

Now Showing at The
Happy Hour

"THE FIGHTING TRAIL"

Chapter I--"The Priceless Ingredient"

A Story of the Great
Outdoors



CAST
John Gwyn, Mining Engineer,
William Duncan
Nan Law on.....Carol Holloway
"Cut Deep" Rawls, an outlaw.....
George Holt
"Shoestring" Drant, his partner.....
Joe Ryan
Hendrik Von Block, a foreign spy
Walter Rodgers
Yaqui Joe, a faithful Indian
H. Duerow
Don Carlos Ybarra
Charles Wheelock

Baltermann leaned forward im-
pressively in his chair.

"There is nothing further to be
left to doubt, gentlemen," he said.
"Only one thing remains: We
must go ahead, though the cost
be millions. Do you agree with
me?"

The others about the directors'
table merely stared. They were
afraid to answer. Men of millions,
rulers of the world of finance, cap-
able of hurling the Stock Exchange
into furious panic by a mere utter-
ance, they feared to say the words
that would start the wheels of a
nation turning to carry out a mis-
ty aim. Still, as they stared across
the table at Baltermann, they shrank
Strong, wealthy, powerful as they
were, Baltermann was greater. He
glared at them a moment and spoke
again.

"I repeat, gentlemen, what I have
just said." His words were quiet-
ly spoken and calm, but they car-
ried the whole force of his char-
acter. He fluttered the yellow
sheet of a cablegram in his fingers.
"This message is decisive. It means
a resolute quest for our country.
Alone, it is enough for me. You
know, all of you, that we control
the greatest explosive in existence;
you were present when the govern-
ment tests were made and announ-
ced successful. You know, also,
that cinnabar is a necessary ingredi-
ent of that explosive. We must
have cinnabar, and, gentlemen, I in-
tend that we shall have it.

"The supply of California has
been worked to the limit. Spain
has emptied its mines. Every known
source has been exhausted.
There is but one man who can fill
our orders. We must enlist the aid
of John Gwyn. I do not know
where he obtains the supply, and I
don't care. I know that he can meet
our demands, and I know that he is
honest. I am satisfied. Gentlemen,
what do you say?"

It took but a moment, after the
decision had been reached by his
conferees, for him to pick up the
telephone and call a number. He
did not delay an instant. Time, at
this moment, meant lives. He reach-
ed Gwyn's secretary, then Gwyn.

"Mr. Gwyn?" he questioned. "This
is Baltermann. We would like to see
you immediately on a matter of
great importance. We shall wait
for you. Good!" Baltermann hung
up the receiver and turned again to
the men about the table. "Gwyn is
coming right over. You can take
him absolutely into your confidence.
He is surprisingly young for the

the august dignity of the directors
who were deliberating over such a
weighty problem, and shook Balter-
man heartily by the hand.

Baltermann lost no time in getting
to the point.

We have been conferring about
our new explosive," he announced.
"You no doubt have heard of it.
There are certain ingredients which
are essential in the manufacture of
it and which we are desirous of ob-
taining. One of these is cinnabar.
It is imperative that all our plans
and operations be absolutely confi-
dential, for there will be much in
our actions that would be invalu-
able to the Central Powers. We
realize that our every move, despite
the discretion with which it is made,
is closely followed by the agents of
those Powers. You, Gwyn, are the
men we have chosen to supply us
with cinnabar, as we understand
that you have an unlimited supply
and because we know that we can
rely upon your confidence."

"I thank you for the honor of tak-
ing me into your confidence," Gwyn
replied, "and I can assure you that
it has not been misplaced. I appre-
ciate, however, as you must, the
vastness of this task to which you
are assigning me. Your demand
alone will surpass all others that
I have been receiving in the past.
It will necessitate improvements
and enlargements at the source of
my supply in order for me to meet
it and I shall have to cancel imme-
diately all orders for the future."

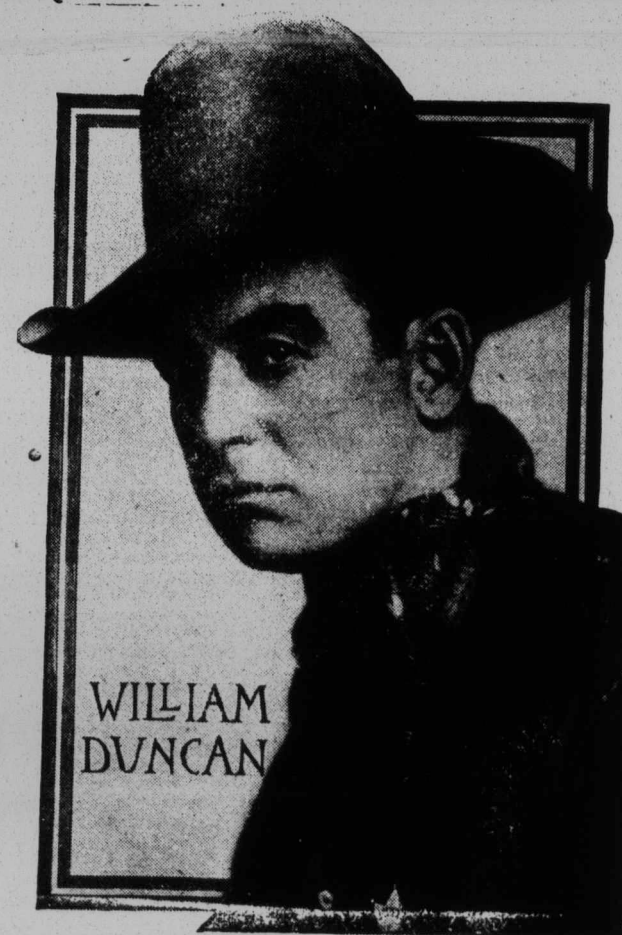
"But we shall pay you well," re-
minded Baltermann.

"However," continued Gwyn firm-
ly, sweeping the assemblage with
his eyes, "since we are agreed on
the most important point, I can sup-
ply you with what you require. I

happen to know, gentlemen, no
matter through what channels of
information, that you cannot manu-
facture your new explosive without
cinnabar. I believe, also, that I am
the only man on earth who can lo-
cate the source of cinnabar, while
you can export your explosive—the
greatest in existence—I control it.
The price of your explosive—the low-
est I can offer—is a bonus of two
million dollars and the market price
for all of the material with which I
furnish you."

"Gentlemen," asked the leader,
"what disposition do you care to
make regarding Mr. Gwyn's proposi-
tion?"

"It is nothing! It is everything!"
Baltermann shouted impatiently.
"The price may be ridiculous, but it
is also reasonable—it is important.
There is no need to dicker childishly
with Mr. Gwyn. It would be use-
less. He understands our situation,
as he informed us. He knows that
we cannot secure cinnabar anywhere
in the United States—or anywhere
on God's earth, for that matter—ex-
cept from him, and he intends to
charge us for it accordingly. I
don't blame him. He is a business
man. Moreover, he controls our
whole enterprise and its success, as
well as the nation's welfare. And,
gentlemen, Mr. Gwyn is a man to
depend on. It is worth two millions
of dollars to my mind, to have his
support instead of some one else's.
I demand, in your own interests,
that you accept this proposition. If
you refuse, you may carry out your
own affairs—I shall withdraw en-
tirely, and sever my connections
with this enterprise. You may do
as you please. Gentlemen, what is
your answer?"



The effect of Baltermann's threat to
withdraw both his influence and his
capital was astounding. There was

not a moment's hesitation. The pro-
position was accepted.

Baltermann turned to Gwyn. "We
accept. Are you prepared to start
for the West on the Limited?"

"I am prepared," he answered to
start for anywhere in one hour. I
am with you to the greatest extent
of my power, and you can depend
upon me absolutely. I need not say
that I shall expect the same from
you. I know I shall receive it."

Karl von Block, chief representa-
tive of the Central Powers in the
United States, laid his newspaper
on the desk before him and delayed
into thought. His secretary, seated
at a desk nearer the door, tiptoed
quietly from the room. When von
Block thought, he thought of grave
and important things, and his se-
cretary knew by precedent that he
preferred to be alone.

Von Block, left alone, proceeded
to read again the newspaper item
which had so perturbed him. It
seemed to stick from the rows of
type in words that spelled the des-
truction of his nation, of his power,
of his every interest; and yet he
saw toward the last of it a ray of
hope—the hope which he must make
a reality. He read:

"The terrific power of the new allied
shell is marvelous. It surpasses
anything which the Central Powers
have yet developed and promises
to be the nation's salvation in the
present great conflict. This remark-
able power is due to the new explo-
sive which has recently been in-
vented and, with this explosive, the
munitions problem of the country
will be revolutionized. The only
drawback—which is truly a menac-
ing danger—is the extraordinary
small supply of cinnabar the chief
ingredient of this new explosive."

He rose from his chair, laughing,
though more with scorn than mirth,
and passed through a door at his
back to an adjoining room. There,
leaning over a long table, wore his
associates, ready to do his bidding
reading the code translation of a
cable message they had just receiv-
ed and deciphered. They greeted
their superior with dignity and re-
lief. His mere presence and his
austere mien were comforts to them.

Von Block was handed the cable,
and he read it carefully. Then he
smiled. His associates knew the
meaning of that smile—they had
seen it often on previous occasions.
They knew, also, what the cable gram
contained. Von Block spoke:

"The most important thing to our
enemies, at the present time, is the
perfection and supply of their new
explosive. Therefore, naturally, the
most important thing to us, at this
moment, is the destruction of this
explosive; we must render it impos-
sible for it to be made. The easiest
and most effective way for us to do
this is to cut off the supply of
(Continued on page 8)

Torture Moved Him Not!

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