6/ Children of Progress

I have never been able to find happiness in conformity. . . . A sure instinct told me that the majority was always wrong. . . . But whenever we do conform it is to endure the agony of humiliation, to drink the cup of degradation to the very last drop. . . . And [in] this mental torture, which the dull-thoughted persecutors of the Children of Progress can never feel—for they cognize not the subtle pains that torment the refined—we also charge up against the monkey-hyena Idol which is called "Society."

—Edwin C. Walker, from “Society,” Lucifer, 10 September 1886

HEN the marshal arrived in Valley Falls on a February day in 1887 to arrest the Lucifer staff, he knew that one of the editors, Edwin Walker, would not be found. Walker was already imprisoned; he occupied cell number two in the county jail at Oskaloosa. Cell number one held his wife by free marriage, Lillian Harman, the teen-age daughter of Moses Harman. Lucifer had opened another front in its crusade to dramatize woman's sexual bondage.

Although Walker did not share Moses Harman's enthusiasm for the plain-words crusade, both editors agreed on the issue of marriage reform. And Lillian Harman, her father's true daughter and Lucifer's compositor, also agreed. On 19 September 1886, Moses Harman convened the "autonomistic marriage" ceremony in which Edwin, aged thirty-seven, and Lillian, aged sixteen, were joined; the word had become flesh for the Lucifer group.

Moses Harman had criticized both the church's and the state's involvement in marriage from the beginning of his Kansas career. In 1880, in the second issue of the Valley Falls Liberal, he replied to churchmen who disparaged freethinkers as free lovers; one had only to survey the mounting divorce statistics to see the true quality of their "God-made unions." From the evidence, he wondered "would it not be well . . . to let Jehovah go out of the business of marrying folks for a while and let them marry themselves?" Since marriage is an intensely personal thing, reasoned Harman, why recognize any authority greater than the self in performing it?
“Is a man who prefers to give his simple word of honor, any less likely to prove a faithful husband than he who must be bound up by an oath, or by his faith in Jehovah, that he will love his wife as long as they both shall live?” The belief that heaven created marriages and forgave partners for transgressions allowed an easy means to shirk personal responsibility for the union.

Four years later he related his marriage stand to his position on temperance: he practiced abstention from liquor and he practiced monogamy in marriage, but he opposed state enforcement of his beliefs on anyone else; true morality, he believed, demanded liberty of choice in such matters. To outlaw plural marriages or to enforce monogamy, particularly in deference to religious forces, was “an unwarranted invasion of private and personal right.” He noted ruefully that society banned the discussion of “sexual physiology and of social sciences, in its widest sense . . . this ignorance soon bears its legitimate fruit in inharmony and unhappiness whether outside or inside of the marriage pale.” Children suffered most from this ignorance that was sanctioned by both the church and the state.

Abruptly, in early September 1886, *Lucifer* began to publish a series of critical articles on social coercion. “Society,” a scorching attack by Edwin Walker, revealed a firsthand acquaintance with social ostracism; the author, after all, was an anarchist, an infidel, and a divorcé whose former wife and two children lived in another part of Kansas. Together with this article appeared the first installment of a series on “Autonomy—Self Law,” probably also written by Walker. These articles discussed the implications of the principle that sovereignty resides exclusively in the individual man and woman, rather than in the state. The writer noted the demands upon liberty that were made by the state, as a creation of the majority of society; and near the end of the second installment he speculated:

Now suppose two persons, a man and a woman, of mature age and sound minds, decide of their own free will and choice to live together in the sex-relation—they find this relationship mutually promotive of happiness—nature sanctions their union by giving healthy, well-formed and intelligent offspring. Now we ask, is the conduct of this man and woman—these autonomists—immoral and vicious?
Posed in the abstract, such a debate between anarchists and "state paternalists" (almost everyone else) could be counted on to take up several more or less interesting columns of newsprint. Propriety would be outraged perhaps, and someone might become angry enough to suggest censorship. But, most likely, the effects of such a question, abstractly posed, would not be great. Well aware of the limits of abstraction, Edwin Walker and Lillian Harman married themselves at Moses Harman's house two days after the article appeared.

The ceremony began with the reading of a "Statement of Principles in Regard to Marriage" by the father of the bride. Based on Moses' previous writings on the subject, this statement pointed out that marriage, as it was generally enforced, existed preeminently as man's affair. According to Christian mythology, woman was made for man rather than man for woman or each for the other. Marriage created the family as an institution with the male member as its autocrat. Marriage merged woman's individuality as a legal person into that of her husband, "even to the surrender of her name, just as chattel slaves were required to take the name of their master."

At this time, most states held that marriage could be solemnized by either civil or religious authority, although the laws of Maryland, Delaware, and the District of Columbia held that only a religious authority could legally join a couple. Harman repudiated this prerogative of the church and the state in marriage; external regulation was not only impertinent but morally wrong and disastrous in practice. "We regard intelligent choice—untrammelled voluntaryism—coupled with responsibility to natural law for our acts, as the true and only basis of morality," he explained.

As to making promises on such an occasion—"to love and honor" by the male, "to love, honor and obey so long as both shall live" by the female—the first could not truthfully be promised, because it ignored the possibility that feelings could change over time; the second destroyed woman's being, making her the inferior and the vassal of her husband. If love ceased to exist between the two, that promise nevertheless continued to bind the woman to submit sexually, "to prostitute her sex-hood at the command of an . . . unloveable husband." No promises would be extracted, then, at this autonomistic wedding.
After Harman had read his statement, Walker stood and announced to the assembled family that while he regarded public marital ceremonies as "essentially and ineradicably indelicate, a pandering to the morbid, vicious, and meddlesome element in human nature," he considered this form the least objectionable. He then abdicated in advance all conventional marital rights. "Lillian is and will continue to be as free to repulse any and all advances of mine as she has been heretofore. In joining with me in this love and labor union, she has not alienated a single natural right. She remains sovereign of herself, as I of myself and we... repudiate all powers legally conferred upon husbands and wives."

He acknowledged Lillian's right to the control of her own person, name, and property; he also specifically recognized her equality in the partnership, while recognizing his own "responsibility to her as regards the care of offspring, if any, and her paramount right to the custody thereof should any unfortunate fate dissolve this union." Then he explained to those present that "this wholly private compact is here announced not because I recognize that you or society at large, or the State have any right to enquire into or determine our relationship to each other, but simply as a guarantee to Lillian of my good faith toward her, and to this I pledge my honor."

Lillian then responded:

I do not care to say much: actions speak more clearly than words, often. I enter into this union with Mr. Walker of my own free will and choice, and I agree with the views of my father and Mr. Walker, as just expressed. I make no promises that it may become impossible or immoral for me to fulfill, but retain the right to act, always, as my conscience and best judgment shall dictate. I retain, also, my full maiden name, as I am sure it is my duty to do. With this understanding, I give to him my hand in token of my trust in him and of the fidelity to truth and honor of my intentions toward him.

The father concluded the ceremony, acknowledging that as the natural guardian of Lillian, he gave his consent to the union. "I do not 'give away the bride,' as I wish her to be always the owner of her person, and to be free always to act according to her truest and purest impulse, and as her highest judgment may dictate." Congratulations, as at most weddings, were then exchanged all
around, the participants celebrating not only a personal union but also the wedding of two basic elements in *Lucifer*’s philosophy—extreme anticlericalism and individualist anarchism.

This outrage, which was compounded by the “awful letters” being printed in *Lucifer*, brought threats of mob violence in Valley Falls, and officials promised legal action against the “Lucifer Match” in order to head off the vigilantes. On the morning after their wedding night, the constable appeared at the *Lucifer* office with an arrest warrant for the couple, sworn out by Lillian’s stepbrother, W. F. Hiser. The couple had flouted the peace and dignity of Kansas, read the warrant, by “unlawfully and feloniously” living together as man and wife without being married according to statute.6

The case promised to be sensational—at a time of growing concern about the frailty of marriage, the government’s authority in the marriage contract was being challenged by an anarchistic, anticlerical, free-love couple whose paper was named for the devil himself. The government’s dramatic response assured that the *Lucifer* Match would be a cause célèbre among American social radicals for several seasons.7 Such well-informed radicals as Lillian Harman and Edwin Walker did not view their marriage as a unique experiment, however, but rather as part of the radical tradition of “free marriage.”

Communitarians and avant-garde individualists had traditionally focused the dissatisfaction with institutional marriage, but discontent surfaced even in the most respectable levels of nineteenth-century society. The efforts of moderate reformers were often personal and were confined to the ceremony itself; this narrow focus on the contract perhaps reflected the Victorian proclivity for seeking germinal causes. While the simple Quaker marriage pact frequently served as a model of form for reform ceremonies, the contract itself often voiced a protest against woman’s subordination in conventional marriage and claimed her basic equality in the newly formed union. Such reform ceremonies, like that of Robert Dale Owen and Mary Robinson in 1832 and that of Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell in 1855, wished to improve laws rather than flout or ignore them.8

“Free marriage” took the mild protests of the reform ceremonies
to radical lengths. As a special definition of the amorphous term “free love,” this union stressed freedom of the individual within an enlightened partnership in which neither partner would rule or be ruled. This definition had particular meaning for woman: it freed her from the subjugation to the sexual appetite of the male. Since free marriage left open the question of permanency, it was especially strong medicine for Victorian sensibilities, which, after all, viewed institutional marriage and its consequent, the family, as the basis of civilization. Victorians insisted on this view of the family with extreme defensiveness, even to the extent of justifying prostitution as the overflow valve for male sexuality that kept the family “pure.”

The Lucifereans disagreed with the prevailing view of marriage as the regulator of base sexual instincts, an institution, as the senior Henry James put it, “to educate us out of our animal beginnings.” The Markland letter demonstrated that marriage served as the refuge of sexual vilenes; marriage, Lillian later wrote, “is the foe of true morality. Morality often exists in spite of, or regardless of, marriage, but I do not believe morality ever came into being because of marriage.” Moses turned the Victorian theory of family primacy on its head: institutional marriage, as the basis of the family, was therefore the foundation of the coercive state; not only did marriage curb one’s personal freedom, it was ultimately responsible for “most if not all the tyrannies.”

The new moralists of Valley Falls campaigned against conventional marriage in the name of “social science” in the nineteenth-century sense of the term, which equated sociology with social reform. Walker castigated the press for being ignorant of the larger meaning of the “autonomistic” marriage: “They speak of our marriage as ‘novel,’ ‘strange,’ ‘queer,’ ‘anomalous,’ ” he wrote; one paper had even expressed surprise at the couple’s respectable appearance. As a precedent, Walker cited the union of the Comtean positivist and critic George Henry Lewes with Mary Ann Evans (“George Eliot”); it was also well known that another positivist philosopher—John Stuart Mill, the author of The Subjection of Women—had joined Harriet Taylor in a ceremony that repudiated the usual legalities of wedlock.

But the vision of society that was shared by Lucifereans reflected the doctrines of the pioneer sociologist Stephen Pearl
Andrews more than they did the influences of Comte's hierarchical order. "Men have sought for ages to discover the science of government; and lo!" proclaimed Andrews, "here it is, that men cease totally to attempt to govern each other at all! that they learn to know the consequences of their own acts, and that they arrange their relations with each other upon such a basis of science that the disagreeable consequences shall be assumed by the agent himself."

John R. Kelso's pamphlet on the Lucifer Match defended the couple in Andrewsian terms; they had done no wrong since no one could show damage from the act. He further pointed out that the marriage had revealed the extent to which the state and the church still claimed property rights in woman, particularly in her sex organs:

The defendants in this case are charged with "illicit cohabitation";—that is, with illicitly using their own organs of sex. But what was it that rendered their cohabitation "illicit"? . . . You all admit that he [the marrying official] could convey to Mr. Walker a good title, as husband, to the sex-organs of the woman. And yet we all know that he could not convey to Mr. Walker, or to any one else, any title which is not vested in himself. In him, then, is still vested a husband's title to Lillian Harman's sex and to the sex of every other unmarried woman in his district.\textsuperscript{11}

In Walker's criticism of the naïveté of the press, he also cited the legal struggles of two free-marriage couples a decade earlier, Mattie Sawyer and Moses Hull in New Jersey and Mattie Strickland and Leo Miller in Minnesota. Hull, the editor of Hull's Crucible (Boston) came out for free love in 1873 in Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly. Just as people needed changes of scenery, he believed, so did they need changes of sex partners. Monogamy had chafed so cruelly that he finally yielded "humbly and prayerfully" to the "diviner impulses." Elvira, his wife, concurred in the experiment and publicly judged Moses a better companion for it. When Moses and Elvira dissolved their marriage by a single announcement, claiming that a law higher than man's had divorced them, they aroused a torrent of public criticism. When Moses and his lecture mate, Mattie Sawyer, announced their free marriage, similarly without benefit of church or state, criticism became intense and enduring. Four years later a Christian organization in New
Jersey filed a complaint against the two and had them arrested for their unconventional union. The couple expected to fight their case in court, but it never came to trial; a judge dismissed the action after a hearing.12

At the same time, however, the law moved against another notable spiritualist lecturer and free lover, Leo Miller, and his wife in spiritual affinity, Mattie Strickland. An angry crowd rioted at his lecture on "Social Freedom" in Waterford, Minnesota, in June 1876. The cry "Put him down! He's come here to break up families!" touched off the scuffle, and in a hail of rotten eggs and rocks, Miller scurried off the stage and made for his carriage. Officers arrested Miller and Strickland a short time later at the home of a friend in Castle Rock. The friend was W. G. Markland, later of "Markland letter" fame. The grand jury charged the couple with "lewd and lascivious cohabitation" as a result of their nonlicensed union. They also cited Miller for obscenity because he had distributed copies of Ezra Heywood's paper, *The Word*.

The couple, who had joined themselves by a written agreement, knew beforehand of plans to arraign them; they planned to plead guilty to the technical charge and then go to jail as the first American couple to be martyred by the marriage laws. A lawyer and a gifted speaker, Miller relished the prospect of carrying the case to the Supreme Court, arguing it on the ground of the constitutional right to liberty of conscience. As it turned out, Miller alone went to jail for the marriage; his wife's health kept her from being tried. Although the district court found him innocent of the obscenity charge, it judged him guilty of the illegal union and sentenced him to ten days in jail or a $25 fine; the state supreme court later upheld the decision. Miller served his time in the Dakota County jail, a milder martyrdom than the young man would have preferred.13 Social radicals had to wait another ten years for a full-fledged hero and heroine of free marriage to emerge.

Even the Liberals of Valley Falls would not post the $1,000 bond for Lillian and Edwin. Noah Harman, an older cousin of Lillian's, later offered to post bail for her, but R. D. Simpson, the justice of the peace, refused to allow a separate bond to be made. The couple spent the second night of their marriage under guard at
the Cataract House in Valley Falls. With no bond, they traveled the eighteen miles to the county jail at Oskaloosa the next day.

The jail had no facilities for a woman, so Moses persuaded Sheriff Housh to allow Lillian to return under guard to Valley Falls. Lillian at first refused to return, declaring that she would share equally the responsibility for the marriage. Her father finally convinced her, however, that she was needed in the press office at home. The three male prisoners who were already occupying the two-celled jail added a vigorous protest against jailing Lillian.

A week later in Valley Falls, Moses Harman appeared as the single witness at a preliminary examination into the marriage. David Overmeyer and G. C. Clemens had been hired by Harman to defend the “Lucifer lovers.” Overmeyer argued that the marriage constituted a legal civil contract and suggested that charges were being pressed in an attempt to ruin Lucifer and the Kansas radicals. The county attorneys argued that society had rights in the matter of marriage, that these rights had been ignored, and that the authority of the state had been defied. Punishment must therefore be exacted, urged the prosecution. Justice Simpson concurred and ordered the couple bound over to district court for trial on charges of violating Section 12 of the Marriage Act, which deemed “any persons, living together as man and wife, within this state, without being married,” guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine of from $500 to $1,000 and a jail sentence of from thirty days to three months. The crowd at the hearing, which was all male except for Lillian Harman and Edwin Walker’s mother, received the decision with boisterous applause.14

Lillian remained out of jail until October 6, when officials brought her and Walker to the Shawnee County jail in Topeka to await trial. Walker described the underground jail as a horror: filth everywhere; the spectacle of young boys thrown in with the hardened tenants; a sadistic keeper; rats; loud sounds of cursing; dirty bedclothes too flimsy for warmth; and, worst of all, the pervasive degradation of spirit, “the unfortunate prisoner made to feel he has no rights, that the very fact of being there is proof positive that he deserves to be there.”

The presence of Lillian sent the prisoners scurrying to bars and cracks in order to gawk. No privacy existed. When the caged men
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found out that this was a “free-love couple,” they taunted and jeered and made “vulgar sounds.” Outraged that his young wife should have to endure such degradation at the hands of the state, Walker remembered blackly the free-thought “friends” who had refused to post bail for them. What Lillian felt is not recorded.

On October 14 the Walker-Harman marriage case came before the district court at Oskaloosa, Judge Robert Crozier presiding. As a first move, attorneys Overmeyer and Clemens presented a petition for a change of venue, charging that the great amount of local prejudice precluded a fair trial. They read extracts from five county papers, some of which had recommended mob violence against either *Lucifer* or the couple.

The judge overruled the motion, a jury was selected, and the trial proceeded quickly. W. F. Hiser, Moses’ step-son who had sworn the original complaint, provided important testimony. Hiser reported that he was present the day before the marriage and that he knew about the plans and proceedings for the autonomistic wedding. At the prodding of the prosecuting attorney, Hiser said that he had heard Moser remark that “this marriage will take place regardless of law—in defiance of law.”

According to *Lucifer*, Hiser had sworn out the complaint against the two in order to avert mob violence, which had been openly threatened. But since it appeared that previously Moses Harman had intentionally set up a test case of obscenity laws, it is possible that the *Lucifer* group likewise planned the “Lucifer Match” as a test of state marital statutes. Very conveniently, an insider—one of the family—brought proceedings against the couple. It was also convenient that Hiser did not step in early enough to halt the wedding, but rather on the morning after consummation of it. Earlier issues of *Lucifer* had given plenty of warning of what was to occur. If the case had not been manufactured, it was at least modeled upon more or less exact specifications, Moses and the principals perhaps wishing to have some initial control in what would inevitably become a community affair.

Following instructions from the judge, the jury found the couple guilty both of living together as man and wife without first having obtained a license and of being married by a legally prescribed officer. The judge then attempted to sum up the case and the
situation of the guilty party. The case, early and late, revealed an amount of judicial confusion: in Judge Crozier's rambling remarks, for instance, he gratuitously admitted that if either of the two were now to marry a new partner, he would in fact be guilty of bigamy.

On the nineteenth, Judge Crozier refused motions for a new trial and for an arrest of judgment, being less than appreciative of attorney Clemens's argument based on the absurdity of some state marriage statutes; Clemens, for example, pointed out that the minimum fine for any incestuous marriage was $100, while the fine for being married without a license was $500. The couple was then called up for sentencing.

Following form, the court asked if either of them had anything to say regarding why sentence should not be passed.

"Nothing now, your honor," said Edwin.

"Nothing except that we have committed no crime," Lillian added. "But we are in your power, and you can, of course, do as you please."

"It is a melancholy sight to see a prisoner unconvinced of her guilt at such a time," remarked the judge. After determining if their financial status would allow them to pay a fine (the couple hardly intended to acknowledge their guilt by paying a fine, however), the judge sentenced Edwin to seventy-five days in the Jefferson County jail and Lillian to forty-five days. In addition, both were to remain in jail until court costs were paid. The couple's lawyers appealed to the state supreme court at once.17

"It would make a pretty good plot for a 'Hill Top' novel, this struggle between the ideal and the conventional," commented the Star (London) about the Lucifer lovers when its reporter interviewed Lillian while she was visiting England in 1898. More seriously the Star pointed out that the Lucifer Match gained fame as the only couple in the English-speaking world to be imprisoned for their act of marriage. Although this claim is difficult to verify, the imprisonment of both the man and the woman in the Kansas free-marriage alliance did constitute a legal rarity.

Locked up on October 25, Lillian and Edwin occupied adjacent cells in the Oskaloosa jail. The sheriff and the jailer, according to Moses, both attempted to persuade the judge to allow Lillian to stay in a room at the jailer's house instead of in jail. Crozier
refused: "She must be punished," he ordered. Lillian's cell measured seven by ten feet, and its walls were covered with iron; it was a box with no windows. Although she had a lamp, the darkness was the worst thing about her cell, Lillian wrote in her first letter from jail.18

The case came before the high court in January 1887, presented by Overmeyer and Clemens. On the fourth of March the Kansas Supreme Court returned its opinion upholding the decision of the district court. The court treated the question as a test of the validity of common-law marriage, and as a test of the state marriage laws and of the legislature's power to regulate marriage and punish violators. In the principal decision, Justice Johnson affirmed the legislature's authority in marriage, ruled that the marriage laws were sound, and upheld the couple's punishment. This did not mean, however, that, according to Kansas law, common-law marriage was illegal; indeed the judge affirmed that "the mutual present assent to immediate marriage by persons capable of assuming that relation is sufficient to constitute marriage at common law." Such a marriage would be sustained as valid in the state of Kansas.

"The case was doubly notorious," a present-day official of the Kansas Supreme Court has noted, "in that for the first time the Supreme Court upheld the validity of a common-law marriage in Kansas through mandating a county jail honeymoon for violation of the marriage license statute." In essence the court had ruled that common-law marriage was legal but nevertheless punishable under law as noncompliance with the marriage statutes. Justice Johnson side-stepped the question of whether the Lucifer Match constituted a common-law marriage, while Chief Justice Horton purposely disregarded the issue of the couple's marital status: "The question, in my opinion, for consideration is, not whether Edwin Walker and Lillian Harman are married, but whether, in marrying, or rather in living together as man and wife, they have observed the statutory requirements." This construction infuriated Moses Harman, who wrote in Lucifer that the charge had effectively been changed by "a stroke of legerdemain" from that of living together without being married to that of "violation of regulations designed to secure a record of their marriage." The judge, wrote Harman, "seems utterly oblivious of the fact that if
the parties are married they cannot lawfully be punished for living together without being married."

In contrast, Judge Valentine ruled on the union itself: "In my opinion, the union between E. C. Walker and Lillian Harman was no marriage, and they deserve all the punishment which has been inflicted upon them." According to common law, wrote the judge, "the mere living together as husband and wife of a man and woman competent to marry each other, with the honest intention of being husband and wife so long as they both shall live, will constitute them husband and wife, and create a valid marriage. But that is not this case. In the present case, the parties repudiated nearly everything essential to a valid marriage, and openly avowed this repudiation at the commencement of their union."¹⁹

The defense intentionally raised a women's rights issue in the trial, testing the degree to which marriage could legally subjugate the woman. In the mid nineteenth century many states had passed Married Women's Property Acts which allowed wives some basic rights in the ownership and negotiation of property which had been denied to them under common law. Interpreted by traditionalist judges, however, the laws did not immediately alter the status of women. Numerous cases in several states between 1853 and 1883, for instance, upheld that "the earnings of the wife still belong to her husband, as at common law. The married women's property acts have made no change in this respect." A Tennessee decision in 1877 held that the whole body of the common law on the subject of the domestic relationship "is the primary law of Tennessee." As late as 1893 a Nebraska court held that the earnings of the wife, made while she is living with her husband and is engaged in no separate business, are the property of the husband. An 1886 Indiana decision ruled that "while the statutes remove, as a general rule, the disabilities of a married woman, the common-law rule that a husband and wife are to be regarded as one person still prevails." Likewise, many decisions, even in the twentieth century, have denied the wife's right to be known by her maiden name. By about 1900 the interpretation of the property laws regarded wives with more favor, but the man clearly remained the legal head of the household, with special rights that his wife was bound to respect.²⁰

Justice Horton responded to these issues in the Walker-Harman
case by conceding that a married woman could legally retain her maiden name; that she had "the same control of her person and property as her husband," and that "the wife does not merge her individuality as a legal person in that of her husband." Compared to existent legal interpretations, this opinion of a high court represented a victory of sorts for the *Lucifer* lovers.

Horton enlarged upon the position of women in Kansas, which, in fact, was a comparatively advanced state in regard to women's rights. Besides enjoying equal property rights, women in Kansas could participate in municipal elections, for "here the burden of a common prejudice and a common ignorance against woman has been wholly removed," he effused, not bothering to explain the seeming contradiction of limited suffrage. Horton concluded with the suggestion that the couple unite themselves in an honest marriage ceremony, "then over their union there can be no contention. Then the wife may be to the husband in law and in deed, 'A guardian angel o'er his life presiding. Doubling his pleasures, and his cares dividing.'"

At the time of the high-court decision the couple were still in jail. They had legally served their sentences, but they had refused to pay court costs. Lillian, whose shorter sentence had been completed in December, had refused to allow the costs to be paid and had refused to leave jail, even though Moses had made a special trip to fetch her. This act forced the press to a grudging reversal of an earlier opinion that Lillian was a mere child, used as a pawn by her elders. "She's gritty, though misguided," commented the normally venomous *Oskaloosa Independent.*

In a letter in *Lucifer,* Lillian had pointed out that it cost the county enough to keep a person in jail—sixty cents per day—and that the financial aspects of imprisonment cut both ways. Collecting her debt of $56.60 would *cost* the county, she promised. Some friends insisted that, for her health, she should pay the costs and go free; but she disagreed. To compromise on this point would be to admit that their relationship was merely a clandestine love affair. Furthermore, the girl, who had just turned seventeen, noted that clandestine love affairs historically had done nothing whatsoever for the emancipation of woman.

Moses and George Harman, now forced to run *Lucifer* and the job shop by themselves, had little time to cheer the prisoners in
Oskaloosa. Then, on 23 February 1887, officials arrested the two journalists on charges of obscenity because of the "awful letters" in *Lucifer*. With Lillian and Edwin in jail and with Moses and George likely to be there soon, the future of the *Light Bearer* looked dim. Lillian and her husband acknowledged the peril:

We are willing to endure [imprisonment] in the cause of woman's sex emancipation. But we knew then, as now, that that was the paramount issue only so long as Pen, Paper, Tongue and Mail were free. When freedom of discussion and investigation is threatened there is no longer any question which can rightfully take precedence to that.²³

After six months in prison the couple paid the costs and were set free, sacrificing a lesser principle for the greater one, as they saw it.