

'It was cold, but my body was warm enough, buried in the snow. I thought of everything that was most distracting: I thought of my business, of my best girl—and, perhaps, of my second best—of my holiday in England now looming in the near and blessed future—and after a while I fell asleep.

'I slept, I suppose, for four hours at least, and it may have been more. One of my ears was frozen slightly, but otherwise the cold had not hurt me. I looked sleepily around to make sure that all was safe. The moon was up and I could see fairly well to a considerable distance.

'The forest line was indistinct, though of course the tops of the trees were clearly outlined against the sky. In front of the forest, half-way between them and me on my left, was a row of tree-stumps that I did not remember—six, seven, nine of them. It was curious that I had not noticed these, for they stood so symmetrically, like a line of little black men on sentry-go.

'I rubbed my ear with snow, releasing my arms to do so, and soon made it comfortable. Then I glanced again, but quite without design, in the direction of the row of stumps. They were not there!

'I winked my eyes and looked again. Certainly they had disappeared. Was my sight going wrong—spots in the eye or something of the kind—the result of the frost? I rubbed the skin violently all around them and looked again. The stumps were not there; but my eyes felt all right. I must have been mistaken.

'So I sat still awhile, and gave myself up to the luxury of thought. I was going to England, I had done well in my business, and I might marry if I chose, and if someone else chose. The thing was, did I choose? I liked girls, and this girl perhaps best of them, but—

'Suddenly my meditations were broken by a sound which positively made my blood run cold: it always does whenever I hear it, and under any circumstances—the howl of a wolf; the dreariest, saddest, weirdest, uncanniest cry that ever was selected by one of God's creatures to convey information to a brother of his ilk, or, it may be, to relieve his own feelings. It was doubly weird, trebly terrifying now—when the sound betokened extremely serious things for me, and since it was, moreover, much nearer than I had ever heard it before.

'At the same moment, slowly turning my head in the direction whence the howling proceeded, I observed that the nine stumps which I had seen on my left now stood in a row on my right.

'Then I recognised those tree-stumps, and recognised also my position, which was most unenviable I can assure you. The stumps were, of course, wolves—nine of them, seated upon their haunches and watching me; licking their lips, no doubt, and trying to pluck up courage to run in and win.

'I waved my arms and uttered a shout.

'Like a dream the creatures vanished, scudding for the cover of the pines although the Evil One were after them.

'"Come," I thought, "you are far from worded up as yet, my friends! There may still be a chance for me if I keep my head!"

'As a matter of fact, a wolf is a great coward until he is so hungry that famine and desperation compel him to disregard danger for his stomach's sake. The winter had not been a very cold one, however, and these wolves were probably by no means starving; if there had been but one or two they would not have dared even this much; their numbers had emboldened them. Every companion adds to the pluck of a wolf, and in that lay my danger; for here were nine wolves, and nine wolves are more than nine times more dangerous than a single wolf.

'Presently they were out again and seated upon their haunches watching me. I shouted a second time, and once more they fled, but not so far as the forest line, turning and squatting this time after running a few yards. This was a bad sign, for it meant that they were beginning to gather courage. I remained still, anxious to see to what extent their courage would avail them, and whether I was to regard the brutes as really dangerous or not.

'Of a sudden one of them set up a howl, and another chimed in. It was just as though he had cried "Come, boys, there's only one, and probably he's almost frozen to death. Let's make a dash and have him!"—for immediately the whole company started and trotted towards me, suddenly stopping and squatting when within about thirty or forty yards.

'I do not pretend that I was not frightened. On the contrary, I gave myself up for lost as they came nearer and nearer. I prayed, and then shouted. It was in response to my shout that they stopped and sat down. But the effect went no further than this, evidently my shouts no longer greatly terrified them since they found that these were followed by no physical injury to themselves.

'At a distance of forty yards they sat and watched for an hour. During this time my courage rather increased than diminished. I stood up and waved my arms, doing imaginary dumbbell exercises. This kept me warm, and prevented, it seemed, a further advance of the enemy.

'Then I grew tired and rested, and almost immediately the brutes advanced another ten or fifteen yards, and again squatted upon their haunches and watched me. The situation was becoming somewhat desperate.

'Then I took to singing songs. I sang a dozen on end, howling them at the top of my voice till I was hoarse and was compelled to stop. Instantly my nine friends advanced—this time trotting forward until they sat within ten yards of me. It was more than horrible, almost maddening. Indeed I think I grew somewhat light-headed at this point of my trials. I remember addressing the nine grim, squatting brutes in a speech, abusing them in calm but coldly-cutting terms—a speech, biting, sarcastic, venomous, but not, I think, rude. I remonstrated with them, and also threatened them. I had my gun, I told them, and intended to blow out the brains of the first wolf that ventured to come within a four-foot circle.

'The wolves seemed to listen with interest. They fidgeted their feet when I had finished speaking, and one or two whined softly. One howled aloud—it was terrible; moreover, it seemed as if the sound encouraged the rest, for they moved a very little closer.

'I went through wild gymnastical exercises, some of which alarmed them sufficiently to drive them for a moment or two a few yards further from me, but they soon returned, and again sat about me as close as the nearest point up to which they had yet ventured.

'So long as I moved or spoke they came no nearer, and so the matter halted for a period which seemed an eternity, but which was, I suppose, two or three hours at most. Then I became so hoarse that I could speak no more, and was, moreover, so weary that every movement, besides being most painful to my injured limb, which the gymnastics had not relieved, was an effort for which I scarcely now possessed sufficient strength. I felt that I must sit down and rest. If they came nearer in consequence one should die at any rate and perhaps the shot would scare the rest. I sat down and waited and rested, gun in hand.

'Almost immediately the wolves began to grow impatient, believing, I suppose, that the time had nearly arrived when an attack upon me might be made with impunity. One or two began to trot round and round me—a move which disconcerted me very much, for I could not protect myself both in front and behind at the same time. The whining turned to snarling—matters were coming to a crisis.

'Suddenly, and almost unexpectedly, for I had not thought that I should be attacked quite yet, one of the brutes rushed in, open-mouthed and long-toothed, uttering no sound but a kind of indrawn snarl; he had actually fixed his teeth in my leg—partially protected by the felt-lined leather knee-boot that I wore—before I was aware of his intentions. I felt the drag of his jaws as he pulled at my flesh, his teeth firmly fixed in my calf, his desire being, I suppose, to haul me away among his comrades, to betorn to pieces at discretion.

'He had, I think, dragged me a little way before I brought my gun to bear upon him, and fired.

'His jaws relaxed their hold and his eyes dimmed, he fell backwards from me, recovered himself and snarled viciously, looking like an angry devil and striving to gather himself together, as though to spring upon me, but in a moment he fell back again, dying.

'I looked about, having struggled to my feet, for the rest, clubbing my gun for a last fight. They were gone.

'Not for long, however. Inch by inch I saw them creep back until, within a quarter of an hour, they squatted and walked and trotted as before, licking their lips and snarling, within five yards of me, but keeping their distance.

'Suddenly one made a dart. I thought he meant to pull me down, and was ready for him with clubbed gun, but he seized his still struggling comrade by the foot and dragged him away.

'Immediately the other seven fell upon him and his prize, and a snarling, growling, rearing, tearing match began, which lasted for an hour or more—until the eight had picked the one to pieces and swallowed every particle of him save his bones—a devilish cannibal orgie, indeed, but undoubtedly my salvation.

'For whether their weird meal had satisfied them, or whether the oncoming of dawn reminded them that their deeds were deeds of darkness and would not bear the light of day, or whether, their hunger satisfied it suddenly struck them that I was a dangerous thing and might at any moment spit fire at them, even as I had launched it at the late lumbered object of their supper, whatever the cause, they drew off by ones and twos, and the howling of the last of the crew died away in the distance of the forest.

'This was a good opportunity to faint, and I availed myself of it so thoroughly that when my friends arrived upon my track at about eight or nine in the morning I was still as insensible as the picked bones of my victim, which lay, as witness to my adventure, 15 yards away, in the spot to which he had been dragged for the feast.—FIELD WHISHAW, in *Captain Magazine*.

The Catholic World.

AUSTRIA—A Catholic University.—The Catholics of Austria have an association for erecting a Catholic University at Salzburg. The Catholic University fund amounts to a million marks.

BAVARIA.—Appointment of a Papal Nuncio.—Mgr. Cesare Sambucetti, titular Archbishop of Corinth, and Secretary of Ceremonial, has been nominated by his Holiness to the Apostolic Nunciature of Bavaria. It may be remembered that Mgr. Sambucetti was the Prelate appointed by Leo XIII. as delegate to England on the late occasion of the Queen's Jubilee, and it was then said that he was one of the most distinguished-looking representatives present on that occasion.

BELGIUM.—Catholic Journalists and the Holy Father.—The Belgian Catholic journalists have this year renewed the handsome New Year's gift of a goodly round sum which they offered Pope Leo XIII. last year. Subscription lists were opened by every Catholic journal. This, of course, is in addition to the usual Peter's Pence subscribed. In a special audience granted the Belgian journalists last year when they presented their New Year's gift, his Holiness remarked that the money would be devoted to the needs of the Syrian, Chaldean, and Melchite patriarchs who were in sore want.