

A WOLF STORY.

A weird-like romance hangs over the heights that crown the River Rhine. Tales of feudal magnificence in ancient times rival the stories that lend romantic history to the scenes of the same character in Scotland, and the Rhine passes in its course through all the varied changes of rugged magnificence to the calm waters that are bounded by fertile valleys, resembling rather the placid quiet of a lake than the progress of a stream.

The Upper Rhine formed a frontier department of France and Alsace, which belonged to the German Empire until 1871, after passing to the control of Austria it was finally annexed to France by Louis XVI. In 1871 and the province is now the battlefield of Prussia. In the west of this province are the chains of the Vosges and Jura mountains. These stretch in lofty magnificence, and, with the exception of the poor Alsatian weavers, are rarely penetrated, save by an adventurous hunter in pursuit of game. The chamois here are sought by the sportsman or pursued by the wolf, who make this timbered forest of the forest their chief subsistence, save when the decent upon some fertile and cultivated spot in the plains, they extend their forays to the sheepfold of the peasant.

Rarely, however, does the wolf make these incursions, unless impelled by the stern dictates of hunger. This spurs the natural laziness of his disposition, and he then becomes the most dangerous of ravenous animals, exercising the faculty that leads him in extremity to prey upon the carcass of his brother wolf. The fetid odor of his body is so disagreeable that dogs will hardly attack him, and the flesh is refused to be eaten by even the bloodhound who pursues his trail.

An old hunter relates a night's experience in the Vosges (when the presence of these animals was more numerous than at the present time), and how, by an ingenious ruse, he defended himself and dogs from the onset of a pack of these rapacious beasts.

Night had overtaken the hunter more than a league from the nearest civilized border. Accustomed to the bivouac, he did not hesitate to spend the night in the forest relying upon the results of the day's labor for a satisfactory meal, which, with a huntsman's providential skill, was duly prepared by the cheerful fire that contributed both nourishment and warmth. No sign of a lurking foe was remarked until, warned by the instinct of his dogs, who crouched at his feet, their hair bristling with terror, the expert hunter was warned of a present danger. An instant's reflection, and if he had any doubts of the cause, it was certified by the prolonged howl, rather than bark, which distinguishes the wolf from the dog. The hunter had enclosed himself in the fissure of a caverned rock, and he felt secure that he could be attacked from one side only. So he prepared himself against surprise, and, casting fresh wood upon the fire, peered into the darkness, where the dark forms with gleaming eyes revealed the presence of his wolf-brothers. The hunter felt that to make an open attack or forcibly resist would be a useless hope. He well knew that the brightness of the fire would deter immediate assault. The only fear was, that his supply of material falling short, this method of defense would be exhausted.

At last a bright thought suggested itself to his hunters' experience, and knowing that the nature of wolves was sometimes appalled by the scraping of a violin, he drew from his breast his flute, and struck upon it the highest keys in the loudest notes. The effect was as instantaneous as remarkable. A rushing sound of flying feet sounded accompaniment to the notes of the flute, and the rustling of leaves in the distance died away as the ravenous pack fled to the inner recesses of the forest. The hunter slept no more that night, but vigilantly stood guard until the patrol of day assured him of present safety. Since then he never ventured to make a bivouac without companions, even in the forests bordering on civilization, for at that period it was not unusual for a predatory wolf, urged by hunger, to seek the border settlements, and bear off the sheep of the hardy peasants.

THE RIGHTS OF GHOSTS.—It appears, as a rule, that ghosts do have rights which white men are bound to respect. In England the protecting powers of the law have been cast around phantoms.

At Huddersfield a medical gentleman was lately called up at three o'clock in the morning to attend a patient, and, the case being urgent, he hurried off alone to a dressing gown. While flitting through the streets at that untimely hour he was noticed by several belated youths, who promptly concluded that he was a ghost; and the midnight doctor, by certain appalling utterances and ghostly motions of the arm, rather encouraged the idea. Determined to put an end to the wanderings of unwelcome spirits, the Huddersfield youths attacked the supposed phantom and gave him a severe drubbing. They were subsequently summoned before a magistrate, who fined them each five pounds, and took the bold ground that even had the unlucky physician been, like Hamlet's father, "an honest ghost" he had as much right to the streets as other people, and should be protected from assault and battery. This decision will serve as a precedent, and haunted streets will probably soon become as numerous as haunted houses.

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