

# The CONVICT COUNTRY: or FIGHTING for a MILLION

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## CHAPTER XXIV.—Continued.

The next day Louis Lang was united in marriage to Pearl Huntington, according to the ritual of the Roman Catholic church; for strange as it may seem, there was a priest in Paradise City. A lawful marriage was an unusual occurrence in the city, but owing to the standing of Pearl, so different from the other inhabitants, it caused little comment. As this marriage was part of Schiller's scheme, Lang invited the king to participate in the ceremony. To Schiller this act was at the same time gall and wormwood and the sweetest honey—and this "royal" knight could not forbear to taunt Dr. Huntington with the fact that part of his revenge at least was fulfilled—"marriage with a convict." Dr. Huntington in his turn led the schemer to believe that it was a most undesirable match, while at the same time in reality the contrary was the case. Golden congratulated both Pearl and Louis on the plan, while Rogers reasoned that it would soften Pearl's lot and take away the sting of compulsion.

When Wilson arrived home from the mines, after supper Lang placed him and Dr. Huntington on guard, and with an equipment of arms, compass and a dark lantern, Louis set out for the purpose of exploring the tunnel, as he thought, discovered the evening before. By the aid of a chisel, Lang succeeded in opening the door and found himself in the entrance to the passage way. He supposed that the tunnel would be but a hole cut through the rock and solid earth, and had prepared himself to crawl through a narrow opening for the better part of the distance. Such, however, was not the case. The passageway was wide and commodious, admitting of the passage of several men in an upright position, and instead of being artificial, was a natural canon, and evidently had in times gone by been the bed of



At last Lang flashed the rays of the dark lantern around.

an underground river, with its source undoubtedly in the higher region outside the city. At intervals the sides were boarded up, and here and there were marks of excavations by man, enlargements by cutting through rock and sandstone.

Closing the door behind him, Lang proceeded carefully. A hundred yards from the entrance, a friend became aware that, instead of progressing upward, toward or into the mountains, that he was walking down, and imagined that at one time he was directly under water. Consulting his compass, he discovered that he was journeying in the opposite direction from the one that he thought should take him without the city's walls. In other words he was walking toward the very heart of the city. Treating on dangerous ground, Louis thought it wise to retrace his steps and call in the aid of Wilson, and place Pearl on guard instead, for fear that some occasion would arise wherein it would be necessary for him to be called back for the entertainment of any visitor that might be called in. Thread and string enough was produced, so that communication could be had by Pearl with the two in the tunnel. The fact that a tunnel existed at all was a revelation to everybody but Lang. "You have succeeded in discovering in a week," said Wilson enthusiastically, "what I have not been able to discover in years, though I have made diggings and soundings in almost every direction."

"True," replied Lang, playing out the string as they walked along, "but you have not been placed in the position to know, as I have, the one man who founded the town. However, we are not now in the tunnel I was made cognizant of, a continuance, I think, of the one leading out of the city."

"The second entrance then; where do you think this will lead to?"

Louis, who now fully understood the value of Golden's words to Johnson when he said, "I have plenty of money at my command," readily replied, "Undoubtedly the treasury."

"I think you are right!" replied Wilson.

For fear of running into a snare, or even into some blind passageway, the progress was necessarily slow. In one spot, stopping to listen, both were made aware of the proximity of strange noises. Dull, plodding sounds. Aware, of course, that noises carry far through earth, they reasoned that in some spot about the line with themselves, digging was being carried on. Both Lang and Wilson, from their sojourn in the mines, were aware that the miners were working nights on a tunnel which was meant to take the prisoners to liberty. This must be the cause of the noise.

found themselves in almost a perfect room, large and dry, and a perfect arsenal was spread out to their view. Upon oiled blankets and covered with the same were about fifty rifles, revolvers and as many knives; while in one corner were several cases of giant powder and boxes of cartridges.

"If we had entered a room," said Lang, "I should imagine this to be the ammunition room. But as it is, I am forced to think this is but Golden's private arsenal."

"I agree with you," said Wilson. "We have here, then, at our command, enough material to equip a small army, the very thing necessary to place our convicts on equal footing with the guards."

"Placed here evidently for some such purpose," replied Lang. "Now the question, are we near the treasury or simply about to enter some house, Golden's for instance?"

"No better way than to press on and find out."

Consulting the time, they were surprised to find it about two o'clock. After deep thinking, Lang came to the conclusion that the time was ripe for making further search. The outlines of a door were visible to the eye, and by diligent search in the floor and surrounding wall they found the latch which kept the door closed. They closed their lantern slides and drew their revolvers in readiness to protect themselves in case they were running into the presence of some armed guard. They raised the latch; noiselessly the door swung back upon its hinges, and the bold adventurers peered into blackness beyond. Breathlessly they listened for some sound which would tell them that they were in the presence of some living creature. At last Lang flashed the rays of the dark lantern around. They were alone, and in the vault of the treasury! Around them, in piles, were bags upon bags of what Louis felt was

the precious golden metal, the dust dug from the mines. Fearing discovery, the twain contented themselves with simply abstracting one bag from their resting place, and silently departing as they came.

The treasure was within their grasp.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### Formation of the Conspiracy.

Through the influence of Schiller (now that Lang was supposed to be willing to perform some of the king's dirty work), Lang was not forced to begin his labors in Paradise for several weeks. For a few days after the celebration of the marriage of Louis and Pearl, Dr. Huntington lived with the young people, performing medical duty as called upon, then disappeared. Search was instituted for him, but no trace was found of the doctor. Schiller thought he knew what became of him, but in this he was as much deceived as anybody. The king, of course, imagined that Louis had "done away" with the doctor. We know better, though. Lang, by means of the tunnel running through the mountains, had managed to send the doctor toward home, mounted on a horse procured by stealth from Rogers' stable and left outside the city's wall, carrying with him about fifteen thousand dollars in nuggets.

If Lang had felt perfectly assured of being able to make his escape, accompanied by his wife, he might have made the attempt. Yet he would not have been satisfied to have his mission unfulfilled—that of destroying the convicts' stronghold. As soon as able Lang began planning for a general insurrection. As success depended on enlisting sufficient men in his cause, this was the first thing to do. Wilson was of great help in this, as a go-between between the miners and the outside world. To enlist the convicts was Lang's first idea.

The convicts depended largely upon Wilson in the matter of furnishing information in regard to the outside condition of affairs, and he was approached by the head of the gang that was tunneling to liberty, even before George approached him, so that it was an easy matter for Lang to make a proposition of aid to them. Wilson learned that most of the prisoners were political prisoners, insurrectionists and men of ideas, and that they had formed a plan almost similar to the one contemplated by Lang, only their idea was to assure control of government, not over throw it. The majority of these men had made up their minds to face death by the bullet rather than toil for life in the mines. Wilson, seemingly entering heart and hand into the convicts' plot, put new life into that organization. He would have liked to have made known Lang's plans to these desperate men, but did not for fear of traitors. To a few, the ringleaders, the most intelligent and with all the most desperate, however, he told enough to make the organization his own, or rather had it worked done in such a manner that it worked in harmony with Lang on the outside. Lang, the evening after the disappearance of Dr. Huntington, made a

critical survey of the territory surrounding the haunted house and seemingly located the tunnel being dug by the convicts. There could be very little doubt that the convicts were very near to the earth and in proximity to the tunnel leading to the treasury. It became necessary for him, then, to push his plans forward as fast as possible to avoid conflict from that quarter. He realized that it would never do to allow these men to get to the treasury before he did. As a matter of precaution he instructed Wilson to force the diggers to tunnel parallel to his tunnel, hoping in the delay to perfect his own plans.

Feeling that the time for open action had come, Lang called upon Golden, intending to attempt first to influence him. As Golden had partially approved of the extermination of the society, Lang anticipated no hard task.

"Golden," said Lang, "I presume you have had no occasion to change your opinion of me? You are still my friend—and have confidence in me?"

"No, I hold you in the same regard as before." He did not appear surprised at the question, and Lang felt that Golden was in a manner prepared for what was to follow.

"Do you remain a member of this colony because you like it, or because you are afraid that if you leave it the members will do you harm?"

"The last."

(To be continued.)

## SAVED BY LAUNDERED COLLAR.

### Prisoner's Good Use of the Present Day Abomination.

"Washing, to-day, is a question of chemicals, not of labor," said a delegate to the national convention of laundries in Philadelphia.

He sat down, and there was a burst of applause. But Carter McGrath of Atlanta said:

"It is well for us to look to the chemistry of washing and to get our labor-saving machines, but there is still another thing for us to look to: Let us try to make clothes washed by us last as long as they used to do when washed at home."

Mr. McGrath smiled.

"A cynic told me a story the other day," he said, "and it is our duty to knock the bottom out of such yarns, to destroy their reasons for existing."

"There was a prisoner in a cell, lamenting his lot. He longed for a saw, for a file.

"Suddenly the man spied on the floor a package of laundry, that the jailer had just tossed in.

"Saved," he cried hysterically, and opened the packet, and taking from it a stand-up collar, the poor fellow cut his way swiftly through the steel window bars to freedom with the saw-like edge."

### How "Bill" Powers Got Even.

Up in Bellows Falls, Vt., there is a clerk in the Hotel Windham who is well known to the boys on the road, both for his general good fellowship and also for his quiet way of getting even with such people as try to be nasty over small matters.

One day, about a week ago, a traveling man went to the desk and wanted to know the whereabouts of his laundry package, which had been sent out the early part of the week and was to have been returned the night before. "Bill" Powers, the clerk, said it had not yet come back, but that he would find out what the trouble was. The traveling man expressed his opinion about hotels and hotel methods in general, but Powers made no answer.

That same evening, after supper, a number of people were seated in the office. Suddenly "Bill" Powers' voice sounded loudly from back of the desk, silence falling when he called out, "Mr. James, your other shirt is in your room now."

### Tipped by the Court.

F. M. Beckford of Laconia, N. H., was once arguing a case in the Belknap county court, and began his argument as follows:

"Your Honor and Gentlemen of the Jury: This case is one peculiar in circumstance as well as in fact. It came to me as a legacy from my late brother, Col. Thomas J. Whipple, who was engaged in its preparation at the time of his death. The county attorney who brought the case into court has long since gone to his reward. The justice who held the original hearing has passed away. Our distinguished Attorney General Barnard, since he became interested in the case, has been called to that happy land where litigation is not known. Several of the leading witnesses, too, are dead."

"All of which," said the court, "reminds us of the uncertainty of human life. Proceed, or none of us will be able to see the case through."

### A New Anecdote of Witte's.

That M. Witte has a sense of humor is again made evident in a story concerning him. It appears that, while arranging to propose a toast at a dinner given in his honor before leaving America, it was suggested that he propose the health of the president, and his host the health of the czar. "Is that customary in this country?" he asked.

"Can one propose the president without including the people?" Being assured that such was indeed the American habit, he said: "It is very strange. In our country no one would dare propose the czar without linking with his majesty the Russian people. I suppose," he added, reflectively, and with the suggestion of a twinkle in his eyes, "it is the difference between a republic and a monarchy."—Harper's Weekly.

### A Mother's Story.

A new family had come to stay next door to us, and our houses were so close together that their three children played under my bedroom window a great deal.

One morning, as I sat there sewing, they got into a wrangle over something, and the first I knew the two little brothers were both slapping the older sister as hard as they could.

I leaned out to remonstrate—they were all just babies, you know—and what I saw was the little girl, in a perfect fury, shaking first one and then the other of her small brothers, while she said savagely, with a shake to emphasize each phrase:

"Let love—through all—your actions run."

And all—your words—be mild!"

—Weekly Scotsman.

## HERE IS SLANG AT ITS BEST.

### What the Vernacular Is Coming To in Colorado.

Judge Benjamin B. Lindsey, who has made a national reputation for himself by his work at the Denver juvenile court, tells in the American Magazine the story of Eel Martin, a typical bad boy, whom the judge has since succeeded in reforming. The following is one of the boy's exploits:

One of the boy's methods of beating his way about the country was to board a train and after it had started to creep into an empty berth in a sleeping car.

On one occasion Martin was awakened by the porter's startled exclamation: "Good Lawd, the's a kid in heah!" Then, as the boy phrased it, "I flew the coop while the coon guy went to tell the conductor. I was ditched at a town they call Reno, in Nevada. Course I was dead broke. I touched a guy for a half and bought me a cane and some chewing gum. I walked into a bank and right up to the guy I'd done monkey case. I said I wanted work, and he said he hadn't none. I told him I'd clean up de back yard and while he went to ask de head guy about it, I raimed de gum on de end of my cane, showed it t'rough de cage and swiped a twenty that stuck to de gum. Then I took a hike mighty sudden. I lay low and went out on the express that night."

### Somewhat Tedious.

He—I see that Prof. Loeb's efforts to create life have resulted in nothing more serious than a primordial protoplasm that cannot be developed into manhood in much less than 20,000,000 years.

She—Think of waiting for a mere man all that time.

## ALWAYS TROUBLE IN BALKANS.

### Turbulent Southeastern Europe Never Out of the Public Eye.

When other sources fail the Balkan war cloud can always be depended upon to fill the void and furnish a sensation. Is there need of a "thriller," a plot to murder King Peter of Serbia is unearthed. Is there peace, elsewhere, riot and bloodshed can be found in that turbulent portion of southeastern Europe about which so much is heard and so little known. Here conspirators and intriguers thrive. The chief diversion of the populace is plotting to exterminate each other, to tear down existing institutions without revealing any well-defined plans for bettering conditions. Making widows and orphans furnishes a favorite pastime. Your patriot of to-day may be a murderer tomorrow or vice versa. Real and imaginary atrocities are alike seized upon with avidity by the outside world, and the territory whose chief asset appears to be a greater proportionate power for fomenting troubles than any other spot under the sun is constantly in the public eye.—Detroit Free Press.

### The Sentimental Cook.

I must be fond of scenery or of poetry or some pin.

"Cause I love to see upon the wharf and watch the fishes jumpin'.

The sky it really spreads so nice and the water looks so fine.

And the air it makes you feel as good as drinkin' sherry wine.

Yes, there must be poetry in me 'cause it sets my head to thumpin' To see upon the wharf and watch the little fishes jumpin'.

There is nothin' more delightful than attendin' to your cookin'.

But I sometimes wipe a tear away when I'm consistent in lookin'.

I wipes it off because it comes from lookin' at the lake.

Which stretches off so lovely while I'm fryin' of the steak.

But at mornin' and at evenin' when the little skiffs are bumpin'.

The thing that moves me deepest is to watch the fishes jumpin'.

O when I die and go before the throne to get my due.

I hopes as how they'll recognize the goodness of my stew;

I hopes they'll give me credit for the charity I done.

And also my creation of the sugar-coated bun.

And when I gets my robe on and my heart with joy is thumpin'.

I'll just sit there with folded wings and watch the fishes jumpin'.

—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

### The Key to Power.

Success in life is a delicate and difficult thing to define. To many—rightly or wrongly—it is synonymous with the accumulation of wealth, the standard of achievement and the end of all ambition worthy of human endeavor. But whatever may be our delineation of this subtle and somewhat fickle goddess, the possession of a substantial bank account is, for most persons—for all, in fact, who are not degenerates—a most laudable object of ambition. It has a psychological value all apart from its conventional, commercial value. It is veritably the key to power—not alone through what it buys, but through what it does—unlocking those secret sources of strength that transform the delinquent into the alert, the vacillating into the confident, kindling the embers of hope, and giving the race to the slow, the battle to the weak.—Business Men's Magazine.

### John B. Knox Home.

John B. Knox of Anniston, Ala., who has frequently of late been spoken of as a candidate for the United States senatorship, was in Birmingham yesterday on his way home from Europe, where he has been for two months.

Mr. Knox is looking well and says he had a most enjoyable trip. On the subject of politics, he had nothing to say, or, at least, he said nothing. When the subject was mentioned, he looked at his watch and said:

"It is now 2:30 o'clock. The baseball game at West End park begins at 4. Gentlemen, I'll bid you good afternoon."

And with that, Mr. Knox left the lobby of the Hillman and made for the ball game.—Birmingham Age-Herald.

### Pitiful Plight of Aged Man.

Because Oliver Powe, a builder of Ansonia, Conn., put all his property in his wife's name and she died childless he lost it all, according to the probate court's ruling, and is left penniless at the age of 72, too infirm to work. Believing that at his wife's death he would be her heir. Mr. Powe had his home and savings, \$22,000 in all, transferred to her, so she would have no trouble in getting his estate should he die first. Mrs. Powe died a year ago, her estate was promptly claimed by her relatives and the probate court sustained their claim. Mr. Powe has brought a suit for equitable relief.

### Ordered Emperor to Bed.

Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria attended the recent army maneuvers and sat his horse for three hours in a drenching rain in spite of remonstrances from medical advisers. As a result he caught cold and the doctors revenged themselves by ordering him to bed for two or three days.

# LITTLE EXPLOSIONS

## Asking Too Much.

"I'll give you a good meal," said the housekeeper, "if you'll light the fire in the range for me."

"All right, lady," replied Ragson Tatters.

"Here's a hatchet. Just chop some of that wood, and—"

"Oh, see here, lady, I thought it was a gas range you had. Good-day."

## Somewhat Tedious.

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She—Think of waiting for a mere man all that time.

## Couldn't Be Sure.

"Tell me," began the morbid woman, "if I were to die, would—"

"Hush!" protested her lover, shuddering.

"But I must know," she persisted. "Would you follow me to the grave?"

"How can I tell?" he replied, frankly; "might not your family decide to have the interment private?"

"Maybe it was both."

"Very likely. Anyway, she's going to get a new hat to-day. You can't preach economy to a woman like that."

## He Had Tried and Tried.

Kindly Parson—Cheer up, my man—cheer up! If at first you don't succeed, try, try again, you know.

Prisoner (savagely)—Well, I guess you don't know what brought me here.

Kindly Parson—No; but the motto applies just the same—try, try again.

Prisoner—Well, that's what I done an' here I be—for bigamy.—Judge.

## The Scheme.

"Policeman Fox is very active in his efforts to catch the boys who play ball on his beat," remarked the captain.

"Yes," replied the citizen. "He has a small boy of his own."

"Ah, does his own boy play ball?"

"Yes, with the bats and balls his father takes from the others.—Philadelphia Press.

## Shot Out.

"Look at Bottle-Nose Ben, for instance," said the earnest exhorter. "It was the Demon Rum that made him the one-eyed, low-browed sot that he is to-day."

"Not altogether, parson," said Alkali Ike. "It mebbe made him a low-browed sot, but it was my good old gun that made him one-eyed."—Catholic Standard.

## Her Excuse for Moses.

A teacher in a lower West Side public school recently received the following letter:

"Kindly exculpate my son Moses from being one aggregate day absent. Because his mother subsisting sick. Moses had to sojourn in the house perforce, so kindly apology him for not coming once day to school."—New York Sun.

## The Strenuous Part.

He claims that salt-water bathing is more thorough exercise than fresh-water bathing.

That's because you can usually bathe in fresh water without a suit.

What's the difference?

Well, the greatest amount of exercise is what a man gets wriggling in and out of a suit three sizes too small for him.

## Objects to Being Questioned.

Tommy—Oh, my pa says you're a blamed nuisance, teacher.

Teacher—What?

Tommy—Well, that's what he says I am when I ask questions, and that's what you're always a-doin'.

## Insultation.

Mrs. Jawback—I suppose you attended a meeting of the vestrymen last night?

Mr. Jawback—I did.

Mrs. Jawback—How did you come out?—Cleveland Leader.

## Sizing Them Up.

"I don't care what you say about the Swellmans; they're certainly the cream of society."

"I guess you're right. At any rate the milk of human kindness seems to be beneath them."

## Tired of His Part.

Mother—What is all this fuss in the nursery about?

Small Boy (crying)—James is always the procession, and I'm tired being the crowd on the sidewalk.

## No, Indeed.

"That's Miss Robinson, who just left your house, isn't it?" asked the neighbor.

"That's my Aunt Carrie Robinson," replied the little girl.

"Your aunt, eh? On your mother's side?"

"No; she stands up for pa every time."

## Satisfied.

"Did you read my novel, Criticus?"

"Well, I read as far as the chapter where the hero was shot, and then I quit."

"Oh, but the hero recovers in the next chapter."

"I was afraid he would. That's why I quit."

## OBLIGING.

Lady—Can you direct me to the nearest town?

Tramp—Certainly. Me and my partner will git right in and show you th' way there.

## A Wasted Lecture.

"I talked economy to my wife last night and she wore her last fall's hat to the theatre. And what do you think? Every woman on the other side of the car grinned when she saw that hat. Whether it was the hat it self or the way my wife wore it, I don't know."

"Maybe it was both."

"Very likely. Anyway, she's going to get a new hat to-day. You can't preach economy to a woman like that."

## The Cause of It.

"Why did you leave your last place?" asked Mrs. Hiram Offen.

"Well," replied the pretty servant maid, "the last couple I was with didn't agree—"

"Indeed! Why should their disagreements effect you?"

"It was about me. The gentleman liked me, but she didn't."

## Well Stocked.

"They say the Widow Longgreen can think of nothing but money."

"Well, she has a remarkably well-stocked mind."

"Well stocked?"

"Yes, a million and a quarter in bank stock at 250 above par."

## Life's Uncertainty.

"Are you engaged?"

"Blamed if I know. How can you ever tell till you're married?"

## WHY SHE WAITED.

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## Considering a Weighty Matter.

Mr. Happleman (with a brave attempt at pleasantness)—Why so pensive? Is the honeymoon beginning to pall on my little bride?"

Mrs. Happleman (throwing off the air of preoccupation)—Not at all, dear. I was merely engaged in trying to solve the problem: How long will it take us to save a sum sufficient to enable us to live in a style in keeping with our presents?—Tit-Bite.