

THE CABIN

rode through the forest. Our way led along a plateau near the summit of a great mountain. We were on a gently rolling level of several miles in width, rising gradually ahead of us. To our left we could have ridden to where the mountain fell away three thousand feet precipitously. To our right, we could equally have climbed, had we so wished, several hundred feet more to the top of the range, whence we could have seen abroad over an area equal to many kingdoms of the earth. Neither of these facts, however, had any evidences to offer us. The great sugar pines and firs shut us in; the streams sang across our path. Occasionally we pushed through a leafy thicket that bathed us mysteriously in its fresh green; occasionally we mounted a little hill up which the tall trees marched ahead of us orderly. The smooth green bear-clover spread its mantle over the slopes. Thickets of snowbrush sprawled in the sunlit openings. The horses plodded along the dim trail, handling each foot separately after the wise fashion of the mountain animal. Pepper, the Airedale, and Tuxana, the bull terrier, patted behind.

All at once Pepper and Tuxana scurried madly off at a tangent through the brush. After a moment we heard the excited and outraged chattering of a squirrel.