GOLD BULLETS

by Charles G. Booth

SYNOPSIS: Two intriguing words—"gold bullets"—angrily shouted by Andrew Ogden a few hours before he was murdered, draw closer into the tangled skein the legendary figure of Alex Peterson and his famous revolvers loaded with golden slugs. John Peebles to find the murdered and to clear Ogden's son, Jerry, who is engaged to Peebles' niece, of all suspicion. Peebles ponders the engrossing coincidences, Nathan Hyde's secrecy as he sold the Peterson revolver to Peebles, Ogden's murder, his two queer visitors, the "woman in black" and Furie, Jerry's flight and now Ogden's excited words "gold bullets."

Chapter 5

WHERE IS JERRY?

Deacon greeted me briefly and went slowly towards the figure at the desk. He stood looking down at it, his square face white and his sea-blue eyes humid with emotion.

The dagger was carefully removed, and Dr. Oakley began his examination. Deacon turned to me.

"Well, John, what about it?"

I had been dreading the question. I detailed my purchase of the revolver and Hyde's secrecy about it, the telephone call, how I had found Drew, Mrs. Moffit's message and what Hubbard had told me. Henry listened with eyes like points of ice.

"Did you see any one as you came over, John?"

Henry could not possibly know that I had seen Jerry or any one else, yet I felt as if he were looking into my mind. My voice was steady as I replied:

"I saw no one."

Stimson, the gardener, stood at the door with Hubbard. Stimson's eyes were riveted upon me, and there was in them something I

didn't like. Stimson has been with Ogden's less than a year, and I haven't seen much of him. For some obscure reason he irritates me. I was suddenly vaguely conscious of disaster. It came upon me overwhelmingly that I should prevent Stimson from speaking, and I blurted out:

"Hubbard had better tell you his story, Henry."

Hubbard proceeded to enlarge upon what I had already told Deacon.

Deacon turned to me. "Hubbard tells us Ogden shouted the two words 'gold bullets.' The bullets in this Peterson revolver you bought are gold. Do you suspect a connection?"

"I don't know any more than you do, Henry."

Dr. Oakley spoke just then. "He's been dead an hour or so, Deacon." Deacon looked at his watch.

"Ten-twenty-five," he muttered.

"What time did you find him, John?"

"Nine-thirty-three."

The dull thud, thud, of the front door knocker reverberated through the hall. Coming like that, it startled all of us. Hubbard hurried into the hall.

The front door opened. Hubbard's voice, deferential and explanatory came to us. Another's broke in upon it, hard and rasping in tone and familiar to me. My eyes sprang to Deacon's in astonishment. I saw him stiffen; a look of irritation crossed his honest face. I love a contest, and in spite of my astonishment and heaviness of heart I half smiled. But what had brought Luther MacNair here?

"Good evening, gentlemen."

MacNair had preceded Hubbard into the room, and he stood looking at us with that cold, disconcerting stare which was to become so familiar to me in the next few days.

A year or two my junior, he had retired from professional life six months ago and taken up residence in San Felipe. He brought with him a handsome reputation as a man-tracker. Ruthless in his methods and diabolically clever, he was said to be less a personality than a machine.

"I called to see Ogden," MacNair went on. "This man," nodding at Hubbard, "tells me he has been murdered."

Deacon indicated the figure on the couch. "Pretty late for calling, isn't it."

"I am here at Ogden's invitation. When I got home a few minutes ago I found this card under my door." MacNair gave Deacon one of Andrew Ogden's personal cards.

On the back of the card Andrew had written:

> Mr. MacNair: You were out when I called. There is a matter I wish to discuss with you. Will you drop in as soon as you return. This is important.
>
> A.O.

"Have you any idea what Ogden wanted?" Deacon asked.

"Specially, no."

"You mean he may have wanted to see you in a professional way?"

"Yes. But I retired six months ago."

Henry looked at the body. "I am sorry you weren't home," he grieved. "Andrew might have been with us now."

"You'll get your man easily enough."

"Ah! the solution is already apparent to you," Henry flashed at him.

"Dear, dear! I was trying my hand at a compliment."

"You were never known for your compliments, MacNair."

"I suppose not. It's a grim business, this man-catching. But I'm through with it. A man with 23 hangings and 14 electrocutions to his credit has no business being interested in anybody's murder but his own. You'll find me at 2341 Magnolia if you want me. Good night, Deacon. Regards to Polyandria, Peebles."

Deacon went to the glass-topped cabinet behind the desk and lifted the lid.

"That dagger is kept here, isn't it, Hubbard?"

"As a rule, sir."

"It belongs to Mr. Jerry, doesn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is Mr. Jerry, Hubbard?"

"I—I believe he is out, sir."

"Where has he gone?"

"I don't know, sir. As I told you, I heard Mr. Jerry and Mr. Ogden talking in the library a few minutes after nine. That is all I know, sir."

Again there was silence. I managed to get myself in hand. Deacon was thinking. Presently he said:

"I suppose it was you who left Mr. Ogden's card at Mr. MacNair's?"

"No, sir. I left it there."

Stimson, the gardener, had answered the last question, his eyes challenging mine.

"You are the gardener, aren't you?" Deacon asked.

"Uh-huh."

"What time did Mr. Ogden give you this card?"

"Around six, I guess. That Furie feller had just gone down the drive. Mr. Ogden called me, gave me the card and told me where to leave it. There was nobody home, so I shoved it under the door."

Deacon nodded.

"Your rooms are over the garage, aren't they?"

"Uh-huh."

"Is Mr. Jerry's car in the garage?"

"No it ain't. But it was there round nine o'clock—just before I dropped in on the Hubbards!"

"Did you see or hear the car go?"

"Nope." Stimson leered at me, then he leaned confidently towards Deacon. "I'd like a word with you alone, Chief."

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What will Stimson say to Deacon? Did he see Jerry running from the house? Tommorrow's chapter will tell.

MacNair stood looking at us with his cold, disconcerting stare.

Foxes in the Alps

Quite a number of silver foxes have been sent from Canada to ranches in the Italian Alps, where it is stated that ranching conditions are ideal, and where the fox farming industry is having quite a steady growth.

Speaking of Investments

If more people believed their bankers and fewer believed their barbers there would be less trouble over the family savings.—American Magazine.

And Rheumatism

Wisdom comes with age, they say—but, also, too often, so does stiffness!

THE GARDEN

IMPROVING THE PEA CROP

Selecting the best variety of pea to grow in the home garden is approaching an arithmetical basis. If two varieties of peas of equal quality produce the same number of pods but one variety produces one more pea to the pod than the other, the answer to the problem is obvious. This is a claim made for some of the newer varieties of peas. They are claimed to be improvements on older sorts of known top-notch quality because they average one pea to a pod more than the older sorts. One of these is Laxton's Progress, a pea of English origin. Its predecessor was Laxtonian, famous as producing the same huge pods as the brush pea, Gradus, on dwarf vines and of the highest quality. Now comes Laxton's Progress claimed as being as fine a quality as Laxtonian but giving one more pea to the pod. In picking a mess of peas the extra pea to a pod would mean one or two more servings from one variety than the other.

This is the time to sow the main crop of peas. The dwarf peas have quite run away with the brush peas that used to be the mainstay of the older days because they are much less trouble to grow in that no supports need be given them. The dwarfest, such as the new "Eight Weeks," grow only 8 to 10 inches tall. The older American Wonder is a foot in length and Laxtonian about 18 inches. The taller of the dwarf class are benefited by a length of 18-inch chicken wire to take them off the ground.

Do not sow peas so thickly that they touch in the rows. The old style of pea sowing always showered in the seed thickly. You will get no more peas in the same space from this thick sowing than if you space the seeds at least an inch apart and you can get many more peas from a packet because the seed will go much farther if given the proper distance apart in the seed row. Sow in double rows, with two inches between the peas in the row.

To get a maximum pea crop it is an excellent plan to sow a balanced commercial fertilizer in the rows when the peas are sown. The pea delights in a light, cool soil with plenty of moisture. The advent of hot weather marks the end of the pea crop. Sow peas at once.

Workmen are tearing down the first steel skyscraper erected in Chicago. Must have been a pretty tough building.

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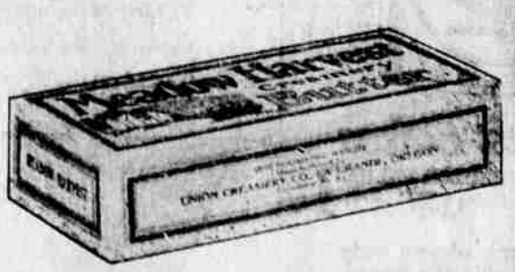

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31x5.25 Balloon	10.55	11.95
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