

ment glazed and dizzy eyes; then, squatting about the food, began to eat, slowly, tremulously, oblivious of the drawn and aghast stares fixed upon their skeleton, abominable features. Gail ate also.

They blew upon each mouthful. Not a word was spoken. The dogs began to whimper, above the sputter of the sticks. Sydney gasped and averted her humid eyes. Dick stiffened, pale and open-mouthed; Arthur's tender lips twitched, as if he were braving pain.

"Eat — for our three lives, Gail," murmured Clara, suddenly becoming ravenous. But Lena, who had dragged herself bag and all from the tent, a muffled bulk, inertly dropped her spoon. Sydney picked it up, trying to feed her.

"That's no use, with her scurvy," said Trueblood. "But we can get them all back to the big camp to-night, and potatoes."

The words seemed, at first mockingly, to pierce their lethargy. An empty grin creased the powder pits of Pete's cheeks. Then following Clara, he with Bleven and Gail began wolfing the cooked mess, attacked it with bare fingers. Once Perry paused, drew the back of a hand across his blank and monstrous lineaments, now alight with the dazzling, yet animal, transport of truth; and he found speech:

"Potatoes? You'll josh once too often. How far is camp?"

"Right across the river," answered Dick. "You're at the upper canyon. And Gail, your discovery stakes I found ain't been jumped yet. The first chechakos expected there — they'll be corpses."

Dead-O gave a soundless guffaw; but the news appeared, aggressively, to loose Bleven's kindling mind.