

"Why do you think it's Bruce's crony?" asked Cashel in a low voice, for the sick man had moved uneasily in his sleep.

"Who else'd follow us?" exclaimed Billy. "I guess it's Injun Tom, wonderin' what we're doin' with Bruce. But I'm wonderin' what he's doin' away from the valley o' gold so soon. P'r'aps he didn't find it. P'r'aps it ain't there."

"Oh, what's the use of wondering?" said Cashel wearily. "At any rate, the gold's not for us. Go to sleep, Billy."

So they slept, both of them, quietly enough, while the great pure stars sailed above them and sank behind Khadintel. And in a cold, golden dawn they awoke—awoke to find the man Bruce gone, they knew not where; and Sinker had gone with him.

"Lemme go after him," cried Billy, raging almost to the point of tears. "Lemme go after him with the gun. I'll not bring him back, but I'll bring Sinker. That's his gratitude! Oh, lemme go after him with the gun!" But Cashel stayed him with that stern, hopeless, weary look that now was his usual expression.

"No, Billy, he said, "we'll le' him go his own way, and we'll go ours. We'll not think of him any more, nor trouble about him. I'm sorry to lose Sinker. But Bruce is kind to horses, kinder than he is to women. Let him go his own way in his own fashion."

"I knew some one was follerin' us," Billy burst out again. "An' 'twas Injun Tom, like I thought 'twas. An' now that—skunk, he's gone off ter join Injun Tom, leavin' you who'd give up all fer him. An' took