

# The CONVICT COUNTRY: OR, FIGHTING FOR A MILLION

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## CHAPTER XVII.

**The First Night in the Convict City.**  
John Rogers and Richard Golden led the way toward the well-lit building in the center of the city.

"What relation are you to Golden?" asked Wilson of Lang.

"No relation," answered Lang.

"How is it you appear to have power to influence Golden for good? I feel that Golden is a better man now than before he met you."

"I saved his life," was Lang's simple answer.

"Why did you interfere in my behalf?" was the grateful question of Wilson.

"My sense of justice. Could I stand idly by and see a human being torn to pieces by dogs, when I might save him?"

"What do you think of your chances now? You understand in what danger you have placed yourself by aiding me?"

"Oh, my chances are all right. Golden has an object in view in keeping me alive—and I mean to keep you alive! Now that I have seen your face, I have an idea that you and I can pull pretty well together. How many men, placed in your position, would have refused aid as you did, just because your willing friend would become involved? That showed me that you were worth the risk I took."

Wilson gazed on Lang in amazement. "You are the queerest man I ever met. It is hard to believe that you are a scoundrel—yet I presume you are, or you would not be here!"

"So? Well, I robbed Jim Denver, the Chicago detective of ten thousand dollars," said Lang, as if in excuse for being in the convict city.

"You damned scoundrel!" said Wilson, and he threw himself upon Lang as if to annihilate him. Lang was taken by surprise at the onslaught, but was quicker than Wilson, who had scarce recovered from the fatigue of his chase.

"So you love Denver?" said Lang in a low tone, as he deftly plucked the other's arms to his side. "You love him enough to kill the man who has done him a wrong? Suppose I tell Golden that Denver is a friend of yours?" Wilson and Lang had dropped

and spotless linen. Upon the platform were four other seats. Upon one sat Pearl Huntington, her face bathed in tears; and Louis Lang thought that he had never looked upon a more lovely and pitiable sight. Upon another, with a gavel in his hands, and a small table with a marble top before him, sat the crier of the city. The two other chairs were empty.

Schiller bowed to Golden, coldly, but showed no surprise in seeing him, and nodded also at Rogers, motioning them to occupy the two seats upon the platform.

At a motion from Schiller, the crier struck the stone with his gavel and commanded silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen of Paradise," the crier said, "we are about to administer the oath to these men and women, and that you may judge of their merits intelligently, I shall give you a brief history of each, after which, if there are no objections registered, the king will read the oath."

Then he introduced each candidate, giving an account of their many supposed virtues and vices.

Lang being unknown to the crier, Golden was then requested to give a short biography of our hero. This was done in quite a dramatic manner. He ended up his little introductory speech with words something like this:

"In a hand to hand fight, the prettiest of its kind I ever witnessed, he killed Long Rope, the Indian chief, the head of the band who attacked our train! Three days ago he saved my life from the hand of Revolver Rob, who would have assassinated me but for his interposition. He is a white man; a true man; he is worthy to be one of us!"

"The candidates will now stand before me," said Schiller, rising, "while the oath of allegiance is administered. I—repeat your name after me—"

"I, Louis Lang," said our hero, "renew allegiance to the President of the United States, the State of Illinois, or any other state wherein I may have resided, and declare my allegiance to the king of Paradise, and intention of obeying all orders and laws originating from him! That I will do all in my power to make the others do the same thing. That I will

not see a citizen wronged if in my power to prevent it; and that I will share and share alike with all that I possess or may possess. That if I fall in any essential degree, or prove a traitor, the law, through its head, the king, may extract from me whatever punishment it will, even to the taking of my life. These I do solemnly swear and agree to before these, the citizens of Paradise!"

This was the oath as repeated by all. Then the king pronounced 'each and all members of the colony, ending up with:

"Let me impress upon you the solemnity of the oath you have just taken. You are no longer citizens of the United States, but belong body and soul to Paradise! You have expressed your assent to abide by its laws; this is clear to you. You will be expected to work, to do your share in supporting the country and increasing its wealth. You cannot leave the city without a written permit from me, the king. If you prove yourselves traitors, death is the penalty! Death is also the penalty for other misdeeds, but here you have one chance of escape; but to be a traitor is death instant. Now that I have, I hope, made myself plain, I warn you, study the law, that your days may be long and happy ones!"

After delivering his speech Schiller sat down, while several ushers supplied seats for the several groups and allotted to them places to sleep. Thus far the king had seen fit to notice Wilson to the extent of speaking to him, presumably weighing well his words before compromising himself. During the lull he sat glaring at Wilson like a savage beast, seemingly getting more angry every minute. Wilson calmly returned the glance, smiling frequently, which seemed to madden the king more and more.

"What are you doing here?" the king finally asked, in a voice showing suppressed excitement. The assemblage was on the qui vive.

Wilson did not flinch not tremble, but like the brave man he was, with slow step approached the platform which represented the throne. Lang approached also. Before Wilson made answer, Golden spoke up. "He is here by my authority," he said, coolly, realizing that the crisis was at hand.

Then Schiller turned to Golden. Being in a measure prepared for Golden's championship, he was not surprised. "Why do you bring him here?" he asked.

"For no other reason than that I desire to see fair play accorded him!" was the quiet reply.

"You know then that he has been condemned to death?" was the fierce question.

"I do," replied Golden rising.

"And yet you dare to bring him here?"

"Certainly! I made the laws by which this colony is governed," proudly, "and I say that there is no law which gives even the king right to unjustly condemn a human being to death without cause!" There was a suppressed murmur of admiration from the crowd.

"The king is supreme!" said Schiller for a moment off his guard at the seeming audacity of Golden.

"Most powerful czar!" said Golden, bowing in mock honor to Schiller while a smile of scorn played round his face. The king saw his mistake and flushed scarlet.

"And so it has come to pass that the people of Paradise have granted to you the power of life and death—without question? I won't believe it! I still maintain that the king is not the law, simply the instrument—and I appeal to the people of Paradise! No one has the power to condemn another to death but in open assembly!"

The vast assemblage seemed to rise to their feet as if of one body. Their cries were deafening. "No! he has not this power!"

"I thank you!" said Golden, flushed with victory. "I knew that such could not be the case. Without hesitation then, I place Wilson in your keeping! Condemned last night to death for daring to restrain the king from committing a crime against humanity, he has successfully evaded capture! Hunted by the bloodhounds who guard your gates, by the aid of Louis Lang (whom you have granted equal suffrage with yourselves) he has killed his savage pursuers, and I maintain that he deserves freedom at your hands!"

"Yes! yes! So be it!" was the cry. Schiller arose. He saw his power slipping from him. Crafty to a high degree he did not attempt to stem the tide by retorting harshly, but bowing in mock humiliation, fearful of encountering further obstacles and humiliation, he said, "Ye people of Paradise, I bow to your decision! It is just; I was a little hasty; I forgive Wilson the indignity he has heaped upon his king!"

The words were spoken humbly, but Lang and Wilson were not deceived. They knew that Schiller would never rest until he had wiped out the bitter sting of defeat.

(To be continued.)

## CHANCE FOR A QUEEN.

**Dorothy's Directions Strong Where Mother's Fell Down Worst.**

Twelve-year-old Dorothy is already a cook of no mean proficiency. Saturday morning frequently finds her in the kitchen, being initiated into the making of some simple dish.

"Oh, put in a moderately generous pinch of salt," her mother will reply to her anxious inquiry. Or her grandmother will give a professional glance at the stew pan and say, "Well, if I were making it I think I'd probably put in quite a little more butter."

Such remarks, coming easily from the tongues of artists who have only to look at a bit of cookery in process of making to know exactly what it needs, are exasperating to a youthful cook, especially one who inherits from "the other side" a predilection for scientific accuracy of statement.

Recently Dorothy, returning from a visit, excited the interest even of those past masters, her mother and grandmother, by making a wonderful new salad dressing. The two ladies shortly afterward tried to make the dressing, under Dorothy's instruction.

"Well," said Dorothy, with unnatural deliberation, "if I were making that dressing I shouldn't be surprised if most likely I'd put in a moderately generous heaping tip-end-of-a-medium-sized-tablespoonful!"—Youth's Companion.

**WORK OF FLYWHEEL EXPERT.**

**Only One Man Engaged in This Form of Insurance.**

Only one company issues fly wheel insurance, because only one man can write it. He is monarch of all his inspectors survey; his right there is none to dispute. Two years ago he was a professor in a small engineering college with some theories and figures of his own about flywheels.

His success is largely due to his own formula, for flywheel insurance is almost pure mathematics. When a wheel is revolved at a high enough speed the centrifugal force exceeds the centripetal and the wheel flies apart. Solid cast iron explodes when the speed at the rim is, roughly, three miles a minute. A thick rim explodes just as easily as a thin one of the same material. Wood explodes at a greater speed, jointed iron at a less.

The underwriter allows a rim speed of a mile a minute, one-third the explosion rate, as a safe limit for solid iron wheels. This permits a two foot pulley wheel sixteen revolutions a second, while it keeps a sixteen foot flywheel down to two. A jointed wheel is allowed still less. The underwriter has only to name the number of revolutions he authorizes, and to proportion his premium to the size of the wheel. The larger the wheel, of course, the more destructive its explosion.—Leslie's Magazine.

**Two Keys, But Only One Keyhole.**

The Father Mathew society of Lynn, Mass., presented two well known business men of that city with a nice roll-top desk. The elder brother, having been in the country the longest, is more up to date. He said: "Dinny, this is a fine present. Here are two keys; one for you and one for me."

"But," said Dinny, "where is my keyhole?"

**Woman's Hat Causes Suit.**

Prevented from seeing the stage at the Sarah Bernhardt theater by a woman's hat, a Parisian went to a better seat and sued Mlle. Bernhardt for the difference in price. But he lost his case.

**What Did He Mean?**

Crimsonbeak—Did you ever eat any alfalfa?  
Yeast—Certainly not! I'm no horse.  
"No, but other things besides horses eat it."

## HISTORY OF AN ERROR.

**Blunder Escaped Notice of Proof-readers and Editors.**

A. B. wrote a certain paper for a popular journal, says London Tit-Bits. This paper went through certain successive stages during the process of production. At each step it received a new reading from beginning to end. Thus:

1. It was written in manuscript. Then it was read through and in great part rewritten.

2. It was read through again when completed and sent to be typewritten.

3. The typewriter read it through before sending it back.

4. The author corrected the typewritten manuscript carefully and sent it in again.

5. It was then set up in type.

6. The author received a proof, which he read and corrected, sending it back for press.

7. The editor or the subeditor read it finally and passed it for the magazine.

The paper thus had at least seven readings. Yet a blunder was passed, if the author made it—or committed, if he did not make it—of a most elementary description; one that leaps to the eyes; one that stands out of the page calling on everybody to spot it, correct it, put an end to it.

The blunder was simply this: A certain strike of workmen was spoken of as undertaken for "lower wages instead of 'higher.'" How the word "lower" got there—whether the author wrote it in the first instance or the typewriter or the compositor—it is impossible to say. Probably it was an author's mistake. A long succession of readers of the passage followed. Not one of the readers discovered the mistake.

**HE WAS A PHILOSOPHER.**

**But He Couldn't Stand the Gaff in the Matter of Golfing Supremacy.**

"I hear that your country home was hit by lightning and burned," said Smithers to the philosopher, Jollibeigh.

"Yes; it made quite a blaze, and it was not insured for a penny," said the philosopher; "but you know the summer season is almost over, anyway."

"That's true," said his friend, sympathetically. "Still, you seem to have had luck in another direction."

"Oh, yes," said the philosopher. "Burglars swooped in on my town residence recently, took all the family plate and looted the house."

"It doesn't seem to annoy you any," said the philosopher.

"What is the use of worrying. The robbery made little difference to me, for I lost my fortune in Wall street recently and I couldn't continue to live in the style I formerly did."

"Well, well, you certainly are an optimist, old man. But tell me, is the newspaper account true that you wife is suing for a divorce?"

"Yes," answered Jollibeigh, smiling. "You know I haven't coin enough now to boost her social aspirations."

"That's just what George Golpher said on the links this morning. He was telling me how he beat you three straight games of golf with a score—"

"Wow!" yelled Jollibeigh, getting purple in the face. "The liar! The scoundrel! Let me at him, and I'll soon teach him to injure my golfing reputation. Wow!"

**What's the Use?**

When he who saunters gains the goal,  
While he who struggles falls at last;  
When wings are granted to a mole,  
While it is snared the bird is fast;  
When fate play foul at every cast,  
Though thou art honest in the strife,  
And steal the bite that thou hast—  
This is the irony of life!

When one has lost his very soul  
In strivings strong and labors vast,  
Then find his name upon the scroll  
Of fame by some gay fool outcast;  
When some pale young ecclesiast  
Speaks the few words that make a wife  
Of her he worshipped in the past—  
This is the irony of life!

When on the waves that shoreward roll,  
After a voyage safely passed,  
A tired ship grounds upon a shoal,  
And helpless sailors, all aghast,  
See grating keel and straining mast  
Aunder rent as with a knife,  
Sunk in the harbor by the blast—  
This is the irony of life!

Now, there are no more rhymes to  
—at—  
And likewise no more rhymes to  
—life—  
Stung! Who'd have thought they wouldn't  
last!  
This is the irony of life!  
—Cleveland Leader.

**Everybody Listens.**

In a little hamlet a few miles from Cleveland the telephone hasn't worn out its novelty and the subscribers get all they can out of it.

It is said that when the bell sounds along a certain party line the feminine head of each household in the circuit immediately ceases whatever she may be doing and comfortably seating herself at the phone, takes down the receiver and prepares to enjoy the conversation to its full extent. A visitor to whom this cooperative scheme was new was somewhat disconcerted the other day while at the phone by a shrill voice that suddenly interrupted her in these words:

"When you get through tellin' Mary Jane 'bout that Simpson affair I'd like to hev a word with her."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

**Snake Rang Door Bell.**

Mrs. Hughes, whose home is in the Spring street section, heard her door-bell ring the other day. The bell is rung by an electric push button. She looked out of the parlor window before going to the door to see whether it was a peddler or a solicitor for signatures from an improvement association. What was her horror upon beholding a snake standing almost erect and pressing the button with his head.

She says the snake rang two or three times and then glided off the piazza around to the back stoop.

The iceman had just left the day's supply at the outer door. The snake mounted it, coiled up and went to sleep, apparently in great enjoyment. When Mrs. Hughes' boy came home from school the snake was dormant and easily killed.—Boston Journal.

**Not So Easy to Get Out of It.**

Gerald—As it is to be a secret engagement it would not be wise for me to give you a ring at present.

Geraldine—O, but I could wear it on the wrong hand.

# LITTLE EXPLOSIONS

**Depot Literature.**

"There's one good thing about your railroad," said the tourist to the conductor on the Mosquito Bay line.

"What's that?" was the surprised query.

"Your time tables. They don't always get the facts quite right, but they are never sensational."

**Not Without Experience.**

Grasping (angrily)—"What! More money? If you keep on you'll bankrupt me; then, after I'm dead, you will be a beggar."

Mrs. Grasping (calmly)—"Oh, well, I'd be a great deal better off than some poor woman who never had any experience in that line."

**Provoking Mistake.**

The caller was angry, and even beligerent.

"I want an explanation and an apology, sir," he said. "In your paper this morning you had an account of the wedding at the Smithys' last night, and you spoke of the joy that attended the happy pair as they went to the altar. Now, sir, I'm the—"

"Gracious heaven!" gasped the editor. "I wrote it 'joy!'"

**He Knew Them.**

"Woman's inhumanity to woman—"

"Yes?"

"Makes man's inhumanity to man look like sweet charity."—Houston Post.

**Left.**

When she awoke in the middle of the night a burglar was standing at her dresser.

"Leave me!" she screamed.

"That was certainly my intention, madam," he answered politely. "The things I am going to take will be sufficiently burdensome without encumbering myself with an old maid in addition."

She was left again!

**Left on the Porch.**

Mr. Staylate—My! it's 10 o'clock. However, my train doesn't go till 11:10, and it's very pleasant here on the porch.

Miss Subbubs—Yes, I'm glad you lie it. Mr. Staylate—Yes, but—er—perhaps I'm keeping you up.

Miss Subbubs—Not at all; I'm going to lock up and go to bed now.

**Remarkable Longevity.**

"I see that Bimler's father died the other day at the age of 96."

"Yes, a remarkable old man. He never was as happy as when he fancied he was 'doing' somebody."

"But who could he 'do' when he was past 90?"

"The undertaker."

**Uncertain.**

"What are you doing now, Scribbles?"

"Why, I am just about to start a magazine."

"Under what name?"

"The 'Age of Woman.' Do you think it will be a success?"

"Well, it is doubtful."

**Might Interrupt Her.**

"Now," said the salesman, "here's a piece of dress goods that speaks for itself."

"Oh, that would never do," replied Henpeck, who was doing some shopping for his wife. "Maria always likes to do most of the talking herself."

**Alphabetic Confusion.**

"Is Mr. Scadds a man of scientific distinction?"

"Yes, indeed," answered Miss Cayenne. "He has so many college degrees that when he sends in his card you can't be sure whether it is his name or a problem in algebra."

**One Exception.**

"No," declared Mr. Nagget, "there never was a woman on earth who could refrain from turning around to rubber at some other woman's clothes."

"No?" replied his wife sweetly. "Didn't you ever hear of Eve?"

**Mean Thing.**

"My wedding presents were splendid," the bride was saying, "particularly the silver service from the Astorbills. Wasn't it good of them?"

"Yes," replied Miss Speitz; "but then, you know, they always were charitable."

**A Consistent Career.**

"I can remember when the wealthy Mr. Hidem didn't have a dollar of his own," said the man who disappears.

"Well," answered the misanthrope, "it is said that he is still doing business entirely with other people's dollars."

**Called Him Down.**

"Yes, I believe I did say that you were always lying about yourself."

"Sir, I'm a gentleman!"

"There you go again."

**A Blackmailing Instrument.**

The street musician paused at the steps.

"Moosic!"

"No, no. Here's a quarter for you. Move along."

"Thanka, signor. It is such a fine org."

"Fine! It's the worst box of discordant whistles I ever heard!"

"It is da finest org' Pietro ever own. It plays da tune not so much, but it brings da more mon!"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

**Mean.**

Miss Planeyox—My wedding day is a long way off but I get dreadfully nervous when I think about it.

Miss Kutty—I don't blame you, dear. Fortunes are made so rapidly in these days, you know.

Miss Planeyox—What has that got to do with it?

Miss Kutty—Why, Jack may get rich suddenly and be in a position to marry the girl he's really in love with.—Detroit Tribune.

**Properly Stated.**

Mokeley—"Oh! life and death are not far apart. You hear of so many people who pass away suddenly."

Jokeley—"Yes; only the other day I heard of one poor fellow; buried one day and died the next."

Mokeley—"You've got that twisted; you mean 'died one day and buried the next.'"

Jokeley—"No, I don't. This man was an undertaker."

**Down on the Farm.**

"But I don't see any mosquito netting in my room," said the young man who had just arrived.

"Don't need any," replied the old farmer. "The mosquitoes are so big down here you can just put on a catcher's mask and keep them off. You'll find a mask hanging under the clock."—Chicago News.

**Looked Like a Scandal.**

Bacon—I saw Babbs out walking with his wife's dressmaker to-day.

Egbert—Are you sure?

"Positive."

"What did his wife say?"

"Oh, she said a great deal."

"I should think she would! Who is his wife's dressmaker?"

"His wife."

**Cause for Thankfulness.**

"I ought to be very thankful," said the Billville citizen.

"Why so?"

"Well, only yesterday the sheriff's mule rat away with him and broke his leg just when he was comin' to levy on me!"—Atlanta Constitution.

**A Suspicious Agreement.**

"I guess your watch is wrong."

"What! My watch doesn't vary a quarter of a minute."

"Well, I don't know how much it's out of the way, but your time is too blamed near mine to be right."

**Before the Ceremony.**

Rural Groom—Sue an' I can't see no reason why we shouldn't get along when we're married.

The Magistrate—Well, I just marry folks and don't express any opinions.

**A Possible Complication.**

Obobatch—When a man of my age marries he is usually willing to settle down for a quiet life.

Miss Young—Yes, but he often marries a girl who accepts him because she is tired of a quiet life.

**Her Popularity.**

"Why are the men all crowding around her?"

"Sh! Don't you know? She's that young widow who paid \$12,000 for her copy of 'Squints and Glances.'"

**Called Him Down.**

"Yes, I believe I did say that you were always lying about yourself."

"Sir, I'm a gentleman!"

"There you go again."