

The CONVICT COUNTRY: or, FIGHTING for a MILLION

BY CHARLES MORRIS BUTLER
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CHAPTER XXII.

Lang's Fight for Life.

Lang's late arrival, and his action in throwing himself into the arena after the gates were all but closed against him, won him a storm of applause. His forlorn condition excited pity, and his manly bearing through all created many friends.

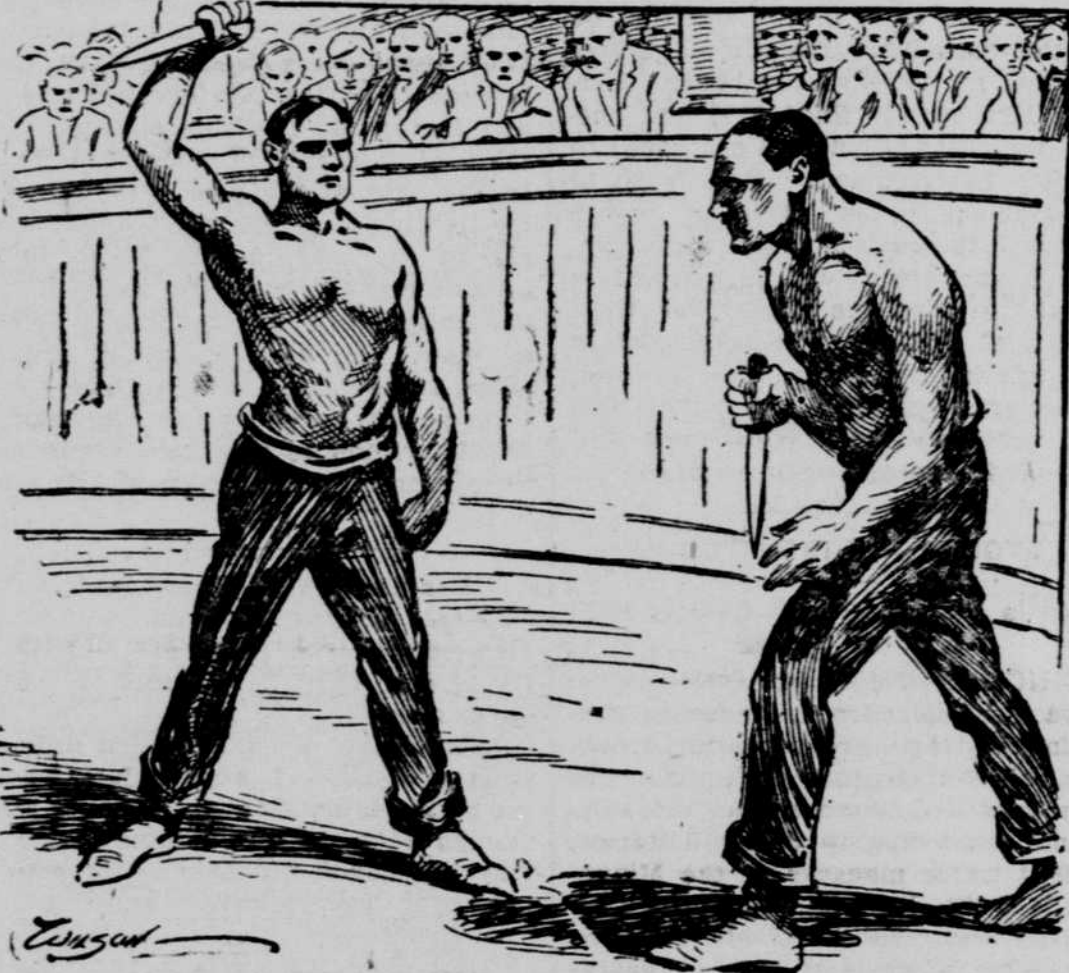
Schiller commanded silence. "Why do you appear before us in that garb?" he demanded fiercely, at a loss for words.

"This is the condition you left me in last night!" calmly replied our hero.

"Why did you not arrive here before?" The second question was more to be regretted than the first. "It is after eight o'clock and by the laws of our country you have forfeited your life to the city without one chance!"

There was deathlike stillness preceding Lang's retort.

"I was unconscious from the wounds received last night while protecting my wife from the insults you heaped upon her!" Schiller tried to stop Lang from answering, but Lang ignored the king entirely. "You sent my friends away; I was alone; in fact I have never been warned that the penalty incurred would have been exacted so soon. I would never have known it, had not my wife found me out and warned me of the danger of not being here on time. I left the house before eight with plenty of time to arrive here. But I was set upon by two hell-hounds who attempted to hinder me from getting here, and I had to 'lay them out,' before I was allowed to come here at all! I may be late; it is not fault of yours that I am not! and I appeal to the people for my chance! I am weak from the loss of blood and in no condition to fight for my life to-night, but all I ask is my chance! A chance is all I want!" appealing to the people.



"It is my turn now!" he cried.

Wilson was the first to echo the cry, "A chance! a chance!" and soon the cry became unanimous.

The first part of the battle was won—the chance was granted him! The surroundings grew brighter—Golden arrived; a few moments afterwards, Rogers appeared.

"Prepare the contestants for the battle!" ordered the king. There was no doubt in Schiller's mind but that Whalen would conquer our hero. To conquer meant to kill!

Largo, who was also master of ceremonies, assisted Whalen to disrobe, leaving him, as later he did Lang, only clothed in pantaloons and stockings, naked from the waist up. Each was then furnished with a heavy horn-handled bowie-knife with a shining blade over six inches long.

At precisely 8:35 o'clock the combatants, knives in hand, and foot to foot, at a given signal from Schiller sprang at one another!

Louis was cool and collected. He had no fear of the consequences—had he not an arm of steel, and had he not taken lessons in dueling in expectancy of just such a trial as this!

There was a clash of steel against steel! Parry, thrust, parry, thrust; first one, then the other struck at his opponent. It was a brilliant exhibition, and as each antagonist gained the point of vantage he was applauded loudly by his adherents.

While the few preliminary passes with the knives were being indulged in, as a test, before the actual struggle took place, Louis said to Whalen: "Are you afraid to die?"

"I am not going to die!" said the burly desperado, making an extra savage lunge at our hero.

"One of us is about to die!" said Louis, parrying the lunge. "It may be me—I am prepared. What have you done to merit death?"

"Eloped with another man's wife," was the unconcerned reply. "But in being condemned to fight a duel with you, it will only be play for me to kill you! And by that I will gain my freedom, and the woman! I killed the husband last week!"

Here was a devil-may-care sort of a fellow, a model desperado, who valued human life as of very little consequence.

"Well," said Louis, grimly, "you deserve death; I only hope you get your deserts!"

"Oh! don't hesitate to do your share of the slaughtering!" said Whalen. "Get all the fun out of me that you can. I haven't begun to cut and slash yet! And before we get through with one another, I mean to give the people of Paradise (for I see you know a little something about dueling with the bowie) an exhibition of sharp knife-work!"

"You underrate my powers," said Louis, beginning to warm up with the

exercise, and throwing his left arm behind him to more firmly support his fighting arm.

"I am only sorry I am not fighting a man!" said Whalen, sneeringly, "there is not much credit to be gained by killing a kid—and a wounded one at that!"

"You will find your match to-night, Whalen," said Louis, meaningly, who was confident that he had sized up his opponent's weak points. "And though I don't want to kill you in cold blood I suppose I will have to do so to save my own life!"

Whalen had been in many tight places before and had little fear of the consequences. They both became silent and watchful, waiting for an opening, attempting to tire the other. This test of strength had not tired Louis by any means, in fact the banter had partially cleared the cobwebs from his brain. At last Louis feigned weariness little by little. Whalen grew bolder, and a sinister smile played around his lips.

He thought he had Louis at his mercy, and the very bravado of his nature came to the surface as he forced (or thought he did) Louis from the center of the ring more toward the side occupied by Schiller and the influential sightseers. There was a very dramatic ring to his voice as Whalen called the attention of the populace to Lang's supposed condition:

"I have met him and he is mine! I mean to mark him up. First I will cut a cross upon his breast! Next I will cut off an ear! Then mutilate his face!"

Pearl Huntington burst into tears. Poor girl, she really believed that her lover's time had come. Golden and Rogers looked at each other significantly as if questioning the propriety of stopping or attempting to stop, the cruel sport—but they thought better of it, knowing that that course would but hurt the cause of Lang.

his life. No generous action on the part of Louis would stay the murderous hand that was raised against him.

As Louis stooped to pick up his knife, Whalen bounded to his feet and sprang toward him! There was a hush of deathlike silence; no voice was raised in warning to aid Lang. Schiller, who saw the action of Whalen, expected to see our hero annihilated before a voice or hand could be raised to save him. A piercing scream! Louis divined the cause, turned without picking up his knife and grappled with his assailant! If Louis had stopped to regain his knife, or if he had taken but one step forward his life would have paid the penalty. But he saw the act of Whalen, and in his stooping position, like the tackler in the football game, while the would-be assassin was stretched to his full height expecting to cover space, tackled his opponent around the other easily wrenched the knife from his almost benumbed hand, turning the blade against the assassin's breast. Once before had a scene of this kind been enacted in our hero's life, and as before the aggressor fell pierced to the heart with his own weapon!

Peal upon peal of applause rang out at the outcome of the struggle. The semi-barbarous people of brutal instinct cheered the victor!

With his arms folded across his breast in questioning attitude, Lang stood before the king, waiting to be pronounced free. The outcome had been so unexpected that Schiller seemed to be devoid of speech.

(To be continued.)

MR. GRADGRIND'S GOOD ACTIONS.

Providence Enabled Him to Do Three in a Bunch.

Gradgrind, hurrying from his office, was about to step into his automobile when a poor woman accosted him.

"Oh, sir," she said, "will you lend me a dollar?"

The millionaire's hard features did not soften.

"What for?" he asked harshly.

"To get my baby christened with," she answered. "My new baby, sir; and \$1 is the fee."

"Gradgrind produced a \$5 bill. 'Here, take this,' he said, 'and bring the change to my office in an hour.'"

The woman's wan face brightened.

"How good you are," she said, "to trust me, sir."

"There, there," said Gradgrind. "Don't betray my trust, that's all."

And in his huge automobile he tore smoothly away.

An hour later, sure enough, his \$4 in change awaited him in his office.

"My dear," said Gradgrind virtuously to his wife that night, "I did three good actions to-day."

"What were they," Mrs. Gradgrind asked.

"In the first place," said the plutocrat, "I was the instrument, through Providence, of helping a poor woman. In the second place I aided in adding a new member to our church. Thirdly, I got rid of a bad \$5 bill."

FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS.

Symptoms of Childish Ill Worth Immediate Attention.

Change of disposition in children is often wrongly interpreted and both parents and teachers have recourse to various means to secure improvement, such as reprimanding, forcing, depriving of food, etc., although conditions grow worse instead of improving.

A child, for example, enjoying heretofore good health, all at once undergoes a radical change; he becomes slow in his actions, takes more time than usual in eating, dressing, studying; his intellectual faculties become less vivid, memory fails, he lacks attention. The condition is diagnosed as laziness and bodily punishment is inflicted. A child like this is certainly ill, and coercive training will not improve the condition, but strictly medical attention. The subject is certainly important, from a practical standpoint, as the future of such a patient depends upon the early recognition of the pathologic condition. It should be borne in mind by every parent or teacher. Carefulness, laughter, vivaciousness, are all attributes of youth, and if these characteristic features of childhood are rapidly replaced by lassitude and impairment of intelligence, the condition is undoubtedly morbid.—American Medicine.

Both Had Forethought.

Returning from his first European trip, which he called a "tower," the late unique Texas congressman, known in Washington as "Howdy" Martin, told of a French butcher who was apparently on his deathbed. He gave his wife minute directions about conducting the business and concluded his farewell address with the earnest warning:

"As soon as department will allow, and society will approve, after I am dead and buried, you must marry 'Gene, my shop boy. He is an honest fellow, and in the butcher business success cannot be continued without a man to constantly look after its details. So, you must marry 'Gene; and he will make a good husband for you, Eloise."

"Yes, my love, and he is also handsome. We have already been talking it over; so you need not worry about us."—Los Angeles Times.

Naval Progress.

"Having discovered a projectile that will pierce any armor," said the seeker for information, "what will the next step be?"

"To find an armor that no projectile will pierce," answered the naval expert.

"And then?"

"We must find a projectile that will pierce any armor."—Washington Star.

Change of View.

Giffie—"A month ago Jinks was abusing his uncle for an old skintint. To-day I overheard him praising that relative's notable thrift and frugality."

Spinks—"That's natural enough. His uncle died last week and Jinks got all his money."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Daily Motto.

The man who sows wild oats ought not to complain about the harvest.—Detroit Free Press

LITTLE EXPLOSIONS

Tender.

"No, madam," said the houseowner, "I cannot let you have the house on account of the little boy."

"But," explained the woman, "we don't want to move in until after the Fourth of July, and then we won't have the boy."

This, of course, had not occurred to the houseowner.

A Saving Clause.

"Like Ma Made for Pa.

"Our John's wife," said John's father, "is too easy with him. She's too ready to make excuses for him."

"Well," remarked John's mother, significantly, "John can't say truthfully that they're not 'like mother used to make.'"

Where Wealth Takes Second Place.

"There is one thing about our waving democracy that greatly pleases me."

"And what is that?"

"It is the fact that when it comes to giving a girl a seat in a street car the pretty girl has the call over the merely rich girl every time."

Insult Piled on Injury.

"Why am I gloomy?" demanded the undesirable admirer, to whom she had given the cut direct. "Isn't it enough to make one gloomy to be cut by the one he loves best?"

"The idea!" exclaimed the heartless girl, "I didn't even know that you shaved yourself."

Not to Be Disturbed.

Query—"You're got a Morris chair at your house, I suppose.

Henpeck—Oh, yes.

Query—"They're great, I think. Don't you enjoy it?"

Henpeck—I do, when I get a chance, but Henrietta's cat usually gets there before me.

He Stayed Up.

Father—Robert, is it not about time that little boys were in bed?

Robert (aged 6, carelessly glancing at his watch)—Really, father, I must be excused from venturing an opinion. It is a subject in which I have little interest; I have no little boys, you know.

It Was the Tone of Voice.

"What's Maude crying about now?"

"Oh, she asked her husband if he would marry again in case she died and he declared that he wouldn't."

"Well, nothing wrong about that."

"No; but you should have heard him say it."

Not Quite Finished.

"Greathead's a friend of mine. He's invented a flying machine you know."

"Indeed! Has he given it a practical test yet?"

"Oh, no; he's still alive."—Catholic Standard.

An Important Exception.

"Helen has a rather unpleasant disposition, hasn't she?"

"Well, I've never known her to say a good word for any of her acquaintances, with one exception."

"And that was?"

"Herself."

Caught.

"Now, my dear sir," said Dr. Fox, "I can't cure you unless you promise to do everything I tell you."

"All right," said Skinner, "I promise."

"Good! Now, first of all, pay me my last year's bill."

Well, Hardly.

Magistrate—You say you stole the crabs because your family was starving; yet I have been given to understand that you keep three dogs.

Prisoner—Yes, your Honor, sir; but I couldn't ask my family to eat dog meat, sir.

Shun the Eucalyptus.

No worm or insect is ever found upon the eucalyptus tree, nor in the earth penetrated by its roots.

Six Doctors Failed.

South Bend, Ind., Sept. 25th (Special)—After suffering from Kidney Disease for three years; after taking treatment, from six different doctors without getting relief, Mr. J. O. Laudeman of this place found not only relief but a speedy and complete cure in Dodd's Kidney Pills. Speaking of his cure Mr. Laudeman says:

"Yes, I suffered from Kidney Trouble for three years and tried six doctors to no good. Then I took just two boxes of Dodd's Kidney Pills and they not only cured my kidneys, but gave me better health in general. Of course I recommended Dodd's Kidney Pills to others and I know a number now who are using them with good results."

Mr. Laudeman's case is not an exception. Thousands give similar experiences. For there never yet was a case of Kidney Trouble from Backache to Bright's Disease that Dodd's Kidney Pills could not cure. They are the only remedy that ever cured Bright's Disease.

In a fox's run at Ulverscroft, Leicestershire, was recently found a vixen and two cubs, thirty-two rabbits, pheasants, partridges and a wild duck.

Home Visitors' Excursion to the middle states. The Wabash R. R. will place on sale November 30th, very low round trip rates to many points in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Western Pennsylvania, New York and West Virginia.

This will be a splendid opportunity for those who wish to visit their old homes and friends, to take advantage of, after the Harvest days are over.

The Wabash between Omaha and St. Louis has just recently been rock ballasted, and new heavy steel rails laid. All trains consist of the latest up-to-date equipment, thus making it a pleasure to travel.

For all information, such as rates, maps, time-tables, etc., call at Wabash City Office, 1601 Farnam St., or address, HARRY E. MOORES, G. A. P. D. WABASH, Omaha, Neb.

France Leads in Theaters.

France leads the countries of Europe in theaters, having 384.

Those Who Have Tried It will use no other. Defiance Cold Water Starch has no equal in Quantity or Quality—18 oz. for 10 cents. Other brands contain only 12 oz.

Seen in many lands—gangplanks.

Reverence gives repose.

Grounds.

"Mr. Slopoy, did I understand you to say you believed my coffee to be half chicory?"

"I believe," replied Mr. Slopoy, peering into his cup, "I have grounds for such a belief."—Houston Post.

Explained.

"This paper says there are at least 10,000 stray dogs on the streets of Constantinople.

"Yes, so I've heard. You see the Mohammedan religion does not allow its devotees to eat sausage."

The Usual Way.

Dyer—Gotrox has a magnificent estate, but there are a lot of tumble down cottages in the vicinity that detract from it.

Ryer—That's where his poor relations live.—Judge.

His Proposition.

She—"I will become engaged to you for two weeks."

He—"Make it a week. I don't think my money will last longer than that."—Judge.

PROFITABLE.

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Doctor—My friend, you must profit by advice. Patient—I would if I got two dollars a visit for giving it, like you do.

A Brave Man.

"Do you see that little man over there in the blue suit?"

"Yes, what about him?"

"Bravest man in town."

"He doesn't look it. What has he done?"

"Had the courage to sit on the porch in his shirt sleeves on one of the most fashionable streets in the city."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Frank Admission.

"I used your hair remover and now look at me."

"Did you take it internally or externally?"

"Can it be used either way?"

"Certainly. It doesn't make a hair's difference which way you use it."

Not Too Hard.

"Rather hard to lose your daughter, eh?" said the guest at the wedding.

"No," replied the bride's father; "it did look as if it was going to be hard at one time, but she finally landed this fellow just as we were giving up all hope."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Suspicious.

"But, Rosa, if you have no talent for painting, why not take up chemistry?"

"Impossible, papa. The other members of the Emancipated club would think I was trying to learn cooking in a roundabout way."—Meggendorfer Blatter.

Misunderstood.

She—"I told you I was going to paint those porch chairs to-day and I asked you to go over to our neighbor's and borrow some paint."

He—"Yes, and I went over and asked for some paint."

"Well, where is it?"

"Oh, the woman over there said they had no paint that would go with your face."