

Along the Perilous Way

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they were up with the wolf; but he turned in across the boulevards, and then sprang into a side lane, throwing off the men and most of the dogs. But two collies, keen and swift of foot, followed him, and, emboldened by the onslaught of a mongrel hound, they snapped at the wolf's rear. Some workmen nearby ran across and with shout and gesture encouraged the dogs, and the fight was on. Once, and twice, the big wolf chopped and shook, and his enemies were two. A collie was as quickly put out of commission; then to escape the missiles hurled at him he put off again.

But now he was very lame and tired. His mouth was open wide, as he panted heavily. Bloody slavers ran from his lolling tongue, and his eyes were red rimmed and bleary. If they would only let him rest a little! But he was a wolf, and it was everybody's duty to seek his life. But because he was a wolf, he had the wolfish heart, that keeps on and on and knows not defeat till it is dead. Northward was the way; and because he could not stop, he loped onward; and though each lobe was very short, still he was a wolf.

For a considerable distance he kept to the lane and secured temporary respite; but a delivery wagon blocked the way and forced him to the street. Before he had gone a quarter of a mile, he was again pursued; and now he could not outstrip his pursuers. As he struggled painfully onward, a long low building suddenly blocked the way. A dozen curs were snapping around him, and, seeing a narrow door, he dashed into it almost against a portly man in a white apron. The pursuers piled promiscuously about the door and fell to fighting, and he of the white apron slammed the door.

Shag limped into a long aisle, and his nose filled with the most delicious fragrance that he had ever encountered. All about him, row on row, was meat, red meat, and raw. He was in the city market. Cries and much confusion followed his appearance. Many customers, regardless of half-filled orders or orders not begun, rushed pell mell from the building. The pangs of hunger that had temporarily been silenced by the fear, excitement, and fierce wrath of battle, now returned, and reaching up, the starved brute seized a mouthful of tender chops. Gulp, gulp; he jerked his neck and swallowed the savory morsels in great pieces.

"Open dat door!" yelled a florid faced man in a white apron.

"No; keep it shut and we'll catch him!" It was a vegetable dealer in the next stall speaking.

"You t'ink you keep dat greedy devil here? You t'ink he not eat your cabbages! My Got! Look! Von chop he eat already! Open dat door!"

And the infuriated German hurled a bare beef bone at the marauder. It found his ribs with

a hollow "bung," and the wolf growled his reply through a mouthful of meat. He was not afraid of these men, not he. They were not hunting him. But the irate meat vendor made an attack with a terrible knife in one hand and a cleaver in the other; and Shag moved on, dragging a long string of sausage through the sawdust on the floor. Up and down the long aisle he limped, looking for a means of exit. Presently he saw an open side door, and he fled through it.

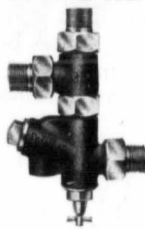
Once again the stern race began, with more dodging of the miscellaneous traffic of the city street. In spite of his feast, he felt more tired. Had he been a wild wolf, he could have run interminably; but on account of his confinement his muscles were not so wiry nor his wind so inexhaustible as it would otherwise have been. Rest, rest! was nature's insistent cry within his tormented body. But he was a wolf, and his wolfish heart drove him forward. Instinct told him that he must soon be through the maze of men and their habitations and he sought the open country as the drowning victim seeks the air. He was going toward the land of freedom. On, on!

Elton-st. was largely warehouse property, and here Shag had a run without much molestation. Soon he reached the railway yard. Long lines of freight cars stood on the sidings, and under and among them he threaded his way. A yard engine was clanging near; but the wolf did not turn aside, for now he was caloused to fear. He paused and looked backward with eyes that saw little; and then he lay down below a box car.

Many hours he lay and rested, and longed for the darkness. Several yard men passed dangerously close, but he crouched low in the shadows and escaped observation. Toward evening that clanging, black, ill smelling monster again passed his way; and a few moments later there was a tremendous shock at the end of the line of cars. A wave of bumps and bangs seemed sweeping his way, and, filled with fear at the commotion, he attempted to get out. It required the third effort to get his stiffened, painful legs below him, and he crawled out just as the long line of cars started backward. Just then he heard the excited shouting of men near him, so he crawled under an adjoining line of standing cars. But every man here as elsewhere was a foe; and soon pieces of coal and stone came whistling his way. He was forced to strike out again on another march on his perilous way.

He was rested somewhat, and, thanks to the German's chops, he felt stronger; but every muscle was painfully sore and tortured him with each step. There were many cuts and bruises too on his gaunt body; for collies and curs bite hard. Still, he was a wolf, and the north called him. By the time that he had crossed the tracks he had limbered up a little.

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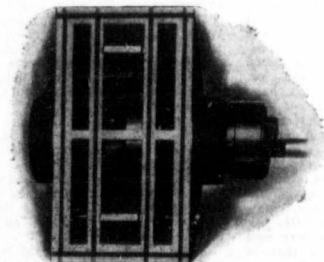
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