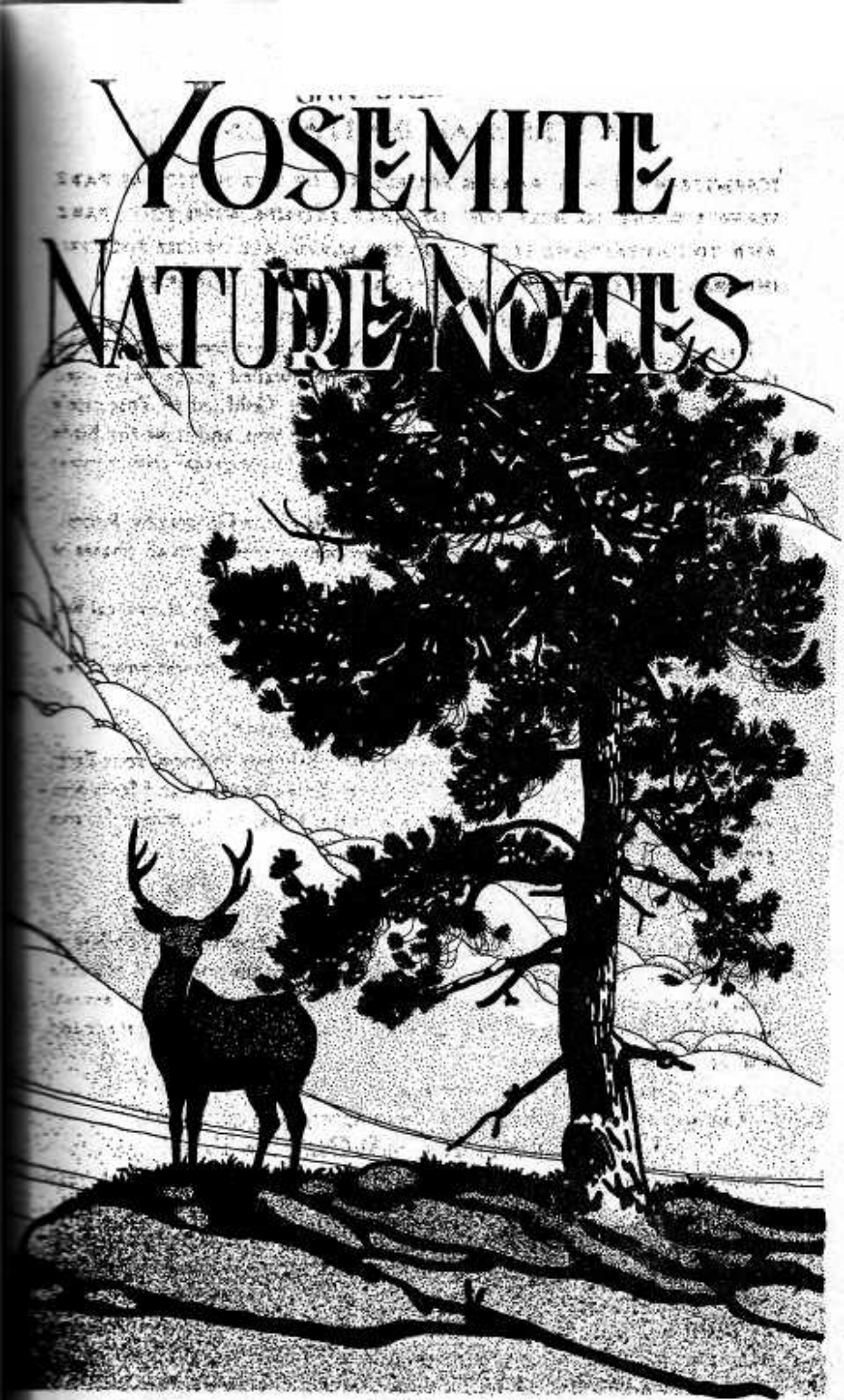
# YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES



Volume IV — August 25, 1925 — Number 14

# A PERSONAL INVITATION.

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK IS YOURS! WE OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WANT TO HELP YOU TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOUR PARK AND TO UNDERSTAND IT IN ITS EVERY MOOD. ALL OF THE FOLLOWING SERVICE IS OFFERED TO YOU *free* BY YOUR GOVERNMENT:

## Visit the Yosemite Museum!

Here you will learn the full story of the Park — what tools were used by the great Sculptor in carving this mighty granite-walled gorge; who lived here before the white man came; how the Days of Gold led to Yosemite's discovery; how the pioneers prepared the way for you; and how the birds and mammals and trees and flowers live together in congenial communities waiting to make your acquaintance.

Plan your trail trips on the large scale models in the Geography Room.

The Yosemite Library in the museum provides references on all phases of Yosemite history and natural history.

Popular lectures on Yosemite geology and other branches of natural history are given by nature guides at scheduled times each day.

The nature guide on duty will be more than willing to answer your questions on any subject.

## Go Afield with a Nature Guide!

Take advantage of this free service that will help you to know your Park. A competent scientist will conduct you over Yosemite trails, and from him you may learn first hand of the native flowers, trees, birds, mammals, and geological features.

See Schedule of Nature Guide Field Trips.

## Visit Glacier Point Lookout!

From there you will obtain an unexcelled view of Yosemite's High Sierra. The binocular telescope will bring Mt. Lyell to within one third of a mile from where you stand; you can recognize friends climbing trails several miles away. The Nature Guide in attendance will help you to operate it and will explain what you see.

A small library is at your command.

You will enjoy the informal nightly campfire talks given here.

## Attend the Nature Guide Campfire Talks!

In addition to the museum lectures members of the educational staff give talks as a part of the evening program at Camp Curry and Yosemite Lodge. Non-technical explanations of how Yosemite came to be; what you may expect of Yosemite bears; how the local Indians lived; what birds you see about your camps; what trout you will catch in Yosemite waters; how you may best visit the wonderland of the summit region; and scores of similar subjects are given by the National Park Service Nature Guides.

ALL OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES ARE PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE BY YOUR GOVERNMENT.

—TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM—

# YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

Volume IV August 25, 1925 Number 14


## THE LURE OF THE HIGH SIERRA

*By David D. Keck*

AS A CONTRAST to the green and brown monotones of Yosemite Valley one should visit at this time of year the rock bound lakes above timberline. These cold waters are surrounded by beetling cliffs and crags well patched with dirty snow banks whose melting soaks the soil so that all have some green spots or flowering shoreline about them. The situation appears most unfavorable for plant growth, yet above tree line we find some of our choicest flowers. The ruggedness of the granite, the coldness of the nights and the sharpness of the wind's blasts do not deter these pioneers from living their short, beautiful lives. The whites and purples are the predominating shades. One notes that the yellows seem to be symbols of sunshine rather than cold.

The heathers are among the most attractive alpine flowers. Nature freely uses them in her rock gardens. The white Cassiope is found fringing huge boulders which grant but slight protection in return for the additional beauty nature has bestowed. Bryanthus forms large carpets of fine design with the magenta flower clusters liberally dotting the green foliage beneath. The Camassia with its purplish bloom is another delicate flower to be observed. The white columbine is a striking plant when in full flower. Also, two or three kinds of daisies may be found and the desert naturalist will be surprised to find one of the Indian paint brushes above tree line.

*A Rock Rabbit*

"Only the bleat of a cony disturbed the hush."

The writer was in a severe hail storm at the Gaylor lakes above Tioga Pass. The waters were lashed by the stones into a turbulent sea and the water was running off the ground everywhere. Not a shelter was in sight, and in walking across the slope one was forced to wade. Crossing a cliff of small granite blocks a flock of Aleutian rosy finches was disturbed and all flew into the storm, abandoning their wet nooks. Then the storm ceased! A sharp wind quickly cleared up the scattered clouds and soon the sun burst through to dry the wet meadows. The flowers still bobbed merrily, not to be beaten down by a single hail storm. The wind subsided and the lakes were again placid to reflect the colorings of a sunset made memorable by a cloud-decked sky. Only the splash of a hungry trout or the bleat of a cony disturbed the hush. Thus is nature continually showing many moods in a single day in the High Sierra.

# THE LOST LAKE OF LITTLE YOSEMITE

By Ansel F. Hall

Chief Naturalist United States National Park Service

Fifteen years ago I was told of a lost lake somewhere in Little Yosemite valley. Reports varied. Rumor placed it deep in the woods somewhere near the base of Half Dome, but failed to disclose anyone who had actually seen it. A day's search on my part only added to the mystery of the unknown.

Two years later, looking down from the summit of Half Dome, I was surprised to find a dark little body of water snuggling close to the rounded southeast slope or "back" of the Dome. On the other side of the shallow little valley lies the round summit of Mount Broderick.

Later exploration of this region led me through the most beautiful open forest of sugar pine and Jeffrey pine whose brown pine needle carpet was dotted with golden brodieas, pink pussy's paws and other sun-loving blossoms.

Abruptly I stepped into the deep shade of firs and lodgepole pines and found a tiny stream gurgling its way through a veritable garden of succulent grasses and flowering plants. Lost lake lay just beyond. It was shallow, to be sure, but beautifully edged with strips of meadow and with great masses of white and salmon colored azalea blossoms.

I have returned many times since, sometimes by following the traces of an old almost obliterated trail that once led from Little Yosemite, and at other times climbing up through the steep glaciated defile between Liberty cap and Mount Broderick.

In September, 1923, I found the lake to be lost indeed. In its place was a meadow upon which one could walk from one end to another dry shod.

The story of the disappearance of Lost lake is exactly the same as that of those of other Sierran lakes. Twenty thousand years ago most mountain canyons were emerging from beneath the ice of the last great glacial push, leaving myriads of little rockbound basins which had been scoured out by the grinding and plucking action of the ice. Some of these lakes (or tarns, if we use the geologist's name for them) were recently filled by the fine rock flour emerging in milky streams at the snouts of the retreating glaciers. Yosemite valley itself owes its level floor to the sedimentation of just such a mountain lake—probably the largest in the Sierra.

As the glacial mill stopped grinding and gave place to sunny, tree-planted canyons, the filling of lakes became slower, but no less certain. Gravel and sand came tumbling down along stream bottoms and pushed out in deltas, just like the one which is today filling Mirror lake, before our very eyes. Even the smallest lakes received their share of weathered rock, though sometimes only during the few spring months of tiny snow-fed torrents.

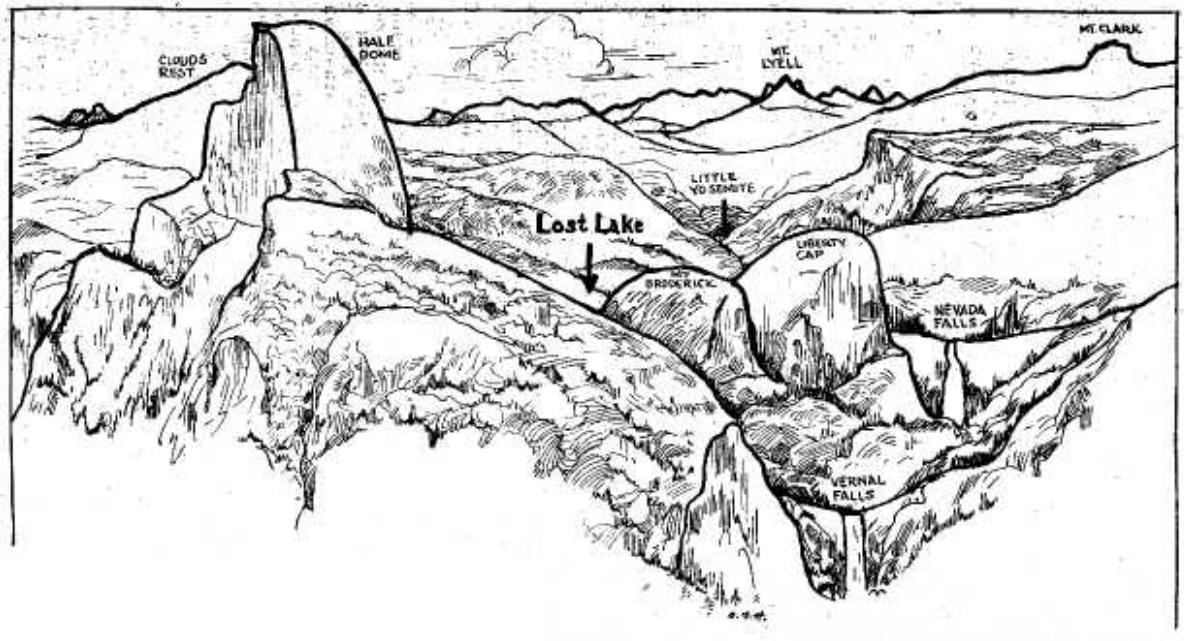
Then, too, trees that had made their homes at the water's edge, fell, floated for a time, and then added their bulk to the accumulated mass at the lake bottom which was now black with dead leaves and other vegetable material that had fallen into the water, and, in the absence of air, only partly decayed.

**Filled With Peat**

Finally this layer of peat, for it is peat formed of vegetable material gathering under water, accumulated until it reached the surface. Now moisture-loving grasses and reeds pushed farther and farther out from the beaches. This bog may have remained swampy for many years, but it became drier and drier and eventually the true meadow grasses and their companions the flowers, ventured out into the open. We had now a mountain meadow—oftimes as perfect a gem as a High Sierra lake.

But even a mountain meadow is with us but a short time. Tiny lodge-pole pines, creeping out from the forest's edge, seem planted by nature only to give variety to the darker green carpet—but come back in twenty or thirty or fifty years and what has happened? The growing trees have crowded out the grasses and flowers and the forest is in possession.

Thus is the cycle completed. Lake, swamp, meadow, forest—how different they look as our mountain trails reveal their many beauties, and how little we realize how they are all related and all but phases of nature's evolution.




Sketch of view from Glacier Point showing location of the Lost Lake.

# AFIELD WITH THE NATURE GUIDES

### NATURE'S SHELTERS

After a late dinner my companion and I set forth into the dark, wet forest to search for a dry tree. We had no tent. In this pure tamarack forest in which we found ourselves the prospects for success in our quest were not encouraging. We felt the matting under one tree after another, but every tree had a leaky roof. Finally, however, persistence was rewarded and we found two tamaracks near together, tight-roofed, offering a snug shelter to the belated traveler wise enough to avail himself of accommodations thus freely provided.

Small dead branches, broken from the lower trunks, and their damp outer part whittled away, soon provided us with material for starting a fire. In due course our damp garments were dried and sleeping bags unrolled. For two weeks it had rained every day and sometimes all night, but no raindrop found its way through our tamarack roof.

This was in the great meadow of the Tuolumne. Another summer along the Kern the rain caught us in the middle of the night. Our sleeping bags kept us dry enough, but our dunnage was less fortunate. The sun came out so bright and clear in the morning that we deemed it the part of wisdom to seek out a drier boudoir where we could enjoy and defy the afternoon showers. We chose, of course, a great fir and under its protecting thatch disposed ourselves in comfort and watched the showers, which appearing true to schedule, drenched the forest, except for the charmed circle, the center of which was the trunk of our stalwart protector.

Again it rained, this time at a higher altitude, where the trees were less well equipped to give us shelter. I remembered a great rock canopy half a mile down the stream which drained the lake, called Bullfrog, by the side of which we were encamped. This rock, fallen from the cliff, lay upon high boulders. There was some forty feet square of space with level ceiling ten feet from the ground, and the drainage was such that this ground was perfectly dry. Here we lived secure in a house which will stand as long as the world stands.

At timberline, by a lake dotted with many islands, while some of my companions carelessly threw down their blankets upon the grass of the open, cold, wet meadow, I clambered up to an Alpine pine, so ensconced among the rocks as to give little promise of sleeping quarters. Considerable digging out of rocks and transference of thick packed masses of leaves wedged among the rocks provided a level bed, half of which was sheltered by the low branches of the little tree. This shelter I supplemented with a small piece of canvas, carried for use in such an emergency. These were the cosiest quarters one could conceive of.

Nature invites man to study and enjoyment, and freely provides for all of his needs.—J. B. Newell of the Yosemite Field School.

### CLARK NUTCRACKERS VISIT GLACIER POINT

A conspicuous bird of the timber line country, the Clark Nutcracker, has dropped down from his timberline home so that visitors to Glacier Point are benefited. Last week several young birds followed their parents about begging for food. In flight this bird looks black with conspicuous white patches, but when perched one finds himself looking at a distinctly gray bird with a jay-like bill. Many a person has been confused by this quick change in appearance to be noted in a perched bird. The principal food of the Nutcracker is pine nuts gleaned from the cones of the white-barked pine and consequently it is known most commonly to those who visit the timber line. The crow-like call is characteristic and certain chattering notes given when the bird is feeding remind one of a company of people busily talking.

Visitors to Clouds Rest often ask about magpies because of the black and white coloration of the Clark Nutcracker. It is the latter bird, however, that comes to pick up the left over lunches of travellers on the highest peak on the rim of the valley.

As the fall season approaches there are many treats for the bird student for birds often perform a post nesting season migration. Birds from the high country drop to lower elevations and birds from the foothills climb higher.—H. C. Bryant.

### LEADING A FAWN TO WATER

The forests along the banks of Yosemite creek near Lost Arrow trail afford excellent opportunities for the tourist to observe the deer of the valley. Scarcely a day passes that we who are fortunate enough to live near fail to see from two to five deer browsing among the ferns, usually does with fawns; occasionally a young buck.

With a little persuasion the deer will condescend to eat from one's hand, although the does, like other mothers, keep watchful eyes on the fawns and once in a while drive them away from temptation. The deer have been known to acknowledge favors offered by rearing on their hind legs and ripping the clothing of the feeder with their sharp forefeet.

Last week we saw a doe and tiny fawn on the opposite bank. The mother was pushing the little one into the stream for a drink. Eventually the fawn entered the water, drank copiously, and lingered to enjoy the scenery. The mother evidently was displeased with the delay. She walked behind the fawn, stopped for a moment, and getting no action, deliberately kicked the loitering one. Needless to say, there was immediate response and both departed at full speed.—Edith Beal of the Yosemite Field School.

## THE YOSEMITE NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION
### ITS PURPOSES

1. To gather and disseminate information on the wild-life of the Sierras.
2. To develop and enlarge the Yosemite Museum (in co-operation with the National Park Service) and to establish subsidiary units, such as the Glacier Point lookout and branches of similar nature.
3. To promote the educational work of the Yosemite Nature Guide Service.
4. To publish (in co-operation with the U. S. National Park Service) "Yosemite Nature Notes".
5. To study living conditions, past and present, of the Indians of the Yosemite region.
6. To maintain in Yosemite Valley a library of historical, scientific, and popular interest.
7. To further scientific investigation along lines of greatest popular interest and to publish, from time to time, bulletins of non-technical nature.
8. To strictly limit the activities of the association to purposes which shall be scientific and educational, in order that the organization shall not be operated for profit.

### MAY WE SEND YOU EACH ISSUE OF YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES?

Your check for $2.00 sent to the Park Naturalist, Yosemite National Park, will help to pay the cost of its publication for one year and make you a member of the Yosemite Natural History Association for the same period.

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### FROM THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON OUT-DOOR RECREATION

Called by PRESIDENT COOLIDGE

"THAT THE CONFERENCE ENDORSE NATURE STUDY IN SCHOOLS AND THE EXTENSION OF THE NATURE STUDY IDEA TO EVERY AMERICAN SCHOOL AND FAMILY; . . . . . THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MUSEUMS OF NATURAL HISTORY IN NATIONAL PARKS WILL INCREASE THE EDUCATIONAL RECREATIONAL VALUE OF THE PARKS".—*Resolution of the Conference.*