

Two Blooming

The Adventures of Two Criminals.

BY DOUGLAS WINTON.

Bay Trees.

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

(Continued.)

"It certainly presents possibilities," said Piggy, "and, unless I am greatly mistaken, it will present a good many difficulties too; but that is what we must expect. At any rate, it is a stake worth playing for. Know any more details?"

"No, until I see the place, I don't see how I can; it wouldn't do to cross-examine him too much."

"How did you get to hear of it?"

"I dined with Van Coortvelt at his club—the Magnates—yesterday, and he began to talk about his coming house-party. I took up the conversation, and as the old chap knew nothing about shooting, and less of hunting, yet wanted to gas about his country place some way, he had to gas about that. By the way, talking of The Magnates, I've been put up for one club, and put up and elected for another. Our little family scandal was never known in Society at large. My governors dead, and I'm supposed to have been away at the end of the earth somewhere. I've met and been welcomed by several people I knew formerly; in fact, I'm quite in the swim again."

Piggy looked at him keenly, and a trifle somberly. Jack saw it.

"You dear old Piggy," he said; "do you think I'm going to get tired of the connection? No, sir, as Van Coortvelt would say, we are made for each other, which is more than either of us were for society. The only difference is that I've no objection to living according to its outward forms, and I think we can wage our warfare better if one of us does that. But only say the word, and I'm ready to chuck everything, and start with you for the centre of Africa, or a cave on the Andes, whichever you please. I was lost at Eton when you left and I was lost in the big world when I found you. Come good come ill, this firm sticks together."

Jack reached out his hand as he finished speaking, and positively a tear gleamed under Piggy's shaggy brow as he took and clasped it heartily. Then brusquely, as if ashamed of such an exhibition of feeling, he leaped from the table saying—

"Then the safe at Tony Croft let it be. It may be as impregnable as the vaults in Chancery Lane, but for all that, it has got to disgorge in our favor. When can you get down there to see it?"

"My invitation is for next week," said Jack; "but I know that Van Coortvelt himself goes down on Saturday. Let's see—this is Thursday; tomorrow is his Turkish Bath day, so I can see him then, without seeming to be hunting him up; and, if I

direct the conversation skillfully, I think I can be pretty sure of getting asked to go down with him, ahead of the others. Except the servants, we shall be pretty well alone in the house."

"Capital! By the way, what's the county town?"

"Holmthorpe," replied Jack.

"Holmthorpe, H'm! Chug us over that railway guide, will you?"

"H'm! Here we are, Holmthorpe—population—H'm—hotels—King's Arms—

—Lord Nelson—family and commercial—Thistle—Golden Lion. I think the Thistle ought to do me. Well, Jack, I shall occupy the next few hours in packing the business portmanteau, the one I showed you, you know, with tools, chemicals, and various appliances that may be useful; then with that, and a smaller portmanteau of clothes and a motorcycle in the luggage van, I shall start to-night for Holmthorpe. Let me know at the Thistle when you will be at Tony Croft; and, in the meantime, I may do a little reconnaissance work on my own account."

"Are we going to know each other?"

"No, not unless we find we have to."

The following evening, after a hard day's motor cycling over the roads and lanes adjacent to Van Coortvelt's big estate, during which he had thoroughly familiarized himself with every feature of the locality, Piggy might have been seen, seated in a big armchair, toasting his toes at a splendid fire in one of the best bedrooms of the Thistle Inn, Holmthorpe, tea things at his elbow, and a large scale ordnance map of the country spread out on his knee. A rap at the door was the herald of the arrival of a telegram. It ran—

"Going down by train, arrived four o'clock tomorrow, write me Tony Croft Demerse."

The receipt of this telegram seemed to turn the current of his thoughts. He folded up his map and laid it on the table, then began to space the room, pausing occasionally to nibble his toast or sip his tea, at other times pausing for nothing, apparently, but to stare at the fire as if in search of an inspiration.

"It's a pity," he mused, "that I can't go as Jack's valet; that would be splendid, but I could never keep it up. It's not pride that's in the way, but I don't know the etiquette of the servant's hall. I should give myself away at once. H'm! Well, I suppose there is nothing for it but to go to the place as a friend of Jack's staying in the neighbourhood. Yet I don't like it; we have been so careful. So far, no one knows that we are pals, and the longer we can

keep it so the better; yet see the place for myself I must. Is there no other way?"

Piggy cudgelled his brains. At last an idea, so order! Motors—traction—h'm! Too complicated—need too much time; something simpler. Fire alarm—burglar al—By Jove!"

"Why shouldn't I go as what I am, a young scientific student—say a young inventor? Yes, that's the game! A young scientific inventor, who comes to see Van Coortvelt to try and get him to finance some invention! I look like that, and I talk like that; no danger of rousing anyone's suspicions in that character. Question remains, what sort of an invention can I take up in short order? Motors—traction—h'm too, complicated need too much time—something simpler—fire alarm—burglar al—by jove!"

And Piggy, all alone as he was, at the thought which now came to him, burst into a hearty laugh, the sort of laugh which, as he had said to Jack on the memorable evening of their meeting on the Embankment, he had not known for three years.

Against all the laws, both of ethics and moral philosophy, Piggy was expanding, becoming a happier, healthier—we are almost tempted to say a better man; but that can hardly be since his nefarious partnership with Jack Demerse had begun, than he had ever been before. He wrote the following note:

"Thistle Inn, Holmthorpe, Friday evening, Dec.

"Dear Jack:—

"I leave here to-morrow morning on my motor bike, with my things on a trailer. Shall go straight to the Goat and Compasses at Little Sunningdale, i. e., about ten miles the other side of you. En route I shall change myself into a stout young Anglo-German, with spectacles and my name to Henry Schmidt. I suppose it ought to be Heinrich, but I am a bit rocky on the right pronunciation of that, so it can go that I am of an Anglicised family; in fact, I only take the German disguise because it is at once so good and so easy. In the character of Schmidt, I shall call Monday evening on Van Coortvelt to show off my invention of a new pattern burglar alarm. Would come before Monday, but the thing will take all that time to make. Your task will be to see that the old boy gives me the interview, and, if possible, gives my invention a trial. Nothing for you to do till then; but make yourself as familiar as possible with the grounds, and the different approaches to the house.

"Yours ever,

"PIGGY."

"Well, it ain't quite the most convenient sort o' time, and that's a fact," said Mr. Van Coortvelt, as he and Jack Demerse sat alone, sipping their wine, in the big dining-room at Tony Croft on Monday evening. Pawkins the butler, had brought in a card and a note, and the verbal message that the gentleman was waiting. But from the wealth of superciliousness which he managed to put into his manner of pronouncing the noun substantive descriptive, it was clear that Mr. Pawkins had formed no very high estimate of the gentility of Mr. Schmidt.

"No, it ain't convenient," continued Mr. Van Coortvelt, scratching the goatee on his chin, "but yet, somehow, I don't like to send him away. You know, Mr. Demerse, I've been down bottom myself. I guess you aristocrats don't just know what poverty is"—Jack thought of the days of broken victuals and casually caddled coppers, and smiled. "Yes, sir, you smile; but I've been there, and I know what it is. Now I've arrove, I don't want to come the high and mighty, and freeze down, nobody wants to push himself forward. There's a sight of cranks a-rouseing but, on the other hand, this chap may have gotten hold of something good. There may be money in it. Not that I've any occasion of think of dollars now," he hastened to add, "but as a patron of invention. Now I guess that's the sort o' thing would tickle Mrs. Van Coortvelt. What do you say, Mr. Demerse? I guess that has a high-toned appearance some?"

"I can imagine nothing more meritorious, sir," replied Jack gravely. "You are now in the position of a captain—I should say a general—of industry, resting on your laurels. Material assistance quite apart, I can imagine nothing more gratifying to a young soldier in the same army than a little kindly encouragement from a veteran like yourself."

"Now you put that neatly, you do indeed, sir," exclaimed the gratified Van Coortvelt; "and its true enough, too. But you've had a college education. Maybe if I—"

and he paused, sighed, and passed his hand a trifle wearily across his face.

"Well, I guess you can show him in, Pawkins."

Piggy, thorough in all things, had made a careful study of the art of disguise. He had grasped two points as essential—first, that disguise could be employed successfully only as a temporary expedient; hence in such a business as his, it should be used for the perpetration of the crime, leaving him free to re-assume his natural self afterwards secondly, that it should not be too elaborate. By the simple expedient of first swathing his body in many yards of flannel, he was now wearing quite naturally a suit of clothes cut for a man of his height but forty pounds heavier. A false moustache—the only piece of false hair, by the way, which will stand close inspection—spectacles, and the employment of a dye which turned his naturally raven locks to a hue of fiery red, completed the make-up. When he entered the room, a worn black bag in one hand and a soft hat in the other, and bowed comprehensively to the two inmates, as if not surprised which was the millionaire whom he had come to

see, Jack Demerse could hardly believe that it was really Piggy.

(To be continued.)

AN OBJECT LESSON

In a Restaurant.

A physician puts the query: Have you never noticed in any large restaurant at lunch or dinner time the large number of hearty vigorous old men at the tables; men whose ages run from sixty to eighty years; many of them bald and all perhaps gray, but none of them feeble or senile? Perhaps the spectacle is so common as to have escaped your observation or comment, but nevertheless it is an object lesson which means something.

If you will notice what these hearty old fellows are eating, you will observe that they are not munching bran crackers nor gingerly picking their way through a menu card of new fangled health foods; on the contrary they seem to prefer a juicy roast of beef, a properly turned loin of mutton, and even the deadly broiled lobster is not altogether ignored.

The point of all this is that a vigorous old age depends upon good digestion and plenty of wholesome food and not upon dieting and an endeavor to live upon bran crackers.

There is a certain class of food cranks who seem to believe that meat, coffee and many other good things are rank poisons, but these cadaverous sickly looking individuals are a walking condemnation of their own theories.

The matter in a nutshell is that is the stomach secretes the natural digestive juices in sufficient quantity, any wholesome food will be promptly digested; if the stomach does not do so, and certain foods cause distress one or two of Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets after each meal will remove all difficulty, because they supply just what every weak stomach lacks, pepsin, hydro-chloric acid, diastase, and mucus.

Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets do not act upon the bowels and in fact are not strictly a medicine, as they act almost entirely upon the food eaten, digesting it thoroughly and thus giving the stomach a much needed rest and an appetite for the next meal.

Of people who travel, nine out of ten use Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets, knowing them to be perfectly safe to use at any time and also having found out by experience that they are a safeguard against indigestion in any form, and eating as they have to, at all hours and all kinds of food the travelling public for years have pinned their faith to Stuart's Tablets.

All druggists sell them at 50 cents for full-sized packages and any druggist from Maine to California, if his opinion were asked would say that Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets is the most popular and successful remedy for any stomach trouble.

The Grocer—See here, my lad, if there are any more mistakes made behind this counter, you walk.

The Boy—Yes, sir.

The Grocer—Eh, what's this? How did this \$5 gold piece get among these pennies?

The Boy—Took it in by mistake, sir.

The Grocer—Eh? Mistake? Well, we won't count this one.—(Cleveland Plain Dealer.)

TEN CENTS EVERY DAY.

New York Judge so Fines a Professional Beggar.

New York, Nov. 12.—Police Judge Sweeney, of Newark, who has ways of his own, disposed last night on the case of the Mrs. Beulah McCarton, alleged to be a professional beggar and a member of a family of professionals, who have been imposing upon clergymen in the east for a number of years.

The woman is 35 years old, and has bothered the Rev. Lewis Shrove Osborne, of Trinity church, Newark, for several years. He finally made a complaint against her and was seconded by the Rev. Robert Scott Inglis, of the Third Presbyterian church, of Newark, and Arthur W. McDougall, of the Bureau of Associated Charities. Mrs. McCarton was arrested and came before Judge Sweeney last night for examination.

He has a peculiar way of handling such cases. It is experimental and has not resulted satisfactorily so far. He allowed Mrs. McCarton to go at large under a sentence to pay into the court a fine of 10 cents per day for two and a half years. Mrs. McCarton is expected to come around every day and pay up the 10 cents, no matter how she gets it. She is expected to confine herself to the jurisdiction of the court. Others who have been penalized in the same manner at the rate of 10 cents a week have disappeared or have been picked up for other offenses and are in jail at present.

POST CARDS IN WAR. (New York Tribune.)

It is a happy idea of the Japanese war office to provide troops in the field with illustrated postcards bearing a message for home ready printed, and needing only the soldier's signature. The message runs thus: "This is to let you know that I am alive and well. I cannot give you my address, for I do not know where I shall be tomorrow. But your letter will reach me if you copy the postmark on this card. Greetings to my family and friends." The full use of the picture postcard in a campaign was made by the French army of the Loire in 1871. Since then it has been ignored by the military mind in Europe. But the Japanese have a knack of snapping up the unconsidered trifles of our western civilization.

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