

to fight through that battle for another whole year, much less for the balance of his life! Jean Tavy! He had come into their lives only to disgrace them again! And how often would he do it in the time to come? With a moan of anguish he rose from his chair and walked down to the center of the bar, to look at himself in the mirror conscious, while he did it, that, to add to his humiliation, all those decrepit wrecks of humanity over against the wall were watching his every movement and leering at him. He turned to the narrow mirror just above the open cash drawer and what he saw, in the bleared and distorted face, chilled the blood in his veins. He almost stopped his breathing, and looked and looked, and reached the full depth of his degradation!

At last Mike Dowd had his call. By some trick of the switchboard, he had the wire before Jean Stuart.

"Billy Lane's?"

"Yes." The sleepy voice of Burke.

"Billy up?"

"No, sir — yes; he says he's awake."

"Well, tell Billy this is Mike Dowd. There's a certain party down here, he'll know who ——"

There was a deafening explosion, a concussion as if all the air in the room had been compressed