

The blow struck the largest and first of the wolves who was head of the rest; he fell.

The report had awakened the lady's maid, who screamed fearfully, persuaded that we were attacked by robbers.

"It is only the wolves," said Kosko to her, with a horrible calmness; "they will eat their fallen comrade. Behold us rid of our enemy, but a hundred other will remain our companions until"..... he did not continue, not wishing to reveal to the two women all the horrors of our situation.

The horses, animated by the sound of the shot, darted forward with new ardour whilst the wolves stopped around the carcass.

"That will not keep them long," murmured Kosko; "I know them, they will soon be anew on our heels and our horses will become their prey.

It was at this moment given me to admire Aninia's strength of mind, she occupied herself only with her waiting woman; consoling her, inducing her to resign herself and, above all, to place confidence in Him whose will alone would tame the savage beast. Throwing herself at the bottom of the sleigh, she exhorted the maid, who could not rally her ideas or pray; the unfortunate creature renewed her cries and lamentations, in cursing the unfortunate voyage she had undertaken.

The fine figure of Aninia, turned towards heaven, was lightened by the rays of the moon. It was like a glory, her hands were joined and she prayed with a low voice, but with perfect calmness, and her mind appearing not the least troubled by her imminent peril. Her example encouraged me and gave me hope.

I renewed the charge in my gun that I held ready. The horses were striving to escape from their cruel enemies, but at the same instant we heard anew the noise of the troupe of wolves, and I soon perceived some of these monsters who advanced before the others and who turned towards us with their bloody jaws.

A second shot knocked over the boldest. I hoped then, I believed even that by the repeated halt of these ferocious animals besides the carcasses which they devoured, we should be able to attain the limits of the forest or some habitation.

Helas! how ill founded were my calculations; this time some seconds sufficed to the wolves to devour their comrade; I had hardly time to load anew before they were again behind our sleigh.

"Your efforts are useless," whispered Kosko in my ear; "the horses will soon give in and then we will be lost."

In fact we already remarked that they slackened in their efforts. Their breathing became more and more panting, their step unequal—they did