

"That's right, Bill," cried Jim. "You really cover it, you know. Hinter said he was the only one who knew the oil was there until you rafted out to the lake and saw the oil-bubbles breakin' on 'em. He says the fortune likely lies there, so you see —"

"An' Teacher Stanhope, he deeded the swamp," said Billy dazedly. He got up from the log and shook his shoulders. "Well," he spoke, "that was mighty good of him, but I ain't wantin' that swamp."

"But Bill," urged Jim, "the oil they've found will make you rich."

Billy shook his head. "I'm as rich as I ever was right now, Jim."

"Look here, Bill," cried Maurice. "You don't want to hurt Teacher Stanhope's feelin's, do you?"

Billy glanced at him quickly, a troubled look in his eyes. "N-no," he said, "you bet I don't."

"Then that's all there is to it; you keep your mouth shut about what you do."

Billy considered. "I ain't sayin' jest what I'll do," he spoke finally. "I gotta ask another person's advice about this thing. But if I do take it you, Jim, an' you, Maurice, are goin' to be my partners in Lost Man same's I was in bay Thomas. Here, Maurice, you take Thomas' horse stable an' feed him a feed. I gotta go somewhere else. And leaving Jim and Maurice sitting, open-mouthed, I ducked into the timber."

Not until he had put some distance between him and his friends did he remember that he had not told them the great and wonderful news that had been imparted to him by old Harry. Well, never mind, they would hear it. Harry would see to that. He turned into a path that strayed far up among clumps of red-gold maples and