The CONVICT COUNTRY: or, FIGHTING for a MILLION

By CHARLES MORRIS BUTLER

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CHAPTER VI.

The Forged Check.

Lang, after leaving Regan, wended his way to the residence of Jim Denver.

Being admitted, not a word was spoken until the twain were safe from eavesdroppers in the detective's private sleeping apartments.

"Well?" queried Denver, taking a seat upon the edge of the bed, preparing himself to listen to Lang's story.

"I have made my boast," said Louis, flushed with excitement now, that the time for real action had arrived, "that I could rob a bank in the morning. How am I to do it?"

"Forgery! my boy, forgery!" cried the detective, slapping Lang on the back. "You have the nerve to pass a forged check—a forged check that is not forged?"

"I am, at a loss to understand you as yet."

"It is easy enough," was Denver's reply, seating himself at his writing desk and filling out a check from his book. "You arrive at my office in the morning, timing yourself so that you are there while Regan is in my room. I will then fill out a check for you in this manner," showing his protege a check for ten dollars, made out in his usual open, sprawling style.

"An expert penman could easily 'raise' this check if he wanted to," continued Denver, writing another check, "and make it look like this new one,' showing him a check for ten thousand dollars. "What's to hinder you from keeping this check for the ten thousand dollars? Nothing! I have the money in the bank, and the bank people will cash it if presented. In the morning after receiving your check for ten dollars, you show it to Jack and make some remark about 'raising' it. Then you go to your room and make a bluff at writing and scatter a few scraps around the floor. When you are ready, pass the large check. It will appear like a forgery to Golden and Regan, at least, whether I honor the check or not."

"The check is a forgery!"

"Then you are perfectly willing to trust me with ten thousand dollars of your money?" asked Louis rather proudly.

"I am satisfied to risk this sum of money to find out where the stronghold of these villians is. Knowing what you are going to do to-morrow, I can disguise myself and keep you and the party in sight, up to the very gates of the city we are looking for."

"I am glad to hear you say you will keep in sight," said Louis, "for I confess that I am a little bit shaky in regard to the outcome of the matter."

"I, too, am sad to-night for some reason or other," said Denver, laying his hands rather tenderly upon Louis' shoulders. "It seems to me as if we are to part for a long time—I hope it is not forever! I have become attached to you, and would be sorry indeed if I were leading you to your death or even disgrace."

"I believe in your friendship for me," replied Lang, as he grasped his patron's hand. "I am a better man, mentally, morally and physically for the knowing of you, and whatever befalls me, you can rest assured that it will be through no neglect of duty on your part."

"You won't be alone in your undertaking," said Jim, as if reassuring himself. "I have succeeded in interesting the general government in this matter—and when you need help you will get it. Be true to yourself and providence will protect you. But let the thought of sudden death be ever before you, you will court it in many ways. Weigh well every word and every action. I can say no more!" It was their farewell.

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Regan was in the general office of the detective agency with Denver when Lang called in the morning. He saw Louis draw Denver into conversation, while slyly stealing a blank check from the open bank book lying on Denver's table, and saw Louis receive a check from Jim presumably for ten dollars.

Regan followed Lang into the hall.

"What are you going to do with that check?" Regan asked.

"Cash it," answered Lang.

"I mean the blank one you stole."

"I understand you; and I repeat, I will cash it."

"For how much?" Regan asked.

"Ten thousand 'plunks,'" whispered Lang.

"I'll bet you a hundred you don't."

"You're betting on the wrong horse—unless you mean to betray me?"

"Have no fear of me," Regan interposed. "I don't forget my compact of last night; anything you can get out of Denver will be peaches and cream to me. I hate the man!"

"I'll take your bet, Jack; I'll need your hundred; you'll be my meat." There was no time for hesitancy now."

"It's a go, then?"

"Sure! I'm going to my room now and shall either 'raise' this old one or write a new one." Then as a parting bluff: "Come on down to my room with me and see me turn the trick."

"I can't," replied the detective, "I must be on the lookout for G———. You can show me the check, or the money if you get it."

"Oh, I'll get it, you needn't be alarmed. I haven't been practicing on his signature for a year for nothing," cried Louis.

A short hour afterward, that is, about twelve o'clock, Louis presented a check to the cashier of the Madison bank. It was for ten thousand dollars.

The following conversation took place:

A short hour afterwards, that is, about twelve o'clock, Louis presented a check to the cashier of the Madison bank. It was for ten thousand dollars.

"Rather a large sum of money?" queried the cashier, as he carefully scrutinized the paper. "How will you have it, a transfer to your account, or currency?"

"You may give me bills of large denomination," said Louis, composedly.

"It is an unusually large sum of money to pay out on a check to a comparative stranger—to any one but the owner of the money." The cashier was satisfied of the genuineness of the note, but was sparring for time, not feeling like taking upon his shoulders the responsibility of the possibility of mistake. Finally he made a peculiar signal. "You will excuse me a moment,' he said, "and you may as well step into the private office."

Lang looked around. When he came in every door was open, and there was not a janitor nor uniformed officer in sight outside the railings. Now, as if by magic, all the outside doors were closed, and a man whom Louis took to be a janitor, but who was a detective, was making a bluff at dusting off the windowsills and picking up stray papers from the floor. Looking through the glass door leading into the street, Louis saw a policeman standing in rather an unusual position, with one hand grasping tightly his club, while the other was hid beneath his coat tails.

The bank president was seated at his desk. "Mr. Smith, I believe?" he asked pleasantly.

"That's my name," answered Lang.

"You are, or appear to be, in Mr. Denver's confidence."

"I am."

"May I ask why Mr. Denver does not draw this check himself?"

"He is not at liberty to-day."

"Is it important that you receive it immediately?"

"It is, and in money, not a check."

"Did Mr. Denver hint anything to you about the possibility of your being unable to draw that sum of money?"

"I am in no mood for parleying; why do you wish to converse with me?"

"Simply to keep you busy pending the arrival of Mr. Denver," said the president after a slight pause.

Louis colored up. Here was a new complication whether Denver was true or not. Had Denver prepared for this emergency?" "You will not be able to find Mr. Denver," replied Louis with as much a show of calmness as he could command.

"That remains to be seen."

The conversation lagged. The banker grew restless. Louis fidgeted rather uneasily in his chair; but grew calmer as the moments dragged, and finally became the calmer of the two. The cashier returned, holding in his hands a stack of greenbacks. Louis rose up to receive it from him.

"You have concluded to cash the check?" he asked with a sigh of relief.

The president intercepted the package. "I have decided not to cash it," he said rather bluntly.

"Why?" demanded Lang, resolved to force the issue.

"The check is a forgery!"

"All is lost!" thought Lang, but he did not flinch from the ordeal. "What makes you think so?" he asked while he tried to smile.

The banker hesitated; Lang noticed it. "You are overstepping your bounds!" he exclaimed. "And I shall sue you for any damage that may result from my not getting this money when I need it!"

"You can go any time you want to," added the president harshly, "I am not detaining you, and you should thank your lucky stars that I am so lenient with you."

"Very well," said Lang, a heavy feeling at his heart, realizing that he had lost his game "You mean that you are not willing to run the risk of arresting me? However we'll let that go. Give me the check."

"We cannot do that," said the banker decidedly.

"By what right do you presume to keep both the draft and the money? You go too far. If you retain the draft, what evidence have I that you will not swear that I have received the money? You have no right to expect me to trust you, if you do not trust me, and you must either arrest me as a forger or pay me the money."

"We are recognized as responsible agents," responded the banker, attempting to appease Lang. "And have a right to protect ourselves as well as Mr. Denver."

"I shall remain here until I receive either one thing or the other," said Lang firmly. He seated himself very coolly in the chair he had vacated upon the arrival of the cashier with the money.

The president cast an inquiring glance toward the cashier; the cashier returned his superior's look, and then both gazed intently at Lang. The young man had stood their test admirably; they were convinced of the genuineness of the note, yet were loath to cash it. While the officers were debating as to the policy of turning over the money, a rap was given upon the door, and the "janitor" entered.

"Detective Regan on the outside, sir. Shall I admit him?"

(To be continued.)

DEBUT OF TINY HEIRESS.

She Was Flower Girl at a Fashionable Church Wedding.

Little Katherine Mackay, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence H. Mackay, arrayed in a dainty frock composed of lace which was said by the women present to be worth $70 a yard and carrying a big basket of pink sweet peas, made what may be ascribed as her first appearance in public recently by acting as flower girl, along with the equally diminutive and similarly attired Kate Haven, at the wedding of Miss Marian Haven to Forsyth Wickes at St. Bartholomew's, says the New York American.

Miss Mackay's dress was of cream chiffon, with a finely cut yoke. On the shoulders were small capes of rose point, falling over short, puff sleeves, finished with a ruffle of lace. The belt was of lace and the skirt made with groups of fine tucks and had a ruffle of lace.

A large bow of white embroidered and lace-trimmed sash ribbon was fastened at the back of the belt; small white sandals were worn with white silk stockings. Instead of gloves, she wore white silk mittens.

Whisky as is Whisky.

A man in Cincinnati bought a barrel of whisky thirty-five years ago and kept it in a third-story dry room, well ventilated, and in all the intervening period used only one pint for testing. There remain to-day only one and four-fifths gallon of the original thirty-four, the rest being lost through evaporation. A celebrated physician says: "One small drink of this whisky contains more electricity and rejuvenating properties than any medicine that can be prescribed." As to quality, connoisseurs agree that this whisky, considering its pure distillation and age, is the finest in the world, and that no King or Emperor, the Rothschilds, Morgans, Vanderbilts, Astors, Carnegies, Belts or Clarks, with all their enormous wealth placing at their will all the luxuries of the world, can command such. A careful estimate of the cost of storage and a computation of interest and insurance for thirty-five years prove the cost of this whisky at the present time to be $489.01 a gallon.

Large and Roomy.

A violent windstorm which traveled over Berks county some time back saw fit to take with it an old shed wherein a certain blacksmith was wont to ply his trade. The blacksmith's determination to continue business in the open, pending the construction of a new building, caused not a little amusement among the neighboring farmers. One of these, driving along a day or two later, saw limping toward him a horse, led by a disconsolate looking individual, who, on drawing near, explained:

"My horse has lost a shoe. Can you tell me where I can find a blacksmith shop?"

"You are in the shop now," replied the other, facetiously, "but the anvil is about two miles down the road."—Philadelphia Ledger.

HORTICULTURE

Fruits on the Farm.

It has been my observation that the farm that has on it a complete array of fruit-bearing trees, canes and vines is the farm that sells at a fancy price in the market. The ordinary mortal, if he has the money with which to purchase a farm, will pay a good deal more for one on which are the different kinds of fruits growing in considerable quantities than he will pay for a few farm buildings and barren land. The money value of a well-ordered farm is out of all proportion to the money that has been put into it.

As an illustration of this I have in mind a little place on the edge of a neighboring village. A man had bought a lot for $200 and put on it a $400 house. Then he spent a few dollars in trees of various kinds and set them out. He did nothing more, except live on the place for a few years and incidentally take care of the trees and shrubs. He told me that he thought he could get $650 or $700 for the place if he wanted to.

But in the meantime the little place had grown into a thing of beauty, and anyone passing would say that it had the best arranged yard on the street and that the shade trees were artistically arranged. A man living on the street was looking at the place and admiring it and asked the owner what he would take for it. "Oh, a thousand dollars," he replied, thinking this price one that would stagger the other. But the other man quietly said, "I'll take the place," and he did. The few years of growth in the trees and shrubs had done the work. They had been growing into money while the owner was sleeping.

Fruits on the farm are no less enticing to the buyer, but on the other hand endear the farm so to the occupants that they seldom want to let go of it. If you wish to wean your family from the old place, don't plant fruit trees, fruit canes or vines.—Milton Knight, Cherry Co., Nebr., in Farmers' Review.

Good Foliage; Good Fruit.

There is a saying among some orchardists that good foliage means good fruit. While this is not true in every respect, yet it is true that good foliage is necessary if we are to have a large amount of fruit. The growing apple cannot use food material that has come up through the tree directly from the roots. It must pass up through the tree and into the limbs and leaves, in which latter place it is combined with the carbon from the air, and is then ready to be carried back to the fruit, into which it passes and is used in the development of the tender cells that form the flesh of the apple as well as every other part of it. It is obvious, therefore, that the amount of fruit the tree can produce will be regulated largely by the amount of material that can be prepared in the leaves. If, therefore, blight and rust, or caterpillars are permitted to destroy the leaves, the preparation of food is stopped, and no more fruit can be developed. Many a farmer has seen his trees defoliated when the fruit was half grown, and has seen that fruit ripen without increasing in size. This was because of this same lack of foliage. Therefore the protection of the foliage becomes one of the most important objects of the intelligent orchardist. Therefore he sprays his trees with fungicides and with insecticides that he may have a healthy foliage during the entire growing season.

The Blight Spore.

Professor Craig, of Cornell University, has for several years been studying the cause of blight on the pear tree, apple and other fruits. No greater result has been obtained, and none more necessary to the understanding of blight, than his discovery of the character of the spore itself. It has always been supposed that blight spores were blown by the wind, and that certain warm winds, in moist weather, carried the spores to numerous trees, where they germinated quickly. But he has discovered that the spore is glutinous, that is, sticky, and is transported only by adhesion to some moving object. The object most commonly used as a point of adhesion for the spore is the honey bee. Hence the problem resolves itself into several others, one of which is the coating of the tree affected by the blight with something that will prevent the bees from visiting it and carrying the spores to the blossoms and tender leaf ends of healthy trees.

Persimmons in China.

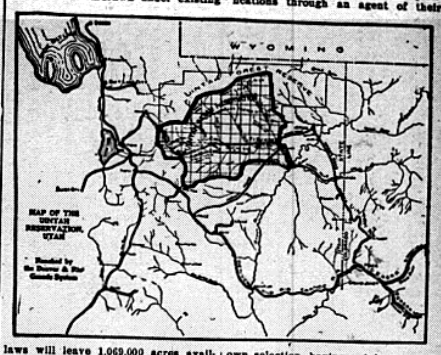
The persimmon is highly esteemed in China by natives and by many foreigners. It has the characteristic flavor of the American persimmon, but is less astringent. It grows to good size and keeps well. Near Peking the most popular sorts of persimmons have rings or grooves near the stems, which give them the appearance of having had strings tied around them when small and of having grown around the strings. The varieties in the southern and central portions of China are smooth, large and very handsome. Some persimmons are picked green by the natives and ripened in lime. Thus ripened they have a firmness of flesh that is much esteemed.—United States Consul Anderson at Hangchau, China.

The price of poultry success is eternal vigilance.

Opening of the Great Uintah Indian Reservation

President Roosevelt on July 15 signed the proclamation providing for the opening to homesteaders and townsite entry of the unallotted lands in the great Uintah Reservation in Utah.

The Reservation contains 2,445,000 acres, but the Military and Forestry Reserves and such Mineral lands as have to be withdrawn under existing laws will leave 1,069,000 acres available for entry.



Registration for the land will commence August 1st and close August 12th. Registration may be made at Grand Junction, Colo., and Vernal, Price and Provo, Utah. Prospective settlers may register at any one of these places from 9:00 a. m., Tuesday, August 1st, until 6:00 p. m., Saturday, August 12th.

To obtain registration, each applicant must appear at one of the registration places and show himself duly qualified to make homestead entry (160 acres) by written application to be made only on a blank form provided by the Commissioner of the General Land Office. Registration cannot be effected through the mails or by an agent, except in the case of honorably discharged soldiers or sailors, who may present their applications and due proofs of their qualifications through an agent of their own selection, having a duly executed power of attorney, on a blank for that purpose provided by the Commissioner. No person will be permitted to act as agent for more than one soldier or sailor, and no one will be allowed to register more than once or in any other than his true name.

The procedure necessary to secure lands in this greatest of government reservations is outlined in detail in a pamphlet just issued by the Passenger Department Denver & Rio Grande Railroad. Write to S. K. Hooper, Gen'l P. & T. A., Denver, Colo.

"Big Tim" on King Edward.

"I understand," says "Big Tim" Sullivan, speaking in London, "that the king is a great fellow. He sticks to his friends, and that is the test." This is the Bowery's first open indorsement of the British throne. It should promote measurably the broadening of the Anglo-American era of good feeling.—New York World.

Important to Mothers.

Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, a safe and sure remedy for infants and children, and see that it

Bears the Signature of Chas. H. Fletcher.

In Use For Over 30 Years.
The Kind You Have Always Bought

New Petroleum Fuel.

The new petroleum fuel reported from Switzerland is in the form of bricquettes containing four parts of petroleum to one part of secret material. At 15 cents a gallon for oil, the cost of each bricquêtte was about two and one-quarter cents, but on a large scale would be much less.

Out of all the appreciations of John Hay that have appeared since the death of that distinguished statesman, none has been truer or more sympathetic than the brief editorial in "The Reader Magazine" for August. It is accompanied by an excellent and hitherto unpublished photograph of Mr. Hay.

Sit down with "The Country Calendar" and think of all the things that you wish would happen "under the blue sky;" then open it and you'll find how they have happened to others, so attractively presented that you are far inspired to win them for youself.

Usual Performance.

"Then so far as you are aware," said the lawyer who was doing a cross-examining stunt, "your wife was performing her usual household duties when the accident occurred?"

"Yes," answered the witness; "she was talking."

Here is Relief for Women.

Mother Gray, a nurse in New York, discovered a pleasant herb remedy for women's ills, called AUSTRALIAN-LEAF. It is the only certain monthly regulator. Cures female weaknesses, Backache, Kidney and Urinary troubles. At all Druggists or by mail 50 cts. Sample mailed FREE. Address, The Mother Gray Co., LeRoy, N. Y.

Wasteful.

Mrs. Chatters—You don't seem to consider my opinions very valuable.

Mr. Chatters—My dear, I consider them so valuable that it shocks me to see you giving them out so promiscuously.

When Your Grocer Says

he does not have Defiance Starch, you may be sure he is afraid to keep it until his stock of 12 oz. packages are sold. Defiance Starch is not only better than any other Cold Water Starch, but contains 16 oz. to the package and sells for same money as 12 oz. brands.

The August "Arena" contains a number of unusually strong papers on civic, political and economic subjects which will challenge the attention of thoughtful Americans.

Every person thinking of visiting the Uintah Indian reservation in eastern Utah, to be opened for settlement August 12th, should have a Homeseekers' Guide and sectional map. It tells everything. Sent postpaid for 50c. Address W. H. Emmons, 700 17th St., Denver, Colorado.

The fellow who follows his own inclinations is seldom in the lead.

Robert L. Gerry to Have Stable.

Another millionaire's son, Robert L. Gerry, son of Commodore Elbridge T. Gerry of New York, is the latest patron of the sport of kings. He is the proud owner of the steeplechase horse Joe. Gerry had contemplated such a move for a long time, but as his father was opposed to it he put it off from time to time. The delay only increased his desire to follow the lead of Harry Payne Whitney, Clarence H. Mackay and other rich young men. In connection with Gerry's advent on the turf the report was spread that Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt would become his partner. Gerry and Vanderbilt are close friends. At the latter's wedding the former acted as best man.

Every housekeeper should know that if they will buy Defiance Cold Water Starch for laundry use they will save not only time, because it never sticks to the iron, but because each package contains 16 oz.—one full pound—while all other Cold Water Starches are put up in ¾-pound packages, and the price is the same, 10 cents. Then again because Defiance Starch is free from all injurious chemicals. If your grocer tries to sell you a 12-oz. package it is because he has a stock on hand which he wishes to dispose of before he puts in Defiance. He knows that Defiance Starch has printed on every package in large letters and figures "16 ozs." Demand Defiance and save much time and money and the annoyance of the iron sticking. Defiance never sticks.

Farming Made Pleasant.

In the Palouse wheat region they tell you such stories as these: One farmer on his sulky plow came to the end of his row just in time to meet his neighbor on his sulky plow who had come to the end of his row. "Have a cigar, John?" and he offered him a twenty-five cent perfecto. Or this: A farmer came into town to ask at the bank for the address of a neighboring farmer who was traveling with his family for pleasure. The banker took down a series of telegrams and replied: "Yesterday he left Atlantic City for Newport. He will be there a week.—August "World's Work."

Through Tourist Cars to California.

The Southern Pacific Tourist Car service is famous for its excellent equipment. If going West, investigate this way of travel—you'll be surprised when you find how cheaply you can go, and still travel in comfort. The newest cars and daily service. Write to W. G. Neimyer, General Agent, 120 Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill., for California literature and full information.

Russians Seek American Aid.

The Russian government has sent to the California University College of Agriculture specimens of the famous "black earth" of European Russia, which is showing signs of deterioration. The Russians want the advice of the Berkeley scientists as to reviving it.

Over one million acres of land in the Uintah Indian reservation will be thrown open for settlement August 12th. Registration begins August 1st, at Grand Junction, Colorado, continuing till August 12. From Denver, Colorado Springs or Pueblo, the Colorado Midland is the shortest route to Grand Junction or reservation points. Write C. H. Speers, G. P. A., Denver, for booklet, giving information regarding land, rates, etc.

One of the most engaging stories of the season is "The Debutante's Letters," by Reginald Wright Kauffman in "The Pilgrim" for August.