SAYING IT WITH PISTOLS

"MURDER BY MAIL"

BY

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"Murder by mail." So the mail-order traffic in the pistol is characterized. Bandits, bootleggers, hi-jackers, professional murderers, and all the stealthy army of gunmen experience no difficulty in obtaining the tools of their trade. A few dollars for the gun and a few more cents for the postage, and they have by return mail a weapon that is guaranteed to do the work—to protect the bootlegger from the police and hi-jackers and to help the professional gunman earn his murderous living. The accuracy of the guaranty is evidenced every day in the newspapers. Chief of Polce William P. Rutledge, of Detroit, told the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which met recently at Montreal, that 5,000 guns are shipped by mail into Detroit every year, and that other cities suffer from a similar experience. Abolition of the traffic is one of the chief items in the program of the Association, and it is also one of the Aims of the American Bar Association. In London the police go unarmed. In that city of 7,000,000 people fewer than 100 civilians are licensed to carry pistols, and even burglars are rarely found to have guns. Other countries which control the pistol traffic are Ireland, Holland, Canada, Japan, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Here bills designed to control the traffic have been introduced into both houses of Congress, and some of the States and many cities seek through their own laws to control the sale, and practically all forbid carrying concealed weapons without a permit. The sad fact is however, that guns are too easily concealed, so while the law-abiding obey, the lawless do not.

Glance over gun catalogs and you will note that "wide-awake merchants are assured by the jobbers that the cataloged articles are very popular and are earning large profits for wide-awake dealers in all parts of the country." This assertion will be verified in police reports, coroners' verdicts and criminal court trials, and be further supported by morgue attendants and undertakers.

The primary appeal of the trade is to he-men, including dope addicts, feeble-minded citizens, beer-runners, stick-up men and gentlemen full of moonshine, but it is not restricted to robust masculinity. The slogan is a gun for everybody, one for every member of the family. Ladies' sizes are attractive. In many cases a lady is foolish to write to Doris Blake to ask what to do when her sweetie has taken another girl to the movies. She should look over this catalog, make a selection, and meet him at the door when he comes outo ft he show. A .25-caliber Baby Peerless is designed for her, a small arm adapted for ladies' use, midget in size but a giant in effectiveness. Mother-of-pearl stock $1 additional. A fastidious lady would want the mother-of-pearl.

It is recognized that a one-hand gun makes an attractive gift. There is one silver engraved, with mother-of-pearl stock, combining beauty, effectiveness and accuracy, artistically engraved and well adapted for gift purposes. Something to give Gwendolin when she is confirmed or graduated from high school. Archibald probably will want something which a real stick-up man would use, but there is one which might takes his eye, and somebody's life. It can be carried in the vestpocket, "ready for instant use, with perfect safety at all times. No jury insurance goes with the guaranty of perfect safety.

No one, from grandmother to baby Gertrude should be without these instruments and decorations of our civilization. When you have an anniversary which calls upon your affections, "say it with pistols." Grandmother would be tickled to death with one. You do not know. She may have been wanting to take a shot at grandpa for thirty years, and this would brighten her declining days.

This is the land of opportunity and the gun jobbers want you to enjoy it, get its thrills, express yourself, and live the free life. It is the land of the one-hand gun, with an abounding population and no lack of openings for the emotions. A pint of synthetic, five gallons of gas, the one-hand gun, and the bells go ting-a-ling-ling for anyone you want to pick out—sweetie, auntie, husband, your own or some other body's, a chance acquaintance, or a perfect stranger. It's the life.

The toll of murders and deeds of violence is a national disgrace, blaming the promiscuous shooting down of people on the ease with which lethal weapons are obtained. Recent news dispatches told of one mail-order house in Chicago which was shipping out 1100 pistols per day—and there within convenient reach thousands annually would escape the guilt of murder. If 90 per cent of the revolvers in the hands of individuals could be confiscated this week and they were debarred from further purchases, murder statistics for next week would be reduced in almost equal proportion.

But in the St. Louis Post Dispatch recently there appeared an article in which it can not see that anything will be achieved by prohibition of any kind, and it believes that even if the manufacture and sale of pistols were prohibited by law the thugs would be armed just the same. Any kind of an old gas-pipe will answer the purpose should expert gunsmiths fail, it says. The remedy, it thinks, lies in education and regulation, and "the more education, the less need for regulation.'

But as things are, it argues, it would encourage its general use. The more citizens are familiar with the pistol and expert in its use, the better for the individuals concerned and for the country at large, particularly in case of a national emergency. Also the less inducement for a thug to take a chance on a hold-up or on entering a home. If all policemen, mail clerks, pay-roll clerks, and others in similar responsible positions were fine shots, willing to use their weapons, the number of hold-ups and murders would dwindle remarkably. Still the police alone can not put an end to the admittedly scandalous situation. It must have the prompt support of the courts. The trial of a suspect should be over within a few months of his apprehension. By that time he should be acquitted or condemned. If the latter, he should be on his way to the prison or the gallows and the court's sentence should not be open to modification except by the President of the United States.

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