The CONVICT COUNTRY; or FIGHTING for a MILLION

By CHARLES MORRIS BUTLER.

Author of "The Revenge of Pierre," "A Tenement Tragedy," "Mark," Etc.

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CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.

"We can run no chances, you know, Doc," laughed Pearson, insinuatingly, then as if in apology for his act, "besides, it will be to your own interest in case the haunt was discovered. If you do not know where it is, you at least will not be held responsible for any harm that may come through the discovery, see?"

"We kill traitors!" said the matter-of-fact Sharkey, complaisantly.

"It may save your life," said Pearson, as he satisfied himself that the doctor was completely blinded. But he took no pains to insure the doctor's comfort, for he placed a pair of handcuffs upon his wrists. "I am obliged to do this," he said, as he changed places with the boy and sat upon the seat with Schiller, driving the team, "so the boys won't think me unmindful of the duty I owe them in protecting them from possible danger from treachery."

The doctor sat in silence for quite a time, meditating upon the strangeness of his adventure. Oft and anon, from the distance, could be heard the baying of dogs, so that the doctor did not fall into any of the numerous ruts or bark his shins against any of the snags in the underbrush. Sharkey followed on behind, carrying the doctor's case of instruments.

Again Doctor Schiller broke the silence: "What kind of a place are you taking me to?" he asked.

This time Pearson condescended to keep up the conversation. "Did you ever hear of the Jonesboro Bank robbery?" he asked.

Pearson walked arm in arm with Schiller.

"Yes! You mean the time when President Jones was killed by about twenty mounted desperadoes while attempting to protect the bank's property?"

"The same. Well, we are going right to the cave in which the desperadoes took refuge when pursued by the citizens."

"So?" asked the doctor in surprise.

"Yes, I don't mind telling you, Dr. Schiller, that we are only a foraging party for a colony of convicts—it is a hard term to call a company of men—convicts, but that is what we are! We have formed a colony; built a city; protected ourselves against capture, and mean to live in peace—if we can. But, Doctor, I don't think you will find us such a bad lot of men, after all. I don't know whether you are in sympathy with crime or not, though you once did commit a criminal offense. Even your class will never realize what a life such men as I have led in infancy, youth and manhood, and the need of protection from ourselves and the world."

"It must be an interesting community," said the doctor.

"So it is. You would hardly believe that we compel one another of the motley group of citizens to live upright and honest lives, would you. Composed as it is of all the different shades and grades of criminal outcasts."

"Hardly," was the incredulous answer.

"Such is the case, however," replied Pearson, enthusiastically. "We respect one another's rights; carry on business honestly; support schools, and while our colony, as you can well imagine, is not founded on a religious basis, we recognize something of the sort—honorable marriage, or duty to our neighbor. Barring a few necessary raids, such as we are out upon now, we live very ordinary lives."

"You are not all hardened then; you cannot be!"

"We are not all criminals, of course not. But most of us have done something some time or other to merit punishment from the government. There are many like you, who have paid the penalty of their sins, and only associate with us because they cannot bear to parade themselves before the world as having fallen once. Being bound together in the state described, however, places them on a footing with the rest of us. Whether all do anything contrary to the law or not, all are held accountable to the law for what the few have done, understand?"

"Yes, I believe I do. What you mean to say is, that the law never forgives you what you have done at any time, no matter how right you live afterwards."

"That's it. But we live in open defiance of the law. That is, we have manufactured laws that conflict with the laws of the United States. For instance, we shoot a man for interfering with another man's wife. If there is any law we do respect, it is the law of marriage. Most all of our penalties are death. A man is compelled to be honest to another if he desires to live. We are not justified in taking life, we are not the law, but it cannot be otherwise with us."

"How do you live? That is how do you obtain your supplies?" asked the doctor.

"We have agents who supply our wants. They have many acres of fine agricultural land, supplied with modern machinery, and plenty of help to till the soil. What we do not raise, we buy, or in extreme cases, like the present, we raise by force."

"You talk of schools. I should think there would be no need of such a thing as an educational institution. The country cannot exist, it will be depopulated through poverty, if nothing else. You certainly have not been in existence long enough to have raised children to the age of schooling."

"Not so. We have existed for twenty years or more unmolested. We are self-supporting. We dig gold from the mountains. We have manufactures (in a remote form) for the making of shoes, and supply a large portion of one of the states with this article. In fact our treasury is on a sound basis, better to-day than it ever was."

"Why do you divulge to me the secret of your existence?" asked the doctor.

"For the simple reason, my dear doctor," replied Pearson, complaisantly, "that it is my wish that you take up residence with us. We are in need of a few professional men like yourself, to make life pleasant for us. You are one of our kind—an outcast—and have nothing to lose by joining us. As for a money consideration, we can pay you a salary princely in magnitude in comparison with your present income!"

The doctor was somewhat prepared for the offer. "All I want is money and revenge in this world," he said, as if assenting. "Money to be happy —revenge on the man who is the cause of all my trouble!"

"You can command money in plenty," said Pearson—what kind he did not say. "Revenge depends upon yourself. Whom have you such bitter feelings against?"

"A doctor who was instrumental in sending me up."

"How, and in what way do you mean to accomplish your ends?"

"How I don't know, nor care. But I want to make him suffer as I have suffered. Disgrace him before the world as he has disgraced me! Reduce him to poverty and want! Ruin him; imprison him; do anything to make him feel what it is to be damned—an outcast of society. That is my only aim and desire!"

CHAPTER IX.

Dr. Schiller Initiated Into the Convict Society.

"The time may come," said Pearson, insinuatingly, to Dr. Schiller, as he helped that worthy over a log lying across their path, "if you join our forces, when you can do even more than this. You are a man of intelligence and will undoubtedly command influence in time. There is no reason why, in the future, you could not organize a band, kidnap the gentleman, and incarcerate him alive in a living tomb!"

The chance was readily grasped by the doctor. "I accept," he said. "I have everything to gain. If you desire my presence among your clique, you can depend upon me. To show you that I am sincere, I will do all in my power to aid you in any undertaking you may engage in. To show the people whom I come in contact with that I will do right by them; if human hands can save your comrade I will put him on his feet again!"

"We will soon be at the rendezvous and can then be convinced of the sincerity of your resolve," said Pearson.

They walked on in silence the balance of the journey. At last the party came upon a little clearing. By aid of the moon, which was shining now, a man's form shown up in the distance. "Halt! Who comes there?" was the challenge.

"Citizens, friend sentinel, who have with them a doctor," was Pearson's reply, and at the same time he made a mystic sign with his fingers.

The trio traveled a short distance further and were again halted. Again they passed a sentinel and at last stopped before the door of a dugout, situated in a ravine.

The door stood partly ajar, through which came the glimmer of a light created by the burning of a pine knot suspended from the ceiling of the room which was about eight feet square. A sentinel, armed to the teeth, guarded the door, but upon receiving the password, allowed the party to pass. Hewed logs at the rear of the room formed a "blind door," which led into another room twenty feet long and sixteen feet wide, along one side of which banks were arranged after the fashion of berths on a steamboat, and from the number of these at least thirty persons were finding sleeping accommodations in the abode. In one corner of the room, on a lower berth lay the wounded man.

Up to this point the doctor had not been relieved of the bandage from his eyes. This was now taken off, together with the handcuffs. The room was dimly lighted by a candle stuck in the neck of a bottle. The doctor first rubbed his eyes, then his wrists, while he accustomed himself to his surroundings. A groan from the direction of the corner berth made him look toward it. There were two villainous looking men sitting at the side of the bunk, holding the hands of a wounded man.

The doctor threw off the covering which was over the man, who lay stretched upon a rude mattress, a bandage roughly tied around his waist and over one limb. He was soaked in blood.

"A basin of warm water," said Schiller to Pearson. "Hand me my instrument case,' he said to Sharkey. With one hand on the wounded man's wrist he was counting the number of heartbeats to the minute. This being done, the doctor opened his case and laid out a package of clean bandages, and selected several instruments to have them handy. After the water arrived he bathed the hurt with a sponge, and examined the wound made by the bullet.

"We will administer a little chloroform," said the doctor, as he saturated his handkerchief with the fluid taken from his case.

When the man was thoroughly under the influence of the drug, he was lifted upon the table. The doctor then began probing for the bullet and succeeded in locating it almost immediately. It was but the work of a moment to remove it, and to thoroughly cleanse the wound with a preparation taken from his case. The flow of blood was stopped as well as possible, and the wound bound up. The patient was placed upon the bunk again, before the chloroform was taken from him.

(To be continued.)

BEATEN AT HIS OWN GAME.

Sure Thing Gambler for Once Gets the Worst of It.

"There was a sure thing gambler down in Mississippi named Gamble—good name by the way," said John Sharpe Williams. "He never made a bet unless he was sure he would win. He was out at a country fair, staying at a hotel. One morning a man who was in the sporting line himself got up early and looked out of the window. He saw Gamble carefully measuring with a tapeline the hitching post in front of the hotel. He knew something was up, and When Gamble went out to the fair he went out and measured the hitching post himself. Then he took a sledge hammer and drove the post into the ground an inch and a half.

"That night, after supper, while they were sitting on the hotel porch, Gamble craftily led the conversation around to the difficulty of judging distances and heights.

"'Now,' he said, 'there's that hitching post out yonder. I'll bet a hundred I can come nearer its height than any body here.'

"How high would you reckon it is?' said the sledge hammer artist, who after a lot of conversation, had put up the hundred with Gamble.

"'Oh,' said Gamble. 'I'll take it at 30 inches.'

"'Oh, no,' replied the other man, 'you are wrong. I'll bet it is less than 29.'

"They measured and it was 28½. Gamble hasn't smiled since that day.' —Rehoboth Sunday Herald.

Which He Took.

You probably remember the schoolboy who, in a composition on pins, said, "Pins have saved the lives of many people."

His teacher was astonished at this statement and asked him to explain it.

He replied: "By people not swallowing them."

That was not the case with the man in the following incident:

"'My dear,' Mr. Finnicky said to his wife, 'I don't think those pills I have been taking have done me much good.'

"'Why, you haven't been taking any for three weeks.'

"'Yes, I have; I've swallowed one three times a day as directed.'

"'You have? Then why is it that there are as many left in the box as there were three weeks ago? What box have you been taking them from?'

"'This one—marked for me.'

"'Dear me, John! That is my shoe-button box.'"—Birmingham Herald.

An Energetic Builder.

One of the most energetic nest-builders is the marsh wren, in fact, he has the habit to such a degree that he cannot stop with one nest, but goes on building four or five in rapid succession. And there is nothing slovenly about his work either. Look among the cat-tails in the nearest marsh, even within the limits of a great city, and you will find his little oven balls of reed stems with a tiny round hole in one side. There is a certain method even in his madness, for the nest in which his wife is brooding her seven or eight eggs is less likely to be found when there are so many empty ones to be around. Then, too, he uses the others as roosting places for himself.—C. Wm. Beebe in Recreation.

Heard of Coler.

She—They say the Kongo dwarfs, six specimens of whom have been brought to London by Col. Harrison, never reach a greater age than 40 years.

He—What do you suppose does it—chloroform?

Japan's Specie Reserve.

Japan's specie reserve stood at $225,000,000 (American gold value) on Jan. 1, 1905, after eleven months of costly war.

WORK OF WICKED FLEA.

Caused Delay in Docking of Big Ocean Liner.

The flea is a small animal, but his ability to make trouble for big ships seems unlimited. The fleas which dwell on the Pacific mail liner City of Peru, arriving this morning from Panama, says a San Francisco dispatch, were particularly busy. As a result of their operations, three of the passengers, Mrs. Emma Schneckenay and the two daughters of Louis Hirsch of Castle Bros., sought the ship's surgeon's advice.

The doctor examined small red spots with which their bodies were covered and declared that they had smallpox. The boarding surgeon shared the alarm and the ship's doctor and a tug was sent for Chief Surgeon Cummings at Angel Island. The three medical men held a consultation and to Dr. Cummings belongs the honor of finding out the secret of the fleas.

He saved the quarantine records from ridicule by declaring the passengers were afflicted with a "parasitic disease." The fleas delayed the vessel in docking the entire forenoon.

STONE IN PERPETUAL MOTION.

What Would Happen to Projectile Dropped Through the Earth.

Most of us have probably speculated, at one time or another, what would happen if a hole were bored right through the earth and one were to drop a stone into it; and F. R. A. S. now gives his views on this puzzling question. "The stone," he says, "would fall with increasing speed to the center of the earth, where it would have attained a speed of nearly 300 miles a minute. Its momentum would carry it at a constantly reducing speed through the remaining half of its journey until by the time it appeared at the antipodean end of the hole it would have come to a standstill. It would then begin to drop again, and would perform exactly the same journey on its return to the starting point. Thus it would continue to travel backward and forward from one end of the earth to the other practically forever."—London Tit-Bits.

UNSIGHTLY BALD SPOT.

Caused by Sores on Neck—Merciless Itching for Two Years Made Him Wild—Another Cure by Cuticura.

"For two years my neck was covered with sores, the humor spreading to my hair, which fell out, leaving an unsightly bald spot, and the soreness, inflammation and merciless itching made me wild. Friends advised Cuticura Soap and Ointment, and after a few applications the torment subsided, to my great joy. The sores soon disappeared, and my hair grew again, as thick and healthy as ever. I shall always recommend Cuticura. (Signed) H. J. Spalding, 104 W. 104th St., New York City."

Modern Pictures Not Wanted.

In recent years it has become a matter of increasing difficulty for a living English artist to find a market for his wares, says the Academy. The middle classes appear to have concluded that original pictures are entirely beyond the means of persons with a moderate income, and content themselves with photogravures. The wealthy, on the other hand, appear to consider picture-buying merely in the light of an investment, and all they want is a safe thing like preference stock—the established reputations.

Church Trustees

should investigate Acetylene Gas. See ad of Acetylene Apparatus Mfg. Co. in this paper.

Cleaning India Rubber Goods.

To clean indiarubber goods, a piece of clean, household flannel should be rubbed upon a bar of common yellow soap. When a lather is obtained, apply the flannel to the rubber and pass it briskly over the surface. This will speedily make the article clean. Set to dry in a cool breeze

Way to Met Dead Men.

W. H. Dedman, leaving Portland for Eugene, Oregon, wired to a stable keeper there: "Meet Dedman at 3:20 train to-day, sure." The operator corrected the spelling a little and the traveler was met at the station with a hearse.

Horses Must Be Hitched.

In San Francisco if one leaves his horse unhitched or untended in the street it means a fine. The city is about to spend $3,000 on more hitching posts.

Here is Relief for Women.

Mother Gray, a nurse in New York, discovered a pleasant herb remedy for women's ills, called AUSTRALIAN-LEAF. Cures female weaknesses, Backache, Kidney, Bladder and Urinary troubles. At all Druggists or by mail 50c. Sample mailed FREE. Address, The Mother Gray Co., LeRoy, N. Y.

A woman's way of reasoning is as much of a mystery to the average man as her way of dressing.

A woman can hide a sorrow until she gives away under the strain.

I do not believe Piso's Cure for Consumption has an equal for coughs and colds.—JOHN F. BOYER, Trinity Springs, Ind., Feb. 15, 1900.

The woman who seems to accept flattery with the most satisfaction usually thinks the least of it.

Women never weep more bitterly than when they weep with spite.

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup.
For children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic. 25c a bottle.

It takes more than a bank draft to start the heavenly flame.

Catarrh of the Bladder and Kidney Trouble absolutely cured by Dr. David Kennedy's Favorite Remedy. World famous for over 30 years. $1 a bottle.

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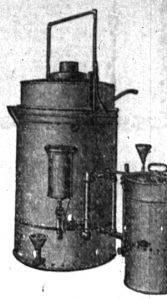

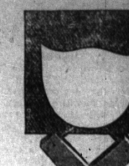

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"Peruna is the finest regulator of a disordered stomach I have ever found. It certainly deserves high praise, for it is skillfully prepared.

"I was in a terrible condition from a neglected case of catarrh of the stomach. My food had long ceased to be of any good and only distressed me after eating. I was nauseated, had heartburn and headaches, and felt run down completely. But in two weeks after I took Peruna I was a changed person. A few bottles of the medicine made a great change, and in three months my stomach was cleared of catarrh, and my entire system in a better condition."—Genevive May.

Write Dr. Hartman, President of The Hartman Sanitarium, Columbus, Ohio, for free medical advice. All correspondence held strictly confidential.

Back for His Umbrella.

Joseph M. Stoddart, whose acquaintance among authors and artists extends over two hemispheres and half a century of activity, tells this story of a meeting with Edgar Saltus, novelist and wit, in London a few months ago. "I had just arrived in London from Liverpool, and was hurrying down Fleet street, when I came face to face with Saltus," said Mr. Stodart. "He drawled an inquiry as to where I was hurrying from, and I remarked that I was just over from New York.

"'And I—I'm just going back,' rejoined Saltus. 'I forgot my umbrella.'"—New York Times.

Palindromes Not Uncommon.

"It is a fascinating occupation," said a philologist, "to search the language for palindromes. A palindrome is a word that reads the same backward as forward. Several hundred of these strange words are tabulated, and new ones are continually turning up in the English tongue. I can rattle off extempore a dozen or two palindromes: Thus: Bab, refer, bib, sexes, Anna, tot, bob, peep, civic, toot, dad, madam, deed, pup, deified, sees, dewed, tat, did, shahs, eye, reviver, ewe, rotator, gog, pop, gig, gag, redder, level non, Otto."

Would Boycott Wagner.

The Vegetarische Worte, a vegetarian journal published at Hamburg, appeals to its readers not to attend Wagner's performances or play any of the master's music. It describes Wagner as "a gross flesh-feeder" and a man who openly ridiculed vegetarian principles.

The Brazilian Review says that Brazil needs American methods and energy to make use of its splendid forests of hard wood, to construct ports and harbors, to build railways, to develop mining, to enlarge agriculture and cattle breeding—in short, to control and run the entire range of the republic's resources.

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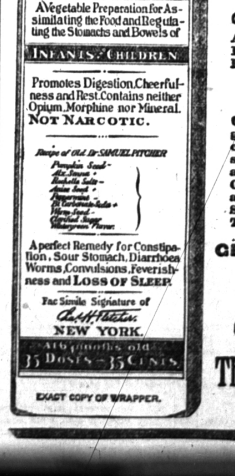

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