

SELECTIONS

TOLD A "TREASURE" STORY.

How a Convict Fooled the Warden and Made His Escape From Prison.

One of the most remarkable escapes of state prison convicts in Massachusetts on record occurred under the administration of Frederick Robinson, who was warden from 1843 to 1849.

A convict named William Phillips, alias Porter, had been sentenced to the penitentiary for nine years for burglary. When on trial, he made some remarkable disclosures to his counsel relative to a large amount of valuable property which had been missing for several years and was secreted in a place known only to himself, it being the result of a successful break which he claimed to have made while in pursuit of his arduous and hazardous calling.

To the credit of the gentlemen of the legal profession it is believed that the lawyer was too shrewd to accept of this hurried treasure as security for his services until it had been produced and demanded spot cash for his fee in getting for his client only nine years' imprisonment. The "enterprising burglar" did not despair of turning his remarkable secret to account even after he was securely behind the bars of the jail.

He first made a confidant of the city marshal of Charlestown, but he, good soul, could profit nothing by it without the co-operation of the warden of the prison, who had the prisoner in durance vile. So the warden was taken into confidence, and the convict told to him his story with so much particularity, with such attention to minute details and with such apparent frankness and with an honesty that was surprising in one who had probably before this never breathed an honest breath in his life, that the warden was charmed with his ingenuousness and the prospect of securing a share of the gains.

It was arranged that the three should go together to Barnstable, where in a secluded spot, it was said, the stolen property was buried deep in the ground, and to be secure against interruption it was agreed that the digging should be done in the night. There were to be no witnesses to the proceeding, as that might prove inconvenient in case any inquiry should be made as to the right they had to retain the property in case the owners should put in a claim. Besides it would be impolite to show any distrust of the honesty of the honest fellow who had dealt so honestly with them. Picks and spades were provided, and there was an equal division of the spoils. One man worked in the pit while the other two kept watch on the outside. No advantage was taken of the convict's loss of social cast or his helpless condition. He was not required to do any more work than the others, and nothing was done to make him feel his degraded position.

The work went merrily on until quite a depth was reached, and the poor prisoner who had performed his stint was helped out to make room for one of his companions, whose turn it was to go down into the hole. They were assured that the requisite depth had almost been reached, and, while one dug, the other, with the convict, eagerly watched the progress of the work. But such is the perfidy of human nature that the convict, Phillips, forgetting the good offices performed for him by his companions, the warden and the city marshal—even forgetting the fact that he had given up the secret of the treasure which he had carried for years—pushed his friend on the outside into the pit, and abandoning all of his wealth to them ran nimbly away, never so much as stopping to say goodbye. It was with much difficulty that they extricated themselves from the hole, and, strange to relate, they also abandoned the wealth so near at hand. So far as any one knows, it still remains in that retired spot in Barnstable. The two officials were as reticent about it as the convict had been, and the only certain information that was given of the incident came from the convict himself, for he was subsequently recaptured. He had the audacity to say that it was "only a little joke" he played on the men, and there was really no treasure there at all.

It is possible that the honest fellow again fled, and that after his release from prison the crafty rogue dug it up and is living in affluence, honored and respected for his great wealth. Certain it is, he was never arraigned for the escape, and the only official notice that was taken of his escapade was when a member of the legislature, with a humorous turn of mind, introduced an act appropriating a large sum of money "to enable the warden of the state prison to continue his search for hidden treasure." For reasons now forgotten this generous recommendation never became a law.—Boston Transcript.

Adverse Opinion on the World's Fair.

Was the greatest show on earth a failure after all? "A disastrous failure" is what Lord Armstrong called it in a speech he has just delivered at Rothbury, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in opening a small local exhibition. In his view the Chicago exhibition failed on account of its very size. International exhibitions, he declared, have been getting bigger and bigger and more and more costly, while at the same time they have diminished in profit and in general beneficial effects. Great central exhibitions being thus discredited, it is, he thinks, to consider whether small ones will not have a better effect. Whatever they be thought of Lord Armstrong's views on international exhibitions, he has no doubt that he is right in saying that much good is done by small local exhibitions in encouraging students to see and study.

Lowell and Poe.

Lowell's friendship with Poe was not destined to good fortune. There had been mutual good will and respect, with kindly offices on both sides. The connection of Poe with Briggs in the editorial conduct of The Broadway Journal was the occasion of an exchange of views and facts between Briggs and Lowell which left Poe's reputation very much impaired in Lowell's judgment.

Poe's admiration for "the author of Rosalind," on the other hand, did not survive the lines in "The Fable For Critics," in which his own portrait was not inaptly drawn. After Briggs ceased to be his editor, Poe attacked Lowell as a plagiarist, and the latter expressed his resentment at length in a passage to be found in his published "Letters." Lowell, too, had lately met Poe, just recovering from a stroke, and the impression then received was sufficient of itself to terminate their relations.

A short time after, in October, 1845, occurred the public scandal of Poe's visit to Boston to read a poem before the Boston Lyceum, which confirmed him in his lifelong dislike of the Bostonians. Later, in an unpublished letter to Mr. F. W. Thomas early in 1849, Poe denounced Lowell with some contempt and made a public disclosure of his changed attitude by an unfavorable review of "The Fable For Critics" in The Southern Literary Messenger in February of that year.—Scribner's Magazine.

Gambling on His Life.

The gambling instinct is strong in most men, but it is seldom that one hears of a man with sufficient nerve to bet a sum of money on his own life. A wager of this kind has leaked out in which two prominent members of a Philadelphia club are concerned. These two men have been close friends for years. One is a doctor and the other a lawyer. A year ago the lawyer, who had previously enjoyed the best of health, began to complain of feeling run down. He consulted his friend, the doctor, who, after a minute, thorough examination, told him frankly that his lungs were affected, the action of his heart was impaired and that he would not live a year. The lawyer, who is a man of indomitable pluck and will power, was naturally stunned for a moment. After the first shock had passed off his true nature asserted itself. "I'll bet you \$1,000 you are wrong and that I do live over a year," he exclaimed. The doctor was positive that his diagnosis was correct and was forced to accept the bet. The money was placed in a safe deposit vault, and the lawyer went abroad. In six months he returned. The year was just past week, and he won his wager. And, what is more, he says he is open for more bets of a similar nature.—Philadelphia Record.

A Pomological Wonder.

A queer case of natural cross fertilization is reported from Anjou, France. A grapevine, which grows in close proximity to a large apple tree of the russet variety, has developed a full bunch of small apples on the stem which is usually set with grapes. There are 29 of these queer "grape apples" in all, and they are so thickly set upon the stem that many of them, all, in fact, except those growing at the ends, are mashed out of shape, so that they are almost as angular as corn grains. Each of these freaks has its "blossom end" like true apples, and in the fine specimens which have been examined 11 poorly developed apple seeds were found. The pomologists of Europe are greatly excited over the publication of the facts relating to this queer case as they appeared in La Nature, and many who have never attended a meeting of the Imperial Pomological society will do so this year in order to hear the curiosity discussed. Those who have ever paid any attention to fruit culture and know how entirely dissimilar the blossoms of grapevine and apple trees are will naturally doubt the genuineness of this freak.—St. Louis Republic.

She Cured His Hiccoughs.

About a week ago an old man named Wetherow was attacked with a violent spell of hiccoughs, which kept up until the doctors despaired of saving his life. Wetherow's mother-in-law had heard of an old-fashioned way of curing hiccoughs, and she determined to make use of it. Gun in hand, she managed to creep without being detected under the bed in which Wetherow lay, and when she and the old man were left alone for a moment she pulled the trigger.

In her agitation she forgot to aim for the floor, in which the load might bury itself in safety, and instead let the discharge tear a hole through the mattress on which Wetherow lay. The powder burned the sick man's toes, and in a rage he sprang from the bed, and dragging the woman from beneath proceeded to give her a sound beating. In his anger Wetherow forgot all about his hiccoughs, and when the doctors called, expecting to see a dying man, he was dining, and they had only the mother-in-law's bruises to look after.—Ramer (Ala.) Dispatch.

A Japanese Simile.

A bright young native of Japan who is in business in this city came into The Express office the other evening to learn the latest news about the war between his country and China. He speaks English with but a slight accent, and his only difficulty in expressing himself seems to be rather in his pronunciation of the words. He has the utmost confidence in Japan's ultimate victory, and when it was remarked to him that China had a great advantage in point of numbers he said:

"It's just like this: You have 100 cents—that's \$1. I have a \$1 bill. That's only one. My one is as good as your hundred."

The Japanese has evidently a full appreciation of the advantages of civilization. His simile was a good one and pretty nearly describes the situation.—Albany Express.

HAD TO GIVE BONDS.

A Delaware Marriage Formality That Struck Terror to One Bridegroom.

To get married seems an easy thing to the young man whose fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love, but when it comes to the actual ceremony there are a thousand and one terrors which surround and threaten to overcome him. Marriage in some states is easy. In others it is difficult as obtaining a divorce.

A well known Philadelphian was about to be married to a beautiful young woman who lived in the state of Delaware. He had no idea that the marriage laws of that state were of an appalling nature. He had secured his license and thought that was all that was necessary.

"Have you filed your bond yet?" said some one to him the day before the wedding.

"What?" gasped he.

"Your bond," repeated the questioner. "You know every man who is married in this state has to file a bond for the protection of the state."

The bridegroom was rather dubious, but was finally persuaded that this was a fact.

"I'll see a lawyer about it in the morning," said he. So he went to a friend, who was a legal light, and said:

"See here. They tell me I have to give a bond to the state when I get married."

"Certainly. Haven't you done so?" in a surprised way.

"No; I never heard of such a thing before. What kind of bond is it?"

"Oh, any real estate will do."

"But I haven't any real estate."

The lawyer looked at him a moment. Then he solemnly said:

"Haven't you any friends who own property?"

"None that I care to ask to lend it up that way. I can't ask my bride's relatives, you know."

His friend looked at him pityingly. "You can't postpone the wedding, can you?"

"What?" fairly shrieked the unfortunate.

"Of course, of course not," said the legal light soothingly. "But the poor bridegroom looked stricken.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, old man. I'll lend to the matter for you. Don't give yourself any more concern about it."

The young man about to be married grasped his hand. He could not speak for a moment, and then he poured forth his thanks. He picked up his hat in a relieved sort of way and walked to the door. Then he turned.

"By the way, I forgot to ask you how large is the amount of the bond required?"

"Fifty cents," said the lawyer.—Philadelphia Press.

It Meant Mutiny.

One morning a British man-of-war was seen entering Hongkong harbor with the ensign inverted, which is the usual sign of "mutiny on board." Immediately this was noticed a couple of man-of-war cutters put out, full of blue-jackets, and dashed across the harbor toward where the newcomer had anchored. Perhaps it was a little regatta enthusiasm, or perhaps it was purely the spirit of duty which stimulated them, but anyhow a most exciting race ensued—in fact, there was a narrow escape of a bad smash as they reached the vessel. There the officers and some of the crew were at the taffrail, shouting themselves hoarse and beckoning to the two boats to come on faster. At last, half dead with their exertions, yet eager for the fray with the mutineers, the tars tumbled on board and were warmly complimented on their rowing pace. It must have blown them badly. Would they have a drink?

"A what? Where is the mutiny?" gasped the senior officer in charge of the boarding party. "Mutiny! There's no mutiny in this ship. We are all the best of friends," was the reply. "Then why did you want me? You yelled loud enough." "We thought it was Hongkong regatta day and were cheering the winners." Staggered for a moment, the officer pointed inquiringly to the ensign, still flaunting its appeal for aid that was not required. "Oh,—is the boy! He always puts it up wrong if we don't watch him—simply out of stupidity. Let's all go and punch his head."—St. James Gazette.

Luck.

Abraham Lincoln, after being a member of congress, desired to secure a clerkship in Washington, but he was defeated by Justin Butterfield. He was disappointed, but had not been defeated he would have spent his life in obscurity instead of becoming president of the United States.

Oliver Cromwell was once on board a ship bound for America, but he was taken back by a contending, and the result was that he became one of the greatest men England ever knew.

Ulysses Grant would not have been a military man had it not been that his rival for a West Point cadetship had been found to have six toes on each foot instead of five.

The great silver mine, the "Silver King," had been discovered by the lucky accident of a prospector throwing a piece of rock at a lazy mule.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

The Pottery Tree of Paris.

One of the curiosities of Paris is a tree whose wood and bark contain so much silica that they are used by potters. Both wood and bark are burned, and the ashes are pulverized and mixed in equal proportions with clay, producing a very superior ware. The tree grows to a height of 150 feet, but does not exceed a foot in diameter. The fresh bark cuts like sandstone, and when dried is brittle and hard.—American Magazine.

A curious account for a dead person has been introduced in Germany—a fact, daily reminding a boy sent to school in the old style.

There Is Merit

In Hood's Sarsaparilla. I was in bad condition with Stomach, Heart



Palpitation, Hot Flashes. Since taking Hood's Sarsaparilla I am as well as ever. I give Hood's Sarsaparilla all the credit. I took no other medicine. JOHN R. LOCHARY, Roxbury, Ohio.

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SCHOOL TEXT-BOOK PETITION.

To the State Board of Education: Protest Against Changes in Text-Books or Any Contract Fixing Prices for the Next Six Years.

Governor Penney, Secretary of State McBride and State Superintendent of Public Instruction McElroy, sitting as the State Board of Education of Oregon:

Sirs:—Your petitioners, patrons of the public schools, taxpayers and citizens of Oregon, respectfully petition you to take no action to bring about—adoption of new series of public school text books under the law passed by the legislature, nor to enter into any contract at present publishers prices adopting the text books now in use, or those that might be authorized by your board a present prices, such prices to be fixed and maintained by the publishers for the next six years, as specified in that law.

In view of the fact that by state publication the people of California are obtaining public school text books at an average price of about thirty cents apiece for the entire series needed in the common schools, or about one-half what we pay in Oregon, we demand state publication at the earliest day possible.

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