

that it means the sme' evaporates rapidly in any open space——"

He looked up.

"Like a stage, for instance. Besides, it seems it can be modified by alcohol. But this is the real point. The doc hit the ceiling when I told him about the perfume you and Dolly had been sniffing about the stage. He dug in the books again and told me about a thing called oil of benzaldehyde. It's full of hydrocyanic acid. When the acid is removed the oil is sold as the basis of a perfume, and it used to be a popular one. He found a lot of instances of poisoning from this perfume and proved that they were all due to traces of acid remaining in the oil. That settled the whole business. All they had to do was to put a tiny quantity of that deadly acid in the perfume—what they figured would put a man out, sprayed as Mike did it, directly in Carlton's and Wilkins' nostrils when they stood by the mantel lifting the candlestick. Talk about your sledge hammer. That was it—applied to the base of the brain. The only good thing to be said for the acid is that its effects pass off very quickly, provided it doesn't instantly kill. I'd never have forgiven myself if Wilkins had got an overdose last night. As I say, I don't believe they intended to kill Carlton. He was probably in worse shape physically than we thought, or else they gave him a little too much, or else he breathed it deeper.

"So I knew exactly what to expect to-night. I