

## A DETECTIVE'S CLEVER WORK

How a Murderer Was Trained and  
Convicted in Alaska.

### HIDDEN CRIME REVEALED

The Patient Careful Work of a Detective  
—The Most Remarkable on Record—  
How the Facts Were Brought to Light.

(The following is from last Sunday's Philad. Press, by one of their staff correspondents who is now in Alaska. Geo. Nox McCain has frequently visited our town and is known to many of our readers. The incident he relates is marvelous. It surpasses anything we have ever heard or read in that line, and for that reason give it much space in this issue.—Ed.)

BY GEORGE NOX MCCAIN.

Dawson City, Yukon Territory, Aug., 1901.—One of the costliest murder trials the world has ever known, one of the greatest pieces of detective work ever accomplished, will have become history in a few days with the hanging of George O'Brien.

He is the most brutal murderer the British Northwest has ever seen. He is to be hanged here in the little hewn log inclosure of the Northwest Mounted Police on August 23. He has twice tried to commit suicide and cheat the gallows.

To weave the chain of evidence around this triple murderer required a year's work by the detectives; involved a trip by one of them of 5000 miles by dog sled; the summoning of witnesses from all over the world nearly, while the trial cost over \$150,000. The detective work was such a remarkable performance that the judge publicly complimented the officers from the bench—a rare thing in an English court.

This detective is a Pennsylvanian by birth. He is a rival of Sherlock Holmes in real life.

#### STORY OF THE MURDERS.

The story of the murders, which are of secondary importance in this connection, briefly is as follows:—

On Christmas Day, 1899, three well-known men, Ralph Clayson, a merchant, of Dawson; Ole Olsen, a telegraph line-man in the employ of the Canadian Government, and Lynn Wallace Rolfe, a former cashier of the Monte Carlo Theater, at Dawson, suddenly disappeared on the trail between Minto and Hutchiko while they were on their way from Dawson to Whitehorse. Clayson was a well-known young business man, with a brother equally well known in Skagway. With Rolfe he had come to Dawson from Seattle, their native place, in 1898. Olsen was a Swede.

Search was instituted within three days. It was not known whether they had met with foul play or had been lost in the river by falling through the ice.

Early in the winter the mounted police authorities in Dawson had been informed by a clergyman that George O'Brien and two other men had perfected a scheme to hold up and rob men on the trail leading from Dawson to Bennett where the railroad to Skagway ended. A conscience-stricken man had told him that he had been approached by O'Brien and another man and asked to join the scheme.

#### AN ENGLISH DESPERADO.

O'Brien was well known to the Northwest Mounted Police. He came from Birmingham, England, where he had served seven years over there for attempting to kill a policeman. At the end of his sentence he had come to New York, thence emigrated to Juneau, Alaska, where he worked for a time in the great Treadwell gold mines. From there he had drifted across the trail into the Klondike country, and had been arrested for robbery and confined in the Barracks jail here in Dawson under sentence for two years. He broke jail and was subsequently captured down the Yukon and brought back and given six months of an extra sentence, which he served.

Immediately on his release from jail he disappeared, the statement from the minister being the first evidence that he had gone back to his old criminal ways. The disappearance of the three men named at this time caused the liveliest apprehensions in the minds of the Northwest Mounted Police that O'Brien knew of these men and their fate, and orders were telegraphed to arrest him wherever found.

The winter trail from Dawson to Bennett Lake is merely a bridle path 500 miles long. It runs along the Pelly and Lewis rivers when they are frozen over, part of the way, and it is as regularly traveled as any country road in Pennsylvania. About two weeks after the disappearance of the three men named an American detective with a team of seven dogs was on his way over the trail to Dawson. He was going to the Klondike on some insurance fraud case. His name was Phillip Ralph McGuire.

In personal appearance McGuire is of medium height and build. He is sinewy, obervant, affable, keen, fearless, and persistent. He was born in Meadville, Pa., drifted out west, became first a Secret Service man in the employ of the United States Government, later on was inspector of police in Minneapolis, and then came into Alaska as the detective and personal representative of a big surety and guarantee company of New York. He took out three or four defaulters and forgers who had sought the seclusion of the Alaskan wilds and, in that way came to know the country long before the Klondike became famous.

Early in January Detective McGuire learned from the brother of Ralph Clayson in Skagway that the former had disappeared. McGuire new the missing man intimately. They had gone over the trail and the Chilkoot Pass together. When, therefore the story of the disappearance was recited to him, with an appeal from the brother to search for the missing man, McGuire proceeded to look into the matter on his way to Dawson.

In the meantime the Northwest Mounted Police of Canadian Government arrested a number of men along the trail on suspicion, but were compelled to let them go as no evidence could be obtained against them. Among the prisoners arrested was one man who was held at Tagish House by the police. When he was arrested the police did not know who he was. When Detective McGuire arrived at that point he recognized the man as George O'Brien, the ex convict.

It was at this time that Inspector W. H. Scarth, of the Canadian Mounted Police, was placed in charge of the case, which by this time had attracted attention all over the Yukon territory and Alaska wherever mails or telegraph lines reached. The position of inspector corresponds in the military establishment to that of captain. Inspector Scarth is a young man of thirty odd years, a gentleman and a thoroughgoing disciplinarian.

In the meantime Detective McGuire had had an interview with O'Brien in the temporary prison at Tagish. He told contradictory stories and was exceedingly bitter against the police. He told McGuire where he had halted last on the trail and what he done. Leaving Tagish, which is farther along the trail by 150 odd miles from the scene of the murder, McGuire with his dog team went down the trail and found that the statements of the prisoner were true.

He had halted at an Indian camp, but he did not tell the detective that he had tried to sell gold dust to the natives or had tried to dispose of two horses for \$60, for which he had paid \$200 but four days previous. This awakened McGuire's suspicions and on further investigation he found by sled tracks that O'Brien had tried to get around the police station at Tagish, but had broken through the ice on the river and had been compelled to return to the Indian camp.

At this time O'Brien was trying vainly to get out of the country, and over to Bennett Lake, where he could take a train and disappear forever from the scene of his crimes.

#### BORINGS A CLEW.

While going along the trail Detective McGuire found some wooden borings from an inch auger. They were of oak wood. He suspected O'Brien of the murders, though he knew nothing of the statement of "hold up" conspiracy from the Dawson clergyman. The sight of the auger borings suggested at once that O'Brien had "plugged" his sled, bored holes in it, and hidden any valuables he may have found in the borings. He went back to Tagish, inspected the sled and found that the heavy oak standards had been bored clear through. There was space enough here to hide \$10,000 in gold dust, but O'Brien had pulled out the plugs and there was nothing in the holes.

There was nothing left to work on, therefore, but the fact that the three men had disappeared somewhere between Fort Selkirk and Hutchiko. In one direction this was eighteen miles, in another across country it was 1500 miles. The American detective began his search for evidence, therefore, in the eighteen miles between the posts named.

In his dog team, which he used for traveling over the snow, Detective McGuire had two specially well bred dogs; one was a "husky," three parts wolf; the other was part bloodhound and part fox hound. These were of the greatest material assistance to him in his work.

The conditions under which this remarkable piece of detective work—unequaled perhaps in the annals of any secret service—was performed, can best be understood by the statement that at this time the ground over the entire distance was covered by three feet of snow and the thermometer frequently registered from 40 to 60 below zero. These facts delayed investigation, but meanwhile George O'Brien was held as a suspicious character pending developments.

Five weeks later the influence of the

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## SUPREME COURT IN DISGRACE

Justice Potter, the Quay Nominee,  
Accused of Lobbying

### OTHER MEMBERS IMPLICATED

Potter Kept Governor Stone Informed  
of Court Secrets—Conversations  
Over the Telephone—Such Men  
Are Unfit.

Last summer the sensational charge was made that while the famous "Ripper Bill" appeal and the celebrated Patton township school appropriation appeal from the decision of Judge Love, were before the Supreme Court of this state, in which Gov. Stone and the Quay gang at Harrisburg were intensely interested, that Justice Potter, whom Gov. Stone appointed, had by telephone kept Gov. Stone informed of the position of various members of the court and the progress of the measures. The Philadelphia Press correspondent at Harrisburg made the direct charge and when it was denied by Gov. Stone, re-affirmed the statement. Owing to no further evidence on the subject at that time little account was taken of it.

This week the Press created a great surprise over the state by publishing complete conversations of these two officials, as overheard and noted by another party, at that time. The accused officials refuse to make a statement and deny all efforts for an interview. The attending facts are convincing and there is little doubt as to its authenticity.

Since Justice Potter has come before the people for a judgment upon his qualifications for the high office to which his partner has elevated him, the Press is entirely right in giving to the public the evidence of his unfitness.

These reported conversations being on April 15th, when Governor Stone inquired about the delay in announcing the decision of the Supreme Court upon the veto power. Justice Potter replies: "Mitchell was too sharp and it will be held a few days; but it is all right."

A week later the decision was announced and the judge asked the governor how long the legislature would remain in session. A conversation followed on the "Ripper" bill and "the position to take," as "we want the law sustained if possible." On April 22nd the judge informs the governor that "we are ready for business tomorrow," and "I think we are pretty sure of four."

The following are parts of the judge's conversation which were overheard:

"This man here (Brown) is all right."  
"We stand a good show of Fell."  
"The old man just home (Dean) is dead against it."  
"For God's sake, don't let on. I am doing everything I can. I think it ought to be five. We can't say anything."  
"I just found out this afternoon that Judge Mitchell seems hurt that more was not said about his opinion."  
"Get him a write-up. He felt hurt. He has no suspicion that I am saying anything to you."

The next day a "write-up" of Judge Mitchell appeared in the Inquirer. A week later, on May 1st, this conversation is alleged:

Judge Potter: "It's good."  
Governor Stone: "My God! I am glad to hear that it is all right. I will be down at 10 o'clock tomorrow."  
Justice Potter: "It's safe now. I don't want to say anything about it, but it's all for you. I had a Dickens of a time."  
Governor Stone: "It's the best thing you ever did in your life, young man."  
Justice Potter: "I had to scratch to do it all right."  
Governor Stone: "Well, I have been awfully nervous, but it will be public in a few days. It's in the best of hands. Won't they 'holer' it? It will set them wild. It's a great thing! Good-by."

Justice Potter here appears as a lobbyist for the machine, "scratching," as he expresses it, to get a favorable decision upon questionable bills, reporting to his partner from time to time and consulting with him on the means to be taken to influence wavering members of the court. All that passed between the two conspirators was confirmed by subsequent events. The betrayal not only of the secrets but of the weaknesses of the Supreme Court, or of some of its members, is of a character that seems to call for some action by the court itself. Only a corrupt Bench will silently permit such an action to go unchallenged. It is among the most shameful scandals that even this misgoverned Commonwealth has known.

There may be denials or evasions; but the duty of the people of Pennsylvania is clear. A governor and a legislature controlled by the machine are sufficiently dangerous; if the Supreme Court also falls under the same control, all constitutional safeguards are destroyed and no greater calamity can befall our free institutions. No matter what may be Justice Potter's personal character or professional attainments, his political connections disqualify him, and his low conception of judicial responsibility is such as cannot be tolerated in the highest

tribunal of the state. An investigation should follow, unless he voluntarily resigns; and yet he is a candidate for reelection. He ought never to have been nominated. He ought not now to remain a candidate. If he does, he ought to be overwhelmingly defeated, by the vote of all honorable and patriotic people, irrespective of party creed.

These are some of the fruits of Gov. Stone's administration, and which John Hamilton, Judge John G. Love and others in this county approve.

Is it not a shame? Is it not a disgrace?

#### TRAIN WRECKER ARRESTED

County Detective Joseph Rightnour made an important arrest on Monday that will give relief to the managers of the Central Railroad of Pa. and its employees. One night last August as the evening train was drawing into Bellefonte, having on board a number of persons who had been attending the Reformed picnic at Hecla Park, a misplaced switch derailed the engine and baggage car which came near plunging over an eight-foot embankment into Spring Creek. It is said that other switches had been tampered with on the same road.

The company could get little trace of the offender. Finally they placed the matter in Mr. Rightnour's hands. After some investigation his suspicions were that Harry Miller, an 18-year old colored lad, son of Frank Miller, was the offender. He kept after him and some of his companions, continually bringing the matter to their attention, noticing their uneasiness over it. Finally young Miller from one admission to another committed himself and confessed. Mr. Rightnour at once took him to the railroad office where he made a clean breast of the whole affair. Upon a hearing, in default of \$2000 bail, he was sent to jail for trial at next court.

The lad is a bad one. In the past summer he stole a horse from Origen Attwood's stable. Then he robbed Irvin's stationery store and was convicted. His mother swearing that he was but 12 years of age, court suspended sentence. While awaiting trial he derailed this passenger train. This was a clever piece of work for which Mr. Rightnour deserves much credit.

#### Fire at Potters Mills.

Monday, shortly after noon, McCoy's general store, at Potters Mills, was destroyed, the building and stock of goods being a total loss. The store was being scrubbed, and the work had been well under way, on the main floor, when an effort was made to move a large coal oil tank, on that floor, by placing it on rollers. While the tank was being moved in this manner, one of the rollers slipped from under it and the vessel tilted throwing the oil out over the floor. Some of the oil ran through cracks in the floor into the cellar, where some one was using a coal oil lamp to get some articles, and the dripping oil from above coming in contact with the lamp, a blaze immediately flashed up and at once spread to the main floor which was saturated with the spilled oil, causing such a rapid spread of the blaze that it was impossible to save anything. The building was a 2-story frame, good as new.

There is \$4500 insurance on the property in various companies, of which Grant Hoover had written \$1500, Charles Smith \$1000, and the balance by another agency. The total loss is upwards of \$6000. The insurance on the stock is \$4000, balance on the building. Mr. Frank McCoy had a narrow escape from being burned to death. All escape by the lower floor was cut off by the raging flames. Fortunately there was a stairway near him by means of which he reached the second floor and from a window jumped to the ground below. His face, hands and eyebrows were severely scorched by the flames.

The Sportsmen's League of Potters Mills who had a lodge room above the store lost all their furniture.

#### FIRST COUNT.

Last evening the first count of coupons was made for the Estey organ. As many do not know who will want the instrument naturally are waiting for this count. It resulted as follows:

JUDGES REPORT.  
The following is the result of the first count of coupons, made on Wednesday evening, October 16th, 1901:

Liberty Baptist Church, Blanchard.....	29
Lutheran S. S., Rebersburg.....	5
Kreamerville M. E. Church.....	54
U. B. Church, Pleasant Valley.....	18
Unmarked Ballots.....	1
	107

#### A. M. SLOTMAN,

THOS. J. SEXTON, Judges.  
We are informed that the Lutheran Sunday School, at Rebersburg, do not wish to enter the contest. Several other parties will be announced in next issue.

On last page, 10, will be found the coupon and information regarding the method of awarding this organ.

## VARIETY OF COUNTY NEWS

Items of Interest Gathered From  
All Sections.

### SHORT AND TO THE POINT

What Transpired Worthy of Brief  
Mention, the Past Week—News From  
Over the County—For Hasty Readers—  
A New Department.

The field pumpkins are safe against rot this year—there are none to rot.

Samuel E. Campbell, of Lemont, has been granted a pension of \$8 a month.

Jacob Yearick, of Jacksonville, was stricken with paralysis. Mr. Yearick is 81 years old.

One of the fortunates to have a large crop of non-rotting potatoes is Samuel Slack, near Potters Mills. Send some of 'em this way, Samuel.

W. H. Ruse, of Milesburg, who has been driving for the Adams Express Co. at Windber, Somerset Co., during the past seven weeks, has been promoted to a position in the express office at Altoona.

Miss Gertrude Irwin, oldest daughter of the late Wm. Irwin, of Jacksonville, and Elmer C. Ross, of Lemont, were married Wednesday afternoon at 1 o'clock. Only the relatives of the immediate families were present.

Luella Mc, owned by Irvin Gray, of Stormstown, at Bloomsburg Thursday took first money by taking three straight heats in a race in which there were ten starters. The time was 2:15 1/4, 2:20 3/4, 2:19 1/4. At Milton last week she took first money in a hard seven-heat race.

The barber shop and confectionery store of W. E. Confer, at Howard, was entered by burglars Friday night. They stole barber tools, confectionery, etc. They gained an entrance by taking out one of the large show windows in the front of the store. There is no clue to the perpetrators.

The potato rot, within the recollection of the oldest inhabitant, was not so great as this year. In some localities it is almost total and in others half the entire crop. The price in market for potatoes is not high, since dealers are not anxious to purchase large quantities of the tubers, for fear the rot might get among them and a loss be sustained.

The hunting season opened this week, and pop, pop, pop, went the guns in and along the mountain districts. The birds would fly high if they just knew when the season for the unsparing shootists opened, but as it is, the birds are exposed to a rain of lead for the next dozen weeks. It is believed that game of all kinds will be plenty.

Thursday evening the farm house of Mrs. Michael Fishburn, near town, was partially destroyed by fire. The family had been making apple butter during the afternoon near a wood house in the rear of the residence and in some manner the building caught fire. The wood house and wash house were destroyed, but by hard work they succeeded in saving the building from complete destruction.

Thursday morning about 11:30 o'clock while John Bickel was feeding a threshing at Charles Bickel's farm in Bald Eagle, he was struck on the right hand by a large knife, which was being used by George Berry in cutting sheaves open. It cut off all the leaders and veins in the wrist, and the wound bled profusely. He immediately called on Dr. Painter, who dressed the injury. It required ten stitches.

The Meyer reunion, family of Reuben Meyer, deceased, was held Tuesday 8th, at Jerome Meyer's, three miles east of Rebersburg. Among those present were: Mrs. Polly Meyer, and the following children: Calvin Meyer, wife and mother-in-law, of Pueblo, Colo.; Daniel Meyer and wife, of Osceola; Amazon Meyer and wife, of Bloomville; Jerome Meyer and wife, Dr. J. W. Bright and family; J. B. Kreamer and wife, of Rebersburg. They had a most enjoyable time.

#### IN ADJOINING COUNTIES.

Rev. J. F. Dunlap, of Tyrone, has accepted the call from the Lutheran charges of Sugar Valley.

Hon. Charles A. Mayer has returned from his European trip, having arrived in Lock Haven Saturday afternoon.

The Twenty-second Pennsylvania regiment (cavalry) will hold its annual reunion at Marklesburg, Huntingdon county, Friday, October 18th.

Miss Bertha White, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey White, died at Mill Hill Thursday evening from a complication of diseases. She was 19 years old.

Alfred Graham, of Clearfield, has purchased a tract of timber land from Dr. Delome Stewart, of Moshannon, this

(Continued on page 6 column 1.)

## FACT, FUN AND FANCY.

Bright Sparkling Paragraphs—Selected and Original.

It's the dull fellow who is generally the greatest bore.

When some people have their pick, all they seem to look for is flaws.

At some hotels and most grist mills you can get meals at all hours.

It's the little things that tell—especially the little brothers and sisters.

The inchworm has to walk twelve times its length to go anywhere a-foot.

The fellow who frequents saloons often finds himself in a tight place.

When a man puts money in the bank he is working for his own interest.

Property owners and ragged beggars may be said to live on their rents.

A parrot is the most talkative bird, but a peacock also can talk an unfold.

Some people never attempt to do anything for fear they might do it wrong.

A sharp shooter—the soldier who is foxy enough to keep in the background.

The fellow who always has his hammer out is not always the first to nail a lie.

If it were not so much trouble to get money, fewer people would borrow trouble.

A child, like all envelopes, should be directed properly and licked in moderation.

The man who refuses to discuss politics, religion or golf is a friend worth having.

The mint is about the only business concern that makes money without advertising.

It seems funny that when a woman wants to pin her clothes she never uses a clothespin.

During the recent dry weather in Kansas pigs had to be soaked over night to make them hold swill. West of Salina, water was wet on one side only and dust was blowing off the rivers. Down at Wichita poor Mrs. Lease had to run the well through the clothes wringer every morning to get enough water to wash her clothes. But think of the ferryman hauling water eleven months in a year to keep his boat running.

#### INCENDIARISM IN FERGUSON TWP.

A number of the good farmers of Ferguson township are feeling some alarm for the safety of their barns in view of the late fires, and intimations that other barns are to be fired. The large barn of Frank Bowersox was burned a short time ago at night with all its contents, including some live stock. A few weeks previous to the fire, the Centre Democrat has been informed, Mr. Bowersox received several anonymous letters, with threats that his barn would be burned. Mr. Bowersox paid no attention to the threatening epistles sent him, thinking they were only intended as a playful scare, and that his township did not contain an inhabitant mean enough to be an incendiary. But the threats proved only too well founded, and the firebug came upon him like a thief in the night and did the dastardly deed. The anonymous letters are still in the hands of Mr. Bowersox, and may be some aid to a clue of the firebug.

On Thursday night, two weeks ago, the large barn of Henry Snyder, in the above named township, was set on fire by some scoundrel, and burned to the ground with all its contents. That this fire was of incendiary origin is proved by tracks of a large shoe leading across a plowed field to the northwest corner of the barn where the fire was first discovered, and the tracks led away again in the direction they came. The earth in the plowed field being damp the impression of the fire fiend's shoes were plainly stamped on the soil.

It is also further said that other owners of barns have received intimations that their property would be burned, and this has naturally caused fear and alarm among the good people up there, and will require unceasing watchfulness for some time at least. A detective should be placed in that territory to hunt down the fiend or fiends that are engaged in this nefarious work.

#### Harrisburg may get College.

The project for removal of the Central Pennsylvania College at New Berlin, has assumed something definite in the action recently taken by the committee to select and decide upon a point. The committee met in Harrisburg at the Evangelical publishing house, and it was decided to be to the best interests of the church and schools to unite the colleges at New Berlin and Meyerstown. Harrisburg has been moving to secure the college, and many of the members of the conference look upon that location favorably. Different towns in the state are anxious to secure the college. Definite action will be taken at the next meeting of the United Evangelical conference when the site will likely be determined upon.