

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 xxvii. v. 35.

(Continued.)

"Wal, sergeant, or whatever you are, I guess yes," replied the little Yankee, who, now that the time of trial had come, did not want for pluck. "I don't say I saw through you, won't pretend to be more clever than I am; still, there was a sort of feeling, deep down in my little Mary somewhere, that this crook-catching business was requiring rather too many letters, and cheques, and stamps, and so on, to be quite natural; so I just took an opportunity to change them two letters when you weren't looking; it came easy, as they were both addressed to the same place. If you had any crooked game on, I reckoned you'd a just given that last one a lick and posted it, then gone ahead to cash your cheque bright 'n' early in the morning and got landed in jail. Wal, I've missed getting you, but you ain't got the hoodie neither."

"We have the cheque," said Piggy meditatively.

"But I don't reckon my bank'll cash an overdraft like that, not on sight, anyway; specially when they telephone me, an' don't raise no answer."

"Ah!" said Piggy, struck by an idea. "Childs-Gordon, I think I see a way—would you?"

This last exclamation was caused by Van Coortvelt, who had kept a wary eye on the traffic, suddenly yelling "Help!" at a "fixed-point" policeman. But Piggy's dashed out fingers stifled the cry in his throat. There was a good deal of noisy traffic—there were then in Victoria Street—and the constable was some way off. He made no sign.

"You say you have a way, Porson," said Childs-Gordon, grimly, when the gag had once more been inserted in their prisoner's mouth.

"By God!" so have I. We'll take this drip-up little mummy of a money-grubbing machine into some quiet place, and wait him there with a stick unless he writes us another letter; that's my plan."

Piggy surveyed their captive.

"No," he said, "I won't have that. To begin with, I don't believe we'd get our letter; this old boy has grit in him, though he is led by the nose by his wife and daughters. Then, as likely as not, he has spleen, or heart disease, or something, and might kick the bucket under the treatment, and there we should be with ropes round our necks, and that is a thing that, so far, I have been fortunate enough to keep clear of; and I've no wish to break my record in that way at the last. Besides, if we did get it, it'd look

a bit queer on ordinary unaddressed paper."

"We could get a sheet of his club paper," said Childs-Gordon. "These big clubs have so many members that you can almost always get in without challenge. Let's see what his club is."

A little search in the prisoner's pockets brought to light a card case. With the aid of Piggy's torch, Childs-Gordon examined a card.

"Magnates, Northumberland Avenue," he said; "that ought to be easy enough. Reading-room is just inside the door on the left. I'm hardly in the fig to try it, but you might, Porson. What do you say. Shall we tell our friend on the box to drive to Northumberland Avenue."

"No," said Piggy decisively. "With one slight alteration, the plan stands as it did before. I'm giving up bad practices, and I'll have no hand in torturing this poor little devil. Don't fear, Childs-Gordon, you will get your half of the hundred thousand all right. There will be a slight increase of risk, but it is I who take that. Tell me, you are sure there is nothing against you?"

"Morally, everything—frauds, sins, enough to sink a battleship, but, as far as the authorities are concerned, nothing at all. My ward, whose trustee I was, would not prosecute; and my debts, legitimate and otherwise, an old Quixotish fool of an uncle, who had hated me all his life, went and paid, or arranged somehow for the honour of the family name. If he'd given me a quarter of the cash to use myself, I need never have come a cropper at all, and, by this time, would have been at the top of the tree. But didn't we go into all this before deciding that the cheque should be made out in my real name?"

"Yes," replied Piggy, "but this new development makes the matter more delicate; it's necessary to be doubly sure. Now tell me, do you think the clerks, or any of them at this bank, the—Anglo-Canadian, will know you by sight?"

"Does that matter?" said Childs-Gordon. "I am afraid that there is pretty sure to be some one there who will know me by sight; it's not long since I was a pretty familiar figure in town, both City and West End, you know."

"All the better," said Piggy. "Now let's examine the situation in detail. To-morrow morning you walk in and present your cheque across the counter. There is no doubt about the cheque, there is no doubt about your being yourself, and there is no doubt about the bank's being perfectly willing to allow an overdraft to our

friend here to any amount he likes to ask for. The only thing that looks in the least fishy, is that he doesn't write a line to say what he is going to do. Of course, the fact that he is an American goes for something. Yankees are famous for dealing with large sums by a single stroke of the pen—it is a kind of mania."

"All the same," said Childs-Gordon, "I don't think that a British Bank will pay out a hundred pounds like that on the nod. If he had the balance it would be another thing, they would pay out at once. As it is, I think that this little beast has summed up the matter pretty correctly; they will telephone to his house, and, when they get no answer."

"On the contrary," said Piggy, "they will get an answer, an answer to go ahead and pay, and that he will be round that afternoon to arrange about covering the overdraft. Turn him over, and see if you can find a latchkey."

But there was no latchkey on Van Coortvelt. The little man grinned, or tried to, but, with the gag, the result was ghastly.

"Never mind," said Piggy, "I have one. It may need a little coaxing, but it will open the door all right."

"You have one!"

"Took an impression the night that he was my host and didn't know it. Now listen. At eleven o'clock to the minute, you will enter the bank and present your cheque. I will give five minutes for you to have your palaver with the manager; and, at five minutes past eleven, to the second, I will march into Van Coortvelt's house and up to his telephone. Unless I am greatly mistaken, it will ring just as I get there."

"But the risk?" said Childs-Gordon who had yet to know Piggy.

"Great in appearance, slight in reality," he replied nonchalantly. "To begin with, I will have first telephoned from some hotel, or any place with a public phone, to get his manservant out of the way—there is only one there when the family is not in town. I shall telephone in Van Coortvelt's name, that he is to—oh! anything, go and meet a train, come and bail his master out at Bow Street, anything, that will get him out of the way."

"Look out a number in St. John's Wood, or well away West in the Fulham Road, and say he's to take a new hat and a change of linen there," said Childs-Gordon, who could not forgive the little man for getting the better of him with the letters. "Servants talk, you know, and—I say, old boy, are you a Methodist?"

Van Coortvelt groaned, he was. "There will only be a housemaid to fear," continued Piggy; "and it would be only great bad luck that would send her to the hall during the very few seconds that I shall be passing through it, but, if I do meet her, I think you may trust me to bluff her. Yes—that's an idea—I will provide myself with one of our friend's cards, and a line scribbled on it—I can forge all right in pencil—anyway, it can't be very difficult, however it turns out; three minutes, and the trick is done, and I am in a hansom speeding away to meet you and divide the swag."

Childs-Gordon looked at him in admiration.

"I wish I had your nerve," he sighed. "But why go to the house at all? Why not telephone from somewhere else, in Van Coortvelt's name, to the bank manager to honour the cheque?"

"Too thin, my boy," replied Piggy, shaking his head. "That dodge worked when the telephone first appeared, but it won't work now, not in a matter of a hundred thousand pounds. A bank manager who gets a telephone of that kind from Jones, says yes; then waits a minute or two and calls up Jones, and asks him about some little detail he's forgotten; then he soon finds out if the message really came from Jones or not. No, if a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing properly; I must go to the house. But cheer up, Childs-Gordon, I succeed, I assure you; I don't fail."

The cab had long ago crossed Westminster Bridge, and was now, sometimes at a trot, sometimes at a walk, spurring the horse, making its way in the direction of Woolwich and Gravesend. Some time after midnight it turned into a little by-street in Woolwich, and pulled up.

"Look after this magnate of Hall Street," said Piggy to Childs-Gordon. "This is where we change horses. I must get out to see that our other friend on the box doesn't get gossiping."

The change effected, the cab resumed its route, this time at a better pace, and eventually, after a few more miles had been traversed, pulled up opposite a landing place on the Gravesend waterfront. Piggy at once got out, and, taking his little electric torch, flashed the old signal—two short, along, a pause, and then another long. Within two minutes a dinghy had put off from the Sea Queen, dimly to be discerned as she lay at her anchor.

"That's all right," said Piggy. "Bundle out our passenger, Childs-Gordon." And Mr. Van Coortvelt was bundled out accordingly.

(To be concluded.)

DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS

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Miss Nellie Clark, Lambeth, Ont., tells of her cure in the following words:—"I suffered for about two years with kidney trouble. I ached all over, especially in the small of my back; not being able to sleep well, no appetite, menstruation irregular, nervous irritability, and brick-dust deposit in urine, were some of my symptoms. I took Doan's Kidney Pills. The pain in my back gradually left me, my appetite returned, I sleep well, and am effectually cured. I can highly recommend Doan's Kidney Pills to all sufferers from kidney trouble."

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He stands in the lonesome night
When the wind blows chill and the
clouds hang low,
And the flakes fall ghostly white.
And the little fellows who sleep up-
stairs
And go to bed without saying their
prayers,
He fills their dreams with fears and
lears.
The little old man of the snow!
The little old man of the snow
Knows each little fellow in town;
He watches and waits at bad boys' gates
To catch 'em an' swallow 'em down!
He knows when they anger their mothers
so,
And he chuckles and says to himself,
"Oh! no!
I'll open my mouth and down they'll go!
This little old man of the snow!"

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THE COST OF A GREAT CITY.

New York Spends Over \$110,000,000 to Keep Going.

(Wall Street Journal, New York.)

The following compares the city budget for 1905 with the city budget in 1901:

1901	.....	\$ 98,100,413
1905	.....	110,524,259
Increase	.....	\$12,423,846

This is an increase of 12.6 per cent in four years. This seems large, and it is large, but New York is a great city and is just now in a state of transition, and reconstruction which inevitably calls for increased expenditures, to be met mostly by issuing bonds, but involving also increased taxation. In the four years from 1900 to 1904 the expenditure of the Federal government increased 9.1 per cent, but in this computation the payment for the Panama canal was deducted. Still that was reasonable for purposes of comparison as the Panama canal payment was of the same nature as the payments for the subway. The nation made the former by taking the money for its surplus of previous years, while the city paid for the latter by increasing its indebtedness.

A comparison of the budget of 1905 with that of 1901 shows the following increases:

Interest on public debt	.....	\$4,708,501
Redemption of debt	.....	8,088,429
Education department	.....	1,985,138
Fire department	.....	1,108,815
Street cleaning	.....	445,790
Charitable institutions	.....	50,238
Police	.....	92,157

Some idea of the immensity of the cost of the city government may be obtained by the following comparison of the 1905 budget with the expenditure of a number of governments:

New York city	.....	\$110,524,259
Canada	.....	30,759,000
China	.....	71,896,800
Japan in peace	.....	132,805,000
Netherlands	.....	61,468,000
Belgium	.....	116,500,000

It is only in comparison with the greater powers, like England, France, Germany, Russia and the United States that the expenditure of New York city seems small. It costs about as much to defray the expenses of this city as it does those of the second rate powers of the world.

It has been said that the city is in a state of transition and reconstruction. This has necessitated vast expenditures, for new public works, such as the subway, bridges, etc. This work of reconstruction is by no means completed. The future growth and commercial supremacy of the city depend on a continued policy of liberal expenditures for public improvements. At present the city has an apparent margin of new indebtedness of more than \$100,000,000 but a very large proportion is already pledged for works begun or authorized. The necessities of the not far distant future will have to be met by an increase in real estate valuations or else a change in the constitutional debt limitations.

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