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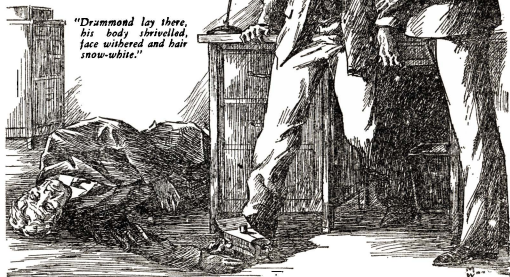
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The Man Who Conquered Age

By EDMOND HAMILTON



A gripping weird-scientific tale—a great scientist, drunk with power, runs amuck in the streets of New York

DOCTOR JOHN HALLECK walked a little tiredly up the steps of the narrow stone house and touched the bell-push. As he waited in the bright early-morning sunlight for answer, he found himself wishing that Professor Wilse Drummond lived nearer than this northwestern corner of New York City's island. Doctor Halleck was sixty, his scholarly face lined and his hair

gray, and the early ride up here to Meckman Street had tired him.

He rang again, impatiently. Why had old Drummond been so insistent that he come up at once, if he were not here to receive him? But as Doctor Halleck asked himself that, the door opened.

A young man of twenty or twenty-one, with black hair and eyes and keen, somewhat ruthless features, stood in the door-

way. Doctor Halleck could not remember having seen him before, yet there was something bafflingly familiar about him.

"Professor Drummond's here?" Halleck asked, and the other nodded.

"Please come back into the laboratory," he said.

Doctor Halleck followed him through the house into the neat laboratory with its tiled walls and tangle of metal and glass bio-physical apparatus. "Will you tell Professor Drummond that Halleck's here?" he said to the young stranger.

The young man made an astonishing statement. "I am Professor Drummond," he said.

Doctor Halleck stared at him. "I mean Professor Wilse Drummond, the biophysicist."

"And that is just who I am," the other calmly assured him.

"You're crazy!" Halleck exclaimed. "I know Drummond well—why, he's older than I am, seventy-one or seventy-two years of age."

The young man laughed in sheer amusement. "Nevertheless I am he," he said. "And I called you, Doctor Halleck, less than an hour ago asking you to come up here."

Doctor Halleck faced the other with dignity. "Whoever you are," he said, "I demand to see Professor Drummond at once. If this is some kind of practical joke on his part—"

The young man came closer, brought his face near. "Look, doctor," he said. "Do I look like Professor Drummond?"

Doctor Halleck stared into the youthful face. The keen features, the black eyes—now that baffling familiarity explained itself. "You do look like Drummond!" he said. "You're one of his grand-nephews?"

The young man shook his head. "No, I'm Drummond himself, the Professor

Drummond you've known twenty years, who was on the faculty of Manhattan University with you until a few years ago."

Doctor Halleck was rapidly coming to feel as though some quality of insanity had injected itself into the situation.

"If you are Drummond," he said caustically, "how comes it that you look fifty years younger than when I last saw you?"

"It comes because I *am* fifty years younger," calmly replied the young man who called himself Professor Drummond. "Because, but a few hours ago, I made myself that much younger!"

"You made yourself that much younger?" echoed Doctor Halleck astoundedly. "Why, you must be mad!"

The other grasped his wrist, his black eyes snapping. "What is mad about it? As a scientist, as a biologist, do you find it so incredible that the age-processes of the human body can be controlled?"

"As a scientist?" Doctor Halleck clutched at the shred of explanation. "Do you mean to say that you've found some scientific way to—"

"I've found what men have dreamed of finding for centuries, yes!" said the young man exultantly. "The secret of controlling the age-process! I used it on my own senile body, and though I'm still Wilse Drummond, with his mind and mental power still, I've got the body I had when I was twenty! I've conquered age!"

"Good heavens, you do look as Wilse Drummond must have looked at twenty!" exclaimed the startled Doctor Halleck. "But the thing's impossible—"

"There's nothing impossible about it!" lashed the self-styled Wilse Drummond. "As a biologist you should be better able to appreciate its possibility than most men.

"Why shouldn't the processes of age

be controlled? What ages a human or animal body, anyway? The slowing down of its rate of metabolism, the rate of its capacity to absorb new energy from nutritive elements. As this rate of metabolism slows down, the body loses energy, weakens, ages.

"Suppose we can stimulate metabolism by outside forces? Then just as much as it is stimulated, so much more new energy can the body acquire, so much younger will it become. The disintegration of cell-structures due to lack of energy will be rebuilt and reversed, the body's cellular structures will be rebuilt to their youthful condition.

"Or, similarly, if we use forces that depress the rate of metabolism further instead of stimulating it, the body will grow older rapidly instead of younger. All we need, therefore, to make the body older or younger at will is to find the forces that can be turned upon it and cause that change in its metabolic rate."

Doctor Halleck, listening with an intentness against which he struggled, saw the eyes of this young man who called himself Wilse Drummond become set and hard.

"I DETERMINED five years ago to find those forces, that secret," he told Halleck. "Five years ago, when they kicked me out on a pension down there at Manhattan University because I was too old.

"Too old! Damn them, my mind was better than any of theirs, but because my body had become aged and feeble I was no good! I determined to show them, to show the world, that my mind was powerful enough to make my body young again. I would conquer this force of age that they thought had put me on the scrap-heap!

"And I did conquer it! I found, after

more than four years of unceasing experimentation, a combination of high-frequency electrical radiations which stimulated the metabolism rate of animal bodies to an unheard-of degree. I turned those radiations on a rabbit dying of senility and almost instantly their effects brought that rabbit back into vigorous youth.

"I found, too, that a different combination of radiations had an opposite effect, slowed the metabolic rate almost to nothing. Those rays, turned on a young, healthy rabbit, so aged it before my eyes that this animal died of sheer senility at once. I needed only to construct compact and efficient projectors of these two forces, therefore, and I would have the power to make older or younger any living thing."

"And you mean to say that you did that?" Doctor Halleck said incredulously.

For answer the self-styled Drummond took from one of the laboratory's cabinets a black box-like object. It was an oblong black metal case like a large box-camera, Halleck saw, in one end a dull quartz lens several inches across with a regulating screw, and in the other end a three-way switch.

"This projector," the other told Halleck, "can send forth either force, the one that rejuvenates or the one that ages. It contains its own compact batteries, tubes and step-up coils, and the forces can be used close at hand or projected to some distance by altering the focus of the quartz lens.

"But a few hours ago I used the rejuvenating force upon myself, turning it off in a few moments when it had brought my body back to the physical youth it had when I was twenty, when it had taken me back to that age."

Doctor Halleck had listened with eyes

wide. "It sounds logical enough," he admitted. "But it's so unthinkable——"

"Unthinkable?" the other said. "Halleck, I'll dissipate your doubts once and for all."

He placed the black box-like projector on the table, its quartz lens directed into the room, then turned the switch on its back to the left.

A low buzzing sound, almost a hum, came from inside the projector, but there was no other manifestation. But the young self-styled Drummond now took his place a few yards in front of the projector's lens.

"Watch, Halleck," he said, "if you don't believe that projector can make a human body younger."

Doctor Halleck watched and in a moment a choking sound came from him. The young man standing under the projector's invisible forces was swiftly growing even younger. His body was becoming slimmer inside his clothing, his face rounder and rosier. The shoulders narrowed, the features lost their maturity—almost before Halleck could believe his eyes the stalwart young man of twenty had become a smooth-faced stripling of sixteen!

This boy who moments before had been a man stepped to the projector and turned it off. He turned to face the stunned Halleck.

"That was the rejuvenation force, Halleck," he said in a boyish treble voice matching his changed appearance. "I don't dare let it make me much younger than this, as the changes in interior structure would be too great for my adult-size body to stand.

"Now I'll show you the opposite force, the one that ages," he said, turning the projector's switch to the right and stepping back again into the range of the invisible radiations from its lens.

Doctor Halleck, incapable of speech, saw the stripling of sixteen changing again, growing older now under the invisible aging rays, developing rapidly again into the stalwart youth of twenty. And he was changing still more under the rays, growing still older!

His figure thickened into the solid one of a man of thirty-five, his face more lax and his hair sparser. Swiftly he continued to age and now was a man of fifty with graying hair and lined face.

Now he was sixty-five and now seventy, a thin, stooped figure with white hair and wrinkled face—the Professor Wilse Drummond whom Halleck knew! Drummond, yes, beyond doubt!

But Drummond was growing still older, his figure even more bent, hair thinner, eyes deep-sunken. A moment more and he tottered feebly to the table, snapped off the projector's buzzing force.

Halleck stared dumbly at this snow-haired senile figure who moments before had been a boy of sixteen.

"You see me now at an age over ninety," came Drummond's cracked voice. "If I went further in age I'd die right here of senility!"

His shrill laugh cackled. "But I'm not going further. I'm going back to youth."

Drummond turned the projector-switch again to the left, turning on the rejuvenating radiations, and as he stood in their force he went swiftly back in reverse order through his changes of the last moments.

Rapidly he grew younger into the elderly man of fifty, the muscular man of thirty, and at last again the vigorous young man of twenty. Then Drummond turned the projector's force off and turned to Halleck.

"WELL?" he said. "Does it seem so unthinkable now, Halleck?"

"It's terrible!" Halleck exclaimed.

"Good God, Drummond, why did you ever do it? You can't stay young like that!"

"Stay young?" Drummond echoed. "Of course I can! I can use the rejuvenation force to keep me at this age—twenty—indeinitely!"

"But you can't!" Doctor Halleck cried. "Why, it's unholy—the first law of life, as you should know from biology, is that all living things must age and in time die. Upset that law and you upset the world!"

"What if I do upset the world?" Drummond snapped. "Don't you see the power that this thing gives?"

"Power?" Halleck repeated. "It's a hellish power, Drummond! It will mean chaos for humanity to acquire this power. It will mean the end of natural death, all earth's peoples staying young indefinitely! Without natural death the world will soon be overcrowded with billions on increasing billions of people. Wars of crowding populations, famines, riots—that's what the power of staying young indefinitely will mean to humanity!"

Wilse Drummond shook his head. "You're wrong, Halleck. In the first place, I did not say I was going to give this power to humanity."

"You mean that you're going to give it up—destroy this thing?" asked Doctor Halleck with a ray of hope.

"Of course not," Drummond said. "But I'm going to sell it to those who can afford to buy. I'm going to sell indefinite youth to those who can pay for it, and they're going to pay high!"

Halleck stared at him in utter amazement, horror. "Sell youth? Why, Drummond, that would be worse than the other way! A world in which some men stayed young while others grew old and died would be worse than a crowded world where all stayed young! Think of

the horror of it, of a world in which the rich few who were able to pay for youth lived on and on, while generation after generation of the many poor grew old and feeble and died!"

"What if they do age and die?" Drummond snapped. "They didn't care when I aged, did they? They kicked me out down at the university when I reached their age limit, didn't they? Precious little the world cared about me and precious little I care about the world! Whoever in the world wants to stay young or be made young again will have to pay my price. There won't be any bargaining, either, for they can't go to any one else. I've got a corner on rejuvenation and I'm going to squeeze humanity!"

Doctor Halleck clutched the other's arm desperately. "Drummond, you can't do it! Before I let you do it I'll smash your plans myself, let the world know what a horror you're planning!"

"You'll not!" Drummond exclaimed. "Halleck, don't be a fool! I called you up here because I'll need your help in this. I'm going to make you young like myself, and my associate in this thing. Why, think of the power it'll give us!"

"I don't want that kind of power and I don't want that kind of youth!" Halleck told him. "Drummond, will you give this thing up here and now?"

"No!" said Drummond fiercely. "I'm going on as I said, and if you're not with me it will be the worse for you!"

"Then I'm going to act!" Halleck said. He seized the black projector from the table and turned to the laboratory-door.

Drummond leapt to him and grasped his arm. "You fool!" he snarled. "What are you trying to do?"

"I'm going to smash your plans and smash this projector!" exclaimed Halleck, flinging open the laboratory door.

"You're not!" Drummond cried, and spun Doctor Halleck around, grasping at the projector.

Halleck tried to tear loose the other's hold but found quickly that he was no match in strength with the youthful Wilse Drummond. They struggled for a moment by the door and then with a desperate effort Halleck thrust Drummond back from him.

Drummond, his face crimson with fury, came at Halleck again before he could get through the door. Halleck swung his arm—the arm that held the projector—instinctively, to ward off the other's rush. The projector's metal case struck the onrushing Drummond's head and knocked him back, momentarily stunned.

Doctor Halleck ran through the door, out of the house and into the sunlit street, panting and clutching the projector still.

HE STARTED up the street westward at a run. Suddenly a tingling force seemed to sweep through him and at the same time he was aware of an increasing tiredness, growing weariness and weakness.

With a sudden startled thought he turned around. On the doorstep of the house that he had just left stood Wilse Drummond's youthful figure. Drummond, his face deadly, held a black projector like that in Halleck's hand and had it trained upon Doctor Halleck!

For a moment Halleck was rooted to the sidewalk in astonishment; then as his feeling of weakness grew swiftly, he understood and emitted a shrill cry. Drummond had another projector and was trying to kill him by turning the aging force upon him!

Doctor Halleck stumbled hastily toward and around a street-corner a few

yards ahead. Out of sight of Drummond and out of the ray's range the tingling force no longer flooded him, but he still felt very weak and weary. Drummond was not now in sight behind him, though, and he hastened westward toward the busier thoroughfare of Riverside Drive, holding the projector tightly to him.

When he reached the drive it was apparent to Doctor Halleck that Drummond was not following him. Halleck stood, panting for breath. He caught sight of himself in a shop-window mirror and gazed in amazement at his reflection.

It was not his own elderly but straight and scholarly figure that looked back from the mirror at Halleck but a man twenty or twenty-five years older, a thin, bent, aged figure with snow-white hair and deep-wrinkled face and blinking eyes. Drummond's ray had aged him that much before he had escaped it!

Passers-by looked curiously at the hatless, senile figure with the camera-like box, staring at his own reflection. Halleck turned from the mirror with mind awhirl. What was he to do? Act to halt Wilse Drummond's dread plans, yes. But how?

He saw a policeman, started toward him and then stopped. The officer would only stare at his story, Halleck knew. It was not a story for him but for police headquarters, if he could get any one there to believe it.

Captain Crater! Halleck remembered now the detective-captain who twice had called him in for scientific aid and information, Captain Daniel Crater. He was the man to see—and at once!

HALLECK hailed a taxi and in moments was speeding downtown along the drive. He tried to collect his chaotic thoughts.

What would Wilse Drummond do?

He still had another projector—he must have made two, Halleck now knew. He could still carry out that unholy scheme of his of selling youth if he was not stopped.

Again Doctor Halleck was swept by that dread vision of what the world would be if Drummond carried out his plan. Frantic struggles for the money that could buy rejuvenation, a youthful aristocracy ruling an aging world—

The taxi drew up with a jerk before the gray pile of police headquarters. Halleck paid the driver, hastened inside. He knew the way to Captain Crater's office and at once had his name sent in to that officer.

Captain Crater, a keen-faced, gray-eyed man of middle age, looked up as Halleck came in with a smile of welcome that changed suddenly into a frown.

"I thought you told the girl it was Doctor John Halleck calling," he said.

Halleck stared, then as he glimpsed himself in a mirror, remembered. His changed appearance! The work of the aging ray! "It is—I am Halleck, Captain!" he said.

Crater's eyes narrowed. "What kind of a game is this? Do you think I don't know Doctor Halleck?"

Halleck made a frantic gesture. "Crater, for God's sake listen to me! I'm Doctor John Halleck who helped you on the Ferson and Willetti cases. I know I look twenty-five years older than he, but I'm he nevertheless and I can prove it!"

"I don't know what you're trying to do, but I do know that you're not Halleck," Crater said decisively. "Spill your stuff before I have you locked up as an impostor."

Doctor Halleck with trembling, shrivelled hands set the projector on Crater's desk, then turned its switch to the left and as the projector buzzed stepped back into

range of the invisible radiations from its lens.

He watched his reflection in the mirror, and as he felt the unseen vibrations of the rejuvenating forces tingling through his body, he could see age dropping from him. He changed, his figure becoming less bent, his face less lined, his eyes clearer, and strength coming back to him. Then when he was again at his normal age of sixty, the scholarly, gray-haired Doctor Halleck he had been, he turned the projector off and faced Captain Crater.

Crater's face was deathly white, his eyes protruding. "Halleck!" he gasped. "And you grew younger there before my—good God, what kind of witchcraft is this?"

"Witchcraft of science," Doctor Halleck told him, shaken himself by the thing. "You saw what this projector can do. Well, there's another one like it and the man who has it is going to smash the world with it if he's not stopped."

Halleck talked rapidly, almost incoherently, for minutes. As he spoke, leaning tensely across the desk, he saw the stunned amazement in Captain Crater's eyes replaced by dawning comprehension.

Halleck told of his experience with Wilse Drummond, of Drummond's demonstration of his power and of Drummond's plan. He saw belief and then determination in Crater's eyes.

"Halleck, I believe you!" the detective-captain said swiftly. "God knows, the whole thing is fantastic, but I've got to believe after what I just saw with my own eyes!"

"You'll act, then?" Halleck asked quickly. "Crater, if you don't act it will be as I say—Witse Drummond setting up a monopoly on rejuvenation, a world gone crazy!"

"We'll act, and now!" Crater said tersely. "There may be no law to get Drummond under, but this is no time

for legalities. We've got to get Drummond and get him quick!"

He snapped an order into a desk-phone. "Manly? Two men and a squad-car at once—we're going out!"

Three minutes later Doctor Halleck sat beside Captain Crater and Manly in the front seat of a touring-car that tore north through the morning traffic with screaming siren, young Manly driving. In the rear seat two policemen hunched forward against the rush of wind.

HALLECK held clutched against him the square case of the projector. They shot at increasing speed along the upper drive, then made a perilously swift turn eastward. As they turned into Meckman Street a few moments later Doctor Halleck pointed down it toward Wilse Drummond's house.

The car drew up before it with siren dying, its occupants spilling forth with Captain Crater at their head.

"Stay with the car, Manly," Crater directed. "Dorsey, get round to the back of the house! McNamara, come with Halleck and me!"

Crater and the policeman McNamara ran up the steps with Halleck close behind them, into the house. The two officers had their pistols in their hands.

They followed Halleck's pointing finger through the house into the laboratory at the rear. It was empty of Wilse Drummond and the other projector. Papers had been flung about as though in hasty search for notes.

Captain Crater and McNamara quickly rummaged the house with Doctor Halleck, Dorsey coming in from the rear. They found neither Drummond nor the projector.

"He's gone!" Halleck cried. "Crater, Drummond's got away with the projector!"

"Gone, eh?" Captain Crater's face was grim. "Then we'll get a net out for him at once—he's got to be found."

"Drummond free to use that hellish power!" Dread clutched at Halleck's heart as they went out. "Drummond free——"

They started down the steps, Crater and McNamara beside Halleck. Autos and pedestrians were stopping curiously in the street at sight of the police-car.

Suddenly McNamara emitted an exclamation, a curiously high-pitched one. They turned toward him and for the moment Crater and Halleck were frozen with horror.

Policeman McNamara, a husky middle-aged man of solid build when they had come out of the house, was suddenly, swiftly changing. His brown hair was graying, whitening, his body rapidly shrinking and shrivelling. A shrill cry he uttered, his age-wrinkled face distorted, then clutched at the air and fell.

"What's happened?" Crater cried. "He grew old before our eyes here——"

"Wilse Drummond!" yelled Doctor Halleck. "Drummond and the aging ray—look there!"

He pointed over McNamara's prone form to a taxi parked a little way up-street, its motor running. Its back window was partly open and from the opening peered the dull quartz lens of a black projector like that Halleck held. Behind it Halleck glimpsed Wilse Drummond's youthful, hate-filled face.

Drummond saw they had seen him and snapped a word to his driver. The taxi leapt up the street. Captain Crater uttered a cry and he and Halleck leapt into the police-car as Manly, at its wheel, released its clutch. They shot up-street after the fleeing cab!

They gained rapidly upon the taxi, whose driver was apparently unaware of

the pursuit. Drummond's face appeared at its rear window again and Crater leaned out from the speeding police-car with pistol in hand. They were within fifty feet of the taxi—then Doctor Halleck glimpsed Drummond turning the black projector's lens back upon them.

Tingling force flooded through Halleck, he felt again that sudden onset of weakness and weariness, and saw that Manly and Crater and he were swiftly aging!

Crater's hair already was gray, his face wrinkled! Halleck cried out and Manly, glancing at him and Crater, saw and understood, whirled the car sidewise to avoid Drummond's aging ray.

Manly, himself grown from youth to middle age by then, turned the car too sharply and it struck the curb, caromed off a lamp-post, and crashed to a halt.

THEY stumbled out of the wrecked car as Wise Drummond's cab disappeared around the next corner. They looked dazedly at each other. All three had aged ten years, Doctor Halleck from his normal sixty to a thinner, weaker seventy, Captain Crater from alert middle age to definite elderliness, and Manly from clean-cut youth to early middle age.

"Drummond's projector—the age-force!" Halleck exclaimed. "He turned it back on us!"

"And a few more minutes of it and all three of us would have been dead of old age," Crater said grimly. "You were right, Halleck—if Drummond stays loose with that thing he'll wreck the world!"

"But how—what——" Manly was attempting to ask.

"If I'd thought to turn this projector ahead on Drummond!" Halleck exclaimed suddenly, conscious for the first time that he still clutched the projector.

"You couldn't have—but here comes Dorsey," Crater said.

Through the little crowd of excited persons gathering around the wrecked police-car Policeman Dorsey hastened from the Drummond house farther down the street.

"Chief, what's happened?" he cried to Crater. "McNamara back there——" Then Dorsey took in the changed appearance of the three.

"But what happened to you?" he exclaimed. "You all look a dozen years older!"

"Never mind about us!" Crater's voice was steely. "What about McNamara?"

"He's dead! And he looks—you won't believe it—but he looks as though he died of old age!"

Captain Crater nodded grimly. "All right, Dorsey. Find the nearest phone and order another squad-car sent up here. Also tell them to send out a general alarm for a black-haired, black-eyed man of twenty or twenty-one carrying a thing like a camera."

And as Dorsey sped away on the errand and Crater and Manly and Doctor Halleck started back down the street toward the Drummond house, Crater said, "There's a chance Drummond can be picked up before he can use that damned thing further."

"And if he isn't?" Halleck questioned. "If Drummond escapes by means of his power as he did from us?"

Crater answered between set teeth. "In that case, hell is going to break loose!"

CAPTAIN CRATER repeated his words a few hours later down in the big building of police headquarters. He and Manly and Doctor Halleck sat in the office of the police commissioner, with the heavy, serious-faced commissioner Peter

Winston and the hard-visaged chief of detectives Mart Tuttle.

Winston and Tuttle listened intently to Crater's rapid account. Already, Halleck knew, the far-flung web of the metropolitan police system was vibrating with descriptions of Wilse Drummond and orders to hold him if found.

"It means hell itself if Drummond isn't taken!" Captain Crater was saying. "With that thing he can reduce human organizations to chaos!"

Commissioner Winston shook his head slowly, his face uneasy. "Crater, this is almost beyond belief. If I hadn't seen McNamara's body and the change in you and Manly, I'd think it was incredible."

"You'll find nothing incredible about it if Drummond starts to use it," Crater predicted. "For him to start selling youth to those who could pay high enough—it would turn the world upside down!"

"It would that!" said Chief Detective Tuttle in crisp agreement. "The man and his machine have got to be picked up before the thing goes further."

"It won't be easy," Winston said thoughtfully. "If the thing will actually make your Drummond able to age or rejuvenate at will, as you say, it will enable him to elude us better than any disguise. Also he can use the aging force as a weapon, as he did against you."

"Yet we've got a weapon against him too if we had a chance to use it," Crater reminded. "This other projector that Halleck took—it ought to be a check on Drummond's plans."

They looked curiously at the oblong black case that Doctor Halleck still held. "And that thing can age or rejuvenate any living body?" said Commissioner Winston half unbelievably.

"Why don't you use it then to bring yourselves back to your normal age?" Tuttle asked, and Captain Crater nodded.

"We will—we've not had time until now. We may as well now, though, Halleck—ten years of added age has made me pretty weary in the last half-hour."

Doctor Halleck stood up, the projector in his grasp. Captain Crater stepped over and stood in front of its lens. Halleck was about to switch on the thing when Tuttle interposed.

"Wait!" said the chief detective. "You'll be meeting this Drummond again, if you can find him. In that case you ought to be as young as possible."

They stared. "Don't you see?" Tuttle asked. "The younger you are, the longer you can stand Drummond's aging-ray when you do meet him, and the better chance you'll have against him!"

"That's right," Commissioner Winston said. "You ought to be as young as the thing can make you."

"They're right, Halleck," said Captain Crater. "Send me back to about twenty, then, if you can."

Doctor Halleck, with unsteady fingers, snapped the projector's switch to the left. The buzzing of its action sounded from within.

Halleck held the lens steady upon Crater, the invisible rejuvenating radiations flooding the officer's elderly figure. The others watched intently.

Crater grew swiftly younger! The age-lines in his face vanished rapidly as though smoothed by an unseen hand. His hair changed from gray to dark, his eyes became clearer, his posture straighter and shoulders broader.

Winston and Tuttle were white-faced as they saw Crater going back through that quick process of rejuvenation—back through middle age, through late youth, until Crater was a robust, healthy young man of twenty. Halleck snapped off the projector.

"Well?" said Crater, his clear youthful

voice a little unsteady. "Do I look too young for a detective-captain?"

"By God, the thing's weird!" Winston exclaimed. "But go on—you too, Manly."

Manly took Crater's place in front of the projector and rapidly went back from middle age through the late twenties that were his normal age to a youthfulness matching Crater's.

"Now, you, Halleck," said Crater, taking the projector.

"Not back to a youth like that!" Doctor Halleck exclaimed. "I just want to get back to my own age and stay there!"

"You must do it, Halleck," Captain Crater said. "Don't you see?—you know more about Wilse Drummond and his work and the projectors than any one else. We've got to have your help and you've got to be as young as possible if we meet Drummond again."

Halleck hesitated, fighting his instinctive repulsion. "All right," he said. "Hold the projector's lens toward me and turn the switch to the left——"

Moments passed as he stood in the tingling invisible radiations, and when Crater turned them off Halleck too stood a youth of twenty. He stumbled into a chair, for despite his abrupt consciousness of unwonted youth and vigor, he felt momentarily nerveless.

"You too?" said Crater to Winston and Tuttle, nodding toward the projector. They shook their heads.

"Not for a million," Tuttle declared. "It's too damned uncanny."

"It's that, all right, and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to smash the thing," Crater said, "but before we do that we've got to get Drummond and the other projector.

"To get Drummond," he added, "we've got to keep a net out for him no matter what age he may be, from sixteen

to ninety-six. For if we look only for a young man, Drummond will make himself old and so elude us, or if we look for an old one he'll——"

THE door burst open and an orderly entered. "Riot up at Sixth and Thirtieth, sir!" he reported to Commissioner Winston.

"Sixth and—what started a riot there?" Winston shot at him.

"I don't know, sir, but the patrolman who rang in a minute ago yelled something to me about people suddenly getting older and younger——"

"Drummond!" Crater exclaimed. "Drummond's using his power already!"

In brief minutes they were in a police car speeding northwestward across lower New York. Doctor Halleck, numbed by the swiftness and incredibility of events, sat between Winston and Tuttle in the rear seat, holding the projector. Crater and Manly were beside the driver, and two cars crowded with policemen followed theirs.

As they shot west on Thirtieth Street from Broadway they found the Sixth Avenue intersection ahead blocked to traffic by a crowd of excited people that had overflowed from the sidewalks into the streets and had stopped vehicles from proceeding further. From this mob came an uproar of voices, the early-afternoon crowds gathering quickly.

As the occupants of the police-cars emerged, Doctor Halleck saw that the center of excitement was some scores of men and women, some extremely aged and others very youthful, who appeared mad with terror.

Many of them were mouthing meaningless cries while others were staring at their reflections in shop windows or at their companions. With sinking heart Doctor Halleck saw that many of the

white-haired old people were dressed in youthfully cut clothes that hung oddly loose upon them, a snow-headed old man in a snappy golf-suit, two senile, bent old women in the latest short skirts and jaunty hats, another ancient, wrinkled-faced man in a messenger boy's uniform.

Similarly some of the most youthful-looking of the crowd were attired in oddly unyouthful fashion. A stiff silk hat, frock coat and starched wing-collar were worn by a stripling of sixteen who appeared dazed. A fresh young girl wore a black silk dress and bonnet of old-fashioned style. A street-cleaner's uniform was worn by another boy of sixteen or seventeen.

"Drummond!" Doctor Halleck's voice was shaking. "Drummond's turned the age and rejuvenation rays loose indiscriminately here——"

"Scatter around the whole intersection!" Captain Crater's clear voice ordered the policemen who had emerged from the other cars. "Don't let any one here get away and if you see any one using a thing like a camera with a big lens, get him if you have to shoot!"

A thin, white-headed oldster with a patrolman's uniform hanging loose on him tottered up to them. "Patrolman Casey, sir!" he told Commissioner Winston in a cracked voice. "There's hell going on here!"

"What happened?" Winston asked. "When did this start?"

"Ten or twelve minutes ago!" the other said shrilly. "I was standing on the corner when I heard some people screaming. I looked and saw people changing, an old woman suddenly seeming to get young, two men aging. Then I felt a tingling through me and was old and weak like this myself. Old—and I'm only thirty-four!"

"Did you see a man with a black case

like a camera?" Crater asked him tensely. "Or a package about the size of a camera—just when this happened?"

Patrolman Casey shook his white head. "No—but yes, I did see an old fellow with a little square bundle going along the sidewalk just then!"

"Drummond!" Crater exclaimed. "Drummond made himself old and disguised his projector as a package of some sort—turned the two forces loose at random as he went along! He's showing the world his power by this means, establishing it beyond doubt. What an unholy way to do it, though—making people young or old at random!"

"Crater, what are we going to do with these people?" asked Commissioner Winston desperately.

The scene in the street was now one of indescribable confusion. Crater's men had established a line around the intersection and were keeping any from entering or leaving, but inside it those suddenly made young or old were now screaming in panic.

Doctor Halleck grasped Crater's arm. "This projector!" he cried. "We can bring them back to normal with it—make them younger or older!" He indicated the projector he still held.

Crater nodded instantly. "By heaven, we can! It's all that will keep these people from going mad, too!"

"We'll round them up in one of these stores," he told Winston and Tuttle, "and Halleck can bring them back to normal with our projector!"

"All right, but for God's sake work fast!" Commissioner Winston told him. "This will have all New York in a panic if it goes on!"

Crater, Manly and Tuttle with a half-dozen policemen plunged into the crowd. Halleck saw them fighting to quiet the panic-stricken victims and to herd them

into one of the near-by stores. Some of those suddenly made old or young were still rational enough to follow the commands of the policemen, but others, shrieking in their terror, had to be dragged into the store-room commanded by Crater.

As this rounding-up of the victims of Drummond's ray proceeded, Halleck's eyes roved everywhere in search of the man who had let loose this storm of panic, Wilse Drummond himself. He could see him nowhere, nor, he told himself, was there any chance that Drummond would have lingered here. He had simply passed along dealing age and youth at random from his concealed projector and letting the resulting turmoil develop of itself behind him.

THE turmoil was quieting a little now as Captain Crater and Manly and Tuttle with their men gradually herded the victims into the store-room chosen. Halleck gave up his looking for Drummond and went with Winston into that store-room, the projector in his hand.

There were about seventy men and women in the store-room, including the seven or eight prone forms the policemen had carried in. Doctor Halleck bent with Crater and the others over these first, heedless for the moment of the hysterical uproar of the others.

"Dead," said Halleck in a moment. "All dead of old age. These are old people Drummond happened to catch with the aging-ray."

"Some of these others are going to be dead of terror in a few minutes if we don't do something," Captain Crater said grimly.

He raised his voice above the uproar. "You people who were made younger or older—we can make you as you were before, do you hear? Doctor Halleck can

change you back to the age you were before!"

The terror-crazed victims surged toward the officers. A girl of seventeen or eighteen in clothing that seemed too old for her had by the arm a feeble white-haired old man. "My husband and I!" she screamed. "We were both forty-two, and out there in the street we changed—he grew older and I younger!"

"We'll change you back," Crater reassured. To Doctor Halleck he said, "We'll start on these people, Halleck! We can take them one at a time."

While policemen kept curious crowds and reporters outside from entering the store-room, the work in it proceeded. A tall mirror was found and set up, and beside this Doctor Halleck stood with his projector while the hysterical victims were allowed to come forward one at a time.

The first was the patrolman, Casey. Placing him before the mirror Halleck turned the rejuvenation ray on him. As Casey saw himself growing rapidly younger, in the mirror, he seemed dazed but was able to signal to Halleck when he had reached his normal middle-aged appearance. Halleck turned the ray off and the messenger-boy who had been aged into an old man took Casey's place.

Quickly the work went on, those in the store-room watching incredulously and scarce able to believe their eyes even when they themselves were restored to normal age by the projector. Halleck had half expected some of those made young would decline to enter the ray and be made old again, but this was not the case. This strange youth that had come upon them so suddenly was terrifying to them, throwing time back and lifting them out of their normal place in the world, and they desired nothing but to get back to their familiar older age.

In three-quarters of an hour all of the victims save those killed by senility had been restored to their usual age, and somewhat stunned but otherwise all right, had stumbled out. Doctor Halleck, weary despite his new youthful vigor, remained with Commissioner Winston and Crater and Manly, Tuttle having gone to help in the search for Wilse Drummond.

Commissioner Winston wiped his brow. "This thing will soon have New York crazy," he said. "The reporters out there are foaming at the mouth to find out what changed the age of those people and how we restored them to normal."

"Let them foam," said Crater curtly. "If they hear about Wilse Drummond and realize a man is running wild with that power, there'll be a still worse panic."

"They'll learn about Drummond sooner or later," Winston said, "and when——"

AN EXCITED policeman pushed to the side of the commissioner. "Chief Detective Tuttle wants you up at the Maxson Theater at once, sir!" he reported.

Instant apprehension crossed Winston's face. "What's happened there? Is it another——"

"He said to bring Doctor Halleck and his projector with you!" the other said.

Captain Crater laughed grimly. "Drummond is not wasting time, it seems. Come on, Halleck!"

Ten minutes later the police-cars drew up on West Forty-eighth Street before the square cream-colored bulk of the new Maxson Theater.

Here also there was a tangle of traffic and a horde of excited people on the sidewalk. They pushed through them into the theater, Halleck between Crater and Manly.

The theater was full of people in a state of panic, the matinee crowd that a little before had been witnessing a performance of that world-famed revue, Maxson's Follies. Policemen posted at the doors kept them from leaving, and one of these led Winston, Crater and Halleck around into the wings of the big stage.

There was excitement there too, performers in brilliant costumes or in dressing-gowns exhibiting the same panic as the audience. Tuttle came to meet Winston and Crater and Halleck.

"Your Drummond at work again!" he exclaimed. "He must have come straight up here after what he did down there at Sixth and Thirtieth!"

"What did he do?" Crater asked quickly.

Tuttle pointed to where many of the performers had gathered around a dozen hysterical women. The dozen women were old, their faces wrinkled and figures shrunken, hair white. Yet they were dressed in the abbreviated costumes of modern revue dancers.

"That's what he did," said Tuttle grimly.

Tuttle told briefly what had happened. The matinee performance of Maxson's Follies had just begun, and the twelve featured dancers were engaged under a golden glow of light in their intricate evolutions, patterns of brilliant costumes and youthful beauty following the lilt of the music.

Then the patterns had become suddenly confused, the dancers stumbling against each other, some falling, and at the same time women in the audience had screamed. The dancers were one by one, so swiftly that the eye could hardly follow it, growing old, aging from fresh youth to senility, their hair whitening and their bodies withering!

The policeman on duty in the wings had instantly called headquarters but when Tuttle had arrived he had found that though most of the audience was still there, some of them had escaped in panic.

"There's not a doubt but that Wilse Drummond was in the audience and turned the aging ray upon the dancers, then got away before we came," Tuttle said.

"My God, what a thing to do!" Halleck exclaimed. "But it's like Drummond's sardonic mind to do it!"

"Drummond is taking the best way to let the world learn his power, surely," Captain Crater said. "Well, we can undo his work."

Quickly with the projector's rejuvenating forces Halleck restored the twelve dancers to their normal youth. But hardly had he done so when there came more evidence that Wilse Drummond was ranging the city unsparingly with his dread power.

This was a call from an afternoon political meeting in a hall in lower New York. Two well-known candidates for United States senator had been holding there a public debate on the issues involved.

WHEN Halleck arrived with Crater and the other officers at the panic-filled hall, it took some time to learn what had happened. The two candidates, both serious and dignified elderly men, had been on the platform of the hall, one speaking forcefully and the other awaiting his turn to speak.

Then the incredible had happened. The dignified speaker had suddenly, swiftly, grown younger! His gray hair had darkened, his figure had changed, he had gone back through middle age and through youth and stood before the

astonished audience as a rosy-cheeked boy of sixteen in an elderly man's clothing! And before the stunned audience could credit their eyes the other candidate had grown similarly younger, so that two striplings held the platform.

Witse Drummond had undoubtedly entered the hall and with the same sardonic humor had transformed the two eminent statesmen into boys. And even before Halleck had restored to the two stunned men their normal age, further alarms of Drummond's activities were coming.

Halleck felt panic seizing upon him as it was seizing upon New York, as he and Crater and Manly sped from one to another of the scenes of Drummond's continuing deeds.

For Drummond seemed deliberately working to throw New York into panic. No other hypothesis could explain his actions.

Youths and girls pouring out of a high-school found suddenly that a dozen or more among them had abruptly grown to middle age. Conversely, a half-dozen inmates of a home for the aged, senile men and women, were suddenly restored to youth.

At a boxing-bout being witnessed by a large crowd, Drummond must have been present; for one of the two fighters suddenly became a tottering, aged man and in the next moment the other was by an opposite change a youthful stripling. They faced each other as thunder-struck as the crowd.

Drummond was using his power in the streets, too, with the most deadly effects. In place after place, as the afternoon progressed, there were riots where Drummond had passed along the streets and turned his concealed projector right and left into the crowds. A son would find himself suddenly older than his parents—

a grandfather as young as his grandson.

And as hour followed hour and Doctor Halleck sped with Captain Crater and Manly and Tuttle from place to place, following Drummond's trail and undoing Drummond's terrible work with the projector Halleck held, terror was spreading through New York and penetrating every crack and corner of the vast city.

It was a terror of the unknown. None but the police knew Wilse Drummond to be responsible for the stunning phenomena of the day, and so these strange visitations of age and youth on people at random stirred deepest dread. Then it became known that the police were somehow, incredibly, able to make normal again those made younger or older.

But it was none the less panic-striking. As the screaming newspapers spread the incredible news, the crowds in the streets became thinner. None knew but that the invisible power would reach to touch them next, hurling them out of their normal age into strange senility or youth, perhaps into death. The city was afraid.

And Halleck was afraid. For as he and Crater worked with the projector to restore the hysterical victims of Drummond, Drummond's terrible power was more and more clear to his eyes.

"Crater, if Drummond isn't taken soon he'll have New York wrecked!" Halleck said as in a police car he and Crater and Manly sped back through the bright-lit streets toward police headquarters from the scene of the latest panic.

NEWBOYS were shouting extras on every corner but the usual night-time crowds were not on the streets. They looked oddly deserted.

"Halleck's right," Manly said. "Look at these streets—people afraid to go out already, and Drummond's been out with this thing for only one day!"

"We'll get Drummond!" Captain Crater told them with iron-like determination. "He's not superhuman, even with the powers he has, and he can't get away from the whole police system indefinitely."

But when they reached police headquarters and entered the office of Commissioner Winston, they found a new situation. The faces of Winston and Tuttle were grim when the three entered the bright-lit office, and without explanation Winston cut off Crater's words and handed him a black-headlined newspaper.

"Read that," he said. "It came out a quarter-hour ago."

Halleck read over Crater's shoulder. The newspaper's whole front page was occupied by a huge-typed letter that had been received by all of New York's newspapers less than an hour before.

"To the People of New York," it read. "The strange changes in age of people throughout the city today, the rejuvenation of some persons and the aging of others, are not supernatural in cause. I, Professor Wilse Drummond of Manhattan University, retired, caused them by the power of controlling human age that I have developed. The police who have been hunting me today can verify this statement.

"As long as the police continue to search for me I will continue to use my powers at random as I have done today. I will not stop until the civil and police officials of New York make public announcement that the search for me has stopped, and guarantee me immunity from arrest or molestation. When such announcement is made I will halt my present activities and use my age-control process in a legitimate manner. Wilse Drummond."

There was a moment's silence in the

office. "Blackmail!" Crater finally said. "Drummond's trying to blackmail the city into giving him immunity!"

"He's not only trying," Commissioner Winston said heavily. "He's succeeding."

"What do you mean?" Crater asked quickly.

"Crater, the mayor has just been here and the governor was on the phone. They order me to make the announcement guaranteeing Drummond immunity."

"But you can't!" Doctor Halleck cried. "Do you realize what it means? Wilse Drummond free to sell youth to the highest bidder—the whole world in awe of him, fawning on him——"

"Give us more time, Winston!" pleaded Crater. "We can get Drummond if we have time enough, and smash this whole hellish business!"

Winston shook his head. "If it was mine to say, I would. But I've got my orders and I've got to do it—have to send the announcement out now. God knows I hate to do it."

He turned to the door, but before he could open it, it swung wide and disclosed an excited orderly, with behind him a dazed-looking stripling of sixteen or seventeen who wore thick glasses and clothes that seemed too old for him.

"This fellow says some one changed his age and other people's over on Broadway just now!" cried the orderly. "He says he saw a man there using a projector openly! His name's Harbison."

"You saw Drummond?" Captain Crater cried. "Just now?"

"I saw a man there," Harbison answered dazedly. "He had a thing like a camera and was turning it on people—he turned it toward me and I changed like this! I'm forty years old, a lawyer, but grew younger in a moment until I was like this! I ran over here——"

"By heaven, Drummond using his projector openly!" Crater cried. "Winston, it may be a chance to get him—let us try it before you send that announcement!"

Winston hesitated. "Do, it's a last chance at Drummond before we give up!" Tuttle cried.

"All right, we'll take it!" Winston said briefly. "Come on!"

THEY ran for the door, Halleck with them with his projector. Harbison, the stripling who had brought them the word, ran after, clutched at Crater's arm.

"What about me? I've got to get back to my own age again—I've got to——" His voice rose to a ragged, nerve-torn scream.

"Halleck, bring this fellow back to his own age!" Crater flung to the biologist. "Then come over after us—there'll be more there for you to work on!"

Then Crater and Winston and Tuttle and Manly were gone, the excited orderly with them. From outside came the roar of the police cars speeding away.

Halleck turned back to Harbison, alone now in Winston's office with him. Harbison was closing the office door.

"All right!" Halleck snapped. "There's no time to lose! Stand over here and I'll bring you back to your own age with this projector. You can tell me from the mirror there when you're normal."

"Wait a minute!" pleaded the other. "I can't do it for a minute——" He sank into a chair, his face in his hands.

Halleck, with an exclamation of tense impatience, waited. Despite his own rejuvenation, the youth the projector had given to him as to Crater and Manly, Halleck felt a deadly weariness.

If Crater and the others could take Drummond, even this late! But Halleck's numbed mind knew the slenderness of this last chance—it would fail and the announcement of immunity would be

made and Wilse Drummond would be free to work horror in the world by setting up his sale of youth. Tingling horror again swept Halleck at that thought.

Tingling—but no, it was not horror but force that was tingling through his body! Tingling force like that of the projector of the aging and rejuvenation rays! And as Doctor Halleck came to that startling realization he heard the buzz of the projector's operation!

He looked down, but the projector in his hands was not turned on! Nor did the buzz come from it! Halleck was aware of sudden increased weariness, weakness, *oldness!* Then his dazed eyes saw that across the room the stripling Harbison was not now sitting in his chair by the door, but standing, that from under his coat he had taken the oblong black case of a projector whose quartz lens was full upon Halleck, and that Harbison's youthful features, his black eyes behind the thick glasses, were—

"Wilse Drummond!" Halleck yelled, and was aware from the deep pitch of his voice that Drummond's ray had already aged him from youth to middle age!

"Yes, Drummond!" cried the other. "You didn't think I'd let you keep the projector you stole from me, Halleck? I'm going to use my power as I planned and I'm going to use it alone, not with you undoing what I do as you have done all this day—"

He stopped as Halleck, with desperate swiftness, clicked the switch of the projector in his own hands to the right, turned its aging-ray upon Drummond!

For a moment they stood with rays turned upon each other, both Drummond and Halleck growing older with each moment, though Halleck was the elder. Then with an exclamation Wilse Drummond reached to the wall-switch behind him and snapped off the lights. The office was plunged in darkness.

They stood in that darkness, projectors buzzing, and then Halleck moved quickly to one side. He felt no more the tingling and knew he was out of range of Drummond's ray. Halleck turned his own projector off, heard and placed the buzz of Drummond's in the darkness. He turned his own ray in that direction.

He heard Drummond move hastily in the darkness in a moment and knew he had reached him with his force. Drummond's projector stopped buzzing and instantly Halleck shut off his lest Drummond place him in the dark.

There was no sound. Halleck's heart was beating rapidly. This was the weirdest of duels, surely, between Drummond and him, two men fighting in darkness with age as the weapon, the loser to die by senility.

Halleck thought of shouting for help—but that too would give away his position in the darkness to Drummond. To open the door would be as fatal, for it would disclose him against the lighted hall outside. But if Crater and the rest would return!

Drummond had sent Crater and the others on a false errand in order to get this chance at Halleck and his projector. Once he had both projectors, and with immunity against further search by the police, Drummond would indeed be winner. Halleck set his teeth.

D RUMMOND'S projector buzzed in the darkness like an alarmed snake and its tingling force shot through Halleck. At once Halleck leapt to escape it, but Drummond followed him by the sound. Halleck stopped, turned his own age-ray desperately through the darkness.

He heard Drummond in turn move, bump against a chair or the desk in the room's corner. He kept his ray turned on that corner a moment, then turned it off. Halleck was feeling very tired and

weak, knew that in the times it had struck him Drummond's ray had made him decades older.

But Drummond too had been hit by his ray—must be middle-aged, at least. In the next moment Halleck again heard Drummond move and shot his invisible aging-ray through the darkness. Again Drummond moved hastily out of it. He was at least evening their ages, Halleck knew.

They fought on through the darkness in the strange combat. Deadly, silent, it went on—Halleck and Drummond moving with infinite care around opposite sides of the dark office, loosing their aging-forces at each suspicion of a sound from each other.

Halleck felt himself very old, with a weakness of age upon him that made it hard for him to move silently. He knew that Drummond too must by then be old, though whether older or younger than himself he could not guess. The time they had carried on the unearthly duel seemed infinite to him, though he knew it could have been but minutes.

Moving with ever greater weakness, his projector and Drummond's buzzing in the darkness at each sound, Halleck knew he could not long continue the fight.

He was beside the desk, now, and a desperate resolve took him—a resolve to end the thing one way or another.

He set his projector on the desk's corner, lens facing into the room. Then he snapped on the age-ray and leapt silently away from the desk.

As the projector buzzed, Drummond's buzzed in swift answer across the room. Halleck crept quickly around the room's edge through the darkness toward the sound of Drummond's projector. He heard Drummond turn it off, then leapt through the darkness toward him.

He struck Drummond, clutched him,

and they struggled—Drummond's projector knocked from his hands by the shock. They fought together in the darkness. Halleck's blows were feeble, his grip weak, but Drummond's were as weak or weaker. Two old men who moments before had been young, struggling in the dark room! The projector on the desk still buzzed.

Halleck reeled with Drummond toward the desk, felt the tingling force of the aging-ray sweeping through them. Drummond felt it and sought to break loose but Halleck held him fiercely. His strength was fast waning as the ray made both of them swiftly older. The one of them who was oldest would first die of old age, Halleck knew!

Staggering himself, Halleck clawed to hold Drummond with him in the ray—to end it one way or another! Halleck felt the tingling force making him older and older still, as desperately he held Drummond, older—weaker—he felt himself swaying, consciousness going—

Then Drummond slipped limply from his grasp, struck the floor with a thump! Halleck, with a tremendous last effort of his waning faculties, reached a hand through the darkness to the buzzing projector and snapped it off. Then, clutching the desk for support, he sank nervelessly beside Drummond.

LIGHT suddenly flooded the room, almost blinding Halleck's dim eyes. He heard voices crying out excitedly, feet running and hands supporting him, but for the moment could see nothing clearly but the motionless form on the floor beside him.

Wise Drummond lay there, his body shrivelled, face withered and hair snow-white—old—old—dead of senility.

Halleck, looking dazedly into the mirror opposite, saw himself as a white-haired, twisted ancient as old almost as

Drummond. Crater and Winston and the rest gathered excitedly about him.

"You got him with the age-ray, Halleck!" Crater was crying. "You got Drummond!"

"Crater—the other ray——" uttered Halleck in a cracked voice.

Captain Crater was already taking the projector from the desk, turning the rejuvenation force upon Halleck. In the mirror Halleck saw age fall from him, as he grew younger into a man of seventy-five, one of sixty-five, one of sixty—his normal age.

"That's enough!" he said.

Crater turned the ray off and Halleck stood the scholarly, gray-haired Doctor Halleck he had been until that day.

"Crater, you and Manly?" he said.

"Yes," Crater answered. "For God's sake let's get back to normal."

In moments the aging-ray had made them their usual ages, Crater the middle-aged detective-captain, Manly his younger aide.

"And now——" said Crater.

He swung up his pistol by the barrel, its butt a hammer hanging over the two black projectors.

"Go on!" Halleck said. "Smash them before some one else tries to use them!"

"Go ahead!" Winston nodded. "If you don't now we'll lose our nerve and keep the damn things!"

Crash! Crash! Crater's pistol-butt smashed into shattered glass and wire and metal the potential rejuvenation of humanity.

He stood up and they looked at the dead Drummond and his smashed projectors, then at one another. Then they turned to the door, Tuttle's voice excited as they went out, Winston and Halleck looking back, Crater turning the light off as he closed the office door. Silent beside the shattered metal and glass fragments, looking up into the darkness with frozen, age-distorted face, lay the man who had conquered age.