

towed on us. He cast gloomy looks on the vacillating flames ; his brow was wrinkled, and, from time to time, I saw that he shook his head. At first I paid but little attention to him ; but suddenly we heard a piercing cry sound from without, and we looked at each other with anxiety.

This cry was of such a nature, that certainly was not uttered by a man ; I knew not to what animal it could belong.

It soon ceased, but the horrible plaint that it expressed, long resounded to the bottom of our hearts.

"This terrible cry," said Kosko to me, "announces to us, sir, the death of your favourite horse. I have often heard the like on the battle field, it is uttered by young and strong horses who fight up to the last moment, with useless efforts, against death. I would swear that the mare has suffered less, but one thing is certain, that these poor beasts have fallen a prey to the wolves ; these monsters are still occupied, and are leaving us an instant of repose ; but they will return more hungry, more famished than before."

The old servant said truly ; they did not delay beginning their attacks on the cabin ; we could even divine, without trouble, that their fury had increased, for they tried to scramble up the walls to reach the roof.

We were in the greatest fear, our eyes fixed on the opening in the roof. Suddenly, by a gust of wind scattering the smoke, we could distinguish the starry sky. At this moment the lady's maid fell down fainting in pointing to the opening.

Our looks met a terrible apparition ; four wolves' heads shewed themselves there, their jaws still marked with blood : through the smoke, these frightful heads resembled devils. Kosko alone kept his presence of mind ; he threw a fagot in the flames and said to us :

"We have nothing to fear from these ; wolves are afraid of fire, they are blinded by the light of the flame, and do not distinguish us."

A terrible cracking was, however, heard ; three of the monsters disappeared at the moment in which part of the roofing, which was only of wood, broke in under the weight of the fourth, who fell into the middle of the fire.

"Get away !" cried Kosko, "draw," said he to me, "but do not miss your aim."

He seized on the gun. The animal cried fearfully ; I drew the trigger of the pistol and, at the same moment, Kosko finished the wolf with a blow from the butt of the gun.

We drew back from the fire, where his blood, spilt in it, had produced a thick smoke ; we carried him away into a corner.

"It is probably the only essay of the kind that we shall have to fear