

# The CONVICT COUNTRY: OR, FIGHTING for a MILLION

BY CHARLES MORRIS BUTLER

Author of "The Revenge of Pierre," "A Feinment Tragedy," "Anita," Etc.

## CHAPTER I.

Jim Denver, the Detective, and His Great Scheme.

"I believe this is Louis Lang?"

"Well, how are you to-day?"

"Oh, fairly well," replied the young man addressed as Lang. He was sitting before a small table in one of the secluded corners of a high-class saloon on Clark street, Chicago.

When first accosted, at being spoken to, and saw a very gentlemanly-looking person standing before him. "You certainly have the advantage of me," he replied, cautiously, eyeing his interrogator enquiringly. "Whom have I the honor of addressing?"

The gentleman smiled, and drew up a chair beside the youth. "I am Jim Denver, lately from New York," he replied somewhat harshly, then in an undertone he added abruptly, "who once arrested you on suspicion of having committed a murder!"

It was a cruel stab, and Lang was flustered for a moment, an angry flush spreading over his face. A shudder seemed to pass through his frame, that passing, he composed himself almost immediately. "Well, what's your 'lay' now?" he inquired.

"Still have hard feelings against me, I see," said the detective, as if surprised at the bitter tone of the youth.

"I have no love for you, certainly—and as far as that goes, no grudge against you, either," answered Lang.

"The arrest was made in the line of your duty—but I was innocent! You can bet that you will have no further cause to 'take' me!" The subject was very painful to Lang. He figured around in his chair as if sitting on a red-hot gridiron.

"Keep on in the way you are go-

ing," insinuated the detective, "and you will end in a different manner than you expect."

"Oh! I don't care what becomes of me!" said the young man, moodily toying with the empty beer glass on the table before him.

"Life, then, has no attraction for you?"

"Not much!" answered Lang.

"What would make life of interest to you?" asked the detective, as if interested in the answer.

"To be able to lift up my head; to become respectable—wealthy," said the young man, fiercely.

"Pardon me, Lang," said the detective, quite earnestly, "if I seem to be reading you a lecture. But do you imagine that you are going ahead in the right direction—to attain all these—when you begin by throwing away what little respect and manhood you may have had left? You, and every-one else, owe the world your best efforts. You are really a criminal, as much to be despised as a thief, when you sink to a low level!"

"Fate!" sadly replied the youth, taking the rebuke in good part, vainly striving to frame an excuse. "The best years of my life were taken away from me. I have no ambition to begin over again. I have struggled to combat fate, but I am no better off now than I have ever been."

"Fate, indeed," echoed Denver, contemptuously. "One would think, to hear you talk that you were an old man looking back upon a life of fleeting opportunities! Instead of striving and overcoming opposition, you make your condition worse. Your dreams of wealth and honor, are they dead now?"

"No! If I didn't dream, all hope would indeed be gone! I would put an end to my existence now if I did not hope."

"How do you expect to realize this hope—to become rich, if you don't toil; respectable, if you do not respect yourself?"

"I don't. I have toiled, striven hard to please—but to no avail. Who wants me in their employ? What kind of society is open to me? Answer me that. It is for this that I am discouraged."

"A hopeless case," said the detective shaking his head. "You brood over a mere fancy—yet you say you still hope! How many more days of dissipation do you think you can put in on the money you now have?"

"This is my last night," sadly replied the young man, as he gazed at a few stray coins brought to light from his trousers' pocket.

"Then what are you going to do?"

"Haven't the least idea in the world."

"Are you open to a business proposition?"

"Most certainly am."

The detective arose. "Now that we have a foundation to work on, I think that I can interest you. Let us retire to a private room where we will not be disturbed."

"Very well."

Jim Denver was a noted New York detective. Recently, while engaged in hunting down a noted forger, he had been brought to Chicago where the



"I have a scheme to rob a colony of thieves of over a million dollars in gold."

one he hinted at the possibility of the existence of such a place, and it seems to me more than reasonable. How else can we account for the many complete disappearances of such men as Snell's murderer (with \$50,000 on his head) and the mutilator of Amelia Olsen? I would not be surprised if it could be proven that they there rest secure from the law they have outraged. Bombthrowers, murderers, thieves—these are the colonists."

"A select gathering," said Lang. "And you imagine, because these gentlemen cannot be traced to Canada or Mexico, that they have formed a colony in some secluded part of the United States. Barring the lions of the law in their dens, as it were."

"That's my idea exactly. And the thing which is most to my liking," exclaimed Denver, "is the fact that these colonists must have a world of gold money in their possession!"

"Where did you get your idea?"

"From a dying criminal, who confessed to having a knowledge of such a place, though he could not tell me where it was located. It was described as a barricaded town. For a certain sum of money prisoners or accused persons are assisted to escape from custody, and taken to this place to live. The sum demanded as an admission fee is so large that none but criminals of renown and wealth become 'colonists,' and as they can hardly have use for money in a place undoubtedly supported by co-operative effort, I estimate that they must have accumulated about this sum of money. Even if this is not so, a vast fortune could be made by capturing or killing ten or twenty of those rascals for whom extra large rewards are offered, Tascott, for instance, and the abductor of young Cuddy, there's a hundred thousand dollars right there for some brave man to pick up. I want you to help me discover this place."

"These 'colonists' must have a powerful clique on the outside—agents in every city of importance in the United States," said Lang, "to recruit the colony in the way described by you."

(To be continued.)

## SOME IDEAS ABOUT WOMEN.

By One Who Imagines He Knows the Softer Sex.

The woman who knows Greek will still spend an hour and a half in dressing her hair for a party. I calculate that if women wore their hair short a million unemployed hours would be thrown daily upon the world.

The young couple with the grains of rice still upon them start blithely across the marriage links. Much depends on the way they negotiate their first disillusion—or bunker!

Passion wins maids and perseverance widows.

The rejected lover should never lose hope. In addressing the lady his tone should be soft, mellifluous—a south wind rustling over orange trees. Orange trees—not cypresses!

The man who sums women up in a sentence is the man whom women can fool with a phrase.

It is a woman's most delightful quality that she is not interested in politics.—From "Mollentrave," popular London play.

## A Precocious Sportsman.

"The Americans are great Sportsmen," said Sir Thomas Dewar, in recounting his impressions of America. "From their earliest years they take a consuming interest in all sorts of contests and races."

"I remember one cold afternoon in New York seeing a poor little, ragged lad, with his nose glued against the window of a toy shop. I stopped beside him and looked down. But he paid no heed to me. His clear young eyes were intent on the window's bright and inviting contents."

"Without a word I slipped a penny into his cold little hand. He looked at the penny, and then he looked at me."

"Well, if this ain't luck," he said. "I've been wishin' for a cent, and here's one dropped right in me fist."

"What did you want the cent for, my lad?" said I.

"The urchin answered: 'I wanted to get a night extra to see wot's won. I've got a dollar on Swallow in the third race.'"

## Ralph Waldo Emerson's Stove.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was a man of rare integrity, and very particular about small things. One day a new cooking stove had been provided for his house, and, although the stove came very highly recommended, it proved thoroughly unsatisfactory and most provoking, as it did everything but what it was expected to do. After a while the family were in despair, and some one suggested sending it to auction.

"What!" exclaimed Emerson, "transfer our own perplexity to another pair of shoulders? Never! Unless the stove is labeled 'imperfect!'"

And so, "imperfect" it was labeled, and sold at a great discount.

## Familiar With the Disease.

Dr. William Osler of Johns Hopkins and Oxford, tells this story: An old darky quack, well known in a certain section of the south, was passing the house of a planter, whose wife was reported to be dangerously ill. Stopping at the gate he called to one of the hands:

"I say, Rastus, how's the missus?"

"Well," replied Rastus, "the doctah done say dis mawnin' dat she convalescent."

"Humph! Dat ain't nothin', chile," said the old quack, with an air of superior wisdom. "Why, I've done cured convalescence in twenty-foah hours!"

## Uncertainty of Life.

"Young man," said the clerical-looking passenger, addressing the beardless individual across the aisle, "do you ever consider when you lie down at night that you may never see the sun rise again?"

"No," replied the party at whom the query had been fired, "I can't say that I do; but every morning when I wake up I realize that I may not live to see another sunset."

"I do," queried the surprised c. l. p.

"I do," answered the young man. "You see, I'm a baseball umpire.—Cincinnati Enquirer."

## The Theory of the Convict Country.

"A colony of thieves?" questioned Lang.

"Yes! A colony of thieves!" said the detective. "No doubt you have often wondered where all of our rich defaulters and criminals go to in order to keep from falling into the hands of the law?"

"It is commonly supposed that they take up their residence in Canada or other foreign countries."

"I have every reason to believe that there exists a colony composed of 'escaped' or 'wanted' criminals—none in Canada, but right here in this free and enlightened republic! More than

# BASE BALL

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Del Howard is authority for the charge that Heinie Peitz coaches himself while running bases.

The Brooklyn Club has released pitcher Eddie Poole and catcher Jacklitch. Both have signed with Providence.

Harry Arndt may not go back to Louisville. The Boston Nationals are said to hanker a little bit after the third sacker.

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Manager Joe Kelley is unable to gain any definite information as to when he may get into the game again. His injury is mending but slowly.

Pitcher Willis has jumped the Altoona club and gone back to the Boston Nationals, President Soden, of Boston, having come to the pitcher's terms.

Pitcher Willis last week made himself an outlaw by joining the Altoona club. He says his salary will be far more than \$3,000 and that he has it guaranteed.

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President Holland is anxious that his staff of umpires present a good appearance on the diamond and has ordered each man to provide himself with a uniform of dark blue to consist of trousers, blouse and cap.

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# TOLD OF THE VETERANS

## The Parting Volley.

With arms reversed the ranks pass on. The muffled drum makes faltering tread. A muster roll reads simply, "Gone."

One more is numbered with the dead—A crash! The parting volley rolls A requiem among earth's souls.

The flags hang drooping from the mast. Faint echoes come and go and die. Tears fill the eyes, welling and do. Of those who see a comrade lie. Where memory must be a name. And tablets praise a hero's fame.

What then? A soldier gives his life For love of country, valorous deeds. And lies as one whom carnal strife Marked for its end among its seeds. Ah, yes! ere yet a flashing blade Was drawn or sheathed his grave was made.

Who calls the names of those to fall? Ask of the God of Battles, who? But they are known, and some of all. Who go to war to dare and do. Know that the piercing shout will bring To him his altar's offering.

Some meet the shock within the fray. Some fall within the nurse's tent. Maimed, weak and gaunt they waste away. Yet to its end each way is bent: The end? Deserved promotion calls To higher life each one that falls.

—Clifford Kane Stout.

## OLD SPIRIT STILL STRONG.

## Veteran in Desperate Straits Adopted Reckless Suggestion.

"Two or three years ago," said the doctor, "I was living in New York, and was engaged in a profitable business. One evening I was seated at a table in a restaurant when a well-dressed, elderly man came in from the street, walked straight toward me and said in a low voice: 'I am in great distress. I am at the end of my string. I have no money, no place to sleep, and I am hungry. What would you advise me to do?'"

"Of course, I was annoyed, and I showed my annoyance. There was no reason why the man should have singled out me for such a speech, except, possibly, that I wore the Grand Army button. However, that did not occur to me at the time, and I said jocularly, 'I know what I would do under like circumstances. I would go outside, look for a good-sized stone, clutch it firmly in my right hand, find a large plate glass window, and hurl the stone through it. After that I would be sure of board and lodging for some weeks at the expense of the city.'"

"The stranger said with jaunty politeness: 'You are very kind. Thank you, sir. I will act on your suggestion.' Thereupon he walked straight to the door and went out, and I ordered my supper. In less than five minutes there was a crash in front, a tinkle of broken glass and a clamor of voices. I went with others to the street and saw that my acquaintance of five minutes before had taken my advice with a vengeance. He had thrown a stone through the window of a jewelry store and was awaiting arrest. There were all sorts of theories on the lips of men who were awaiting the second move in what they regarded as a daring scheme of robbery."

"Meantime several policemen were closing in cautiously on the man who had thrown the stone. They evidently regarded him as a dangerous character, or insane. Divining this, the stone-thrower said, 'Oh, I will go with you. No trouble on that score. In fact, I broke the glass that I might be arrested.' As a policeman grabbed him, I said, 'Wait a minute. I am afraid I am to blame for this. I said to this man when he asked for assistance that I would throw a stone through a plate glass window, and in that way secure board and lodging from the city. That was a joke, but he seems to have acted on my advice, and I feel in a measure responsible.'"

"The upshot of the affair was that I agreed to pay for the broken glass and to take charge of the man who had broken it. I paid for the supper of the stone-thrower, secured lodgings for him, and told him I would listen to his story the next day. I never expected to see him again, but he kept his appointment the next morning and told his story. He had been in the employ of the house for twenty years, and when it failed thought he would have no difficulty in securing other employment. But he found himself with no resources and no chance of employment."

"The sensation of being turned out of doors, of being without friends, and of being hungry, affected him strangely, and, noticing my Grand Army button, as I went into the restaurant, he decided to lay his case before me. In his desperate mood my suggestion struck him as being much better than suicide. I secured him employment the next day on trial, and he did so well that he was regularly engaged the next week. In six months he came to my office looking so much better that I did not recognize him. He said the jeweler of the broken window had told him that I paid a bill of \$70 for replacing the glass, and he had come to repay the money."

"He said he had a good position and was abundantly able to pay the bill; that he was indebted to me for the position and for the general bracing up he received in following my advice, and that he wanted to be a comrade in good standing. Then it came out that he had seen service in the same brigade as myself, and he recalled an exploit in which he and some of my own regiment had been engaged—to their credit. I understood then the reckless, devil-may-care spirit of the fellow who threw a stone through a window on my advice.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

## First Badge of the G.