

# Colonel TODHUNTER of Missouri

By RIPLEY D. SAUNDERS

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## CHAPTER XII.

### A Strange Cry From Black Lips.

LD Governor Leslie hurried to Nineveh from St. Louis the day following Colonel Strickland's own return home. He came in response to an urgent telegraphic summons from the candidate, whom he found in close conference with Major Gentry Dryden, one of Missouri's most famous criminal lawyers. Colonel Todhunter was with them.

"We'll bring Tom through all right, governor," said Colonel Strickland, although his worn and worried face belied the brave words, "but in the meantime I thought it best to get you down here so that I could straighten myself out in the matter of my campaign for the nomination for governor with as little delay as possible."

"What do you mean to do?" asked old Leslie.

"I mean to withdraw from the race," replied Colonel Strickland. "I can't run, carrying this weight of Tom's trouble. It's got me beat right now. I won't ask my friends to make a hopeless fight."

"You'll stay right where you are," said Governor Leslie. "You're not responsible for Tom's reckless folly, and the Democratic voters in Missouri won't hold you responsible."

"The Yancey crowd will make it appear that the killing of Stam Tucker was a political murder," Colonel Strickland answered. "They're doing it already. Their newspapers are handling the case along that line. They've published the story of the quarrel between Tom and Stam Tucker the night we opened my campaign here in Nineveh and of their fight in the barroom the next day. They point out that old Eph Tucker is my bitterest political enemy and that he and his son were working tooth and nail for Stephen K. Yancey and that this political feud has resulted in the assassination of Eph Tucker's son by my son. It's a pretty black story handled that way, and it'll do me all sorts of harm throughout the state."

"They can't ignore the facts in the case," retorted Governor Leslie. "In the first place, as I understand it, your son himself doesn't know that it was he who shot Stam Tucker. He's bound to plead not guilty, and the prosecution's got to prove the fact of guilt. In the second place, the real reason for deadly trouble between Tom and Stam Tucker was the story told by that Doggett girl and its bearing upon their rivalry for the hand of Miss Mary Todhunter. The Doggett story puts an entirely new light on the feud between the two boys."

"Not the way the Yancey organs are presenting it," said Colonel Strickland. "It only serves to intensify the original trouble and to make a thrilling 'murder story' with what they call 'romantic' as well as political trimmings. They're featuring it on that basis, and they're going to get Steve Yancey nominated just that way."

"I thought this was what you wanted to see me about," commented old Governor Leslie, "so I had a conference with the St. Louis men who worked with me to put you in the race. But before I tell you any more about that I want to ask you just one question, Bill Strickland."

A moment of silence followed these words. Colonel Strickland held Governor Leslie's eyes with his own inquiringly.

"Do you want your son to be convicted of the murder of Stamford Tucker?" asked Governor Leslie.

"I don't want to get back here before then 'less'n I could be of some use to Tom Strickland," said Colonel Todhunter. "There won't be no trouble 'less'n some o' the Yancey crowd object to a man's talkin' straight from the shoulder. We've just about got time now for a lightnin' flash on the stump, takin' it for granted that I'm expected to reach all parts of the state, so the sooner I start the better."

"You start tomorrow, Colonel Todhunter," responded old Governor Leslie. "We've already made the speaking appointments for you, and I've got the list of towns and dates right here with me. It's a devilish big contract, sir, and you won't get back here until just a few days before the primary elections."

"I don't want to get back here before then 'less'n I could be of some use to Tom Strickland," said Colonel Todhunter, a sudden huskiness in his throat as his eyes fell on Colonel Bill Strickland's haggard face. "The main thing I want is to give the Yancey crowd a fight they wasn't expectin'."

"I'll make Mizzoarah too hot to hold 'em!"



"Good God, man!" cried Colonel Strickland. "How can you ask such a thing?"

Governor Leslie turned to Major Gentry Dryden. "Dryden," he queried, "what would be the effect of Colonel Strickland's withdrawal from the campaign at this time?"

"It would be taken as a confession of his belief in his son's guilt. It would be the worst blow possible to the defense right now. I should strongly protest against Colonel Strickland's withdrawal."

"There you are!" exclaimed old Leslie, turning to the candidate. "That was exactly the view I took of it—you've got to consider your son's interests above all else, Strickland. And now I'll tell you what your St. Louis backers said. They authorized me to refuse to accept your withdrawal as a candidate for the Democratic nomination for governor of Missouri. Aside from whatever personal regard they may have for you, they believe that, even as matters now stand, you're the strongest man in the state and that you've still got a better fighting chance to win than any other man would have. You've got to stay in, Strickland."

"But, good Lord, man, how can I fight to any purpose?" asked Colonel Strickland piteously. "I must deal fairly with you, so I tell you right here and now that compared with Tom's safety I don't care what becomes of my chances in the campaign. I'm going to stay right here and move heaven and earth to clear my son of the awful charge against him, and by the time his trial's ended the campaign will be over too."

"Not quite," answered Governor Leslie, unmoved. "But if that was the case it wouldn't make any difference. God knows you're justified in sticking to Tom through thick and thin, to the finish and regardless of all other demands upon you. I wouldn't wipe my feet on you if you were capable of doing anything else. So don't you worry about that. We're going to do all the fighting for you from now on, and we've picked on Colonel Todhunter here as the best man to lead what you seem disposed to call a forlorn hope."

"Now you're talkin', suh!" broke in Colonel Todhunter, his grim old face alight with the lust of battle. "I won't ask anything better'n to get out on the stump and skin 'em alive. They're crowdin' old Bill Strickland to go with because they think they've got him fowl, and Bill's friends have got to stand by him closer'n ever. Turn me loose on 'em, Leslie. I'll make Mizzoarah too hot to hold 'em!"

Old Governor Leslie smiled ominous-ly. "We've made arrangements to that end, Todhunter," he replied. "I knew just how you'd feel about it. We want you to tell the Democrats of Missouri just exactly why we wouldn't let Strickland withdraw, just exactly why he himself won't do any more campaigning for the nomination and just exactly why and where the Yancey newspapers and the Yancey speakers are distorting the truth of this case against Tom Strickland to make it look like a political assassination. And it's going to be pretty hot work, Todhunter. You may have more than one personal difficulty on your hands before you get through with it."

"We needn't talk about that feature of it, Governor Leslie," said Colonel Todhunter. "There won't be no trouble 'less'n some o' the Yancey crowd object to a man's talkin' straight from the shoulder. We've just about got time now for a lightnin' flash on the stump, takin' it for granted that I'm expected to reach all parts of the state, so the sooner I start the better."

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suh, and I'll be eternally condemned if we ain't a-goin' to do it too!"

Wherefore the following morning Colonel Todhunter started out in the lead of the forlorn hope that was to make the last stand for Colonel Bill Strickland in Missouri.

It proved to be a soul wearying battle, full of baffling chagrin and disappointment. On the very eve of the trial of Tom Strickland for the killing of Stamford Tucker, Colonel Todhunter returned to Nineveh. He was met by Colonel Strickland, whose face seemed now not only haggard, but hopeless.

"They're pushin' us pretty hard, Bill," said Colonel Todhunter. "I've fought 'em the best I know how, but Steve Yancey's crowd is workin' Tom's case against us better'n I thought was possible among folks that know you like our Mizzoarah Democrats know you, suh. It's enough to make a dog sick to see how easy people can be turned against a man when he's in trouble. I'll just be double whipsawed if it ain't!"

"That's all right, Thurs," replied the other listlessly. "Don't you go worryin' yourself any longer about my campaign. I knew I was beat the minute they got Tom's trouble to use as a weapon against me. But what hurts me most now, Thurs, is that Governor Leslie is findin' it impossible to raise that campaign fund we counted on. I'm licked, and I've hurt you mighty bad at the same time."

But Colonel Todhunter fired up at this. "I'll be shot full o' holes if you're licked—yet!" he exclaimed. "And I ain't hurt any till you hear me holler, suh. Don't you misunderstand me, Bill Strickland. I acknowledge that we've got a hard row to hoe, but that ain't no sign we ain't a-goin' to hoe it. Anyway, by Godfrey, we'll make an everlastin' good stagger at it. The next best thing to livin' victorious is dyin' game, suh!"

Colonel Strickland shook his head. "There's mighty little fight left in me," he spoke sadly.

"I'll do the fightin'," retorted Colonel Todhunter. Then he looked his friend anxiously in the face. "How's Tom's case goin'?" he asked.

"It looks mighty black," answered the other. "It's going to be a political trial, bitter as sin, because the old gang counts on Tom's conviction to drive me out of Missouri politics. The evidence in the case is all against the boy. The courtroom will be packed with Yancey heeleders—there's no way to prevent it—and they'll make every demonstration possible to influence the jury. And every man connected with the court wears the gang's collar, even to Judge Pittman himself. If we ask for a change of venue we'll jump from the frying pan into the fire, because my enemies have got the whiphand anywhere we turn. Old fellow, I believe they'll have my boy's life before they get through!" The speaker's voice broke in spite of him.

Colonel Todhunter's face grew hard and grim. "No, they won't!" he said stubbornly. "They can't do it. They ain't got nothin' against Tom but circumstantial evidence, and it surely ought to be mighty hard here in Nineveh to convict a boy like Tom, well known and comin' of a family that's lived here so long, on circumstantial evidence alone. They'll try to do it, Bill, but they can't. Tom'll get the benefit of the doubt."

There was something deeply pathetic in this eager clutching at the one remaining strand of hope. The two old friends were now making their way toward the jail to see Tom. Suddenly they came face to face with Mrs. Todhunter and Mary.

The girl advanced directly toward them with outstretched hand, her mother following.

"Howdy, Colonel Strickland!" she said, her voice trembling a little. "You are on your way to visit Tom, aren't you?"

"Yes, Miss Mary," replied Tom's father quietly. "The trial begins tomorrow, and I only left him to meet Colonel Todhunter, and he's returning with me."

"Colonel Strickland," said Mary resolutely, though her voice shook more than ever, "I want you to carry a message to Tom from me."

There was a curious little pause. Mrs. Todhunter laid her hand gently on her daughter's arm, but the girl moved away from the touch, not harshly, yet as if she felt it to be a protest.

"I want you to give Tom my love, Colonel Strickland," she said. "And I want you to tell him, from me, that I don't believe one word of these awful charges against him—not one word—either about Stam Tucker or about that girl!"

And as she spoke Mary Todhunter burst out crying. She dabbed piteously at her face with her handkerchief, unable to control her emotions. Then, sobbing, she turned away with her mother, no other word being spoken.

"God bless that girl of yours, Thurs!" spoke Colonel Strickland, his own voice unsteady. "She's good grit clear through—and, somehow, she gives me more courage than I've had for many a day. They haven't got Tom yet—and they'll have the fight of their lives before they do get him!"

"That's the talk!" cried Colonel Todhunter. "Face 'em that way, Bill, and we'll make 'em strain their souls for every inch they try to gain! They got to do it—by the good God up yonder in their skies, Bill, they got to do it!"

But the little flicker of encouragement caused by a girl's brave words soon died away in the somber shadow of Tom Strickland's prison. It was two very weary and gray faced old men who came away from the prisoner an hour later and parted at the jail's front, each to go to his own home.

That evening Colonel Todhunter went by appointment to the Strickland home for a conference with Tom's father and

Major Gentry Dryden, leading counsel for the defense. It was nearly midnight when he returned to his own home.

He found Aunt Mirandy Ransom there. The old negro rose, trembling, at sight of him, her black hands fluttering toward him in instinctive gladness of welcome.

"Bress Gawd, yo' done come!" she cried. "I been eatin' my ole heart out waitin' fo' yo', suh! Kunn' Todhunter, yo' got some mighty quick an' ticklish wuk cut out fo' yo' ef yo' gwine save Mars' Tom Strickland's life—das hucome I hyar now to tell yo' erbout it, suh!"

Through the after midnight blackness that was soon to change into the gray of a cloud swept down a fugitive man and woman fled.

Side by side they sat in a light road wagon drawn by a rawboned horse whose long and swift stride told of its selection for this special service.

The man, gaunt, swarthy, with keen black eyes that gleamed alertly from under the wide brim of a weather beaten sombrero, seemed ill content, however, with the progress being made.

Almost incessantly he urged the horse to increased effort, now and then cursing outright in the grip of a feverish impatience.

Save when he leaned forward for this urging the man sat slouching and limp, the mark of the vagrant Ishmael on every line of body and limb.

The woman was tense, rigid, her face set always to the front. It was framed in by a shawl thrown over her head and drawn about her shoulders. Once or twice her glance went furtively to the man beside her. Fear and distrust were in her eyes. Her hands were tightly clasped together as they lay in her lap.

Deep woods stretched on either side of the road. Their stillness was profound. The enveloping gloom seemed as of the grave itself. The woman shuddered and drew her shawl closer.

"Lord ha' mercy!" she spoke. "I can't do it, Jesse—I can't! It's worse'n murder—worse'n what's been done a'ready!"

The man laid a cruel lash across his horse's flanks. "You fool!" he muttered. "It's high time I bring you away! You lovesick fool!"

The girl's eyes flashed sullenly. "That word's a lie!" she retorted. "Ain't I goin' with you? And would I be a-doin' that if I was lovesick for somebody else? It's a lie, and you know it!"

The man laughed. "If you had stayed where you was you'd h' blabbed the whole thing out and you'd be in jail now 'stead o' him."

Suddenly the woman threw her arms upward. "I'll hant me to my dyin' day!" she cried. "I ought to ha' told the truth! I wish I had! I wish I had! It couldn't be no worse'n it is now!"

"I say that it could!" savagely returned the man. "You keep your mouth shut. I got all I can do to save us as it is, 'thout'n you waggin' your tongue. You keep your mouth shut!"

The woman passed her hands over her face miserably.

The man again slouched down in his seat. Now and then his moody glance turned apprehensively to his companion.

"I've done a whole lot for your sake, Lottie-May," he spoke at last. "I could ha' got away long ago. I'm takin' big chances on your account. And you don't seem to care."

Lottie-May Doggett's face grew shamed. "Yes, I do, Jesse," she exclaimed. "I know just what you're doin' for me. The only show I got is to go with you. And you musn't think I don't appreciate it." Her hands fluttered piteously at her throat.

"My God!" she cried, her voice breaking in anguish. "Tom Strickland's goin' to be hung! He's goin' to be hung! They ain't nothin' on earth can save him!"

Far in the east the gray dawn was breaking.

"D—n Tom Strickland!" cursed the man. "I'll be glad when he is hung! You've always been in love with him!"

"He's goin' to be hung!" repeated the girl. "And they ain't no way to save him now!"

An evil mockery leaped into the man's face. "Oh, yes, there's a way," he retorted. "You go back there to that trial and confess the truth. You're the only one on God's earth that can save him. Ain't that so?"

The girl's face whitened. As the man spoke they had turned from the pike road and were going deeper into the woods. A scant light of day had come. The faces of the two were haggard and worn.

"Yes, I'm the only one!" cried Lottie-May Doggett suddenly. "And that's what I'd do now if I had the chance—tell the whole truth. I ain't thinkin' no more about me. I ain't thinkin' no more about you. I'm thinkin' about Tom Strickland!"

A forlorn and dilapidated cabin was revealed in a barren little opening ahead. The man laughed aloud as he saw it.

"You'll have to take it out in thinkin', Lottie-May!" he exclaimed triumphantly. "I've got you now where you are safe. When you and me leave that shack tonight there'll be no more talk o' you savin' Tom Strickland. We'll be headed straight for Oklahoma then, and nothin' can stop us!"

The girl's eyes rested on the miserable little cabin. An ominous light was in them. The man drew up at the hut and assisted his companion from the wagon. He pushed open a creaking door. The cabin's interior showed black and forbidding.

"That's where we stay till night time," he said. "I'll take the horse and wagon round where they won't be seen if anybody happens to come along. And I don't want no more o' your foolishness, Lottie-May!"

The girl started as if struck. "Don't talk to me like that!" she cried. "I ain't your nigger yet. I ain't got to do anything I don't feel like doin'. You're takin' too much for granted, Jesse!"

The man seemed to lose all patience at this. Grasping the girl by the shoulders he forced her into the hut. Then he disappeared. A moment later he returned.

The girl was standing against the wall. Her face was buried in her arms. Sobs shook her body. The man closed the door behind him.

(To Be Continued.)

## IN PLATTSMOUTH FORTY YEARS AGO

Items of Interest to Old and New Residents of City Which Were New Forty Years Ago.

Five hundred Russians passed through our city on Friday and Saturday last, seeking homes in the western part of our state. May good luck go with them.

Bates is fixing himself up a new house on the corner of Sixth and Vine. He first raised her, and then boarded her, and now he's new topping her, and when it's all done he'll have as nice a home as anybody's folks.

We paid a visit to J. A. Connor's wheat warehouse, or Side Hill elevator, last week. All the bins were full and sacks lie piled up for rods around the shanty. The old fanning mill was rattling away and ear after ear backed up empty and was hauled off full. Such lively times makes a body think all the wheat in creation is coming into Plattsmouth, but it is only a very small portion of what the great state of Nebraska will produce this year.

Fifty-five times, and a good time; one of the most enjoyable of innocent sprees, turned up in Plattsmouth on Monday evening last, the occasion being the arrival of the fifty-fifth birthday of Mrs. Chaplain Wright, and the thirty-eighth of their married life. It was called a surprise party, and was truly a very surprising party to the kindly and genial chaplain and his lady. On some pretense they were sent off visiting that afternoon, and the two daughters of the house, Mrs. Wise and Mrs. French, at once prepared to celebrate their mother's birthday in the happiest manner possible. A number of pleasant guests were invited in the evening, and the house and grounds were brilliantly illuminated. After all was ready, the marriage feast duly prepared, and the guests assembled, Mrs. Wise went over to the neighbor's where the unsuspecting couple were visiting and told a little exaggeration—not amounting to a white lie even—about some people from a distance coming over to see the chaplain, and they "had better come home." They came; but as they turned the corner and the bright lights from the grounds and house struck them full in the face, Mrs. Wright exclaimed: "Why, father, the house is on fire, hurry home!" the old gentleman, wiser in his day, but no nearer the truth, said: "These young folks are up to some mischief, and we must hurry home and see what it is." When they arrived at the house and fifty outstretched hands grasped theirs in welcome, and fifty hearty, loving neighbors' voices bid them god speed, thus far, and many happy days yet in their long career, the scene was almost too much for both. For once the parson lost his wits and could only say: "You rogues, you rogues, I give it up, you've beat me," while Mrs. Wright declared that happy as they had been in the main, she had no desire to see 55 more years in this hard world of ours. A bountiful supper and many a good-humored jest and reminiscence finished an evening of pleasure, without a shade of alloy.

Nat Brown and John Shannon both came out in a spic-span new suit of clothes last week—drab brown with purple spots on 'em. The clothes were made in New York by S. Bloom & Co., from imported short horn, Melton, English Petersham Merino wool goods and it took three whole

pieces to get 'em all out of. As the suits came home from the shops they were a little too large, but by repeated weightings during the shower of last week, they shrank so much that Nat had to trade his off to John for a short horn pony, and John gave his to a 16-year-old haymaker from the Weeping Water blue grass region for an unweaned half-breed Texas calf. Brown starts east in a few days to buy out the factory, and has chartered the B. & M. R. R. to transport the machinery, hands and all, out to Coon Hesel's hollow, where we shall soon have a woolen mill and clothing manufactory at wholesale, running in first rate order. It is a unique and entirely new mill. You just chuck the sheep, goats or flax in one end and a suit of clothes, a hat, or overalls comes out of the other. Go west, young man, and see this wonderful piece of machinery.

A child of Mr. H. A. Austin was buried on Wednesday afternoon, and the child of Mr. Hoffman, the blacksmith, died on the same day.

Jerry Sexton wants to challenge anyone to row a skiff race, one mile or two miles, for \$25 or \$50 a side. Now, boys, here's your chance—only one week's training. Give Jerry a chance.

I. N. Corey of Weeping Water mouth, down in the gable end of Cass county, has been up to see us. Corey is a pretty good fellow—been a printer, teaches school and hoes his own row—or row—just as you like—with any man.

Sheriff Cutler informs us that a lad named Lorin Smith, living in Stove Creek precinct, was shot and instantly killed on Friday last. Augustus Davis, another boy of 15 years did the shooting by accident. They were playing "tag." Jimmy Smith, a 6-year-old brother of the deceased boy, was the only witness.

The brick work on the second story of the new school building was completed on Saturday last, and Mr. Dexter, the contractor, informs us he will have finished all the brick work on the whole building in three weeks more. When this building is completed Plattsmouth can boast of one of the finest buildings in the state.

The following named persons and people were duly installed in their respective offices at the Pleasant Ridge Grange week before last: D. D. Andrus, master; John M. Craig, overseer; N. Holmes, lecturer; Jas. Bennett, steward; Jas. M. Craig, assistant steward; A. Hull, chaplain; P. T. Beaver, treasurer; J. C. Gilmour, secretary; M. Meisinger, gatekeeper; Mrs. D. D. Andrus, coress; Mrs. G. Swift, pomona; Miss Allie Hull, flora; Miss E. J. Craig, lady assistant steward. Regular meetings on second and fourth Saturdays in the month.

We have struck coal, it's here in Cass county. A big chunk lies on our table now, and it's hard, and black, and coaly, and smuts our papers, and blacks people's fingers that come in and feel of it, and then if they rub their noses it blacks them, too, and we know it is coal. Mr. J. Mc F. Hagood brought to this office a piece of coal of four or five pounds weight, good fair coal, mined in Cass county, on the Missouri river, ten miles below here, and there are oceans of it, viz: An eight-inch vein, twenty-three feet from the ground surface, and growing thicker every minute. No man knows how wide it is nor how far it goes, and this story is all true; and if you don't believe it come up to our office and smell of the coal.

We publish this week the settlement of the vexatious litigation between our county and the B. & M. R. Co. in Nebraska. The railroad surrenders up to the county \$100,000 in bonds and \$50,000 in coupons now due. Cass county allows the other \$100,000 to stand, and pays the interest to be levied for 1874 of \$10,000, thus starting Cass county on her way with only a bonded debt of \$100,000 with interest to run from the year 1874. At the time of the maturity of these bonds, in 1889, there would be to pay, the principle, \$200,000, with interest to pay (or paid as the case might be) of \$350,000. If the county should now be compelled to pay all interest due, up to and including the year 1874, it would be the neat sum of \$60,000. Our county commissioners, setting as the fiscal agents of the county, have acted on this matter only as prudent men could act.

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Sheriff Cutler informs us that a lad named Lorin Smith, living in Stove Creek precinct, was shot and instantly killed on Friday last. Augustus Davis, another boy of 15 years did the shooting by accident. They were playing "tag." Jimmy Smith, a 6-year-old brother of the deceased boy, was the only witness.

The brick work on the second story of the new school building was completed on Saturday last, and Mr. Dexter, the contractor, informs us he will have finished all the brick work on the whole building in three weeks more. When this building is completed Plattsmouth can boast of one of the finest buildings in the state.

The following named persons and people were duly installed in their respective offices at the Pleasant Ridge Grange week before last: D. D. Andrus, master; John M. Craig, overseer; N. Holmes, lecturer; Jas. Bennett, steward; Jas. M. Craig, assistant steward; A. Hull, chaplain; P. T. Beaver, treasurer; J. C. Gilmour, secretary; M. Meisinger, gatekeeper; Mrs. D. D. Andrus, coress; Mrs. G. Swift, pomona; Miss Allie Hull, flora; Miss E. J. Craig, lady assistant steward. Regular meetings on second and fourth Saturdays in the month.

We have struck coal, it's here in Cass county. A big chunk lies on our table now, and it's hard, and black, and coaly, and smuts our papers, and blacks people's fingers that come in and feel of it, and then if they rub their noses it blacks them, too, and we know it is coal. Mr. J. Mc F. Hagood brought to this office a piece of coal of four or five pounds weight, good fair coal, mined in Cass county, on the Missouri river, ten miles below here, and there are oceans of it, viz: An eight-inch vein, twenty-three feet from the ground surface, and growing thicker every minute. No man knows how wide it is nor how far it goes, and this story is all true; and if you don't believe it come up to our office and smell of the coal.

We publish this week the settlement of the vexatious litigation between our county and the B. & M. R. Co. in Nebraska. The railroad surrenders up to the county \$100,000 in bonds and \$50,000 in coupons now due. Cass county allows the other \$100,000 to stand, and pays the interest to be levied for 1874 of \$10,000, thus starting Cass county on her way with only a bonded debt of \$100,000 with interest to run from the year 1874. At the time of the maturity of these bonds, in 1889,