

WE FLY BY NIGHT.

We suddenly received from home the intelligence that my father had been taken seriously ill, and had expressed a wish that we should return. The necessity was so urgent, that we were obliged to be thought of, and we started the very same hour. It was a sad journey we had to make. A few days before, I had thrived, and then again fevered; now I was well, and the weather was kindly, and my anxiety about my father left me no rest, and Axinia longed to be by his bedside, and to see him in his bed. We determined to travel the night through; and we were the better enabled to do so, as to-night being the hottest season to smoke, we experienced a moonlight that shone through the trees, which was well acquainted with the road. We were well furnished with fire, and also with provisions for our journey. Before we started, we had already reached the spreading forest which separated us from our native home, and which stretches away for a distance towards Luluabans, there to meet itself with the boundless forests of that country. The road we travelled was wide enough to permit the full moon to shine through the trees, which had been caused by the complete track following immediately upon the snow, checked out upon the road, and the moonlight shone through a perfect stillness reigned around us, which was broken only by the trotting of the horses, and the occasional snoring of the men. The women, who had fallen asleep, my thoughts were by the bed of my sick father, and neither Axinia nor myself felt inclined to talk. It was nearly an hour before we reached a place similar had happened on our lonely way; suddenly the horses which drew our sleigh began to rear, and in a twinkling they were rearing, snorting, and without being urged by the whip, they galloped faster and faster. They were rearing, and had become so wild and irregular, that we were induced to get out of their usual speed only by some very extraordinary cause. They appeared anxious and fearful, and often turned their heads to look back towards the rear of the train, as if so we unknown power impelled them to renewed exertions. From these sudden changes forward, we soon became so wild and irregular, that Rosko was obliged to use some restraint; to this they gave way, it is true, but not without a violent and a violent appearance of the greatest terror. Axinia was so deeply engaged in her own thoughts and feelings to pay any attention to the altered behaviour of the animals; but she had to use to the utmost of her power to be agitated, and prepared as it were for some strange and wonderful occurrence; and old Rosko, who was so much used to wild and irregular, uneasy feeling. He looked back several times quickly, seemed to be listening; then he gave the reins to the reins, and he was off at full gallop. I was so seated in the sleigh, that by turning my mouth was close to our driver's ear. "What is the matter with these horses?" he said gently to him, that it was impossible for Axinia to catch what I said. "You seemed to be alarmed about the uneasiness of the horses had communicated itself to you."

The old man considered for a moment, and then answered me in a low voice, "I fear the horses are upon our track; the cold has driven them out of the woods, and hunger makes them follow us; and if the speed of the horses does not save us, we are lost."

I have since then lost the life of a soldier, and have believed since in its most fearful forms that were so thick upon our track, and I fear that a flaming battery did I ever feel the terror and horror I feel at this moment. My first thought was to get out of the sleigh, but my imagination, her delicate lovely form torn by the teeth of the lions; I saw them appear their hunger with sanguinary delight. I had often heard that those who pursued their prey with an eagle eye, and a speed which made it impossible to escape from them. If our horses could hold out, we were not to be feared, but if they were to be exhausted before that of our pursuers, and that we should fall a sacrifice to them. I was the more knit to my father, and to my mother, with a rifle and a pair of pistols; but my provisions of powder and ball was small, and could serve only to bring down some few of these savage creatures. I thought I might be able to depend upon their nightly expeditions in flocks of several hundreds together. In the meantime, old Rosko was so much upon our track, and I was so much, but it was not necessary to urge them much, for the acute instinct of the terrified beast understood the approaching danger of the man. I had an interesting instruction to look back into the traces behind us, in order to listen through the stillness of the night, for some sound that might excite our horses.

Rosko saw and heard plainly than I. They are coming; they are coming!" whispered he. "Don't you see, they are coming! They are coming!" They look like a dark shadow as they came up out of the valley. It is a pack of more than thirty wolves.

"Now saw what Rosko's quick sight had already seen. With a strange gliding motion, an enormous black mass came nearer and nearer; it was slowly over the snow, and I could not exactly distinguish the manner of its motion, and it became evident that it would very soon overtake

our horses, the strength of which was beginning to give way. Awful, horrible sounds broke through the stillness of the night. They seemed to be sent forth from the depth of the chest, and resembled something of a grating noise, and the most painful, hollow, but yet partly relieved, and yet in agony. Axinia still suspected nothing, and continued to gaze on the animal which engaged her so deeply. I was not able however, any longer to leave her in that happy unconsciousness of the danger which threatened her, and I turned to the other two groups of the eager monsters; already several had burst forward, out of the mass, and were rearing, snorting, and without being urged by the whip, they galloped faster and faster. They were rearing, and had become so wild and irregular, that we were induced to get out of their usual speed only by some very extraordinary cause. They appeared anxious and fearful, and often turned their heads to look back towards the rear of the train, as if so we unknown power impelled them to renewed exertions. From these sudden changes forward, we soon became so wild and irregular, that Rosko was obliged to use some restraint; to this they gave way, it is true, but not without a violent and a violent appearance of the greatest terror. Axinia was so deeply engaged in her own thoughts and feelings to pay any attention to the altered behaviour of the animals; but she had to use to the utmost of her power to be agitated, and prepared as it were for some strange and wonderful occurrence; and old Rosko, who was so much used to wild and irregular, uneasy feeling. He looked back several times quickly, seemed to be listening; then he gave the reins to the reins, and he was off at full gallop. I was so seated in the sleigh, that by turning my mouth was close to our driver's ear. "What is the matter with these horses?" he said gently to him, that it was impossible for Axinia to catch what I said. "You seemed to be alarmed about the uneasiness of the horses had communicated itself to you."

"It is all of no use," whispered Rosko to me; "the pack is coming so thick longer, and they are lost."

And it is true that by this time there was a great number of the creatures upon our track, and their breath became an anxious gasping, and their race unsteady. They did their best, for they knew that the bloodhounds destroyed were at our heels, and that they knew only speed could save us; but their powers were becoming more and more exhausted. Often had one or other of them already fallen, and the remaining few were in a desperate effort. They were, indeed in a fearful situation; I trembled for Axinia's life, for my father's life, and for my own. I was so much upon our track, and I was so much, but it was not necessary to urge them much, for the acute instinct of the terrified beast understood the approaching danger of the man. I had an interesting instruction to look back into the traces behind us, in order to listen through the stillness of the night, for some sound that might excite our horses.

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