
THE LAME PRIEST.

IF the air had not been December's, I should have said there was balm in it. Balm there was, to me, in the sight of the road before me. The first snow of winter had been falling for an hour or more; the barren hill was white with it. What wind there was was behind me, and I stopped to look my fill.

The long slope stretched up till it met the sky, the softly rounded white of it

melting into the gray clouds — the dove-brown clouds — that touched the summit, brooding, infinitely gentle. From my feet led the track, sheer white, where old infrequent wheels had marked two channels for the snow to lie; in the middle a clear filmy brown, — not the shadow of a color, but the light of one; and the gray and white and brown of it all was veiled and strange with the blue-

gray mist of falling snow. So quiet, so kind, it fell, I could not move for looking at it, though I was not halfway home.

My eyes are not very good. I could not tell what made that brown light in the middle of the track till I was on it, and saw it was only grass standing above the snow; tall, thin, feathery autumn grass, dry and withered. It was so beautiful I was sorry to walk on it.

I stood looking down at it, and then, because I had to get on, lifted my eyes to the skyline. There was something black there, very big against the low sky; very swift, too, on its feet, for I had scarcely wondered what it was before it had come so close that I saw it was a man, a priest in his black soutane. I never saw any man who moved so fast without running. He was close to me, at my side, passing me even as I thought it.

"You are hurried, father," said I, meaning to be civil. I see few persons in my house, twelve miles from the settlement, and I had my curiosity to know where this strange priest was going. For he was a stranger.

"To the churchyard, my brother, — to the churchyard," he answered, in a chanting voice, yet not the chanting you hear in churches. He was past me as he spoke, — five yards past me down the hill.

The churchyard! Yes, there was a burying. Young John Noel was dead these three days. I heard that in the village.

"This priest will be late," I thought, wondering why young John must have two priests to bury him. Father Moore was enough for every one else. And then I wondered why he had called me "brother."

I turned to watch him down the hill, and saw what I had not seen before. The man was lame. His left foot hipped, either in trick or infirmity. In the shallow snow his track lay black and uneven where the sound foot had taken the weight. I do not know why, but that black track had a desolate look on the

white ground, and the black priest hurrying down the hill looked desolate, too. There was something infinitely lonely, infinitely pathetic, in that scurrying figure, indistinct through the falling snow.

I had grown chilled standing, and it made me shiver; or else it was the memory of the gaunt face, the eyes that did not look at me, the incredible, swift lameness of the strange priest. However it was, virtue had gone from me. I went on to the top of the hill without much spirit, and into the woods. And in the woods the kindness had gone from the snowfall. The familiar rocks and stumps were unfamiliar, threatening. Half a dozen times I wondered what a certain thing could be that crouched before me in the dusk, only to find it a rotten log, a boulder in the bare bushes. Whether I hurried faster than I knew, for that unfriendliness around me, I did not trouble to think, but I was in a wringing sweat when I came out at my own clearing. As I crossed it to my door something startled me; what, I do not know. It was only a faint sound, far off, unknown, unrecognizable, but unpleasing. I forgot the door was latched (I leave my house by the window when I go out for the day), and pushed it sharply. It gave to my hand. There was no stranger inside, at least. An old Indian sat by the smouldering fire, with my dog at his feet.

"Andrew!" said I. "Is anything wrong?" I had it always in my mind, when he came unexpectedly, that his wife might be dead. She had been smoking her pipe and dying these ten years back.

"I don' know." The old man smiled as he carefully shut and barred the door I had left ajar. "He want tobacco, so I come. You good man to me. You not home; I wait and make supper; my meat." He nodded proudly at the dull embers, and I saw he had an open pot on them, with a hacked-off joint of moose-meat. "I make him stew."

He had done the same thing before, a sort of tacit payment for the tobacco

he wanted. I was glad to see him, for I was so hot and tired from my walk home that I knew I must be getting old very fast. It is not good to sit alone in a shack of a winter's night and know you are getting old very fast.

When there was no more moosemeat we drew to the fire. Outside the wind had risen, full of a queer wailing that sounded something like the cry of a loon. I saw Andrew was not ready to start for home, though he had his hat on his head, and I realized I had not got out the tobacco. But when I put it on the table he let it lie.

"You keep me here to-night?" he asked, without a smile, almost anxiously. "Bad night, to-night. Too long way home."

I was pleased enough, but I asked if the old woman would be lonely.

"He get tobacco to-morrow." (Andrew had but the masculine third person singular; and why have more, when that serves?) "Girl with him when I come. To-morrow" — He listened for an instant to the wind, stared into the fire, and threw so mighty a bark-covered log on it that the flames flew up the chimney.

"Red deer come back to this country!" exclaimed he irrelevantly. "Come down from Maine. Wolves come back, too, over the north ice. I s'pose smell 'em? I don' know."

I nodded. I knew both things, having nothing but such things to know in the corner of God's world I call my own.

Andrew filled his pipe. If I had not been used to him, I could never have seen his eyes were not on it, but on me.

"To-morrow," he harked back abruptly, "we go 'way. Break up here; go down Lake Mooin."

"Why?" I was astounded. He had not shifted camp for years.

"I say red deer back. Not good here any more."

"But" — I wondered for half a minute if he could be afraid of the few stray wolves which had certainly come,

from Heaven knew how far, the winter before. But I knew that was nonsense. It must be something about the deer. How was I to know what his mind got out of them?

"No good," he repeated; he lifted his long brown hand solemnly, — "no good here. You come too."

I laughed. "I'm too old! Andrew, who was the strange priest I met to-day crossing the upland farm?"

"Father Moore — no? Father Underhill?"

"No. Thin, tired-looking, lame."

"Lame! Drag leg? Hurry?" I had never seen him so excited, never seen him stop in full career as now. "I don' know." It was a different man speaking. "Strange priest, not belong here. You come Lake Mooin with me."

"Tell me about the priest first," though I knew it was useless as I ordered it.

He spat into the fire. "Lame dog, lame woman, lame priest, — all no good!" said he. "What time late you sit up here?"

Not late that night, assuredly. I was more tired than I wanted to own. But long after I had gone to my bunk in the corner I saw Andrew's wrinkled face alert and listening in the firelight. He played with something in his hand, and I knew there was that in his mind which he would not say. The wind had died away; there was no more loon-calling, or whatever it was. I fell to sleep to the sound of the fire, the soft pat of snow against the window. But the straight old figure in my chair sat rigid, rigid.

I opened my eyes to broad, dull daylight. Andrew and the tobacco were gone. But on the table was something I did not see till I was setting my breakfast there: three bits of twig, two uprights and a crosspiece; a lake-shore pebble; a bit of charred wood. I supposed it was something about coming back from Lake Mooin to sit by my fire again, and I swept the picture-writing

away as I put down my teapot. Afterwards I was glad.

I began to wonder if it would ever stop snowing. Andrew's track from my door was filled up already. I sat down to my fly-tying and my books, with a pipe in my mouth and an old tune at my heart, when I heard a hare shriek out. I will have no traps on my grant, — a beggarly hundred acres, not cleared, and never will be; I have no farmer blood, — and for a moment I distrusted Andrew. I put on my boots and went out.

The dog plumped into the woods ahead of me, and came back. The hare shrieked again, and was cut off in midcry.

"Indian is Indian!" said I savagely. "Andrew!" But no one answered.

The dog fell behind me, treading in my steps.

In the thick spruces there was nothing; nothing in the opener hardwood, till I came out on a clear place under a big tree, with the snow falling over into my boot legs. There, stooping in the snow, with his back to me, was a man, — the priest of yesterday. Priest or no priest, I would not have it; and I said so.

He smiled tightly, his soutane gathered up around him.

"I do not snare. Look!" He moved aside, and I saw the bloody snow, the dead hare. "Something must have killed it and been frightened away. It is very odd." He looked round him, as I did, for the fox or wild-cat tracks that were not there. Except for my bootprints from my side, and his uneven track from his, there was not a mark on the snow. It might have been a wild cat who jumped to some tree, but even so it was queer.

"Very odd," he said again. "Will you have the hare?"

I shook my head. I had no fancy for it.

"It is good meat."

I had turned to see where my dog had gone, but I looked back at the sound of his voice, and was ashamed. Pinched,

tired, bedraggled, he held up the hare; and his eyes were sharp with hunger.

I looked for no more phantom tracks; I forgot he had sinned about the hare. I was ashamed that I, well fed, had shamed him, empty, by wondering foolishly about wild cats. Yet even so I had less fancy for that hare than ever.

"Let it lie," said I. "I have better meat, and I suppose the beasts are hungry as well as we. If you are not hurried, come in and have a bite with me. I see few strangers out here. You would do me a kindness."

A very strange look came on his face. "A kindness!" he exclaimed. "I — do a kindness!"

He seemed so taken aback that I wondered if he were not a little mad. I do not like madmen, but I could not turn round on him.

"You are off the track to anywhere," I explained. "There are no settlements for a hundred miles back of me. If you come in, I will give you your bearings."

"Off the track!" he repeated, almost joyfully. "Yes, yes. But I am very strong. I suppose" — his voice dragged into a whisper — "I shall not be able to help getting back to a settlement again. But" — He looked at me for the first time, with considering eyes like a dog's, only more afraid, less gentle. "You are a good man, brother," he said. "I will come."

He cast a shuddering glance at the hare, and threw it behind him. As I turned to go he drifted lamely after me, just as a homeless dog does, half hope, half terrified suspicion. But I fancied he laid a greedy eye at the bloody hare after he had turned away from it.

Somehow, he was not a comfortable companion, and I was sorry I had no lunatic asylum. I whistled for my dog, but he had run home. He liked neither snow nor strangers. I saw his great square head in my bed as I let the priest in, and I knew he was annoyed. Dogs are funny things.

Mad or sane, that priest ate ravenously. When he had finished his eyes were steadier, though he started frightfully when I dropped some firewood, — started toward the door.

“Were you in time for the funeral yesterday, father?” I asked, to put him at his ease. But at first he did not answer.

“I turned back,” he said at last, in the chanting voice of yesterday. “You live alone, brother? Alone, like me, in the wilderness?”

I said yes. I supposed he was one of the Indian priests who live alone indeed. He was no town priest, for his nails were worn to the quick.

“You should bar your door at night,” he continued slowly, as if it were a distasteful duty. “These woods are not — not as they were.”

Here was another warning, the second in twenty-four hours. I forgot about his being crazy.

“I always bar it.” I answered shortly enough. I was tired of these child’s terrors, all the more that I myself had felt evil in the familiar woods only yesterday.

“Do more!” cried the priest. He stood up, a taller man than I had thought him, a gaunt, hunted-looking man in his shabby black. “Do more! After nightfall keep your door shut, even to knocking; do not open it for any calling. The place is a bad place, and treachery” — He stopped, looked at the table, pointed at something. “Would you mind,” said he, “turning down that loaf? It is not — not true!”

I saw the loaf bottom up on the platter, and remembered. It is an old custom of silent warning that the stranger in the house is a traitor. But I had no one to warn. I laughed, and turned the loaf.

“Of course there is no traitor.”

If ever I saw gratitude, it was in his eyes, yet he spoke peevishly: “Not now; but there might be. And so I say to you, after nightfall do not open your door — till the Indians come back.”

Then he was an Indian priest. I wondered why Andrew had lied about him.

“What is this thing” — I was impatient — “that you and they are afraid of? Look out there,” — I opened the door (for the poor priest, to be truthful, was not savory), and pointed to the quiet clearing, the soft-falling snow, the fringe of spruces that were the vanguard of the woods, — “look there, and tell me what there is in my own woods that has not been there these twelve years past! Yet first an Indian comes with hints and warnings, and then you.”

“What warnings?” he cried. “The Indian’s, I mean! What warnings?”

“I am sure I do not know.” I was thoroughly out of temper; I was not always a quiet old man in a lonely shack. “Something about the red deer coming back, and the place being bad.”

“That is nonsense about the red deer,” returned the priest, not in the least as if he meant it.

“Nonsense or not, it seems to have sent the Indians away.” I could not help sounding dry. I hate these silly mysteries.

He turned his back to me, and began to prowling about the room. I had opened my mouth to speak, when he forestalled me.

“You have been kind to an outcast priest.” He spoke plainly. “I tell you in return to go away; I tell you earnestly. Or else I ask you to promise me that for no reason will you leave your house after dark, or your door on the latch, till the Indians come back —” He stopped in the middle of a word, the middle of a step, his lame leg held up drolly. “What is that?”

It was more like the howl of a wild beast than a question, and I spun round pretty sharply. The man was crazier than I liked.

“That rubbish of twigs and stones? The Indian left them. They mean something about his coming back, I suppose.”

I could not see what he was making

such a fuss about. He stood in that silly, arrested attitude, and his lips had drawn back from his teeth in a kind of snarl. I stooped for the things, and it was exactly as if he snapped at me.

"Let them be. I — I have no fancy for them. They are a heathen charm." He backed away from them, drew close to the open door, and stood with a working face, — the saddest sight of fierce and weary ruin, of effort to speak kindly, that ever I saw.

"They 're just a message," I began.

"That you do not understand." He held up his hand for silence, more priest and less madman than I had yet seen him. "I will tell you what they mean. The twigs, two uprights and a crosspiece, mean to keep your door shut; the stone is — the stone does not matter — call it a stranger; the charcoal" — for all the effort he was making his hand fell, and I thought he trembled — "the charcoal" —

I stooped mechanically to put the things as he described them, as Andrew had left them; but his cry checked me.

"Let the cruel things be! The charcoal means the unlucky, the burned-out souls whose bodies live accursed. No, I will not touch them, either. But do you lay them as you found them, night after night, at your door, and — and" — he was fairly grinding his teeth with the effort; even an outcast priest may feel shame at believing in heathenry — "and the unlucky, the unhappy, must pass by."

I do not know why such pity came on me, except that it is not right to see into the soul of any man, and I knew the priest must be banned, and thought Andrew had meant to warn me against him. I took the things, twigs, stone, and charcoal, and threw them into the fire.

"I 'd sooner they came in," I said.

But the strange priest gave me a look of terror, of agony. I thought he wrung his hands, but I could not tell. As if I had struck him he was over my threshold, and scurrying away with his swift lame-

ness into the woods and the thin-falling snow. He went the way we had come in the morning, the way of the dead hare. I could not help wondering if he would take it with him if it were still there. I was sorry I had not asked him where he was going; sorrier I had not filled his pockets with food. I turned to put away my map of the district, and it was gone. He must have moved more silently than a wolf to have stolen it, but stolen it was. I could not grudge it, if I would rather have given it. I went to the bunk to pull out my sulky dog, and stood amazed. Those books lie which say dogs do not sweat.

"The priest certainly had a bad smell," I exclaimed, "but nothing to cause all this fuss! Come out!"

But he only crawled abjectly to the fire, and presently lifted his great head and howled.

"Snow or no snow, priest or no priest," said I, "we will go out to get rid of these vapors;" for I had not felt much happier with my guest than had the dog.

When we came back we had forgotten him; or why should I lie? — the dog had. I could not forget his lameness, his poor, fierce, hungry face. I made a prayer in my bed that night. (I know it is not a devout practice, but if the mind kneels I hold the body does not matter, and my mind has been kneeling for twenty years.)

"For all that are in agony and have none to pray for them, I beseech thee, O God!" And I meant the priest, as well as some others. But, however it was, I heard — I mean I saw — no more of him. I had never heard of him so much as his name.

Christmas passed. In February I went down to the village, and there I heard what put the faint memory of the lame man out of my head. The wolves who had followed the red deer were killing, not deer in the woods, but children in the settlements. The village talked of packs of wolves, and Heaven knew how many children. I thought, if it came to

bare truth, there might have been three children eaten, instead of the thirty rumor made them, and that for the fabled pack there probably stood two or three brutes, with a taste for human flesh, and a distaste for the hard running of pulling down a deer. And before I left the village I met a man who told the plain tale.

There had been ten children killed or carried off, but there had been no pack of wolves concerned, nor even three nor two. One lame wolf's track led from each robbed house, only to disappear on some highroad. More than that, the few wolves in the woods seemed to fear and shun the lonely murderer; were against him as much as the men who meant to hunt him down.

It was a queer story; I hardly thought it held water, though the man who told it was no romance-maker. I left him, and went home over the hard shining of the crusted snow, wondering why the good God, if he had not meant his children to kill, should have made the winter so long and hard.

Yellow shafts of low sunlight pierced the woods as I threaded them, and if they had not made it plain that there was nothing abroad I should have thought I heard something padding in the underbrush. But I saw nothing till I came out on my own clearing; and there I jerked up with surprise.

The lame priest stood with his back to my window, — stood on a patch of tramped and bloody snow.

"Will you never learn sense?" he whined at me. "This is no winter to go out and leave your window unfastened. If I had not happened by, your dog would be dead."

I stared at him. I always left the window ajar, for the dog to go out and in.

"I came by," drawled the priest, as if he were passing every day, "and found your dog out here with three wolves on him. I — I beat them off." He might speak calmly, but he wiped the sweat

from his face. "I put him in by the window. He is only torn."

"But you" — My wits came back to me. I thanked him as a man does who has only a dumb beast to cherish. "Why did you not go in, too? You must be frozen."

He shook his head. "The dog is afraid of me; you saw that," he answered simply. "He was better alone. Besides, I had my hands full at the time."

"Are you hurt?" I would have felt his ragged clothes, but he flinched away from me.

"They were afraid, too!" He gave a short laugh. "And now I must go. Only be careful. For all you knew, there might have been wolves beside you as you came. And you had no gun."

I knew now why he looked neither cold nor like a man who has been waiting. He had made the window safe for the dog inside, and run through the woods to guard me. I was full of wonder at the strangeness of him, and the absurd gratitude; I forgot — or rather, I did not speak of — the stolen map. I begged him to come in for the night. But he cut me off in the middle.

"I am going a long way. No, I will not take a gun. I have no fear."

"These wolves are too much!" I cried angrily. "They told me in the village that a lame one had been harrying the settlements. I mean a wolf" — Not for worlds would I have said anything about lameness if I had remembered his.

"Do they say that?" he asked, his gaunt and furrowed face without expression. "Oh, you need not mind me. It is no secret that I — I too am lame. Are they sure?"

"Sure enough to mean to kill him." Somehow, my tongue faltered over it.

"So they ought." He spoke in his throat. "But — I doubt if they can!" He straightened himself, looked at the sun with a queer face. "I must be going. You need not thank me, — except, if there comes one at nightfall, do not,

for my memory, let him in. Good-night, brother."

And, "Good-night, brother," said I.

He turned, and drifted lamely out of the clearing. He was out of my sight as quickly as if he had gone into the ground. It was true about the wolves; there were their three tracks, and the priest's tracks running to the place where they had my dog down. If, remembering the hare, I had had other thoughts, I was ashamed of them. I was sorry I had not asked in the village about this strange man who beat off wolves with a stick; but I had, unfortunately, not known it in the village.

I was to know. Oh, I was to know!

It might have been a month after — anyhow, it was near sunset of a bitter day — when I saw the lame priest again.

Lame indeed. Bent double as if with agony, limping horribly, the sweat on his white face, he stumbled to my door. His hand was at his side; there was a dry blood stain round his mouth; yet even while he had to lean against the doorpost he would not let me within arm reach of him, but edged away.

"Come in, man." I was appalled. "Come in. You — are you hurt?" I thought I saw blood on his soutane, that was in flinders.

He shook his head. Like a man whose minutes are numbered, he looked at the sun; and, like a man whose minutes are numbered, could not hurry his speech.

"Not I," he said at last. "But there is a poor beast out there," nodding vaguely, "a — a dog, that has been wounded. I — I want some rags to tie up the wound, a blanket to put over him. I cannot leave him in his — his last hour."

"You can't go. I'll put him out of his misery: that will be better than blankets."

"It might," muttered he, "it might, if you could! But I must go."

I said I would go, too. But at that he seemed to lose all control of himself, and snarled out at me.

"Stay at home. I will not have you. Hurry. Get me the things."

His eyes — and, on my soul, I thought death was glazing them — were on the sinking sun when I came out again, and for the first time he did not edge away from me. I should have known without telling that he had been caring for some animal by the smell of his clothes.

"My brother that I have treated brotherly, as you me," he said, "whether I come back this night or not, keep your door shut. Do not come out — *if I had strength to kneel, I would kneel to you* — for any calling. And I — I that ask you have loved you well; I have tried to serve you, except" (he had no pause, no awkwardness) "in the matter of that map; but you had burnt the heathen charm, and I had to find a way to keep far off from you. I am — I am a driven man!"

"There will be no calling." I was puzzled and despairing. "There has been none of that loon-crying, or whatever it was, since the night I first met you. If you would treat me as a brother, come back to my house and sleep. I will not hurt your wounded dog," though even then I knew it was no dog.

"I treat you as I know best," he answered passionately. "But if in the morning I do not come" — He seized the blanket, the rags; bounded from me in the last rays of sunlight, dragging his burden in the snow. As he vanished with his swift, incredible lameness, his voice came back high and shrill: "If I do not come in the morning, come out and give — give my dog burial. For the love of" — he was screaming — "for the love I bore you — Christian burial!"

If I had not stayed to shut the door, I should not have lost him. Until dark I called, I beat every inch of cover. All the time I had a feeling that he was near and evading me, and at last I stopped looking for him. For all I knew he might have a camp somewhere; and camp or none, he had said pretty plainly he did

not want me. I went home, angry and baffled.

It was a freezing night. The very moon looked fierce with cold. The shack snapped with frost as I sat down to the supper I could not eat for the thought of the poor soul outside; and as I sat I heard a sound, a soft, imploring call, — the same, only nearer and more insistent, as the cry on the wind the night after I first saw the priest. I was at the door, when something stopped me. I do not exaggerate when I say the mad priest's voice was in my ears: "If there comes one to your door after nightfall, do not let him in. Do not open for any crying. *If I had strength to kneel, I would kneel to you.*"

I do not think any pen on earth could put down the entreaty of that miserable voice, but even remembering it I would have disregarded it if, before I could so much as draw breath, that soft calling had not broken into a great ravening howl, bestial, full of malice. For a moment I thought the priest had come back raving mad; I thought silly thoughts of my cellar and my medicine chest; but as I turned for my knitted sash to tie him with, the horrid howl came again, and I knew it was no man, but a beast. Or I think that is a lie. I knew nothing, except that outside was something more horrible than I had ever dreamed of, and that I could not open my door.

I did go to the window; I put a light there for the priest to see, if he came; but I did no more. That very day I had said, "There will be no more calling," and here, in my sober senses, stood and sweated because my words were turned into a lie.

There seemed to be two voices, yet I knew it was but one. First would come the soft wailing, with the strange drawing in it. There was more terror for me in that than in the furious snarl to which it always changed; for while it was imploring it was all I could do not to let in the one who cried out there.

Just as I could withstand no longer, the ravening malice of the second cry would stop me short. It was as if one called and one forbade me. But I knew there were no two things outside.

I may as well set down my shame and be done. I was afraid. I stood holding my frantic dog, and dared not look at the unshuttered window, black and shining like new ice in the lamp-light, lest I should see I knew not what inhuman face looking at me through the frail pane. If I had had the heathen charm, I should have fallen to the cowardice of using it.

It may have been ten minutes that I stood with frozen blood. All I am sure of is that I came to my senses with a great start, remembering the defenseless priest outside. I shut up my dog, took my gun, opened my door in a fury, and — did not shoot.

Not ten yards from me a wolf crouched in the snow, a dark and lonely thing. My gun was in my shoulder, but as he came at me the sound that broke from his throat loosened my arm. It was human. There is no other word for it. As I stood, sick and stupid, the poor brute stopped his rush with a great slither in the snow that was black with his blood in the moonlight, and ran, — ran terribly, lamely, from my sight, — but not before I had seen a wide white bandage bound round his gray-black back and breast.

"The priest's dog!" I said. I thought a hundred things, and dared not meddle with what I did not understand.

I searched as best I might for what I knew I should not find, — searched till the dawn broke in a lurid sky; and under that crimson light I found the man I had called brother on the crimson snow. And as I hope to die in a house and in my bed, my rags I gave for the dying beast were round his breast, my blanket huddled at his hand. But his face, as I looked on him, I should not have known, for it was young. I put down my loaded

gun, that I was glad was loaded still, and I carried the dead home. I saw no wounded wolf nor the trace of one, except the long track from my door to the priest's body, and *that* was marked by neither teeth nor claws, but, under my rags, with bullets.

Well, he had his Christian burial! — though Father Moore, good, smooth man, would not hear my tale.

The dead priest had been outcast by his own will, not the Church's; had roamed the country for a thousand miles, a thing afraid and a thing of fear. And now some one had killed him, perhaps by mistake.

"Who knows?" finished Father Moore softly. "Who knows? But I will have no hue and cry made about it. He was once, at least, a servant of God, and these," — he glanced at the queer-

looking bullets that had fallen from the dead man's side as I made him ready for burial, — "I will encourage no senseless superstition in my people by trying to trace these. Especially" — But he did not finish.

So we dug the priest's grave, taking turn by turn, for we are not young; and his brother in God buried him. What either of us thought about the whole matter he did not say.

But the very day after, while the frozen mound of consecrated earth was raw in the sunshine, Andrew walked in at my door.

"We come back," he announced. "All good here now! Lame wolf dead. Shoot him after dark, silver bullet. Wē-gŭlādīmōoch. Bochtūsŭmí." ¹

He said never a word about the new grave. And neither did I.

S. Carleton.