

apparent, with a lighter load the enemy were getting nearer.

"Ef that's the case, we'll make a stop precious soon," said Hank. "What say, Joe?"

"I'm with you. We're three now to their two, and if we could face eight of them some little while ago, surely we could——"

His argument came to an abrupt ending at that moment, for a wide ditch with vertical banks carved out by nature crossed their path, and the snow hid it from view. It was more than likely that the snow had formed a species of bridge over this deep hollow; but, in any case, it broke down as the last of the team of dogs crossed, causing the front end of the sleigh to dip suddenly. The runners cannoned against the iron-hard banks, and in a twinkling sleigh and men went flying.

"Surely we could face those two," gasped Joe, as if continuing the sentence where circumstances had caused it to be so abruptly broken, and at the same time picking himself up from the bank of snow into which he had been thrown. "Here's fine cover. This ditch will hide us completely."

He threw himself down into the deep hollow at once, and found that he had quite a high bank before him, over which he had to lift his head to see the enemy. Hurley marked the occasion by firing at him, and his bullet swished past within an inch, causing Joe to duck suddenly. As for Hank, the sudden upset seemed to have caused him vast amusement, and certainly he wasn't in the smallest degree