VE NEVER COMMITTED A CRIME AND NEVER ASSOCIATED WITH CRIMINALS. THAT'S NEW ENGLAND -- WE'LL LIVE THERE.



SO BENTZ AND HIS YOUNG WIFE OCCUPIED AN EXPENSIVE HOME IN PORTLAND, MAINE. HERE BENTZ WENT INTO BUSINESS, FORMING THE ULTRA PRODUCTS COMPANY. THIS BUSINESS WAS MAINLY THE DISTRIBUTION OF SMALL TOYS. BENTZ, HIMSELF, TOOK TO THE ROAD SELLING.

THAT WOULD BE A CINCH TO CRACK IF I WERE STILL IN THE BANKING BUSINESS!



BUT BUSINESS WAS BAD ... TO KEEP THE ULTRA PRODUCTS COMPANY FROM GOING BROKE, BENTZ NEEDED NEW CAPITAL. ONE MORNING, BENTZ AND TWO COMPANIONS STALKED INTO THE CALEDONIA NATIONAL BANK AT DANVILLE, VERMONT, TERRORIZED THE EMPLOYEES WITH A DISPLAY OF WEAPONS, AND ESCAPED WITH \$23,000 IN CASH AND BONDS.



G-MEN WERE PUT ON THE CASE. BANK EMPLOYEES DESCRIBED ONE OF THE ROBBERS AS BIG AND FARMERISH IN APPEARANCE. FROM THE SINGLE FINGERPRINT FILE AGENTS SELECTED ALL PHOTOGRAPHS OF 'BIG, FARMERISH LOOKING' CRIMINALS AND LAID THEM BEFORE THE BANK EMPLOYEES.

THAT'S THE FELLOW!

YES, THAT'S RIGHT!

EDDIE BENTZ!



EDDIE BENTZ HAD SLIPPED. HE HAD OVERLOOKED THE NEW FEDERAL LAW GIVING TO G-MEN THE TASK OF CAPTURING THOSE WHO ROBBED A NATIONAL BANK. WITH HIS WIFE, HE FLED TO ALBANY, N.Y., WHERE HE LOOKED UP SOME FARMER ASSOCIATES, SHORT OF FUNDS, AS HE HAD TAKEN BONDS FOR HIS SHARE OF LOOT. HE ASKED TO BE TAKEN IN ON A JOB.

KEEP AWAY FROM US, YOU'VE GOT FEDERAL HEAT ON YOU. LOOK AT THAT --- YOUR PICTURE IN A BOSTON NEWSPAPER! YOU'D BETTER MOVE ON!



SO EDDIE MOVED ON TO NEW YORK CITY. FOR MONTHS HE AND HIS WIFE MOVED FROM ONE APARTMENT TO ANOTHER. FINALLY SHE LEFT HIM, NOT KNOWN AMONG THE NEW YORK UNDERWORLD, AND PRACTICALLY BROKE, HIS LIVING QUARTERS BECAME MORE AND MORE SHABBY. THEN HE FOUND A HIDEOUT WITH A BURGLAR IN BROOKLYN. TRAILING HIM FROM PLACE TO PLACE, THE G-MEN FINALLY CAUGHT HIM IN THIS SQUALID BROOKLYN APARTMENT.

COME ON OUT, EDDIE, WE'RE FEDERALS!

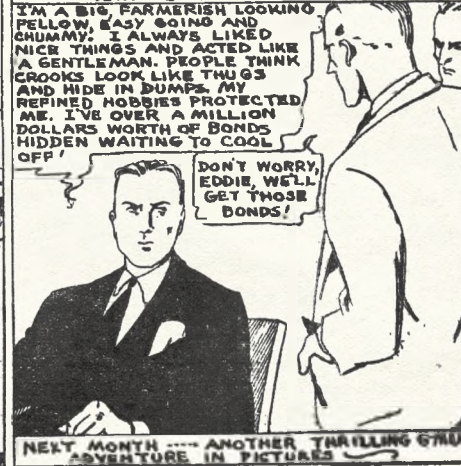
OKAY!



BENTZ WAS SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS IN A FEDERAL PENITENTIARY. HE TOLD HIS STORY TO THE G-MEN.

I'M A BIG FARMERISH LOOKING FELLOW, EASY GOING AND CHUMMY. I ALWAYS LIKED NICE THINGS AND ACTED LIKE A GENTLEMAN. PEOPLE THINK CROOKS LOOK LIKE THUGS AND HIDE IN DUMPS. MY REFINED HOBBIES PROTECTED ME. I'VE OVER A MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF BONDS HIDDEN WAITING TO COOL OFF!

DON'T WORRY, EDDIE, WE'LL GET THOSE BONDS!



NEXT MONTH --- ANOTHER THRILLING G-MEN ADVENTURE IN PICTURES

The Black Chamber

How to Solve Secret Ciphers Told by a
World Famous Cryptographer

By M. K. DIRIGO

CONTINUING on the subject of frequencies and LETTER CHARACTERISTICS, we present in this issue a chart analyzing all the 31,131 words in Webster's Universal Dictionary, arranged so as to show the following:

1. The total number of words beginning with each letter of the alphabet.
2. Frequencies of initial letters.
3. Frequencies of second letters under each index.
4. Frequencies of second letters in general.
5. Frequencies of second letters doubled under each index.
6. Frequencies of second letters doubled in general.
7. Total number of words showing occurrence and frequency of each letter's appearance in second position.
8. Total number of words showing occurrence and frequency of each doubled letter appearing in second position.

Note: The numbers enclosed in small squares indicate in each case the highest frequency letter in each respective group. The upper numbers

refer to the frequency of doubled letters.

The vertical alphabet at the left of the chart shows the initial letters of words, and the horizontal alphabet at the top the second letters.

THE LETTER "A"

Analyzing the initial letter A (for experiment), you find that there are 2,426 words beginning with this letter; that it is followed in second position by N, most frequently (338 times); next by R (214 times); next by B (156 times), etc.; and least frequently by J (only once). You will find that it is followed by doubled letters: most frequently by CC (94 times); next by PP (85 times), etc., and least frequently by MM (5 times).

Next, following letter A down the first vertical column, you find that there are 4,643 words having A as a second letter; that it appears as a second letter most frequently after C (680 times); next, after M (605 times); next, after B (482 times), etc.

Notice, for example, that the letter Q in its 185 appearances as an initial is followed **IN EVERY CASE** by U. Also, that it appears in second position 90 times and is preceded initially only by three letters of

CRYPTOGRAM No. 19

UFYR GQ GR UFGAF MAASPQ RUGAC GL Y
KMKCLR MLAC GL Y KGLSRC YLB LMR MLAC GL
Y RFMSQYLB WCYPQ?

This one is a "hanger," but when you have solved it, try your luck in answering the question.

CRYPTOGRAM No. 20

KU VJGTG C YQTF KP VJG *GPINKUJ NCPIWCIG
VJCV EQPVCKPU CNN UKZ XQYGNU?

Another easy one, but the answer to this one will unquestionably be more difficult!

TRY THESE TWO NEW ONES—AND MAIL IN YOUR SOLUTION

the alphabet; most frequently by S (41 times); next by E (36 times), and lastly by A (13 times).

acquired in this department! It seems they are not satisfied with simply solving cryptograms. They want the dual presentations. First you solve the crypt, then answer the conundrum, or puzzle.

SOLUTIONS

The cryptograms presented in the last few issues have made quite a hit with the readers. The response has been tremendous. What a brainy bunch of fans we have

Well, it just proves the statement that the well-known George C. Lamb made to our editor when he said, referring to the

[Turn Page]

†	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	TOTALS
A		10 158	94 128	79 141	47	35 22	19 47	6	23	1	2	68 183	5 126	26 338	3	85 15	28 214	76 180	30 60	123	36	24	24	7	9	2,426	
B	2 482			1	35 270			1	258			207			37 222			23 1278		276		233			3	2,083	
C	680				150			346	72			159							256		156			47	6	3,944	
D	133				12 681			2	500			4 166			122				122		2		4	19	1	1,738	
E	48	8 40	8	1	6	34 21	2 14		14	7	1	7 126	2 115	2 221	65	36	7 41	5 49	31	23	55	2	286	17		1,308	
F	222				13 163				262	2		243			17 248			177			114				3	1,984	
G	215				1 130			2	37			184		15	16 102			278			104				26	1,077	
H	283				10 206				185						18 105						113				164	744	
I	2	2	33	45			1	17				34 4	58 230	17 903	10	1		15 24	3 30	16		5		1	2	1,440	
J	52				1 38				19						62						72					244	
K	27				10 34			5	55			2		42	15			8	1		4			2		206	
L	244				7 152				212			3			16 173						91				20	730	
M	602				8 123				243						21 289	1					170				35	1,665	
N	118				10 143				79						5 128						53				4	542	
O	13	102	21 27	5 12	3	21 3	5	2	8		1	34 17	17	19	8	22 62		3 120	7 37	4 5	40	35	7	17	6	8	676
P	447				10 434	1		125	175			175			8 273				636	20	4	173			32	2,565	
Q																					185					185	
R	122				8 282			46	112						15 151						108				2	1,352	
S	352	249	1		14 381			220	185	61	126	52	47	9 204	315	41				221	322	1	86	90	2	3,354	
T	234				12 245			215	123						12 186			403	4		102		92	36		1,526	
U		3					3	1				1	19	13	3 174	27		25	18	5 16	3		1			653	
V	117				1 162				184						64 73				1		19				1	597	
W	163				13 78			117	116						28 73			51			5				4	649	
X	7				9				1										1						17	35	
Y	34		2		25				4			2			21	2					3	13				106	
Z	9				23				20						23 16						4				17	115	
TOTALS	4,693	2,83	5,25	2,47	4,628	1,17	1,07	1,029	2,844	12	66	1,428	604	2,170	4,082	667	90	2,711	379	708	2,384	134	153	334	488	28	31,141

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS IN THIS CHART

- In 1st line: initial letters, arranged in descending frequency order.
- " 2nd " : highest frequency second letters to above initials.
- " 3rd " : highest frequency second letters "doubled" to above initials.
- " 4th " : highest frequency second letters in general.

SUMMARY

1. SCPABDMTFIREGHLUWV[N]KQZYX
2. TORNAEARINEXRAARNAIEUIUEAY
3. EOECOEEOEMOFOOOPTOEEO—O—
4. EAQIRUNLHTPMCYSXBDWVFGQZJ

Can you guess, for example, without referring to the chart, which letter follows initial E most frequently? Just make a good guess, then look at the chart and get a surprise!

Note: * Vertical—Initial letters of words.

† Horizontal—second initial letters of words.

followers of this department: "You have a right smart bunch of cryptographers among your readers." Mr. Lamb got his impression from those of our readers who joined THE AMERICAN CRYPTOGRAM ASSOCIATION through a notice which we had in a previous issue. All we can say is that we are proud of our fans. Good luck to you all.

CRYPTOGRAM No. 17 DECODED

What words may be pronounced quicker and shorter by adding syllables to them?
The answer: QUICK and SHORT.

CRYPTOGRAM No. 18 DECODED

What is that which no man wishes to have yet no man would wish to lose?
The answer: A BALD HEAD!

PATTERN WORDS

In the next column is completed the index 13 of the four-letter words. In the next issue we will continue with index 14.

We hope you are saving these pattern word lists. The complete list will be invaluable.

In this issue, for example, there are a number of pattern words. In Cryptogram No. 19 there are three:

uFgaF, mAAspq, KmKclr.

and four in Cryptogram No. 20:

vjGtG, nCplwClg, cNN, eqPvckPu.

The first instalment of Pattern Words appeared in the August issue.

**LIST OF FOUR-LETTER
PATTERN WORDS**

INDEX 13 (Continued)

MAMo	OBOb	POPt	TATu	WAWL
MEMo	OBOK	PUPA	TETH	WoWF
MiMA	OBOL	PUPE	TiTe	—
MiME	ODON	PUPs	TiTL	ZiZA
MiMP	ODOR	PUPT	TiTs	—
MOmE	OHON	—	ToTA	—
MUMd	OKOW	—	ToTE	—
MUMp	OLOt	RARE	ToTs	—
—	OTOE	—	—	—
—	OXOs	—	—	—
NaNE	—	SASH	ULUA	—
NANT	PAPE	SESi	ULUs	—
NiNA	PAPs	SiSt	URUP	—
NiNE	PAPT	SoSt	URUs	—
NiNo	PEPO	SUSA	UTUM	—
NONa	PEPs	SUSi	—	—
NONE	PIPA	SUSY	—	—
NONu	PIPE	—	ViVA	—
NOnd	PIPs	—	ViVE	—
NUNE	PIPt	TATE	ViVo	—
NUnc	PIPY	TATH	—	—
NUNs	POPE	TATL	—	—
—	POPs	TATs	—	—

LIST OF CORRECT SOLVERS

CRYPTOGRAMS NUMBERS SIX AND SEVEN
Jaul D. Hough, 529 Center St., Braddock, Penna.

CRYPTOGRAMS NUMBERS TEN AND ELEVEN

Albert De Lucien, Jr., c/o C. N. Grubb, Route 4, Martinsburg, West Va.

CRYPTOGRAMS NUMBERS TWELVE AND THIRTEEN

John Farmer, Elmonte, Calif.; Thelma Skiver, R. F. D. No. 1, Box 516, Holland, Ohio.

CRYPTOGRAM NUMBER THIRTEEN

Ernest Bean, Route No. 8, Box 187-A, Yakima, Washington.

CRYPTOGRAM NUMBER FOURTEEN

E. Robert Haag, 1337 McHenry St., Louisville, Kentucky; F. A. Amentrano, U.S.S. Holland, Enroute San Diego, California; Isabelle Murdock, 6233 Newell Avenue, Chicago, Ill.; Robert P. Biggs, 87 Chamberlin St., Memphis, Tenn.; Martin J. Moore, 335 Rutland Rd., Brooklyn, N. Y.

James Watts, 7 Pleasant St., Houlton, Maine; Mrs. G. W. Hunt, 51 W. Dearborn, St. Paul, Minn.; Bill Clark, 104 West Thayer, Bismarck, N. Dak.; Joe H. Ross, 6 Vachon Court, So. Berwick, Maine, John Chovanec, 224 E. 74th St., N. Y. C.; P. S. MacArthur, 11802 Ada Ave., Cleveland, Ohio.

CRYPTOGRAMS NUMBERS FIFTEEN AND SIXTEEN

Bill Clark, 104 West Thayer, Bismarck, North Dakota; Henry E. Langen, 642 Greenwood Avenue, Box 571, Maple Shade, N. J.; Robert R. Miloch, 411 Michigan Ave., Detroit, Mich.; Richard M. Smith, P. O. Box 612, Tallahassee, Florida; Herschel McClung, 218 Brooks Street, Charleston, W. Va.; Alex Pripnar, 7 Salisbury St., New Bedford, Mass.

P. S. MacArthur, 11802 Ada Ave., Cleveland, Ohio; Walter Holan, 525 E. 92nd St., Chicago, Ill.; Ethel M. Masters, Portland, Maine; Joe H. Ross, No. 6 Vachon Court, So. Berwick, Me.; John Chovanec, 224 E. 74th Street, New York City; Mrs. G. W. Hunt, 51 W. Dearborn, St. Paul, Minn.; Isabelle M. Murdock, 6233 Newell Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Arthur Tebbe, 602 W. Michigan St., Sidney, Ohio; James Watts, 7 Pleasant St., Houlton, Maine; Adam Janis, 268 East 10th St., N. Y. C.; A. J. Case, Staples, Minn.; Norine Barth, Pierron, Ill.; F. A. Amentrano, U.S.S. Holland, Honolulu; Namron, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Y. M. Reyna, St. Sgt. U. S. Army, Syracuse, N. Y.; John Hannon, Newburgh, N. Y.; Ralph B. McEwen, 11 Ocean St., New Bedford, Mass.; Robert P. Biggs, 67 Chamberlin St., Memphis, Tenn.

In the Next Issue of G-MEN

Dan Fowler at His Fighting Best in
THE PAROLE RACKET

A Sensational Complete Book-Length Novel

POETIC JUSTICE



Wong saw him tied to a chair

A Mysterious Telegram Riddle Sends Richard Wong, Shrewd Oriental Sleuth, on a Trail of Sinister Peril

By LEE FREDERICKS

Author of "Murder Flies Low," "Last Shakedown," etc.

RICHARD WONG, Treasury Agent for the United States Secret Service, stood in front of his chief, Charles Durbano, holding a telegraph blank. Wong's narrow almond eyes were almost concealed by their lids as he speculated over the message he had just read:

**IN FLANDERS FIELDS THE POP-
PIES GROW
BENEATH THE CROSSES ROW
ON ROW**

Slowly he put the message down on his chief's desk. "Quite a poetic idea," he observed thoughtfully. "But why should this anonymous person think I'd be interested in that bit of verse written to immortalize the world conflict?"

Durbano took the vile smelling cigar from his mouth and looked the message over, his brows frowning with thought. "Know anything about Jim Lun?" he asked abruptly.

Wong nodded, getting out one of his perfumed atrocities called Oriental cigarettes and lighting it. "So far he has been an ideal citizen. His laundry has faithfully turned out work that is highly satisfactory to his customers. And he has been making a steady, though not large, income—sufficient to take care of his needs. If only—he hadn't fallen in love."

"What has his falling in love to do with our business? He's not a rival of yours, is he?" Durbano asked.

Wong smiled. "No, but Pearl Po is a dangerous woman for any man to love. On several occasions she has caused honorable men of the hatchet to forsake the weapon of their ancestors and resort to the new death of lead. I understand she has returned from China and is hiding somewhere in Newark."

DURBANO'S mouth dropped open. "Bill Cass had that dame deported two years ago. How did she get back?"

"That is what I intend to find out," Wong said grimly. "There is much beating of breasts in Chinatown about missing relatives who are supposed to have been smuggled into this country—and I am out to catch the smuggler."

"You are out to catch Pearl Po," Durbano corrected. "Smuggling is up to the Immigration Department and the Coast Guard."

Wong smiled as he reached in his pocket. He brought out a small earthenware jar with a porcelain top and put it on his chief's desk. "It contains one ounce of the best Yunnan opium," he said enigmatically. "It came from Jim Lun's this morning. Sing Pu Yee obtained it for me as a favor. I took it from him in Wo Hop's Palace of Guilded Chance."

He extinguished one cigarette and took another from his pocket, lighted it and puffed. "Does the smuggling of narcotics come under the Treasury Department?"

Durbano grunted as he ripped the top off the jar and looked at its contents. It was opium beyond a doubt. Durbano had seen too much of it dur-

ing his career not to recognize the insidious stuff. "Get three of the boys," he said shortly. "We'll raid Lun's joint this afternoon."

"He who sets out to slay dragons does not stop to kill mice on his way," Wong translated an old Chinese proverb into English. "To raid Jim Lun's would but warn the real criminals. Lun is a tool in their hands . . . only one of their many tools."

Durbano saw the sense of that. "Okay," he agreed, "but I'm putting a man on Jim Lun to see that he doesn't go too far in distributing the stuff. You can work the other end to your heart's content. But if you are going on this case, there is one thing I want you to remember—*get Pearl Po!*"

Wong lit another cigarette from the butt of the last and rose to his feet. "I've a little work to do first. If you want me you'll find me in Room Z. In the meantime will you have a clerk bring me a Who's Who and all the Greater New York telephone books?" He walked out the door, leaving a cloud of smoke behind.

Routine investigation is tedious work but Wong was playing a hunch full force. First he went through the telephone books starting with Manhattan and finishing with Queens. The array of Flanders was appalling. Wong began to think he had picked a job that would make Hercules' cleaning of the Augean stables look insignificant.

The clerk arrived with the Who's Who. Hastily Wong thumbed through it. Suddenly he paused, his finger resting half-way down a page in the F's.

"Flanders, H. C.—" he murmured. Then his narrowed eyes flashed as he followed the genealogical data. "Flanders, A. J., Col.," he read almost aloud, "settled North Shore Long Island 1841, prominent in support of Northern cause during Civil War, opened tannery business at 18 Varick St., N. Y. C., 1872, died 1887—" But Wong had all he wanted. He jumped up from the desk and hurried to the elevator.

Fifteen minutes later found him in

the Recorder of Deeds office in downtown New York. "I want your Long Island portfolio, year of 1841," he told the clerk.

The man looked up at the clock on the wall. "It's fifteen minutes to four now," he said. "We close at four, and it will take us more than fifteen minutes to get that portfolio out of the vaults. Can you come back tomorrow?"

Wong reached in his top vest pocket and brought out his treasury shield. "It is better that you get the portfolio now," he said quietly. "And also you will stay with me while I trace a deed through."

The clerk took a look at the badge, his eyes widened. "All right, sir," his tone changed. "I'll have the deeds up in three minutes." Wong smiled as the young man dove below. From fifteen minutes he had cut it to three—that was the power of the United States.

The clerk came back even sooner than he had promised. In his arms he lugged a huge portfolio. He placed it on a desk and then rubbernecked while Wong went through the patent grants one after another.

WHEN Wong found the one he wanted his eyes narrowed speculatively. As it was long past closing time he ignored the "No Smoking" sign and lit a cigarette. Puffing steadily he read the description of the Flanders property—located right on a bay leading to the Atlantic Ocean and near enough a present yacht club so that the comings and goings of any small vessel wouldn't excite the suspicions of the Coast Guard. The setting seemed perfect.

With the clerk's assistance Wong traced the deeds through the years.

The place had been sold many times since Colonel Flanders' death. Wong toiled until he came to the last deed on the property—to a Mr. Robert Lamoreux, who gave his business as landscape gardener. Then he concluded his search with a satisfied smile, thanked the goggle-eyed clerk and left.

He hopped into a taxi at the curb and gave the driver his destination—Pennsylvania Station. As the driver jockeyed into position at the lower level motor entrance Wong noticed the couple in the taxi ahead. He ducked his head after his first glimpse of them, and watched them get out.

One of the objects of his interest was a heavily veiled woman and the other a Frenchman. Wong glanced up as they paid their fare and moved slowly to the steps. On the side of the Frenchman's face was a long scar that ran from his temple down to where a fierce moustache cut it off suddenly.

From posters in the Secret Service office—posters that had arrived from the *Sûreté* in Paris—Wong knew at once that the man was Jean Lamar, recently written up in French newspapers as the Butcher. The woman, though her veil made identification uncertain, Wong would swear was Pearl Po. They were heavily laden with baggage.

Ignoring his driver's impatience, Wong deliberately struggled with his fare money while he watched the couple hand their baggage over to a red cap. He saw them disappear down the stairs that led to the Long Island Railroad before he found the right change and a tip for his cabby.

Then, as if someone had put a firecracker under him, he bounded down the steps to keep them in sight. If once he lost sight of them, they might use any of the many entrances to the tracks which were arranged in a regular labyrinth. He followed, keeping far enough in back of them to make sure they wouldn't notice him. Smiling grimly, he thought of what his boss would say if he saw him following two of the most wanted people in the United States.

Most likely, if he ever heard of it, he would explode because Wong hadn't arrested them at first chance. But Wong had other ideas which he considered worth the risk of their escape. He had a lead on the narcotic smugglers now, and he wasn't going to give it up by revealing his hand too soon. [Turn Page]

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In Flanders Fields the Poppies grow—that much of it was clear now, but there was still the other rhyming line that puzzled Wong. As his quarry left the ticket window Wong followed them through the gate, down the steps. He stood in the vestibule of a coach to the rear of the one they had picked out, watching to see that they didn't change their minds and get off before the train started.

At each station stop Wong watched closely to see if his passengers got off. But he had a pretty good idea of where they were going and would have been more than surprised to see them leave the train. He managed to snatch several restful smokes to the annoyance of the man beside him.

A close scrutiny proved Wong to be right in his surmise. The Frenchman and veiled woman were on their way to the end of the line. When the train pulled into Port Washington, Wong was one of the last to leave his seat. If the strange couple in the car ahead were suspicious of being followed, they might look over the first of the passengers off the train but they would be very unlikely to stay until the last straggler had left.

Through the window he saw them cross the platform and enter a car waiting at the curb. For once Wong realized he had made a mistake. The car was under way before he reached the platform. A moment later it had disappeared from sight in the traffic of Port Washington's main street.

Quickly he dashed out to a taxi stand and jumped into a cab. But when the cab swung out into the traffic of Main Street the mysterious sedan was nowhere in sight, and Wong knew that pursuit was useless.

THE cab was jogging past one of the many real estate offices when Wong leaned forward. "I'll get out here," he said. The cabbie jammed on his brakes and pulled to the curb. "Thanks," Wong told the puzzled driver as he paid him and walked into the real estate office.

The girl inside looked over his Oriental features distrustfully. Wong was used to that. The usual judg-

ment that he was a laundry man or restaurant owner had helped more than hindered him in his work. He came straight to his point now.

Politely he told the girl, "I am interested in cemeteries," and then seeing her surprise he gave a logical reason. "I am a college student here in this country and am preparing a treatise on rare old cemeteries."

The girl unfroze. "Oh," she said, "I'm afraid you won't find many here now. The whole island used to be full of private cemeteries that belonged to owners of estates, but now they have been removed by property developments or the new owners. I can only think of two, one on the Bevins' estate and the other on the old Flanders' property."

For a swift second triumph flitted over Wong's face and then his features became immobile as ever. "Thank you," he bowed. "How do I get to the Flanders' estate?"

The girl looked doubtful. "I would advise you to look at the one on the Bevins' place," she said after a pause. "We were the agents in the recent sale of the Flanders' property and its purchaser is most peculiar. He won't even let the tradesmen inside the high wall he has built. He's a landscape gardener and is experimenting with some rare plants. I'm sure you wouldn't be able to get in," she floundered.

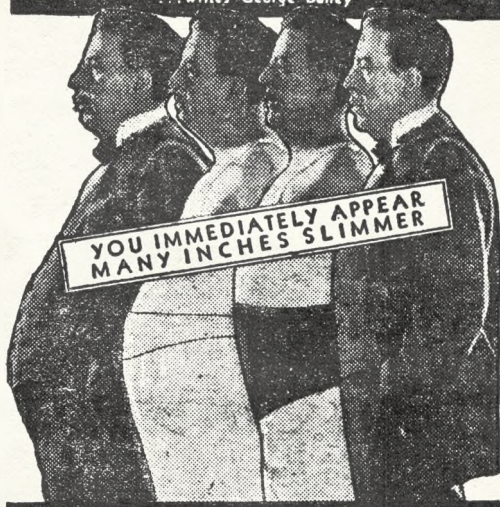
Wong didn't care to contradict her but he thought differently as he made hasty thanks and headed out the door.

Beneath the Crosses Row on Row—his interpretation seemed to be working out. He looked up at the sky. It was clouding over, promising rain. He walked down the main street and sighted a diner. He had lots of time, now that his plans were definitely made. He decided to eat and stroll around until dark.

The night came sooner than he expected. His meal was hardly finished when the proprietor of the diner switched on the lights. Wong lit a cigarette and leisurely paid his bill. He would walk out to the Flanders' estate, and in that time the night

(Continued on page 120)

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(Continued from page 119)

would bring shadows to help them. One after the other he lit cigarettes as his eager, untiring feet consumed miles of the dark countryside.

A high stone wall came into sight. Casually Wong took in every detail of its construction—about six feet high and set along the top with jagged glass. The glass reassured Wong. Evidently they were relying on it to repel intruders. The wall was easy if there was no electrical alarm on top of it.

He followed along the wall to the water's edge and gazed for a moment out over the bay. He could clearly picture the easy course of a smuggler among the winking lights of the numerous pleasure craft in the harbor.

Pearl Po was very clever.

The wall turned abruptly and continued along the water. He dismissed the idea of trying to enter along the water wall. If there were guards posted, they would concentrate along that side. His best bet was the stretch within sight of the high grilled iron gate and the gatekeeper's lodge that he had passed on the road. Slowly he made his way back along the wall.

There was a light in the gatekeeper's cottage. For a moment Wong toyed with the notion of heading back to town for reinforcements to raid the place. But Pearl would have taken precautions against a raid, and the chances were that they would find nothing—not even Pearl and her companion. His best chance was to go it alone. They wouldn't be expecting that.

When Wong was within a hundred feet of the gate he slipped out of his overcoat, formed it into a bundle and expertly tossed it into the air so that it landed neatly folded atop the wall. Once there it formed a cushion so that he could hoist himself on top of the wall without lacerating his hands and knees on the glass.

His next step wasn't so easy. He couldn't pull himself up. He'd have to leap, be careful that his hands land on the coat. He stepped back several paces and made the leap as neatly as any gymnast on exhibition.

Even through the thick coat he could feel the cruel glass, and had reason to be glad his *jiu-jitsu* practice had kept him in good training which had enabled him to make the top of the wall without being cut severely.

Silently he waited on the wall ready to jump in either direction if he was discovered, but no sound disturbed him. He tensed his muscles and jumped down lightly as a cat inside the wall.

Something snapped sharply by his feet. Wong froze, startled, and looked down. His almond eyes widened as he saw what had nearly been his misfortune. In landing his foot had struck a small decayed tree branch which had tumbled into and set off a huge bear trap. He looked down at the sullen steel jaws gleaming in the slight light and breathed a long sigh of relief.

If there was one trap, there would be more, Wong reasoned logically. A broken tree branch had served him once, it would again. He reached into the shrubbery and quietly severed a limb from one of the small trees.

Cautiously placing the stick in front of him he tested every inch of ground before he took a step forward. He had gone about five feet when another snap caught the stick. Wong stopped and spread the jaws of a second trap apart. He felt a sticky substance on the teeth and shivered.

There was no chance that anyone caught in this trap would cry out and obtain aid from the road. The teeth that tore into his flesh were, no doubt, coated with a deadly poison and the victim wouldn't live long enough to know what had happened to him.

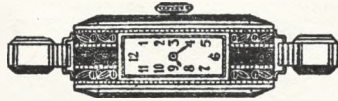
BIT by bit Wong worked his way toward a light that was gleaming. That should be the main house, a roomy structure once built for a man of wealth and ease, now the headquarters for the most despicable type of criminal.

When he drew near he saw that the light was coming from a window and that the occupants of the room hadn't

(Continued on page 122)

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(Continued from page 121)
thought it necessary to draw the shade.

Wong clung to his shelter until he had looked the place over carefully and felt satisfied that there was no guard in sight. Then he crossed the short stretch of lawn until he was beside the lighted window. Slowly, so that the motion wouldn't attract the attention of those within, he maneuvered himself into a position from which he could look into the room.

There were three people there—the Butcher, Lamar, who must be Robert Lamoreux; the woman who had worn the veil, and Jim Lun.

Wong had never had such a good look at Pearl Po's face. His eyes widened as he gazed on her. An Eurasian, she had inherited the best features of both races. From her photographs and the several glimpses he had had of her three years before, as well as from gossip, he knew she was rated as a "good looker." But he wasn't prepared for the vision of loveliness that met his gaze.

She was a gorgeous creature—even according to Wong's strict standards, and if you didn't mind a cruel mouth.

Voices came through the window as plainly as though the glass wasn't there. Wong saw that Lun's feet were bound to his chair and that the two were intent on questioning him.

"You forced us into this position," the woman's voice accused. Wong listened to its vibrant quality, a sound like the purr of a tigress, and knew her for the calculating adventuress that she was. As he peered into the room he solemnly wished he could light one of his cigarettes.

Beads of terror stood out on Jim Lun's forehead. "But most gracious one," his voice was puzzled and pleading. "I—

The Frenchman broke in. "Come, come, Pearl," he soothed. "We cannot waste time on this stupid species of camel. Put him with the others. We must go to work."

Pearl was not calmed. Her voice rose. "Jean, you speak of work like you were working for the government instead of against it. Don't you see

that this"—she indicated the trembling Lun—"is a menace, the weak link in a perfect chain—and you talk of work."

She turned back on Lun. "Do you know that we have a very special death for those who doublecross us?"

As Lun started to answer Wong was forced to jump back into the bushes. A car had stopped by the gates and the gatekeeper was opening them for it.

From his cover of darkness and shadows he watched the car as it rolled up the driveway and stopped by the front door. Wong could see the people inside the room had been warned of its approach. He saw them untie Lun and move with him out of the room. Then three forms came out the back door and ducked into the bushes.

Wong had a chance to get one fleeting look at the occupants of the car. Police—he saw the uniforms plainly, then, he, too, ducked into the bushes heading in the direction the three forms had taken.

He sensed rather than heard their progress. Quietly he sneaked along behind them. He was nearing the solution of the whole business, he felt sure.

SUDDENLY he emerged into a little clearing. Ahead he made out several slabs, the old graves of the Flanders' family. He peered about, trying to find the three figures he had been following. Now, strangely, there was no sign of them.

For a moment he was bewildered—and then the last line of the famous rhyme reoccurred to him—*Beneath the Crosses Row on Row!* There was his solution! While the police rounded up those in the house he would find where the criminals had hidden.

The slabs over the graves were flat long stones, about the size of a coffin, with a headstone at the top. Wong started inspecting the headstones. One after another he passed them up until he found one that seemed loose. He stooped to look closer. Under the family name he could discern a coat

of arms. He gave a start. It was two sets of crusade crosses that divided a wheat and lance emblem. This was the spot.

First he tried to lift the heavy slab. The opium should be concealed beneath. But the stone resisted his efforts. Sweating from his unsuccessful exertion, he leaned on the headstone. He nearly fell over with astonishment. The headstone moved under him like a toggle switch and the heavy slab was lifting automatically, silently, on well greased hinges.

It was spooky to watch, but Wong had other things on his mind than the supernatural. He drew his revolver and went around to the front of the stone. When there was room for a man to walk in, Wong saw a flight of stone steps leading downward and lost no time in ascending them.

As he reached the bottom he saw with horror that the heavy stone lid was closing. He turned to dash back but the slab came down much faster than it went up. All he got was a bumped head for his efforts.

The crypt was dark as pitch. Wong reached in his vest pocket and brought out his fountain pen flashlight. He directed its beam over the walls to see if there was any switch he could throw to open the slab again.

At the foot of the steps he saw a heavy iron door studded with nail heads. Gun in hand, prepared for any emergency, he slowly advanced toward the door. As he stepped on the third from the bottom step, the iron door swung slowly open. Wong could literally feel his hair creeping along the back of his scalp.

"You may as well come in," a woman's voice jeered at him. "You can't get out, except through the gates of heaven."

Wong threw his light into the darkness ahead. His finger itched to pull the gun trigger. Nothing but empty darkness greeted his ray of light. He heard a harsh grating laugh. The whole business seemed unreal.

"Come in," the voice ordered, "and drop that gun where you are."

Wong knew when he was up against

(Continued on page 124)

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(Continued from page 123)

it. Obliging he let the gun slip from his hand.

"That's better," the voice purred. "Now advance, hands in air."

As Wong advanced someone went over his clothing, searching for concealed weapons. They took his handcuffs, his treasury shield and his police whistle. Then the door closed behind him and a light snapped on.

Pearl Po was standing by his side, gun in hand, and the Frenchman was pocketing Wong's possessions. Now Wong could see how his enemies had remained concealed from his flashlight's beam. They had watched him through what appeared to be solid nail studs in the door but in reality were mesh covered peepholes.

"So our innocent duckling, Jim Lun, led you to us?" Pearl asked. "Now that you are here it will be more than difficult for you to return to your comrades above ground."

Wong's heart missed a beat. So they thought he was part of the contingent of police. He would further the idea. "Are you such fools as to think my companions would abandon me?" he asked. "You will never leave this hole except as prisoners."

The Frenchman's face twisted into a sneer. "I thought G-men were supposed to have brains," he leered. "You don't think we built this place without another entrance?"

Wong's face remained impassive. "Confucius, wisest of philosophers, once observed that a rodent, being the most cowardly of animals, provided for itself a secret place to run to. I imagine you are no exception."

LAMOREUX went livid at the implication. "For that insult, I kill," he said raising his gun.

Pearl laughed, a grating, jarring noise. "Not yet," she motioned Lamoreux to halt. "This man knows a few things I want to find out."

Wong looked at her and smiled. "You should know your own people well enough to realize that you can get nothing from them. Death is part of my business. Go ahead, shoot."

(Continued on page 126)

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10c AT ALL STANDS

(Continued from page 124)

Lamoreux was eager to comply but Pearl stopped him again. She flung at Wong tauntingly, "And I suppose failure is also part of your business. You've got a price and we're prepared to meet it, if you give us the assistance we need. If not"—she raised her hands expressively—"there are ways to make even you talk, and maybe we will use them."

She opened the door to another passage. "Through here," she said imperiously.

Wong didn't move until Lamoreux shoved a gun into his side. Then he followed Pearl Po through the doorway and along the passage, the Frenchman, gun in hand, behind him. Wong was surprised at the length of the passage. From what he could figure he judged it ran directly back toward the house. They were probably using an old part of the cellar walled off for the storehouse of their drugs.

When they entered the large brick room he saw part of the wall was new, while the rest was so old it was covered with a green mold. Then he knew his surmise was right. His second glance startled him. At least twenty-five Chinese were chained to the wall like slaves of olden times. Pearl saw his glance.

"A side issue of our business," she said casually. "With your help we could deliver them in town twice as fast and with no trouble—all except Lun here, that is." Wong saw the hapless one who had been love-lorn. "We get one thousand dollars each for bringing them to this country. Three hundred would be your share."

"An interesting proposition," Wong murmured. "But I'm afraid I can't accept."

"I think you will," she contradicted. "And I have an idea to fix it up so you won't doublecross us, either." She turned to Lamoreux. "Break out three decks," she said. "We're going to initiate the boy friend here."

Wong recoiled. They were going to feed him cocaine. He knew the power the drug soon acquired over anyone and the hell they would go through to get a supply once they con-

tracted the habit. In desperation his eyes roved around the room looking for a way out.

Pearl held a gun on him—to try an attack would be worse than foolhardy. His downcast gaze rested on the remains of a meal pushed to one side of the table. "Do you mind if I sit down?" he asked.

Pearl shrugged. "Suit yourself," she said as she took the chair opposite him.

Lamoreux was busy with the drug powder. He brought it to the table on little papers. As he put them down, a telephone buzzed. Quickly Lamoreux picked up the receiver. Wong's hand moved so far that it couldn't be seen in the semi-gloom. Pearl gave him a suspicious glance but his movement seemed harmless enough.

She cocked her ear to overhear what was coming over the phone. "The police say they saw someone come in over the wall?" he questioned. "You haven't let them search the grounds?" Evidently he was reassured, then annoyed. "They say they won't leave until they see the owner," he informed Pearl, and then turned on Wong.

"So you came alone after all—over the wall," he sneered. "We can hold you here safely for a month if we wanted to. The cops have got to see the owner, though, 'cause Mugsy won't let them search the place. I've got to go up."

He reached out to the table and picked up one of the papers of cocaine. "I'm going to need this," he said. He brought the paper up to his nose, cupped his hands.

WONG held to the edge of his chair, his body on a hair's balance. Lamoreux inhaled sharply. For the barest second he seemed stricken with apoplexy, then he staggered. Pearl in her excitement dropped her gun to spring to his aid. But Wong was quicker than a flash. He seized the fallen weapon and smacked it against Lamoreux's head. It cut his first *achoo* in half. He dropped like an ox felled in the slaughter house.

(Concluded on page 128)

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FREE SAMPLE

(Concluded from page 127)

Pearl screamed as he fell. Then turned on Wong, a clawing, spitting tigress. Wong grabbed for her scratching hands, protecting his eyes with one arm. He pushed her off but she made a second onslaught.

"You have killed him," she screamed and hurled herself on him.

Wong twisted her arm in a *jiu-jitsu* grip this time. As he increased his pressure the fight left Pearl Po. He stooped, keeping the gun on the now pity-seeking Pearl, and removed his handcuffs from Lamoreux's pocket. As he locked Pearl's wrists to the Frenchman's, Lamoreux was stirring.

Wong jerked the still choking Lamoreux to his feet. "The switch!" Wong asked. Sobbing Pearl pointed to the wall. Wong threw the switch and the doors opened. Slowly Wong

prodded his prisoners ahead of him back to the house.

A policeman answered his whistle at the door. His eyes opened wide as he saw Wong and his two companions. Briefly Wong explained what had happened and where the underground passage could be found. The sergeant lost no time in taking charge of the prisoners and posting a guard at the passage entrance while Wong put in a call to headquarters.

"And who sent that telegram?" Durbano asked after Wong had related the details of the capture of Lamoreux and Pearl Po.

"Our friend, Jim Lun," Wong replied, grinning. "It seems that he did something of which Pearl or Lamoreux didn't approve and received a kind invitation to visit this joint, presumably for the purpose of a little business chat with the big shots of the gang.

"Well," Wong went on, "he sensed a herring in the stew and thought he'd better play safe. He couldn't risk coming out with his suspicions, neither could he take the chance of signing his name to anything addressed to Federal authorities. So he put the situation in a riddle and prayed to Confucius that all would be well. He was very fortunate—"

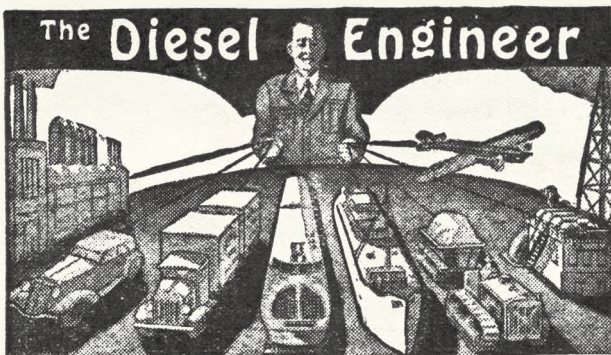
As he finished his talk with Durbano, the sergeant hailed him. "The dame says for me to call a doctor," he announced. "Says you poisoned that guy."

Wong smiled. "Not poison," he corrected. "Pepper. They had their cocaine on the table where were the remains of a meal. I merely dumped a little pepper in the cocaine. He'll be all right in about an hour."

The sergeant grinned. "Swell stuff," he said. "We got the guy that said he was butler and another who calls himself a chauffeur. What beats me is how you traced 'em here."

"Easy," Wong assured him. "It was all in the knowledge of poetry. Confucius has said that poetry is the essence of life."

"Maybe so," the sergeant agreed. "But I never heard of it putting anyone in the can before."



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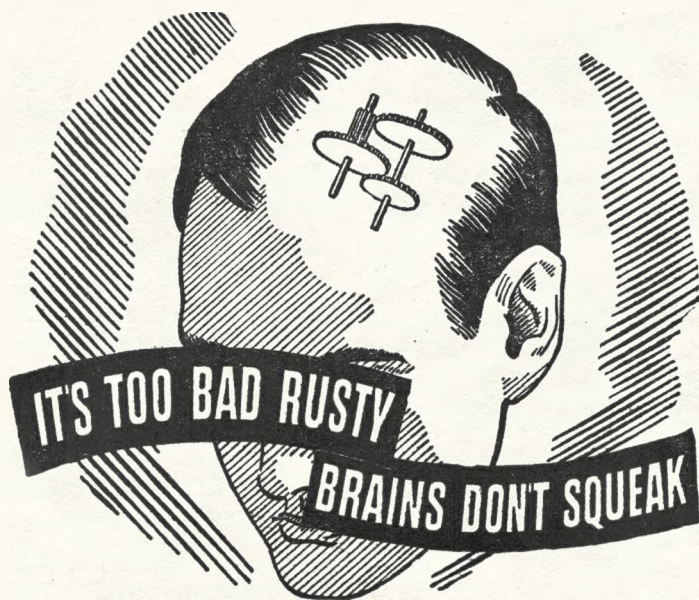
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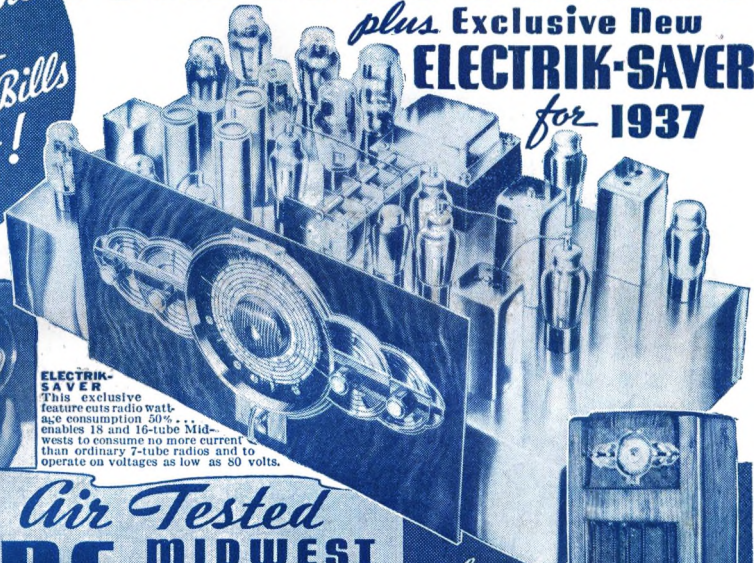
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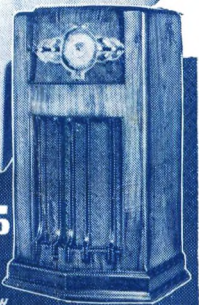
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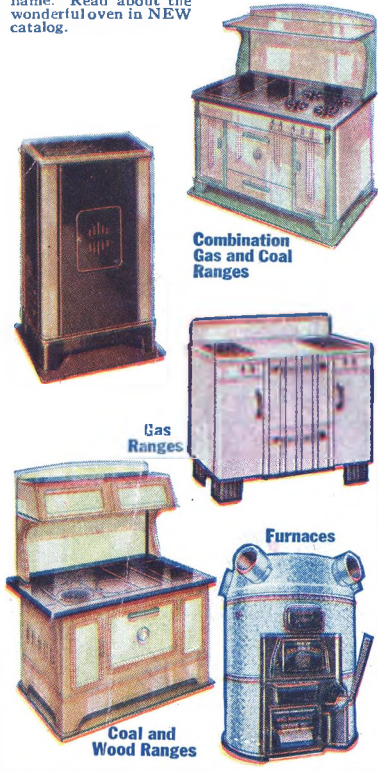
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