

nders of the Yosemite Valley, and of Californiar by Samuel Kne

Samuel Kneeland

1871, by Alexander Moore. Photographic Illustrations, 1870, by John P. Soule

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Summary

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r *The Wonders of the Yosemite Valley, and of Californiar* was written by Dr. Samuel Kneeland.r Dr. Kneeland was a Boston physicianr founding member and later professor of zoology at MIT.r He wrote several books, including this, from careful diaries kept during his zoological-collecting expeditions.r This book is from two trips by Dr. Kneeland to California,r taken sometime during 1869 to 1871.r

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r The photographs were supposedly taken by John P. Soule of Massachusetts,r although there's disagreement as to whether he traveled to Californiar or just purchased the negatives.r In any case, *Wonders of the Yosemite Valley* is an early example of Western scenes being published on the East coast.r

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r Some of Dr. Kneeland's views on glaciation were "borrowed" fromr John Muir'sr new theories about glaciation of the Sierra Nevada and Yosemite Valley.r According to William Frederick Badè:r Muir did not approve Kneeland using his materials without credit.r But Kneeland had the effect of attracting considerable attention for Muir's views and explorationsr (*The Life and Letters of John Muir*.r Chapter 9).r In the next, or third, edition of *Wonders of the Yosemite Valley*,r Kneeland gave partial credit to Muir's writings.r

r r

r *Wonders of the Yosemite Valley* also describes Kneeland's trip west by train from Omaha through Salt Lake City,r Mormons, Giant Sequoia trees, California Indians, San Francisco,r Calistoga mineral springs,r and his trip back east by steamship and Panama train.r

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r —Dan Anderson, www.yosemite.ca.us

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Bibliographical Information

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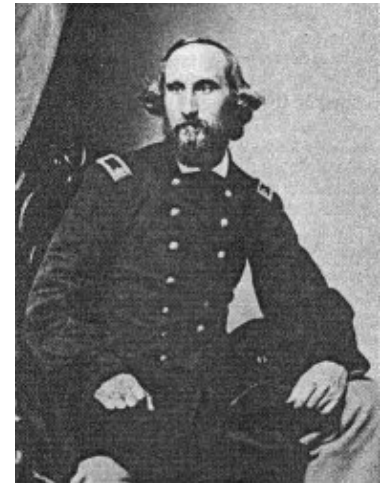
r Samuel Kneeland, 1821-1888.r *The Wonders of the Yosemite Valley, and of California*,r second editionr (New York: Lee, Shepard & Dillingham, 1872).r xii, 78 p., 10 mounted albumen photographs, illustrated.r Gilt edges.r Gilt lettering on cover and spine with tan or dark blue cloth with decorative cover.r Two wood-engraved maps, 27 cm.r Photographs by John P. Soule.r Library of Congress Call Number: F868.Y6 K62.r The first edition was issued in 1871 andr the second and third editions were issued in 1972.r The photographs are the same in all editions.r Bibliographies:r Cowan (I) p. 131. Cowan (II) p. 333, Currey & Kruska 225, Farquhar 10b,r & Kimes 3-4.r

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r Ther [University of Michigan'sr *Making of America* \(MOA\)r digital library](#)r hasr r images ofr r [The Wonders of the Yosemite Valley 2d. ed. \(1872\)](#)r online atr r <http://name.umd.umich.edu/AGW1475>r r r You may order print-to-order copies of this bookr from University of Michigan.r

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About the Author

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r Samuel Kneeland was born August 1, 1821 in Boston, Massachusetts.r He graduated from Harvard with a AB in 1840 and AM and MD in 1843.r He married Eliza Maria Curtis in 1849.r He was associated with a group of young Boston physicians trying to reformr the medical profession.r In 1862 he joined the Union

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army as a surgeon and was in charge of hospitals in New Orleans and Mobile, Alabama until 1866.r Dr. Kneeland was a founding member of the Massachusetts Institue of Technologyr in 1865 and served as professor of zoology and physiology.r He became an avid collector and his travels included Brazil, Hawaii, the Philippines, and Iceland.r He contributed over a thousand articles to Appleton's *American Cyclopaedia* and published several medical papers.r He died 1888 in Hamburg, Germany.r His complete writings are at the Boston Society of Natural History.r

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r CALIFORNIA.r

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r THE YOSEMITE VALLEY.r
r 4060 feet above the Sea.r

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r THE WONDERSr

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The Wonders of the Yosemite Valley, and of Californiar by Samuel Kneeland (1872)

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r CALIFORNIA.r

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r SAMUEL KNEELAND, A.M., M.D.,r

r

r PROFESSOR OF ZOOLOGY IN THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY.r

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r WITH ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS,r

r By JOHN P. SOULE.r

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r BOSTON:r

r ALEXANDER MOORE.r

r LEE & SHEPARD.r

r NEW YORK: LEE, SHEPARD & DILLINGHAM.r

r 1872.r

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r Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.r

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r Photographic Illustrations, entered according to Actr of Congress, in the year 1870, byr John P. Soule,r inr
r the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.r

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r CAMBRIDGE:r
r PRESSWORK BY JOHN WILSON AND SON.r

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r **Dedication.**r

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r TO ALL LOVERS OF THE GRAND AND BEAUTIFUL IN NATURE, ANDr
r ESPECIALLY OFr

r r

r MOUNTAIN SCENERY,r

r r

r UNPARALLELED IN THE WORLD, THIS VOLUME ISr
r RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.r

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PREFACE.

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r r r North America r is certainly a favored land in itsr magnificent scenery in its White and Green Mountains, Adirondacks,r Appalachians, Rocky Mountains and Sierra Nevada; in its great lakes; inr its mighty rivers—the Mississippi, Missouri, Colorado, and theirr tributaries; in its cataracts—Niagara, Genesee, Trenton, Ithaca,r Montmorenci, Minnehaha, and the grand cascades of the Yosemite Valley;r in its boundless prairies, magnificent forests, and variety of ther aspects of nature from the tropics to the arctic regions. If it ber possible for grandeur of natural scenery alone to elevate the mind, ther Americans should be a people of great ideas.r r

r It is a fact of whichr comparatively few seem to be aware, that California, the land of gold,r is also the land of wonders in scenery and in natural productions. Tor many of those who are cognizant of this fact, the distance from home,r and the consequent fatigue and inconvenience of travel, appear asr insurmountable obstacles. The first and the only difficulty in ther journey to the Pacific is, to get started; that accomplished, with ther comfortable cars, good food, easy bed, and other luxuries of the Pullmanr and Wagner palaces, the traveller of ordinary endurance and common-senser has only to take his ease and enjoy himself; if, to the above simpler qualifications, he fortunately add a natural love of the picturesque,r the grand, and the beautiful, I know of no journey on the face of ther earth in which so much enjoyment can be crowded into a month's time.r

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r In the lover of mountain scenery—even in one familiar with the Alps—ther Rocky Mountains, and especially the Sierra Nevada, will excite a newr and exquisite sensation. Such extent of grandeur is unparalleled in anyr mountains explored in civilized regions.r

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r It does not require strongr nerves, firm determination, nor great physical endurance, to make ther trip to the Yosemite; and this magnificent scenery is easily within ther reach of the invalid, male or female, who is not so hopelessly enfeebledr as to forbid, under any circumstances, removal from home.r

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r The beautiesr and wonders described in this book, however, are not presented for ther benefit of the sick, but to the crowd of pleasure-seekers who make theirr annual visitations to Niagara, Newport, Saratoga, Cape May, and other centres of fashion, frivolity, foppery and folly. With half ther expenditure of money and vital force thus thrown away, to the moral andr physical deterioration of allr r r concerned, the California trip, *via* ther Pacific Railroad, may be thoroughly enjoyed. There is nothing in it tor enfeeble, but everything to

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strengthen; the exhilarating mountain air, r by day or by night, makes the lungs tingle with a sensation never experienced at the Eastern watering-places; the cool mountain-streams will prove a better tonic to the dyspeptic, than all the drugs he has swallowed. The brain of the student and the overworked merchant can here lie fallow amid scenes which, by their strange fascination, will drive from the memory all thought of books and ledgers; even the love of dress, and the pursuit of fashions, leave their votaries, as they take their seat in the saddle for the Valley or the Big Trees. The absence of storms in the summer, the serenity of an unclouded sky, and a deliciously cool air, permit one to climb the mountains without the risk of getting wet, of being delayed by an avalanche, of falling into an ice-bound crevice, or of being enveloped in a thick mist, at a point noted for fine scenery, so provokingly common in Switzerland. Without danger, hardship, or even discomfort, and with a certainty of finer weather week after week, the California mountains invite you to their magnificent scenery. r

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r Without any pretension to original discovery, or for the loftiness of style befitting so grand a subject, this volume is issued in the hope that the scenes recently visited by the writer may be more sought for by Eastern travellers; and that the order followed by him, and sketched imperfectly here, may serve in some measure as a useful guide to the grandeur of the Yosemite Valley, and to the other wonders of California. r

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r S. K. r

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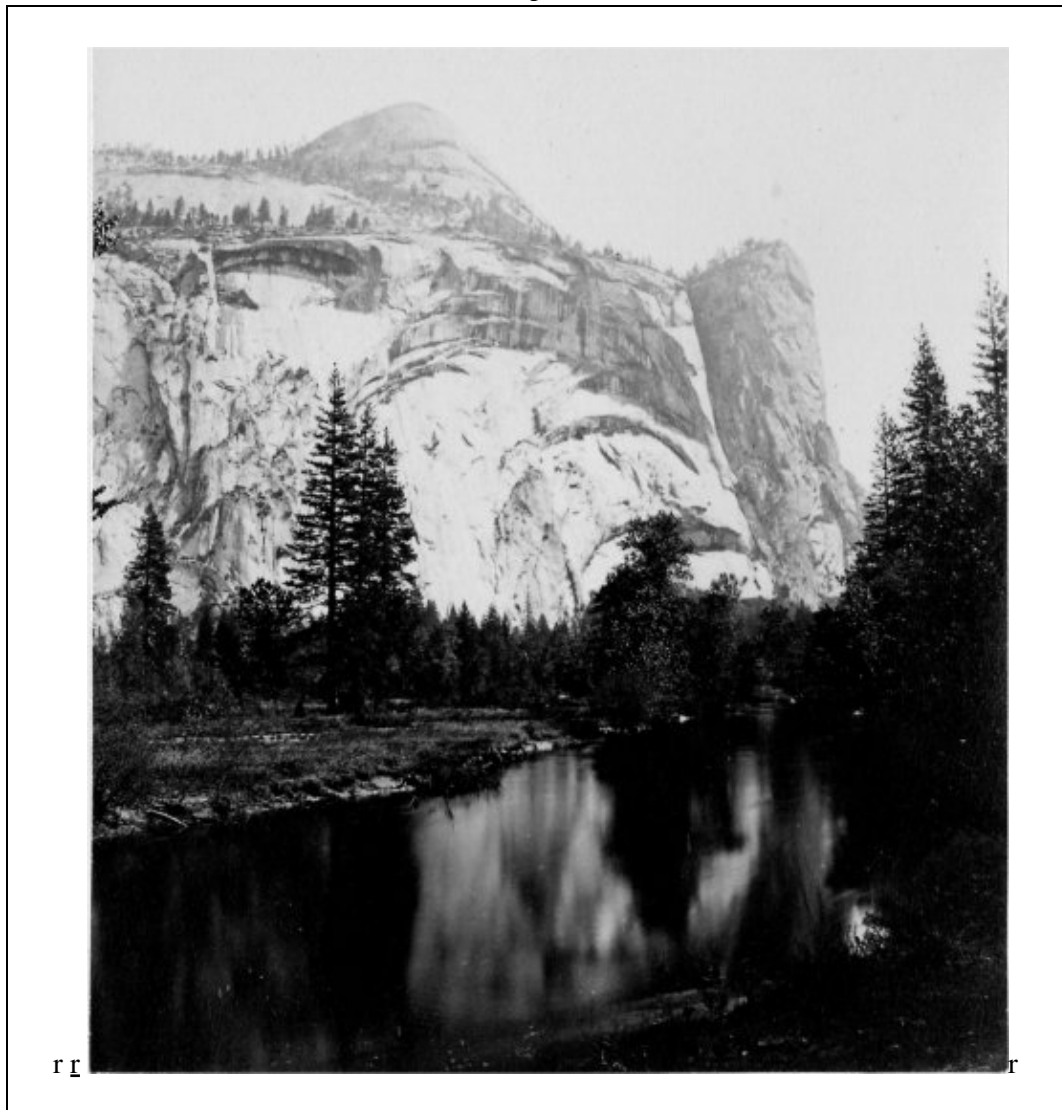
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Omaha to Salt Lake.

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r r North Dome—Wash'n Column—Royal Arches.r r
r From Merced River.r

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r r Onr r the east of the Rocky Mountains most of the great river systemsr descend very gradually, and pour their waters through ther Mississippi into the Gulf of Mexico, viz.: the Red, Arkansas, Rior Grande, Platte, and Missouri; while the Columbia and the Colorado flow into the Pacific Ocean; the former water lands of great luxuriance, andr thickly populated; the latter flow through a sterile region, hardly fitr for the abode of man, yet with very grand scenery.r

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r The profile of ther Pacific Railroad, from Omaha to Sacramento, 1,775 miles, has fourr principal summits. 1. At Sherman, where the Rocky Mountains (or Blackr Hills, so called) are crossed, 550 miles from Omaha, 8,235 feet above the level of the sea, the highest point in the world crossed by ar railroad. 2. Aspen Summit, 385 miles from Sherman, or 935 from Omaha,r 7,463 feet high; also in the Rocky Mountains, and the dividing ridge orr continental rocky back-bone. 3. In the Humboldt range, near Pequop, 310r miles from Aspen, or 1,245 from Omaha, 6,076 feet high. 4. In the Sierrar Nevada, at Donner Lake Pass, 425 miles from the Humboldt Summit, 1,670r from Omaha, or 105 from Sacramento, 7,062 feet high; thence there is ar descent of 7,000 feet in 100 miles to Sacramento, very steep, and to ther inexperienced traveller seemingly dangerous. The road from Cheyenne, 520r miles from Omaha, for 500 miles on a stretch, to the Wahsatch Range inr Utah, is more than 6,000 feet above the level of the sea; from this tor the Sierra crossing the average height is 5,000 feet, and nowhere lessr than 4,000; whence it would be naturally supposed that the road wouldr be liable to become blocked by snow; this, however, is not the case, asr the snow-sheds are a protection in the most exposed regions of ther Sierra Nevada.r

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r The muddy Missouri River is crossed from Council Bluffs,r Iowa, to Omaha, Nebraska, and here the Union Pacific Railroad begins,r 968 feet above the level of the sea, in the great valley drained by thisr river and its tributaries. The ascent is so gentle that you do notr perceive it, and yet when you have reached Cheyenne, you are 6,000r r r r feet above the sea, ascending fromr 7 to 10 feet per mile. For 290 miles the road is along the main streamr of the Platte river; along its banks are many fine farms and clumps ofr trees, and the sides of the track are variegated with beautiful flowers,r among which are roses, larkspurs, and a fine white thistle. This wasr once a hunting-ground of the Indians for bison and antelope; ther former is now rarely seen, but now and then an antelope will scamperr away from the track, turning, when at a safe distance, to scrutinize ther rushing train which disturbed him. This was also a portion of the roadr dangerous from Indians, as here they were accustomed to cross ther plains, naturally hating the whites for expelling themselves and ther game from their favorite haunts. Every station was once, of necessity, ar fort; the frequent camps of mounted riflemen, and their presence asr armed sentinels at the stations, showed that it was not yet consideredr safe to leave the road at the mercy of the hostile tribes.r

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r The Platte River, though navigable, as the saying is,r for nothing larger than a shingle, on account of its shallowness, sand-bars,r and ever-shifting channel, drains an area of nearly 300,000 square miles;r larger than

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all New England, New York, and Pennsylvania. It is, however, nature's highway for a railroad, and probably but for it, this Pacific Railroad might never have been built. The old emigrant road was along this river, and it can now be traced by the telegraph poles, skulls and bones of cattle, and now and then a grave, bearing testimony to the toil, privation, and death of the gold-seekers.

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r Columbus, 91 miles from Omaha, is, according to George Francis Train, the geographical centre of the United States, and, when he becomes President, will be a candidate for the government buildings. Grand Island, in Platte River, is about 80 miles long, and 4 wide; it is fertile, and well-wooded, and belongs to the United States. From 150 to 350 miles from Omaha you are within the range of the buffalo, but will probably see none, not even a track; this region is also infested by Indians, as shown by the fort-like and guarded stations; the cabins are low, covered with mud and turf, to render harmless the blazing arrows of the savages, and with loop-holes for defence. Here and there are sullen-looking fellows, indifferently armed, scowls at the passing or stopping train, but we saw no bands.

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r About 290 miles from Omaha you come to the north and south forks of the Platte River, and the railroad takes a westerly course between them. Soon Alkali is reached, in the alkali belt which extends for seventy or eighty miles westward; the soil and water are strongly impregnated with alkaline salts, the carbonates of the alkalis being so abundant that the earth may be used for raising bread. Here farms cease, and the country is of use only for grazing. Julesburg, 377 miles, was noted as a thieving, gambling place, as the terminus of the advancing road always was; shanties and tents were built in a night, and disappeared as if by magic, leaving nothing behind but a bad reputation, ruined chimneys, old boots, tin cans, and soiled cards. These hardy communities, when too bad, were occasionally exterminated by "Vigilance Committees." At Lodgepole, about 400 miles, the elevation is nearly 4,000 feet, and from this you perceive that you are ascending. About thirty-five miles beyond this is Prairie Dog City, so named because, for several hundred acres on both sides of the track, the earth is raised into little hillocks by these burrowing squirrel-like animals. Each occupant of a burrow sits erect on his hillock, scampering into his hole in the most ludicrous manner at the approach of danger; they are obliged to endure in their villages the presence of the burrowing owl, which lives in burrows deserted by, or forcibly taken from, the rodent by the lazy owl; they do not live together in the same hole, as far as I could observe or ascertain. This is to be the great pasture-land of the Continent, and was evidently once the bottom of a great lake or inland sea; the region extends for 700 miles north and south, on the east of the Rocky Mountains, and for 200 miles east and west, besides the innumerable valleys in the mountain ranges; there is an abundant supply of water in the valleys, and the nutritious grasses, nine to twelve inches high, are always green near the roots, however parched and cured at the top; cattle require no housing, and need only be prevented from straying; in winter the snow is so dry that it rolls off their backs, and does not chill them like our wet, clinging snows. Now that the railroad is here to bring the products to the Eastern markets, it is safe to say, that in a few years the untold wealth to be derived from raising cattle and sheep will bring to this region a larger and vigorous population from the overcrowded Atlantic States.

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r At Cheyenne, Wyoming Territory, 510 miles, you are nearly 6,000 feet high; here the engines are doubled, and in thirty-three miles you ascend about 2,300 feet, or seventy feet in a mile. This place, where in 1867 there was only one house, has now several thousand inhabitants, and has the elements of a permanent increase, and will not fade away like most of the other railroad creations. It has its newspapers, schools, churches, manufactories, and extensive system of inland transportation, especially in connection with the rapidly-increasing mining interests of Colorado on the south. About fifteen miles from Cheyenne the grader

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becomes very steep, and you have fine views of the "Black Hills," ther most eastern ranges of the Rocky Mountains. The scenery now becomes wildr and rugged, and the masses of reddish felspathic rock are piled up inr grand confusion. On arriving at the summit, at Sherman, named from ther tallest general in our army, you are 8,235 feet above the sea, ther highest point crossed by any railroad. The summit is bare, and ther surrounding desolation grand and awful; the rocks and the road-bed arer of a reddish color, which gives an unearthly aspect to the scenery. Ther air, after you get a few inspirations, is singularly exhilarating. Thisr is 550 miles distant from Omaha, and affords a good view of Pike's andr Long's Peaks, and other localities famous in the history ofr gold-seeking. The many cuts and snow fences show the physical andr elemental difficulties which were encountered here.r

r r

r Three miles fromr Sherman you come to Dale Creek, which is bridged by a frameworkr structure 650 feet long, and 126 feet above the stream; the woodenr trestles are laced strongly together, and present, at a distance, a veryr light and gracefild structure. When your r r r r r get upon it you shudder as your look down and see the stream a mere thread below, and feel the bridger quivering under the weight of the train to such a degree that water isr thrown from barrels, placed there for putting out accidental fires; itr is a relief to get upon *terra firma*, when every one draws a fill breath,r which is instinctively impossible during the transit. I fear that ar terrible accident will some day occur here, as a fancied security fromr past immunity is apt to beget carelessness, and the bridge itself doesr not seem to me sufficiently strong for its peculiarly dangerousr locality.r

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r For more than twenty miles from Sherman the descent is sor great that no steam is required, and the brakes are constantly applied;r this distance brings us to Laramie Plain, the grade of which, however,r is constantly changing. You pass numerous ridges of reddish sandstone,r worn by the elements into the most fantastic shapes, as castles, forts,r churches, chimneys, pyramids, etc., looking like a city changed to stoner by the enchanter's wand; the general name of "buttes" is given to these,r with a prefix according to the color or shape, as red, black, churchr buttes, etc.; some of these singular formations are 1,000 feet high, andr in the distance are very interesting objects to the observant traveller.r

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r r The Laramie Plain has a fine grazing belt, sixty miles long by twentyr wide, one of the finest stock-raising, regions in the world, ther alkaline quality of the soil and water making the growth of veryr nutritious grasses most luxuriant; this was once a grazing place for ther buffalo, now rarely seen. When there is too much alkali, of course ther soil is barren, and the water unfit for animals and man. This plain isr 7,000 feet above the sea, and is much broken by the ranges of the Blackr Hills, which enclose, often, extensive and fine tablelands or "parks,"r sheltered from the wind, abundantly watered, with excellent timber andr grass, and much mineral wealth, which will one day be a source of greatr prosperity. The distant peaks are here and there crested with snow, butr you see no glaciers and eternal snows, as in the Alps, coming down intor the valleys; at the base is generally nothing but a barren, treelessr plain, plentifully stocked with the pale aromatic wild sage, and ther home of the wild rabbit and antelope. It affords a good example ofr hundreds of miles of country which apparently can never be brought underr cultivation, nor become fit for the residence of civilized man.r

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r At Carbon, 656 miles, there is good supply of tertiary coal, the shaftr being close to the track, the yield being 200 tons a day; the forcer which uplifted this table land broke up these coal-bearing strata,r fortunately placing them so that they are easily workable, andr exceedingly valuable where wood is so scarce.r

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r At Creston, 740 miles, r 7,000 feet high, is the dividing line of the continent, where streams flow easterly to the Gulf of Mexico, and westerly to the Pacific. Sager brush and alkali give the aspect of desolation to this central point of the grandest of our mountain ranges. Westward for thirty miles, the country is a barren alkaline desert, with a reddish tint, from salts of iron.

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r Green River Station, 846 miles, is so named from the river, which flows into the Colorado; the water has a greenish hue, from the minuter particles of the decomposed green slaty rocks which it washes; it is a large, rapid stream, with good water, plentifully stocked with trout. This region was evidently once the bed of a large lake, or very wider river, and affords a great many moss agates. Here you pass into Utah Territory.

r r

r Aspen, 940 miles, 7,463 feet high, the second highest point on the Union Pacific Railroad, is so named from the tree of that name, which grows on the sides of the mountains, spurs of the Uintah Range. It will be noticed that there is an interval of about 100 miles between the stations here mentioned, which will indicate to the reader what a dreary and uninteresting region this is as a whole, with here and there a place worthy of mention.

r r

r From Aspen the track descends through the cut made by the Weber River through the Wahsatch Range, into Salt Lake Valley. At Wahsatch, 968 miles, after a good breakfast (and it may be here stated, once for all, that the meals all along the route are excellent, at moderate price, and with plenty of time to eat), you plunge into the famous Echo Cañon, flanked by the most magnificent scenery. Here comes in a merry conductor, full of proverbs and wiser sayings, ready to do battle in words, (and for aught I know with fists,) for all sound morality; he has a fair voice, and as he enters the car, preliminary to taking the tickets, treats the passengers to a snatch of some song, sacred or profane, which puts every body into good-humor, contrasting favorably with the boorishness so frequently met with in conductors who ride behind horse-flesh in our large cities. He invites you to go to the rear or observation car, open above and on the sides, affording an unobstructed view on all sides. The cars soon pass into a tunnel, 770 feet long, approached by a long, and rather shaky trestle-work; here the jolly conductor (not a Mormon, as you at first suppose) cautions young people, and especially any who may be on their bridal tours, to be sure that they select the right person before they proceed to any little caresses suggested by the long, dark tunnel; according to his account, many ludicrous and provoking mistakes have sometimes been revealed when the sudden darting, of the train into the daylight has shown the various attitudes of the passengers; from failure to recognize the points of the compass in the light, moustaches have been found under the wrong bonnets, and arms around the wrong waists.

r r

r No words can describe the wild and grand scenery of the Echo Cañon, at this pass narrowed to a mere chasm, between cliffs of reddish sandstone from 500 to 2,000 feet high, almost overhanging the road, and carved by the elements into the most fantastic forms, whose names and resemblances are pointed out by the communicative conductor. Excellent photographs for stereoscopic use have rendered these scenes familiar to many, and, though giving but little idea of the real grandeur, serve well to fix in the memory of those who have seen them the momentary glimpses so rapidly taken from the rushing car. The whistle of the locomotive starts a thousand echoes from the rocky sides, chiefly on the right, the left sloping away to grassy

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meadows. r r r Here are seen ther “Mormon Fortifications,” 1,000 feet high, with the massive rocks stillr in place destined to have been rolled upon the United States troops sentr in 1857 to attack this people; they were, however, never used. Echor Creek winds among the rocks, and is crossed thirty times in twenty-fiver miles. Occasionally is seen a small Mormon settlement, of longr one-storied houses, surrounded by richly-cultivated fields; but ther houses and fences are in bad repair, with slouchy, bearded men hangingr about, and the women sad-eyed, homely, and poorly dressed—the tyrannyr of their creed impressing itself even on their external appearance. r

r r

r Soon after leaving Echo City, you come to the “thousand mile tree,” ar vigorous evergreen, spared to mark the thousandth mile from Omaha—2,650r miles from good old Boston. Then comes Weber Cañon, cut by the river ofr that name, more beautiful, if possible, than Echo Cañon, though onlyr three miles long (Echo being eight); it is rendered more pleasing byr the river which rushes by the side of the track, now a torrent, then ar cascade, then a whirlpool, and then boiling rapids, according to ther obstructions of its rocky bed and sides. In this, as in Echo Cañon, r every second brings into view some new wonder or beauty. We canr mention only two, both named from his Satanic Majesty, who seems tor claim most that is sublime and awful, in the scenery west of the Rockyr Mountains. The first is the “Devil’s Slide,” two vertical ridges ofr granite, on the left of the track, extending several hundred feet inr height; the earth between the ridges, which are several yards apart, isr covered with grass and flowers, rendering by contrast the gray rockyr barriers very distinct. Passing this and Weber Station you come to ther second, the “Devil’s Gate,” a narrow gorge through which the Weberr River rushes, crossed by a bridge about fifty feet above the raging, r stream. You have no opportunity for fright or pleasure, as you arer whirled along by the iron horse, which has no eye for scenery, andr regards only time and space. r

r r

r After passing through these fine cañons inr the Wahsatch Range, you are in the Great Salt Lake Valley, thoughr still, at Uintah Station, 4,550 feet above the sea. Eight miles more andr you are in Ogden, the terminus of the Union Pacific, 1,032 miles fromr Omaha. This is a strictly Mormon town; the houses are widely scattered, r but with fine gardens and orchards. Near the depot is the usualr assortment of shanties, tents, and saloons. On the platform you willr probably see Indians of the Shoshone tribe, in costumes partlyr civilized and partly savage; as a military hat with feather, pants, r and coat, with dirty blanket, moccasins, and daubed with paint—withr the unmistakable odor of the red man, indicating, to more senses thanr the eye, that frequent ablution is not one of his virtues. r

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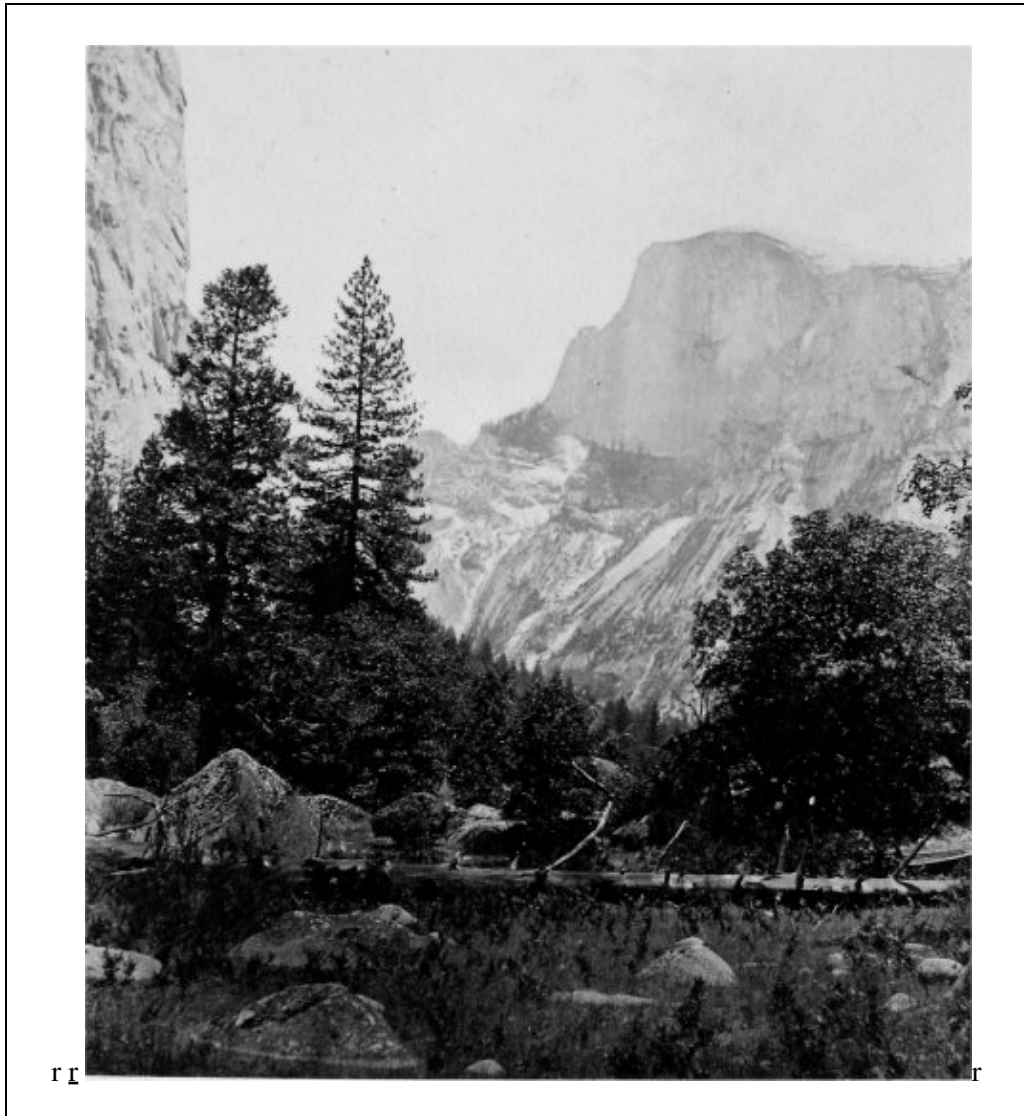
The Wonders of the Yosemite Valley, and of California (1872)

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Salt Lake and the Central Pacific Railroad.

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rr HALF, OR SOUTH DOME.rr
r (1½ Mile high,) from head of Valley.r

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r r Atr r Oden the traveller takes the Utah Central Railroad, going south, andr after a two hours' ride, of thirty-five miles, arrives in Salt Laker City, the temporal and spiritual head-quarters of President Brigham Young,r

r r

r Surrounded as is Salt Lake Valley by lofty mountains, and cut offr from civilization by a thousand miles of barren and almost impassabler deserts, it is certainly a very remarkable instance of human industry,r perseverance, and devotion to what they regarded as a divine precept,r that the Mormons should have established such a prosperous community inr this unpromising region. Salt Lake City was founded in 1847; it isr situated in latitude 40 deg. 46 min. north, and longitude 112 deg. 6r min. west, at the base of the western slope of the Wahsatch Mountains,r which you pass by the Echo and Weber Cañons.r

r r

r The history of the riser and progress of this strange sect cannot be entered into here. Sufficer it to say that it was organized in 1830 by Joseph Smith, in Ohio, underr circumstances savoring strongly of delusion and fanaticism, if not ofr deception; it afterward removed to Jackson County, Missouri, and then tor Natuvoo, Illinois, on the Mississippi. Persecuted for obvious reasons inr 1844-45, the Mormons emigrated in 1846, under President Brigham Young,r the successor of Joseph Smith, who, with his brother Hyrum, wasr murdered by a mob in 1844. Persecution followed them through Missouriir and Iowa, and they reached Great Salt Lake, after much hardship, in ther latter part of July, 1847, passing up the left bank of the Platte River,r crossing at Fort Laramie, and over the mountains at the South Pass. Inr 1850 Utah was admitted into the Union as a Territory, though it appliedr for admission as a State under the name of "Deseret."r

r r

r The city is fourr miles long and three wide, the streets—it right angles to each other,r 132 feet wide, with sidewalks of twenty feet. Each house is twenty feetr from the line of the street, and is adorned usually by shrubbery andr trees; water is brought from the mountains, and its fresh current runsr freely through the gutters of the streets, with a sound and sight veryr refreshing on a hot day, is you walk along tinder the grateful shade,r over the sidewalks. Most of the houses are of adobe, or sun-dried brickr and wood, and a few of stone. The stores are well supplied with goodsr from the East, and with excellent articles of home manufacture, whichr the saints are, in a measure, forced to buy—the trade of the Gentilesr being with each other and with strangers, and not much with ther Mormons. The Mormon stores, generally co-operative, are known by ther sign, "Holiness to the Lord." Church and State are closely united, ther heads of the church being also the high civil officers. One-tenth of allr a convert has, lie pays, it is said, into the "Treasury of the Lord,"r and one tenth of his yearly profits, and devotes one-tenth of his timer for publicr r r r r works—resembling ther system of tithing of the ancient Israelites. There is, besides, a tax onr property for the revenue of the civil government. Outward prosperity,r peace, and contentment, seem to reign; poverty is unknown; crime isr rare, and severely punished, and the ordinary vices of our large citiesr are not seen, and most likely do not extensively exist—the one greatr evil, as we deem it, polygamy, swallows up all lesser

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vices by taking away one great incentive. The Mormons regard their prosperity as a sign of the favor of heaven; but outsiders more truly ascribe it to their industry, discipline, and concentration of energies on one purpose. Whatever may be thought of their religious views and consequent practices, they are undoubtedly sincere. The President is a man of remarkably clear mind and sound sense, and with great executive ability, equal to his responsible position; sincere and active in everything which he considers good for the moral, intellectual, and material elevation of his people, whose confidence he fully enjoys. He is of commanding appearance, affable to strangers, and impresses you with the idea of strength, firmness, and resolution, which indeed are required to keep this anomalous community from falling, to pieces by the slow but continual sapping of its foundation-tenets by the encroachments of Eastern principles.

r r

r The “spiritual-wife” system, which now seems tottering to its fall, was not an original tenet of the Mormon creed, forming no part of the teachings of its founders; and probably would long since have met the fate deserved by such an abomination, had it not been in great measure kept out of public sight by the remoteness and isolation of this people. Even now, when public indignation is aroused for its extinction, the problem is a difficult one to solve in a way which shall punish or restrain the guilty ones in high places, without causing unmerited suffering to the deluded wives and innocent children.

r r

r I have before me the “Third Annual Catalogue” of the “University of Deseret,” in Salt Lake City, for the years 1870-71. It contains the names of 580 pupils: 286 males, and 294 females, with those of 13 instructors. The courses of instruction in the classics, in the sciences, and in the normal studies, will compare favorably with those of our Eastern colleges, and seem admirably adapted to prepare the way for a better state of things, evidently now approaching rapidly, and to develop the great natural resources of this country. With a fertile soil, healthy climate, and inexhaustible mineral wealth, this land of beauty and grandeur must soon be the pasture and the mine, as it is the highway of the nation. Time only can solve the questions of statesmanship, civil polity, religion, and morality, presented by this singular community, whose centre is at Salt Lake City. When the iron will which rules this people ceases to exert its influence, the Mormon system will doubtless crumble away before the advancing tide of Eastern civilization, now so rapidly surrounding and permeating it by means of the Pacific Railroad; yet, whether its life be long or short, this sect has made a pathway and a stopping-place for the westward march of the nation, and thus, involuntarily, have greatly advanced the progress of humanity. The city is beautifully situated, and, as seen from the surrounding hills, its so-called “Valley of the Jordan” is a perfect garden in the wilderness. With and without irrigation the crops are fine, and the fruit is excellent; the grasshoppers are a great plague, and sometimes so utterly destroy a growing crop as to require planting even a third time. Camp Douglas overlooks the city, and, in case of need, could soon shell out an enemy. The valley was evidently once the bottom of an inland sea, as proved by the terraces, which can be traced for miles along the sides of the mountains, indicating former levels of the water; it contains over 1,100 square miles, with much fine grazing, as well as cultivated, land. Mormon industry has shown that reclaimed and irrigated sage plains make very fertile soils; the disintegrated felspathic and limestone make a rich, porous, and absorbent earth, if well watered. The Mormons now manufacture almost everything they use, even to articles of silk; their precious metals, coal, iron, and building stones are abundant, and their water-power for machinery is ample.

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r The Tabernacle will hold about 10,000 persons; it is the first object seen when approaching the city—its bell-shaped top looking like a balloon rising above the trees; the building is oval, 250 by 150 feet, the roof supported by forty-six columns of sandstone, from which it springs in one unbroken arch, said to be the largest self-sustaining roof on the continent; the height on the inside is 65 feet. It contains an organ, second in

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size only to ther Boston organ, made by a Mormon in Salt Lake City. The seats are plain,r those of the men and women separate. The foundations of the greatr temple are laid in granite, and are now even with the ground, abover which it is doubtful if they rise the building was to cover about halfr an acre, and to be one of the grandest church edifices in the country;r the main structure 100 feet high, with three towers on each end, ther central one 200 feet high. The fine granite of which it was to be builtr resembles the Quincy sienite, but is much whiter; it is found inr abundance in the neighboring mountains. The theatre, city hall, andr council house, are fine structures, and many of the stores comparer favorably, both inside and out, with our own.r

r r

r Though Capt. Stansbury, inr 1850, mentions seeing myriads of wild geese, ducks, and swans on ther surface of the lake, I saw nothing but a few ducks and snipes aroundr the edges, scarcely disturbed by the noise of the train. The shore isr naked and bleak, and there are none of the invigorating breezes of ther ocean coming from its vast and motionless expanse. Except the valleys atr the southern end of the lake, the country seems very barren, withoutr fresh water, and so little elevated above the lake that a rise of a fewr feet in its waters would flood an immense extent of country—the onlyr use of which would seem to be, in the language of Capt. Stansbury,r that, from its extent and level surface, it is good for measuring ar degree of the meridian. The lake is said to be rising annually, and ther Salt Lake problem may ere long be solved by geological agencies, ther people being actually drowned out.r

r r

r The existence of a salt lake ini thisr region has been known forr r r r r r nearly two centuries. Ther water is so salt, that twelve hours' immersion will so far corn beefr that it can be kept without further care, even when constantly exposedr to the sun; in a few days it may be made perfect "salt junk"; if ther meat were only there, a "Salt Lake Meat Preserving Company" mightr profitably be established near these waters. There is no life in ther lake, and beat little in the surrounding brackish waters, so thatr pelicans and gulls which breed on the islands must go at least twentyr miles for food for themselves and young. The water, from its density,r is very buoyant, as in the Dead Sea; it is easy to float in it, butr hard to swim, from the tendency of the legs to come up and the head tor go down; the brine irritates the eyes, and almost chokes you ifr accidentally swallowed; the most expert swimmer would soon perish inr its heavy waves. It contains more than twenty per cent. of pure salt,r with very little impurities; if the people are not the "salt of ther earth," the water is, and probably ere many years this region will ber the seat and the source of a profitable and extensive industry from itsr natural salt works.r

r r

r After leaving Ogden, and pursuing your way westwardr on the Central Pacific Railroad, you pass through a well-cultivatedr Mormon country, getting fine views of the lake, near which the trackr passes for miles. In nine miles you arrive at Corinne, a lively gentiler town, the centre of valuable mining interests in the neighboringr territory of Montana on the north. After crossing Blue Creek on ar trestle bridge 300 feet long, over many sharp curves and through deepr cuts, you come close to the graded bed of the old Central road, whichr ended at Ogden and is now unused. Here you begin to rise till you getr to Promontory Point, one of the most difficult passes on the road, andr near where the trains from the east and the west met May 10, 1869, whenr the last tie was laid which bound the Atlantic to the Pacific. This wasr certainly one of the most remarkable events in the history of travel; wer all remember how the country rejoiced, some cities quietly andr economically, like Boston, others noisily, and with generous andr hospitable exultation, like New York and Philadelphia, when the messenger flashed over the wires on that day that the last spike was driven; ther President of the road stood there in the wilderness holding in his handr the silver hammer to whose handle was attached the telegraph wire, andr when he struck the golden spike at noon, the joyful news went onr lightning wings to every city of the land; the locomotives screamedr and rubbed their sooty noses together,

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and the crowd huzzaed, shookr hands, drank toasts, and exhibited the hilarious and almost frantick transports peculiar to such occasions outside of staid New England. Thisr point is fifty-three miles from Ogden, 1,084 from Omaha, and 2,730 fromr Boston.r

r r

r At 100 miles you are about in the middle of ther “Great American Desert,”r where the eye searches in vain for signs of animal or vegetabler life; alkaline beds, sandy wastes, and rocky hills, constitute ther landscape; this desert was once evidently the bed of a great salt lake,r and such as would be presented were the present Utah and Great Saltr Lakes to be drained, and raised to the same level.r

r r r r r r r r

r In 150 miles you leave Utah, and enterr Nevada Territory, and at Toano, 183 miles, you enter the Humboldt division of the road, ascending the desert by the Cedar Pass to Humboldt Valley, at Pequop, being on the third high point, 6,210 feet above ther sea. From this there is a gradual descent, along which you obtain finer distant views of the beautiful valleys in the range, well supplied withr lakes, and famous for their fine crops. The celebrated Humboldt Wellsr are 218 miles from Ogden; here the emigrant trains used to stop afterr the hard journey across the desert; there are about twenty wells, in ar charming valley, in which the water rises to the surface, slightllyr brackish; they are exceedingly deep, and are evidently craters ofr extinct volcanoes, whose existence is proved by the broken masses ofr lava and granite all around. This valley, which seems like Eden afterr crossing the dry and dreary desert, is named from the Humboldt River,r which, rising in the neighboring mountains, runs through it; the trackr follows the river for many miles. At Elko, 275 miles, stages may ber taken for the famous White Pine District; Treasure City, 125 miles tor the south, is the centre of extensive gold and silver mining. Atr Humboldt Cañon, or the Palisades, about 300 miles, the scenery is fine,r much like that of the Echo and Weber Cañons on the Union Pacific Road,r but more dismal from the greater bleakness and bareness; it is gloomyr and grand from the furious river which rushes along in the deepr gorges. A peculiarity of the rivers here is that they spread intor shallow lakes, and in summer disappear in what are called “sinks”;r probably most of their water escapes by the great evaporation, thoughr there may be in some cases a sinking into a subterranean channel, orr into the absorbent sand.r

r r

r As the Truckee region is approached, finer growths of timber begin to appear, clothing the slopes of the Sierrar Nevada range, which you now begin to ascend; the river is extremelyr pretty in its rocky bed, though much of the beauty of the scenery isr lost, unless the moon be shining, by passage in the night and early morning. At Reno, 590 miles, you may take the stages for Virginia Cityr and Gold Hill, Nevada, where are the famous Ophir and Comstock silverr mines. Soon after passing Verdi, following along the numerous curves ofr the river, and crossing several picturesque bridges, at 610 miles, your enter California. You are now ascending all the time, amid grandr scenery, with mountains on each side, timber-clothed ravines, and herer and there a strip of meadow. At Truckee, 623 miles from Ogden, and 120r from Sacramento, you are above 5,900 feet above the sea; this is ther centre of a great trade in lumber, as the best of material is abundantr and accessible, and the water-power ample. Here you may start for Laker Tahoe, a beautifully clear sheet of water, very deep (in some placesr 1,700 feet), twenty-two miles by ten; it is part in Nevada, and part inr California; this is the lake which Mark Twain so extols above ther Italian lakes in the “Innocents Abroad,”r to which admirable burlesque ther reader is referred for fuller description. Donner Lake, smaller, but asr beautiful, and seen from the track, has a melancholy interest, from ther domestic tragedy connected with it; here, in the early times ofr immigration, a party from Illinois were hemmed in by the snow; mostr r r r r r r escaped, leaving ar Mr. Donner, his wife, and a German; when a party reached the place ther following spring, Mr. Donner had died, and the German is said to haver been found eating a part of Mrs. Donner’s body, whom it is believed her murdered. Both these lakes are probably in craters of old volcanoes,r closed by some geological convulsion

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which has occurred in the Sierra.

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r The summit of the range is fourteen miles distant, and the doubling of the locomotives shows that work is to be done; up you go constantly, getting glimpses of the lake and the mountains, till you get to the provoking snow-sheds, which for forty miles protect the road from avalanches of snow, but not of hard words from travellers, who are by them deprived of the magnificent views. You cross the range at Summit, 7,242 ft. high, 1,700 miles from Omaha, and 105 from Sacramento. The peaks of the Sierra are far above the level of the Donner Pass, and are here and there covered with snow. The Summit Tunnel, the longest of several, is 1,700 feet, nearly one-third of a mile; the forty miles of snow-sheds, of solid timber, are said to have cost \$10,000 a mile. You are now descending all the time, sometimes quite abruptly. Just after leaving Alta, sixty-two miles from Sacramento, you enter the "Great American Cañon," one of the grandest in the Sierra, where the rocks, 2,000 feet high, give a narrow passage to a branch of Feather River; the scenery is very fine, and there are no sheds to intercept the view. Here you come to a succession of strange names, suggestive of the lively times of twenty years ago,—such as Dutch Flat, Little York, You Bet, Red Dog, Gold Run, Cape Horn. This is the region of hydraulic mining, and you see ditches and flumes, with rapid streams from the mountains running for miles to various claims, and then directed through discharge pipes with great force against the gold-containing bank, washing away immense amounts of dirt into the long channels, where the gold gradually settles from its greater weight. Chinese miners and their cabins frequently meet the eye. Going rapidly down, almost on the edge of a precipice 2,500 feet deep, you come to and double Cape Horn, the road cut into the very side of the mountain by the Chinese it makes one shudder to think of the consequences of the train getting off the track as it rushes with frequent screams down the steep and narrow line, around the sharp curves, and over the apparently delicate bridges; if quicker, it is perhaps more dangerous than doubling the point of South America. Let us hope that familiarity will not breed contempt of danger, for inevitable destruction would be the result of an accident here.

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r The fine fruit, bottles of wine, grapes, and grain fields show that we are in one of the great valleys of California. We soon rush into Sacramento, only fifty-six feet above the sea, having descended over seven thousand feet in one hundred miles. Sacramento is the heart of California, depending on its never-failing agricultural and mineral resources; while San Francisco is rather a great commercial market, constantly fluctuating, and as much injured by the Pacific Railroad as Sacramento, the capital, has been increased by it. It has suffered greatly from floods, from the filling up of the river by the results of mining operations; but it is now raised fifteen feet above the highest level of the river, and is now considered safe from floods. Thence to San Francisco, *via* Stockton, over the Western Pacific Railroad, is 138 miles; thus, the distance from Boston to San Francisco, nearly 3,600 miles, may be passed over, if necessary, in seven days.

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r The Pacific Road was in running order seven years before the limit of the construction time, the track having been laid, and well laid, at a rate before unparalleled. In twenty-two hours, on the Union Pacific Road, seven and a third miles were laid; and on the last day but one, May 8, 1869, the Chinese laid, on the Central Pacific road, ten miles of track in twelve hours. When we remember that the great road from Vienna to Trieste, over the Soemmering Pass, less than three hundred miles, and with an elevation of only 4,400 feet, required fifteen years for its construction by the Austrian Government, with all the advantages of a populous country, and then consider that our road, more than six times as long, rising nearly twice as high, and built through a waterless, woodless desert, infested by hostile Indians, by private enterprise was completed in seven years, it is truly marvellous, and a convincing proof of the wonderful energy and foresight of the

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YOSEMITE VALLEY—HISTORICAL SKETCH.

r r r r r r r

r r Before r describing the Yosemite Valley, it may be of interest to ther reader to know something more of the history of the discovery of this wonderful locality, within a few years known only to the Indianr tribes. The following historical sketch is condensed from ther “Geological Survey of California,” published by authority of ther Legislature.r

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r In the year 1864, Congress influenced by intelligentr citizens of California, passed the following Act:r

r r

r “*Be it enacted by ther Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, inr Congress assembled,*r That there shall be, and is hereby, granted to ther State of California, the ‘Cleft’ or ‘Gorge’ in the Granite Peak of ther Sierra Nevada Mountain, situated in the County of Mariposa, in the Stater aforesaid, and the head waters of the Merced River, and known as ther Yosemite Valley, with its branches and spurs, in estimated lengthr fifteen miles, and in average width one mile back from the main edge ofr the precipice, on each side of the Valley, with the stipulation,r nevertheless, that the said State shall accept this grant upon ther express conditions that the premises shall be held for public use,r resort, and recreation; shall be inalienable for all time; but leasesr not exceeding ten years may be granted for portions of said premises.r All incomes derived from leases of privileges to be expended in ther preservation and improvement of the property, or the roads leading,r thereto; the boundaries to be established at the cost of said State byr the United States Surveyor-General of California, whose official plat,r when affirmed by the Commissioner of the General Land Office, shallr constitute the evidence of the locus, extent, and limits of the saidr Cleft or Gorge; the premises to be managed by the Governor of the State,r with eight other Commissioners, to be appointed by the Executive ofr California, and who shall receive no compensation for their services.r

r r

r “Sect. 2.r *And be it further enacted,*r That there shall likewise be, andr there is hereby granted to the said State of California, the tractsr embracing what is known as the ‘Mariposa Big Tree Grove,’ not to exceedr the area of four sections, and to be taken in legal subdivisions ofr one-quarter section each, with the like stipulations as expressed in ther first section of this Act as to the State’s acceptance, with liker conditions as in the first section of this Act as to inalienability, yetr with the same lease privileges; the income to be expended in ther preservation, improvement, and protection of the property, the premisesr to be managed by legal subdivisions as aforesaid; and the official platr of the United States Surveyor-General, when affirmed by the Commissionerr of the General Land Office, to be the evidence of the locus of the saidr Mariposa Big Tree Grove.”r

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r r EL CAPITAN.r r
r (3100 feet above Valley,) from Merced River.r

r PAGE 41.r

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r This Act was approved by the President, Juner 30, 1864; and soon after, Governor Low, of California, issued ar proclamation, taking possession of the tracts thus granted in behalf ofr the State, appointing, commissioners to manage them, and warning allr persons against trespassing or settling there without authority, andr forbidding the cutting of timber, and other injurious acts. Ther necessary surveys were made, and the limits of the Valley and ther Mariposa Grove were established in the same year.r

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r r

r The grant by Congressr had no validity until the State, by its Legislature, had solemnlyr promised to accept the trust, forever binding when once accepted.r

r r

r At ther next session of the California Legislature, an Act was passed acceptingr the Valley and the Grove, on the conditions imposed by Congress, andr containing provisions for the punishment of persons committing.r depredations on the premises, and appointing a guardian of the grant.r Since the passage of this act, the vandalism of those who would haver destroyed the grove, who would have cut down a giant tree to buildr their houses, has been in a great measure arrested; visitors, however,r may remember a huge pine prostrate near the upper hotel in the Valley,r cut down in the winter of 1869-70 by persons whom Mr. Galen Clark, ther guardian, had succeeded in placing in the hands of justice.r

r r

r The whitesr living on the streams near the Valley, as early as 1850, had beenr greatly harassed by the scattered Indians in this region, and finallyr formed a military company to expel them from the country. As the Indiansr were pursued it became evident that they had a safe retreat high up inr the mountains, and it was determined to trace them to, their refuge;r this was found to be the Yosemite Valley, which thus came to be knownr to the whites. In the spring of 1851 an expedition, under the commandr of Captain Boling, started to explore this Valley and to drive ther Indians out of it; guided by an old chief, Tenaya, whose name is givenr to one of the cañons of the Merced River, they reached the valley, andr drove the Indians from their supposed impregnable retreat, killing a few,r and making a peace with the rest—this, it will be seen, was fourteenr years before the Act of Congress, above referred to. The Indians againr becoming, troublesome to the miners, another expedition was fitted onr for the Valley in 1852, by the Mariposa Battalion; some of the Indiansr were killed, and the rest fled to the Mono tribe, on the eastern side ofr the Sierra; having stolen some horses from their friends, the Monosr pursued them back to the Valley, where a bloody battle was fought,r resulting int the almost entire extermination of the Yosemite tribe.r

r r

r According to Dr. Bunnell, the Indians in and around the Valley were ar mixed race, made up by refugees from many widely-scattered tribes; eachr family is said to have had a tract set apart for its use, which had itsr own name; all we know of their language is preserved in the sonorousr and often musical names given to the waterfalls and rocks, as elsewhere stated, which, however, have in most cases been replaced by Spanishr and English names.r

r r

r The visit of the soldiers did very little towardr opening the Valleyr r r r to public notice; theirr wonderful stories found their way into the newspapers, but were passedr over as the exaggerations so often published by travellers in distantr regions, where there is no liability of contradiction by eye-witnesses.r Mr. J. M. Hutchings, who has been long, identified with the history ofr the Valley, and who now keeps a hotel there, seems to have been ther first, in 1855, to collect ar party of tourists to visit the Yosemite for pleasure;r in the same year, another, and a larger, party fromr Mariposa went into the Valley. In 1856, the regular pleasure travel mayr be said to have commenced—if it can be called pleasure to toil up andr down steep ridges, dangerous on horseback, at that time, and veryr fatiguing on foot. The trail from Clark and Moore's hotel is even nowr abominable, and unnecessarily so; fallen trees might be removed, rollingr stones picked out, fords levelled, mud holes made safe, and projectingr rocks knocked off, at very little cost of time or money. It

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seemsr unbecoming in the State to allow such neglect of the trails, now thatr the visitors number thousands, and many of them ladies, in the course ofr the summer. Mercy for the horse, as well as for the rider, demands morer care to be devoted to these trails, which seem now as if purposely mader to wrench, torture, and fatigue the poor traveller, and compel him tor stop at the houses of entertainment along their course. Were the trailsr properly attended to, it would be easy enough to go from Clark's intor the Valley in a day; now it is very hard to do this, and by the timer they have gone twelve miles, most travellers are weary enough to restr at the "Half-way House," and to make the other twelve miles on the next day; like a Chicago train, which generally contrives to get you in anr hour too late to make your Eastern or Western connection, thusr compelling an unnecessary expenditure there, this trail seems to ber neglected intentionally for a similar end.r

r r

r The first house built in ther Valley, in the autumn of 1856, opposite the Yosemite Fall, is stillr standing, and is occupied as a hotel. In 1860, Mr. J. C. Lamon took upr his residence in the Valley, where he now lives, a lonely bachelor, inr a comfortable log house. He has truly made the wilderness to "blossomr like the rose," and has succeeded in raising excellent vegetables, andr some exceedingly fine berries, and other fruit; his garden is one ofr the "sights" in the Valley, and the visitor is always sure of ar welcome reception; if the proprietor be not at home to sell you hisr fruit, you are allowed to pick and eat, but not to carry away, in hisr garden, depositing on his window a quarter or half-dollar in silver. Her thinks that he has a claim to the tract cultivated by himself, andr considers himself a *bona fide* settler; of course he has no legalr claim, as the land was not open to pre-emption, never having beenr surveyed and put into the market. Many summer residents have since putr in their claims, which are invalid under the United States laws, for ther above reason, and also because they were not accompanied byr permanent residence. None of the claimants, it is hoped, will be allowedr to have their pretensions recognized by Congress, or in any wayr sanctioned by public opinion. The gift of Congress is too precious tor the State and to ther r r r r country to be hampered by the restrictions whichr would inevitably be imposed by the greed of individual owners orr lessees, who would surely manage it for private benefit, and not forr public good. In the language of ther "Survey,"r "As the tide of travel inr the direction of this wonderful and unique locality increases, so willr the vexations, restraints, and annoying charges, which are so universalr at all places of great resort, be multiplied. The screws will be put onr just as fast as the public can be educated into bearing the pressure.r Instead of having every convenience for circulation in and about ther Valley—free trails, roads, and bridges, with every facility offered forr the enjoyment of Nature in the greatest of her works, unrestrainedr except by the requirements of decency and order—the public will find,r if the ownership of the Valley passes into private hands, thatr opportunity will be taken to levy toll at every point of view, on everyr trail, on every bridge, and at every turning, while there will be nor inducement to do anything for the public accommodation, except thatr which may be made immediately available as a new means of raising a taxr on the unfortunate traveller. . . . The Yosemite Valley is an exceptionalr creation, and, as such, has been exceptionally provided for jointly byr the Nation and the State; it has been made a National public park, andr placed under the charge of the State of California. Let Californiansr beware how they make the name of their State a by-word and reproach forr all time, by trying to throw off and repudiate a noble task which theyr undertook to perform—that of holding the Yosemite Valley as a place ofr public use, resort, and recreation, inalienable for all time!"r

r r

r A few years since, some scientific men, familiar with California, andr especially with this Valley, undertook to obtain the signatures of theirr fellows throughout the land, and of those connected with learnedr societies, remonstrating against the enormity of permitting the claimsr of private individuals to stand in the way of the reservation of thisr Valley as a public park forever. They were successful in obtaining ther approval of the great majority of American savants, scholars, andr eminent men; and it is to be hoped that Congress will never recognizer such claims. It would be better far to pay ten times their estimate ofr alleged improvements, and to secure the right of the nation to the fullr control of every portion of the Valley and its surroundings mentioned

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r r r r

Yosemite Valley.

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r r This r unique and wonderful locality, visited by the writer in July, 1870, wasr once the stronghold of the Yosemite tribe of Indians, who were expelledr from it in 1851, and exterminated in 1852, by the whites, exasperated byr their murderous attacks, and by the rival tribe of Monos. Before thisr time it was unknown to the whites. A few of these Monos now live in ther valley, belonging to the so-called diggers, a miserable, drunken, andr fast-disappearing, race, living chiefly upon fish from the Merced River,r acorns, and the seeds of a species of pine, called the nut-pine.r

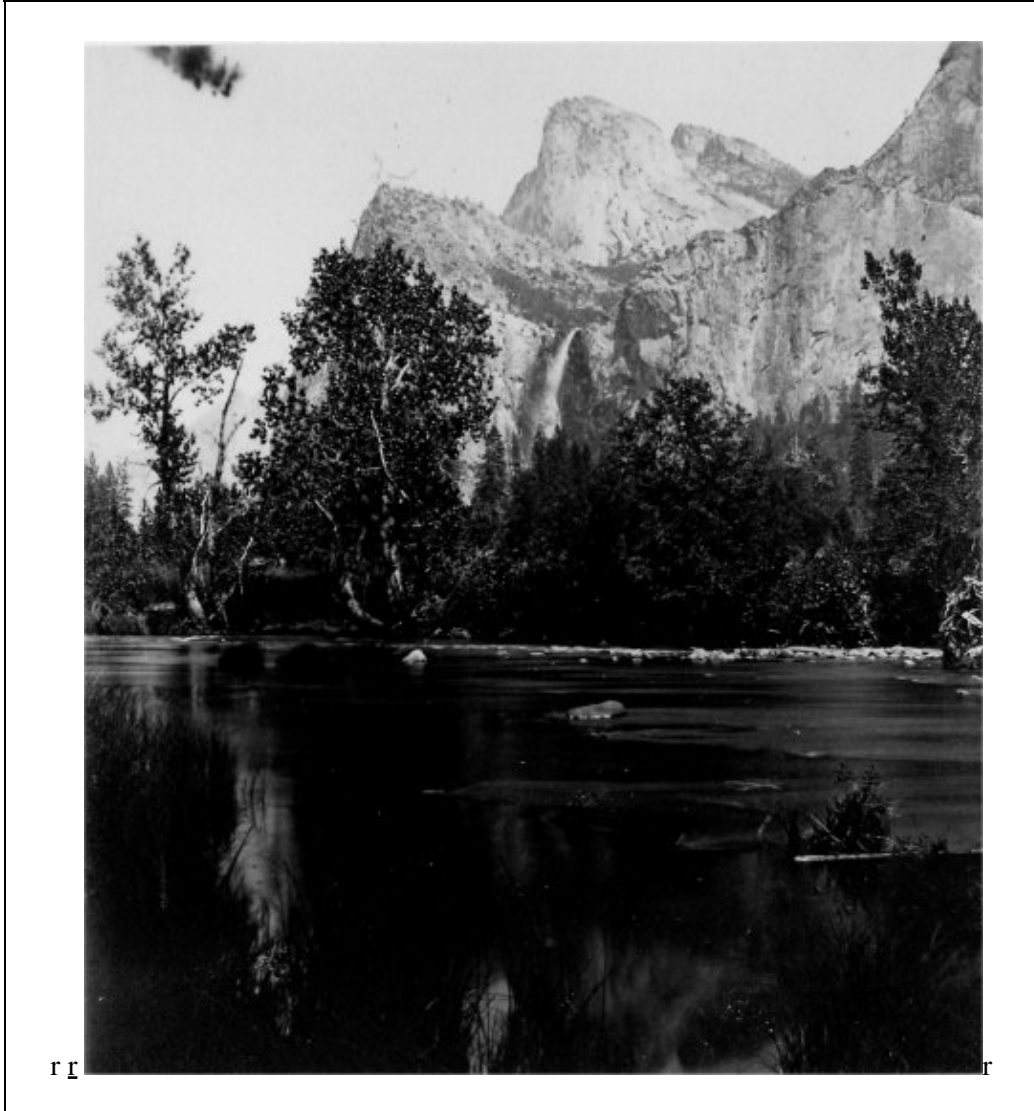
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r Ther word Yosemite, meaning a large grizzly bear, was probably the name of ar chief, who gave his name to the tribe, and the valley is now called byr the Indians Ahwahnee, and not Yosemite; and even the latter is sometimesr pronounced Yohemite by the Mexicans. It was first visited for curiosityr or pleasure in 1855, since which time the number of visitors hasr annually increased, so that three hotels are now hardly able tor accommodate them. It is a toilsome, fatiguing, and, in many respects, ar very disagreeable journey, but when carriage-roads are extended,r railroads built, and the trails made decent for horse and man, it may ber undertaken by the most delicate and timid with safety and delight. Itr belongs to the State of California, granted by Congress, and acceptedr by the Legislature of the State, in 1864. There are some who lay claimr to a considerable part of the best portion of the valley; and shouldr they succeed in establishing their claims, the fleecing system ofr Niagara would be likely to prevail, and a price have to be paid forr every trail, bridge, and advantageous point of observation. It should ber under the sole control and management of the State; and the sooner ther State takes the roads and trails in hand, the better for its own creditr and the comfort of travellers.r

r r

r On account of the chilly winds rushing inr from the northwest through the “Golden Gate” to supply the place of ther heated current, which ascends along the coast range, the summer (Julyr and August) is the coldest, dampest, foggiest, and most disagreeabler part of the year in San Francisco; so that, going eastward, you riser several thousand feet in all air actually warmer than on the coast, andr on the highest part of the Yosemite range, 7,400 feet, it is even warmr in midday in summer. At Clark’s Hotel, outside the valley, and at ther hotels in the valley (each about 4,000 feet high), the thermometerr indicated 80 deg. for six hours every day, though the nights werer cool, but indescribably clear and exhilarating. At this season ther traveller is sure of good weather, as rain is extremely rare, and cloudsr uncommon. One is impressed with the subtropical character of ther vegetation on the Pacific in latitudes where, on the Atlantic, ther flora of the temperate zone prevails; in Stockton, figs grow luxuriantlyr in the open air, and in one of the squares was a magnificent Americanr aloe, atr r r r r r

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r r BRIDAL VEIL FALL.r r
r 940 feet high.r

r PAGE 41.r

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r r r r r r r least forty feet high, whoser beautiful yellow flowers were the pride of the city; this in latitude 38r deg. In San Francisco, in about the same latitude, the climate isr cooler; Stockton is on the east side of the coast range, in the Sanr Joaquin Valley, but of about the same elevation, as well as latitude,r as San Francisco.r r

r Among, the health inducements for travel here are ther invigorating air, the pure cold water, and the exercise, which, thoughr often severe, cannot fail to strengthen an ordinary traveller, refreshedr as he is, at

Yosemite Valley.

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night, by excellent food and comfortable bed; when to these is added the grand and beautiful scenery in this immense panorama of mountains, surely no further inducement is necessary for one to journey to this valley, brought within a week's easy travel of the farthest Atlantic seaport. In the words of Prof. Whitney, "Nothing so refines their ideas, purifies the heart, and exalts the imagination of the dweller on the plains, as an occasional visit to the mountains. It is not good to dwell always among them, for 'familiarity breeds contempt.' The greatest peoples have not been those who lived on the mountains, but near them. One must carry something of culture to them, to receive all the benefits they can bestow in return. As a means of mental development, there is nothing which will compare with the study of Nature as manifested in her mountain handiwork." Beside the grandeur of the mountains, and their stateliness of the trees, the most beautiful feature is the system of waterfalls, fed by the snow, which is seen glistening on the high summits in midsummer; as the snow gradually lessens with the advancing summer, the volume of water diminishes, and, by July, some of the most beautiful, like the "Virgin's Tears," and the falls of the "Royal Arches," and the "Sentinel Peak," are entirely dried up, and even the great Yosemite, the Bridal Veil, the Vernal, and the Nevada Falls, are comparatively small by the month of August. The fact is simply alluded to here, as, in another place, more space will be devoted to this topic.

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r The mountains, which look so massive and uniform in outline in their distance, when approached, are found to be deeply cleft by valleys and narrow cañons.

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r This whole mountain system, called by Prof. Whitney the "Cordilleras," is between the Pacific Ocean and 105 deg. west longitude including the Rocky Mountains proper on the east, and, as we proceed westerly, the Sierra Nevada and the broken region between, and the most westerly coast range.

r r

r Beginning on the Pacific, the coast ranges are geologically newer, according to the California geologists, than the Sierra Nevada, and have been subjected to great disturbances up to a comparatively recent geological period; there are in them no rocks older than the Cretaceous, this and the tertiary making up nearly their whole body, with some masses of volcanic and granitic material, neither forming anything like a nucleus, or core. They have no lofty peaks in Central California, Mt. Hamilton, near San Jose, being only 4,400 feet, and Monte Diablo, so conspicuous from San Francisco, only 3,860. Their scenery is picturesque, but not grand, and especially remarkable for their beautiful valleys, or parks, between the ridges, with magnificent forests of oaks and pines, the ridges being bare. North and south of the central region, their elevation is greater, even to eight thousand feet, but yet not within six thousand feet of Mt. Shasta, of the Sierra Range. The phenomena of erosion are well marked, it is said, and the atmosphere has their indescribable exhilarating property which so delights the traveller and strengthens the invalid.

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r The Sierra Nevada, or the snowy range, forms the western edge of the great continental upheaval, or plateau, on which the "Cordilleras" (as just explained) are built up; the Rocky Mountains form the eastern edge of the same plateau, the width between the two, traversed by the Pacific Railroad, being about one thousand miles. In this range the peaks are the highest, and the subordinate ranges the most regular. The base of the Rocky Mountains is four thousand feet above the sea level, with such a gentle ascent from the Missouri River that you hardly perceive it as you speed along for six hundred miles; but on the west side of the Sierra you descend very rapidly, and, in many places, apparently dangerously, seven thousand feet in less than a hundred miles to the level of the sea. The Sierra Nevada strictly belongs to California, being called

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the Cascade Range to the north inr Oregon and Washington Territories, and to the south losing itself, morer or less, in the coast ranges; from the Tejon Pass to Mt. Shasta is 550r miles, the last one hundred being the Cascade Range—the average width ofr the chain is eighty miles, taking in the lakes on the east and ther foot-hills on the west. The western slope, in the centre of the State,r rises one hundred feet in a mile, or seven thousand feet in a horizontalr distance of seventy miles; in the southern passes the slope is muchr steeper than this. Donner Lake Pass, where the Central Pacific Railroadr crosses the range, is about seven thousand feet above the sea; the crestr of the range is five hundred to a thousand feet higher than the passes,r or eight thousand feet high. The central mass is chiefly granitic,r flanked by metamorphic slates, and capped, especially to the north, byr volcanic materials; the activity of the subterranean forces is nowr indicated by occasional severe earthquakes, more severe and more dreadedr than we in the east dream of, by hot springs and geysers, and by ther existence of many well-formed, but extinct, craters.r

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r The scenery of the “High Sierra,” as you stand upon the “Sentinel Dome,”r or “Glacier Point,” is very different from that of the higher Alps.r You see much less snow and ice, and no glaciers extending into the valleys.r But the rocks, even to the edge of the Yosemite, are grooved and polished,r showing the former existence of an immense sheet of ice. You see nor grassy slopes between the forest and the snow, but the woods extend muchr higher up, and abruptly terminate with the bare rock in summer, and ther snow line in winter; the trees are large, but sombre and monotonous,r growing even at a height of 7,000 feet. Though there are many beautifulr valleys along the streams, and magnificent waterfalls, the character ofr the scenery is rather grand, sublime, and awful, than beautiful orr diversified; the heights are bewildering, the distances overpowering,r the stillness oppressive, and the utter barrenness and desolationr indescribable.r r r r r r One of the most strikingr features of the scenery on the edge of the valley, is the concentric structure of the granite in the so-called “Domes,” and “Royal Arches,”r of which more hereafter. Suffice it to say here, that the rounded,r dome-shaped masses contrast remarkably with the sharp peaks above andr beyond them; they rise front three to five thousand feet above ther valley, presenting toward it a sheer precipice of nearly thisr height—domes of the most graceful curves, and on a stupendous scale. Thisr concentric structure, according to Whitney, is not the result of ther original stratification of the rock, and there are no evidences ofr anticlinal or synclinal axes or marks of irregular folding; the curves,r arranged strictly with reference to the surface of the masses of rock,r show, according to him, that they were produced by the contraction ofr the material while cooling or solidifying, giving one the impressio nr that he sees the original shape of the surface. The concentric graniter plates overlap each other, absolutely preventing ascent from the valley;r as these immense plates have fallen, some from a height of over 3,000r feet, detached by the frost, and other agencies, they have left ther enormous cavities which have received the name of the “Royal Arches,”r and royal indeed they are.r

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r All observers agree that the snow disappearsr from the highest summits rather by evaporation than by melting, and thatr the air there is remarkably dry; and by this is explained the generalr absence of glaciers on Mt. Shasta and similar elevations, where in ther Alps glaciers would exist; immense masses of snow, miles long andr hundreds of feet thick, remain all summer, thawing and freezing on ther surface, gradually wasting away without becoming glacier ice, andr yielding comparatively small streams of water. Still, at ar comparatively recent geological period, immense glaciers existed inr these mountains, and the usual traces of scratched and polished surfacesr are common enough, and moraines of great extent are found—theser evidences of former glacial action, however, seem to be limited to ther higher parts of the range, and not to descend below 6,000 feet above ther sea, except in a few exceptional cases, where the configuration of ther upper valleys was favorable to the accumulation ofr large masses of snow—this indicates at that periodr a considerably moister climate than nowr exists there. Glaciers extended from Mt. Dana (13,000 feet above ther sea) to a level of the upper border of the great Yosemite, or 7,000 feetr above the sea, the bottom of the valley being 3,000 feet lower. Ther weight of an ice sheet a mile in thickness, may have had something to dor with

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the sudden subsidence which many geologists think was in part the cause of the formation of this valley. Marks of glacial action are manifest on the "Sentinel Dome," and on "Glacier Point," both grooving and polishings; this polishing extends far down the smooth surface on the south side of the valley, near the Illilouette Cañon, a steep, gigantic slide for a thousand feet, of perfectly smooth rock, which makes one dizzy to look at from above or below, ending, as it does, in a vertical wall toward the valley. There are no signs, that I know of, of glacial action in the valley. The Little Yosemite Valley, 2,000 feet higher than the big Yosemite, but greatly resembling it, communicates with the latter by the Nevada Fall, the main stream of the Merced River running through both. No doubt a glacier passed down the Illilouette Cañon from the Mt. Starr King group to the edge of the valley; the land at the head of the Merced River was not high enough for the formation of a glacier into the Yosemite Valley, and there is no evidence that it came beyond the edge, as above stated, though it doubtless filled the higher Little Yosemite.

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The famous valley is about 155 miles from San Francisco, a little south of east, or 250 by the usual line of travel. It is best to stop, when coming from the east, at Stockton, distant ninety miles from San Francisco by rail. I went by the Mariposa route, the longest, with the most horseback-riding, but leading near the Mariposa grove of big trees, and affording, on the whole, the grandest views. We took a private conveyance, three of us and a driver, at Stockton, the usual charge for which is \$16.00 a day, including the food and all expenses of driver and two horses; the stages are crowded and uncomfortable, (though, from experience, I think not more so than the private carriage,) but are considerably cheaper and quicker, as they travel day and night. By this route you have about twenty-five miles to go on horseback, mostly up and down steep and rough trails, to reach the valley—this we did in one day; but it is better to take two, as both horses and riders get greatly fatigued.

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You cannot enter the valley without rising about 3,500 feet above the point you wish to reach, viz.: the bottom of the valley—this is 4,000 feet above the sea, and so is the ranch of Mr. Clark, from which you start; from this you ascend to 7,400 feet, and then descend about 3,500 into the valley. This severe, but necessary, toil, is what, with the dust and heat, makes the journey so fatiguing. You can do it all on horseback, as Mark Twain's pilgrims did in the Holy Land; but pity for the horse, and comfort, it not safety for the rider, impels you often to dismount, exchanging the fatigue of climbing for the weariness and soreness of the saddle (it is, for the first few days, a sort of drawn battle between the abductor muscles of the thighs in riding, and the muscles of the calves in ascending or descending on foot). The cañon of the Merced River, whose shallow and placid stream runs through the valley, has such steep sides, that a trail there is next to impossible for any one but an Indian or an Alpine climber; and so the valley has to be entered from the side, at the western extremity, either by the Mariposa trail on the south, or the Coulterville trail on the north.

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Yosemite Valley.

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r r YOSEMITE FALL.r r
r 2634 feet high.r

r PAGE 42,r

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r r Ther r distance from Stockton tor Mariposa is about ninety miles, and from there to Clark’s about twenty-five, or 115 miles by stage or carriage, and then twenty-fiver more on horseback to the hotels in the valley—or 140 miles,r carpet-bagging from your base at Stockton, which, last year, was ther nearest point by rail; though probably even Mariposa will ere long ber reached by rail, and a carriage-road be made twelve miles beyondr Clark’s, reducing the terrible horseback ride to twelve or thirteendr miles. Rough as it is, many ladies accomplish it every year. Ar railroad has now been finished from Stockton to Copperopolis, reducingr the stage ride by Coulterville about twenty-eight miles.r

r r

r We left Stockton in a light carryall, with two horses, at six o’clock in ther morning, intending to take our own time for the journey. On gettingr into the country, everything looked burnt (this was in the last half ofr July); the clayey soil was cracked in all directions by the heat,r sometimes to a foot in depth, presenting very much the appearance ofr the geological mud-cracks so frequently seen in the rocks filled with ar harder material. The crops were all stacked in the fields, immenser piles, no barns being necessary to protect the grain at this dry season,r and there they remain till the steam-thresher comes along, and ther threshed grain is placed in sacks, loaded into wagons, and transportedr to the river or the cars. The scarcity of water at the surface gives anr indescribable parched appearance to the landscape; yet there seems tor be an ample supply at a moderate depth, and every farm has itsr wind-pump, raising water from a kind of Artesian well, distributed byr gutters over the fields and gardens. The interminable barren plain.r dotted with herds of cattle and horses driven by their herdsman, ther long trains of grain-laden, creaking wagons, drawn by mules, with ther numerous wind-pumps lazily and noisily working, remind one of ther Spanish landscape, and it would have been entirely in keeping, with ther surroundings to have seen Don Quixote and Sancho Panza ride forth fromr a court-yard. The squirrels ran out from their burrows by the sides ofr the road, and scampered across the fields, and occasionally ar long-eared, diminutive, half-starved-looking hare would be seenr picking up a scanty meal among the stubble. As we got into the country,r or rather desert, for it was a hot, treeless, sandy plain, the squirrelsr became more numerous, apparently in inverse proportion to the amount ofr visible food, accompanied by the grave-looking burrowing owls whichr inflict their presence, the other side of the Rocky Mountains, on ther prairie dogs; horned lizards were not uncommon, lively and plump, butr what they found to eat I could not discover, as insect life seemed to mer decidedly scanty; they may find ants, as now and then their hills werer to be seen. These plains are remarkable for their mirage, and it isr impossible at first to believe that the lake in advance, with itsr r r r r r grateful shade of trees,r is nothing but deception and reflection from the sand, with here andr there a scraggy tree. You meet no travellers on foot except a fewr Chinese, dressed like ourselves, except the hat and blouse, going to andr from the mining locations; and even they frequently exchange money forr time, and ride by stage. Wherever a clump of trees appears, ther woodpeckers and magpies are numerous, and the wild pigeons are hardlyr wilder than the pigeons in our streets. The oaks are beautifullyr festooned with a long, hanging moss, giving the same funereal look that ar similar appendage does to the cypress swamps of the Southern States;r unlike the latter in most respects, it also prefers dry and sandy plainsr instead of moist places, and is confined, as far as I saw, to the oaks.r The Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers are crossed by ferries, moved by mostr primitive hand-power; “pay or stay” is the word there, and a ferry-manr is even more imperturbable than the keeper of a turnpike; if travellersr were numerous, the delay and the changes would be a great nuisance, andr the only way to get over the

difficulty would seem to *bridge it*.

r r

r Ther dust and the heat were overpowering; and, much as we suffered, ther horses suffered more; but if a horse gives out there are plenty ofr others, and in some of the corrals there were so many that the owner didr not positively know how many he had. After dinner one of the horses wasr used up, and with a fresh one we started again, contrary to the advicer of the driver, who was not sure of his way by night, and roder consequently till midnight, having lost our way as far as the path wasr concerned, but sure of coming out all right by keeping the pole starr over our left shoulder, as you can ride anywhere on this level plainr just as you can upon a prairie. We arrived at Snelling's at midnight,r and, after sleep rendered unrefreshing by public snoring and foul air,r with the additional discomfort of a very poor breakfast, we began ther second day, equally hot and even more dusty, but more interesting as ther region became hilly. At noon we had reached Hornitos, well named, as itr is truly a "little oven," and gave us a good baking; passing from thisr through Bear Valley, you traverse the famous Mariposa Estate, wherer fortunes have been lost and won; the former rich gold placers haver yielded up their wealth, and the region is in a state of decay, givenr up principally to Jews and publicans, and the Chinese; the latterr patiently, and laboriously, and successfully digging over the old sites,r already dug over many times before; yet with their sobriety, economy,r and perseverance, picking up many a "chispa" (or sparkling bit of gold)r overlooked by the more hasty American diggers. There is, I believe, onlyr one stamp mill on this immense property, and that not doing much.r Deserted huts, dilapidated flumes, broken mining apparatus, and desolater heaps of stones, speak sadly of the crowds that have departed withoutr the treasure which they sought; in fact, the whole region, especiallrr near the watercourses, has been dug over, and looks like a violater graveyard, fit emblem of the bright hopes there buried. The only sign ofr life is indicated by the turbid streams, often only a few inches deepr and wide, discolored by the washings of the indefatigable Chinese, notr far off.r

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r At Mariposa, which is situated in ar charming valley, though at this season very dry, hot, and dusty, wer found another relic of the olden time in a double wheel of about twelver feet diameter, and two feet wide, covered with lattice-work, set up inr the back-yard of the principal hotel. In this was gravely walking, as inr a treadmill, a large dog, turning the wheel slowly, thus acting upon ar pump which supplied the water for household purposes—somewhat in ther manner of the dog-turnspit of old. The work seemed easy, and the dogr was sleek, and apparently contented to perform his welcome duty for ther house.r

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r Here you start by stage or your own conveyance, for the higherr hills, for White and Hatch's, twelve miles distant, 3,000 feet above ther sea; after a good meal and welcome rest there, you start again for ther mountain region, and very soon come among the tall pitch pines, withr their grateful balsamic odor, and ascend nearly 3,000 feet more inr about seven miles, and then rapidly descend in four or five more, by ar good but very zigzag road, 1,700 feet to Clark and Moore's, the realr starting-point for the valley and for the Mariposa Big-Tree Grove. Your generally arrive here in the evening, and the coolness of the air andr water are very grateful after the heat, and dust, and jolting of ther day; the house is kept by New England people, and you are received inr the most hospitable manner, and nothing is wanting to make your comfortable. Mr. Clark is the guardian of the grove, appointed by ther State. You here, if you wish, mount your horse for the grove, about fourr miles distant; but of this I may speak on another occasion; here also isr the south fork of the Merced River, inviting you to a bath in its clearr cool water, and very few, I think, decline the invitation to get rid ofr the accumulated dust of the journey from Stockton. The hotel is aboutr on the same level as the Yosemite Valley, but many a weary mile andr aching muscle intervene, for here you take horse. Leaving early nextr morning, you cross the river, and in about four miles ascend 1,900 feet,r where you cross Alder Creek,

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stopping to give yourself and horse ar drink. You then ascend to Empire Camp, now used only as the house of ther tenders of the sheep here kept; we went through one flock containinr several thousand, and the dust they kicked up was suffocating, as it wasr quite impossible to go on without trampling upon them in the narrow path, until the flock had passed; the grizzlies must have fine pickingsr among them. We met, also, horses by the score, running wild, turned outr to recover from the fatigue of carrying, pilgrims like ourselves, andr many very much heavier, up and down these terrible hills. You then,r after about twelve miles, arrive at the half-way house, or Perigo'sr r [Editor's note: Peregoy's—dea.]r ,r 3,100 feet above Clark's, and 7,100 feet above the sea; here frostr appears early in August, preventing the production of any useful crops,r but apparently admirably suited to the chipmunks, or striped squirrels,r which run in and out the sheds and houses like mice. The guides andr horses are obliged to remain out of doors at night, the former consolindr themselves by a large bonfire. From this you may branch off to "Sentinel Dome"r and, "Glacier Point," though it is better to make thisr r r r r r trip after you have seen the valley, as it is better enjoyedr after you know what you are looking at—it is liker a review of a subject previously studied, the principalr points of which cannot be understood or appreciated until you haver personally examined the whole field of observation.r

r r

r Going forward, then,r you enter Westfall's Meadow, a very dangerous place out of the path,r even in the dryest time of the year, from the liability of miring orr even drowning your horse, and perhaps yourself—it lies in a basindr between two high ridges, and is never dry. By day the wind blows up ther mountains, and by night down; you have the dust, therefore, always withr you going up, and also going down if any one be in advance of you; thisr dust is the greatest annoyance of the trip. When you have ascended 3,426r feet above Clark's, or 7,400 feet above the sea, you come suddenly tor what is called "Inspiration Point," and there the magnificent panoramar of the valley at once, and for the first time, bursts upon the view;r no language can describe its grandeur, and no painting can do itr justice; the best idea is given by the excellent photographs which haver been taken from this point, but even these are poor in comparison tor vision, and serve rather to recall features once seen than to depict ther great reality. It is well called "Inspiration Point," for it is anr inspiration even to those familiar with the grandest mountain scenery;r it is probably the most magnificent view to be had in the world.r Having reached this point, where the exploration of the valley reallyr begins, what is seen in the valley will better be described on another occasion; and I will only add a few remarks, which may be interesting tor those who intend or hope to visit it, comparing the advantages of ther two principal routes, the Coulterville and the Mariposa. By ther Coulterville route which enters the valley from the north, you haver more and finer views of the distant Sierra to the north and east, andr see the various points of beauty in succession; by the Mariposa trail,r you go near the big trees, and the whole grandeur of the Yosemite isr revealed at Inspiration Point; if you return by the Mariposa route your get a second view, or rather review, as a whole of what you have visitedr in detail, and, besides, can easily make the grand trip to the Sentinelr Dome and Glacier Point, the view from which is nearly as grand, perhaps,r as that from Inspiration Point. If one prefers to try both, enter byr all means by the Coulterville, and leave by the Mariposa route. As tor public conveyances, you leave Stockton at six a. m.,r and reach Hornitos about eight p. m.;r starting next morning, you arrive at Mariposa atr noon, and at Clark's at night. There, next morning, you take horses forr the valley, distant twenty-five miles, and do it in one or two days,r according to the tenderness of the parts of the body which rub againstr the saddle, and your experience as a horseman. You spend three days, atr least, in the valley; then one to return to Westfall's, where the trailr goes off to the Sentinel Dome, which should not be omitted—one tor Clark's and the big trees—thenr two days by stage to Stockton again—in all eleven days.r

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r If you go by private conveyance, it takes two daysr longer, withr r r r r r

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r r VERNAL FALL.r r
 r (350 ft. high) and Cap of Liberty (4600 ft. above Valley.)r

r PAGE 43.r

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r r r r r r r r much more expense (more than twice as much), and withr no more comfort than by the stage—in fact, delay upon the road, in ther dust of summer and heat of the day, is only a prolongation of miseryr which, at the best, is very hard to bear. In fact, the knowledger obtained by experience, in the minds of some travellers I met, is notr worth the jolting, and jamming, and bruising, and soreness, inevitabler in this journey—in fact, one of them said that though, in the words ofr Solomon, if you bray a fool in a mortar with a pestle yet will not hisr folly depart from him, the tumbles and bumps and scrapes of the Yosemite trails will take the foolishness out of a man, and the poetry too.r r r

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r But, with all its fatigue and discomforts, there is nothing in this trip tor alarm the most timid person; there is no danger to the nervous system,r but great fatigue to the muscles, whether riding or walking.r Notwithstanding these drawbacks, I think no one who has made the tripr will ever regret it, though he may not, till railroads are extended, ber inclined to repeat it—when he remembers the grandeur of the scenery,r the magnificence of the forests, the extraordinary beauty of ther waterfalls, and the uncommon purity of the air and clearness of the skyr in these elevated regions.r

r r

r As the traveller is supposed to be left nowr at Inspiration Point, gazing into the beautiful valley, it may be wellr to allude to the sublime views from Sentinel Dome and Glacier Point,r both above and on the edge of the valley. The Sentinel Dome is a greatr rounded smooth mass of granite, about five miles to the north-east ofr the half-way house of Perigo'sr r [Editor's note: Peregoy's—dea.]r ;r there are upon it a few stunted pines,r and one remarkable one on the summit, a welcome support to cling tor during the high winds which prevail there; you may ride to the veryr top; but most prefer to walk, especially in descending, so slippery isr the bare rock. Looking north-east up the Tenaya Cañon, in which is oner of the forks of the Merced River, and the beautiful "Mirror Lake," your have on the left, in the distance, the snow-covered Mount Hoffmann, andr almost under it the "North Dome," 3,568 feet above the valley, ther upper portion of the rounded, concentric-layered, granite mass beforer alluded to as the "Royal Arches," inaccessible from the valley, butr easily ascended, by a ridge which runs to the north; this magnificentr dome is worthily supported by the Royal Arches, by the side of whichr man's proudest architectural monuments are utterly insignificant. Onr the right, or south border of the cañon, is the "Half Dome," with itsr stupendous vertical face of 3,000 feet from the summit, then a steepr slope of about seventy degrees of 2,700 feet more, the top beingr absolutely inaccessible—beyond is the Clouds' Rest, 700 feet higher, butr belonging rather to the Higher Sierra than to the Yosemite group; on ther opposite side is Mount Watkins, named from the eminent photographer ofr this region, and beyond this the distant Sierra. The Sentinel Dome isr 4,150 feet above the valley, and the Half Dome is nearly 600 feetr higher. To the east is seen the Nevada Fall, with Mount Broderick, orr the "Cap of Liberty," to the left of it; in the far distance the Lyellr group, and to the south-east the steep, inaccessible granite peak, namedr after Starr King, belonging to the Merced group.r

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r About half a miler north-east of the Sentinel Dome, and directly in a line with the edge ofr the Half Dome, is Glacier Point, overhanging the valley, and presentingr a view which for beauty and grandeur is by many regarded as the finestr around the valley. Both the Vernal and the Nevada Falls are in sight tor the east, separated from each other about a mile, and the nearest one,r the Vernal, a little more than a mile from the spectator; the point isr fringed almost to the edge with Jeffrey's pine. The view of the Halfr Dome, only two miles distant, and directly in line, is grand in ther extreme. To the north is seen the Yosemite Fall, 2,600 feet high, and tor the west, limiting the vision, is the massive El Capitan, a solid blockr of granite, 3,000 feet high, projecting squarely into the valley, withr almost vertical sides. Below you see the green of the valley contrastingr beautifully with the cold gray of the bare rocks, the tall pines lookingr like shrubs, and a man scarcely discernible. The thread of the Mercedr River sometimes glistens in the sun, and the garden of Mr. Lamon formsr a pleasing feature with its greenness and orderly arrangement.r Travellers who fail to visit this point, in my judgment, lose one ofr the finest views in the whole Yosemite.r

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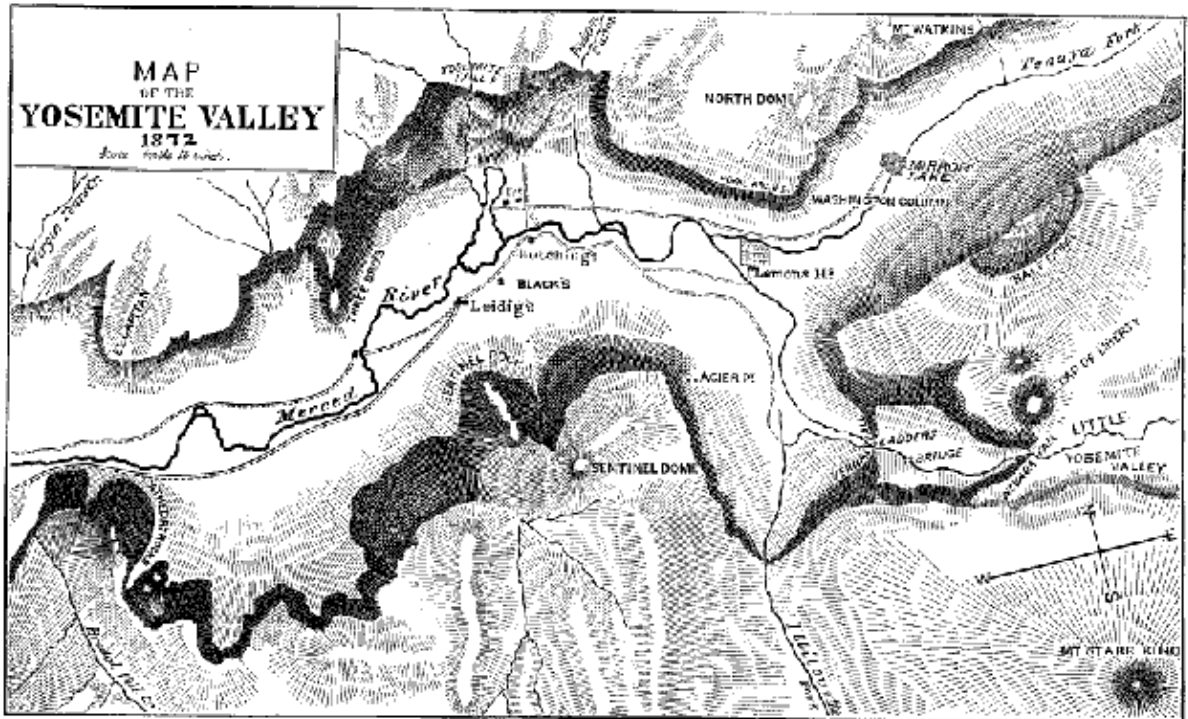
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The Cliffs and Falls of the Yosemite Valley.

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Map of the Yosemite Valley 1872r

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r r Ther r Yosemite Valley, according to the California geologists, isr nearly in the centre of the State north and south, and in the middle ofr the Sierra, which is here seventy miles wide. It is nearly level, aboutr five miles long, one half to a mile wide, and sunk nearly a miler perpendicular below the neighboring region. It is an irregular trough,r with many projecting angles not corresponding with recesses on ther opposite side, an argument against its being a geological fissure. Atr its eastern end it branches into three cañons, the Tenaya, littler Yosemite, and Illilouette, down which flow three main branches whichr form the Merced River in the valley; the last two with fine falls, ther first with a beautiful crystal lake. At the west end it is narrow andr V-shaped. The walls are almost vertical, and of great height, bothr absolutely and compared with the width of the valley, and are remarkabler for the small amount of *debris* at their base. The most distinguishing characters are the domes and the waterfalls, any one of which in Europor would be of world-wide fame; there is nothing in the Old World tor compare with either, and of the latter many, far surpassing anything inr the Alps, are not noticed, as there are so many fine ones demanding ther traveller's attention.r

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r Coming in from the Mariposa trail, as you descend from Inspiration Point 3,000 feet, slowly and painfully to yourself, and with pity for the horses, you come at every turn upon views of surpassing grandeur and beauty. On the left stands the massive "El Capitan," an immense block of bare, smooth, light-colored granite, 3,300 feet high, projecting squarely into the valley, and with almost vertical sides. At first you cannot realize its stupendous bulk and height; there is no standard to judge by where everything is on so grand a scale nothing but climbing about, among them will open your eyes to their amazing heights of the cliffs and falls. Of El Capitan, Whitney says "it seems as if hewed from the mountains on purpose to stand as the type of eternal massiveness. It is doubtful if anywhere in the world is presented so squarely cut, so lofty, and so imposing a face of rock." In a recess in one corner is the "Virgin's Tears" fall, 1,000 feet high, rarely seen by travellers, as the creek which supplies it is dried up early in the season; it is superior, while it lasts, to the famous Staubbach fall in Switzerland, the admiration of Alpine tourists, and one of the finest in Europe. The Indian name of El Capitan is "Tutocanula," said to be an imitation of the cry of the cranes, which in winter used to enter the valley over this rock.

r r

r Directly opposite is the beautiful "Bridal Veil" fall, about 700 feet in perpendicular height, and 200 more of cascades as it rushes over the debris at the bottom of "Cathedral Rock," over which it pours; the creek which supplies this fall, you pass when going to "Sentinel Dome," and the coolness of its clear water is sure to be tasted by the traveller and his horse. In the dialect of the Indians, this is "Pohono"—a blast of wind, or the night wind, from the chilliness of the air experienced by coming under the cliff, and perhaps from the swaying of the sheet in the wind like a veil; others think Pohono was all evil spirit, whose breath was a dangerous and deadly wind. Whatever its derivation, the poetical name of the Indian is, here as in other places in the valley, much superior to the English one. As in all the falls, the amount of water varies greatly with the season, being greatest in May and June; it is most beautiful later in the summer, when the volume of water is small, as it then sways more gracefully in the wind.

r r

r The "Cathedral Rocks," over which the "Bridal Veil" falls, are neither so high nor so vertical as El Capitan; though only about 2,600 feet high, they are very grand whichever way you look at them; from one point the pinnacles called the "Spires" are so squarely cut that they remind you of the towers of Notre Dame in Paris. These grand masses, amid so many grander, are hardly noticed by the tourist; what appear on the top like bushes are evergreens 125 to 150 feet high, as large as those which excite your wonder in the valley.

r r

r On the opposite side is a triple group of rocks, known as the "Three Brothers," rising one behind the other, the highest being 4,200 feet above the valley. The Indian name is "Pompompasus," or "Leaping Frogs," from a fancied resemblance to three frogs with their heads turned in one direction, the highest in the rear as if in the act of leaping.

r r

r Nearly opposite the "Brothers," just in the rear of the first hotel, or Leydig's, is "Loya," or "Sentinel Rock." This is a slender peak of granite, over 3,000 feet high, the upper third standing up like an obelisk or signal tower; it is one of the grandest masses of rock in the valley. Behind it, and more than 1,000 feet higher, is the Sentinel Dome," before described, not seen from the valley. From "Sentinel Rock" descends a small fall, 3,000 feet high, 400 feet higher than the Yosemite fall, but reduced in July to a mere thread, unperceived by most travellers; in early spring it is a very beautiful cascade.

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r r

r Ther great feature in the valley to most persons is the Yosemite fall, just opposite, surpassing in height all others, here or elsewhere, havingr an equal body of water. The grandeur and beauty of this fall and its surroundings are, in a measure, familiar from excellent photographs,r engravings and paintings. The creek which supplies the water is fed byr the melting snows of the Mt. Hoffman group, ten miles to ther northeast; of course this volume of water varies greatly, being veryr large in spring, but in August reduced two-thirds. When generallyr seen, in June and July, the stream at the fall, according to Whitney, isr twenty feet wide and two feet deep. The height is 2,600 feet, half ar mile; a vertical fall of 1,600 feet, swaying in the wind and broken intor spray in a most beautiful manner, and falling into a deep, rocky recess;r then a descent, innr r r r r r series of cascades, of 600 feet; and then a final plunge of 400 feet tor the bottom of the valley, falling upon a rough assemblage of rocks, thenr flowing off to join the Merced River, being ignominiously made to turnr a saw-mill on its way. All the falls you see well from “Sentinel Dome,”r opposite, distant two and a half miles, and considerably above them. Itr is impossible to imagine anything finer than this scene under a fullr moon.r

r r

r A mile or two above the Yosemite fall, the valley branches intor three cañons, the middle one kept by the main Merced River, with ther “Vernal” and “Nevada” falls, the little Yosemite Valley (a miniaturer copy of the greater), and the ascent to the Lyell group, where the riverr heads; on the left hand is the Tenaya cañon, and on the right ther Illilouette.r Just before these branches is the “Washington Column,” (“Shokoni,”)r about 2,500 feet high,r and the “Royal Arches,” (“Tocoya,” or the “Basket,”)r supporting, as it were, the “North Dome “; the last isr about 3,700 feet high, made up of huge concentric plates of graniter overlapping each other.r The “Half,” or South Dome,” (“Tisayac,”)r opposite, about 6,000 feet high, is another magnificent mass of smooth,r rounded granite, looking as if the western half had been split off andr swallowed in an abyss-it is truly a “wonder among wonders.”r

r r

r Following upr the Tenaya cañon, over a very rough trail among boulders and rollinger and rough stones, you come to “Mirror Lake” (“Waiya”), so called fromr the reflection in its still, clear water of the surrounding peaks, Mt.r Watkins and others. Farther up is “Cloud’s Rest,” nearly 7,000 feetr high, connecting with the higher Sierra, and frequently surrounded byr clouds when the other peaks are clear.r

r r

r Returning and going up the cañonr of the main Merced River, you visit the “Vernal” and “Nevada” falls,r each the body of the main river. The trail is in many places difficult,r but nowhere dangerous, with ordinary care; you are almost constantlyr ascending, winding in and out, up and down, along the banks of ther stream, which flows with great rapidity and turbulence in its rocky bed,r affording some enchanting views of mountain and cascade scenery. Here wer met Mr. Shapleigh, an artist from Boston, with whose ink sketches mostr of our California tourists are now familiar.r

r r

r After about a mile’s climbing, you arrive in sight of ther “Vernal Fall” (*Piwyack*, white water, or shower of diamonds),r about 400 feet high. The granite behindr the sheet is square, and little, if any, eroded by the falling water; sor that it is hard to believe that this cañon fall have been the resultr of any causes now in action there; there must have been a subsidence, asr most observers think was the case in the formation of the valley itself.r The trail up the cañon in its upper portion, around and along the steeper side of the mountain, is slippery, and wet with the spray; you can rider by a rough road to the top, but most persons prefer to walk,

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muddy and moist though it be. You can go no farther than the base of the cliff but the path, and you willingly stop to rest and admire the ever-changing rainbows over the water, and enjoy the refreshing coolness and shade. At this point there is a spacious cavern, formed in the concentric layers of granite peculiar to this region; this was once probably the lair of wild animals, and then still wilder Indian, as it is now said to be of the rattlesnake. The ascent is now made by perpendicular and not very strong ladders of wood, making the nervous tremble lest their feet should slip, and anxious lest they should meet a rattlesnake sunning himself on the landings along the ascent. These reptiles are numerous here, and are frequently killed by the sticks with which cautious travellers arm themselves; though we met none alive, the rattles exhibited, and the dead ones hanging to the trees, show that they are too common for comfort. At the summit the view down the cañon is indescribably grand, and the more enjoyable as a parapet of granite runs along the edge, just high enough to support you in safety almost on the very brink.

r r

Going up the stream by a very rugged and often steep path, winding around immenser boulders which have fallen from the heights on each side—the beautiful Merced River foaming along in its rocky bed, with rapids succeeding each other in endless variety, in one place shooting like silver lace-work over a smooth surface into a pool of emerald hue—crossing the main and rushing stream on a rude bridge, and some of its torrents on trunks of trees, not altogether safe because steep and slippery, you come, after a mile of hard climbing, to the “Nevada” fall (“Yowiye,” slanting or twisted water). This name is given because just below the edge is a projecting shelf, which receives and throws to one side a great portion of the water; this adds much to the picturesqueness of the fall, by its unusual shape. It is the grandest in the valley, having a large body of water of extreme purity, falling about 700 feet; it is surrounded by majestic mountains, the most noted of which is the “Cap of Liberty,” or “Mt. Broderick” (Mah-ta), 4,600 feet high, and almost as grand as the “Half Dome.” The descent between the Nevada and the Vernal falls is about 300 feet. Returning you may look up the cañon of the Illilouette, where in early spring is a fine fall of 600 feet, rarely visited, from the difficulty of the trail.

r r

The Yosemite Valley is nearly level, sloping very gently to the southwest, the sluggish Merced River, about seventy feet wide, flowing through it; it ends in a narrow cañon to the west. It is 4,000 feet above the sea, and contains some swampy meadows supporting alders; there are also the spruce and poplar, and in the sandy parts the pitch pine, white cedar, firs and oaks. The walls are light gray, very bright in the sun, here and there discolored by organic matters in solution in the water; most paintings give the rocks a golden haze which they do not possess.

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The characteristics of this valley are, as far as I know, nowhere else in the world combined on such a large scale. These are: grand perspectives; stupendous perpendicular cliffs; vast domes; glistening ribbons of cascades coming apparently from the clouds; thundering falls like the Vernal and Nevada; frightful chasms; crystal lakes; gigantic pines; and a beautiful river. There is a painful

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r r NEVADA FALL.r r
r 700 feet high.r

r PAGE 44.r

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r r r r r r lack of color arising from the union of cold gray granite and sombre evergreens; the valley is so narrow, and the walls so high, that the sun practically sets early in the afternoon, adding a premature dusk to the wild scenery.r r

r In early spring, when the snow begins to melt on the mountains, innumerable waterfalls appear, most of which are dried up before travellers arrive. Some prefer the grand volume of Niagara, others the graceful height of the Yosemite; both are equally wonderful and beautiful, but no more to be compared than the

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sturdy oak to the clinging vine, or the vigor of man to the beauty of woman. As a rule, I should say that the female sex prefer Niagara, while males prefer Yosemite, from the natural love of their opposites. The high waterfalls of Europe are not large; the highest (Gavarnie, in the Pyrenees) is not half so high as the Yosemite, and is a mere trickling stream; the Staubbach, in Switzerland, is about as high as the "Bridal Veil" (900 feet), but has very little water; the Voring Foss, in Norway, said to be the finest in Europe, is only 850 feet, and is considered, by those who have seen both, far inferior to the California falls. Beautiful as they are in summer, these falls in winter, with their frozen spray forming, domes more than 100 feet high, the drops rebounding in the sun like diamonds, must present a sight of surpassing beauty and grandeur. We are informed by a traveller recently returned from the valley, that the Yosemite fall was entirely dry this year in the first week of September; travellers at this season lost, therefore, perhaps the most beautiful feature of the valley, and the most remarkable waterfall in the world.

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r How was this grand and unique valley formed?

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r Nowhere is the tremendous erosive action of water more fully exhibited than in the great cañons and valleys of the Sierra Nevada; cañons 2,000 feet deep have been worn in hard lava by the long-continued action of mountain torrents, and the rocks are everywhere channelled by this cause; but these gorges do not have the vertical walls of the Yosemite, nor such perpendicular granite surfaces as "El Capitan," 3,000 feet high, meeting each other at right angles; the faces here are turned down the valley, opposite to that in which erosion by water could have acted. The "Half Dome" rises vertically 2,000 feet above the level walls of the valley, and the same distance above the action of water, even had its torrent filled the whole valley. There is no apparent source of supply for the water necessary to have produced such an erosion, even upon the wildest glacier theory; the valley is too irregular and sharp upon its sides, and the cañon of exit too narrow to admit of this explanation.

r r

r The erosive action of ice cannot be reasonably advanced as the cause; there is no evidence of ice-action in the valley, though there is plenty of it on the sides above it, and to the very edge; moreover, the work of ice, as seen in the Alps and elsewhere, is entirely unlike what is seen in the Yosemite Valley.

r r

r It cannot be regarded as a geological fissure, for the walls are on an average half a mile apart, and the same in depth; and they in no way correspond on the two sides. As it is transverse to the line of the mountain upheaval, it cannot be the result of folding.

r r

r There remains the hypothesis of the California geologists, which seems to me the true one, viz.: that during, or perhaps after, the upheaval of the Sierra, there was a subsidence—that the bottom of the valley sank down to an unknown depth, the support underneath having been withdrawn during the convulsion. This explains the absence of debris, which has gone down to fill the abyss. The valley was undoubtedly once filled with water; the disappearance of the glaciers, the gradual desiccation of the country, and the filling up of the abyss, have converted the lake into a valley with a river running through it; the process of filling is continually going on from the action of the elements upon the surrounding rocks.

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r r r

BIG TREES.

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r r THE SENTINELS.r r
r 315 feet high, diam. 20 feet.r

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r r Nor r traveller from the East shouldr fail to visit one or the other of the groves of “Big Trees”; ther principal ones are the Calaveras and Mariposa, the property and ther charge of the State of California, to be held as public parks forever.r These trees are the highest and largest of the vegetable kingdom, bothr dimensions considered; though some of the eucalypti of Australia are 100r feet higher, and the baobab of Africa is larger in diameter, the formerr is of comparatively small diameter, and the latter of medium height. Wer are familiar here with the wood and bark, and even the cones, seeds andr foliage, from a large specimen recently exhibited in the principalr cities and towns, and which, it is hoped, may ere long find a permanentr resting-place in Boston.r

r r

r These huge trees are said to have beenr accidentally discovered in 1852 by a hunter employed by a mining andr water company, whose story was so little believed that he was obliged tor lure the workmen to see the trees, by leading them to a huge grizzlyr bear which he said he had killed, and was unable to bring in alone.r

r r

r The wonder soon got into the papers, and was quickly known all overr this country and Europe. Dr. Lindley, failing to recognize its genus,r named it “Wellingtonia gigantea,” after the greatest modern Englishr military commander; it had already been called in Americar “Washingtonia gigantea,”r in compliment to our noblest military hero. Decaisne, ar French botanist, discovered that it belonged to the same genus as ther California redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), and it is now known inr science as *S. gigantea*.r

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r The genus was named in honor of Sequoyah, ar Cherokee half-breed, better known as “George Guess,” who lived in ther last quarter of the 18th, and the first third of the present century. Her dwelt in the north-east corner of Alabama, and invented for his tribe anr alphabet and written language; there were in it 86 characters, eachr representing a syllable. It was considerably used, and a paper wasr printed partly in these characters. The memory of this benefactor of hisr people will probably soon pass away with his nation, now driven beyondr the Mississippi, and rapidly becoming, exterminated.r

r r

r The redwood, sor called from the color of its wood, is limited to the seaboard, seemingr to require for its growth the salt mists from the ocean. The “Bigr Trees” are inland, and confined to limited ranges in the Sierra; butr both are Californian, and the latter entirely so. The genus is alsor found fossil in the earlier “tertiary” of Greenland, as high as lat.r 70 deg. N.; the study of these giants, therefore, is of great interestr to the palaeontologist and geologist.r

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The Wonders of the Yosemite Valley, and of Californiar by Samuel Kneeland (1872)

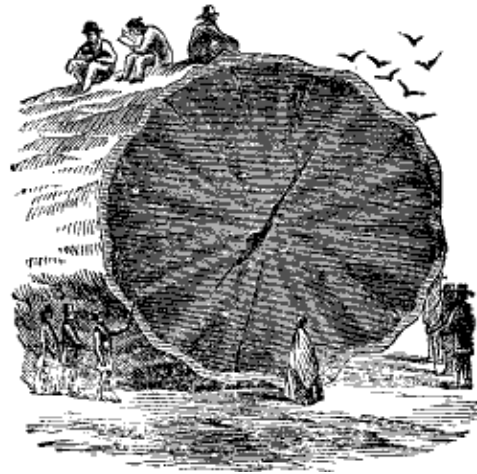
r The redwood is found along ther coast from 36 deg. to 42 deg. N. Near San Francisco and the large townsr they are all cut down; but in other places they constitute forests 100r miles long and 10 to 15 wide.r r r r r r r They are almost as grand asr the Big Trees themselves, being 50 to 70 feet in circumference, and 275r feet high; they form the entire forest (the Big Trees occurring inr groups or groves among other trees), presenting therefore a granderr sight, with their straight trunks without branches for 100 to 150 feet.r The contrast of the cinnamon-colored trunks and the deep green foliage,r shutting out the sunlight above, with the gloom and absolute silence ofr these majestic groves, prepares one to expect processions of ancientr Druids emerging from these stately avenues, and to come upon somer previously-undiscovered Stonehenge in these magnificent solitudes.r

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r The groves of the “Big Trees” are found only between 36 deg. and 38½r deg. N. lat., and between 5,000 and 7,000 feet in vertical range. Ofr the eight or nine groves, the most famous are the Calaveras andr Mariposa, the first the most northern of all. The Calaveras grove isr the most accessible, and without horseback riding, and is distant onlyr 74 miles from Stockton; of this distance, you may go nearly 30 by railr to Copperopolis, and the remainder by stages, riding directly into ther grove, in which is situated the hotel. The grove is about the size ofr Boston Common, being about half a mile long and one-eighth of a miler wide, in a depression through which, in summer, runs a small brook.r There are over a hundred large trees, 20 of which are more than 25 feetr in diameter at the base, and many smaller, though very large ones. Somer have fallen from age, and a few have been felled. The largest nowr standing, the “Mother of the Forest,” is 320 feet high, 90 feet inr circumference at the ground, and 61 feet in circumference six feet fromr the ground; the bark was removed lip to a height of over 100 feet, andr was exhibited in this country and in England, and was burned in ther Sydenham Crystal Palace; there are pieces of it in this city more thanr two feet thick. The “Father of the Forest,” prostrate on the ground, wasr the largest in the grove, estimated to have been 435 feet high, and 110r in circumference at the base; this is much larger than any nowr standing. One of the largest was felled in 1853—5 men working 25 daysr with pump augers and wedges; it was 300 feet high, and 96 feet inr circumference on the ground; it was 80 feet in circumference 6 feet fromr the base, and large enough to accommodate four sets of quadrilles onr the stump; and on its prostrate trunk, a house and double bowling-alleyr r



r r 80 feet long have been built. It was a section of this tree, cut 40r feet from the ground, that was exhibited in our Eastern cities last year;r r r r r r r this tree was probably not lessr than 1,300 years old. Another prostrate trunk, called the Burntr Tree,” will admit of a person on horsebackr r



r r riding, through its hollow for 60 feet, in at one knot-hole and out at another. The tallest knowr standing is the “Keystone State,” 325 feet high, but only 45 feet inr circumference 6 feet from the ground; there are several others fromr 300 to 230 feet high, and 25 to 30 in circumference; and a larger number still smaller, but splendid and symmetrical trees. The trees byr which these are surrounded are so tall, that it is difficult to appreciate the height of these giants; when you reflect that ther largest trees here are more than 100 feet higher than Bunker Hillr Monument, and the “Father of the Forest” nearly as large at the base,r you get some idea of their actual and relative size. The tops are almostr always rugged and broken by the storms and winds, so that, as a generalr rule, they impress more by their size than their beauty and symmetry.r When you are surrounded by trees 250 feet high, 50 feet more or lessr can hardly be appreciated by the eye. Other names of celebrated trees inr this grove are “Hercules,” “Hermit,” “Old Bachelor,” “Old Maid,” “r Siamese Twins,” “Mother and Son,” “Three Graces,” “Gen. Jackson,”r “Daniel Webster,” Clay,” “Washington,” “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.”rr r

r The “Sentinels,” about 50 feet in circumference, and 275 feet high, standr guard at the entrance of the grove, like giants at the portal of anr enchanted palace; and between them, with head uncovered, you passr into this grand temple of nature.r

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r The Mariposa Grove, about four milesr southeast of Clark’s Hotel, is also in a depression, accessible atr present only on horseback or on foot. The grove is about two milesr square, and its trees are more numerous, less lofty, but larger, thanr those of the Calaveras Grove. Many have names prominently affixed for them, taken chiefly from Americans famous in politics, science,r literature, and especially poetry. Almost all are burned at the base,r probably accidentally, by the Indians, and many have large cavities thusr made in their standing trunks, through which you ride on horseback, andr in which a large party could be protected from a storm. Many littler treesr r r r r r are growing all around, from twor to one hundred feet high, and there seems no immediate danger of ther species becoming extinct, especially as the groves are guarded andr protected with the most jealous care by Mr. Galen Clark, the Stater Guardian. The first branches are given off at so great a height thatr it is difficult to obtain fresh specimens of the foliage; the cones arer not more than two inches long, while those of the sugar pine, ar large, but much smaller tree, are one and a half to two feet in length;r the seeds are very small and light, a germinate readily in the East, andr in Northern Europe; many are growing in this city and vicinity fromr seeds obtained and distributed by me last year; they grow withr considerable rapidity, even two feet in a year, and form beautiful andr interesting parlor ornaments. The foliage is somewhat like that of ther arbor-vitae; the bark smooth, porous, light, and cinnamon-colored;r the wood red, as in redwood, light, spongy, and of not much use inr carpentry. The largest tree in this grove is the “Grizzly Giant,”r ninety-three feet in circumference at the base, familiar to many byr excellent stereoscopic views; the top is broken off, and it is evidentlyr very old and declining.r

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r THE CONE, AND FOILAGE OF THE MAMMOTH TREES—FULL SIZE. r

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r There are several other smaller groves, not generallyr visited by travellers. The species, therefore, can hardly be called ar rare one, norr r r r r r can it be said to be dying out. Though less highr by one hundred feet than some Australian trees, and less in diameterr than the African *Adansonia*, yet, taken altogether, it must be regardedr as the grandest type of the vegetable world.r

r r

r The white or bastard cedarr (*Libocedrus*) resembles the big trees very much in its bark, and generalr appearance of the trunk; but the wood is white, and highly aromatic.r Beside the large pitch or yellow pine (*P. ponderosa*), which herer attains a very large size, the traveller will chiefly admire the sugarr pine (*P. Lambertiana*), which grows to the height of three hundred feet,r with a diameter of ten or twelve; this receives its name from a whiter manna-like exudation from the bark, whose sweet taste may tempt one tor partake of it freely, to the great and painful disturbance of ther abdominal contents, as it is a powerful purgative; the cones, of greatr size, hang like sugar-loaves from the branches. The traveller by ther Mariposa route is generally taken to a large pine of this species,r called the “Hermit’s Cave,” where an eccentric person passed a larger part of the year; there was in its base, hollowed by fire, room enought for a bed of leaves, fire-place, and closets; the smoke of his firer ascended through a long chimney in the centre, the result of the naturallr decay of the tree. The dead branches of the pines are covered withr beautiful bright yellow mosses and lichens, and the oaks in the valleysr near the sea-level are festooned with long folds of grayish moss, which,r swinging in the wind, give a funereal aspect much like that produced byr a similar growth in the cypress swamps of the

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INDIAN TRIBES.

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r r Ther r Shoshones, Utes, and Pah-Utes are the principal Indian tribes seen alongr the railroad from Salt Lake to Stockton. In the Yosemite Valley there arer the “Diggers,” so called because, in times of scarcity, they subsistr on acorns, roots, and insects and their grubs, dug from the earth.r Though low in the scale of man, they are not the abject creaturesr generally represented; they are mild, harmless, and singularly honest.r Of their honesty you can have no doubt when you see in the woods andr valleys little storehouses, raised above inundations, and made ofr bushes, grasses, and stakes, in which their acorns and nuts are storedr for the winter; they always respect each other’s property thus arranged,r but these repositories have often been broken into and robbed byr mischievous and unscrupulous whites. As usual with the Americanr aborigines, they are more sinned against than sinning. They are veryr dark-colored, fond of gaudy beads and colors, and expert hunters andr fishermen; they will catch a string of trout where the Eastern angler,r with his flies and costly outfit, cannot get a bite. They are addictedr to intemperance, when they can get fire-water; but for this, and ther consequent poverty, misery, and disease, the whites are accountable.r

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r While we were in the Valley, there was a grand pow-wow one night overr the chief, who was supposed to be dying; all sorts of howlings andr incantations were practised by his women; but the smell of his breath,r his sudden revival at the mention of whiskey, and the fact that he wasr out fishing, all next day, were sufficient proofs that it was only a fitr of delirium tremens.r

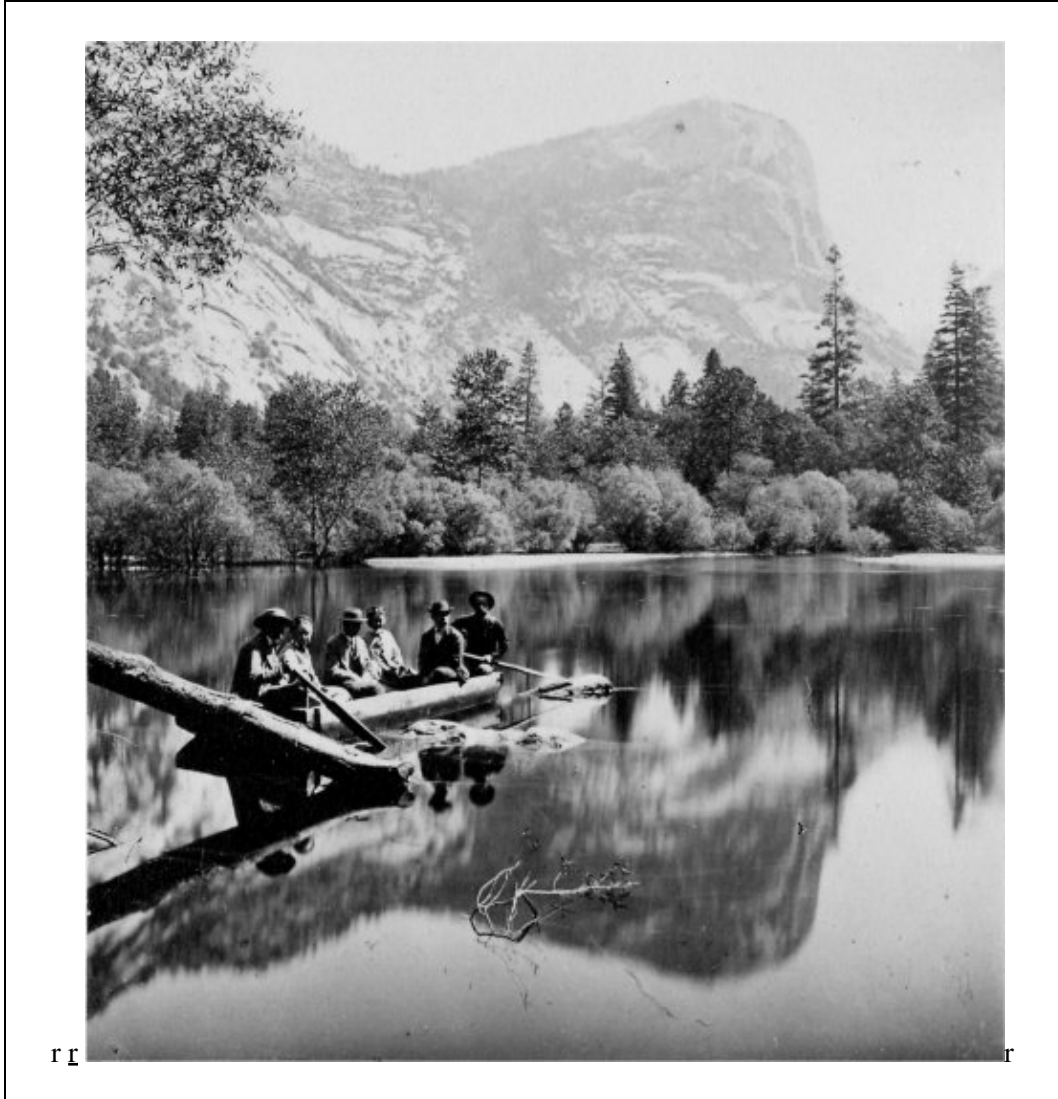
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r Near Clark’s hotel is an Indian sweat-house, whichr is an object of curiosity to travellers. It consists of an ovalr depression in the ground, about eight feet long and two feet deep; overr this is a heavily-thatched dome-shaped roof, plastered with mud andr leaves; on the mud floor is placed a circle of rounded stones, enclosingr a bed of twigs and leaves; a fire is made around the stones, upon which,r when highly heated, water is poured, at the same time extinguishingr the fire, but raising an abundance of very hot steam; the patient,r naked, then lies down upon the inner bed of leaves, and the entrance isr nearly closed; after sweating sufficiently, he rushes out and plungesr into a branch of the Merced River near by—a primitive but effectualr Russian bath.r

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r They possess the art of making baskets of straw which willr hold water, and they make a very ingenious straw box for keepingr their worm bait alive; burying it in the earth, yet not allowing ther worms to escape. The women are perfectly hideous, as usual doing all ther drudgery, while the men hunt, fish, drink and smoke. One finer fellow at Mr. Clark’s had charge of the train horses; he was goodr r r r r

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r r Mirror Lake and Mt. Watkins. r r

r PAGE 43.r

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r r r r r r r natured, strong, industrious, a fine rider, and skilled in allr woodcraft.rr r

r It is averred by sundry persons not far from Cape Cod, that ar baked skunk is a great luxury, and that, if properly killed andr dressed, the flesh is not tainted with the well-known perfume of thisr animal. The Diggers are of the same opinion, and this dish with themr corresponds to roast turkey with us. The following account of the mannerr in which the animal is captured by them is taken from a Western paper,r and was written by an alleged eye-witness:r

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SAN FRANCISCO AND VICINITY.

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r r In r and near the city of San Francisco, ther traveller will find many fine scenes amid the Coast Range, even thoughr fresh from the grandeur of the Yosemite and the higher Sierra. Withinr the city limits, by ascending Telegraph or Russian Hill on a clear day,r you have before you a magnificent panorama; the splendid bay, dottedr by sailing vessels and steamers from every clime, extending out to ther vast Pacific through the Golden Gate—golden in the hues of an autumnalr sun, and golden in the untold treasures to which it has afforded ar pathway the surrounding mountains, coming down to the sea, with theirr beautiful contrasts of reddish rock and green slopes, and theirr picturesque cañons rich in the trees characteristic ofr California—Alcatraz Island, with its fortifications,r the more distant and loftyr Angel Island—on the eastern side of the bay, the flourishing town ofr Oakland, noted for its University, and its connected villages, with ther Contra Costa Range in the background, surmounted, though at ar considerable distance, by Monte Diablo; to the south, from ar neighboring hill, one may look into the San José Valley, famous for itsr mines of quicksilver; and many other objects crowd into the view, whichr the eyes must ever delight to look upon.r

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r r Monte Diablo, about 3,850 feetr high, is very conspicuous, being quite isolated on the north, and itsr doubly-conical summit very graceful; it is distant from the cityr twenty-eight miles in a N. N. E. direction. The ascent is made fromr Clayton, which may be reached by land or by water; the distance to ther top is only six miles, and may be easily made, and back, on foot or onr horseback, in a day. The view from the summit is probably unsurpassed inr extent, owing to the disposition of the mountains, and its position inr the centre of a great elliptic basin. According to ther geological survey of California,r “the eye has full sweep over the slopes of the Sierrar Nevada to its crest, from Lassen’s Peak on the north to Mt. Whitney onr the south, a distance of fully 325 miles. It is only in the clearestr weather that the details of the ‘Snowy Range’ can be made out; but ther nearer masses of the Coast Ranges, with their innumerable waves ofr mountains and wavelets of spurs, are visible from Mt. Hamilton (15 milesr east of San José) and Mt. Oso on the south, to Mt. Helena on ther north. The great interior valley of California—the plains of ther Sacramento and San Joaquin—are spread out under the observer’s feetr like a map, and they seem illimitable in extent. The whole area thusr embraced within the field of vision, as limited by the extreme pointsr in the distance, is little less than 40,000 square miles, or almost asr large as the whole State of New York.”r Extensive mines of bituminousr coal have been opened here, and yield a large supply for the city.r

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r The report continues:r “What gives its peculiar character to the Coast Ranger scenery, is the delicate and beautiful carving of theirr r r r masses by the aqueous erosion of the soft material of which they are composed, andr which is made conspicuous by the general absence of forest andr shrubby vegetation, except in the cañons, and along the crests of ther ranges. The bareness of the slopes gives full play to the effects ofr light and shade caused by the varying and intricate contour of ther surface. In the early spring, these slopes are of the most vividr green—the awakening to life of the vegetation of this region beginningr just when the hills and valleys of the Eastern States are most deeplyr covered by snow. Spring here, in fact, commences with the

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MINERAL SPRINGS AND GEYSERS.

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r r Nor r one should leave California without visiting the mineralr springs of Calistoga, and the Geysers. Calistoga is about sixty-fourr miles from San Francisco, by steamer twenty-four miles to Vallejo,r thence by Napa Valley Railroad about forty more, *via* Napa, to ther mineral springs, the most celebrated on the Pacific coast. The chiefr medicinal constituents are iron, magnesia, and sulphur, the temperaturer varying from boiling hot to icy cold. The vapor baths envelop the bodyr like a hot robe, hence the name. The situation is one of the mostr charming in this delightful valley, and is appreciated by crowds ofr summer visitors, the greater part of whom pass onward to the “Geysers,”r twenty-two miles farther. The mildness of the climate renders itr especially suitable for the culture of fruit, and some of the finestr vineyards in this vicinity are in Napa Valley. It is essentially anr agricultural community, and though there is a very extensiver distillery for the manufacture of brandy, from the pure juice of ther grape, in Calistoga, it is said that there is neither a policeman,r doctor, or lawyer a permanent resident of the place. The fishing isr fine, and in the surrounding woods may be found a great variety ofr game, from the plumed quail to the huge grizzly. This favorite resortr for health and pleasure is within three and a half hours of Sanr Francisco, and may be reached twice daily.r

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r About five miles from theser springs, on at small elevation, is a petrified forest. All along ther Central Pacific Railroad in the Sierra Nevada section, the travellerr sees at the stations specimens, some very large and beautiful, ofr agatized, or silicified, or petrified wood; but here we find a forest,r not buried in the ground, but exposed to view on the surface, thoughr they are also met with at various depths in the soil. Within a radiusr of a mile are more than thirty of these fossil trees, the largest beingr twenty feet long and six feet in circumference; this trunk isr prostrate, the roots being still below the surface, and is brokenr squarely across, and into several pieces, evidently silicified before itr fell, the soil once surrounding it having been removed, probably byr denudation from geological causes, and at a remote epoch; the hill uponr which they are found is almost solid rock, conclusively showing ther action of powerful denuding agencies. The wood is so hard that it willr scratch glass, and in it are occasionally seen beautiful opaline spots.r I do not know that the kind of tree has been accurately determined,r though it is probably of some hard wood found now in this region. I haver heard of other localities, near the line of railroad, both in Californiar and Nevada, where similar petrified trees have been noticed.r

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r The “Geysers” are in Sonoma County, twenty-two miles from Calistoga, byr stage through Napa Valley, and about nine hours travel from Sanr Francisco. They merit a visit not only for their medicinalr r r r r r properties, equal to thoser of Saratoga or Baden-Baden, but for their curious phenomena among ther wildest and most picturesque scenery of the Coast Range. Along theirr course runs the Plutou or Sulphur Creek, stocked with fine trout,r though in immediate proximity to troubled and diabolical lookingr waters. The waters found in the Geyser Cañon are alkaline, sulphurous,r or acid, forming efficacious remedies for various cutaneous, rheumatic,r and chronic diseases; some are icy cold, others boiling hot.r

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r From Lieut. Davidson's account, the reader may form a good idea of ther qualities of these waters. About seventy-five feet below the hotel, is ther first spring of iron, sulphur and soda, with a temperature of seventy-threeer degrees Fahr.; going up the Geyser gulch you come to the tepid alumr and iron spring, with a temperature of ninety-seven degrees, forming, inr the course of twelve hours, a heavy iridescent incrustation of iron;r within twenty feet of this is a spring of a temperature of eighty-eightr degrees, containing ammonia, Epsom salts, magnesia, sulphur, andr iron, yielding crystals of Epsom salt two inches long; higher up is ar boiling spring of alum and sulphur, with a heat of 156 degrees, andr near it, also, a hot black sulphur spring. The following, paragraphs arer taken from Lieut. Davidson's account of these Geysers.r

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r "As we wander over rock, heated ground, and thick deposits of sulphur, salts,r ammonia, tartaric acid, magnesia, etc., we try our thermometer in ther Geyser stream, a combination of every kind of medicated water, and findr it rises up to 102 degrees. The 'Witches' Cauldron' is over seven feetr in diameter, of unknown depth. The contents are thrown up about two orr three feet high, in a state of great ebullition, semi-liquid, blackerr than ink, and contrasting with the volumes of vapor arising from it;r temperature, 195 degrees. Opposite is a boiling alum spring, veryr strongly impregnated; temperature, 176 degrees. Within twelve feet isr an intermittent scalding spring, from which issue streams and jets ofr boiling water. We have seen them ejected over fifteen feet. But ther glory of all is the 'Steamboat Geyser,' resounding like ar high-pressure seven-boiler boat blowing off steam, so heated as to ber invisible until it is six feet from the mouth. Just above this the gulchr divides; up the left or western one are many hot springs, but ther 'Scalding Steam Iron Bath' is the most important; temperature, 183r degrees. One hundred and fifty feet above all apparent action we found ar smooth, tenacious, plastic, beautiful clay; temperature 167 degrees.r From this point you stand and overlook the ceaseless action, the roar,r steam, groans, and bubbling of a hundred boiling medicated springs,r while the steam ascends one hundred feet above them all. Following ther usually-travelled path, we pass over the 'Mountain of Fire,' with itsr hundred orifices, thence through the 'Alkali Lake'; then we passr cauldrons of black, sulphurous, boiling water, some moving andr spluttering with violent ebullition. One white sulphur spring we foundr quite clear, and up to the boiling point.r

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r "On every foot of ground wer had trodden the crystalline products of this unceasing chemical actionr abounded. Alum, magnesia, tartaric r r r r acid, Epsom salts,r ammonia, nitre, iron, and sulphur abounded. At thousands of orificesr you find hot, scalding steam escaping, and forming beautiful deposits ofr arrowy sulphur crystals. Our next visit carried us up the Pluton, on ther north bank, past the 'Ovens,' hot with escaping steam, to the 'Eye-Waterr Boiling Spring,' celebrated for its remedial effects upon inflamed andr weak eyes. Quite close to it is a very concentrated alum spring;r temperature, 73 degrees. Higher up is a sweetish 'Iron and Soda Spring,'r fifteen feet by eight; and twelve feet above is the 'Cold Soda and Ironr Springs,' incrustated with iron, with a deposit of soda; strong, tonic,r and inviting; temperature, 56 degrees. It is twelve feet by five, andr affords a large supply. The Pluton, in the shade, was sixty-one degrees,r with many fine pools for bathing, and above for trout-fishing.r

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r "The 'Indian Springs' are nearly a mile down the cañon. The boilingr water comes out clear as ice. This is the old medicated spring, where many ar poor aborigine has been carried over the mountains to have the diseaser driven out of him by these powerful waters. On its outer wall runs ar cold stream of pure water; temperature, 66 degrees; and another waterr impregnated with iron and alum; temperature, 68 degrees. It isr beautifully and romantically situated.r

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r “We have not mentioned a tittle ofr those you pass at every step in your explorations—nor one day nor oner week will reveal them all to the inquirer. Do not suppose thatr desolation, fire, and brimstone reign supreme—one of the wonders ofr the place is that grass, shrubs, and huge trees should grow on its veryr edge, and even overhang, in many places, the seething cauldrons below.r The most varied wood abounds around you—oaks, pines, sycamore, willow,r alder, laurel, and madrone.”r

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r Bayard Taylor, describing his visit to the Geysers, says:r “The scenery is finer than that of the lower Alps, andr the place is a mine of future wealth, and of thorough rejuvenation.” Ofr the Witches’ Cauldron he writes: “A horrible mouth yawns in the blackr rock, belching forth tremendous volumes of sulphurous vapor.r Approaching as near as we dare, and looking in, we see the black watersr boiling in mad, pitiless fury, foaming around the sides of theirr prison. Its temperature, as approximately ascertained by Lieut. Davidson,r is about five hundred degrees. An egg, dipped in and takenr out, is boiled; and were a man to fall in, he would be reduced to brothr in two minutes. From a hundred vent-holes, about fifty feet above ourr heads, the steam rushes in terrible jets. I have never beheld any scener so entirely infernal in its appearance. These tremendous steam-escapesr are the most striking feature of the place. The wild, lonely grandeurr of the valley, the contrast of its Eden slopes of turf and forest, withr those ravines of Tartarus, charmed me completely, and I would willinglyr have passed weeks in exploring its recesses.r

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r “A pure alum spring,r reminding me of the rock-alum spring in Virginia, is a great resort forr dyspeptics. In fact, the properties of all the famous watering-placesr seem to be here combined, and invite the sick to come and be healed.”r

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r Among the features of this region are the hills of crude sulphur forr r r r r chemical manufactures, asr gunpowder, sulphuric acid, etc., of which it is said half a millionr tons are annually consumed. The climate is unsurpassed for itsr salubrity. The Geysers may also be reached by steamer to Petaluma,r thence by stages in ten or eleven hours; this route leads throughr Russian River Valley, and though longer and more fatiguing than ther other, is very pleasant; it is well to go by Vallejo and return byr Petaluma.r

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r The religious spirit of the old Spanish Jesuits is perpetuatedr in the names of saints and of holy things given to many prominent places;r such are San Francisco, San José, San Mateo, San Pablo, San Diego, Sanr Joaquin, San Bernardino, San Antonio, San Quentin, Santa Barbara, Santar Clara, Santa Cruz, Sacramento, Los Angelos, etc. As these priests had ar keen sense of the beautiful in nature, they selected for their missionsr the most delightful sites, which now afford to the traveller some ofr the most charming spots in California. Prominent among these is San José,r well called “the Beautiful.” The valley is very fertile, and ther climate healthful; and the pueblo of San José, with the mission of Santar Clara, a few miles beyond, grew to be a very thriving place. It hasr increased rapidly since the Americans took possession, and is nowr celebrated for its wealth and refinement, for its excellent schools andr fine public buildings. Horse-cars run in the principal street—ther Alameda—which is flanked on each side by a fine row of willows,r planted by the priests more than seventy years ago, now completelyr overshadowing the road to Santa Clara; three railroads now converge tor this place, which is the centre of a large manufacturing interest; ther population is estimated at over ten thousand. Santa Cruz, accessible byr stage from Santa Clara, opposite Monterey, is a popular resort forr

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HOMeward BOUND.

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r r Ther r traveller, having visited the above places in the vicinity of San Francisco,r will now think of turning his face eastward, if he return overland, andr of examining more closely some of the interesting, points which her hurried by in his eagerness to behold the wonders of the Yosemite. Ther first place which will claim his attention is Oakland, so called fromr its beautiful groves of oaks, opposite San Francisco, and fronting ther Golden Gate. The shallowness of the water in the bay has compelled ther railroad company to build a wharf about two miles long into the bay, sor that you seem to be going out to sea in a railroad car; from the end ofr this wharf is established the ferry to San Francisco, being ther terminus of the Western Pacific Railroad. Sometimes called the “Parkr City,” it bears somewhat the same relation to San Francisco thatr Brooklyn does to New York; it is, *par excellence*, the educationalr centre of California; besides its numerous public and private schoolsr for both sexes, being the site of the State University. The drivesr along its macadamized streets, with the fine view of the bay and ther distant Pacific, and the beautiful gardens on every side, cannot ber surpassed, if equalled, in any city of the country.r

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r One of the mostr interesting cities which the Yosemite tourist is sure to visit isr Stockton, about ninety miles from San Francisco by railroad. It wasr named in honor of Commodore Stockton, who took an active part in ther conquest of California, and was laid out by Capt. Webber in 1849-50; itr is also at the head of navigation on the San Joaquin River, distant byr water 127 miles from San Francisco, and accessible by large steamersr and sailing vessels; the river is navigable for small steamers morer than 100 miles farther up. It is estimated to contain about 12,000r inhabitants, and is a very busy and thriving place. The public andr private buildings and stores, many of which are built of brick, give itr a decidedly Eastern look. Near the Yosemite hotel, the principal one, isr the enclosure which contains the State Asylum for the Insane. Ther country around Stockton is exceedingly fertile, and its agriculturalr resources are inexhaustible; its mining facilities are also important.r

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r An artesian well, 1,000 feet deep, supplies the city daily withr 360,000 gallons of water; though the water rises eleven feet above ther surface, it is raised by steam to a high reservoir, whence the city isr supplied. It is in the centre of the vast grain-producing district ofr the San Joaquin Valley; and in harvest time the roads are lined with ther mule-drawn wagons heavily laden with the golden produce, which has beenr estimated at \$3,000,000 annually. The soil around the city is a blackr vegetable mould, called “adobe,” soft and slippery in the rainy season,r hard and deeply cracked in the summer; about five miles beyond thisr begin the sandy plains leading to the foot hills, described in ar [previous chapter](#).r r r r r r Stockton is well called the “Windmill City,”r as, by sinking a well-tube ten to twenty feet, water isr readily obtained. Hence almost every one cultivates the rich soil as ar garden, watering, it by his wind-pump, which takes the place of ther hand-pump in almost every yard. The gardens are very beautiful; and,r such is the mildness of the climate, figs, and other sub-tropicalr plants, flourish and ripen in the open air. This is the centre of ther stage lines for the Yosemite Valley, and both the starting and returnr point for most travellers bound for that region. In the summer season,r when the water is low, the sloughs which penetrate the city in variousr directions have a

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green, stagnant, and most unwholesome look; they receive much of the drainage of the houses, and cannot fail, sooner or later, to form a suitable receptacle for the origin and spread of epidemic disease, when drought, heat, and accumulation of filth shall unfortunately occur together.

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r Leaving San Francisco at 8 a. m., your reach, on your return-trip to the east, at about 5 p. m., the pretty and flourishing town of Colfax, 192 miles, named from Vice-President Colfax. Here it is well for those interested in mines to stop a day or two to pay a visit to Grass Valley and Nevada, among the most important of the gold-producing regions of California. Grass Valley was one of the earliest stopping places of the old "forty-niners," not only because there they found excellent pasturage for their animals, but on account of the profitable "washings" from the streams; the subsequent discovery of rich veins of gold-bearing quartz led to the building up of a town, numbering now about five thousand inhabitants. The fine orchards and gardens around the miners' houses render this one of the prettiest of the mining localities, and show that the thirst for gold does not necessarily interfere with the love of the ornamental and the beautiful. Its buildings, newspapers, schools, and churches, distinguish it as a centre of enterprise, intelligence, and wealth; there is probably no place in the State where mining improvements and machinery are better appreciated, and more successfully employed, than here. It is thirteen miles north of Colfax, and easily accessible by a line of stages. Though about 2,600 feet above the sea, it is so far below the snow-line, that its temperature permits the ripening of semi-tropical fruits, and its climate is very healthy.

r r

r Nevada, four miles distant, the county seat, can also boast of very fine buildings, and a considerable population engaged in milling and agriculture; it is rather irregularly laid out on both sides of Deer Creek, which runs through a part of the town. After the washings in the old river had ceased to be profitable, hydraulic mining was introduced with great success; but now the principal mining operations are upon the quartz in the fine stamp mills. It has been estimated that over fifty million dollars' worth of gold has been taken from this locality in twenty years. Newspapers, banks, churches, and schools indicate the prosperity of the place. A foundry, flouring-mills, and distilleries, show that manufactories and agriculture may be profitably pursued in busy mining regions; the soil of the valley and surrounding hills is well adapted to the fruits and vegetables, which are the pride and boast of California, and the delight of the hungry traveller.

r r

r Passing eastward 65 miles from Colfax, you come to Truckee, a large, busy, and muddy town, of over 4,000 inhabitants, chiefly engaged in the lumber business; it is situated in a heavily-timbered region. The traveller would make no stop here, were it not the starting-point for Lakes Tahoe and Donner, which are indeed the gems of the Sierras. The Truckee River, which runs along the road for miles, brawling in its rocky bed, has one source in each of the above lakes, and empties its waters into Pyramid Lake to the north. Lake Tahoe is 12 miles distant, and the road along the river bank is delightful. The dividing line between California and Nevada runs through the lake, and its waters wash the shore of five counties; the depth along this line is about 1,700 feet. No words can do justice to the beauties of this lake, before which those of Como and Maggiore are not to be mentioned; the crystal purity of the water, the mountain slopes, the verdant meadows, the splendid trees, to say nothing of the pleasures of sailing, fishing, and shooting in its invigorating air, excuse the raptures into which every appreciative traveller involuntarily falls.

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The Wonders of the Yosemite Valley, and of Californiar by Samuel Kneeland (1872)

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r r r r

SAN FRANCISCO TO BOSTON.

r r

r r Onr r taking the ferry-boat at Oakland to make the six or eight miles' transitr across the bay to San Francisco, I was surprised to find the ladies dressedr in furs, and the gentlemen with winter overcoats; the air was damp andr chilly, very much like a Boston east wind in March. From April tor November, the ascent of the heated air from the valley of ther Sacramento along the Coast Mountains to the east causes the coldr north-west winds to rush in from the Pacific through the Golden Gate,r laden with moisture, whose condensation envelops the city in ther morning and evening in dense fogs, with many clouds, which never atr this season yield any rain. The hot sun at mid-day dispels the mists,r and straw hats and thin garments are worn at noon of a day whose morningr temperature was disagreeably cold. This season is admitted to be ther most uncomfortable in the whole year, and the most trying to invalids.r The same wind which blows up the clouds of sand in the streets, roughensr the waters of the bay, and makes the passage in or out rather cold andr dismal. Soon after getting out of the Golden Gate and on to ther Pacific, the wind dies away and the sea becomes smoother, but the cloudsr without rain, and the cold fogs, accompany you for hundreds of miles atr this season (August). The rocky islands and headlands give shelter tor innumerable sea-birds, especially guillemots (*Uria*), whose large andr irregularly blotched eggs are sold by the hundred for food in the Sanr Francisco markets; there are also many large seals, or so-calledr sea-lions (*Phoca jubata*), about the same rocks. This cold, damp, andr foggy air does not go very far inland; and in the foot-hills, and higherr mountains, the sky is cloudless, the nights without dew, and the starsr as bright as on a frosty night with us; the air is so dry that therer is no danger of taking cold in camping out, even at an elevation ofr five thousand feet; and travellers not unfrequently placetheirr cot-beds on the outside and uncovered piazza, sure of a pure, dry air,r with no danger of rain; it is this rest you get at night, whichr enables you to rise refreshed after the heat, dryness, and dustiness ofr the day's travel.r

r r

r One of the striking characteristics of the Pacific steamers is, that the crew are all Chinamen; and any one who hasr experienced the disorder, the dirtiness, the unnecessary noise,r scoldings, swearings, and often intoxication, attendant on the sailingr of ships from Atlantic ports, must be delighted with these Chineser sailors; they are neat, orderly, quiet—not using oaths, tobacco, norr whiskey—obedient, respectful, strong, and in every way good sailors.r

r r

r The coast, seen at a distance of about three miles, is high, rocky orr sandy, but indescribably barren and inhospitable looking. The sea, forr the whole voyage of two weeks, was remarkably smooth, well justifyingr the term Pacific to any one who has been tossed about on the Atlantic;r except in crossing the gulf of California, there was no more roughness,r exclusive of the long and gentle tidal swell of the ocean, than anr hour's east wind would create in our bay. In fact thisr r r r r now rarely undertaken Pacific voyage is, at this season, very delightful,r with its beauty, and quiet, and absolute repose of body and of mind, fullyr realizing the dreamy *dolce far niente* of the Italian imagination.r

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r Large petrels (*Puffinus cinereus*—Gmel.)r began to appear and follow us onr the second day out. On alighting in the water, which they often do, theyr put forward their webbed feet, checking their headway in this manner,r backing water as it were, with the wings spread, before settling, onr the surface. They came around and near the steamer in considerabler numbers, but never alighted on it, as the booby of the Atlantic does. Onr account of the great length of their wings, and the shortness of theirr legs, they cannot rise, like the gulls, directly from the water, but arer obliged to run along the surface, like the smaller petrels, beating ther water with their feet, until sufficiently elevated to use their wings.r

r r

r Flying fish also began to appear, but neither so numerous, nor so large,r as in the Southern Atlantic. The ventrals were expanded just like ther pectorals in the act of flight, the former being much the smaller. They rose out of a perfectly smooth sea, showing that they are not merer skippers from the top of one wave to another; they could be seen tor change their course, as well as to rise and fall, not unfrequentlyr touching the longer lower lobe of the tail to the surface, and againr rising as if they used the tail as a powerful spring. While ther ventrals may act chiefly as a parachute, it seems as if the pectoralsr performed, by their almost imperceptible but rapid vibrations, ther function of true flight. Another reason which leads me to think theyr perform a true flight, is the way in which they reenter the water. Afterr reaching the end of their aërial course, they drop into the water withr a splash, instead of making a gentle and gradual descent, like ther flying squirrel, flying dragon, and other vertebrates with membranestr acting as parachutes. The drying of the flying membrane in the airr would prevent the small but numerous and rapid motions necessary forr true flight, and the animal therefore suddenly drops when the membraner becomes stiff. I do not see how the drying of the pectorals wouldr affect their action as parachutes. The temperature of the air was 70r deg. Fah.r

r r

r At the same time there were seen small Portuguese men-of-warr (*Physalia*), no larger than an olive, and without the purple reflectionsr of the larger ones so often met in the Atlantic. Whether these were ther younger or full-grown individuals I do not know; I saw none larger thanr these, and they were not numerous.r

r r

r As we approached the coast of ther gulf of California the petrels left us, and were replaced in an hour orr two by white gulls about the size of Bonaparte's gull, but eitherr entirely white, or with a very slight lavender-blue tinge on the backr and wings. These had an entirely different way of alighting, andr rising from the water; they did not put forward their feet to arrestr their course, but circled round like pigeons until their headway wasr stopped, and then quietly settled upon the water, immediately foldingr their wings. They also rose directly from the surface, without runningr along as the larger winged petrels did. 75 deg. Fah.r

r r r r r r r

r The next day, August 7, the temperature was 80r deg. Fah. Land was in sight all day. The California coast, for hundredsr of miles, is most forbidding, rocky to the ocean, with high mountainsr in the background, entirely parched and barren at this season, andr having that greenish-red tinge suggestive of mineral contents,r especially copper. The shore is entirely uninhabited even to beyond ther mountains, and shipwrecked persons there would perish of starvation ifr they depended on what the country afforded. Indeed a part of the coastr near which the "Golden City" went ashore in 1869, is calledr "Starvation Point"; her numerous passengers,r among whom were many women andr children, had to walk more than twenty miles to reach a headland, wherer their signals of distress were fortunately seen by a passenger on one ofr the Pacific steamers bound in

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the opposite direction, who was trying his opera-glass very early on that morning. There is now little commerce in these waters, and we did not see a sail for days on this part of the coast; all the trade is done by a few small coasting schooners, which keep near the shore. The coasts of Mexico, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, on the contrary, are beautifully green.

r r

r After passing Cape St. Lucas, August 8, we were in the mouth of the Gulf of California, where it ascends many hundred miles to the north, parallel to the coast, leaving the long, comparatively narrow, barren and uninhabited region, along which we had sailed for the past two days. The weather now became hot—85 deg. Fah. at noon, and so remaining day and night to Panama, once going up to 88 deg., and occasionally descending to 84 deg. Point Conception, in latitude 34 deg. 50 min., corresponds very nearly to Cape Hatteras on the Atlantic coast; at this point, the coast, instead of continuing to follow the mountains from north-west to south-east, becomes nearly east and west, and the cold north-west winds from San Francisco are suddenly exchanged for the warm southerly winds of the tropics, and off goes the pea-jacket, and on goes the thin coat and light hat. For two or three nights, the nearly full moon shining upon the glassy sea was very beautiful; but with the moon, as with the sunrise and sunset, I find that we have far more beautiful colors and contrasts at home; it seems as if the land and sea must be both before the sight to give the full effect, which a dreary waste of water alone cannot give.

r r

r The water here was very phosphorescent. I obtained a bottleful in about latitude 19 deg., which has been unopened since August 9. It may be interesting to see if it contains more salt than the water of the Northern and the Atlantic Oceans, as is alleged—if there be in it any remains of diatoms, or of animal forms, or of any kind of organic or nitrogenous matter which may serve as nutriment for protozoa, or any dilute protoplasm diffused through the waters of the ocean which could be directly absorbed by these lowest organisms.

r r

r The Mexican shore here came in sight, strikingly contrasting with the Californian, being green, with a luxuriant vegetation, and very pleasant looking; the shore high, with elevated mountains in the distance, and here and there a beach lined with coral reefs against which the surf could be seen breaking. We could see the rain-clouds in the mountains, and the lighting, and hear the thunder; while where we were—three miles from the shore—all was bright sunshine, with no sign of rain. On the ninth, in about 18 deg., we stopped in the land-locked harbor of Manzanillo, the mountains rising steeply from the water's edge, more than one thousand feet high, clothed with vegetation to the very top. For the last day, after leaving the California gulf, no birds were seen; first we had the large petrels, then the smaller white gulls; these soon disappeared, having limits beyond which they did not pass; the reason was not evident to our senses, as the climate, and the shore, and the sea, appeared to us the same; but the birds knew the difference.

r r

r On the eleventh we reached Acapulco, Mexico, in about 17 deg. north, where we stopped half a day, going on shore to purchase shells and corals, and the luscious fruits of the place, and to witness the strangeness of an old Mexican city, with its Spanish decay softened by tropical indolence, its curious mixture of natives, negroes, and Mexicans, the peculiar customs of the market-place, and the heterogeneous articles exposed for sale; the stock of a hundred women, and nearly as many men, was not greater than the contents of a single stall in one of our markets, the trade being of the most petty description, and seemingly like that of children playing buying and selling merely to pass away the time. I obtained here a few shells, especially *murices*, and some natural and artificially-colored corals. The harbor is very beautiful, entirely land-locked, surrounded

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by high hills covered with bushes to the top; here and there could be seen the palm-leaf huts of the natives, with patches of bananas and groves of oranges; the beach was lined with palm-trees, and everything had the peaceful, lazy, dreamy look peculiar to the tropics; the buildings of the town are of stone, with tile roofs, and generally of one story; the old church in the plaza was built by the Spaniards, and is now used as a prison, as its grated windows indicated. The water was beautifully clear, and swarmed with bright-colored fish, and it is said with sharks; I saw none of the latter, and the professional divers near the landing apparently had little fear of them, as they dived for the pieces of money thrown for them by the passengers.

r r

r When the coasts of Southern Mexico and Guatemala are reached, and especially about latitude 11 deg. 30 min., white-rumped Mother Carey's chickens came around us; they looked just like the common Atlantic species, and, as Baird does not describe such a bird on the Pacific in vol. ix. of the Pacific Railroad Reports, I suppose the species must have appeared since then, either from South America, or having crossed the isthmus. Now and then a marine turtle would be seen lazily rolling at the surface.

r r

r The lowest latitude reached, is about 7 deg. north. We arrived at Panama Aug. 17 (a fortnight from San Francisco), where we remained two days, giving ample time to examine this quaint old Spanish town. In the spacious and finer harbor were many hooded gulls, brown pelicans, and frigate pelicans, while numerous turkey buzzards ran along the beach with the same tameness and voracity as in our Southern and Gulf States; the water abounds in catfish and sharks, though I saw none of the latter caught by the numerous fishermen. Panama is built along the bay, which is surrounded by high hills and mountains, covered with tropical verdure; many of the smaller islands show columns of basalt with precipitous sides, and there have been several noted subsidences of the land. Though hot in mid-day, the temperature at night was delightful; and this in the middle of August. The place has the typical appearance of a dirty Spanish town.

r r

r We left Panama, Aug. 19, to cross the Isthmus for Aspinwall, a distance of forty-seven miles, occupying three hours in the passage, in very dirty and uncomfortable cars, steerage mingled with cabin passengers, as both classes pay the same fare, viz., twenty dollars in gold. The route runs for nearly half the distance along the Chagres River, a narrow, muddy stream, with banks of reddish clay which tinges the water to the color of that of the Missouri River; the road has some sharp curves, and a few cuts, and presents only one engineering notability, where it crosses the river on a substantial iron bridge. The land is mostly low, and the vegetation most luxuriant; water seems abundant, but of a repulsive look and stagnant character, which, with the marshy effluvia, fully explains the death of thousands from malarious disease during the construction of the road; it is familiarly said that a life was lost for every sleeper laid, so unhealthy was the region for Northern workmen. The natives, however, seemed vigorous and well developed, and every hut swarmed with children, the amount of clothing on which, especially on boys to the age of seven or eight years, would not materially draw upon the contents of a dry goods store. Many negroes were seen, and they fraternize fully with the Indian natives; the latter are nearly as dark as negroes, but have finer forms, more regular features, and straight black hair. The marshes and the mud are occasionally relieved by masses of very dark volcanic looking rock, through which several cuts have been made; the graceful palms, and the beautiful flowers, could not fail to attract the attention of the most unobservant; the only birds seen were small black anis (*Crotophaga ani*. L.), a scissor-bird of the cuckoo family, which hopped and flew about like blackbirds with us.

r r

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r The town of Aspinwall is small, low, on the margin of a swamp, recalling tor the mind the ideal of the marshes of the carboniferous period, andr suggesting the formation of coal from the luxuriant vegetation;r though, near the sea, the water is salt, instead of the fresh waterr supposed to be necessary to the formation of coal.r

r r

r There was nothingr noteworthy in the nine days' passage to New York, except the muchr greater heat in the Caribbean Sea, than in similar latitudes on ther Pacific; probably from its comparatively small size, and beingr land-locked. No whales were seen in the Pacific, and none in ther Atlantic, till latitude 37 deg., off Delaware Bay, when a school ofr about twenty finbacks, some of them forty to fifty feet long, came quiter near the steamer; I was interested to notice that their blowingr projected into the air simply a fine vapor, and not a jet of water, asr is usually believed; that cetaceans do, however, sometimes eject waterr in this way, I know, as I have, on many occasions,r r r r r at night, heard the puffr soon followed by the swash of the descending, water.r

r r

r The whole tripr from San Francisco to New York takes about twenty-three days, at a costr of \$100 in gold; in the cars you can make the passage in one-third ther time (seven days) at a cost of about \$180—by the cars, two weeksr shorter and about \$60 dearer—if one has plenty of time, it is farr pleasanter by sea, as you are brought into contact with new aspects ofr nature, tropical scenery and fruits, and are free from dust, change ofr cars, anxiety about baggage and sleeping facilities, and from ther inevitable rush of the dining saloons and railway stations.r

r r

r In these short sketches I have endeavored to express what especiallyr interested me in the California trip; others will take note of differentr things, each according, to his taste and education; but every one will,r I think, admit that this journey will bring him into contact with some ofr the sublimest of scenery.r

r r

r As to the causes which have produced thisr remarkable Valley, there are three principal theories: the subsidencer theory, the ice theory, and the water theory. From what I have seen, andr have been able to ascertain, it seems to me that there was a greatr subsidence, as claimed by Prof. Whitney, and that subsequently anr immense glacier extended to the edge of the Valley, even entering ther easterly end of it by the numerous cañons there, as proved by ther glacial scratches and moraines, and giving rise, by its melting, to ar great lake, which gradually disappeared. That the Half Dome, El Capitan,r and other masses in the Valley, were produced, or essentially modifiedr by ice or water, I am not, with the present evidence, prepared tor believe.r

r r

r As a means of restoring impaired health, and of invigoratingr the feeble and nervous of both sexes, it is to be highly recommended—itsr bracing air, pure water, delightful tramps, and awe-inspiring scenery,r are a thousand times more to be desired by persons of sense and culture,r than the inanities of Saratoga, the fashion of Newport, the pomposity ofr Long Branch, the petty swindling of Niagara, or the discomforts of ther White Mountains.r

r r r r

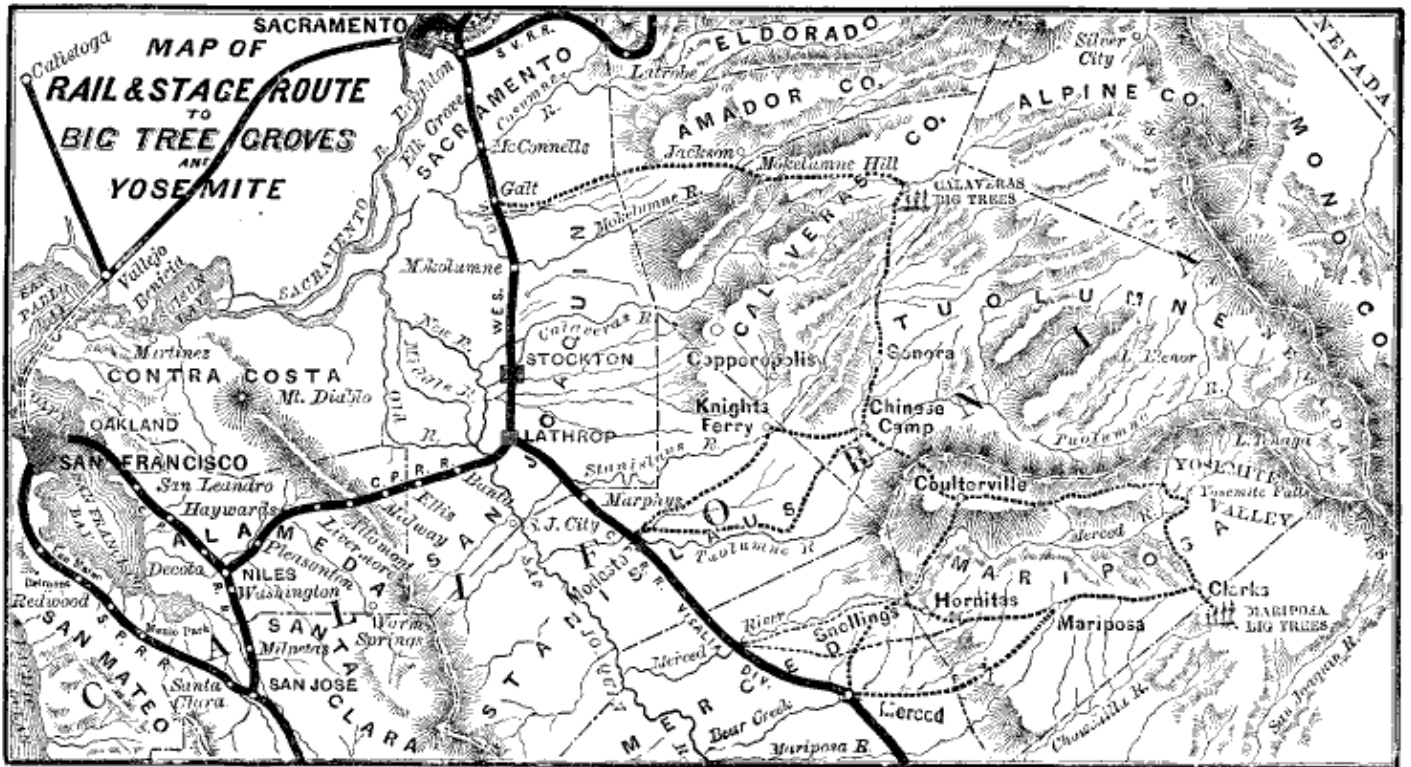
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THE YOSEMITE IN 1872.

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r Map of Rail & Stage Route to Big Tree Groves and Yosemite

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rr Thoser r whor visited the famous Valley in 1869, 1870, and even 1871, will findr that much of the fatigue, dust, vexatious delays, and the cuticularr abrasions incidental to prolonged saddle excursions, may be avoided byr the improved facilities for travel in 1872. In fact, it may almost ber asserted that the only horseback riding necessary now, is the descentr of the mountains directly into the Valley, a distance of only threer miles, and occupying not more than two hours of time. Indeed the speedr and comparative comfort of the trip now rob it, in my opinion, of muchr of the charm and delightful feeling of freedom which attach tor equestrian exercise among magnificent mountain scenery, even thoughr the air-passages be choked with dust, and the bones ache fromr riding. On your horse you are free to stop and admire when you please;r in the stage you have much dust and as much fatigue, though of ar different kind, crowded into fewer hours, with the additionlr discomfords of cramped position, inability to see, and disagreeabler joltings, against which you cannot guard.r

rr

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r By consulting the maps, the reader will be able to trace the different routes to the Valley, and to locate in advance the most remarkable cliffs and waterfalls described in the previous pages.r

r r

r It is estimated that in 1869, about 1,100 Visitors entered the Valley; this number, in 1870, was increased to 1,700, and in 1871 to 2,300; in 1872, it is safe to predict that at least 3,000 persons will behold its beauties. Judging from the expressed intentions one hears around, many hundred persons from this vicinity will substitute this for their summer trip to Europe and the fashionable watering-places.r

r r

r It is understood that the "American Association for the Advancement of Science" has this year been invited to meet in San Francisco. Californian generosity and hospitality are proverbial; and the treasure which she lavished on the "Sanitary Commission," will not be stinted in furnishing facilities for the "Scientific Brotherhood," who are looking with longing eyes to the Pacific shore. Her fertile plains, her magnificent forests, her inexhaustible old fields, her immense orchards and vineyards, her salubrious climate, make her the envy of the more sterile Eastern States. No doubt she will extend such a welcome, that the scientists from every state will find it in their power to cross the continent by the Pacific Railroad. This will probably lead to the Yosemite many a geologist, to speculate upon the mighty agencies of convulsions, ice, and water, which have combined in the formation of the great Valley; many a botanist, to revel in the gorgeous floral richness and in the unparalleled forest growth of the mountain meadows and gorges; many a true lover of nature, to appreciate and extol the sublimity and beauty of the Sierra Nevada, with its cliffs and falls. So may it be!r

r r

r Even Californians do not seem to be aware what a magnificent trust the United States have committed to their care. It is understood that parties who think they have a claim to portions of the Valley, from squatting upon, and, in their idea, improving the land therein (though having none, as the region had not been surveyed), have been busy the past winter in endeavors to have their titles legalized. If these persons have made what they regard as improvements, let them be paid amply therefor; build a golden bridge for them to pass over, and let them carry at once and forever by this pathway, cheap at any price, all supposed claims to this part of the *national* domain. True, it has no gold, nor fertile land, nor available forests, to tempt the cupidity of individuals, or in any way to increase pecuniarily the value of the State; but it has that which no money can purchase—the sublime and beautiful in nature—what will render the State more famous than her mines and her grains, and will do more than her institutions of learning, noble as they are, to elevate and cultivate her people. Every lover of his country, and of her grand scenery, is interested to prevent the acknowledgment of all claims, under whatever pretence advocated, of private individuals, or of corporate bodies, to any part of the Yosemite Valley and its surroundings, as fixed by the Act of Congress alluded to in the preceding pages.r

r r

r Let the "American Association" speak the united demand of the sciences they represent, at the meeting of 1872, and put a stop forever to the vandalism which has assumed such threatening proportions. Let the State assume the responsibility of the roads, the new trails, the bridges; let her forbid the erection of any more shingler houses for trading, or drinking purposes, and level with the earth many now existing, the continued building of which will make the Valley look like the cloth-covered shanty villages which appear and disappear as a new railroad progresses on the plains—a sort of house-caucer, which follows the avenues of travel, carrying in its course gambling, whiskey, and riot, and remediable only by the strangulating surgeryr

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of “Vigilance Committees.”r

r r

r Let the cutting down of trees be stopped by more stringent measures, the present law not being strictly enforced.r Let no man fence up meadows belonging to the State, and charge travellers pasturage for their horses on the public domain. Ther beautiful wild flowers and thickets, classed by the soulless improversr as useless chapparal, are trampled by cattle and destroyed by ther plough. But fortunately, in the language of one who knows whereof her speaks, and is filled to overflowing with the beauty of Californianr nature, “By far the greater portion of Yosemite is unimprovable; herr trees and her flowers will melt like the snow, but her domes and herr falls are everlasting.”r

r r

r Let not the Golden State permit her own andr her sister populations to regard the Valley of the “Great Grisly Bear”r (Yosemite) rather as the valley of the “Golden Fleece.”r

r r

r Every traveller, coming from the East, should stop at Stockton, California,r and make that city; the point from which to start on the tour of ther Calaveras Grove, Yosemite Valley, and the Mariposa Grove, all of which,r if times permits, should be included in the trip. Presuming that ther traveller wishes to avoid, as much as possible, horseback riding, andr avail himself of railways and stages where practicable, Stockton is ther proper base of departure. Various routes are open to the traveller, andr very eloquent and pertinacious advocatesr r r r r will soon beset him, assuring him positively thatr speed, comfort, safety, and moderate charges can be secured only onr the route for which he is employed as runner; as all are made outr equally advisable, each in turn, the traveller will naturally andr properly decline to believe *all* that is told him by the rival advocates.r All the routes have their advantages, and all their disadvantages,r and, after all, there is not much to choose; you will be surelyr disappointed in some things, while others will surpass yourr expectations. Taking things easy, and making the best of what offers,r and not expecting, in this new and rough country, the punctuality andr the little comforts he has become familiar with in the palace cars, arer what make the philosophic traveller enjoy himself in spite of minorr inconveniences, while the male fuss-bug and the female fidget arer disgusted with everything, and pronounce the Yosemite trip a humbugr and a bore.r

r r

r Heavy trunks should be left at Stockton, as you willr surely return thither, whether you approach the Valley from the eastr or the west; they will be unnecessary and a nuisance, difficult tor carry by stage and impossible by horses, and, if carried from Stocktonr and left, necessitating return by the same route, which is notr advisable if you wish to see the most you can in a short time. A valiser that can be carried by hand, or easily packed on a horse, is enough forr a fortnight’s trip, and few make one more than ten days’ long; forr gentlemen, are desirable a broad-rimmed light hat, strong boots,r serviceable but not too nice clothes, with flannel shirts; for ladies,r flounces, trains, high-heeled boots, and fashionable hats are quite outr of character; the clothing should be about what would be worn here inr the latter part of spring; the heat may be ninety degrees Fah. at noon,r in the Valley, while the nights and mornings are cool; umbrellas arer useless impediments.r

r r

r In my judgment, the best route to follow, if your are not in a great hurry, and wish to visit the Calaveras grove ofr trees, is this: taking the railroad at Stockton you go to Milton orr Copperopolis, a distance of

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twenty-eight or thirty miles; there your take stage for Murphy's, a distance of thirty-seven miles; seventeen miles farther by stage will bring you to the Calaveras grove of big trees, occupying ten hours. Remaining one day in the grove, previously described, you start in the morning for Murphy's again; dine at Sonora, and take supper at Chinese Camp, going on to Garrote, which you reach at nine p.m., there passing the night; on this day you have ridden about sixty-seven miles by stage, the distance from Murphy's to Garrote being fifty miles; the roads are better than on the old Mariposa route, the hotels are comfortable, and the fare good. Next day, before light, you start again, reaching, at noon, Crane's Flat, a distance of thirty miles; about half-past one you leave again, and by the middle of the afternoon arrive at "Prospect Rock," the end of the stage route; here you get the first glimpse of the Valley, though not so good as the one from "Inspiration Point," on the Mariposa route. You then mount your horse, descend the mountain about three miles, and reach the hotels in the Valley about eight p.m.—having ridden seventeen miles from Crane's Flat without any great fatigue.

r r

r Then making the tour of the Valley by stage, and on horseback, you visit the various points of interest, noted on the accompanying map, and previously described, spending not less than three days. If you ascend the high Sierra, toward the upper Yosemite fall, or go to Cathedral Peak, which is strongly advised to all good climbers, for the purpose of seeing the polishing of the rocks—in the vicinity of the beautiful lake Tenaya, especially—the work of the ancient glacier which once ploughed its way, miles in length and width, and thousands of feet in thickness, along the top of the Sierra, filling up the Yosemite Valley, and extending twenty miles or more along the plain of the Merced River—you must stay half, or, better still, a whole week longer. Nowhere can be seen better evidence of the immense power of ice in shaping the hardest rocks, than in the easily accessible heights on the north side of the Valley.

r r

r It will be well to return to Stockton by the Mariposa trail, as by that you visit Sentinel Dome, the Mariposa trees, and pass through the interesting gold diggings of Mariposa and Bear Creek. It is longer and more fatiguing, and with more horseback riding than the Coulterville route. These routes can be well understood from the accompanying excellent map of the region, kindly furnished by F. Knowland, Esq., General Agent of the Union and Central Pacific Railroads. In Summer, tourists will be able to descend from Sentinel Dome as well as by the Mariposa trail on the south side, and by Indian Cañon, as well as the Coulterville route, on the north side; but it is best for most travellers, especially for ladies, to make the descent by the oldest and best trails; by all the routes you can go by stage almost to the edge of the Valley.

r r

r Going out, then, by the Mariposa trail, your ride by stage (or on horseback, if you prefer it) to the western end of the Valley, along, but not crossing, the placid Merced River, passing near the Bridal Veil fall.

r r

r Mounting your horse, you ascend a steep and winding path, often casting a fond, lingering look behind at the beautiful Valley, till it is lost from sight; you arrive in about an hour at "Inspiration Point," from which, coming from the other direction, you obtain the first glimpse of Yosemite, and probably the grandest view in the country, if not in the world. Linger here as long as you can, you branch off to Sentinel Dome and Glacier Point, from which the view of the distant Sierra, embracing the Obelisk, Mount Lyell, and Mount Dana groups of mountains, is indeed magnificent. Thence to Westfall's meadow, and to Clark and Moore's, 25 miles from the Valley, where a genuine New England welcome awaits you.

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r Distant from their hotel about five miles is the Mariposa grove ofr big trees, where the “Grisly Giant” stands erect, about 300 feet highr and 90 feet in circumference at the base—with scores of smaller giants, male and female, married and single, as indicated by theirr names.r

r r

r Returning to the hotel you take stage for Mariposa over a veryr good road, with an oasis in the desert called “White and Hatch’s,”r r r r r r r where a second New England welcome and home-liker table will refresh both mind and body. From Mariposa you go by stager through the decayed mining region of that name, where a few Chineser still search for gold successfully in the deserted diggings. The end ofr your dusty ride soon ends, as you strike the Visalia division of ther Central Pacific Railroad at Modesto, 20 miles from Lathrop on the mainr railroad; thence to Stockton 10 miles, after a stage ride of about 90r miles.r

r r

r By this route you pass through Calaveras, Tuolumne, Mariposa,r Merced, and Stanislaus counties, and get an excellent idea of the Sierrar and the foot-hills. If the Calaveras grove be omitted, the touristr should by all means enter the Valley by the Mariposa route, for ther sake of Sentinel Dome and Inspiration Point, and go out by ther Coulterville trail; then, on reaching Chinese Camp, should the appetiter grow by what it feeds on, and time allow, it is easy to go up to ther Calaveras grove—or the traveller may return by Knight’s Ferry tor Modesto, or whatever may then be the terminus of the Visalia branch tor Stockton. Should the railroad be finished to Bear Creek or Merced, ther stage route by way of Mariposa will be shortened some 30 miles, and willr be and additional inducement to enter the Valley by this route,r returning by Modesto.r

r r

r Time from Stockton back again, including threer days in the Valley, the Calaveras circuit, Sentinel Dome, and ther Mariposa grove—ten to twelve days. Fare from Boston to San Francisco,r \$142—time to Stockton, 7 days, for which \$5 to \$6 a day should ber allowed for sleeping-cars and meals; the Yosemite trip will cost fromr \$125 to \$150, according to the manner of conveyance, and the number ofr the party: the total necessary expense per individual, with a few daysr in San Francisco, is not more than \$600. Beyond Utah, greenbacks shouldr be exchanged for gold and silver.r

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Recent Earthquakes in Yosemite.

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r Readers of the preceding pages will remember the many proofs of old and existing, volcanic eruptions in the region of the Sierras; and recently there has been in this region some severe earthquake disturbances. The earth has been rent in long and deep, but narrow, fissures; rocks, trees, animals and dwellings have been swallowed up or destroyed, and great destruction of property, and not a little terror, have been the result of these tremblings, which even now have not ceased.

r r

r Confining ourselves here to the Valley, the following information has been communicated to a friend by a gentleman who has passed the winter there: On the twenty-sixth of March, 1872, at about 2½ a.m., the first shock occurred, shaking people out of bed, lasting about three minutes, with undiminished energy, and with considerable movement of the surface. At first nothing was heard but an unusual agitation of the trees, but after about a minute a tremendous crash was heard on the south side of the Valley, opposite Yosemite Falls; Eagle Rock had fallen from a height of 2,000 feet, and was pouring an avalanche of boulders over precipices, and through the forests of firs and spruces, filling the Valley with dust, and with countless reverberations. The sky was clear and the moon bright, so that everything could be plainly seen; the trees were strangely agitated, and the croaking of the frogs in the meadows, for a time, silenced. The river soon after was found to be muddy, from portions of its banks having been shaken into it, but otherwise showed no signs of the agitation to which it must have been subjected.

r r

r This shock was followed, at intervals of a few minutes, by sharp concussions, each attended by gentle undulations and deep rumbling sounds. A second well-defined shock, about an hour after the first, was followed by another avalanche of rocks from the region of Eagle Rock. A third severe shock occurred soon after sunrise, of less violence than the preceding.

r r

r Rocks of small size, up to those 30 feet in diameter, formed, from this cause, a long rough slope at the foot of the vertical walls; many trees were destroyed, some four feet in diameter, cut and bruised, and thrown about like straws; some had their tops cut off 100 feet from the ground by the flying rocks. Other avalanches occurred in Indian and Illilouette cañons, and on the west side of the Cap of Liberty. Innumerable shocks occurred on the following day, and all were observed to progress from the north to the south, with a few from the east. The walls of the Valley are not disfigured, the only noticeable changes being some patches of fresh rock surface, and some new spires and fronts where Eagle Rock fell. The shocks were noticed till late in April, and perhaps later, and their consequences cannot fail to add a new interest to the sights in the Valley for the visitors of 1872.

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Summary

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r *The Wonders of the Yosemite Valley, and of Californiar* was written by Dr. Samuel Kneeland. r Dr. Kneeland was a Boston physician r founding member and later professor of zoology at MIT. r He wrote several books, including this, from careful diaries kept r during his zoological-collecting expeditions. r This book is from two trips by Dr. Kneeland to California, r taken sometime during 1869 to 1871. r

r r

r The photographs were supposedly taken by John P. Soule of Massachusetts, r although there's disagreement as to whether he traveled to Californiar or just purchased the negatives. r In any case, *Wonders of the Yosemite Valley* r is an early example of Western scenes being published on the East coast. r

r r

r Some of Dr. Kneeland's views on glaciation were "borrowed" from r John Muir's r new theories about glaciation of the Sierra Nevada and Yosemite Valley. r According to William Frederick Badè: r Muir did not approve Kneeland using his materials without credit. r But Kneeland had the effect of attracting considerable attention for Muir's views and explorations r (*The Life and Letters of John Muir*, r Chapter 9). r In the next, or third, edition of *Wonders of the Yosemite Valley*, r Kneeland gave partial credit to Muir's writings. r

r r

r *Wonders of the Yosemite Valley* r also describes Kneeland's trip west by train from Omaha through Salt Lake City, r Mormons, Giant Sequoia trees, California Indians, San Francisco, r Calistoga mineral springs, r and his trip back east by steamship and Panama train. r

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r —Dan Anderson, www.yosemite.ca.us r

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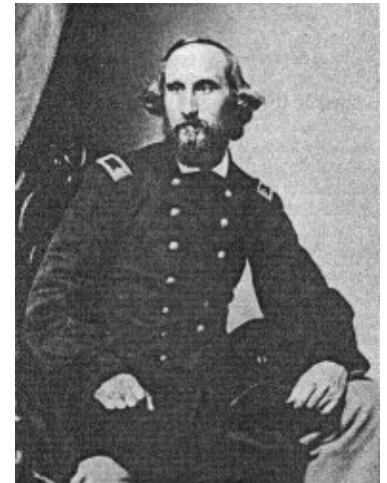
r Samuel Kneeland, 1821-1888.r *The Wonders of the Yosemite Valley, and of California*,r second editionr (New York: Lee, Shepard & Dillingham, 1872).r xii, 78 p., 10 mounted albumen photographs, illustrated.r Gilt edges.r Gilt lettering on cover and spine with tan or dark blue cloth with decorative cover.r Two wood-engraved maps, 27 cm.r Photographs by John P. Soule.r Library of Congress Call Number: F868.Y6 K62.r The first edition was issued in 1871 andr the second and third editions were issued in 1972.r The photographs are the same in all editions.r Bibliographies:r Cowan (I) p. 131. Cowan (II) p. 333, Currey & Kruska 225, Farquhar 10b,r & Kimes 3-4.r

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r Ther [University of Michigan'sr Making of America \(MOA\)r digital library](#)r hasr r images ofr r *The Wonders of the Yosemite Valley* 2d. ed. (1872)r online atr r <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/AGW1475>r r r You may order print-to-order copies of this bookr from University of Michigan.r

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About the Author

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r Samuel Kneeland was born August 1, 1821 in Boston, Massachusetts.r He graduated from Harvard with a AB in 1840 and AM and MD in 1843.r He married Eliza Maria Curtis in 1849.r He was associated with a group of young Boston physicians trying to reformr the medical profession.r In 1862 he joined the Union

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army as a surgeon and was in charge of hospitalsr in New Orleans and Mobile, Alabama until 1866.r Dr. Kneeland was a founding member of the Massachusetts Institue of Technologyr in 1865 and served as professor of zoology and physiology.r He became an avid collector and his travels included Brazil, Hawaii, the Philippines, and Iceland.r He contributed over a thousand articles to Appleton's *American Cyclopaedia* and published several medical papers.r He died 1888 in Hamburg, Germany.r His complete writings are at the Boston Society of Natural History.r

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r http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/wonders_of_the_yosemite_valley/

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