

A Death Struggle.

The people of Griggs County Excited Over the Most Brutal Case of Attempted Murder That has Ever Occurred in This Section.

Wm. Kerber, a Farmer Living Southeast of Town Claims to Have Been Attacked by his Hired Man and They Engage in a Life and Death Struggle, the Hired Man Being Killed and Kerber Badly Cut Up.

THE HORRIBLE DETAILS.

The above head does not half describe the horrible affair that occurred fourteen miles southeast of Cooperstown last Wednesday morning. William Kerber, a farmer living alone with his hired man, John Zobak got into a deadly fight with a hatchet in which Zobak loses his life and Kerber is badly hacked up. Wednesday morning. Kerber claims that his hired man attempted to rob him and deliberately struck him in the face with an hatchet while he was lying in bed with the intention of killing him. The two men engage in a hand to hand, life and death struggle so Kerber claims and the hired man is choked and forced on his back, the hatchet taken from him and he is then and there dispatched by Kerber, the hatchet being driven into his head and brains several times. Kerber says he did it in self defense and that if he had not killed Zobak, Zobak would have killed him. A man is certainly justified in defending his own life, but whether Kerber was justified in killing Zobak when he had him at his mercy and could have choked or pounded him into insensibility without using the hatchet in the above described manner and got out of his way, is another thing, and the Coroner's jury have a very grave case to solve with only Kerber's side of the story to go on. The room in which the tragedy was committed is a small one. The bed clothes are torn and smeared with blood, the walls and floor likewise, the stove is knocked down and where the dead man lay great pools of congealed blood and gore lie in different places on the floor. The scene is too horrible to contemplate and shows that a vicious battle for life had been fought. The low-ceiling contains the marks of the hatchet where the man had missed the stroke. It is by long odds the ghastliest and bloodiest affair that has ever occurred in this state and one of the great number of cases which will never be fully explained.

The COURIER editor went to see Mr. Kerber at the Palace hotel for the purpose of getting his story. Kerber told his story as follows:

"John Zobak is the name of my hired man. The affair took place Wednesday morning about seven o'clock. I usually get up first to build the fire, but on this particular morning, John got up first and went out doors. He returned in about a minute. I said to him, 'while you are up you had better build the fire.' He did so. I was lying on the front side of the bed with my face turned towards the wall—had my eyes closed but was not asleep. First thing I knew, the hatchet came down on my face, cutting me from the right eye down below the jaw, breaking my cheek and jaw bones. When he struck me he never said a word. I said to him, 'what are you doing John,' and he replied 'give me some money, I am going away.' I got up and he struck me with the hatchet again on the front of the scalp. I then took him by the throat and choked his wind off

and we struggled, and I backed him behind the stove and he fell on his back with me on top of him, and I made him give up the hatchet, by that time, and he commenced to beg for his life, saying that he had a wife and children, and I should let him alone. I thought that it was either my life or his and to save myself I thought I had better wind him up while I had a chance and did so. I then got partly dressed and went over to Fred Lilly's house where they dressed my wounds, and Mr. Lilly brought me to town." This is Kerber's story and as the other man is dead, no one will ever know the other side.

Coroner Kerr and Sheriff Greenland went out yesterday morning to hold an inquest. A coroner's jury, consisting of Nels Hemmingsen, Wm. Saar and W. A. Baker was summoned, and after an investigation, rendered a verdict to the effect that "Zobak met his death from wounds in the head, inflicted from some sharp instrument in the hands of Wm. Kerber." The remains were brought to town to-day and will be interred in the cemetery. Funeral at 2 o'clock.

HANNAFORD.

Ed Olson is the landlord of town.
Mr. Ole Oleson was in town last Sunday.
Mr. Gabriel Berg is up visiting his brother John.
Miss Juliana Storly went up north last Wednesday to see her sister, Mrs. Hammer.
John Berg is booming the town by building an addition to his shop.
L. Samuelson says he can't buy wheat when he gets no b—r. O. K.

Swiss Bell Ringers.

The only troupe of Swiss Bell Ringers in the United States will appear at the court-house, Tuesday evening, Dec. 6th. The company has been traveling for nearly a quarter of a century and have delighted audiences in all parts of the world and have done much toward elevating the art of music. The Chicago Inter-Ocean says: "The Oaks Company of Comedians and Swiss Bell Ringers made their appearance at the Windsor last night for the fourth time in Chicago and from the size of the audience that greeted them they have lost none of their former popularity. Their specialties are clever in the extreme. Their songs are all good and the way they sing them denotes vocal powers of more than ordinary ability. The musical part of the programme at times was listened to with breathless interest. Alice Oakes is certainly the representative Herfest of America and the instrument she introduced last night was beyond doubt the finest harp ever seen on any stage in Chicago. The Windsor management congratulate themselves in announcing that the company will hold the boards the balance of this and next week." Tickets are on sale at the post-office. Admission. 25c., 50c. and 75cts.

LANDS FOR SALE.

20,000 acres of choice farming lands for sale cheap on cash or crop payments in township 145, ranges 59, 60 and 61. The most fertile part of Griggs county. Address J. W. Fiero, Hannaford, Griggs county, N. D., or see him on section 26-60-145.