Two Blooming Bay Trees.

The Adventures of Two Criminals.

BY DOUGLAS WINTON.

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

(Continued.)

CHAPTER XVII.

The Harvest of the Sea.

Three days after events recorded in the last chapter, while the last rays of the setting sun gilded the spires, away on the opuosite side of the Solent, in the direction of Southampton, Water, a little knot of loungers, well-dressed idlers, yachtsmen for the most part, stood on Cowes pier, speculating on the probable business and destination of a small schooner-rigged craft, lately arrived, now lying at anchor a cable's length or two away.If trim paint and white canvas and absence of any apparent commercial occupation went for anything, she seemed to be a yacht. On the other hand, except herhaps in old Dutch days, when first the term was used, who ever saw a yacht broad of beam and bluff-bowed like that? Though,bluff-bowed or not, no one could deny that she had the lines of a magnificent sea-boat. Also, although there was evidence of very different fittings from those of an ordinary merchant-ship, there was to be seen neither the perpetual brass-work nor the sailors in uniform which are generally the special characteristics of a yacht, even a small one. In fact, she was a puzzle.

Just the comfortable sort of craft that I should like to take a long shooting trip in,' said a middle-aged military looking man, who had been examining her attentively through a field glass. "She doesn't fly any burgee. Any one know who her owner is?"

"She is owned by a friend of mine, sir, a Mr. Riversmeade," said a short, rubicund gentleman, looking something like a naval officer in mufti, with the starchiest of linen, and the most correct of yachting costumes, monocle, and gold-headed cane. Piggy's self and no other. He had come up unseen while General Chetlaine, the military man with the field glass, had been speaking.

"Riversmeade's going to take a season on the Friesland Lakes in her bit of an artist, and so on, been reading Doughty's book on Friesland Meres, and rather struck by it,' he continued jauntily

General Chetlaine was not exactly taken in by Piggy. He did not take him for a criminal, but he did take him for a stock-broker, imitating a gentleman. Whatever else he was, he was certainly most damnably bad form, and the General was very brief and stiff in his reply in consequence. In fact, soon the whole aristocratic party moved away, and, except for a loafer or two, the pier was deserted, which was exactly what Piggy wished. Now the cart, with the air-pump, diving-dress, coils of tubing, etc., which was on its way from Cowes station, could drive up without attracting much attention. Piggy's invariable rule, as the reader knows, was, whenever possible, to avoid publicity.

When the cart arrived, he directed the men to put the cases down on the pier; then, after receiving something with which to drink his health, they drove away. And now a dingby put off from the Sea Queen, and in a minute or two Jack leaped ashore to greet his friend. Piggy, the first hand-clasp over, lead him away to the end of the pier out of earshot of the man who had sculled the boat.

"I didn't like to put too much in my letter, Jack," he said, "in case of its getting into wrong hands. I have had a wonderful stroke of luck —been right into the enemy's camp. and know their plans——"

"Wha-at?"

ity, and no trace of antagonish seem

"Been into Van Coortvelt's house and made a third at a most interest-conversation between the old fool himself and the detective inspector whom I knocked over the boko at Kew, and who, a few hours later, nearly collared us at Stamford street. It's all right, Jack," he continued, laughing, as he saw the latter's look of amazement, as if he opined that his friend and leader must have suddenly taken leave of his senses. "I'm not joking, I actually did what I say; but the story must keep till we are on our way to Southampton; except for Pedro, who doesn't speak English, you and I will be alone then."

"Pedro?"

"The Spanish boy, who is going to be our cook, steward, first-lieutenant and bo'sun. I've picked up the very chap we need—a good, honest, intelligent Spanish boy from old Spain. He's made one voyage, from Cadiz to London, as cabin boy, and ran away because they beat him. I found him starving in Whitechapel; he's up at the hotel here now. However, all this about Pedro is neither here nor there to what I have to say to you. Everything is going splendidly; only —there is always a 'but' or an 'only' —we have to rush things. These cases must be got on board at once, and then you must get rid of your crew. How are they engaged?"

"By the week only," replied Jack. "All the same, it will look rather odd engaging them only two days ago and then discharging them at once."

"I'm afraid that can't be helped," said Piggy. "Send that chap in the dinghy on board to tell your skipper to wrap the craft alongside here and get those cases in. While it's being done, we'll go and dine."

"Now," said Piggy, as, after a good dinner at a hotel, they walked back to the pier, followed by an olive-complexioned, but nice-looking boy,roughly dressed as a merchant seaman, who carried the small amount of luggage which Piggy, to keep up appearance, had acquired and brought down from London, "I see they have got all the diving gear on board. We'll soon sail her over to Southampton, and if we can't hit on the exact place where we dropped the gold at night, we'll anchor as near it as we can, and shift there with the first of the daylight. Then we start our diving operations, and get up our swag in short order. It will not take long; I've planned everything down to the smallest detail. A very heavy weight in the air is only a very light one in the water; with a whip and tackle, you and Pedro will hoist those wallets of gold up, a dozen at a time. I say you and Pedro, because I shall be in the diving dress, making periodical trips to the bottom You'll see, it's all arranged; but first we have to get rid of your crew."

"Beg parding, sir," said Jack's skipper, a simple, weather-beaten, Yarmouth fisherman, "but all them cases is abroad, an', as I don't think we'll be let stop 'ere alongside the pier all night, 'adn't we better sweep 'er out to 'er anchorage?"

Ah! Jennings," said Jack, "I have something to say to you and to the other men." They walked along the pier until they were abreast the Sea Queen. Jack continued, "You know, men, our agreement was by the week?

"Yes, sir."

"I made it so purposely, because this yacht is only in commission for a short pleasure trip in inland waters, and when my guests arrive there will be no more need of a crew. I did not think that they would join me so soon, but this gentleman," indicating Piggy, "and his servant have come, and some others will join shortly at Southampton, so though I am perfectly satisfied with you, and have not the least fault to find, I am going to discharge you to-night."

The men regarded each other more than a little blankly. Jack continued:

"I thought it would be better for you to leave here, where so many yachts are sure to be wanting hands though, of course, that will make no difference to my paying your railway fare home just the same. Come men! I am sorry we must part, and I shall always remember that, when I want good, trustworthy hands, Yarmouth is the place to find them. However, what must be so let's get it over. Let me see; a week's wage, another week instead of notice, railway fare, and, as eight o'clock at night it is rather an awkward sort of time to be dumped ashore without warning, shall we say a sovereign apiece extra all round, just to show that there is no ill-feeling?'

There was nothing to say to an owner who made terms so generous as these, and, in a short time, the men and their bags were all out on the pier. Jack paid them, and shook hands with the skipper; then jumped on board. Piggy and Pedro followed. The men on the pier cast off the ropes, Piggy and Pedro hoisted the fore stay sail, and, with Jack at the helm, the Sea Queen glided off into the night.

"Well, I'm blowed!" said one of the lately discharged fishermen, whose mind moved slowly. "I wonder if there's any game on?"

"Game your grandmother!" said he who had been skipper. "D'yer think 'ee's tryin' to steal 'is oun boat—'cos she is 'is own; we was all at Yarmouth while he was 'avvin' 'er built, and know 'ee paid for 'er—or what? No, they're toffs, that's all. They don't keer what they does, toffs don't. Come on chapsies!"

This seemed to be the general opinion. Having watched the Sea Queen out of sight, they moved off in a body in search of liquid refreshment and a lodging for the night.

For convenience of handling, the Sea Queen made her trip to Southampton under the very easiest of sail. Piggy, as he was to do the diving, slept most of the way,and Pedro was also allowed a good nap. Jack had made up his mind to go without sleep. When they reached, as near as he could make out, the wished for spot, he kicked up Piggy, and they lowered the sails and anchored. Daylight,when it came, showed that they had hit it off, almost to a cable. To trip the anchor, and, with a stroke or two of the sweeps to bring the marks they had noted the morning they swam ashore exactly into line, was not a long piece of work.While awaiting daylight, Piggy had occupied himself in getting ready the diving apparatus, and instructing Jack as to the management of the air-pump;so that all was ready for a start. Piggy assumed his helmet, gave a few final directions, screwed up his glasses, and dropped over the side, disappearing in a line of bubbles. In his hand he had the ends of twenty small ropes, fitted with hooks, Pedro, under Jack's supervision, gently turned the air-pump-handle.

(To be continued.)

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SCHOOL FOR RAILROAD MEN.

Chicago, Dec. 8:—A class for the instruction of prospective railroad employes at the University of Chicago, has been advocated by an advisory committee representative of most of the western railroads entering this city. At a recent meeting attended by several railroad officials a plan was developed for the instruction of employes who desire to become station agents and traffic managers. Classes under the instruction of competent lecturers are to be begun in the near future in the fine arts building under the auspices of the university college.

WONDERS OF ELECTRICITY.

San Francisco, Dec. 7:—In an experiment conducted by Dr. Albert J. Atkins of the California Medical college on the living stomach of a healthy man, it has been demonstrated that the organ is electrical in its action. The experiment consisted in the introduction of a specially prepared electroid into the stomach by having the man swallow it. When the electroid was brought into contact with about a square inch of the stomach's wall, the galvanometer registered nearly ten millivolts of direct electric current. It is claimed that this action proves that the whole process of digestion is electro-chemical, also that this current in the walls of the stomach prevents the digestion of the stomach by its own juices.

THE ALASKAN BOUNDARY.

Washington, Dec. 8.—A final settlement of the Alaskan boundary line has been reached. There was a small section of this boundary which was not determined by the Alaskan boundary commission as its meeting in London for the reason that it never had been surveyed. Mr. Tillman, president of the Coast Geogetic survey, and Mr. King of the Canadian Government were appointed a special commission to complete this work, which has been done.

BROKE LABOR LAW.

Bangor, Dec. 8:—Frank L. Robinson of Columbia Falls waived examination before United States Com'r Hamlin Wednesday afternoon on a charge of breaking the foreign contract labor laws by attempting to bring a party of French-Canadians into this country contrary to law.He gave bonds of $500 for his appearance at the December term of the United States District court now in session in Portland. He was defended by P. H. Gillin Esq., of this city.

Mr. Robinson is a well-known lumberman of Columbia Falls where he carries on extensive operations. A few weeks ago one of his employes named Mockler was arraigned on the same charge, having crossed the line into New Brunswick and is alleged to have returned with the party. The arrest of Robinson is the outgrowth of the case against Mockler.

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