

Side by side in the warm glow of the July evening he and Joan climbed up over the three miles of gentle convolutions that terraced the way to the loftiest ridge before they looked back and when they glanced around they beheld an unbroken line of pack-laden men crawling upward with the slow, peculiar, bobbing motion that packs in the tump-line impart.

The sight brought home more clearly to Joan the memory of that other evening when Carlisle and Andrews had come over the Portage without their warning, and she began to laugh softly in low, throaty notes that blended with songs of the thrushes by the trailside.

"Do you remember, Paul, how you came to tell us the Portage was closed? You were a Northwest mail-courier in black cotton shirt, mackinaw trousers, cowhide moccasins, and a battered, blue felt hat. Yes, and your face was stained as brown as an Indian's. Do you remember?"

"Yes," nodded Carlisle, "I remember that masquerade, all right, and I remember how I cursed it when you came."

"Why?" she teased, "because it was so dirty?"

"No, you cherished hypocrite, because I wanted you to know me as I was. I wanted to stand in the skin God gave me."

"Conceited thing!" Joan bantered. "As if that amounted to much! And as if I cared at all!"

She fluted out her laughter freely as she darted