

became overmastering. "Suppose he doesn't say anything," he began.

"It won't make any difference to your friends," she said. "They know you're not a thief."

"It's a queer business this having a good name and not having one," Jack went on, plucking blades of grass. "As if anybody cared who took the money."

Mary offered no comment.

"I'd lose my claims," Jack went on. "I couldn't go out to file them. But the governor would never put the police on to me, now. He'd be too jolly glad to get rid of me."

Mary refused to raise her eyes from the dough.

Jack thought she hadn't understood what he was driving at. "You see it would let me out there," he went on. "This would be my country for ever and ever, and the people up here my only friends."

There was another silence. He looked at her hungrily. The hard young face was soft enough now.

"Mary," he murmured hoarsely at last; "I don't give a damn if he never speaks."

The dough-pan was dropped at last. She lifted a tortured face. "Don't," she murmured low and swiftly. "Don't you see what it means? Don't you see how you're hurting me? You mustn't wish it. Maybe our thoughts are influencing his sick brain this minute. He *must* speak! He must tell the truth and clear you. Nothing else matters. You must be able to go wherever