

The Convict Country: or, Fighting for a Million

BY CHARLES MORRIS BUTLER

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CHAPTER XX.

Lang commenced to fight a duel. After a few hours of rest, he and Lang arose refreshed. With Pearl's help the twins managed to secure sufficient food, easily prepared, but answered for breakfast. With the intention of giving no visible excuse to Rogers for further punishment, and realizing that promptness in reporting for duty was essential if they expected leniency, they hurried Rogers up and gave themselves in charge.

Rogers conducted Lang and Wilson to a cabin built in the side of the mountain, situated in the north corner of the village. This was the entrance to the shaft leading into the heart of the mountain. The mines were practically all tunnel, about 300 yards long by 30 feet wide and 30 feet high at its highest point, boarded up roughly, to keep the earth from crumbling in and filling the space. Over a hundred men worked in this place. Some of these prisoners had never seen the light of day since their incarceration.

"Suppose, Lang," said Rogers, calling Louis to one side, out of hearing of everybody but Wilson, "that you are prepared for the worst in this deal?"

"No, I can't say as I am," said Louis, smiling, "but I can take it as it comes. There is a great deal in feeling that you don't deserve punishment, and you know that I do not—and I can make myself contented under the circumstances. I brought it on myself ignorantly, but if everything goes on as it should I will be the winner in the end. I need to hard labor, and my work is all the more I don't care what I have to do. I think the wife I've gained—the finest little woman in the town is worth the struggle. See?"

"Yes, I see and I don't see! I think I can understand as well as anyone."



A villainous personage was placing his rough hand over her mouth.

You expect to make it warm for Schiller in some way though."

"That remains to be seen. It would be foolish for me to stir my plans away at this stage in the game!"

"I know Wilson pretty well, and can guess his plans for revenge. However, you might have done worse than fall into my net, and I am keeping 'I'll treat you fair; but I want you to give me a little advice—whatever you do, do it well."

"There are two meanings to this," said Lang to himself.

"I shall make Wilson oversee of the cartmen, not such a hardened rascal like yourself. I can trust him to come and go between the mines and the river." Louis understood the drift. "And you, Lang, I shall have to give a pick and shovel and send you into labor with the diggers. If we do not restrict even these to absolute silence, so you can talk all you want to; but I advise you not to make a confidant of any of my guards—a word to the wise. You know, of course, from overhearing my conversation with Golden, that I bear Schiller no love, but that is no reason why I should be any too lenient with you. Your experience has come from hearing hard knocks, and your salvation must come through your own self."

"At this juncture Cronley, Rogers' assistant, entered the office. "Give an ignorant the authority and he will abuse it," such was the case of Cronley. He was a great, burly, grizzled Irishman, of the typical severest descent, one of our large cities. He had killed a companion in a fit of anger and made his escape through the subterranean passages which he knew so well. He fell in with a band of thieves later, and in turn fell in with the convicts under Schiller. The king had appointed him safe to assume the role as the king to take advantage of his power.

Cronley conducted the twins to their respective working stations. It only took Lang about 10 minutes to divine Rogers' true thoughts in assigning him to work with the "diggers"—in the main, life prisoners, and that for reason a most desperate lot of prisoners, whether they had been sentenced for the reason, then, was apparent to Lang. Here was the place to stir up the insurrection! Lang set

his wit to work to get into the grasp of his fellow-workmen as soon as possible.

Lang fell under Cronley's displeasure at once by his wiffling clumsiness in holding his pick and awkwardness, generally, and several times in the next hour alone, he was reprimanded for loafing. On one of these occasions Louis returned back; in consequence of his "saw," he was warned by the keeper that another offense of the nature would mean twenty strokes of the cat. As a punishment, instead of being allowed to go home for dinner at noon, he was compelled to load up an extra car of dirt during the noon hour alone, and only given 5 minutes for rest and a very light lunch of dry bread and black coffee.

This was the first day. Lang was not so sure that the course he had laid out for himself was the best, but having started on the plan, despite any discomfort to himself, he meant to carry it out. In the evening Wilson and himself were allowed their liberty.

Arriving at the house they found it deserted. No Pearl, no Dr. Huntington; what could it mean? In silence each ate a few scraps to appease their almost ravenous appetite. Something seemed to warn the lads that a struggle of momentous importance was about to take place. Waiting until there could be no doubt but what the absence of the two was not occasioned by the fact that they were simply out walking, Lang and Wilson went to the home of Golden and stated the case to him.

"Some plot of Schiller's," said Golden, readily, "but what it is I hard to state. I hardly think that he has dared to abduct your wife from your home. He knows too well the penalty for such a crime here! However, we will notify Rogers, and if he thinks it best we will call upon Schiller at his place."

After a little time spent in search, Rogers was found, and while offering no clue as to Pearl's whereabouts, he recommended a call upon the king. The king, who had been summoned home thoroughly first, to satisfy themselves that the lost ones were not within its portals, then visited the king's palace.

The king, overburdened with a surplus of servants, answered the ring at the door, himself. "Well," he questioned, as if at a loss to understand why he was paid a visit.

"Where is Mrs. Lang?" asked Golden, who thought it best to precipitate hostilities from the start. Schiller was equally on his mettle. "I don't know that that is any affair of yours," was the retort.

"Perhaps it is mine!" said Louis. The quartette, while conversing, were following Schiller into his office, which was the front room off from the hall leading from the front door.

"She is my wife. I desire to know where she is."

"Your wishes can be many—a convict's enquired Schiller. "What do I know of your convict wife?"

It was with effort Louis restrained himself from striking the insulting man.

"Listen to me, then!" thundered Rogers, speaking for the first time. "I know that Mrs. Lang is in this house. Her husband may be a convict, but she, as a wife, is bound to receive protection from every honest man."

"That will do, Rogers!" said the king, very calmly. "When you say Mrs. Lang is in this house, you let!"

What might have taken place after this declaration is hard to say. Whether Rogers would have tried conclusions with his superior or not never was demonstrated; Schiller had scarce hurried the threat, when a piercing scream was heard, whose echo filled the half-empty palace.

Lang made a dive for the rear of the house. "My wife!" he cried, and had scarce thrown the hall and into the kitchen. There he met a sight which filled his very blood, and made him for a moment a very madman. A villainous-looking personage, dressed in the attire of a guard, was struggling to keep Pearl from shrieking, by placing his rough hand over her mouth, while supporting her in his arms.

Obviously he was attempting to carry her from the room.

It took Lang but a second to knock the fellow down and catch his wife in his own arms before she fell to the floor. When the party, headed by Schiller, arrived upon the scene, Lang was master of the situation.

"Who brought you here?" Louis asked of the man who was Pearl's manager to tell her story. "Early this morning father came here to notify Schiller that he was ready to practice his art on me. I wanted, and waited for his return; at last unable to bear the suspense, I came to find him. Schiller would not tell me where he was, and against my will he forced me to remain here. He confined me in a darkened room and has dared to ask me to become his wife, again!"

"This was too much for Louis. "You cur!" he cried, and sprang upon Schiller, bearing him to the floor in his frenzy.

Louis, in taking this means of redress, had simply robbed himself of an legal means of escape. From this time on you and I are enemies! You condemn Lang to death for this, and so help me, I'll make it more than warm for you!"

"I do not fear your threats, Golden, I am king here, and this is my palace. This man—a convict—has assaulted me, and as my right, I sentence him to fight a duel to the death with Whalen in the amphitheater to-morrow night! We will see who has the upper hand here!"

"So he'll," said Golden, furiously, to fight a duel to the death with Whalen in the amphitheater to-morrow night! We will see who has the upper hand here!"

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ILLINOIS NEWS

Choose items from over the state, especially selected for our readers

WOMAN COAL PICKER IS KILLED

Mother of Six Children is Terribly Crushed by Loaded Car.

While picking coal in the Southern railway yards of the Oakland coal mine, Mrs. Ella Lebus, aged 48, wife of Samuel Lebus, was run over by a loaded coal car and her body ground in such a terrible manner as to be unrecognizable. The Lebus family reside at Dewey, near the mine, and although Mrs. Lebus had frequently seen her neighbor women and children picking loose coal this was her first trip to the place. The woman was standing in the center of one of the sidetracks when a loaded car was cut loose by the workmen and per- mitted to run to the foot of an incline. She did not see or hear the approaching car, and was knocked down and her body dragged for 100 yards. The only witness to the accident was Charlie Pierce, topman at the mine, who could not give the alarm in time to save her. The body was removed to Belleville and Coroner Lewis held inquest. The jury returning a verdict of death from accident. Deceased is survived by her husband and six children.

PANIC AT POLITICAL MEETING

Tier of Seats Fall as Governor Arrives to Make Address.

Twenty people who slightly injured at Moline by the falling of a tier of seats at the hall where Gov. Charles B. Deneen spoke. The meeting was a republican rally at which the governor spoke in favor of the candidacy for congress of James McKinney of Aledo, who also was present and spoke. About 2,000 packed the hall.

At the entrance of Gov. Deneen and his party many people gathered upon the already overcrowded seats in order to obtain a view of him. The supports of one section of seats gave way under the strain and about fifty people, men, women and children were thrown to the floor in a heap. Upon them descended the heavy planks, of which the seats were built, and the result was a panic. In a second panic was threatened. A movement toward the scene of the accident which threatened to trample the injured was begun, but through the efforts of the police, assisted by Gov. Deneen, this movement was checked. The governor and other cool heads then succeeded in quieting those who were inclined to panic and keep the crowds away, while the injured were helped from the wrecked seats and taken care of, after which the speaking took place.

OLD TRAPPER GOES TO REWARD

Noted Illinois River Character Dies at His Home in Peoria.

Edward Briggs is dead and Peoria has lost one of its oldest settlers, and one of the quietest characters that ever resided within its confines. "Governor" Briggs, as he was familiarly known, was 83 years of age at the time of his death, and up to within four months ago retained the health and vigor of one who has spent the greater part of his life out of doors, and who revelled in the sports of the hunt and the fether. For sixty-two years Mr. Briggs had lived continuously in the city of Peoria, and in his day he was considered the best shot with a rifle and one of the most skilled trappers in the state. He knew the Illinois river from beginning to end, and up until half a year ago the banks of the stream and the woods along its edge were his haunt and practically his life.

ANTI-SALOON CHIEF,

Rev. R. M. Little, who has been named by the headquarters committee of the Anti-Saloon League of Illinois to succeed William H. Anderson as state superintendent of the league, is chairman of the committee and has been nine years pastor of the Wood-



REV. R. M. LITTLE

lawn United Presbyterian church, Chicago. He is also director of the league representing the Presbyterian body. Should Mr. Little accept the superintendency it will involve his giving up his pastorate, which he feels reluctant to do. His nomination will come up for approval in the state convention at Peoria, Nov. 14. Mr. Little is the choice of Dr. P. A. Baker, national superintendent for the Illinois position.

Receiver to Issue Bonds.

Judge Shirley has been petitioned by the city of Carlinville to direct the receiver of the water works company to issue 5 per cent receiver's certificates to the amount of \$25,000. The court decided to order the receiver to advertise for bids on the above amount of certificates and use the proceeds to put the plant in condition for ample fire protection and service to the people. The court announced that an order would be made to take effect December 1.

May Pick Husband's Pockets.

In the city hall police court at Alton Judge Rose proclaimed that a wife has the right to pick her husband's pockets while he sleeps, or at any other time, to get money for household expenses, and that such an act does not constitute an excuse for a man's abandoning his family. He told this to Ernst Burton, the defendant, who said that he left his wife because she had surreptitiously taken a dime from his pocket.

Grocers Violate Food Law.

Twenty-two grocers of Galesburg were arrested on a charge of violating the pure food law by selling chemical vinegar, spurious butter and hogwash, paid their fines of \$25 and costs each, all pleading guilty. The plea is made by the grocers that the goods were represented to them as pure.

Excavator He Narrow Escape.

George Scott was almost buried alive by the caving in of an excavation for a man. He was rescued after being buried for several hours. The wall on Manning street in Upper Alton. Scott was buried to his neck and it required five minutes' work to dig him out. He was not injured and returned to work immediately.

Shooting at Norris City.

While attempting to arrest Postmaster Henry Wakford, Jr., for disturbing the peace in Norris City, D. B. Huetty of Norris City was shot and slightly wounded. Wakford was shot twice by the marshal and his recovery is doubtful.

Bank for New Haven.

Articles of incorporation have been secured for a national bank in New Haven. Willard Telford Olney, the president and W. E. Mathis cashier. It is capitalized at \$25,000.

HOLDS \$19,000 FROM COUNTY.

State's Attorney Healy Wants Protection from Future Suits.

The State's Attorney Healy has notified the Cook county board that he is ready and willing to turn over to the county treasurer or county superintendent of schools about \$19,000 which has been collected by him as the criminal court from fines and forfeitures just as soon as he is satisfied that when he pays it in the future by the officer to whom such payment is not made. It is believed that Mr. Healy will not turn the funds over until the county brings suit against him on a friendly basis to test the constitutionality of the act which gives the state's attorney a salary of \$10,000 a year and requires him to turn over to the county superintendent of schools all sums collected from fines and forfeitures. "I do not think that the county will bring such a suit," said President Brundage of the county board. "Why should we bring a suit to test the constitutionality of a law which the county board wants to see stand?"

LAWYER FLOORS HIS OPPONENT

Altercation Follows Hearing Before State Railroad Commissioner.

Following the hearing before the railroad and warehouse commissioner at Springfield over the Harvey crossing case occurred an altercation at the Leland hotel between John G. Drennan, counsel for Illinois Central, and Civil Engineer Davis of the Chicago Southern Traction Company. Davis disputed the facts of the case and called him a liar, according to Drennan's statement, and Drennan knocked him down. The crossing case was bitterly contested and Drennan's attorney in the case, J. W. Drennan, accompanied with a petition of citizens and a telegram from the mayor saying two lives had been lost the day before at the grade crossing. The board ordered the traction company to build a subway.

"CUSS" WORDS TERRIFY A GIRL

Hears Them Over 'Phone and Accused Farmer Is Arrested.

Grant Bible of Bethel township has been arrested on a charge of swearing over the rural telephone. The complaint is made by Mrs. Edward L. Stevens, whose daughter happened to be using the line while Mr. Bible was conversing with David Davidson, another farmer. The young woman says the words were "cuss" and "damn" and "terrible." Mr. Bible, who is a highly respected farmer, in his defense claims that he did not make the "terrible" statements credited to him, and that the words were spoken by a third party who was intoxicated at the time. He claims that when he and Mr. Davidson knew there was a lady listening on the line they stopped their talk, but heard the vulgar language used by this third party.

WILL BATTLE FOR PURE FOOD

Illinois Consumers' League to Assist Women's Clubs in Crusade.

The Illinois Consumers' league is to join hands with the General Federation of Women's Clubs in the crusade for pure food, according to the announcement made at the annual meeting.

At Chicago Mrs. Harriet Van De Vaart of Neighborhood house was appointed chairman of a special committee to call the attention of the women of Illinois to the adulteration of food. The committee will be the principal of the National Consumers' league, made the principal address. He likened the league's work to the "spraying of insurance consumers to obtain better conditions in their companies."

Fatally Shot by a Bartender.

During an altercation in a saloon in Willitsville, a mining town, Asa Meyer, aged 21, was fatally shot by an Italian bartender named Casco Meyer. It is alleged, entered the saloon with two companions and demanded that the bartender treat the three. Meyer was refused and Meyer started to go behind the bar, when the Italian fired two shots, one of which entered his antagonist's neck.

Arrest Unlucky Christian Leaders.

As a result of a fight at a recent meeting called to reorganize the United Christian party, Rev. Wallace R. Struble of Chicago was arrested at Rock Island on complaint of W. R. Beukert of Davenport, national chairman, who charged the clergyman with threats to kill. Beukert was also arrested, charged with disturbing the peace. They were released upon paying the costs.

Struck by Pitched Ball.

Otto Hilde, twenty-four years old, died at his home near Logan as the result of a pitched ball which struck him in the neighborhood of the game of baseball. Several young men of the neighborhood were engaged in the game when a pitched ball struck Hilde above the right ear. He laughed about it at the time, but soon complained of dizziness and went to his home shortly after arriving there he became unconscious and died. The young man died on his twenty-four birthday anniversary.