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# GOLD BULLETS

*by Charles G. Booth*

**SYNOPSIS: Peebles describes his experiences of the night to Deacon, omitting mention of the two silent figures seated at the poker table. Deacon questions Furie without result but purloins the lens which Furie always carried. Deacon eliminates Furie as a murder suspect but theorizes that a quarrel over a new vein in the Ogden mine ended with Jerry Ogden stabbing his father. Peebles and Deacon enter the mine and find an immensely rich vein of gold-quartz.**

CHAPTER 26.

"Jerry"—And Another.

I think the discovery of no other form of wealth is comparable with that of virgin gold in its effect upon the human emotions. My brain seemed to have become a well of flame. A strange intoxication gave wings to my feet. And Deacon, who is seldom demonstrative, was similarly effected.

"Looks like the stuff we found in Ogden's desk," he muttered.

"The same," I said unsteadily.

"I had it assayed," he went on. "It ran $20,000 to the ton."

I whistled. "If there's any depth or breadth to the vein or if the hanging wall is good, it may run into millions. . . . Hello! what's this?"

We saw it at the same moment. A small, square, shining object, it stood in a niche just below the vein. My hand beat Deacon's to it.

"A silver snuff-box," he grunted. "It hasn't been here long by the look of it."

"It comes from one of the French Louis periods," I observed.

"Well, whose is it? You look as if you knew something."

"It elongs to Nathan Hyde, Henry," I said significantly.

"Hyde, Hyde," he muttered in perplexity. "It isn't like him to put a valuable down and forget it."

I chuckled. "He must have been deeply stirred. Taking snuff from his Louis snuff-box is a sort of a ceremony with Hyde."

Henry nodded reluctantly, pocketing the snuff-box. "Coming upon the vein was enough to make him forget it, eh? Well, he had already concluded he knew something about the mine.

His tone implied that there was nothing more to it than that, but I knew the snuff-box had given him something to think about, and I laughed to myself as we went on into the timbered passage. We had gone some distance in the direction of the original entrance when I stopped abruptly, clutching Deacon by the arm.

I went a little sick, for I have no stomach for the grewsome. I had almost tripped over the skeleton of a tall man. It lay face up, arms folded. A few rags clung to the bones, high-laced boots covered the feet and ankles, a stout leather belt encircled the waist. Undoubtedly the skeleton had lain there many years, but from the uneven distribution of dust on it I judged it had been disturbed recently.

Deacon looked at me gayly. "Who is it, John?"

I knew very well who it was, and so did he. Dropping to our knees, I gently ran my hands through the dust and gravel around and under the skeleton. I brought to light two bone buttons, four metal ones, a bit of candle, a two-inch wire nail and a stub of indelible pencil.

"Somebody else has been at him," Deacon muttered. "Furie probably."

"See this!" I ejaculated.

The fifth right rib of the skeleton was nicked and split in the region of the heart.

"Bullet, by the look of it," Deacon commented.

"Here's something else!" I cried suddenly.

My fingers rummaging below the surface dust beneath the skull had encountered a crackly substance. I drew it forth—a small newspaper, yellow and brittle with age. In spite of my care it split in two as I opened it and spread it on the floor of the tunnel. At the head of the front sheet was the legend:

TORRIDITY FIREBRAND
A Weekly Newspaper
Torridity, Skull Valley, Cal.
Monday, July 6th, 1896.

Items of local interest occupied the front page: Gun Fight Along Main. Another Holdup at Lundy's! Bad Medicine Closes Down. And so on.

Part of the top margin of the third page had been torn off. With it had gone the date line. We stared at the torn margin in silence, our hearts pounding in our ears. The curtain had lifted.

"This is where Furie got your pistol, John," Henry said at length.

"Yes. This is the pencil." I stared down at the remains below me. "'Jerry'—what were you to Andrew?" I looked up at Deacon. "I suppose this was Andrew's reason for keeping the mine closed," he said huskily. "It's a good thing you found the note in that cartridge, John."

"You mean you'd have assumed Andrew had killed this man himself, 30 years ago?"

He nodded. "We should have had to. Andrew steadfastly refused to open the mine. Why? Because of what we have just found: the skeleton of a man who has been murdered. The inference would have been inescapable."

"Demonstrating again the unreliability of circumstantial evidence," I remarked dryly. "Here is my theory: Dillon killed 'Jerry' 30 years ago, and he killed Andrew three days ago. He killed Andrew because Andrew had just found out that he, Dillon, had killed 'Jerry.'"

"Perhaps you are right," Henry admitted wearily. "But if you are right, why did Andrew leave this body here instead of giving it proper burial?"

"When we know that, we shall know what turned Alex Peterson into Andrew Ogden," I replied sententiously. "Depend on it, he had some good reason. Andrew never did anything without reason."

"I wish MacNair was here," Deacon muttered, getting up. "He's got a solid head on his shoulders. This thing is too much for me. You'd better take care of that newspaper. That bit of pencil, too."

The blocked door of the mine was just beyond the body, and we were returning silently to the slash through which we had entered the tunnel when I heard quite distinctly a small sound. Somehow I felt that it was of human origin. So did Deacon, for he snapped out the light and dropped his hand to my arm.

"What's that?" I whispered.

"Sah!"

He guided me into one of the tributary passages, and we waited, scarcely breathing, for what was to happen. The darkness clung to us like pitch. And yet it was alive and tingling, as darkness sometimes is. Intangible softnesses seemed to run through my hair and caress my eyes and cheeks and throat.

Another sound. Louder this time. And then a ray of light pierced the blackness of the slash. Deacon's hand gripped my arm, and we shrank back against the wall of the tunnel. I could hear the breath whistling in his nostrils; my heart seemed to be pounding in my throat. The ray of light expanded, dimly illuminating the slash, which we could see from where we stood. We drew back again, plastering ourselves against the wall.

(Copyright 1929 Wm. Morrow Co.)

**Someone is entering the tunnel. Who is it? Tomorrow's chapter will reveal the secret.**

A light-beam cut the inky darkness—"we waited, scarcely breathing."

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**Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound**


# AZEL BLODGETT BRINGS BRIDE TO WILLIAMS CREEK

WILLIAMS CREEK, Ore., May 24.—(Special.)—Azel Blodgett surprised his many friends by bringing home a bride Tuesday. Mr. Blodgett and Miss Lora Vail were married Monday at the Baptist church parlors at Eugene, the Rev. Dr. Trawin officiating.

Mrs. Blodgett is well known in this community, she having lived here for some years with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Vail. Mr. Blodgett grew to manhood here and has many friends who wish him and his bride many years of happiness and prosperity.

Miss Blanche House accompanied friends to Medford Saturday afternoon.

Callers at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Lofland Sunday were Mr. and Mrs. Jake Brown of near Medford, Mr. Lofland's mother and two sisters, the Misses Maria and Ruby Lofland, and Mrs. Peterson of Medford, Mrs. Lofland's brother, Riley Norris and family of Big Applegate.

Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Roberts and Everett Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. Evans of Provolt visited at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Letteken Sunday afternoon. Mr. and Mrs. Evans contemplate returning to Missouri in the near future.

Little Miss June Bigelow came out from Grants Pass Monday to spend the week with Mrs. B. E. Wood and other friends.

Mr. and Mrs. M. L. House and family spent Sunday after Sunday school at the home of their son, Homer House.

Mr. and Mrs. Dell Lemmon and family spent Sunday with Mrs. Lemmon's sister and family, Mrs. Ed Woolfolk, in their new home near Central Point.

Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Fixley drove over to Klamath Falls Monday for a few days' visit.

Mrs. Blanche Sutton and little daughter Phyllis and little nephew, Stanley Sparlin, of Klamath Falls are spending a few days with Mrs. Sutton's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Taylor Hartley.

Little Cora Gibson fell from a truck on which she was playing Tuesday afternoon, and broke her arm just above the elbow. She was taken into Grants Pass to have it attended to.

Charley Kincade was buried at the Sparlin graveyard Thursday afternoon. The bereaved family have the sympathy of their friends. Mr. Kincade had grown up and spent most of his life here.

Tayler Hartley is on the sick list.

# CLIMAX CLATTER

We regret to hear of the illness of Miss Vera Kershaw and hope she will be recovered soon.

Miss Evelina Charley is spending a couple of weeks at the E. P. Kurz home.

Mr. Merrifield, deputy assessor, spent two days in our vicinity last week.

Mr. and Mrs. G. G. Oliver and W. F. Charley motored to Portland Saturday.

County librarian Miss Chrysler and her friend, Mrs. Runz visited our school Monday.

The grader has been over our road the last week and bumps are not so numerous.

Mrs. L. H. Wertz, Miss Elvira Blair and Miss Garrel Charley spent Saturday in Medford.

A. J. Grissom went to Ashland on Monday.

# GOTHAM CROWDS SEE PLANE FUELED IN AIR

NEW YORK, May 24.—(AP)—Refueling of a bombing plane in the air was demonstrated over the city last night.

As thousands on the streets watched, a supply ship made five contacts with the army plane.

Lieutenant Odas Moon piloted the bomber and Captain Ross Hoyt was in charge of the refueling plane. They flew here from Bolling field, Washington, where the bomber landed after its "raid" the night before when thick weather prevented the refueling demonstration.


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