

The CONVICT COUNTRY

or, FIGHTING for a MILLION

BY CHARLES MORRIS BUTLER

Author of "The Revenge of Pierre," "A Tenement Tragedy," "Annie, Etc." Copyright, 1905, by Charles Morris Butler.

CHAPTER XII.

The Journey to the Convict Country.

We left our friends Lang and Denver in company with Regan and Golden, traveling toward the West. Upon arriving at St. Paul, which was reached as Golden supposed, without being detected, the group was reinforced by another gang of female domestics of about the shade of intelligence of those already being taken to the country, and embarked on board one of the large Mississippi steamers on its journey down the river. At St. Louis the already large crowd was further added to by a curious quartet; one was a celebrated pickpocket, called "Limp Jim," and his "stone," "Pocketbook Pete," who were in company with two women of questionable character, "Dizzy Lill," a tumbled-down variety actress, and "French Fannie," a reperin for a concert saloon.

It was not Golden's wish to travel in company with such a large gang of crooks and thus court capture, but in this he was not a free agent. However, the vessel had been chartered for the gang's exclusive use, and the more people carried the better for the colony. Jim Denver, in the character of a stowaway, managed to secrete himself on board the boat, but at the junction of the Arkansas and the Mississippi, fearing that Regan and Golden would discover his identity and being aware by this time of the probable situation of the country, parted company with Lang and left the boat.

The party threw off all restraint when once the vessel began to ply the Arkansas. There was no one on board now but the emigrants to the Convict Country. Our German girls had by this time, if they had not before, learned their fate, which was to be married off, even against their wills, to the several farmers who supplied the city with edibles. This to them was no great misfortune. They

were to find homes. This was to them compensation enough and they made themselves quite happy.

Louis Lang seems to be out of place in this group. He is unlike any other individual in the gang. A passenger paying his way into the city. There had been just as foolish men as he appears brought into the city before, who, for fancied security had paid over their all, and awoke to find that their past was but a dream, and a future of toil and slavery still ahead of them. As we know Lang, we know he expects to reap some benefit from the expenditures of his fortune (supposed to have been stolen from Jim Denver). Before his eyes were the terrible chances he was taking. Time and time again had his life passed in review before him (like the brief survey of a drowning man) and he realized that he was rushing on to almost certain doom. He had constantly in mind these thoughts: riches or death! Life (to him) was not worth the living unless he obtained wealth and fame, even if he had to enter the very jaws of death to accomplish his purpose. To look at him no one would suppose him an extraordinary youth; he is as much an ordinary mortal as can well be conceived, yet he is a little different. He sings and dances, plays upon the mouth organ and tells funny stories, even the watchful and sober Golden has to laugh at his wit, and each of his German cousins is in love with him.

The journey is uneventful up to the navigable source of the river, where the vessel was abandoned. The party forms a pack train and proceeds overland. Here the party was met by a guard of ten rough border men, and as many prairie schooners with six big strapping mules attached to each wagon. Lang, Regan and Golden, and the other male passengers were furnished with bronchos to ride, while the women folks were placed in the wagons. The whole outfit were now furnished with defensive weapons, as they were traveling over a dangerous portion of the continent where might made right and where it was worse than folly to be caught napping with anything on their persons worth stealing either by desperadoes or Indians. It was just four weeks after the time of leaving Chicago that the party set out boldly across the plains. None but convicts' wagons have ever passed over the route taken, for they are now in the "Bad Lands," and unless fully protected their lives will pay the penalty of their rashness. It is an eighteen day's journey from Umrinia to the Convict City by wagon (25 miles a day), but in three days 108 miles are made uninterruptedly.

On the third day the train was overtaken by a severe storm—a "north-easter," accompanied by sleet and hail, lasting for over a day. It took fully three days to rest up, and during that time they were sighted by a roving band of Indians who were out after a herd of stampeded cattle.

Louis Lang conducted himself nobly in the fight which ensued. The attack by the Indians was made by night. The train had been on the move up till ten o'clock at night. Just after forming a solid circle, for protection at night, and while all was in confusion over preparing supper, while the guards were busy with the tethering of mules and rubbing down of stock, the charge of the Indians came. The chief scout of the train, Cowboy Charlie, accompanied by Lang, was viewing the surrounding country from the ridge, preparatory to mapping out the next day's march, when he caught a glimpse of moving forms in the woods on one side of the train. It was this fact alone that saved the train from total annihilation. It took the scout but a moment to warn his colleagues of their impending danger. The wagons were huddled more closely together, the women sheltered behind an impromptu barricade of boxes in the center, and the mules securely picketed as far from danger as possible. The charge was not made immediately, but the Indians waited for the moon to pass behind a cloud, so the boys were somewhat prepared for them. Where a confusion reigned a moment since, ominous silence now held sway. Desperate men, used to frontier life, upon one knee in a half-sitting posture, with rifles resting upon the spokes of the wagons and their revolvers handy, listened for the signal of attack. Cool and collected, every one was waiting for the inevitable.

All was darkness for a moment, then the charge came! Now all seemed confusion; the women screamed; the mules brayed; the Indians yelled; the actual defenders alone were silent. With grim determination painted on every face, the emigrants awaited the attack and were not caught asleep! At last there came the discharge of arms—and yells of more unearthly sounds, and when the moon again

burst out from behind the clouds the first skirmish was over, and all but the dead were out of sight.

Two or three braves, more daring than the rest, in the first mad rush, had leaped to the front, and tomahawks in hand, had managed to break into the circle. One was met by Bowie Bill; one by Cowboy Charlie, and the third, a young chief, by Lang. Long Rope, the chief, was out for scalps, and had singled out Lang as the easiest man to dispose of, and thus break into the enclosure. But Long Rope was mistaken.

Louis Lang was not taken unawares, though unused to border warfare. After firing one volley from his repeater he laid it down before him and was upon his feet just as he saw a form leap out from the darkness upon him. Louis was armed with that terrible instrument called a "detective's dirk" an instrument made in the shape of a policeman's billy and used much as a sandbag, and by pressing a spring through the head of the billy protrudes a shining steel blade, which can be used as a knife. This is a very dangerous weapon, being both a Bowie knife and a club at the same time. Long Rope expected to run his hand against the barrel of a gun, and tomahawk in hand, expected to cleave the owner's skull in twain. But in this he was mistaken. In the darkness the Indian ran quite unexpectedly into the arms of our friend.

If Long Rope had succeeded in accomplishing his purpose of besting Lang, the game would have been won. Knife in hand, the chief would have stamped the mules; confusion would have reigned supreme; the women perhaps have been trampled to death beneath the hoofs of the infuriated and half-tamed animals; the men to save the train would have had to devote some attention to capturing the horses, and that would have been enough to have made them lose the day in an encounter such as they were in.

However, Lang was no "tenderfoot," even if he had been brought up in the city. As he felt the earth far as the chief sprang toward him, he reached out his arm and grasped his foe, at the same time dealing him a blow with his billy. If Lang could have seen his foe in the first place, the chief would never have moved again. As it was, the blow did not stop the rush of the chief, simply surprised him as the blow landed only upon the shoulders. For a moment Lang and the Indian fought hand to hand. Lang held the Indian's right hand with his left; the Indian held Lang's in the same manner, and they swayed back and forward, each striving his utmost to get the best of his antagonist.

During the time of this struggle a second charge was made upon the train, and the moon uncovering itself, a second and third volley was fired by the emigrants, with considerable accuracy, which completely routed the

Indians. Bowie Bill had dispatched his antagonist, and had propped the body up before him as a shield, while calmly meeting the second charge. Cowboy Charley had gone to his last account, nevertheless he had succeeded in finishing his slayer. His knife, plunged with the strength of a dying man, was found embedded in the heart of his enemy.

When the repulse had been successfully accomplished the border men turned in time to see the end of the struggle between Lang and Long Rope. Lang had succeeded in freeing himself from the grasp of his antagonist, and by a herculean sweep of his arm had planted his trusty blade in the breast of the chief, ending the fray, becoming conqueror in the most desperate encounter. The Indians, now without a leader, made a few feints, then abandoned the fight, furnishing victory for the whites with but slight loss, considering.

Circumstances made Louis the lion of the hour. His was the play before the grand stand. Others may have done more to merit approbation, but his was the act seen. After everything had been made snug and comfortable for the night, Louis was fettered to his heart's content. He had longed for just such a chance as this to prove his skill in an emergency and the test was to his credit. It made his reputation.

"You're a handy man with a killing tool," said Bowie Bill, as he patted our hero upon the shoulder. "I kinder thought you was a tenderfoot, but I see you know how to handle yourself!"

"You can bet your bottom dollar on that, old sport!" said Louis, in bragadoocio. "I done him up brown."

"Yes, done it neatly," said the border man.

"He robbed his bank as easily," said Golden proudly. Golden was a little fearful of the responsibility he had taken upon himself in bringing Lang along, but now he was satisfied with the result. Louis had gained the hearty good will of these desperate men by his bravery, and it is bravery, if anything, that all men admire in men.

French Fannie came over and embraced Louis. "You are a duck of a fighter," she said. And as Limpy Jim approached, she continued. "And if I was not 'Pete's flam,' I'd stick tighter 'n glue to you. See?"

"Thanks," replied Louis, "you do me proud!"

Then Dizzy Lill said that she would sing and dance for him on the morrow. This was quite a concession on her part, as Louis had been trying to get her to do this very thing for him, but had thus far failed.

"I'm your huckleberry," he said. To himself he allowed himself to admit that at last he had the bull by the horns, and was on the highway to the accomplishing of his intentions. (To be continued.)

THE LINE HE DREW.

Professor Had Answer Ready for Inquiring Sophomore.

Prof. "Bill" Bailey's recent visit to New York recalls a story that is told at his expense by a prominent sophomore at Yale.

About a month ago, when everybody was getting his spring clothes, the professor noted with great annoyance that the attendance at one of his classes was falling off rapidly, due to "illness." On looking up the college records he found that there were more absentees from that one class than there were names on the sick list of the entire sophomore class. A general rounding-up followed, and as a result the attendance once more became normal.

The next week, however, fate ironically decreed that the professor himself should be indisposed, and thereby prevented from attending his classes. The student in question called on his instructor one afternoon, and after a little general conversation, for the professor is a "prince of good fellows," and very popular with the entire university, the young man looked at him as he lay there and said with a twinkle in his eye:

"I say, professor, just where do you draw the line on this sick business?"

"Bill" looked keenly at him for a moment, then appreciating the humor of the situation, snapped back with his ever-ready wit: "Oh, I draw—I draw the clothes line!"—New York Times.

PROMISE WAS TO LIVE ONE.

Circumstance Raised Obstacle to Matrimonial Project.

Mayor Weaver, of the awakened city of Philadelphia, was talking to a reporter about a very astute and wily politician.

"It is difficult," said the mayor, "to get this man to do anything he doesn't want to do. Cornered, he advances argument after argument against the course you desire to pursue. He begins with weak arguments. You think you've got him. But just as victory appears assured he puts forth a final argument that is insuperable, a final argument that floors you thoroughly."

"The fellow is like the fickle sailor of the old romance. This sailor was strong, handsome and gay. The girls liked him, and he, I fear, liked the girls. The following conversation, one moonlight night in the tropics, passed between him and a young woman:

"Then, Jack, when shall we be married?"

"But I promised my wife, sweetheart, that I would never marry a second time."

"The young girl, beautiful in the flattering moonlight, murmured: "Would you cast me off for the sake of a promise to a dead woman?"

"But she isn't dead yet," said the fickle sailor.

Breaking Up a Nevada Saloon.

They were exchanging the gossip of the mining camps of Nevada.

"Did you hear," said the fellow with the diamond scarfpin in his sweater, "how they did up Sullivan over in Kawich?"

"Really?"

"Yep, Sullivan's scion at Kawich is busted flatter than the bank at Goldfield? You haven't been over to Kawich, have you? It's forty-five miles out in the wilderness, and water, when there is any in camp, is worth its weight in radium. Well, a fellow went into Sullivan's the other day with seven friends, and just out of pure curiosity they all ordered water."

BETTER THAN MULES

CHINESE COOLIES TRAVEL FAR WITH HEAVY LOADS.

Their Cheerfulness and Endurance Under Hard Labor Calls Forth Admiration of British Traveler—Need Little Food and Less Sleep.

Wheelbarrows are used to a great extent in China for the transportation for long distances of passengers and freight. Lieut. Col. C. C. Manifold of the British army writes as follows of the wheelbarrow men in the upper Yangtze provinces: "The plain of Suicho is as densely populated as any part of China and a great trade in locally manufactured cloth is carried on from its neighborhood and sent all over the country. The only transport used, until the railway or a navigable affluent of the Han river is reached, is the wheelbarrow. There is no doubt that a good cart road could be easily made, but whether it is due to the fact that draft animals are not bred in any numbers or that from time immemorial wheelbarrows have been used, these latter alone hold the field and no attempt has been made to construct roads suitable for any other form of wheeled vehicle. These wheelbarrows, however, are by no means to be despised as a means of transport. Hundreds of them were passed by us, each loaded with at least five and often seven or eight of the bales of narrow cotton cloth made in the surrounding districts, each of these bales weighing about seventeen pounds. One man would wheel a barrow carrying 350 pounds and make his twelve to twenty miles a day, more than double the amount which the government pack mule is allowed to carry in India, and the same human beast of burden will go on making the journey cheerfully day in and day out, without any halts for lameness or sore backs.

"My admiration for the Chinese coolie is unbounded; there is no man in the world who does the same patient, laborious work so cheerfully. Farther on, when we came to the mountainous watershed country, where only back loads are possible, I became still more confirmed in this opinion. Often after a long and weary day with the surveyors, in the course of which we would have climbed up from 5,000 to 8,000 feet, and made several such ascents and descents, having, perhaps, been on the move from 5 in the morning until dusk, we would come in, rather inclined to pat ourselves on the back at the thought of what a hard day's work we had successfully accomplished, only to find that the Chinese coolies had made as good time, each man having covered nearly as much ground with a load of 100 pounds on his back. This done on a few bowls of rice and bean curd, for a wage of less than niencepe (18 cents).

"Then, on their arrival, one might have thought that the coolies would have been glad to rest; but if, as was often the case where accommodation was limited, I slept in the same house, I found to my annoyance that to retire to bed was far from their thoughts and that my sleep was often disturbed by the noise they made as they sat up gambling long past midnight and yet they would be again on the road before 6 in the morning, having risen to make up their loads and get their food cooked before 5 o'clock."

On the Right Track.

Dr. Weir Mitchell relates the sad case of a young woman from Baltimore affecting literary fads who attended a reception given by a Philadelphia woman in honor of a well-known writer.

The young woman from Baltimore was introduced to the whole roomful of more or less celebrated individuals, and it seemed to be a circumstance on which she prided herself that she could remember an amazing proportion of the names of those present. When, however, she came to say farewell to a certain rather distinguished young man, who, by the way, was probably the only person there who was not of a "literary" turn, she remarked:

"Do you know, I've remembered very nearly all the names, but when it comes to yours I must confess that I'm entirely at sea."

"With a smile the young man replied: "Then you're not far from wrong. My name is Atwater."—New York Times.

His Return.

HE.

Ah, do you remember those halcyon days when I went barefooted and you made mud pies?

On many strange scenes have I centered my gaze.

Since you had me good-bye with hot tears in your eyes—

I have roamed o'er the world, all its wonders I've scanned—

And here, where we parted, I'm holding your hand!

SHE.

Ah, yes, I remember the pies and the feet.

There was one of your toes which was minus a nail—

It seems as if yesterday there in the street

You left me a child, in short dresses and frock.

And I wept, as you say, when you bade me good-bye.

And—will you forgive me for wondering why?

Hoodoo on June 1.

In deference to a superstition which has prevailed for many years, there was on June 1 a complete cessation of work at Lord Penrhyn's slate quarries at Bethesda, in Wales, where 4,000 men are employed. The superstition owes its origin to a succession of fatal accidents on Ascension day. Some years ago the management succeeded in inducing the workmen to remain at their posts, but, strange to relate, a fatal accident occurred.

Bet on San Francisco's Growth.

In 1900 Andrea Starboro, a wealthy citizen of San Francisco, bet another, P. C. Rossi, a dinner of twenty covers at \$10 each that in twenty-five years San Francisco will have a population of 1,000,000. Arrangements have been made for the payment of the bet by the heirs of the better if necessary.

Improved Typewriter.

German newspapers speak of a new typewriting machine which prints syllables and short words instead of single letters, attains much greater speed than others, and it is claimed, will revolutionize the art of typewriting.



LITTLE EXPLOSIONS

No Letup There.
Tess—Miss Hussle is in for everything. She's constantly doing something."
Jess—"Yes, but the one thing she is doing most constantly she won't admit."
Tess—"What's that?"
Jess—"Growing older."

Made Himself So.
Neerbye—I called to see Brassy last evening, but he wasn't at home.
Subbubs—Oh! yes he was.
Neerbye—I tell you he wasn't.
Subbubs—But I tell you he was—very much at home. He monopolized the hammock on our porch all evening."

Let Him Retire.
"I see that Jimmy Britt wants to retire from the prize ring."
"Well, who is holding him?"

Surprised.
"Ella gets her beautiful complexion from her mother."
"Is her mother a chemist?"

Made a Clean Sweep.
"Alas!" said the old horse. "There's no hope for me now; I see my finish."
"What's the trouble?" asked the Jersey cow.
"The new breakfast foods. My master tackled oats first; then he changed to hay; then fodder and only this morning I saw him looking yearningly at the only patch of green grass left in the meadow."

Modesty.
Whizzer—"I hear that you nearly killed a man this morning."
Goggles—"Yes; but I wouldn't have done it if he hadn't been just around a curve."
Whizzer—"Cut out the modesty, old man. If you don't boost yourself no one else will do it."



A HARD BLOW.
Her Brother—Sister took up for you last night alright. Pop said you were a fool.
Her Suiitor—What did she say?
Her Brother—Sister said that he shouldn't judge a man by his looks.

She Was Worried.
"Charles asked me the all-important question last night," said Clara.
"What—a proposal?"
"Oh, heavens, no. He wanted to know if I would like the use of his auto while he was away this summer."
"And what about the other question?"
"Oh, that will come; but I felt uncertain about it."

Little Daughter Looks Ahead.
Mamma—My dear, what are you doing?
Little daughter—aking a dolly for my little sister.
Mamma—But you haven't any little sister.
Little daughter—No, not yet, but Sally Stuckup has just got one, and I know we always get everything the Stuckups do.—Illustrated Bits.

A Plea for Mercy.
"You've been fishing," said the stern parent. "Come with me, sir; I'm going to punish you."
"I hope, father," said the boy, "that you will make the punishment fit the crime."
"That's what I propose to do, sir."
"Well, father, I only got one nibble. That's all the crime amounted to."

Easily Satisfied.
"Stop and think, young man. Why do you drink that stuff? Remember, that water is the best beverage—it is a priceless drink."
"Sure, that's all right. But I'm not extravagant in my tastes—the best is too fine for me. All I want is a drop of something good."—Cleveland Leader.

Following Instructions.
"Now," said the magistrate, "you must testify to what you know; no hearsay evidence."
"Yes, sir," replied the female witness.
"Now, then, what is your age?"
"I—er—won't tell you. I have only hearsay evidence on that point."

Describing Her.
"But she goes to church regularly."
"Of course. I don't deny that."
"Well, then, in the matter of her religious duties she's a close observer."
"Say, rather a 'clothes observer.' She simply goes to observe the clothes of the other women."

Difficult Navigation.
Church—Aerial navigation is still difficult, is it not?
Gotham—Why, yes. We had a very hard shower the other night when I was at a roof-garden show and the navigation was something fierce!—Yonkers Statesman.

An Actor Knows.
Miss Sue Brette—"Some people say 'chest' and others say 'trunk'; what's the difference, do you suppose?"
Poote Lighte—"Well, you see, a chest is something you throw out and a trunk is something you let down."

Hard Luck.
"Funnysmith seems to be feeling grouchy these days."
"Yes; they settled that life insurance squabble before he got a chance to work off a Jekyl and Hyde gag."

Sense Not Needed.
Poet—I'm sure I don't know what to do with this poem. The editor says it's utter stush and even my friends pronounce it nonsense.
Friend—Well, I'll tell you—why don't you have it set to music?

Went Deep.
"Is Brown's wife one of those deep feeling women?"
"I guess so; he says he can never keep any change in his pockets."—Milwaukee Sentinel.



A MISUNDERSTANDING.
Hiram—Maybe our boy Reuben will turn out to be a preacher. He's great on the Bible the President of his college wrote me.
Mrs. Hiram—Whatever did he write?
Hiram—He says for one thing that he's noticed Reuben is much inclined to be bibulous.

Breaking it to Mother.
"I wish you wouldn't encourage that young man, my dear. He is ridiculously poor."
"But he has expectations."
"What expectations?"
"My little fortune, mamma dear."

Alimony.
"Binks is getting a divorce on the installment plan."
"On the installment plan?"
"Yes—he has to pay a sum of money every month in order to keep it."

Slim Eating.
"Do you think there is any difference in a man's weight before he eats his meal and afterwards?" asked the boarding house lady.
"Well, not if he gets the meal here," replied the thin boarder.

The One Thing Needed.
"But it is no use to argue with a woman."
"Oh, yes, it is; only, instead of using logical arguments you should use convincing ones."