

'I see you are not such a calf after all;' and then Roland heard him mutter something about 'an acquisition to the band.' The words made the matter clear enough now to our hero. This ruffian had not saved him because he had shot Ham, but because he wanted an addition to his force. Knowing that there was a price upon Roland's head, he believed that he would find little difficulty in bending him to his infamous ends.

'Here; let us take your hand. We shall never reach home at this rate.' It was with a feeling akin to a shudder that Roland felt the touch of his guide's hand; but the arrangement was successful, and the two got over the ground at a rapid pace. Every maze and tree in that dismal swamp seemed to be known to the guide; and he swerved to right and left,—sometimes so changing his course that it seemed as if he were retracing his steps—with such astonishing swiftness as to completely bewilder our hero.

'I wonder,' observed Roland, 'that the law does not reach you here by the aid of bloodhounds; they filled the wood with dogs this morning for my benefit.'

'They tried that twice, but it didn't turn out profitable,' replied the robber.

'How did you elude them?'

'Why we simply posted ourselves at convenient points and caught the intruding idiots. Out of a pack of twelve only one got out of the swamp alive.'

'Have the constabulary ever sought you here?'

'Oh, frequently. Once they were permitted to roam about through the swamp without molestation. They found nothing for all their searching but a shed built on the lake's edge, and evidently used by fishing parties. They then returned and declared that the story of the swamp being infested was all fudge. A couple of years passed, during which many a bloated butcher and cattle dealer was relieved of his purse; and a few who were foolish enough to dispute about the coin were despoiled of