

# 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.) CHAPTER III.

Uttersen Street to vigor square (continued.)

Mr. Reginald Childs-Gordon, M. P., sat in his dressing-gown and slippers, gloomily surveying the prospect before him. An evening paper, open at the Money column, lay on a table by his side. It had cost him a penny, and appraised him of his ruin.

Son of an old-established solicitor, he had succeeded to the connection, and as is the way with the younger school, had tried to cram into his one life financial, social, and even political ambitions. And he had very nearly succeeded. But not quite. His purse had proved too weak for the strain. Not being a man of half-measures—indeed, it was no case for half-measures—he had speculated boldly, coolly, and skillfully. Now, just when success seemed about to crown his combinations, a great Wall street house had fallen, and the market on both sides the Atlantic was tumbling crumbling, melting away in sympathy. If it had kept still just one more week! But what was the good of "ifs"? Bah! he had had his fun, now he must pay the penalty. Yes, must go, disappear, belong to the underworld. Ugh! he thought over the names of a few of those who had gone before. Ommaney Lampton, Howard Garraway, that vulgar old beast Porson; where were they now, what did they do? Well, that was what he was going to find out. For, unfortunately, it was no mere bankruptcy that confronted him. There were going to be some pretty nasty disclosures about trust funds not accounted for, and money given for investment which had never been invested. No, it must be disappearance for Mr. Childs-Gordon—that is if he should be lucky enough to get the chance to disappear.

So far as he knew his embarrassments still remained unsuspected, that day he had got together close on two thousand pounds in ready cash. Tomorrow he must raise as much more as possible, and invent some story to stave off inquiries while he got a few days' start. And in the meantime, after the day he had been through, it was absolutely necessary that he should sleep. He was not supposed to be in town. He had arrived unexpectedly, and had sent the caretaker, a pensioned butler, home to his wife, saying that he would picnic in the house alone that night. However, the old servant had insisted on getting a bed ready, and making such small preparations for his comfort as were possible on short notice. He was sitting in his

bedroom now. A few minutes saw him in pyjamas, and he cast himself into bed. But not to sleep. Firm as was his will, it was not strong enough for that.

"This will never do," he muttered, after an hour's tossing. "Sleep I must have."

Then the idea came to him that a bottle of heavy stout would be just the soporific he required. There was some in the house, though where he did not exactly know; but probably in the pantry. He slipped on his dressing-gown, and, taking a tall candle from the mantelpiece, went downstairs. But the stout was harder to find than he expected. Ultimately he unearthed a case in one of the cupboards. It was unopened. "Damn!" he grumbled; "by the time I am through I shall be more wide-awake than ever. Now, what the deuce to use for a case opener?"

He was so annoyed and pre-occupied that he spoke aloud. He was also, of course, much too pre-occupied to see the face, stealthily observing him, through the little window which gave from the pantry on to the basement passage.

Quick, Jack! a mask of some sort," said Piggy, in the lowest of whispers to his companion. "It's Childs-Gordon: he used to dine at the governor's. I don't think he would recognize me, but he might. Now, what's to be done for a mask? We'll come provided with him in the future; but tonight, I suppose, we must make our handkerchiefs do."

Piggy had a pocket-knife, sharp as a razor. He pucked up two little pieces in his handkerchief and cut them off, thus making a fairish mask with eye-holes. Jack contented himself with slouching his hat and pulling up the collar of his ragged coat. Jack was already pretty well disguised with dirt and a week's growth; besides, Childs-Gordon did not know him.

If Childs-Gordon had still been holding the candle in his hand he would have dropped it to a certain ty. Standing there, in dressing-gown and pyjamas and slippers, he was quite defenceless; but had he had a weapon, it is a question if he would not have been too surprised to think of using it. He looked blankly at the curious, thick-set bowing figure, with a white rag over his face, and a big out-held jemmy in his hand, and at the other figure, slouching behind, almost in the dark, he listened to the quiet voice, which seemed at the same time so full of determination. At last he blurted out—

"Who the devil are you, and what do you want?"

"My name," replied the apparition, "is immaterial. I am here—my friend and I are here—to rob the house."

"At least, you are candid!" Piggy bowed and proceeded.

"I assure you we have no idea of putting you to any unnecessary personal inconvenience. I see that you are about to partake of some refreshment, but are embarrassed by the case. Allow me—" and the jemmy, tempered to negotiate the steel door of a strong-room, had made short work of the lid of the box of Guinness in less time than it takes to write it. "And now, Mr. Childs-Gordon," pursued Piggy, who did not fail to note the other's start on hearing his name, "we will leave you to discuss your beer. We shall be constrained to lock the door. As for the little window, I perceive that it is well provided with bars. I need scarcely point out that no noise you could make could, by any possibility, be heard in the street. Oh, don't mistake me. I make no threats; you are quite at liberty to shout yourself hoarse, if it pleases you. Fortunately, you have here all that is necessary to lubricate your uvula. You have a cork-screw—and a tumbler. Yes! Well, time presses, you must excuse us."

And these two most polite members of the criminal fraternity nodded pleasantly and backed out. The key turned, and Childs-Gordon was alone with his candle, his cork-screw, and his stout.

Completely taken by surprise as he was, and brief as was the time taken by the whole incident, the door had not closed before Childs-Gordon's active brain was already at work on the problem—the problem to grapple instantly with which becomes second nature to a modern speculator, the problem which, however the details may vary, may always be referred to this common enunciation: "Something unexpected has happened, how can I turn it to my advantage?"

For some minutes he thought intently. Of all his defalcations, that which pressed most insistently on his mind was a certain trust, consisting of a sum of money and some valuable jewellery, held for a half-niece, a ward of his father's. Not that this was at all the largest. On the contrary, compared to some of the obligations which he ought to but could never be able to meet, it might be counted a mere bagatelle. The money, a thousand pounds, plus accumulated interest, was less than two thousand; and the jewels, though worth more, he had pledged in Paris for only a hundred thousand francs—that is, four thousand pounds. It was the date that was so insistent.

Olive Wylie, the young lady in question, came of age that week, and her trustees must then either be prepared with the money and jewels, or be found out. This fact it was that had decided him to commange his fight at once. Yet to do so had gone sorely against the grain. In ten days, by carefully juggling with his credit, he could be ready to leave with four times the sum he could obtain by the earlier date. The idea of a sham, a fake burglary, to account for the loss of the jewels, had already occurred to him, only to be rejected as unfeasible. The police have pretty good experience of sham burglaries, and are seldom hood-winked. But now that two real burglars had appeared on the scene, could he not use them? Might he not put on their shoulders the loss of a large amount of cash—which would probably be true enough, of the jewels, and, say, of an imaginary bundle of securities? It was a tempting plan; but like most tempting plans, the difficulties lay in the details. For instance, suppose that after telling his story there should be doubts, that he should still be suspected of having planned a fake burglary himself? Probably the police would recognize the signs of genuineness, and would believe him. But others—when it came out that he had come up to town unexpectedly, and sent the caretaker away? He shook his head. To use an expressive vulgarism, it would look too much like a put-up job. Yet it was hard! Here was the real thing, and he unable to take advantage of it. Poor Mr. Childs-Gordon, he was indeed deserving of sympathy!

Taking the case that the robbers should be captured, locked up there in the pantry there did not seem much prospect that he would be able to conduct to this result; but, by his agency or otherwise, supposing they were captured, what then? Again he shook his head, for it seemed to him that, from his point of view, their capture would be just as useless as their escape. For if captured they would be searched, and with no jewels or securities found on them, what became of his story?

Then suddenly came an inspiration. How if one could be captured, and the other let escape? Would not that be perfect? Absolute confirmation of the genuineness of the burglary, and what the world would think quite sufficient confirmation of the story of his losses. Even if they proved members of a gang known to the police, and the second fellow were re-captured next day, there could yet have been ample time for him to be supposed to have disposed of his plunder. That was, indeed, a result worth working for. He drank the glass of stout at a gulp and surveyed the room. The little window, as his polite captor had truly said, was well barred, and there was nothing to hope for there. To be sure, he tried all his strength on the bars, only to find that he could not budge them. He had been smoking cigars before he went to bed, and had his penknife still in the pocket of his dressing-gown. Could he cut round the lock of the door? But one glance sufficed to convince him of the impracticability of the idea. For the door was thick and the lock large, as

beftited a room where was kept the family silver. He remembered having a now and better lock put on some five years since for his own and his butler's satisfaction. But this train of thought brought a new idea. What did it matter that he could not leave? The burglars were sure to return; for whoever heard of burglars who went through a house and left out the pantry? His business now was not to waste time in futile efforts to escape, but to quietly plan how to master them when they returned.

Two plans presented themselves. The first, to make a sudden and unexpected attack, in which he might hope to stun or disable one, and perhaps to put the other to flight; the other, to try to make them drunk. The worst of this latter plan, otherwise the most favorable looking of the two, was that he did not see, if he made them drunk, how he was to manage that one of them should escape? He would have the poker ready, that being the best weapon he could find, and await developments.

Hardly had he reached this decision when he heard steps descending and he knew that they were coming. (To be continued.)

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**HONORED**  
**COL. E. B. BEER**  
Who is Removing From Sussex to Halifax—Personal Notes.

Sussex, Nov. 8.—The ladies of the sewing circle of the Episcopal church, and friends, gave a whist party in honor of Col. E. B. Beer, who leaves tomorrow for Halifax where he will make his future home with his son. Duplicate whist was engaged in until 11 o'clock, when some 30 couples sat down to a sumptuous turkey supper. In the line of refreshments served, were, cake, coffee, candy and ice cream. At the close of the tea, Mrs. J. M. Kinnear favored them with a few selections on the piano, and all heartily engaged in singing. One old familiar piece was sung "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," on which the Colonel made a brief address thanking the Ladies of the circle and friends. All then sang "God save the King."

Col. Beer will be very much missed indeed by the people of Sussex, and especially by the members of the Episcopal church, in which he took an active part at all times. The directors of the Sussex Exhibition association will also miss him. He has been secretary of this association for about 15 years. His many friends wish him good health in his new home.

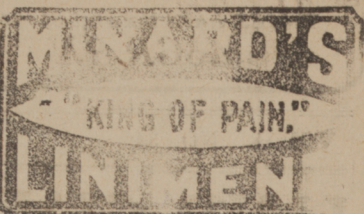
Zion lodge, No. 21, F. and A. M., held its monthly meeting Monday evening, at which several degrees were conferred. The meeting was lengthy and largely attended.

Mrs. Fred Ferguson of Richibucto arrived yesterday by C. P. R. and is the guest of Mrs. J. McAuley, Main street.

Miss Violet McKay, daughter of Mayor McKay, left yesterday by C. P. R. for Boston, where she will begin duty as nurse in Charity Club Hospital.

A. S. Moore, who has had charge of the job department in the Record office, left Monday afternoon for Moncton where he will take charge of similar work in the Transcript office, Moncton.

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