

The CONVICT COUNTRY: or: FIGHTING for a MILLION

BY CHARLES MORRIS BUTLER
Author of "The Revenge of Pierre," "A Tempest Tossed," "Anita," Etc.
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CHAPTER VI.

The Forged Check.

Lang, after leaving Regan, wended his way to the residence of Jim Denver.

Being admitted, not a word was spoken until the twain were safe from eavesdroppers in the detective's private sleeping apartments.

"Well?" queried Denver, taking a seat upon the edge of the bed, preparing himself to listen to Lang's story.

"I have made my boast," said Louis, flushed with excitement now that the time for real action had arrived, "that I could rob a bank in the morning. How am I to do it?"

"Forgery! my boy, forgery!" cried the detective, slapping Lang on the back. "You have the nerve to pass a forged check—a forged check that is not forged?"

"I am at a loss to understand you as yet."

"It is easy enough," was Denver's reply, seating himself at his writing desk and filling out a check from his book. "You arrive at my office in the morning, timing yourself so that you are there while Regan is in my room. I will then fill out a check for you in this manner," showing his protegee a check for ten dollars, made out in his usual open, sprawling style.

"An expert penman could easily 'raise' this check if he wanted to," continued Denver, writing another check, "and make it look like this new one," showing him a check for ten thousand dollars. "What's to hinder you from keeping this check for the ten thousand dollars? Nothing! I have the money in the bank, and the bank people will cash it if presented. In the morning after receiving your check for ten dollars, you show it to Jack and make some remark about 'raising' it. Then you go to your room

"I mean the blank one you stole."

"I understand you; and I repeat, I will cash it."

"For how much?" Regan asked.

"Ten thousand 'plunks,'" whispered Lang.

"I'll bet you a hundred you don't."

"You're betting on the wrong horse—unless you mean to betray me?"

"Have no fear of me," Regan interposed. "I don't forget my compact of last night; anything you can get out of Denver will be peaches and cream to me. I hate the man!"

"I'll take your bet, Jack; I'll need your hundred; you'll be my meat." There was no time for hesitancy now.

"It's a go, then?"

"Sure! I'm going to my room now and shall either 'raise' this old one or write a new one." Then as a parting bluff: "Come on down to my room with me and see me turn the trick."

"I can't," replied the detective, "I must be on the lookout for G—."

"You can show me the check, or the money if you get it."

"Oh, I'll get it, you needn't be alarmed. I haven't been practicing on his signature for a year for nothing," cried Louis.

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"Rather a large sum of money?" queried the cashier, as he carefully scrutinized the paper. "How will you have it, a transfer to your account, or currency?"

"You may give me bills of large

denomination," said Louis, composedly.

"It is an unusually large sum of money to pay out on a check to a comparative stranger—to any one but the owner of the money." The cashier was satisfied of the genuineness of the note, but was sparing for time, not feeling like taking upon his shoulders the responsibility of the possibility of mistake. Finally he made a peculiar signal. "You will excuse me a moment," he said, "and you may as well step into the private office."

Lang looked around. When he came in every door was open, and there was not a janitor nor uniformed officer in sight outside the railings. Now, as if by magic, all the outside doors were closed, and a man whom Louis took to be a janitor, but who was a detective, was making a bluff at dusting off the windowsills and picking up stray papers from the floor. Looking through the glass door leading into the street, Louis saw a policeman standing in rather an unusual position, with one hand grasping tightly his club, while the other was hid beneath his coat tails.

The bank president was seated at his desk. "Mr. Smith, I believe?" he asked pleasantly.

"That's my name," answered Lang. "You are, or appear to be, in Mr. Denver's confidence?"

"I am."

"May I ask why Mr. Denver does not draw this check himself?"

"He is not at liberty to-day."

"Is it important that you receive it immediately?"

"It is, and in money, not a check."

"Did Mr. Denver hint anything to you about the possibility of your being unable to draw that sum of money?"

"I am in no mood for parleying; why do you wish to converse with me?"

"Simply to keep you busy pending the arrival of Mr. Denver," said the president after a slight pause.

Louis colored up. Here was a new complication whether Denver was true or not. Had Denver prepared for this emergency? "You will not be able to find Mr. Denver," replied Louis with as much a show of calmness as he could command.

"That remains to be seen."

The conversation lagged. The banker grew restless. Louis fidgeted rather uneasily in his chair; but grew calmer as the moments dragged, and

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"You have concluded to cash the check?" he asked with a sigh of relief.

The president intercepted the package. "I have decided not to cash it," he said rather bluntly.

"Why?" demanded Lang, resolved to force the issue.

"The check is a forgery!"

"All is lost!" thought Lang, but he did not flinch from the ordeal. "What makes you think so?" he asked while he tried to smile.

The banker hesitated; Lang noticed it. "You are overstepping your bounds!" he exclaimed. "And I shall sue you for any damage that may result from my not getting this money when I need it!"

"You can go any time you want to," added the president harshly, "I am not detaining you, and you should thank your lucky stars that I am so lenient with you."

"Very well," said Lang, a heavy feeling at his heart, realizing that he had lost his game "You mean that you are not willing to run the risk of arresting me? However we'll let that go. Give me the check."

"We cannot do that," said the banker decidedly.

"By what right do you presume to keep both the draft and the money? You go too far. If you retain the draft, what evidence have I that you will not swear that I have received the money? You have no right to expect me to trust you, if you do not trust me, and you must either arrest me as a forger or pay me the money."

"We are recognized as responsible agents," responded the banker, attempting to appease Lang. "And have a right to protect ourselves as well as Mr. Denver."

"I shall remain here until I receive either one thing or the other," said Lang firmly. He seated himself very coolly in the chair he had vacated upon the arrival of the cashier with the money.

The president cast an inquiring glance toward the cashier; the cashier returned his superior's look, and then both gazed intently at Lang. The young man had stood their test admirably; they were convinced of the genuineness of the note, yet were loath to cash it. While the officers were debating as to the policy of turning over the money, a rap was given upon the door, and the "janitor" entered.

"Detective Regan on the outside, sir. Shall I admit him?"

(To be continued.)

DEBUT OF TINY HEIRESS.

She Was Flower Girl at a Fashionable Church Wedding.

Little Katherine Mackay, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence H. Mackay, arrayed in a dainty frock composed of lace which was said by the women present to be worth \$70 a yard and carrying a big basket of pink sweet peas, made what may be ascribed as her first appearance in public recently by acting as flower girl, along with the equally diminutive and similarly attired Kate Haven, at the wedding of Miss Marian Haven to Forsyth Wickes at St. Bartholomew's, says the New York American.

Miss Mackay's dress was of cream chiffon, with a finely cut yoke. On the shoulders were small capes of rose point, falling over short, puff sleeves, finished with a ruffle of lace. The belt was of lace and the skirt made with groups of fine tucks and had a ruffle of lace.

A large bow of white embroidered and lace-trimmed sash ribbon was fastened at the back of the belt; small white sandals were worn with white silk stockings. Instead of gloves, she wore white silk mittens.

Whisky as Is Whisky.

A man in Cincinnati bought a barrel of whisky thirty-five years ago and kept it in a third-story dry room, well ventilated, and in all the intervening period used only one pint for testing. There remain to-day only one and four-fifths gallon of the original thirty-four, the rest being lost through evaporation. A celebrated physician says: "One small drink of this whisky contains more electricity and rejuvenating properties than any medicine that can be prescribed." As to quality, connoisseurs agree that this whisky, considering its pure distillation and great age, is the finest in the world, and that no King or Emperor, the Rothschilds, Morgans, Vanderbilts, Astors, Carnegies, Beits or Clarks, with all their enormous wealth placing at their will all the luxuries of the world, can command such a careful estimate of the cost of storage and a computation of interest and insurance for thirty-five years prove the cost of this whisky at the present time to be \$489.01 a gallon.

Large and Roomy.

A violent windstorm which traveled over Berks county some time back saw fit to take with it an old shed wherein a certain blacksmith was wont to ply his trade. The blacksmith's determination to continue business in the open, pending the construction of a new building, caused not a little amusement among the neighboring farmers. One of these, driving along a day or two later, saw limping toward him a horse, led by a disconsolate looking individual, who, on drawing near, explained:

"My horse has lost a shoe. Can you tell me where I can find a blacksmith shop?"

"You are in the shop now," replied the other, facetiously, "but the anvil is about two miles down the road."—Philadelphia Ledger.

MYSTERY OF MONEY

SUBJECT ABOUT WHICH LITTLE IS REALLY KNOWN.

Proper Methods of Acquiring It, or Its Wisest Use, Are Matters Upon Which the Wisest Differ—Has No Power to Confer Happiness.

For centuries the economists have been disputing about the definition and offices of money, says the Wall Street Journal. There are almost as many different theories of money as there are schools in theology. There seems to be an immense difficulty in comprehending just what money is, what it does in facilitating the exchanges of the world and what is its influence upon prices. Here is the most practical and substantial thing in the world, an article which is in universal use, and which is most eagerly sought after by people of every clime and race, and yet how little we know about it! Even now no one can tell exactly how much currency a country needs to carry on its business and how large should be the reserves of gold against the bank reserves. Even bankers, whose business all the time is to deal in money, as others deal in merchandise, are liable to become hopelessly confused in a discussion regarding the principles which underlie its use.

Strange to say, the confusion which attends an economic study of money, also attends any discussion of the ethics of money. All the philosophy in the world has not answered the question of how much money it is wise for a man to possess. How widely men differ—even our scholars and moral instructors—as to the proper methods of acquiring wealth. We even dispute as to the wisest use of money. We are not agreed as to the distribution of money in charity. It would seem as if the commonest, the most universal tool of man, was the one thing that plagued him the most.

But this is not all. Useful, indispensable as money is, there is nothing which is more constantly put to an evil use, or which is more likely to destroy the man who uses it. There is something about money which defiles nearly all who touch it. There are, indeed, some rare souls that are immune to its corrupting influence, but the great body of mankind are susceptible to its corroding power. Both lack and superfluity, both poverty and riches, seem to destroy the finer fibers of the soul. The individual who has the most chance of throwing off money's baneful influence is he who stands midway between superfluity and poverty.

Money is a microbe that poisons the blood and perverts the mind and heart of a man. No one is happy without it, and yet no one is really happy who possesses much of it. The more one gets the more he wants. Money getting becomes a passion. It fastens itself upon one like a habit. Even the opium eater is not more in control of a demon than one who has got the "itch for money." He becomes a slave to the very thing which is intended to be his tool. The disease affects different people differently. Some it makes sordid, penurious, mean. Others it leads to lavish display and extravagance. Some use it for mere luxury. Others enjoy it for its power. Nearly all, in one way or another, are changed and often polluted by the possessions of wealth.

California.

I dreamed a dream of beauty,
Of dewy orange bloom,
Of waving plumes of palms and gusts
Of subtle, sweet perfume;

Of lilies and rare roses
That glistened bright between
Rich banks of brilliant tropic blooms
That I had never seen.

I dreamed about the ocean
And mountains close beside,
Their purple mantles bordered by
The silver of the tides.

I dreamed of holy brethren,
Of gentle word and deed,
Who journeyed over half the world
To sow the Lord's good seed.

To toll till church and cloister
Arose for Christ's dear sake,
Though o'er the thresholds, in my dream,
I saw gold pieces break.

And lo, as I was dreaming,
I journeyed swiftly through
Three days and nights, then I awoke
And found my dreams come true!

—Evelene Stein, in Sunset Magazine.

Carnegie's Old Home Torn Down.

Another landmark of Pittsburg, one of the first houses in the city that Andrew Carnegie loved to call his home before the millions that have made him famous were his own, has passed away before the devastating act of the progressive house destroyer.

It is the old two story frame dwelling at the corner of Penn and Lang avenues, directly opposite the No. 16 fire engine house, in the heart of one of the most densely inhabited millionaire sections of the East End.

The work of demolishing the old house was begun last Tuesday. By Friday only the cellar remained, and even this will soon be torn away, as will the little knoll on which the old timbers rested.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

Brevity the Soul of Wit.

The anonymous writer who contributes to the Sunday Magazine, "Arrows Shot in the Air," tells us: "Emerson wrote a chapter and then tried to reduce it to a page. He wrestled with the page until he gathered its force into a paragraph. Then he did battle with the paragraph until its pith stood revealed in a sentence. This was told me by his friend, Justin Winsor, the accomplished librarian of Harvard university, who added that it explained the epigrammatic quality of Emerson's essays, and the abruptness as well as the thought-packed nature of his style."—Liverpool (Eng.) Mercury.

THE BOND BROKEN

NORWAY SEVERES TIES UNITING HER TO SWEDEN.

STORTHING TAKES INITIATIVE

Declaration of Independence and Sovereignty Set Forth—One of the Causes for Desire of Sweden and Norway to Separate Consular Systems.

CHRISTIANA—"Norway today is a fully independent and sovereign state."

This is the text of the editorials in the Norwegian newspapers and it reflects the spirit with which the people of Norway accept the action of the storthing when it proclaimed King Oscar no longer king of Norway.

King Oscar's refusal to sanction the bill passed by the storthing providing for a separate consular service for Norway culminated in the passage of a resolution by the storthing declaring the dissolution of the union of Sweden and Norway and that the king had ceased to act as king of Norway. Although the action was anticipated, it caused considerable excitement in this city on account of the anxiety as to what action the king would take.

The crisis became acute May 26, when his majesty, after three months' rest, during which the regency was confided to Crown Prince Gustave, resumed the reins of office. The council of state immediately submitted to him the consular bill, which he, May 28, refused to sanction, arguing that any action must receive the sanction of the mixed council. The Norwegian council of state thereupon resigned and the king refused to accept their resignation, as, in view of the state of public opinion, it was impossible to form a new government. Demonstrations were held throughout the country endorsing the action of the council of state.

One of the causes for the desire in Sweden and Norway for separate consular systems was the fact that Sweden is protectionist, and Norway is for free trade, and also because of Norway's more extensive sea trade and other divergencies of commercial interests.

At its meeting the storthing addressed a proclamation to the Norwegian people, in which is given a detailed account of the events preceding the passing of the resolution.

This proclamation concludes as follows: "The storthing hopes that the Norwegian people will succeed in living in peace and on good terms with all, and not the least with the Swedish people to whom we are linked by so many natural ties."

"The storthing is sure that the people will join with it and with government in maintaining the full independence of Norway and with firmness and dignified tranquility submit to the necessary sacrifices, and it is further sure that all subjects will fully respect all ordinances and prescriptions from the government."

"All officials, civil and military, must in every respect yield that obedience which the government has the right to claim according to the authority transferred to it by the storthing in the name of the people of Norway."

British Bank in Trouble.

LONDON—The bank of Glynn, Mills, Currie & Co. petitioned the courts to order the compulsory winding up of the International Bank of London. The petitioners are creditors for upward of \$1,250,000.

SAYS THE TAXES MUST BE COLLECTED

MUSKOGEE, I. T.—Mayor Fite has dismissed the charges against the Indian police arrested by the city authorities, charged with assault in closing the stores of merchants who refused to pay the tribal tax. There will be no further arrests. Inspector Wright received telegraphic instructions from Secretary Hitchcock to proceed with the collection of the taxes. Mr. Wright stated that all business houses where the tax is not paid will be closed.

CRISIS IN RUSSIA.

Czar Begins Reactionary Policy by Appointing Gen. Treppoff Dictator.

ST. PETERSBURG—Emperor Nicholas' ukase virtually creating Governor General Treppoff dictator has given rise to a mighty sensation. It is the imperial recognition of the crisis in the internal affairs of Russia and instinctively recalls the step taken by the emperor's grandfather, Alexander II, immediately after the attempt to blow up the winter palace in 1880, when he appointed a commission of public safety, headed by General Loris-Melikoff, except that the position of General Treppoff will be more analogous to that occupied by Loris-Melikoff, when later in the same year he was appointed minister of the interior, with full control of the police.

Names New Committeeman.

WASHINGTON—Postmaster General Cortelyou, acting chairman of the republican national committee, announced the appointment of Pearl Wright of New Orleans, as member of the republican national committee for Louisiana. Mr. Wright is a leading business man of New Orleans, prominent in republican councils of the state. Mr. Cortelyou says Mr. Wright was appointed not as a representative of any faction but in the belief that he would represent well all classes in a satisfactory way.

A STRIKE CRISIS

Many More Men May Become Involved.

CHICAGO—The teamsters' strike has reached the point where its further progress and its further increase is dependent upon the action taken by the members of the Chicago Team Owners' association. This organization has from the first declined to make deliveries to the boycotted houses and has constantly urged the teamsters to arbitrate the question of making such deliveries.

The teamsters have positively refused to deliver or receive goods, and now the last chance of securing any concessions from the teamsters having faded away, the members of the Team Owners' association must either decide to deliver goods or allow the teamsters to have their own way in the matter. Opinion among the members of the Team Owners' association is strongly divided and the result may be a split in its ranks. Many of the largest team owners in the city have announced that they are going to make deliveries.

A meeting of the organization will be held tomorrow night and the action taken at that time will largely determine the future scope of the strike. If the Team Owners' association decides to make deliveries and discharge all of its men who refuse to obey orders, the ranks of the strikers will be increased by about 8,000 men.

The strikers made another attempt to force a break in the ranks of the Employers' association. A committee called on Edward Hillman, proprietor of a large dry goods store, and asked him to arrange another conference between the teamsters and the employers. Mr. Hillman positively refused, saying that unless the strikers had some new proposition to offer it was useless to attempt to reach any agreement. Their present attitude he said was such as there could be no possible middle ground upon which the employers could meet them. This was the only attempt at adjusting the strike made and it is not probable that more efforts will be made for some time to come.

AMBASSADOR CONGER TO STAY IN MEXICO

MEXICO—Ambassador Conger put an end to the rumor circulated in American papers that he would remain here but six months, retiring to become a candidate for governor of Iowa. He denies this and says: "I have been repeatedly urged by my friends in Iowa to accept the nomination for governor, but I have persistently declined to do so. My views in the matter have not changed. I like the diplomatic service and prefer to serve my country in it. My appointment here is permanent so far as I know. It is subject to no other conditions than are attached to any other consular appointment."

RUSSIA SHOWS RESENTMENT

Bitter Newspaper Comment on Course of United States at Manila.

ST. PETERSBURG—The Russian papers, notably the Novoe Vremya and the Russ, the latter recently reflecting the views of the foreign office, display a great deal of resentment against the United States for enforcing the twenty-four hour rule in the case of the Russian cruisers at Manila. The Russ quotes the American neutrality regulations and contends that President Roosevelt, in applying the principle that only injuries received during a storm and not in battle can be repaired in American ports, not only narrows the American regulations, but infringes recognized principles of international law. This paper declares it has official warrant for the statement that representations have been made at Washington on the subject.

The Novoe Vremya is exceedingly sarcastic. After a slap at Great Britain for the alleged manner in which its vessels dogged the Russian fleet from the time it left Cronstadt and for trying to force all the powers to accept its interpretation of the rules of neutrality, the Novoe Vremya declares that President Roosevelt, to whom it refers as "Mr. Roosevelt," contaminated by England's example, arbitrarily interprets his own rules in a sense favorable to Japan, adding:

"Mr. Roosevelt takes full advantage of the fact that Russia is helpless and powerless to do more than protest. The Japanese minister is reported to have expressed gratitude to America for this act of impartiality, which is partial to Japan. We trust Mr. Roosevelt is satisfied with his success."

The admiralty, it can be stated, is reconciled to the internment of the three Russian cruisers at Manila, but opposes on principle the rule that warships injured in battle cannot repair their machinery and boilers in neutral ports. The officials add that friction over this minor question would be exceedingly unfortunate just at the time that President Roosevelt is assuming the delicate role of trying to bring the belligerents together.

Papers to Consolidate.

ST. LOUIS—The St. Louis Star and the St. Louis Chronicle, both afternoon papers, published announcements of their consolidation under the name of the Star-Chronicle. Negotiations were closed by which the consolidation goes into effect immediately, and the new corporation will be known as the Star-Chronicle Publishing company, with a capital stock of \$500,000. The Star-Chronicle, it is announced, will be an independent paper, and will be issued from the Star building.



"The check is a forgery!"

and make a bluff at writing and scatter a few scraps around the floor. When you are ready, pass the large check. It will appear like a forgery to Golden and Regan, at least, whether I honor the check or not."

"Then you are perfectly willing to trust me with ten thousand dollars of your money?" asked Louis rather proudly.

"I am satisfied to risk this sum of money to find out where the stronghold of these villains is. Knowing what you are going to do to-morrow, I can disguise myself and keep you and the party in sight, up to the very gates of the city we are looking for."

"I am glad to hear you say you will keep in sight," said Louis, "for I confess that I am a little bit shaky in regard to the outcome of the matter."

"I, too, am sad to-night for some reason or other," said Denver, laying his hands rather tenderly upon Louis' shoulders. "It seems to me as if we are to part for a long time—I hope it is not forever! I have become attached to you, and would be sorry indeed if I were leading you to your death or even disgrace."

"I believe in your friendship for me," replied Lang, as he grasped his patron's hand. "I am a better man, mentally, morally and physically for the knowing of you, and whatever befalls me, you can rest assured that it will be through no neglect of duty on your part."

"You won't be alone in your undertaking," said Jim, as if reassuring himself. "I have succeeded in interesting the general government in this matter—and when you need help you will get it. Be true to yourself and providence will protect you. But let the thought of sudden death be ever before you, you will court it in many ways. Weigh well every word and every action. I can say no more!" It was their farewell.

Regan was in the general office of the detective agency with Denver when Lang called in the morning. He saw Louis draw Denver into conversation, while slyly stealing a blank check from the open bank book lying on Denver's table, and saw Louis receive a check from Jim presumably for ten dollars.

Regan followed Lang into the hall. "What are you going to do with that check?" Regan asked.

"Cash it," answered Lang.

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