

What's Gone Before.

Frank Benson, from Albany, New York, reaches Benton, Wyoming, then—1868—western terminus of the Pacific Railroad. He had been ordered by physicians to seek a climate "high and dry." He is robbed of most of his money in his hotel and loses his last twenty dollars at monte in "The Big Tent," a dance hall and gambling resort in the "scaring" town of Benton.

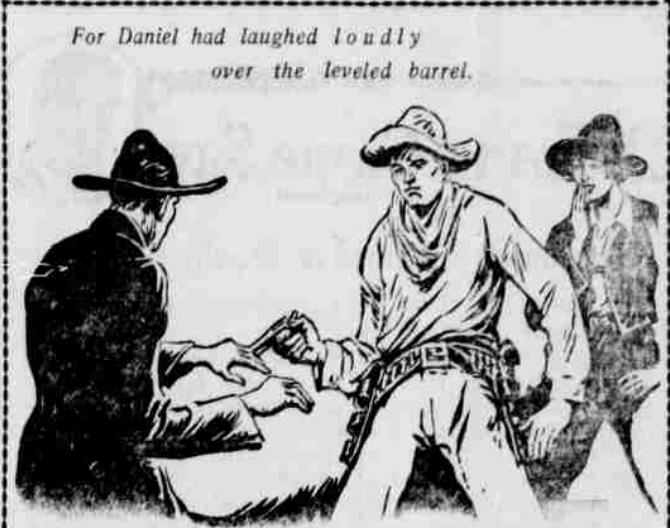
I felt her instant look. She spoke palpitant. "You have one man among you all. But I am going. Good-night, gentlemen." Captain Adams was frowning sternly, his heavy face unsoftened. "Why come you here?" "My husband has been abusing me, and I shot him!" "You killed him, woman?" "Not yet! He's likely fleeing the public at this very moment."

ed upon me. "I thank you; and Mr. Jenks." They went, Rachael's arm about her. Daniel pressed beside Captain Adams, talking eagerly. "She's powerful purty, ain't she, paw! Gosh, I never seen a woman in britches before! Did you? Paw! She kin ride in my wagon, paw. Be you goin' to take her on, paw? If you be, I got room."

CHAPTER VIII. For a Woman's Smile Jenks stiffened, bristling. "Mind your words, Adams. I'm under no Mormon thumb. As for your brat on horseback, he'd better hold his yawp."

The Captain's younger wife, Rachael, had stepped to him. Pending reply I hastened directly to My Lady herself and detained her by her jacket sleeve. "Wait," I bade. "You would take her in, Rachael?" the captain rumbled.

"Go! Tend your stock and think of other things," boomed the father. "Remember, that the Scriptures say: 'Beware of the scariet woman!'" Daniel galloped away, whooping like an idiot. Our group dispersed, each man to his blanket under the wagons or in the open.



any note of alarm. I saw him give a twitch to his holster and slightly loosen the Colt's. As it chanced, our outfit was the first upon the gambler's way. "Howdy, gentlemen?" "Howdy yourself, sir," answered Mr. Jenks. Montoyo was pale as death, his lips hard set, his peculiar gray eyes and his black moustache the only vivifying features in his coldly menacing countenance.

clearly. "Your choice of company is hardly to your credit," he sneered. "Or, I should say, to your education. Saintliness does not fall well upon you, madam. Of your two champions—" And here I realized that I was standing out, one foot advanced, my fists foolishly doubled, my presence a useful factor.

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