

CHAPTER XXXII

THE SUMMER OF LIFE

THE passage of time for John Kars had never been so swift, so feverish in the rush of poignant events. Four months had passed since he had landed like a shadow in the night on the banks of Snake River, to tell the story of men's evil to those to whom he would gladly have imparted only happy tidings.

Now he was at the landing again, with pages of tragic history turned in his book of life. But they were turned completely, and only the memory of them was left behind. The other pages, those remaining to be perused, were different. They contained all those things without which no life could ever be counted complete. That happiness which all must seek, and the strong and wise will cling to, and only the weak and foolish will make a plaything of.

It was the crowning day of his life, and he desired to live every moment of it. So he had left his bed under the hospitable roof of Father José to witness the first moment of its birth.

The first gray shadow lit the distant hilltops. To him it was like the first stirring of broken slumber. Strange but familiar sounds broke the profound stillness. The cry of belated beast, and the waking cries of the feathered world. The light spread northward.