

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, MAY 28, 1898.

## STORIES ABOUT CROOKS.

TOLD AT A RECENT GATHERING OF CHIEFS OF POLICE.

**Steadman's Successful Break for Liberty**  
by Way of a Flywheel Belt—How a Squad of Police Averaged 30 Prisoners Per Man at One Hunt.

It is one thing to catch a thief and it is another thing to hold him. During the meeting of the Chiefs of Police of all the larger cities of the United States and Canada, which occurred at Milwaukee the past week, there were reminiscences with a number of remarkable captures and escapes which bordered closely upon the miraculous. Tones of criminal history were taken from the shelves of memory and opened at chapters of thrilling interest by the men who had been themselves the principal actors. History? Yes, that is the proper word, but most mould pronounce it romance.

"The most remarkable escape from prison that I can recall," said William A. Pinkerton to a group of Chiefs and Superintendents, "was that of Frank Steadman from the San Quentin prison. But I'll not tell you about it, for here is John Glas, who caught Steadman and sent him back to San Quentin."

Chief Glas straightened his six feet three inches, and pinched the brown imperial on his under lip reflectively for a moment before he responded to the looks of inquiry bent upon him by those not familiar with the story.

"The escape to which you refer, Pinkerton was, made after I sent Steadman to San Quentin, and not before. I was not the fortunate one to get him after that last wonderful break. And to tell the truth, I have never taken to myself much credit or taking him the time I did, for it was to a considerable degree a matter of good fortune. You see, we were just at that time keeping our eyes open for a bank robber by the name of Barnes, who had gone into one of the banks out there, covered the one man who happened to be alone in the place at the time, locked him up in the vault, and then coolly walked out of the bank and out of sight with all the funds he could get his hands on.

"One day a man answering closely the description we had of Barnes stepped off the train at Los Angeles. We took him in tow at once, but found we did not have the bird we were after. However, we managed to hold him long enough to find out that he was Frank Steadman, who had been notorious even at that time as a successful jail breaker. He had four or five escapes from southern Indiana credited to him, had got away from Joliet, and had still seven years to do at the Illinois prison, had also been at San Quentin, and had escaped from there with five years unfinished.

"Steadman was a machinist by profession, and a burglar by inclination. When he was sent back to San Quentin to finish his time he was put to work with other convicts in the engine room. It was here that an idea came into his brain that for absolute daring and fearlessness was typical of the man. He had noticed that every evening at the time the men working in the engine room were lined up to be marched away, the machinery was stopped at exactly the same moment. He had observed as well that a window leading to an adjacent roof was not far from the top of the big driving belt of the engine. From that roof it was possible to reach the outer wall of the prison. Beyond the wall was freedom. He had escaped so many times that his mind reverted again and again to the window high up on the wall of the engine room. Apparently it was beyond all possibility of being reached. No ladder was to be obtained. Had such a thing been even standing in place against the wall, to break from the line and scale it with catlike dexterity, although the work of but a few seconds, he well knew would be futile, possibly fatal. Bullets travel faster than legs, and the guards were not bad shots. But desperate deeds demand desperate means. Some minds may work with an ingenuity born of despair, but Steadman's was of a different calibre. His plans were the outgrowth of steadfast optimism. He never ceased to scheme, as he never ceased to hope for liberty.

"One day there came to him, as if by inspiration, the thought that the big belt might be the means of carrying him to his goal. He found that it was impossible to count the revolutions of the driving wheel, but there were lacings in the broad belt, which he was able to distinguish as a sort

of blur as it passed a given point. For days and days he counted, and in his cell at night he spent his time in calculations. He discovered the exact number of revolutions the wheel made per minute. He learned also, by constant observation, just how many times the belt went round after the engine was shut down.

"One evening, when the line had been formed as usual at the close of a day's work, and as the big wheel began to lose its momentum, suddenly a convict sprang from the line, leaped to the belt, with outstretched arms snatching both edges of the broad lacings. He had calculated well the strength that would be required, for the terrific wrench did not loosen his grasp. Outward and upward he swung until he reached the topmost point of the circumference. The nicety of his calculation had reaped its reward. The belt stopped. He leaped to his feet, sprang through the window, and was gone before convicts or guards had recovered from their astonishment. He caught up a guard's coat and hat, dropped from the wall and got away in the dusk of the evening. I am inclined to believe that as a mathematical proposition that was about as perfect a piece of work as any man ever accomplished."

"And did he get away without recapture?" some one asked.

"No, I am almost sorry to say, he did not," answered the Los Angeles Chief, "for that ought by rights to be the denouement of such a story, which combines so much of daring and cleverness. Steadman was taken again in a short time and put to work at his old job. There are bars over that high window above the big drive belt now. Not long after this Steadman cut and nearly killed one of the other convicts and is now serving out an additional sentence, for attempted murder, at the Folsom prison which is situated some twenty-eight miles from Sacramento.

"Sometimes you hear of one man single-handed and alone arresting four or five people," said a Superintendent of an Eastern city, "but that slender man over there with the black mustache and bronzed face ought to hold the record, and I am inclined to believe that he does. That is W. G. Baldwin of Roanoke, Va., and he is chief of detectives for Norfolk and Western Railroad and chief of the iron and coal police of West Virginia. He took seven men with him at one time and brought back an average of thirty-nine prisoners for each man. About two years ago there was established at Roanoke Va. a big gambling joint. Being situated just across the river from Washington, the plant waxed strong and the syndicate behind it grew so powerful as to laugh at all attempts at interference. Baldwin had made a reputation in his country, having been mixed up more or less with the celebrated Hatfield-McCoy feud. He had arrested five of the leaders in that trouble, one of whom was hanged and three were sent over the road for life. He heard of the Roanoke layout and declared that were he given the opportunity he would arrest the whole outfit and break up the gang. He was given the chance. But he went at it in a different way from that which any had anticipated. With seven men he deliberately attempted and successfully accomplished the arrest of over 300. He quietly stationed one detective at each entrance and exit. Then he walked to the centre of the big hall and with a gun in each hand announced to the astonished gamblers that every man within sound of his voice was under arrest. The majority of those present were bartenders and butchers, and they fell over each other and rolled and tumbled on the floor in their efforts to reach the doors. When they got to one and found two gun barrels barring the way they rushed for another exit. It was confusion worse confounded. There were irresponsible ones who wanted to fight. The detectives did not flinch. Two of the gamblers were shot and killed in the first impetuous rush to get away. The 312 remaining decided that they had really no desire to go across the Potomac in Pine boxes. The coup was a complete success. After Baldwin had arranged for the care of his small army of prisoners he and his detectives demolished over \$12,000 worth of gambling utensils."

"This is a progressive age, and the criminal classes are not falling behind the procession," said a Chief of a city whose inhabitants number several hundred thousand, and whose name is not given for obvious reasons. "The thief of to-day has more daring and will take greater chances than the man engaged in the same line of work would have dreamed of twenty years ago. The Police Departments have got too keen moving, and at a rapid rate, too,

in order to keep abreast of the multiplying methods of the criminal class. We have to hold just as many cards in the game as the other fellow, and if we want to be sure to win, it is a good plan to have one or two cards up our sleeve. I have in operation at present what I call my 'fly cell.' It is something I would not exploit the location of through the newspapers for the world, for that would kill the effectiveness. One of the great troubles every Police Department experiences is in getting men to talk. A holdup occurs in a certain section. We know just what characters were in the locality about the time the affair is reported to headquarters and officers are sent out to make the arrests the plunder had been stowed away somewhere out of reach. The men arrested refuse to talk. They say we have nothing for which we can hold them. We run the heaviest sort of bluffs as to the dead-sure case we have against them, but without success. I had racked my brain over the proposition as to how to get such men to give up, and without much success until I hit upon my 'fly cell' scheme. It is merely a small double cell of the most ordinary kind, and there is not one single thing in or about it that would arouse the suspicion of the most wily thief. The secret lies in the ceiling, and the cell is in reality nothing more than a gigantic telephone receiver. When two pals are arrested and we want to learn something about them they go to this cell. Then I can sit in a room on the fourth floor and hear every word that is spoken between them. I experimented with this cell for a long time, built and rebuilt it, and finally it works to a charm."—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

## HUNTING WILD HOGS.

A Dangerous Adventure in the San Joaquin River Bottom.

For years past a select lot of knowing hunters have been having exciting sport hunting wild hogs in certain sections of the San Joaquin River bottoms. It isn't every day, though, that the venturesome hunters are almost killed by the cornered hogs. That fate, however, nearly befell William Douglass recently. If Jim Pope, with a trusty Winchester, hadn't been standing near by, Douglass wouldn't be telling the exciting story he does about the old 'trucker' that had him down in a rush.

The country they hunted in is wild and densely covered with an almost impenetrable tangle of vines, low brush, and occasional trees. All old residents along the lower San Joaquin Valley know just such territory along the bottom lands, where the water overflows in the spring. Hundreds of wild hogs inhabit some of them. It was in just such a jungle, near Lathrop, where young Douglass went to bag some wild hogs, and it was in this same jungle that 'Old Man' Tyler hid after killing Deputy Sheriff Buzzell on Thanksgiving eve, 1895. To this wilderness of willows and underbrush Williams and Schlager fled last September after attempting to wreck and rob the south-bound New Orleans express.

Nearly every traveller in California knows of Lathrop, in the banner wheat county of this State, but very few of the passengers who dine at the station daily know that less than five miles away there is a wild spot where boar hunting can be followed that is every bit as exciting as the famous hunts in India. There can be no 'pig sticking,' to be sure, for the hunter who wishes to bag a wild porker in the San Joaquin underbrush must rely on his rifle and enough nerve and strength to carry him on his hands and knees beneath the network of vines and bushes.

The land thereabouts abounds in coons, and coon hunting is a favorite pastime with the sportsmen of San Joaquin county. Occasionally, when running down one of these ring-tailed despoilers of hen roosts, the hunters run across one of the droves of wild hogs that sometimes venture out into the thickets on the open places on the river bottom. The hunters, however, rarely venture into the thickets on the old Trabern ranch and in the underbrush, where the wild hogs root out a living. It is a dangerous venture unless one is prepared to meet a roving, vicious old "trucker." Williams, the train wrecker, now serving a life sentence in the Folsom State Prison, knew this wild section well, and told the authorities that he crawled all night long through this tract on the evening of the Morano hold-up. He was looking for a hiding place where it would take the officers weeks to find him, and he was in just the right kind of country to find such a place. He might still be at large had not hunger and curiosity forced him to leave the haunts of the wild hogs.

"Those robbers will have plenty of 'hog meat to keep them alive,' was what a number of old-timers said when they heard the

train wreckers had taken to the brush. This is what fired hunters with a desire to possess a pair of wild boar's tusks.

"Pope and I had heard," said Douglass, in telling his adventure, "that there were lots of wild hogs in the underbrush near the river. I heard this story when I first came to the country, but paid no attention to it, for whenever I had a chance to go hunting I was after ducks or doves. After newspapers printed so much about that Williams and Schlager affair and told of the wild country they were supposed to be in, I suggested to Jim—that's Pope—that we go down into it some day and see if we could get one of those wild boars. Jim is always ready for anything of that kind and has a fine Winchester to help him out. I had no gun, so I borrowed a single magazine shotgun. We fitted out for a three days' stay, and hired a skiff to go up as far as San Joaquin City. I did not know much about the country, but Jim had lived in the country all his life, and knew the lay of the land.

"When we reached San Joaquin City it was early in the afternoon, and Jim inquired if there were any woodchoppers' camps near by. Just as soon as we learned in what direction we could find one we started for it. Maybe you don't think it was work getting there. That's the toughest country I ever expect to travel through. There was nothing but tangled willows, blackberry vines, hazel bushes, and underbrush, and you have to crawl on the ground or climb over it or cut your way through. It was nearly night when we reached the clearing where the woodchopper's cabin is. No one would ever find it in ten years without proper directions.

"The woodchopper routed us out at 4 o'clock next morning to get outside of some coffee, bacon, and a teal duck apiece. The old chap made us eat a tremendous breakfast, for as he put it, 'If you don't feel full, you'll never have the sand to hunt long in that brush.' We were mighty glad afterward that we fed well, for when we struck the brush we found that it took nearly an hour to go a mile.

"It must have been fully three hours before we got a sign of a wild hog. Jim caught a glimpse of him in a bit of clearing. We crawled through the tangled blackberry vines in front and got a good view of him. He was an old boar, just like the pictures you have seen. Near him were a sow and three fairly grown pigs. They were too far off for a good dead shot, so we moved about to get a little nearer. I went to the left and Jim to the right.

"The old rascal must have scented us, for he lifted his snout and started for the brush directly in front of where I was standing. I stepped out, and in the excitement shot too soon, for he was over seventy-five yards off. The shot never touched him, and he made for me.

"I did not think there was any danger, for I knew all I had to do to get another and better shot was to pump another cartridge into the magazine. I tried to work the gun. The cartridge stuck. I pumped it for all I was worth but it would not budge.

"I was on one knee, using every muscle to dislodge the shell, and the boar was coming head on like a limited express.

"I saw he'd reach me before I could jump anywhere for safety, so I clubbed the gun

and made a smash at him. But I slipped on the soggy ground and he was at me, when I heard Jim's Winchester crack. The boar looked as big as an elephant to me for an instant. I'm sure his tusks looked larger than a mastodon's.

"He was right over me and one of his tusks grazed my duck coat, and Jim caught him between the shoulders. I lay flat on the ground, reaching for my knife as the boar toppled over.

"That's the closest shave I ever had. Catch me fooling with those magazine shotguns any more! 'Trombone'—that's what the crack Reliance man calls himself—may break bluerock with them, but I'll take a rifle and a 44 calibre Colt's besides when I go after wild hogs again.

"What we should have had was a lot of good dogs. Then there would have been a pretty fight. I'll bet that old boar would have made it warm for the best dogs in the country.

"When Jim fired the boar fell directly across my body and I couldn't get out from under him till Jim ran up and helped to roll the big brute over. He did not look quite so big when he was stretched out as he did when standing over me with his head ready for a gouge, but he was a vicious looking rascal just the same. We each have one of the big tusks as a souvenir.

"On the way home we bowled over another. An old sow and two pigs were rooting acorns under an oak. This time we had a 'cinch,' for we were right on them and while I put a load of buckshot into one of the pigs Jim caught the sow right under the left shoulder. Then our troubles began again. How to get them through the brush was the next question. We finally decided to take the pig and let the old woodchopper take the sow, if he wanted her.

"That night we had a feast in his cabin. He dressed the pig, did the cooking, and we did the rest. I tell you we were hungry."

## A Trial of Noses.

Here is a description of a novel contest which is said to have taken place at a social 'function' in Hartford, Conn. The description is taken from the Times:

"Twelve vials were filled with liquids of a uniform red color, but of different odors. The test was for each guest to name the odors and write the names on a card. The odors chosen were familiar, such as witch-hazel, cologne, wintergreen, pennyroyal, rose, lemon, and the like, and it would be supposed that there would be little or no difficulty in identifying them; but the task was not so easy after all, for the reason that the stronger odors seemed to dull the sense of smell as to the more delicate ones.

Some of the mistakes were very amusing. The highest score, eleven out of twelve, was made by one of the gentlemen, and, as a rule, the scores of the gentlemen were better than those of the ladies. A curious fact was that a vial containing a liquid without any odor was wrongly guessed by all the ladies, and was identified as water by only two of the gentlemen.

## A Convenient Custom.

In Holland bills are often paid through the medium of the Post office. It enables a man living, say in Rotterdam, to get a small bill collected in any provincial town without the often expensive and tedious interference of a banker or agent. For that purpose he hands his bill to the nearest postoffice. It is sent to the place where the money is to be collected. After the collection a draft is forwarded to the payee by the office where he deposited the bill duly receipted on payment of a small commission, which is payable in advance.—London Evening News.

## A Custom-Made Joke.

Customs Office—"I told that woman she'd have to pay ten dollars duty on that dog or we'd confiscate him. She hasn't decided yet what to do."

Assistant—"Another case of love and duty, eh?"

# Disease

can be driven in or driven out. Dr. Ayer's Sarsaparilla drives disease out of the blood. Many medicines suppress disease—cover it but don't cure it. Dr. Ayer's Sarsaparilla cures all diseases originating in impure blood by purifying the blood itself. Foul blood makes a foul body. Make the blood pure and the body will be sound. Through the blood Dr. Ayer's Sarsaparilla cures eczema, tetter, boils, eruptions, humors, rheumatism, and all scrofulous diseases.

"Dr. Ayer's Sarsaparilla was recommended to me by my physician as a blood purifier. When I began taking it I had risings or boils all over my body, but one bottle cured me. I consider Dr. Ayer's Sarsaparilla the best blood medicine made."—BONNER CRAFT, Wesson, Miss.

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