

He had waited a long time for it, and he had experienced his share of misfortune while waiting. But now it had come to him, had dropped directly in his path. Chub blessed the judge who had sentenced him to prison. Dell Mungry! The man who knew how to make real money. And the man was a boob, a sucker, and Chub had him where he could work him to his heart's desire!

CHUB WALKER now set his choice talents to work to develop the good fortune that had befallen him. Slowly and skillfully he laid down a campaign for making himself old Clarkson's confidante. He had estimated the man's loose character to a dot: Clarkson was one of those weak-minded crooks who, having turned a trick, are unable to cast off the memory of the deed. Chub knew that the one great need of such crooks is to find someone whom they feel they can trust. To him they will open their souls, relieving themselves of the dark secrets that trouble their nights, even though the secrets be dark enough to take them to the



"For all of it, kid," said Clarkson softly. "They gave me all of it—for turning you up."

chair. Clarkson's secrets were of a kind which Chub could use in his business. It was only a question of getting inside the poor fool's shell, a feat which Chub would have despised himself for falling in.

He did not fail. Clarkson being in charge of the prison library, Chub became a constant reader. Next he began to consult the librarian about the selection of books. Within three months he had won the old man's confidence and Clarkson was burdening him with the revelations of his past life. Most of it was dross, but occasionally in his rambling confidences the counterfeiter revealed choice nuggets of practical information of the sort that Chub craved. Each of these bits Chub carefully stored away in the back of his head until the opportunity offered to put them on paper. At times he asked casual questions, skillfully concealing their aim from the simple minded Clarkson. But mostly he bided his time and let the old man talk. He had plenty of time, and he could not afford to arouse any suspicion concerning the motive of his interest.

"From what I've heard you made the game pay all right when you were in it," said Chub one day.

"I never made it pay," mourned Clarkson. "It can't be done. It wasn't until I quit it, until I buried my plates and burned my stuff, and married, and supported my wife and kids by running a little print shop out there in Ohio that I made anything pay. No, I never made the stuff pay, and I—the faded eyes gleamed with pride—"I was the one man who could make the real stuff. I had the secret—the real thing.

Dutch Otto, he was a better engraver than me, but Otto didn't have the secret. I had that. I could fool the government itself. And I could n't make it pay."

Chub waited a fortnight. Then he said, argumentatively: "If a fellow could make stuff good enough I don't see how he could fall down. You make stuff that you can pass without any hitch and how is there going to be any come-back?"

"Aw, it ain't that," said Clarkson wearily. He seemed to hesitate, then blurted: "Here, I'll tell you how it happened to me. Don't think for a minute my stuff was n't good enough; you've heard what I've done with it. The trouble is when you're going crooked you always leave a track. When I met the woman out in Cincinnati five years ago I did my best to wipe out those tracks. Before we got married I'd wiped myself so clean of the queer game that—that the woman was satisfied. And that was going some, believe me, kid. I'd burned a trunkful of the best queer ever manufactured and I'd buried my plates five feet under ground; changed my name, changed everything, and got nicely started in the print shop in that little town up in Ohio. Married and on the square, working every day, and living in a little white house—why there was n't anybody like Dell Mungry any more. You would n't have thought I could have been nicked any more than a dead man. I was a regular guy."

"I don't see how they could get you—if you stayed that way," suggested Chub as the old man ran down.

"I didn't, that was the trouble," Clarkson roused himself. "I thought I was going to, sure, but I couldn't. One evening when I'm closing up shop—four years after I'd got married, and when the second kid was a year old—Shaver Duke comes walking in and ducks his round head at me.

"Thought you'd ditched us for good, eh, Dell?" he says. "Oh, no, we've been hep to you for over a year. We did n't need you till now. Diamond Lil shot a guy in Chicago," says he, "and we need twenty-five thou' to get her clean. We're all broke," he says, "so it's up to you."

CLARKSON shot out his feeble under lip and his fingers curved like claws.

"I had him down under the imposing stone with a mallet in my hand in about two seconds," he went on, "but he speaks up and says, 'The bunch knows I came down here. If you get me they'll get you and your family.' I let him up and he says: 'Come on; produce, or we'll let this town know that Clarkson, their popular printer, is Dell Mungry.' You see," concluded Clarkson meekly folding his hands, "there's always something turns up and gets you."

Chub nodded sympathetically. "You didn't have the twenty-five thousand, I suppose?"

"No—no, I didn't have any twenty-five thousand, of course," resumed Clarkson slowly. "But I could make it, and they knew it, too. There wasn't any way out of it. I had to dig up my plates. I ran 'em off a hundred thousand worth—hundreds, fifties, twenties, tens—perfect stuff. They turned 'em over in Kansas City for twenty-five, and I buried my plates again, and they promised to let me alone. But it can't be done. The guy in K. C. who'd bought the stuff was hungry for blood. He put the screws to Shaver, and Shaver went to him with a chiv. Before the guy croaked he gave up the whole deal. Don't s'pose you can guess



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