Highland Messenger.

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W. ATKIN,
ND PROPRIETOR.

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Letters to the Editor must come free of post[illegible]
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From the Review.

JACK LONG;

OR, LYNCH-LAW AND VENGEANCE.

[Continued.]

From this time poor Jack was in hot water. 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 "black mail" to the Regulators for protection from all such annoyances, immunity from depredations not only by themselves, but from other quarters. 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 [illegible] Late in the evening he return[illegible] [illegible] announced that after tracing it with [illegible]reat 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 hunted far and wide all the circumstances [illegible] criminate him. After making these things as notorious as possible, attracting as great a degree of public curiosity as he could to the farther investigation, which he professed to be carrying on for the purpose of fixing the hunter's guilt beyond a doubt, the horse was unexpectedly found tied with a lariat, to a tree in a dense bottom near Jack's. This seemed to settle the question of his criminality, and there was a general outcry raised around him on all sides. 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 to steal among themselves. "He must be warned to quit the country," was in the mouth of every body, and he was warned. Jack with great simplicity gave them to understand—that he was not ready to go—that when he was, he should go at his leisure—but that if his convenience and theirs did not happen to agree, they might make the most of it. This left no alternative but force; and as no individual felt disposed to take the personal responsibility on himself of a collision with so unpromising looking a body, Hinch eager as he was, did not feel that the circumstances were quite strong enough yet, to justify the extremes he intended pushing his vengeance to. Things were not quite ripe, and Jack with all the hurrah and excitement about him, kept even on his way, conquering and to conquer among the hairy tribes, for some weeks longer.

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, but merely in base revenge for some fancied injury. The rumor soon got out that all these animals might be observed to belong to those persons who [illegible] 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 remark of Jack, and his odd feat in 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, nay, lynching, any thing was too good for the monster. All this was most industriously fomented by Hinch and his myrmidons, [illegible] things had reached the proper crisis.—[illegible] county meeting was got up, at which [illegible] Planters presided, and resolutions [illegible] that Jack Long, as a bad citizen, [illegible] be lynched and driven from the county [illegible] Hinch, of course, dictated a re[illegible] which he was to have the pleasure of [illegible] in effect. In the mean time, Jack [illegible] himself very little trouble about [illegible] of him. He had kept himself [illegible] apart from every body that he was [illegible] perfect ignorance of what was going [illegible] the bear fell before his unerring rifle in [illegible] numbers as ever. The bear rendered up his shaggy coat, the panther his tawney 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 hill side, overlooking a thicket which bordered a small stream. No trellised vines ran over it, nor garden flowers nodded with gaudy crests about it. But the gray silver moss hung its matchless drapery in long fringes from the old wide-armed oak [illegible] and that mild but most pervading odor [illegible] are skillful to steal from the [illegible]table [illegible] young grass growing, and [illegible] The m[illegible]ment of delicate wild flowers filled the [illegible] atmosphere around. These were the perfume [illegible] 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, but 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 accostomed 'hooks' of buck's horns nailed against the wall. The smoking meal her tidy care had prepared was dispatched, and the hunting adventures of the day told over. Then he threw himself with his great length along the buffalo robe on the floor, to rest and have a romp with the children. While they were climbing over his large body, 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 gun; 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 way to the stream. He sprung 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 raw-hide lasso, which had been thrown over him. He instatly 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 around 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 two children looking out upon him.—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 awakening to Jack Long, but it was to a new birth! His eye took in the whole details of the scene. His enemy grinned in his face with wolfish triumph, the "quirt," with its long heavy lash of knotted raw hide in his hand. He saw the brute spurn her violently from him with his foot, until she pitched heavily 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. The murderous thong fell upon his white skin, whelking it in blue ridges, while the dull black drops spouted and rolled off to the ground.—But he regarded it no more than did the oak above him, which swayed its moss-wreathed arms and shook its green leaves, as on any other day, in the wind; and when his wife as every harsh slashing sound fell upon her ear, would shriek "mercy!" then shudder; "Oh! mercy! what has he done?" while she covered her eyes with her hands, and cowered with her head on the ground, he seemed no more to hear her than did the dead block on the little of his door. The man seemed to be dead, all except his eyes, and though Hinch, roused to frantic wrath by his unmoved air, rose on tiptoe and swung the lash with redoubled fury, howling blasphemies at each blow, yet those eyes unmovingly, with a cold search, glanced around into the faces of the men.—That regard was clinging and keen, as if the faintest lineament were intended to be remembered in hell! The man's look was positively awful, and it dwelt fixedly upon one after another with an icy light that shot freezing an undefined sense of fear into their souls, beastalized as they were. The villians could not stand it, and began to shrink and shuffle behind each other to avoid it, but it was too late! He had them all! Ten men! *They were registered!* "Kill him! Kill him! He's dangerous!" panted Hinch, as he labored yet more furiously with the lash. 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 disappeared, nor did any know or care what had become of them. For a little while there were various rumors, but the whole affair was soon forgotten amidst the frequent occurrence of similar scenes.

It was about four months after these occurrences, that with a friend I was traversing Western Texas. We were both anxious to familiarize ourselves with the topography of the country, and to combine, as much as possible, amusement with our researches into its natural history. About equally zealous for science and the "sports," we made it a point, on reaching any district which promised much for either, to make some excuse for stopping. The modes of chase, and the animals principally abounding in the different counties, varied greatly, and were determined by the characteristics of the surface, the predominance of prairie or timber, with the scarcity or abundance of water; or else, as we found to be the case in Shelby, the equal distribution of all. Islands of Timber ("Motts,") with long belts of forest fringing the streams, were dotted and stretched in delightful variety over the broad ground-work of now undulating, now level prairie. Here was diversity of attraction sufficient to suit the nature of all the denizens, whether of water, wood, or plain; and, accordingly, in penetrating a short distance we observed such numbers and so many different species of game, that the country seemed to be a true paradise of hunters. The prospect of rare sport, in all its phases, proved too attractive for our philosophy, and a stay of a week or two in Shelby county was promptly determined on between us. My friend happened to recollect that a man who had removed from his native county in Virginia to Texas, and taken with him some wealth in property, had finally settled in Shelby county. We inquired for him at the first house, and readily found his whereabouts. He was a large Planter, and received us with great frankness and cordiality.—Whatever else may be said of the Texans, they are unquestionably most generously hospitable. Our host forthwith placed at our disposal, not only his own time, but horses, dogs, negroes, and all the *et cetera* insuring our enjoyment to the fullest extent of every amusement the country afforded. We were soon actively and entirely absorbed in a daily round of exciting chases. One day several of the neighbors were invited to join us, and all of our forces were mustered for a grand, "Deer Drive." In this sport dogs are used, and under the charge of the "driver," as he is called, they are taken into the woods 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 spot, and these places 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 we were 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 in the afternoon toward the Planter's house, to partake of a late dinner of game with him before the party should separate. It was near sun-down when we dismounted.—Soon after we were seated, it was announced that dinner was ready. We now discovered the absence of my friend, Henry, and one of the neighbors, whose name was Stoner. But every one thought they would be there directly, and our appetites hinted pretty strongly, that it would be vastly uncourteous of us to leave the dinner of our Hostess to spoil by waiting. We sat down, and were doing undoubted justice to the fare—there is no appetizer like the headlong excitement of the chase, out where the wilderness-winds blow upon you—when Henry, 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, Buffalo, Horned-Frogs, Centipedes, one would think were strange creatures enough for a single country; but, by George! I met something to-day which lays them all 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 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 round the table, while Henry drew a long breath, wiped his forehead, and threw himself into a chair. Our curiosity was irresistably excited and as Henry commenced, the whole company leant forward eagerly.

"If you wont interrupt me I will tell you the whole affair as it occurred."

"No no; go on."

"You know when we parted, that Stoner and myself went up to 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 observe 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 under tone. "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 moments a fine buck came bounding by, and I fired. He pitched forward on his knees at the shot, and made off. I knew he must be badly hit, and sprang upon my horse to follow him." "Rather a venturous 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. Now 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 meeting with 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 to discover the track of some of you, when the violent shying of my horse made me raise my eyes—and by Heaven, it was enough to have 'stampeded' a regiment of dragoons. Just before me on the right, with one foot advanced, as if it had paused in the act of stepping across the road, stood a tall, ghastly, skeleton-like figure, dressed in skins with the hair out—a confounded long beard—and such eyes! It is impossible to imagine them. They did'nt 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 still and freezing! It startled my nerves so strangely, that I come near dropping my gun, though he was just swinging a long rifle down to the level, bearing on me. "Why did't you shoot?" "Ay! why did'nt I! I did not *think* of self-defence, but of those eyes. The rifle was suspended but they continued fairly to cling 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 into the thicket after him 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 where he stood to see if he had left any tracks behind." Every body drew a long breath. "I warrant you found 'em cloven!" said one.—"Did'nt you smell sul—." "Never mind what I smelt—I found a very long moccasined track, or I should have been convinced that 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 Henry. "After this incident I continued to follow the devious windings of this road, which seemed to turn toward each of the Cardinal points in the hour, until my patience was perfectly exhausted, and it was not until after sunset that it finally led me out into a prairie, the features of which I thought I recognized. I stopped, I 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 for me to tell in the dusk more than he was a dark horse—say about the color of mine." "Stoner's horse was a dark brown!" some one said in a low voice, while the party moved uneasily in their seats and looked at each other.

There was a pause. The Squire got up and walked with fidgety manner toward the window to look out, and turning with a serious face toward Henry, remarked, "This is a very curious story of yours, and if I did not know you too well, I would suspect you were quizzing. Did you hear a gun after you parted with 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 it." "Was it about a quarter of an hour by sun?" (that is before sun-down) interrupted the Driver. "Yes." "Well, I heard a gun about that time on your side, but thought it was some of yours." "It may be, 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 road 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 up this creature, boys." "I expected to find the horse here—he came on in this direction," said Henry. "No," said the Squire, "Stoner's house is beyond here."

Henry 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 common 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 speed was heard approaching.—The Squire rose hastily and went out, while the room was oppressively still. In a few moments he entered 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 the reins on its 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 in subdued tones, breaking the spell of silence. "Henry's bearded ghost," said another. "Yes," exclaimed several, "devil or ghost, that's the way it has happened. I tell you what, Henry, has occurred to me ever since you finished your story: that this singular being was on the look-out for Stoner, and while you rode with your head down, thought that you were he, for there are several points of general resemblance, such as size, color of your horses, &c., but that in the long look he took at your face, he discovered the 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 sun-down to-morrow." 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 any thing to-night, we had to content ourselves with a sound sleep preparatory for action on the morrow.

Soon after day-break, 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 the window saw them dismounted and grouped about the yard. I recognized the voice of our host in sharp, decisive altercation, under our window, with some one, whose harsh, overbearing tones convinced me that it must be Hinch. I listened anxiously, and heard him swearing in round terms that Henry's story was all gammon, an "old woman's tale," that he didn't believe a word of it; but if Stoner was murdered, Henry 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, (Henry 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, ruffianly-looking fellow, wearing the palpable marks of the debauchee in his bloated person and red features.

We were soon under way. A ride of nearly half the day through the scenes of yesterday's adventure elicited nothing, and we were all getting impatient, when fortunately Henry's search, undertaken at my earnest suggestion, was successful in recognizing the place where he had 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 around 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 recognized 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 no stones, shoes were unnecessary, certainly there was not a horse in our company that had them on. This must be the horse of the murderer! Of course Henry was freed, even from the suspicion of these brutes. They believed that this trail could be easily followed, and felt sure now that 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 again, could never find it. They were compelled to give up in despair, and scattered for their separate homes.

[Concluded next week.]

Watchman! 'Tell us of the [illegible]

Watchman! tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are:
Trav'ller! o'er yon mountain's height,
See that glory beaming star!
Watchman! does its beauteous ray
Aught of hope or joy foretell?
Trav'ller! yes; it brings the day,—
Promised day of Israel!

Chorus:
Trav'ller! yes; it brings the day,
Promised day of Israel!

Watchman! tell us of the night,
Higher yet that star ascends:
Trav'ller! blessedness and light,
Peace and truth its course portends!
Watchman! will its beams alone
Gild the spot that gave them birth?
Trav'ller ages are its own,
See! it bursts o'er all the earth.

Chorus:
Trav'ller! ages are its own,
See! it bursts o'er all the earth.

Watchman! tell us of the night,
For the morning seems to dawn:
Trav'ller! darkness takes its flight,
Doubt and terror are withdrawn.
Watchman! let thy wand'rings cease;
Hie thee to thy quiet home;
Trav'ller! lo! the Prince of Peace,
Lo! the Son of God is come.

Chorus:
Trav'ller! lo! the Prince of Peace,
Lo! the Son of God is come!
Lo! the Son of God is come!

Slavery and the Church.—The Baptist [illegible] of Missions having resolved not to [illegible] any slaveholder as a Missionary, a [illegible]tion of the Southern Baptists is contemplat[illegible] for the purpose of dissolving their connex[illegible] with the Northern Baptists, in their Triennial Convention, by which the Board of Missi[illegible] is appointed.

The "old school" Presbytery of Ci[illegible]cothe, Ohio, has adopted, by a vote of 2[illegible] 7, a resolution, declaring that "if the G[illegible]eral Assembly, at its next meeting, shall fuse or neglect to take such action as is [illegible]culated immediately to free the (Presbyterian) church from the sin and scandal of sla[illegible] holding, then the Presbytery ought to ce[illegible] all further ecclesiastical connection or fell[illegible]ship with said Assembly."

These events [illegible] rit which must rest [illegible] of the present cen[illegible] twees churches of [illegible] slaveholding and no[illegible] The Convention of t[illegible] Episcopal Church, wh[illegible] ville in May next, will [illegible] It is manifest will be foll[illegible] denominations successiv[illegible]

A serious blow at Am[illegible] The Courier des Etats Un[illegible]bly from some Paris jour[illegible] schedule for the approachi[illegible] tobacco to be imported fro[illegible] into France will contain a [illegible] but with certain restrictions [illegible] bacco shall be imported in [illegible] The Courier adds, that the [illegible] tobacco, imported into a[illegible] colonial possessions, is to b[illegible] *N. Con. Adv.*

Pardoned.—President [illegible] Captain Sangster, convicte[illegible] sault upon Hon. John Q. [illegible]

The Louisiana Convention [illegible]tion of a new Constitution [illegible] work at N. Orleans. The [illegible] scribed for an elector [illegible] be a free white [illegible] of age, [illegible] States, [illegible] one of [illegible] other [illegible]