

in the course of the night," said Kosko to me, but, added he, "when day begins we shall have more of those hellish beasts than we shall be able to kill."

I alone had heard these words, and asked of him in a low voice what he was afraid of; for my part, I hoped that with the dawn, the wolves would quit us to retire into the forest.

"What would even that serve us" replied he sadly? "the horses are dead, and how is a feeble creature like Miss Aninia to attain on foot the limits of the forests? Night will surprise us anew and the wolves will again find us. Alas! this hope is all in vain. There, where the wolves assemble in such great numbers, they do not fear the light of day. Whilst provision of wood lasts, our fire will preserve us from an attack from above. During the day, the flame does not make so great an impression on the wolves. We must gather up all our courage, all our strength, for the next event, for we must defend the women and our life to the last moment. All that may not serve us," added he, in a voice so low that I could hardly hear him.

My only hope, founded on the return of day, was then destroyed, our loss appeared to me now certain, and the bitterness of despair again spread itself over my soul.

In the fear that Aninia should see my trouble, and wishing her to preserve as long as possible the little tranquility which remained to her, I approached her. The hours were passing slowly and anxiously. Aninia was asleep, she lay like a child who knows no danger about it; she smiled in her sleep, and that smile pierced me to the heart.

Old Kosko, in silence, continued to keep up the fire; he had said truly that no other wolf would appear at the opening in the roof; but their scratchings against the door, their cries, their howlings, continued all night. Before Kosko had made his observations, all my hopes lay in daybreak, and now I desired night should never end. Foolish hopes of man. What should we have obtained by that, if it was only a slow death, that of hunger, instead of that which was reserved for us at the wolves' teeth.

The stars grew pale; day, so feared, came on again.

The moment for the predictions of Kosko were about to come.

The wolves encouraged by the day, scrambled, to the number of twenty, around the roof, which was at the point of breaking in under their weight. Aninia still slept, I thanked God for it.

At this moment, when all hope seemed to have left us, we heard the report of more than fifty shots; the sound of the hunting horn and the barking of dogs struck our ears.

The two women got up.