

Two Blooming

The Adventures of Two Criminals.

BY DOUGLAS WINTON.

Bay Trees.

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

(Continued.)

"They might have got his name from the Directory certainly; but why should they?" replied the Inspector. "Shipping agents do not send their circulars broadcast; it wouldn't pay them."

He took up the telephone on his desk; but, on second thoughts, put it down again.

"No," he said, "this is hardly a thing to do by telephone. You go back to Ratcliffe Street, Robbins. I'll take a trip to the City and look into this."

At Hæmel and Mathews, Inspector Mackay sent in his card, and was received by the manager.

"Yes," said that gentleman, on learning the motive of his visitor's inquiry, "if one of our circulars went out to that address, it is because we have that name on our books. Excuse me a minute."

"He was soon back with a slip of paper."

"Here it is," he said. "We have that name on our books, but only since a week or so ago; but there is a regular half-yearly distribution of circulars made, and he got one like any other client."

"May I ask the nature of the transaction?"

"One large case—contents, personal effects—shipped by Peter Porson on board the Sofan at the docks. Case was called for at No. 1, Como Road, Kew, not a fortnight since."

"That is all the record we have in the office. The carman who called for the case may be able to give you some extra details. I am afraid that he is not here at present; he ought to be back soon, and—"

"I should be very much obliged, if as soon as he does come in, you would send him on to me at New Scotland Yard," replied the Inspector.

"Good morning," replied the Inspector. The first thing that Inspector Mackay did, on returning to his office, was to send for Robbins. The messenger, a young detective, was told to take his place in Ratcliffe Street.

Robbins and the carman arrived just about the same time.

"You are the man who called for a case at Kew?" said the Inspector to the latter.

"Yes, sir."

"Now, we want you to tell us all about it, what the house was like, what the case was, who received you—in fact, anything you know."

"Well, I don't know as there were anything very remarkable about that there job, sir," replied the carman, a stolid, honest-looking specimen of the British working man, scratching his head.

"Well, let's have the whole story. You see, I know next to nothing a-

bout it, and I want to know everything. To begin with, when did you get the order that you were to go to Kew?"

"As for that, sir, that I remember well, I'd done one early morning job that day a'fore, and I was oping to 'ave a bit of a stand-off while they loaded up at the ware'ouse; but Mr. Tompkins, the new clerk with the red 'ead," he calls out, "Odgerson," he says—that's my name, sir, haitch-ho-dee-gee-ness-ho-hen, 'ode-son—'William is late back from Woolwich,' he says, 'so you've got ter start right off to collect 'eavy goods for the Sofan at the docks. Take this 'ouse at Kew first, it being the furthest off. There weren't no need for 'im to tell me that, I ain't an idiot, and, 'ncherally, 'avin' a round to go, and wishin' to spare the 'orses—"

"Quite so. You went straight, then, to Kew?"

"Yes, sir, an' got there soon after ten, or it might be gettin' on for eleven."

"What was the house like?"

"Well, you see, sir, in a manner o' speakin', it weren't a 'ouse at all."

"Not a house?"

"No, sir, just a queer sort o' brick an' glass place like a conservatory, smethin', with a bit o' ground an' a 'igh wall."

"Who received you?"

"The parson 'issel, sir."

"Oh! there is a parson in it, is there?"

"Yes, sir; leastways, that was the name on the box. 'The Rev. John Hawtree, passenger to Rio Janeiro. I always takes down the name of each case I gets, an' ere it is."

"So saying, he produced a very grimy and thumbed little penny account book, and, turning over the pages till he came to the place, handed it to Inspector Mackay.

"Yes, I see," said the latter.

"Now, the case itself, what 'was it like?"

"Ege, sir, an' 'eavy, tho' not so 'eavy, for its size. Still, it was almost more than me an' the boy could a managed, if the parson 'adn't 'elped."

"Now, about what size, in feet?"

"As usual with a man of his class, this demand for definitiveness seemed to puzzle him not a little. However, it so happened that Mr. Hodgson's business experience had furnished him with a very good standard of comparison. For at length, after a good deal more head scratching and humming and hawing, he said—

"Well, sir, it was that big that it might almost 'ave a small planer, though it weren't that shape neither scarcely, squarer like."

After a few more questions Mr. Hodgson was dismissed.

"Robbins," said the Inspector, when the carter had gone, "we'll arrange for some one else to take charge at Ratcliffe Street. I want you to go to Kew and find out anything you can. I will join you in the evening, and we will decide what is to be done."

"Now, I wonder," mused Inspector Mackay, when he was alone, "I wonder what was in that case?"

CHAPTER XIV.

Inspector Mackay is Hit Over The Head.

Soon after dark Inspector Mackay met his assistant at the corner of Como Road, Kew.

"Well, Robbins," he said, "what news?"

"Very little, sir, I am afraid," the subordinate replied. "The carman was quite right. No. 1 is not a house—that is, not an ordinary house, but just an artist's studio. However, someone has been living there till quite lately; but not seemin'ly an artist; though no one seems to know anything for certain. The milkman and baker called there, but never got beyond the garden door; and the place itself lies quite a bit back from there. There! You can see the wall now, sir; but you can't see the building."

"Have you seen it?"

"Yes, sir; I went and had a cup of cocoa over there, sir."

He pointed as he spoke to a Pearce and Plenty refreshment establishment, situated nearly opposite No. 1.

"They have a first-class room upstairs, where I went, and got a seat by the window; I could see the whole place."

"What was it like?"

"Just a brick and glass building, about big enough to make one good room, standing in the middle of an acre or so of wilderness. The tenant may call it a garden; but the grounds don't look to me as if they've had a spade put to them for five years."

The Inspector walked on a while without speaking; then he said—

"Robbins, you and I are going to do something illegal tonight. We're going to scale that wall and burglarize the place."

"Very good, sir."

But it was late before even quiet Kew was quiet enough for them to make the attempt. At length, towards midnight, with a leg up from Robbins, the Inspector, having first covered the broken glass with which it was surmounted with a sheet of cardboard, previously purchased, and over that a folded coat, raised himself to the top of the wall, and dropped down inside. Robbins, it

had been decided, was to remain in the street.

He advanced to the door of the studio, and, drawing a neat little bunch of picks from his pocket, tried the lock. As he had expected, it was beyond his skill. Had the lock proved pickable, he would have been rather disappointed, as that would have looked as if the inhabitants of the place were honest folk.

"H'm," he said, "the windows just as bad, I expect."

And here again he was right—not a window was negotiable.

There was nothing for it but either to retire or break a pane. Though he had no warrant, and what he was about to do was of course utterly illegal, he did not hesitate to choose the latter course.

"If by any chance I should be on a false scent, they will put it down to boys throwing stones over the wall," he muttered.

To give such a hypothesis some semblance of truth, he moved round from the window on which he had been about to operate, situated on the river side of the studio, and made his attack on a pane of the opposite window, which faced the road. Now, this move was unfortunate.

At the time that Inspector Mackay was arranging his cardboard and coat over the broken glass on top of the wall, a small boat, paddled silently, Canadian fashion, by one man, was drawing towards the little pier of the studio from the East or Londonwards. There was no moon; and even if there had been, it is doubtful if the Inspector could have distinguished the boat; but the paddler, looking shorewards, the Inspector's head over the wall, that is, just about the level of the street lamps.

Piggy, for Piggy it was, finished the stroke he was giving; then did not even risk the slight noise of laying his paddle inboard, but let it slip quietly from his hands into the river. There was another in the boat. He had been kneeling to paddle; he now leaned forward, so much so as to be practically lying down in the boat, and was able to stretch out his hand a little in front of the bows with what way the boat already had and a little tide that was making up she came silently up to the pier. Piggy grasped the edge with his outstretched hand, so that not the slightest shock of impact could be heard. Then with equal care he lifted her about till he got her alongside; then, just as the Inspector was lowering himself down in the studio garden, he got out and knelt beside a bush. While the Inspector was fiddling with the door he came closer; finally, when the policeman moved round to break a pane, and made an entry by the window which faced the road, Piggy reached the door and inserted his key; then, simultaneously with the crash of breaking glass, he turned it in the lock. While Inspector Mackay, with searching hand, was still fumbling for the window catch, Piggy stepped inside and stepped behind a curtain, which in default of proper furniture, Jack had hung to a shelf to form a kind of wardrobe.

The first act of the Inspector, when at length he had got the window op-

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on and effected an entrance, was to produce and light a candle end. "Out of date sort of fossils the police are!" was Piggy's comment. "They don't even know enough to carry an electric torch." Holding his candle in his hand the police-officer made a tour of the room. Piggy thought that he was going to draw aside the curtain, and made ready to spring on him; but he passed on, and picked up a book which lay open on a chair. "Quest!" Piggy heard him say. "Another Don Quixote!" (To be continued.)

WILL START IN SPRING.

Ottawa, Dec. 1.—E. A. Doucet, engineer in charge of the surveys on the eastern division of the National Transcontinental Railway, reports eleven parties out between Quebec and Winnipeg. He expects by May next to have the surveys sufficiently advanced to enable the government to award contracts for construction. It is stated by a member of a Grand Trunk Pacific surveying party that the Thunder Bay branch will be the first piece of the railway constructed. This section will be 200 miles long.

HONOR FOR CANADA.

Dr. J. M. Bell Appointed Geologist to Government of New Zealand.

(Mail and Empire).

Dr. J. A. Mackintosh Bell, formerly of Almonte, Ont., at one time connected with the Canadian Geological Survey at Ottawa, and now on the staff of Harvard University, has been appointed geologist to the Government of New Zealand.

Dr. Bell was born at St. Andrew's Quebec, in 1877, and was educated at the Almonte High School, at Queen's University, in England, and finally at Harvard University. He is a son of Mr. Andrew Bell, C. E. of Almonte; a nephew of Dr. Robert Bell, director of the Canadian Geological Survey; a nephew of Bennett Rosemond, ex-M. P., of Almonte, and a brother-in-law of the late Hon. John F. Stairs, of Halifax. While on the staff of the Canadian Geological Survey he led an expedition to the Mackenzie River and Great Bear Lake. In 1901 he resigned from the survey and was for two years on the geological staff of the Lake Superior Co., of Sault Ste. Marie.

In 1903 Dr. Bell was appointed in charge of a party by the Bureau of Mines of Ontario to study the economic resources of the northern part of the province, and during the past Summer was engaged in the preparation of a monograph on the Michipicoten iron range. For the last two years Dr. Bell has been a teacher in the mining and geological department of Harvard University. He is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society of England, a member of the American Mining Institute, and of other societies. He will probably leave for New Zealand about the middle of January.

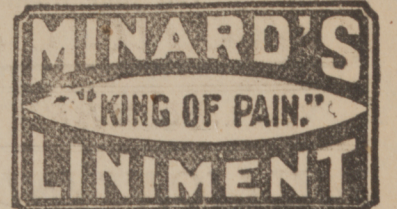
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