

# The Escape Was Simple

Salem, Ore., July 11. — The attempt, although unsuccessful, of some unknown man to enter the Oregon penitentiary at midnight Monday shows once more the weakness of the institution Oregon has provided for its felons. While the prison is sufficiently secure against outbreaks by prisoners, unaided, the ease with which guns may be passed over the walls at night is almost beyond belief. It is surprising that an attempt to free the prisoners was not successful before Tracy and Merrill escaped a month ago. It was learned today that Tracy and Merrill planned an escape three years ago, and that fifty prisoners were in the plot. Had the scheme been kept secret, probably fifty or more prisoners would have left the penitentiary at that time, leaving behind them more than three dead guards. One of the prisoners gave the penitentiary officials a word of warning, and while the details of the plan were not learned, the escape was prevented. Tracy and Merrill were the ring leaders and were kept in restraint for some time afterward. Profiting by experience, they took no one into their confidence in this adventure, but made their flight alone.

## THE PRISON YARD.

The prison yard is enclosed by a brick wall sixteen to eighteen feet high. The prison itself forms a part of the wall on the west side. The prison lawn is enclosed with a steel paling sixteen feet high, the steel rods being bent over at the top and barbed in fishhook fashion. The gate through the paling fence is open nearly all day, but no entrance to the rear prison yard is ever open except when a steel door on the Southern Pacific sidetrack is opened to admit a car. When visitors or prisoners are admitted from the front yard to the rear yard, they are first locked in a small room and then the inner door is opened, so that locked steel bars always present a barrier against an escape through the gates or doors.

But the precaution used in arranging the gates has not been employed in guarding against such intrusions as resulted in the death of three guards and the escape of Tracy and Merrill.

## EVERYTHING IN ESCAPERS' FAVOR.

To one who visits the prison yard now and examines all the conditions which were in favor of rebellious convicts, it would seem that Tracy and Merrill could not have had things more to their liking if they had ordered all the arrangements themselves. The prison yard is pentagonal in shape, with a guardhouse at each of the five corners. The longest wall is about 400 feet in length. The guards pace back and forth along a walk built on the outside of the wall about three and a half to four feet from the top. Thus a guard's body is unprotected down to the waist. Crouching down on the walk he can protect his whole body, or all but his head and shoulders, while firing over the wall. The guardhouses have wide windows and furnish little more protection than the open wall.

## THE WAY TO GET INTO YARD.

On the north side of the wall is built a wagon shed, the roof of which extends up against the wall, reaching nearly to the walk on which the guards pace their beats. The lower edge of the roof comes just above the top of the wooden gate in the barn yard. A man can, therefore, climb on top of the gate, step up on the shed roof and run up the easy slant of the roof to the top of the wall. With a rope ladder he could then let himself down into the prison yard. Just inside the wall, not far from the shed, is a huge pile of molding boxes about eight to ten feet high, a pile of pig iron, and a building used for storing coke. A few feet further from the wall is the nearest of the stone foundry shops where the convicts made their break. A man entering over the north wall would have the protection of the pile of boxes almost as soon as he touched the ground.

About twenty feet from the prison wall on the east is an old barn, not now in general use. In this men could secrete themselves while arranging an ascent of the wall on that side, and by means of a ladder or rope they could ascend to the top of the wall, dropping down on the inside in the rear of the shops. A run of about fifty feet would bring them into the shelter of another pile of molding boxes, stacked up about ten feet from the shops.

On the outside of the south wall, where the strange man appeared last Monday night, there is no means of temporary concealment except a freight car standing a few feet away on the side track, and the brick buttresses which extend out two feet from the wall at intervals of about

twenty feet. A man dropping down into the yard from the south wall would find his first place of concealment in a row of blackberry vines about seventy-five feet from the wall.

## NOT A HAZARDOUS UNDERTAKING.

As there are no guards on the walls at night, and as there was prior to the escape only one guard in the shop yard, it is apparent that scaling the wall and hiding a rifle in the shops would not be a very hazardous undertaking. Unless discovered when ascending or descending the wall, the intruder would have almost constant concealment and could in-trench himself behind a pile of boxes, one of the buildings, or a pile of logs, in but a single bound. There can be no doubt that some ex-convict scaled the wall and secreted the rifles in the foundry, where Tracy and Merrill were accustomed to work, and that they were expecting the assistance.

Standing in the northwest corner of the shop where they worked, Tracy and Merrill could draw a bead on any three of the five wall guards, and were protected from a return fire. After killing Shop Guard Ferrell they fired at the guards at the west and northwest posts and rushed out the rear door of the shop. Here they were partly protected by a pile of boxes and began firing at two guards on the east wall. When these guards jumped from the wall Tracy and Merrill went inside the shop and brought out a ladder used by the foundry employes when oiling the high shafting. When they emerged with the ladder they came in range of the guard on the southeast corner and were exposed to a fire for the first time. A few shots from this guard made them turn their course to the north wall, where Tracy set up the ladder. While doing this they were out of range of all the guards except the one on the northwest corner, and Merrill, protected by a pile of boxes, kept firing at this guard.

As soon as he reached the top of the wall, Tracy shot Jones, the guard, at the post mentioned, and then they had no opposition to their escape. By running to the north wall they had put the shops between themselves and the guard who had fired at them from the southeast post. They were under cover nearly all the time while the guards were exposed. By a few rapid shots they drove two guards from the wall and kept the others guessing where they were. The rapidity with which they changed their positions gave the impression that the outbreak was general and that a considerable number of the convicts were armed.

After a run of about 100 yards, the convicts reached some low brush along the bank of Mill creek, and a half mile away they struck heavier brush, which afforded concealment. Not knowing how extensive the uprising might be, the prison officials could not send any of their force in immediate pursuit of the two men who had escaped.

## NEED OF CHANGES APPARENT.

While all was going along peacefully at the penitentiary, there was no apparent need of changes which would afford better protection against an outbreak, but the manner of the escape of Tracy and Merrill leaves no doubt that radical changes should be made. The attempt of some unknown man to enter the prison yard Monday night, just one month after the escape of Tracy and Merrill, serves to emphasize the need of changes.

It has been stated since the escape of Tracy and Merrill that the prison guards are not properly armed. Superintendent Lee says the guards are armed with 30-30 Winchester, the same style of rifles carried by the escaped convicts. The guards were probably neither as quick nor as accurate in their use of rifles as Tracy and Merrill, but their chief disadvantage was that they were exposed to the sudden attack of a concealed enemy.

## Chicken Stealing Story.

Early in the seventies, said a lawyer, I was practicing down south in a small town of about a couple of thousand inhabitants. I and a friend of my own age were fond of going to a pool in the creek near by early in the morning to have a swim. One day just about daybreak we were strolling along the side of the creek when there was a stir in the brush, and the next moment a big black dog sprang out, crossed our path and plunged into the water. In less than half a minute a tall, gaunt man came crashing through the scrub, with a gun in his hand and blood in his eye. He halted on the edge of the creek, raised his gun and fired at the dog, which had almost reached the other

side. The shot was a failure, for the dog bounded up the bank, shook himself and disappeared.

"The gal darned thing!" cried the man, resting his gun on the ground and shaking his fist toward the spot where the dog had vanished. Then he turned his eyes toward us and took stock of us.

"For a month," he said, "I've been missin', most of a mornin', one plump chicken after another and couldn't for the life of me make it out. Ye see, jest about daylight I turn the chickens out to feed around. Well, in a month six of 'em have gone—that's at the rate of a chicken and a half a week—and always the plumpest of the lot. At last I determined to keep a good watch. So this mornin', soon's I let 'em out, I watched, with a gun, and caught that dog runnin' off with a chicken in his jaws. Now, I'm goin' right away to see Squire Rigney. He's been a-losin' his chickens the same way, but he would have it it was hawks."

The man disappeared in the bush. We lounged along by the creek, laughing over the incident. When we reached the pool, we found the water low, so we went on a little farther toward the river. We came to a ford, the cart-ruts disclosing the fact. Glancing along the roadway through the brush on the other side, we saw the dog come sneaking out of cover. We lay low, and the beast coolly crossed the ford. A negro came out of the scrub and joined the dog. The negro carried a canvas sack, at which the dog sniffed every once and again. We struck into the brush and intercepted the negro. The dog shrunk into a hiding place.

"Mawin, sah," the negro said, taking off his cap and making a humble grimace.

"What have you in that bag?" I asked in a severe tone.

"Bag, sah?" he said. "Oh, sah, on'y a little o' sumfin for mah missus, sah."

"There's a little something alive inside, for I see it movin'," I said.

With that the man dropped the bag and dashed into the bush, followed by the hound. In the bag we found a fine fat chicken, with the slaver of the dog on its back, where the beast had grabbed it. After our swim we returned, and when we reached the spot where the dog first appeared we entered the scrub and pushed forward, expecting to find the house of the owner of the chicken at no great distance. We hadn't gone more than 300 yards when we came upon the man, lying on his back, bleeding in the breast and unconscious. We hurried away and in a few minutes reached a well kept homestead, with evidences of thrift and prosperity around it. To shorten the story, this was the man's home, and we got a door, returned to the wounded man and bore him to the house. His wife and children were distracted, as the doctor who was summoned said that the man couldn't live.

At the inquest I and my friend were present and told all you have heard, though we recounted the facts with more detail and circumstance.

It was clear that the man had not accidentally shot himself, for his was a single barreled shotgun, whereas the wound in the man's breast was made by a leaden bullet of large caliber, as was shown when it was extracted. The negro was easily traced. He lived with his wife in a hut near the bank of the river. It was not known that he owned a dog, but it was found that the dog which figured as a chicken thief was owned by the man for whom the negro worked and that it was always with the negro except when he drove it away. There was no doubt that the man had trained the beast to steal chickens and to bring them alive to him. There was nothing whatever to connect the negro with the killing of James Hinney — that, I remember, was the man's name—and the mystery of his taking off was undiscovered for some years.

One day I received a message from Squire Rigney's wife saying that he was dying and wanted to make a will. I went to his home and drew up the instrument, by which he left one-half of his property to the widow of James Finney.

I finished writing the will, and just at the time the doctor and a nephew of his drove to the house. It was very opportune, for I was thus enabled to see that the will was duly executed. I was about to leave when the squire motioned me to stay. After the doctor and his nephew had left the squire beckoned me close to him and said:

"I killed Finney. I was lookin' out for chicken thieves. I thought it was birds, ye know, and, seein' somethin' move in the thick bush, I let fly. I was too big a coward to go forward and tell the truth. But now I've done all I can to make up for what I did by accident and squared things up." — Brooklyn Citizen.

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## How Did the Fight End?

At 3 in the morning it was already light as the two men came along the cliff path. They walked in silence until they reached a wedge shaped promontory. The path skirted the one side of it and was divided from it by a light fence; on the other two sides was nothing but the sea, roaring on spiked rocks hundreds of feet below.

Age was the chief distinction between them. Halbron was 25 and Safwell 11 years older. Both were men of fine physique and looked in perfect condition. Halbron was perhaps a shade taller and had a trifle longer reach, and Safwell was a little heavier. Both wore an air of grave determination; in this strange duel there were no elaborate courtesies.

Two miles away a lazy, pretty woman woke for a moment, yawned, and went to sleep again. Both men had the thought of that woman in their hearts.

The older man spoke:

"I mention once more the conditions. You will try to kill me by throwing me over the cliff; I shall try to kill you in the same way. We go on until one is dead or both are dead. The fence constitutes the boundary. It is not permitted to kick or hit with the fist, but everything else is permitted; one may take advantage of the exhaustion or sleep of the other, supposing that the struggle is prolonged; one may resort to any kind of feint. I think I have mentioned everything."

"Now," said Halbron. For a moment they watched each other with strained eyes, and then Safwell sprang forward suddenly and tripped and threw Halbron. He caught him by the ankle to drag him, but Halbron twisted himself free and was on his feet again in a moment. He flung himself on Safwell, and the two, locked closely together, spun round and round. The struggle lasted some minutes, neither being able to get the other down. Suddenly they broke away; they had worked right up to the edge of the cliff, and another step would have sent both over.

Instinctively both men rushed back to the fence and flung themselves down, panting. Safwell happened for one instant to turn his head, and in that instant Halbron had caught him by the foot and was dragging him. He tried to twist his foot free, but could not; nor could he stop himself with his other foot or by clutching at the short, dry grass. He was within three feet of the edge, and the case seemed hopeless for him. At the best in going over he might be able to clutch at Halbron and drag him over, too; that was his only consolation. But as Halbron was on the point of swinging him over he stumbled and fell, releasing Safwell.

Both men sprang to their feet and faced each other. They were on the narrowest part of the wedge. As Safwell lowered his shoulder to charge he saw Halbron drop and let the force of the charge carry him over. There was a moment's pause, and then Halbron darted back to the fence again. Safwell went after him and once more they locked every muscle strained in the life and death struggle.

It was 7 in the morning. The woman was awake again and angry at being awake, she who usually slept so long and well. After a vain effort to get some more sleep she gave it up and presently rang for her maid. When the fresh sunlight was admitted into her room and she had got her letters and her cup of tea she had a feeling of unusual virtue in being awake so early. It seemed to herself to be good of her.

Prone on the grass by the fence lay the two men a few yards apart from each other, utterly exhausted. They had been like that for the last half hour. It looked as if it would resolve itself into a trial of endurance, that the one who first slept or swooned would be the one to die. They watched each other carefully, the least movement of the one was suspected and answered by the other. Since the duel began it had gone on in absolute silence; not a word had been spoken. Twenty times the merest chance had saved them both from destruction.

Safwell felt that his strength was giving out; he determined on a plan which would end the fight one way or the other and seemed to give him at least an equal chance with his opponent. His plan was to stand on the extreme edge of the cliff with his back to his enemy; Halbron would not risk a charge, but would creep up behind him and then push him to send him over. If just at the moment that push he dropped, Halbron would be certain to stumble over his body and over the cliff; if he dropped too soon Halbron would not stumble and would have a good chance of rolling him over the edge

if he did not slip soon enough then it was certain death.

He rose and went to the edge and looked over, with his back to Halbron. He stood there for some minutes, and then he could hear Halbron softly rise to his feet. He dared not look round. He had to go by the sound alone. It was Halbron's breathing that he heard best; on the grass the footsteps were almost inaudible. Another moment would settle it.

I am sorry that I forgot the rest of this story.—Exchange.

## Seven Heats Required.

Detroit, July 16.—It took seven heats to decide the 2:17 trot at Grosse Pointe track this afternoon and the event, which was won by Alice Russell, proved to be the best race thus far seen at the Blue Ribbon meeting of the Detroit Driving Club. The weather and track were fine and the attendance was 7,000. Summary:

2:11 trot, purse \$1,500 (unfinished yesterday)—Ansell won the third and fourth heats in 2:09, 2:10; Point Dexter won the second heat in 2:09; Palm Leaf won the first heat in 2:10.

2:10 class trot amateur mile dash to wagon—Alice Barnes won in 2:12.

2:17 trot, purse \$1,500—Alice Russell won the fifth, sixth and seventh

heats in 2:14, 2:16, 2:15. New Bearer won the first and fourth heats in 2:13; Mary P. Leburn won the second and third heats in 2:14, 2:14.

2:14 pace, purse \$1,500—Romney won the third, fourth and fifth heats in 2:04, 2:04, 2:11; Romney won the second heat in 2:11; Manning Stratton won the first heat in 2:04.

Fresh from a stormy interview with the prima donna, who wanted a higher salary, the impresario was home.

His wife met him with the news that the cook had struck and that a cold supper awaited him. Wearily he threw himself on the lounge.

"My hired girls," he groaned, "will be the death of me yet."

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Her Mother—Don't say "ma," dear, say "mama." What do you want?

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**Private L**

Tom Lawson could "run a turf straight as any other man in the Prairie, and he kept the turf in his big sturdy-limbed horses. Since he, a newcomer, did not have these paramount traditions of the community, he was well known to the neighbors referred to him as "Dick Caldwell's horse." It didn't matter so much to him as to the neighbors, but his former life in Indiana might have been a closed book unless he had it otherwise. Folk of the Prairie knew he was up with the turf every morning and they whistled songs as he traipsed the dew-spangled pasture team before breakfast. All the time one of them to all appearances.

Tom Lawson was not a man who could be trusted. If he did not reveal his secret to these practical tilers of the soil, he would have been a man who did not care for his own life. He was one of those who had a sympathy for the turf, but there is no keener secret than that.

He was thinking of all this as he stood and dusty on the head of the horse, and looked out over the acres of brown earth. In his long ribbons before him. Some of the gathering twilight was on him. Maybe it was the thought of his isolation, maybe a yearning for a different life, maybe much more likely—the dawn of a fair-haired lass he had left in Indiana.

They there, Lawson! wo! he was just thinking so my answer. "It's been a Frank."

By the way, Tom, did you know news?"

Governor's called out all the men to help fight the bloody war down in Cuba. The Company's goin' to Springfield every morning and wants to make it a hundred."

That night Lawson tossed on his bed until long after midnight. He couldn't be one of the fellows who would be killed if he went to war and maybe he would be a captain. These and a hundred possibilities crowded upon him. He scanned them all as he lay against the background of the little farmhouse where every other soul in it was sleeping. He crept out of bed, took his only suit of clothes, and went to the door and passed the night. Canton was five miles away, but his footsteps were steady toward a distant glow in the sky. There he knew nothing of the city, asleep, and waiting for the reveille that would call him to war for the first time since the century.

No need here to tell of the excitement that attended the mobilization of Company M and its march to the train already packed for Springfield. No need to picture the scenes of parting as the trains were enacted every morning in 1898 in two towns in Illinois. It is sufficient to say that not one of the thousands gathered at the station for the band of Tom Lawson and his men.

Not a tear was shed, not a hand was waved as the train pulled out, not a man expressed the hope that the boys would be back alive, and yet it was one of the lucky who had just returned to Company M to the strength.

As the train rolled off its tracks and farmhouses and the village Lawson felt that he was a part of the old life, but a part of comradeship and of already bound him to his friends with a tie stronger than any he had known in his life.

He took to himself a share of the thoughts along the line. The gravel music in his ears was deep in his heart—that was his home, that was his life. Maybe—how fondly he might have thought of his home had he withstood in a one-way run that would have been a run—something more.

The train swung around a corner. From the top a flag was in the wind. Another whistle, beckoned from a "Long Tom" was the cry