

"We thought we heard wolves, dear father," exclaimed Franziska.

"You were mistaken. Wolves do not often venture so far." He shuddered, as if some dreadful scene was before him, and then exclaimed, "It is a fearful sight to see a pack of wolves. I have never recovered from my horror of them, since my poor cousin Alexis fell a prey to their fury."

"How was that?" asked the young girl.

"Years ago I was driving along a lonely road which led through a forest. Night drew on before we came in sight of Dnilhis, the place to which we were bound. All at once a pack of wolves rushed from the borders of the wood and pursued us. Our frightened horses needed no spur to urge them forward. We almost flew over the ground; but it was in vain that our noble steeds strained every nerve, the fierce animals gained upon us rapidly. My cousin, who was with me, seemed paralysed with fear; our driver held the reins firmly while I attempted to fire at them, but before I could raise my pistol, a violent jolt threw cousin Alexis out of the carriage—may I never again hear such a wail of anguish as burst from his phrensied soul at that awful moment! The famished wolves rushed upon him, and for an instant ceased their pursuit. Our horses fled away like spirits, for well they knew the wolves would be on them again.—Death seemed inevitable. The fierce howls of our pursuers sounded more and more distinctly, and it seemed as if our horses must soon drop down; just then, a sudden turn of the road brought us almost in contact with a band of troopers from Moscow. They were fully aware of the danger, though hidden from the foe, and as soon as the wolves appeared, discharged their loaded carbines amongst them, and in a moment so many lay bleeding and dying that the rest of the pack fled with the utmost precipitation. That was many years ago; but I shall never forget my sufferings, or the death struggle and awful end of my relative. Such scenes are more rare in Russia than they used to be when I was young, still there are districts where it is dangerous to travel unless well protected, hunger makes these animals so desperate."

"Is it true that our government offers a bounty to those who kill wolves, as they did in England?"

"I think not, you know that the Russian Empire is so extensive that it would be difficult to manage such a thing."