

WRITTEN IN RED

STORY OF CHRIS EVANS, TRAIN ROBBER AND KILLER, WHO PLEADS FOR PARDON.

JOAQUIN MILLER'S MYTHS

The Poser Poet Puts Wings On the Old Villain and Tells Absurdly Untrue Tale of His Career of Outlawry to Aid His Release.

Lieut.-Gov. Warren Porter is said to be strongly in favor of pardoning and releasing from prison old Chris Evans, train robber and wholesale murderer, serving a life sentence by mercy of a jury whose plain duty it was to let him be hanged. Evans has been trying to get out on parole or pardon for some time, and doing a lot of hypocritical whining and lying to arouse sympathy for a "poor old man, whose errors were of the head, not of the heart," and some persons with more sentimentality than sense are trying to worry the board of pardons into turning him loose.

Among these joggle-witted sentimentalists is Joaquin Miller, who has written some good stuff in verse and a fearful lot of rubbish in prose. To seriously criticize Miller for misstatement of fact would be absurd to those who really know him, for Joaquin is constitutionally unable to differentiate the truth from the vaporings of his vain imagination, but the public knows Miller only as a poet of considerable repute and may be inclined to give credence and weight to what he writes.

In one of the coast magazines, Miller attempts to tell the story of Evans and Sontag, and there is not one essential fact of the history of those notorious outlaws that he has not distorted and perverted beyond recognition. He ministers to his own ridiculous vanity by representing himself to have taken a part in the famous chase and reported one of the combats, crediting himself with experiences of others. But that is Miller all over. His adventures with Indians and bears, of which he brags constantly, are pure myths. His connection with the Evans and Sontag case was confined to writing for the Examiner an account of a pretended meeting with Evans in the mountains, which was printed with a fake picture of Joaquin in the outlaw's retreat.

Murderous Robbers.

It was about fifteen years ago that Evans and Sontag ran their career of outlawry in Tulare and Fresno counties and furnished the newspapers with sensational stories. They had been robbing trains frequently in San Joaquin Valley, twice adding murder to their other crimes, but had not been suspected until by accident the officers found evidence pointing to one of the Sontag brothers. George Sontag was arrested, and two officers went to John Sontag's house in Visalia to search for a trunk. Even then nobody had thought of Chris Evans as one of the gang, but when the officers entered the Sontag house, Evans opened fire on them with a shotgun and gave himself away. This is Miller's version of the incident:

That evening a posse of half-drunken men, with a mob at their heels, came up from town to the little farmhouse with a warrant for John Sontag. He started for the barn and the posse opened fire right there among the terrified children. Mrs. Evans, with a babe at her breast, tried to get behind a horse, when a drunken "deputy" fired, almost in her face, and brought down the horse. Then this man fell. The battle was short, but long enough to riddle the little board house, hurt many of the "deputies," one of them mortally. It lasted long enough to drive Mrs. Evans and her aged mother into hysterics and to blight the lives of those little ones as with a midnight frost. Evans and Sontag went away together, came back, and then the next day another battle.

Not one true statement in the whole mess. There were but two officers, and one was wounded in the neck. Mrs. Evans was not present, and there was no "battle," the officers being taken wholly by surprise. Evans and Sontag hid in a barn that night, and an officer was detailed to watch the place. They sneaked out in the dark, murdered the officer and took to the mountains.

Perverse Sympathy.

For months the outlaws were hunted by sheriffs and safeguarded by the mountain men, the latter transmuting their animosity to the Southern Pacific into friendliness to the men who had robbed the detested corporation's trains. Many of the mountain men were old Mussel Slough settlers, and

they had good reason to hate the railroad, which had robbed them of their farms by as scoundrelly a trick as ever was played by a predatory corporation. But it was absurdly illogical to mix the Mussel Slough affair of twenty years back with the raids of thieves upon express cars which happened to be hauled by the Southern Pacific.

During the hunt in the mountains, a posse at noon approached a cabin on Sampson's Flat, not suspecting that the outlaws were dining there with the occupant, one Mainwaring. Victor Wilson, an Arizona officer, had joined the posse with two Apache trappers, Palon and Palomino, whose skill in tracking was expected to be useful. Wilson and Constable Maginnis went to the cabin, intending to buy some vegetables, while others of the posse remained in the road or searched the garden for ripe melons. Mainwaring came out of the cabin with a bucket and went toward the spring, saying nothing to the approaching officers and allaying by his movements any suspicion they might have had.

Officers Murdered.

When Wilson and Maginnis were about twenty feet from the cabin, Evans and Sontag shot through the window and killed them in their tracks. The outlaws rushed forth, opened fire with rifles and shotguns and stampeded the rest of the posse, wounding one and killing a horse. The two Indians were at some distance, looking for tracks. They dropped behind rocks and returned the fire. A bullet singed Evans's cheek, and he and Sontag fled through a cornfield into the woods.

The writer was with Sheriff Hensley's posse for some time, and also with the Wells-Fargo officers on the chase, was at the cabin the day after the murder and gathered the facts from all possible reliable sources. Not being a poet, he prefers the word of an intelligent, honest officer to the story of a thief and murderer, and has reason to believe that he is accurately acquainted with the facts of the matter.

Miller's Dime Novel.

But read Joaquin Miller on the murder at Sampson's flat.

Chris Evans was never tried for train robbery? Why? I do not know, certainly, but I should say it was because he was never a train robber or anything of the sort. He was tried for killing a man by the name of Wilson, a neighbor, who, as he knew him well, was persuaded to go along at the head of some Arizona Indian trailers for a promised reward. Mrs. Evans, hearing his purpose, went to him and told him how surely he would be punished. Well, to be brief, he went ahead, located, through the Indian scouts, the cabin where Evans and Sontag were sleeping, and, surrounding it, summoned them to surrender, assuring them that the only escape from the Indian tomahaw was to surrender to their white neighbors. As they came too near the cabin these two white neighbors fell dead and the Indians fled.

It is tolerably plain to anyone having the slightest acquaintance with the ways of the law that Evans was not tried for train robbery because there were several clear cases of the greater crime of murder against him. After he was convicted of murder in the first degree, with punishment fixed by the jury at life imprisonment, it was hardly worth while to try him for another offense. The California law has no provision for inflicting punishment after death.

Outlaws Taken.

Evans and Sontag shot more officers before they were taken. George Gard, once U. S. Marshal for Arizona, went after them with a small posse, had a battle with them in which Sontag was killed and Evans badly wounded, and took Evans to Fresno jail. Evans escaped from jail, with the aid of a man who supplied him with arms, and shot the city marshal of Fresno as he fled out of town. He was recaptured, tried and sent to prison.

Joaquin Miller, believing the old bandit's hypocritical yarns, asserts that Evans never robbed a train, and concludes his fantastic eulogy of the murderer thus:

And why is he not out on parole with his family and friends? I asked this question of many on my recent visit and the reason has always been: "The railroad. You see, to let mutilated old Chris Evans out might imply that the railroad, and not he, was in the wrong. See?"

A Vicious Villain.

That is pernicious rubbish. A bag of silver taken from the last train robbed by the gang was dug up in Evans's dooryard. George Roberts, an express messenger, fought Evans and the two Sontags for hours from the inside of his car, and was defeated only when the bandits blew up the

car with giant powder. Evans wanted to finish him when they entered the wrecked car, but Sontag would not permit the old hyena to slaughter the shattered and helpless messenger. The writer has heard the story of that fight from the lips of Roberts, who is a good citizen, and is convinced beyond shadow of a doubt that Evans did rob that train, as he robbed many others.

Whether or not the best thing we can do with a criminal is to keep him in prison for life is a question on which many men differ, but if the laws against robbery and murder mean anything it would be a crime against society to commute the term of Chris Evans by one hour. He might not do any more harm, but his release in response to mawkish sentimentalism would do a world of harm by proclaiming that justice in California is vacillating and that wholesale murder of officers of the law is a trivial misdemeanor. The sins of the Southern Pacific—and they are many—have nothing to do with the case.

Duty of a Gentleman.

He—You never can tell about a woman.

She—You shouldn't, anyhow.—Illustrated Bits.

TO FLOOD DAMAGE CLAIMANTS.

There will be a meeting of flood damage claimants at El Centro next Saturday, April 11th, 1908, at 1:30 p. m., to conclude arrangements for bringing suits to collect our claims. Let all interested attend.

[Signed:]

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

By W. M. ORRICK, Chairman.

Everything in furnishings at W. H. Goodrich Furniture Co.'s.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC TIME TABLE.

NORTHBOUND.

No. 503.

Leave Calexico 6:00 a. m.
 " El Centro 6:24 "
 " Imperial 6:40 "
 " Brawley 7:10 "
 " Junction 8:00 "

No. 505.

Leave Calexico 12:45 p. m.
 " El Centro 1:09 "
 " Imperial 1:25 "
 " Brawley 1:55 "
 " Imp. Junction 2:45 "

SOUTHBOUND.

No. 502.

Leave Imperial Junction 8:40 a. m.
 " Brawley 9:25 "
 " Imperial 9:52 "
 " El Centro 10:10 "
 " Calexico 10:40 "

No. 504.

Leave Imp. Junction 3:30 p. m.
 " Brawley 4:15 "
 " Imperial 4:42 "
 " El Centro 5:00 "
 " Calexico 5:30 "

TIME TABLE.

Holton Inter-Urban Railway, Effective March 23rd, 1908.

WEEK DAYS.

Westbound.
 No. 1—Leave Holtville 5:30 a. m.
 No. 3—Leave Holtville 12:20 p. m.
 No. 5—Leave Holtville 4:15 p. m.

Eastbound.
 No. 2—Leave El Centro 7:20 a. m.
 No. 4—Leave El Centro 1:30 p. m.
 No. 6—Leave El Centro 5:30 p. m.

Trains Nos. 1 and 2 carry freight. Nos. 3, 4, 5 and 6 motor car service.

SUNDAYS.

Westbound.
 No. 1—Leave Holtville 10:15 a. m.
 No. 3—Leave Holtville 4:15 p. m.

Eastbound.
 No. 2—Leave El Centro 12:35 p. m.
 No. 4—Leave El Centro 5:30 p. m.

Motor car service only. W. F. HOLT, President. C. E. PARIS, Gen'l. Supt.

Classified Liners

FOR SALE

FOR SALE—Turkey eggs. Mrs. Sam Moore, main canal, between Dogwood and Date canals. 50-4t*

FOR SALE—A few brood sows, 6½ miles southwest of El Centro on Dahlia. P. R. Cox. 50-4t*

FOR SALE—Deglet Noor date plants, from 4 to 6 feet high; in small lots one dollar each; in lots of 25 or more, 75 cents each. At the Corwin ranch, 3½ miles N. W. of El Centro. W. S. Corwin. f 15-tf

FOR SALE—Eight milch cows, singly or in lot. Good milkers and giving lots of milk now. 2½ miles southeast of Heber. F. A. Blake. 52-4t

FOR SALE—Turkey hens. Mrs. Sam Moore, on main canal, between Dogwood and Date. 47-7t*

Banking by Mail

PERFECTLY EASY

ABSOLUTELY SAFE

WE PAY

3 Per Cent on 3 Months Accounts
 4 " " " 6 " "

Our Bank was one of the few in California which in the recent financial stringency did not issue scrip or call time on its depositors.

WRITE TO US and we will be glad to explain our system, and refer you to a number of prominent people in your town as to our standing and business methods.

The Savings Bank of Redlands

Redlands, California

FOR SALE—Ranch team, cheap. Inquire of J. F. Tout. 47-tf

FOR SALE—Span of mules, 6 years old, 800 pounds, good roadsters. Hussey Bros., Silsbee. 52-55*

FOR SALE—A few choice young milch cows; also finely bred registered Jersey bull; also three-year-old Durham bull. H. M. Kusick, Depot Stables. 48-tf

FOR GOOD WORK AND EASY prices in painting or paper hanging see or write W. A. Faust, El Centro. 50-4t

FOR SALE—Hay in car lots. Get prices of J. H. Stewart, Redlands, Calif. 51-54

FOR SALE—Remington typewriter. Address, Remington, care Imperial Valley Press. 51-53*

FOR SALE—Eggs—Blue Andalusians and Rhode Island Reds. World's record breakers. \$1.25 a setting. Mrs. O. L. Snow, El Centro. 50-tf

FOR SALE—Stove wood, 4-foot or stove lengths, delivered for \$8.50 a cord. Call or drop a card to L. L. Forrester, El Centro. 48-tf

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE—160 acres, fully water stocked; extra fine sandy loam soil; no better in the valley; half cash, balance good Los Angeles property or nearby. See R. E. Jauman. 48-tf

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE—240 acres, fully water stocked, all in growing crops, fenced and cross-fenced, ripe for subdivision; want part cash, part good Los Angeles; do not submit anything which will not bear strictest investigation. See R. E. Jauman. 48-tf

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE—320 acres, 320 shares water stock, good house, shade trees, fenced and cross-fenced; 200 acres in alfalfa, balance in barley; sandy loam soil; this is a chance of a life time and will not last. See R. E. Jauman. 48-tf

FOR SALE—100 head of first class dairy cows, 1 mile west and half-mile north of El Centro. Will sell payable one-half of creamery check. Crawford, Davis & Burbank. 36-tf

FOR SALE—DeLaval steam separator, nearly new. Also DeLaval hand separator for sale cheap. Inquire of Mrs. F. McKusick, 2 miles west of Heber. d21tf

FOR SALE—One Holstein cow, good family cow. Address A. S. Fell 4 NE of El Centro. 28-tf

FOR SALE—160 acres sandy loam in No. 8, all in cultivation; \$40.00 per acre; liberal discount for cash.—Imperial County Land Co., Blackinton Bldg. 38-tf

WANTED

WANTED—Sweet potatoes. Parties having sweet potatoes for sale please communicate with C. E. Thurston Co., Brawley, Calif. 51-52

WANTED—Hay to put up on shares or to buy in the field. Geo. Jenifer, El Centro. 52-53*

WANTED—Water stock in Co. No. 1. F. J. Eddy, El Centro, Cal. 52-16*

WANTED—By a competent business man, position in store; years of experience; also bookkeeper; can furnish best of reference; begin work May 1st. Jas. P. Slater, 43 Sonoma St., Redlands, Calif. 51-3t*

POULTRY WANTED—Highest cash price for all kinds of poultry at cantaloupe shed east of railroad, El Centro. Receive on Tuesdays only. 41-tf Geo. T. Irvin

WANTED—To rent a piano for about four months. W. H. Sprague 36 El Centro, Cal.

WANTED—A good, reliable party to act as manager in Imperial county for an article that must be seen to be appreciated. Must invest two hundred and fifty dollars for your own stock that will be delivered at once for the business. This is a business where you can make big money out of small capital. Address or call—Magic Instant Freezer, Hotel Franklin, El Centro. 52-18*

FOR RENT

FOR RENT—100 acres of fine cantaloupe land. Enquire of Salisbury Bros., 1 mile east of El Centro. 32-tf

LOST, STRAYED AND FOUND.

TAKEN UP—One large Holstein bull, dehorned, about four years old. Inquire at ranch of R. L. Wilson, three miles south of El Centro. 46-8t

FOR EXCHANGE.

FOR EXCHANGE—Two fine modern flats, 12 rooms each, splendid location, bringing in good rental, furnished. For Imperial Valley land up to \$8000. Address Box 965, Riverside. 48-tf

STRAYED—To ranch of R. L. Wilson, 2½ miles south and ½ mile west of El Centro, 1 full-grown black sow, 1 young sow, black and white spotted, and 1 young boar, black and red spotted. Cole Filson, El Centro. 51-56

STRAYED—Small bay mare, branded with flying H on left hip; had halter on. Notify Moore Bros., Brawley. 52-18*

LOST—A physician's satchel, either in El Centro or between El Centro and Holtville. Finder please leave at the Press office. Dr. G. T. Greenleaf. 51-3t*

Rheumatic Pains Relieved.

Mr. Thos. Stenton, postmaster of Pontypool, Ont., writes: "For the past eight years I suffered from rheumatic pains, and during that time I used many different liniments and remedies for the cure of rheumatism. Last summer I procured a bottle of Chamberlain's Pain Balm and got more relief from it than anything I have ever used, and cheerfully recommend this liniment to all sufferers from rheumatic pains." For sale at the El Centro drug store.

For Singer sewing machines, see Teller, the Singer agent, at Imperial.