

well as the little nest of huts, or rather wigwams, allowed. The people had not gone out of their way to serve us ; but they had withheld nothing.

Naturally we had plenty to talk about ; and I liked Phil Dwyer better the more I knew of him. He was so delightfully hopeless a vagabond ; he had such supreme faith in his own wisdom, and such an absolute incapacity for turning it to any personal account whatever. And then he was so utterly good-tempered and content that it almost tried my patience now and then.

"Do you really mean to tell me, Phil," I asked him, as we entered a singularly dark and narrow ravine, where the road had been formed rather by the gold-bearing torrent than by pickaxes and spades, "that you have no curiosity as to where I am taking you ? If anybody was going to lead me into a black gorge like that, I should want to know, at any rate, that it had another end."

"It does look an ugly bit," said Phil, looking up the dark and slippery sides, on which patches of snow still lingered, and then watching the flight of an eagle from the crag on which it had been perching. "And I'll own to liking better to go in at either end with the pistols than without 'em. 'Tis a fine bit this, for a man who wants a good horse to get one for nothing."

"Then you don't really care a straw where we're going ?"

"Divvle a rag, your honour, so long as we get there."

"And suppose I don't know any more than you ?"