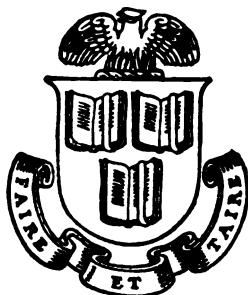


THE  
**Wolf's Long Howl**

BY

STANLEY WATERLOO



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## LOVE AND A TRIANGLE

A MAN came out of a mine, looked about him, inhaled the odor from the stunted spruce trees, looked up at the clear skies, then called to a boy idling in a shed at a little distance from the mine buildings, telling him to bring out the horse and buckboard. The name of the man who had issued from the mine was Julius Corbett, and he was a civil engineer. Furthermore, he was a capitalist.

He was an intelligent looking man of about thirty-five, and a resolute looking one, this Julius Corbett, and as he stood waiting for the buckboard, was rather worth seeing, vigorous of frame, clear of eye and bronzed by a summer's work in a wild country. The shaft from which he had just emerged was that of a silver mine not five miles distant from Black Bay, one of the inlets of the northern shore of Lake Superior, and was a most valuable property, of which he was chief owner. He had inherited from an uncle in Canada a few hundred acres of land in this region, but had scarcely considered it worthy the payment of its slight taxes until some of the many attempts at mining in the region had proved successful, and it

was shown that the famous Silver Islet, worked out years ago in Lake Superior, was not the only repository thereabouts of the precious metal. Then he had abandoned for a time the practice of his profession—he had an office in Chicago—and had visited what he referred to lightly as his “British possessions.” He had found rich indications, had called in mining experts, who confirmed all he had imagined, and had returned to Chicago and organized a company. There was a monotonous success to the undertaking, much at variance with the story of ordinary mining enterprises. Corbett had become a very rich man within two years; he was worth more than a million, and was becoming richer daily. He was, seemingly, a person much to be envied, and would not himself, on the day here referred to, have denied such imputation, for he was in love with an exceedingly sweet and clever girl, and knew that he had won this same charming creature’s heart. They were plighted to each other, but the date of their marriage was not yet fixed. He had closed up his business at the mine for the season, and was now about to hasten to Chicago, where the day of so much importance to him would be fixed upon and the sum of his good fortune soon made complete. This was in September, 1898.

It was not a commonplace girl whom Corbett was to marry. On the contrary, she was exceptionally gifted, and a young woman whose cleverness had

been supplemented by an elaborate education. There was, however, running through her character a vein of what might be called emotionalism. The habit of concentration, acquired through study, seemed rather to intensify this quality than otherwise. Perhaps it made even greater her love for Corbett, but it was destined to perplex him.

In September the air is crisp along the route from Black Bay to Duluth, and from that through fair Wisconsin to Chicago, and Corbett's spirits were high throughout the journey. Was he not to meet Nell Morrison, in his estimation the sweetest girl on earth? Was he not soon to possess her entirely and for a permanency? He made mental pictures of the meeting, and drifted into a lover's mood of planning. Out of his wealth what a home he would provide for her, and how he would gratify her gentle whims! Even her astronomical fancy, Vassar-born, should become his own, and there should be an observatory to the house. He had a weakness for astronomy himself, and was glad his wife-to-be had the same taste intensified. They would study the heavens together from a heaven of their own. What was wealth good for anyhow, save to make happy those we love?

The train sped on, and Chicago was reached, and very soon thereafter was reached the home of the Morrises. Corbett could not complain of his reception. The one creature was there, sweet as a woman may be, eager to meet him, and with ten-

derness and steadfastness shown in every line of her pretty face. They spent a charming day and evening together, and he was content. Once or twice, just for a moment, the young woman seemed abstracted, but it was only for a moment, and the lover thought little of the circumstance. He was happy when he bade her good-night. "To-morrow, dear," said he, "we will talk of something of greatest importance to me, of importance to us both." She blushed and made no answer for a second. Then she said that she loved him dearly, and that what affected one must affect the other, and that she would look for him very early in the afternoon. He went to his hotel buoyant. The world was good to him.

When Corbett called at the Morrison mansion the next day he entered without ringing, as was his habit, and went straight to the library, expecting to find Nell there. He was disappointed, but there were traces of her recent presence. There was an astronomical map open upon the table, and books and reviews lay all about, each open, with a marker indicating a special page. A little glove lay upon the floor, and Corbett picked it up and kissed it.

He summoned a servant and sent upstairs to announce his presence; then turned instinctively to note what branch of her favorite study was now attracting his sweetheart's attention. He picked up one of the open reviews, an old one by the

way, and read a marked passage there. It was as follows:

“It will always be more difficult for us to communicate with the people of Mars than to receive signals from them, because of our position and phases. It is the nocturnal terrestrial hemisphere that is turned toward the planet Mars in the periods when we approach most nearly to it, and it shows us in full its lighted hemisphere. But communication is possible.”

He looked at a map. It was a great chart of the surface of Mars, made by the famous Italian Schiaparelli, and he looked at more of the reviews and found ever the same subject considered in the marked articles. All related to Mars. He was puzzled but delighted. “The dear girl has a hobby,” he thought. “Well, she shall enjoy it to the utmost.”

Nelly entered the room. Her face lighted up with pleasure when she met her fiancé, but assumed a more thoughtful look as she saw what he was reading. She welcomed him, though, as kindly as any lover could demand, and he, of course, was joyously content. “Still an astronomer, I see,” he said, “and apparently with a specialty. I see nothing but Mars, all Mars! Have you become infatuated with a single planet, to the neglect of all the others? I like it, though. We will study Mars together.”

Her face brightened. “I am so glad!” she said.

"I have studied nothing else for months. It has been so almost from the day you left us. And it is not Mars alone I am studying; it is the great problem of communication with the people there. Oh, Julius, it is possible, and the idea is something wonderful! Just think what would follow! It would be the beginning of an understanding between reasoning creatures of the whole universe!"

He said that it was something wonderful, indeed, maybe only a dream, but a very fascinating one.

"Oh, it is no dream," she answered. "It is a glorious possibility. Why, just think of it, we know, positively know, that Mars is inhabited. Think of what has been discovered. It was perceived years ago that Mars was intersected by canals, evidently made by human—I suppose that's the word—human beings. They run from the extremes of ocean bays to the extremes of other ocean bays, and connect, too, the many lakes there. Nature does not make such lines. They are of equal width, those canals, throughout their whole length, and Schiaparelli has even watched them in construction. First there is a dark line, as if the earth had been disturbed, and then it becomes bright when the water is let in. Sometimes, too, double canals are made there close to each other, running side by side, as if one were used for travel and transportation in one direction and one in another. And there are many other things as

wonderful. The world of Mars is like our own. There are continents and seas and islands there—it is not a dead, dry surface like the moon—and it has clouds and rains and snows and seasons, just as we have, and of the same intensity as ours. Oh, Julius, we *must* communicate with them!”

“But, my dear, that implies equal interest on their part. How do we know them to be intelligent enough?”

“Why, there are the canals. They must be reasoners in Mars. Besides, how do we know but that they far surpass us in all learning? Mars is much older in one way than the Earth, far more advanced in its planet life, and why should not its people, through countless ages of advantage, have become wiser than we? Whatever their form, they may be superior to us in every way. We are to them, too, something which must have been studied for thousands of years. The Earth, you know, is to the people on Mars a most brilliant object. It is the most glorious object in their sky, a star of the first magnitude. Oh, be sure their astronomers are watching us with all interest!”

And Corbett, dazed, replied that he was overwhelmed with so much learning in one so fair, that he was very proud of her, but that there was one subject on his mind, compared to which communication with Mars or any other planet was but a trifle. And he wanted to talk with her concerning what was closest to his heart. It was the one



great question in the world to him. It was, when should be their wedding day?

The girl looked at him blushing, then paled. "Let us not talk of that to-day," she said, at length. "I know it isn't right; I know that I seem unkind—but—oh, Julius! come to-morrow and we will talk about it." And she began crying.

He could not understand. Her demeanor was all incomprehensible to him, but he tried to soothe her, and told her she had been studying too hard and that her nerves were not right. She brightened a little, but was still distraught. He left, with something in his heart like a vengeful feeling toward the planets, and toward Mars in particular.

When Corbett returned next day the girl was in the library awaiting him. Her demeanor did not relieve him. He feared something indefinable. She was sad and perplexed of countenance, but more self-possessed than on the day before. She spoke softly: "Now we will talk of what you wished to yesterday."

He pleaded as a lover will, pleaded for an early day, and gave a hundred reasons why it should be so, and she listened to him, not apathetically, but almost sadly. When he concluded, she said, very quietly:

"Did you ever read that queer story by Edmond About called 'The Man with the Broken Ear'?"

He answered, wonderingly, in the affirmative.

"Well, dear," she said, "do you remember how

absorbed, so that it was a very part of her being, the heroine of that story became in the problem of reviving the splendid mummy? She forgot everything in that, and could not think of marriage until the test was made and its sequel satisfactory. She was not faithless; she was simply helpless under an irresistible influence. I'm afraid, love"—and here the tears came into her eyes—"that I'm like that heroine. I care for you, but I can think only of the people in Mars. Help me. You are rich. You have a million dollars, and will soon have more. Reach those people!"

He was shocked and disheartened. He pleaded the probable utter impracticability of such an enterprise. He might as well have talked to a statue. It all ended with an outburst on her part.

"Talk with the Martians," said she, "and the next day I will become your wife!"

He left the house a most unhappy man. What could he do? He loved the girl devotedly, but what a task had she given him! Then, later, came other reflections. After all, the end to be attained was a noble one, and he could, in a measure, sympathize with her wild desire. The lover in "The Man With a Broken Ear" had at least occasion for a little jealousy. His own case was not so bad. He could not well be jealous of an entire population of a distant planet. And to what better use could a portion of his wealth be put than in the

advancement of science! The idea grew upon him. He would make the trial!

He was rewarded the next day when he told his fiancée what he had decided upon. She was wildly delighted. "I love you more than ever now!" she declared, "and I will work with you and plan with you and aid you all I can. And," she added, roguishly, "remember that it is not all for my sake. If you succeed you will be famous all over the world, and besides there'll come some money back to you. There is the reward of one hundred thousand francs left in 1892 by Madame Guzman to any one who should communicate with the people of another planet."

He responded, of course, that he was impelled to effort only by the thought of hastening a wedding day, and then he went to his office and wrote various letters to various astronomers. His friend Marston, professor of astronomy in the University of Chicago, he visited in person. He was not a laggard, this Julius Corbett, in anything he undertook.

Then there was much work. -

Marston, being an astronomer, believed in vast possibilities. Being a man of sense, he could advise. He related to Corbett all that had been suggested in the past for interstellar communication. He told of the suggested advice of making figures in great white roads upon some of Earth's vast plains, but dismissed the idea as too costly and

not the best. "We have a new agent now," he said. "There is electricity. We must use that. And the figures must, of course, be geometrical. Geometry is the same throughout all the worlds that are or have been or ever will be."

And there was much debate and much correspondence and an exhibition of much learning, and one day Corbett left Chicago. His destination was Buenos Ayres, South America.

The Argentine Republic, since its financial troubles early in the decade, had been in a complaisant and conciliating mood toward all the world, and Corbett had little difficulty in his first step—that of securing a concession for stringing wires in any designs which might suit him upon the vast pampas of the interior. It was but stipulated that the wires should be raised at intervals, that herding might not be interfered with. He had already made a contract with one of the great electric companies. The illuminated figures were to be two hundred miles each in their greatest measurement, and were to be as follows:



It was found advisable, later, to dispense with the last two, and so, only the square, equilateral triangle, circle and right-angled triangle, it was decided should be made. The work was hurried forward with all the impetus of native energy,

practically unlimited money and the power of love. This last is a mighty force.

And great works were erected, with vast generators, and thousands and thousands of miles of sheets of wires were strung close together, until each system, when illuminated, would make a broad band of flame surrounding the defined area. From the darkened surface of the Earth, at the time when the Earth approached Mars most nearly, would blaze out to the Martians the four great geometrical figures. The test was made at last. All that had been hoped for in the way of an effort was attained. All along the lines of those great figures, night in the Argentine Republic was turned into glorious day. From balloons the spectacle was something incomparably magnificent. All was described in a thousand letters. A host of correspondents were there, and accounts of the undertaking and its progress were sent all over the civilized world. Each night the illumination was renewed, and all the world waited. Months passed.

Corbett had returned to Chicago. He could do no more. He could only await the passage of time, and hope. He was not very buoyant now. His sweetheart was full of the tenderest regard, but was in a condition of feverish unrest. He was alarmed regarding her, so great appeared her anxiety and so tense the strain upon her nerves. He could not help her, and prepared to return again to a season at his mine.

The man was sitting in his room one night in a gloomy frame of mind. What a fool he had been! He had but yielded to a fancy of a dreaming girl, and put her even farther away from him while wasting half a fortune! He would be better on the rugged shore of Lake Superior, where the moods of men were healthy, and where were pure air and the fragrance of the pines. There was a strong pull at his bell.

A telegraph boy entered, and this was on the message he bore:

Come to the observatory at once. Important.

MARSTON.

To seek a cab, to be whirled away at a gallop to the university, to burst into Marston in his citadel, required but little time. The professor was walking up and down excitedly.

"It has come! All the world knows it!" he shouted as Corbett entered, and he grasped him by the hand and wrung it hardly.

"What has come?" gasped the visitor.

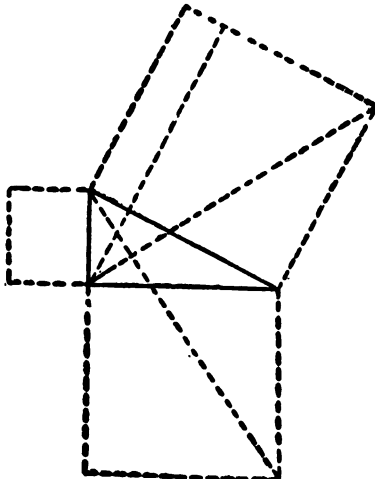
"What has come, man! All we had hoped for or dreamed of—and more! Why, look! Look for yourself!"

He dragged Corbett to the eye-piece of the great telescope and made him look. What the man saw made him stagger back, overcome with an emotion which for the moment did not allow him speech. What he saw upon the surface of the planet Mars was a duplication of the glittering figures on the

pampas of the South American Republic. They were in lines of glorious light, between what appeared bands of a darker hue, provided, apparently, to make them more distinct, and even at such vast distance, their effect was beautiful. And there was something more, a figure he could not comprehend at first, one not in the line of the others, but above. "What is it—that added outline?" he cried.

"What is it! Look again. You'll determine quickly enough! Study it!" roared out Marston, and Corbett did as he was commanded. Its meaning flashed upon him.

There, just above the representation of the right-angled triangle, shone out, clearly and distinctly, this striking figure:



What could it mean? Ah, it required no profound mathematician, no veteran astronomer, to answer such a question! A schoolboy would be equal to the task. The man of Mars might have no physical resemblance to the man of Earth, the people of Mars might resemble our elephants or have wings, but the eternal laws of mathematics and of logic must be the same throughout all space. Two and two make four, and a straight line is the shortest distance between two points throughout the universe. And by adding this figure to the others represented, the Martians had said to the people of Earth as plainly as could have been done in written words of one of our own languages:

Yes, we understand. We know that you are trying to communicate with us, or with those upon some other world. We reply to you, and we show to you that we can reason by indicating that the square of the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equivalent to the sum of the squares of the other two sides. Hope to hear from you further.

There was the right-angled triangle, its lines reproduced in unbroken brilliancy, and there were the added lines used in the familiar demonstration, broken at intervals to indicate their use. The famous *pons asinorum* had become the bridge between two worlds.

Corbett could scarcely speak as yet. Telegraph messengers came rushing in with dispatches from all quarters—from the universities of Michi-



gan and California, and Yale and Harvard, and from Rochester and all over the United States. Cablegrams from England, France, Germany and Italy and other regions of the world but repeated the same wonderful observation, the same conclusion: "They have answered! We have talked with them!"

Corbett returned to his home in a semi-delirium. He had the wisdom, though it was midnight, to send to Nelly the brief message, "Good news," to prepare her in a degree for what the morning papers would reveal. He slept but fitfully. And it was at an early hour when he called upon his fiancée and found her awaiting him in the library.

She said nothing as he entered, but he had scarcely crossed the threshold when he found his arms full of something very tangible and warm, and pulsing with all love. It has been declared by thoughtful and learned people that there is no sensation in the world more delightful than may be produced by just this means, and Corbett's demeanor under the circumstances was such as to indicate the soundness of the assertion. He was a very happy man.

And she, as soon as she could speak at all, broke out, impulsively:

"Oh, dear, isn't it glorious! I knew you would succeed. And aren't you glad I imposed the hard condition? It was hard, I know, and I seemed unloving, but I believed, and I could not have given

you up even if you had failed. I should have told you so very soon. I may confess that now. And—I will marry you any day you wish.”

She blushed magnificently as she concluded, and the face of a pretty woman, so suffused, is a pleasing thing to see.

Of course, within a week the name of Corbett became familiar in every corner of the civilized globe, the incentive which had spurred him on became somehow known, and the romance of it but added to his fame, and a few days later, when his wedding occurred, it was chronicled as never had a wedding been before. They made two columns of it even in the far-away *Tokio Gazette*, the *Bombay Times* and the *Novgorod News*. But the social feature was nothing; the scientific world was all aflame.

We had talked with Mars indeed, but of what avail was it if we could not resume the conversation? What next step should be taken in the grand march of knowledge, in the scientific conquest of the universe? Never in all history had there been such a commotion among the learned. Corbett and his gifted wife were early ranked among the eager, for he soon became as much of an enthusiast as she—in fact, since the baby, he is even more so—and derived much happiness from their mutual study and speculation. All theories were advanced from all countries, and suggestions, wise and otherwise, came from thousands of sources.

And so in the year 1900 the thing remains. As inscrutable to us have been the curious symbols appearing upon Mars of late as have apparently been to them a sign language attempted on the pampas. It is now proposed to show to them the outline of a gigantic man, and if Providence has seen fit to make reasoning beings in all worlds something alike, this may prove another bit of progress in the intercourse, but all is in doubt.

Given, the problem of two worlds, millions of miles apart, the people of which are seeking to establish a regular communication with each other, each already acknowledging the efforts of the other, how shall the great feat be accomplished? Will the solution of the vast problem come from a greater utilization of electricity and a further knowledge of what is astral magnetism? There have been, of late, some wonderful revelations along that line. Or will the sign language be worked out upon the planets' surfaces? Who can tell? Certainly all effort has been stimulated, in one world at least. The rewards offered by various governments and individuals now aggregate over five million dollars, and all this money is as nothing to the fame awaiting some one. Who will gain the mighty prize? Who will solve the new problem of the ages?