

log hut, stuck like a gray lichen against the snow-plastered granite, where smoke would rise on the instant of Dane's return. His jaws had become rigid, his eyes glazed with the eternal vigil. He had strained sunken cheeks against the slide till they were scored with purple lines, livid and weird against the starvation pallor of his skin.

This time, as usual, the tiny roof showed sharp and snow-covered. Nothing curled from the rusted chimney pipe. Bruneau strode back to Mavor and Canard.

"*Que Dieu vous bénisse !*" he murmured, gripping their hands in turn. "I'm t'ink you be saved yet, *camarades.*"

"My God!" cried Mavor. "I can't let you go! I can't let you go!"

For now that the hour of the compact had arrived the admiral was incoherently unmindful of the agreement the three had made.

But Bruneau silenced him by putting a glove over his mouth and pointing to the blanketed figures by the farther wall.

"Dose women! Remembraire!"

He drew up his parka hood and took his rifle.

Enid and Sonia heard him slip through the doorway and move off, his snowshoes crunching on the heavy crust.

They thought it was but another of his vagaries, another of his unceasing pilgrimages to the cabin higher up.