

Two Blooming

The Adventures of Two Criminals.

Bay Trees.

BY DOUGLAS WINTON.

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

(Concluded)

"I certainly hit pretty hard; and whack with an iron bar over the occiput does not usually tend towards longevity; on the other hand, they are wearing pretty thick caps, and have all the looks of being born to be hanged, which is in their favour—temporarily, anyway. Hit my buck, are you dead?"

A slight groan was the reply to this question, or rather to the kick in the ribs which accompanied it. "I expect they are all right," said Piggy. "Chuck some water on 'em, Jack or rather, since you know your way about the house, take this chisel and break open the dining-room side-board and see if you can find some beer. I'll chuck water on 'em when you're away."

When Jack returned, with a decanter half full of Scotch whiskey, which was the best he could do, the two burglars, under the influence of a vigorous cold drenching, were already showing signs of coming to. Piggy stepped across the bodies to take the decanter, which he placed on the kitchen table, at the same time signing to Jack not to enter. As soon as he had put the decanter down he rejoined him in the passage, and, taking him by the arm, led him to the foot of the stairs, saying: "Jack I don't want you to show—at any rate, for a bit. Bring the things to the head of the stairs, instead of right down, when they are ready. If I call to you, you must answer in your toniest and most youthful voice. You see, I am a parson, the owner of this house—"

"You're a what?" "I am a parson, I say, the owner of this house, and you are my son Jack. I am possibly going to pardon these poor men, on condition that they make a full confession, and give some promise of living an amended life in future. Of course, I shall confiscate the implements of their nefarious occupation. To do otherwise would be to leave them exposed to great temptations. Besides, by the way they negotiated the door from the coal-cellar into the house, these poor men are probably of considerable standing in their criminal calling, and should be possessed of a very fine and complete set of tools."

"Piggy! Piggy! And to think that at Eton no one ever thought of asking you to play in private theatricals! But take your coat and tie off; then, in their eyes, you may manage to pass for a Methodist preacher if not for a clergyman, especially if you keep it up like that."

"Drink a little of this, my poor erring friend," said Piggy sanctimoniously, as kneeling in his shirt-sleeves over that one of his late ad-

versaries who seemed the worse hit, he held a tumbler of stiffly mixed whiskey and water to his lips, supporting his head the while with his other hand.

"A—ah! Blimy! tha—that does me good! Some—more!" "Directly, directly, my friend. I will leave you but a minute to administer to the necessities of your companion—alas! that I should have to say so; but I fear I must say—your companion in crime."

They must both have been blessed with pretty thick skulls, because, in less than a quarter of an hour, both were sufficiently convalescent to talk reasonably as they lay bound side by side, their heads pillowed on a rolled up mat, while the virtuous Piggy surveyed them with sorrowful wonder. From various specially constructed pockets in different parts of their garments he had gathered a collection of queer-looking implements, which now lay at his right hand on the kitchen table.

"And now, my friends, that you are sufficiently recovered to answer questions, perhaps you will have the kindness to explain how you come to be in my house at this hour of the night?"

"Beg parding, guv'nor," said the man who had led in the attack, "but do I understand as 'ow yer th' boss 'ere, the gentleman o' the 'ouse, I mean?"

"Yes, my friend."

"Blimy! an' me wot was thinkin'?"

"Thinkin' what, my friend?" "Well, I'll tell yer straight, guv'nor, since yer got us. Seein' yer all alone, wiv a candle and an' a rope, an' wot looked like a jemmy, I thort yer was jest a burglin' the 'ouse, sime as his—"

A smile of amused pity spread over Piggy's sorrowful countenance. But whether he did not quite have the trick of it, perhaps overdid it a little, or what, there seemed, to the other's keenly watchful gaze, to be something not quite true about it—a false note somewhere—for he suddenly continued, vehemently and savagely—

"An' yer here, too, yer bloody, bleedin', bleedin', sanctimonious, 'oly tra-ree-di-hann yer! Whacher doin' 'ere, orl alone, at this time o' night, yerself, yer bloody, putty-faced, ugly-mugged, b—r?"

At this tirade Piggy recoiled with every expression of horror and disgust. When at length, through failure either of breath or of obligatorial inventiveness, his denunciatory gave him the chance, he called, in a firm, but none the less beautifully sacerdotal voice—

"Jack!"

"Yes, pa-pa."

"Be ready to ring the police alarm the moment I call to you to do so, my son."

"Yes, pa-pa. But hadn't I better ring it at once? I am afraid those horrible men will hurt you!"

"No, my son, not yet; be ready, that is all. And now, my friends," he continued, in a much sterner voice than before, what you mean by such ridiculous talk, or how you think that it will serve you, I am at a loss to understand. I am the Reverend John Hawtree, tenant of this house. During my absence at the seaside I arranged that one of my friends should visit it from time to time. Yesterday I received a telegram from him to say that it had been entered by robbers, and my son and I hastened to town. We arrived late, and were just completing an investigation of the damage, when you suddenly burst upon me, intent, apparently, on the infliction of serious bodily harm. Thanks to the Power which orders all things your wicked attempt was brought to naught, and you lie there now, maimed, bound, and suffering. Oh! my friends, even from your own, even from the worldly point of view, how much, how very much better to have kept to the straight and narrow—"

"Oh, stow it, guv'nor! When we gets in quod we'll tike our whack o' that sort o' slash; but we ain't due for it yet. Say, Bill, it's a fair cop, I reckon?" "I reckon it's so, Hawlibert."

"Then, guv'nor, since yer got us, sooner yer sends fer th' perlice th' better. We thanks yer fer th' lickin', an' I beg yer parding fer not knowin' better'n ter mistake yer fer a cracksmen; but we ain't none too comfortable layin' 'ere, wiv our legs an' arms tied hup so's we can't move. So, while thankin' yer agin, yer 'aps yer'll be so kind has to convey his inter th' proper custody, as by law provided, so's we kin be treated right, an' 'ave our 'eads seed to, which is 'urtin' crool."

"Sime 'ere," echoed Bill. "I fear that is indeed all that remains to be done, unless—but, alas! what promise of reform could I trust?"

"Strike me bloody well lucky, but 'ees turnin' soft!" whispered Hawlibert, turning his head, as well as he could in his bound condition, to Bill's ear. "Well, I wouldn't never 'a' thort it, not by th' w'y 'ee wiped me over th' nob, I wouldn't. This'll be wot they calls muscular Christianity, I reckon. You work 'im, Bill, you kin allus tell th' tyde."

"Wotcherthink?" whined Bill.

"Cherthink we lokes ter be doin' o' this yer sort o' graft, sir? Why, we fair 'ytes hit. A koided gentleman lokes you don't know, that's where it is; 'ee don't know, do 'ee, Hawlibert?" "Oh, no, sir, you don't know wot it is fur th' lokes o' hus. We ain't never 'ad no chawnst, not no more nor if we was dogs, we ain't. Oh! it's fair crool, it is! We's jest druv to crime. If yer'd honly spare hus, fer this wonst—"

Piggy interrupted this appeal with a masterful wave of his hand.

"Alas!" he said, "I fear that I am too able to rate such appeals and such promises at their true value. And yet," he continued musingly, "so much perverted ingenuity, if employed in any honest enterprise—this peculiar implement now—for opening doors, I suppose—ah! screws together—so! Then this—what will this be, now?—light?—yes, I perceive—a minute electric light—most ingenious. And in this small phial, oil, I presume? Now these, what can these be?"

"Wotcher want er know fer?" growled Hawlibert. "But the more saponaceous William hastened to down his rudeness with a cringing explanation."

"Them things, koided sir? Them's wot we wicked chaps turns keys wiv, wot's been left in th' doors the hother side."

"Ah! really! Well, I think I am going to have a practical demonstration," said Piggy. "I shall unbind your arms, and you shall know me exactly how it is done. It will be quite useless to attempt any tricks. Jack!"

"Yes, pa-pa?" "Be quite ready to ring the police alarm if you hear the slightest sound of a struggle."

"Yes, pa-pa."

"Now, my friend!"

And the unwilling Bill had to give an exhibition of his skill with burglars' pincers. He had to do the same with most of the other contents of his armory. Once or twice he looked up furtively, as if seeking an opportunity to work this suave clerical gentleman some ill turn; but the square jaw, watchful eye, and ready-held iron bar which met his gaze, convinced him of the futility of entering any such intentions.

"Well, well!" said Piggy. "Did it never strike you that the same amount of skill and perseverance, brought to bear on the furtherance of some legitimate enterprise, would by this time have raised you to a position of honorable independence and esteem?"

"Oh, Gawd! there 'ee goes on the old racket!" muttered Bill, with deep disgust. "Aloud he said—"

"Yes, guv'nor, we knows; but, yer sees, we ain't 'ever 'ad no chawnst. Hif yer—"

"I am now," pursued Piggy impetuously, "about to leave you both in solitary confinement until morning."

"'Ere! Wotcher doin' o'f? Ye hain't never agoin' ter tie me hup agin? I won't 'ave it. It ain't legal, an' I'll see yer—"

"Quiet, now! or it will be the worse for you." And so, without the slightest mercy, he once more tied his instructor's arms. Then went over both their

bonds, assuring himself of the tightness of each turn and knot. After which he dragged them, without further ceremony, to the pantry the other to the scullery, and there locked them in securely.

(To be continued.)

WHAT THE MINISTER SAYS

Is Most Convincing.

"I thought I would write you what Pyramid Pile Cure has done for me. I had a most aggravated case of bleeding piles; indeed I dreaded when I had to go to stool. One fifty cent box cured me. I feel like a new man. I have recommended it to others as being the most wonderful remedy known. It is indeed a great blessing to suffering humanity. You are at liberty to use this for all it is worth, and I hope it may do good." Rev. W. E. Carr, 355 No. Holbrook St., Danville, Va.

Clergymen (like all professional men who lead sedentary lives) are especially addicted to piles, in various forms, and are continually on the lookout for a remedy which will give relief, with little or no idea of obtaining a cure.

Recognizing this fact, Rev. Mr. Carr consents to the use of his name in order that other sufferers may know there is a cure called Pyramid Pile Cure, which is sold by druggists everywhere for the low price of fifty cents a package, and which will bring about for every one afflicted with piles, the same beneficial results as in his own case. Be careful to accept no substitutes, and remember that there is no remedy "just as good."

A little book describing the causes and cure of piles is published by Pyramid Drug Co., Marshall, Mich., and will be sent free for the asking. All sufferers are advised to write for it, as it contains valuable information on the subject of piles.

Canadian Admirals.

Canadian-born Admirals are well to the force now with Sir A. Douglas as Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth, and Sir C. C. Drury as Second Sea Lord at the Admiralty, says The Canadian Gazette. It is now stated that when Lord Charles Beresford retires from the command of the Channel fleet early next year his successor in that most important position will be Vice-Admiral Sir C. C. Drury. Born in Quebec, Sir Charles Drury has had a long and distinguished naval career. In 1893 he was a member of the Ordnance Committee, and in 1896 received the thanks of the Foreign Office for services in Crete. He was elected a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 1900, and in 1902 was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the East Indies station, receiving the honor of K. C. S. I. the following year. He was appointed to succeed Sir John Fisher as Second Naval Lord of the Admiralty on August 31, 1903.

"SUGGESTIONS BY READERS FOR INTERESTING FEATURES OF THE TIMES WILL BE WELCOMED AND GIVEN FULL CONSIDERATION."

NEW WARSHIPS FOR BRITAIN.

Three Armored Cruisers to Be the Finest Afloat.

London, Nov. 7.—The three armored cruisers of the current shipbuilding programme, which are to be laid down at Portsmouth, Devonport and Pembroke will reach the high water mark in cruiser construction.

The new vessels which will be named the *Minotaur*, *Shannon* and *Defence*, will practically be battleships. In both power and size they will exceed anything of their class afloat. The following are the particulars of the ships:

Guns: Four 9-2 inch; ten 7-5-inch. Shells: 380 lbs. and 200 lbs. Rate: Four/shells per minute. Penetration: 2½ feet. Armour: belt: 300 ft., of 6 in. steel. Gun protection: Sin. steel. Speed: Twenty-three knots. Horse-power: 27,000. Boilers: Water-tube. Displacement: 14,800 tons. Cost: About £800,000.

Cruisers like battleship. Mr. Philip Watts, the designer made a study of warship attack when he was in private service at the great firm of Armstrongs, at Tyneside, and his investigation led him to develop a combination of the speed of the cruiser with the battleship's strength in guns.

The broadside discharge will be 100 lbs. heavier than in our present best cruisers. The guns will be longer and more powerful, and their striking power three and a half times as great as that of the latest cruisers afloat.

Plainly described, the new cruisers will be as effective at three miles as other cruisers now are at two miles, and in general power they will be half as strong again as vessels of the County class and twice as powerful as those of earlier design.

The power of attack with 9.2 inch and 7.5 inch guns is greater than that of the newest French ship, the *Edgar Quinet*. The 9-2 inch guns will be mounted in pairs in barbettes on the fore-castle and upper deck. The 7-5-inch guns will be in barbettes on the upper deck, five on each side.

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