

THE LIFE
OF
LOGAN BELT

The Noted Desperado of Southern Illinois.

A COMPLETE LIFE HISTORY OF THE MOST DARING
DESPERADO EVER KNOWN TO
CIVILIZATION.

BEGINNING WITH HIS BOYHOOD, AND TAKING UP HIS LIFE FROM THAT
PERIOD THE READER IS CARRIED THROUGH THE CIVIL WAR OR
LATE REBELLION WITH HIM AS LIEUTENANT; THENCE DOWN
TO HIS LIFE ON A FARM NEAR CAVE-IN-ROCK, ILL., AND
HIS SENTENCE TO PRISON FOR THE KILLING OF OLDHAM;
THEN RE-ARREST AND TRIAL FOR THE MURDER OF
LUKE HAMBRINK—HIS ACQUITTAL AND FINALLY
DEATH BY ASSASSINATION ON JUNE 6th, 1887.

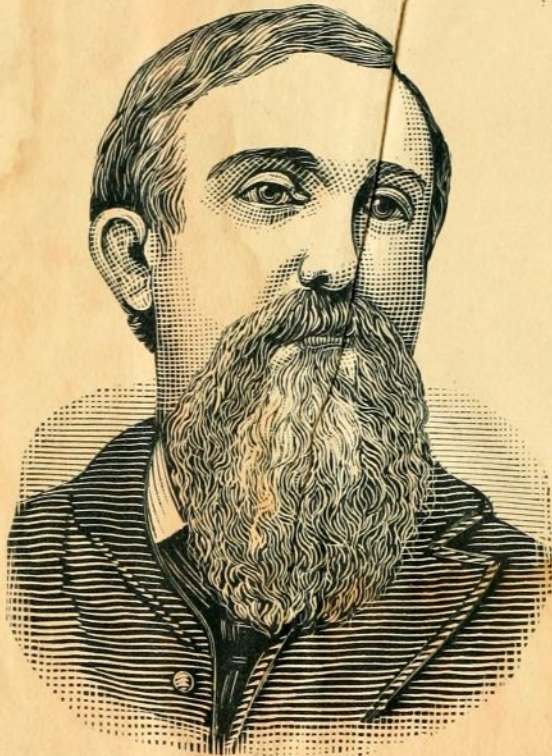
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LISHED IN "THE RECORDER," A COUNTY PAPER ISSUED
WEEKLY AT CAVE-IN-ROCK, ILLINOIS, AND
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A TRUE AND VIVIDLY WRITTEN NARRATIVE
BY
SHADRACH L. JACKSON.

CAVE-IN-ROCK, ILLINOIS,
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BIOGRAPHY OF LOGAN BELT.

CHAPTER I.

WE introduce in this pen sketch one of the most remarkable characters that ever figured in Southern Illinois. In fact, the writer does not believe that a man of like character ever existed. This man was Logan Belt, the very name of whom, was a terror to all Southern Illinois and the adjoining border counties of Kentucky.

Logan Belt was born in Hardin County, Illinois, October 20th, in the year 1840. His father, Hiram Belt, was a quiet farmer in the little county of Hardin, and was also a local minister of the Baptist persuasion.

Such was the father of the subject of our sketch. He was powerless to control his family, and his sons therefore, very early in life, bade adieu to the parental hearthstone and drifted about at will; sometimes in Kentucky (where they had relatives), and sometimes in Illinois. Logan, however, seemed to be the "blue fowl of the brood," and invariably got into trouble wherever he went. The overbearing or "large I and small u" disposition that characterized his life throughout, after years of maturity had been reached, also displayed itself in his boyhood.

One day two neighbor boys, John and Calvin Palmer, were passing through Hiram Belt's orchard, and his son Logan seeing them, accosted them and in an insolent manner ordered them out. Young Calvin Palmer resented the untimely and uncalled for abuse, saying that he was not to be hurried, etc. This enraged young Logan, and seizing an ax crushed in the skull of young Palmer. Madame rumor soon spread the intelligence that the boy had been killed, and through the intervention of friends or relatives young Logan was hurried out of the country and developments in the case awaited. An indictment was found against the boy Logan but young Palmer recovered gradually, and after the lapse of a few months the boy desperado returned four-fold worse in disposition, through the leniency shown in this instance

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and the general inclination among his friends to foster this blood-thirsty element of his character. The swell or braggadocio spirit that characterized his after life or Logan Belt at the mature age of 40 years was also very apparent in his youth, or Logan Belt at the age of twelve. A portrait of him at the age of sixteen truly reveals the after man. It resembles in many respects a picture once shown the author of this sketch while in the West, of a savage warrior of the plains when in full dress—the same reckless air and defiant look of deviltry; the same uncultured passion for tinsel show—as the youth Logan has suspended well down on his person a huge brass locket securely held in place by an awkwardly large chain of brass thrown loosely around his neck. The long, airy and loose-fitting garments as shown in this picture verify the statement as regarded the migratory habits of young Belt, plainly indicating that the boy at that period was not under the special care of either parent or guardian, but was left pretty much to take care of himself. However, he managed to acquire the rudiments of a common school education, although no one seems to understand how he did it—the facilities for such being very poor at that period of the history of Southern Illinois. Being possessed of keen native ability he might have become a useful man and an ornament to the highest society; yet his Yankee-like shrewdness only served to place him as leader among a low class of associates, and through the medium of bad blood, which seemed to course naturally through his veins, young Belt was ever bent on mischief—invariably getting either himself or companions into trouble. On one occasion while going to Marion, Ky., in company with a brother and another relative, young Logan after crossing the river stopped when only a short distance from Ford's Ferry, (Ky.), at the residence of a family by the name of Fritts, and dismounted to whip one of the boys. His companions seeing that trouble was brewing rode away thinking that young Logan, seeing that he was left with odds against him would mount his horse and follow after and thus an unnecessary difficulty be avoided. Not so, however, the boy Logan was bent on having a row and whipping somebody; the Fritts boys seeing this, managed to decoy him into the house where a mother and sister were, and after once getting him thus caged with all means of exit debarred, the fun began in real earnest by the entire family attacking him. Young Logan was "game" in this instance, however, and the Fritts family found to their consternation that they had caged a "tiger" in human form. But being a determined set of as bad blood as young Belt they succeeded by combined strength in throwing him upon a bed, where a member or two of the family held him secure while the remaining members played effectively upon his person with jack knives. In the meantime the companions of young Belt, after riding a short distance away, and stopping to await the coming up of young Logan became uneasy, knowing the quarrelsome proclivities of his nature, and returned to the scene of the row just in time to

break into the closed house and save the life of Belt, but not until he had been so severely stabbed as to render it necessary that he be immediately carried back to Illinois, where for a few weeks his life was almost despaired of.

This last trouble would have proved a wholesome lesson to almost any other youth but Logan Belt. At an early age he seems to have been impressed with the idea that he was a superior personage, and that idea, as we shall prove further on, was never eradicated. In youth, he was Big Indian, on all occasions; in mature years he was Lieutenant Belt. Everything must bow submissive to his will, otherwise receive due chastisement. While a boy he scorned honest labor and managed to deadhead a livelihood among relatives, as also friends of a low type—as applicable to a civilized people. The latter looked upon young Logan as a genius, and did much toward fostering his overbearing principles. The word “revenge” seemed written upon the very fly-leaf of his life and characterized his every act. A familiar phrase with him was, “D—n him, Logan Belt will get even though it cost the life of a man or two to do it.” And, in after years, he generally did it. Like unto Cain of Scriptorial fame, “his hand was against every man, and the hand of every man against him.” Well does this last illustration apply to Logan Belt. But again, as touching his boyhood. From the age of fifteen to nineteen years, he was constantly scheming and hatching all the low flung deviltry imaginable. One night he and companions of the same ilk, would stone the dwellings of a neighbor; another night the hen roost of a second neighbor would be visited, the chickens snatched from their perches, their necks wringed and then thrown (generally) in a circle around and in close proximity to the roost; and, on still another night, a third neighbor would be visited—his dog killed, his fences thrown down and inclosures thrown open, or, perhaps a horse carried to the stables of a fourth neighbor where the animals therein would be turned outside and the animals carried there haltered in one corner with head down and tail drawn through a crack and securely tied; as in those days open, round log stables or barns were very common in Egypt, as Southern Illinois is familiarly known—in fact, other kinds being rarely seen. And so the life of young Belt ran. A great many instances such as the foregoing could be cited, and the names of the victims of young Belt’s night raids given and the respective instances proven, but a great many of the parties are still living and the majority of the better classes in Egypt “harbor in their breasts” a “delicacy” in and are decidedly against having their names connected in any form with the life of so black-hearted a desperado. And, in but few instances, does the author deem it necessary to connect the names of reputable citizens with this vile character, as they were unavoidably thrown in contact with the Egyptian desperado and helplessly suffered by his hand. His chief delight seemed to be in visiting the rude log houses of worship on the

eve of services being held and arrange the furniture in comic style, draw rough caricatures of the divine who was to preside, and sometimes leave the church in such indecent style that services could not be held at all until the same had been thoroughly cleansed with soap, water, etc. Deeds of this character most revolting were thus committed by the youthful desperado—all under cover of night, this being his favorite time for "operating," as he styled it. Thus it was through his entire life, his darkest deeds were done at a midnight hour.

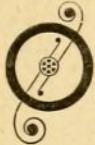
As stated, his chief aim and delight in life was to make a show, astonish the natives, and inspire all with the idea that he was Logan Belt, and like unto him, not another. He would startle his youthful companions by selecting a tree or stump and essay to rid it of its surplus bark by butting it in sheep-like fashion, or, by taking a run from a certain point in order to lend more force to his novel battering ram of human flesh. The reader can, as he goes along, draw his own conclusions of Logan Belt in youth and Logan Belt in maturer years. The author's intention is only to give the many incidents connected with his restless and checkered career, and, if he should choose as a finis to the work to sum up his acts and paint him as the author knew him, in a separate chapter, the picture will only be drawn as facts alone reveal the man—nothing more will be added and nothing will be omitted.

But we pass briefly over his youth, giving merely a running sketch, his after life being of most import to the reader. Suffice it to say that young Belt was ever skipping from trouble, first to Kentucky and then back to Illinois. A depredation would be committed in Egypt, whereupon he would flee to the "Dark and Bloody Grounds" to escape punishment by the strong arm of the law. Ere long, however, he would commit some deed in violation of the laws of Kentucky and another skip from justice would follow. In youth he depended altogether upon time to rust the wheels of justice; in mature manhood he relied solely in scaring off and killing off important witnesses. Those that could not be frightened into fleeing the country were killed, and thus the ends of justice defeated.

On the 13th of January, A. D., 1860, Logan Belt was married to Miss Mary Frailey, daughter of William Frailey, living some seven miles north of Cave-in-Rock, and owner of a small grist mill known as the "old water mill," on Rock Creek. Two brothers of Mrs. Logan Belt, Alexander and William Frailey, are also figurative characters embraced in this work, as mentioned by a newspaper correspondent sent into Hardin County to write up the Belt troubles.

Logan Belt in the Rebellion.

CHAPTER II.

N date of July 16th, 1863, Logan Belt enlisted in Company D, 48th Kentucky Volunteers. Being an Illinois Company, but raised for a Kentucky Regiment, Company D., joined the Regiment at Marion, Ky., August 24th, 1863, where they went into camp and officers were selected. Logan Belt was selected as Second Lieutenant. Thomas Smock, also of Hardin County, Ill., was before the company, but the friends of Belt claimed that he was best entitled to the position on account of the services rendered by him while the company was being made up, etc. Before leaving Hardin County for Marion, Ky., a ballot was taken at Dunn Springs in order to ascertain who would be the probable choice of the Company for Second Lieutenant. Some twenty men of Company A were present, and as they were stationed at the lower end of the line Belt walked down close to them, realizing that they would vote for the man nearest them, which they did. Thus an impression was thrown out that Belt was elected over Smock through unfair means. This is all a mistake, however, as Belt was the choice of the Company. But a great many afterward saw the blunder made in selecting him as such officer.

The first move of the Regiment was to Princeton, Ky. This Regiment never saw active service, and only did guard and skirmish duty. During drilling exercises Lieut. (Logan) Belt took but limited stock and that was forced out of him by superior officers. In regimental drill Maj. Hoyt would give command to Regiment, and Lieut. Belt was not sufficiently skilled in or acquainted with military tactics as to give orders to his company that would accord with the general order or aid in the execution of the desired movement.

He was inefficient to exercise duties required of him, and he seemed to feel his inability by keeping aloof and avoiding all drilling and other exercises. He was a total failure in everything that did not personally interest and financially benefit Lieut. Belt. As a soldier puts it, "pure cussedness was Belt's forte." He could successfully steal a fine horse and smuggle him through to his

home in Egypt, where he could also have him disposed of at handsome figures. A part of these stolen animals were kept for him by various parties until his return home at the close of the Rebellion. His wife was left in the care of her father, (widely known as old Billy Frailey), and to whom was entrusted the keeping of several mules and horses and some two hundred dollars cash. His brother-in-law, Asa Mott, also cared for and disposed of a great deal of his ill-gotten property. A total of eighteen horses and mules were captured and run to Egypt by confederates. These confederates were to be largely rewarded upon Belt's return, but a man that will stealthily take a part will also take all if the opportunity presents itself. Thus, but very few of Belt's confederates received anything for their services. But it is not deemed necessary to give each particular incident of a stolen horse or mule, and owing to limited space we content ourself with noting a few of the most important as we go along. While at Princeton, Ky., ravages were from time to time being made upon the citizens of Princeton, and an order was issued from headquarters (Louisville, Ky.) by Gen. Burbridge making assessments on rebel citizens for damages or loss incurred through the depredations of the guerillas. Logan Belt was detailed to notify them to report to Gen. Burbridge, or in other words to summon them to appear at headquarters and pay the assessment. Again we wish to portray to the mind of the reader the harshness of Logan Belt's nature, and the empty domineering or swell-head disposition possessed by him. Instead of going to these resident rebels (a great many of whom were perfect gentlemen, who were thus being called upon to make good the losses occasioned by the depredations of a criminal class of free-booters, with whom they were in no wise connected), and quietly informing them of the orders from headquarters, and in a soothing manner make them to feel that he was merely discharging a painful duty devolving upon him through the orders of superior officers, and thus allaying to some extent the bitter feeling existing in their bosoms against the North, he only kindled the spark of wrath into a sweeping flame of hate and added insult to injury by calling his vindictive nature into play, using abusive language, etc. By way of illustrating the foregoing and verifying our statement, it is only necessary to give as a sample the following incident: Going one day to the residence of a wealthy Kentuckian, for the purpose of requesting him to personally appear before Gen. Burbridge, at Louisville, and pay the assessment due, he found the gentleman mentioned confined to his room very ill. This man, whom Belt could see was very sick, endeavored to have himself excused, or the date for his appearance at headquarters deferred. This, however, was not sufficient grounds for Lieut. Belt to excuse a rebel; go, he must, and that at once. In vain did the sick man plead with our heartless desperado. Belt would not excuse him, neither would he appoint another day for him to visit headquarters, nor even obtain orders of Gen. Bur.

bridge to appoint a committee to receive the assessment, but with assumed authority the sick man was hurried off to Louisville, being cursed meanwhile by Belt for being a rebel. There is honor to be maintained even in warfare, but Belt knew it not. There is generally a spark of humanity found in the heart of the vilest desperado, yet such a spark ne'er smouldered in the black heart of this character or Logan Belt.

The Regiment next moved to Russellville, Ky., where they drilled during early part of winter of 1863. Before leaving Princeton, however, Lieut. Belt sent a fine gray mare to Asa Mott to be taken care of for him. What became of the mare the writer will show further on. Suffice it to say that this was another "pressed" horse, while "pressing" animals for the U. S. Government he was not wholly unmindful of Logan Belt's financial interest, and accordingly "pressed" the finest ones for Lieut. Belt. The third move was to Bowling Green, Ky. While encamped on Barren River a little incident happened which the author desires to give simply to show the general character of Belt. One day while a government drove of mules were passing through to Louisville, Ky., and when in the act of swimming them over the river they had the misfortune to mire several fine mules—some of them being greedily swallowed by the treacherous sands of the river's bed, while others barely stuck in a blue coarse mud. Of the latter, the officer in charge told the boys if they would rescue the mules from a watery grave they might have them. Accordingly a young man named Wm. Boyd, who was a teamster, pulled a very fine young mule out of the mud. The mule was nearly dead when rescued, and it was several weeks ere his muleship was his former self, and this only through the kindest treatment. Mr. Boyd was an excellent young man possessing a philanthropic disposition, and the same spirit that prompted him to save the dumb beast also prompted him to care well for it, so that in six weeks the animal looked altogether different. Lieut. Belt, however, had his "weather eye" open, and as soon as the mule was again in fine condition captured him and sent him home. Virtually stole the animal before its owner's eyes, as he had an opportunity to send him to friends in Egypt, and so himself boldly took a halter, placed it upon the mule, and had him led away in open day. Teamster Boyd well knew Lieut. Belt's desperate character, and therefore thought it was better to lose the animal than his own life later, should he cause Belt any trouble over the "abduction of a mule." Two other fine mules were sent home while encamped on the Barren. This was during latter part of the winter of '63 and '64. Wm. Boyd, the teamster here spoken of, is well known to many of our readers, having returned home with his Company to Hardin County, and having oft repeated the story which we now relate. There are also several living witnesses to this incident, but we care not to reveal their names in this work, and would not have used the name of the deceased were it not just as it is—he is lying under the

mould. Boyd was a bold, fearless man, however, and numerous persons now residing in Hardin County have heard this same story from his lips. The living witnesses do not care to have their names associated with Belt unless it was absolutely necessary, and we certainly deem it not.

Before proceeding farther, we give the names of a few of the officers, the names of whom will be used hereafter while sketching Belt's life during the great Civil War. The First Lieutenant was John Tyer, also from Hardin County, Illinois, Orderly (or First) Sergeant, Geo. W. Jackson, from aforementioned place, and a gentleman known only to us as Lieutenant Gregory, of Company A. But we stop with this last for the present. If it had not been for these three men Lieut. Belt would never have gotten his credentials in shape so that he could have been mustered out. He could not have made a satisfactory report or settlement with U. S. Government, so illiterate was he. They made intercession for him at various times when arrested. They well knew Belt was crooked and that his "ways were dark," but they leaned this much toward him through that pity known only to soldiers. Belt was of their Company, had gone out with them and thereby hangs the tale. Tyer was appointed Quartermaster and the duties of this office confined him closely, so that he afterward knew but little of Belt's army record, and perhaps knew but little before, as he was a man who attended strictly to his own individual affairs, and concerned himself not as regarded the affairs of other men. The Adjutant was a gentleman named Wm. Shuler. The Regiment was put on detached duty from Clarksville, Tenn., to Louisville, Ky., along the L. & N. Railroad. Company D was divided and principal part was stationed at Cave City, Ky., and the minor part of the Company was on detached duty at Bacon Creek, in Hart County, Kentucky, guarding a railroad bridge. This was in April, 1864. At this juncture it will not be amiss to give the only instance in which Logan Belt was ever known to turn over captured property to the government. He was in command of the detachment at Bacon Creek. One day a report came into camp that a few guerrillas were at a farm house a short distance away, whereupon Lieut. Belt sent four men out to surprise and capture them. They found the three guerrillas as per report and cut short their rendezvous by firing upon them, The guerrillas returned the fire and fled. The surprising squad of four then immediately captured the horses of said guerrillas and promptly turned them over to Quartermaster at Munfordsville. While guarding this place Lieut. Belt had a horse that was constantly breaking into the fields of an old gentleman living one mile from camp. Although a man of generous proclivities, still he did not wish his corn destroyed when it was entirely unnecessary that it should be, so he mildly waited upon Lieut. Belt and informed him quietly of the depredations of the animal upon his fields of corn. Belt insultingly told him to help himself; the man of silver hairs—for he was seventy years of

age—humbly took his leave begging Belt to care for the horse and not allow his standing crop destroyed. The animal was still allowed to trespass at will upon the grounds of the nice old gentleman who had in his modest way begged that it be not allowed. At last forbearance ceased to be a virtue even with this good old father of three score and ten, so coming into camp one early morn he informed Lieut. Belt that he must keep his horse out of his fields. Belt cursed him and again told him to help himself. In response the man of years and gray hair firmly told Belt he would shoot the horse the next time he broke in upon his premises. This was too much for Lieut. Belt ; his dignity as an officer was wounded, so in a rage he knocked the old gentleman down, kicked and unmercifully beat him, and would perhaps have killed him outright had not some of the detachment interceded for the helpless victim of Belt's wanton cruelty. At this inhuman treatment of an old man just on the verge of the grave, the boys of Belt's command were greatly incensed at their leader, and Belt was accordingly reported. Belt was arrested and a hearing of the case by officers from the Colonel's office at the station on the creek. Just a hearing and the case against him was dismissed, through the leniency of Capt. Charles E. Van Pelt and others. The evidence was of a serious nature and all against him. The daughter of the old gentleman had come up to camp with him, and was therefore a witness against Belt, as also were several of the detachment. Here was an aggravated case : Imagine, dear reader—yes, picture if you can, the scene of a young man in the capacity of an officer, willfully maltreating a fellow being whom the blighting frosts of seventy winters had rendered physically infirm ; meanwhile an intelligent little daughter was wringing her hands and plaintively pleading for her father. No one but a deperado, whose heart was calloused o'er by the committal of many crimes, could have withstood the sweet young voice and tear-stained face of that lovely girl as she piteously interceded for her aged parent. Yet all this did not move the flinty heart of this monster in human form. He was Lieut. Belt, and Lieut. Belt's will must not be crossed. Here was the coveted moment in which to inspire his small detachment with awe, and cause them to dread even the name of Lieut. Belt, and as we have stated he lost not the opportunity. This, though a cowardly act, had the desired effect upon the men under him ; it proved conclusively his cowardly, yet vindictive spirit, and it behooves them to watch him, lest they should be gotten into trouble on his account. If his dictates were always obeyed trouble was likely to ensue therefrom, and if they were disobeyed then the life-long displeasure of Lieut. Belt was incurred, and they knew not but that life itself would at some time pay the penalty. The reader can at once see that it was the treacherous revengeful spirit of Belt that was most feared by his associates even in war. The consequences were always considered. Indian-like, he was ever stealthily maturing plans whereby he

could gain revenge and yet not be proven positively an actor in the dark drama. To show that a cowardly spirit reigned within the man, we have only to relate another little incident which occurred while at this place, though we refrain from giving name of party concerned outside the character of this book. One day a hog had been troubling the boys of a certain mess while preparing their frugal meal. At last they became tired of it and one of them, a lad about 19 years of age, shot it in the leg inflicting a mere flesh wound but sufficient to make the porker squeal. Belt heard the hog squeal and immediately began to utter threats against the man who did the shooting if only he could find him out. No one said anything; this seemed to license our Lieutenant to say a great deal more, which he did, much to the discomfort of all. Finally he became so much enraged that he had the boys drawn up in line and the roll called, whereupon he put the question direct to all but the last man. No one knew anything about the matter; threats of heavy penalties were profusely made, but no one seemed to regard them till after Belt had reached a finis in his tirade of abuse. When he had ceased speaking a young man (the very same one to whom Belt had not put the question regarding the hog) stepped out of the ranks with the cool remark: "Mr. Belt, I am the man that shot that hog; if you have anything more to say let us hear it, and I assure you we can settle it quickly." The boy threw his gun carelessly upon his left arm and stood demurely tapping its stock with the fingers of the right hand while awaiting a reply from Belt. The movement was a quiet but yet a decided one. The firm resolute look in the boy's face and the flashing eyes told a true story of deadly intention, which Lieut. Belt was not slow to see, and not heeding the boy's remarks quickly dismissed the line of men before him, and turning upon his heel left the scene without further remarks upon the hog question. While at this place Belt shipped a great deal of ill-gotten plunder home, and which consisted of dry goods, clothing, soldiers' shoes, groceries, etc. He compelled one certain man now living in Hardin County, Illinois, to box up these stolen goods and ship them to Asa Mott, then a resident of Hardin County, and a brother-in-law to Belt. At last this man became afraid the constant stealing by Belt would be detected and he refused to pack and ship any more of the goods. Belt threatened him, but it availed nothing. Lieut. Belt had then to pick another man. The writer can prove all of this, and more, upon good authority. Two very large boxes were at one time shipped to Cave-in-Rock, Ill., via Louisville, Ky., and a prominent citizen of the county sat upon one of the boxes in Louisville. Also a large box of coffee, tea, sugar, blankets, etc., were shipped by him from Cave City. While they were still at Bacon Creek the report that rebel soldiers were in the vicinity again came into camp. Belt took four or five men and went to capture them. But it turned out that they were Union soldiers of

another company and that it was only their horses that Belt meant to surprise and capture, which he did, securing two very fine horses which were immediately run out of that section by confederates and were soon securely stabled in Hardin County, Illinois. These soldiers were on their way home and perhaps never knew who robbed them of their horses.

Here we introduce to the reader a character known as Louis Franklin, of Crittenden County, Kentucky. Franklin had killed a rebel in Kentucky and was thrown into jail therefor. He broke jail, however, and fled to Hardin County, Illinois, where, in the year 1863 he was living on what is now known as the Isaiah Gustin farm, just one mile north of Cave-in-Rock, Ill. In this same year he enlisted in Company D, along with Logan Belt and others. He became closely allied with Lieut. Belt, they being bosom friends. Franklin was a man who knew no fear, and to arouse his ire meant to place him as a deadly foe against the personage who did it. Yet, in justice to him, it must be said that he was not the man to take undue advantage of his opponent and was in every respect a man of cool, collected mind. His comrades respected him for his bravery. We introduce him to our readers in order to correct an erroneous impression that has gone out to the effect that Franklin was killed by Belt. But Lieut. Belt and Franklin were firm friends, as heretofore stated. A short sketch and the reader will be left to his own thoughts again. Lieut. Belt left Bacon Creek and went to Cave City where he was placed second in command of the Post. A command had been issued that the boys should not take any more roasting ears, but shortly after the order had been given an officer came down into camp early one morning only to find the camp kettles steaming and the boys, as usual, cooking roasting ears. "Who stole those roasting ears?" was the inquiry from the officer. No reply from the boys. This enraged the officer, who said: "By G—d he would find out who got that corn." So he ordered the First Sergeant to detail six guards and to place the remainder of the company in the stockade, where it was the duty of the guards to see that they remained till some one would tell who took the corn. Franklin having been on guard the night previous was asleep in the stockade, and when he awoke was informed by the boys that he was alike with them, under arrest. Franklin did not understand it, so quietly getting up he passed out of the stockade unhindered by the guard and proceeded directly to the officers' quarters, where he asked him why he was placed under arrest. But his painstaking was only rewarded by a tirade of abuse. Franklin talked back in a lively way and the officer threatened to have him bucked and gagged, but the company being nearly all under arrest and the Orderly Sergeant refusing to assist in gagging him, he ordered the First Sergeant to tie Franklin to a tree, as also the guard who allowed him to pass out of the stockade, which was executed. In the meantime the soldiers confined in the stockade mutinied and threatened to take their guns and walk

out. The officer was informed of this and placing himself in the door of the stockade ordered the men to pass out by him in single file, and as they did so he would put the question to each as to whether or not they got the corn. The first man to pass out was the man who acknowledged that he procured the roasting ears, and was ordered tied to a tree by the superior officer, who immediately left the company quarters and went down into town, which was distant not more than one-fourth mile. Six of the boys went down to where Franklin was tied and cutting the cords that bound him, they, without orders, set him free. Our officer upon his return, made inquiry as to who cut Franklin loose. The First Sergeant, in answer to him, said: "Some of the boys." No more was said about it, but the next morning he ordered Franklin to be sent to Munfordsville, twelve miles distant, delivered to provost-martial and court-martialed. So he was accordingly taken by First Sergeant, as officer in charge, with H. M. Winders as guard. The presiding officer, however, failed to prefer charges against Franklin and the provost-martial set him at liberty. Franklin refused to go back to his company, and after a while succeeded in getting himself placed in Quartermaster's department to care for horses. Franklin wished to go home in order to see his family, then residing at Marion, Ky. The Colonel and Quartermaster tried to prevail on him to give up the idea, but no; go he must. So in company with a relative he started to Marion, each on horse-back. But poor Franklin never saw "the companion of his hopes and fears"—the dear wife he so longed to see. Franklin and his companion were shot from off their horses and their heads severed from their bodies. Logan Belt was absent from the company at that time visiting his family in Hardin County, Illinois. Therefore, it was quite easy to throw out the impression that he was Franklin's murderer, but the author has learned enough to convince him that Lieut. Belt neither committed nor was a party to the crime in question. Franklin, as heretofore stated, had killed a rebel. That rebel had relatives—enough is said. Logan Belt was innocent of this charge, and here we will let it rest. Franklin was killed in November, 1864.

Now a few more little incidents and we shall close this chapter of his life. One day two of the boys passed out of camp to get shavings to sleep on. Going by where Logan Belt sat the first one said, "Lieutenant, I'm going down after shavings to sleep on." "All right," replied Belt. The hindmost soldier, who was none other than James Mason, deceased, and known to many of our people, passed on without saying aught to Belt. After Mason had passed Belt called to him, asking him where he was going. Mason said he was going after shavings. "No, by G—d, you are not," Belt said hotly. He immediately ordered Mason tied to a tree, and while he was being tied Lieut. Belt commanded the boys to "tie him as tight as h—l." Our informant says that the tone of this expression by Belt on that

occasion made him feel queer, and he distinctly remembers the incident to this day. On another occasion while the company were removing from Princeton to Bowling Green, Lieut. Belt again displayed his disposition of wanton cruelty by tying one of the boys (who is yet living in this county) behind one of the wagons with a short piece of rope and walking him through the mud as though he were a dumb animal—all this now as a reprimand for some small misdemeanor. And, another incident we shall give here, is that of Richard Edwards, whom Lieut. Belt had stripped of every vestige of clothing, his feet tied together and hands behind him, and then water thrown upon his naked body. Edwards, in the meantime, nearly going into convulsions and acting more like a mad than a sane man as he rolled over upon the ground frothing at the mouth and cursing. At another time he tied this same Edwards by the thumbs, placing Edwards upon his feet in a standing posture with his hands drawn up to a pole overhead, just as high and as tight as could be drawn, and in this position he was forced to stand for four or five hours. Such treatment of a human being causes a shudder to pass over the writer to even pen it. Logan Belt was court-martialed at Bowling Green, Ky., for buying clothing of the boys, who, when they would run short of funds, would draw on the Government for clothing, and then dispose of the same to Lieut. Belt for a mere trifle in cash. But the wily Lieutenant was not to be caught even in so plain a case as this, and managed the affair so adroitly that nothing was done with him.

In latter part of the year 1863 the regiment was consolidated, and major part stationed at Munfordsville. It was intended that this regiment join Sherman's army, but the regiment was subsequently disbanded and put on detached duty along the L. & N. Railroad. The regiment was again consolidated in the fall of 1864, and finally mustered out of service on December 16th, 1864, at Bowling Green, Ky. But ere we close this chapter we wish to give the manner in which Belt sometimes proceeded while pressing horses for army uses and how he sometimes managed to procure the most valuable for himself. Upon one occasion he went on an expedition of this kind, and while looking at the horses espied a very fine animal well worth one hundred and fifty dollars. He told the owner that he would like to have that one for himself, to use as a saddle horse, and would give him twenty-five dollars for him if he said so ; if not, then they would have to take them all alike for the use of the army. This horse was also sent home.

Logan Belt on the Farm.

CHAPTER III.

AS stated in the first chapter of this sketch, Logan Belt was born in Hardin County, Illinois, a few miles back of Cave-in-Rock, and on what, as was in those days, known as the Anderson Brown place. Having married a short time previous to his enlistment in the army, he, of course, returned to Hardin County at the close of the war and settled down on a small farm. Not that his mind was bent toward the pleasures and profits of agricultural pursuits at all, but in order that he might easily gain a livelihood without labor by preying upon the unsuspecting farmers among which he lived. Shortly after coming home Lieut. Belt was elected Constable in the precinct in which he lived, and at the expiration of his term as a petty officer he had become so well acquainted with the common laws as to practice in the Justices' courts, where a victory was invariably scored for the client of Logan Belt. For several years previous to his sentence to the penitentiary, for the murder of one Dock Oldham, he kept the surrounding neighborhoods, or those adjacent to the vicinity in which he lived, in that turbulent state reaching to an extreme. He would create strife between his neighbors; the natural result, a law suit, would follow in some form. Belt would be engaged as counsel upon one of the contending sides, the case would come up before one of several petty justices and Logan Belt would gain the suit for his client. A moderate fee for his services, of from five to fifty dollars, and the "maiden of peace" would pursue the even tenor of her way for a few days, or at least until "our ex-Lieutenant"—as he was familiarly called by his intimate friends and allies—could spring another law suit. Certain Justices residing near him, whom, it is said, never decided a case against him, they being members of the obnoxious coalition, thus formed to deprive worthy men of their just rights and rob law-abiding citizens of property accumulated by dint of industry, but still doing it in a legal way, the reader must understand. A great many Hardin County citizens yet live to testify to the truth of this statement, and we shall now pass briefly over his life on the farm.

As previously stated, Wm. Frailey the father-in-law of Belt, had boarded Belt's wife and taken care of horses, mules, money, etc., that Belt had entrusted to him from time to time. When Belt arrived home he took his property or booty, rather, under his own care, but said nothing to his father-in-law about paying him for the services rendered and did not even propose to pay the board bill of his wife. After moving all live property, he soon demanded the \$200 entrusted to his father-in-law for safe keeping, until he should return. That gentleman, in turn demanded that Logan pay his wife's board bill. This he refused to do as a matter of course, but the old gentleman was shrewd enough to keep the money then in his possession until the claim was settled, and as Logan never felt disposed to settle, he never received the money.

Within a short time after his return home he took an old bay horse for which he had paid \$15.00, and went to Fowler Kirk's, an aged negro, living some three miles below Cave-in-Rock and proposed to trade him the old horse for a fine young mule that Kirk owned. Kirk told him that he would not trade the mule at all, as he wished to keep him. He had purchased the mule from a gentleman by the name of Frank Pearson, who came from Missouri, and had given him one hundred and fifty dollars for the animal. Kirk had the mule fastened up in a stable, and Logan took the saddle from the back of the old horse and turned him loose in the lot, then going into the stable he caught the mule, led him out, saddled him and after telling Kirk to inform his neighbors that he had traded with him he mounted the mule and rode away, leaving the chagrined negro standing in the lot looking after him. Belt told Kirk that if he kicked or made any noise about the transaction he would prove that he had traded him the mule for the horse. In those days the negro was not allowed his oath, and not then being entitled to suffrage he of course was left the helpless victim of an open outrage. Gentle reader, what do you think of this character now? But we have no space for comment, and so again leave you to draw your own conclusions.

We shall now tell the reader more about a certain gray mare that Lieut. Belt "pressed" while in the army, but which he somehow neglected to turn over to the U. S. Government. The mare was the property of a resident Kentuckian. After Belt had returned home this Kentuckian with his wife visited relatives near Raleigh, Ill., and passing the residence of Lieut. Belt, he noticed the gray mare Belt had taken away from him, quietly grazing in a pasture near by. He continued his journey to Raleigh, but when there, at once procured the assistance of relatives and friends, and immediately retraced his steps. The party drew up at Belt's residence at a late hour in the night and without a moments hesitation re-captured rightful property and set out for Raleigh. Belt discovered the whereabouts of the animal at last, and taking Capt. Gibson with him went up to Raleigh intending to bring the mare back. On riding into Raleigh they found the animal hitched

to a rack near by, and at once made inquiry as to who rode it there. No response from the little group of men standing near, among which was the owner of the animal. Again the inquiry was made by Belt, which was received as before by the small knot of men, except that one of them stepped quickly away and entering a grocery store soon re-appeared armed with a double-barreled shot gun. Walking quietly up toward the horsemen he began: "Mr Belt, by G—d I am the man who rode and hitched that mare there. Gibson and yourself took that mare from me when I couldn't help myself, but I am on an equal footing with you now, G—d d—m you, and you had best leave here and that d—m quick, too". It is needless to say that Belt left and without the mare. On the day following the Kentuckian returned to his native state, again passing the residence of Lieut. Belt. He had expected Belt to follow the mare up and attempt to retake the same, and had prepared to receive him. On returning home his friends accompanied him to the Ohio River, but "our Lieutenant" knew his man and had no desire to further interfere.

Immediately upon his return home, after being mustered out of service, Lieut. Belt gathered his confederates together and heading them made several raids into Kentucky, where, as the war was just closing, they found it an easy matter to plunder and rob the citizens under various guises. Upon one of these raids they visited the section of country lying back of Carrsville, Ky. Going to the residence of an old gentleman whom they knew possessed considerable property and a sympathizer with the South, they passed themselves off as confederate soldiers. The old gentleman prepared a fine dinner for his guests, and after the regal repast had been served he kindly showed them through the rooms of his dwelling, relating to them several little incidents of the war, and finally showed them where he kept his arms. The guests at last bade their friend adieu and departed. The following day, however, they saw fit to visit their hospitable old friend again, not as confederate soldiers but this time in the guise and dress of Union men. They captured three fine horses, took the fire arms shown them on the day previous, (some 10 or 12 fine guns) and four or five hundred dollars in specie, after which they lost no time until they had safely placed their booty in Egypt. They afterward fell out and quarreled among themselves over the division of their spoils. Does the reader ever remember having heard of Bill Dollar, Dick Taylor, Dick Parker, Wm. Moss, Jim Guess and Capt. Gibson? If so, we have said enough.

In the year 1865 a gentleman by the name of Jas. D. Young and Logan Belt had a misunderstanding and a fight at Pott's Hill, in which Lieut. Belt was badly whipped. The following year Young was killed on Christmas eve, of 1866, by Ab. Woods, a desperate character who had prior to this slain several men. It was generally supposed that Lieut. Belt was accessory to the crime, as Woods had lived several months with Young and had frequently told Young that Logan Belt had offered him five dollars

if he would kill him. At the time of the murder Belt and Woods were known to be very intimate.

Logan Belt once sued a neighbor, Henry Ledbetter, for sixty cents. Jno. B. Tucker, now a Baptist minister, was living with his brother-in-law, Henry Ledbetter, as was also a sister. Ledbetter lived on Jesse Baugher's place at the time. Tucker and sister were yet minors; the sister was taken very ill and expressed a desire for cider, whereupon her brother went to Mr. Elias Grise and purchased a gallon for 60 cents, but did not pay for it at the time. Mr. Grise, however, charged the same to Ledbetter, and in a short time sold the account to Logan Belt, who immediately sued upon the same before a Justice of the Peace in Rock Creek Precinct, and judgment was rendered against Ledbetter for the amount and costs, which were \$9.00. An appeal was taken to the Circuit Court and there a decision was rendered that an open account was not negotiable, and so our Lieutenant was loser by his suit of some \$75.00.

After coming home from the service Logan Belt was elected Constable in his Precinct, and, although he owned a small farm of 40 acres, yet he devoted all his time to the duties of this petty office, and hired laborers tilled his few acres. He was always having trouble with some one, and ere long another man was killed and this murder was also laid at Lieut. Belt's door. We have reference to the killing of Samuel H. Dorris, about the year 1870. We will give a few incidents subsequent to the murder and then leave it with the reader to judge whether or not Belt was guilty of the crime alleged to him.

Henry Ledbetter, to whom the reader has already been introduced, lived on 40 acres of land adjoining the forty upon which Belt lived, and, as has been stated, did not recognize each other as neighbors. After Ledbetter had pitched his crop and when his corn was waist high, Belt ordered Hugh Dorris and another gentleman whom he had employed upon his little farm, to turn a span of mules and a yoke of oxen into the field of corn, saying, "That it would make good pasture." Dorris drove the oxen which with the mules were turned in upon the green corn according to Lieut. Belt's command. Then he bade Dorris go and cut a couple of trees upon Ledbetter's land, which Dorris at first refused to do, saying that he knew the timber to be upon the land of Ledbetter. Whereupon Belt again told him to fell the trees and added that "if Ledbetter cut up about it he would whip it out of him". This was in the year 1868, and Ledbetter entered suit in the Circuit Court against Belt for damages. This was two years prior to the murder of Dorris, but Belt had said that if he did not get rid of Dorris, Ledbetter would ruin him—Dorris being the only surviving witness. After the trial was over in Elizabethtown, Belt accused Dorris of swearing "a d—d lie", and as a result Lieut. Belt got badly whipped, whereupon he swore that Dorris would suffer for that day's work. We now refer the reader to the killing of Dorris, as mentioned in the chapter

entitled, "Hell on the Ohio". A man under the cognomen of Dock Clay said afterwards that he did the bloody work, accompanied by Lieut. Belt, and that Belt was to give him \$50.00 for the part he had played. He claimed the paltry sum but no one is able to tell whether he received it or not, as he very suddenly disappeared from the stage of action in Hardin County, and has never since been seen nor heard of. It has been darkly hinted that his bones moulder in the vicinity of what was once known as the Shoemaker school house, that is, that his body was buried in a stable (near a school house of that name), wherein Lieut. Belt at that time kept his horse. We do not claim the latter part to be true, yet it is not at all unlikely. As to the murder of Dorris, Logan Belt proved in this, as in many other instances, an alibi, and thus it ended.

The writer will, before going further, give an instance in which articles of wearing apparel, etc., sent home by Logan Belt while in the U. S. Army, were disposed of or rather bartered to those whom he could secure to labor as hirelings upon his farm. At one time Lieut. Belt wished some rails made, so going to a Baptist divine of rail-making fame, by name of Albert Briggs, he proffered to let him have a pair of soldier shoes if he would split so many rails for him. The offer was accepted and Mr. Briggs got the shoes with the understanding that he was to do the work when Mr. Belt had made ready for him. A few weeks afterwards, however, while our Baptist Brother was filling another rail contract, Mr. Belt sent him word that he wanted him (Briggs) to come and make rails for him immediately. Briggs signified his willingness to do so as soon as the contract upon which he was then engaged was finished; but Mr. Belt sent his wife to Briggs saying that the work must be done without delay or he would enter suit. Briggs then went and made him a tender in cash, the price of the shoes, which Belt refused as nothing short of having the rails immediately made would satisfy him. He soon found out he had met his equal in temper, and to save a sound drubbing from the hands of the brawny rail-mauler he quickly softened and made easy terms with our through-going, plain-plodding woodsman.

Lieut. Belt was noted as a lady's man—even to the extent of neglecting the wife of his bosom. And to women of a loose character is attributable no small amount of his crime and deviltry. On the evening of the 27th of December, 1875, Doc Oldham was killed—a woman was at the bottom of it, Oldham being a successful rival of Belt in this instance. And, the author could name one or two women whose characters were not without blemish, whom Belt kept at various times upon his farm. Another, a widow, whom he ruined and then forced her through fear to exchange a good homestead for a small and very poor one—the 40 acres of clay soil that Belt had only owned hitherto. The mormon proclivities of Belt's general make-up as a man, and his creed not only allowed him the privilege of rearing a

very large family of children by his lawful wife but also a handsome little family outside his lawful domestic relations. Like Brigham, of Salt Lake fame, Belt too believed in multiplying and replenishing the earth.

In the year 1873, Arthur Price, a brother-in-law to Logan Belt, was killed, and the general supposition was that Belt was the instigation of this murder. But the killing of Oldham in '75 seemed to be the eve of a day when Logan Belt was to be check-mated in his checkered career. In order to escape the clutches of the law in this instance many plans were devised by his fertile brain in an evil course, among which was the organization of a Ku Klux Klan for getting away with important witnesses for the people in this case, etc. This seemed to be the turning point of his life of unhindered deviltry up to this date. He seems to have realized it and made a last desperate struggle to place or trample the common laws under his feet. Here he made a fatal mistake, which it does seem to the writer that the better judgment of a man of his seeming ability, or rather, shrewdness, should have taught as much had he only duly considered his after-steps. But Lieut. Belt knew only one rule, which was to "rule or ruin". And he ruined no one but himself, that is, irreclaimably so.

Lieut. Belt had, previous to his trial for killing of Oldham, taken a family from the State of Tennessee upon his place by the name of Jones. Tom Jones and his wife Sarah with two or three children, seemed a very nice family indeed, and though poor, still Jones had a good team and wagon. Lieut. Belt was very hospitably disposed until he succeeded in getting them comfortably settled in one of the tenant houses upon his farm, and one near his residence where he could look well to their interests. (?) But they soon found that his (feigned) hospitality did not supply them with the necessaries of life, though Jones worked steadily for Belt while his wife (Mrs. Jones), ransacked the neighborhood for the staples necessary to keep soul and body together. A few of the neighbors moved by pity, assisted the family in this direction, but the majority insisted that Jones move from off the farm of Mr. Belt before aid was tendered by them. This he did not do, and in a very short time both himself and wife sickened (?) and died. Jones first, followed by his wife hard after. The author was informed that both were hurried into the turfy earth just as they died, without the bodies being dressed or a change of clothes, and it is said that one lady who lived near and who happened in after, but early on the morning of the day of Mrs. Jones' death, partially removed a flannel tied closely about the throat of the body, but seeing dull black circles on the throat as if by finger, marks became frightened and hastily fled the scene, for fear it should be discovered that she knew too much. The children were very small and Belt gave them away, but relatives in Tennessee learning of the demise of their parents came through in a wagon and took them back to their native home. Belt kept

their small housekeeping outfit, among which was good feather beds and the team and wagon in payment for trouble and expense during the short illness of the unfortunate parents. Why did not some one call for an investigation, did you say, gentle reader? Well we cannot in words picture to your mind the terror-stricken state of those who lived as neighbors to Lieut. Belt at that time. They well knew that the least show on their part or the expression of a desire to investigate the acts of Lieut. Belt and their doom was sealed. How one man or one family can create so much terror in an entire county, such even as Hardin, the smallest of the Egyptian Counties of Illinois, we do not know; but, we do know an unparalleled reign of terror invaded even the sister counties of Hardin, through a wily band headed by a wary bandit and desperado named Logan Belt. And this reign of terrorism was only quelled by the determined and unflinching efforts of as brave a man as ever tread terra firma, or so the writer views him. This man was Hon. Jno. Q. A. Ledbetter, who, assisted by Hon. W. S. Morris, another man who was loyal to the rights of the people, fought this element for 12 long years in the capacity of States Attorney or counsel for the people.

Another murder was that of a peddler, about the year 1878, as near as we can learn. We do not say that Logan Belt did this, but will relate our story and again leave it with the reader. The last seen of the peddler he had stopped over night with a man whom Belt had living on his farm. This man was seen at Belt's house late that evening, and Belt accompanied him upon his taking leave; whither the two went the writer is not able to say, but one thing is known that Belt's tenant was soon hurried off to Kentucky, ostensibly, and at last settled in Tennessee, and his family were sent to him. Belt, however, retained their little property. The peddler was supposed to have been murdered by them and his body thrown in a sink, generally known as the "suck" near the Callahan farm. On a day or so following the sudden disappearance of the peddler certain parties were out hunting their hogs, and passing by this suck noticed that a couple of rails and a pole had been thrust into the mouth of the fissure, and pulling them up saw blood upon them, and perhaps saw more but was afraid to reveal anything, though seen even by chance. A few of the peddler's goods were scattered on a road leading to the house of one of the Oldham's, but they were mere trinkets, of no value, and it was supposed by the majority of people living in that section, that this was done in order to cast suspicion upon the Oldham family, as it was claimed by Belt and friends that the foul murder and robbery rested with the Oldham's. But, dear reader, why should the wife of Lieut. Belt refuse to attach a certain chain and seal to a gold watch that she had placed in the hands of Robert Sherridan to pawn for thirty dollars, which Mr. Belt, while in prison under sentence of 15 years for the killing of Oldham, had requested her to raise and send him? Mr. Sherridan found a person who was willing to

loan the money and take the watch as security, but upon presentation of the watch it was found to be minus a certain chain or guard that had formerly belonged to it, so Mr. Sherridan was informed that if the chain that belonged to it was attached then the money would be forthcoming but not without. He put the time piece back in its pocket and went to obtain the guard, and upon his return stated that a certain gentleman had carried the chain and seal off and had not returned them, but the watch was not taken as it was the chain that the party most wished to secure, it being an odd pattern and the only one of the kind ever seen in that section. Such a one was worn by the peddler. This much then toward the identity of the worse than fiend who murdered the innocent peddler.

We pass briefly on. Shortly after Arthur Price was killed in 1873, Logan Belt imagined that a man by the name of Franklin Winders was an enemy to him. Price's wife lived in Winders' family a few months after her husband was killed. Belt, as usual, wanted Winders removed from the "scene of action", but sought, as was his custom, other hands to do it. A proposal was made to a couple of men who are still living in the county and who were then living as neighbors to Winders, to go and kill him. This they firmly refused to do. Belt generally studied the nature of men before approaching them and was generally correct in forming his ideas of a man, but failed in this instance.

But to return to the murder of Elisha T. Oldham, whom was shot and killed by Belt at a dance on the evening of the 4th Monday (27th day) in December, 1875. It is not necessary to give details of the affair as they will be found in the Chicago Times article contained herein. Belt gave himself up to authorities after some months of defiance at the capture by the civil officers and an indictment was found against him, a copy of which is presented to the reader as follows:

STATE OF ILLINOIS, }
HARDIN COUNTY, } ss:

Of the April term, of the Hardin County Circuit Court, in the year of Our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-six, the Grand Jurors chosen, selected and sworn in and for the County of Hardin and State of Illinois, in the name and by the authority of the people of the State of Illinois, upon their oaths present that Logan Belt, late of said county, not having the fear of God before his eyes, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the devil, on the twenty-seventh day of December, in the year of Our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-five, with force and arms, at and within the said County of Hardin and State of Illinois, in and upon the body of one Elisha T. Oldham, in the peace of the people then and there being feloniously, willfully and of his malace aforethought did make an assault, and that the said Logan Belt, a certain pistol, of the value of five dollars, then and there loaded and charged with gun powder and

one leaden bullet, which said pistol he, the said Logan Belt, in his right hand then and there had and held then and there feloniously, willfully and of his malace aforethought did discharge and shoot off to, against and upon the said Elisha T. Oldham, and that the said Logan Belt with the leaden bullet aforesaid, out of the pistol aforesaid, then and there by force of the gun powder aforesaid, by the said Logan Belt discharged and shot off as aforesaid, then and there feloniously, willfully and of his malace aforethought did strike, penetrate and wound him the said Elisha T. Oldham, in and upon the left side of the breast of him the said Elisha T. Oldham, giving to him the said Elisha T. Oldham then and there with the leaden bullet aforesaid so as aforesaid discharged, and that out of the pistol aforesaid by the said Logan Belt, in and upon the left side of the breast of him the said Elisha T. Oldham, one mortal wound of the depth of four inches and of the breadth of one inch, of which said mortal wound the said Elisha T. Oldham, from the said twenty-seventh day of December in the year aforesaid until the thirtieth day of the same month of December in the year aforesaid at the County aforesaid did languish and languishing did live, on which said thirtieth day of December in the year aforesaid, the said Elisha T. Oldham, at and within the County aforesaid of the wound aforesaid died, and so the Jurors aforesaid upon their oaths aforesaid do say, that the said Logan Belt, him the said Elisha T. Oldham, in manner and form aforesaid, feloniously, willfully and of his malace aforethought did kill and murder, contrary to the form of the statute in such case made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the said people of the State of Illinois. W. S. MORRIS,

STATE'S ATTORNEY,
Hardin County, Ills.

STATE OF ILLINOIS, }
GALLATIN COUNTY, } ss:

I, R. L. Millspaugh, Circuit Clerk, in and for the County and State aforesaid, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true, full and complete copy of the indictment now on file in my office remaining.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my hand and affixed the official seal of said Court at my office in Shawneetown, Illinois, this 1st day of November, A. D., 1886.

R. L. MILLSPAUGH,
CIRCUIT CLERK.

April Term, 1876, Hardin Circuit Court. The People of the State of Illinois vs. Logan Belt. Indictment for murder. A true bill, Willis Littrell, Foreman of Grand Jury. Recorded April 5th, 1876, in book "A" Indictments, Record on page 47, L. F. Twitchell, Clerk and Recorder. Exhibit "E".

WITNESSES: Lewellen Oldham, Lucy Melon, Morgan Tucker, Charles Buckhart, William Buckhart, Kit Zook, Robert Wingate, John Corlen, Richard Bell, Frank Dall, Frank Hardin, W. B. Ledbetter, Franklin Ledbetter, C. D. Stephens, T. L. Dean,

Washington Covert, Anna Belle Sherridan, Jeff Boyd, John Goodwin, Anna Underwood, Jerry Froyser, Thomas Oldham, J. W. T. Oldham, William Johnson, George Dale, Henry Rittenhouse, Ila F. Dasset, Henry Adams, George Dasset, William Winn, Charles Dunn, Martin Mannon, George W. Hardsley, Elizabeth Hardsley, William Johnson, Susan Brown, William Pankey, Susan Davis, James Dale, James Crider, Daniel Crider, Thomas Crider, John Payne, George W. Covert, George W. Brown, Charles Dunn, Tottan Dunn, M. L. Shelby, Henry Ledbetter, Henrietta Adams, Luke Hambrink.

Filed April 8th, 1876, L. F. Twitchell, Clerk.

Belt was indicted at April term, on 4th day of April, 1876, of the Hardin County Circuit Court, for the murder of Elisha T. Oldham.

After a preliminary hearing Belt was released on \$3,000 bail. Several witnesses were on hand, whose testimony Belt found to be of a very damaging character, relative to his case, among whom were Robert Wingate, George W. Covert and Morgan Tucker. Belt's plan was to beat the case off from time to time, and thus wear it as near out as possible, and also in the meantime to rid himself of all important witnesses, which he proceeded to do. Before going further, will relate an incident or two of examining trial. Wingate, as mentioned, was a youth of some 18 years of age, and Logan Belt, as was customary with him, thought to bulldoze court and witness. So after the boy had taken the chair as a witness, Lieut. Belt interrupted the witness while rendering his testimony by getting down in front of him, and after fixing his eyes firm in the boy's face, said: "Now Bob, you know that I did not strike Oldham first, and did not use knuckles on Oldham; but that Oldham struck me first, and was the man who used the knuckles, striking me with them." The boy, in the most striking manner of simplicity, not seeming to realize the danger thus imperiled by an open statement of truth, quietly placed his elbows on his knees, and leaning over toward Belt with his face resting in his hands, and steadily meeting the threatening, terrifying gaze of Belt's fiery eye, said: "Yes, I saw you strike him with knuckles; you struck him first, and you know that I know it." The boy, however, soon after sickened with fever and died, leaving the people minus a very important witness. Morgan Tucker, another important witness, was giving in his testimony, and a brother to Logan Belt was near and tread on Tucker's toes, but the witness unflinchingly told his story. It came near costing him his life, however, as during intervening time between examining and final trial, Tucker was at various times waylaid by Belt and his residence watched, but the witness adroitly managed to elude those who sought to slay him. One more important witness for the people was in the person of one G. W. Covert. Belt had managed to marry Covert to a Mrs. Sarah Greene, a "lady friend" living near Lieut. Belt. Belt had several good reasons for wishing to unite with the bands of the

law this couple. He wished to remove, through Covert, certain members of the Oldham family, whom he deemed in his way, and made overtures to Covert to that effect ; at one time proffering to give Covert a large white horse that he owned if he would kill Tom and Jesse Oldham. Covert refused, and Belt finding that he had a head of his own, and fearing him still more as a witness, on account of the overtures made him, began to cast him about for some means or manner, in which he might also remove Covert. Covert getting afraid that his life would be taken, went out to Harrisburg, Ill., but this did not satisfy "Loge" Belt, as a great many called him. He was evidently afraid that Covert would turn up all right at court as a witness, and that was just what our Lieutenant was determined should not happen. So taking Jim Belt and Joe Lowry he went up to Harrisburg after him, but did not get him, yet subsequently did, and under the pretext of arresting him Covert was carried back to Hardin. His charge, of course, was not substantial and Covert was allowed to go free. Belt simply wanted him where he could "take care of him." Lieut. Belt had a peculiar disposition, or that of looking after the affairs and interests of other men, especially where they conflicted with his own, and he seemed to find it to his special interest to look after the affairs of our character named Covert. After getting Covert once more within the bounds of Hardin, and after the charges preferred against him were not sustained and Covert was released, then it seemed that the next duty devolving upon "our Lieutenant," was that of having him closely watched until other charges could be generated by Mr. Belt. In the meantime Covert was passing around over the county thinking that perhaps Belt had become partially reconciled toward him. So one day, while passing near Belt's farm, or along the highway which ran through the farm, he suddenly came upon a gentleman by the name of Frailey, and in a moment or two saw Logan Belt also, standing with a shotgun, which he was in the act of leveling upon him, so he quickly sprang aside and behind Frailey. But none too soon did he act, for the very moment he was safely ensconced behind the person of Frailey a shot rang out upon the air and Frailey fell, badly wounded. Covert lost no time in beating a safe retreat, and hurriedly going to the residence of Dr. Dunn (a physician living near) had his wounds dressed, a stray shot having carried away a portion of his left arm or wrist. Covert had other charges preferred against him by Belt and others, and on one of these was taken to Elizabethtown, the county seat, and Covert's friends escorted him hither. Belt, however, had a writ or warrant for Covert's arrest in James Carr's hands on a charge of attempting to break into his stables, Belt claiming to have caught him while in the act of stealing his horse. This writ was taken from Carr and placed in Joe Lowry's hands, with instructions to arrest and carry Covert, after his acquittal at Elizabethtown, to Battery Rock that night for trial the next day before Esquire Henderson, and Belt also

informed Lowry, as he left for Elizabethtown, that he need not be surprised if twenty-five or thirty of those d—d sons-of-bitches did not take Covert away from him and hang him that night, and to take him the lower water road by the cave, Belt meaning the Oldhams. Lowry knew the Oldhams were friends to Covert, and so told Belt, whereupon Belt looked him through, with the remark: "By G—d, I say take him the lower road, by Cave-in-Rock." The counsel for the people were alert, however, and demanded the writ, which Lowry gave up. Hon. W. S. Morris told the court that they had just as well take the prisoner and hang him to one of those locust trees near the Court House as to allow him carried to Battery Rock. It was afterwards learned that men were secreted on the lower road in the Barker hollow, and that Belt had gone to Thos. Hodge's, near that place, for the night, so he would be able to prove his usual "alibi." The authorities, or rather the prosecution and counsel for the people, forbade, as we said before, the carrying of Covert to Battery Rock, suspecting that it was a scheme by Belt in order to rid the people of an important witness, and although Lowry did not reveal anything of a damaging character against Belt, even did he know, yet it was evident that he understood the matter and was afraid to carry him thither. He told the attorneys for the people that Mr. Belt had advised him to take Covert to the place of trial by the lower road, or the one leading by Cave-in-Rock, and added that "he need not be surprised if some of those d—d sons-of-bitches (the Oldhams) did not take Covert from him and stretch him (Lowry) to a limb." Lowry knew that the Oldhams had nothing against Covert, and the idea immediately flitted through his mind that it was merely a ruse of Lieut. Belt's, that bloody work was contemplated, and that after its execution strong efforts would be made to fasten the crime upon the Oldhams, whom Lowry knew were friendly inclined toward Covert. So Covert was held in Elizabethtown by Ledbetter and Morris, they giving as their reason that they were thoroughly convinced that Covert would be killed if he was allowed to go. So serving the papers that Belt had put into Constable Lowry's hands, they at once remanded the prisoner to jail for safe keeping until after court, which was then near at hand, telling Lowry that Covert could be tried for the offense with which he was charged after court was over and he had been used as a witness, and to so tell Mr. Belt. Lowry was so afraid that a party would be in wait for them on their return, and perhaps a party secreted upon each of the two main roads, that he and companion would not return by either, but went several miles out of the way in order to return by a less frequented and also by an unsuspected route.

And now before we take up the final trial of Loge Belt for murder of Dock Oldham, let us review the murder and also preliminary trial therefor. Belt, after committing the crime, hastened to the house of a friend living near and this friend escorted him home. When he reached home he had gashes cut on one side of

his face as though done by knuckles. The State's attorney, and his assistant counsel, were of the opinion, however, after hearing the evidence in the case and locating the two men from testimony regarding the altercation and murder, that Belt's wounds were upon the wrong side of his face to have been inflicted by Oldham, in the positions which he and Belt occupied or posed, and that the wounds were made by the hands of other parties through Belt's dictation, and while at the house of his friend. This latter theory was expressed by the State's attorney while addressing the court in examining trial. He also wound up his address by reminding the court that "the first case on record on earth (that of Cain for murder of Abel, as given in first book of the Bible) was one in which the defendant was the only witness and that witness lied." With this pert, but truthful and appropriate remark, he left the case in the hands of the court. Belt kept his case off, postponed for three or four years, and had in the meantime worked up a Ku-Klux organization, scared off some of the witnesses, and various depredations were committed. Jas. H. Beavers lost wheat in the stack ere it could be threshed, had his fences burned, etc. Luke Hambrink, a witness, had been foully murdered at his own home, and surrounding circumstances pointed Loge Belt out as the instigator. But this is given further on in an article, or series of articles, taken from the Hardin Gazette, a paper being published in the county by J. A. Lowry, at the time. A reign of terror had been inaugurated by Belt, and good citizens were actually afraid of their lives. They were on the eve of rising enmasse and wiping out the faction that was through its lawlessness making life and property insecure, but through the influence of one prominent man this saved the better class of Hardin County citizens. He requested that they wait until after Belt's final trial, then pending, for murder of Oldham, and if he then escaped the due punishment of the law, he would have nothing more to say. His advice was acted upon, and so Belt's crime in killing Oldham, was passed upon in a sister county and due punishment therefor meted out.

Belt was tried at Shawneetown, at a July special term, 1879. He was sentenced to the Penitentiary for fifteen years, on the 22d day of July, 1879. And right here it is not amiss to give an incident or two of final trial.

J. Q. A. Ledbetter and W. S. Morris were the counsel for the State, or in behalf of the people, and they had learned enough to know that ex-Lieut. Belt was contemplating receiving a term at Joliet, and that anticipating this much he would rally his forces, and in case sentence did fall upon him, be rescued by his men from the hands of justice. If they had no such anticipations or fear in this regard why should measures of precaution be taken? If Logan Belt and his followers were not dreaded, then we ask why it was that shortly before the trial at Shawneetown a company of militia had been organized? Ostensibly for another and under an unsuspected pretext, but in very

truth to await and be in readiness for any emergency that might present itself during final trial. If this was not the prime object, then why did this company, in a secret manner, receive only a few days previous to the trial, a hundred stands of arms, with ammunition, direct from Springfield? Such invincible facts express plainly to a thinking mind, the awe and dread in which Logan Belt was held by the people of Southern Illinois. Neither was their fear groundless, as was afterward conclusively proven. Brave men stood square to duty in that trial, and had it not been for the coolness displayed by Sheriff John Yost on that occasion, "our Lieutenant" would in all likelihood have been rescued from the hands of the officers. The case came to a finis on Saturday evening at nine o'clock. A motion was made for appeal or new hearing in the case, and the court ruled that the motion be laid over till Monday following. John Yost was standing in the Court House door, having previously placed bailiffs in proper positions. Court was adjourned and people began, as was expected, to jump to their feet preparatory to a rush down stairs. Mr. Yost, in a firm, steady voice, demanded that all resume their seats, which command was implicitly obeyed, and a bailiff was then told to pass out with the prisoner, and after he had placed him safely within the county prison to come quickly back and report to him, then all would be at liberty to wend their various ways. The bailiff did as directed. Some fifteen or twenty bailiffs were placed from Court House to Jail within a respectable distance of each other, and as the bailiff, with Mr. Belt in charge passed, the respective bailiffs each fell into line and formed the rear. If an interruption and an attempt upon the part of Belt's allies to defeat the ends of justice had not been anticipated, then why was this precaution taken? And if such an attempt had not been contemplated, why was it that a man stood at the corner of the Court House holding Belt's horse by the bits with his right hand, while the bridle was thrown over his neck, and not only holding the horse, but standing with a heavy coat thrown over his left shoulder, and which concealed his left side from view, as also his left arm? Why was this? The man standing there was said to have been a tried friend, and the horse Logan Belt's. Then, we are left to infer that the Belt men were all in the court room, and that the intention was to rescue Belt, and in the jam that followed in the exit from the court room, and under the excitement, the rescue would be an easy matter, and but little would be afterward known about it, or who the participants in the rescue were. But in this they were foiled by the coolness of Mr. Yost, and also in the unexpected manner in which he managed the affair. He had evidently taken in the situation, and if so, certainly proved himself equal to the occasion.

One more incident in this connection: The witness, Covert, had been compelled to secrete himself in order to save his life prior to trial, but the men who were employed by the people saw

that he put in his appearance at the trial. The State's Attorney, J. Q. A. Ledbetter, wished to show by this witness that Belt was the man who shot him, instead of Wm. Frailey, and, whether by design or otherwise—which we leave for the reader to determine for himself—yet true it is, that Covert took the witness box presenting a very respectable appearance. His left side was toward the jury box. Covert was not often seen wearing a nicely laundered white shirt, which he did on this occasion, much to the surprise of a great many who knew him to be too poor a man to afford the garment worn; and, whether by design or otherwise, as we said before, the sleeves of this very necessary article of apparel were very long, with very large wristbands. The question arose relative to Belt killing off witnesses, and witness threw up his left arm, and with right hand quickly shoved down his sleeves, disclosing to the jury his fractured wrist, a part of which had been carried away by a shot from a gun held in the hands of Logan Belt, and as he executed this movement, remarked; "You can see whether he intended to kill me or not." The jury could plainly see the large hole torn in his wrist. The Court ruled that such was out of order, but the State's attorney, to prove his points, quickly asked Covert who tried to kill him—who shot him? Whereupon Covert as quickly responded, "Logan Belt." It was enough. The prosecution had got in their work—had carried their point, and in this instance great tact and good judgment was displayed.

Belt's Ku Klux organization had a great bearing upon Belt's case in this court, as on the 7th of June prior to this trial he had been arraigned and a preliminary held on the charge of organizing a Ku Klux Klan in Hardin county, but he had beat this off, like the Oldham case. Our opinion is, and we are not alone in thinking so, that had Logan Belt quietly submitted to the rulings of a Hardin county court, without any attempts to bull-doze courts, officers, witnesses, etc., and in every conceivable way defeat the ends of justice, his sentence would have been comparatively light to the sentence received at the hands of a Gallatin county court.

Logan Belt remained in prison at Joliet just six years to a day. While in prison he is said to have remarked that the one mistake of his life was in not following the precedent of John A. Murrill, also a well known desperate character, or desperado, who once figured conspicuously through this section, and regretted not having adopted Murrill's style—that of preaching. While in prison his mind was ever occupied with thoughts of obtaining pardon and release. It seemed that prison life only chafed and rather served to inflame his revengeful spirit than to subdue it. Yet there seemed to be a burden upon his soul that could not be lifted. He was afraid, seemingly, that the murder of Luke Hambrink would come out, and this bore him down. He wanted to create an impression upon the minds of Hardin county people that he was not a party to this atrocious crime. The hideousness and great wickedness of this appalling deed did not seem to strike

him, but only the fear that the weight of the law would fall upon his head for it. He was ever alert and scheming to throw off suspicion and change public opinion in this regard, and various methods did he employ to do this.

After sentence had been passed upon Lieut. Belt, and he had been safely lodged in Joliet, a perfect calm settled down upon little Hardin. A peaceful, quiet air, that had not been known or felt for years previous to the conviction of Belt, now permeated the every nook and corner of little Hardin. Prosperity began to lower her gracious banner on this long-suffering and down-trodden little county. But the restless spirit of Belt forbade that it should long remain thus. He began asking of the people petitions addressed to the Governor, praying for his pardon. This request they could not think of granting to one who had so wronged them. At last Belt's hope waned, and it is said that he next sought means to escape from his dreary prison life, and came near succeeding in making good his escape, by secreting himself under an outgoing wagon, but that at the gate the keepers discovered him clinging underneath the vehicle just in time to detain him and prevent his escape. How true this latter is, we do not know, and it is only given here as being a mere rumor, though it is a feasible story and likely true. At last it began to dawn upon Hardin county citizens that Belt would be actually pardoned, and pretty soon the quiet reign of peace in Hardin was broken, and a state of deviltry was the programme. The county capital received the heaviest blow of all, as the Court House, together with the records, was burned, and by whom no one knew. The theory of a great many is that "our Lieutenant," although safe within the walls of Joliet, or State prison, yet was still figuring in Hardin's affairs, and this only to destroy or make groundless the assertion that Belt was responsible for all the crime and deviltry in Hardin previous to his sentence, and to prove to the people that crime was still rife among them, even though he was absent. The writer, of course, admits that second characters were upon the stage of action, but who plotted or composed the dark drama that was being enacted in Hardin? What was the motive? Was it to shift crime, or rather the punishment for the committal of crime, from the shoulders of the one to whom it rightfully belonged? Who can say? But this is only given as a theory.

Belt was at last pardoned by Gov. Oglesby, and immediately returned to the section he had left six years before. Word preceded his arrival that he had become a changed character, and would henceforth preach the Gospel of Christ in the section in which he had hitherto been a devoted disciple of the evil one. This word was very unfavorably received by the Egyptians, among whom Belt had formerly dwelt. Belt, setting himself up as a divine, or a Baptist minister, was considered an evil omen as regarded the future of little Hardin. Belt returned home, and his first act was to order from the premises his wife and daughter, whom he claimed had led aught but virtuous lives—that intimate

relations existed between them and certain Oldham men. This they firmly denied. On this point the author proposes to remain silent, not knowing as to the validity of the claim made by Belt in this regard. The writer is reliably informed, however, that while Belt was in prison he wrote his wife to go to Oldham's and get down upon her knees and beseech them to sign a petition for his release. She went as directed, but could not obtain the signature of a single member of the Oldham family. They informed her that they were willing to render her any possible aid for the sustenance of her children, but that they would not sign a petition for the release and freedom of the man who had wantonly slain their brother.

Mrs. Belt converted all the personal property into money that she could dispose of and forwarded the same to her husband, who expended the same, but how or for what purpose is not definitely known. The general supposition is that it went to his attorneys, with whom he was very liberal, though this liberality on his part, ere long had rendered his family almost destitute. He had left his wife with a large family of children to care for and he was now robbing them of even the necessaries of life in order to fee certain attorneys. At last Belt got all the money that his wife could raise by selling off personal property. When all the property was disposed of and she was almost reduced to poverty, having now no team and being compelled to rent the farm to a poor class of tenants, from whom she received but meager rent receipts, she was then forced to work very hard herself, and at times to depend upon neighbors for the wherewith to support her large family of children. All who knew her and the hard time had in providing for her little ones, thought she had done admirably well under the existing circumstances. Lieut. Belt, however, resolved to cast this loyal wife off when he heard that she had obtained a sack of corn from one of the Oldhams with which to supply her children with bread when in dire need. Why did he not ask his better class of neighbors concerning his wife before forbidding her shelter under his roof? But no; the better classes were never troubled by him in this regard. He did not seem disposed to make a great deal of inquiry, and imagine dear reader, if you can, the picture presented upon his return home. No letters had been received from him for quiet awhile, but when he neared his former dwelling of six years previous, and when the wife of those former years saw him and ran to meet him with an attempt to embrace him, and thrice welcome him to her bosom after an absence of six long years, oh, we say, imagine that stony-hearted fiend pushing aside the woman he had sworn to protect, and with bitter words that fell upon her like a leaden pall, bade her go forth into a cold world and seek her own livelihood apart from the family of dear children that she had labored for and protected when he could not! A man with a conscience not dead to sin could not have been so relentlessly cruel. If this act was a just and righteous one in Lieut. Belt, as

his friends claimed for him, then allow us to ask why it was that it brought down upon his head the indignant condemnation of the masses, and most especially the better classes of the people, who, after this, held him in utter contempt, open expressions to that effect being freely made. But Lieut. Belt never courted favor with the higher classes, and cared not as to their opinion of him.

But to continue: Our character claimed to have forsaken his old ways of sin, and to have entered upon a new life (?), so accordingly joined the church of the denomination known as United Baptists at Peter's Creek, and was baptised on the first Sunday in December, 1885. Great pretensions were made by him, and 'ere long, like Murrill, he was preaching the religion of Jesus Christ. Large audiences greeted him in the Peter's Creek church, and when donations for the church were in order, "our ex-Lieutenant" was the most liberal of all. Upon one occasion he urged Matt Smock to give for church expenditures, etc., the sum of one dollar, and as Smock was seemingly loth to act, told him that if he would donate one dollar he would pay one-half of it, and as Smock consented to do so, Belt promptly paid one-half dollar. Another time, he found the church presenting a very uncleanly appearance and needing a broom, so pulling twenty-five cents from his pocket, handed it over to the church authorities with instructions that a new broom be purchased, which was done. We might go back and tell more of his life as passed the latter ten years prior to his assassination; how H. M. Winders, Riley Lamb, W. J. Hall, Joe Lowry and others, were compelled to abandon their home and together lay out for weeks in order to save life, but lack of space forbids it. As we have before stated, Belt was very liberal toward the church of his choice after he became connected with it, giving from five to ten dollars upon ordinary occasions. Yet the people in general had but little faith in his professed christianity. It was reported that he had said while behind the prison bars that "if he ever came back to Hardin he would raise h—l with some of them even if he had to turn preacher to do it," and when upon his return, he verified in action the report that had preceded him, the people looked upon him with great distrust, expecting an outbreak at almost any time from the faction of whom he was formerly the leader and whom all seemed to think was still existing but which had remained inactive to a great extent during Belt's confinement in prison, simply because their leader was absent.

Belt applied for and received a divorce from his first wife whom he had driven from his home upon his return, she through fear or otherwise, having failed to appear against him. Having secured a divorce he was married to a cousin of remote degree. Mary Amanda Belt, of Franklin County, on Tuesday evening of October 26th, 1886. A Baptist divine, B. A. Salyers, performed the ceremony that made them man and wife at the residence of Logan Belt. It is said that this last woman had lived under

Belt's roof several weeks previous to her being united in marriage to Lieut. Belt. This is as much as the writer cares to say in regard to the last wife of Mr. Belt, but a letter is given from her to the author in the closing chapter and was received by him while the preparation of this book was in progress. Belt, with others was indicted for the murder of Luke Hambrink on the 29th day of October, 1886, or at the October term of the Hardin County Circuit Court, 1886. Members of grand jury that rendered indictment, being as follows:

Aaron Cowsert, John Thornton, Frank Seiner, Ila F. Dossett, Charles Miller, George W. Douglas, Smith Hosick, Lewis Joiner, Noah Hurford, James Hale, Isaac N. Ozee, T. J. Vinyard, Wm. H. H. Coltrin, John Reiner, Wm. R. Lamb, B. L. Ledbetter, Thomas Douglas, Henry Vinyard, John J. Shearer.

Mr. Shearer was foreman of the jury. The indicted parties were immediately arrested and a preliminary given them, which resulted in three of them being held in bond of \$2,000 each, two in bond of \$5,000 each and Logan Belt was held in jail to await his trial.

After Logan Belt was placed in the Gallatin County jail he one day referred, while in conversation to the killing of Doc. Oldham, and, in conclusion of his remarks, said, as he drew a long breath: "That was the beginning of all the trouble in our neighborhood." So the reader readily sees that our theory expressed in this direction heretofore is now verified in the very language of our character. Following in chapter 4th is a series of articles taken from the Hardin Gazette relative to the Ku Klux organization by Belt in 1879, which is also followed by an article from Chicago Times in chapter 5th, then his late trial for murder of Hambrink in chapter 6th.

Logan Belt was acquitted in the trial for the murder of Hambrink, as appears in Chapter 6th, wherein the proceedings as published in the Register are given. It seemed, however, that fate had decreed that the character as herein embraced should not go unpunished for his many crimes, as on the evening of Monday, June 6th, 1887, Logan Belt was assassinated near Wesley Chapel, by an unknown hand. But in closing this chapter, we wish to correct the Chicago Times articles, as given in chapter 5th, and relative to Ferrell and Platter, of Hardin County, as civil officers. To be brief, we shall not gainsay the charge, but will simply state to our readers that in epoch of Hardin County's history it well paid men to in nowise connect themselves with Logan Belt.

A Series of Articles from the Hardin Gazette and Published at Elizabethtown, Illinois, in the Year 1879.

CHAPTER IV.

MORE Ku Klux—The following note was found tied to Ben Burton's mare's mane: "May 1st, 1879.—This is a hint. The way you see your mare's tail, is the what I will do for your head, and you had better get away inside of to (two) months or I will put a hole thru you. W. C. and gess at the rest, God dam you."

Mr. Burton has asked permission to reply to the above threat through these columns in the following manner :

"I found the above notice tied to my mare's mane on the morning of the first of June. My mare's tail had been shingled and her foretop cut off by the party, I suppose who posted the notice. The only comment I wish to make is that I will not leave the country, and request the party who makes the threat to come in the day time and I will be ready to receive him. June 6th, 1879. BEN BURTON."

Comment is unnecessary. The threat given above can, we are told, be traced back to one of the Klan back of Cave-in-Rock. It makes no difference what this party had against Burton, the tendency is all the same, and shows clearly that this Klan and all others of a like character run into murder, robbery, arson and all their kindred crimes. Crush it out by the strong arm of the law,—wipe it out of existence, and let peace and quiet once more rest upon the people. Stop it at what it is at, and let the peaceable and industrious citizens who have been driven from their homes return to their families and their farms. We got a letter only this week from Wm. J. Hall, who is a fugitive,—not from justice, but driven away from his home by these outlaws. If our civil officers have not got the nerve to do their duty in the matter, let us apply to the Governor, for militia, to nip this thing in the bud.

We want the readers of the Gazette outside of Hardin County to understand that the Ku Klux Klan here is not a political organization, but got up for the purpose of exterminating all the known enemies to the members thereof, without any regard to religion, politics, or standing in society. Won't they have their hands full, though ?

As soon as the trial was over last week against Logan Belt and others, they issued a warrant against Frank Hardin and Zed Jenkins for perjury and the trial was set for Monday. The parties on the day waiving an examination, were held on their own recognizance, to appear before the Circuit Court.—Hardin Gazette, June 13, 1879.

LETTER FROM EARL SHERWOOD.

Cave-in-Rock, Illinois, June 20th, 1879—Editor Hardin Gazette—Dear Sir: In your issue of June 13th you say that “We want the readers of the Gazette to understand that the Ku Klux Klan here is not a political organization, but gotten up for the purpose of exterminating all the known enemies to the members thereof without any regard to religion, politics or standing in society. Won’t they have their hands full, though?”

Also under the head of “More Ku Klux,” you say that “comment is unnecessary,”—that the threat of a mad boy in the northwest corner of the county against a neighbor boy on account of a pretty girl,—“can be traced to one of the Klan back of Cave-in-Rock.” James A. Lowry, you know in your soul that it is a falsehood.

You say that the “tendency of this Klan, and all others of a like character, run into murder, robbery, arson and all their kindred crimes.” In this connection, I will say, that you have named our organization a Klan. Call it what you like. If a few honest hearts combined together for the purpose of ferreting out a crime and bringing criminals to justice can be called a Klan, then call us what you will. If the murderer of Luke Hambrink can be found, it shall be.

You say “it runs into murder, robbery and arson.” I say that we endeavor to bring to justice murderers, robbers and burners, and to crush them by the strong arm of the law. You say crush us by the strong arm of the law. You say wipe us out of existence. We do not say wipe them, nor you, out of existence. You say “let peace and quiet once more rest upon the people.” We say disband your army that has been in arms ever since Luke Hambrink was patricided;—make them stop terrorizing the county with shot guns by the dozen. Make them let their witnesses be interviewed.

They refused to allow Wm. J. Banks, et al., to see the widow Browning, when sent by the grand jury, and have since then shipped her.

You say “stop it at what it is at, and let the peaceable and industrious citizens who have been driven from their homes, return to their families and their farms.” We know of no one who has been driven from their homes. The shotgun company do so from choice and an evident joint interest. Wm. J. Hall, who you say has “been driven from home by these outlaws,” was actuated by fear, induced by the mind-paralyzing lies told by the Judas who gave the medicine to his wife’s former husband

about one month before he married her. These lies, colored by an interested party in Wm. J. Hall's neighborhood, caused his flight. I to-day, read two letters from said Hall to Mr. Logan Belt, and they throw dark shadows on some who roost high.

You, say "let us apply to the Governor for militia to nip this thing in the bud." If the thing had been nipped in the bud before the poor peddler, who unsuspectedly ate his dinner, and then—a few trinkets scattered and his pack—in the big sink ; if the bud had been nipped before poor Osbrooks, the husband of Joe Adams' first wife, took his last dinner at G. W. Hollemon's ; if the bud had been nipped before poor old man Hardesty, after chatting and smoking with friends, took that last dose of medicine and was bounced to the grave with a whoop and a yell ; if the bud had been nipped before poor old man Hambrink was made to take the heavenly train to keep his money from going to Germany with him, there never would have been this disturbance, nor such a general uprising by certain characters, among high and low, to shout "stop this investigation—it retards the wheels of justice."

KU KLUX.

"Oh! judgment, thou hast fled to brutish beasts and men have lost their reason." When good men can be misled by men who have been given libels under their signature ; when good men can not see the cause and the effect, the sequence and the consequence ; when bad men can kill stock, burn fences, assassinate men, swear lies and band together armed to the teeth to resist law, and by obtaining certain worshipped counsel, after they find it a ground hog case, oh! it is a grand "coup d'etat" to shift the origin of the excitement upon parties who deplore that our county has been despoiled by such men as comprise this shotgun gang, thereby deterring any wealthy immigration to our country. And here we will say that the "Ku Klux Klan," so much talked of, is simply this: A few men met together for the purpose of devising ways and means to ferret out the Hambrink murder, and to protect the witnesses, as the witnesses were all under the control of armed men. They took a solemn obligation to keep secret all that might be discovered until the arrest of the party or parties implicated. And, as to the report that this was Logan Belt's Klan, or in his interest, I will state this, that if the discovery of the murderers of Luke Hambrink would benefit Logan Belt, then it was in his interest ; if it would injure him, then it was against his interest.

I see that the papers of different states have said a great deal about this matter. I ask that they copy this, and that they do not give us a newspaper death. Let us live before the people as we live before high heaven ; with conscience clear, let our reputation be with our conscience. I am yours, etc.,

JONATHAN BELT,
EARL SHERWOOD, et. al.

MILD COMMENT BY THE EDITOR.

Earl Sherwood, as spokesman for the Klan, came to see us last week, and asked permission to use these columns to explain up matters in which they were concerned, and to try to allay the excitement existing ; which privilege we granted, and the above is what has come of it. Verily, "Whom the gods destroy they first make mad." He upbraids us for calling their organization a "Ku Klux Klan." That is what they called it a year ago when serving notices on the Oldhams, as will be seen from one of those notices published elsewhere. He says they organized for the purpose of ferreting out the murder of Luke Hambrink. Are they such friends of law and order as to impel them to this step? Were they such intimate friends of Mr. Hambrink as to cause them to take such extraordinary steps? Why no. In point of fact, some of them were his inveterate enemies. In point of fact, Luke Hambrink was afraid certain members of this Klan would kill him. In point of fact, Luke Hambrink told the editor of this paper over a year ago that he was going to Germany, for, said he, "If I stay where I am Logan Belt will kill me." Perhaps Mr. Sherwood will stigmatize this as another huge lie, and in case he does, we are able to cite him to other persons, of unquestioned veracity, to whom Mr. Hambrink used the same language. It looks more like they wanted to cover up the murder of Luke Hambrink than to bring it to light. If this had been their only object, as he would have you infer, then why, in the name of all that is good, have they been bulldozing, threatening and terrifying citizens against whom they could have had no suspicion whatever? The idea that some of the parties engaged in this thing should undertake it for the purposes stated by Mr. Sherwood, is really a joke, which the people who know them best will appreciate most. We would have Mr. Sherwood, and all concerned with him, to understand that we do not wish to misrepresent any one. We are not actuated by malice, but by the desire to promulgate the truth, and shield the people from danger by warning them of that danger. If it had been our disposition to prejudice Logan Belt's case, it looks reasonable that we'd have commenced some time ago. Mr. Sherwood, with a tragic air, calls up the case of the peddler who was supposed to have disappeared up in that country, and of two or three men who in all probability died natural deaths of disease. This is done for effect. Had we the power the Witch of Endor manifested before King Saul, we could call forth the shade of Captain Gibson, of Mr. Dorris, of Lewis Franklin, of Dock Oldham, and others, and this too would be for effect, and to pretty good effect, too. We have no apology to offer for anything which has appeared in these columns, nor shall we promise to be quiet while there is an armed band of this character in existence in this county. They may try some quieting process, but we feel confident, knowing this people as we do, that our fall would not go unavenged.

THE IMPENDING DANGER.

[The following editorial article and document was prepared for last week's Gazette, but was laid over for good reason :]

The excitement occasioned by the exposure of an organized and armed band in this county has somewhat subsided, but we fear the danger is not yet past. Some of the parties say that they have dropped the organization and have abandoned everything connected with it. It is to be hoped that this is true, but if it be true, why do they still hold their clandestine meetings? Why do they still prowl around the premises of Zed. Jenkins and other citizens? Why are they still trying to intimidate men against whom they have grudges? We are inclined to think the trouble is not past, and we fear that in case it ever gets another start, that they will rival the Williamson county outlaws in the number and atrocity of the crimes committed.

This county is too small, too weak, too poor, and too much dependent, to ever stand the expense of even such a state of affairs as existed in Williamson a few years ago.

The members of this gang claim that it was organized to detect and punish the murderers of Luke Hambrink, and some of them may think so, but in point of fact this thing was planned a year ago, and it was gotten up solely for the purpose of making capital in the Belt murder trial now pending. In proof of this assertion we publish below a letter mailed one year ago at Salem, Ky., directed to two persons back of Cave-in-Rock and taken out of the postoffice by a person well known by the citizens of this town, so that the matter can be easily traced back to the reception of the letter one year ago; and the authorship of the letter can be clearly established by the handwriting, and by one other circumstance which we for the present withhold.

Here is the letter and it proves what we have said in regard to the object of this organization, and if anybody doubts any of the allegations we propose to fully and clearly establish them by proof when occasion requires it

At home in all places, but more especially in Hardin County, Ill. Gents. : As we desire to be friendly with all parties, we want in this epistle to warn you that in the event of your attempts on our friend Logan Belt, we, the citizens of the above named place, are fully determined to hold all of you to a strict accountability for any threat or attempt to injure our much esteemed friend, a Lieutenant in the army during our last war. We, the aforesaid citizens of the above named place, are fully aware of the dastardly attacks made by the "Odum stock" on account of our Lieutenant merely discharging his duty and sending one to his long home, who richly merited all he got, and as this letter means business you had all better beware of us † Ku Klux † as we have eaten nothing of any consequence since the battle of Shiloh, and we are hungry! Beware! Beware of us fellows, as the leaves are now on the trees and as we are nothing but shadows and fearfully hungry, and as we are desirous of acting

in Ku Klux style we warn you to beware of the infuriated friends of Lieutenant Belt, who are and have been watching his welfare for some time. We are merely across the brink, but all attention, should anything occur to our esteemed friend, and be sure to accept of this as from a friend, as we do not wish to send any of you to Shut-Eye-Town, unless some depredation is committed upon the person or property of our friend. Now as you and a considerable number of your dirty acquaintances are mean enough to do anything on this earth, be sure to take this as a memento morit. And now farewell.

From your only friend on this lower footstool.

A CITIZEN OF THE ABOVE PLACE.

Addressed: Tho's & Jesse Odum.

Now this clearly shows a bad state of affairs to exist. The author of the letter is a citizen of this county and a member of the Ku Klux recently on trial here.

We have a law here and the majority of the people wish to see it lived up to and executed. The people are not satisfied with this way of intimidating, bulldozing and driving witnesses and prosecutors. It has been done before in this county, and will be done again and again if the people are not outspoken and prompt in breaking down this last attempt. We say again put it down, or we shall not live to be old enough to see the end of it, nor will our property be sufficient to pay the expense it will entail.

WHAT THE PRESS SAYS OF IT.

From the Johnson County Journal :

A gentleman of Elizabethtown has written to a friend in this place that a band of Ku Klux has been terrorizing the citizens in the eastern part of Hardin County ; that eleven of the gang have been arrested and admitted to bail ; and that ninety men are under arms night and day in that locality.

From the Shawnee Local Record :

There seems to be a bad State of affairs existing in Hardin County, but we are unable to learn the particulars. It appears that a party had organized for the purpose of ferreting out the murderer or murderers of Luke Hambrink. Another party was also organized, and there existed bad blood between the two organizations, growing out of former troubles. It is said that parties were notified to leave the county, and some did leave. The Sheriff was afraid to make any arrests. The factions hearing of this, concluded to go into Elizabethtown and voluntarily give themselves up. So they armed themselves, about fifteen or twenty on a side, with revolvers and sabers, so that neither side should have the advantage in case of a difficulty, and went in for trial. Some of the citizens of the town in fear closed up their places of business and left. The trial resulted in several parties being placed under bond of \$200 each. These are substantially the facts as we learn them at present.

From the Metropolis Democrat.

* * * It would seem that the days of Murrell and Ford were again upon us, Hardin County being the especial theatre of action for these desperadoes. Just across the river and a little above Cave-in-Rock, Ill., is the little Kentucky town of Ford's Ferry, where the celebrated James Ford had his headquarters, and where Ford finally met his death at the hands of an assassin. The editor of this paper has been over almost every square mile of the territory mentioned, and while knowing that a very large majority of the people of Hardin County are as clever folks as the sun ever shone on, yet knowing the parties engaged in this Ku-Klux business, is forced to say that they have been known for years as desperate characters.

THE BAD BELTS.

Correspondence Louisville Courier-Journal.

Evansville, June 12.—Old citizens of Kentucky and Illinois need not be reminded that Ford's Ferry and Cave-in-Rock, on opposite sides of the Ohio River, long since became notorious for the robberies and horrid murders perpetrated by Ford and his confederates. These tragedies have recently been revamped by some of the Kentucky papers. Your correspondent, who had occasion to make a business trip a few days ago through Hardin County, Illinois, has to speak of modern barbarities, which he ventures to say even the red-handed Ford would not be ashamed to own were he living among the desperadoes who seem to have taken their cue from him. Verily, they are fit successors of the dead monster, and are entitled to undisputed possession of his "dark and bloody" patch of ground.

Belt is the name of a large family living near Cave-in-Rock, Ill., which for years has been more terrible to the timid than were ever the names of Little and Strong, in the kingdom of Breathitt. It can be found on nearly every criminal docket that has been made up in Hardin County during the last fifteen years, and is not entirely unknown to criminal fame in several of the adjoining counties. I will begin with the last exploit of Hardin County lawlessness; will then "advance backward," and tell of the deeds of theft, assault and dark assassination that have been mysteriously withheld from courts, grand juries and even Argus eyed reporters for the great dailies.

On the 30th day of May last, upon complaint made by Frank Hardin and B. Z. Jenkins, a warrant was issued charging with unlawful conspiracy (i. e. Ku Kluxing) the following parties: Logan Belt, Jonathan Belt, H. J. Belt, James Belt, Arthur Belt, Elisha Morris, son-in-law of Jonathan Belt; Wm. Frailey, brother-in-law of Logan Belt; George Ratliffe, nephew of the Belts; Frank Justice, Tom Leeper, Robert Sheridan, W. D. White, Bill Lyons and Harry Holloman. All, except the two last named, when they ascertained that a charge had been preferred against them, gave themselves up to J. F. Taylor, the County Judge, for their trial, which began at Elizabethtown on the 4th and ended

on the 5th of this month. Hardin and Jenkins were the principal witnesses for the people, and stated substantially that by various influences and false pretenses, employed from time to time by Loge Belt and Bob Sheridan, they were persuaded to join the conspirators on the night of the 7th of May last. The place of meeting was a sequestered gulch near the Ohio, the pretended purpose was to ferret out the mysterious murder of one Luke Hambrink, committed in that locality on the night of the first of last April. It was also suggested that a man named Covert should be whipped or killed, and that society thereabouts should be regulated generally. Speeches were made by several of the midnight regulators, grips, signs, uniform and password adopted. Their faces were to be cowed, and a light was to be carried in the hat of each during a raid on evil-doers. Steps were taken to arm all who were too poor to furnish their own weapons. The question whether a fellow should be whipped or "treated worse" was to be left entirely to the conscientious discretion of the klan. In the event one of the brethren should get into the clutches of the law he was to be rescued by pistols, drawn and cocked in the hands of disguised men. The plan adopted to escape the injury of courts and grand juries was very simple and effective—at least it so seemed to the pliable consciences of these night riders. The organization was born, but left without "a local habitation and name," in order that its members could truthfully swear that "they knew of no Ku Klux organization in the county." Hardin and Jenkins having satisfied themselves that it was the intention of the conspirators to assassinate persons who were important witnesses against Logan Belt, in a trial for murder, pending in Gallatin County, and to commit other crimes that they were not sufficiently hardened to take a hand in, determined to disregard the infamous oath that bound the members under pains and penalties "to stick to one another until death." They resolved finally to consult W. S. Morris and J. Q. A. Ledbetter, able and courageous attorneys of the Elizabethtown bar. Tremblingly and in whispers their terrible secret was revealed, and the prosecution began; but they do not appear to have relieved their perilous situation, for they are kept in constant apprehension of a sudden and unexpected "taking off."

INCIDENTS OF THE TRIAL.

The Sheriff took time by the forelock, and had important business up the river the day the trial commenced. Indeed, it has been stated on good authority that he declared to the Commissioners of the county he would resign his office before he would attempt to "force the formidable Belts into a favorable opinion of the law." Prudent people are not disposed to blame him much for transacting long-neglected business in the farthest corner of the county, while the ferocious clans were gathering at the county seat with knives, pistols and shot guns eager to obey

their leader's command. I say clans, for be it remembered there are three of them, which may be designated as the Belt, Simmons and Oldham factions, the last two having declared war for self-protection against the Belt faction. But more of this civil strife and the cause thereof hereafter. It has been estimated that not less than 100 armed men attended the trial. Near the close of the investigation a youthful Beltite, not one of the defendants, was seen to enter the temple of justice bearing a carpet-bag full of pistols. Logan Belt, a shrewd villain, with some knowledge of the criminal law—"so much a long communion tends to make us what we are"—conducted the defense. He generally kept maliciously cool, but once or twice scattered fire from his lead colored eyes, and nervously fingered a large pistol concealed in the right pocket of his pantaloons. His favorite method of cross-examination of a witness whom he disliked was to tell him "he had sworn an infamous lie." A question arose as to the competency of evidence offered by the State, when he coolly informed the court that if a decision were rendered against defendants he should decline to make further defense. What he meant by this statement was not clear to those who heard it, but fortunately the court adjudged the evidence improper, and the trial progressed peaceably to the close. The defendants proved by themselves that their purposes were lawful and praise-worthy. Jonathan Belt, himself an indicted murderer, tearfully declared that Hambrink was a kind, good neighbor, and that, "law or no law," he intended to drag the assassin of the lamented Hambrink to justice.

To say that the times were getting squally to the court, conveys a very poor idea of the difficulties and dangers of the situation. The end came at last without bloodshed, and the defendants were held in the sum of \$200 each to answer indictments. They were released on their own recognizance. Indeed, the judge seemed anxious to get rid of them on any terms, and your correspondent is not the man to censure him for it. I think I should have released them without any bail, and then set up the drinks on condition of their leaving town immediately. After old Jonathan Belt had made an ineffectual effort to get up a "shooting scrape" with Morris, the lawyer, who had pressed the prosecution with great courage and ability, the whole party retired to their guns, which were hid in the edge of the town, and thence retreated to their native fastness. But they intend to give Elizabethtown only a short respite. They have had Hardin and Jenkins arrested on charge of perjury, and will return next Monday in force, to prosecute the charge.

THE PEN AS WELL AS THE SWORD USED.

It was proven on the trial whenever the clan deemed it necessary, threatening letters were sent out. A number of such notices were issued, some of which were read in evidence. The following is a fair sample :

Lickport Headquarters.—To Jack Oldham and the balance of the damned Oldham clan: You have two weeks to clear out, or hell will be your doom.

Robert Hasty, Thomas Oldham and others were in like manner informed that they ought to leave without delay the homes of their fathers. A notice was found among the papers of Hambrink which threatened his life if he failed to drive off two persons who were living on his premises. Notices, supposed to have come from the same fruitful source, since it was proven that branches of the clan existed in different parts of the country, were found about ten miles north of Elizabethtown. Ben Burton, a few mornings since, went into his stable to feed his mare, and found her tail shingled and the following notice tied to her mane:

This is to hint the way you see your mayer's tail is the what i will do for your head, and you had better get away in side of to months, or i will put a hole through you.

W. C. and gess the rest God dam you.

He found also pinned to his gate a card informing him, "ben burten," in substance, that he must get away in ten days or submit to the pleasureable sensation of being killed by a leaden ball or other hard substance.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF THE CRIMINALS.

Robert Sheridan, the Captain of the nameless band, has lived in Hardin County about twenty years, and bore a very good character until four or five years ago, when he yielded to the wicked influence of the Belts. He is now considered "as bad as they make 'em." Frank Justice, the second Captain, lived until recently in Pope County, where he was for a brief period, agent for some kind of patent medicine. While engaged in this business he was mysteriously robbed of \$200 that he had collected for his employers. He is now "bad medicine" himself.

Wm. Frailey has been indicted for forgery, larceny, perjury and assault with intent to commit murder.

Earl Sherwood attempted to commit a rape in Franklin County, and fled to Hardin, where he soon got into trouble, and was indicted for a murderous assault on some person unknown to the writer hereof. George Ratliff began his criminal career several years since by stealing a horse in Hardin County. Very little is known of the antecedents of Morris, White and Leeper. The last named is considered by Jenkins and Hardin as the most desperate villain in the clan, and they always tremble for their safety when his eye is upon them. H. J. is perhaps the "mildest-mannered" of all the Belts. He has yet to kill his man. He tried once, however, to achieve a bloody notoriety, and was indicted for the offense. James and Arthur Belt are scarcely grown, but have been well trained in "ways that are dark" and assassinations that are never found out. Jonathan Belt is more devotional than his fellow-clansmen. He often prays and preaches, "without money and without price." His auditors have

discovered that, while he talks of "peace on earth," a Colt's army is concealed in his bosom, and they are, therefore, uncommonly attentive and respectful. He is a Baptist, and none of his neighbors have ever dared to deny in his presence the doctrines of close communion and baptism by plunging. Indeed, such a firm believer is he in the necessity of immersion that he would not hesitate to tie rocks to a heretic and plunge him into the river where the current runs deepest. During the war he was a Captain under the infamous Payne at Paducah, but becoming dissatisfied—some say cashiered—he tried to get the position of Major in the Forty-eighth Kentucky Infantry. Failing in this, he retired to the crags of his native Hardin, and rarely leaves them except on important business that concerns the lives of his fellow-citizens. When the war commenced he lived in Kentucky, where he got his first taste of human blood by killing a Confederate soldier. Several years since Huston Belt was shot and killed in Elizabethtown by Capt. Frank Gibson, but Jonathan got even by sending a load of buckshot through Gibson while the latter was unsuspectingly riding along a public road.

There were two witnesses to this murder—one of them died, and the other, frightened by the Belts, fled the county. A farcical trial ended in the acquittal of the assassin. During the war, Joe Belt, under arrest at Cave-in-Rock accused of murder, was forcibly released by Jonathan and Logan Belt, assisted by persons unknown in that locality.

THE DARK PLOT UNRAVELED.

Logan Belt is the central figure of the group of Hardin County desperadoes—the master spirit of all the devilry that has lately been perpetrated by them. Every movement of the Belt faction has been made in his interest; to save his body from the penitentiary or his neck from the legal halter. He is, in some respects, a remarkable man. He possesses uncommon nerve and force of character, a pleasing address, unlimited self-possession and great native shrewdness—qualities which fit him well for leading the lawless characters whom he has gathered about him. He was an officer in the Forty-eighth Federal (Kentucky) Infantry, and soon won a first-class reputation as a horse thief. He "pressed" more for himself than for the Government. A soldier of the regiment, who knew a good deal about Belt's crookedness, was found dead and scalped early one morning. The Indian who played this trick on the unsuspecting soldier has never been captured. The criminal charges that have been preferred against him in Hardin and adjoining counties are too numerous to mention in this article. Several years since a man named Dorris whipped Belt in a fist fight at Elizabethtown. Dorris, a short time afterwards, was assassinated at his own house, in Gallatin County. Belt was indicted, proved an alibi, and escaped. His next man-killing exploit was bolder. A dancing party were gathered at the house of Tom Oldham, in Hardin County. Belt walked into the crowd, coolly shot and

killed Dock Oldam, a brother of the host, and then dared any of his friends to "take it up." The indictment for this murder is the danger that Belt dreads. Hambrink, the father-in-law of one of the Oldhams, and the only moneyed man engaged in the prosecution of Belt, is believed by the best citizens, who are conversant with the foregoing facts, to have been murdered by Logan Belt, or at his instigation. The pretended purpose of the clan to ferret out the Hambrink affair is, therefore, a very thin falsehood, and was evidently intended as a diversion in favor of the murderers.

Logan Belt and a man named Covert were once confidential friends. Belt made damaging admissions to Covert. A rupture after this occurred between the two, and Covert's life came near paying the penalty. He was waylaid by Bill Frailey and Logan Belt. Though badly riddled with buckshot, he lives to hide between courts, and now fails to turn up when the case of the people against Belt is called. It must not be presumed that Belt is ungrateful to his friends. In 1873 Aleck Frailey, a brother of Bill, murdered Arthur Price, but was easily cleared by Belt's testimony.

This dark picture has a bright side. Although Logan Belt is running at large on straw bail, the probability is that he will be convicted of felony. This will rid the community of his presence, and will break up the nest of criminals, of whom he is chief. Furthermore, the shocking developments of the late trial have aroused and united the order-loving people of the whole county, and there is a general disposition among them to hold the Belt party responsible for every secret, lawless act that may be committed in the county. Your correspondent would not be surprised to hear, at no distant day, of a lively rope-stretching performance in the vicinity of Cave-in-Rock. X.

While the main facts and allegations in the foregoing article are, so far as we know, correct, yet we do not wish the impression to go out that all the Belts in this country are bad and lawless men; for many of them are as good citizens as we have, peaceable, industrious, and law-abiding, minding their own business and having no difficulties with anyone. Further, we do not think that the impression given in this article that Judge Taylor was intimidated, &c., is either fair or true; for if such was the case, no one present at the trial could see it. No decision which was lawful was withheld, and no order necessary to be given was refused. With these corrections we give the article to the people, as a matter of news, and also because we deem it our duty to give them the fullest insight possible into the deeds and objects of this clan.

Somebody has been prejudicing the minds of the people from the back part of the county against the impaneling of the grand jury. We do not know just what the jury may be able to accomplish, but we do know that the murderers of one of our best citizens are still at large, and we further know that a state

of affairs exists in this county, which, if it cannot be reached and remedied will cost the people a thousand fold more than a few days' session of a grand jury.—Hardin Gazette.

The question has frequently been asked lately, "What is the so-called Ku Klux Klan, and what is its object?"

This is a question which can not be fully answered just now. Enough, however, has been learned to show that their objects were neither lawful nor laudable. Enough has come to light concerning this damnable conspiracy to show any sane man that if the thing had not exploded just at the time it did, they would have inaugurated a reign of terror in Hardin County, the like of which has never been seen before.

Logan Belt is spending his precious time in trying to get some to believe that they had no other object in view than to find the murderer of Luke Hambrink. This is the story he tells in Hardin. In Gallatin County he puts on a look of injured innocence and tells them that he knows nothing about it, and that he can not conceive why any one should try to misrepresent or injure him. But it will not avail him anything to tell the people away from home that there is nothing in it, for they have only to look upon the criminal records of Hardin County to find that he stands indicted by the grand jury for the very offense he denies.

Neither will it avail him anything to spend his time and money trying to malign and break down the only man who has ever dared to gainsay his evil doings, or tried to fully expose the crookedness of his ways. We say it will do him no good; for that man has been known by the people of Hardin County from infancy up, and if he has not walked uprightly the people undoubtedly know it. We shall not use Belt's favorite phrase, and say that he is a "malicious liar," but we simply refer him to the people. As to "infamous" insinuations we refer any one who does not already know the falsity of them, to the people of Hardin County in general. Below we publish a masterly effort of his published in his organ at Shawneetown, (The Local Record), last week, that the people of Hardin County may see the little game he is up to. He could have saved money probably by publishing it in the Gazette. It is more than probable, however, that he had it published where it will do him the most good. A man who can get away with a government mule right in open camp, without incurring the penalty, is undoubtedly sharp enough to spend his money where it will do him the most good. Here is the letter referred to :

Editor of Local Record :

Cave-in-Rock, Ill., June 20, 1879.—Dear Sir: Allow me, through the columns of your paper, to answer the Hardin Gazette in a series of attacks (as he says publicly that he is my enemy) on me, directly and indirectly, through certain articles printed by him, for the purpose of prejudicing the outside community in my trial, in the Gallatin Circuit Court, on the second Monday in July.

I suppose that the articles published in the Gazette had reference to me and others who were charged with conspiracy to retard public justice, and also bears the idea that we are a Ku Klux Klan.

Now, I publicly assert that if it was intended to charge me or any of my friends with being Ku Klux, he charges an infamous lie.

The excitable term "Ku Klux" has been used by my enemies against me and my friends because we wanted to know who murdered Luke Hambrink. They have stopped the wheels of public justice by running off the witnesses, and the hue and cry of Ku Klux is raised to attract the attention of the masses to us and me, and to veil by excitement the horrible crime that was committed upon Luke Hambrink by——

If this charge of Ku Klux was made against me, why was it made? I do not know. But if my grandfather, who might have been charged with robbing the school treasury of several hundred dollars, or my father had been indicted for stealing a wagon, etc., or my uncle had murdered his wife and got out of the penitentiary on the grounds of insanity, or my brother was a common thief and had jumped a bond for perjury, of at least seven hundred dollars, and if I had went on my brother's bond, and said bond had been stolen, as in another case, these charges would not have been made against me. But God forbid. But "my sisters, my aunts and my cousins" are not guilty of the above-mentioned things. Had they been, such indirect charges would not have been alleged against me and my friends, as we would have been in the ring.

Yours truly,

LOGAN BELT.

While publishing letters, we will give one received from Wm. J. Banks, this week, contradicting an assertion made by Sherwood in his letter published last week.

LETTER FROM W. J. BANKS.

Karber's Ridge, Ill., June 30th. A. D., 1879.—Editor Gazette: I see in your issue of last week that Mr. Sherwood says that "they would not allow Wm. J. Banks, et. al., to see the widow Browning when sent by the grand jury," etc. I never heard of the widow Browning before; never was sent anywhere by the grand jury to serve papers, or anything of the kind, and never was "refused" by anybody to see anybody.

I am respectfully,

WM. J. BANKS.

P. S.—"Et. al.," may have been "refused."—not me.

We desire to inform the readers of our paper, once for all, that we are not making war upon the so-called Ku Klux Klan from any feeling of a personal nature; that we do not desire to do anything that will prevent a fair administration of justice; that we have not heretofore expressed ourselves as the avowed enemy of Logan Belt, as he charges. But that crime is rife in our

county is well known to everybody. The disposition of the people and the press to remain quiet has given an impetus to evil doers that has caused them to assume such open means to commit acts of lawlessness. We shall hereafter, however, be more mindful of the duty we owe the people of this county, and our voice shall be heard denouncing crime in all its forms. The duty we owe the people demands that we expose in all their hideousness the crimes which have and are still being committed in this county, no matter who the authors may be. And we say in behalf of the people of this county that the majesty of the law will and shall be vindicated, and the guilty ones brought to justice.

And to you men that have been suspected of crime, we say that the matter shall be investigated, the accused shall be brought to trial, the guilty ones shall be convicted and punished ; but the innocent, if any there be, shall go unpunished, for we shall defend their innocence with as much vigor as we denounce the guilty. But remember, no amount of bull-doing, terrorism or threats will deter the people from proceeding straightforward to the uprooting of crime in Hardin County. The people are fully aroused to a sense of their duty, and they will see to it that every man stands or falls by his own acts, and no storm of terror that a few men can inaugurate, will prevent it. We shall refer to this subject again when occasion requires, as we have other facts to lay before the people when the proper time shall come.

ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION.

Friday, July 11, 1879.

Charley Kruppert, a German living near Capt. Tyner's, on the Ohio River, below Cave-in-Rock, was shot while plowing in his field Wednesday, the ball glancing his side just sufficiently to draw blood. He stumbled and fell just as the pistol fired, and the would-be assassin, Ellis Monroe, thinking he had killed him, threw the pistol at his head. Kruppert scrambled to his feet, snatched up the pistol and fired one shot at Monroe, who was by this time about sixty yards away in full retreat.

The pistol captured by Kruppert proved to be Jonathan Belt's, and it was soon ascertained that Belt had given Monroe the pistol and told him to shoot Kruppert with it.

To give the reader an idea of the cause we shall have to go back a few weeks, and state that Kruppert told certain persons that he had caught Jonathan Belt in the act of adultery. Belt hearing of this tried to make him contradict his statement, but failed. Since that time Kruppert has been threatened with death if he did not leave the country. He has been threatened with summary vengeance at the hands of the Klan, but has stood his ground, and his life has nearly paid for his bravery.

Judge Taylor issued writs against Jonathan Belt, Ellis Monroe, William Monroe and Lucinda Monroe, but who will serve them ?

SHOOTING AFFRAY.

Mrs. Elizabeth Dossett, widow of J. H. Dossett, shot and probably mortally wounded George Miller last Wednesday. Miller was cultivating a part of the Dossett farm back of Cave-in-Rock, and his wife and Mrs. Dossett quarrelled about a cucumber patch, and Mrs. Dossett struck her. Miller's wife went to where he was gearing up the team and told him what had happened, and he went to the house and commenced a quarrel with Mrs. Dossett, when she struck him with the broom. He wrenched the broom out of her hands and tried to get both of her hands into one of his, when she jerked loose from him, and retreating into her room, snatched up a shotgun and fired, the charge taking effect in his lungs. He is hardly expected to recover. Mrs. Dossett came to town and gave herself up.

ASSASSINATION IN HARDIN COUNTY.

Argus Journal.

Hardin County is now afflicted with organizations similar to those that cursed Williamson a few years ago, and the people are in much turmoil over it. There are three bands, armed and at enmity towards each other. The origin of the situation appears to have been a murder committed to get a witness out of the way, a combination seeming necessary to the assassins to prevent the ferreting out of the murderers. The man murdered was an inoffensive German in good circumstances. Two of the three factions organized, seem to be purely for defensive purposes against the third, which is terrorizing the country. If this dreaded band makes many more demonstrations the other two are likely to get after it and produce much bloodshed. Leading citizens who are standing up for law and order, are living constantly in apprehension of assassination. The local paper nobly performs its duty in the emergency, but the editor evidently thinks he is in a precarious situation. A culmination of the trouble is likely to come soon, and people need not be surprised to hear of a series of murders, perpetrated in rapid succession, in Hardin County soon.

HARDIN COUNTY.

From the Shawnee Local Record, Friday, July 18, 1879.

Cave-in-Rock, Ill., July 9, 1879.—Editor Record: As my trial is to commence next Monday at Shawneetown, it seems my enemies have flooded your paper and others with a series of the vilest slanders and most wicked and baseless falsehoods, in the hope of prejudicing the minds of the people of Gallatin County against me, I solemnly assert here that I am not guilty of the offense for which I am to be tried; that what I did was in my own necessary self defense—to save my own life, which, at the time was being assailed with great violence; and I ask the people of Gallatin County to suspend their judgment in the case until they hear the evidence from the lips of the witnesses in court, when they will be satisfied that my action was in my own self defense, and that I am not the inhuman monster my enemies

have painted me. In this I am only asking what the law freely accords me—the presumption of innocence until guilt is proven. I desire (and it is my right, as it is the right of all men accused of crime) to be tried by sworn testimony, in open court, when I can meet the witnesses face to face, when I can have the unprejudiced judgment of twelve unbiased men upon the testimony, rather than by vituperation, inuendo, falsehood, slander, and ridiculous rumors scattered through the newspapers immediately preceding my trial in court, by known enemies, who are hounding on my trail and seeking my destruction.

I desire, however, through your columns to call attention to a few of the shameless and miserable falsehoods published against me in a letter written by an enemy of mine, a citizen of Hardin County, to the Louisville Courier-Journal, and published in your issue of last week. The coward who signs himself X, says, “He (Belt) was an officer in the Forty-eighth Kentucky (Federal) Infantry, and soon won a first-class reputation as a horse thief.”

This is a dark and cowardly falsehood, as Jo Robinett, one of your citizens, and a member of my command, will readily testify. I could refer to a number of others who were with me and who were brave soldiers, if I thought it necessary.

“ X ” further says :

“ A soldier of the Regiment who knew a good deal about Belt’s crookedness, was found dead and scalped one morning.”

Now mark the lies : No soldier of my regiment or command was ever found dead and scalped ! I never saw any soldier living or dead that was scalped in my life !! Never knew such a soldier ! Now for the facts : There was a soldier, so I was informed, utterly unknown to me, who belonged to the regular Army, and whom I never saw or knew, that was killed and scalped at Bowling Green, Ky., for his money, and Elisha T. Oldham, now a citizen of Hardin County, and a member of the Oldham family who are persecuting me to-day, and two others of my company were arrested for the murder and turned over to the civil authorities, and who were retained in prison until after the war was over, and until long after my company had been mustered out of the service. James A. Lowry, editor Hardin Gazette, who has been making such vicious attacks upon me, knows the above to be true as gospel, and all the members of my company know the same facts.

“ X ” further says :

“ Several years since a man named Dorris whipped Belt in a fight at Elizabethtown. Dorris a short time afterward was assassinated at his own house in Gallatin county. Belt was indicted, proved an alibi, and escaped.”

The only thing true in the above is that Dorris was cruelly, and in cold blood, assassinated at his own house near Equality, in 1870, by some desperate midnight assassin. It is false that I was ever indicted for the crime. I was arrested simply because he had lived in my neighborhood before, and we had quarreled. I

had an examination before ex-Judge Robert D. Pearce, at Equality, and the people having failed to produce an iota of evidence against me or even the breath of a suspicion, and it appearing on the trial that I was eighteen or twenty miles away at the time the fatal shot was fired, I was discharged, Judge Pearce giving me voluntarily the following certificate:

"This is to certify that Logan Belt was arrested and had an examination before me on the 27th day of February, 1870, for the murder of Samuel H. Dorris, and that there was not the slightest evidence against the said Belt, but to the contrary Belt proved positively that he was in Hardin county, some 18 or 20 miles from Equality, at the time said Dorris was shot.

February 28th, 1870.

R. D. PEARCE, J. P."

"I certify that the above statement by R. D. Pearce, is correct. ALFRED SMITH, Constable of Gallatin County."

Thus falls to the ground this vile slander hawked through the newspapers to injure me in the approaching trial.

The anonymous correspondent X has a great amount of slush hashed up about the Belts being organized into a Ku-Klux-Klan, all of which is infamously false, and has no foundation in truth; and the writer hereof has proposed time and again to his enemies that if they would produce one single respectable witness that he (Belt) or any of his friends had been seen in Hardin county, either day or night, under arms or in disguise, or in a band together for any purpose, that he would then admit there was some foundation for such rumors; but no such witness has been nor can be produced, and these anonymous scribblers well know it.

On the other hand I have proposed to prove, not only by one but dozens of honorable, high minded men, that my enemies are banded together with shot guns and pistols in numbers from six to eighteen in one gang, not a friend of mine with them; that they roam the county both night and day, carrying terror and demoralization to the quiet and peaceable citizens of Hardin county.

Why is it, my fellow-citizens, that myself and my friends suffer continuously from poisoned dogs, poisoned horses, burnt fences, burnt houses and all such devilment too tedious to mention, while no one can point to a single one of this gang who have ever been injured to the amount of one cent, either in person or property? Echo answers: Why is it?

I will give a reward of one hundred dollars for any reliable proof that myself or any of my friends have ever left any threatening letters at any place, seeking to drive any persons away from their homes.

That such letters have been written and sent, I do not deny. I have received such letters myself, and can show one now in my possession, which I have retained, and perhaps fortunate I did so, for the one found in the papers of the poor, unfortunate, murdered Hambrink, is in the same handwriting as the one received by myself. The letter to me warned me to do certain

things if I wished to enjoy life and property in Hardin County, and was signed "Regulators."

The editor of the Hardin Gazette, though an avowed enemy of mine, while publishing the infamous X article, recoils from its false, slanderous and reckless charges, and says editorially:

"We do not wish the impression to go out that all the Belts in this county are bad and lawless men, for many of them are as good citizens as we have, peaceable, industrious, law-abiding, minding their own business and having no difficulties with any one. * * * With these corrections we give the article ("X") to the people as a matter of news."

No one knows better than this editor that the X article was conceived in inequity and born in corruption. He knows its statements are as false as hell itself. He knows the object of the author was by slander, falsehood and abuse, to so poison the minds of the people of Gallatin County that it would be impossible for me to receive a fair and impartial trial. He knows the article has been spread broad cast over Gallatin and Hardin counties, so that the slime of the slanderer should do its deadly work before the facts could be elicited on a fair and impartial trial before a jury.

But, Mr. editor, I thank God that :

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again ;
The eternal years of God are hers ;
But error wounded writhes in pain,
And dies amid her worshippers."

I feel, sir, and I think I know that the sober judgment of the people will not be swerved from right, truth and justice by the wicked venom of the anonymous slanderer, but they will judge of me and my actions as all men should be judged by the irrefragable truth as it will be developed from the mouths of the witnesses on the trial of my cause.

No honorable man should ask for more ; no honorable man should be content with less.

LOGAN BELT.

We have but little comment to make upon the foregoing "appeal" of "Lieut." Belt. He says ; "I desire, however, through your columns to call attention to a few of the shameless and miserable falsehoods published about me in a letter written by an enemy of mine in Hardin County to the Louisville-Courier Journal, and published in the papers of your county." Belt evidently does not know what he is talking about, and so we propose to give him a little gratuitous information, by which he may possibly profit. We have learned that the Courier-Journal-article was not written by "an enemy in Hardin County," not even by a citizen of Hardin County. It was written by an occasional correspondent of the Courier-Journal who was present during the famous "Ku Klux" trial, and heard the facts from the mouths of witnesses and creditable citizens. He had been previously acquainted, however, with Belt's doings and character in Kentucky. If there was a single citizen of the entire county

who knew that such a publication was going to be made before it appeared, we do not know it ; and if Belt knew who wrote that article he would not use such language as the coward who signs himself " ' X ' " says, etc. No ; Belt would not dare to face that man and use language unfit for one gentleman to use toward another. But we leave Belt and " X " to settle these matters, as we have no interest in them whatever, and proceed to notice the statement of Belt that a man killed at Bowling Green, Ky., was scalped, and that it was the only one he ever heard of being scalped in his life. In this, Belt has the usual bad luck in telling the truth, which attends most of his other statements. He knows that man was not scalped, but had been struck on the head with a rock, and he also knows that the parties he mentions were arrested on suspicion, simply because they were seen drunk together the evening before. Belt knows that Lewis Franklin was shot and scalped near Princeton, Ky.,—and Belt knows more.

The " Lieutenant " further says : " James A. Lowry, editor of the Hardin Gazette, who has been making such vicious attacks upon me, knows the above to be true as gospel, and all the members of my company know the same facts." We refer to the above statement because there are twenty or thirty members of the " Lieutenant's " company who are readers of the Gazette, and we ask them to refresh their memories in regard to the matter.

In regard to the Dorris assassination we do not desire at present to make any statement whatever. The matter has been talked of for nearly ten years among the people of the upper part of the county, and nothing the editor of the Gazette, or Belt either, could say, would change their minds about who assassinated Dorris. Clay, the man who stopped with Belt awhile before the assassination may be found, in which case we may have something to say upon the subject.

There is one point in Belt's letter to which we desire to call particular attention, as it may prove to be the clue by which the murderer of Luke Hambrink may yet be brought to justice. He says : ' I have received such letters myself, and can show one now in my possession, which I have retained, and perhaps it was fortunate I did so, for the one found in the papers of the poor, unfortunate murdered Hambrink is in the same hand writing of the one received by myself, etc.' It may be so ; it probably is so, and " thereby hangs a tale."

We do not wish to waste time and space commenting further upon his letter. If it is good we have no wish to detract from its merit ; if it is bad we would not add to his weight of guilt.

There is one thing, however, that we will say to Belt and to the people. We are not responsible for the exposure, trial, and subsequent indictment of the conspirators who have struck such terror to the hearts of the people. We are not to blame for any one of the many charges of crime against Belt. On the other

hand we have neglected a solemn duty to the people and have had nothing to say whatever during all these long years of Belt's crimes and crookedness, until the "last straw which breaks the camel's back" was laid on in the shape of this hellish conspiracy. Then, and not until then, did we essay to show up their crimes and warn the people of the danger likely to result from their felonious organization.

Belt may be acquitted of the charge of murder in the Gallatin Circuit Court this week. Indeed, it would be strange if he did not, after having the license he has had shown him by the public officers. But whether he is convicted or acquitted, he stands charged before the bar of public opinion with heinous crimes, which time will never efface, and the people would rather have him let his last crime be the last one, and in future if he has his lot cast in our midst, live as an honest and law-abiding man should live; and if he can not make amends for the mischief he has done, he can at least resolve to add nothing new to the catalogue of his crimes.

THE DUTCHMAN AND THE BELTS.

The Kruppert assassination case, like all the others in that direction, is becoming complicated or mixed up. Since Kruppert was shot he has been scouting about most of his time, and last Saturday evening he was in town and met The. Belt, a son of Jonathan Belt, the man who hired Monroe to kill Kruppert. The. Belt beckoned Charley Kruppert into the hall of the McFarlan brick, and told him that he had heard that he had a pistol supposed to be his fathers, and that he wanted to look at it. The Dutchman unsuspectedly handed it over, and The., instead of looking at it, slipped it into his pocket. Charley demanded its return. The. swore he'd keep it, whereupon the Dutchman knocked him down and took it away from him. Just as he was getting out at the door, Joe Layoff, another desperado, covered him with his pistol and ordered him to "give up Belt's pistol," but instead of doing this he brought it to bear on Joe's cranium, with the remark, "I don't haf to." Joe retreated in good order and the Dutchman got clear of them, but he lost the writ against Belt and the Monroes in the meleé. Monday morning the State's attorney had another warrant issued from, before Esq. John Jackson, leaving out Jonathan Belt, and gave it to Constable Carr to serve. Judge Taylor, when he came down to his office Monday morning, issued a duplicate writ for Jonathan Belt and the Monroes, but it now turns up missing. Taylor says he will issue a third, but it is no use. We are now willing to bet all our interest in O'Neal's watermelon crop that Belt will never be arrested, and that none of them will ever be punished for this dastardly attempt to murder. The Dutchman is trying to sell out to get away, and it is the best thing he can do, as he will get no protection here. It is hard to be run off like Sol. Parker was, but it is better than being made a target of. If we were not afraid we should feel constrained to ask, like the Detroit Dutchman, "Vell vat next!"

A Hardin County Picture as Presented by the Chicago
Times of July 17th, 1879.

CHAPTER V.

HELL ON THE OHIO.—A "Times" reporter discovers it in the vicinity of Cave-in-Rock, Hardin County, Illinois. It was established by Ford, the prototype of the latter-day Bender, assisted by Ledbetter and Murrell, and has been maintained by the Belts and Oldhams, who murder but do not steal. Logan Belt, an affable desperado, and his brother Jonathan, a pious ruffian. After six months an indictment is found, and witness-killing becomes the leading industry. Two members of a murderous cabal turn state's evidence, and disclose its secrets. Carpet-bags full of pistols and skiff-loads of guns prove weighty evidence in court. The leader of one of the gangs at last arraigned on a charge of murder. Some of the local officers alleged to be either cowards or sympathizers. From our own reporter.

DARK DEEDS OF OLD.—A REIGN OF TERRORISM.

Elizabethtown, Hardin County, Ills., July 14.—There exists in one portion of this county a condition bordering on barbarism. Two or three factions waging war on one another have brought about a reign of terrorism in the county, and have so far intimidated the citizens of neighboring counties that they, almost without exception, fear to say anything, lest they fall under the wrath of the fighting parties. Murders have been committed; bands of armed men have gone riding about the country by night, frightening people almost out of their lives; property has been burned or otherwise destroyed; stock has been poisoned; peaceable citizens, suspected of knowing too much, or for other reasons become odious, have been warned to leave and have fled in alarm for their lives, while those who did not leave have been shot; and a state of affairs terrible almost beyond understanding, has existed for years. At times the disorder has been quiescent, again it has burst out, and it has alternately lapsed and relapsed as occasion caused it to do so. Excitement is just now at a fever heat over the trial for murder of the leader of one of the factions, and perhaps the most notorious desperado of them all, which trial begins to-day, in Shawneetown, Gallatin county, under a change of venue.

The average reader will be hardly able to accept the assertion that such a condition of things can exist in the enlightened and civilized State of Illinois, or, granting that it does exist, to understand why he has never heard of it. His first deduction will be that if society is in such a condition anywhere, it must be in the extreme

SOUTHERN PORTION OF THE STATE,

At the very bottom of Egypt. In this he is right. Cairo is in Alexander county, and Hardin is the fourth county east on the Ohio river, and is within one or two counties of the Indiana state line. Within its sacred borders has never trespassed either a railway or a telegraph line, and thus it happens that what occurs in its limits seldom reaches the outside world. Its only means of communication with the rest of humanity is by boat on the Ohio river, or by wagon from Shawneetown, over twenty-six miles of as horrible up-and-down mountainous roads as are to be found anywhere. It is as isolated as if it were in Alaska. That the reader may comprehend how the present state of affairs came about, he ought to go back in history nearly seventy years.

Ever since Illinois was settled—and this portion was invaded by the whites in very early days—the southern tier of counties has been the resort and home of criminal and desperate characters, and Hardin county, and that part of Kentucky immediately opposite Hardin county, was the centre of the class. Seven miles above here is a natural phenomenon known as Cave-in-Rock. As the traveler on a steamboat passes the point he sees on the Illinois side a large arched doorway about eight feet high in the side of an immense rock. This doorway is the entrance to a

CAVE IN THE ROCK.

The cave runs back about one hundred feet, and is as high as an ordinary room. The township in which it is situated is called Cave-in-Rock, and it is to-day in this vicinity that the desperate characters live. The cave played an important part in the early criminal history of the State, having been for a long time the den of a notorious gang of counterfeiters, that flooded the western country with spurious money, and having been also the constant headquarters and refuge of horse-thieves, river pirates, murderers and other dangerous men. It is now unused, except when an occasional picnicing party takes possession of it.

Not far from Cave-in-Rock is Ford's Ferry, which gets its name from a man who was one of the noted criminals of pioneer history. He lived on the Kentucky side about two miles above Cave-in-Rock, and was ostensibly a farmer, owning a large tract of land. He also kept a hotel, which is to this day

THOUGHT OF WITH HORROR

By those who knew of it. Ford was always surrounded by a gang of desperate men, highwaymen and murderers, such as Ledbetter, Schause and others, and, while nothing was ever

proved on him, he was looked upon as equal to his companions in guilt. He was a robber of flatboats, and of emigrants. Dead bodies were found near his house, and isolated and freshly made graves were discovered in that neighborhood. Men were known to start West with a little money, to locate, and were never after heard of. Their friends would inquire, follow them to Ford's, and there lose all traces of them. It was one of his habits to cut down trees and obstruct the road to rival ferries, until the owners would be compelled to quit and leave, thinking retaliation only a means of provoking death. But Ford brought on himself the penalty for his lawlessness. An old feud existed between him and the father-in-law of a man named Simpson, and Ford killed his enemy. Simpson gathered a crowd of friends, and went armed to Ford's house for the purpose of killing him. They found him on the Illinois side loading a boat. He knew at once why they had come, begged for his life, and appealed for protection to one of their number, Jonathan Brown by name. Brown was touched by the appeal, and interceded for the terrified murderer. The plea was so far successful that the crowd waited two or three hours, but when darkness came, they took him out and

SHOT HIM DEAD,

When he was begging hardest to be spared. It is said that none of the crowd proper did the shooting, but that Simpson compelled his negro to do the deed. This was about the year 1835. An old gentleman who knew Ford very well, told me to-day, that he once heard Ford narrate how Ford's son obtained so much land from Ford. "By G—d," said Ford, "my boys are as game as any in the West. One of them brought me a deed of the land, held a cocked pistol to my head and told me to sign, or die. I signed." Ford's sons and daughters inherited from him a large fortune, and they are now very respectable people, living in Caldwell county, Kentucky, while a grandson keeps a large grocery house in Cincinnati.

Another noted criminal was Ledbetter, a companion and helper of Ford. He was a highwayman, river pirate and murderer. One of his victims was avenged, in that sufficient evidence was found to convict him. He was tried at Golconda, under a change of venue, and hung.

Ford, Ledbetter, Chause and others were a terror to the district, but a greater one was John A. Murrell, probably the most

NOTORIOUS AND DESPERATE HIGHWAYMAN

And murderer that ever infested these parts. He used to "operate" all the way between Ford's Ferry and New Orleans. "Following the trail" was his favorite occupation. River transportation in those days was by flatboat. The flatboatmen went to New Orleans, sold their cargo and boat, and walked back to their homes or rode horseback, taking always the same trail. Murrell made it a business to waylay and kill for the sake of robbing. He carried on his depredations for about ten years, until 1830,

when he was captured, convicted and sent to the penitentiary at Nashville on a life sentence.

These and such men as these made Cave-in-Rock their headquarters fifty years ago, and the locality has been one of bad repute ever since. And not without reason. It has been infested, more or less, with horse-thieves and desperate characters constantly. During the war it was at times filled with such men.

From instances like this it seems as if localities as well as persons had the power of heredity, and that the spirit of criminality, once attached to a place, descended from generation to generation. Or, as if the state could be compared with the body. A man may be in apparently good health, and yet have on him an ulcerous sore which does not spread much, but refuses to heal. Notwithstanding the fact that the component parts of the frame are constantly changing, and that the entire body is periodically renewed, the ulcer remains, the old elements infecting the new which take their place, and the disease continuing in the same place year after year. Such, for example, is a cancer. Hardin County is the cancerous part of the State. As the old criminals died off, new ones, sometimes related to the old, but frequently not at all related, took their place, and the lawlessness continued. The law-abiding people who live here have been always used to it. They were born and reared with it around them, and so much do they take it as a matter of course that they seldom think of publishing it in the newspapers. And this is another reason why the outside world has never heard more than a bare rumor of it.

TWO MURDEROUS FAMILIES.

The present condition of affairs differs from the lawlessness in Williamson County some years since in many important particulars. The men in Williamson County were self-confessed outlaws; they were desperadoes, marauders, thieves and murderers, making war openly on society. There were but two parties, society and the desperadoes, and the two were struggling for the supremacy. In this county the notorious men are desperadoes, bullies, fighting men, but they are not marauders. They commit murder, but they do not steal. There are several factions, of which two are the most prominent, and are the only ones mentioned now. These two are the Belts and the Oldhams. The Belts consist of Logan Belt, the most noted of them all, and the one whose trial for murder begins here to-day; Jonathan Belt, H. J. Belt, James Belt and Arthur Belt. Some of them, as Logan, Jonathan and H. J., are men of 45 or 50 years old, and have grown-up sons and daughters. These Belts, with their sons and their friends, make up a clan which is variously estimated at from twenty to fifty men. They are all farmers.

The Oldhams are also farmers, and live about Cave-in-Rock. There are Thomas Oldham, Jesse Oldham, John Oldham, and the Lord only knows how many more, but they number probably about the same as the Belts. Now, neither of these factions is made up of robbers. The two clans simply hate one another.

There is bad blood between them ; the feud has lasted many years ; men have been shot or shot at on one, and perhaps both, sides ; they have been warned to leave the country, their stock has been poisoned and their property burned, and the community thereby more or less terrified. Neither side is making war on society directly. They have warred on one another, to vent their anger, instead of appealing to the courts. Lately, however, the Oldhams have been invoking the law entirely, and have not been very defiant.

THE NIGHT RIDING

Has not been for the purpose of robbery, but to intimidate the other side. So great is the terror of the simple-minded farming community in that district that many of the people have their cows milked, their horses put up, and their houses locked by dark, and after that they will not venture out. If a stranger riding through the country by night should go to a farm-house to inquire the road, he would probably receive no response from within. The occupant would be afraid to open the door, lest he might find outside a man with a rifle to shoot him down. All this terror seems to exist, however, on account of the Belts. The men who complain of the terrorism are all anti-Belt men. The Oldham—the word is pronounced as if it were spelled Odum—the Oldham faction and that part of respectable society which is an adherent to neither faction, but nevertheless has more fear of the Belts than of the Oldhams, know that there is a reign of terrorism in the rural districts of Hardin County, but the Belt men all deny it. They say they are all law-abiding citizens. Logan Belt defies any man to prove that he was ever out night-riding. And the faction generally deny the theory of terrorism in the county. I am inclined to think myself that a stranger would be entirely safe in riding through that country alone at night. I do not think he would be molested. But the members of either faction are not so willing to undertake it.

From the representations which are made

LOGAN BELT

Is a man about five feet eight inches high, with a magnificent physique, blue eyes, light complexion, of fine appearance, possessed of a fair common-school education, somewhat learned in criminal law, very polite in his manner, an excellent talker, and above all a man of unquestioned and determined bravery. Those who know him say that he is far above the average of farmers in personal appearance, in conversational powers and in affability. He is extremely courteous, will take you by the hand, sit down and talk in the most agreeable manner, and every one says that he is the last man in the world you would suspect of being a desperado. He has a wonderful personal magnetism, and is a man of considerable influence in his neighborhood and among his friends. The trouble seems to be that he is always in trouble—although many say that he is not quarrelsome—and he is a fighter, and instead of

appealing to the courts to settle his troubles, he has always settled them himself by violent means. He will not, it is said, strike a man in the dark or behind his back, but he has followers who will, and some of the stories told of him do not represent him as being so entirely chivalrous. His friends—and he has many, or at least he has law-abiding acquaintances who, utterly condemning his ways, still like him personally—say that his style is to go to a man whom he does not like and tell the man just what he dislikes, and the man soon learns that the best thing is to settle the matter—nor as an enemy. Belt is revengeful and persistent to the last degree.

OLD JONATHAN BELT,

His brother, and a man who figures conspicuously in all the troubles, is also a brave man, but he differs from Logan, in that Logan has the appearance of a gentleman, while Jonathan is a self-evident ruffian. He is the pious man of the gang. The Belts are all Baptists of the devoutest kind, but Jonathan is a preacher, and a superintendent of a Sunday school. He prays with great unction and talks of his "acceptance by Christ." It is related of him that recently when he was preaching near Cave-in-Rock, some of his congregation became altogether irreverent in their conduct. He stepped down from the pulpit, gave the mockers a sound drubbing, and then resumed his discourse. He is an illustrious and persistent disciple of that theological school which insists upon salvation, not by works but by faith, whose members declare that good works go for naught, that future happiness is attained only by faith in Jesus; the class that, conscious of having no good works to save themselves by, affect to attain heaven on an easy and patent process by a formula of believing in something that can not have any relation to good conduct. Jonathan Belt would be horrified at the blasphemy which denies the deity of Jesus, but he would not scruple to kill his enemy on sight.

Not all of the Belts are desperadoes. Many of them are quiet, orderly citizens, and honorable, upright men. But those who belong to the gang are desperadoes, and the friends who fill up the group are tricky and cowardly as men ever get to be. Logan Belt has a wonderful influence over them, and is their leader by a process of natural selection, being by far the bravest, shrewdest, and the most gentlemanly one among them. He is generally in the background, but his wishes determine the actions of his men.

THE OLDHAMS

Are, I am told, a low, trifling set. Some of them may be respectable men, just as some of the Belts are; but the members who are giving character to this trouble seem, in spite of all that can be said in their favor, to be mean and contemptible in their modes of life, are ignorant and unscrupulous, and they are in every way the inferiors of the Belts. So far as is known, they have never committed any depredations or murders, but they are quarrelsome, great fighters, always in trouble, always settling their difficulties

by brute force. With two such families living together it is but natural that bad blood should arise.

IT IS A NATURAL LAW

That to divide ignorant men by any lines makes them enemies. If it be a national line they are national enemies; if a religious line, religious enemies; if a political line, political enemies; or if a family line, family enemies. It is this fact which gives rise to the saying, "Politics makes strange bedfellows." To the ancient Greek every man not a Grecian was a barbarian. To the Jew every one not a Jew was a Gentile. The Christians and the Mohammedans each boast that their's is the most charitable and liberal religion in the world. They are liberal—to their kind; to others they have been as cruel as the devil could make them. So in society, men and women are faithful to their kind. Thieves do not steal from one another, any more than "honest" men do; they steal from the "high-toned" people, those not of their kind. The hoodlum will trust you and be like any other young man to you, if he does not suspect that you are not above him, that you are not of his kind. Many cases of infidelity on the part of wives come from the fact that the wife finds her husband to belong to another class from herself, and infidelity does not seem to her to be unfaithfulness, because it is the tendency of human nature to think treachery to one not of our class as not such a bad thing after all.

The earliest reliable information that I can get of Logan Belt dates back to the time when he was fifteen years old, and was living with his father near where he now resides. They were from Kentucky. In the spring of 1858, Logan

ASSAULTED A BOY WITH AN AXE,

And had to leave the country. He fled to the home of his brother, Jonathan, which was then on the Kentucky side, and remained there about two years, His father having smoothed the matter over, he returned and married a Miss Fraley, with whom he is still living.

Jonathan Belt was a Union man during the war, and lived, as has been said, in Kentucky. When Forest was in Marion, Ky., purchasing supplies for the Confederate army, he heard of Belt and Belt's outspoken Unionism, and he wanted to see the man, and probably wanted to take Belt into custody. He took a few armed men and went to Belt's house. Belt heard the noise—it was night—stepped to the door and saw the Confederates. He went into his house, reached down his gun, returned to the door, deliberately shot one of the men dead, and then fled through the back way amid a shower of bullets. He managed to escape, reached Ford's Ferry by morning, and came at once to his father's on this side of the river. This circumstance shows his bravery and daring.

The two brothers went into the Union army. A citizen of Hardin County, a bitter enemy of Logan Belt, has recently pub-

lished a letter containing some grave charges against Belt, which are probably not true, but to which reference must be made to show how the clans are vilifying one another, and to enable the reader to understand Logan Belt's letter published later on. He says:

"Belt was an officer in the Twenty-eight Federal (Kentucky) infantry, and soon won a first-class reputation as a horse-thief. He 'pressed' more for himself than for the government. A soldier of the regiment, who knew a good deal about Belt's crookedness, was found dead and scalped early one morning. The Indian who play this trick on the unsuspecting soldier has never been discovered."

ORIGINAL KILLINGS—A BELT AND A GIBSON KILLED.

The two returned from the war in a year or so. In 1863 Huston Belt was shot and killed by Capt. Frank Gibson in a quarrel in this place. Within a few weeks Jonathan Belt met Gibson riding on the public highway between two men, and he shot Gibson dead. There were as witnesses of the deed only these two men, but soon after one of them was, I am told, assassinated by an unknown hand, and the other witness, for some mysterious reason, left the country. Jonathan Belt remained in the country, but refused, it is said, to be arrested. The grand jury indicted him, the court met, the trial was for some reason postponed, but when it finally came on Belt and his friends came armed into court. He never surrendered himself; he was never arrested. He came into court in the morning, and went away at night unmolested. He pleaded not guilty; there was no evidence against him, and he was acquitted. Up to this time the Belts had been but little known, but now they began to grow in disrepute.

THE GRINDSTAFF MURDER.

To show the condition of society in that neighborhood, I get outside the Belt and Oldham factions into a third, and notice as cold-blooded and deliberate a murder as was ever perpetrated. Samuel Grindstaff was a miner, living in the southern portion of Gallatin county, the one next above Hardin. He was a drunken, worthless fellow brutal and desperate, but the leader of a faction that had existed more in spirit than in name. He had married a young girl, the step-daughter of Jesse Davis, a Southern refugee. The event about to be narrated occurred in 1870. Mrs. Grindstaff, unable to endure longer the brutal ill-treatment of her husband, had left him and taken refuge with Davis. Grindstaff saw Davis and demanded that Davis turn her away from his home so as to throw her on Grindstaff's mercy and compel her to return to him. Davis told Grindstaff that the girl had come home because she was unable to live with him longer, and that she should have a refuge with Davis until Grindstaff agreed to treat her better. Grindstaff was not satisfied, but left reiterating his demand. When the next week the wife was at her step-father's, and Grind-

staff wanted to know if Davis was going to make her leave, Davis repeated his former statement, whereupon Grindstaff drew a revolver and again made the inquiry. Davis became frightened and said that if Grindstaff could go to the house and persuade the girl to leave he might have her. That would not suit Grindstaff. He wanted Davis to drive her away so as to compel her to return to his house and be at his mercy, and he grew imperative for an answer, yes or no. Davis saw at once that he was about to be murdered, and he began backing off, begging Grindstaff not to shoot, and saying he could have the girl if he could persuade her to go with him. They continue to converse until Davis had backed away about twenty feet, Grindstaff following him step by step. Grindstaff was accompanied by a notorious desperado named Kilgore, a man who ought to have been in the penitentiary long ago. At last Kilgore said: "Grindstaff, do what you are going to do." Grindstaff took deliberate aim, and, while the gray-haired old man was begging hardest for his life, Grindstaff shot him down dead. It was as atrocious, merciless and unprovoked a murder as was ever committed in this part of the State, and the jury sentenced the murderer to thirty-three years in the penitentiary. Gov. Beveredge commuted the term to twenty years, which, with the good behavior allowance, will let him out in eleven years. Only a few weeks ago the fiend had the audacity to apply to Gov. Cullom for a pardon, but the Governor refused to grant it. Efforts will no doubt be made with succeeding Governors to get him out, but the people in this part of the State will watch him closely, and if any Governor does ever dare to lessen his punishment any more it will cost him almost the entire lower tier of counties at a later election, so indignant are the people over the case. Grindstaff is a man of remarkable executive ability, and should he be released he would no doubt head as desperate a band of ruffians as ever infested this district, and might begin by killing his wife.

THE KILLING OF ARTHUR PRICE.

To return to the Belts: A man named Arthur Price had married a Miss Frailey, a sister of the woman whom Logan Belt married. They did not live happily together, and Price was jealous of a man named Winders. Alexander Frailey, the wife's brother, sided with his sister. They quarreled bitterly, and finally one day, when Frailey had been at Winder's house, he met Price on the road and shot him. This was in 1873. Frailey fled the country, and was gone two or three years before he was arrested. He was at last apprehended, but he pleaded not guilty, and it is said that Logan Belt managed to furnish the testimony by which he was finally acquitted. Frailey has remained at home ever since, but recently he received notice to leave the country, and two weeks ago, last Saturday he departed.

THE MURDER OF SAMUEL H. DORRIS.

Another terrible murder occurred several years since, which Logan Belt stigmatizes as a cruel, cold-blooded assassination, and

yet nine-tenths of the men in Hardin and Gallatin counties can not be convinced otherwise than that he was the instigator of it, if he were not a principal. Samuel H. Dorris lived near Cave-in-Rock, and was a witness in a suit against Logan Belt. Belt subsequently accused him of swearing to a lie, and he and Belt had a fight and Belt was whipped. He soon found that life was not safe for him there, however, and he moved to Equality, a town back of Shawnee, in Gallatin county, to get out of Belt's way. About six months afterward, Dorris was called to his door, one night, by a man at the front gate, who began a conversation with him. After the exchange of a few words the discharge of a gun was heard, and Dorris fell back wounded, and died in a few minutes. Mrs. Dorris says that a man named Clay, who had been in Logan Belt's employment, was at Dorris' house that day and took dinner there, and she says that it was he who shot her husband. How she knows I have not been able to learn, but I hear that she says she recognized the man's voice. It was suspected at the time that Belt either did the shooting or was along, and he was arrested. He proved an alibi, however, by two witnesses, and was discharged. The two witnesses were two desperadoes, Maribles and Bill Corlew, who swore that on that night Belt was at Marible's house, a place some ten miles this side of Equality, and on the way from Equality to Cave-in-Rock, Belt's home. Corlew has since proven his character as a witness by running away with another man's wife. The alibi theory is weakened by a statement, which is made often in conversation, that a young man named Thompson, says that about 9 a. m. on the day after the shooting he met Logan Belt and Clay at a point half way between Equality and Marible's place, riding together and coming from the direction of Equality. While there is no proof, therefore, that Logan Belt is the guilty man, nearly everybody believes firmly that he knows something about it.

ANOTHER OF THE BELTS KILLED.

The character of the Belts had now become so notorious that people were on their guard more, and one of them suffered death when he least expected it. He was a nephew of the Belts, and was named William Huges. He came to Shawneetown July 4, 1876, during a celebration, grew very much intoxicated, and disturbed the peace in a violent manner. The citizens were afraid of him, and the officers were defied by him. The officers summoned a posse and went to arrest him, when he started to leave town. They followed on after him, and frequently commanded him to stop, but he refused to obey. Finally one of the posse, Capt. Parker B. Piller, fired at him and killed him. Piller was arrested for manslaughter and locked up, and the jail was guarded by a large number of his friends, who were certain that the Belts would come up and kill him. But they never attempted it, although it is said that they organized for that purpose. Piller was tried and convicted. The jury wanted to acquit him, but it could not. He thought that he had a right to shoot, but he

had none. Huges had been guilty of no criminal offense, and Piller was not an officer and had no warrant. Accordingly the jury made the sentence as light as it could, and fixed the punishment at one year in the penitentiary. Immediately after Piller was sentenced the State's attorney went to Springfield, well backed up with influence, and procured his pardon, so that he served but one month in the prison. He now lives in Shawneetown.

THE KILLING OF "DOC" OLDHAM.

But the worst affair of all, the one which has been the seed of more crimes than all the others put together, was the shooting of "Doc" Oldham by Logan Belt. The reader begins to understand what kind of a family the Belts are. But when he considers that the Oldhams are just about as bad, but are not half so smart, he can readily see that there was little prospect for peace in a community where both dwelt. There had long been bad blood between the two families, although Logan Belt says that up to that time he and "Doc" Oldham had been on excellent terms. This statement is, however, hardly borne out by the circumstances. In the month of December, 1875, Thomas Oldham, who had purchased a house, celebrated the event by giving a dance, to which he charged an admission fee of twenty-five cents. "Doc" Oldham, his brother, was door-tender. Logan Belt and another man were on their way past the house, or else they went there expressly for the purpose—both stories are told—and they forced their way in without paying. "Doc" Oldham was as ready to fight as Belt was, and he at once went at him. Just what ensued is not definitely known. Some say that Oldham knocked Belt down with a pair of knuckles; others say it was Oldham who was knocked down, and that he was afterward shot. Belt's story, as told to me by his attorney, is that "Doc" Oldham was superintending the dance. Belt and his friends entered the house, and stood around quietly for some time. Presently Oldham, who had been drinking, remarked in Belt's hearing that there were some persons present who had not paid, and that he was going to put them out. Belt, who was friendly to Oldham, according to his own story, thought that Oldham was jesting, and he said jestingly in reply, "'Doc!' I haven't paid. You are not going to put me out, are you?" "Yes, by God," Oldham replied, "I will put you out." Then they got into a quarrel, and Oldham struck Belt in the face with a pair of knuckles and knocked him down. Belt jumped up, grabbed Oldham, ran him back over a chair, knocked him down, kicked him, and then started for the door. Oldham sprang up and started for him again, when Belt called out, "Gentlemen, keep him off of me; he is coming at me with knuckles." To this Oldham replied, "Yes, by God, I have got them, and I know how to use them." He continued to advance on Belt until within five feet of him. Belt warned him to stop or he would

he shot. He continued to advance, when Belt drew a revolver and shot him, the wound producing death.

KILLING OFF WITNESSES.

The results of this affair have been terrible. Belt was arrested and an indictment was found. After a preliminary hearing he was released on \$3,000 bail. His trial has been pending this long for the reason that he has continued it from time to time. By a change of venue it has been transferred to Gallatin county, and it is to begin there to-day. Belt's plea will be self-defense. Since the shooting attacks have been made, say the friends of the prosecution, upon all of the leading witnesses in the case, in the effort to frighten them away from the country or to end their lives. The most notable of these was the attack on an old man named G. W. Covert, who was present at the dance and saw the killing. In April, 1877, he and Bill Frailey, the brother-in-law of Belt, was walking along the road, when a man suddenly appeared from concealment and said :

“DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES.”

Covert recognized the voice as Logan Belt's and he immediately sprang behind Frailey. The latter thereby received the discharge of the gun in his bowels and body, and Covert started down hill on a run. Frailey fell, dangerously hurt, and Belt fired several more shots at Covert, one of which, he thinks, cut off his finger. At any rate he lost a finger at that time. Belt is now under indictment for the attack, and Covert has since been hiding between courts to keep out of the way of the Belts. I have heard it stated, though, on what authority I do not know, that another and later attack has been made on him, without injuring him.

Logan Belt's story of this affair makes it altogether different. He says that attempts on his life were in progress, and that one night some person tried, but without success, to draw him out of his house by kicking his horses in the stable and causing them to make a noise. Readers of the Times will be reminded by this of the same device of the murderer of Clark, at LaGrange, to draw the victim from the house. It seems to be a favorite scheme with rural criminals. On the following Sunday, Belt was standing, he says, in his orchard, when he heard a gun fired, and he heard Frailey call for help. He was afraid to go unarmed to Frailey's assistance, and he ran to his house for a gun. On coming out he saw Frailey, who came hurrying up badly wounded, but by whom he did not know. Belt says he thinks it was one of the Oldhams, or their friends, who did the shooting.

LOGAN BELT'S LIFE IS ATTEMPTED.

Logan Belt says that on another occasion he himself was fired at by two concealed persons. He was riding on horseback on his way to his home, when suddenly two guns were fired at him from opposite sides of the road and at the same moment. The road passed between two trees, and the assassins fired, he

says, as he came between the trees. His horse jumped and threw him, but he sprang to his feet, leaped upon a ledge of rock and ran around the side of the mountain, escaping injury from the succeeding shots which quickly followed him. He does not know who fired the shots, but he thinks they were from the Oldham boys.

LETTERS OF WARNING.

Almost without number have been sent to different men, both sides receiving them, and a few of them may not be uninteresting to the reader. This one was mailed from Salem, Ky., to the two persons addressed :

At home in all places, but more especially in Hardin county, Illinois—Gents : As we desire to be friendly with all parties, we want in this epistle to warn you in the event of your attempts on our friend, Logan Belt, we, the citizens of the above-named place, are fully determined to hold all of you to a strict accountability for any threat or attempt to injure our much-esteemed friend, a Lieutenant in the army during our last war. We, the aforesaid citizens of the above-named place, are fully aware of the dastardly attacks made by the "Odum" stock on account of our Lieutenant merely discharging his duty and sending one to his long home, who richly merited all he got, and, as this letter means business, you had all better beware of us † Ku-Klux †, as we have eaten nothing of any consequence since the battle of Shiloh, and we are hungry ! Beware ! Beware of us fellows, as the leaves are now on the trees, and as we are nothing but shadows and fearfully hungry, and as we are desirous of acting in ku-klux style, we warn you to beware of the infuriated friends of Lieut. Belt, who are and have been watching his welfare for some time. We are merely across the brink, but all attention should anything occur to our esteemed friend, and be sure to accept of this as from a friend, as we do not wish to send any of you to Shut-Eye town unless some depredation is committed upon the person or property of our friend. Now as you and a considerable number of your dirty acquaintances are mean enough to do anything on this earth, be sure to take this as a memento mori. And now farewell. From your only friend on this lower footstool. A CITIZEN OF THE ABOVE PLACE.

Addressed : Thos. and Jesse Odum. .

Another notice was as follows :

Lickport Headquarters—To Jack Oldham and the balance of the Oldhams' clan : You have two weeks to clear out, or hell will be your doom.

The Oldhams have been so thoroughly terrified that they have not left their homes for weeks. They have feared to go to Elizabethtown lest they might be shot on the way, and to furnish evidence in the forthcoming trial to the prosecuting attorneys they have sent their wives, and the latter have ridden into the village on horsback daily and alone.

Ben Burton went to his stable one morning and found his mare's tail shingled and this notice tied to it :

This is to hint the way you see your mare's tail is the what I will do for your head, and you had better get away inside of to months, or i will put a hole through you.

W. C. and gess the rest God dam you.

Burton also found tacked to his gate a card informing him that he must leave within ten days or suffer death.

Robert Hasty, Thomas Oldham and Luke Hambrink also received notices to quit the country. All, or nearly all, these notices were sent to persons on the anti-Belt side. Belt says he and his friends have received notices also, but none of them have ever been made public, except, perhaps, in the case of the one sent to Frailey.

On the night of April 1, just passed, occurred

THE MURDER OF LUKE HAMBRINK,

A deed which has been pregnant with yet more startling results than even the Oldham shooting. Each side charges the other with the murder, and each has a fair showing for a case. Hambrink was an old German farmer who resided in that neighborhood. He lived unhappily with his wife, and the latter, instead of sleeping in the house proper, slept in a small house apart from the main house. Two of the Oldhams had married Hambrink's daughters, but the family relations all around were unpleasant. Hambrink had some money, \$2,500, which he kept in the house when he was at home, but which he took with him whenever he went away, so afraid was he that he might be robbed. He was contemplating either a trip or a return to Germany, and this was hastened by his fear. But so great did the latter become that he finally went to A. K. Lowe, a merchant in Shawneetown, and told Lowe that he heard he was to be robbed by his relatives, and asked what he should do. He did not state which of his relatives he feared, but Mr. Lowe subsequently learned that the two sons-in-law were the cause of his alarm. Mr. Lowe advised him to put his money in the bank, receive for it a certificate of deposit, and show the certificate around, thus tacitly informing the would-be robbers that the object of their cupidity was beyond their reach. Hambrink accepted Mr. Lowe's advice, and went to the bank of Hon. J. McKay Peeples and told Mr. Peeples that he feared he was going to be killed by his relations for his money. It will be observed that while he told Mr. Lowe he feared robbery, he told Mr. Peeples he feared a violent death as well, and from the hands of his relatives at that. He asked for a certificate of deposit for \$2,500, and received it. I have these facts directly from Mr. Lowe and Mr. Peeples, so that there is no mistake about them. Within a month the old man was assassinated by night, and his murderer has never been discovered. When his body was found it was lying in front of the door of the house in which his wife sleeps, and around the house were

two or three distinct trails of blood, showing that he had run around the building once at least, and perhaps two or three times, and that he had finally fallen in front of the door.

THE MOST TERRIFIC EXCITEMENT

Spread immediately through the county, and almost all eyes turned toward the Belts, simply for the reason that such a terror of them exists, and so many bloody deeds have been laid to their charge, that whenever anything of the kind occurs the citizens instinctively say "the Belts!" and shiver with horror. And it soon came out that there was ground for the belief. The Belts had long been at enmity with Hambrink, and Hambrink said more than a year ago to the editor of the Hardin Gazette, "I am going to Germany, for, if I stay here, Logan Belt will kill me." Hambrink was also a witness in the Oldham shooting affair, which of itself was enough to convince the people of Hardin county that Logan Belt would kill him if it could be done without the author being discovered. The Belts felt keenly the instantaneous manner in which the whole county turned to them in suspicion and dread, and they at once did all they could to throw off from themselves the public conviction, and to fasten it on the Oldhams. They denied that Hambrink was an important witness against Logan Belt, and as proof of this cited—what was a fact—that Hambrink was not among the original witnesses, but that his name had been added to a subsequent list long after the case began to form. They declared it to be their belief that Hambrink was killed by his relatives to keep him, and more particularly his money, from going to Germany; that by killing him his relatives intended to get his property through the administrator, which, it must in truth be said, they are now in a fair way to do. And the Belts further charge that the Oldhams tried to obstruct the exposure of the murderer by refusing to allow the testimony of witnesses to go before the grand jury, and by sending the witnesses out of the country when necessary. The other side deny this, and say that the witnesses were not important and have gone of their own accord.

AN OATH-BOUND CLAN.

But no such excitement has ever been known in this county as that which broke out the first of June, when the proofs were offered that there existed among the Belts an organization with signs, grips, pass-words, masked men and arms, the purpose being to intimidate and murder. The evidence was so conclusive that even the Belts had to acknowledge the organization, but they assigned to it altogether a different purpose. The citizens refused, however, to believe them, and Elizabethtown and the county went almost wild with terror. The Hardin Gazette called on the authorities to summon the militia and crush out the band by force, and very many of the best citizens thought such a course necessary, and for a few weeks affairs had a terrible appearance. The way the facts came out was this:

There lived in this county two men named Frank Harding and B. Z. Jenkins, who had been from time to time solicited, they say, by Logan Belt to join an organization of which he spoke, and finally, on the night of May 7 last, they did join. What they were then let into so horrified them that they turned State's evidence, and

AN EXPLOSION FOLLOWED.

Warrants were issued May 30 for the arrest of the following :

Logan Belt, Jonathan Belt, H. J. Belt, James Belt, Arthur Belt, Elisha Morris, son-in-law of Jonathan Belt, Wm. Frailey, brother-in-law of Logan Belt; George Ratliffe, nephew of the Belts; Frank Justice, Tom Leeper, Robert Sheridan, W. D. White, Bill Lyons and Henry Holloman.

The Sheriff refused flatly to serve the warrants, giving as the reason his opinion that the trial was simply to create public prejudice against the Belts so as to injure Logan Belt in his murder trial. The statements made by the anti-Belt people as to the Sheriff are various. Some say that he is a coward, others that he is a scoundrel and in sympathy with the Belts. Still others say that there was undoubtedly an understanding between himself and the Belts that what did occur should be for effect. When the alleged conspirators heard that the warrants were out, and that the Sheriff would not serve them, all but the last two named gave themselves up to J. F. Taylor, County Judge. The examination occurred June 4 and 5, and was a curious judicial proceeding. The Belts came into the court-room armed to the teeth, it is said, and carrying a carpet-bag full of pistols besides. At least they brought the carpet-bag into the room and placed it on the floor near them, and the spectators were so afraid that they imagined its contents were pistols whether they were or not. They are also charged with having brought down a skiff-load of guns and left them at the dock under the guard of two men. The Sheriff went up the river on business the day that the trial began and remained till it was over, and this gave rise to the report that he had fled the country. Logan Belt conducted the defense in person, and his method was unique. In his cross-examination he would inform the witness that the witness had "sworn to an infamous lie;" and a question having arisen as to the competency of some evidence offered by the State, he informed the court that, if the evidence were admitted, he would make no further defense. He seemed to regard the affair as a purely voluntary contribution to good order on the part of himself and friends, and, if they were not treated respectfully, he and they would not stay there any longer. With twenty or twenty-five armed men in the room the declaration meant business, too; but fortunately, as a matter of law, the evidence was incompetent, and the desperadoes were not put to test. The

TESTIMONY OF THE TWO LEADING WITNESSES

Was substantially that by various influences and false pretenses, employed from time to time by "Loge" Belt and "Bob" Sheri-

dan, they were persuaded to join the conspirators on the night of the 7th of May last; that the place of meeting was a sequestered gulch near the Ohio, and the pretended purpose to ferret out the mysterious murder of Luke Hambrink; that it was also suggested that Covert should be whipped or killed, and that society around there should be regulated generally; that grips, signs, uniform and pass-words were adopted; that members' faces were to be cowed, and a light was to be carried in the hat of each during a raid; that arms should be purchased for all who were too poor to buy their own; that the question whether a man should be whipped or "treated worse" was to be left entirely to the discretion of the clan; that if one of the members were arrested he was to be rescued with drawn pistols and by disguised men; that to avoid the inquiry of grand juries the organization was to have no name and no regular place of holding forth, so that its members could truthfully swear that "they knew of no Ku-Klux organization in the county;" and that the witnesses, having become satisfied that it was the intention of the conspirators to assassinate or intimidate persons who were important witnesses against Logan Belt in the pending murder trial, decided to disregard the oath which they had taken to stick by the members till death, and to make a full exposure of the organization for the public good. The testimony was so strong that the defendants were bound over in the sum of \$200 each to the Criminal court. They immediately caused the arrest of the two witnesses for perjury, and the case was to have been tried on the following Monday, but the prosecution did not appear.

This hearing had the effect to virtually break up the organization, but for a time people almost

WENT CRAZY WITH TERROR

Over it. Only on last evening I was talking with a gentleman in the hall of the hotel, trying to gain some facts from him, and he showed throughout the conversation the greatest fear, looking over his shoulder and into out-of-the-way places for concealed enemies, and lowering his tone in the most frightened manner. "You see," he said, "we have to live here with these fellows, and they have threatened the lives of those who furnish information for publication, and we have to be careful." And he furnished me a few facts with great trepidation and trembling. In Shawneetown I found but one man among the anti-Belts who dared to talk freely, and everyone is taking sides one way or the other. The ministers, the store-keepers, the citizens generally, all avoided the topic, afraid to speak on it. Many of them confessed openly that it was risking their lives to incur the enmity of the Belts, as they should do if it became known that they had told me anything. Others shrugged their shoulders, said that they knew nothing, and told me to go to certain other persons whom they named, for those persons knew all about it. When I went to those others they were as afraid as the first ones, and

would say nothing. In Elizabethtown, a village of a thousand inhabitants, there are but three men who dare talk what they think. One of these is James A. Lowry, the editor of the Hardin Gazette, as brave and conscientious a man as ever performed a duty. He exposes these fellows week after week, lashes them without mercy, calls them Ku-Klux, says their organization tended to murder, robbery and arson, and demands that it be thoroughly crushed out. The people of the village would not be surprised to find him dead some night, and he himself is not unconscious of the danger he incurs, but he says he has faith, knowing the better classes of people as he does, that his fall will not go unavenged.

THE BELTS DENIED

Most positively that the organization was for any unlawful purpose. They said that it was organized after the death of Hambrick, less than three months ago. The anti-Belts, believe, however, that it dates back to the time of the Oldham shooting affair. The reader will observe that in the warning notice published above, and dated: "At home in all places, but more especially in Hardin county, Illinois," the writer thereof says: "You had better beware of us Ku-Klux;" and that letter was written over a year ago. The Belts explain the organization by saying that the suspicion that Logan Belt had murdered Hambrick was injuring Belt, and tending to go hard with him in his approaching trial; to prove that he was innocent, his friends formed this organization, for the purpose of working quietly, getting all the information they could as to the real murderer, comparing notes, and keeping the entire thing secret until all the evidence necessary was found. The story is fairly plausible, but it does not satisfy the people of this county. Jonathan Belt and Earl Sherwood, the latter a son-in-law of one of the Belts, have

WRITTEN THE FOLLOWING DEFENSE,

Which may entertain the reader. It is a curious commentary on life in as civilized a state as Illinois is supposed to be:

Cave-in-Rock, Ill., June 20, 1879.—To the editor of "The Hardin Gazette"—Dear Sir: In your issue of June 13, you say that "We want the readers of the Gazette to understand that the Ku-Klux Klan here is not a political organization, but gotten up for the purpose of exterminating all the known enemies to the members thereof, without any regard to religion, politics, or standing in society. Won't they have their hands full, though?"

Also, under the head of "More Ku-Klux," you say that "comment is unnecessary," and that the threat of a mad boy in the northwest corner of the county against a neighbor boy, on account of a pretty girl, can be traced to the klan back of Cave-in-Rock. James A. Lowry, you know in your soul that it is a falsehood.

You say that the "tendency of this klan, and all others of a like character, run into murder, robbery, arson and all their kindred crimes." In this connection, I will say that you have

named our organization a klan. Call it what you like. If a few honest hearts combined together for the purpose of ferreting out a crime and bringing criminals to justice can be called a klan, then call us what you will. If the murderer of Luke Hambrink can be found it shall be.

You say "it runs into murder, robbery and arson." I say that we endeavor to bring to justice murderers, robbers and burners, and to crush them by the strong arm of the law. You say crush us by the strong arm of the law. You say wipe us out of existence. We do not say wipe them or you out of existence. You say "Let peace and quiet once more rest upon the people." We say disband your army that has been in arms ever since Luke Hambrink was patricided; make them stop terrorizing the county with shot-guns by the dozen; make them let their witnesses be interviewed.

They refused to allow Wm. J. Banks et al. to see the widow Browning when sent by the grand jury, and have since then shipped her.

You say "Stop it at what it is at, and let the peaceable and industrious citizens who have been driven from their homes return to their families and their farms." We know of no one who has been driven from their homes. The shot-gun company do so from choice and an evident joint-interest. Wm. J. Hall, who you say has "been driven from home by these outlaws," was actuated by fear, induced by the mind-paralyzing lies told by the Judas, who gave the medicine to his wife's former husband about one month before he married her. These lies, colored by an interested party in Wm. J. Hall's neighborhood, caused his flight. I to-day read two letters from said Hall to Mr. Logan Belt, and they throw dark shadows on some who roost high.

You say "Let us apply to the Governor for militia to nip this thing in the bud." If the thing had been nipped in the bud before the poor peddler, who unsuspectedly ate his dinner and then—a few trinkets scattered and his pack in the big sink; if the bud had been nipped before poor Osbrooks, the husband of Joe Adam's first wife, took his last dinner at G. W. Hollemon's; if the bud had been nipped before poor old man Hardesty, after chatting and smoking with friends, took that last dose of medicine and was bounced to the grave

WITH A WHOOP AND A YELL.

If the bud had been nipped before poor old man Hambrink was made to take the heavenly train to keep his money from going to Germany with him, there never would have been this disturbance, nor such a general uprising by certain characters among the high and low to shout "stop this investigation—it retards the wheels of justice." Ku-Klux!

"Oh judgment! thou hast fled to brutish beasts, and men have lost their reason," when good men can be misled by men who have given libels under their signature—when good men cannot see the cause and effect, the sequence and the conse-

quence—when bad men can kill stock, burn fences, assassinate men, swear lies, and band together, armed to the teeth to resist law, and by obtaining certain worshipped counsel—after they find it a ground-hog case—Oh! it is a grand coup d'etat to shift the origin of the excitement upon parties who deplore that our county has been despoiled by such men as compose this shotgun gang, thereby deterring any wealthy immigration to our county. And here we will say that the "Ku-Klux Klan" so much talked of is simply this: A few men met together for the purpose of devising ways and means to ferret out the Hambrink murder, and to protect the witnesses, as the witnesses were all under the control of armed men; they took a solemn obligation to keep secret all that might be discovered until the arrest of the party or parties implicated. And as to the report that this was Logan Belt's klan, or in his interest, I will state this, that if the discovery of the murderers of Luke Hambrink would benefit Logan Belt, then it was to his interest; if it would injure him, then it was against his interest.

I see that the papers of different States have said a great deal about this matter. I ask that they copy this, and that they do not give us a newspaper death. Let us live before the people as we live before high heaven; with conscience clear, let our reputation be with our conscience. I am yours, etc.,

JONATHAN BELT,
EARL SHERWOOD, et al.

In this letter

SOME REFERENCES NEED EXPLANATION.

That the reader may understand them. That one as to the Read boy, in the second paragraph, relates to two boys who quarreled over a girl, and one of the boys was supposed to be backed by the clan. I have already spoken of the matter to which the letter refers in speaking of Banks. The Belts claim the Oldham faction refused to allow Banks to see an important witness, when Banks was sent to the witness by the grand jury that was investigating the Hambrink shooting affair. William J. Hall was a man who left home through fear of the Belts, but Jonathan Belt says that the fear was groundless, as the information which produced it was a series of falsehoods told to Hall by one Joseph Adams, a member of the Oldham faction, whom Belt characterizes in the letter as a "Judas." The reference to the peddler and to Osbrooks and Hardesty are flings at the security of life in Hardin county. The editor of the Hardin Gazette demanded that the Belt clan or organization be crushed that life might be safe; Jonathan Belt retorts that before it existed life was not safe. The peddler, he says, was seen eating his dinner by the roadside, but that was the last that was ever seen of him. Later, his pack and trinkets were found in one of the sink-holes which abound in that vicinity. Osbrooks was a man who lived in that neighborhood; Belt intimates that Osbrooks' wife and Joseph Adams were in love; that Adams killed Osbrooks, probably

with poison, and within a month married Osbrooks' wife. Hardesty was a man who was supposed to have been treacherously killed while partaking of the hospitality of neighbors. The editor of the Hardin Gazette replies that Belt's taunt is based upon fiction; that most of the parties referred to died natural deaths as far as is certainly known, and that society was peaceful and life secure before the Belts became so notorious.

ANOTHER WITNESS TERRIFIED.

Within the past two weeks, I am told, one of the witnesses against Belt was visited by a would-be assassin. My informant had forgotten the witness' name. The witness is a farmer, and one night he heard some one outside calling him. He started to go to the door, but his wife, in a constant state of alarm, said, "No, let me go." The husband stepped out of view, and his wife, opening the door, saw a man standing in the darkness with a gun in his hand. She was paralyzed with fear and screamed for help, while the man deliberately stood there and peered into the house for her husband. Her cries quickly brought to her aid a neighbor who lived only a few steps away. The assailant, seeing the neighbor coming, did not run, but placed his gun on his shoulder and calmly walked away. Who it was is not known. Everyone of course says that it was a man sent by Logan Belt to kill the witness. The neighbor who came to the rescue was himself badly frightened, and he told the wife that he had once or twice before come to her help in similar cases; that he would not again answer her screams for aid, and that she and her husband must take care of themselves or move out of the county until the trial was over.

LOGAN BELT'S DEFENSE.

Logan Belt found that public opinion in Gallatin county, where he is to be tried, was rising against him, and that the prospects of a conviction were excellent. The Hambrink affair would stick to him; the so-called Ku-Klux hurt him, and, worse still, there was published in a Gallatin county paper, the Local Record, a long article written by a man who signed himself "X," which reviewed all of the charges against the Belt family from the earliest times, and tended, of course, to put the Gallatin county people against him and to prevent him from getting an unprejudiced jury. This article has already been referred to. To off-set this feeling, or to stay it, Logan Belt published in the county papers of Gallatin county, in their issue last Friday, the following letter, which, coming as it does from the most noted desperado of them all, will be read with interest:

LOGAN BELT'S LETTER.

Cave-in-Rock, Ill., July 9, 1879.—To the editor of the Record—Sir: As my trial is to commence next Monday at Shawneetown, it seems my enemies have flooded your paper and others with a series of the vilest slanders and most wicked and baseless falsehoods, in the hope of prejudicing the minds of the

people of Gallatin county against me. I solemnly assert here that I am not guilty of the offense for which I am to be tried ; that what I did was in my own necessary self-defense—to save my own life, which, at the time, was being assailed with great violence, and I ask the people of Gallatin county to suspend their judgment in the case until they hear the evidence from the lips of the witnesses in court, when they will be satisfied that my action was in my own self-defense, and that I am not the inhuman monster my enemies have painted me. In this I am only asking what the law freely accords me—the presumption of innocence until guilt is proven. I desire (and it is my right, as it is the right of all men accused of crime) to be tried by sworn testimony, in open court, when I can meet the witness face to face, when I can have the unprejudiced judgment of twelve unbiassed men upon the testimony, rather than by vituperation, inuendo, falsehood, slander and ridiculous rumors scattered through the newspapers immediately preceding my trial in court, by known enemies, who are hounding on my trail and seeking my destruction.

I desire, however, through your columns, to call attention to a few of the shameless and miserable falsehoods published against me in a letter written by an enemy of mine, a citizen of Hardin county, and published in your issue of last week. The coward, who signs himself “X,” says : “He (Belt) was an officer in the Forty-eighth Kentucky (Federal) infantry, and soon won a first-class reputation as a horse-thief.” This is a

DARK AND COWARDLY FALSEHOOD,

As Joe Robinett, one of your citizens and a member of my command, will readily testify. I could refer to a number of others who were with me and were brave soldiers if I thought it necessary.

“X” further says : “A soldier of the regiment, who knew a good deal about Belt’s crookedness, was found dead and scalped one morning.” Now mark the lies : No soldier of my regiment or command was ever found dead and scalped. I never saw any soldier, living or dead, that was scalped in my life. Never knew such a soldier. Now for the facts : There was a soldier, so I was informed, utterly unknown to me, who belonged to the regular army, and whom I never saw or knew, that was killed and scalped at Bowling Green, Ky., for his money, and Elisha T. Oldham, now a citizen of Hardin county, and a member of the Oldham family who are persecuting me to-day, and two others of my company were arrested for the murder and turned over to the civil authorities, and who were retained in prison until after the war was over, and until long after my company had been mustered out of the service. James A. Lowry, editor of the Hardin Gazette, who has been making such vicious attacks upon me, knows the above to be as true as gospel, and all the members of my company know the same facts.

“X” further says : “Several years since a man named Dorris whipped Belt in a fight at Elizabethtown. Dorris, a short

time afterward, was assassinated at his own house in Gallatin county. Belt was indicted, proved an alibi and escaped." The only thing true in the above is that Dorris was cruelly, and in cold blood,

ASSASSINATED AT HIS OWN HOUSE

Near Equality, in 1870, by some desperate midnight assassin. It is false that I was ever indicted for the crime. I was arrested simply because he had lived in my neighborhood before and we had quarreled. I had an examination before ex-Judge Robert D. Pearce at Equality, and, the people having failed to produce an iota of evidence against me or even the breath of a suspicion, and it appearing on the trial that I was eighteen or twenty miles away at the time the fatal shot was fired, I was discharged, Judge Pearce giving me voluntarily the following certificate:

This is to certify that Logan Belt was arrested and had an examination before me on the 27th day of February, 1870, for the murder of Samuel H. Dorris; and that there was not the slightest evidence against the said Belt. But, on the contrary, Belt proved positively that he was in Hardin county, some eighteen or twenty miles from Equality, at the time said Dorris was shot.

R. D. PEARCE, J. P.

February 28, 1870.

I certify that the above statement of R. D. Pearce is correct.

ALFRED SMITH, Constable of Gallatin County.

Thus falls to the ground this vile slander hawked through the newspapers to injure me in the approaching trial.

The anonymous correspondent "X" has a great amount of slush hashed up about the Belts being organized into a Ku-Klux Klan, all of which is infamously false, and has no foundation in truth; and the writer hereof has proposed time and again to his enemies that if they would produce one single witness that he (Belt) or any of his friends had been seen in Hardin county, either day or night, under arms or in disguise, or in a band together for any purpose, he would then admit that there was some foundation for such rumors; but no such witness has been nor can be produced, and these anonymous scribblers and slanderers well know it.

On the other hand I have proposed to prove, not only by one, but by dozens of honorable, high-minded men, that my enemies are

BANDED TOGETHER WITH SHOT-GUNS AND PISTOLS

In numbers from six to eighteen in one gang, not a friend of mine with them; that they roam the county both night and day, carrying terror and demoralization to the quiet and peaceable citizens of Hardin county.

Why is it, my fellow-citizens, that myself and my friends suffer continuously from poisoned dogs, poisoned horses, burnt fences, burnt houses, and all such devilment too tedious too men-

tion, while no one can point to a single one of this gang who have ever been injured to the amount of one cent, either in person or property? Echo answers: Why is it?

I will give a reward of \$100 for any reliable proof that myself or any of my friends have ever left any threatening letters at any place, seeking to drive any persons away from their homes.

That such letters have been written and sent I do not deny. I have received such letters myself, and can show one now in my possession which I have retained, and perhaps fortunately I did so, for the one found in the papers of the poor, unfortunate, murdered Hambrink is in the same handwriting as the one received by myself. The letter to me warned me to do certain things if I wished to enjoy life and property in Hardin county, and was signed "Regulators."

The editor of the Hardin Gazette, though an avowed enemy of mine, while publishing the infamous "X" article, recoils from its false, slanderous and reckless charges, and says editorially:

We do not wish the impression to go out that all the Belts in this county are bad and lawless men, for many of them are as good citizens as we have, peaceful, industrious, law-abiding, minding their own business and having no difficulties with anyone * * * With these corrections, we give the article ("X") to the people as a matter of news.

No one knows better than this editor that the "X" article was conceived in iniquity and born in corruption. He knows its statements are as

FALSE AS HELL ITSELF.

He knows the object of the author was, by slander, falsehood and abuse, to so poison the minds of the people of Gallatin county that it would be impossible for me to receive a fair and impartial trial. He knows the article has been spread broadcast over Gallatin and Hardin counties so that the slime of the slanderer should do its deadly work before the facts could be elicited on a fair and impartial trial before a jury.

But, Mr. Editor, I thank God that:

Truth crushed to earth will rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers,
But error wounded writhes in pain
And dies amid her worshippers.

I feel, sir, and I think I know that the sober judgment of the people will not be swerved from right, truth and justice by the wicked venom of the anonymous slanderer, but they will judge of me and my action as all men should be judged by the irrefragable truth, as it will be developed from the mouths of the witnesses on the trial of my cause.

No honorable man should ask for more—no honorable man should be content with less.

LOGAN BELT.

RECENT SHOOTINGS.

Two shooting affairs occurred on last Wednesday near Cave-in-Rock, which will illustrate the state of society there.

A MAN NAMED GEORGE MILLER,

Who is, I am told, a relative of the Oldhams and is a member of that faction, was engaged in cultivating a part of the Dossett farm back of Cave-in-Rock, the farm being the property of Mrs. E. Dossett, the widow of J. N. Dossett. Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Dossett quarreled about a cucumber patch, and Mrs. Dossett struck Mrs. Miller. Mrs. Miller went to her husband, who was engaged in hitching up a team, and told him what had occurred. Whereupon he entered the house and began a quarrel with Mrs. Dossett. She struck him with the broom; he wrenched the broom out of her hand; she retreated to her room, took a shotgun and fired the entire charge into Miller's chest, the shot penetrating to the lungs and rendering recovery hardly probable, although he is still living. Mrs. Dossitt came to town and gave herself up.

Now this would have been great capital for the Beltites, for it shows what bad fellows the Oldhamites are. But the Oldhamites got back on the Beltites the same day—that is, they did nothing, but they secured a good retort. There lives a man named Charles Kruppert, a German, a short distance below Cave-in-Rock. Several weeks since he told some neighbors that he had caught

JONATHAN BELT IN THE ACT OF ADULTERY.

Of course this was shocking. The idea that a Baptist preacher, a Sunday-school superintendent, a hard-shell immersionist, a rigid close-communionist, a pious evangelist, who had all his life upheld the doctrine of the Lord Jesus—that he should do such a thing was too scandalous! It hurt the cause of Christ—to have it get out! So the pious old murderer went to Kruppert and tried to compel him to recant. But he would not. Soon after he received notice to leave the country or take the consequences. He did not scare worth a cent. On last Wednesday, while he was plowing in his field, a man named Ellis Monroe came up to him, and, drawing a big navy revolver,

FIRED AT HIM.

Fortunately Kruppert stumbled and fell just as the shot was fired, and the bullet struck him in the side, inflicting a slight wound. The man thought that he had killed Kruppert, and, throwing the weapon at Kruppert's head, he fled. Kruppert jumped to his feet, snatched up the revolver and fired one shot at Monroe, who was by that time nearly two hundred feet away and in full retreat. Monroe escaped unhurt. The revolver proved to be one belonging to Jonathan Belt, and the theory naturally is that Belt gave it to Monroe and told him to kill Kruppert. It seems as though the Belts had a gang of followers who will execute their orders, even to the extent of committing murder

Kruppert came to Elizabethtown and swore out warrants, but doubts are expressed as to whether the Sheriff will serve them.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE ?

The question which the reader will naturally ask is, "What must be done to put down this lawlessness?"

So far as I can see there is no place for the militia, which many of the citizens are constantly demanding. Nothing has yet occurred to make them necessary, or their use lawful. The first proper step is for the Sheriff to summon a posse whenever the occasion requires it, and put down any demonstration of mob violence, such as was made when the so-called Ku-Klux had their examination. The respectable, order-loving citizens are largely in the majority in Hardin county, and are fully able to squelch these ruffians summarily, if their local executive machinery would work properly. But it will not. With a good, faithful Prosecuting Attorney, and a brave, dutiful Sheriff, the respectable citizens could jerk the life out of the desperadoes in short order. Unfortunately, just the two officers who are most needed to be valiant and able, and honest, are quite the reverse. The Sheriff, P. Ferrell, is represented to me by prominent citizens to be a coward, a scoundrel, and probably a sympathizer with the Belts. The State's attorney, Mr. L. F. Plater, is represented to be an imbecile, without honesty or backbone, and at least indifferent to the danger that peaceable citizens are in, if he is not actually

IN SYMPATHY WITH THE DISORDERLY FACTION.

Whenever any prosecuting is to be done against the Belts, the complainants do not go to Plater, but to Messrs. C. S. Morris and J. Q. A. Ledbetter, two vigorous lawyers, who are prosecuting Logan Belt in the case now pending, and are determined, if possible, to either hang him or drive him out of the country. Ferrell and Plater might be indicted, and, if they could be convicted, they could be punished, their places made vacant, and men put in who would execute the laws in an energetic manner. But it is difficult to get evidence sufficient for this, and even then the jury would probably disagree. The only solution seems to be to wait until the terms of the present incumbents expire, which will occur in the fall of 1880, and then to elect in their places men who will perform their duty. Everything is now

HINGING ON THE TRIAL

Of Logan Belt. The prosecutors think they can convict him of murder and hang him. More moderate men think that he will be convicted of manslaughter and sent to the penitentiary. But if either sentence were visited upon him it would have a healthy effect on that neighborhood, in that it would disorganize the desperadoes and give them a suitable respect for the law. There is much speculation as to the trial. Some think that Belt will not answer, but that he will forfeit his bond and skip the country. Others think he will appear, but with the intention of being cleared. Should he be convicted of either manslaughter or murder, there is little doubt but that his friends would attempt a rescue.

Lieut. Belt's Last Earthly Trial, as Published by the Register of April 15, 1887, and Successive Numbers.

CHAPTER VI.

BELT-HAMBRINK TRIAL.—Proceedings of the trial of Logan Belt, Jas. D. Belt, George Ratcliffe and Earl Sherwood for the murder of Luke Hambrink on the night of April 1, 1879. General characteristics surrounding trial both on side of people and defense. On Thursday, April 7th, the selection of a jury was begun, and progressed rapidly until Friday evening, when nine jurors were secured; it was then thought that it would be a difficult matter to secure the other three, as it was evident to all that the defense intended exhausting the county, if possible, but by skillful management on the part of counsel for the people (Hons. J. Q. A. Ledbetter and W. S. Morris) the defense were foiled in this attempt, and by 12 m. Saturday (9th inst.) the jury entire was secured, and consisting of men named as follows: Clement Matheny, John A. Tinsley, Emanuel Pittman, William O'Hare, Baker Finney, Wm. I. Jenkins, Charles A. Ferrell, Marcus Sheldon, Robert Cowgill, Henry Ferrell, James Renfro and Joseph Ferrell, all of whom were taken from three precincts only, viz: Seven being obtained in Monroe, four in Rose Clare and one in McFarlan precinct.

Saturday afternoon session.—The jury being accepted and sworn in, the opening statements were made, the points of which we give as follows:

STATEMENT FOR THE PEOPLE—BY W. S. MORRIS.

It was clear and concise and tolerably full, though it was evident that the entire bulk of evidence to be produced was not by any means shown in the opening statement. He began his statement by first calling the attention of the jury to the great importance of clearly noting all the evidence to be brought forth in the trial in question, and also the great importance to the general public of a true verdict being rendered in accordance with law and evidence—showing the disastrous results of a bad or untrue verdict; further showing that both the people (prosecution) and the defense were satisfied with the jury as selected, and whom he was then addressing, after which he drew a diagram of the situation of the premises where Luke Hambrink

was killed, showing location of sleeping apartments of Hambrink and family, and the manner in which the dark deed was committed—position of perpetrators, etc., as shown by evidence already brought out and evidence yet to be produced. He also described the circumstances as related to the inmates of the Hambrink dwelling—locating each person and giving actions and conversation of each immediately after death of Hambrink, etc. He stated personal characteristics of Hambrink as being economical, money-making man, and a man who loaned a great deal of money; also, social relation as existed between him and family—showing that the general social relation as should exist between husband and wife did not exist between Luke Hambrink and the wife of his bosom; that she was hard of hearing, etc., and, altogether, a person possessing a temperament that would allow her to be readily used by designing persons; or, otherwise speaking, a “ready tool,” in the hands of the bloody perpetrators of the awful deed committed on that first night in April, 1879—and a person whom they well might use (unsuspectingly) as an instrument or an ally to aid them in the execution of a horrible crime, and then afterward palm off upon her and members of her family the very crime which they, themselves, committed. He further stated to the jury the different features surrounding the death of Hambrink, and that his death was caused by wound from a shot fired from a pistol of 38-calibre central fire, and the physician called upon, Dr. G. W. Hill, said in his statement that he thought Hambrink died almost instantly, perhaps taking a few steps.

He then pointed out the force of circumstantial evidence as compared with direct evidence—showing that it was sometimes as good, if not better, than direct evidence and illustrated the same by telling the jury that, on a day previous, Mr. A. had picked up from among some half-dozen other hats his (Morris’) hat and worn it off, and when he came to look for his hat he found it not, so quietly waited until each of the gentlemen had taken up their respective hats and passed out, after which he immediately picked up the remaining hat instead of his own, and, looking under inside band of same, found the name of the rightful owner, and that he knew thereby who had taken his (Morris’) hat, and so, upon the following day, went to and exchanged hats with the gentleman.

Also, he related circumstances of the killing of Doc. Oldham in December, 1875, by Logan Belt, and the combination or organization afterward, in the spring of 1876, of a Ku-Klux Klan by Belt, for the purpose of intimidating, running off and killing all witnesses vs. Belt whom they could not scare from the country. He further stated to the jury an outline of their secret meetings while they were discussing future plans for depredations to be committed, and their manner of coming together, etc. Also, giving oath members were compelled to take, and giving a list of the depredations committed (among which was the

...killing of Luke Hambrink, shooting of Geo. W. Covert, burning of the houses of Lucy Sterling, Mrs. Greene and Rock Creek school-house, etc., etc.) in pursuance of the plans laid by that organization, and that, through force of fear, they had driven some good men into their organization, in order to present a respectable appearance and thereby keep their dark deeds secure from law and justice.

All this, Mr. Morris stated, would be introduced in the trial simply for the purpose of corroboration of testimony that would be offered; not to throw prejudice upon the case, but to prove certain facts relative to or connected with the murder of Luke Hambrink.

He then read the indictment vs. Logan Belt and others for the murder of Hambrink, as rendered by the grand jury of the October term of the Circuit court, 1886, of whom John J. Shearer was foreman. After the reading of which he gave an account of the arrest made, the preliminary trial or habeas corpus examination before Judge McCartney, and result of the same—Logan Belt being committed to jail without bail; Earl Sherwood, James D. Belt, George Ratcliffe and Matthew Ledbetter admitted to bail, and the indictment against Henry Ledbetter nollied. A summary of the evidence as to the killing of Hambrink by Belt, and which would be before them for consideration, was then given the jury as follows:

That the State would be able to show that prior threats had been made by Belt to take the life of Hambrink, on one occasion having said that if Hambrink should move that fence (which was in dispute) he would kill him, as also at various other times. That Hambrink was a witness vs. Belt in the Belt-Oldham murder case, and that Belt believed Hambrink to be in his way in making a successful defense in the same, charging Hambrink with being interested in the prosecution and with fostering or loaning money to the Oldhams for the purpose of aiding them in prosecuting, and that Belt saw it to his interest to remove Hambrink out of the way: That Hambrink received written notices a short time prior to his death, and the following, which he received in the year 1876, we give below:

NOTICE.

September 23d, 1876.

Mr. Hambrink, Luke—You are hereby notified to keep from your place of residence that Lucy Mellon, a prostitute woman, and Tucker Morgan, if you would enjoy life and property; as we intend to have more virtue, morality and christianity in this neighborhood.

Sir, bear this in mind.

[Signed:] Regulators of Crittenden and Hardin counties.

That they expected to prove that Logan Belt was the author of the foregoing notice; and that notices were served on other important witnesses of a character or nature that would tend towards scaring off said witnesses and prevent them from appearing against him in trial, and, further, that it was their

intention to overrun the county and create a panic among the citizens in order to achieve their ends. Again, he added, that some would say that some of the witnesses were not to be believed, and that some of them had been steeped, in crime, etc. This he refuted by saying that assassigators invariably pick upon such men to assist them in committing a dark deed, and that the testimony of such men could not be thrown aside simply because they were men of a like ilk of the accused. Also, that the evidence would show that Logan Belt endeavored to have William Frailey burn Rock Creek school-house on the night of the murder of Hambrink, saying that it would raise hell, and that they would lay it on the Oldhams, but that Frailey refused. That while in Joliet together, Belt told Frailey that he killed Luke Hambrink. That they expected to prove that Belt told Mrs. Lackey that he would kill Hambrink. That Belt instructed Mrs. Hambrink to take an axe and break in the bureau and secure Hambrink's money, and also asked if Hambrink was armed, and the reply was that he kept a pitchfork by his bed. Belt said that he would play hell with a pitchfork. That meetings were held in a dark hollow below Cave-in-Rock, and there plans were suggested and matured whereby masks, lanterns, arms, etc., could be obtained, and schemes were discussed and laid to draw upon the public moneys of Hardin and then swear out of it if accused. The reason for wearing masks were in order that, when crime was committed, they would be able to swear (so their leaders told them) that they did not recognize each other, as they would not know who all were along with them.

Mr. Morris challenged the defense to produce a single iota of evidence that would tend toward shifting the crime of the murder of Luke Hambrink on the Oldham family. He then showed the position of the surrounding fields, and that tracks of four men were visible, and that this corroborates Frailey's testimony. That the defense were frequently seen around the premises of Hambrink prior to his murder, and that Earl Sherwood resided near in an old shop on Belt's place hard by; and further explaining to the jury that the evidence of certain witnesses would be corroborated by the evidence of other certain witnesses. He then brought the statement to a finis by asking the jury to carefully examine facts according to evidence and give a verdict in accordance with the testimony and in behalf of justice, and inasmuch as they valued the future welfare of Hardin county citizens in a Hardin county court of justice, and also the future welfare of their posterity to see to it that all side-bar issues that might be thrown in by the defense for the purpose of diverting their minds from real, better, and heavier evidence, have no such effect with them when it came to weighing the more solid testimony.

STATEMENT OF DEFENSE.

Hon. T. B. Stelle made the opening statement in behalf of the defense, and said he regretted that the counsel for the State

wished the jury to return a verdict in accordance with popular clamor. He appealed to their conscience or, rather, their feelings; he appealed to their American patriotism, when it came to the serious matter of the life of an American citizen. He tried to show a vindictive spirit in the opening statement of the people, and admonished the jury that it was better that ninety and nine criminals escape the avenging hand of justice than to jeopardize the life and best interests of an innocent person, and stating that the wrong men were indicted for the crime. He made reference to the statement of Mr. Morris that the people and people's witnesses were not on trial, etc., Mr. Morris having said this in closing his statement to the jury. He (Stelle) dwelt with much affected force upon the aforesaid statement, and also upon the fact that Matthew and Henry Ledbetter were endorsed as witnesses for the State, and that, too, said he, for the sole purpose of shielding the real perpetrators and casting the crime upon the accused when they (the accused) were innocent of the charge. He insinuated that the family of Luke Hambrink were the persons who committed the crime—for the simple reason that Hambrink, as the defense claim, had threatened to go back to Germany and take his money and little son Peter with him, and that his family wished to have the benefit of that money, and deemed it necessary to kill him in order to retain it in the family. He admitted, however, that Logan Belt might have been the attorney of Mrs. Hambrink. He claimed that Hambrink had refused to furnish the Oldhams with money with which to prosecute Belt; and that it was to the interest of Belt to have Hambrink live, as then, perhaps, his money would not fall into the hands of his family and into the hands of the Oldhams. He further stated that, while they were not installed as prosecutors of crime for the State, they intended, notwithstanding, to act in that capacity, and not only show the defendants innocent of the crime with which they were charged, but also show who the real murderers were, and, in behalf of the people of Hardin county, bring them to justice. That they could prove that Mrs. Hambrink was an enemy to her husband, and that Matthew Ledbetter, her brother, and the Oldhams were in co-operation, and were, with her, working to secure Hambrink's money. That the diagram of positions, as given by the State, was most assuredly wrong, and that, instead of being as they represented, it was (or nearly so) the reverse, and that they meant to prove that it was his own family who murdered him; and that he (Stelle) meant to stand shoulder to shoulder with Messrs. Ledbetter and Morris in the prosecution. He accused Wm. Frailey, witness for the people, as being ready to swear false, having as a motive for doing so simply and wholly a desire for revenge, as Belt, upon his return, had cast off and denounced his former wife because she had proved to be an adulteress and, as he expressed it, a common strumpet, and that because Belt had cast her off and married again Frailey sought revenge, he being a brother to Belt's former wife.

In regard to Mrs. Lackey, as a witness, he expressed himself very humorously, seeming inclined to make her a subject or object of ridicule, and whose evidence he regarded as being of no importance, saying that her evidence could not be relied upon, as she was a strange person, having both an eccentric and vindictive disposition. He asked the jury to look at the motives that might actuate men who should be witnesses for the people, especially, in the instance of Wm. Frailey as a witness against the defense and for the State. He also stated to the jury that the defense would be able to show that the relatives of Luke Hambrink had both opportunities and motives for committing the murder, and setting forth the idea that the motives, on the part of some of the witnesses, were self-preservation, and on the part of others as being through a sense of revenge. He accused the prosecution with secreting a part of the witnesses for the people in order that the defense could not obtain access to them or learn anything of what might be the testimony of these witnesses, which he claimed the defense had a right to know, in order to be prepared to meet the prosecution, who had, he said, conspired together to punish innocent men. He tried to impress upon the jury that great doubt was implied in the case, and that they must be careful to look at the motives of each witness brought upon the stand and throw away all evidence that might be questioned or thrown in doubt.

Judge Baker's instructions to the jury were very close and rigid, showing that he fully realized the necessity of great watchfulness or close attention in this regard. Three escorts, with strict instructions, were placed with the jury, the names of whom are Thos. L. Jenkins, John H. Ferrell and George T. Murphy, all good men, who can be relied upon to see that the strict instructions of the Judge are to the letter carried out.

REMARKS.

We inferred from the harsh attack made by Judge Stelle, of the defense, upon Wm. Frailey and Mrs. N. Lackey, in his opening statement to the jury, that those two witnesses were feared most by the defense. We considered the statement made by Judge Stelle as being the weakest thing of the kind ever heard by us, but, in very truth, it could not have been otherwise, as he had no points and no foundation upon which to base an argument or statement.

We shall, in the next issue, begin with the evidence in the Belt-Hambrink trial, and which shall be as full and just as near the facts (truth) as we can get it. It may take three or four weeks to give the trial entire, but just be patient until we get through, and then we think you will agree with us that we have given you a true and clear synopsis of this, the most important feature or event in the annals of Hardin county history. We noted every expression and every movement, both on the side of the State and also on the side of the defense. We highly commend the counsel for the people and admire the backbone dis-

played by them in the prosecution. The defense also wore a "bold front" throughout up to the time when Sam. Grindstaff was placed on the witness chair. Then the face of Mr. Belt (Logan) blanched, and the "star of hope" of the defense seemed to wane. Several noticed this, but none understood why such was the case.

The jury in the Belt-Hambrink trial were out only thirty minutes, and rendered a verdict of "Not guilty."

Judge McCartney saw enough in the evidence, as given in the habeas corpus trial in the Belt-Hambrink case, as to not admit all of the defendants to bail; yet, notwithstanding this fact, and notwithstanding the fact that a great deal more and great deal stronger evidence was before this jury than was before Judge McCartney last fall, still a verdict of "Not guilty" was rendered. Strange, isn't it?

The publication of the truth or facts never yet hurt this or any other county. It is the smothering up and the covering up of such deviltry that does us harm abroad; for it will creep out anyhow in the course of time, and, when it does, the stench will be much greater, for the putridness will have grown greater. Open denouncement and suppression is the quickest and only remedy, and the only plan to insure safety of life and property and the county from bankruptcy.

Early Monday morning, April 11th, the witnesses for the people were called, sworn in and retired—then again called in regular order, as follows:

PROSECUTION.

Henry Ledbetter: Am a brother-in-law of Luke Hambrink, deceased. At the time of the murder I lived about a quarter of a mile from Hambrink's place, and was working for Hambrink at that time. On the evening of the murder I had went up to Charley Buckhart's for the purpose of sitting up with a sick lady by the name of Browning. Chas. Buckhart and wife and Wm. Browning were there, and Mr. Hambrink came over just after dark and remained until a few minutes after eight o'clock, when he returned home, he only living some three or four hundred yards from Buckhart's. I saw a man pass just before Luke started home, and just after that I heard some one whistling and singing. Stepping to the door I saw a man coming up the road riding and recognized Wm. Frailey; he was going towards Hambrink's. I saw another man coming up out of the field or wood and quartering up towards Frailey from the south side of the road; he dropped into the road just behind Frailey in the hollow and near a drain between Buckhart's and Hambrink's; but I don't know who that man was. Mrs. Greene, Mr. Belt, Mr. Shoemaker and Mr. Austin all lived in that direction; Mr. Austin lived nearest, and Mr. Belt lived about two and a half miles on an air line and about three by road. Hambrink started home about fifteen or twenty minutes after he (Ledbetter) saw the men. Witness and his wife were giving medicine to Mrs.

Browning, and, just as they were preparing to give another dose at 9 o'clock, Hambrink's little son Peter came after Charley Buckhart, telling him that his mother wanted him to come over, as his child was sick and crying, and that she could do nothing with it. [Mrs. Hambrink was keeping Buckhart's child.] Buckhart went, and in a few minutes after the conch blew, whereupon he immediately ran over and found Buckhart standing in the road still blowing the conch, and, in reply to question asked by Ledbetter as to what was the matter, said that Hambrink had been killed. They went in, and Buckhart laid the conch upon a shelf. Hambrink was found lying in the door of the old house (room occupied by Mrs. Hambrink) on his face, with his toes reaching out on the door-step, and with a three-tined pitchfork, of which he still had grasp, lying under him, with the handle of the same extending back under the left arm. He just had on his underclothing—having stripped and put on fresh underclothing—and a shot was found in his left side and rather in front, as though he was shot while facing the foe. His blouse was lying on a corner shelf, and his dirty clothing was lying beside his bed, the cover of which was thrown back, and an imprint upon the bed as though a man had sat thereon. From this the witness inferred that Hambrink was preparing to retire when he received the fatal shot. Witness saw blood at the door-step of the old house and also underneath Hambrink. All this occurred in Hardin county, Ill., in the year 1879. He was at the inquest next day. Mr. Morris asked who Claiborne and Grant Belt were, and was told by the witness. Witness had no reason to believe that Tobe (Matthew) Ledbetter had anything to do with the murder. Tobe lived at Alex. Frailey's at the time of the murder, which was about two miles from Hambrink's. Witness was at Tobe's when he heard that he was indicted for the murder of Hambrink, and, as he was preparing to go to court, he went on the following morning to Elizabethtown. Witness diagramed the premises of Hambrink for the benefit of the jury.

DEFENSE.

Henry Ledbetter: Simply a repetition of the former statement, with a few exceptions, which are given. Witness married Rebecca Tucker. Chas. Buckhart married Martha Hambrink. Stelle asked witness what Wm. Browning was at Buckhart's for and where had he been since? Browning was there sitting up with the sick woman, and afterward he removed to Pope county, Ill. Mrs. Browning was moved away pretty soon after the murder to Equality by a man named Mitchell, he thought, though not positive in that regard. Witness married a half-sister of Morgan Tucker. Buckhart had two or three children altogether. Mrs. Hambrink had the child next to the baby, which was one week old. It was sick and crying that night, and the boy Peter had come over after Buckhart to go and take care of it, as he said it was hurt and bleeding. His mother had told him this. Buckhart had only time to get there when conch blew. Witness

went in the old house, passing in by the left side of Hambrink, but Buckhart remained on the porch. Mrs. Hambrink was sitting rocking the child—no lamp lit, but fire stirred up; lamp in Luke's room. Peter was in with his mother. Sherman Browning was asleep. Witness was second person there. Bettie Oldham (Hambrink's daughter) was there. She was 13 years of age. Hambrink had seven children. Martha had married Chas. Buckhart; Jane, Frank Dale; Hannah, Jack Oldham; Lucy, George Dale; Bettie, Jas. Oldham, and two were unmarried. Mrs. Hambrink was singing and talking to the child when witness went in and asked, "Who done that?" She said she did not know, and asked what was to be done; he told her the coroner would have to be brought, and immediately went after him, getting back at daylight next morning. The moon shone till about 3 o'clock a. m. that night. Hambrink had not said he would take his money and go to Germany, but simply his boy Peter. Hambrink and family were on good terms. But, that Luke and his wife had not been living harmoniously until within a few weeks preceding the murder. They knew Hambrink had his money deposited in the bank at Shawneetown. It was generally understood that Hambrink and sons-in-law were engaged in the prosecution of Belt for the killing of Oldham. Jack Oldham live about a quarter of a mile from Hambrink's. Mrs. Hambrink had her clothes on, and had not been asleep up to the time of the murder. Hambrink had hold of the fork near the tines. He saw Frailey pass about 8 p. m.; the moon was shining, and Luke started home a few minutes after. Alex. Ledbetter told witness he (witness) had been indicted, and he went to Elizabethtown voluntarily without arrest. A nolle prosequi was entered in his case on insufficient evidence. He had never told any one at the shop of Guideon Howell that, if he should tell what he knew, his brother Tobe would hang. He had never quarreled with his brother in his life.

PROSECUTION.

Matthew Ledbetter: Name stated. Nicknamed Tobe. He was one of the men indicted by the grand jury, but went to Elizabethtown before he was arrested. His father's name was John; grandfather's name was James. Was well acquainted with the defendants. He lived at his father's during 1878 and 1879, but in the fall of 1879 moved to the Hurt place belonging to Logan Belt. Witness was raised in this county; his father came from Tennessee; he had known Belt from boyhood, and Sherwood about seventeen years. Hurt place adjoined Hambrink's. Belt lived about two miles from Hambrink on an air line and about two and a half miles by road. David Shoemaker lived to the right of that line, and Dan Austin, he thought, lived in the old school-house at the time of the murder. Mrs. Greene lived on or near that line, and about one-half mile from Hambrink's. There were hard feelings between Belt and Hambrink; their places joined, and Luke had threatened to tear away the fence

between them, which he had erected himself. Belt told Tobe that if he did tear that fence away he had better be in hell the moment he did it, as he (Belt) would not be any too good if he should be over there on the hillside with his gun to shoot him. Belt told Dan Austin that Hambrink was furnishing the Oldhams with \$500 with which to prosecute him (Belt), and sent Tobe to interview Hambrink in regard to it, whereupon Hambrink told Tobe that he was not. Belt also came to where he was working one day and Told Tobe that Geo. and Jack Oldham were going to murder Hambrink to get his money. (This was in February, before the murder in April.) Tobe told Belt he had not before heard of such a thing, whereupon Logan exclaimed; "Why, hell-fire! it's all over the country." Tobe said he was not in anyway related to either John Q. A. or John T. Ledbetter. Tobe went to see Belt in behalf of Mrs. Hambrink and in regard to having her dower set apart for her. Belt said he would meet her at Tobe's house upon a certain evening, and to tell her to be sure and meet him at the appointed date. She was there as agreed upon, but Logan did not come. He afterward told Tobe to tell her to manage somehow to get possession of all his money and then let him do the lawing if he wanted to, as he would then be destitute of means to law with. He had heard Belt say a "right smart," he said, in regard to Hambrink, but did not remember just all he had said. Belt again told him to tell Mrs. Hambrink to take an axe and burst in the bureau and secure all the money it contained, but to wait until Hambrink had the most money before doing so; and after she had done so he would tell her what to do. She said she would not get it that way, and that the drawer was locked. Belt asked Tobe what corner of the house Hambrink slept in, and if he did not sleep in the southeast corner of the house, next to Buckhart's? Tobe replied in the affirmative. Belt then asked if Luke kept himself armed, and was told by witness that he kept a pitchfork by his bed, and that if anyone should interrupt him they would get a pitchfork stuck into them. Belt said he would play hell with a pitchfork. He also asked if Luke made any changes in regard to his sleeping apartment in either warm or cold weather. Witness did not know that he did. Witness had a dance at his house on the night of the murder, and it broke up about ten o'clock. Jack Oldham was the fiddler. Chas. Buckhart was not there. Geo. Dale and wife were there, but went home about nine o'clock, or one hour before the dance was broken up. The sons-in-law of Hambrink were all there at the dance except Charles Buckhart. Witness heard of the event the next morning and was at the coroner's inquest, getting there at about seven o'clock. Belt had told Tobe previous to the murder that, if he (Belt) was in Tobe's place, and if Mrs. Hambrink was his sister, as she was Tobe's, he would kill the d——d, flop-eared, Dutch son-of-a-b——h. Witness moved away from the Hurt place because he was afraid to stay there, he said, as the Belts and Geo. Ratcliffe

were around the premises of Belt all the time, and he was working for Belt. Plenty of arms, ammunition, etc., were kept around Belt's house, and all were armed. He moved from the Hurt place about the last of February or the first of March. One morning, when he went to Belt's to work, he found Jas. D. Belt, Tom Leeper, Frank Hardin, Wm. Greene, Wm. Frailey and Geo. Ratcliffe all there, and he heard them say they slept there, and that "scared him up," he said, and he moved out of the neighborhood as soon as possible. The last day he worked for Belt, Jas. D. Belt and Thos. Leeper were there; witness was cutting out fence row and Logan Belt passed him going to Thomas Hodge's to stay all night, and told him——. Here the defense objected to the testimony, saying it was entirely outside of the case in question. The jury were withdrawn from the court-room, and Mr. Morris, of the prosecution, stated to the court that it was not outside evidence, for by such evidence he wished to show that there was a conspiracy formed for the purpose of removing out of the way all the important witnesses against Belt, and this, too, prior to the killing of Hambrink, and that this part of the testimony of the witness was to tend partially toward showing this fact. He read as authority for witness proceeding with evidence, Sec. 1078 and 1079 of Vol. 1 of Bishop's Criminal Procedure, and also some other authorities to the same effect. Stelle, Pillow and Youngblood, in behalf of the defense, endeavored to show authority for the inadmissibility of such evidence, and Mr. Youngblood stated to the court that, "unlike Judge Stelle, he did not propose to identify himself with the prosecution, but was there for the sole purpose of defending the accused, and none other. That he thought the authority as read by him was sufficient to convince the court that such evidence was wholly inadmissible, and he trusted the court would so decide." After some two hours' discussion upon the matter, Judge Baker sustained the claim of the counsel for the people, that they had a right to introduce such evidence, stating that as the people had shown in their opening statement that such evidence would be introduced, and that as the purpose for introducing said evidence was also shown, therefore the court had no right to debar them of the privilege, and ordered that the people proceed with the witness. Whereupon witness stated that Belt passed by him, where he was engaged cutting out the fence row, and told him that he was going over to Thos. Hodge's to stay all night; he said Wm. Frailey and Joe Lowry had gone to town, and that Covert was to be brought up to Henderson for trial, and he (Belt) was going up there to stay all night. Belt told Tobe that, if he was a little further up, he would show him where Covert waylaid him, and that if he had come along he would have been killed. Witness saw Joe Lowry, Wm. Frailey, Jas. D. Belt and Tom Leeper at Logan Belt's that day, but did not know what they were doing there; he did not see them either come or go away. Tom Leeper and Jas. D. Belt were there at dinner, but

as witness went home in the evening he saw they were gone. Witness did not know whether Hambrink tore the fence away or not. Belt was riding when he passed witness going to Thos. Hodge's.

DEFENSE.

Matthew Ledbetter: Witness was commonly called Tobe Ledbetter. He did not know who killed Hambrink. He lived two or three miles from Hambrink. Defense asked witness if he was a member of the church. He had been, but the church had gone down. He had always attended dances, and did not think there was any harm in so doing. No one left before the dance closed that night but George Dale and wife, that witness knew of. The feeling between Belt and me was that of a friendly one at the time of the conversation had when I was at work for hi.n. He did not remember whether or not he swore on former occasion; he was mad at Belt. He arrived at inquest after sun-up. Joshua Hobbs told him about the murder. He was not at either Belt's or Hambrink's on the evening of the murder, but was at work in his new ground. Did not remember what Mrs. Hambrink was doing when he got there on the morning of the inquest. He didn't know that Hambrink was going to Germany. Mrs. Hambrink told him that Luke and her were not on speaking terms. He did not remember swearing that she told him Luke was going to Germany. He did not know that Hambrink had money in the bank. Mrs. Hambrink did not tell him that it was. She did not give any reason for wanting her dower set off. Logan Belt said that "Up that path was where Covert waylaid me, and would have shot me had I come along then." Witness moved from Hurt place to Alex. Frailey's, and from there to Baugher place.

PROSECUTION.

William Frailey: I am a brother-in-law to Logan Belt. I was acquainted with Doc. Oldham. I was at Logan Belt's house the spring following the killing of Oldham; and Jonathan Belt, George Ratcliffe, Jim Belt and Earl Sherwood were there. I heard Logan and Jonathan Belt say they would get their men and kill off the witnesses against Logan. This talk was had between the house and the shop. Belt had guns and pistols in that shop. It was used as a blacksmith shop and law office. Jonathan and Logan said that all was now ready, and they would take their clan and clean up things. Jonathan was to go across the river into Kentucky and get his clan and Logan would gather together his men in Hardin, and, with the two clans united, they would make a general sweep of all the witnesses against Logan. I saw them scouting around, and they told me they were waylaying Covert and the Oldhams. Covert was a witness against Logan Belt. Logan told me that he had been shot at by the Oldhams, and that they were going to get their men and just wipe them out. I was present when Lucy Sterling's house was burned. I objected to going, but Logan said by God I had to, and that it

was the only way to save my life. Harvey Hollemon burned the house; he went in and applied a match to the bed; Lucy was not there, but Belt's instructions to us were that, if she should be there, to burn her up in the house. Belt had the roads watched and two men waylaid to my certain knowledge. I know he gave men notices, for he had me to go to Shawneetown and put them in the postoffice. I have taken about six notices and mailed them at Shawnee. I don't remember who all of them were for, but two of them were for Luke Hambrink and Ewing Lambert. Belt's excuse for having the notices mailed at Shawneetown was that the parties would not know where or whom they came from. Cave-in-Rock was the nearest postoffice of the parties to whom the notices were mailed. I lived a part of the time on Belt's place and a part on the Vaughn place. Belt waylaid for Covert and the Oldhams twice. He waylaid them one night at the Hambrink school-house. Logan Belt, myself, Jim Belt, Geo. Ratcliffe and Manford Underwood were in that crowd. At another time myself and Marion Belt guarded one road. At another time Logan said that Covert was in the neighborhood, and that he wanted to kill him. At the east end of Belt's lane Belt shot Covert and me both. At another time the road was watched between Mr. Pritchard's and Ebb Dossett's by myself and Marion Belt. I came to town to get out subpoenas in Belt's and my own case the day before Hambrink was killed, that night. I met B. Z. Jenkins at Peter's creek coming from town as I went into town. I rode Loge's horse, and I got back to Belt's about sundown, and ate supper there. Belt had formerly told me, on the bank of the creek at Rock Creek church, that "Luke, the d——d old son-of-a-b——h, should never live to see another court to furnish money to prosecute him with." I ate my supper and then started home. Loge went out to the lot with me to catch my horse for me, as I had left my horse there as I went down in the morning, riding Logan's instead, and, while assisting me to catch my horse, Loge proposed that I should go that night and burn Rock Creek school-house, saying that it would raise a hell of a stink in that part of the county, and that he would lay it on the Oldham's. He said he had other men who would do it, it, but they had another job to do that night. He said they—Earl Sherwood, George Ratcliffe and Jim Belt—were going to kill that G—d d——d Dutch son-of-a-b——h that night, and pointed towards Hambrink's, and that his men were down there in the woods now waiting, and again motioned towards Hambrink's; he further added, "That they were men who never flinched, too." I told Loge I must go home and could not burn the school house that night. Loge then said that by G—d one thing I had to do, and if I valued my personal safety I had better do it, too; that was that I must go along the road whistling and singing, and if I met anyone to stop until I had passed them, and with this Loge went off and left me and I went on home. I overtook Zed Jenkins about one mile from H's and rode with him as far as his house;

I went on, and when I passed Buckhart's I saw both Henry Ledbetter and Luke Hambrink there, but did not stop or warn Hambrink, as I was afraid to. I saw a man come into the road behind me between Buckhart's and Hambrink's, and that man was Earl Sherwood; I went to see J. R. Oxford the next morning. I never heard of the working at Ebb Dossett's. I was jointly celled with Logan Belt while at Joliet. I was sent to the penitentiary for shooting Covert. While there Belt and myself were talking about the killing of deceased, and Loge told me that what he did not do he HAD done. Belt had received a letter from home and some things in the letter aggravated him, and as we were talking of the deceased's murder Loge again said that what he didn't do in it he had done. Grindstaff and Belt both said they were in the same cell at Joliet.

DEFENSE.

William Frailey: I am brother-in-law to Logan Belt by marriage, he marrying my sister. Am 40 years old. Came home from Joliet about eight months before Belt did. Was at Belt's evening of murder; had been to town to get subpoenas for witnesses in Belt's case and my own. I saw no one outside of his own family there—there was Mary his wife, and Margaret, Avary, Knocker, Jodie and Jonathan. Stopped at Belt's to change horses, and was in the lane and yard with Loge. I knew Hambrink was going to be killed that night. I heard the conversation between Logan and Johnathan in regard to killing witnesses, and joined the band to help do it, but went into it through fear and by force. Was with them only at times which I have spoken of to kill or murder witnesses. The reason I knew deceased was to be killed that night was because Loge told me so. The States attorney told me he would protect me from prosecution for anything relative to the killing of Hambrink if I would only swear the truth in this case. Well, he said he would do what he could for me if I would swear to the truth. I don't think I swore that he promised to furnish enough evidence to convict them if I told all I knew; he never said he would furnish me any evidence. I swore I shot Covert. I did it to save my life. I know I am swearing the truth now, and knew I was swearing false then, but surrounding circumstances then would not permit me to do otherwise, for I knew that though Logan was in the pen his bad men were left behind and were here among us. I don't think I stated that Belt had nothing to do with the shooting of Covert. I swear I know from my own personal knowledge that I was afraid Belt and his men would sometime waylay and kill me. I feel more safe now and not afraid to swear the truth; then, I was. No; the States attorney did not assure me that I was safer now, but the people have; they have got tired of this sort of thing. Why, the people in general, of course—all over the county. No; Logan Belt shot Covert and me both. Ile Dossett and Henry M. Winders were both present when I talked with Jno. Q. A. Ledbetter. Defense then asked witness if he had not been advised

by prosecution that he had not sworn quite enough but must make it a little stronger? He said he had not. Belt would not speak to him when he came back, and so he was, he said, of course, unfriendly; he had sent or written a partial statement to Sam Grindstaff—just a social letter, giving general news of country and what Belt was doing; he wrote to him because the States attorney wanted to find out where he was at, he said; he did not state to Maj. R. W. McLowrie in Joliet that he knew that Belt had nothing to do with the murder of Hambrink or that Hambrink's own family and the Oldhams killed him; he felt more secure now than he did last fall, for then he felt that his life was in danger, and he thought he was yet in danger if the accused was turned loose. Did he understand the nature of an oath? He did. Consequences of disregarding his oath? He thought the devil would get him. Did he not think the d—l would get him anyhow for swearing lies? He said not, as he thought it was owing to circumstances; that if a man had to swear a lie to save his life he did not think the d—l had anything to do with it. Could he tell them how people would know that he was swearing the truth? He said he did not know about that, and it didn't concern him, but that circumstances now warranted him to tell the truth. About six months before Hambrink was killed Belt and himself had a little difficulty over a reaper, but only had a few words; he was not at Hambrink's house, but went straight along the road, and did not hitch his horse at Mt. Zion church, and, with Tobe Ledbetter, kill deceased; he did not go to Judge Ledbetter's, at 11 o'clock, on the night of Thursday, April 7, 1887, but he was there a little bit after supper. The State's attorney had been at his home only one time and that was in the spring of 1886; he did not tell Jim Oldham that the wife of the deceased had the dogs put up on the night of the murder; he told him he had heard it, but did not know how true it was; he did not get into the hogshead and shoot deceased: he never wrote nor made his mark to such a document as appeared in the Golconda paper; he said he didn't tell Lewis Lavender that Luke's own family murdered him.

A FORGERY.

The following letter appeared in the Golconda Herald of the issue of October 10, 1877: From Hardin county.—Cave-in-Rock, Ill., October 18, 1877.—Eds Herald—Understanding that one G. W. Covert, with whom I had a skirmish one week ago to-day, had gone down the river to some point, and that he reported that Logan Belt had shot me and also him, I wish to give the facts in the case as they occurred. I was hunting near Logan Belt's house when I was fired upon from the thicket, receiving one buckshot in my leg, two through the abdomen and two in the shoulder. A man ran from the thicket and I fired two shots at him. Covert's cane was found in the thicket, and blood trailed from there to Dr. Dunn's. Covert was wounded in the arm and cared for at Dunn's; arrested and taken to this

place, where he escaped and went down the river ; he probably took me for Logan Belt, as he, one year ago, plead guilty to being one of the parties who waylaid Belt ; he told then that the spot where he had fired on me was one of their ambuscades ; he broke jail and fled from that charge. Covert has a wife in this county, and, I am credibly informed, is married to the woman he has had with him recently, finding her at Harrisburg, Ill.; he is charged with burning his wife's house in this county, and with attempting to sell a forged note for \$300 on John Flannery, a gentleman of Kentucky ; he ran away from Indiana to escape punishment for larceny, is known by all to be an uncommon liar, and, to use an old saying, would rather tell a lie on credit than tell the truth for cash. I now hope to get well.

his
WM. ✕ FRAILEY.
mark.

Attest:

JOS. LOWRY.

[Aforegoing letter was sworn to be a forgery by both Wm. Frailey and Joseph Lowry.]

PROSECUTION.

Joe Lowry : Witness knew and pointed out all the defendants ; he was Constable at the time. A copy of the Golconda Herald was handed him, in which was the above letter, and he said he never saw any such document with Wm. Frailey's name attached, and attested by him, and said it was a forgery ; he had heard a conversation between Logan Belt and deceased at Robt. Sheridan's in regard to a hound of Belt's that had been killed. Deceased said that the hound had been killing his sheep, and that he told Morg. Tucker to kill him, which he did ; but that deceased offered to pay for the dog. Belt said he wanted no pay for the hound, but that there would be a future settlement with him, and that if he (Belt) found out for certain that his hound had not killed Hambrink's sheep that his d——d old hide would pay for it. This conversation between Belt and Hambrink was in the winter before the latter was killed in the spring. Witness said that, being a constable, he saw a great deal of Belt's handwriting, and knew it wherever he saw it, whereupon he identified the following notice as being written by Logan Belt :

NOTICE.

September 23, 1876.

Mr. Hambrink, Luke—You are hereby notified to keep from your place of residence that Lucy Mellon, a prostitute woman, and Morgan Tucker, if you would enjoy life and property, as we intend to have more virtue, morality and christianity in this neighborhood. Sir, bear this in mind.

[Signed:] Regulators of Crittenden and Hardin counties.

Witness thought Belt had endeavored to counterfeit, or, rather disguise his hand writing, but he said it was from the hand

of Logan Belt nevertheless. He thought that, as a general thing, Belt omitted punctuation, and that sometimes he wrote heavy and sometimes a light hand, but that his writing was always natural, and that a man well acquainted with Belt's writing could always tell it, even though he should try to disguise the same. Belt was a bad speller, he said, and he knew it was his hand from the shape of his small "d," as he made the same like a small "a." Witness knew that it was his hand from the general appearance, as it was peculiar and altogether different from the writing of anyone else that he had ever seen. He had seen Belt write a great deal, and he did not write alike all the time: he usually wrote a tolerably heavy hand, and this was rather lighter than he commonly wrote, but still it was his. Wm. Frailey and Jas. D. Belt had come to the residence of witness with a note from Loge Belt, asking him to come to his house. Witness went next morning and found Jim Belt and Tom Leeper there. Belt wanted him to go to Elizabethtown, with Wm. Frailey, with a warrant for the arrest of Covert and take him to Esquire Henderson's for trial. Belt told him to bring him along the low water road around by Cave-in-Rock, as about twenty-five or thirty of those d—d sons-of-b—hes would be on the high water road and would take the d—d old son-of-a-b—h away from him, and for witness to take him the lower road. Witness told Belt he apprehended no danger, but, thinking that something was wrong, he did not bring Covert up. Witness returned from town to Belt's next morning and found Jim Belt and Tom Leeper again at Loge's armed with guns.

DEFENSE.

Joe Lowry: Nothing new was elicited, save that Covert's writ charged him with stealing a horse. Judge Stelle asked witness if he did not understand Mr. Belt, when he told him to take Covert the lower road, to mean that if he did not do so the Oldhams would take him away from him? Witness replied that he thought Loge wanted him to bring Covert along the lower road in order that he (Belt) himself might kill Covert, or have it done, as Covert was a witness against Belt, and for that reason he did take Covert to Henderson's. He did not know whether the "notice" presented to him was written with a gold, steel or quill pen, but he knew that it was in the handwriting of Logan Belt. Another paper was shown witness, and that was also identified as being the handwriting of Belt.

PROSECUTION.

H. M. Winders: Witness was acquainted with defendants; he had been Constable, Justice of the Peace, and was now County Surveyor. The notice given deceased, and signed "Regulators," was shown to witness and identified by him as Logan

Belt's handwriting. [This was the same notice identified by Joseph Lowry.] He had lived some two or three miles from Belt for several years, and knew him well and also his handwriting; had given considerable attention to the study of penmanship; had studied both Belt and Belt's handwriting, for Belt was a peculiar man and wrote a peculiar hand—a hand that witness said he did not believe could be imitated. He was well satisfied that the "notice" shown him was Belt's handwriting, but he thought that Belt had endeavored to disguise his true hand in this instance. He had surveyed lands in the Hambrink neighborhood, and had made a map of the surrounding vicinity, or covering an area of about one and one-half townships. This map was at his office, but the court caused it to be sent for, and the witness was then asked to take it and explain to the jury the exact surroundings as shown by the map, which he did, locating the various farms and their surrounding roads, etc., of the neighborhood. A second and a third paper was also shown to and identified by witness as being the handwriting of Logan Belt. The feeling of witness toward Belt was not the best, but his feelings would not influence him to swear otherwise than true. Belt and witness had never had any unfriendly relations, yet witness did not like Belt as a man and as a citizen.

DEFENSE.

Henry M. Winders: Witness was very firm and positive, and defense could not shake his statement. Nothing new much was elicited, save that Belt had a peculiar way of making certain letters—making a small "d" like the letter "a," and that he made caps "B" and "L" in a peculiar style. Witness recognized the "notice" to Hambrink from the general style used by Belt, and told the defense that if they would only compare it with recent letters written by Belt they would find the handwriting to be exactly the same.

PROSECUTION.

Morgan Tucker: I lived on the place of Hambrink before he was killed, and lived there some two or two and a half years. I was a witness against Belt, I knew Lucy Mellon. Deceased showed me a notice notifying him to put Lucy Mellon and myself off his farm, which deceased had received from the "Regulators," and asked me what I was going to do about it. This is the same notice shown me by deceased. I heard conversation between deceased and Logan Belt about a note. Deceased would not let Belt have the note until he paid. About one year before deceased was killed I was living on Stone's place. I came home about nine o'clock one night and saw three men in my yard; they passed around the house two or three times and then came out

at the gate and crossed the bridge near where I was hid in the gully. They stopped on the bridge and held a whispered conversation. They had two guns. I think they were Logan Belt, Isaac Keeling and Wm. Frailey, and I think they intended killing me if they had found me. Stone lived at the old Hale place, one and one-half miles southeast of Belt's house, one year before the death of deceased. I killed Belt's dog, but did so under Luke's directions. I think the note held by deceased on Belt was probably a mortgage note. Belt asked deceased if he was not going to give up the note, and, when deceased refused, remarked that it would not do him any good. I can read handwriting.

DEFENSE.

Morgan Tucker: I can read writing and can write. I write my name. Deceased showed this paper to me. I can make out enough of it to know it. My eyes were not sore at the time I saw the men on the bridge. They were within fifteen or twenty feet of me; I had a good view of them; the moon was shining. It was before deceased was murdered. It might have been six months before, but it was sometime during the year before Hambrink's death. No one told me about who the men were. My eyes have been sore at intervals for sixteen years. I married Mary Delilah Jupin. Defense are all friendly with me except Mr. Belt. I don't call him my friend. I said I guessed he was. I now have friendly feelings toward Belt's person, but don't like his way. I think I offered to tell it last fall, but it was objected to. I had deceased pay nine dollars to Loge Belt for me, which Belt claimed I had stolen, or its equivalent.

PROSECUTION AGAIN TAKE THE WITNESS.

Morgan Tucker: Frank Hardin had been to a shooting match and had gotten his gun out of fix. I went on Sunday with Mr. Hardin over to Mr. Belt's to get the gun fixed and Belt was not at home, but Mrs. Belt told us just to go to the shop and fix the gun; I sat down on the steps while Hardin went into the shop and unbreeched the gun; we were there about twenty minutes. The next morning Belt sent for us, saying that he was going to prosecute us for theft; we went over and told him that he was making a wrongful charge and that we were innocent; but Belt said he would sue us if we did not pay him nine dollars, and that if we would settle that amount on a note at Hambrink's he would let us off—we did it rather than to have any trouble with him.

PROSECUTION.

Jane Belt: I am living with my uncle, John Frailey. I am twenty-five years of age. I was living at home with my father when Hambrink was killed. Jim Belt, George Ratcliffe

and Earl Sherwood were at father's house the day Hambrink was killed. They came early in the morning and remained until after twelve o'clock, noon, and took both guns and pistols away with them. Father kept several guns, revolvers, etc. around his house. After Jim Belt, George Ratcliffe and Earl Sherwood left, I noticed that all the guns were gone. Those three men were at my father's a great deal just before the killing. George Ratcliffe lived in the Roark house just at the mouth of the lane. Bill Frailey came to father's on the evening of the murder; he got there about sun-down and ate supper there; he had been to town and had rode father's horse. My father and Uncle William stood at the gate after supper and talked awhile, and then went out at the gate. I went to bed about nine o'clock. I don't know whether the clock was right or not. They were not there when I went to bed. I slept in another room. Father was at home next morning when I got up. Father went to a working at Ebb Dossett's next day and mother went along with him. Sherwood was at our house a "heap" of the time and frequently slept at the shop, as father had bedding there. Jim Belt, George Ratcliffe and Sherwood were there a great deal of the time and were out a great deal of nights. Sherwood did not live there all the time but the most of his time.

DEFENSE.

Jane Belt: I am not married; never had any children; father cast me off, he said, for being too intimate with men. He cast my mother off for the same reason—I stood to my mother. I don't know exactly how long; I looked at the clock; I don't know whether the clock was right or not; I don't know where he was; he was talking with Bill Frailey; I knew William Frailey; the gate was not very far off, he didn't go away at dusk; George Ratcliffe lived tolerably close to my father's. Upon close questioning by defense, witness said that she thought it was between one-fourth and one-half mile from Belt's to Ratcliffe's, but upon being pressed further in regard to the distance, told Judge Stelle that if he was very particular, to go and measure the distance and then he would know. Her father owned the place at that time. She thought Ratcliffe moved to the county farm; he was married when he lived on her father's place; had been married four or five years, she thought. Sherwood lived at her father's before he was married, and also again just before the murder of Hambrink, but witness did not remember just how long; he was there on the day deceased was killed at night. Her father and Sherwood were very intimate, she said. She said she noticed her father and Frailey standing at the gate several times that evening, and guessed they must have stood there one hour and a half at least. It was not true, she said, that she had lived with a man in Gallatin county. She had not lived with John Norris in Gallatin county. He had taken her up

there, but they did not live at the same place. Marion Mott had never drove her off. Her father had never talked to her about the way they had been living. He had, upon his return home, drove her off without giving her any reason, but she heard afterward that he said that it was because she had been too intimate with men, but that it was false. There was a law office in her father's old shop, and Sherwood slept there; her father kept arms in there for Sherwood's use. There were two rifles, two pistols and two shotguns. Witness said that her father kept hounds, and persons often came there and went hunting; that sometimes they would meet there and have a general hunt; Mr. Sheridan's and Mr. Lackey's folks sometimes brought hounds with them for that purpose. Mr. Sherwood had his washing done at her father's house a part of the time.

PROSECUTION.

Thomas Leeper: My name is Thomas Leeper. I am acquainted with the defendants; I knew where Logan Belt lived when deceased was killed, and have worked for him; I worked for him all the next summer after deceased was killed and was at work for him when he was sent to prison. I had a conversation with Belt about running off the witnesses in the Oldham case. I was sworn into the "band" by Logan Belt, near his house and on right of the lane; Sherwood, Geo. Ratcliffe and Jim and Arthur Belt were present, and the oath I had to take was binding upon a man so as to force him to take the life of a brother, if so ordered by the captain, Robert Sheridan. We were to ferret out the Hambrink murder; I told Loge I would like to see that done, but that I was a poor, ignorant orphan boy; had always had to work very hard for my living; never had any chance to get an education, and was not capable of assisting in the ferreting out of the Hambrink murder; that there were smarter men than me to do that. Belt said: "By G—d you are a man, ain't you?" I said: "Yes, in size." "Well," he said, "You can do as much as any man, can't you?" I said I could. Belt said; "By G—d that was enough." I knew it was a ground-hog case. I knew then I had to join them or do worse, so I told Loge that if it would do him any good, I would join the band. Belt said he knew G—d d—d well he could make good use of me, so I joined them in fear of my life. Belt then said: "It is dark now, but I'll give you the signs and grips in the morning." We were to know who belonged to the band, when we shook hands with members, by the sticking of the little finger under the thumb; also to fold or draw lapels of the coat across the chest in passing, and if the person was a member, he would signify the same by raising hat and passing hand over brow or forehead, as though wiping perspiration therefrom; if assistance was desired, we were to stick thumbs in each pocket, allowing remainder of hand to hang down on outside and pass around a known member until

we attracted his attention when, according to his oath, he was bound to retire with us to a secluded spot where we could have the desired communication. Belt sent Bill Irby and myself to hunt and kill Covert. One day while passing, Belt stopped me to look at his fine horse; he asked me when me and that girl (my wife, then Mary Norris) were going to marry. I told him we were not going to marry that I knew of; he said yes we would, and that by G—d he would set me up for keeping house to the amount of \$50, and that much would fix me up nice, if I would go and kill Covert, and that he and family would clear me of it. Another time Belt and I were in the sinks hunting when we saw a man coming, and Belt said that if it was one of those d—d Oldhams' we would kill him right there. Another time Belt sent Jim Belt and me to Barker Hollow to watch for and kill Covert, who was expected along there that night. I told him I had no gun and did not want to go, but he said I did not need a gun, as Jim would do the killing, and that he just wanted me to go with Jim as company. I had on a new pair of Walker boots, and Loge made me pull them off and put on an old pair, as he said by G—d they could track me with them things on. Loge said he would go to Tom Hodge's and stay all night, as people would lay it on him and then he would prove himself clear. Loge took my boots and hid them behind the book-case; after we started I told Jim we would go down there, stay an hour or so and then return, as Loge would never know any better nohow, and so we did. Covert was to be brought up to Henderson's that night for trial. Another time we went hunting; Loge gave me a carbine, but he and Jim both took shotguns, and he walked in front and Jim behind me. I thought they intended killing me. I was passing along the road once when Jim Belt and George Ratcliffe, who were upon the hillside lying behind a log, called to me, and, going up to them, I asked them what in the h—l they were there for, and they said "to kill them a man." I told them they would play the d—d. They said I would see if Covert should come along. I was at the working at Eb. Dossett's the next day after the murder of Hambrink, and Jim Belt told me he stayed at Logan Belt's the night before.

DEFENSE.

Thos. Leeper: He was cowardly, and was made go along with parties to waylay men. He had been a law-abiding citizen ever since he "hopped out of the Ku-Klux-Klan" (his own expression). He was not there as a hired or bribed witness for the Oldhams'. He said he would not swear a lie for any man, and that, though he bore the accusation of waylaying men, still he thought that was a different thing, as he was made do that. He could neither read nor write. He was at Ile Dossett's on the Sunday before; was not sent for, but just happened to go over. John Q. A. Ledbetter, Sam Grindstaff and others were there;

the State's attorney was merely passing along and stopped to get his dinner, when he again went on ; and that he did not say a word to him or in his presence relative to the trial of Logan Belt and others for the murder of Hambrink ; that the witnesses had not met for the purpose of talking over the Belt trial ; he understood the nature of an oath ; he had never went to Belt's to work until some six weeks after the murder of Hambrink.

PROSECUTION.

W. D. Taylor : Had known defense nearly all his life. Sherwood had sworn him into the klan in a dark ravine below Cave-in-Rock. About seventeen men were present. Logan Belt had solicited him to join the organization about a week before, saying that it was to ferret out the Hambrink murder. This was, he thought, in May. Belt told him to go to the cottonwood trees at the mouth of Mitchell's lane, and some one would be there for the purpose of conducting him to the place of meeting. He arrived at the cottonwoods about dark, where he found B. Z. Jenkins and Frank Hardin ; Geo. Ratcliffe came and showed them to the ravine. Logan and Jonathan Belt, Robt. Sheridan. Wm. White and Earl Sherwood made speeches to them. Jonathan Belt told them that devilment was going on in the county which the law could not reach, and that the purpose of this band was to hunt up and punish the perpretrators. The oath was to stick to each other till death, through all emergencies. and the penalty was death for divulging the secret. They were to give notices to parties in order to scare them out of the country and then if they did not leave, they were to be taken out and whipped or other means resorted to. Signs and grips were to be used, which were given by witness. They were to draw notes upon the various school treasuries in order to obtain money for their various needs, purchase arms, etc. When they went to correct or punish parties, they were to wear masks and high topped or double-story hats, in which should be holes, and contain lighted candles. False faces were mentioned, but Logan Belt said he could not stand false faces, and that long masks could be used instead ; false faces were suggested by Sherwood. If any had enemies, they were to be punished. The meeting was held in May, 1879, in Clay hollow, close to the Ohio river—some fifty or sixty yards from the water's edge,—a wild, deep gulch, with broken, dreary-looking country surrounding. All present that night were sworn in. They had no light. Jonathan Belt said such bands were usually called, under ordinary circumstances, a "Ku-Klux-Klan," but that they would style themselves the "Sons of Liberty." Witness said they were to meet again, but he did not like the proceedings, and did not meet with them any more. Logan Belt said that night they would have the Oldhams arrested for murder of deceased, on suspicion, and also on minor charges, take them before Esq. Jacob Hess for trial, and W. S. Morris,

he said, would of course be there to defend them, declare their lives in danger and have a light guard placed over them, that his (Logan's) men would be hanging around so they would have to use them as the guard, and that Jonathan Belt, who would be just across the river with twenty-five or thirty men, would come over to the Illinois side, take them away from the guard and over into Kentucky, where they could be properly taken care of. Belt said he would have a prominent man of the band to swear out a warrant for their arrest, Zed Jenkins did not want to go into it, but Logan Belt said that the life of one man was nothing compared with the lives of sixteen or seventeen men, so Jenkins was sworn in. Wm. White said he had belonged to such a band before. Witness left meeting accompanied by Mr. Jenkins, Logan Belt and Frank Hardin. He was at Logan Belt's afterwards, and Sherwood, Jim Belt and Robt. Sheridan were there, and Logan said they would hold another meeting and then decide whether they would give up and abide by the law, or fight it out. Witness at that time lived on State road about one-fourth mile from Belt.

DEFENSE.

W. D. Taylor; But little that was new was elicited by the defense. Witness was led to attend meeting through misrepresentations to him of the object of the meeting. As Hambrink had been killed, Capt. Belt had fence burned and afterwards his house burned, Jacob Hess had wheat burned, and a number of crimes had been committed which the law could not reach, witness thought that something ought to be done, but he said when he got there he soon saw that their object was not to put down crime, but to commit new ones; that when Jonathan Belt stated that if any present did not wish to join then was the time to say so, and when, in response to this, Zed Jenkins said he did not wish to join them just then, whereupon Logan Belt jumped up and objected to Jenkins backing out, even threatening his life if he did so, witness concluded it was no use to refuse and so joined them, but at the same time did not consider it binding upon him as it was compulsory, but that he did not again attend their meetings.

PROSECUTION.

B. Z. Jenkins: He was a brother of John Jenkins, ex-County Superintendent, and his father's name was Nimrod Jenkins. He had been to Elizabethtown the day before Hambrink was killed to pay his taxes. His brother John was administrator of his father's estate, and Mr. Renfro gave him some papers to take to him; his brother John lived with his mother. He met Wm. Frailey at Peters creek; after speaking Frailey asked him if he had been to town, to which he replied in the

affirmative and passed on. He went to his mother's and ate supper there tolerably late. He passed Mrs. Lackey's, Mrs. Edwards', Art. Belt's, Ile Dossett's and Logan Belt's or near. It was about two or two and a half miles from Logan Belt's to Luke Hambrink's. Witness lived in the Hambrink neighborhood. Frailey had overtaken him when within half a mile of home and rode along with him until Jenkins' house was reached, when Jenkins dismounted and Frailey rode on. Their conversation while together was of simply a casual nature. Frailey asked witness what he had been doing that he had not been home, and Jenkins told him that he had to go around by his mother's and that it had thrown him late; he knew defense; he was sworn into an organization on the 7th of May, 1879; Bob Sheridan solicited him one day to meet with them on the following night for the purpose of ferreting out the Hambrink murder. Sheridan began by talking to witness about death of deceased, and told witness that as he lived so near the scene of the tragedy he ought to take an interest in bringing the perpetrators of the crime to account; that they would hold a meeting the next night, and for witness to be at the cottonwood clump late on the following evening, at the mouth of Mitchell's lane, and he would be shown to the place of meeting. Witness asked him who was going to meet there, and was told that ten or twelve good men would be there. Witness then said he would not go, whereupon Sheridan told him that he had better go, as a man had told him (Sheridan) to tell witness "he had better come." Witness went. George Ratcliffe was there. Witness spoke of returning home, but Ratcliffe told him to wait a little while. Wm. Taylor came along. Then they went on around the corner of the field and met Robert Sheridan, who said: "George, show the boys down and I will come." They then passed on down below the Thomas place, where Ratcliffe stopped and gave a low whistle, which was immediately answered by Earl Sherwood, who came out of the brush and went on down with them into a deep hollow close to the river, where they found several men awaiting them. Logan Belt, Jonathan Belt, Earl Sherwood, William White and Robert Sheridan made speeches. Jonathan Belt stated the object of the meeting, he making the first speech, and said he supposed they all knew what they were there for; that they were organizing in other places in order to rid themselves of bad characters who lived among them, and that there were bad men here, and he thought there ought to be an organization here for the purpose of getting rid of them. He also stated that the organization was generally known to the world as a Ku-Klux-Klan, but that another name suited him much better, and that was that they should call themselves the "Sons of Liberty." They were to have a loose gown, with a cap for each, which they could slip on over the head, and which would completely cover the principal part of the body, and that a high hat or cap should be worn, with holes in the upper story and small lamps or lanterns inside

in order to frighten the people. These masks were also for the purpose of not being able to know each other when they should take out and whip a man, or hang one, as then each man concerned would not be able to tell what other man was there; he said that if they got into trouble they would have that plea to get out on, for they would be so disguised from each other that no one member could swear what other member or members were participants in the crime. Logan Belt and Earl Sherwood made speeches to the same effect. They were to draw notes on township treasuries for the purpose of securing needed funds, as they said some would need arms, etc., who were too poor to buy them, and that in this way they could be provided with all things necessary. They were all drawn up into line before the oath was administered, and Jonathan Belt stated that if anyone wanted to draw out then was the time to do it, whereupon witness objected to taking the oath and refused to join them, but Logan Belt objected to witness backing out, and saying that the life of one man was nothing when compared with the lives of sixteen or seventeen men, and that it would never do to let him off. So then all were sworn in. Earl Sherwood administered the oath, which was to the effect that "they were to stick to each other till death; that they were to keep everything secret under penalty of death if any should rebel against or prove traitor to the klan." They proposed to put witness under a stronger oath after he had refused to join them, but finally swore him in with the rest. Witness was one of the men who swore out a warrant for their arrest on the charge of forming a Ku-Klux organization to the detriment of life and the best interests of law-abiding citizens. The impression of witness, regarding the oath he was compelled to take, was that it would be death if he told it. Witness stated that on the 23d day of February, 1879, Wm. Greene came to see him, and told him that Logan Belt had sent for him, as he wanted to see him. He was at John Frailey's at the time and did not go, and then Jas. D. Belt came after him in the evening and told him that Logan said he must come. So John Frailey, Frank Hardin and witness went over to Belt's. When they got there Logan took Hardin out and talked to him and then witness. Belt told witness that he had a bad man under arrest, as he had, Belt said, been waylaying men, killing stock, etc. This man was George W. Covert, and Belt told witness that he wanted him to help take Covert out that night. He said witness could hold horses while other men did the work. Work was understood, Logan added. Wm. Lackey came while they were talking, and Belt asked witness how Bill Lackey would do, and witness told ¹ he thought Bill would do. Belt asked witness if he would ¹ come back that night. Witness did not know whether Hardin ¹ remained or not, but said that Frailey went on home. When ¹ witness returned home from Ku-Klux meeting on the river he ¹ was accompanied by Art. Belt, Frank Hardin, Wm. Taylor and ¹ Logan Belt—the three former together and Logan Belt riding

with witness. Belt told witness he was willing to drop his case and have nothing concerning it in the business. The only man he talked to witness about having arrested was Covert. [The statement of witness was pretty much the same as that made by W. D. Taylor, their statements corresponding throughout.]

DEFENSE.

B. Z. Jenkins: Witness stated that he did not know whether a warrant had been issued for the arrest of Covert or not, but Belt told him that he had him under arrest and wanted him to help take him out. Belt represented to them that the organization was for the purpose of punishing crime, as they said bad characters were coming into the county. Thomas Williams, James Beavers, Capt. Belt and others had wheat, fences, etc. burned and that they must put a stop to it. Robert Sheridan was captain of the band. Impression of witness when Sheridan solicited his attendance at the meeting and refused to tell him whom else would be there, but insisted on his going, saying: "A man told me to tell you that he said for you to attend the meeting," was that something was wrong, and when Sheridan would not tell him who the man was that said he (witness) must go to the meeting, witness at once drew the idea that it was Logan Belt, and that Sheridan had been sent to him by Belt. Jenkins stated that he attended the meeting that night with no bad intent, whatever, and went simply because he was afraid to do otherwise and because he wanted to find out what was going on and what was meant by the queer maneuvering. Belt told them they were to punish the men who burned Tom Williams' wheat and James Beaver's hay, and if any had enemies, they were to be punished also. He did not know that a dance was to be held at Tobe Ledbetter's on the night that Hambrink was murdered. Oldhams' did not hold clandestine meetings or meetings of any kind. Jenkins had went and told Thomas Oldham that they had better not stay a single night alone as they were in imminent danger of loosing their lives, and that they and he often remained three or four of them together for self protection, especially of a night, as they expected almost any time, he said, to be taken out by the Ku-Klux and all be killed — witness was a traitor to that organization and they sought his life on account of it, he said, and that Belt also wished to exterminate the Oldhams in order that there would not be much of a prosecution against Belt for the killing of Doc. Oldham. Defense asked witness if "William White, in his speech at the meeting, did not say that if the purpose of their organization was to ferret out the murderer of Hambrink he was into it, but if it was to meddle in or ferret out little private matters, he was out of it"—to which Jenkins responded that White had no such talk. He said that he had been waylaid and that two men had come to his house and threatened to shoot his little daughter if she did not tell them where he (Jenkins) was. Also, that guns were carried by prosecuting witnesses in orde

that they might, if possible, defend themselves if assaulted by the Belt faction. Hambrink murder mentioned at meeting below Cave in connection with burning of Williams' wheat. Witness lived south-west of Hambrink; did not pass Buckhart's; did not pass Hambrink's place that night. Saw Frailey before he got home one mile from Hambrink's; Frailey came trotting up and rode the same direction with witness for one-half mile; witness lived one and one-half miles from Belt; Frailey was going from Logan Belt's.

PROSECUTION.

Thos. Leeper: Was recalled just after B. Z. Jenkins. Belt had told Leeper about men that were in the klan when he was sworn in, and that Belt had told him afterward that Zed Jenkins and Frank Hardin had skipped out, turning traitor to him, and that if he ever got a chance he would kill them both, and that by G—d he could take his gun and kill them just as free as he could kill a squirrel. Logan Belt had also told him that Eb. Dossett was scared pretty near to death, and, upon witness asking why, said: "Let me tell you; he thinks he will be called upon to tell something; that something is going to turn up, and now, G—d d——n his soul, if he don't buck right square to the post I'll kill him."

Avarilla Dale: Witness was known as Rilla Belt. Logan Belt was her father, Witness would be 21 years old the 20th of October next. Knew all the defendants. Was living under her father's roof in 1878 and 1879. Jim Belt, George Ratcliffe and Earl Sherwood were at Belt's on the evening of Hambrink's murder. They went away, and Wm. Frailey came by from town and ate his supper there. Frailey and her father were there when she retired, but she did not know what time it was, and she did not know whether her father remained at home that night or not. Belt kept in the house two pistols, two shotguns, two rifles and a carbine.

DEFENSE.

Avarilla Dale: She slept in the kitchen with a younger sister. There were three rooms in the dwelling. She always retired first opportunity—"first chance she got," was her expression. Jas. Belt, Sherwood and Ratcliffe came to her father's sometime in the afternoon preceding the night of the murder of Hambrink, but left late in the afternoon. They were walking; took guns away with them, but had not brought any with them when they came there. There was a room in the upstairs of the dwelling that was finished; the other rooms above were not. She went to bed before her sister Jane did. Her father and Frailey were in the house when she retired. Did not know where Jane slept. Witness had married when only 16 years old, and was the mother of two children. Did not remember Dr. Kane being at her father's on the evening of the murder. She was asked why she hated her father so bad. She said she

did not know as she hated him, but that he had not treated her right ; still she could not say that her feelings were very bitter against him, but, when Mr. Stelle repeated the question, she declined to answer a second time, whereupon Judge Baker commanded her to answer the question. Upon a third demand by Judge Stelle she told him that "it was none of his business." Question again asked and witness then said "it was her business," which was the only answer that could afterward be gained on that question. She was at her father's once after he was arrested. He was arrested on Friday, and she went to see him on Saturday. She had never said to anyone that she had been told that those who didn't know anything would have to be put in jail until they did know something. No one told her that. She did not know what would become of her. She did care as to what would become of her soul if she was to swear a lie. Her father and mother went to the working at Ebb Dossett's the next day after the murder of Hambrink. Guns were kept all over the place. Belt, Sherwood and Ratcliffe got the guns in the house—down stairs.

PROSECUTION.

R. J. McGinnis : I have not been present at the examination of the other witnesses. I am acquainted with the defendants ; some well, others not so well. Have known Sherwood since 1872. I had a conversation with Sherwood in Dr. Moore's drug store after the assassination of Hambrink ; was in Elizabethtown and, like all men, went into the drug store. Sherwood was drinking, and the doctor refused to give him any more for fear of exposure. Sherwood referred the matter to me, and Dr. Moore gave me the key to the back room and told me to do as I liked or thought best about giving him more liquor. I drew a small dram and Sherwood, before drinking it, sat it down and asked me if I was not in favor of law and order. I said yes. Sherwood then said ; "We have an organization above for the purpose of ferreting out crime, as justice is very slow, and we do with them whatever our chief says. The order of our chief is supreme, and we do not turn them over to civil authorities." Afterward, while in attendance at the trial of Logan Belt in Shawneetown, Sherwood came to me and asked me if I had ever told the conversation as passed between us in Moore's drug store. I replied: No, Sherwood ; I gave you the benefit of being drunk.

Nothing new was elicited by the defense.

Sina Hambrink : My name is Francis Sina Hambrink. Am fifty-five years old. Luke Hambrink was my husband. Don't remember what year we were married. Was always hard of hearing. I remember the circumstances. I saw Loge Belt that night ; he came to my house an hour after dark, and told me he was going to kill Hambrink. Luke was at Buckhart's. Never heard the pistol shot. I was in bed when Luke fell in the door ; the noise awoke me ; the door was latched ; I made a

light ; the first I knew, he was killed ; he slept in the new house with Peter, my son, and the hired boy, Sherman Browning. I had not told it because they hadn't asked me.

DEFENSE.

Sina Hambrink : I did not sleep in the room with Mr. Hambrink because there was no room, as he had hired help. We ate together—at same table. Sherman slept in the room with Luke. I never went to bed until he came back from Buckhart's ; I asked how the sick woman was, and he told me she was better and said he believed he would go to bed. Yes, I bade him good night. I then went to bed ; I had been in bed about two hours when I was awakened by the noise made by Mr. Hambrink falling in the door of my room. I guess it had been about two hours, but I don't know. We had no time-piece. I think it was about eight o'clock. Luke was lying in the door on his face with his feet on the door steps ; he was just in his night clothes—shirt and drawers, clothes he had worn all week ; he had not changed under clothing ; I pulled the pitchfork out from under his arm. Was not Sunday. I had Buckhart's two largest children and two of my own at home. None of the children were bleeding that I knew of ; I awakened Peter to go after Charley Buckhart and told him that his pa was killed. I had sat before the fire until the children went to bed. Charles Buckhart and Henry Ledbetter came first ; several others came ; father for one. Jack Oldham was not there at all that night. I stirred up a light in the fireplace and felt of his clothes and knew him by his clothes. He wore home-made clothing that I made myself, and I knew them by feeling of them. I said I didn't go to bed until after he came from Buckhart's. I didn't undress. I had to be up and down with the children. I never undressed at all that night. Peter went to bed after the children did. Luke stayed in my room about one-fourth of an hour and talked about the sick woman. I did not go to his room that night. I did not go out on the porch with him. Loge Belt had been there that night. I did not tell him what Belt said. I was afraid. I knew that if he was mean enough to kill my husband he would be none too good to kill me. We were getting along well and pleasantly ; sometimes quarreled some, but not much ; he would sometimes get fretted and not talk much either to me or anyone else. I never hated him. I loved him, of course, or else I wouldn't have lived with him. When I wanted money I got it if I called for it. I never heard or knew that he was going to leave me. We had never slept together since the new house was built. I had not slept with him for eleven years, as we did not have room in the beds for the hired hands without sleeping apart. Tobe and Henry Ledbetter are my brothers. Jim and Jack Oldham are my sons-in-law. George and Frank Dale were my sons-in-law. Yes. I felt kind and devoted towards him at the time of his death, and had no idea, when he bade me good

night, that it would be the last time. I don't know whether there is any h—l or not. I don't know anything about that. I think there is a God. I think He will punish wicked people. Question: "Did she have a soul?" Witness: "What is that? What is it for?" Yes, I think I'll be punished if I do wickedly. I never done anything to my husband. I did not kill my husband. I would not be afraid to meet God and Luke together. I say it is true that Loge Belt was there that night. I expect to die, but I'll never be punished for that. Sherman got up when I called him and came into my room. I had one sick child, was the reason I didn't undress, for I had to be up and down with it. The children did not awake till morning. Deceased never refused to let his children have money; he told me he had put his money in the bank at Shawneetown. He kept money in the bureau to pay hired hands with, etc. I don't think I was sworn at the inquest. I was afraid to tell it. I never put the dogs up. There was a big hogshead there. Never saw any man get into the hogshead. I never had any revolver. I set the pitchfork up by the side of the door. I got it out from under his arm. I did not know any better than to take the pitchfork out from under him. My sons-in-law never tried to get money from Luke that I know of. Don't know whether he ever let the Oldhams have money or not, or whether he ever refused to let them have money or not. Bettie and Ida were in my room asleep. They went to bed just after dark. I never came down to see the State's Attorney, but came down to see about getting some money. I never got any money from J. Q. A. Ledbetter; he never promised me any to swear. Re-direct: She came here to see the guardian of her children, Mr. G. W. Douglas, for money.

PROSECUTION.

Sina Hambrink: She was subpœnaed on the Thursday previous. She had been there since Friday boarding with Mr. Anderson. She had never consulted a lawyer about having her dower set apart. Did not authorize Tobe Ledbetter to see Logan Belt in regard to having her dower set off to her. She never consulted with Tobe Ledbetter in regard to obtaining possession of Luke's money. She got \$1,000 of the money after his death.

Sherman Browning: Was working for Hambrink; was there the night he was killed; was 21 years old; he slept in the same room with deceased in the new house and next to the road; the road ran south of the house; two beds in that room, and the chimney was in the north; the old house faced the south; stairway in new house next to fireplace. Luke slept in the southeast corner, and the bed he and Peter occupied was next to the old house, and a bureau sat between the two beds; he heard the shot fired and saw a glimpse of some one going out as he raised up, but sank back in bed until Mrs. Hambrink came running in and hollowed for him. Luke had kept the pitchfork standing by his bed all the time he had worked there. Luke was lying on his

face dead, in the door, when witness got up. Peter slept in the same bed and behind witness. It was a three tined fork, and the handle was partially broken off. It was in the county of Hardin and State of Illinois. Charley Buckhart came first and blew the horn.

DEFENSE.

Sherman Browning: He went to bed just after dark, as was his usual custom. He said Peter was sent to Charley Buckhart's by Mrs. Hambrink. She told him to tell Buckhart that Hambrink was killed; he said she just came to the door when she called to him, and didn't come in; he didn't think she was on the porch when Buckhart came down. The report of the pistol was about the room, and he saw the form pass out instantly. Peter and Browning arose out of bed about the same time; that sometimes Mr. and Mrs. Hambrink were not on very good terms; he stayed there all summer and then went to Geo. Oldham's; he thought Jack Oldham and Henry Ledbetter were there some time during the night after Luke was killed. He heard Mrs. Hambrink and Tobe Ledbetter talking in regard to the money deceased had in the bank at Shawneetown, some \$2,400. He heard some talk of Luke going back to Germany, but didn't know very much about it. Defense asked him if this was not a week or two before deceased was killed. Browning said he thought so, but hardly knew. No lamp was lit in Luke's room, but there was a lamp in the old house when he went to bed. His stepmother was sick at Buckhart's, and he (Browning) moved her away himself with Luke's cattle afterwards. Deceased was killed in his night clothes. He did not think the pitchfork was under Luke when Buckhart came, but that old lady Hambrink picked it up and stood it by the door while Peter was gone after Buckhart. He did not think that either himself or Mrs. Hambrink were sworn at coroner's inquest. Witness was 13 years old at the time of the murder. He didn't understand that Mrs. Hambrink told Peter to tell Buckhart the child was bleeding, but that "his pa was killed." He again said in answer to query that he had heard some talk to the effect that Luke was going back to Germany, but they didn't say he was going to take his money with him. He didn't know how long it was before Hambrink's murder. Sometimes they were in one house, sometimes the other.

PROSECUTION.

Daniel Austin: He remembered the circumstances of Hambrink's death; lived one mile from Hambrink and one mile and a quarter from Logan Belt. The evening he was killed, or the evening before, Logan and Jim Belt had passed his house coming from towards Hambrink's; there was a by-path leading from

Belt's to Hambrink's and through by his house. Hambrink's name was mentioned by Logan and Jim Belt in connection with fence, but he did not hear any threats made that he remembered of. Witness saw tracks of four men the next morning after the murder, the tracks leading across his garden, which had been logged just the afternoon before; witness did not, at the time of first noticing the tracks, know that the murder had been committed. He said the tracks had been made late that evening or night, as he had erased all previous tracks by logging; these tracks went across the logged ground and across his onion bed in the direction of Luke Hambrink's. It was between dawn and sun-up when he discovered the tracks; he did not hear of the murder until noon the next day; he was working the road, but stopped to view the remains of deceased when he heard of the murder; he saw tracks in the plowed ground in Hambrink's field and some fifteen or twenty steps from the house; he heard others speaking of them and went to see them, and said they corresponded with the track made in his garden. The path than ran through to Hambrink's and by his house was a narrow brushy one. Witness also stated that the "Belt 40" laid between the farm on which he lived and Hambrink's.

DEFENSE.

Daniel Austin: No threats were made to get me to swear this. No one has been at my house the last few days. Dr. Quillen was in the neighborhood a day or two ago. I don't know who made the tracks. I said the tracks were going toward Luke Hambrink's. Belt said he had been to see about his fence; that he was going to tear loose from deceased. I had made or logged my garden on the day before deceased was killed at night. I heard screaming and horn blowing early on the night that Luke was killed.

PROSECUTION.

Harvey Hollemon: I live in Hopkins county, Ky.; have been under arrest since last October. I know something about the burning of Lucy Sterling's house. Wm. Frailey and I are the men who did it. Belt said if old Lucy was there to burn her up in the house, as he wanted to get rid of all the witnesses, and she was one of them. Belt sent Isaac Keeling and myself down to Hi. Belt's to run Covert out so he could kill him. I buckled a big revolver to the horn of my saddle in order to scare him away; we were to scare him off, and Loge had Bill Frailey and Bub Belt up on the hill by Ebb Dossett's to kill him, as he said Covert would run up to Tom Oldham's for protection. Bud Belt has a brother named Jeff, I believe. I know Loge had lots of fire-arms. I worked for him a good while. Yes; the house of Lucy

Sterling was the only house I was sent to burn. I am acquainted with George and Marcellus Ratcliffe. I knew Jonathan Belt. I had a conversation with Loge; he said he and Jonathan had about seventy-five men and they were going to wipe out the whole thing; he said they would clean up the Oldhams and all the witnesses while they were at it. That was the day before the house was burned.

DEFENSE.

Harvey Hollemon: Had been in jail ever since last day of October. Was charged with burning a house; he had been indicted, he said, for perjury, because he "said he did not do all the hollowing on the street while drunk." Lucy Sterling's house was about two and one-half miles distant from Belt's; he had told no one what his evidence would be here on the stand in this trial. He said Mr. Morris had told him that it might be better for him to tell the truth as a witness here, but promised him nothing. Was not used as a witness in the habeas corpus trial last fall because they objected to him; he had sent for Morris to come and see him while in the jail; he wanted to know about his bond; he also acknowledged to Morris that he had set fire to Lucy Sterling's house. He applied a match to the bed, and they would have burned Lucy had she been there, he said, as that was Belt's instructions. It was in the day time. A thousand people, he guessed, had talked to him about his case. Yes, he said, at his boarding-house he had talked with a good many about his case. Defense asked how it came that he was cared for so well—provided with a hotel, etc. Witness said they had a boarding-house connected with the jail. [Laughter.] P. M. Pritchard had told him it would be better for him to tell the truth. Marcellus Ratcliffe had talked to him since he came up, but defense objected to him telling the conversation. Defense asked him how many times he had been hung. He said he didn't think he had been hung yet; he had not been hung in Kentucky; he had no assurance from the State's attorney that he would be given any quarter, no matter what his evidence was. Did not remember the number of persons whom he had talked with concerning his case, and refused to give them any satisfaction, whereupon defense asked him if he was not aware he might be fined for contempt of court and remanded to jail? He said no; he was already in jail. [Laughter.] He said he had become used to it, and now felt pretty much at home in jail: he did not tell the Sheriff about breaking jail when he was put in for perjury, as he said he did not believe that was his business; he had gone to Judge Ledbetter on Thursday night previous to get a bond filled. Judge told him that any time that the friends of witness would sign his bond it would be all right, and that he could either have his trial at this or the next term of court.

PROSECUTION.

Samuel Grindstaff: Age 47; was first acquainted with Logan Belt in 1867. I went to Joliet in 1870. Began to cell with Logan Belt late in the fall of 1879, and was with him till the latter part of 1880. Was expecting to be released from prison, and Logan Belt wanted him to go and marry old lady Hambrink: Belt said she wanted to marry very much, and he had tried to get Blades to marry her before he left Hardin. Logan Belt said that he wanted him to come down to Hardin and marry Mrs. Hambrink, and either persuade her or make her confess that the Oldhams killed deceased; and for witness to get Jim Belt and George Ratcliffe to swear that she confessed it, and that, if that would not work, to get Jim Belt and Geo. Ratcliffe to burn the barns of Bob Sheridan and Jonathan Belt; that they would understand it, and then to lay it on the Oldhams and swear that they done it; he said he would give witness his farm if he would "tack" the murder of deceased upon the Oldhams. Belt said to "wheedle" her into it if it could be done, and, if not, then to force her to do it. Belt received clandestine letters from George Ratcliffe while in Joliet; he would read and then tear them up; he said he could depend upon Ratcliffe with his life; had become acquainted with Belt in 1867 while with Wm. Corlew; knew Wm. Frailey; Belt sent for witness and he went to see him. Belt told witness that he wanted to made a clean breast of that thing—the murder of deceased; that he knew who killed deceased, and that it was Wm. Frailey. Belt said he could stand it no longer, and had sent for witness in order to tell him this; he said that he could swear that Frailey committed the deed, and he wished to write a letter, for publication in the "Shawnee Record," to that effect, but that he was behind on his subscription to that paper, and that in consequence he could not perhaps secure the publication of it, and asked witness to send one dollar for him to the editor of the aforesaid paper. Belt said there was an impression on the minds of the people in Hardin county that he killed deceased, and he thought, if he could remove that impression, they would readily sign a petition for his release from prison, which was becoming almost unendurable, he said. Witness gave the one dollar to the warden, with the proper instructions concerning the same, and he supposed it was sent, as he afterward sent me a letter with a dollar inclosed. Belt talked a great deal about Ratcliffe; he said he would do anything. Once, upon receiving a letter, he said that George was weakening, too; but the next letter he received he seemed to be more encouraged. Witness had received letters from Belt while he was at Joliet, and also while in jail at Shawneetown. Letters from Belt were introduced; have seen Belt write; he wrote those.

DEFENSE.

Samuel Grindstaff: Nothing new elicited, save that the people paid his expenses as a witness from Lemont, Ill., to the

county capital, he not having the ready means at his disposal. Belt received letters from Geo. Ratcliffe all the time; they came in through what was known as the "underground mail;" there were parties who would secretly bring in and take out mail. In response to question asked, he stated that he had been convicted of murder and sentenced for killing Jesse S. Davis, his wife's stepfather. Killed him in open daylight at the store. Did not waylay or take undue advantage of him. There were witnesses to the deed. A great many questions were asked by Judge Stelle on this point, when the witness, becoming exasperated, said he "was not aware that he was on trial for his life for a crime committed years ago, and for which he had, ere this, paid the severe penalty." With the foregoing remark the witness declined to answer further questions on the subject. Belt claimed that Wm. Frailey killed deceased. Frailey sent witness a statement in 1884; he told him that Belt would make his statement at any time. Was at Ile Dossett's the Sunday previous. State's attorney was there and had taken dinner. Did not remember whether Tom Leeper was there or not. The money to pay his fare here was sent by the people through Mr. Server. The money was not for any other purpose.

LETTERS BY LOGAN BELT.

Shawneetown, Ill., Jan. 7, 1887.—Mr. Samuel Grindstaff, Lemont, Ill.—Dear Sir and friend: Just a few moments ago I looked out and saw strolling leisurely along the street, looking up for someone he knew, doubtless, and I raised the window and said Berryman, for I thought I knew him, and he flashed those gray eyes up. I said come up. Oh, no; I can't. Yes you can, said I; just come in through the hall right up and you will be let in all the same. For there was several friends in the jail, and the old man Blades also. So Berryman came in and had a leisurely chat with me, and among other things said: This is the first time I have ever been in this jail. While Sam was here I was here several times, but was not on the inside. Said I: "By the way, you could not tell me Sam's whereabouts when I last saw you, so now I can tell you so; you bet he had me to give him your P. O. address. Well, Sam, you did not answer my other letter. Don't suppose you wish to be annoyed with me. Well, that's all right, and I don't know of any use I could make of you in my trial, nor don't expect to try to have you, but they had made such a blow about me having the same talk to you that I had to Bill Frailey I thought I ought to have something to meet this infamous clamor, as it might get up some public sentiment against me. However, I am satisfied that if you know anything that will benefit me that you may have learned from Frailey, you will give me the benefit of it in due time. My horse and buggy

was standing at the fence when Berryman came in, and him and Grant Belt got in it and started for home, so I sat down to scratch you these few lines and to send you that dollar you loaned me when I was in prison at Joliet. Sam, I have got lots of friends in this trouble, but Ledbetter's and Morris' surroundings make them truly desperate, as well as the witnesses they are using.

Yours, with due respect, L. BELT.

I enclose \$1 bill to you instead of a postoffice order, not knowing your chance to cash it. L. BELT.

Shawneetown, Ill., Feb. 11, 1887.—Mr. Samuel Grindstaff, Lemont, Ill.—Dear Sir: I received a letter the other day from Hardin county asking me to write you, asking you to flatter this gang with knowing something, and that he would insist on old Ile Dossett sending you money to come on, and that he might get you on the stand, etc.; I wrote him that I would submit the question to you, and that if you thought favorable of the matter you might play it on them. They have got you on the indictment as I wrote you before, and some of my friends seem to think they will make no effort to get you and try to continue on your account, but I don't see how they can with your statements here on paper. We have kept your letters all quiet. There isn't a one that knows we know where you are unless Grice has told them. Have they subpœnæd you yet? They subpœnæd all their witnesses in the county a month ago. Has any of them written you yet? Your statement that you had Bill Frailey's written statement, made to you in 1884, concerning the Hambrink murder, caused us to keep your letter still, as you said you would give it to the public at the proper time. Court is going on here. They are into a murder trial now—E. D. Youngblood for the defense and Kinsall, county attorney and F. M. Youngblood for the prosecution. I was out in the court and stayed one-half day and listened at them; then was up to Pillow's office, met old Uncle Bill and stayed until 10 o'clock in the night. I want to go out and hear the argument in this present trial if my health will admit. I am in very poor health at this time. I would have written you some days ago had my condition been such. Let me hear from you. Say what you know or think about this matter. Yours, with respect, LOGAN BELT.

PROSECUTION.

Sarah Greene: Her name was Sarah Covert. (Here defense objected to witness, saying that she was called to the stand under different name. But the papers of prosecution revealed the fact that she was endorsed under both the names.) Had testified in habeas corpus trial before McCartney. Lived in the shop on the hill of Belt place the year deceased was killed, or in 1879. Logan Belt told her in afternoon of the day before the killing that he was going to kill deceased. That the d—d old

Dutch son-of-a-b——h should not live any longer to furnish money to prosecute him on. Belt wanted her to swear that he had stayed at her house and clear him. She told him she would. He afterward came back and told her he had killed deceased, and that he now expected her to do as she had promised. She told him that she could not do it, as Frank Hardin and wife, and Jesse Lowry and wife were at her house that night and she could not do it. Logan said, if you ever tell this I will kill you. Frank Hardin and wife went home at 11 o'clock that night. He had been playing the violin, but Jesse Lowry and wife remained all night.

DEFENSE.

Simply a repetition of first statement. Wm. Frailey had written some two or three letters to her while at Joliet. A letter was presented to her asking if she wrote it, and she said, "No," but Stelle told her to look at it and see whether or not she wrote it, before being so positive in regard to it. She replied that "she knew she did not write it, as she could not write." She did not have letter closing as follows: "Ever your friend and lover till death. From Sarah Greene to Wm. Frailey, under date of "November 2d, 1883," written. She did not have a letter written in which was found: "In your absence every day seems a week and every week a month and every month a year." She never agreed with Frank Hardin to swear him out of the murder. She had heard from him since, and he was then in Missouri. She expected to be alone on the night of the murder, and would have sworn false for Belt if she had only been alone, but as it was she could not do it. She would have been afraid to do otherwise, she said.

PROSECUTION.

Thomas Scott: Was acquainted with Logan Belt, but not deceased. Belt told witness that he had earnestly and fervently prayed for death of deceased, and that he conscientiously believed his prayer would be answered. This was in September, 1878, before death of deceased in following April. Witness had stopped at Belt's to inquire concerning a horse that had strayed, and which witness was hunting, and which Belt had formerly sold to a Mr. Clark, of Golconda. Remembered Belt's trial at Shawneetown. Belt told witness that deceased was furnishing money to prosecute him (Belt) with.

DEFENSE.

Thomas Scott: Was at Belt's in 1878 hunting a horse. Belt said there was a set in the Sinks that would do anything to occasion his downfall. Witness said that his father's name was

Freeman Scott, and was now living near Carrsville, Ky. Witness had lived in both Kentucky and Illinois, and had known Belt since he was a boy. The father of witness lived at Ford's Ferry, Ky., when he first knew Belt; his father and Belt were acquainted, and Belt used to come over to attend the horse races with his father. Witness was now living in the Sinks with his brother, George Scott. His brother was hard of hearing—had been for several years, and was 43 or 44 years of age. The neighbors of witness were Oliver Pearson, Hi Belt and others. Defense then asked him if the Oldhams lived close to him. He said, "Yes, but I never neighbor with them." Witness knew Jim Oldham, Wm. Frailey and Ile Dossett. The State had not paid him any money as a witness in this trial, he said in answer to question of defense. He had told what he knew to Frank Riggs and Ile Dossett; had spoken to Belt in passing. The conversation with Belt, when he was hunting a horse, was the last talk witness had with Belt. Witness was 36 years old; he was to get no money for making this statement in this trial, but expected to pay out a great deal on account of it, he said.

PROSECUTION.

Ile F. Dossett: I am County Commissioner. I know the defendants. I heard of the death of deceased. I was at Ebb Dossett's at a working the next day. Loge Belt was there. We were talking about Hambrink's death, and I remarked that "I was very, very sorry." Loge Belt remarked that "he wasn't a d—n bit sorry," for the reason and manner in which Luke had treated him in his past trouble. I talked with George Ratcliffe. Logan Belt afterwards asked me "how I would like to join or go into a crowd to ferret out the Hambrink murder?" I told him if it was composed of the best citizens then I was ready; otherwise, not. I insisted the second time on Belt telling me who was into it and who was going into it, but he said: "No; I would find out who was in it after I got into it."

Nothing new was elicited by the defense.

PROSECUTION.

Reese Lackey: I know the defendants. I was at Logan Belt's at a dance. Belt nodded his head to me and we went out together, and he told me they were getting up a Ku-Klux band to ferret the murder of deceased. Loge said: "My lawyer, Bill Green, told me this would be the instigation of me beating my case with the Oldhams." He told me that deceased had been furnishing the Oldhams' money to law him on, and that by G—d every dog has his day, and he thought he would have his, as he intended to kill him; he told me at another time, a month or so before deceased was killed, while we were hunting, that he

wished the G—d d——d old Dutch son-of-a-b——h would come along, so that he could empty both barrels into him. We were at the time sitting upon a log back of Hambrink's field.

DEFENSE.

Reese Lackey ; I had a conversation with Belt in our house—my mother's house. I told Belt if I was him I would discharge Bill Greene if that was his advice. I told Belt I did not wish to join his band, and he said : "If you divulge the secret the penalty is death, and you are under as much bond as if you belonged." Can't say that my feelings are bad against Belt, as I have no ill will against the man at all.

H. M. Winders swore that he had seen a great deal of Earl Sherwood's handwriting, and he identified the following letter received by Tom and Jesse Oldham as being in his handwriting. On cross-examination he said he could identify it by the way he makes capital Ls and Ks, and the general appearance of the writing :

FOLLOWING IS COPY OF LETTER :

At home in all places, but more especially in Hardin county, Illinois.—Gents : As we desire to be friendly with all parties, we want in this epistle to warn you in the event of your attempts on our own friend, Logan Belt, we, the citizens of the above named place, are fully determined to hold all of you to a strict accountability for any threat or attempt to injure our much-esteemed friend, a Lieutenant in the army during our last war. We, the aforesaid citizens of the above named place, are fully aware of the dastardly attacks made by the "Odum Stock" on account of our Lieutenant merely discharging his duty and sending one to his long home, who richly merits all he got, and, as this letter means business, you had all better beware of us †Ku-Klux† as we have eaten nothing of any consequence since the battle of Shiloh, and we are hungry ! Beware ! Beware of us fellows, as the leaves are now on the trees, and as we are nothing but shadows and fearfully hungry, and, as we are desirous of acting in Ku-Klux style, we warn you to beware of the infuriated friends of Lieutenant Belt, who are and have been watching his welfare for some time. We are merely across the brink, but all attention should anything occur to our esteemed friend, and be sure to accept this as from a friend, as we do not wish to send any of you to Shut-Eye Town unless some depredation is committed upon the person or property of our friend. Now, as you and a considerable number of your dirty acquaintances are mean enough to do anything on this earth be sure to take this as a memento mori. And now farewell. From your only friend on this lower footstool.

A CITIZEN OF THE ABOVE NAMED PLACE.

Addressed : "Thomas and Jesse Odum."

PROSECUTION.

Nancy Lackey : I know Loge Belt. Lived one mile and a half from Loge Belt. Belt stayed at my house all night I went out of the room, and when I came back I heard Belt say, "Oh, G—d d—n his old soul, I will kill him." I asked him who it was that he was going to kill. He says: "Luke Hambrink, G—d d—n his old soul." I said: "You will kill a mighty good man." Loge said: "Sina and me are going to kill him. We have been plotting for three years to kill him. Henry and Tobe Ledbetter are carrying the news. Oh, G—d d—n him, I'll kill him!" I was at Belt's after that time to get my pay for corn he had bought of me. This was about one week after the killing. Loge invited me to get down, saying: "Mary is not at home, but get down, anyhow. I sent her out this morning to ascertain whether or not she could get any news concerning the killing of old Hambrink."

DEFENSE.

Nancy Lackey : Age 68. Born in North Carolina. My name was Davis before I was married. I have known Belt since he was a small boy; he has lived in different places. I think he was a bad boy. I came here in 1830. I remember of hearing of the circumstance of the killing of Doc Oldham. I don't know whether Belt moved between the killing of Oldham and Hambrink or not. Belt had been passing around there with the boys. This conversation was about three weeks before he killed deceased. Reese was there. Belt frequently visited my house and stayed all night. That time he came in the forenoon, went up into the bend and did not get back till late in the evening; he stayed all night, and the next morning went fox-hunting with Reese; and it was before starting the next morning that he had the conversation. Reese was just stepping out of the room as I came in. I had been in the other room making up the beds. I never told this to anyone because I was afraid. I don't swear that he came there because I was good-looking, but I presume it was because he was a neighbor; he did not say in the conversation the morning I went to his house that the Oldhams were going to charge him with the murder; but he subsequently said that he had sent Mary (his wife) to see if anyone suspected him of killing deceased; that if they did he was a goner; he said he had not been off the place; he has not paid me for my corn yet. Belt did say that he was going to kill deceased because deceased would not allow his family any privileges, and because he was furnishing money to the Oldhams to prosecute him with. I have had one or two sick spells. I was not present at the killing of deceased.

PROSECUTION.

Thomas Oldham : I knew Logan Belt. I knew deceased. I received this paper (same as printed in last issue addressed to

Thomas and Jesse Oldham) by mail. It was mailed at Salem, Ky. I lived near Cave-in-Rock when deceased was killed. I lived three-fourths of a mile from deceased when Doc Oldham was killed. Did not see Elisha Oldham for some days after deceased was killed. Did not see Elisha Oldham have considerable money after deceased was killed. Don't know about Elisha Oldham having his clothes hid out the next morning after Hambrink was killed. Did not say to Dan Austin that "By G—d I have convicted him again" just after preliminary examination. Did not make any statement of that kind to Dan Austin. I know Mrs. Rittenhouse. I did not say to her last fall at her house that "Tobe Ledbetter had admitted enough to me to break his neck." Question: "Did she say: Don't you think Tobe Ledbetter and Mrs. Hambrink know who killed deceased?" Answer: I don't know whether I said "I don't know" or not. I did tell Mrs. Rittenhouse that I was satisfied that Tobe Ledbetter and Mrs. Hambrink knew who killed deceased. Tobe Ledbetter never did tell me who killed deceased. Doc Oldham was a brother of mine. Was a witness against Belt in his case for killing Doc Oldham. Lucy Sterling was a witness for the people. Don't know whether she was used by the defendant or not. Can't read writing. Can't write. I lived about six miles from deceased when he was killed. I know there was a subpœna ordered for him, for I ordered one out for him myself, but do not know whether it was ever served or not. My feelings are very bitter against Belt. I heard of the killing of deceased. I was at home that night. Deceased never furnished me any money to prosecute Belt with. Don't know that he was ever asked for money for that purpose by anyone. I received the letter just before Luke's death. James is my brother. Jack is my brother. Did not pay the cost of prosecution.

Jane Condit: I know Loge Belt. I heard Logan Belt tell Reese Lackey that deceased was loaning the Oldhams money to prosecute him on, and he intended to kill him. This was in January, 1879, before deceased was killed in April. Belt and Reese were on the porch. I was in the big room washing the dishes and Mrs. Lackey was drying the dishes. My name was Clark. Mr. Clark was not dead. I was a grass widow. Zed Jenkins' first wife was my sister. Tom Leeper's wife is my sister. Tom and John Norris are my second cousins. My hearing is bad now. My hearing was not bad then.

Nothing new was elicited by the defense.

PROSECUTION.

John Lane: I am acquainted with all the defendants. Am related to some of them. Loge Belt is an uncle of mine. Mr. Belt sent Isaac Keeling to see me; he came and said Belt wanted to see me. Belt said he wanted some one to get on the road and kill Morgan Tucker. This was in the night. Isaac Keeling heard Belt's statement.

DEFENSE.

John Lane; I am 40 years old. My father's name was Carroll Lane. I have five sisters. I now live on deceased's place. At the time of the Hambrink murder I was living in the sinks, two or three miles from Cave-in-Rock. At the time Belt came to me I was living on the Hurt place one-fourth mile from deceased's. I can't state whether I had gone to bed or not. Belt said he wanted some one to get out on the road and kill Morgan Tucker. I went to Ike Keeling's that night. The next morning I went home. This was a year, or maybe longer, before deceased was killed. One house stands with its side to the road, and one with its end to the road with porches in front. I have my opinion who killed deceased. I told Belt I had nothing against Tucker and would do nothing of the kind. They were armed; I did not know but what they had a load for me. Tucker had gone to church. The road was near the church. Belt went back to his house. I went to Keeling's. Don't remember why Belt did not go and kill Tucker himself. Don't know whether I have given all the conversation with Belt when we went to him that night or not. Belt had a shotgun. There has been no change in the places. The road is running east and west past there. The house is on north side of the road. Don't know which room deceased and wife occupied, only just what I have been told. The porch is some longer than width of floor; it may be five, eight or, perhaps, twelve inches. I have lived there two years. I am his tenant. John Q. A. Ledbetter owns the premises. I can't tell when I first told this. Isaac Keeling and I first taked about it; then I talked to Mr. George Douglas about it. It has been two, three or perhaps more years, but it was not since Belt came back. I think, though, I told Mr. Douglas before Loge went to Joliet. Mr. Douglas lives up there. I was not the administrator. I was one of the heirs. There was no administrator on my mother's estate. Mr. Belt never claimed that we owed him some money. Can't say positively that I told anyone else. I lived on Belt's place a short time—some six months. I made a crop on his place. I rented from his wife. I think Tom Oldham had some wheat on the place. I think he has treated me badly, and I, of course, don't like him. I think I told Mr. Pritchard, and might have told some one else. I never told anyone that Bill Frailey killed deceased. I have known Frank Tolbert for a good while. I have not been actively engaged in this prosecution. I have talked to the State's attorney. I never told Frank Tolbert that "we had combined together to break Loge's neck, and that we intended to do it." I never told him anything of the kind. I never told anyone that I would kill Loge Belt. I never said I was a d—n fool or I would have killed Belt last spring. I remember Frank Tolbert being at my house and what he was there for. Tolbert said for me to go with him. I never told him to not talk to Jack Oldham, for he was getting

d—d badly scared. I never said that Bill Frailey stood in Hambrink's door. I didn't know how the ball went. I heard how the ball ranged. Mrs. Hambrink has been living with her sons-in-law, the Oldhams, since last fall; prior to that she had been living in Kentucky. I say I never told Tolbert that Frailey shot deceased nor pointed out the place from where he was shot. I know Dal Belt. He is a cousin of mine. He was at my house during ice last winter. We had no conversation in regard to the murder of deceased. Marion Belt has never been in my house for a long while. I never said to Dal Belt that I had said too much to Frank Tolbert. Frank is my cousin. He married a Mott. I came in here once with Mrs. Hambrink. Jack Oldham brought her in. I don't know whether she came to see the State's attorney or not. It was two or three months ago. Re-direct: Judge Ledbetter has not been at my house since last wheat-threshing time. He never said he wanted to convict anyone at the expense of another.

PROSECUTION.

Isaac Keeling: I know Logan Belt and the other defendants. Am related to Belt by marriage. John Lane is my brother-in-law. Never was sworn into or even solicited to join an organization. Was before the grand jury. Logan Belt, John Lane and myself were together one night. Belt said he wanted Tucker removed—it would be a very suitable place up there in Briggs' field. He proposed to us to go up there and shoot Tucker, and, if that woman (Lucy Sterling) was along with him, why, G—d d—n it, it wouldn't make any difference. Belt said that deceased was keeping a heap of trash around him, and that Tucker was a bad man. I wouldn't say that I didn't have a gun. I don't remember that Lane had a gun. We were on a path between Mrs. Greene's and the Hurt place. We were one-mile from the big road. Belt commenced the conversation. He said Tucker was keeping company with bad women. I didn't want to kill Tucker.

DEFENSE.

Isaac Keeling: Don't remember whether I went after Lane. I remember we were in company together. I was cultivating a part of his farm. I don't remember whether I had a gun. I don't think I had a team. I think I went to see about some hogs. I never had anything against Tucker. It was about one-half mile from the road to Mt. Zion church. I think Mr. Belt commenced the conversation. He said Tucker was a bad man. I am repeating his words. It seemed as if he wanted someone else to kill him. Loge proposed that John Lane and I go and kill Tucker and not to stand back because the woman was along,

as that wouldn't make any difference. I never told it until I told it to the grand jury. I never waylaid Tucker's house with anybody; never waylaid the road to kill Covert; never got under a bridge to kill Mr. Tucker: never waylaid the road to kill anyone. Re-direct: Was never with Bill Frailey and Loge Belt about Mr. Tucker's premises.

PROSECUTION.

Jesse Lowry: I know George Ratcliffe. I knew deceased. I heard of the murder of deceased. I saw Geo. Ratcliffe there by a spring where deceased watered his stock. Ratcliffe was reclining in a half-sitting posture, with a shotgun in his lap and two revolvers buckled around him. He was almost lying on his back. This was in the fall, sometime near October, before deceased was killed in the following spring. Was at Mrs. Greene's—at home—the night deceased was killed—me and my family, Frank Hardin and his family and Mrs. Greene's family.

DEFENSE.

Jesse Lowry: Saw Ratcliffe there in the fall. All he said to me was, "Where does Joe Lowry and Frank Hardin live?" Was sworn in the habeas corpus trial. I told all they asked me. I told about seeing him out there last winter. I told Tom Oldham, Joe Lowry and John Lane. Was not particularly afraid of him; if it had been asked me I could have told it. I have not learned that it was important to swear this. Have not learned that it is important to convict these defendants. Lived with my mother-in-law. They (Frank Hardin and wife) came there that evening and stayed till nine or ten o'clock and then went home. My mother-in-law lives three-fourths of a mile from Hambrink's. He left between nine and ten o'clock. I would not be willing to swear that, if deceased had been killed at twelve o'clock, I would be equally as willing to swear that he left there between twelve and one o'clock. Frank and I are own cousins. Frank left some time after deceased was killed. It was, I think, about a year after the murder of deceased. Don't know where Frank Hardin is. Never heard that he was suspected of having something to do with the murder of deceased. Re-direct: I do remember that Frank Hardin was a witness. I believe Mr. Belt claimed at first to stay at Mrs. Greene's. I was only called to corroborate Mrs. Greene in her statement.

William Greene: I know these defendants; know Loge Belt. Logan Belt swore me into the organization, just below where we lived, in the day time. I was at home on the night deceased was killed; Frank Hardin and wife were at our house that night and they remained until ten or eleven o'clock. I am the son of Sarah Greene. Logan Belt was about my mother's house frequently.

PROSECUTION.

David B. Shoemaker : I knew deceased ; I lived about one mile from him. Know Logan Belt. Was present and heard a conversation between Belt and deceased, in which Belt accused deceased of killing his dog. Mr. Belt told Luke he would kill his dog if he had to go into his yard to do it.

DEFENSE.

David B. Shoemaker : Belt told deceased that he would settle with him for it. This conversation was had at a trial at Robert Sheridan's.

PROSECUTION.

Charles Buckhart : I was living on Luke Hambrink's place when he was killed—about one fourth mile distant from Luke's residence. I was at home sitting up with Mrs. Browning on the night of the murder. Henry Ledbetter and wife, Wm. Browning and Luke Hambrink were all there until between eight and nine o'clock. I was lying in the cradle asleep when the old man left. When I got there the gate was open ; I blew the horn as soon as I got there. Peter had come after me and told me to run down there as my boy was lying on the floor bleeding, and that "she" thought he was dead. I saw Sherman Browning and Mrs. Hambrink. I asked her about the child. Sherman was standing on the porch. She told me there was nothing the matter with the child ; she was standing midway between the door and fire-place.

DEFENSE.

Charles Buckhart : The first man that came there after I got there was Henry Ledbetter. Jim Oldham was there that night ; he got there a short time after Henry Ledbetter did. There was blood on the prongs of the pitchfork ; don't know which prong it was. It was a home-made door. Deceased's clothing was lying by the side of his bed. I saw blood under the water shelf. [The blood, as the witness laid it off to the jury, was at the corner of the water shelf next or nearest to the new house.] The blood was about eight feet from her door. The clothes he had on looked like clean clothes ; his under-clothing was lying by the bed where he usually slept ; she said he came in and called for them. The ground slants a little toward the road. The porch is about a foot higher than the ground. Deceased had a black and a brindle dog ; I did not see the dogs. The gate was made of lathing. I do not know who killed

deceased. The young dog was a brindle dog. Don't know that. [This last in answer to the question by defense : " If Mrs. Hambrink had not put or fastened the dogs up the evening of the murder."]

PROSECUTION.

Jack Oldham : I married Hannah Hambrink. I was at the dance at Tobe Ledbetter's on night of the murder. I started to Tobe's about an hour by sun, and stayed there until about nine o'clock. Nannie Hughes and Susie Oldham went with me to the dance. When I came back from the dance, the folks that came with me went up to Charley Buckhart's to set up, and they heard about deceased being murdered, and James Oldham and Frank Dale came and told me about it.

DEFENSE.

Jack Oldham : I was the fiddler and left there about nine o'clock. Received one dollar for services as musician. Those whom I remember as being present at the dance were : George Dale and wife, Frank Dale, Joe Dale, Albert Oxford, Tom Norris, Mike Price Alex Frailey and Tobe Ledbetter ; it was about dusk when I got there. I guessed it to be nine o'clock when the dance broke up. Frank Dale and me did not meet Tom Norris. Tom Norris came along with me from the dance. I got to the house of deceased some time that night ; can't say just what time. Henry Ledbetter was not there. Charles Buckhart, Jim Oldham and Sherman Browning were all there. Question : Did you testify on the inquest that you met old John Ledbetter as you came from the dance ; that your wife insisted on your sending for the doctor, and were you and your brothers not passing the shop at John Ledbetter's ? Answer : Don't think I was before a coroner's jury.

PROSECUTION.

James Oldham : I married Hambrink's daughter. Was at Tobe Ledbetter's at a dance ; left there about nine o'clock and went to Jack Oldham's, and then started up to Chas. Buckhart's and met old John Ledbetter and he told me Luke was murdered.

DEFENSE.

James Oldham : There was a crowd of us together several times. Sometimes there were ten of us. We met most all that Summer until Loge Belt was sent up—that was in July. Never heard before that the Oldhams were charged with the murder. We stood guard for one another. I had one pistol. It was six months before Hambrink's widow married Bud Blades. There was no organization among us. We had no captains. Just

remained together in order to defend ourselves if it became necessary. The family of deceased were not accused of murdering him. Mrs. Hambrink came to my house and stayed a while. Jack Oldham brought her to my house. It was between ten and eleven o'clock when I got to the house of deceased that night. I did not murder deceased. We got together to keep Loge Belt from killing us. These other defendants always done whatever Belt said. Zed Jenkins told me that the organization was pretended to be to ferret out the murder of deceased, but that it turned out to be for something else.

Geo. Dale: I married a daughter of deceased. I was at Tobe Ledbetter's at a dance the night deceased was killed. I lived about one mile and a half from deceased and about one mile and a quarter from Tobe Ledbetter's.

PROSECUTION.

John T. Ledbetter: I was at coroner's inquest. Got there in after part of night. I did observe the door. The wooden latch was broken; the door opened inside. The body was lying in the door. From looks he had been dressing. The bed he slept in was in the southeast corner. Another bed was in the southwest corner. A bureau sat between them. The stairs were in the northwest corner of the house. There were spatters of blood from the new house to the door of the old house. Some one had sat down on the bed he had been occupying. The clothes he had pulled off were at the head of his bed. There was an old cap-and-ball pistol that had not been shot.

DEFENSE.

John T. Ledbetter: Went there with my father and John B. Tucker. Yes; Oldham was talking a great deal and seemed to be restless and acted suspicious. The pitchfork was under him when I got there. Don't remember whether she was sworn or not. There were prints of the tines or prongs of the pitchfork on his forehead. The ball struck deceased in the breast and ranged downward and came out to the left of the backbone.

PROSECUTION.

Dr. G. W. Hill: I am a practicing physician in this county. I have been practicing eight years. I hold a certificate from the State Board of Health. I was at the inquest and made an examination of the wounds. The ball that killed deceased entered about one inch from center of breast bone and ranged downward. I extracted the ball. It came in contact with the arterial blood, having passed through near the region of the heart, and would have necessarily proved fatal. The ball had been shot from a cartridge pistol, 38 calibre. This was in the

County of Hardin and State of Illinois and on the second day of April, 1879. I think the ball entered on the left side of the center of the breast and came out on the other side of the back.

DEFENSE.

Dr. G. W. Hill: I attended Evansville Medical College. Coroner's jury had been empanelled when I got there. It was about eight o'clock the next morning when I got there. It was not more than one inch from the spinal column. The probe would not go very deep. It would have necessarily been a fatal shot whether it went in at the one side or the other. The body was lying in or by the door. The pitchfork was in the house. After an examination of the body I was sure he died from that gun shot wound. The ball entered between the fifth and sixth ribs and came out between the thirteenth and fourteenth ribs. My opinion would be that a man would do as long as he could—what he was then doing he would still do. A dozen different men shot at as many different times would do as many different things. I saw the pistol that was on the premises. The pistol had not been used and was a cap-and-ball pistol. Here the people rested.

TESTIMONY FOR DEFENSE.

Robert McLaughery: I reside in Joliet. I have been Warden of the penitentiary at Joliet since July, 1874. I had Wm. Frailey in my charge. He entered the prison on the 2d of November, 1879, and was discharged 2d of August, 1883. Samuel Grindstaff entered November 17, 1870; was discharged the 17th of February, 1882. Logan Belt was received 22d of July, 1879, and discharged 22d of July, 1885. Wm. Frailey and Belt were cell-mates for several months in the neighborhood of a year just previous to Frailey's discharge. Grindstaff and Belt were together nearly all the time that Grindstaff was there. I heard Frailey and Belt have two conversations. I heard Frailey say that he knew that Logan Belt was not guilty of the murder of deceased. Belt said that there were efforts being made to convict him (Belt) with the murder of deceased, and Frailey said he knew that Belt was not guilty of the murder of deceased. I was present at a conversation between Grindstaff and Belt. Grindstaff stated that he had been down here and said there was a case being worked up against Belt, and that he had been talking with Frailey, and asked me what I thought about it. My recollection is that Grindstaff told Belt that Frailey was against him and helping to work up the case. He did not state what Frailey said. My recollection is that he gave Belt one dollar. Belt said he was going to write a statement to the people. I gave him permission to do so. I gave Grindstaff a recommendation for a pardon, and then gave him a special recommendation to the officers of the Chicago & Alton railroad. [Reads three letters from Grindstaff; check of National, etc.]

Frank Tolbert : John Lane told me that they had combined to break Loge Belt's neck. John Lane told me that if they failed in this prosecution they would kill him anyhow and swear each other out. John Lane told me that keeping old Mrs. Hambrink so close it would excite suspicion. He also said not to speak to Jack Oldham, that he would run off ; that all the witnesses were getting scared, and that he believed that Tobe Ledbetter would run off in spite of h—l. He showed me where the hogshead was which he said deceased was shot from, and said Bill Frailey was implicated. John Lane told me that if I should betray him in this matter he would kill me. John Lane told me that he was a d—d fool that he didn't kill him when he was at my house. John Lane told me that John Q. A. Ledbetter had been at his house three nights since the trial, and that he knew if he had killed Belt he would not have been prosecuted for it. On cross examination witness said that he (Tolbert) had been indicted several times.

James W. Evans : I live in Hardin county. I know Jack Oldham. I have known him all my life. Jack Oldham said, last fall two years ago, in the presence of Baugher and wife and myself and wife, that "had it not been for d——d keen swearing this poor body would have had to suffer for the murder of deceased. But, thank God, d——d keen swearing saved me." On cross examination Evans said : I was not a witness here last fall. He didn't say there had been any swearing at all.

Georgia Belle Evans : I know Jack Oldham. I am James Evans' wife. I was at John Baugher's. Jack Oldham said, while at the dinner table, that "if it had not been for d——d keen swearing his poor body would have suffered." I heard Frank Dale say to Jack Oldham that "were I them, if I could not get that money one way I would another." It was three years ago this fall. On cross examination witness said : I don't remember what year it was. I was the wife of Bill Buckhart when Hambrink was murdered.

Ellis Monroe ; Hambrink was killed on the night of the first day of April, 1879. Elisha Oldham came to my house the next morning about daylight. Said "Hambrink was killed last night," and he acted as though being very much scared. He had \$60, and he said Jesse Oldham had threatened him and he had to get away, and that his clothes were hid out preparatory to leaving. He said the murder of deceased was done in the family, but would be laid on Loge Belt. I heard two years afterwards that Oldham was indicted for murder. Lived on Grant Belt's place five miles from town. On cross examination Monroe said : Live two and one-half miles from Cave-in-Rock. We moved here in 1873. Was in jail here once. I broke jail. I went home after I broke jail. Re-direct : The witnesses for prosecution have not tried to intimidate me.

William Fries : Reside at Cave-in-Rock. Am a school teacher. Remember seeing "Georgia Belle Evans" and her hus-

band, Wm. Buckhart, the next day after the murder of deceased. Buckhart was going through the field in a trot, and his wife came after him and asked which way he had gone, and said he had left her. On cross examination witness said that he also saw George Ratcliffe that morning, but did not know which way he was going.

Claiborne Belt: I know Henry Ledbetter. Henry Ledbetter told me last summer at my house, in the presence of my wife, that the plan to kill deceased was made at Tobe's own fireside. He did not say who laid the plan.

Addie Belt: Henry Ledbetter said that Tobe Ledbetter told him that the plan to kill deceased was made at his (Tobe's) fireside.

William Hetherington: I live in this county. Have lived here ever since a few days before deceased was killed. Boarded at Jas. Keeling's during winter of '85 and '86. Henry Ledbetter lived in that district. He told me he did not know who killed deceased, but that the man could be found who could tell, and that he lived in Kentucky—that Tobe Ledbetter told him that the plot was made at his fireside. I have been teaching school in this county ever since the winter of 1879. On cross examination witness said: "He never told me who laid the plot."

Joseph A. Irby, Sr.: Jack Oldham was at the inquest. I was one of the coroner's jury that sat over the body of deceased. Jack Oldham said he was at the dance, and that old John Ledbetter was the first one to tell him of the murder. He told me that after he heard deceased was killed he went home and would not tell his wife until she promised that she would not get scared. Deceased had two dogs that were pretty severe. The neighbors would not go in. I saw blood under the water bench within a foot and a half. Did not see blood elsewhere. I don't know that there was not any other blood. I got there about three o'clock in the morning. When I got there the body was all inside except the right foot—rather on his face. The pitchfork was standing by the door. He had three scratches on his face as though made by falling on the prongs of the fork. On the witness stand Jack Oldham was as calm as any man I ever saw. He appeared excited to some extent, and exhibited such symptoms as any son-in-law would have done under like circumstances. The bed in the southeast corner had the appearance that deceased had sat down upon it. His clothes were at the head of his bed. I heard that he kept a pitchfork in the room. His wife told me that she drew the fork from under him. She stated that she did not know anything about who killed deceased. There had been a wooden latch to the door; latch was broken. There was a step of eight or nine '—' from the porch into her room.

Joseph A. Irby, Jr.: I was at the inquest. All the blood I saw was on the door sill. The blood seemed to have scattered. Mrs. Hambrink stated that she did not know how he had been killed. I might have overlooked the blood. I saw the bed; it looked as though he had sat down upon it.

Dallas Belt : I know John Lane. On the 7th day of March, at his house, John Lane said that he was afraid that he had already told Frank Tolbert too much, and asked me if I thought Frank would betray him. He said that if Frank did betray him he would have revenge. I did not inquire of Dr. Hill if Tobe Ledbetter had given it away. James Belt swore he would not believe me on oath.

Jacob Hess: I am County Judge. Have lived here 35 years or since 1851. Knew Hambrink. Knew Geo. Ratcliffe at the time of Hambrink's death. Ratcliffe is my wife's brother. I knew where Ratcliffe lived. I heard of it the next day. I saw Geo. Ratcliffe. I remember seeing him at sundown or after. I don't know whether he took supper there or not. He was there at breakfast. Geo. Ratcliffe usually slept with the boys whenever he came to my house. The boys sleep up stairs. I sleep in the lower room. Ratcliffe lived within a hundred yards of my house. His wife had been out in the country where they had lived prior to coming to my house. I usually lock the front door. Don't think anyone could go out or come in without disturbing me. Ira Curtis was there, Tom and John Norris and one of the Evans'. They were there in the afternoon. I think he did. Would not be positive that he did. My best judgment is that he stayed all night at my house. He moved to my house the fall before deceased's death. Had no land and had just rented a house to live in. I saw him next morning before breakfast. Jim Belt had sued Sherwood for fifty cents. On cross examination witness said : "I am not positive that Ratcliffe stayed all night. I don't know where George Ratcliffe's wife was.

Elizabeth Hess : I am George Ratcliffe's sister. I am the wife of Jacob Hess. I heard next day that Hambrink was killed. Geo. Ratcliffe came to my house in the morning. Ira Curtis was at my house playing the fiddle. George went up and cut up the wood. I did not cook supper, as we had late dinner. Tom Norris was working at our house. He went to the dance that night. Couldn't say what time of night they went to bed. On cross examination she said : "I know he did stay at my house that night. He lived only a short distance. He had moved there the fall before. I think he moved to Loge Belt's place in May after that. George is 33 years old. Jim Belt was a brother-in-law of Geo. Ratcliffe. I don't know whether we ate supper on the first day of April, 1878. I don't know where he was at supper time. Don't know when he went to bed. Don't know where his wife was. I think he moved there the fall of 1879. The reason I can remember so well, is because of the talk about the Hambrink murder. Tom Norris came late in the evening.

Ira Curtis : I am a fiddler. I was at Judge Hess' about that time. Was playing the fiddle. There was a man came there whom they said was Geo. Ratcliffe, about that time. Am not certain about it. Know Tom Norris. Know Evans. Evans and I went there together, and then went away together. Ratcliffe

and Evans were dancing around. I did not hear of the dance. Had been following farming mostly. Have been milling since. Heard of death of Hambrink about a week after. I could not tell who I did see. Went to Ford's Ferry and stayed there about a week with John Tolbert.

David Evans: I did not know deceased. I heard of his death; don't know how long afterwards before I heard of it. I heard it in three or four days afterwards. I think I was at Judge Hess' with Ira Curtis, but don't remember. Geo. Ratcliffe, Mr. Hess, and I believe one of the Edwards boys were there. Hess and Curtis played the fiddle. I know Ractliffe. I left him at Hess' about 3 or 4 o'clock. On cross examination witness said: "I lived 3 miles below Cave-in-Rock, with my father. We just stopped in at Hess'. Don't know how I came to be subpoenaed. I have not talked with Ratcliffe a great deal. I saw him yesterday. I don't know what day it was. Don't remember when it was. Heard of the murder shortly afterwards.

Cordelia Mott: I know Sherwood. He married my sister. I didn't know deceased. I heard of his death directly afterward. Sherwood was at my father's, H. J. Belt's. My husband and I went up there. It was the first time we had been there since we were married. My sisters and brothers, my husband and I, and Sherwood and his wife were all at my father's. We went to bed between 9 and 10 o'clock. When we got there they told me that ma and pa had started to Kentucky about twelve or one o'clock. Sherwood and wife had been living on father's place a year. Sherwood lived at my father's one year before he and my sister were married. Yes sir, I learned afterward that it was the same night that deceased was murdered. It is six miles to Hambrink's from my father's. Sherwood arose next morning between 4 and 5 o'clock. Don't remember whether he was there all the next day or not. I guess it is six miles to Hambrink's. I got there about an hour by sun. We stayed, and Sherwood's wife and I went to bed. Don't know the day of the week, the month or the year. Don't know whether my husband was sworn into an organization or not, but heard that Sherwood was.

John L. Mott: Witness corroborated the statement made by his wife, and on cross examination said: "Cordelia Mott is my wife. Was not out of the room after I went to bed. Know it was the night deceased was killed. Think Sherwood went to the Cave next day. It is about 5 miles from Hi Belt's to deceased. Pearson's folks were the first I heard speaking of the murder. Sherwood swore me into that organization in May. He administered the oath to me at H. J. Belt's, in the house. We were pledged to each other by the oath. I had heard it talked that Uncle Logan was suspected of the murder of deceased, and that the Oldhams were also suspected.

Rosetta Hess: Hiram Belt is my father. I know Sherwood. He was my brother-in-law. Ellen Belt is my mother. Lucinda Belt is my sister. Cordelia Mott is my sister. I

don't remember the time. Didn't know deceased in his lifetime. Those I remember being there, were Mott and wife and Sherwood and wife. I heard of the murder the next morning. Am 16 now, but was only 9 years old at that time. If it wasn't the morning I don't know. Don't know the day of the week. I don't remember the year.

Ellen Belt: Am Hi. Belt's wife. Ellen Belt is my name. I had no acquaintance with deceased. My ma was sick. Went to see her on Tuesday and came back on Friday. I got Earl Sherwood and wife to come to stay with my children. I can't state positively whether he lived on our place all the time or not. He lived at Cave-in-Rock awhile. Sherwood lived at our house two or three years before he was married. Sherwood and wife were at my house when I left. They lived about a quarter off. I was at Cave-in-Rock when I heard it, after I had got back. Defendants had been there in the past, but not shortly before the killing. My husband has one pistol. On cross examination witness said: I went on Tuesday, in the year 1879, either the last of March or the first of April, 1879. I told them before I went off. Didn't look at an almanac or calendar. Can't tell where I was any other Tuesday but that. Couldn't tell you whether it rained or not. Wm. Pankey took us to the river.

Luvana Belt: I am a sister to Rosetta Hess and Cordelia Mott. Ellen Belt is my mother. Grandma Nesbit was sick. Pa and ma went over. Wm. Pankey took them to the river. Earl Sherwood and wife and John Mott and wife were at our house. Don't remember which came first. I am nineteen now. We went to bed between nine and ten o'clock. Don't know what room we slept in. Sherwood was there the next morning when I got up. I heard of it the next day in the afternoon. Mrs. Griffin came to our house and told us. Was nineteen on the 24th of last June. I was twelve years old at the time of the murder. Don't know where I was eight years ago to day. Don't know where I was a year ago, or a month ago, or a week ago.

Wm. Pankey: I heard of the murder the next day. The day before I had taken Hi. Belt and wife to the river. Sherwood and wife were there when I left. On cross examination witness said: I heard of it the next morning. I stayed at home. Was at the house of Hi. Belt, and saw Sherwood and wife at Belt's between sundown and dark. The sun was up an hour high the next morning. Sherwood had just got up, and I remarked to him that he slept late, and he said: "Yes, I sat up late." Mr. Taylor was talking to me. Did not tell Reese Lackey, at Knuckey's day before yesterday, that Sherwood said he was out late.

Grant Belt: Am a brother of James Belt. Jim stayed at home that night. I had no timepiece. Don't know what time we went to bed. Marion Belt was there that evening. Don't know where Jim was the day before. Went after potatoes that evening. Know Wesley Hughes. Did not say in the presence of Wesley,

Nannie Hughes that Jim Belt did not stay at home the evening of the murder of deceased, but that, getting on his horse, he rode away, saying that he was going to Logan Belt's. Did not say to them that I did not put it past Jim to have killed deceased. Am 24 years old. James Belt was suspected of the murder by some.

Marion Belt: Was on the Ohio river the day before; don't know where Ratcliffe's wife was that night. Left there about 8 or 9 o'clock. Grant and me went after potatoes the day before and was gone all day.

George Belt: Am twenty-one this fall. George Perry was there in the evening. Marion Belt stayed there till between 9 and 10 o'clock. Grant Belt slept with Jim that night. On cross examination witness said: Don't recollect who told me. Was 11 years old then; don't know what kind of a day it was; don't know what day of the month it was or what day of the week it was. Know that Grant Belt slept with Jim that night. Marion wanted Jim to go to Jonathan's, but Jim said he could not, that he wanted to go to Ebb Dossett's to a rail mauling the next day. I did not say to Hughes that "they had better not have me subpoenaed if they did not want the truth, or that Jim did not stay at home that night." Did not say to Tom Leeper since habeas corpus trial that Grant and Jim wanted me to swear a pack of d——d lies, but I wouldn't do it.

Lewis Lavender: Am 72 years old, I have been here sixty years. Was Sheriff of this county sixteen or seventeen years. I was up in the court-house when Mr. Morris came to me and said to me: "I don't want to prosecute Wm. Frailey; can't you get him to leave." I talked to Frailey about it, and a report had got out that Frailey was indicted for the murder of deceased, but Frailey said they wouldn't hurt him for that, as his own people murdered him, and that they knew d——d well that he (Frailey) knew it.

Ike Tackett: I have met Jim Belt. Told him that deceased was murdered. He was three-fourths of a mile from his mother's, and was just above Jesse Oldham's; had stayed at Jack Oldham's that night. Jack had been to Tobe Ledbetter's. Was on my way to let Jesse and Geo. Oldham know.

Elbert Dossett: Heard of death of deceased. Jim Belt came to my working at 9 o'clock. Sent Geo. Perry and Tom Leeper to ask hands. Belt and myself were together in the army sixteen months. Am acquainted with Logan Belt's handwriting. This notice (to Hambrink relative to Morgan Tucker and Lucy Sterling) is not Logan Belt's handwriting. On cross examination he said he was a brother to Ile F. Dossett; that he was not acquainted with Sherwood's handwriting; that he did not believe the "notice" to be Logan Belt's handwriting; that he was never solicited to join an organization, but had heard one talked of, and his brother Ile and another man told him not to go into it.

Jacob Hess: Am tolerably well acquainted with Sherwood's handwriting. I have known Earl Sherwood seven, eight

or nine years. That (the notice to Tom and Jesse Oldham) might be his handwriting, but it doesn't favor his writing. The writing is about the same size as Sherwood's, but Mr. Sherwood uses proper language—bigger words than I do. I have not noticed Sherwood's writing until the last four or five years. I don't think this notice (to Hambrink) is Logan Belt's handwriting. Was better acquainted with his writing seven or eight years ago than now.

James Keeling : Knew Henry Ledbetter. I had a conversation with him about Tobe ; he said Tobe came to his house and said that he had better leave, and that he told Tobe that he had nothing to do with the killing of deceased, and that he (Tobe) had better leave. On cross examination he said : Was invited to join the organization. Jonathan Belt, Logan Belt and Frank Justice came to my house and wanted me to join them. Question by prosecution : "Did you tell Joe Lowry and John Lane at your house about five weeks ago that they (Jonathan and Logan Belt and Frank Justice) told you they had been looking after Joe Lowry, Frank Hardin and Zed Jenkins, and had been close enough to them to have their guns cocked on them?" Did not ; only told them that I had heard it.

Earl Sherwood : I am 40 years old. Know deceased. I lived at that time on Hi. Belt's place. The night before I heard of the death of deceased I stayed at Hi. Belt's. Robt. Gregory, brother-in-law of Mrs. Belt, came after them, and they asked me and my wife to come and stay until they came back. Think I was at home on the day before death of deceased. Was not at Logan Belt's the day before the murder of deceased. Was not in company with Jas. D. Belt and others that night. Did not write that notice to Tom and Jesse Oldham. I stayed at Logan Belt's the summer of 1876. Went to Hi. Belt's in April, 1878. I married H. Belt's daughter, and lived there until the fall of 1879. I heard Bill Frailey's evidence. I was not at Hambrink's as Bill Frailey said. The Ku-Klux meeting was about a month after Hambrink's death. There was some talk, after we got there, of ferreting out the murder of deceased. There was some other things spoken of, and it was suggested to make it apply to other cases. Jonathan Belt, Hiram Belt, James Belt, Frank Justice, Wm. White, Robert Sheridan, George Ratcliffe, Elisha Morris, Wm. Taylor, Logan Belt and myself were at that meeting. It was discussed there that some of the members of Hambrink's own family were guilty of the murder. I am not certain that Wm. Taylor was a witness, but I guess he was. Lucy Melon was a witness. On cross examination witness said : Don't remember any grips, signs, etc. The purpose of the oath was to keep the proceedings secret while ferreting out the murder. The witnesses of the defendants were to be kept from them. I did not hear of any notices. Jonathan Belt was telling about the Ku-Klux. I don't remember. "Memento Mori" is a word that I have used sometimes. In 1876, while I was there, it was con-

sidered dangerous on some roads, and I carried a pistol. We met at my house to decide who should be arrested for the murder of deceased. If we had been let alone we would have had some women arrested, but we were interrupted before we had our arrangements completed. I swore John L. Mott in. I know Sheridan never killed deceased. Sheridan was as pure a man as ever lived. I have been in jail here and at Shawneetown. Saw Frailey at Logan Belt's a great many times in 1876. I have seen Geo. Ratcliffe there. I have seen Jim Belt there. We would have had somebody arrested in two weeks. I could not tell you how many times in jail. Thought I ought to have been. They asked me to give them an obligation of secrecy. I will not say who asked me. Sheridan came to Hi. Belt's. If he wrote it, it is a feigned hand.

George Ratcliffe : I am a farmer. Knew deceased. Heard of the murder the next morning after deceased was killed. Was not at Logan Belt's on the day before deceased was killed. Was not at where Jesse Lowry said I was by the spring back of Hambrink's place. I was never there. One time Jesse Lowry, Logan Belt and Bill Lyons went a deer driving. Did not inquire of him where Joe Lowry and Frank Hardin lived because I was not there. Frailey says that in 1876 we waylaid the road for Covert. That is not so. Never waylaid the road for anybody. The day before I was at my mother-in-law's. I had taken my wife out there. My wife was at her mother's making soap. I started after my wife and heard that deceased was killed. Never made any arrangement with Belt to run off his witnesses. Was never behind a rock. That which Leeper said never occurred. On cross examination witness said : Was at Loge's somehow, and Sherwood swore me into the organization. Never received any signs, grips or pass words. I might have whistled. Don't remember. Can't tell at whose solicitation I went there. Can't say whether I rode or not. I took an oath to keep things quiet. We went there to ferret out the murder of deceased. Can't repeat the oath. Can't remember that Loge Belt said anything about it. Not a word was said about any notices. Did not waylay Covert at Harrisburg. I followed him to Eldorado. My wife was left at her mother's. I met her three-fourths of a mile from mother's. We met at Sherwood's. We were to keep quiet. Never wrote Logan Belt a letter in my life. That was not Loge Belt's handwriting. Am acquainted with Sherwood's handwriting. That is not his handwriting. I might have written him some letters that had some words abbreviated.

Jas. D. Belt : Mariah Belt was my mother's name. Lived with my mother. Am twenty-eight years old, and a half-brother of Logan Belt. I heard the next morning that deceased was killed as I was going to Ebb. Dossett's working. Tackett told me when about one-half mile from home. I didn't tell Leeper that I stayed at Logan Belt's that night. Don't remember the obligation that I took there. Never had any other meeting. I

never waylaid anybody. On cross examination witness said: I would guess it to be five or six miles from my house to Hambrink's. Can't tell how the houses are situated. Don't know anything about the houses. Never was at the houses in my life but once, and that was day of Hambrink's sale. Was about twenty years old. Bob Sheridan asked me to come down there. Seems like I have been to Salem. I had an uncle that lived there. He is dead now. Don't know where he died. Bill Frailey lived at Logan Belt's. Heard Wash Covert was shot. Some one told me. Did not swear that I was at Loge Belt's, on the night deceased was murdered, at the Ku-Klux trial. Don't know where I stayed on the night of April 1, 1879. I had a lie bill by Frank Hardin. It was among my father's papers, and I thought he would be here as a witness, and I wanted to impeach him.

Logan Belt: My name is Logan Belt. I am forty-six years old, and have known Hambrink ever since he came from the old country. At the time of his assassination my wife and I and Art. Belt went to a rail mauling at Ebb Dossett's. Deceased was not a witness. Lucy Melon was against me. Lucy Sterling was my witness. I never organized a crowd to run of witnesses. I was at home the day before the killing. I was not at Mrs. Greene's that day. Did not go to Mrs. Greene and ask her to swear me out of the murder of deceased. Bill Frailey was at my house at eight or nine o'clock in the morning. He said he was coming here to get subpœnæs. Frailey ate supper that day at my house. He lived about four miles from my house. Did not request him to go and burn the Rock Creek school house. I left my house between sundown and dark. I went to the house. Dr. Cane was there. Bill Frailey lit his pipe, and about that time Dr. Cane left. Tom Jones was with me when I shot. Jones was living on the premises. Close to where Jim Smock lives I was fired upon. That was the only shooting. I have talked with Frailey lots of times in the penitentiary. Never told him that I killed deceased. Grindstaff told me that when he got down here Frailey and he separated and Frailey went to the Oldham crowd. Frailey told Grindstaff that they wanted to lay the murder on me. I told Grindstaff that I would give him my farm to place the Hambrink murder where it belonged. I had a conversation with Lackey, but did not tell him that Greene said for me to organize a band. Reese said that Sheridan had asked him to join the band. I had learned that deceased was not furnishing money to prosecute me with from Tobe Ledbetter. Deceased and I never had any trouble about a dog. Gustavis Melon and his wife separated, and he said he wanted me to take the place. I agreed to it. The first note was sold to Hambrink, Luke and I could not agree about it. That was the only misunderstanding we ever had. The only private words me and Mrs. Hambrink ever had were about sending for a doctor for deceased. I have known her all my life. Was at the meeting in Col. Clay hollow. The head of it was Sheridan. The intention was to ferret out

the murder of deceased. My boy had a very small gun. I had a shotgun and a 32 calibre pistol. Never waylaid Covert or had anyone to do so. Never used the language which Ile Dossett said I did in conversation with him. On cross examination witness said: Never shot Covert. Did not shoot Frailey. I remember hearing the article to Golconda Herald read. Sherwood wrote it at my house. I heard Sherwood read it and saw Frailey make his mark to it. Joe Lowry witnessed it. [Here the witness described the locality and grounds where Covert was shot.] I went with a writ to Saline county after Covert. I wanted him arrested because Jones told me that Covert was one of the men that waylaid me. Didn't write that notice to Hambrink. Didn't know that deceased was on the indictment. I did not tell my son Hiram to kill his mother.

Here the defense rested.

REBUTTAL TESTIMONY, AS INTRODUCED BY THE PEOPLE.

John T. Ledbetter: Logan Belt did say to his son Hiram, while he was being taken to jail at Shawneetown, that "If your mother comes there take your gun and fill her full of shot."

John A. Barnerd: Logan Belt said to his son Hiram: "If your mother comes fooling around take you gun and fill her full of shot."

John W. Hughes: Grant Belt said at my house that Jim Belt did not stay at home on the night deceased was killed, and that he did not put it past him to have killed deceased.

Thomas Oldham: Jim Belt swore in the Ku-Klux trial that he stayed all night at Loge Belt's the night of the murder of deceased.

Morgan Tucker: I was here at the Ku-Klux trial. I heard Jim Belt testify, and he said he did not know where he stayed on the night deceased was killed, but Logan Belt immediately spoke up and said: "Didn't you stay at my house?" and Jim Belt said: "Yes, I did."

George Ledbetter: Jim Belt testified at the Ku-Klux trial that he stayed at Logan Belt's the night of the murder of deceased.

James Oldham: Jim Belt said at the Ku-Klux trial that he stayed at Logan Belt's the night deceased was murdered.

Nannie Schafer: Grant Belt said that Jim Belt did not stay at home on the night deceased was killed; that he went away, saying he was going to Loge's.

Elizabeth Hughes: Grant Belt said that Jim Belt did not stay at home the night deceased was killed, but went to Loge's.

Elizabeth Baugher: Jack Oldham did not say in my presence that "if it had not been for d——d keen swearing his poor body would have suffered for the murder of deceased."

Jesse Lowry: George Ratcliffe lived on Loge Belt's place either in the Tom Lowry house or in the Roark house when deceased was killed.

David B. Shoemaker : Geo. Ratcliffe lived on Loge Belt's place, in the house that Roark built, at the time deceased was murdered.

Albert Oxford : George Ratcliffe lived in the Roark house, close to Loge Belt's, at the time of the death of deceased.

Dan Austin : Jim Belt testified at the Ku-Klux trial that he stayed at Loge Belt's the night of the murder of deceased.

REBUTTAL OF DEFENSE.

George Ratcliffe was introduced and testified as follows : "I moved from Mariah Belt's place to the farm of Jacob Hess in the fall of 1878 and then moved to the Roark house on Loge Belt's place in the May following.

The examination of witnesses was finished Thursday evening, and the argument began Friday morning (which was clear and a pleasant breeze) at 8:45 by Judge John Q. A. Ledbetter leading out for the prosecution. The importance of the case was first laid before the jury by him, then the weight of the evidence and the provisions of the law sustaining the case. The finding of the bill by the grand jury in October, 1886. The preliminary trial before Judge McCartney and the conclusion of that trial. The reason why only four of the indicted men were now on trial. The history of this case, beginning with the killing of Doc Oldham in 1875—showing that after the indictment was formed to annihilate the witness against Belt ; reading of the law concerning conspiracies, and then giving his opinions as to its meaning and how it applied to this case. Presented indictment of Belt for killing Doc Oldham, as rendered April 5, 1876. Discussed the evidence of Wm. Frailey. Showed the act of the conspirators, when they began waylaying, and that they waited till the leaves put out in the spring and then began waylaying witnesses, etc.; burning of Lucy Sterling's house ; giving notice to deceased to remove two of the witnesses off his farm ; meeting in the glen below Cave-in-Rock and swearing men into their conspiracy ; peculiarities of approaching men ; the threats that always accompany the solicitation of men to join them ; his objects and designs in ferreting out the foul murder of deceased ; their efforts and their detectives working in this case ; Judge Stelle's opening statement that they would not only clear the defendants, but show who did kill deceased, and that, when additional counsel was secured by them, they concluded they would have enough to do to clear the defendants ; Stelle charging the prosecution with conspiracy to "break Loge Belt's neck" and then failing to give any evidence to that effect ; Judge Stelle's opening statement about the grand jury's motives in finding the bill of indictment ; Geo. Ratcliffe's alibi ; kinds of murder, and what constituted murder, etc.; what constitutes alibis ; evidence of defendants ; the influence of the oath that bound the organization together ; acts of conspirators, their plan of clearing each other,

etc.; concluding appeal to the jury, and character of the murder and Luke Hambrink; Logan Belt's efforts to tack the murder of deceased on other parties, and classed these theories or features as indications of his guilt; discussed anticipated theory of the defendants in their arguments, and closed with an earnest appeal to the jury at 1:50 o'clock p. m.

Judge Stelle began argument for defense at 1:55 p. m. and discussed the position and importance of the jury in making a verdict where human life was at stake, etc.; principles of law in such cases; the motives that Hambrink's own family could have had for killing him, etc.; an appeal to the jury for the liberty of defendants. Defense closed Saturday at 2 p. m. by a speech of three hours and thirty minutes from F. M. Youngblood to arouse the sympathy of the jury by a rousing appeal to them for a careful consideration in regard to their verdict. Hon. W. S. Morris then closed for the prosecution by an eloquent address to the jury of two hours and fifteen minutes, ending at 4:15 p. m. The unusually strict instruction of the Judge were then read and the jury retired. In less than thirty minutes, and at 6:30 p. m., the jury rendered the following verdict:

We, the jury, find the defendants, Logan Belt, Earl Sherwood, Geo. Ratcliffe and Jas. D. Belt, not guilty.

We most assuredly could not, were we so gifted, say too much in praise of Judge John Q. A. Ledbetter and Hon. W. S. Morris, for the gallant fight made by them in behalf of the people, right and justice. The defense had some of the most able counsel of the State employed to defend them — and they evidently did good work.

We give finis of trial, which we have been for sometime trying to crowd out. What we have given is a true rendering and as taken by five of the best men in the county. They correspond with each other throughout, and their manuscripts and duplicates of same will be kept.

FAC-SIMILE OF LETTER BY LOGAN BELT.

3-23-1887.

Mrs. Mollie My Good Wife in hast I write you this Epistol —Hon Stelle has been with Me to day George & Hugh J Hales—Stelle thought we had better Keep this Man through the trial —So I settled up with him to day he claimed \$40 off of us & I Settled with him by agreeing to pay Old Man Jack \$21. and you and I pay his Expenses from Now until Court Ends—I also give him the Money that will More than pay his expences to court \$10. So you will have nothing to pay only the 21\$ to poqr old Jack—you May arrange some of it without Money—You Must Stow Your Wheat before Court at the Cave and if You have any to spair Sell it—He's to furnish Evidence to Vindicate us for \$79, otherwise is to get Nothing More Pillow holds the Contract. He will receipt you for the 10\$ as you have all the receipts I told him to—Now Mollie be * * * * *

he is to get up and go and leave nothing unturned—and I want you to Kinder look a ledle out & see how he does—Oh how bad I feel just since I began writting this letter—under Each ear screams & hurts—“in the locks of Jaws also hurts—I feel funey—Baby Sell such things as you Know you dont † need and git things in shape as fast as you Can—would like to see you, but dont Come unless you git ready and want too. I dont Know anything about your oat & Potato trade here—Mary I sent you some Pictures for you to Make fool sPeaches over—Jody you Jonathan and children all be good Papa will be home in the sweet by & by.

LOGAN BELT.

Mollie dont let your Pen write any thing on paper about a Jury as in this letter to me—it might get misplaced and get to the Public—

MOLLIE'S LOGAN.

† Need, or the word indicated in above or foregoing letter, was spelled kneed, but a line was afterward drawn through the letter. The letter was written on legal cap, but was afterwards torn in halves near center or line of folding, and in a ragged but slanting line from left to right, so that “Shawneetown, Ill.,” was, it is supposed, torn off. But, be that as it may, the letter has been identified by several reliable men, who were well acquainted with Belt's handwriting, as being the handwriting of Logan Belt. It evidently, by the non-connection of the two sides, and where asterisks are inserted, gave to his last wife the details of the manner in which the late trial was to be managed. Through R. F. Taylor, an attorney in the case, the first wife of Belt, after his death and the removal of his last wife to Elizabethtown (so we learn), was induced to move in the vacant houses, and it was she who found the fragment of letter while cleaning out the rubbish preparatory to occupancy. Mrs. Mary Belt (nee Frailey) at once gave the letter to Mr. James Walton, who immediately sent it to us through the kindness of Mr. John Lane. After having it inspected by the proper authorities, we now give it to our readers, who may draw their own conclusion.

INSTRUCTIONS OF JUDGE BAKER TO JURY IN AFOREGOING OR
BELT-HAMBRINK MURDER TRIAL.

That if you believe from the evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt, that in the spring of eighteen hundred and seventy-six (1876) the defendants combined and confederated together for the purpose of killing and running off the witnesses in a certain criminal prosecution, then pending against Logan Belt, and that Luke Hambrink became a witness for the prosecution before the final trial thereof; and if you further believe from the evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendants, by means of said combination, shot and killed Luke Hambrink, or caused him to be shot and killed, as charged in the indictment, then you should find all of the defendants guilty of murder and fix their punishment as explained in these instructions.

You are instructed that if you believe from the evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt, that in the spring of eighteen hundred and seventy-six (1876) an indictment was pending against Logan Belt, charging him with the murder of one Doc Oldham, and that Lucy Sterling, Geo. W. Covert, Morgan Tucker, Lucy Melon, Thos. Oldham and Luke Hambrink and others were witnesses against him in said cause; and if you further believe from the evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendants combined and confederated together for the purpose of killing and running off said witnesses, and in pursuance of such purpose and by means of such combination, if the same has been proven beyond a reasonable doubt, they shot and killed Luke Hambrink as charged in the indictment, then you should find all of the defendants guilty of murder and fix their punishment as explained in these instructions.

Murder is the unlawful killing of a human being in the the peace of the people, with malice aforethought, either expressed or implied. The unlawful killing may be perpetrated by poisoning, striking, starving, drowning, stabbing, shooting, or by any other of the various forms or means by which human nature may be overcome and death thereby occasioned. Express malice is the deliberate intention, unlawfully, to take away the life of a fellow-creature, which is manifested by external circumstances capable of proof. Malice shall be implied when no considerable provocation appears, or when all the circumstances of the killing show an abandoned and malignant heart.

The crime of murder is committed when a person of sound memory and discretion unlawfully kills any reasonable creature in being under peace of the people, with malice aforethought, either express or implied.

Express malice is that deliberate intention, unlawfully, to take away the life of a fellow-creature, which is manifested by external circumstances capable of proof.

You are instructed that if you believe from the evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendants entered into a conspiracy to kill and murder the witnesses in a certain criminal prosecution against Logan Belt, as explained in these instructions, then and in such case the separate acts and declarations of any one of the parties thereto in furtherance of the common purpose, if proven, are in law the acts and declarations of all of them.

The court instructs the jury that a conspiracy is a combination of two or more persons, by some concert of action, to accomplish some criminal or unlawful purpose by criminal or unlawful means.

That the evidence in proof of a conspiracy may be circumstantial or direct, and, although the common design is the essence of the charge and must be proved beyond a reasonable doubt,

yet it is not necessary to prove that the defendants came together and actually agreed in terms to have that design and pursue it by common means.

The jury is instructed that while the law requires an order to find all the defendants guilty, that the evidence should prove beyond a reasonable doubt that they all acted in concert in the commission of the crime charged, still it is not necessary that it should be proven that they all met together and agreed to commit the crime, such concert may be proved by circumstances, and if from all the evidence the jury is satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that the crime was committed by the defendants, and that they all acted together in the commission of the crime, each aiding in his own way, this is all the law requires to make them all equally guilty.

An accessory is one who stands by and aids, abets or assists the real perpetrator in the commission of a crime, or, who not being present, has counseled and advised its commission. Under our law, he who advises, aids, abets or assists in the commission of a crime is regarded as a principal, and punished accordingly.

To convict the defendants of the crime charged, it is not necessary that the killing should have been done by the prisoner's own hands, or those of either of them, but if it is shown by the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt, either that all the defendants were actually present, aiding, abetting and assisting in the actual commission of the crime charged, or that they were constructively present and had counseled or advised the commission of the crime, then and in such case you should find all of the defendants guilty, as charged in the indictment.

That the advising or encouraging that may make one an accessory to crime, need not be by words only but may be by words or acts, signs or motions, done or made for the purpose of encouraging the commission of crime.

That if you believe from the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that any one or more of the defendants are guilty of shooting and killing Luke Hambrink, as charged in the indictment, and that any other of the defendants stood by at the time and aided, abetted or assisted in the commission of the crime, or not being present, had advised or encouraged the commission of the same, then such other persons so aiding, abetting, advising or encouraging, are in law, guilty as principals, and the jury should so find by their verdict.

That an accessory is one who stands by and aids, abets or assists, or who, not being present aiding, abetting or assisting, hath advised and encouraged the perpetration of the crime charged; he who thus aids, abets, assists, advises or encourages, is considered a principal and punished accordingly.

That if you believe from the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that Logan Belt, wilfully, feloniously and of his malice aforethought, shot and killed Luke Hambrink, as charged in the indictment, and that Earl Sherwood, James D. Belt and George

Ratcliffe were present, aiding and abetting such killing, as explained in these instructions, or that prior thereto they had counseled and advised such killing, then you should find all of the defendants guilty of murder, as charged in the indictment.

That if you believe from the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendants, together with Matthew Ledbetter and Sina Hambrink, combined and confederated together to kill Luke Hambrink, and that in the pursuance of such combination and confederation, they did shoot and kill him as charged in the indictment, then you should find all of the defendants guilty of murder.

That if you believe from the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendants, together with other persons unknown, combined and confederated together to kill Luke Hambrink, and that in the pursuance of such combination and confederation, they did shoot and kill him, as charged in the indictment, then you should find all of the defendants guilty of murder.

The jury are instructed that if they believe, from the evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the circumstances surrounding the defendants, or either of them, were calculated to awaken suspicion against them, and that, acting from fear of such a belief, they fabricated testimony or attempted to fabricate testimony in their own behalf, or that they concealed or attempted to conceal the real perpetrators of the crime, then you may consider the facts and circumstances relating thereto, if proven in that behalf, in determining the question of guilt or innocence.

That, although you may believe from the evidence that the witness, Frances Sina Hambrink, had guilty knowledge of the perpetration of the crime charged, still if you believe from the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendants combined together to kill Luke Hambrink, and did kill him as charged, then you should find the defendants guilty, even though you believe, from the evidence that Frances Sina Hambrink was accessory to said killing.

That, although you may believe from the evidence, that the witness, Matthew Ledbetter, had guilty knowledge of the perpetration of the crime charged, still, if you believe from the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendants combined together to kill Luke Hambrink, and did kill him as charged, then you should find the defendants guilty, even though you believe from the evidence that Matthew Ledbetter was accessory to said killing.

That, although you may believe from the evidence that the witness, William Frailey, had guilty knowledge of the perpetration of the crime charged, still, if you believe from the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendants combined together to kill Luke Hambrink, and did kill him as charged, then you should find the defendants guilty, even though you believe from the evidence that William Frailey was accessory to said killing.

That, although you may believe from the evidence that the witnesses, William Frailey, Matthew Ledbetter and Frances Sina Hambrink had guilty knowledge of the perpetration of the crime charged, still, if you believe from the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendants combined together to kill Luke Hambrink, and did kill him as charged, then you should find defendants guilty, even though you believe from the evidence that William Frailey, Matthew Ledbetter and Frances Sina Hambrink were accessories to said killing.

That, in considering this case you should not go beyond the evidence to hunt for doubts, nor should you entertain such doubts as are merely chimerical or based upon groundless conjecture.

A doubt, to justify an acquittal, must be reasonable and arise from a candid and impartial consideration of all the evidence in the case, and then it must be such a doubt as would cause a reasonable, prudent and considerate man to hesitate and pause before acting in the graver and more important affairs of life.

If, after a careful and impartial consideration of all the evidence in the case, you can say and feel that you have an abiding conviction of the guilt of the defendants and are fully satisfied of the truth of the charge, then you are satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt.

That the reasonable doubt which entitles the accused to acquittal, is a doubt of guilt reasonably arising from all the evidence in the case. The proof is deemed to be beyond reasonable doubt when the evidence is sufficient to impress the judgment of ordinarily prudent men with a conviction on which they would act without hesitation in their own most important concerns or affairs of life.

That, in a legal sense, a reasonable doubt is a doubt which has some reason for its basis; it does not mean a doubt from mere caprice or groundless conjecture. A reasonable doubt is such a doubt as the jury are able to give a reason for.

The rule requiring the jury to be satisfied of the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, in order to warrant a conviction, does not require that the jury should be satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt of each link in the chain of circumstances that is put in evidence and relied upon to establish the defendant's guilt; it is sufficient if, taking the testimony altogether, the jury are satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendants are guilty, and that each link or circumstance that is essential and necessary in order to establish guilt, is established beyond such reasonable doubt.

That, while it is necessary for the prosecution to prove every material allegation in the indictment beyond a reasonable doubt, yet if the proof is of that nature that it would control and decide the conduct of reasonable and cautious men in the highest and most important affairs of life, then, as a matter of law, facts established by such evidence are deemed to be established beyond

a reasonable doubt, and the jury in a criminal case with that kind and degree of proof before them, as to every material allegation in the indictment, should convict.

You are instructed that if you believe from the evidence that William Frailey, one of the prosecuting witnesses in this cause, is what is known in law as an accomplice, still you can not on that account disregard his testimony, but in the light of all the other facts and circumstances proven, you should give such weight to it as you deem proper.

The law is that the uncorroborated testimony of an accomplice is sufficient to convict a person charged with crime, if from such evidence the jury believe beyond a reasonable doubt that the accused are guilty as charged.

You are instructed that, while the statute renders the defendants competent witnesses in their own behalf, still the jury are the judges of the credibility and weight of such testimony, and in determining such weight and credibility, the fact that said defendants are interested in the result of the prosecution may be taken into account by the jury, and they may give such testimony only such weight as they think it entitled to under all the circumstances of the case, and in view of the interest of such witnesses.

If the jury believe, from the evidence, that the defendants have wilfully sworn falsely on this trial, as to any matter or thing material to the issues in the case, then the jury are at liberty to disregard their entire testimony, except in so far as they have been corroborated by other credible evidence, or by facts and circumstances proved on the trial.

That while the defendants as regards the defense of an alibi, are not required to prove that defense beyond a reasonable doubt to entitle them to an acquittal, yet they should establish that defense so clearly and satisfactorily as to raise in the mind of the jury a reasonable doubt as to their presence at the time and place of the commission of the crime charged.

The court instructs you that if you believe from the evidence that the said Luke Hambrink was unlawfully killed with malice aforethought, in manner and form as charged in the indictment, and that the defendants were present and in any manner aided, abetted or assisted in such killing, or advised or encouraged the same, the jury should find them guilty, although they may believe from the evidence that some other person fired the fatal shot.

That if the evidence, facts and circumstances convince you beyond a reasonable doubt that the said Luke Hambrink was unlawfully killed with malice aforethought in manner and form as charged in the indictment, and that the defendants were present and in any manner aided, assisted or abetted such killing or advised or encouraged the same, then the jury should find them guilty, though there was no human eye witnessed the fact of such killing.

That if you believe from the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that any one or more of the defendants are guilty of the offense charged in the indictment, and that any other of the defendants stood by at the time and aided and abetted or assisted, or not being present had advised or encouraged the commission of the same, then such other persons so aiding, abetting, advising or encouraging are in law guilty as principals, and the jury should so find by their verdict.

You are instructed that what is meant by circumstantial evidence in criminal cases is the proof of such facts and circumstances connected with or surrounding the commission of the crime charged as tends to show the guilt or innocence of the parties charged, and if these facts and circumstances in this case are sufficient to satisfy the jury of the guilt of the defendants beyond a reasonable doubt, then such evidence is sufficient to authorize the jury in finding a verdict of guilty, and you should so find.

You are instructed that while you must be convinced of the guilt of the defendants beyond a reasonable doubt from the evidence in order to warrant a conviction, still the proof need not be the direct evidence of persons who saw the offense committed.

The acts constituting the crime may be proved by circumstances.

You are instructed that although you may believe from the evidence that the witness, William Frailey, has sworn differently at different times regarding the matters testified to by him, still if you believe, from all the facts and circumstances in evidence surrounding this case, that he has testified truthfully upon this trial, then, and in that case, you are authorized to give his testimony all the weight, credit and belief that you think it is entitled to receive.

If you find the defendants, or either of them, guilty of the crime charged in the indictment, then you should fix their punishment by your verdict, which may be imprisonment for life or for any number of years not less than fourteen, or you may fix the death penalty. You may fix the punishment of each separately as you see fit by your verdict, giving the same or different punishments to each.

You are instructed that the indictment in this case is for murder; that the punishments for murder are three—the punishment of death, imprisonment in the penitentiary for the term of the defendant's natural life, or imprisonment in the penitentiary for any term not less than fourteen years that you may agree upon.

That if you find the defendants or any or either of them guilty of murder, then you should fix his or their punishment and return it as part of your verdict or verdicts.

That if you find any or all of the defendants guilty of murder, and fix the death penalty for such defendant or defendants,

then your verdict as to such defendant or defendants may be in this form, to-wit :

“We, the jury, find (here insert the name or names of such defendant or defendants) guilty of murder as charged in the indictment, and we do further find that said (here insert name or names) shall suffer the penalty of death.”

That if you find any or all of the defendants guilty of murder and fix their punishment at imprisonment in the penitentiary for life, then your verdict as to such defendant or defendants may be in this form, to-wit :

“We, the jury, find (here the name or names of such defendant or defendants) guilty of murder as charged in the indictment, and we fix the punishments of said (here insert name or names) at imprisonment in the penitentiary for the term (or terms) of his (or their) natural life (or lives.)”

That if you find any or all of the defendants guilty of murder and fix his or their punishment at imprisonment in the penitentiary for a term or terms of years, not less than fourteen, then your verdict as to such defendant or defendants may be in this form, to-wit :

“We, the jury, find (here insert the name or names of such defendant or defendants) guilty of murder as charged in the indictment, and we fix the punishment of said (here insert name or names) at imprisonment in the penitentiary for the term of (here insert any period not less than fourteen years that you may agree upon.)”

That you may find either one, or some, or all of the defendants guilty, or one, or some, or all of the defendants not guilty. That you may find some or all of the defendants guilty and give the same or different punishments to those found guilty. That you may return one form of verdict and punishment for one defendant, and another and different punishment for another, and still different punishments for each of the others. In this latter case you may use and combine the forms above given, so as to express your findings as to each of the defendants, and you may give the same or a different term of years to those you may find guilty.

If you acquit all the defendants, then your verdict may be in this form, to-wit :

“We, the jury, find the defendants not guilty,”

If you convict some of the defendants and acquit others, then you should specify in your verdict which of the defendants you find not guilty, and which of the defendants you find guilty.

NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.—Instructions here given are in behalf of The People only, as instructions for defendants were in some manner removed and kept beyond our reach.

CHAPTER VII.

LOGAN BELT AFTER ACQUITTAL FOR THE CHARGE OF MURDERING LUKE HAMBRINK.

BELT had obtained a pension of something near \$2,000 after being released from prison. Concerning this pension the writer has nothing to say. But little was left him, however, at the close of his trial on the charge of having murdered Hambrink. He again returned home with his new wife and settled down to life. But somehow matters did not seem to run smooth in the neighborhood in which he lived, as the stock of those to whom he was an enemy began to suddenly sicken and die in rapid succession, and no one was able to tell what ailed the dead animals. They were cut open in an instance or two and the outer portion of the entrails were found to be congested or very much inflamed. The supposition at last became current among the people that this deadly work was being done with a shot-gun of very small bore and charged with gunpowder only. Out of the five or six cases of this character in as many weeks, but in one case was the property that of a friend, and that was supposed to be either by design or accident. This happened just prior to the assassination of Belt, after which no more cattle were lost by people living in that vicinity.

We give an account of the assassination of Belt as was given in the Register, a weekly paper published in the county at Cave-in-Rock, under date of June 10th, 1887, and is as follows :

LOGAN BELT ASSASSINATED—SHOT DEAD IN HIS BUGGY WHILE RETURNING HOME FROM MARKET—A LADY ACCOMPLICE, OR SUPPOSED WORK OF A MAN AND WOMAN.

On last Monday evening, June 6th, Logan Belt was shot and killed while enroute home from Cave-in-Rock and about 150 or 200 yards west of Wesley Chapel, on the old State road, and which adds another crime to the dark annals of Hardin. It is said to be the first time since his trial that he had gone anywhere even on his farm unaccompanied; at least it was the first time he had been seen in this place alone—his wife, a relative or some friend having formerly accompanied him. He started home after the ruin that evening, and the distance to his home is about four and one-half miles. On the spot where he met his tragic death the road runs to the verge of a bluff or ledge of rocks, having a descent of some fifty or sixty yards, and at this spot a

narrow profile (which is used by footmen in passing across the country) runs down through the rocks and into which a ravine empties, and whence the waters of all freshets are carried into the valley below. The edge of this stony ledge is fringed with small growth of timber, bushes, overhanging vines, etc., affording a protecting covert for the lurking foe, and from which a fatal shot could be fired. The tracks of a man and woman were found on either side of the road near the spot and leading down the profile—track of man corresponding to that made by a No. 7 or 8 shoe, and that of the woman to a No. 4. The measure as brought in by Judge Hess the next morning of the woman's track, and as fitted by us in Fowler & Miller's store, just fitted a No. 4 medium shoe (size between a course and a fine.) It is stated that Mrs. Jerry Simmons, who lives down in the bottoms, one-half mile perhaps from the scene of the tragedy, says that at 6:30 p. m. she started to milk the cows, and while milking she heard a shot fired as from a rifle, then a scream such as made by a person in dire distress : the scream was instantly followed by three more shots in rapid succession and then a rumbling report as though a team were running off with a wagon. After hearing of the murder she supposed that it was Belt who did the screaming. This was about one hour by sun, she said, and 6:30 by her clock.

The horse ran between fifty and one hundred yards and then turned out in the woods, when Belt was thrown out, the horse tore loose from the buggy and ran on home. Mrs. Belt suspected that something was wrong, and taking her step-son, Jodie Belt, went to look for her missing husband, and found him at the spot as above mentioned, weltering in blood.

The coroner, Rev. J. B. Tucker, summoned the following jury : Dr. Quillen, Enoch Bebout, Mike Price, George Norris, George and Thomas Douglas.

DR. QUILLAN'S STATEMENT.

Logan Belt came to his death by a ball which penetrated his side five inches below and seven and one-half inches to the left of left nipple, cutting into the seventh rib and passing through the mediastem plurea, lower lobe of left lung, pericardium, striking the right heart near its apex and lodging in the upper portion of the outer wall of right ventricle, cutting of right ventricle open at apex. Was killed by parties unknown to jury.

JOHN N. QUILLEN, M. D.

His remains were interred at Peter's Creek cemetery, Wednesday.

The above is as was reported.

And now, dear reader, we are nearing the end of our little volume and biography of Logan Belt. We have endeavored to present to you the life of one of the most remarkable men that Southern Illinois ever knew, and a man at whose cruel hands many have suffered. We have been very careful to present to

you only what truth warranted, and could we but place before you all that we have learned, to our satisfaction, of the many dark deeds of Logan Belt, this work would be four-fold larger than its present size, and the narrative blood-curdling, to say the least. We have met with a great many obstacles in the preparation of the book, as the friends of the character as here given strongly objected to its issue, and refused to furnish the author with a photograph of Logan Belt. A true and cabinet portrait of our character was withheld from us, but we procured one that we considered good, and which is herein presented to our readers.

Having given you the impartially written life history of Logan Belt amid difficulties that would have caused some men to flounder in their work, we submit our book for your kindly consideration by appending a letter written to me by the latter Mrs. Logan Belt, as a finis :

FORT WORTH, TEXAS, December 13th, 1887.

Editor of the Register, Cave-in-Rock, Ill.:

SIR—I understand you have “with the assistance of interesting writers,” just completed the manuscript for a book containing the life of my husband. I do not know how many writers there are, nor who they are, but I have an idea who, (or at least a part of them.) And I do not want that history written, not that my husband has ever done anything I would care to have every person know of, but that which he never thought of doing would be grasped for the hardest. Not that I care to have written again, he once killed a man (being the one it was), for God knows he did a good thing when he did it, and it would have been a better one if he had left more of them in the same fix he left that one in, and every man or woman who were possessors of true man or womanhood would say so. Not because he was indicted last fall for murder, for he was as innocent of that for which he was indicted as an infant, but from my own observation, I know it would not be written by unbiased pens, written by ————, and I know he is at the bottom of it, and has been preparing it for years.

MRS. LOGAN BELT.

