

THE PASS

Twice more we accomplished these long jumps from one terraced meadow to another. The sheer cliff walls rose higher and higher above us, shutting out the mountain peaks. By three o'clock it had become late afternoon. The horses were tired; so were we. We should have camped, but the strong desire to see the thing through grew on us. We were now in the bottom, where grew alders and willows and cottonwoods. Occasionally we came across the tracks of the wild cattle of the mountains.

And then the river dropped again over a fall; and we had to climb and climb and climb again until we had regained the sunlight. A broad, sloping ridge, grown thick with quaking asp, offered itself. We rode along it, dodging branches, blinded by leaves, unable to see underfoot. Abruptly we burst from them into a deep pine woods, soft and still.