

it came again out of the frost muffled woods—the long sighing wail.

"Alex, do you hear that?"

"Yes," but he didn't want to.

"What 's that?"

"Hare seized by owl."

"You think—that?"

"Yes," but he thought it weakly.

"Your hare has a human voice, Alex."

But Alex, who was visibly chattering, became voluble. Of course, it was a hare. He'd often remarked the resem— But the words died in a gulp of fright, and the guide got himself to bed in haste with the blanket robe over his head.

"Alex, your hare has a long life, bien! Listen! Do you hear? Get up! Some one has need of us. I'm going to see."

In vain he explained to the priest that the voice came from the body of some brave buried among the branches of the trees in there, who was calling for the things his relatives had forgotten to place with the corpse.

"Then, I'll go alone," said Lacombe, "but you keep your gun ready; and if there is danger, I'll call you."

And surely, says the narrator, from a prudent point of view it was rash to follow a vague voice into unknown woods blanketed black with the thickness of intense frost. What was terrifying was that the groans seemed nearer than his own hands and feet—yet he could find nothing! Suddenly he was aware of the warmth of cinders under his moccasins; and stooping felt a voice in his very face. A human form lay wrapped in a buffalo robe across the dying camp fire.

"Speak! What are you?" he demanded.

"A woman with her child—lost I could tramp no longer—my feet are frozen."

Calling the guide, the two men carried

woman and infant to their teepee. She was little more than a child herself, and had evidently been outrageously beaten. Both feet required amputation. The priest learned that she had been cast off by her Cree husband, and had gone forth from the camp to kill both herself and the child; but at the sound of its cry her courage failed her. She could not do the act, and marched on and on, day after day, till her frozen feet could march no further. Then, wrapping the child in her warmest clothing, she had gathered it close in her arms, spread the buffalo robe over herself and laid down to die. But to this Hagar of the wilderness came a visitant of mercy. When Father Lacombe awakened in the morning he found that the guide had plied the woman with restoratives all night, wrapped her in robes, and placed her on the dog sleigh. The guide then hitched himself with the dogs to pull. Father Lacombe fastened the steering pole behind to push; and so they took her to the mission house hundreds of miles distant. On the way they came up with the Cree husband who had abandoned her. The man was dumbfounded at the apparition.

"What!" he blustered. "I don't want this wife! You'd have done much better to have minded your own business and left her alone where she was, to die."

For just a second, the Man in Father Lacombe got the better of the Priest. "I think if that Cree had waited he would have received all he needed.

"You miserable beast!" thundered Lacombe. "You don't think as much of your child as a dog of its pups! Get into that tent this minute and hide your dishonorable head, or— I will find some one to take care of her."