

to this. I has fust shot; ef I miss, you're welcome to try; only I somehow feel as ef this war my special business. Here we are; now fer it."

Beaver Jack brought the team to a halt in masterly manner, while Joe and the hunter rolled off the sleigh. Then Hank took post close to the edge of the wood and just in the open.

"I ain't the one to fire at a man without giving him a chance," he said. "Ah! he's seen us; he's stopped. That was a near 'un!"

There was a heavy thud as Hurley's bullet struck the tree beside the hunter. Then up went Hank's weapon. He took a rapid sight, and then flung down his rifle almost before the report had come to Joe's ears, while the latter watched for the result of the shot with more than a little anxiety. A little time before he would perhaps have wished Hurley to escape injury, for Joe possessed a soft and forgiving heart. Now, however, he had a different opinion as to his merits. It was, therefore, with no great amount of sorrow that he saw the ruffian suddenly throw up his arms and tumble over.

"Wiped out clean," growled Hank. "Dead as a trapped beaver."

There could be no doubt that that was the end of the murderer. Hank's bullet had, in fact, killed Hurley instantaneously, and had thereby provided a fitting punishment for the detestable crime he had committed. As for Hurley's companion, the half-breed leaped on to the sleigh which, like his master, he had abandoned for the moment, and sending his whip