

Hawk nodded, as his pencil began to travel across the paper.

"'mtlky'—stroke at five. Two-three-one tonight," he said aloud.

Without pause, without hesitation, without the slightest indication of spacing to break its continuity, the sounder rattled on—and finally, as abruptly as it had begun, it stopped.

On the sheet of paper the Hawk had written this:

mtlkyeqodktrpcvkqlmtpkpwrtgrgtftuqcyqnttsghv
ukopgfkxtikukqprelcnrcatocuvgdatsfgumttlvgpvjf
qwucpmtfkpuckjihgvqptkijvrsa wvp xodtt dgtqprg
qplqosd

He reached out for the pad, tore off another sheet, and in two parallel columns set down the letters of the alphabet, one column transposed. There was a faint smile on his lips, as he turned again to the cipher and began to write in another line of letters under the original message.

"I wonder what Poe and his predominant 'e' would do with this!" he chuckled. "'Combi'—stroke two. Key letter—stroke three." He frowned the next instant. "What's this! Ah—stroke three, instead of one." He completed the transposition, stared at the several lines which were now scattered with vertically crossed-out letters, whistled low under his breath, and a grim look settled on his face.

The message now read: