

THE LEDGE

I was riding ahead. The woods stretched before me as far as I could see. I eased myself in my saddle. Somewhere ahead the route from the Giant Forest to Mineral King ran at right angles. Some time we would cross it.

And then, without warning, there appeared, almost under my horse's hoofs, a deep, dusty brown furrow. I reined in, staring. It did not seem possible that the thing should have happened so quietly. Subconsciously I must have anticipated some pomp and blare of trumpets to herald so important an event. The appearance of this dusty brown furrow, winding down through the trees, represented so much labor of mind and body, so much uncertainty, so many discomforts, so many doubts and fears and hopes! And now it came into view as simply as a snow plant or a fallen pine cone. All we had to do was to turn to the left. By that act