

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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Vol. XIII.]

TORONTO, MARCH 18, 1893.

[No. 11.]

HOWLING WOLVES.

WHAT a terror do wolves present to our imaginations! Their loud, dismal howling at night sends a cold chill to the heart of the traveller through the winter forests. This universal terror gives us the expression, "Keep the wolf from the door," which means, hard work to keep us from poverty and starvation.

But wolves are not generally as dangerous as they are supposed to be. Living alone in my "shack" or log hut away out near the Rocky Mountains for months, there was hardly a night that I did not hear outside the long blood-hound like howling of the "coyotes" or prairie wolves, wild and weird enough to make the blood run cold in one's veins, yet they were most cowardly animals—frightened by their shadows on a moonlight night.

It is only during the long, cold winter when the poor brutes are driven mad by hunger that they are dangerous. Then in packs they come down from the woods and hills, and attack the belated traveller. The great wood wolf is the most savage. In the great forests of North America, in the Black Forest of Germany and in northern Russia he is generally found, and many fierce fights have the backwoodsmen had for their lives. When attacked by one alone, man is generally the victor, but from a starved pack of these gaunt fiends there is little chance of escape. In the Russian scene above, the wolves are following two benighted travellers—summoning up their courage for an attack. As they advance, others are attracted, by the



A PERILOUS RIDE.

howling from the neighbouring woods, and if the travellers do not soon reach friendly shelter, they will be attacked by the reinforced pack when nought but the sleigh and a few scattered bones will remain to tell the story of their fate.

A SINGULAR VILLAGE.

IN the Cevennes Mountains, in central France, there is a village named La Beage, the inhabitants of which practically live underground a great part of the year. It is 4,250 feet above the sea, and in the bottom of a pass where the snow is heaped up by the winds. When the snow begins to fall heavily the inhabitants retire indoors, and it is not long before the low-roofed cottages are buried, the only means by which air can reach the interior being down the single chimney, which in all the cottages is built very wide and substantial. The snow gradually mounts so high that the door will not open, and at last the windows are blocked up. The inhabitants lay in a good supply of bread, cheese, and salt pork for themselves, and of hay and straw in the outhouse for their cow and horse; and, although the men occasionally go out by way of the chimney, the women and children live in the fetid atmosphere all the winter. They spend their time making cane chairs and baskets, doing a little rude wood-carving, and knitting stockings. If the snow does not melt in a month or so, the people burrow tunnels from house to house, and so get a little society. Should a death occur, the body is confined, and laid away until a thaw makes the cemetery accessible.