

not turn round, for the other men were facing him. He did not move, but the girl did. "Coward!" she said, and raised her pistol at Borotte, standing with her back against Pierre's.

There was a pause, in which no one stirred, and then the girl, slowly walking up to Borotte, her pistol levelled, said: "You low coward—to shoot a man from behind; and you want to be a decent girl's husband! These men that say they're my brothers, are brutes, but you're a sneak. If you stir a step, I'll fire."

The cowardice of Borotte was almost ridiculous. He dared not harm the girl, and her brothers could not prevent her harming him. Here there came a knocking at the front door. The other brothers had come and found it locked. Pierre saw the crisis, and acted instantly. "Thiel and I—we will fight you to the end," said, "and then what's left of you the law will fight to the end. Come," he added, "the old man can't live a week. When he's gone then you can try again. She will have what he owns. Quick, or I arrest you all, and then—"

"Let her go," said Borotte; "it ain't no use."

Presently the elder brother broke out laughing. "Damned if I thought the girl had the