

"Sure," admitted Chasni Jim, "but who got um?"

Eager to look inside, yet fearful of what he might find there, Félix shoved back the door. Canard lay by the Klondike stove. His legs were bound to a heavy log. His arms were strapped together at elbows and wrists, allowing him only the freedom of swinging them, like a crane, in a semicircle from the woodpile to the stove and back again in order to keep the cold at bay. For the rest, the cabin was deserted and bare. Sleeping blankets, supplies, cooking utensils, and dunnage were all gone.

From his position Canard could not see them, but he heard the hinges creak and he squirmed into a sitting posture.

"Thank God!" he screamed, staring at the two. "Cut these straps!"

The voyageur saw that his nerve was shattered. He understood how the solitary hours of waiting, uncertain as to rescue, fearful lest the fire die, had shaken the captain to pieces.

During a period obviously short by the natural measurements of time, but eternal in its length of menace and intimidation, the hitherto unseen spirit of the Northland had attained visibility. It had drawn near, a concrete image, powerful, circumspect, and glowered into the prisoner's face. It was no wonder he was incoherent, babbling many strange things of fear and detention, new phases of them which had not been known to him before.