

"dog of Ennerdale," who for five months held a whole district at bay; appearing and disappearing phantom like among the crags and mists of the high fells, keeping shepherds and farming-folk in perpetual excitement, watched for by night and day, hunted by hounds and by men, yet never to be captured; frightening lovers from their trysts, and the children from school; a presence and a terror prevailing men's minds, and suspending the ordinary operations of life. So in some sort was it with the hunt for Will Brand. It was firmly believed that in the course of it he was twice seen; once in the loneliness of Skiddaw Forest, not far from the gamekeeper's hut, the only habitation in that moorland waste; and once in a storm on the slopes of Great Dodd, when a shepherd, "latin" his sheep, had suddenly perceived a wild-looking fellow, with a gun between his knees, watching him from the shelter of a rock. So far from making any effort to capture the man, the shepherd had fled in terror; but both neighbours and police firmly believed that he had seen the murderer. There were also various mysterious thefts of food reported from mountain farms, indications hotly followed up but to no purpose. Would the culprit, starved out, be forced in time to surrender; or would he die of privation and exposure among the high fells, in the snowdrifts, and leave the spring, when it came, to uncover his bones?

Toward the end of the month the snowstorms of its earlier days passed into a chilly and continuous rain; there was still snow on the heights. The steady down-pour presently flooded the rivers, and sent the streams racing in torrents down the hills.