HERALD OF FREEDOM.

THE KANSAS

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BY G. W. BROWN & CO. LAWRENCE, KANSAS, SEPTEMBER 10, 1859. NUMBER 8--VOLUME 5.

Poetry.

Aspirations.

Written for the HERALD OF FREEDOM, July 15, 1859; thermometer, in the shade, standing at 100 deg. above zero.

O for repose in some cool shade,
By fairy hands for lovers made;
Where wood-nymphs flit among the boughs,
And witness plighted lovers' vows,
And timid squirrels gambol round
On mossy trunks and leaf-clad ground;
Where rippling streams meandering flow,
And fragrant zephyrs gently blow;
Where no intrusive insect flies,
And his envenomed bill applies,
Nor wanton, vagrant steps intrude,
To mar my peaceful quietude.
Here, in this solitude profound,
With nature's minstrels all around,
Here, oft with social friends I'd sit
And speed the hours with mirth and wit;
Or passing hours, perchance, I'd spend
With books, by favorite authors penned;
Or, far from noise and care reclined,
With babbling brooks to soothe the mind
I'd lay me down in soft repose,
Perhaps I'd sleep a while—who knows?
Oh, where is this enchanted ground?
In Kansas bowers may it be found?
O tell me, grant my one desire,
And let me to its shade retire.

L. KELLOGG.

LAWRENCE, July 15th, 1859.

Miscellaneous.

SHOT IN THE EYE.

A True Story of Texas Border Life.

BY C. WILKINS EIMI.

My word for it, reader, I should never have ventured to construct a professed romance out of incidents so wild and strange as those of this narration. It is only with the hope that you will accept in good faith the assurance given in the same spirit, that these things *really did occur* while I was in the country, and most of them within my personal knowledge, that I venture to relate them at all. Remember, the scene is laid in a frontier county in Texas, and if you have even a remote conception of the history of that republic and the general character of its social elements, you will be prepared for a good deal. But, though you might even have visited its cities and older settlements, you would still find it difficult to realize all that is true of frontier life, unless, by extending travel and experience, your faith should be forfeited. When you can have to say, as I can, "what mine eyes have seen and ears heard," on that ground alone you will be "fit audience though few," to receive, as matters of course, relations which would, doubtless, for a moment, shock others as monstrous in improbability, if not, indeed, impossibility. The man of high cultivation will find great difficulty in understanding how such a deed as I am about to relate, requiring months to consummate, would have been carried through in the face of law and the local authorities; but the man who knows this frontier will tell him that the rifle and the bowie-knife are all the law and local authorities recognized. Witness the answer President Houston gave, when application was made to him for his interposition with the civil force to quell the bloody "regulator wars" which afterwards sprung up in this very same country—"fight it out among yourselves and be d——d to you"—a speech entirely characteristic of the man and the country, as it then was! It was in the earlier stages of the organization of this same "regulator" association that our story commences.

Shelby county, lying in western Texas, on the border of the "red lands," was rather thinly settled in the latter part of '39. What population it had was generally the worst cast of border life. The bad and desperate men who had been driven from our frontier formed a rallying-ground and head-quarters here—seemingly with the determination to hold the county good against the intrusion of all the honest persons, and, as a sort of "Alastia" of the West, for the protection of outlaws and villains of every grade. And, indeed, to such an extent had this proscription been carried, that it had become notoriously as much as a man's life or conscience was worth who settled among them with any other purpose in view; for he must either fall into their confederacy, leave, or die! This was perfectly understood; and the objects of this confederacy may be readily appreciated, when it is known that every now and then a party of men would sally out from this settlement, painted and equipped like Camanchees, with a view of carrying off the horses, plundering or murdering some marked men of a neighboring county; then returning with great speed, they would re-brand their plunder, resume their accustomed appearance, or defy pursuit or investigation.—Not only did they band together for their operations in this way, but a single man would carry off a horse or commit a murder with a most open audacity, and if he only succeeded in escaping here, was publicly protected. I do not mean to be understood that the whole population at this time were men of such stamp avowedly.

There were some few whose wealth to a degree protected them in the observances of a more seemly life, though they were compelled at least to wink at the doings of their ruffianly and more numerous neighbors; while yet there is another but large class of sturdy, straight forward emigrants, who, attracted solely by the beauty of the country, had come into it and settled themselves down wherever they took a fancy, with characteristic recklessness, neither enquiring nor caring who were their neighbors, but trusting in their own stout arms and hearts to keep a footing. Of course all such were very soon engaged in desperate feuds with the horse thieves and plunderers around them; and as they were not strong enough to make head efficiently, were one after another finally ousted or shot. It was to exterminate this class that the more lawless and brutal of the other associated themselves and assumed the name of "regulators." They numbered ten or twelve, and, under the organization of rangers, commanded by a beastly wretch named Hinch, they professed to undertake the task of *purifying* the county limits of all bad and suspicious characters; or, in other words, of all men who dared refuse to be as vile as they were—or, if they were, who chose to act independently of them and their schemes. This precious neighborhood soon became the scourge of all that region. Whenever an individual was unfortunate enough to make himself obnoxious to them, whether by a successful villainy, the proceeds of which he refused to share with them, or by the hateful contrast of the propriety of his course, he was forthwith surrounded, threatened, had his stock driven off or killed wantonly; and if these annoyances and hints were not sufficient to drive him away, they would publicly warn him to leave the country in a certain number of days, under the penalty of being scourged or shot. The common pretext for this was the accusation of having committed some crime, which they themselves had perpetrated against him. Their hate was entirely ruthless, and never stopped short of accomplishing its purposes; and in many a bloody fray and cruel outrage had the question of their supremacy been mooted, until at last there were but few left to dispute with them, and they tyrannized at will

Among these few were Jack Long, as he was called, who neither recognized nor denied their power, and, indeed, never troubled himself about them one way or the other. He kept himself to himself, hunting incessantly, and nobody knew much about him. Jack had come of a "wild turkey breed," (as the Western term is for a roving family,) and though still a young man, had pushed on ahead of the settlements of two Territories, and had at last followed the game towards the south, and finding it abundant in Shelby county, had stopped there, just as he would have stopped at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, had it been necessary to pursue it so far. He had never been in the habit of asking leave of any power where he should settle, and of course scarcely thought of the necessity of doing so now, but quietly set to work and built him a nice log cabin, as far off from every body as he could get; and the first thing that was known of him he had his pretty young wife and two little ones snugly stowed away in it, and was slaying the deer and bear right and left.

The honest brotherhood had made several attempts to feel Jack's pulse and ascertain his availability; but he had always seemed so impassively good natured and put them off so pleasantly that they could find no ground for either disturbing or quarreling with him. What is more, he was physically rather an ugly looking "customer," with six feet four inches of brawn and bone; though the inclination just discoverable in his figure to corpulency, together with a broad, full, good-humored face, gave an air of sluggishness to his energies, and an expression of easy simplicity to his temper, which offered neither invitation to gratuitous insult nor provocation to dislike. He was the very personation of inoffensive, loyal honesty, slumbering on its conscious strength; and these men, without exactly knowing why, felt some little disinclination to waking him. He had never been aroused to a knowledge of himself, and others felt just as uncertain what that knowledge might bring forth as he did, and were not specially jealous of the honor of having it first tested upon their own persons; so that Jack Long might have been left for many a day in quiet, even in this formidable neighborhood, to cultivate his passion for marksmanship at the expense of the dumb, wild things around him, but for an unfortunate display he was accidentally induced to make of it.

Happening to fall short of ammunition he went one day to "the store" for a fresh supply. This cabin, together with the blacksmith's shop and one or two other huts, constituted the "county town," and as powder and liquor were only to be had there, it was the central resort of the regulators. Jack found them all collected for a shooting match, in preparation for which they were getting drunk as fast as possible to steady their nerves. Hinch, the regulator captain, had always been the hero of such occasions; for, in addition to being a first-rate shot, it was known that it would be a dangerous exertion of skill for any man to beat him, for he was a furious and vindictive bully, and would not fail to make a personal affair of it with any one who should mortify his vanity by carrying off the prize from him. In addition, the band of scoundrels he commanded was entirely at his service in any extreme, so that they made fearful odds for a single man to contend with.

Every body else in the country was aware of this state of things but Jack Long, and he either didn't know or didn't care. After they had fired several rounds he went lounging listlessly into the crowd which had gathered around the target, exclaiming in admiration over the last brilliant shot of Hinch, which was triumphantly the best. The bully was, as usual, blustering vehemently, taunting every one around him, and when he saw Jack looking very coolly at the famous shot, with no care of that deferential admiration in his expression which was demanded, he snatched up the board and thrusting it insultingly close to his face, roared out—

"Here! You Jack Long-Shanks, look at that! Take a good look! Can you beat it?"

Jack drew back with a quiet laugh and said, good humoredly,

"Pah! You don't brag on such shootin' as that, do you?"

"Brag on it! I'd like to see such a moon-eyed chap as you beat it!"

"I don't know as I'd be very proud to beat such bunglin' work as that."

"You don't, don't you?" yelled the fellow, now fairly in a rage at Jack's coolness. "You'll try it, won't you?—You shall try it, by——! We'll see what sort of a swell you are!"

"Oh, well," said Jack, interrupting him as he was proceeding to rave for quantity, "just set up your board, if you want to see me put a ball through every hole you can make."

Perfectly astonished at the rash bearding of the lion—for it was difficult to tell whether contempt or simplicity dictated Jack's manner—the men set up the board while he walked back to the stand, and carelessly swinging his heavy gun from his shoulder, fired seemingly as quick as thought.

"It's a trick of mine," said he, moving toward the mark as he lowered his gun; "I caught it from shootin' varmints in the eyes; always take 'em there. It's a notion I've got—it's my fun."

They all ran eagerly to the target, and sure enough his ball, which was larger than Hinch's, had passed through the same hole, widening it.

"He's a humbug! It's all accident!—He can't do that again!" shouted the ruffian, turning pale till his lips looked blue, as the board was held up. "I'll bet the ears of a buffalo calf against his that he can't do it again!"

"If you mean by that to bet your own ears against mine, I'll take you up," said Jack, laughing, while the men could not resist joining him. Hinch glared around him with a fierce, chafed look, before which those who knew him best quailed, and with compressed lips silently loaded his gun. A new target was put up, at which, after long and careful aim, he fired. The shot was a fine one. The edge of the ball had just broke the center. Jack, after looking at it quietly, remarked,

"Plumbing the center is my fashion; I'll show you a kink or two, Captain Hinch, about the clear thing in shootin'. Give us another board there, boys."

Another was set up, and after throwing out his gun on the level, in the same rapid, careless style as before, and when the eager crowd around the target announced that he had driven the center cross clear out, he turned upon his heel and, with a pleasant nod to Hinch, started to walk off. The ruffian shouted hoarsely after him.

"I thought you were a d——d coward! You've made two good shots by accident, and you now sneak off to brag you've beat me. Come back, sir! You can't shoot before a muzzle half as true!"

Jack walked on without noticing this mortal insult and challenge, while Hinch laughed tauntingly long and loud—jeering him with exulting bitterness as long as he could make himself heard, as "a flash in the pan"—"a dunghill cock who had spread white feathers," while the men, who had been surprised into profound respect for Long, and were now still more astonished at what they considered his "backing out," joined clamorously in hooting his retreat.

The fools! They made a fatal mistake in supposing he left the insult unresented for any fear for himself. Jack Long had a young wife at home, and his love for her was stronger than his resentment for his own dignity. His passions were slow, and had never been fully aroused—none of them, at least, but his love, and that presented her instantly, forlorn and deserted, with her little ones, in this wild country, should he throw away his life with such fearful odds; and seeing the turn the affair was likely to take, he prudently determined to get away before it had gone too far. But had any of those men seen the spasm of agony which shivered across his massive features, as these gibbering voices rang upon his ears in insult which no proud, free hunter might endure, they would have taken the hint, to beware of chafing the silently foaming boar any longer.

This was an ill-starred day for Jack, though from this day troubles began to thicken about him. The even tenor of his simple, happy life was destroyed, and dignity and courage followed each other fast. Hinch never forgave the unlucky skill which had robbed him of his proudest boast, that of being the best marksman on the frontier; and he swore, in base vindictive hate, to dog him to death or make him leave the country. Soon after this a valuable horse, belonging to a rich and powerful planter, disappeared.—He was one of those men who had compromised with the regulators, paying so much black-mail for exemption from their depredations, and protection against others of the same stamp; and he now applied to Hinch for the recovery of his horse and the punishment of the thief.—This Hinch, under their contract, was bound to do and promised to accomplish forthwith. He and some of his men went off on the trail of the missing horse, and returning next day, announced that they had followed it with all their skill through a great many windings, evidently intended to throw off pursuit, and at last traced it to Jack Long's picket fence, and there could be no doubt he was a thief. The planter knew nothing of Jack, but that he was a new comer, and demanded that he should be forced to give up the horse, and punished to the extremity of the frontier code. But this was not Hinch's policy yet awhile. He knew the proofs were not strong enough to make the charge plausible, even before the Lynch court, of which he himself was both prosecutor, judge and executioner. His object was first to get up a hue and cry against Long, and, under cover of a general excitement, accomplish his devilish purposes without question or mock trial even. So that, after a great deal of maneuvering, for eight or ten days, during which time the charge against Long was industriously circulated by his myrmidons, so as to attract general attention and expectation as to the result of his investigations—he proclaimed far and wide that he had found the horse at last, hid in a timber bottom near Long's. This, of course, seemed strong confirmation of his guilt, and though the mob were most of them horse thieves, to all intents, yet it was an unpardonable crime for any one to practice professionally among themselves, so that Long was loudly denounced, and threatened on every side, and ordered to leave the country forthwith.

These proceedings Jack by no means comprehended, or felt disposed to be moved by; but gave them one and all to understand, that he meant to remain where he was until it entirely suited his convenience to go; and if his time and theirs did not happen to agree, they might make the most of it—and Jack was such an unpromising, snaggish looking somebody, and his reputation, which had now spread everywhere—of possessing such consummate skill with the rifle, that he thought it a condescension to shoot game anywhere else than in the eyes—was so formidable, that no individual felt disposed to push the matter to a personal collision. He might, therefore, have been left in quiet, but Hinch had unfortunately taken up the impression, from Jack's conduct in the shooting-match affair, that he must be a coward, and if this were true, then all his skill amounted to but little; and like any other bloody, selfish brute, he followed him up the more eagerly for the very reason which would have disarmed a generous foe. Besides, Jack had given fresh and weightier matter of offense, in that he had refused to obey, and defied his authority as a regulator. The very being of that authority seemed to require now that wholesome example should be made of him, for the awing of all refractory persons hereafter. The wretch, who was cunning and ferocious, and had sworn in his inmost heart to ruin and disgrace Long, from the moment of triumph, now availed himself remorselessly of all his influence and knowledge of the society around him, to accomplish it. Several horses now disappeared, and robberies of other kinds, perpetrated with singular dexterity, followed in quick succession. All these things he managed, through the clamors of his scoundrelly troops, to have laid directly or indirectly to Jack's door.

But in the popular estimation they counted nothing, in fixing the charge of dangerous malice upon poor Long, in comparison with one incident. About this time not only Hinch himself, but every other person who had made himself conspicuous, by insisting upon Jack's guilt, and the necessity of punishing him summarily, began to lose, every day or two, valuable stock, which was wantonly shot down sometimes in sight of their houses; and it soon began to be remarked that every animal lost in that way, *had been shot in the eye!* This was instantly associated, of course, with Jack's well known and curious predilection for a mark in hunting, and a perfect storm of indignation followed.

A meeting was at once convened at "the store," of which the planter was chairman; and at it, by a unanimous vote, a resolution was passed condemning Jack Long to be whipped and driven out of the country, and Hinch and his regulators appointed to carry it into effect! He could hardly contain himself for joy; for now, whatever extreme his pitiless malignity might choose to indulge itself in, he had no fear of after-claps or questioning. The meeting had been a mere form at any rate. But these "formalities" are all-powerful everywhere, and unsettled and elementary as was the condition of society here, this ruffian leader of ruffians felt the necessity of acting under their sanction, though himself had dictated it. He could and would have consummated his purposes without it; but the faint life of conscience within him—by a species of logic peculiar to itself—felt relieved of the grievous responsibility of such a crime in the sense of participating with so many others. Many a man has gone to the devil in a crowd, who would have been horrified at undertaking the journey alone. It was the third day after the meeting. Jack, during all these persecutions, had deported himself with the most stoical indifference. Avoiding all intercourse with the settlers, he had continued to hunt with even more assiduity than usual, and was in a great measure ignorant of the unenviable notoriety he was enjoying. He had heard something of the charge with which his character had been assailed, but attributed them all to the jealous enmity he had incurred at the shooting-match. He could understand perfectly how one man could hate another who had beat him shooting, and thought it natural enough; but he could not understand how that hatred might be meanly and desperately vindictive, and therefore gave himself no uneasiness about it. He was only anxious that his wife should not hear and be annoyed by any of these things, and preserved his usual cheerfulness of demeanor.

He had just returned from hunting, and laying aside his accoutrements, partook of the simple meal her neat housewifery had prepared for him; then stretching himself upon the buffalo robe on the floor, romped with his two rosy cheeked boys, who rolled over his great body, and gamboled and screamed in riotous joy around him; but mother wanted some water from the branch, and the frolic must be given over while Jack would go and bring it. So jumping up, he left the little folks pouting willfully as they looked after him from the door, and started. The stream was only about a hundred yards from the house, and the path leading to it was through a dense, high thicket. It was against Jack's religion ever to leave his house without his gun; but the wife whom he loved above all the universe of sentiment and everything else, was in a hurry for the water, and the distance was so short, so he sprang gaily out with the vessel in his hand, leaving the rifle behind. The water had been dipped up, and he was returning along the narrow path closely bordered with brush, when he felt a light tap on each shoulder, and his career strongly impeded. He had just time to perceive that a lasso had been thrown over him, which would confine his arms, when he saw himself suddenly surrounded and rushed upon by a number of men. He instantly recognized the voice of Hinch, shouting "down with him! Drag him down!" as the men who had hold of the lasso about his body jerked at it violently in the effort to throw him. As it was, he dragged the six stout men, who held it, after his frantic bounds nearly to his own door, before he was prostrated, and then it was by a heavy blow dealt him over the head with the butt of a gun. The last objects which met his eye as he sank down, were the horrified faces of his two children and wife looking out upon him!

The blow deprived him of his senses for some time, and when he recovered he found himself half stripped, and lashed to a tree a short distance from his house. Hinch in front of him, with a knotted rope in his hand, his wife on the ground, wailing and clinging with piteous entreaty round the monster's knees, his children weeping by her, and outside this group a circle of men with guns in their hands. That fearful awakening was a new birth to Jack Long! His eye took in every thing at one glance. A shudder, like that of an oak rifting to its core, sprang along his nerves, and seemed to pass out at his feet and through his fingers, leaving him as rigid as marble; and when the blows of the hideous mocking devil before him fell upon his white flesh, making it welt in purple ridges, or spout dull, black currents, he felt them no more than the dead lintel of his door would have done; and the agony of that poor wife, shrieking a frantic echo to every harsh, slashing sound, seemed to have no more effect upon his ear than it had upon the tree above them, which shook its green leaves to the self-same cadence they had held yesterday in the breeze. His wide-opened eyes were glancing calmly and scrutinizingly into the faces of the men who stood around—those features are never to be forgotten! for while Hinch lays on the stripes with all his furious strength, blaspheming as they fall, that glance dwells on each face with a cold, keen, searching intensity, as if it marked them to be remembered in hell! The man's air was awful—so concentrated—so still—so enduring! He never spoke, or groaned, or writhed—but those intense eyes of his! the wretches couldn't stand them, and began to shuffle and get behind each other. But it was too late; he had them all—ten men—*they were registered!*

We will drop the curtain over this horrible scene. Suffice it to say, that after lashing him until he fainted, the regulators left him; telling his wife, that if they were not out of the country in ten days he should be shot. He did go within the specified time; and, as was said, returned with his family to Arkansas, where his wife's father lived. The incident was soon forgotten in Shelby county, amid the constant recurrence of similar scenes.

About four months after this affair, in company with an adventurous friend, I was traversing Western Texas. Our objects were to see the country, and amuse ourselves in hunting for a time over any district we found well adapted for a particular sport—as for bear-hunting, deer-hunting, buffalo-hunting, &c. Either of these animals are to be found in greater abundance, and of course pursued to greater advantage in peculiar regions; and as we were anxious to make ourselves familiar with all the modes of life in the country, we made it a point in passing through to stop wherever the promise of anything specially interesting offered itself. Prairies, timber and water were better distributed in Shelby than any other county we had passed through—the timber predominating over the prairie, though interlaid by it in every direction. This diversity of surface attracted a greater variety and quantity of game, as well as afforded more perfect facilities to the sportsman. Indeed, it struck us a perfect hunter's paradise; and my friend happening to remember a man of some wealth, who had removed from his native county and settled, as he understood, in Shelby, we inquired for him, and very readily found him.

Whatever else may be said or thought of the Texans, they are unquestionably most hospitable. We were frankly and kindly received, and horses, servants, guns, dogs, and whatever else was necessary to ensure our enjoyment of the sports of the country, as well as the time of our host himself, were forthwith at our disposal, and we were soon, to our hearts' content, engaged in every character of exciting chase.

One day we had all turned out for a deer-drive. This hunt, in which dogs are used for driving the game out of the timber, scatters the hunters very much; they are stationed at different "stands," which are sometimes miles apart, to watch for the deer passing out; for this reason the party seldom gets together again until night. We divided in the morning, and skirted up opposite sides of a wide belt of bottom timber—while the "drivers" and dogs penetrated it, to rouse the deer, which ran out on either side by the stands, which were known to the hunters. We were unusually successful, and returned to a late dinner at our host's, the planter's house. By dusk all were in, except my friend, whose name was Henry, and a man named Stoner, one of the neighbors, who had joined the hunt. Dinner was ready, and we sat down to it, supposing they would be in, in a few minutes. The meal was nearly over, when Henry, who was a gay, voluble fellow, came bustling into the room, and, with a slightly flurried manner, addressed our host:

"Squire, this is a strange country of yours! Do you let crazy people range it with guns in their hands?"

"Not when we know it. Why? What about crazy people? You look excited."

"Well, I think I have had enough to make one feel a little curious."

"What is it? What is it?" exclaimed everybody eagerly.

"Why, I have met with either the Old Harry himself, a ghost, or a madman; which it is, I am confoundedly puzzled to tell?"

"Where? How?"

He threw himself into a chair, wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and continued.

"You know, Stoner and myself, when we parted from you all this morning, took up the right hand side of the bottom timber. Well, Stoner accompanied me to my 'stand,' where we parted; he to go on to his, and I have seen nothing of him since. Soon after he left me, a deer passed out—I shot—wounded it, and jumped on my horse to pursue it. The deer had staggered at my fire, but he was not so badly wounded as I supposed, and led me off, until it suddenly occurred to me that I might get lost, and I reined up; but I soon found that this sober second thought had come too late, and that I was already out of my latitude. I wandered about nearly all day, though taking care not to go very far in any one direction, before I came across anything that promised to set me right again. I at last came upon a wagon trail, and felt relieved, for I knew it must take me to some point where I could get information. The trail was narrow, leading through scrubby thickets; and I was riding along slowly, looking down, in the hope of detecting the tracks of some of your horses, when the violent shying of my horse caused me to raise my eyes. And, by George! it was enough to have 'stampeded' a regiment of horse! On the left of the trail stood a very tall skeleton figure, dressed in skins; one foot advanced, as if he had stopped in the act of stepping across it, and a long heavy gun just swinging down to the level bearing on me. Of course my heart leaped into my throat, and my flesh shrank and crept. Before I could think of raising my gun, my eyes met those of this strange figure—and what eyes! Surprise at their cold, unnatural expression, suspended my action; burning with a chill, singular brilliancy, in deep sunken sockets, they looked as if they never had winked. Dwelling steadily on my face for a moment, they seemed to be satisfied, and the gun was slowly thrown back upon his shoulder, and plucking at a long grisly beard with an impatient gesture of the bony hands, the figure made a stride across the trail, and without speaking a word, plunged into the thicket. I was so confounded by this dumb show, that he was nearly concealed in the brush before I found my tongue to shout to him to stop; but he kept on, not even turning his head. I was provoked, and spurred my horse in after him, as far as I could penetrate, but he kept on, and I lost sight of him in a moment, and whether he can talk at all or not is more than I can tell."

"Did you look at his feet, Henry?" interrupted one of the party. "I expect it was old—"

"Never mind what you expect—hear me out," he continued. "I followed the trail, which wound about, it seemed to me, towards all points of the compass, for an hour or more; when at last it led me out into a prairie, which I thought I recognized. I stopped, and was looking round to make out the landmarks, when a horse, with a saddle on, burst from the woods, behind me, and tore off across the prairie as if he too had seen the devil."

"What color was he?" exclaimed half-a-dozen voices in a breath.

"He was too far off for me to distinguish more than that he was a dark horse—say about as much so as mine. I could distinguish the pummel of the saddle and the stirrups flying!"

"Stoner's horse was a dark bay," was buzzed around the table, in low tones, every one looking seriously in his neighbor's face.

"Yes!" said the squire, rising and stepping uneasily to the window. "Stoner's horse was a good deal like yours; he must have got away from him, and that detains him. But then, the nag was a very kind creature, and well trained. I wonder it should have behaved so."

"Don't believe 'bay' would have done it, squire," said one of the men. "Something's gone wrong, I think! Was the bridle down, Mr. Henry?"

"It was too far off for me to tell. I followed in the direction the horse took, and soon found myself here, and expected to find it here, too."

"No, Stoner's is beyond here," said the squire. "That wagon trail you were turning and twisting about in, is a road I had opened to a number of board trees we cut and rived out there; you might have followed it for hours and not been more than a mile or so from the place you started from. That ghost of yours, by the way, may be some crazy fellow, who has wandered off into these parts, with mischief in him. Did you hear no gun?"

"I thought I did—about an hour after parting with that man, or devil, or whatever he was—but the sound was so faint and distant, that for fear I might be mistaken I did not go to it; and the road had turned so frequently, I could not tell whether it was in the direction he went off or not."

Here the "driver" interposed, saying that he heard a rifle about that time on the right, but, supposing it to be Henry or Stoner, he thought no more about it. And a half-laughing discussion followed as to the probable character of the wood-ghost Henry had reported of, some asserting that he was quizzing us—for these men were too much accustomed to the exigencies of a hunter's life to be for more than a moment seriously affected by the circumstance of Stoner's non-arrival. In the midst of this, a horse's feet were heard gallopping up to the door, and a loud "Hilloa!" followed.

The squire rose hastily and went out. In a moment after he entered, looking pale and excited.

"Tom Dix (one of Stoner's neighbors) says that his horse has come home without a rider, the reins upon his neck, and a clot of blood upon the pummel of the saddle! Boys, he's been shot! Just as I suspected from the first."

Everybody arose at the announcement, looking in the face of him opposite with a blank pallid stare.

"The crazy man!" ejaculated several.

"Strange."

"Very mysterious business!" said others.

"I tell you what," said the squire after a pause, "has struck me from the first.—It is that this strange looking fellow Henry saw, mistook him for Stoner, until he looked into his face, for Henry's horse and general appearance are not unlike his, and when he found he was wrong, got out of his way and went on till he met Stoner himself, and has shot him."

"No doubt of it!" said several.

"But is a very mysterious affair," continued he, "I know of no such looking man in this region as Henry described; but at any rate he will be hunted down to-morrow, for Stoner was one of the regulators, and Hinch is a perfect blood hound. He can hardly escape him, crazy or not crazy."

This seemed to be the most satisfactory solution of the difficulty, and as it was too dark for us to do any thing that night we resumed our seats to discuss over again the details; while the squire sent off a messenger summoning Hinch and the regulators to be on the ground early in the morning.

Before sunrise in the morning, Hinch arrived with six men. I was waked by his loud blustering and swearing. He was, as I afterwards understood raving about Henry; calling his story about the meeting with the remarkable personage all humbug, and asserting his belief that if the murder had been committed, Henry was its author. Our host quieted him in some way, and when we came out to join them he greeted us with a snarling sort of civility. He was a thick set, broad shouldered, burly-looking wretch, with blood-shot eyes, and face bearing all the marks of riotous debauchery. Our search was for several hours unsuccessful, until Henry by accident found the place where he had encountered the bearded ghost as some one christened him. Here one of the keen eyed hunters found the traces of a large moccasined foot. These were pursued several miles and lost, but on spreading our line and continuing the same general course for some distance further, we at last found indeed the body of Stoner. It had been so much mutilated by the wolves and ravens that little examination was made of the bones. We gathered them together to carry them home to his family, and in doing this I noticed the fracture of a bullet through the back of the skull. It had been stripped bare of flesh, and both eyes plucked out by the birds, and was too shocking an object for close examination. But what puzzled all parties most was the discovery a short distance off of the trail of a shod horse. Now there was not one horse in Shelby county that wore shoes, and certainly not one in our party. Shoeing is never thought of, being unnecessary where there are no stones.—This was as perfect a poser as even Henry's story, and threw yet a greater air of inexplicability around the affair. It was thought that this track might be easily traced any distance, but after worrying about it for several days, it was given up in despair, and the regulators fatigued and disheartened, scattered for their respective homes.

But one of their number never reached his. Being missed two days, there was a general turnout to look for him, and as had been the case with Stoner, his body was found torn to pieces by the wolves. The report was that he had been shot through the back of the head.

These murders, and the singular circumstances accompanying them, created great sensation. Hinch and his troope scoured the country in every direction, arresting and lynching suspicious persons, as they called them. One poor inoffensive fellow they hung and cut down four or five times to make him confess; but nothing was elicited; and they left him with barely a spark of life.

That evening as they were returning to their head quarters at the store, one of them named Winter, missed a portion of his horse furniture, which had become accidentally detached. He said he observed it in its place a mile back; that he would return and get it and rejoin them at the store by the time they should be ready to commence the spree they had determined on going into that night. He left them and never returned. They soon got drunk, and did not particularly notice his absence until some time next day, when his family, alarmed by the return of his horse with an empty saddle, sent to inquire after him. This sort of inquiries had come to be so significant of late, that they were instantly sobered and mounting rode back on their trail. Very soon a swarm of buzzards and wolves, near a line of thicket ahead, designated the whereabouts of the object of their search, and they found his fleshless bones scattered on every side. They were appalled. The reddest, bloated cheek among them blanched. It was terrible! They seemed to be doomed. Three of their number dead and torn to pieces within ten days, and yet not the slightest clue to the relentless and invisible foe, but that ghostly story of Henry's, and the tracks which only served to tantalize them. It must be some dread supernatural visitation of their hideous crimes. They shivered while great drops started from their forehead, and without thinking of looking for any trail, or even gathering up the bones, they started back at full speed, spreading the alarm every where. The excitement now became universal and tremendous.—Nearly the whole country turned out for the purpose of unraveling this alarming mystery; and the superstitious frenzy was in no small degree heightened by the report that this man had been shot in the same way as the others—in the *back of the head!*

These incidents were all so unaccountable, that I own I felt no little sympathy with the popular association of a supernatural agency in their perpetration.—Henry laughed at all this, but insisted that it was a maniac, and to account for the peculiar dexterity of his escape and whole management, related many anecdotes of the proverbial cunning of madmen. The wildest, most absurd, and incredible stories were now afloat among the people concerning this deadly and subtle foe of the regulators; for it was now universally believed and remarked, that it was against them alone that his enmity was directed. The story of Henry was greatly improved upon and added to, and as some reports had it, the madman, as others, the bearded ghost, was seen in a half a dozen places at the same time; now on foot, stalking enormous strides across some open glade from thicket to thicket, passing out of sight again before the observer could recover from his surprise; then mounted, he was seen flying like a shadow of a summer cloud over the prairie, or beneath the gloom of forests, always haggard, and lean, dressed in skins with the hair on, and that long, heavy, terrible rifle on his shoulder. I noticed that there was only one class of men who ventured to assert that they had actually seen with their own eyes these wonderful sights, and that was constituted of those who either had suffered, or from their characters and pursuits, were most likely to suffer persecution from the regulators—the class of hunter emigrants. These men were most industrious in embellishing all the circumstances of characters, feats and relentless hatred to the regulators, as highly as the excited credulity of the public would bear. They never saw him except in the vicinity of the homes of some one of these hated tyrants. In their version this being was forever hovering around them, waiting the moment to strike while they were alone and far from any help.

They carried this thing so far as to attract attention to it, and aroused in the cunning mind of Hinch the same suspicion which occurred to Henry and myself, namely, that all of this was the result of a profoundly acute and well organized scheme of this class, headed by some man of peculiar personalities and consummate skill, with the object of exterminating or driving off the regulators. It seemed impossible, that without collusion with many others, the murderer should have been able to so baffle our pursuit. Hinch and his band had been thoroughly cowed and awed; but the moment this idea occurred to them, the reaction of their base fears was savage exultation. Here was something tangible; their open and united force could easily exterminate an enemy who had acknowledged their weakness in resorting to secret combination and assassination from "the bush." They forthwith proclaimed "war to the knife," with the whole class; and during the next week several outrages, so revolting that I will not detail them, were perpetrated upon these men in different parts of the country; and the fact, that during this general tumult, nothing was seen or heard of the mysterious rifleman, encouraged them with the belief that they had succeeded in getting rid of him through the intimidation of his confederates.

They had now been for nearly a fortnight in the saddle, and glutted themseves with vengeance, and as they conceived, broken down this dangerous conspiracy against their power; and if they had not succeeded in detecting and punishing, had at least frightened off their singular foe. They now concluded they might safely disband. That day, after they separated, one their number, named Rees, almost as bad and savage a man as Hinch himself, was riding past a thicket, in sight of his own house, when he was shot from it. His negroes heard the gun, and seeing his horse galloping up to the house riderless, and snorting wildly, they ran down and found him stretched in the road, dead. *He was shot in the eye* and the ball passed out at the back of his head.

When Hinch heard of this, he turned perfectly livid, his knees smote together, and with a horrible oath, he exclaimed—"It's Jack Long, or his ghost, by G—d! come back for vengeance." It was now perceived for the first time, that all the men had been shot through the eye instead of the back of the head where the ball had passed out after entering the socket. The other heads had been too unpleasantly mutilated for examination, and this fact had not been before observed. Of course, everybody was satisfied now that this terrible being was in one way or another identified with Jack Long; for the notoriety of his favorite mark and his matchless skill instantly occurred to all, accounting for much that was unaccountable in these occurrences. This produced a great change in public feeling. The better sort began to conceive that they understood the whole matter. The lynching Jack had received was fresh in their memories, and they supposed that its severity had shaken his mental balance and made him a maniac, and that the disease had endowed him with the marvelous cunning, the staunch, murderous hate, and the unnatural appearance which had created such sensation. They could not understand how a being so simple hearted and sluggish as he was reputed to be, could have been roused or stung to such deeds by the mere depth and power of his natural passions. But monomanic or not, such a vengeance and the daring conduct of the whole affair, were very imposing to their associations and prepossessions, and they sympathized heartily with him. It was only while the general uncertainty left every man in doubt whether his own person might not be next the object of this murderous aim, that the public were disposed to back the rangers in whatever violent measures they might choose to resort to, to drag the secret to light, and the actor to punishment; but now that it was apparent his whole hate was leveled against the rangers, and all that uncertainty was confined to them, be he the devil, ghost, madman or Jack Long, the public had no intention of interfering again. It was a personal issue between him and them; they might settle it between themselves. Indeed, men felt in their inmost hearts that every man of the ten engaged in the lynching of Jack Long, deserved a dozen times to be shot; and now they looked on coolly, rather enjoying the thing, and earnestly hoping that Jack might have the best of it.

And of this there seemed to be a strong probability, for the regulators made only one attempt to get together; but another of their number being killed on his way to the rendezvous, his body bearing that well known and fearful signature of skill, the remaining five, perfectly unnerved and overwhelmed with terror, retreated to their houses, and scarcely dared for several weeks to put their heads outside their own doors.

The class to which Jack had belonged, at least those of them who had managed to keep a footing during the relentless proscription of the regulators, now began to look up, and hinted that they had known of Jack's return from the time of Stoner's murder, and had aided and abetted his purposes in every way in their power; furnishing him with fresh horses, when the noble animal he rode back from the States become fatigued, assisting his flights and concealments, and furnishing him with information, as well as spreading the exaggerated stories about him. One bluff, old fellow remarked:

"You are fools to talk about Jack's being crazy! He's as calm and as cold as a frosty morning up in old Kentuck; and his head's as clear as a bell! He has just got his Indian fightin' and tory hatin' blood waked up in him by them stripes. That's a blood, you know, that's dangersomer than a catamount, when it once gets riz!"

Jack was now frequently seen, but it was known that his work was only half done, and that he meant to finish it, and he was regarded with great curiosity and awe. The five wretched men were entirely unstrung and panic-stricken. They made no attempt at retaliation, but all their hopes seemed to lie in the effort to get out of his reach. That long, heavy rifle haunted them day and night. They saw its dark muzzle bearing on them from every bush, and through the chinks of their own cabins!

One of them, named White, who was an inveterate toper, with all his terror, could not resist his inclination for liquor, and, after a confinement in his house of nearly three weeks, determined to risk all and go to the store and buy him a barrel. He went in a covered wagon, driven by a negro, while he lay stretched on the bottom, in the straw. The barrel of liquor was obtained; he got into the wagon, lay down beside it, and started for home. All the way, he never raised his head, until near the mouth of his lane. A log had been placed on the side of the road, which tilted up the wagon, in passing over it, so as to roll the barrel on him. He forgot his caution, and sprang up, with his head out of the cover, to curse the boy for his carelessness; and at that moment a rifle was discharged. He fell back dead—*shot through the eye.* The boy said that his master suddenly cut short his oaths, and exclaimed "There he is!" at the moment the gun was fired. He was a tall man, with a beard hanging down on his breast, dressed in skins, walking off through the bushes, with his rifle on his shoulder.

The next man, named Garret, about two weeks after this, got up one morning about sunrise, and, in his shirt sleeves, stepped to the door, and threw it open to breathe fresh air. He was rubbing his eyes, being about half asleep; and, when he got them fairly open, there stood the gaunt avenger beside a tree in the yard—the fatal rifle leveled, and waiting till his victim should see him distinctly. He did see him; but it was his last look. The bullet went dashing through his brain. Long is said to have