

think of him even in love and death.' " Again they plodded on in silence. After half an hour or so, Billy spoke suddenly.

"I guess," he said gruffly, "that the hills has got inter us like the whoopin' cough." And Cashel's wistful eyes assented.

Late in the afternoon they came out above the broad valley which separated them from Khadintel, and of which every tree and stream was familiar. Cashel, looking up at the Ridge, thought of the day he had stood there and dreamed of the gold. So much had passed since then. He felt so much older, so much more hopeless, so much more tired. The knowledge that, at the last stern parting of the ways of good and evil, he had chosen good, failed now to uplift him above the sordid anxieties, the bodily weariness he endured.

Once more, ere they descended into the valley, they looked back along their trail. "Well," said Billy, with a long breath, "it's over. All over an' done. I wisht—I wisht ye'd let me go back and get Sinker. That skunk! But it's all done now."

"Yes," said Cashel, beginning to lead Sam down the rough path, "yes, it's all over and done. I come back poorer than I went, Billy." He took no notice of Billy's fierce reference to Bruce.

"Ah!" said Billy comfortably. "That's the best o' havin' nothin' at all, like me. Then ye can't get no poorer."

They crossed the valley slowly, pausing now and then for Sam's benefit, for the grass was long and sweet. The sun sank lower, and the shadow of Khadintel was heavy upon them. Heavy also were