

The CONVICT COUNTRY: or FIGHTING for a MILLION

BY CHARLES MORRIS BUTLER

Author of "The Revenge of Power," "A Tempest Tossed," "The World," etc.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

Lang Explores the Tunnel.
As a matter of precaution against eavesdroppers, before entering into the conversation between Dr. Huntington and his daughter, Lang attended to the locking up of the house, and stationed Wilson in the front parlor as a guard, while the trio adjourned to the front room above. Dr. Huntington took a seat in an easy chair with Pearl standing at his back; Louis paced the length of the room several times before speaking; at last he stopped before the doctor's chair.

"Dr. Huntington," said Louis, "when I married your daughter I formed the union as a means of protecting her from harm. Now we find—that is, both of us—that we really love one another. I have sought this interview to request you to consent to our marriage, in reality."

"Is this your wish, Pearl?" asked the doctor, and there was a tinge of sadness in his voice.
"It is, papa," Pearl answered, fondly kissing her parent, and attempting to hide her blushes by resting her head on his shoulder.

The doctor tenderly stroked his child's head for a moment, gazing into her face wistfully; then he for a little time buried his face in his hands, sighing deeply. "You are taking an advantage of me," he at last managed to say to Louis. "I did at first think you a disinterested, honest man, and intended to trust you with more than my life—the honor of my child. You feel, no doubt, the truth—I do not desire a union in fact. But you place me in a position where I cannot refuse."

"I understand you, Dr. Huntington," replied Louis. "You were willing you are willing, to use me—but you do not think me worthy of filling the true position of husband to your child. Louis had not meant to retort, but



Sounded the floor and walls of the cellar for a clew to the tunnel's entrance.

the most blunt refusal cut him to the quick.
"Can you blame me?" more blandly asked the doctor. "Your aid has the choice of two evils—a possibility that but one evil would exist."

"No, I do not blame you," acknowledged Lang. "I admit the circumstances are not a pleasant thing for a parent of your social standing to contemplate the union of purity such as your child possesses with a person of my character, but looking at it from candy and from all sides, can you expect to do better? What are your chances for ever leaving this place alive? Besides, have I not, truly, risked my life to save her from a worse fate? Under the existing state of affairs she is looked upon as my wife—without really being so. Do I not show you that I am honorable, and I am serving the sanction of the church to make the marriage lawful? Another thing, Dr. Huntington, I have asked your consent coupled with the statement that your daughter loves me—this is an argument in my favor. Still, if you wish to refuse, why do you not do so? I did not demand; by a very simple test you would prove whether I asked for your consent through courtesy or not. Your daughter has trusted me far enough to believe that if you refuse I will yet act the part of a gentleman and not take undue advantage of any circumstance that may have placed your destinies in my keeping."

"Then I think," said the doctor with great deliberation, "that it is best you do not insist upon marriage with my daughter. You see I am candid with you."
Pearl looked hopefully at her lover.
"Now, as my right, I own, the check of Huntington, what are your reasons for refusing me your daughter's hand?" was the business-like question of Lang.

"You understand my motives perfectly, Lang," said the doctor, trying to appear calm during the trying ordeal. "Why force me to say something which will distress us both?"
"Is it of a physical nature?" asked our hero, refusing to take the hint.
"No, you are physically a model of manhood," said the doctor, enthusiastically.
"Is it on account of poverty?" you are not aware, perhaps, that I have a home and several thousand dollars in the bank?"
"Poverty does not enter into the question."

nor appear to notice the repetition of marriage in church. What do you intend to do?" he asked.
"I mean to turn it to yours and my own advantage," returned Louis. "Circumstances could not have played better into my hands, I have had Schiller approach me in the manner he did. Are you willing to trust me implicitly?"
"I am," the doctor replied.
"And leave your life and happiness in my hands?"
"I am."

"You do not ask why Schiller made me these conditions," said Louis.
"I know why," explained the doctor. "I am the only living heir to an English estate of great value. If I die it goes to my daughter as the only living representative of a once noble house."
"And the estate is worth?" queried Louis.
"A million!" answered the doctor, promptly.

After the doctor and Pearl had retired for the night, Lang set his wits to work to invent some device of circumventing Schiller. A plan had presented itself to the detective, by which it would be possible to delude Schiller into the belief that Dr. Huntington had been disposed of. It depended wholly upon the truth of Golden's statement that there was an entrance to and an exit from the city through a tunnel leading from the haunted house. The tunnel was still in existence. Lang meant to allow Dr. Huntington to make his escape from the city in that way, furnishing him with a horse and harness, and the doctor would be able to find his way by the first station into the hands of Johnson, who, Louis felt, could be trusted to see the escaping man safely on his way over the border and directed toward civilization. The plan was worth trying at least.

With Lang, to think was to act. As the first thing to be settled was to find out where the tunnel lay, Lang too, candle and went down into the cellar to get his bearings. Entrance was made through a trap door cut in the floor of the kitchen, and by the aid of a stationery ladder he let himself down into the hole which answered the purpose of a storeroom for bric-a-brac and cast-off kitchen furniture. Louis sounded the floor and walls of the cellar for a clew to the tunnel's entrance, but for a long time without success. When about to give up the task as hopeless, a slight gust of wind which had a tendency to blow out the candle led him to the spot, which proved to be a door carefully concealed. Proof of the entrance of the tunnel being thus obtained, Louis proceeded further search until better prepared to meet any unexpected emergency which might crop up.

(To be continued.)

Gov. Long and His "Band."
The Hon. John D. Long of Massachusetts tells with great glee of an experience he had when he was governor. There was a public meeting at one of the theaters, to which the governor and his staff were invited. The staff put on their most gorgeous uniforms. There were quite a number of them, and they were resplendent in gold lace and cord.

When the party reached the theater entrance they found so many people there that somebody suggested they should go around and enter by the stage door.

They encountered a stolid stage doorkeeper, who had been at his post for years, and was used to the wiles of people who went to get behind the scenes.

"Can't get in here?" he said, gruffly.
"But," said Mr. Long, "I am the governor."
The doorkeeper looked the governor over carefully. Apparently he recognized him, for he said, "All right, governor, you can go in."

Then he waved his hand at the gaudy staff and announced: "The band must go around the other way."
Back in the sixties Goodrich & Dyer were tailors in Joy's building, and the late J. Putnam Bradlee was one of their patrons, says a writer in the Boston Herald.

One day he ordered a pair of doekin trousers, and in due time they were sent to his home.

The next day Mr. Bradlee called and said to Mr. Dyer: "These trousers are out with the nap down on the front and up on the back part."
Mr. Dyer, with rare presence of mind, replied: "That is the way we cut them now. You break down the front of the back, so it makes it more convenient for you."
Mr. Bradlee said: "I am glad to know it," and went out.

In the course of the war he came in to order another pair, and he said to Mr. Dyer: "If it will not be any great trouble to you, I prefer that nap should run the same way front and back."
"Why 'Mike' Kelley Laughed.
Baseball cranks will all remember with pleasure the late "Mike" Kelley, the star attraction of the famous Boston team, then the champions of the National League. The Bostoners were playing in a western city, and had just returned to their hotel after the game and the motor-city team were separating and going to their rooms, while Kelley headed for the bathroom to take his regular "rub-down."
A few minutes later one of the other players of the team, while passing down the corridor, heard Kelley's well-known laugh inside the bathroom, and stopped at the door and asked Kelley what he was doing.
"I'm getting a rub," said Kelley. "This is the first time I ever got out of the bath tub without stepping on the soap."

ILLINOIS STATE NEWS

OSBORNE AND SMITH ARE FREE

Charge of Conspiracy Not Proved Against Jacksonville Men.
J. H. Osborne and Rev. Thomas P. Smith of Jacksonville were discharged from the custody of the sheriff at Chicago after the hearing of charges that they were in a conspiracy to obtain money by false pretenses. Samuel W. Miller, treasurer of the Orinoco Mining Company, accused Osborne and Smith of swindling him out of \$500 through the National Stock and Bond Guarantee Company. Miller's witnesses failed to substantiate his charges, Osborne a prominent banker at Jacksonville and Smith formerly was a Methodist minister there.

GIVES MEMORIAL COLLEGE.

Love for her native state, Kentucky, and the desire to erect an imperishable monument to the memory of her deceased husband, caused Mrs. Matthew T. Scott, one of Bloomington's great women, to erect in the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountain range a college for the education of the mountaineers. The college was dedicated recently by Mrs. Scott's brother.



MRS. MATTHEW T. SCOTT

In-law, former Vice-President A. E. Stevenson, who made a special trip to Kentucky to deliver the dedicatory address. The institution is located near West Liberty and will be a training school for boys and girls. It will be conducted under the control of the Presbyterian church of Kentucky. It opened with an enrollment of 115. An efficient corps of teachers has been secured and the college opened with the brightest prospects for success. Prof. J. W. Thurman is first president of the college and he has five assistant teachers.

BROOM CORN PRICE ADVANCES

Manufacturer Paid \$10 a Ton for 127 Bales in Coles County.
The top price for the year was paid in the central broom corn district. Frank Bundy, a Coles county grower, secured 127 bales of extra fine broom to the Gardner Broom Company, of Amsterdam, N. Y., for \$110 per ton. The consignment also included seven tons of broom for which the buyers paid \$50 a ton. Brokers in the Arcola neighborhood are now freely offering \$105 for good broom, with no takers. An occasional crop of broom in the country, no larger than the best, has advanced devoted their attention to points remote from the chief buying centers. Arcola brokers say the clean up is complete, as to the Vandavia and Sumner territory. The belief in higher prices is firmly rooted. One expert estimates that there are not more than 4,000 tons (possibly not more than 2,000) of broom in the country, no larger than the best, has advanced devoted their attention to points remote from the chief buying centers. Arcola brokers say the clean up is complete, as to the Vandavia and Sumner territory. 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