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grove, heedless of what perils it might hold for them in their terror of the unknown menace that pursued. Half way across the meadow lay a fallen trunk, carried there and stranded by some past freshet. The tall bull took it in his stride. But the cow, apparently half blind with exhaustion, stumbled over it, fell forward on her muzzle with a bleating groan and lay as if she no longer cared what fate might bring her.

Finding his mate no longer at his side the bull halted abruptly, swung back, lowered his huge head and sniffed at her solicitously. He pushed her with his muzzle. He even struck her smartly with the sharp points of his antlers, striving to force her to further effort. Then, apparently making up his mind that his efforts were vain, he stood over her, and stared back along the trail by which they had come.

"He's game all right!" muttered Rawson, his eyes aglow with admiration.

The next moment the undergrowth across the meadow parted with a rush and gaunt forms came leaping into the moonlight.

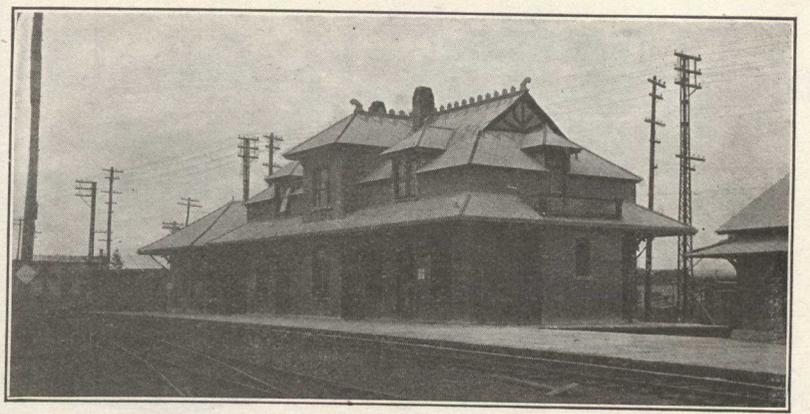
"Wolves! Timber-wolves, by God!" exclaimed Moore in a startled voice. He had been West and knew the breed. Eight of them! He flung down his birch-bark horn and snatched up his rifle.

Mad from their long chase, the wolves did not hesitate a second, but sprang straight on their quarry, their gray leader half a length to the front. As they came, their bared white fangs and cold eyes gleaming in the moonlight, the waiting bull never flinched. At the instant when the leader sprang for his throat, he reared, towering colossal over the onslaught, and struck out furiously with his knife-edged hooves. Unprepared for this novel defense, the leader, in mid-spring, caught the pile-driver blow full in the face. He went down under it with his head crushed in.

The next second came the crash of Rawson's rifle. Another wolf dropped. But the rest were already leaping upon the gallant bull's flank and shoulders, striving to pull him down. Raging at the sight, the Englishman rushed forward to his defence, firing once more—with what effect he did not stop to notice—and then swinging his rifle like a club, Moore, unable to shoot lest he should strike Rawson, dropped his rifle, swung his axe, and followed with huge leaping strides.

Rawson was bringing his butt down across the back of the nearest wolf, erect and tearing at the bull's neck, when from the tail of his eye he saw a smaller, slimmer beast darting at him from the side. Instinctively he shouted "Down! Down!" and delivered a spasmodic kick at his assailant, catching it under the jaw. Had he been less fully occupied with what was going on before him, he would have been much astonished to see this one of his adversaries drop its tail between its legs with a yelp, slink around behind him and stand staring in bewildered submission. The bitch had been recalled suddenly to her ancient allegiance by the command in a master's voice.

The hybrids, having no longer their wise pack-leader to teach them prudence, and maddened by this unlooked for interference with their kill, now turned a portion of their fury upon their new opponents. For a moment Rawson had his hands full to defend himself against the leaps of a flaming-eyed beast which he could only fight off with short desperate jabs, having no room for a conclusive blow. At the same time, however, at the other side of the melee the giant guide was swinging his axe with swift effect; and the invaders were reduced to three. The bull, his neck and shoulders streaming with blood, but suddenly freed from close pressure, was lashing out once more with his battering fore-hooves in a blind fashion that made him a peril to friend and foe alike. As luck would have it, however, he grazed the haunches of Rawson's adversary, causing the brute to whirl upon him with a snarl. The diversion gave Rawson a chance for a full, swinging blow, ending that quarrel. Of the remaining two wolves, one, springing up sideways at the guide's face, was met by a low sweep of the axe which cut clean through his loins. At the sound of his dying yelp the survivor leaped backwards, wheeled, and fled from the lost battle. As he ran, lengthening himself out, belly to earth, Moore swung his axe again. Launched with the unerring aim of the expert backwoodsman, it hurtled through



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