

306 COMRADES OF THE TRAILS

an axe on one side and a rifle on the other, frying-pan and kettle in convenient nooks, a paddle and spruce-pole in the bow and another pole in the stern, sticking far out behind like a cocked-up tail. He had another paddle in his hand.

"Now you get in, Dick," he said, steadying the canoe with the blade of his paddle. Dick stepped into the bow and knelt low, leaning against the bar behind him and the end of the bale of furs. Then Sam stepped into the stern and pushed off from the shore. Joe and Bill the panther stood on the top of the bank.

The partners turned.

"Good-bye, Joe. Take care of yourself," called Dick.

"I'll bring you plenty grub an' tobac," called Sam.

"Good-bye, mates. See ye later," replied Joe Banks, with his face still wreathed in its habitual grin.

The canoe slipped out and Sam dipped the paddle. Dick, with his face over his shoulder, watched Joe and the trail of smoke from the chimney of the shack until they were hidden by a spur of the forest. Then he faced forward and took up his paddle; but he could not banish Joe