

Two Blooming

The Adventures of Two Criminals.

Bay Trees.

BY DOUGLAS WINTON.

"I have seen the wicked . . . spreading himself like a green bay-tree."—Psalm, xlii, v. 35.

(Continued.)

"The other thieves," said Piggy, "the other thieves—quite right! Well, as I say, all they left me was some stamps. Afterwards it struck me that I was an idiot not to think of clothes. There were no overcoats in the hall, of course; but very likely if I had looked carefully in the bedrooms. I might have got a regular rig-out. However, that is neither here nor there. The discovery I made and which all this yarn is only to lead up to, is this"—here Jack Demerso paused a moment, then bent forward in his chair, and continued impressively—"There is nothing but yards and so on between the back leads of that street of little houses and the back leads of the houses which form the east side of Vigor Square!"

"Whew! Vigor Square, that's a pretty rich neighborhood."

"Fairly," replied Jack. "Not like Park Lane, of course. Just city men who have country houses too. Not the sort of place one would care to dine."

Piggy looked at his companion, and at his filthy dunghill rags; and the humour of the remark striking him, burst into a hearty laugh.

"Bravo, Jack!" he said; "I haven't laughed like that for three years. So the idea is that we use your house as jumping-off ground to burgle one of the Vigor Square palaces. It's a flash of genius!"

"And the beauty of it is," said Jack, "that we needn't trouble about apparatus. We'll easily contrive all we shall need for a first attempt from what we find in the house. Afterwards—"

"Afterwards we'll have the best equipment to be found in the trade—trust me for that," said Piggy. "I'm not a chemist, and a mechanic too, for nothing. Now let's start. President Roosevelt is quite right—the strenuous life is the only happy one. I feel five years younger already."

One difficulty presented itself as soon as they got downstairs. It was one who pointed it out.

"Look here, Piggy," he said; "we can't walk together—his conveniences, you know. I don't want to flatter you, but you really look almost respectable enough for a barman on his evening out. I couldn't get a job as window-cleaner like this. No, no," he said, as Piggy demurred. "Anything that attracts attention is against us, and the fewer chances we take the better."

"Right you are," replied Piggy. "Next time you shall be the swell, and I'll be the tramp. Now I'll stroll on alone. I take it what we've got to do is to try and find

out, by watching the lights and so on, which houses are unoccupied. Any one who has a country house ought to be there at this time of the year. There will probably be caretakers; however, I suppose we can't expect to have everything our own way."

"Go on then," said Jack. "I'll never be very far behind you. After we've been mouching round the square half an hour or so, I'll watch my opportunity and come up to you, and pretend to beg. Then we can compare notes."

Anyone who had seen Piggy walking around Vigor Square that evening might have taken him for a broker's man, a private detective, a lawyer's clerk doing a little watching; but a prospective burglar—never! He had gone into his nefarious profession in such dead earnest, so thoroughly with his eyes open, and, thanks to the perverted mental standpoint from which he surveyed things, to which allusion has been made in the last chapter, felt so little ashamed—or rather not ashamed at all—of what he was about to do, that he lacked all those almost indefinable characteristics of gait and manner by which the guardians of our streets are accustomed to identify the criminal, in case or in posse.

As he had supposed, out of the row of twenty-four houses which constituted the east side of the square, there was no difficulty in picking out nearly a dozen at which no lights were visible, either at the windows or by the fanlight over the front door. The owners of these houses, it was to be presumed, were absent. There had been time for him to discover so much, when a whining figure, with outstretched hand, approached him, saying—

"There's no one about. Step across by the square garden, there where the branch hangs over. Well? he said, as they arrived at the spot he had pointed out, and stood against the railings.

"No lack of empty houses," said Piggy, "as I suppose you've seen for yourself. Now, the question is, which house is opposite your empty house in the next street?"

"That doesn't really matter so much," replied Jack, "because the leads all communicate, and once we are out on them we can take our choice of the whole row. However, I can tell you. I have just been pacing the distance, and my house in Utterson Street is just opposite Number 6."

"Number 6," Piggy repeated. "One—two—three—why, Number 6 is that big one there, and empty, as far as I can make out, and so are 5 and 4.

On the other side, 7 and 8 are both showing lights in the hall. So all we have to remember is to try the house just opposite, which is 6, or better still, the next one south, which is 5, and is not only empty itself, but has an empty house on each side of it."

"Wait a bit; before we make our final plans, we may as well test those three houses for caretakers," said Jack.

"Excellent idea," Piggy replied; "and sounds just like chemistry. But how?"

"Easy enough. I will give a run-away ring at all three houses, and you wait here and watch."

"Well?" he said, as he rejoined Piggy five minutes later; "what's the result?"

"As good as we could wish," Piggy replied. "Someone, a man I think came to the door of Number 6. Nothing happened at either of the other two houses. That doesn't say that we shan't find anyone there, of course. Caretakers have a way of spending the evening at the nearest 'pub,' still, that we can't help. Now what do you say, Jack, shall we get down this area of yours at once? It's a little early, but the street seems as quiet as a churchyard."

"I think it will be less risk to go now than to wait and be seen loafing in the neighborhood," Jack replied.

It was only eleven, or, at most, half-past eleven o'clock; but Utterson Street was as deserted as if the time had been two o'clock in the morning. It takes but a half minute for two men to get over an area gate, and that the one dangerous time of this preliminary part of their enterprise, was soon accomplished. They pushed open the door, opening from the area into the coal-seller, entered, pushed it to again behind them, and Piggy struck a match. Jack promptly found the candle lying where he had left it, lit it, and led the way to the kitchen.

"So far, so good," said Piggy. "Now, it will be just as well to wait some time before we make a start for the leads. You might amuse yourself looking through the bedrooms for that new rig-out you were talking about. Don't put it on, except to try if it fits; you'd only spoil the thing, climbing about in them. Bring everything down here, ready to put on our way back. And, by the way, bring down anything you can find in the shape of handbags, Gladstones, small portmanteaus, and so on."

"What shall you do?"

"I?" said Piggy. "I will roust about the basement, and see what I can discover in the shape of tools,

or anything else that may be useful." So Jack lit a second candle, and went upstairs, while Piggy began his task of overhauling the lower regions in a box-room he found enough pieces of cord to make two serviceable ropes, each of about twenty feet. Even if they were not needed for climbing on the leads, they would doubtless be useful for hauling up swag. He had much more trouble in finding tools; and after half an hour's ransacking all he could muster were a screwdriver, a chisel without a handle, and an iron bar, which apparently had once been some part of a small bedstead, a child's cot probably.

"Soft iron, and cast at that," he muttered, as he balanced it in his right hand, surveying it with dissatisfaction. "However, something in the shape of a lever we must have, and this is the best I can find. It strikes me that Jack and I—or rather I, for the blame is on me—have been a bit too precipitate. Had we only been content to wait another day we might have had a glazier's diamond, a saw to saw round locks, and a decent Jammy. Hallo, Jack! is that you?"

Piggy had returned to the kitchen, and fancied that he heard his companion in the passage. He looked up, and saw, standing in the doorway, a short, thick-set, burly-looking man. A taller, equally unprepossessing, individual was looking over his shoulder. Almost before Piggy well knew what was happening, the former had rasped out.

"It's only one. Come on, Bill, scrag the b—r!"

And the two of them were rushing on him. But, if Piggy had never gone in for games, he had gone in for working in the workshop, and for dumbbells and gymnastics. Also, as good luck would have it, his left hand chanced to be resting on the back of a wooden kitchen chair.

Swift as an arrow, he sent it hurtling at the legs of his foremost opponent, who fell, tripped as neatly as by a Cornish Wrestler. Over him fell his comrade, and before either of them could regain his feet Piggy had got in a couple of blows with his iron bar on their heads, and was master of the situation.

He lost no time in binding their arms and legs securely with his ropes. Then, hearing Jack, who had wondered what the disturbance was, coming down the basement stairs, stepped out into the passage to meet him.

"Come in here, and see what I've done," he said.

"And by the way, an idea strikes me; take a good look at these chaps and see if you recognize them."

"Easily; they are the fellows who burgled this house last night. Not a doubt of it."

"H'm! I suppose that means that we are not the only clever people in the world. They also seem to have tumbled to the plan of getting to Vigor Square from these leads. Now what's to be done? To begin with, we must see if I've killed 'em. Know anything about wounds, Jack?"

Jack Demerso shook his head.

(To be continued.)

OF INTEREST TO CANADIANS.

An Interesting Announcement by the Canadian Society of New York.

At a recent meeting of the Executive Committee of the Canadian Society of New York, a program of entertainments for the members and their guests was arranged for the months of November and December.

The evening of November 19 will be designated as "Ladies' Night", when a special dinner and entertainment will be provided for the members and their guests, including ladies.

The annual dinner will be held on the evening of December 6th. Representative men of Canada and the United States will be the guests of the Society. An instructive program of speeches and music has been arranged for this occasion.

The Canadian Society is composed of three hundred and forty members, all Canadians by birth, now residing and engaged in business in the City of New York and vicinity. Its objects are to foster cordial social relations among Canadians and to advance in every way possible their interests.

The Society makes its entertainments during the winter months occasions of genuine hospitality to all Canadians whether members of the Society or not.

All Canadians are requested to send the names and addresses of their relatives and friends who are Canadians and reside in New York City and vicinity, to Mr. J. A. Bucknell, Secretary, No. 170 Broadway, New York, so that the courtesies of the Society may be extended to them.

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St. Lawrence Navigation.

Ocean navigation in the St. Lawrence will close in three weeks. The last sailing scheduled is that of the Allan Line steamship Ontario, with passengers and freight for Glasgow, after which the ocean steamships will take up their regular winter sailings from St. John, Halifax or Portland, instead of Montreal.

BREAKFAST IS BETTER THAN MEDICINE.

Quit taking nostrums—go to bed early—rise early and breakfast on "Swiss Food."

WOMEN AS OFFICIALS.

In Germany Many of Them Hold Government Jobs.

Women have become an indispensable factor in the German postal telegraph and telephone service, it seems, in spite of the conservatism which prevented the utilization of feminine activities in public work in Germany until nearly half a century later than in France and England. United States Consul Monaghan of Chemnitz, in his recent communication to the United States Commissioner of Commerce and Labor, reviews briefly the conditions and requirements which are of interest as showing the progress of women in the fatherland.

It is not every woman who can obtain a position in the German postal service, so strict are the government regulations respecting age, character, education and health. A government medical examiner pronounces upon the health, which must be perfect; the age must not exceed 30 or be under 18, and a good common school education is a primary requisite.

Possessing all these qualifications, the woman candidate is eligible only to a position as assistant in the post office, and the highest salary she can hope for is \$119 a year. In the telegraph and telephone service, however, all grades of positions are open to women, though the rules of admission are equally strict and no women with children are employed.

Four thousand women are now engaged in the telephone service of the German Empire, it is stated 1,000 of them being in Berlin. The hours are light, ranging from six to eight hours a day.

The highest pay which a woman can draw in German telephone offices is \$357, which is said to afford a comfortable living in Germany, but it is a low wage compared to that to be obtained in England, where experienced telephone clerks get \$600 and the chief supervisors are paid as high as \$2,550.

In Germany, however, it must be noted that women, on their withdrawal from active labor after the prescribed number of years of faithful work are awarded a government pension on the same plane with men.

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