

**THE FIVE FIENDS;**

—OR,—



Likeness of Kate Bender, from the Photograph found in  
Breakerman's Pocket.

THE BENDER

**HOTEL HORROR**

IN THE WESTERN PRAIRIES.

# THE FIVE FIENDS:

OR,

## The Bender Hotel Horror in Kansas.

THIS FAMILY OF FIENDS HAVE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS  
BEEN SYSTEMATICALLY MURDERING TRAVELLERS  
WHO STOPPED AT THEIR HOTEL OR STORE,

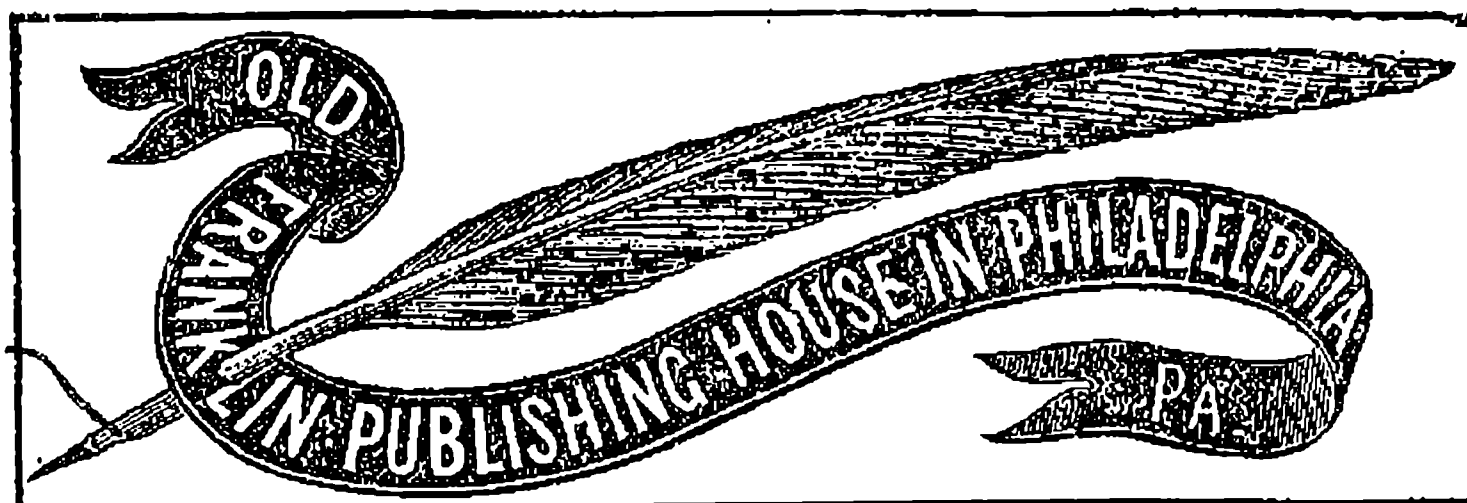
BY A MOST SINGULAR METHOD,

WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN DISCOVERED UNTIL THE KILLING  
OF DR. YORK, THE BROTHER OF SENATOR YORK,  
OF KANSAS.

THIS BOOK CONTAINS FULL AND STARTLING DETAILS OF  
THEIR LIVES AND AWFUL CRIMES.

*IT IS CERTAIN THAT THEY HAVE MURDERED OVER  
ONE HUNDRED PEOPLE!*

PUBLISHED BY



# THE BENDER HOTEL HORROR

I N K A N S A S.

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ABOUT a year ago not only Kansas, but the whole country was terribly excited over the discovery of the hideous tragedies that had been perpetrated in their hotel, or rather store, by the Bender family. These horrible deeds of blood and robbery had been going on between four and five years, and were only brought to light by the following circumstance.

On the ninth day of March, Dr. William H. York, the brother of York, who exposed Senator Pomeroy's attempted bribery, started to go to his home in Independence, from Fort Scott. He was mounted upon a fine horse. His family were anxiously expecting him, and consequently when he did not arrive they were very much worried, because there was a certain important piece of business for him to settle, and they knew he would hasten home for that express purpose.

Day after day went by, and still he did not come, and the conclusion his family arrived at, was that he had been taken sick. But even then, they argued that he would certainly have sent them a message to say so. The next supposition was, that he had been waylaid and murdered by some of his brother's enemies, who had vowed vengeance against all the York family. So it was determined to institute a search for the missing man, and scouts went out at once to Fort Scott. From the Fort they traced him as far as Cherry Vale, in Labette county. There all became an insoluble mystery. All traces vanished as completely as smoke wastes away in upper air.

Cherry Vale is a small town on the Leavenworth, Lawrence and Galveston Railroad, in Labette county, about fifty miles from the southern boundary line of the State.

The scouts inquired very closely in Cherry Vale and its vicinity for any clue that might lead them on York's trail, and in the course of their inquiries they came upon a farmer with whom they talked as follows:

"Who might you be looking for?" asked the farmer.

"Doctor York, who came here from Fort Scott," was the reply.

"Wall, gentlemen," rejoined the farmer cautiously, "I don't know as I oughter to say anything to injure innocent characters, but it does seem to

me that there's most too many folks a disappearin' round this region. I've noticed the thing going on for two or three years past."

"Do you suspect any persons in particular?" asked the scouts.

"Yes, I do, gentlemen. But then you know it's a mighty ticklish job to point at certain folks and say things which, after all, may not be so and then get yourself in the devil's own trouble for your pains."

"You just tell us then, like a true man ought to, and we will pass our word of honor as men to you, that we will not say a single syllable about who told us."

"Oh, it isn't that I fear anything like harm to myself about telling; but we may often suspect the wrong parties of doing things, when in reality they are innocent, and I tell you I would feel worse than mean if I happened to be mistaken."

"Well, can't you tell us on the condition that we don't raise any excitement, but that we follow up your information quietly for ourselves?"

"Yes, I guess I could."

"All right, then, we will make you the promise, and stick to it sure."

"Good enough, then," said the farmer. "You all look like straight men, and so I'll tell you. You jest take this road going south from Cherry Vale here, till you come to Bender's store, or hotel, as they call it. It's right in a swale of the prairie, as I tell you, about three mile out. When you get there, tell them you are going to put up o'er night. And be mighty careful you don't go to sleep there, but keep your eyes skinned, and see if you don't find out something. I haven't been in that locality for a month or more, but I'm satisfied there's something wrong about that settlement. There's no need for me to say more now, except to say again—Don't go to sleep in the hotel, but keep your eyes skinned all the time."

The scouts thanked the farmer, and bidding him good-day, rode off toward the mysterious Prairie Hotel kept by the Benders.

They had ridden about a mile, when they met a man galloping toward them and coming in the direction of Cherry Vale. As he got abreast, he suddenly reined up his horse.

"Are you from Cherry?" asked he, pointing toward the town.

"Yes," was the laconic reply.

"Well, there's something wrong out here at the Bender ranche. It is deserted. The stock they left was all tied up and starved to death."

The scouts were instantly in a fever of curiosity, although they said nothing to indicate their own interest in the matter. And they at once therefore, proposed to the horseman to ride back with him and investigate the mystery. He consented, and, all together, the party galloped back to Bender's deserted house. During the short time of the ride the stranger imparted to the scouts his statement as follows:

"I wanted to come up to Cherry for something, and as I chanced to go by Bender's, I seen that it was shut up, as though they had pulled up stakes

and lit out. Just as I noticed this, how's'ever, there was something else struck me as mighty queer, which was, that just in the off corner of the lot was a dead calf tied to the rail. And, from the looks of the beast, I made up my mind that it had been left there, and starved to death. That was so queer that I decided to stop and take a nearer look at things, for it didn't seem to be the dandy, you know, to leave calves that way. When I reached the house I seen it was deserted, and had been left for some time at least. I didn't go inside; for that ranche has got a devil of a queer reputation. But now that I've got you chaps for company, we'll give it a good ransacking, and see what devil's work they have been at for all these years past."

One of the scouts was Mr. Edward York, a brother of the missing man, and he felt a strange, ominous sensation coming over him as he approached the deserted house, as though the awful fate of his unfortunate relative was already forcing its presence upon him.

Soon the party arrived at the hotel, and, dismounting, quickly commenced their search. Neither doors nor windows were fastened, so the scouts had no trouble in gaining ingress to the building and admitting the honest light of heaven. Within the searchers found pieces of furniture and many other evidences that the flight of the Benders had been sudden as well as concealed.

After the first cursory glances about the place, that object which most struck the attention of the party, was a trap door that was let into the floor about two feet away from the foot of the bedstead. This trap Mr. York raised, but was obliged immediately to shut down again, by reason of the horrible stench that floated up out of the pit it concealed from view.

"My God, boys!" exclaimed he, turning white with mingled dread and anxiety, "there's some awful wickedness been taking place here."

Indeed, so overcome was he by the fear that in the yawning opening at his feet he would find the corpse of his missing brother, that he asked one of his companions to continue the search. "I haven't the heart to do it myself," groaned he.

One of the others at once raised the trap, and, having lit a long twisted wisp of hay for a rude torch, kneeled on his knees, and, reaching the light as far down as his arm could hold it, he peered to the bottom, which he could by this means easily see at a distance of about six feet.

"There don't seem to be any bodies there at all," exclaimed he, somewhat surprised, as he stood up and looked round into the faces about him. "But, here! two of you take hold of my hands, and let me down into the infernal hole, and I'll soon tell you what's there."

While one took the hay torch, two of the others gave the speaker a hand, and allowed him to slide gradually down till his feet rested on the bottom of the pit, when they released him, and he who held the torch gave it to the bold, determined fellow, who hurried to complete his search while the light should last.

Sure enough, there were no bodies. But what could cause such a horrible smell, thought all. As he stepped around in the pit, the scout remarked how soft and muddy the earth was. As he was speaking, a white-handled pen-knife he had in his vest pocket fell out. As he picked it up, he noticed a peculiarity in the color of the *mud* which adhered to it, and, on further examination, he found it to be coagulated human *blood* and *gore*!

"Good God! this is blood!" he exclaimed, in a loathing voice. "What kind of monsters could these devils have been?"

Ejaculations of horror, mingled with rage and detestation, burst from every lip as the scout uttered these words, and held up the torch and the knife together, so that his companions could see that he was correct.

"Where can the bodies be from which this blood was taken?" inquired Mr. York, half-speaking to himself and half to his friends.

"Let's go out and take a look round the plot, and see what we can see," suggested another.

"Yes," acquiesced he who was in the pit, "let's try that. There's no bodies in here, that's certain."

At this suggestion, therefore, all the party at once adjourned to the garden, as the Benders used to call the patch that surrounded their cabin. With keen eyes, ready to detect the slightest suspicious circumstance, each man began a systematic inspection of the ground. All at once one of the scouts exclaimed:

"Here's a lump of subsoil here on top of this hammered place that ought not to be here, that's certain!"

"And there, right across that old furrow," said another, "I can see a straight line. *That's a grave, you bet!*"

All felt convinced that it was so. A long wagon rod, which was in the shed by the dwelling, was procured, and the party began driving the iron-shod point down into the earth, at short intervals, wherever they imagined that the ground looked as though it had been disturbed, or at all broken.

At the exact spot where the lump of subsoil had been found, the rod was pushed down quite easily a certain distance, when it came in contact with a resisting body of some sort. There were no spades about; but one of the scouts mounting his horse, rode off, and soon returned with half a dozen. Meantime the probing with the rod had continued, and resulted in the discovery of fresh graves in all directions.

When the spades arrived, digging was vigorously commenced, and in a very short space of time the first body was exhumed. It was that of a man, stripped of all clothing, except the shirt, and had evidently been thrown into the excavation with the face downward.

"God of mercy!" exclaimed Mr. York, in a suppressed agony of voice, "that's my poor brother, the doctor!"

And so it was, surely.

While examining the corpse for certain marks by which it could be iden-

tified, the nature of the wounds causing death was found to be as follows: With a heavy hammer, or hatchet butt, the back of his head had been completely crushed in, while on each side of the skull the same deadly weapon had been used to drive in the parietal bones. Though any one of these wounds was amply sufficient to have caused death, yet, apparently with no other motive than a tiger-like desire to revel in blood, the brutal murderers had cut York's throat so completely as nearly to sever the head from the body.

The next grave discovered contained the bodies of George W. Longcor and his little daughter. This was the most frightfully fiendish deed, as will be seen further on.

Mr. Longcor had been killed exactly in the same manner as Mr. York. His body had then been pitched into the freshly dug grave; and, more horrible than all, the little girl, a pretty, innocent child, with long soft brown hair, had been thrown down *alive* upon the corpse of her father, while the Bender fiends hurriedly shovelled the earth and clods upon her till they had smothered out her life with her last gasping cry for mercy.

We never read a more brutal, awful thing than this; but it is true, as the scouts could tell from the position in which the corpse of the child was found. She was partly on her knees, with her hands clasped in a prayerful attitude, and her face and head inclined upward. Her father, with parental solicitude, had carefully clad his little daughter in warm clothing, and not a particle of this clothing was removed by her fiendish destroyers, thus proving that they had had no use for children's clothing. Her fur cape and hood were still upon her, and even her little red mittens had not been removed from her hands, but were still upon the latter, as the men lifted her up out of the rude coffinless grave.

By this time large numbers of people arrived upon the scene, who had heard of the dreadful discovery, and curses and execrations could be heard on all sides against the perpetrators of these diabolical acts of bloody murder and rapacious robbery.

Hardened men were moved to tears as they stood and looked at the bodies of Mr. Longcor and his child, and could they only have laid hands on the Benders, there cannot be the slightest doubt but that they would have burned them to death with their late abode of sin and blood.

The probing and digging were kept up incessantly all through the night fresh volunteers taking the rod, and spades, and torches, as fast as the others grew too weary to proceed. Eight bodies altogether were dug up and recognized by acquaintances, relatives or friends; and all were killed in precisely the same manner.

One peculiarity struck all the spectators. Each corpse had had the left arm crossed upon the breast before being buried. Why this should have been done, was of course a mystery to the scouts, but the reason will be

seen further on in the confession of Kate, the fondish daughter, who was hung subsequently in Texas.

Among the spectators at this awful scene was a man named Breckerman; and some person remarked that Breckerman was an intimate friend of the Benders, and had often been known to pass a great deal of his time at their store. This was enough to fire the excitement, and, before he knew where he was, the miserable wretch was pulled into the house, a rope slipped round his neck, and he jerked up to a beam in the ceiling, so that he was half stunned with the blow he received by the contact of his head with the beam.

Then he was let down, and the mob, with clenched fists and glaring eyes, yelled and shouted in his ears:

“You know about some of these murders. Tell us all about it, or we’ll hang you up for sure.”

“I don’t! I don’t!—mercy, gentlemen,” gasped Breckerman, more dead than alive. “I am innocent! I swear before God! I”—

“He’s a liar! Up with him!” shouted several furious voices, and again his quivering body was dangling by the neck from the noose.

He was let down again after this second choking.

“Confess! you Dutch hell-hound! Did you help? Where are them other devils gone to?”

Strange as it may appear, this time, although he was so much exhausted that the lynchers were obliged to hold him up, yet Breckerman was now calm and collected, as with the desperation of man who sees certain death before him. And he managed to say:

“If you cowardly fellows are going to hang me without giving me a chance to tell you why I went to the Benders, and so clear myself, why you’ll have to do it; but if you are men, and treat me like a man, I can do it to your satisfaction. If I don’t, then you can hang me!”

This exhibition of dogged bravery undoubtedly saved Breckerman’s life; for the moderate men of the lynchers admired his grit, and stayed the more furious of their companions, who were unanimously for running him up and finishing him.

“Hold on! hold on, men! let us hear him through first, and see if his story will hold water. Hands off that rope, men, and all be quiet. Now, Breckerman, go ahead with what you have to say. But tell the truth, or you’ll hang for sure.”

Thus admonished the intended victim said:

“I know I used to come here a good deal to this house, but I swear, before God, that I knew nothing of what was going on. I used to come to see the old man’s daughter, Kate. I was soft on that gal, and if all this awful stuff had not turned up, I would have been married to her this Easter coming.”





"What proof can you give us that what you say is true?" fiercely and suspiciously inquired one of the lynchers.

"I don't know, unless this'll do."

And he hauled from his pocket a wallet, out of which he took a gold wedding ring, inside of which were engraved the words, "To Kate." Besides this, he had there another trinket in the shape of a small, cheap locket, wrapped carefully in a scrap of newspaper. In one side of this locket was a half-obliterated ferotype of the identical Kate Bender, looking down at and caressing a little dog. On the other side was a bunch of light hair, and it was the grease which had once been upon this hair that had doubtless so nearly spoiled the ferotype. Or perhaps the stolid, but really affectionate fellow, had kissed the picture a good deal, for that he loved the pretty but fiendish Kate, there was no doubt, as the next incident showed.

One of the scouts seized the picture rudely, and glancing at it in a contemptuous way, said something about Kate which we cannot print. Breckerman, though in the midst of the crowd who were going to hang him, snatched back the trinket, and exclaimed:

"You're no man 'o talk that way about any woman; and if nobody here will interfere, just as bad as I'm hurt, I'll take the risk of knocking your head off, and you can have the same chance at me. So, if you're a man, fix yourself."

Breckerman thrust the locket and ring, and wallet back into his pocket, and shaking himself loose from those who held him, made as though he would spring upon the traducer of Kate.

"Stop this. Stop this!" exclaimed the oldest of the crowd, "I believe the man is innocent. Let him go! Let him go!"

The advice was at once seconded, and Breckerman was at once hustled away by three or four powerful men, one of whom said:

"Don't stop now to make any more bother. Just clear out, or the crowd will hang you any way."

Seeing it was his best plan to take this advice, Breckerman did so, and walked away from the cursed spot at a rapid gait, soon disappearing in the darkness that lay on the prairie like a deathly pall.

All the rest of that night, and throughout the entire next day, the search was kept up, while the eager crowd of curious spectators grew in size every hour; many coming from distances of a hundred and fifty miles to satisfy their intense curiosity to see or hear something new of the dreadful tragedies which had startled the land with their enormity.

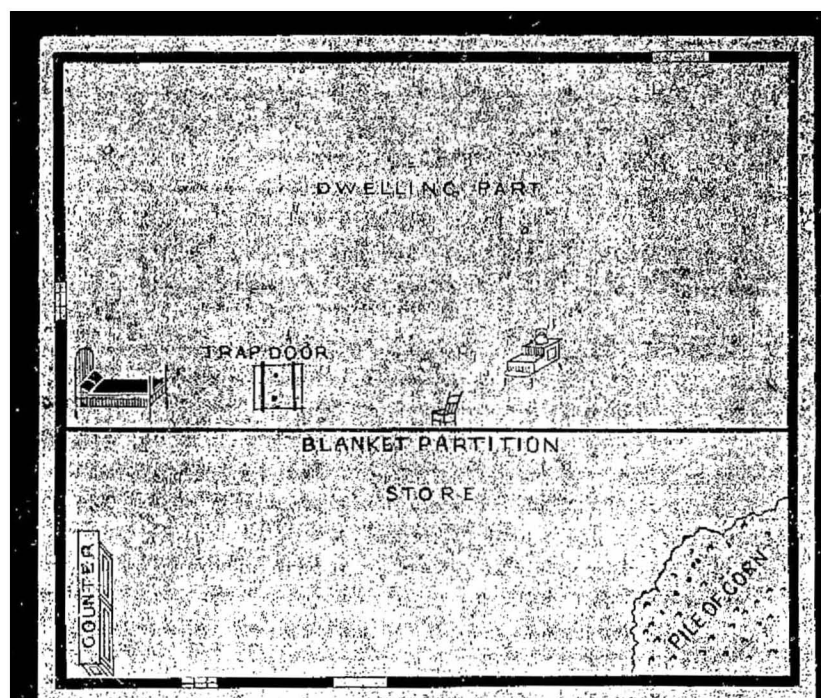
## THE BENDER HOTEL HORROR.

### HOW THE MURDERS WERE ALL COMMITTED.

The peculiarity and evident similarity of the means used to commit the under murders struck everybody with surprise, and all were convinced that the fiends had adopted a studied and regular method of perpetrating their bloody crimes.

First, in the selection of their house, they had chosen a spot that, on account of the natural formation of the ground, enabled them to see in all directions the approach of any person for a distance of two miles at least. At the same time no one could see either them or what they were doing. In this way, even if some traveller were to be seen coming at the exact moment they started to commit one of their butcheries, they would still have time left to finish it and completely conceal every trace by the time the new comer should reach the store.

We have had the following description of the house and the manner in which the murders were committed, most carefully written by an eyewitness. And to complete the understanding of this description, we had the annexed engraving drawn. The reader must imagine that the roof has been removed, and that he is looking down directly into the house from above, exactly as a bird might view it.



The Bender House was divided into two unequal portions by a partition made of cloth, muslin, and parts of skin robes all sewn together, and stretched from floor to ceiling, so as to form quite a neat job for a wall. On the south side of this partition was the stove. At the west extremity of the south room stood the counter, a rough enough affair; the door and one window being to the east of it. In the southeast corner was a large pile of corn heaped on the floor, while standing about the latter were such articles as are generally found in a store of that description. A few rude shelves here and there clinging to the walls contained various other and lighter things for sale.

The west end of the cloth partition, directly opposite the bed, was loose, to permit of easy communication between the dwelling and store, and also for a more deadly purpose, as will be seen further on.

Now then, a traveller entered the store, and, while he was making a purchase, he was eagerly scanned by Old Man Bender. If the latter thought he was worth while killing—that is, if he thought, from his own appearance, or that of his wallet, that he had plenty of money about him, the old scoundrel would give a signal by dropping an old coal bell on the floor.

As soon as Kate heard this, she would run into the store, and, after a short excitement and an exchange of remarks between herself and father, she would succeed in engaging the attention of the stranger. From that moment his fate was sealed, for, besides being quite handsome, Kate was a most charming talker.

Selecting some subject that her quick perception recommended to her as appropriate for her design, she would soon enlist the intended victim in an animated discussion, and keep him at it till the old woman would thrust her head into the store and call “Supper,” or “Dinner,” as the case might be.

The old man at once invited the stranger most cordially to have a little; and, in case the latter was backward, or attempted to refuse, Kate’s blandishments were brought to bear, and, led by the satanic siren, he would pass through the opening into the dwelling part of the house, *never to come forth again alive.*

As soon as the meal was over, Kate would challenge the stranger to a trial of mesmerism, on which subject she had taken care to converse very fully and artfully already. Of course the challenge was at once accepted. She placed a chair against the cloth partition, bade the guest be seated, and told him to lean his head back and close his eyes. He did so, and she, placing her hand under his chin, would force his head back, laughing aloud all the while to divert his attention.

In this manner the back of his head was indented, as it were, into the partition, and of course made a bulge on the store side.

Meantime the old man, or son, as the case might be, had slipped into the store and stood ready with a hammer swung back. And the instant

the bulge was made in the cloth, he would fetch it a blow with all his strength. In this way the victim's skull was crushed in like an eggshell, and he fell dying on the floor at the feet of Kate, the fiendish daughter, who had thus lured him to destruction. But the deed was not yet complete. With all speed the quivering body was pulled to the pit, the trap door of which had been raised a moment previously, and, with a second hammer a blow was given on each side, just above the ear, which smashed the parietal bones to splinters. Next the clothing, with the exception of the shirt, was stripped from the corpse, all the four fiends assisting. The body was then pushed still further on, so that the head and neck projected over the mouth of the pit. In this position the old man, with a sharp butcher's knife, cut the victim's throat completely from ear to ear. Thus the body would be left to bleed till night. In case any person approached the house, the body was unceremoniously pitched down into the pit, and the trap door closed, thus concealing everything from prying eyes.

At night the father and son went out into the lot, and, measuring off the grave, would deliberately dig it, taking care to set aside the top soil on one side, so that after the burial they could shovel it back into its proper position. The next day they would plough and harrow over the spot, and thus, as they imagined, efface all marks or traces of their frightful crime.

And, as we have already remarked, the actual discovery of the graves by the scouts was due entirely to the fact of a lump of subsoil having carelessly been left by the Benders on the surface of the grave of Doctor York.

### THE CHASE OF THE FIENDS.

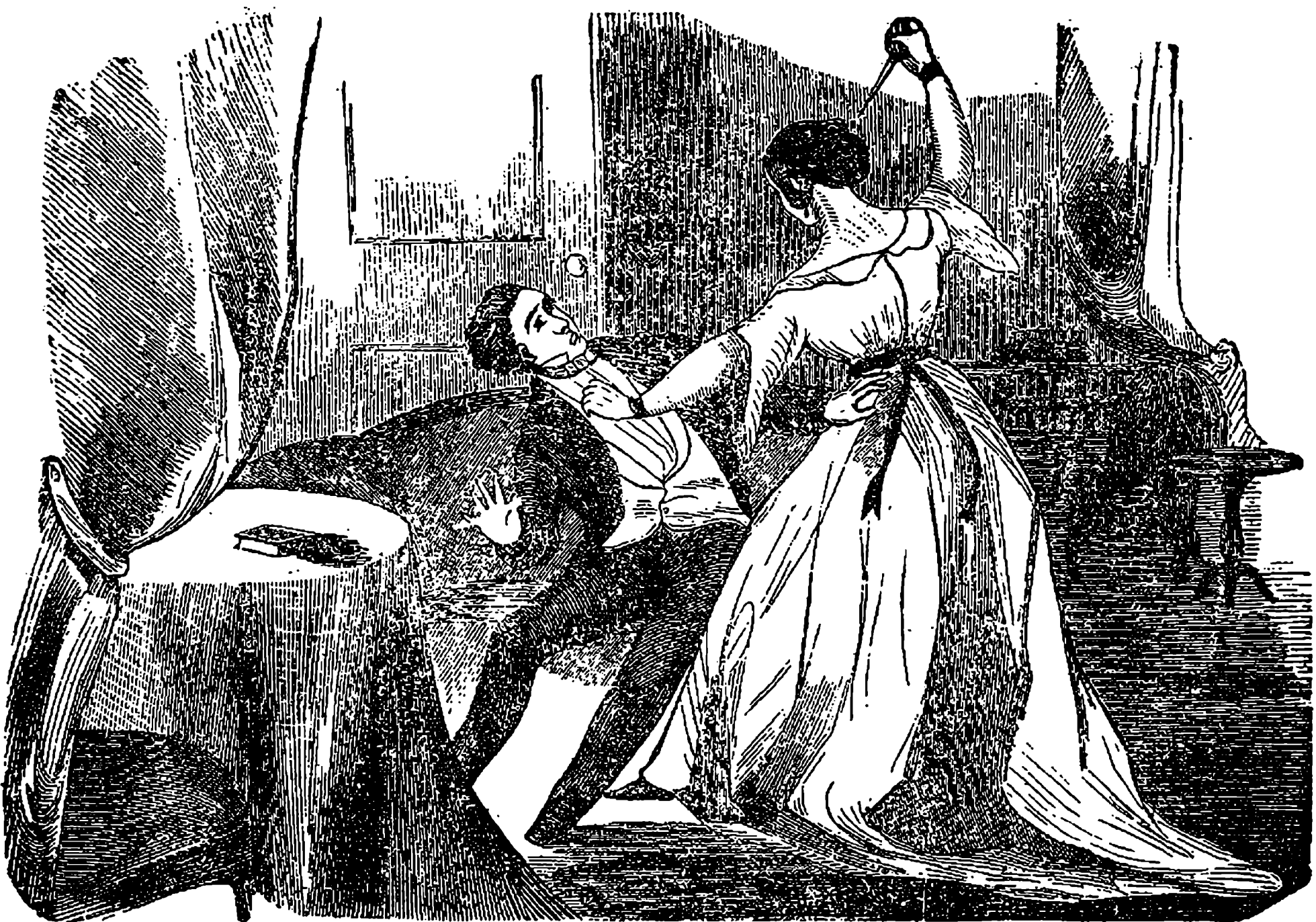
Of course, immediately after the first excitement consequent on the discovery of the murders had passed away, the next step was to trace and arrest, if possible, the blood-stained fugitives. Couriers mounted on swift horses, and the telegraph, were at once enlisted in the service, and it was thought certain that but a short time would elapse ere the Benders would be in custody.

But, unfortunately, they had had a fair start of at least fifteen or twenty days, during which time it was likely they could reach very many places of concealment that would be comparatively secure from the sharpest search that could be instituted against them.

For weeks, it will be remembered, the papers were filled with glowing accounts of the arrest of all, or portions of the notorious family. The most positive of these narratives was the following, which, however, turned out not to be the right party at all. And yet the circumstantial evidence appeared most convincing.

*From the Cedar Rapids (Iowa) Republican.*

"No little excitement was occasioned on our streets last night by the supposed arrest, and imprisonment in the jail of this place, of no less a



Suddenly the sweetly smiling woman, whipped out a stiletto, and plunged it into the poor man's heart.

personage than the notorious Bender, of Kansas, who was the perpetrator of the late horrible murders that were committed in that State.

On Saturday night, a strange-looking man was hanging around the town of Ely, which is a station on the Burlington, Cedar Rapids, and Minnesota Railway, eight miles south of this place. The actions of this man were very restless, and looking as though he was on the watch for some one. He was suspected at once by J. L. Devault, the railway agent at that place, as a man who had committed some great crime, and who was dodging through the country to avoid his pursuers.

Mr. Devault having just read a minute description of each member of the Bender family, soon discovered that this strange man at Ely answered the description in every particular. He at once telegraphed to Mr. Church, the operator in the B., C. & M. office at this place, for an officer to come down and arrest the man. Not being able to send word to the sheriff, Mr. Church communicated the information he had received to our city officers, acting upon which Marshal Hiel, Hale, Cottle, and Joe secured a livery wagon and started for Ely.

In the meantime, Mr. Devault and a few of the people of Ely had got the suspected man in a box car, and held him there by means of conversation and other devices until the officers of the law arrived. They were determined at the same time to hold him at all hazards, if he attempted to escape. The officers arriving, at once went to the car, and being satisfied, from a description they had seen of Bender, that this man answered to it fully, they felt it their duty to arrest him, and hold him in custody until his case was finally determined.

In going from the car to the wagon, he showed that his feet were very sore, occasioned, undoubtedly, by long-continued walking.

On his way to this place he admitted that he had lived near Independence, Kansas; that he lived on a farm, and that he had an orchard. He also spoke several times of his daughter Kate, who, he said, had four thousand dollars in her possession, and that she kept nearly all the money, having only given him a small amount of it. He denounced Kate in severe terms for her thievish conduct in keeping the money. He also said his name is Bender.

John Bender, or 'old man Bender,' is fifty or sixty years old, about five feet seven inches in height, rather round shouldered, with very dark complexion, and very heavy beard, cut rather short; hair long and dark, mixed with gray, and very heavy eye-lashes; nose sharp and rather long; hands spare, with cords upon the backs prominent; gait slow and sluggish,—seemed rather to stalk around than walk; weight 140 to 150 pounds.

He had a sleepy, downcast look, and was grim and surly in his deportment. His cheeks are sunken and rather low. He speaks English in a very broken manner, his native tongue being Low Dutch. His voice seems

to come rather from his chest than his mouth. He is slightly bald, and is careless and slovenly in his dress."

The last of these newspaper accounts places the arrest in the Mormon Territory of Utah, near Salt Lake City. We give it exactly as it appeared. It is about as circumstantial as the others.

"Old man Bender is fifty-five or sixty years old, about five feet seven inches in height, round-shouldered, dark-complexioned, has heavy beard, cut short; hair long and dark, mixed with gray; heavy eye-lashes, sharp nose, hands spare, with prominent cords on the backs; gait slow and sluggish; weight 140 to 150 pounds; sleepy, downcast look; grim and surly in manner. His voice seems to come from the breast instead of his mouth. Speaks English in a very broken manner, his native tongue being Low Dutch."

"The above is the description of the fiend as published by the Kansas authorities, and a man answering it exactly has just been taken here in Salt Lake City, and lies in the jail here awaiting further developments. I have seen him, and with the exception that the prisoner is *not* dark, and that his beard is *not* short, the description is perfect.

"A look at the prisoner here is sufficient to stamp him as perfectly capable of all that has been alleged against Bender.

"When taken, all the circumstances were against him. He could not tell where he came from; and when told why he was arrested, he held up his hands in astonishment, and said:

"See, I have lost my right-hand little finger, and my left-hand little finger. I could not have killed all these people. Besides, Bender had all his fingers."

"Soon after his arrest, a strange young man asked to see the prisoner, and the jailor admitting him, the two had a long talk together. After the young man left, it struck the jailor that his manner had been exceedingly intimate with the old man, so much so, indeed, that he concluded he must be the son. So he at once started trailers on the hunt, who, it is reported, have come up with and captured the mysterious young man. As yet, however, there is no confirmation of the report.

"To-day Mr. H. L. Crane, who was employed in the office of the county clerk in Pike county, Illinois, in 1866, had a conversation with the prisoner, and says he is satisfied that he is the identical Bender, beyond doubt. To him the prisoner admitted that he had a brother-in-law of the name of Schmidt, who died in Pike county at that time, and that he had been appointed the administrator of his small estate, at which time and place Mr. Crane, on several occasions, necessarily had business intercourse with him.

"Bender also admitted that he had been farming in Kansas after that, and Mr. E. Milhorn, a gentleman who had been in the employment of the Government, and supplied the Indians on the Osage Reservation, stated that he had seen the prisoner every day at Bender's ranche, and that he



knew he was one of them. Milhorn had been engaged constructing a road that went by Bender's place, and had seen him while thus employed. His testimony as to the identity of the prisoner with the Bender he knew in Kansas is complete and positive.

"The mother and daughter, Kate, are still at large; but it is expected they also will soon be brought in. Late last autumn a woman came out of the mountains into the outer settlements of Provo, which is about forty miles south of this place. She was almost naked, and seemed at times mentally deranged. She told the most contradictory stories of her past life. One of her favorite statements was that she had been disappointed in love, and had wandered from Colorado into the mountains in Utah.

"A Mormon woman, touched at the sight of her distress, gave her a home, and also some clothing, telling her she might remain as long with her as she liked. Though thus kindly treated the woman one day bade her benefactress good by, and returned to the mountains from which she had come.

"I obtained from this Mormon lady a full description of the woman, and it agrees exactly with that of Kate Bender, as it was given by the authorities. I have also conversed freely with experienced persons here, and it seems to be their unanimous opinion that the whole Bender family have been hiding in one of the many gulches or canyons of the Wasatch Mountains. How they have maintained their existence in the rigorous, desolate region mystifies all. But I think I can account for it in this way. When they made up their minds to leave their house near Cherry Vale, they concluded that they must take with them a sufficient supply of provisions that would not take up much room, and yet that would last them for a long time. In this way they could travel by unused routes, and not being obliged to call on any one along the road to buy anything, why of course no one could possibly say, 'I saw those people; at such a time they stopped at our house to buy provisions.' I'm sure this was their plan of action, and in that way they easily reached the mountain recesses, where they have lain securely concealed all winter.

"Senator A. M. York, brother of the murdered doctor, is sure also that this man we have here now, is none other than Bender. He has urged Governor Osborne to issue a requisition to have the prisoner sent back to Kansas. The subjoined letters require no more comment than their own contents.

" EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, STATE OF KANSAS, }  
Topeka, March 19, 1874. }

" To ANDREW BURR, Chief of Police, Salt Lake City, U. T.

" SIR :

" Governor Osborne directs me to enclose you the letter that you will find herewith from Colonel A. M. York, of Independence, Kansas, a brother of one of the victims of the Bender family, in answer to your

letter of the 8d inst., enclosing a photograph of the man now under arrest in Utah Territory, awaiting identification as the old man Bender. The reward offered is the maximum authorized by law, viz. \$500 for the arrest and delivery to the Sheriff of Labette County, Kansas, for each member of the Bender family.

“ ‘ Very respectfully,

“ ‘ C. A. MORRIS, Private Secretary.’

“ ‘ ELK FALLS, HOWARD CO., KANSAS. }  
March 16, 1874. }

“ ‘ To GOVERNOR OSBOURNE.

“ ‘ SIR :

“ ‘ I enclose herewith a statement regarding the opinion of Bender’s neighbors of the picture you received from Utah. It is the first instance where any of the pictures sent here for identification have even so much as favored any of the family. In my judgment it is the picture of the old man Bender, and it seems to me that the statements of his former neighbors fully justify sending for him.

“ ‘ Very truly,

“ ‘ A. M. YORR.’ ”

### FORMER LIVES OF THE BENDERS.

Since public attention has been directed to this now notorious family of murderers, it turns out that they were guilty of the most frightful atrocities in years gone by, and that really they have never been anything else than the most horrible monsters, making a regular trade of murder, for the sake of obtaining money or whatever valuables chance might enable them to get from their miserable victims.

We have received from an esteemed gentleman, now residing in St. Louis, and who was one of the original company that made the celebrated overland journey with Fremont in 1842, the following account. We give it without any alteration whatever, and we have not the slightest doubt that the family referred to is none other than the old stock of the Benders, who then used their correct name, which was Liefen.

“ ‘ St. Louis, April 12, 1874.

“ ‘ GENTLEMEN :

“ ‘ I have your favor of 7th inst., requesting me to give you the details of my adventures while crossing the plain in 1842, with the expedition under General Fremont. I hardly know how long it would take me to put into readable book shape those stirring events, though doubtless they would be quite interesting reading for the present generation, who can, by the Pacific road, run across to San Francisco from Philadelphia in a *week* ! Truly I can hardly comprehend this myself. Sometimes we would be a

week going *twenty* miles, with no end of accidents and dreadful mishaps. It's wonderful to contemplate. The Pacific road directors ought to send out a party to gather up some of the deserted wagons and other relics of our expedition. I'll guarantee they'd find plenty of them this day lying *undisturbed*, just where we left them a quarter of a century ago. For I doubt if the foot of a white man, or even a digger Indian, has been over some of those awful spots since we bade them adieu. I do assure you there would be no more attractive curiosities for a cabinet in one of the depots of the company. Barnum would make a fortune on such a collection.

"But when I recall those past scenes and adventures, I am too apt to forget what I am about, and digress from the matter in hand. So, as the Frenchman says, 'let us return to our mutton.' Now about the narrative for your proposed book, I can give you lots of it, but the only trouble with me is the getting of it into right shape for the reading public. If I only had your editor, Wesley Bradshaw, here for a week, and let him clothe my rough facts in some of those fine word-draperies that he adorns his own productions in, we could, between us, get up a popular book. Persuade him to come out this summer and spend a hot week or two with me here, and my word for it, he shall come back to you as full of adventure and early pioneer history, as a bee from a ten-acre lot of white clover is full of honey.

"So much for that. But now then there is another subject, more exciting just now, which is this Bender horror over in Kansas. I've paid a great deal of attention to that affair, because I am satisfied that the Benders are identical with a family I once fell in with, named Liefen, who used to murder and rob, and in the same way as these Benders have been doing. There's no doubt but they are the same exactly, or rather what was left of them. To-night, when I go home, I will write you up an account of what I recollect about these fiends.

"Yours truly,

RABE LUKENS.

"P. S. As I send this off, I wish to say (as I have, perhaps, not made it sufficiently distinct in the enclosed narrative) that the three sisters and Liefen (now known as 'old man Bender') were really half-sisters and brother; that is, his father married the mother of the three girls. Liefen and they of course grew up together, and at the time of the Nauvoo excitement, he married the whole three, after the Mormon fashion. They started off to the wilderness, to escape the just vengeance of the community which they had thus shocked with their immorality."

### "THE MYSTERIOUS RANCHE.

"I am well assured that the Benders of Kansas and the Liefens of Texas are one and the same party; and if ever there was such a thing as

fiends being sent from hell to trouble and curse the earth, they were just these fiends.

“After my return from the Fremont expedition across the great plains to the Rocky Mountains, I was knocking around the various towns that had sprung up along the Missouri border, not doing anything much except wasting my time and money. I called it recruiting myself after the awful hardships of that memorable journey.

“Not long subsequently my ready money was all gone, and I found myself compelled to get into some sort of employment. This once decided upon, it did not take me more than a week to fall in with a man by the name of Strawn, who was going extensively into cattle and other operations in Texas.

“He was glad to come across me, and *vice versa*; so we were both well satisfied to close up our bargain, and the following Monday morning, splendidly mounted and equipped, he and I, with six men, started for Texas. We could have gone down on the boat, but Strawn, my employer, wished, for the sake of gaining information about certain routes, to travel down across the country. I was exceedingly well pleased with my position, as, beside giving me opportunities of adventure, and seeing more of life, I would have quite a snug sum of money coming to me at the end of our business arrangement. And even then, when this trip was over, I intended to re-engage again with Strawn, for he was a good, open-hearted, liberal fellow, a man among men.

“Nothing of any moment occurred until we approached Nagadotches. There, however, we fell in with an adventure that exceeded anything I had ever read or heard of, previously, for weird and horrid details.

“In those days travellers were few and far between, in those south-western countries, except, of course, during certain short seasons, when, along particular stretches, there would every now and then be a few go by. Also, houses were still more scarce than travellers, and, consequently, every traveller was always sure to stop at every house he came to, continuing his stay as long as circumstances permitted. Most especially would the stay be prolonged in case there was a woman in the house, no matter if she were old and ugly. We always liked to get to a house where there were women and children; and I have known hunters and trappers to ride twenty miles out of their road, just for the sake of stopping at a house that looked like home, because of the presence of women and children. And I must also add that, although the husbands or sons were often away, and the women folks left thus alone, I never knew the roughest fellows—and there would often be a score of them together—to offer the slightest insult. On the contrary, in those days a female was looked upon as a being equally sacred as an angel, except, of course, she was a lewd creature. But that kind very seldom came out into the wilderness. It was only the brave, honest, virtuous wives and mothers and daughters of the pioneers who would face the

hardships of that country, and it was these qualities that rendered them so sacred, even in the eyes of the roughest plainsmen.

"It was toward sunset that we came in view of a little house built a short distance away from the road, or rather path; for when I say road, it must be understood that I do not mean any nearer approach to the handy, fenced-in pikes of to-day, than a winding line of beaten down grass, now going through a middling good sized open swath of the forest, and then crooking along the side of a river or stream of water to the fording place.

"We were all surprised to see the habitation, for it came upon us suddenly, just as we turned a patch of woods.

"'Hurrah, lads!' exclaimed Martin, reining up his horse, 'we're in luck! I didn't know a ranche was so close as this. We won't go on to the crossing, but we'll stop here till morning.'

"'Right glad of it, Captain!' I replied, slipping quickly out of the saddle, while all the rest re-echoed my words and copied my act of dismounting.

"Leading our horses by their bridles, we approached the door, at which stood a youngish looking man, who stepped out as we came up, and said in broken English:

"'Goot aben, shentlémens. Comes you far away? Glad to see you. Hopple de horses und comes in mit der hause.'

"We promptly obeyed the request, which was made with all the clumsy, but ardent, earnestness and pleasant smiles imaginable. Our host led us into what we at once saw was the store, and begged us to be seated and rest ourselves on anything we could find to take the place of chairs. Acceding to this, we made ourselves quite comfortable, though half of the party squatted themselves right down on the floor, like Indians.

"'Don't see many beeples 'long dis way,' remarked the German.

"'No, I suppose not,' replied Strawn, in German, when he noticed the nationality of the storekeeper. 'And,' continued he, jokingly, 'there's not over many stores or ranches scattered round this region of country, I can tell you.'

"'Nein,' was all Liefen said, and with a manner that indicated he saw no joke about the remark.

"'How long have you been here?' asked Strawn.

"'Ach! 'bout nine, ten months. So!' answered Liefen.

"'Here alone, eh?' was the next query.

"'Nein,' drawled out the German, 'nein; mein familie here with me.'

"'Your wife?'

"'Yah, meine frau und szwei sisters.'

"At once the men assumed a different demeanor from what they had hitherto worn, the instant the presence of females was announced.

"'Lena! Lena!' called Liefen.

“And almost immediately quite a pretty woman came tripping from behind one end of the cloth partition next the counter. The whole arrangement of this Texas house was exactly a *fac simile* of the Bender House near Cherry Vale, Kansas. And that is one of the main reasons why I am satisfied that the Kansas fiends are the same as the Texas murderers.

“The moment we beheld Lena we nodded to her, and were quite in ecstasies when the smiling creature came forward and replied to our recognition in the most cordial manner, just as though she had known us all for years past. She spoke very good English, and said,

“‘Really, gentlemen, it is so seldom that we have any visitors in this lonely part of the country that it is quite an exciting event to have travellers stop. What part do you come from? Somewhere from toward the States, I suppose?’

“‘Yes, we have travelled down from Independence, across.

“‘Why, that’s an odd way to do, is it not?’ she naïvely inquired. ‘Don’t they generally take a boat down the river?’

“‘Yes, that is the general method, Miss Lena——’

“‘Ach! she ist nicht Miss Lena! She is mein frau!’ interrupted the German storekeeper with a grin.

“‘Beg pardon,’ replied Strawn—‘Mrs. Liefen.’

“‘Oh, I’m sure now,’ laughingly added the wife, ‘the mistake is complementary; don’t you all think so, gentlemen?’

“‘To be sure we do, and so ought your husband,’ bluntly answered Strawn for the party.

“‘Well, now, gentlemen,’ continued the handsome fiend (although at that moment we all thought her an angel), ‘you must be very much tired, as in want of something to eat. Sisters and I were just going to get supper for ourselves, so please excuse me, and we shall soon have a little bite read for you, too.’

“And, without waiting for our reply, the woman skipped back into that part of the house behind the partition. In a few moments more, amidst the rattling of pans, and dishes and cups, we heard her singing odd line of a song, in which something about a tired knight, home from the war had come to the cot of his lady love. She had quite a sweet, musical voice, and we listened intently, and with the keenest appreciation, to the melody, the chorus of which I may say, became perfectly ravishing in our imagination, as, at the same instant it fell on our ears, the delicious odor of fried onions assailed our noses.

“Now, no doubt, this will make nearly everybody who reads it laugh outright; but I solemnly assert the truth, for, to a trapper, or hunter, or traveller, accustomed to the awfully hard and monotonous fare he gets on the prairies, the smell of civilized cooking, especially of anything with onions in it, is perfectly enrapturing. And this was a fact well known to



The three fiends were in the very act of killing their drugged victim when the rescuers burst in upon them.

the fiends in whose den we were thus entrapped. It makes me tremble even now when I think of it.

“Shortly afterward, two other female voices were heard, singing in unison with Lena, and, what with the sweet strains, the rattling dishes, and the savory smells of the preparing supper, we were all in a fever of expectancy and pleasure, and could hardly talk with or give straight replies to Liefen, who, however, did not give us much trouble on that score, as he was quite taciturn; though of this we did not think much, as we supposed it was owing to the fact of his not being able to converse fluently in our own language.

“Our suspense was finally ended by Lena frisking through into the store again, and saying, with the sweetest smiles imaginable:

“‘Now, then, gentlemen, supper is all ready, if you will come in.’

“Of course none of us backed out, you may depend, but with eager steps and watering mouths we followed Lena into the dwelling part of the house.

“This was not a large room, and when we all assembled there, we completely filled it up. But for all that we did not postpone our attack on the savory meal the Liefen women had cooked for us. That these sharp creatures also fully understood the appetites of men under our circumstances, was shown by the fact that they had cooked enough, and plenty more, too, to satisfy the hungriest of us. When the meal was over, we topped off with a draught from our ‘generals,’ as we called the whisky flasks we always carried in our side pockets, and then, adjourning to the store, we fired our pipes, and enjoyed ourselves by lounging round and smoking till camping time, when we pitched our shelter tents close by the house, and turned in.

“Until bed-time the four Liefens mixed round among us in an exceedingly sociable manner, and we all had what the young folks of to-day would call ‘a splendid time.’

“One thing I noticed particularly was, that during the course of the evening Pauline, who was the youngest of the sisters, twice called Strawn into the dwelling part of the house; and we cracked several jokes, on the second occasion, as we heard him laughing most uproariously at something. But when he turned in with us for the night, I could not help observing that he was thinking quite seriously about something or other. Still this did not come to my mind till subsequent events forced it on my attention.

“The following morning we were all up at sunrise, and prepared to resume our journey,—not before the Liefens had made us ready a splendid breakfast, the best part of which was the coffee.

“Of course, the first thing we did, after getting our breakfast, was to hold a conversation as to how we should show our gratitude to the kind people who had entertained us so bountifully. The result was that we made up quite a handsome purse of money, and gave it to the old man.



who took it and thanked us, and wished us all a safe and prosperous journey.

“Strawn lingered at the side door till the rest of us had gone into line, and, as I looked back, I saw him leaning down from his saddle, and, while he shook hands with Pauline, say something to her. She was listening intently, a smile spreading over her features, and, as the two parted, she nodded her head and waved her hand to him.

“We had travelled about an hour and a half, when, all on a sudden, Strawn said:

“‘Boys, you go on slowly, and if you reach the town before I overtake you, stay there till I come. I want to go back to the store for something.’

“Without any other explanation or orders, he turned his horse and rode back. To be sure, we all had our ideas about why he really returned, and we got off some tall jokes at his expense. But as we were in his pay, we did not care, and thought we would have a good time till he overtook us.

“‘Strawn is struck, boys, sure, and he has gone back to court the Dutch girl, and next thing you’ll see him jogging back with a wife,’ remarked I, after we had been running on a good while about him, and shortly the subject was changed.

“We thought no more till night came, and we were just going into Nagadotches. No signs were there yet of his appearance. But still we thought he’d come before bedtime, and, as two of the men had been here before with him, they knew just what hotel to go to. We rode hither, and soon made ourselves quite at home.

“Strawn was still absent the next morning, and this nonplussed and surprised us greatly.

“We held a consultation as to what course to pursue, and concluded to send back two of our number to the store to inquire about him,—still under the hope, however, that they would meet him on his way to join us as he had promised.

“Night came again, but no Strawn with it, and, still more mysterious, neither one of the messengers. This was a dreadful event, for it could not be possible for all three to be staying at the store of the Liefens, or to be stopping anywhere on the road between that and Nagadotches. We began, therefore, to think very queer of the affair, and resolved that if none of them made their appearance by the next morning, to despatch two more men on the search, with explicit instructions to halt for nothing, but to return to us the very moment they obtained any clue whatever to the absentees.

“Accordingly, very early on the morrow the next two started back on their mission of inquiry. Thoughts of foul play came constantly into our minds—that is, into the minds of what remained of us, which was one man besides myself.

“The day wore on, and still no tidings came back, nor a single one of

the four we had sent to inquire. And when I say that we two remnants did not sleep much the ensuing night, I tell the simple truth.

“Morning came again, and still we had heard nothing. What was to be done now we hardly knew. But finally, after a good deal of talk, we both made up our minds to go back ourselves, and solve the awful mystery which enshrouded the fate of our friends. For we felt convinced that something had happened to them, be it what it might. The journey back being decided in the affirmative, the next thing was to settle *how* we should accomplish our object, and yet avoid whatever ill had met our comrades. We settled it as follows: Lots were to be drawn between us as to who was to go in advance. Whichever one it might be, was to go on cautiously, while the other was to follow at a distance of a quarter of a mile or so, according to circumstances, and, in case of any attack, he in the rear was to hurry up and help the one so assaulted.

“My comrade drew the lot that ordained him to the advance, and, according to our arrangement, we at once started off on our terrible journey; for we both felt a dread of that mysterious something to happen to us. We took the precaution, however, to arm ourselves thoroughly, and we pledged our sacred honors mutually to stand by each other to death

### THE MYSTERY SOLVED.

“Nothing whatever occurred to disturb our quiet ride, and I saw my friend enter the house of the Liefens, and I was within an ace of giving my horse the rein and dashing up after him, when something, I could not tell what, caused me to halt in my design. It seemed to tell me not to do it, but to stay back and watch what became of my companion. At first I felt mean like, as though I was not keeping my promise to him; but the feeling was irresistible, to wait and see what happened. I dismounted, and concealed myself where I could be secure from discovery, while, at the same time, I could see all that might transpire around the house.

“All that day I waited, anxiously watching and eagerly expecting every moment to see my comrade emerge from the store. But he did not do so, though several times I saw some one of the Liefens come out and re-enter. I never moved from my hiding-place till sundown, by which time I felt convinced that every one of the six men was within that cursed place, and also that *all were dead!* Then flashed to my remembrance the odd looks and words which had been given or said by the Germans, during our stay in their hellish abode. Then did all the tales I had ever read about Sauney Bean, the Land Pirates, and such characters come trooping into my mind, like horrible pictures. At first, as I left the spot where I had been concealed, I thought I would ride directly to the house and arrest the wretches, or blow their brains out. But, on sober second consideration, I saw that perhaps this might not only fail, but also that I myself might

quit, likely fall a fresh victim to the murderers. There might be several men there, and the house might be the rendezvous of a large, organized band of robbers.

"So, in view of all these contingencies, I made up my mind to ride back to Nagadotches and summon help to extirpate the whole infernal crew. Upon arriving at the hotel in the town, I told the landlord—his name was Stevens—and he at once called together a party of determined friends, who, under my leadership, rode back to the house of the Liefens.

"We did not know exactly how to complete our work, so as to make sure of obtaining proof positive of the crimes of which I knew in my own mind the Germans were guilty. Besides, among my companions, there was a sort of mysterious dread of the magic power of the mysterious Liefens. In the first place, the three women resembled each other so closely in size and general appearance, that a stranger could scarcely tell them apart. And, no doubt, to increase this, all three dressed exactly alike, even wearing their hair in one and the same fashion.

"During the time the Liefens had lived at the store, several of the men forming our party had chanced to call there once or twice, and they remembered this peculiarity. One of these fellows, although as brave as a lion in facing any known danger, was quite nervous, and half regretted joining our expedition.

"'You see,' said he, 'I don't mind fighting wild cats, or bears, or Indians; but, scalp me, if I aint afraid of witches like them three Dutch girls are.'

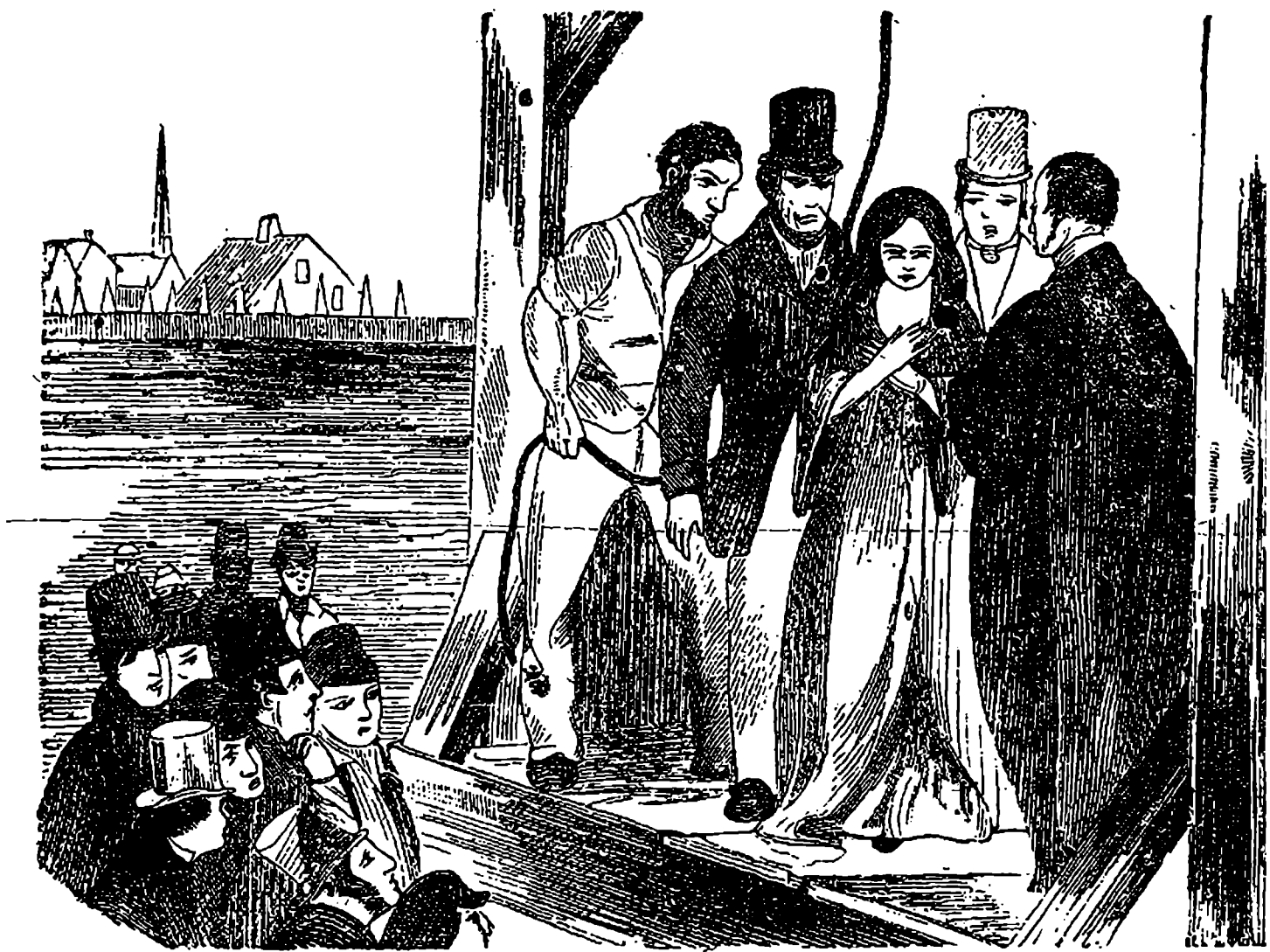
"I noticed that his remarks had a great effect on the rest of the party, and said:

"'I see you chaps are scaring, so we better give up and go back, with our fingers in our mouths.'

"This rallied them somewhat, and each voted to put the job through without flinching—even should Satan himself appear. But I did not have much confidence in their bravado, and therefore I proposed the following plan:

"Just as it was coming dark, I was to ride up alone to the store, and go in and see about the missing men. Meantime the rest were to approach the house, and when I gave the signal—which I was to do by discharging a pistol through the window—they were to rush in and make the capture.

"This being settled, we started at an hour that would bring us to the Liefens' house at dusk. The plan worked well, and just as the sun went down, and the shadows of night wrapped the face of the country in gloom, I boldly, and with quite an unconcerned manner, strode into the store. Liefen was sitting by the counter, smoking his pipe, and when he saw me, he leaped up with every exhibition of extraordinary joy, and, reaching forth his hand, grasped my *left* hand, for I took the precaution to keep my *right* in close proximity to the butt of my pistol, ready for instant use on



Execution of Pauline for her horrible crimes.

the defensive. I did this thing, however, in such a careless way, that he did not notice what I was really about.

“‘Ach! vot for you cooms pack, sir! But shtill I glad for to see you. Vere all you frients? Vot for you cooms back all alone. Or may pe you has your frients outside, eh! Haf yous any vons mit yous?’

“I saw the point of this shrewd questioning instantly; and, accordingly, replied:

“‘No, I’m entirely alone. And that’s the reason, because I don’t know what you’ve done with all my friends.’

“I laughed jokingly as I said this, and slapped him on the shoulder. ‘First,’ continued I, ‘Strawn came back, telling us he would overtake us soon. But he did not, and then we sent two men to look after him. They did not come back; then we sent two more to look after them. They did not return, and then we sent *one* man to look after all that had gone before. And I’m the *last* of the party, and I’ve come to see where my friends have all got to.’

“‘Mein Gott! vos you vas tell me das! No one has cooms pack to see me. Dere must pe robbers mit der road, vot kills all dese mens. I have not see von mit ems since you alls vent away togetter.’

“My blood chilled with horror as I looked into that fiendish face with its well-pretended sorrow and surprise painted on it, and glanced at the upraised, bony, powerful hands, on which, in imagination at least, I could fancy I saw the blood of my friends. I was almost confused, but instantly I remembered that I was playing a part, and a very desperate one, so I collected my thoughts, and answered after a pause:

“‘That’s startling news, Leifen, I must say.’

“At this moment Lena entered the store, and her husband repeated to her the substance of what had passed between him and myself. She was terrified quite nicely. Indeed the whole group—for the other two now came in—would have made their fortunes at acting. Their exclamations were well done, and their attitudes well taken, though I took the greatest care to let none of them slip near enough to me to give me, as I thought they might wish to, a deadly stab or a crushing blow on my head.

“‘Oh, Mr. Lukens,’ exclaimed Lena, at last, ‘you must not think of leaving, at least till daylight. We have heard very strange reports latterly about this region, and I am afraid there are bad characters abroad. No, no, you must not go back to-night. You must stay till morning, and then you ought to go directly to Nagadotches, and raise the men there, and scour the whole country round. There must have been some foul play with your friends.’

“‘I think so, myself,’ I replied.

“I did not know what course to take now. I wanted to have everything complete before I gave the signal to my friends outside, and not thinking the right moment had arrived as yet, I was in quite a quandary. But I soon

made up my mind what to do, and with many thanks I accepted the kind invitation of my intended murderers, for I felt certain that when I went to sleep they would kill me.

"Pleading extra fatigue I retired quite early, my friends insisting that I should occupy the only bedstead there was.

"Now if I should not wake at daylight, will you rouse me, so that I can go to Nagadotches early?" I asked of Leifen, as I went to bed.

"Yah, yah, I vil," he said.

"Now the perilous position of my plan really commenced, but as I thought the easiest, for I had made up my mind to only pretend to sleep, and in reality to keep wide-awake till the man should come to the bedside with his club or knife to finish me, when I would quickly shoot him dead and take the women prisoners. This was how I thought the attempt would be made on my life, because in the tales I had read of such affairs in Europe that was always the way it had been done.

"But the sequel proved the fallacy of my ideas.

"Quite unobserved, as I thought, I slipped my pistol into bed with me, and lay there wide awake ready for the emergency. Meanwhile Lena and her sisters went round in the store, singing in low soft tones some ditty or other. Presently I heard Liefen call out:

"Lena! Lena! the mosquitoes coming in—schmoke dem off."

"A few minutes later I became aware of the presence in the atmosphere of an aromatic smell, caused by the burning of some kind of herbs. I little thought that the old wretch alluded to me when he said mosquitoes. But I found it out in a little while after, as I felt myself growing drowsy in spite of my strongest efforts to keep awake. And this was how I ascertained it all.

"Just as I began to lose myself, I heard Liefen say:

"Ach! Lena, he's all right now. We've got him sure. He was playing a good part."

"Yes! yes! I know it. I saw him take the pistol to bed with him," laughed the she-fiend. "And he intended to shoot you when you went to finish him."

"Ha! ha! he's the seventh—that's all of them, and he's the dumbest goose of the whole flock!"

"This remark, which was made by Pauline, enraged me, and summoning all my energies, I endeavored to spring from the bed and level my pistol at the window. But I could only move the slightest bit, and just as I sank away into utter unconscionousness, I heard some one of them say, in taunting tones:

"Lay still, little goose, you will soon have your neck slit, and go down with your six other friends. Lay still, little goose!"

"Oblivion followed, and when I next opened my eyes and saw Stevens and my rescuers bending over me, I was utterly astounded to find myself

living, and could not resist the temptation to feel my throat where I thought the cut ought to be.

"I tell you, old fellow, you was pretty near a goner that time. Them sweet gals just had their shiny little stickers ready to slit your weasand for you as we bursted in on em.'

"These words brought me at once to my full senses, and I exclaimed:

"What happened, Stevens? Tell me how I was saved.'

"All right, Lukens; but first here take another nip of this whisky, to keep back what we've already poured down your throat.'

"I gulped a good drink of the liquor, and then, with the assistance of one of the men, sat up and listened to Stevens' recital of the previous events as they happened from the moment of my insensibility. Said he:

"We had waited, as we thought, most too long for your signal, when I got quite uneasy, and proposed to the boys to rush in anyhow, and see what had become of you. So we crept up quietly, till we could peep in at the window there. Just as we got up close, I seen the gal lighting some herbs on a plate, and the man sprinkle some powder over the flames, which then made a dense smoke. I thought that meant some devilment, and also that it was quite time for us to mix in. So I whispered to the boys to be ready, and when I clapped my hands and jumped for the door, to rush right after me. I waited a minute or two till I heard the fiends laughing, and saying something about a goose, and then I clapped my hands and jumped for the door. We were just in time, for them pretty-looking devil-cats of women were just going to stab you, when we lit in on 'em. We knocked the man down and tied him, and then we tied up all three of the gals; and just as soon as you're ready, and feel well enough, we'll take 'em back to Nagadotches.'

"But what about poor Strawn, and the others? Have you found out where their bodies are?"

"No; we thought we'd take in the devils that done the mischief first, get them secure, and then come back and search the house.'

"Well, don't do it,' said I. 'Let us make the search at once. We can take the murderers in afterward.'

"You can take me only, gentlemen!"

"It was a woman's voice that spoke; and as we all turned, we saw Pauline standing behind us, contemplating us with quiet, smiling features.

"Stevens sprang to his feet, exclaiming:

"Hallo, gal! How'd you get undone? I tied you myself.'

"And I untied myself, and the others too,' she replied.

"Stevens stared at her in mute wonder, as did also the rest of the party.

"You did! Then you must be the Devil's daughter, that's all, for I tied you so there was no chance for you to get loose.'

"No human being can do that,' said the girl.

"Several of our party edged away from the speaker, as though they feared she was possessed of an evil spirit.

"'Well, if you could untie yourself, why didn't you run away with the rest of your infernal friends?' asked Stevens, who was not at all superstitious.

"'Because, if I had, we should all have been captured, whereas now the rest will make good their escape; and all you can do, you can't find them.'

"'She's right!' exclaimed a third one; 'here's the thong, Stevens. They're not cut, either.' And the speaker held up the raw-hide cords with which the murderers had been tied.

"'Well, you sha'n't yet away, anyhow, you infernal hell-cat,' exclaimed Stevens, seizing the woman roughly.

"'I don't intend to try,' said she, with a most provoking manner.

"'And more than that, when daylight comes we'll track the rest of your band, and see if we can't prove you in another lie.'

"To this Pauline said nothing.

"Acting on my suggestion, my rescuers set themselves about searching the house to find the bodies of the murdered men, but did not succeed in making any discoveries, till I thought of asking the woman, plainly:

"'Show us where your folks put those men after you killed them. It won't make your situation any worse than what it is.'

"'To be sure I will,' said she, just as cool as a cucumber. 'Why didn't you ask me to do so before?'

"I could not make any reply to this cold-hearted, monstrous woman except,

"'Well, show us.'

"She did so, and we found that the victims had all been buried in graves that were dug on the opposite side of the house from Nagadotches, each one, in a grave by itself; and we noticed that each one had the left arm crossed over the breast. After we had exhumed our six comrades, we thought we would take a further look at the ground, and ascertain if there were any other victims. We got more bloody proof of the Liefens' hellish wickedness.

"Close together were two graves. In one we found a man, killed just in the same way as the others. The next grave contained what I think was the most sickening, pitiable sight I ever looked at. There was a youngish looking woman, who had once been quite handsome. She had very long hair, and it was all twisted in disorder about her head and face, as though, whoever had buried her, had dragged her to the grave by taking hold of her hair. Lying upon her stomach was the corpse of an infant, apparently thirteen or fourteen months of age, for between the little lips we could see the white edges of two teeth just coming through the gum. We could see no marks of violence upon the child's body, so we concluded that it had been pitched, while alive, in upon the mother, after she was thrown into the grave.



"I thought the men would have gone most wild when they saw all this, and more than one of them, with oaths that it wouldn't do to print in a book, proposed to knock Pauline's brains out on the spot, and pitch her right into the hole from which the dead mother and child had just been taken. But this was disagreed to.

"'No! that would be too merciful for her,' said Stevens; 'let's take her into town and have her hanged like a dog!' only he did not say the last word in that way.

"'That's all there is,' remarked Pauline, in a cool way, after these three bodies had been taken out. 'They were a man and his wife and child that we thought would be better off in the other world.'

"'For God's sake hold your demon tongue! will you?' I exclaimed, becoming myself quite enraged at the devilish creature.

"She said no more.

"Shortly afterward we started back to Nagadotches, taking care to keep our captive safe. There we obtained the services of several old plainsmen, who at once started back with the purpose of tracking the rest of the Liefens who had escaped.

"Like wild-fire the news of our horrible discoveries spread through the town, and the whole population turned out *en masse* to see the prisoner we had brought in with us. Wagons were hitched up speedily and sent up to the Liefen store to fetch away the corpses we had found, and when the mournful procession returned, I never beheld people so bitterly enraged against a culprit as were the citizens—especially the women—against Pauline. Had we not, with the assistance of the Sheriff and his officers, hidden her, she would no doubt have been torn limb from limb.

"Finally, we promised the incensed populace that she should be hanged in their presence the next afternoon at five o'clock, if they would promise not to interfere, but allow the law to take its course.

"I wish the reader to understand, that, during the early days in Texas there were no silly quibbles in law about insanity or anything of that sort, like there is now-a-days in the refined and flimsy practice of our modern courts. Now had this fiendish woman been in St. Louis, or New York, she would have had all sorts of sympathy, and perhaps would have been made a martyr of. But we made up our minds that such a hideous wretch should be put out of the world as speedily as possible. So the next morning, at nine o'clock, court was called, a jury picked out, and we witnesses told just what we knew, and what we had done. The prisoner was condemned to be hung at five o'clock in the afternoon, and she wasn't asked either what she had to say why the sentence should not be carried out. The minister in Nagadotches then, who was an Episcopalian, was allowed to remain with the wretch during the few hours that intervened between her conviction and execution, as he requested, to see if he could not pray her into some sort of repentance. And in justice to that estimable man, I

must say that he performed his Christian duty in the most zealous way. But Pauline was too deep for him. She played her part most deftly; for playing a part she was, undoubtedly; and this she did apparently from some previously determined motive, the object of which with her was the insuring of the final escape of the other three members of the family in some mysterious way. I do not pretend to be a believer in magic or occult lore; neither do I wish to say that I do not believe in any such science, for I have seen some very singular and unaccountable things, in the course of my life, that I do not know how to give reasons for or against. And this very affair of Pauline Liefen was one of them. She laughed at the idea of our tracking the fugitives. And it is a fact that we despatched four of the sharpest and best plainsmen that ever put eyes on a trail, men who would unerringly trace Indians for hundreds of miles through the driest parts of the wilderness, no matter how carefully the redskins tried to cover up their tracks.

"I say these men went out, and were particularly cautioned to use more than ordinary sharpness, as the people they were after would be likely to throw them off the scent.

"'Don't you bother, boys,' laughed the oldest of these scouts, as they were setting out. 'If you'll only put off hanging that she-devil for forty eight hours, we'll bring in the other three as sure as shooting.'

"'That we can't do,' was our reply; 'for if we attempt it, they will hang us too. We'll make sure of her, and you see that you make as sure of your three, and that will give us another satisfactory job day after to-morrow.'

"The scouts started in the perfect assurance that they would soon return with the captives. We did not expect them back under the third day. Instead of that they returned the next day, and very much chafallen, with this report, exactly in their own words:

"'Why we had no trail to follow. We went straight to the house from here, and worked round it in a regular ring for a mile or more, not missing a single spot where even a coyote could get through, and yet not the sign of a trail could we find. Them people must be related to the Devil, sure, for they got away without making a track. They must have flew off up through the air, or gone down through the earth.'

"I never saw a set of frontiersmen looking or feeling so mean as these scouts did, to be thus, *all of them*, so utterly 'whipped out,' as they called it.

"But meantime we had executed the wicked wretch whom we had secured.

"I shall never forget that scene. It was a bright, splendid day, the sun shining with extraordinary brilliancy, and the air being soft, balmy, and filled with that delicious dreaminess which is a characteristic of the far South. From daylight, the minister I have referred to never left Pauline

till he shook her hand just before we hung her. Indeed, he considered that, in spite of all her awful crimes, we were little less than murderers ourselves, for visiting thus her offences with the punishment of death. He said that we ought to have sent her to an asylum somewhere in which she might be kept during the rest of her life. And he quoted the text to us, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

"But we had our own notions about things, and so far from being sorry for our act of stern justice, we only grieved that we had not caught every one of the other wretches, so as to hang all four in a bunch.

"Long before the hour of execution, the spot selected for the gallows was packed with human beings, eager with curiosity to see the untoward sight of the hanging of a woman. But I only write the truth when I say that, in all that multitude, there was not a solitary expression of sympathy or sorrow for Pauline Liefen's fate—not one. And even the minister's objections to the execution were not prompted from any personal good feeling he had for the woman, but because he could not conscientiously approve of society taking any human being's life, even for the crime of murder.

"Promptly at four o'clock the sheriff led forth the doomed woman from the front door of Stevens' hotel. The gallows was but a short distance away, and Pauline, supporting herself on the arm of the minister, walked to the fatal spot without a tremor. She was wonderfully composed. Only once did she show the slightest sign of trepidation, and that was when she first came out of the hotel, for, just as she did so, the crowd burst forth into a storm of yells, hisses, groans and imprecations. Yet in a moment more she had herself under complete control, and surveyed her enemies in the coolest manner imaginable.

"It was an ugly job to hang a woman, and we wanted to be clear of it as soon as possible. Therefore, the moment we got her under the gallows,—which we had constructed hurriedly of rough timber,—the minister asked her if she desired to say anything.

"'No,' she replied. 'Al. that I wished to say you have already written down. I desire to say nothing more.'

"'Shall I not pray for you once more?' inquired he.

"'O yes, if you want to do so,' she answered, with a smile passing over her features, that implied a very firm disbelief in the efficacy of the proposed prayer.

"Nothing daunted, the clergyman at once made an exceedingly fervid supplication to the Throne of Grace for mercy and forgiveness. As soon as he had concluded, the execution proceeded. Pauline stepped forward, and, with her own hands turned down the collar of her dress to facilitate the putting of the noose around her neck; after which her arms were pinioned with a raw-hide lariat, while, with a second one, we bound her skirts round her ankles.

“ ‘And now, All Merciful Father,’ said the minister, ‘have mercy, oh, have mercy and receive this poor sinful soul, cleansed of all wickedness and sin, through the merits of our Blessed Redeemer!’ ”

“The next instant a dull whirring kind of a thud disturbed the stillness, and the form of Pauline Liefen was whirling and twisting round, limp and lifeless. Her neck was broken, and all was over instantly.

“Speedily a grave was excavated, and the body buried. And so ended that part of the tragedy.”

### MURDERERS BY PROFESSION.

“Having a great curiosity to know something more of the previous history of these Liefens, I waited till a favorable opportunity occurred, and then I had an interview with Mr. Kolman, the clergyman. That gentleman, with great courtesy, handed me the following narrative, or Confession, that he had written out in conversational style, as far as possible in the exact language which had passed between him and Pauline. At first he did not wish it made public; but afterwards he, in a measure relaxed this condition. I made a copy, intending at the time to send it to the *Philadelphia Sun*. But after I had finished the manuscript, I did not just have postage stamps handy, so I laid it away, and the whole matter passed out of my recollection completely, until here I have lately read in the papers about the Benders and their dreadful, bloody deeds. The remarkable similitude between the two families struck me with great force, and after thinking the whole matter carefully over, I am convinced that the Liefens were no others than the Benders, and that Bender is their proper name.

### THE CLERGYMAN'S NARRATIVE.

“ ‘Well, my poor, unfortunate young woman,’ said I, as I entered the room in which Pauline Liefen was kept a prisoner, awaiting her execution. ‘I am deeply grieved to find a human being, and most especially a female in such a dreadful situation as this.’ ”

“ ‘Yes,’ replied she, ‘it’s not very pleasant, but every one has her fate, you know, in this world.’ ”

“ ‘I am a minister of the gospel,’ I continued, after waiting a few minutes for her to say something else, ‘and I have come here to offer you such religious consolation as is in my power.’ ”

“ ‘Yes, sir, you look like a clergyman, but as to your consolation, I scarcely believe it will be of any account to me.’ ”

“There was such a peculiar look upon the woman’s face as she made this remark, that I was astonished at her. I thought at the time she must have a heart of steel or adamant. However, I was not discouraged, but resumed:

“ ‘Your name, I have been told, is Pauline Liefen.’ ”



Lena gave the signal, and the other two stabbed the Frenchman, killing him instantly.

“ ‘That’s my name, sir.’

“ ‘And that you are condemned to death for criminal participation in several murders, which were committed at various times in your brother-in-law’s hotel or store.’

“ ‘Oh, Lord keep you sir—my husband’s.

“ ‘Oh, then I was misinformed. I understood it was your brother-in-law.’

“ ‘Well, yes, he was my brother-in-law too, I suppose; but, at the same time he was also my husband.’

“ ‘In what way?’

“ ‘Oh, quite easy. There were three sisters of us, Lena, Sophie, and Pauline—that’s me. We all liked Liefen, and we could not agree to divide him into three parts, so we all three married him.’

“ ‘Why are you Mormons?’ asked I.

“ ‘Oh, I don’t know; if that’s being Mormon, than we are Mormons.

“ ‘Who was the clergyman who married you thus?’

“ ‘We married ourselves, that’s all.’

“ The hardened woman smiled as she made this reply, and noticing my unmistakable horror at her statement, she laughed outright and heartily.

“ ‘I don’t suppose that would suit your civilized notions of piety,’ said she, after a fresh ebullition of mirth.

“ ‘No, indeed, it would not,’ I replied, with some sternness in my manner; ‘and if you could really comprehend what a terrible sin you have committed, you would be on your knees crying for mercy and forgiveness. And that is what I am here for, to try to point you, as a poor, lost soul out of the fold, to seek again the right and narrow path.’

“ ‘But, my sweet sir,’ she retorted, ‘according to your belief and creed, I am past redemption, just like the pitcher broken at the well.

“ ‘Oh, no, you are not. The worst sinner that ever lived may obtain mercy and redemption, if he thoroughly and earnestly repents of sin and casts himself on the power and love of God.’

“ ‘Mr. Kolman,’ said she, ‘I’ve no doubt you are a gentleman of the best intentions, but if you could really read human nature, and the general plan of creation as you call it, you would not worry your good soul about anything that happened. Horses and sheep can’t live on meat. Whales can’t walk through the woods; birds can’t swim in the ocean. Tigers will always be tigers; lions, lions, and panthers won’t be lambs, even though you feed them on grass. Now you belong to the lamb order, while I am a human tiger, and I never could be anything else but a tiger. So it is useless for you to attempt to change me into a being like yourself. Don’t you see clearly that you are wasting time? Now your friends are going to hang me for what I have done. I do not object to this. I have not injured any of them personally. Yet they are going to kill me. To be sure this is, as I have said, the workings of nature, just as a pack of hounds tear a wild or savage animal to pieces. I have my instincts, they have theirs, and, in

the course of nature, or rather nature's arrangement, the time has come that I should be destroyed by them. They, in their turn, will be destroyed by some other antagonistic power, whether it be one that is seen, or one that is not seen.'

"I was perfectly astounded at the subtilty of this singular woman's powerful sophism. She had entrenched herself in an armor, as it were, of impenetrable steel, from which, in her belief at least, all my arguments fell as harmless as wooden lances would have glanced from the mailed breast of one of the ancient crusaders.

"How long have you indulged in this doctrine of yours?" I asked.

"Well, I hardly know. It grew up with me, I guess. Would you ask a lion why he was not born a jackal?"

"I would give a great deal to know your previous history, and to trace back your habits of life to your early childhood.'

"Ah, I see, you are after a life and confession. Yes, yes, there's nothing so powerful as human curiosity. Well, now, my dear sir, if you will sit down at that table there, and take your pen, and write what I tell you, you will have a famous confession. It shall be every whit true, you may depend on that. Now don't object," she continued, as I made an impatient motion with my hand, 'your doxologies and hymns, and pious preaching, will all be thrown away on me; for nothing you may say, will turn me from my convictions.'

"I could not help saying, 'It is fortunate all people are not like you, Pauline.'

"That may be,' she laughed. 'It would not do, you know, to have the world filled with no other species of animals than tigers. But pray sit down and listen to me.'

"I did so, and taking up the pen, I wrote out her narrative as fast as she rehearsed it to me. While doing so, she often reached over the table, and picked up the manuscript, and she would read it through and point out corrections and alterations she desired made here and there. She appeared to read readily and fluently, but she said she could not write. At least she refused to touch the pen.

"I was completely astonished at her. I never, in all my experience, came across such a woman.

"I was born in a little village, a few miles from Nauvoo, Illinois,' so she began her account, 'and when I was four years of age, I displayed a great precocity of intellect. In this, however, I was not a bit in advance of my sisters, one of whom was older, this was Lena, and the other younger, which was Sophie. We were all born exactly fourteen months apart. That is, Lena was fourteen months older than I, and Sophie was fourteen months younger than myself, which among us made the occult numbers of three evens and one seven.'

"This, however, was not the only peculiarity about us. There was another,

still more singular. We looked so much alike that even our parents sometimes made mistakes; now calling me Sophie or Lena, and then calling either of them by my name.

“When we were between the ages of sixteen and nineteen, we were well-grown girls, and father, having a good business opportunity, moved into the town of Nauvoo. While we had been living in the village near by, we had early learned all we could from the occasional books and papers that father got for us; and when we took up our abode in Nauvoo, we had a great increase of these facilities by reason of the many new acquaintances that we made.

“It was about this period that Anton Liefen came to the town of Nauvoo, and between us a strong friendship sprang up. We all liked him very much, and, as soon as we began to understand the habits and doctrines of the Smith religion, we thought it would be a splendid thing for us. But now, to tell you the truth, we did not accept it at all as a religion. We three girls loved each other very much, and if we all married separate men we knew that we should be parted from each other, which we could not bear to think of. So we all three agreed that if Liefen was willing, we would let him marry us all; or if not, then we would remain single. Liefen had no objection after we told him why, and also told him that we would all work, so that we would not be any burden upon him.

“All these preliminaries being settled, we were married. We never told anybody; but it leaked out, or was suspected, for in a short time, our pious, good neighbors made a frightful commotion about what they called our wickedness and immorality; and threatened to tar-and-feather us, ride us on rails, and then hang us, if the first part of the programme would not drive us out.

“We tried to dissuade them from their wild projects. I remember distinctly saying to the most ferocious woman, that our malady was not contagious, except to those who wished to imitate us; and really we could not see why they should interfere with our peace and happiness, when we did them no harm. This seemed only to enrage our foes the more. There were plenty of really bad people among them, and I noticed these were the most clamorous of any, as though by their eager demonstrations against us, they would lead the community in general to deem themselves the purest of the pure.

“There was, however, no use to combat such overwhelming odds as these against us, so we quietly left the town, and set out to find a spot where we might live, and thrive, and have our being, independent of our neighbors. Yet it seemed as though this, too, were impossible. Everybody seemed to deem it his or her special duty to persecute us, and in the course of time this began to impoverish us. We found we could not make our living honestly, by the ordinary means of intercourse, of business, or labor; so we at once made up our minds to do so by force; and to



make our force equal, or superior, to the great majority against us, we saw we must resort to cunning and duplicity. This we decided to do. We must take from others what was necessary for our wants. If we did this without preventing the result of the revenge natural under such circumstances, we would soon be killed. That we did not intend should occur; so we concluded that the only safe method we could adopt was to kill all the people we robbed.

“This was quite a risky business, and we were obliged to use all sorts of devices to insure ourselves against discovery. But, as you see, we have been tripped up at last, as everything human must always be when its course is run.

“The first spot we selected in which to operate was on the trail to Santa Fe. We set up a house of entertainment for men crossing the plains. Our first customer was a Frenchman. He had been to the diggings, and was well loaded with dust. He stopped at our house, and, seeing that he would be a rich prize, we quickly made up our minds to put him out of the way, and take whatever we found on him.

“But, I tell you, he was a shrewd, cute fellow, and came very near slipping through our fingers. He never moved about except with his pistol and bowie-knife sticking in his belt, ready for instant use. And he was as suspicious as a buffalo bull. Twice we were just on the point of completing the work which would give us his wealth, when he spoiled the plan by his malapropos movements. But the third effort was successful.

“He was a great gambler, you must know, but, at the same time, he was a cautious one, and never would bet any amount of money. We all sat down one afternoon to play a game of Vingt-Une, of which he was exceedingly fond, and at which he was always, as a general thing, successful.

“Liefen was away on a little hunt, and therefore we three women were alone with Quantréle—that was the Frenchman's name. He had drunk considerably just after dinner—quite an unusual trick, and in consequence he was exceedingly boisterous and good-natured.

“After winning several pieces of money from us, we told him we could not afford to lose any more.

“‘I tell you vat,’ exclaimed he, ‘I'll play un dollar against un kiss wis each of you. Now if I vin, zen as vun I names musht kiss me, and if I lose, zen I pay to her un dollar.’

“We accepted this challenge, promptly. But still luck was on the side of the Frenchman, and he kept us kissing him till we got tired of it, for he was an ugly looking wretch. So we made an excuse to talk in a corner by ourselves about a move we were to make in the game. And while making the Frenchman believe we were doing so, we were in reality making up a plan of attack upon him.



Capture of Liefen, *alias* Bender and his wife.

“It did not take us long to agree upon one, which we immediately put into practice.

“Now, see here, *Quantréle*,” said Lena, “we want to win our money back before supper, and we are surely going to do it.”

“Eh! bien, my pretty dove,” laughed the Frenchman, “vat you say? I vill make you von pet vat you all tree vant to kiss me at ze same time.

“Well, yes, but you must bet three dollars at a time then, instead of one.”

“Zat is goot. I makes ze pet tree dollars by vun. Ha! ha! ha! and I vill makes you leetle gals kiss me all ze time. Now zen, zere is my play.”

“He then drew a card—the seven of spades—and I covered it with an ace of hearts. He laughed loudly at this. I pretended to be very angry, and rose up from my chair, thus drawing his attention to myself. This was the preconcerted signal. As I turned, I tilted his chair suddenly backwards, and the next moment the other two stabbed him, and he fell dying on the floor. He still made a desperate fight, however, trying to pull out his own weapons, but we all jumped on him, and he was soon quiet enough.

“We quickly took from him all that he had hidden about him, and dragging his body back to a place we had fixed as a corn-crib, we pushed him in there, and covered him up, in case any person should chance to come in.

“As soon as we had put the body out of sight, we got hot water and commenced scrubbing up the floor. While we were doing this, Liefen came in, and informed us that a party was approaching. This scared us, and made us quite nervous. But we soon overcame this, and, by the time the strangers arrived, everything was in complete order. To insure that there would be no possibility of discovery, we nailed up the corn-crib in which the Frenchman’s body was lying. But all the while that the travellers were there, we were in constant dread for fear that perhaps *Quantréle* was not quite dead, and might recover sufficiently to make a struggle and thereby attract attention, in which case we should all have been shot or hung on the spot. Had that taken place, you see, my dear Mr. Kolman, that you would never have had the pleasure of waiting on me on this interesting occasion.”

“I looked at the woman in more horror and astonishment than ever; but she only smiled sardonically and requested me to go ahead, as time was growing short. My natural inclination was to throw down my pen and tear up what I had already written. But at the same time my curiosity was so thoroughly excited that it conquered my aversion, and I wrote on. She continued:

“The Frenchman was certainly dead, and so we had all our anxiety and dread for nothing. There were too many of the new party, and they kept too much together for us to get the advantage of any of them. Besides at that time we had not got the boldness and skill that we afterwards possessed.”

“‘ As soon as our guests had left the house for certain, Liefen and we unnailed the corn-crib, and hauled the Frenchman out, so as to bury him. This last we did by digging a grave near the back end of the house, and planted potatoes over the place so as to disarm any chance suspicion of searching friends who might come along.

“‘ For some time after this we all felt very bad indeed concerning what we had done, for we had not entirely rubbed off our ordinary habits of civilization, as you would call it. However, we gradually drove off these disagreeable sensations, and consequently, in about a year's time, we could take off a dozen lives and never trouble ourselves for a moment with qualms of conscience, as you folks would call them.’

### THE FATE OF MR. CORNING.

“‘ Our next patient was an Englishman, who was travelling in the far West for the benefit of his 'calth, as he termed it. We managed this case in a different manner from the Frenchman's.

“‘ Sophie pretended to be much smitten with the man, and took pains, as well as the rest of us did, to let him know it. Of course had he been a strictly virtuous man, this would not have worked; but he was not, and so he fell quite easily into the trap.

“‘ Mr. Corning vowed a great deal of love and all that sort of thing for Sophie, and she let on that she reciprocated, which quite made the old fool forget himself and his family at home. Finally he made some insulting proposition to her, when she instantly set up a great screaming, and whipping out her dagger, she settled the matter just in the way we had previously arranged it should be settled. That is, she drove the weapon into his heart, and that ended his love speeches and his life together.’

“‘ Had this man no servants nor friends travelling with him?’ I asked her.

“‘ Yes, to be sure he had,’ answered she, ‘but, like the drover, he told them to go ahead, and he would follow on after them to the next camping place, which he mentioned to them.’

“‘ Well, if they had all proceeded, and he was alone in your house, why did Sophie scream?’

“‘ Only in case some stranger *might* happen to be around; who of course could be a witness to hearing a woman scream for help. She, to save herself, must kill the wicked man, and so she would be clear, and receive much praise beside, for her bravery. Don't you see?’

“‘ Go on,’ said I, without replying to this query, for I could not.

“‘ After the man was dead, we took what he had, and buried him at night, taking great care to conceal the grave thoroughly. In order also to disarm suspicion further, the next morning at day-break, Liefen saddled a horse and rode off after the party, taking with him the Englishman's wallet containing all his papers and some bank-notes. The object of this, you will

notice, was as follows. He knew when the servants found that their master did not come to camp, as he had promised, that night, they would send some of their number back the next morning to look after him.

"It was this deputation that Liefen went out to meet. And, as soon as he saw them, he said :

"Mr. Haskins, when he left yesterday afternoon, forgot his wallet, and I rode after him so as to restore it to him, as it has money and papers in."

"Why we have not seen Mr. Haskins?" they exclaimed. "He has not been to camp yet; when did you say he started?"

"Yesterday about four o'clock, he started on after you. He paid me, and then went into the other room for something. When he came out, he bid us all good-by, and rode off at a quick trot. I did not go to bed till about nine o'clock, and when I did, I found this lying on the bed he had slept in. So I determined to ride after you this morning, and give it to him."

"He must have got astray, then," said they, "for we have seen nothing of him, that's certain!"

"Then he must be found, or he'll starve to death mighty quick!" replied Liefen, "let's hunt him up right away. But better we had go on to the camp first, perhaps we'll find him there. He may have lost himself in the darkness but found his way all right this morning. For, from the way in which he talked, he must have been a hard man to lose in the wilderness."

"Yes, he was; for a green one, I never fell across any one so sharp and quick at picking up a plainsman's business," observed one of the party, addressing Liefen.

"All hands rode back to the camp of the travellers, but there was no sign of Haskins, and Liefen was obliged to repeat to them all the tale of the latter's departure from the house, the finding of the wallet, et cetera. There might have been some suspicion against Liefen, had not the good device of returning the wallet with money in it turned it completely aside.

"A search was at once set afoot for the missing man, and no one was more earnest apparently than Liefen himself. But of course Haskins was not found, and finally his followers set off to return to the States, being careful, however, to retain all his things, and especially the wallet with the money it contained, all to remember him by of course. We did not care though, as we had secured the big share of the booty."

"Did you never experience any dread," inquired I, "that the spirits of these victims would haunt you?"

"Oh, yes, for a while we did," laughed the doomed woman in a careless way. "The truth is, I believe they did bother us sometimes, but we got used to it, you know, at last, and they got tired of haunting us, because they couldn't scare us any more."

"Thinking we could make more money by changing our location, we concluded to pull up the stakes, and settle down somewhere else, nearer a

city, where there would be a good deal of travel. Our idea was this. After awhile it would come to be noticed that travellers disappeared about the time they came to our house, or just after they left it. And these plain-men were so used to tracking any one by their trails, that they would soon find there was no trail, except to our house. *None from it!* Then they would begin to dig and delve around, and the next thing we knew we'd get caught. We wanted to avoid that of course.

“As soon as we concluded to alter our scene of operation, we studied up the subject of where we should locate, and presently we decided that the best spot for us would be close by Santa Fe. Nor did it consume much of our precious time, after we had concluded to move, to get ourselves in motion. So, in a very short period, we were almost within sight of the venerable city of Santa Fe.

“We lived in the city itself for a few months, until we could prospect around and select a proper spot outside in which to commence business. It was not an easy matter to do this. However, in the course of that time we succeeded in getting just the identical kind of a position from which to operate. And we had not been in it a week before we came across a lucky pigeon to pluck. He was rich and a misanthropical kind of a fellow, a Mexican, who had amassed much wealth, but had no relatives that we knew of. He had lived for a number of years in Santa Fe.

“One day he came out to see us, and we concluded that he would be a good prize for us. But we were at a loss for a plan to get rid of people without noise, and without having blood about the house; so we were obliged to study some good method that would answer our purpose. After a monstrous amount of effort and trial, we finally settled on the following as the safest and best:

“The horrible creature here described the cloth partition, the chair, the pit and the grave, as the reader has already read of. And she did it with such a fiendish delight as to quite appal the minister.

“Finally,’ resumed she, ‘after we had decided on the details of our plan, we put it into execution on the Santa Fe merchant, and found that it worked splendidly—so well, in fact, that we have never used any other since that time.

“There was now only one difficulty in the road, and that was that the merchant always had with him a companion in the shape of a vaquero or herder. Lopez—that was his name—was one of those suspicious, ill-turned, little, dried-up runts of men that are always in the road when anything is to be done that you do not want them to know of or meddle with.

“We saw from this that Lopez must be got away with first, but it was very seldom the two were separate. They were invariably close together. Perhaps the reason of this was that Lopez suspected something, and, being thus on his guard, was determined to prevent any harm coming to his master.

“ ‘One day Sophie got round Lopez quite nicely. The vaquero had his weak spot, the same as every other individual, and this weak spot was on the subject of horses. Sophie resolved to make a point on him about horses. It took three visits to consummate her plans finally. On the day I refer to she had an old book describing several celebrated race-horses, such as Peytona, Flying Dutchman, Eclipse, &c. This book contained pictures of these horses. But the trouble with Lopez was that he could not read English. He could not converse even, except in a quite a broken way. So, she got him quite excited over the volume—so much so, that he begged of her to translate it for him, and promised her if she would only do so, to do anything for her that she would ask him.

“ ‘Well, now, I’ll tell you what I will do, Lopez,’ said she to him, ‘I’ll read this for you with pleasure, if you will only help me to perform a trick in magic that I used to play when my brother was alive. And do you know, by the by, that you closely resemble my brother.’

“ ‘The Mexican vaquero grinned at this, and promptly replied,

“ ‘Yes, I will; only read me to the horse book.’

“ ‘Sophie complied immediately, and the fellow’s eyes actually jumped with delight. I never saw anybody enjoy anything like he did that reading. But Sophie knew the Mexican character too well to finish her job before she got her part of the bargain. And, therefore, when she had read half-way through the book she complained of feeling wearied, and added,

“ ‘Lopez, I am awful tired; now, before I finish, let me rest a little. And, while I am doing so, you can help me to perform the little trick of magic I was talking about. I will teach you that too, and you can make a good deal of money by performing it in public.’

“ ‘Ah! vat it called?’ asked Lopez.

“ ‘It is called, the Barber’s Pet. Sometimes it is called mesmerism. It is quite laughable when it is done correctly and quickly. First, now, you sit down in this chair, cross your arms thus, and lean your head back against the wall. You need not shut your eyes till I tell you to. Now then, lean back a little further. Now! now! now! shut your eyes, and go to ——’

“ ‘This was the signal agreed on between Liefen and Sophie. When she said that to Lopez, she was to push his head back against the partition, and Liefen was to strike it with a heavy hammer he held ready in his hand. So, as she uttered the word ‘to,’ she seized the Mexican’s chin and forced his head back.

“ ‘The next instant Liefen sent the hammer crushing into the vaquero’s skull, and Lopez, without a groan, lay dead at Sophie’s feet. This was the first triumphant step toward the accomplishment of our general plan in regard to the old merchant. Lopez had nothing much, so we buried him, after taking out of his pockets a little silver and gold coin—all he

had, for we thought there was no use in letting it be buried with him and wasted.

“The old merchant himself was to come out to see us the next morning, and we felt quite sure of him now, as we had thus secured his faithful servant from interfering with us.

“Everything was ready for him when he did come. The first remark he made when he came in was:

“‘Has Lopez been here? he never disappoints me. It is very strange indeed.’

“‘No, sir, he has not,’ replied Liefen; ‘was he to come here? Did you send him here on an errand?’

“‘No, I did not; but he was talking yesterday about visiting you sometime soon, to get something you had promised to give him,—a book about horses, or something of that sort.’

“‘Oh, yes, Sophie was to do it. He was to be here next time you came, which we expected would be to-day, you know.’

“‘I am greatly afraid an ill-wind of some kind has overtaken Lopez. He must be sick, I am sure, or perhaps dead. He had, I believe, one or two enemies over in Santa Fe.’

“The subject was presently changed to that of building secure houses that is, houses in which treasure could be concealed safely. We all took part in this conversation, as our object was to find out how the old merchant's house was built, as we had ascertained that he had it put up with this special object in view. He never travelled with money about him. But we had no doubt that he had his keys on him, and once in possession of these, we could easily find out the way of getting into his strong boxes or money chests.

“During the conversation we managed among all of us to get the full particulars of everything we wanted to know.

“This done, our next job was to send the old man where we had despatched Lopez, which we accomplished in the following manner:

“‘Do you believe in mesmerism?’ asked Lena.

“‘Well, I hardly know that I do,’ replied he. ‘I never had much opportunity to examine the matter. I believe you have faith in the art.’

“‘Yes sir, we do,’ said I, ‘believe in it thoroughly.’

“‘Well, how do you perform it? I mean, how do you get at the peculiar manifestations that occur?’

“‘We don't know how, we only know that they do take place, that is all.’

“‘Well, can you show it to me?’

“‘Certainly; and we will do so here now, right on the spot. You sit down on this chair, lean your head hard back, and close your eyes for a few moments. Do this first, and then tell me how you feel.’

“‘Oh, no,’ protested the old man, ‘I don't want to be put to sleep!’

“‘We don't want you to go to sleep.’



“ ‘But if I shut my eyes, I certainly will go asleep.’

“ ‘Very well, then, don't shut your eyes. You can soon tell how you feel without that, I guess.’

“ ‘Then I'll try it; so, now here, I sit down.’

“ ‘And he did so.’

“ ‘Now what must I do?’

“ ‘You must sit perfectly still, and gradually bend your head back. There, that's it,—no! just a little further back. *Now then!*’

“ ‘The same instant Liefen struck at the bulge in the cloth partition made by the head of the old man, who the following moment fell dead before us without a groan.’

“ ‘We soon stripped him in order to find what else he had about him beside the keys. But we found nothing of much account of anything else.’

“ ‘That same night we buried the old man just as the moon was setting, and Liefen went the same night over to Santa Fe to the house. He did not come out of it till the next night, when he returned with a lot of gold and jewels of great value. As the old man had been very retiring, and had no friends and acquaintances, the fact of his house being shut up thus did not attract any special attention. This was quite lucky for us, as Liefen could go and come without being observed. He did so for four nights, each night taking care to thoroughly alter and conceal *his tracks*; because he knew that when the discovery took place there'd be a great excitement about it.’

“ ‘During these four visits he managed to bring away nearly all the treasure that was in the house, and we took good care to conceal it in the woods, away from our house, so that there'd be no accident of its being discovered with us.’

“ ‘As we expected, toward the end of the next week the people in Santa Fe, who lived near the old merchant's house, began to notice that the latter was not opened as usual, and that he must therefore be away. Then it was mentioned that no one had seen him for several days, an unusual thing; and then it was concluded to enter his dwelling and see if anything had happened to him. Sure enough, something had happened, for not only was he not there, but it was evident that all his valuables had also disappeared.’

“ ‘You have heard the old saying, that Satan takes care of his own, and it proved true in this case, as you will see. All the neighbors knew that the old man had a body-servant, a Mexican, named Lopez. It was noticed that this villain Lopez had suddenly disappeared, and that he was nowhere to be found. The treasure had disappeared also, and therefore, the wise heads turned all suspicion away from us by asserting, with great positiveness, that no doubt Lopez had murdered his master, and, after concealing his body somewhere, had taken all the money, and left for unknown parts.’

“After a day or two of search in the immediate neighborhood, the whole matter dropped out of mind as well as sight, and, in a month, people hardly remembered it at all. So you see how nicely all that fitted in together for us.

“About six months after that two miners came to the house, who had been out to the diggings for a long time, and were loaded with dust. We resolved to kill them, and as is too often the case under such circumstances, we had become too careless, and so we nearly paid very dearly for our want of caution. These men were wild, jolly fellows, but at the same time sharp and cunning. I suppose their way of living at the mines had caused them to be so. We thought to kill them both at once, and, while Sophie and I engaged the two in conversation, Liefen and Lena took the hammers into the other room to strike the heads at the same instant. But unfortunately the man Sophie was talking to did not hold his head far enough back, or rather perhaps Lena was a little too much excited to do her part properly. Whichever it was, the hammer merely wounded him by cutting his scalp. At the same instant he saw his companion fall dead at his side he felt the blow on his own. The next moment Sophie and I, knowing what would be the result, sprang on him, at the same time calling Liefen and Lena to come quickly and help us. They did so, and we four struggled desperately to conquer the fellow, but he was as strong as a horse, and as active as a panther; and, though we succeeded several times in knocking him down, he finally got away from us, and ran from the house, hallooing for assistance as he went.

“Liefen caught up his pistol, and pursued him, while we hurriedly put the body of his companion out of sight, and straightened things up so as to be ready for the sudden appearance of any unfriendly visitor. Soon afterwards, Liefen returned and told us that he had caught the fugitive, and shot him dead.

“It was evident, however, that, as this was the ninth victim, our good luck was at an end, and that we must go to some new locality. We did so, and, sure enough, we had not been gone a week before there was a hue and cry raised. The miner's body had been found, and, of course, it was not long ere those who found him traced their way to our deserted house, and then the whole affair was out. But meantime we had not been idle, you may be sure. We disguised ourselves, and took up our abode—where do you suppose?—not in the woods, nor in caves, but right over in Santa Fe. The reason we did this was, because we felt certain that all those who would start off to hunt us, would never dream that we were in Santa Fe, but suppose that we had run off across the country. We rather enjoyed the excitement for a while, but, in a short time thereafter, our joy was almost turned to sorrow. It happened in this way. There was a circus in the town, and Lena and Liefen went to see the performance. While they were looking on, there was a man watching them closely. This fellow had been



Lena, Pauline and Sophie (Bender) the three sisters, who resembled each other so closely that a stranger could not tell them apart.

ended to be asleep, and then, just as we were about to dispatch him, he signalled, and at once a posse of men rushed in, and there we were trapped ourselves.

“However, we escaped the same night after they captured us, and gave them the slip for new fields of operation.

“‘I might tell you some more things, but really time is too short, my reverend friend, and so you must excuse me—that’s all. Call back the sheriff, please.’

“The hardened, wretched creature smiled at the clergyman, who, almost bewildered with her frigid audacity, folded up the manuscript, and placing it in his pocket, stepped to the door and summoned the sheriff. That officer at once re-entered the room, and led the prisoner forth to the scaffold, accompanied by the minister, who, true to his holy calling, never ceased his exertions to turn the wicked woman’s attention to the salvation of her blood-stained, guilty soul.

“Some of the assembled crowd hissed and hooted as Pauline made her appearance, but presently ceased their demonstrations, and the execution proceeded with all celerity, as we have before stated. The culprit died old, firm and unrepentingly wicked; and, though a woman, there was not, on all the mob, one single expression of sympathy or pity uttered for her.

“Time passed on, and the Liefens disappeared from public notice—at least nothing of their depredations have ever been heard of until these late horrible murders in Kansas have been unearthed. And the fact that some bodies were found buried away in the garden, and the further fact that the Benders had moved away *before* any alarm was given, first struck me with the idea that they and the Liefens were the same. Sophie, the other sister, has evidently died or been killed; while the young woman they call Kate is either her or Lena’s daughter.

“There is no doubt in my mind that ‘Old Bender,’ now of course far advanced in years, is the Liefen I knew of in Texas, and near Santa Fe.

“Not only this, but, from what I know of the fiends, I have my doubts whether, even yet, they will not succeed in escaping from the meshes of the law, except, of course, their hitherto good fortune should forsake them.”

Since the foregoing was in press, a despatch has been received that the old woman, who is, no doubt, Lena Liefen, has been taken prisoner in the mountains. If that is really true, then the whole band is captive, and we hope, for the sake of humanity, that they will not be allowed to escape by any means, but adequately punished for their awful crimes. Such human wild beasts should be put surely out of the road.



The daughter Kate, taken from a ferotype found in Breckerman's pocket.