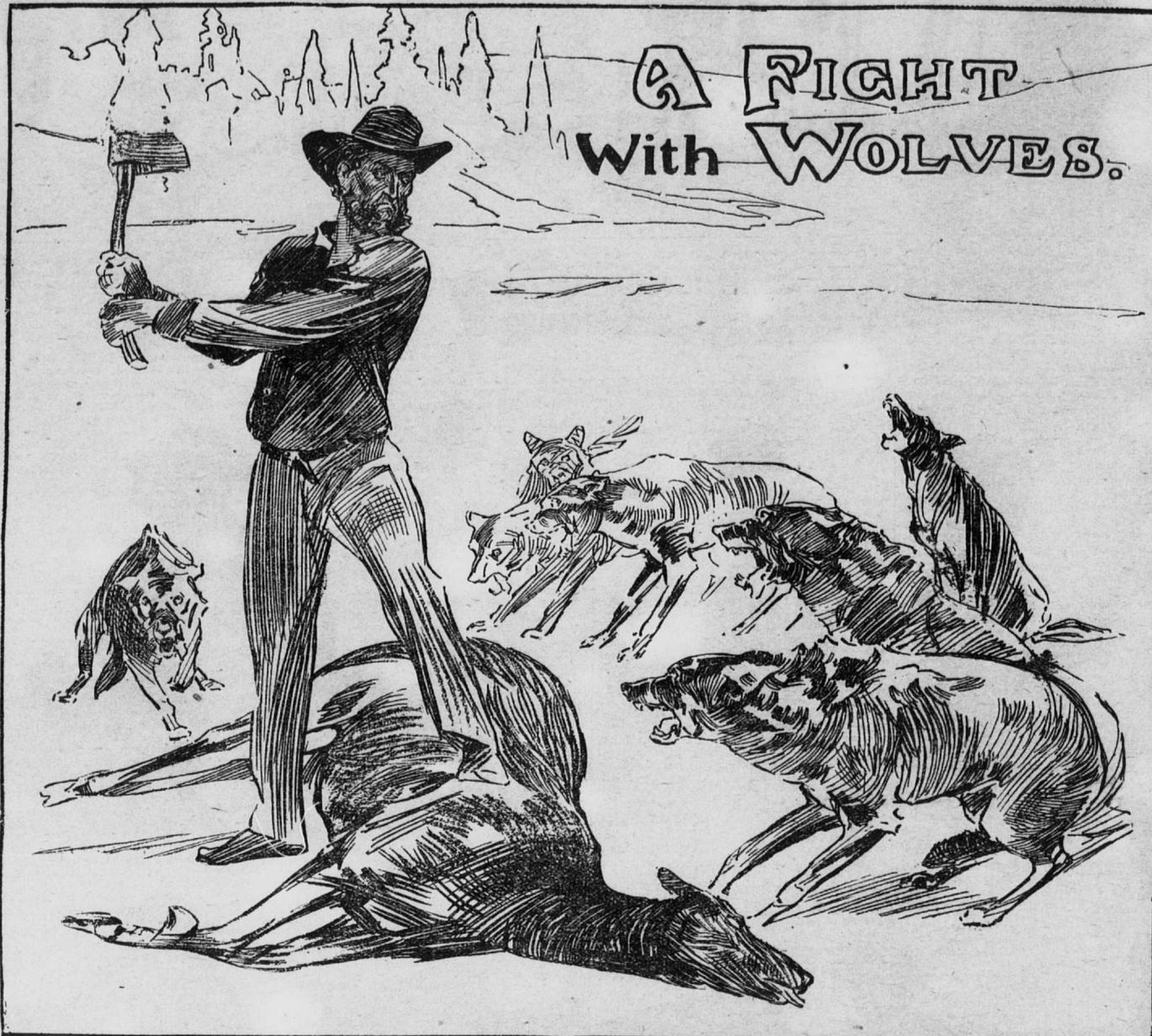


# A FIGHT With WOLVES.



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**W**E were a party of three, camping on the south branch of the Trout River. It was a hot, sultry night in August—such a night as is but rarely experienced in the Adirondacks, but which, when once known, is not soon forgotten.

The woods were filled with the chirping of insects. The gnats and mosquitoes were especially lively and made us still more hot and feverish, with their tormenting buzzing and stinging.

One of the party, George Adams, was a person of long experience in Adirondack woodcraft, and we called on him for a story to while away the long hours.

"Tell us something about cold," I suggested; "let all the surroundings be snow and ice, and it may make us forget the heat."

"Well," responded George, "I'll tell you how old Mose Sangeman once caught a deer on the ice. At the time this affair happened, Mose and his family were living on the shores of Wolfhead Lake.

"This was the only clearing on the lake, and they earned a bare livelihood by trapping, fishing, hunting and doing a little rough farming. No roads led to his shanty, and there were no neighbors within forty miles.

"During the winter of 1856-57, the old Frenchman and his family had a hard time. The winter was an unusually severe one, and for several months they could hold no communication with the outside world. Their provisions gave out, Mose had exhausted the stock of ammunition, which he usually kept on hand for his old musket, and even the fish were scarce.

"One cold morning in February, when Sangeman pushed open the shanty door and looked out over the snowdrifts, matters were a pretty solemn aspect to the pioneer. There was nothing in the house for breakfast.

"As he gazed out over the drifts, the lake lay before him glittering in the frosty air; the wind had cleared it of snow, and the ice shone clear and glassy. Everything was cold and lifeless.

"As his keen glance slowly swept the surface of the lake, his eye was arrested by a dark object which was moving along the shore some half-mile to the north.

"As he watched, the animal cautiously made its way on to the ice and seemed to be heading across the lake. The hunter knew it was not a wolf or bear, for a 'clawed' animal runs freely on the most slippery ice. By the uncertain and awkward way in which the creature moved it must be a deer, and visions of venison steak at once rose in the mind of the hungry Frenchman.

"Seizing his axe, which lay near the door, he started out. On reaching the ice, he skirted along near the shore in order to get well between the deer and land.

"Mose had no covering on his feet but woolen socks and ran on the ice with no danger of slipping. In a few minutes he had cut the

animal off from shore, and turning, he ran rapidly toward the deer.

"His game now saw him for the first time and made desperate efforts to escape. Where there was shell ice or hummocks of snow the deer gained on its pursuer, but on the glare surface it was no match for the man.

"Like the cunning fox he was, Mose kept the deer always headed toward the center of the lake, while he slowly gained on it. At last he reached the animal, and a blow from his ax ended the chase.

"The deer was a young buck, which had lately shed its antlers; although it was not fat, Mose examined the prize with much satisfaction. For the last half hour he had had no eyes for anything but the deer.

"As he was busied in bleeding the animal, he was startled by a series of yelps, sounding in the direction from which the deer had come. Starting to his feet, he looked about. Six or eight wolves were scampering across the ice, evidently on the track of the deer.

"Mose hesitated as to what he should do. Doubtless he could make his own escape if he should surrender the deer to the wolves. But the thought of those venison steaks steeled his nerves. They were worth fighting for, and he would as soon meet the wolves as

his hungry household. Seizing his prize by its front feet, he began dragging it as rapidly as he could toward his shanty.

"The wolves, running with their noses close to the ice, to catch the faint scent, at first did not see him. When they did, setting up a simultaneous howl, they rushed at him. Mose dropped the deer, and turned defiantly, brandishing his ax.

"He knew that as a rule wolves will not attack an able-bodied man. But these fellows seemed uncommonly ferocious; possibly they were in as famished a condition as the Frenchman.

"They formed a circle about him, leaping and snarling. For a time none showed an inclination to come within reach of that flashing ax.

"At length, one brute, more bold than the others, stole behind Mose, and making a rush, gave a savage pull at the deer.

"Mose turned and swung his ax; the wolf let go his prey and dodged just in time. The Frenchman's blood was up, and he ran a few yards after the beast. As he did so, several other wolves sprang upon the deer.

"Running back, Mose dealt blows right and left, and in a moment two wolves lay bleeding on the ice.

"The rest of the pack drew back, frightened, and Mose, taking up the deer, began dragging it in triumph toward the shanty. But he was not allowed to go far unmolested. They began to snarl close at his heels, and fearing that they would make a rush and pull him down before he could protect himself, he was again obliged to stop and face the pack.

"The wolves drew back, and seating themselves on their haunches, uttered long-drawn howls.

"Mose stood with a foot on either side of the deer, brandishing his ax and trying to think of some way out of his predicament. At any rate, he was determined never to give up the venison steaks.

"It was plain to him now how the deer came to be on the ice. Wolves had discovered a place where deer were 'yarding,' and part of the pack had taken after the young buck.

"He, guided by a deer's strange instinct, had followed a 'run-way' to the lake, but the water, by means of which he had hoped to throw his pursuers off the scent, was missing, and he had been compelled to keep on over the ice.

"The wolves evidently felt that the deer belonged by right to them, and the trapper could think of no means by which—unless assistance should come from outside—he could cheat them of their prey.

"As he stood there, revolving these matters in his mind, Mose cast anxious glances toward his shanty, now distant not more than half a mile.

"While he was watching, he saw the door open, and his wife, followed by several of the children, sallied forth. Mrs. Sangeman carried a pitchfork and the others were armed with such weapons as they could find, ranging from a rusty ax to an iron poker and tin pan.

"This motley assembly, with much shouting and pounding of pans, moved boldly toward the spot where Mose stood, surrounded by the wolves.

"Before such company the courage of the wolves disappeared, and, turning tail, they skulked away and took refuge in the woods. The venison steaks were saved.

"The Sangeman family returned in triumph to their shanty, dragging the deer and also the two wolves which Mose had slain with his ax. There is no need of saying that the venison was fully appreciated. It furnished food for the family until the weather moderated enough to enable Mose to make a trip to the settlement and barter his furs for a stock of provisions and ammunition.

"Among all his adventures the old Frenchman finds no tale to relate with greater pleasure than the one in which the wolves saved his family from starvation."

By the time George had finished, either the wintry scene of his story or a night breeze which had sprung up and stirred the leaves of the forest trees, had made us feel cool and comfortable, and before long silence reigned in the camp on the South Branch.

## The Hungry Ant Eater

**I**T is a most uncanny looking creature; its curious little head, with small eyes and ears, and extraordinarily long snout ending in a diminutive mouth; its great forelimbs, armed with enormous claws, which it carries folded in upon its palms, and its huge, bushy tail giving it an odd appearance of being all out of proportion.

This odd appearance, indeed, no doubt gave rise to the extraordinary stories that were told of it by the earlier travelers and writers—such, for example, as that it was in the habit of climbing trees in search of its food, a story which aroused the wrath of the late Charles Waterton, who attacked both the story and its authors with his usual fierceness.

This author also strongly objected to "the remark that the long visage of this most singular quadruped is out of proportion and unsightly," stating that he "considered it to be quite in unison with the rest of the body, and admirably adapted to the support of life;" adding, "What could the ant-bear do without its tremendous claws and cylinder-shaped snout, so tough as to enable it to perforate huge nests of ants, which, in certain districts of South America, appear more like the roofs of Chinese temples than the work and habitations of insignificant little insects?"

The ant-eater's method of obtaining its food is said to be as follows:

Having torn open an ant-hill with its powerful claws, it draws its enormous long, flexible tongue, which is covered with a glutinous saliva, over the masses of insects which rush out in defense of their home, with the result that numbers of them adhere to it, and are thus drawn into the animal's mouth; and so quickly is this operation repeated that we are assured that the tongue is put out and drawn in again covered with insects twice in a second.

Quaint Dr. Brookes describes the process as follows:

"The ant-eater lives upon ants, and when he has found one of their nests he opens the upper part of it with his claws that he may have room to put in his snout and tongue. This is besmeared with a slimy liquor, and is soon covered with ants, which, when he finds, he draws it into his mouth and swallows them. He repeats this practice as long as there are any remaining, or at least as long as they will run into the same snare. When he is hungry again he will go in quest of another nest."

The tongue is a wonderful organ, much longer than the head, round, and capable of being projected sixteen or eighteen inches; in appearance it is very much like an enormous worm; when at rest it is bent backward in the mouth, or "he is obliged to bend part of it back when he keeps it within his mouth, for it is not long enough to hold it without this artifice."