

# Two Blooming

# The Adventures of Two Criminals.

BY DOUGLAS WINTON.

# Bay Trees.

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

(Continued.)

CHAPTER XV.

A Narrow Squeak.

Fortune had in fact for the moment ranged herself on the side of the forces of law and order. When Piggy, to approach the wharf more noiselessly, had let his paddle drop quietly into the water, he knew that there was a spare paddle in the boat but he did not know that it was badly broken. This, however, when he came to use it proved to be the case, the blade being split from the edge to the loom. For anything but very careful paddling in smooth water it was useless. And the tide was making up towards Hampton and Windsor, and running stronger every minute, and to reach his nearest private landing-place Piggy must paddle down Chelsea and Westminster away a good mile and a half, and cross the centre of the stream, where the full force of the tide would be felt into the bargain. And he wanted to get away with the jewels, and, above all, to warn Jack, and that quickly. For he did not know how much the police might know. So, remembering that, even at night, there were generally a couple or so of cabs to be found outside Kew station he let his boat drift a few hundred yards up-stream with the current, then paddled her in carefully to a boat-builder's yard, landed as quietly as he could, and after traversing a couple of streets, was at the cab-rank. There were just two cabs, on it, both four-wheelers. Piggy chose that which appeared to have the better horse, and gave the address of the hotel where Jack and he were staying in Stamford Street. This trip just suited Piggy, who came from a central news, and was glad of a return trip to the region of theatres, late closing clubs, and other producers of well-paying night fares for industrious cabmen; and he drove him along at what, for a four-wheeler, might be called a rattling pace. Piggy did think of breaking his drive so as to throw off possible pursuit, and under ordinary circumstances would certainly have done so. But, to tell the truth, Piggy was not quite his usual self that night. He had been quite in earnest when, a few days since, on their return from Southampton, he had told Jack that they both needed a rest. Nerve force is somewhat like chemical electricity, it cannot be poured out continuously, or too much at a time or the battery runs down, and must be left to recuperate. Piggy had run his battery dangerously low, and it was not yet recovered. The certitude that he now had that the police were close

on their trail, showed him how, with all his skill, he could never be sure of not making some little slip. The sight of Inspector McKay's head over the wall of the studio grounds had seemed to him like the foreshadowing of a Nemesis, which was bound to overtake them soon. However, his forebodings of ill were not very deep-rooted; before the cab was half-way to Stamford Street he was leaning back, his eyes clear and steady, and his jaw shot out, once more the Piggy of old, rejoicing in the fray, and sure of victory. Still, when he entered it with his glass-lined basket of plunder, he was still, to use a plain and expressive Americanism, a bit rattled; otherwise he would hardly have risked driving straight from Kew to Stamford St. He thought of this before the driver had taken off the nosebag, and cursed his folly.

"After all, though," he said, "it might be almost as dangerous to be put down somewhere in central London, and be noticed by dozens of people taking a fresh cab, with this affair in my hands. As it is, I don't think a soul has seen me."

Here he was wrong; a porter, the solitary night porter of the station, had been standing in the shadow of the stairway while he took the cab, though not near enough to see very clearly either the fare, or the parcel that he carried, nor to hear the address. However, when, not much more than half an hour afterwards, the Kew police came round, they of course being the first to have the alarm, to inquire if anyone answering to such and such a description, carrying a sort of round basket, had taken a cab there recently, Jim Dodd, the porter, was able to say that some one, who, as well as he could make out—but then he could not be very certain—was carrying something of the kind had taken an old Joe Dawson's four-wheeler just a little time since. A glance at the register of licensed cabs told the Kew inspector where Joe Dawson's cab was stabled, and a few words through the telephone ensued that, when he came to change horses, a police-officer should be there to question him.

It was getting on for two o'clock when Piggy dismissed his cab and rang the bell. Fortunately, Stamford Street is, to a certain nasty type of Bohemian, much what certain parts of the West End are to the ordinary clubman; Stamford St. does not begin its evenings till the music halls close, and seemingly does not go to bed at all. So the door was promptly opened, and Piggy marched upstairs with his burden and entered the room which he shar-

ed with Jack. The latter was lying on the bed smoking; he had thoroughly entered the idea of the rest cure—he was not even reading. Piggy made certain that no one was loitering near, then closed and locked the door, put down his basket and said:

"Jack, you and I must stop our rest cure, and prepare for action."

"What's up?" asked Jack, springing up.

"Exactly how it has come about I can't tell you," said Piggy "but, briefly, the police are on to the studio. Kew is closed to us, just as much as your rooms in Paardberg Mansions or mine in Ratcliffe street are closed. I was just in time to save the swag; but I had a tussle for it."

"Good Lord!" cried Jack; "let me hear about it!"

Piggy gave an exact account of what he had seen and done.

"There's no fear that I killed him, or even hurt him seriously," he said in conclusion. "All the time I was getting my leg mended in hospital I used to talk to the doctors and nurses, and now I'm quite doctor enough myself to know how to knock a chap temporarily out of time without putting his life in danger."

"But what are we going to do?" asked Jack blankly; "all our bolting holes are stopped now; we have nowhere to go, no base to work from."

"On the contrary, we have still got the best base of all—a flying base; in fact, the only base we need for what we have yet to do; and then, when, it has served us in that capacity, we make our final bow from its stern, and it takes us to our new career in South America; I mean the boat at Yarmouth. That is," he added, after a moment's pause. "I hope we have her still."

"So do I," said Jack.

"Never fear! She must be all right, lying there at your order as Mr. Henderson. They haven't had time to find out everything," said Piggy cheerfully. "But if by any chance they should be on to her too, why, then—"

"What?" asked Jack.

"Why, then we'll get another somehow. We haven't done so well up to now to be beaten at the post." The eyes were keen and sparkling, the face was set—Piggy was the old Piggy once again.

"However many chances we may have ranged against us," he continued, "we must not forget that we have one tremendous chance in our favour, and we ought to be thankful for it. I mean money. We have each a hundred in notes in our belts; then, the morning that I shipped you off in your box, I drew out my

whole balance; there is nearly another thousand in small notes left of that. By the way, we will divide it at once."

"There," he said, when the division had been made, "with six hundred pounds or so in small notes each, we are in a position to operate independently, in case either of us should by any chance require more, he will be able to pledge or sell of the smaller of the Tony Croft stones. Now let's divide them."

"Do you think it better?" asked Jack, a little dubiously.

"I'm sure of it," said Piggy. "You see now we have got to separate—and to hustle; you to get the Sea Queen commissioned, and to buy provisions, get hold of the boy who will accompany us to South America, and last, but not least, buy a diver's outfit and learn something about using it. We don't want to go away without what we left at the bottom of Southampton Harbour."

"Certainly not," said Jack; "but after the time we had getting it, not the jewels, don't you think you might as well keep them? The crew I ship will be new men, and they might try to rob their owner."

"Dishonesty is a terrible thing," said Piggy with a grim smile; "but I fear it must be risked. You see, things are getting so warm for us now, Jack, that the only place for that swag, from now on, like our money, is on our persons; and not only do we ensure, by dividing it, that if one of us should be so unfortunate as to get what the regular members of our profession would call 'pinched,' the other will still be in possession of the sinews of war; but also, from a practical point of view, they are rather too bulky for one of us to comfortably stow them all away. So—one moment!"

Piggy strode to the door, which he unlocked and threw open; then, having assured himself that there was no peeping or eavesdropping going on, locked it again, and taking the bottom part of the carboy in both hands, poured out the contents on his bed. For half an hour they worked, unwrapping the various parcels of jewelry, and dividing it into portions, wherein value, portability, and disposability should be equally represented; then in arranging these about their pockets and money belts. When they had finished Jack was yawning.

Piggy looked at him anxiously.

"That will never do, Jack," he said. "We have got to do without sleep to-night."

"What's the harm in taking two or three hours?" asked Jack. "We shall be twice as fit when we've had it."

"Perhaps," replied Piggy; "but in our present state I doubt if either of us, once we get our heads down, will lift them again before ten or eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and that will never do."

"Why—aw—yaw—aw—oh—oh! why not?" asked Jack. "Aren't we hidden here just as snug as a yaw-yaw—yaw! bug in a rug? Nobody knows we're here."

"I hope not," said Piggy, "and I think not; but that doesn't say they don't. I've come to the conclusion that we have been rather inclined to underestimate the intellect and re-

sources of the New Scotland Yard people. They may not all be geniuses, but they seem to have a nasty way of having a trick or two up their sleeves at critical moments that alarms me. They have given us an unpleasant surprise or two lately. Why, hang it all! he's not listening. Hi! Jack! wake up! wake up, man!"

(To be continued.)

**STARVED TO DEATH.**

Our text to-day is the story of the miser who taught his ass to live on straw, of which he gave him a smaller portion every day.

Just as the miser had got him so trained as to eat one straw a day—the poor ass died.

He is an ass who starves himself to death—as thousands are doing, misled by foolish teachers—because their stomachs have become too weak through neglect or disease, to do the work which nature has provided for their stomachs to do.

Because the engine is out of gear, would you consign it to the junk heap?

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Certainly not! Take Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets!

One thing is sure as shooting. You can never get a new stomach. You must mend it, or it will lead you a miserable existence.

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These methods are all unscientific—therefore false.

Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets are scientific—therefore true, and successful.

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Surely not.

Especially when we make it plain that no promise is made to cure more than one disease—Dyspepsia.

Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets are a positive cure for just this one disease.

They are a scientific combination of ingredients which search out the weak spots in all the digestive organs and make them strong and well. They have an immediate digestive action on undigested food, and thus, while curing weak organs, they at the same time help them to do their work.

They thus stand for all that is good in the medical treatment of Dyspepsia, and for nothing that is bad.

They are not a fad but a fact. They are safe, pleasant, certain and permanent, and can be taken by the most delicate invalids without fear of harmful results.

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## A MAINE TOWN.

### Great Improvement in Houlton Since the Fire.

(Portland Advertiser.)

No other place in Maine can boast the improvement made in the past two years that has been accomplished in Houlton for that town has indeed risen from the ashes. On May 17, 1902, occurred the great fire which caused a property loss here of nearly half a million dollars or by the selectmen's books of \$430,000. It was a dreadful blaze and many feared that Houlton would never recover but now all will unite in saying that the fire was one of the best things that ever happened in Houlton. More than 100 houses and store buildings were destroyed by the flames, considerably more than that number or 130 have been erected to take their places. The churches have been replaced by more modern and commodious edifices, the new places of business are much superior to the old, as may be seen by a glance at the splendid Fogg and Thibadeau blocks while wider streets and superior water power are also to be reckoned in the net results.

The valuation of the new buildings which have been put up during the past year will amount to more than a quarter of a million of dollars. This seems large but it is true and today no town in the state presents a neater and nicer appearance than does Houlton. Many of the houses are expensive and all are sightly.

### MARRIAGE BROKERS.

In Italy there are any number of matrimonial brokers, and the business is quite a regular institution. In their offices there are books with the names and particulars of all the marriageable girls, rich or poor, who live in the district, and the brokers go about endeavoring to arrange engagements in exactly the same way as they would do ordinary trading business. It depends entirely upon their success whether they receive any payment for their efforts or not.

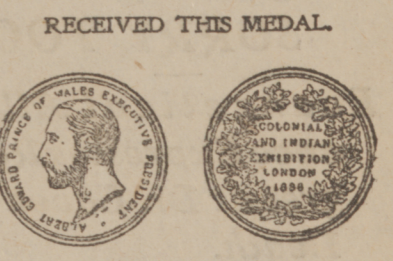
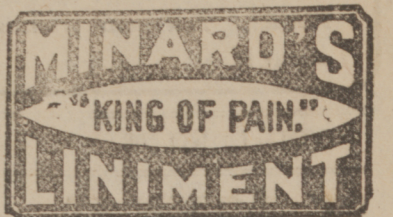
A sack of thirty-five potatoes, weighing 119 pounds, raised by R. S. Dunlap, near Ault, Colorado, forms a fair sample of the "spud" crop raised in the Centennial State the present fall. From twenty acres Mr. Dunlap harvested 3,500 sacks of tubers.

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