The CONVICT COUNTRY: or, FIGHTING for a MILLION

BY CHARLES MORRIS BUTLER

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CHAPTER XXII.—Continued.

Richard Golden rose to his feet. The shouting ceased, and the people readily understood that something out of the ordinary was to take place.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Golden began. "Are we human beings, or animals of low degree?" His very daring made him eloquent. "As individuals, have we rights that this body corporate is bound to respect? In entering Paradise as citizens we have voluntarily thrown off the yoke of allegiance to every reigning potentate in the world. We threw off the yoke because we thought our bonds too heavy, the laws too strict, and the privileges too few. In vowing allegiance to the king and laws of Paradise, we expected more freedom and more rights—we did not expect to be made slaves! If I obey the law, has any one person the right to punish me for nothing. Is the king better than you or I? Is he supreme, the owner, body and soul of the subjects over which he rules? Would I be a man to stand idly by and allow him, or any other man, to strike me and not strike back? I say No!

"Ladies and gentlemen! Louis Lang, the man you see in the arena there covered with blood, incurred the enmity of the king—as you know—by winning the heart and hand of Pearl Huntington, this woman here whom the king wished to be revenged upon. If there is any law we are bound to respect it is an honorable marriage. It was no honorable marriage our king wished with this woman. But Louis Lang, as an honorable man, saved her from a life of misery and shame. There is not a married man among us who would not have done the same! (Great applause.) For daring to thwart the king he was condemned to work a year in the mines! I claim that not even the king has the right to condemn an innocent man to slavery for revenge.

"Every word that he has uttered is a lie!"

Last night, after working hard in the mines all day, he came home, expecting to find his loving wife waiting for him. Was she there? No! Tracing her to the very palace of the king, Lang dared to tell the tyrant to his face that he was detaining her against her will. Whalen, whose body you see lying in the dust before you, has paid the penalty of less than this with his life. Convict or no convict, I would have killed the man, king or subject who would have dared to lay his hands upon my wife. (Applause.)

"I maintain that when a man enters this place and takes the oath of allegiance to our law, that he has rights that we are bound to respect. Because we have found it necessary to be here is no sign that we are beasts—human brutes! (Applause.) We are banded together for mutual benefit, not to embrace slavery! (Right! Right!) Dr. Huntington, the doctor who was abducted away from his home and wife and brought here against his will, took the oath of allegiance this morning. He is now a citizen of Paradise as much as you or I. He has never done us any harm; why should he be condemned to serve the rest of his time in our hospital without the privileges usually granted to men of talent and honor? If he is compelled to remain and work for us, should we not at least attempt to make it pleasant for him in return? At least allow him the privilege of breathing, unfettered, the fresh air once in a while, and sleeping near to one he loves. We should not stoop to revenge. We are not devoid of all feeling! Schiller, though he be king, has no right to torture his helpless victim, and we as men should not allow him to do so. There can no good come from allowing injustice to trample upon our laws, and I ask you, the people of Paradise, to grant me the privilege of allowing Dr. Huntington the privilege of our city the same as any other free man.

"Louis Lang has paid the penalty for his crime—if crime it may be called—in striking the man who would so far forget himself as to war on women. Now that again he has proven himself a man of nerve and honor, I would ask you to grant him complete freedom. It appears that the king hesitates to pronounce the victor free!

"While I am in the mood of asking and while the people's minds are so vividly wrought up with the scenes here enacted to-night, I wish to ask that the king be deprived of the power of life and death! that we establish a court of justice, wherein, before a man can be sentenced to death, he first shall be tried and proven guilty. There is such a thing as going too far, and I think our king has gone too far in condemning Lang to death without trial. If our king is a true man, he will not object to having his further actions made known; but if he wishes to rule as a tyrant, he plainly shows that he is not a fit person to rule at all! What is the will of the people?"

The applause that greeted Golden at the conclusion of his speech was deafening. If Golden had been allowed to put his proposition instantly there could have been but one solution to the problem. But before the test was taken, Schiller rose to his feet and began his reply to the arraignment.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Schiller Makes a Proposition to Lang.

"By [illegible]re you vote," said Schiller, rising to [illegible] feet, and by a gesture with his hand commanding silence, "citizens of Paradise, allow me to say a word. I have allowed Golden to say his say; now I want mine. Golden has accused me of crimes I am not guilty of. Louis Lang is a convict; I sentenced him to death, not through spite but because he struck me—me, the king! It is a fit and the only punishment for that crime. I did not detain his wife in my palace, though it is true that she was found at my home. She came to my palace and asked the whereabouts of her father and I told her he was safe. Because she did not see her father, she said, 'I will not believe it!' She doubted my word, and said, 'I will remain here until you bring my father to me!' It was not my place to argue with her; I ordered my guard to remove her. While the guard was doing so, I was visited by Lang, Golden and Rogers. Lang saw the struggle between the guard and his wife, and struck him; I was about to explain to Lang the circumstance of his wife being in my house when the ruffian sprang upon me and struck me!

"Even then, under the circumstances, I would not have exacted the penalty from Lang but I was dared to do it by Golden and Rogers, who, no doubt, saw a chance to dare me to do what my conscience forbid me. It is but a put-up scheme to ruin me. I am willing to obey the people; my actions have always been above board, and if they want me to abdicate, I, for one, am ready to do so!" That was all he said. He felt that he had made out a very plausible tale—if for no other reason than of the power he held.

"Now I wish to say a word!" said Rogers. "Our king has accused me of inciting him to do a wrong. A poor excuse for a man in the exalted position of our king! But every word that he has uttered is a lie! And his actions, this base subterfuge, shows him to be but a coward! A scoundrel born and bred!" Schiller's face was livid, twice or thrice he essayed to arise, but only to fall back in his chair, trembling with excitement (or fear). "I saw Lang strike the king. I would have done the same under the same circumstances. What made Lang a convict here in the first place? I will tell you. Schiller wanted to put Golden out of the way and Louis Lang nipped the plot in the bud; that's the reason—and our great king now wants revenge on Lang!" Rogers hit the bull's-eye.

"I agree with Rogers there!" exclaimed a voice, and Sam Pearson stood up. "I have been a tool of Schiller's long enough. I was present when he made the offer to Revolver Rob to kill Golden. I like fair play, and I will not stand by and see him condemn an honest man to death, who has not harmed anyone, just for the pleasure of revenge. I think the king has gone far enough!"

The suddenness of the uprising of the people stunned Schiller. He was helpless in the net he had woven for others.

"I do not wish to bring my case before the people," said Golden, who really did not want to be tendered the crown at this time for fear of the after-climax, and who also saw a chance for a masterstroke of diplomacy. "I can take care of myself if only you give me a fair chance. I do not, however, want to see injustice done to anyone. It is time to quit this revenge business and grant Lang and Huntington the freedom of our city. I think the people good enough to rule, and Rogers and I, as the majority of the Council of Three, think these people punished enough. What do the people think?"

"Life to Lang!" was the cry.

"Make Golden king!" was another shout. And the turmoil was deafening.

"We accept your pardon of Lang," said Golden, "but I do not wish to be king. Neither Rogers nor I hold any grudge against Schiller—all we want is to see justice done! Curb his majesty a little; make his office one of mayor; see if he is not worthy of trust, and make a man of him. If that don't work then make Rogers king—there's a man for you!"

"So be it!" was the cry. "We will give him another chance!"

The people having expressed themselves, the meeting broke up. Golden and Rogers were overwhelmed with praise for their action in befriending the helpless (?), and Lang was assisted home on the shoulders of a crowd of enthusiasts who were carried away with the youth's marvelous exhibition of skill in dueling. Schiller was scarcely noticed when he took himself from the amphitheater—a beaten man. However he was not one to give up easily.

For a brief spell our party had a rest from labor and worry. Golden, at the request of Lang, was able to send a letter written by the doctor to Mrs. Huntington, notifying that lady of the safety of her husband and child.

Wilson was the only person who was not made more comfortable than before by the exposure of Scullier. Rogers would have pardoned him—or had him pardoned—but Louis and Wilson both felt that it was better that he remain in the mines as before. Wilson's place was an easy one, and his privileges about as many as if not confined at all. The two detectives were in hopes that he could be made of assistance in gathering the convicts together and in furnishing material with which the miners could blow up the mines in making their escape.

Dr. Huntington, when he was made aware that his letter had been sent to his wife, was at ease, comparatively, and looked upon his detention as a matter of no great importance. He gained the respect of the citizens by his kindness and care in sickness and was looked upon as a valuable acquisition to the city. Dr. Huntington had great hopes of ultimately being made free, of being allowed to return to his wife. Somehow or other Pearl's welfare did not seem to trouble him much. There was something about Lang that forced the doctor to trust our hero implicitly. As Schiller had been somewhat restricted in power, no fear was entertained from that source.

(To be continued.)

Reason for His Enthusiasm.

An art editor was praising the intelligence of the French painter Bouguereau.

"I can hardly believe that Bouguereau is dead," said he. "Paris, without him, will not be Paris. What a keen and brilliant mind the man had.

"I remember a discussion on spiritualism that once took place in Bouguereau's studio.

"'If there is nothing good in spiritualism,' said a widower, 'why is it so popular?'

"'Why is it so popular? I'll tell you,' said Bouguereau.

"A friend of mine lost his wife two years ago. Last week he heard of a beautiful medium in the Square De L'Opera, and attended a couple of her seances. I saw him yesterday. He had already become an enthusiastic spiritualist.

"'Why, it is ridiculous,' said I.

"'Ridiculous! Indeed, no,' he returned. 'My friend, do you know that at each seance the spirit of my dear dead wife returned and kissed me?'

"'Nonsense,' I exclaimed. 'Nonsense. Do you mean to tell me that your dead wife honored those miserable seances enough to come and kiss you in her own person?'

"'Well, not exactly in her own person,' he replied. 'Her spirit took possession of the medium's person and kissed and embraced me through her.'"—Chicago Chronicle.

Advertising by Proxy.

Miss Caroline Powell of Boston is the only woman wood engraver in America. Miss Powell was a pupil of Timothy Cole and at a dinner recently she said of her master:

"Mr. Cole had a horror of stingy persons. He was continually railing against such people, continually pointing out to us glaring examples of meanness and greed.

"He said one day that he had heard that morning of the meanest woman in the world.

"She called before breakfast at the house of a neighbor of his and said:

"'Madam, I see that you have advertised in the papers for a cook.'

"'Yes, I have,' returned the other; 'but surely you are not after the place?'

"'No,' said the stranger, 'but I only live two blocks away from you, and since I need a cook myself, I thought you might send to me all the applicants you reject.'"

Completing the Quotation.

Little Elmer (who has an inquiring mind)—"Papa, what is the rest of the old saying about people living in glass houses should not—what papa?"

Prof. Broadhead—"Should not have neighbors within a stone's throw, I imagine, my son."—Puck.

ILLINOIS STATE NEWS

STATEMENT OF STATE BANKS

Deposits Increase $4,033,970 for Quarter Ended Nov. 10.

A statement issued by State Auditor McCullough shows that the savings deposits in the 321 state banks doing business in Illinois on Nov. 10 were increased $4,033,970 during the quarter, the previous statement being under the date of Aug. 26, when 307 banks were in operation. Other material increases during the quarter in deposits are shown as follows: Individual demand, $797,594; demand certificates, $2,465,559, and time certificates, $1,574,875.

Decreases during the quarter in items that go to make up the liabilities are shown as follows: Demand certified checks, $468,715; due to national banks, $987,718; due to state banks and bankers, $1,497,557; notes and bills rediscounted, $25,000; bills payable, $3,000.

Of the resources, gold coin was decreased $593,355; while gold certificates increased $129,160. Silver coin increased $80,000, and silver certificates decreased $32,467. National bank currency was increased $3,608,631. Legal tender and treasury notes decreased $2,205,738. Overdrafts increased $170,075. The total resources and liabilities of all the banks on the date of the last call amounted to $497,904,262, as against $486,131,205 on the date of the former statement.

MILLIONS FOR THE JOLIET MILLS

Steel Corporation Makes Big Appropriation for Enlargement.

At least one and perhaps two new blast furnaces and other improvements costing between $1,000,000 and $2,000,000 are to be made in the Joliet plant of the Illinois Steel Company within the next six months. Appropriations amounting to over $7,000,000 have been made by the United States Steel Corporation for Joliet, South Chicago, and Indiana Harbor. This new improvement means work for hundreds of men and an annual expenditure of many thousands of dollars in wages. The Illinois Steel Company has just purchased several hundred acres of land close to the new sanitary canal power house and north of its present plant, and the proposed extension will probably be made there.

VILLAGE HAS A UNIQUE TRADE

Some Odd Industries That Flourish in Hopedale Township.

Hopedale contains several unique manufactories. There is a factory where a novel pipe is made. This is an invention of a local physician, and seems to be a cross between a pipe and a cigar. Another factory at Hopedale makes fence posts of concrete. They are claimed to be more enduring than posts of wood, or even of iron, as rust does not affect them. Another Hopedale industry is the making of cornets, flutes and violins. There was formerly a factory at Hopedale where large numbers of combination billiard table and folding bed were made, but the owners failed to advertise their wares and the factory soon closed down, but there are several of these queer combinations still to be seen there.

Policeman Ends His Life.

Despondent over the fact his conduct as a police officer was to be investigated by the board of police commissioners, Gus Anderson killed himself with a revolver at the Hotel Arlington at Aurora. He secured a room and left a call for 8 o'clock. Shortly after the call the shot rang through the hotel. One night recently the chief of police visited that portion of the city which was patrolled by Anderson and met him returning to his post of duty, apparently having been to the business section of the city. On the day following he reprimanded Anderson and told him that his case would be investigated.

Guardian of Orphans Dies.

Mrs. Elizabeth Morrison, matron of Odd Fellows' Orphans' Home at Lincoln, dropped dead from heart disease in a railroad station at Bloomington while waiting for a train for Lincoln. She has been at the head of the home for many years and was 60 years of age. Mrs. Morrison was a resident of Chicago prior to her appointment as superintendent. She leaves one daughter, Mrs. James Brown, and a son, Fred, a druggist, and a sister, Mrs. Golden, all of Chicago.

Victims of Hold-Up Men.

While going to the Fifth avenue elevated station in Chicago Sunday afternoon, August Busse and George Haberlie, both of Elgin, were attacked by five hold-up men. Haberlie ran for a policeman, and when he returned to the scene Busse had disappeared. Haberlie returned to Elgin, but nothing has been heard of Busse.

Sues for Building Bridge.

The Penn Bridge company of Beaver Falls, Pa., filed suit against Whiteside county, Illinois, for $30,000 as half payment in construction of a bridge across the Rock river in Sterling.

Grocery Store is Closed.

The retail store of the Estes Grocery company was closed at Hainsburg on a judgment note held against W. J. Estes, the head of the firm, by a salesman for an Evansville grocery firm.

FIX DATE FOR RATE DECISION

Railroad and Warehouse Commission is Expected to Afford Relief.

Chairman Neville of the state railroad and warehouse commission has promised Governor Deneen that, after a delay of three years, the commission will hand down its decision on the freight rate case in which the shippers pleaded for relief from the railroads, Tuesday, Dec. 5. Recently a committee of the shippers waited on the governor to ask if the decision was ever going to be made, and the announcement followed soon.

It is predicted by some that the decision will call for an average reduction of 17 per cent in rates throughout the state, though the text is closely guarded. Twenty-five per cent reduction was what the shippers asked for. Secretary Kilpatrick three months ago announced that the decision would be handed down at a meeting of the commission the following day, but it was not. It is said that every month's delay means a profit of many thousands of dollars to the railroads.

The report that the commission is preparing an order reducing passenger fares to a 2-cent basis is denied vigorously, and it is declared no such move has been contemplated.

Commissioner A. L. French of Jacksonville, when asked regarding the reduction of freight and passenger rates in Illinois, said absolutely nothing could be given out at this time. Although the commissioners have informally gone over the matter, no report is yet made up, he said, and nothing definite has yet been decided upon by the board. Mr. French says that the ground has been gone over thoroughly and that an order will be entered by the commissioners the nature of which he cannot and would not give out.

BIRTH RATE MAKES BIG STRIDE

Livingston County Population is Increased by Visits of Stork.

The first year of President Roosevelt's anti-race suicide campaign sees the birth rate of Livingston county showing a big increase. The following is the record of the stork for the past nine months as reported to the county clerk's office by the physicians in attendance: Total number births reported, 512; total number still births, 16; total number of boys, 251; total number of girls, 259; sex not given, 2. In all birth records it remains a very pointed fact that a large majority of the fathers of babies are native born Americans and Western born at that, the mothers of babies being almost entirely American born. It is also a fact that the mothers in giving the place of their birth were found to be almost entirely from the state of Illinois. In all of the 512 births during the nine months there were but five twin births.

District W. R. C. Meets.

The annual district convention of the Woman's relief corps was held in Pana, and delegates from various cities in central Illinois were present. The address of welcome was made by Mrs. Lucile Weber and the response by Mrs. Fanny Eckles of Springfield. In the afternoon the Pana corps exemplified the ritual. In the evening a campfire was held, followed by a banquet.

Football Player May Die.

Gus Hall, left halfback for the Moline club football team, was so seriously injured in the game with the East Ends that he may die. Early in the game he received a severe cut over the eye, but continued to play. In the second half his spine was injured. He was taken to the clubrooms, where it required four men to control him, so great was his pain.

Grading New Race Course.

The management of the new sportsman's park has completed grading the race course and ball grounds, preparatory to the erection of the grandstand and other buildings early in the spring. It will be known as Madison park and is located on the McKinley interurban line, about a mile south of Edwardsville.

Dies of His Injuries.

The death of William T. Wood, for eleven years a dry goods merchant of Bloomington, occurred Nov. 24. He was attacked by a peddler Aug. 11, and injuries received then resulted in his death.

Plan to Render "The Messiah."

The Springfield choral society, with 150 members, is a new organization in musical circles. The society is preparing to render The Messiah.

To Have Skyscraper.

The contract for the new eight-story fireproof Ferguson building, which is to be erected at Sixth and Monroe streets, Springfield, has been let.

Aged Man is Killed.

C. Barnett, 80 years old, was killed on the Mobile and Ohio railway track at Baldwin, a small town near Red Bud, while trying to cross the track before an approaching fast through passenger train.

Charge is Serious.

George Gossup and Frank Husk of Shabbona have been arrested on the charge of placing two wheelbarrows on the tracks of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy at that place on Halloween.

HERO RISKS LIFE TO SAVE OTHERS

Man on Rescuing Crew Sticks to His Post Despite Injuries.

LANDS THIRTY-EIGHT SAFELY

Lifeboat is Brought Near Stranded Steamer Off Holland, Mich., Robert Smith catches Line From Ship, and is Pulled Aboard.

Holland, Mich., dispatch: Robert Smith, life saver and hero, tossed his own life into the balance Friday to rescue thirty-eight men, women and children from the decks of the stranded steamship Argo, off this city. Smith's bravery won, and already his fame has traveled from port to port and the story of his exploits has been added to the lore of thrilling deeds performed on the great lakes.

The Argo, from Chicago, and a steel vessel, struck a bar at 5:30 o'clock Friday morning, and in an instant the fifty-three mile gale was throwing great waves across her decks. From dawn until after darkness the life saving crew fought against odds, and at last brought all excepting Captain John Stewart, and a few of his faithful men to shore in a breeches buoy, hung on a slender life line. Stewart and his little band refused to leave the ship, saying they would stay with her until the last hope of saving her should have to be abandoned.

Sixteen members of the passenger list and of the crew were Chicagoans—two of them women. Exclusive of the crew, they were: Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Niskern, H. H. Walker, George P. Fuff, Mrs. C. W. Earl, J. Burton, and E. A. Adams.

Crew is Beaten Back.

Repeatedly the life saving crew had launched their little lifeboat into the surf and had been beaten back. A line had been shot across the decks of the imperiled vessel from the beach cannon, but the crew and passengers stood helplessly at its side, unable to manipulate the breeches buoy which had traversed the 500 feet of tossing foam. It was feared that the steamship would begin to break up at any moment.

In this extremity one more effort to pull the lifeboat to the side of the stranded ship was made. Again the endeavor failed, but the craft was brought so near the ship's side that a line thrown from her deck was caught by Robert Smith, one of the men at the oars. Without a second's hesitation Smith tied the line about his waist and leaped into the icy water. He was borne under the surface several times, but strong hands pulled him toward the ship and soon he was standing on her deck, weak from exposure and bruised by contact with the sides of the vessel.

Taking command of the life line he summoned one of the women to go forward and be the first to make the perilous journey through the churning waves. She started to obey, but then drew back dismayed. Mrs. Niskern took her place. A cheer marked her safe arrival on shore. Other women and several children followed rapidly.

Life Line is Parted.

The line frayed on the side of the ship, and after eight persons had made the trip to shore the strands parted. Throughout the hours that had intervened since the vessel struck and the life saver had been dragged aboard the little band had waited bravely, and there was no suggestion of a panic when the line parted. Fortunately the accident occurred when the buoy was on its return to the vessel.

Again the beach cannon was brought into play and another line was shot across the Argo's deck. It was noon before the new line had been made fast, and the buoy had been started to shore again. From then on until after darkness fell the live savers worked tirelessly, Smith refusing to stand aside to permit stronger hands to take the burden from his own.

When all excepting a few members of the crew had been shot across the sagging line Smith called for a man to take his place in the buoy.

"Not until I see what the cap'n is going to do," said the sailor.

"I'm going to stand by," said Captain Stewart.

"Then we will stand by," said the other members of the crew.

Smith took his place in the buoy, and willful hands pulled him to his reward, the tearful thanks of those for whom he had risked his life. They met him on shore, hugged him, and slapped him on the back, and would have dragged him off to a hot dinner, but he preferred the warm seclusion of the life saving station and went away with his comrades.

SECURES MONEY AND ELOPES.

Wisconsin Town Stirred Up Over Disappearance of Young Couple.

Baraboo, Wis., dispatch: Portage is all stirred up over the elopement of George Burton, aged 19 years, and Gertie Corning, aged 16. The couple secured a livery team and drove to this city, arriving here early Sunday morning. They secured rooms at the Wisconsin house and later departed on the train, having bought tickets to Elroy, where all trace of them was lost.