

**Jack Long**

**The Shot in the Eye**

**by Charles Wilkins Webber, 1819-1856**

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The millions of copies of this story which have been circulated in this country through the daily and weekly press have all been from a mutilated edition which was impudently pirated in an English periodical, under a new name. American editors, in copying, replaced a portion of the original title, to be sure, but took the text as they found it. I would, therefore, present it in book form for the first time, once and for all pronouncing the following to be the only version authorized by me, of a narrative the facts of which are too nearly historical to justify their having been wantonly handled.

It must be confessed that the man of high civilization will find some difficulty in understanding how such a deed as I am about to relate—requiring months to consummate—could have been carried through in the open face of law and of the local authorities—but he who has any knowledge of this Texan frontier, will tell him that the rifle and the bowie knife were, at the period of this narrative, all the law and local authority recognized. Witness the answer President Houston gave when application was first made to him for his interposition with the civil force to quell the bloody “Regulator Wars,” which afterwards sprang up in this very same county—“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 the period of the first organization of the Regulators to which our story refers. Shelby, in the latter part of '39, was a frontier county, and bordering upon the region known as the Red Lands, was the receptacle of all the vilest men who had been driven across our borders, for crimes of every degree! Horse thieves, and villains of every kind, congregated in such numbers, that the open and bare-faced effort had been made to convert it into a sort of “Alsatia” of the West—a place of refuge for all outlaws, who understood universally that it was only necessary to the most perfect immunity in crime, that they should succeed in effecting an escape to this neighborhood, where they would be publicly protected and pursuit defied.

The extent to which this thing was carried may be conjectured, when it is known that bands of men, disguised as Indians, would sally forth into the neighboring districts, with the view of visiting some obnoxious person with their vengeance—either in the shape of robbery or murder. Returning with great speed, and driving the valuable stock before them, till they were among their friends again, they would re-brand the horses and mules, resume their usual appearance, and laugh at retaliation. Even single men would, in the face of day, commit the most daring crimes, trusting to an escape to Shelby for protection. They seemed determined, at any risk, to hold the county good against the encroachments of all honest citizens; and this came to be so notorious, that no man could move among them with any citizen-like and proper motives, but at the expense of his personal safety or his conscience—for the crime of refusing to take part with them, was in itself sufficient to subject all newcomers to a series of persecutions, which soon brought them into terms, or resulted in their extermination.

We do not wish to be understood that the whole population of the county were avowedly horse thieves and cut-throats! There was one different class of wealthy planters, and another of the old stamp of restless migrating hunters, who first led the tide of population over the Alleghanies. These two classes made some pretensions to outward decorum, and in various ways acted as restraints upon that of the worse disposed; while they, with that utter intolerance of restraint, which so unbounded license necessarily engenders, determined to submit to no presence which should in any way rebuke or embarrass their deeds. Most of these bad men were a kind of small landholders, who only cultivated patches of ground, dotting the spaces between the larger plantations; but they kept very fine horses, and depended more on their speed for acquiring plunder, than any capacity of their own for labor.

They were finally wrought up to the last pitch of restlessness by this closing around of unmanageable persons, and organized themselves into a band of Regulators, as they termed themselves. They proclaimed that the county limits needed purification, and that they felt themselves specially called to the work. Accordingly, under the lead of a man, who was himself a brutal monster, named Hinch, they commenced operations. In this public-spirited and praiseworthy operation, they soon managed to reduce the county to the subjection of fear, if not to an affectionate recognition of the prerogatives they arrogated to themselves.

The richer Planters they compelled to pay a heavy blackmail rent, in fee simple of a right to enjoy their own property and lives, with the further understanding that they were to be protected in these immunities from all danger from without of a similar kind. The Planters, in return, were to wink upon any deeds, whose coloring might otherwise chance to be offensive to eyes polite.

The other class of simple-hearted sturdy men were goaded and tortured by the most aggravated annoyances, until, driven in despair to some act of retaliation, they furnished their tyrants with the shadow of an excuse, which even they felt to be needed, and were then either lynched with lashes and warned to leave the county in so many days, or shot if they persisted in remaining! So relentless and vindictive did these wretches show themselves in hunting down every one who dared to oppose himself to them in any way, that very soon their ascendancy in the county was almost without any dispute. Indeed, there were very few left who from any cause could presume to do so. Among these few, and one of this last class of wandering hunters, was Jack Long.

Jack had come of a "wild turkey breed," as I have mentioned the phrase to be in the West for a family remarkable for its wandering propensities. He had already pushed ahead of two States and a Territory, and following the game still farther towards the south, had been pleased with the promise of an abundance of it in Shelby county, and stopped there, just as he would have stopped at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, had it been necessary to have gone so far; without troubling himself or caring to know who his neighbors were.

He had never thought it at all essential to ask leave of any government as to how or where he should make himself a home, or even to inquire what particular nation put in its claim to any region that suited his purposes. His heritage had been the young earth, with its skies, its waters, and its winds, its huge primeval forests, and plains throwing out their broad breasts to the sun:—with all the sights and sounds and living things that moved and were articulate beneath God's eye—and what cared he for the authority of men!

The first, indeed, that was known or heard of Jack, was when he had already built him a snug log-cabin, on the outskirts of the county, near the bank of a small stream—stowed away his fair-faced young wife and two children cozily into it, and was busily engaged in slaying the deer and bear right and left.

He kept himself so much to himself that for a long time little was thought or said of him. His passion for hunting seemed so absorbing, he did nothing else but follow up the game from morning till night, and it was so abundant that he had full opportunity for indulgence to his entire content. Beyond this he seemed to have no pleasure but in that solitary hut which, however rude, held associations dear enough to fill that big heart and quicken all the sluggish veins of that

ungainly body. Sometimes one of the Rangers would come across him alone with his long rifle, amidst the limber island of the plain, or in the deep woods; and he always appeared to have been so successful, that the rumor gradually got abroad that he was a splendid shot. This attracted attention somewhat more to his apparently unsocial and solitary habits. They had the curiosity to watch him, and when they saw how devoted he was to his wife, the gibe became general that he was a "hen-pecked husband, under petticoat government" and other like gratifying expressions.

This, taken in connection with his lolling, awkward gait, and rather excessive expression of simplicity and easy temper, disposed these harsh, rude men, very greatly to sneer at him as a soft fellow, who could be run over with impunity. They even bullied him with taunts—but Jack looked like such a formidable customer to be taken hold of that no one of them felt disposed to push him too far and risk being made, individually, the subject of a display of the strength indicated in the great size of his body and limbs. He was upward of six feet four in height, with shoulders like the buttresses of a tower, a small head, and other proportions developed in fine symmetry. Indeed,—but for a slight inclination to corpulency, and that sluggishness of manner we have spoken of, which made him seem too lazy even to undertake the feat—he looked just the man who could take a buffalo bull by the horns amidst his bellowing peers, and bring him to the ground with all his shaggy bulk.

Finding they could not tempt him to a personal fray, they changed the note and by every sort of cajolery endeavored to enlist the remarkable physical energy and skill he was conjectured to possess in the service of their schemes of brutal violence. But Jack waived all sort of participation in them with a smiling and unvarying good-humor, which, although it enraged the baffled ruffians, gave them no possible excuse for provocation. They would not have regarded this, but there was still less invitation in that formidable person and long rifle; and somehow or other they had an undefined sense that the man was not "at himself," as the phrase goes in the West—that he had not yet been roused to a consciousness of his own energies and capabilities, and they were, without acknowledging it, a little averse to waking him.

They finally gave him up, therefore, and Jack might have been left in peace to love Molly and the children as hard as he pleased, and indulge his passion for marksmanship only at the expense of the dumb, wild things around him, but that he was led to make an unfortunate display of it.

A few log huts near the centre, constituted the county town. Here was the grocery or store as it was dignified—at which alone powder and lead and whiskey were to be obtained for many miles around. Jack happened to get out of ammunition, and came into this place for a supply. Attracted by the whiskey, this was the headquarters of the Regulators, and they were all collected for a grand shooting-match, and of course getting drunk as fast as possible, to steady their nerves.

When Jack arrived, he found them gathered in a group under a cluster of trees, several hundred yards from the house. It had been some time since there had been any altercation between any of them and himself and though he supposed it was all forgotten, yet he felt some little disinclination to joining them and had

resolved not to do it. But as once, and again and again, that sharp report he loved so well to hear, would ring out, followed by the clamors, exclamations and eager grouping of the men around the target, to critically examine the result of each shot, his passion for the sport, and curiosity to see how others shot, overcame a half-defined feeling that he was going to do what, for Molly's sake, was an imprudent thing.

Hinch, the Regulator captain, had always been the unrivalled hero of such occasions; for, apart from the fact that he was really an admirable shot, he was known to be so fierce, blustering and vindictive a bully, that nobody dared try very hard to beat him, since he would be sure to make a personal affair of it with whoever presumed to be so lucky or so skillful. Now, everybody in the county was aware of this but Jack, and he was either not aware, or did not care for the matter, if he did know it. He knew, though, that Hinch was a famous shot; and noticing that he was preparing to shoot, started to join them, determined to see for himself what they called good shooting.

He came swinging himself carelessly among them, with long, heavy strides, as they were all vociferating in half-drunken raptures over the glorious shot just made by Hinch—and he, in his customary manner, was swearing and raving at every one around him, and taunting them with their bungling, and defying them to try again.

Observing Jack, he jerked the target away, and with a loud, grating laugh, thrust it, insultingly, close to his face.

“Hah! Jack Long-legs! They say you can shoot! Look at that! Look close, will you?” pushing it close to his eyes. “Can you beat it?”

Jack stepped back, and looking deliberately at the target, said very drily—

“Pshaw! The cross ain't clean out! I shouldn't think I was doin' any great things to beat such shootin' as that!”

“You shouldn't, shouldn't you?” roared Hinch, furious at Jack's coolness. “You'll try it, wont you? I'd like to see you! You must try it! You shall try it! We'll see what sort of a swell you are!”

“Oh!” said Jack, altogether unruffled, “If I must, I must! Put up his board thar, men. If you want to see me shoot through every hole you can make, I'll do it for ye!”

And walking back to the “off-hand” stand at forty paces, by the time the “markers” had placed the board against the tree, he had wheeled, and, slowly swinging his long rifle down from his shoulders to the level, fired as quick as thought.

“It's fun of mine!” remarked he, nodding his head towards Hinch, who stood near, while he was lowering his gun to the position for reloading. “It's a trick I caught from always shooting the varmints' eyes! I never takes 'em anywhar else! It's a way I've got!”

At this moment the men standing near the target, who had rushed instantly with great eagerness to see the result, shouted, while one of the “markers” held it aloft—“He's done it! His ball is the biggest—he's driv it through your hole and made it wider!”

Hinch turned pale. Rushing forward he tore the target away from the “marker” and examining it minutely, shouted hoarsely—

"It's an accident! He can't do it again ! He's a humbug! I'll bet the ears of a buffalo calf agin his that he can't do it agin! He's afraid to shoot with me agin!"

"Oh!" said Jack, winking aside at the men, "If you mean by that bet, *your* ears against mine, I'll take it up! Boys, fit a new board up thar, with a nice cross in the centre, and I will show the Captain here, the clean thing in shootin'!"

As he said this he laughed good-humoredly, and the men could not help joining him.

Hinch, who was loading his gun, said nothing; but glared around with white compressed lips and a chafed look of stifled fury, which made those who knew the man shudder. The men, who were in reality puzzled to tell whether Jack's manner indicated contempt or unconscious simplicity, looked on the progress of this scene, and for the result of the coming trial, with intense curiosity.

The new board was now ready, and Hinch stepped forward with great parade to make his shot. After aiming a long time—he fired. The men were around the board in a moment, and instantly proclaimed a first-rate shot. And so it was. The edge of the ball had broken without touching the centre. Jack, with the same inexplicable coolness which marked his whole bearing, and without the slightest hesitation, shaking his head as he took his stand, remarked—

"'Twon't do yet—'taint plumb—'taint the clean thing yet, boys;" and throwing out his long rifle again in the same heedless style, fired before one could think. The men sprang forward and announced that the centre was cut out with the most exact and perfect nicety. At the same moment, and greatly to the astonishment of every one, Jack walked deliberately off towards the store, without waiting to hear the announcement.

"Hah!" shouted Hinch furiously, after him, "I thought you was a coward! Look at the sneak! Come back!" He fairly roared, starting after him, "Come back, you can't shoot as well before a muzzle."

Jack walked on without turning his head, while the Regulator, almost convulsed with fury, shouted, "Ha! Ha! See, the coward is running away to hide under his wife's petticoats!" and long and loud he pealed the harsh taunt after Jack's retreat.

The men, who at first had been greatly astonished at the rash daring which could thus have ventured to beard the lion in his most formidable mood, and felt the instinctive admiration with which such traits always inspire such breasts, now, on seeing what appeared so palpable a "back-out," joined also in the laugh with Hinch.

They thought it was cowardice! A holy sentiment they could not understand kept watch and ward over the terrible repose of passion. If they only could have seen how that broad massive face was wrenched and grew white with the deep inward spasm of pride struggling for the mastery, as those gibes, hard to be borne by a free hunter, rung upon his ears, they would have taken warning to beware how they farther molested that slumber of fierce energies.

The strong man in reality had never been waked. His consciousness was aware only of a single passion, and that controlled and curbed all others. The image of his wife and children rose above the swelling tumult, which shook his heavy frame. He saw them deserted and helpless, with no protection in this wild and lawless region, should he fall in a struggle with such fearful odds. For all these

men were the willing slaves, the abject tools, of the ferocious vices of his brutal insulter; and it would have been a contest, not with him alone, but with all of them. This was stronger than pride with Jack, and he walked on.

But he had incurred the hate of Hinch—relentless and unsparing. To be shorn in so unceremonious a manner of the very reputation he prided himself most upon, in the presence of his men; to be deprived of so fruitful a theme of self-glorification and boasting as the reputation of being the foremost marksman the frontier afforded, was too much for the pride of the thick-blooded, malignant savage; and he swore to dog the inoffensive hunter to the death, or out of the county.

From this time, the even tenor of Jack's simple, happy life was destroyed, and indignity and outrage followed each other fast.

Shortly after, a horse was stolen from a rich and powerful Planter in the neighborhood of the town. The animal was a fine one, and the Planter was greatly enraged at the loss; for he was one of those who paid "blackmail" to the Regulators for protection from all such annoyances,—immunity from depredations not only by themselves, but from any other quarter. He now called upon them to hunt down the thief, as they were bound under the contract to do, and return the horse.

Hinch collected his band with great parade, and proceeded to follow the trail, which was readily discoverable, near the planter's house.

Late in the evening he returned and answered, that after tracing it with great difficulty through many devious windings, evidently intended to puzzle pursuit, he had at last been led directly to the near vicinity of Jack Long's hut. This created much surprise, for no one had suspected Jack of bad habits. But Hinch and his villains bruted far and wide all the circumstances tending to criminate him. After making these things as notorious as possible, attracting as great a degree of public curiosity as he could to the further investigation, which he professed to be carrying on for the purpose of fixing the hunter's guilt beyond a doubt, the horse was found tied with a lariat to a tree, in a dense bottom near Jack's hut.

This seemed to settle the question of his criminality, and a general outcry was raised against him on every side. For, though the majority of those most clamorous against him were horse thieves themselves, yet, according to the doctrine of "honor among thieves," there could be no greater or more unpardonable enormity committed, than that of stealing among themselves.

"He must be warned to quit the county," was in the mouth of everybody and accordingly he was privately warned. Jack, with great simplicity, gave them to understand, that he was not ready to go, and that when he was, he should leave at his leisure; but that if his convenience and theirs did not agree, they might make the most of it. This left no alternative but force; and yet no individual felt disposed to take the personal responsibility upon himself of a collision with so unpromising a person; and even Hinch, eager as he was, did not feel that the circumstances were quite strong enough to justify the extremes to which he intended pushing his vengeance.

Singular instances of the most vile and wanton spite now began to occur in various parts of the region around. At quick intervals, valuable horses and mules were found shot dead close to the dwellings of the Planters, as it seemed, without the slightest provocation for such unheard-of cruelty. The rumor soon got out that

all these animals might be observed to belong to those persons who had made themselves most active in denouncing Jack Long. Then was noticed the curious fact, that all of them were shot through the eye! This was at once associated with the memorable remark of Jack, and his odd feat of firing through a bullet hole at the shooting-match. This seemed to designate him certainly as the guilty man; and as animal after animal continued to fall, every one of them slain in the same way, a perfect blaze of indignation burst out on all sides.

The whole country was roused, and the excitement became universal and intense. In the estimation of everybody, hanging, drawing and quartering, burning, lynching, anything was too good for such a monster. All this feeling was most industriously fomented by Hinch and his myrmidons, until things had reached the proper crisis. Then a county meeting was got up, at which one of the Planters presided, and resolutions were passed that Jack Long, as a bad citizen, should be lynched and driven from the county forthwith. Hinch, of course, dictated a resolution which he was to have the pleasure of carrying into effect.

In the meantime, Jack had given himself very little trouble about what was said of him. He had kept himself so entirely apart from everybody that he was nearly in perfect ignorance of what was going on. The deer fell before his unerring rifle in as great numbers as ever. The bear rendered up its shaggy coat, the panther its tawny hide, in as frequent trophies, to the unique skill of the hunter!

One evening he had returned, laden down as usual with the spoils, to his hut. It was a snug little lodge in the wilderness, that home of Jack's. It stood beneath the shade of an island grove, on a hillside overlooking a thicket which bordered a small stream. The gray, silvery moss hung its matchless drapery in long fringes from the old wide-armed oak above, and that mild, but most pervading odor, which the winds are skillful to steal from the breath of leaves, the young grass growing, and the panting languishment of delicate wild flowers, filled the whole atmosphere around. These were the perfumes and the sights the coy, exacting taste of a bold rover of the solitudes must have.

The fresh face of nature, and her breathing sweet as childhood's, could alone satisfy the senses and the soul of one grown thus in love with the freedom of the wilderness.

The round, happy face of his wife greeted him with smiles from the door as he approached, while his little boy and girl, nut-brown and ruddy, strove, with emulous, short steps, pattering over the thick grass, to meet him first, and clinging to his fingers, prattled and shouted to tell their mother of his coming. He entered, and the precious rifle was carefully deposited on the accustomed "hooks" of buck's horns nailed against the wall. The smoking meal her tidy care had prepared was soon despatched, and the hunting adventures of the day told over.

Then he threw himself with his huge length along the buffalo robe on the floor, to rest and have a romp with the children. While they were climbing and scrambling in riotous joy about him, his wife spoke for some water for her domestic affairs. It was hard for the children to give up their frolic, but Molly's wish was a strong law with Jack. Bounding up, he seized a vessel and started for the stream, the little ones pouting wistfully as they looked after him from the door.



It was against Jack's religion to step outside the door without his rifle; but this time Molly was in a hurry for the water, there was no time to get the gun, and it was but a short distance to the stream.

He sprang gaily along the narrow path down the hill, and reached the brink. The water had been dipped up, and he was returning at a rapid pace through the thicket, when, where it was very high and bordered close upon the path, he suddenly felt something tap him on each shoulder, and his progress impeded strangely. At the same instant a number of men rushed from ambush on each side of him, several of them holding the end of the stout rawhide lasso which they had thrown over him. He instantly put forth all his tremendous strength in a convulsive effort to get free; and so powerful was his frame, that he would have succeeded, but for the sure skill with which the lasso had been thrown, that bound him over either arm. As it was, his remarkable vigor, nerved by desperation, was sufficient to drag the six strong men, who clung to the rope, after him. He heard the voice of Hinch shout eagerly, "Down with him! Drag him down!" At that hateful sound a supernatural activity possessed him, and writhing with a quick spring that shook off those who clung about his limbs, he had almost succeeded in reaching his own door, when a heavy blow from behind felled him. The last objects which met his eye as he sunk down insensible were the terror-stricken and agonized faces of his wife and children looking out upon him.

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When he awoke to consciousness, it was to find himself nearly stripped, and lashed to the oak which spread above his hut. Hinch, with a look of devilish exultation, stood before him; his wife, wailing with piteous lamentations, clung about the monster's knees; the children, endeavoring to hide their faces in her dress, screamed in affright; while outside the group, eight or nine men, with guns in their hands, stood in a circle.

That was a fearful waking to Jack Long; but it was to a new birth! His eye took in all the details of the scene at a glance. His enemy grinning in his face with wolfish triumph; the "quirt," with its long, heavy lash of knotted rawhide, in his hand. He saw the brute spurn her violently with his foot, until she pitched against the wretches around; and he heard them shout with laughter.

A sharp, electric agony, like the riving of an oak, shivered along his nerves, passed out at his fingers and his feet, and left him 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 shrilling 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 open eyes were glancing calmly and scrutinizingly into the faces of the men around—those features are never to be forgotten!—for while Hinch lays on the stripes with all his furious strength, blaspheming as they fell, that glance dwells on each face with a cold, keen, searching intensity, as if it marked them to be remembered forever! 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.*

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We will drop a curtain over this scene. It is enough to say that they left him for dead, lying in his blood, his wife swooning on the ground, with the children weeping plaintively over her; and silence and darkness fell around the desolate group as the sun went down, which had risen in smiles upon the innocent happiness of that simple family.

Nothing more was seen or heard of Jack Long. His hut was deserted, and his family had disappeared, nor did anyone know or care what had become of them. For awhile there were various rumors, but the affair was soon forgotten amidst the frequent occurrence of similar scenes.

It was about four months after this affair, that in company with a friend, I was traversing Western Texas. Our objects were to see this portion of 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, etc. Prairie, timber and water were better distributed in Shelby than any Western 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 of game, as well as afforded more perfect facilities to the sportsman. Indeed, it struck us as a perfect Hunter's Paradise; and my friend remembering a man of some wealth who had moved from his native State and settled, as he had understood, in Shelby, we inquired for him and very readily found him.

We were most hospitably 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 several of the neighbors were invited to join us, and all our force was mustered for a grand "Deer Drive." In this sport dogs are used, and under the charge of the "Driver" they are taken into the wood for the purpose of rousing and driving out the deer, who have a habit of always passing out from one line of timber to another, at or near the same place, and these spots are either known to the hunters from experience or observation of the nature of the ground. At these "crossing places" the "standers" are stationed with their rifles, to watch for the coming out of the deer who are shot as they go by. On getting to the ground, who divided into two parties, each flanking up the opposite edge of a line of timber, over a mile in width, while the "Driver" penetrated it with the dogs.

On our side, the sport was unusually good, till, wearied with slaughter, we returned late in the afternoon towards the planter's house, to partake of a dinner of game with him before the party should separate. It was near sundown when we dismounted. Soon after we were seated, it was announced that dinner was ready. All had come in except my friend, whose name was Henrie, and a man named Stoner. We sat down, and were doing undoubted justice to the fare—when Henrie, who was an impulsive, voluble soul, came bustling into the room with something of unusual flurry in his manner, beginning to talk by the time he got his head into the door—

"I say, Squire! What sort of a country is this of yours? Catamounts, buffalos, horned frogs, centipedes, one would think were strange creatures enough for a single country; but, by George! I met something today which lays them ill in the shade."

"What was it? What was it like?"

Without noticing these questions, he continued, addressing our host in the same excited tone—

"Have you no cages for madmen? Do you let them run wild through the woods with rifle in hand? Or, does your confounded Texas breed ghosts amongst other curious creatures?"

"Not that I know of," said the Squire, smilingly interposing, as the young fellow stopped to catch his breath; "But you look flurried enough to have seen a ghost. What's happened?"

"Yes, what is it?"

"Out with it?"

"Have you seen the Old Harry?"

Such exclamations as this, accompanied by laughter, ran around the table, while Henrie drew a long breath, wiped his forehead, and threw himself into a chair. Our curiosity was irresistibly excited, and as Henrie commenced the whole company leant forward eagerly.

"You know, when we parted, that Stoner and myself went up the right flank of the timber. Stoner was to take me to my stand, and then pass on to his own, some miles further down the stream. He accordingly left me, and I have not seen him since. By the way, I perceive that he is not here," he exclaimed, looking sharply around the room.

"Oh, he'll be here directly," said several. "Go on!"

"I hope so," he replied, in rather an undertone. "Well, I was pretty thoroughly tired of waiting before I heard the dogs, but that music, you know, stirs the blood, and one forgets to be tired. In a few minutes a fine buck came bounding by, and I fired. He pitched forward on his knees at the shot, but recovered and made off. I knew he must be badly hit and sprang upon my horse to follow him."

"Rather a verdant act, that of yours," interrupted the Squire.

"Yes; I found it to be so. After a pursuit of some twenty minutes, at full speed, it occurred to me that I might get lost among the motts, and reined up. But it was too late. I was lost already. How I cursed that deer as his white tail disappeared in the distance between two bushes. I had common sense enough left not to go very far in any one direction, but kept widening my circles about the place where I halted, in the hope of finding the traces of some one of the party; at last, to my great relief, I came upon an old disused wagon trail, which, though the winding way it held promised to lead to nowhere in particular, yet went to show that I could not be very far from some habitation.

"I was following it through a high, tangled thicket, which rose close on either hand; and stooping over my horse's neck, was looking closely at the ground, when the violent shying of my horse made me raise my eyes—and, by heaven, it was enough to have stampeded a regiment of horse!

"Just before me on the right hand, with one foot advanced, as if it had paused in the act of stepping across the road, stood a tall, gaunt, skeleton-like figure,

dressed in skins, with the hair out—a confounded long beard—and such eyes! It is impossible to imagine them. They didn't move at all in the shaggy hollow sockets, more than if they were frozen in them; and the glare that streamed out from them was so cold and freezing! It startled my nerves so strangely, that I came near dropping my gun, though he was just swinging a long rifle down to the level, bearing on me."

"Why didn't you shoot?"

"Ay! Why didn't I? I did not think of self-defense, but of those eyes. The rifle was suspended, but they fairly clung upon my features till I conceived I could feel the ice-spots curdle beneath my skin as they crept slowly along each lineament. The fact is, I caught myself shuddering—it was so ghostly! After regarding me in this way about ten seconds, he seemed to be satisfied; the rifle was slowly thrown back on the shoulder and with an impatient twitch at his long grisly beard with his bony fingers, and a single stride which carried him across the road, he plunged into the bushes without a word.

"I started in vexation at my stupidity and shouted. He did not turn his head. I was now enraged, and spurred my horse after him into the thicket, as far as we could penetrate, but lost sight of him in a moment. I felt as if I had seen the devil sure enough, and actually went back to see if he had left any tracks behind."

Everybody drew a long breath. "I warrant you found 'em cloven!" said one. "Didn't you smell sul—"

"Never mind what I smelt—I found a very long moccasined track, or I should have been convinced I had seen something supernatural. I think he must be some maniac wild man."

"He's a strange animal, any how."

"Singular affair," was buzzed around the table.

"Hear me out!" said Henrie. "After this incident, I continued to follow the devious windings of this road, which seemed to turn towards each of the cardinal points in the hour, until my patience was nearly exhausted; and it was not till after sunset that it finally led me out into the prairie, the features of which I thought I recognized. I stopped and looked around for the purpose of satisfying myself, when suddenly a horse burst from the thicket behind me, and went tearing off over the plain, with every indication of excessive fright, snorting furiously, his head turned back, and stirrups flying in the air."

"What sort of a horse?"

"What color was he?" several broke in, with breathless impatience.

"He was too far off for me to tell in the dusk, more than that he was a dark horse—say the color of mine."

"Stoner's horse was a dark brown!" some one said, in a low voice, while the party moved uneasily off their chairs, and looked at each other.

There was a pause. The Squire got up, and walked with a fidgety manner towards the window to look out, and turning with a serious face to Henrie, remarked—

"This is a very curious story of yours, and if I did not know you too well, I should suspect that you were quizzing. Did you hear a gun after you parted from this lank-sided fellow you describe?"

"I thought I did once, but the sound was so distant, that I was too uncertain about its being a gun to risk getting lost again in going to find it."

"Was it about a quarter of an hour by sun?" (that is, before sundown,) interrupted the "driver."

"Yes."

"Well, I heard a gun about that time on your side, but thought it was some of yourn."

"It may be that this madman, or whatever he is, has danger in him," continued the Squire. "I can explain about the winding of that road which puzzled you so. It is a trail I had cut to a number of board trees we had rived on the ground. They were scattered about a good deal, but none of them far from any given place, where you would strike the road, so that you were no great distance at any time, from where this meeting occurred. We must turn out and look for this creature, boys."

"I expected to find the horse; he—he came on in this direction," said Henrie.

"No," said the Squire, "Stoner's house is beyond here." Henrie now seated himself at the table; and great as was the uncertainty attending the fate of Stoner, these men were too much accustomed to the vicissitudes and accidents in the life of the frontier hunter to be affected by it for more than a few moments, and the joke and the laugh very soon went round as carelessly and pleasantly as if nothing had occurred at all unusual.

In the midst of this the rapid tramp of a horse at full gallop was heard approaching. The Squire rose hastily and went out, while the room grew oppressively still. In a few moments he returned, with contracted brows, and quite pale.

"Stoner's negro has been sent over by his wife to let us know that his horse has returned, with his reins on his neck and blood on the saddle. He has been shot, gentlemen."

We all rose involuntarily at this and stood with blank, white faces, looking into each other's eyes.

"The madman!" said one, speaking in subdued tones, breaking the oppressive silence.

"Henrie's bearded ghost," said another.

"Yes," exclaimed several, "devil or ghost, that's the way it has happened."

"I tell you what, Henrie," said the Squire, "it has occurred to me ever since you finished your story, that this singular being has been on the lookout for Stoner, and while you rode with your head down, thought that you were he, for there are several points of resemblance, such as size, color of your horses, etc., but that in the long look he took at your face he discovered his mistake; and, after leaving you, passed over to the left, and met Stoner returning, and has shot him. He is one of the Regulators, though, and Hinch is a very bloodhound. I shall send for him to be here in the morning with the boys, and they will trail him up, if he is the devil in earnest, and have vengeance before sundown tomorrow."

This seemed the most reasonable solution of some of the inexplicable features of the affair; and, as it was too dark to think of accomplishing anything that night, we had to content ourselves with a sound sleep preparatory for action on the morrow.

Soon after daybreak, we were awakened by the sound of loud blustering voices about the house. I felt sure that this must be Hinch's party; and on looking out of my window, saw them dismounted and grouped about the yard. I recognized the voice of our host in sharp, decisive altercation with someone, whose harsh, overbearing tones convinced me that it must be Hinch. I listened anxiously, and heard him swear in round terms, that Henrie's story was all gammon, an "old woman's tale," that he didn't believe a word of it; but if Stoner was murdered, Henrie was the man who did it. I could only distinguish that the Planter's tone was angry and decided, when they moved on out of hearing. How he managed to quiet him I cannot conjecture, (Henrie, fortunately, heard nothing of it,) but when we joined them, Hinch greeted us with a gruff sort of civility. He was a thick-set, broad-shouldered, ruffian-looking fellow; wearing the palpable marks of the debauchee in his bloated person and red visage.

We were soon underway. A ride of nearly half the day through the scenes of yesterday's adventures elicited nothing, and we were all getting impatient, when fortunately Henrie's search, undertaken at my earnest suggestion, was successful in recognizing the place where he witnessed the curious apparition of the evening before. On close examination, the moccasined tracks were discovered, and with wonderful skill the Regulators traced them for several miles, till, finally, in an open glade, among the thickets, we found the fragments of a man who had been torn to pieces by the wolves, numbers of which, with buzzards and ravens, were hanging about the place. The bones had been picked so clean, that it would have been out of the question to hope to identify them, but for the fact that a gun was lying near, which was instantly known to be Stoner's.

I observed that there was a round fracture, like a bullet hole, in the back of the skull; but it was too unpleasant an object for more minute examination. We gathered up the bones to take them home to his family—but before we left the ground a discovery was made which startled every one. It was the distinct trail of a *shod horse*.

Now, there was hardly a horse in Shelby County that wore shoes, for where there were no stones, shoes were not necessary; certainly there was not a horse in our company that had them on. This must be the horse of the murderer! Of course, Henrie was freed, even from the suspicions of these brutes. They believed that this trail could be easily followed, and felt sure that now they should soon come upon some results. They set off with great confidence, trailing the shod horse till nearly night, when in spite of all their ingenuity, they lost it; and though they camped near the place till morning, and tried it again, could not find it. They were compelled to give up in despair, and scattered for their several homes.

The very next day after their breaking up, followed the astounding report that the horse of a second one of their number had galloped up to his master's door with an empty saddle. The Regulators assembled again, and after a long search, the body was found, or the fragments of it rather, bare, and dismembered by the wolves. The rumor was that, as in Stoner's case, the man had been shot in the back of the head, but that the skull had been greatly disfigured.

These two murders occurring within three days, (for the man must have been shot on the day the Regulators disbanded, and while on his way home,) created immense sensation throughout the country. The story of Henrie, which afforded

the only possible clue to the perpetrator, and the singularity of all the incidents, completely aroused public emotions. What could be the motive, or who was this invisible assassin (for the last effort at trailing him had been equally unavailing) remained an utter mystery.

Hinch and his band fumed and raved like madmen. They swept the country in all directions, arresting and lynching what they called suspicious persons, which meant any and everyone who had rendered himself in the slightest degree obnoxious to them. It was a glorious opportunity for spreading far and wide a wholesome terror of their power, and of wreaking a dastardly hoarded vengeance in many quarters where they had not dared before to strike openly.

Public sentiments justified extreme measures, for the general safety seemed to demand that the perpetrator of these secret murders should be brought to light, and great as was the license under which he acted, Hinch yet felt the necessity of being backed by some shadow of approval growing out of the case. He, and the miscreants under his command, enjoyed now for several days, unchecked by any laws of God or man, a perfect saturnalia of riotous violence. Outrage too disgustingly hideous in their details to bear recital, were committed in every part of the county. Inoffensive men were caught up from the midst of their families, hung to the limbs of trees in their own yards till life was nearly extinct, and then cut down. This process being repeated four or five times, till they were left for dead, and all to make them confess their connection with the murders! I will not further particularize.

One evening, after a deed of this kind which had afforded them the opportunity of displaying such unusual resource of ingenuity in torture that they were gluttoned to exultation, they were returning to the grocery with the determination of holding a drunken revel in honor of the event. As they rode on, with shouts of laughter and curses, one of the number, named Winter, noticed that a portion of his horse's equipment was gone. He remembered having seen it in its place a mile or so back, and told them to ride on and he would go back and get it, and rejoin them by the time the frolic had commenced. He left them, but never came back.

They went on to the store, and commencing their orgies, at once forgot, or did not notice his absence, till the next day, when his family, alarmed by the return of his horse with an empty saddle, sent to inquire about him. They were instantly sobered by this announcement, which had grown to be particularly significant of late.

They immediately mounted their horses and went back on their trail. They were not long kept in suspense. The buzzards and wolves, gathered in numbers about the edge of a thicket which bordered the prairie ahead of them, soon designated the whereabouts of the object of their search. The unclean beasts and birds scattered as they galloped up, and there lay the torn and bloody fragments of their comrade!

Hard as these men were, they shuddered, and the cold drops started from their ghastly and bloated faces. It was stunning. The third of their number consigned to this horrible fate—eaten up by the wolves—all within a week! Were they doomed? What shadowy, inscrutable foe was this who always struck when least expected, and with such fearful certainty, yet left no trace behind? Was it, indeed, some supernatural agent of judgment, visited upon their enormities? Awed and panic-

stricken beyond all that may be conceived of guilty fear, without any examination of the neighborhood or of the bones, they wheeled and galloped back, carrying the alarm on foaming horses in every direction.

The whole country shared in their consternation. I never witnessed such a tumult of wild excitement. It was the association of ghostly attributes, derived from Henrie's story, with the probable author of these unaccountable assassinations, which so much roused all classes; and this effect was not a little heightened when the report got out that this man had been shot in the same way as the others—through the back of the head. Hundreds of persons went out to bring in the bones, making, as they said, the strictest search on every side for traces of the murderer, without being able to discover the slightest.

These things struck me as so peculiar and difficult to be reasoned upon, that I felt no little sympathy with the popular sentiment, which assigned to them something of a supernatural origin. But Henrie laughed at the idea, and insisted that it must be a maniac. In confirmation of this opinion, he related many instances, given by half-romancing medical writers, of the remarkable cunning of such patients in avoiding detection and baffling pursuit in the accomplishment of some purpose on which their bewildered energies had strangely been concentrated. This was the opinion most favored among the more intelligent planters; but the popular rumors assigned him the most egregious and fantastic features.

The Bearded Ghost, as he was now generally named from Henrie's description, had been seen by this, that, and the other person; now striding rapidly, like a tall thin spectre, across some open glade between two thickets, and disappearing before the affrighted observer could summon courage to address it—now standing beneath some old tree by the road side, still as its shadow, the keen, sepulchral eyes shining steadily through the gloom, but melting bodily away if a word was spoken; now he was to be seen mounted, careering like a form of vapor past the dark trunks of the forest aisles, or hurrying swiftly away like a rain-cloud before the wind across the wide prairie, always hair-clad and gaunt, with a streaming beard, and the long heavy rifle on his shoulder.

I soon began to note that it was only men of a particular class who pretended to say that they had actually seen with their own eyes these wonderful sights, and they were those Emigrant Hunters who had particularly suffered from the persecutions of the Regulators. I observed, too, that they always located these mysterious appearances in the close vicinity of some one of the houses of the Regulators.

It at once struck me that it was a profoundly subtle conspiracy of this class—headed by some man of remarkable personalities and skill, with the deliberate and stern purpose of exterminating the Regulators, or driving them from the country.

It seems the cunning mind of Hinch caught at the same conclusion. He observed the peculiar eagerness of these men in circulating wild reports, and exaggerating as highly as possible the popular conception of this mysterious being. His savage nature seized upon it with a thrill of unutterable exultation. Now he could make open war upon the whole hateful class, rid the country of them entirely, and reach this fearful enemy through his coadjutors, even if he still managed to elude vengeance personally.



He denounced them with great clamor; and as the people had become very touch alarmed, and felt universally the necessity of sifting this dangerous secret to the bottom, many of them volunteered to assist—and for a week four or five parties were scouring in every direction. Thus doubly reinforced, Hinch rushed into excesses, in comparison to which, all heretofore committed were mild. Several men were horribly mutilated with the lash—others compelled to take to the thickets, through which they were hunted like wolves. At last Hinch went so far as to hang one poor fellow till he was dead.

During all the time when these active and violent demonstrations were being made, and the whole population astir and on the alert, nothing further was heard of the Bearded Madman. Not even faint glimpses of him were obtained, and Hinch and his party, while returning from the hanging mentioned above, were congratulating themselves upon the result of his sagacity, which, as they boisterously affirmed, had been no less than the routing of this formidable conspiracy and frightening of this crazy phantom from the field. They felt so sure of being rid of him now, that they disbanded at the grocery to return home.

One of their number named Rees, almost as bad and brutal a man as Hinch himself, was going home alone late that evening. As he rode past a thicket in full view of his own door, his wife who was standing in it, watching his approach, saw him suddenly stop his horse and turn his head with a quick movement toward the thicket—in the next moment blue smoke rose up from it, and the ring of a rifle shocked upon her ear. She saw her husband pitch forward out of the saddle upon his face, and thought she could distinguish a tall figure stalking rapidly off through the open wood beyond, with a rifle upon his shoulder. She screamed the alarm, and with the negroes around her, ran to him. They found him entirely dead, *shot through the eye*, the ball passing out at the back of the head.

A perfect blaze of universal frenzy burst out at the first news of this fourth murder; but when the curious circumstances noted above followed after it, very different effects, and great changes in the character of the excitement, were produced.

When Hinch was told that Rees had been shot through the eye, and that from the course of the ball in the other cases, it was probable all the others had been shot in the same way, he turned livid as the dead of yesterday—his knees smote together—and with a horrid blasphemy he roared out, “Jack Long! Jack Long!” then sinking his voice to a mutter—“or his ghost come back for vengeance!”

Other citizens, not connected with the Regulators, felt greatly relieved, now that this impenetrable affair was to some degree explained. They remembered at once the peculiar circumstances of Jack’s noted mark, and the lynching he had received; though many still persisted in the belief that it was Jack’s ghost, for they said—“How could it be anything else, when the Regulators left him for dead?”

But, ghost or no ghost, it was universally believed that Jack Long and his rifle were identified somehow with the actor in these deeds. The disfiguration of the skull, in the other instances, had prevented the discovery until now; but everybody breathed more freely since it had been made. It was the painfully embarrassing uncertainty as to the object of these assassinations—whether any individual in the county might not be the next victim, and the propensity for murder

indiscriminate—which had caused such deep excitement, and induced the people to aid the Regulators.

But now that this uncertainty was fixed upon the shoulders of the “bloody band,” and their own freed of the unpleasant burden, they were greatly disposed to enjoy the thing, and, instead of assisting them any further, to wish Jack success from the bottom of their hearts. They felt that every one of these wretches deserved to die a thousand times; at all events, whether it was really Jack, his ghost, or the devil, it was a single issue between him and the Regulators, and no one felt the slightest inclination to interfere.

Those who professed to be very logical in solving the question as to what he really was, reasoned that it must be Jack in the body, beyond a doubt; but that it was equally certain that the injuries he had received must have deranged his mind, and that it was from the fever of insanity he derived the wonderful skill and sternness of purpose which he displayed. They could not understand how a nature so easy and simple as Jack’s was reported to have been, could be roused by any natural energies of slumbering passion to such terrific deeds.

Those of Jack’s own class who had escaped the exterminating violence of Hinch’s hate, now began to look up and come forth from their hiding-places. They laughed at all these versions of opinion about Jack, and insinuated that he was as calm as a May morning, and that his head was as clear as a bell. One testy old fellow broke loose with something more than insinuation, to a crowd of men at the store, who were discussing the matter.

“You’re all a parcel of fools, to talk about his being a ghost or a crazy man. I tell you he’s as alive as a snake’s tongue all over, and a leetle venomouser. As for bein’ cracked in the bore, he talks it out jest as clean as his long rifle whar’s been doin’ all this work. I let you know Jack come of a Tory-hatin, Injun-fighten generation, and that’s a blood whar’s hard to cool when it gits riz. Them stripes has got his bristles up, and it’ll take *some* blood to slick ’em down agin.”

Hinch heard of this bold talk, and, half maddened between rage and fear, made one more desperate effort to get the remainder of his company together. They were now afraid to ride singly; and those who were nearest neighbors collected the night before, under an escort of their negroes, and started for the rendezvous at the grocery next morning, in groups of two and three.

Two of them, named Davis and Nixon, were riding in together, prying, with great trepidation, behind every tree, and into every clump and thicket they came across, large enough to hide a man. They had to pass a small stream which ran along the bottom of a deep, narrow gulley, the banks of which were fringed along the tops by bushes about six feet high. This was within half a mile of the town; and as they had seen nothing yet to rouse their suspicions they began to think they should get in unmolested.

While they stopped to let their horses drink for a moment, and were leaning over their necks, the animals suddenly raised their heads, snorting, towards the top of the bank. The men were startled, too, and looked up. The dreaded enemy! A grisly head and shoulders, above the bushes, and the heavy rifle laid along their tops, bearing full, with its dark tube, into their faces!

The shudder which thrilled through the frame of Nixon was prolonged into the death. The black muzzle gushed with flame, and the wretched man pitched head-

foremost into the stream. Almost immediately the frightened companion heard the heavy tramp of a horse's feet.

Leaving his companion in the water—one crushed eyeball, and the other glaring glassily at the sky—Davis urged his horse up against the ascent, and saw from the top of the bank, a gaunt outline of a receding figure, just losing itself through the trees, among which the horse was speeding with wonderful rapidity.

Davis galloped into town with the news on his white lips. The Regulators dispersed in inconceivable dismay, and never got together again. They shut themselves up in their houses, and for two weeks not one of them dared to put his eyes outside of his own door.

Jack was now sometimes seen for a time, publicly, and was regarded with great curiosity and awe; for, with all he had already done, it was known that his mission was not yet finished. Everybody watched with intense interest the progress of the work, especially the hunters, who began now to express their satisfaction openly.

At last, one of the Regulators, a poor scamp, named White, who was greatly addicted to drink, grew impatient of abstinence, and determined to risk Jack's rifle rather than do without liquor any longer. He set off in a covered wagon for the grocery, to get him a barrel, lying on the bottom of the wagon, while one of his negroes drove. The liquor had been obtained, and he had nearly reached the entrance of a lane, which led up to his house, on his return, without even lifting his head so far as to expose it, when the wagon run over a large chunk of wood, which had been placed across the track, just where it ran close to the thicket.

The jolt was so severe as to roll the barrel over on him. He forgot his prudence, and put his head out of the cover to swear at the boy for his carelessness. The negro heard him say, "There he is at last!" cutting short the exclamation with a torrent of oaths, when a rifle-shot whistled from the thicket. His master fell back heavily in the wagon, and he saw a tall, "hairy man," as he called him, stalking off through the woods with a gun on his shoulder. It was observable that White, also, was *shot through the eye*.

A week after this, another of them, named Garnet, who had kept himself a close prisoner, got up one morning at sunrise, and threw open the door of his house to let in the fresh air. Stepping from behind a large tree in the yard, stood forth the Avenger, with that long rifle leveled, and that cold eye fixed upon his face, waiting for a recognition, as he did in every case, before he fired. The man attempted to step back—too late! The sun was in his eye, but, winged with darkness and oblivion, the quick messenger burst through, shattering nerve and sense, and the seventh miserable victim fell heavily across his own threshold.

But, by an ingenious elaboration of vengeance, the most terrible torture of all had been reserved for Hinch. His imagination became his hell. He died, through it, a thousand deaths. He had been passed by, to see his comrades one by one fall from around him, with the consciousness that the relentless hate and marvelous skill which struck them down was strung with ten-fold sternness against himself. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven! He had counted them all many times. They had all gone down under his eye, and as each one fell, came the question, Shall it be my turn next?

From the certainty that it would come, there was no escaping. He had put forth all the malignant ferocity of cunning and brutal passion in vain; and as

successively he missed his minions from his side, the dark circle grew narrower and narrower, closing in terrible gloom about him, till he stood almost singly in the light, the only target for that pitiless aim. Ay! The very spot where the ball should strike him was distinctly marked by seven several instances! And the wretch clasped his hands before his eyes and shivered in every fiber, as he felt the keen shock strike in blackness, through tissues so sensitive, that even a hair touching them now was agony.

Such a consciousness of coming doom was too much to be endured. Within a few weeks, he shrank like a rank weed from above which the sheltering boughs had been cleft, and the strong sun let in upon its bare stems. His bloated face became wrinkled and pallid. He became so nervous, that the tap of a crisp leaf, driven by the winds against the window, made him shudder and glare his eyes around, expecting that dark tube to grow through upon him from some crevice of his log house.

There were yet two other men besides himself, Davis and Williams; but they were young men, much the youngest of the band. They sold their property, and one night were *permitted* to escape. Hinch caught at this incident with the frantic hope of despair. They succeeded in getting off, and why not he? He managed very secretly to procure one of the best horses in the country, and set forth one dark night for the Red River.

The news that he was off created a strong sensation through the county. However rude and primitive may be the structure of any society, there is yet beneath its surface a certain sense of the fitness of things, or, in other words, an intuitive sentiment of justice which requires to be satisfied; and there was a feeling, not very clearly defined, of the want of this satisfaction, left in the minds of men through this whole region. They had recognized at once the appropriateness and savage sublimity of the retribution which had been visited upon these abominable men; but in Hinch's escape, the consummation was altogether wanting. Vengeance was only half complete.

Hinch reached Red River after a desperate ride. He sprang from his foaming horse at the top of the bank, and the poor animal fell lifeless from exhaustion as his feet touched the ground. He did not pause for a single glance of pity at the noble and faithful brute which had borne him so far and so gallantly; but glancing his eye around with a furtive expression of a thief in fear of pursuit, he descended the sloping bank to the river's edge, and threw himself upon the grass, to wait the coming of a boat.

In two hours he heard one puffing down the stream, and saw the white wreaths of steam curling up behind the trees. How his heart bounded! Freedom, hope, and life!—once more sprung through his shriveled veins and to his lips. He signaled the vessel; she rounded to and lowered her yawl. His pulse bounded high, and he gazed with absorbing eagerness at the crew as they pulled lustily towards the shore.

A click—behind him! He turned with a shudder, and there he was! That long rifle was bearing straight upon him—those cold eyes dwelt steadily on his for a moment—and, crash! all was forever blackness to Hinch the Regulator! The men who witnessed this singular scene landed, and found him shot through the eye! And saw the murderer galloping swiftly away over the plain stretching out from the

top of the bank! And so the vengeance was consummated, and the stern hunter had wiped out with much blood the stain of stripes on his free limbs; and could now do what I was told he had never done since the night of those fatal and fatally expiated stripes, look his wife again in the eyes, and receive her form to rest again upon his bosom.

Powerful elements sometimes slumber in the breasts of quiet men; and there is in uncultured breasts a wild sense of justice, which, if it often carry retribution to the extremest limits of vengeance, is none the less implanted by Him who gave the passions to repose within us—

*“Like war’s swart powder in a castle’s vault  
Until the lin-stock of occasion light it.”*

