

The mischief was done, however; I felt as though I would rather die than go back on my word now. Never before in my life had I been stirred so deeply.

Determined to keep my purpose secret, I waited about the house until all the others had gone off. Then, quietly taking down my gun, I put half-a-dozen biscuits in my pocket, and, with well-filled powder-flask and bullet-pouch, slipped off unobserved towards the forest, Tiger following close at my heels.

Tiger was my own dog—a present from a city uncle after whom I had been named. He was half fox-hound, half bull-terrier, and seemed to combine the best qualities of both breeds, so that for sense, strength, and courage, his superior could not be found of his size. My affection for him was surpassed only by his devotion to me. He acknowledged no other master, and fairly lived in the light of my countenance.

This morning he evidently caught from my face some inkling of the serious nature of our business, for instead of bounding and barking about me in his wonted way he trotted gravely along at my side, every now and then looking up into my face, as though about to say, "Here I am, ready for anything!" And where could I have found a trustier ally?

It was a glorious day in December. A week of intense cold had been succeeded by a few days of milder weather, and over all the trees the frost had thrown a fairy garb of white that sparkled brightly in the morning sun. The air was just cold enough to be bracing. The spotless snow