

osemite Valley, and the Mammoth Trees and Geysers of California

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r Nelsons' Pictorial Guide-Books.r

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r THE YOSEMITE VALLEY,r
r ANDr
r THE MAMMOTH TREES AND GEYSERS OF
CALIFORNIA.r

r r



r r

r r One vast massr
r Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificencer
r A narrow vale unbosoms.r

r shelleyr

r r



r r

r T. NELSON AND SONS, 42 BLEECKER STREET, NEW YORK.r

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r *** A companion Guide, under the title of “Nelsons’ Pictorial Guide-Book to ther
r Central Pacific Railroad,” is also published in this Series; and a “Pictorialr
r Guide-Book to the Union Pacific Railroad.“ With Illustrations from Photographsr
r and other sources.r

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THE YOSEMITE VALLEY, r AND THE MAMMOTH TREES AND GEYSERS OF CALIFORNIA.

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I.—ROUTES TO THE YOSEMITE VALLEY.

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r r

r The traveller generally pursues his route, by Centralr Pacific Railroad, to San Francisco, and thence, after seeing all the interesting scenes and enjoying the generoustr hospitality of the Golden Gate of the Pacific, as the greatr new city has been happily called, he returns to *Stockton*,r —92 miles.r

r r

r From Stockton the three principal routes are:—r

r r

r 1. *The Mariposa*.—The stages leave in the mr for Mariposa, 100 miles; passing French Camp; Snelling's,r on the Merced River; Hornitas, where the travellerr can obtain a night's rest. From Hornitas there are two r sub-routes—one, *viâ* Bear Valley; the other direct tor Mariposa (population, nearly 2000); thence to Hatch'sr Saw Mill, 12 miles; and Clark's Ranch, 25 miles (a trailr diverges from this paint to the Mariposa Grove of Bigr Trees). From Clark's Ranch (where saddle-horses arer generally taken) to Inspiration Point, 15 miles (famoustr for its magnificent view of the Yosemite Valley); Bridalr Veil Fall, 4 miles, Hutchings' Hotel, in the valley, 152 1/2r miles from Stockton.r

r r

r 2. *The Coulterville*, daily, on Sissons' stage line: byr way of Farmington, 10 miles; Knight's Ferry, on ther Stanislaus River, 37 miles; Crimea House, 48 miles;r Mount Pleasant, 50 miles; Chinese Camp, 51 miles. Onr r r r Shoop's line: Jacksonville, 3 miles; Rattlesnake, 12r miles; Coulterville, 23 miles. Thence, with horses andr guides, Marble Springs and Bower Cave, 10 miles; Black'sr House, 6 miles; Crane Flat, 18 miles (a trail here leadsr if to the Tuolumne Grove of Big Trees). At 12 milesr from Hutchings' Hotel we reach Valley View, so calledr because here we obtain the first view of the Yosemite.r

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The Yosemite Valley, and the Mammoth Trees and Geysers of California (c1870)

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r II.—GENERAL INFORMATION.r

r r r

r Time was when, at New York, a visit to the Yosemite Valley was classed in the same category as an expedition to the North Pole, and adventurous persons bent on attempting it were urged, before they left, to make their wills and settle their affairs. But in those days a terrible journey across the prairies, the rivers, the deserts, and the mountains had really to be accomplished before the traveller entered upon the object of his enterprise. Now, with the help of the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific Railroads, we are bottled across the continent with the utmost comfort, and at a considerable rate of speed, and are carried to Stockton, the starting-point for the Big Trees and the wonders of Yosemite, in a peculiarly agreeable manner. Consequently, the terrors of the expedition are considerably shorn. An atmosphere of romance, nevertheless, surrounded it, and tourists returning from it spoke vaguely of obstacles encountered and difficulties and represented themselves as having a kind of undefinable claim to the character of heroes. It cannot be said that any more moderate views prevailed in our guide books. Hence, friends gathering around us recommended that we should invest in a particular kind of flannel clothing, and that our “female relatives”—from sweet seventeen up to mature fifty—should add to their usual wardrobe the indispensable Bloomer costume. So, too, a certain kind of bag was necessary, in which to deposit the male attire, the ladies’ wardrobe, and the Bloomer costume, when we had arrived at the boundary of the civilized world. Stages and other vehicles here ceasing to exist, we should need to mount on horseback, r r r slinging the said bags behind us without any fear of losing them. We were told by some of our good-natured friends that it was madness to attempt such a journey with ladies in our party; others, better natured, kindly said that the ladies were quite as able to undertake it as ourselves. Under these circumstances, we so far bowed to custom as to make the usual preparations, and, in despite of the scruples of the ladies, *remembered* the Bloomer costume.

r r

r Having completed these formidable arrangements, we started for Stockton, which, some twenty years ago, was the great central point whence the miners made their way to the mines—that is, to wealth and prosperity, or to ruin and premature or violent death. The town was once famous as “one of the dullest and most stupid places” in all California. Its inhabitants don’t call it dull, and we don’t affirm its stupidity. It is well built, well governed, and the scenery around it would occupy you pleasantly for a day or two.

r r

r From Stockton we set out, at length, on our journey to the Yosemite, selecting the shortest and easiest route—that of Hardin’s.

r r

The Yosemite Valley, and the Mammoth Trees and Geysers of California (c1870)

r On this route our first stage is the *Twelve Mile House*,r where we breakfast and take horses. Thence we traverser r an undulating country, blooming with wild flowers, butr containing few shrubs or trees. At *Twenty-five Miler House* we again change horses; and about noon we reachr *Knight's Ferry*, on the Stanislaus River, a pleasant settlement,r surrounded by farms and orchards, and renderedr doubly pleasant to the traveller as his dining station.r

r r

r Crossing the Stanislaus Bridge, we wind to the left, overr an offshoot of the mass of trap called the Table Mountain,r so called because its summit seems to be comparativelyr level for about twelve to fifteen miles. Towardsr evening we arrive at *Chinese Camp*, where we spend ther night, satisfied that our day's journey has been one ofr which we have a right to boast.r

r r

r The next morning we are up betimes, and ride in merryr mood up hill and down hill, through leafy avenue, acrossr grassy glade—the whole landscape having an indescribabler air of freshness about it to the Tuolumne River, and ther mining settlement of Jacksonville. Beyond has a kindr of paradise that would have set some of the old-worldr poets raving—“Keith's Orchard and Vineyard,” where,r as in Milton's Garden of Eden, fruits of the greatestr variety and finest quality ripen for the benefit ofr humanity.r

r r r r r

r The Tuolumne River we cross at *Stevens' Bar Ferry*,r and thence we wind up Mocassin Creek to “Newhall andr Culbertson's Vineyard.” If we had not said so much inr praise of Keith's, we would say it in honour of Newhallr and Culbertson. Drink their health, my friends, inr glass of white wine which beats “Catawba”!r

r r

r We now begin our ascent of the mountain—an ascentr of 7000 feet. Sturdy pedestrians, with kindly feelingsr towards animals, will here trudge afoot; ladies can stillr keep to their conveyances.r

r r

r We get an interval of rest at *Kirkwood's*, while ther horses are watered, and the mails and passengers (thoser who don't ride) are turned over to the stage for Coulterville.r Now we are off for Garrote, where we shall breakfast,r passing on our way “the sturdy branch-lopped andr root-cut veteran trunk of a noble and enormous oak, somer eleven feet in diameter, still standing on on right:” itr has given name to the locality, “*Big Oak Flat*.”r

r r

r At *Garrote* we transfer our admiration to the excellentr and admirable attendance at Savory's, or ther Washington Hotel.r

r r

r On our way to *Second Garrote* (who gave these names,r we wonder?) we pass another delicious Eden-like orchardr r —Chaffey and Chamberlain's—of which consider itr our duty to say that it is the *last* orchard on *this* side ofr the Yosemite Valley. We may, therefore, suggest ther necessity of *laying in a supply*.r

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r After leaving *Sprague's Ranch* behind us, we find the landscape rapidly changing in character. It is evidently laid out, so to speak, on a bolder scale—the hills are replaced by mountains, the groves by forests, the calm and gentle by the romantic and picturesque. As our friend Hutchings tells us, in his vigorous way, an occasional deer will now shoot across our track, or covies of quail, with their fine plumage and nodding “top-knots,” whirr among the bushes. If we have any feeling for the magic of sweet sounds, we shall listen delighted to the meadow lark, the robin, and the oriole; and recollections of our childhood will come back with the low purring note of the dove. Instead of the eastern woodpecker “tapping at the hollow beech tree,” the red-headed Californian species, with whose wonderful ingenuity Wilson has made us familiar,—*El Carpintero*, the Carpenter Woodpecker,*—is hard at work boring holes in the bark of a large pine tree, and afterwards carefully plugging them up with acorns, or examining them with a critical eye, to see if his toil does credit to his taste. The reason for this latter occupation is, according to Hutchings, still a mystery to naturalists. As the greatest activity in their storing was in the fall, and the inspection went on at other seasons, it was for many years supposed that an instinctive provision for a coming want was the cause. But as this variety of woodpecker has seldom or never been seen feeding on the acorn, or on the supposed insect which it contained, some doubt has arisen as to their satisfactory nature of its occupation.*

r r

r * Also known as the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker.

r r

r * It is generally understood, however, that a maggot makes its way into the acorn, and, in due time, is extracted by the woodpecker to satisfy his appetite.

r r

r Resuming our journey, we pass, in due succession, Hamilton's, near Big Gap; Hardin's Mill, 7 miles; Hodgden's, 6 miles; Coburn's, at Crane Flat, 5 miles; and Tamarack Flat, 5 miles.

r r

r The entire road opens up to us a series of the most magnificent landscapes ever designed and executed by the Divine Hand. Are you a votary of colour? Here you have it in all its rarest and richest hues—now light and floating, now deep and intense—from azure to ultra-marine, from pink to crimson, from the palest emerald blade to the deepest sea-green foliage. Are you a lover of form? Contemplate, then, its thousand varieties, from the utmost ruggedness of outline to the most delicate curve of grace—rounded, pyramidal, sharp, bold, soft, sublime. In the ravine beneath you, the Tuolumne winds its silver thread. On the cliffs above, the ancient forest trees rear themselves like the pillars of a magnificent temple. The flanks of the valley are sometimes bare, but oftener clothed with the most luxurious verdure. Far away against the horizon, the mountains roll like billows, till they blend in the distant sky. Near at hand, you catch the music of waters tumbling unseen from rock to rock.

r r

r Beyond Hardin's we cross the south fork of the Tuolumne, and climb to a well-wooded table-land, where various kinds of conifers attain to a remarkable height and girth.

r r

r II.—GENERAL INFORMATION.

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r Horace Greeley does justice to this superb forest-growth. r He considers that the one feature in which the Sierra Nevadas surpass other mountains is in their forests. r “Look down,” he says, “from almost any of their peaks, r and your range of vision is filled, bounded, satisfied, by what might be termed a tempest-tossed sea of evergreens, r r filling every upland valley, covering every hill-side, crowning every peak but the highest, with their unfading luxuriance.” r Many hundreds of pines are eight feet in diameter, r with cedars at least six feet; and these forest-giants r extend for miles and miles in serried ranks almost as close as those of a well-disciplined army. The summit r meadows, moreover, are adorned with a heavy fringe of balsam fir of all sizes, from those barely one foot high to those hardly less than two hundred. r

r r

r In fact, you must *see* this vast wilderness of colossal r trees before you can rightly appreciate their imposing r and almost formidable aspect. r

r r

r By diverging a mile or two from our route—which we shall *not* do, though leaving other travellers their full r liberty of choice—we may see the “*Tuolumne South Grove*” r of mammoth trees. The trees here are of the same genus (*Wellingtonia* or *Sequoia gigantea*) as those of Calaveras r and Mariposa. They are about thirty in number, and r some of them are fine specimens. Two, growing from r the same root, and uniting a few feet above the base, are called the “Siamese Twins.” They measure about 114 r feet in circumference at the ground, the diameter, of r course, being about 38 feet. The bark is 20 inches thick. r

r r

r Crossing the grassy water-meadow of *Crane Flat*, we keep to the north-east until we reach the summit of the watershed that pours the Tuolumne in one direction and r the Merced, or “River of Mercy,” another. We pause, almost breathless with the wonder and beauty of r the scene before us, full as it is of God’s grandest, r mightiest, and most surpassing handiwork, and, mute with astonishment, and lost in awe, begin the descent into the Yosemite Valley. It is by no means a “*facilis descensus Averni*,” for the road is difficult and nerve-testing, r and yet it is charming as a young man’s fancy r could wish it to be with over-arching trees and flowering r bushes. r

r r

r At *Tamarack Flat* we all of us mount on horseback. r taking care that our saddles shall be well secured, and enter upon the more difficult and dangerous part of the downward track. Yet we hardly notice the danger, our eyes and attention are so arrested by the novelties which r cluster everywhere about us. r

r r

r A rough and rustic bridge takes us across *Cascader Creek*,—the said cascade wandering far away in a succession r of falls and whirlpools; never resting; never conquered r by any obstacle; now white with foam; now dark r r as night; now crooning a soft low tune; now seething and r hissing in sudden fury. r

r r

r Then the guide bids us pause on a rocky projection, r called *Prospect Point*, whence we can see the Merced flashing in a craggy ravine beneath. r

r r

r II.—GENERAL INFORMATION. r

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r III.—THE YOSEMITE VALLEY.

r r r r

r “In grandeur, sublimity, and beauty, the Yosemite Valleyr stands alone. At the upper end there have been shakingsr and rendings, rocks thrown clown on either side, sometimesr as large as a great church, as if demons had been breaking upr and hurling the mountains at each other. The river dashesr and bounds among these fragments as if frightened and infuriated; and then half an hour’s ride brings you to the oaks,r and pines, and lawns, smooth as a garden, wild as nature, notr showing the mark of use, or anything to alter this park fromr what it was when the eye of man first looked into it.”—Dr.r Todd, *The Sunset Land*.r

r r

r We now begin our exploration of the valley.r

r r

r The first feature which impresses us is the *Bridal Veilr Fall* (the *Pohonó*, or “Spirit of the Evil Wind”), whichr descends from a height of about 940 feet. Pohonó is anr evil spirit of the Indian mythology. The tradition connectedr with this fall, and with the second peak of the summitr west of it, where you may trace the noble head andr features of a demi-god in profile, we shall hereafter relate.r

r r

r The fall itself is the overflow of a stream which flowsr down a rugged canyon, some twelve or fifteen miles, before it lets itself down from the brink of the cliff in one unbrokenr r r sheet of silver, forty feet wide, upon a mass ofr gigantic boulders.r

r r

r Its American name is rather happy. For to one viewingr it in profile, says Ludlow, its snowy sheet, broken into the filmy silver lacework of airy spray, and falling entirelyr free of the brow of the precipice, might well seem the veilr worn by Earth at her “granite wedding,” millions, itr may be, millions of years ago.r

r r

r On either side of Pohonó the sky-line of the precipicer is diversified in the boldest and most strikingr manner. The fall itself cleaves a deep chasm into ther crown of the battlement. To the south-west rises a boldr but unnamed rock, 3000 feet in height; and not farr distant is *Sentinel Rock*, a “solitary truncate pinnacle,”r towering to 3300 feet. Nearly opposite soar the threer ascending ridges of *Eleachas*, or the *Three Brothers*, ther highest attaining to the elevation of 3450 feet.r

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r But we make our way, almost satiate with wonders, r to one of the three hotels to be found in the valley—r Black’s, Hutchings’, and Leidig’s, to name them in alphabeticalr order. The following morning we begin a systematic survey, which, at the least, will occupy us *three*,r but may well and satisfactorily be extended to *seven* days.r r Hutchings is our guide (there can be none better), and,r therefore, the first “object of interest”—to use a hackneyedr phrase—which calls for our attention, and, as ar matter of course, for our admiration, isr

r r

THE YOSEMITE FALLS.

r r

r Crossing the main stream, which is here about eightyr feet wide and five feet deep, we continue along the northern bank, to avoid the marshy flats on the southern,r until we reach the ford, where we re-cross the river,r under an embowering canopy of oak, maple, and dogwoodr trees.r

r r

r As the snow, under the summer sun, is rapidly melting,r we ford, not only the main channel, but severalr smaller streams. Within about a hundred and fifty yardsr of the fall our progress is interrupted by a succession ofr large boulders. Therefore we dismount, and, fasteningr our animals to the nearest saplings, push forward onr foot.r

r r

r We now proceed to climb to the base, or, as nearly asr possible to the base, of the great Yosemite Falls, the loftiest cascade or cataract in the world. There are, inr fact, *two* falls, of which the upper pours down a tremendoustr r sheet of silver for a depth of 1448 feet, and the second plumps sheer down the precipice for 700 feet;r while, between the two, measuring about 400 feet, a seriesr of rapids form an appropriate connecting link. Thus the total height of the “sheeted column’s perpendicular” isr 2548 feet. By some authorities, however, this total isr brought up to 2634 feet.r

r r

r It is difficult to describe the power and majesty of ar gigantic waterfall. But the impression made on the mind by the ceaseless rush—by the tumbling watersr perpetually flashing and gleaming, roaring andr murmuring—by the intuitive feeling that the *motion* before your has never paused since the creation, and *will* never pauser until Time shall cease to be,—is almost bewildering.r You find yourself at a loss to take in the separate details:r the huge wall of granite rising so massively before you;r the huge masses of multiform rocks strewn, and scattered,r and piled in every direction; the ferns, and wild flowers,r and lovely mosses which here and there relieve the harsherr features of Nature. All your soul is concentrated on the vastness of the fall, which seems to fill up the entire picture, so that wherever you go you still seem to see the deep glow of the waters, to catch the flash of their diamondr r spray, to hear the whirr and clash of their endlessr progress.r

r r

r It is said that in the winter the spray from the greatr cataract freezes, and piles up and again freezes, untilr a

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hollow pillar is constructed some hundreds of feet in height. Into that pillar the waters pour, and then rebound like rainbow-coloured balls.

r r

r In the spring, the rush of the cataract and its thousand voices seem for a moment to be arrested. You hasten to the spot. The floods have undermined this glorious pillar, and made ready to topple it from its elevation. The struggle is brief, but desperate. Suddenly the ice yields, and is shivered, and hurled into the air in a thousand fragments, sparkling and shining with a lustrous gleam, and then falling back into the stream, to be carried away and seen no more.

r r

r The falls, let us add, seem, at their summit, to be about three or four feet wide; but Mr. Hutchings, who has ascended the mountain over which they take their headlong leap, declares they are fully forty feet.

r r

r They are not often visited in spring-time; but Mr. Carleton Coffin asserts that then they are a hundred times more majestic than in autumn. This we can hardly readily believe to be the effect of the sun melting the snows. Evidences of the *power* of which we have spoken, but which it is so difficult to realize, are afforded, as Mr. Coffin points out, by the great boulders of granite around us, larger than a thirty-ton locomotive, which, in years remote, fell thundering down the dizzy height, snapping the great trees as if they were reeds, and grinding and pulverizing the rocks. Thus, says Mr. Coffin, the Almighty bids the forces of nature grind the solid granite into flour for human food—the “River of Mercy” carrying it out upon the meadows, to be transmuted by golden sunlight and nightly dews into ripened wheat and purpling grapes.

r r

r LAKE AH-WI-YAH.r

r r

r This is one of the loveliest localities in the valley. You confront the great falls almost with a sense of apprehension and a feeling of undefinable awe: but you look upon this crystal mirror with a sentiment of subdued admiration.

r r

r In its sheet of unrippled glass—especially at early morning—it reflects the mountains, 4000 and 5000 feet high, with such a wonderful clearness that you can readily detect the furrows on their brows and the ledges and ravines in their rugged sides. It is not above a couple of acres in extent, but this remarkable translucency gives it a curious *appearance* of vastness. The bases of the mountains all around are fringed with noble trees, which supply in their various foliage a delightful contrast to the azure of the pool beneath. On the north-east a deep canyon, or gorge, opens wide, to permit the outflow of the north branch of the “River of Mercy,” which supplies the lake.

r r

r To the north of the valley rises

r r r

r THE GREAT NORTH DOME,r

r r

r or *To-coy-ae* of the Indians, a mass of bold, bare granite,r with scarce a tree or shrub, rising to a height of 3725r feet. In its huge sides, which, for two thousand feet, arer absolutely perpendicular, a colossal arch has been createdr by the disruption, in all probability, of several sectionsr of the rock. Look with admiration at the “Royal Archr of To-coy-ae!” According to our guide, philosopher, andr friend, Mr. Hutchings, it has never been submitted tor exact geometrical measurement; but a well-trained eyer gives as its altitude, from the valley to the croon of ther arch, 1700 feet; its span, 2000 feet; its internal depth,r r r 90 feet. Kings and queens of the earth, here is a nobler council-chamber for ye!r

r r

r To the south-cast of the Mirror Lake, or Lake Hiawatha,r as it is sometimes called, towers the majesticr bulk ofr

r r r

r THE SOUTH DOME,r

r r

r or *Mount Tis-sa-ack*, which, though by some tremendoustr convulsion it has been sorely reduced in elevation, andr neatly one half of borne down in a broken pile intor the depth of the subjacent valley, is still 4593 feet inr height.r

r r

r The base is shrouded in the “hazy mystery” which,r more or less, surrounds everything in the Yosemite Valley. “Numerous little white clouds, becoming detached from this misty curtain, are sailing (as we gaze)r up the mountain-side, dodging about among the projecting spurs, intruding their beautiful forms slowly into ther dark caverns, puffed out again in a hurry by the eddyingr winds which hold possession of these gloomy recesses,r and then resume their upward flight, each following ther other with the precision and regularity of a fleet ofr white-winged yachts rounding the flag-boat, and eachr eaten up by the sun with astonishing rapidity, as theyr r sail slowly past the angle of shadow thrown across ther lower half of the mountain. High above all this, inr the clear bright sunshine, towers the lofty summit,r every projection and indentation, weather and waterr stain, fern, vine, and lichen so clearly defined that oner can almost seem to touch its surface by merely extendingr the arm.”r

r r

r The summit of this beautiful mountain has never yet,r we think, been touched by the foot of man. In ther Indian belief it is the borne of the good spirit of ther valley, the lovely *Tis-sa-ack*; and a fantastic legend isr connected with it which the traveller will doubtless ber pleased to hear. Different writers relate it somewhat differently, but the following version seems to be tolerably accurate:—r

r r r

r LAKE AH-WI-YAH.r

r THE LEGEND OP TIS-SA-ACK AND TU-TOCH-AH-NU-LAH.r

r r

r [Editor's note:r this "legend" "was almost certainly fabricated"r according to NPS Ethnologist Craig D. Bates.r —dea.]r

r r r

r In a far distant age, the valley which eve now name ther Valley of the Yosemite was the home of the children ofr the sun. They lived there peacefully under the guardianshipr of their chief, Tu-toch-ah-nu-lah, who dweltr upon the huge rock that still bears his name. With ar glance of his eye he saw all that his people were doing.r r r Swifter on foot than the elk, he herded the wild deerr as if they were sheep. He roused the bear from hisr mountain-cave that the young people might hunt him.r From the nest of the mountain height he prayed to ther Great Spirit, and the soft rains descended upon the cornr in the valley. The smoke of his pipe curled up into ther air, and the warm sunshine streamed through it, andr ripened the golden crops for the women to gather themr in. When he laughed, the river rippled with smiles;r when he sighed, the murmurous pines repeated ther plaint. When he spoke, the voice of the cataract wasr hashed into silence; when his shout of triumph arosedr over the bear he bad slain, it was repeated by every echo,r and rolled like a thunder-peal from one mountain to another.r His foam was straight as an arrow, and elastic as a bow. His foot outstripped the red deer, and ther glance of his eye was like the lightning flash.r

r r

r But one morning, when hunting, a bright vision dawnedr upon him of a lovely maiden sitting alone on the veryr summit of the South Dome. Unlike the nymphs of hisr tribe, she was not wreathed in tresses black as night, norr was the glean of darkness in her eyes; but down herr back fell the long golden hair like a stream of sunshine.r r Her brow was pale with the beauty of the moonlight;r dear eyes were blue sa the mountains in the hour of twilight. Her little feet shone like the snow-crests on ther pine-woods of the winter; she had small cloud-like wingsr drooping from her marble shoulders; her voice murmured sweetly and softly, like the tones of the night-birdr of the forest.r

r r

r "Tu-toch-ah-nu-lah!" she whispered, and was goner From crag to crag, over gorge and chasm, rushed ther impetuous chief in pursuit of the aërial beauty; but, lo!r her snow-white wings had conveyed her to the unknownr land, and Tu-toch-ah-nu-lah saw her no more.r

r r

r Day after day did the young chief wonder among ther mountains seeking after the beautiful one he had lost.r Day after day did he lay sweet acorns and fragrant wildr flowers upon her dome. Once his our caught her footstep,r light as the fall of a snowflake on a river. Oncer he caught a glimpse of her form, and a tender glance fromr her radiant eyes. But be was voiceless before her; norr eyes did her sweet tones fall upon his expectant ear. Sor passionate was his love for Tis-sa-ack, so absorbed was her in his dreams and thoughts of the beautiful maiden, thatr he forgot his people; and the rains ceased to descend,r r r and the valley became athirst, and the crops witheredr where they stood; the beautiful flowers bent their headsr and died; the winds lost their power, and ceased to coolr the valley; the waters passed away, and the green leavesr faded into brown. Nothing of this was seen by Tu-toch-ah-nu-lah,r for his eyes were wholly fixed on the vision ofr the mountains. But Tis-sa-ack saw it, and saw withr sorrow; and kneeling on the gray rock of the dome, sher

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prayed to the Great Spirit that he would again give to the people the bright flowers and delicate grasses, the leafy trees, and the nodding acorns.

r r

r Then, in a moment, the great dome on which she knelt was cloven asunder, and through the gorge thus opened rushed the melting snows from the Sierra Nevada through the wide channel of the River of Mercy. And the rocks that simultaneously fell from the mountain banked up so much of the waters as were sufficient to fill the Mirror Lake. Then indeed, the scene was changed. The birds wetted their wings in the rills and pools, and burst into joyful song; the grasses spread stealthily over the gladdened soil; the flowers received a new life, which they pined out in grateful fragrance; the golden corn sprung up in its abundance, and the merry wind aroused a thousand slumbering echoes. But in the convulsion which had inaugurated this transformation, the maiden had disappeared for ever. And for ever the half-dome bears her name, in grateful recognition of her love for the Indian people *Tis-sa-ack*. Every morning and evening the sun lifts from or lays his rosy mantle upon the summit; and all around the margin of the lake bloom myriads of white violets, the memorials of the snow reaches dropped from *Tis-sa-ack's* wings as she flew away.

r r

r When Tu-toch-ah-nu-lah discovered that she would be seen no more, he abandoned his rocky fastness; and, with a bold hand, carving the outline of his head and form on the face of the rock that still bears his name, a thousand feet above the valley, he went in search of the lost one. On reaching the other side of the beautiful ravine, a feeling of deep melancholy fell upon him. Unwilling to quit it, he sat down, gazing far away towards the sunset, whither, as he believed, his *Tis-sa-ack* had bent her flight.

r r

r And as he sat, his grief weighed heavily on his heart, and he ceased to have motion or life in his blood. Slowly he changed into stone; and the voiceless, breathless, lifeless figure may still be seen by every visitor to the Yosemite, looking afar off to the land of the sunset, in wistful inquiry for the loved and lost.

r r

r

r So runs the legend.*

r r

r * See Dr. Todd, "Sunset Land;" Ludlow, "Heart of the Continent;" and Hutchings, "Scenes of Wonder in California."

r r

r r r

r IV.—THE YOSEMITE VALLEY—*continued*.

r r

r ITS FALLS AND MOUNTAINS.r

r r

r r

r THE POHONÓ FALL.r

r r

r The next point to which the admiring, wondering, open-eyed and open-eared visitor betakes himself is the *Pohonó*, or *Bridal Veil Fall*. This is passed by those who enter the valley either from Coulterville or Mariposa, and has already been noticed by us. In visiting it from any of the hotels, we keep down the south side of the valley. On our left rises the lonely Sentinel Rock, on whose crest so often blazed the watch-fires of the Indians. Beyond we come to a succession of curious peaks, very picturesque and suggestive in their outline. These are the *Cathedral Rocks* and the *Cathedral Spires*—names which no imaginative traveller will consider appropriate.

r r

r Its addition to what we have already said about the feathery, luminous, lace-like fall, we take leave to borrow from Mr. Hutchings an allusion to the Indian superstition respecting it:—

r r

r “Pohonó,” he says, “from whom the stream and the waterfall received their musical Indian name, is an evil spirit, whose breath, is a blighting and fatal wind, and consequently is to be dreaded and shunned. On this account, whenever from necessity the Indians have to pass it, a feeling of distress steals over them, and they fear it as much as the wandering Arab does the simooms of the African desert: they hurry past it at the height of their speed. To point to the waterfall, as they travel through the valley, is in their minds to induce certain death. No bribe could be offered large enough to tempt them to sleep near it. It is, in truth, their belief that they hear the voices of those who have been drowned in the stream perpetually warning them to shun *Pohonó*.” r r r r

r THE PI-WY-AUK OR (VERNAL) YO-WI-YE (OR NEVADA) FALLS.r

r r

r To visit these beautiful and justly-famed falls we must take quite an opposite direction to any we have yet followed. On leaving the hotel we turn to the right, and ascend the valley, which widens as we advance, and is brightened by noble oak trees, standing alone or in clumps at irregular intervals.

r r

r The precipitous wall of granite on our right, 3740 feet high, is silvered by a number of tiny rills that glide or leap down its face. At one point the jutting rocks unite so as to suggest a faint resemblance to a hospice; and this, with a recollection of the Alps, has been named Mount St. Bernard. But, in fact, the outlines of the peaks are so very varied that a lively imagination can easily suggest a hundred quaint resemblances; and these resemblances are more or less conspicuous as we look upon them in shadow or in sunshine, at dawn or purple twilight.

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r r

r On our right we pass the Royal Arches, Washington Tower, the North and South Domes, and more picturesque and magnificent objects than we have time or space to enumerate. Let the traveller beware of fatiguing himself with admiration, or when he reaches the falls he will have spent his enthusiasm, and be forced to contemplate them (if he can) with indifference. Admiration! Why, who *can* have a sufficient supply to bestow, not only on our rocks and rills, but on all the lofty and noble trees around us—pine, cedar, spruce, black oak, and dogwood; or on all the flowering shrubs and fragrant flowers, from the white azalea and the aromatic laurel to the modest primrose and larkspur?

r r

r The “Vernal” Fall, as it is unmeaningly named—that is, the Pi-wy-ack—lies upwards of two miles from the hotel. The view of this beautiful cataract obtainable from below, where it mingles with the river in a noisy, boiling, foaming whirlpool, is very fine; but the view from above is infinitely finer. The ascent is made by means of the Ladders (charge for ascending and descending, 75 cents); and the prospect we see may be described somewhat as follows. Here what is called the Middle Fall of the river, after thundering through a rugged gorge, springs from the ledge of the precipice in one unbroken leap of 350 feet in depth and 60 feet in width. Think, O reader, of the sublime spectacle *hidden* in these figures!—a wall, and yet a *moving* wall, of apparent silver, lit up with diamond and ruby flashes, and 350 feet in height!

r r

r

r Above Pi-wy-ack the river runs for a mile in its granitic channel, which slopes upward on either side at an angle of about 45°, on great tabular masses, smooth and slippery as ice, and without a chink or cranny in them for thirty yards at a stretch, where even the scraggiest *manzanita* may catch hold and flourish. This tilted formation—to use Stephen Ludlow’s words—broken here and there by patches of scanty alluvium and groups of stunted pines, stretches upward until it intersects the posterior cone of the South Dome on one side, and a gigantic battlemented precipice on the other; the whole presenting a landscape of weird desolation. As a traveller says, to a reader acquainted only with the wooded slopes of the Alleghanies, the shining barrenness of these rocks, and the utter nakedness of the glittering dome beyond them, cannot be described by any metaphor.

r Climbing between stunted pines and huge boulders for about half a mile, we arrive at the base of the *Yo-wi-ye*, or Nevada Fall, which, if inferior in beauty to the Pi-wy-ack, has, at all events, a greater volume of water. Its height is 700 feet. It falls from a precipice whose higher portion is singularly smooth and perpendicular. Then it is deflected by an unseen ledge in a slantwise direction, and at an angle of about 30°; the effect of the sudden deviation being to expand it, “like a half-opened fan,” to the width of 200 feet. The spectacle, consequently, is not only sublime and imposing, but exquisitely beautiful; and all the more so from the contrast of the shining, shifting, foaming waters, to the rugged framework of granite in which they are set like a picture.

r r

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r We are weary of description, or we would tell you of another fall—*Tu-lool-we-ack*—in the South Canyon gorge, r which is 600 feet high, and “a very pretty thing, sirs, r as it stands!” Just go and look at it for yourself, my friend. It drops down into a kind of semicircular basin, r whose rocky sides are as near perpendicular as may be. r

r r

r The view of the South Dome from the recesses of the South Canyon is one of those sights which no man forgets, however long he may live. It fills you with an overpowering sense of the grandeur of Nature—of the tremendous power of Nature’s Creator, who set in motion the resistless agencies that have wrought out these features of majesty and awful sublimity. r

r r r r

r THE MOUNTAINS. r

r r

r Of the noble summits—so varied in their configuration, r no similar in their grandeur—that close in the Yosemite Valley, but few have been ascended; and to ourselves, r who abominate the vulgarization of Nature, this seems a special matter for thankfulness. At the north side of the Nevada Fall, however, a mass of rock, 2000 feet above the foot of the cataract, and differently entitled Mount Given, Bellows Butte, Mount Francis, Mount Frederick, and the like, by the fancy of successive visitors—more properly and significantly the *Cap of Liberty*—can be conquered by the profane foot of man without any great difficulty. The prospect—at all events, r from the south-eastern angle— is very impressive, and includes the winding course of the Merced, and the tremendous headlong plunge of the Nevada, the majestic Yosemite Falls, the Sentinel Dome, the Mount Starr King, the regal South Dome, and a legion of other lofty peaks. r

r r

r Not less magnificent is the picture revealed from the summit ridge of the *Three Brothers*; but still more magnificent is that which the bold spirit enjoys who rises to the level of the crest of *Mount Beatitude*. r

r r

r For from this noble elevation (2900 feet) we obtain a complete, unbroken view of the valley and its inclosing peaks. Like a ribbon of silver, the Merced winds its way among the dark-leaved trees. The kinglike head of *Tu-toch-ah-nu-lah* fixes our gaze. Then we turn to the grand summits of the South Dome and the Clouds’ Rest, and the billowy masses seem to roll far away into an ocean of dim azure, relieved by snow—tipped waves. In the foreground, on the left, the Ribbon Fall descends in water and diamond spray from a height of 3300 feet; on the right we may once more admire the beautiful *Pohonó*, or Bridal Veil Fall, with the peak of the Three Graces (3600 feet) towering in the background. r

r r

r The *Sentinel Dome* is also easy of ascent; and is worth ascending, not only because it commands a fine prospect of the valley—with South Dome conspicuous over every other feature—the North Dome, Clouds’ Rest, Cap of Liberty, r Mount Starr King, the Yosemite Falls, the Nevada Fall, the Vernal Fall, and the Cataract of the Merced, r but because its panorama includes a prolonged extent of the Sierra Nevada. Its principal summits are the following:—r

r THE MOUNTAINS. r

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r r r

Mount Hoffman, 13,572 feet. Cathedral Peak, 11,000 feet.
Mount Dana, 13,227 feet. Mount Lyell, 12,270 feet.
Castle Peak, 12,500 feet. Gothic Peak, 10,850 feet.
Mount Starr King, 9,600 feet. South Dome, 10,000 feet.

r r

r The valleys of the San Joaquin and Sacramento, and the Coast Range, near the Golden Gate, are also visible.r

r r

r The elevation of the Yosemite Valley above the sea,r according to the Geological Survey, is 4060 feet. In the middle of summer, therefore, the heat is never overpowering;r in winter, snow falls to a depth of from two to five feet. The valley is about seven miles long, and from half a mile to one and a quarter miles wide. It lies about due south-west to north-east. The total area is 8480 acres. The granite walls on either side rise from 4000 to 6000 feet in height.r

r r

r Our account of this Eden land will close, with our readers' permission, in some words of honest enthusiasm,r partly borrowed from Charles Brace's "New West."r

r r

r There are excursions enough, as he says, to occupy the traveller—especially if he carry a sketch-book—for weeks among the beautiful scenes of the valley. Mount your horse early in the morning—or, still better, trust to your own legs—and stroll up and down the marvellous canyon,r enjoying the various novel scenes that open up at every step. To lie down in sight of one of the Great Falls is a sufficient summer-day's work: for any reasonable man;r and when he is weary of well-doing in this direction, let him ride to Inspiration Point, on the Mariposa trail, and gain such a view of the valley as is nowhere else attainable.r

r r

r In Mr. Brace's opinion, the wonderful thing about the canyon, which will hereafter attract many an invalid from distant lands, is its divine atmosphere. The climate is so mild and invigorating that nothing can surpass it.r Breathing the air of the Yosemite, a new hope and strength are infused into your life. The charm of the wonderful valley is its cheerfulness and joy. Even the awe-inspiring grandeur and majesty of its features do not overwhelm the sense of its exquisite beauty, its wonderful delicacy,r its rich colour, and intense vitality.r

r r

r "As I recall," says our friend, "those rides in the fresh morning or dewy noon, that scene of unequalled grandeur and beauty is forever stamped upon my memory,r to remain when all other scenes of earth have passed from remembrance: the pearly-gray and purple precipices,r awful in mass, far above one, with deep shadows on their rugged surfaces—dark lines of gigantic archways or fantastic figures drawn clearly upon them—the bright whiter water dashing over the distant gray tops seen against the dark blue of the unfathomable sky—the heavy shadows over the valley from the mighty peaks—the winding stream and peaceful greensward with gay wild flowers below—the snow-summits of the Sierras far away—and the

r THE MOUNTAINS.r

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eternal voice of many waters wherever you walk or rest. This, is the Yosemite in memory.”

r r

r And this it is which, long as life shall last, will be indelibly impressed on our heart and imagination—woods, and mountains, and leaping waterfalls.

r r



r r

r TABLE OF ELEVATIONS AT YOSEMITE VALLEY.*r

r r

WATERFALLS.

Feet above Valley.	American Name.	Indian Name.	Meaning of Indian Name.
940	Bridal Veil Fall.	Pohonó.	Spirit of the Evil Wind.
3300	Ribbon Fall.	Lung-oo-too-koo-ya.	Long and slender.
2034	Yosemite Fall.	Yo-se-mite.	Large Grisly Bear.
First Cataract, 1600 ft.		Second do., 434 ft.	Third do., 600 ft.
350	Vernal Fall.	Py-wy-ack.	Cataract of Diamonds.
700	Nevada Fall.	Yo-wi-ye.	Meandering.
600	South Canyon Fall.	Tu-lool-we-ack.	—
3850	Sentinel.	Loya.	A medicinal shrub.
2000	Royal Arch.	To-coy-ae	Shade to Baby Cradle Basket

r r r

MOUNTAINS.

6000	South Dome.	Tis-sa-ack.	Goddess of the Valley.
6450	Clouds' Rest.	—	—
3725	North Dome.	To-coy-ae.	Shade to Baby Cradle Basket.
2200	Washington Tower	Hunto.	Watching Eye.
2000	Cap of Liberty, taken above the base of Nevada Fall.	Mah-tah.	Martyr Mountain.
5000	Mount Starr King	Se-wah-lam.	—
3705			Bearskin.

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The Yosemite Valley, and the Mammoth Trees and Geysers of California (c1870)

r r r r

r r

r V.—THE MAMMOTH TREES.r

r r r

r

r “To equal which, the tallest pine,
r Hewn on Norwegian hills to be the mastr
r Of some great admiral, were but a wand.”r

r

r Milton.r

r

r r

r The Mammoth Trees of *Mariposa* and *Frezno* were discoveredr by Mr. Hogg, a hunter, about the beginning ofr August 1855. In the ensuing October Mr. Clayton, ar civil engineer, met with other trees of the same class onr the Frezno river. Other groups have been discovered atr various dates; but none are so celebrated as those ofr Calaveras, which we shall hereafter describe, and next tor which rank those of Mariposa in point of height, girth,r and general sublimity.r

r r

r The first point to make for is *Clark’s Ranch*, aboutr halfway between Mariposa and the Yosemite, wherer you will obtain the services of an efficient and obligingr guide. The trail runs through a pleasant country, but,r as it climbs a long ascent, is very wearisome.r

r r

r We are, however, fully repaid for our fatigue when wer enter the forest-shades, and catch glimpses of dim mysteriusr vistas, piercing an apparently boundless obscurity.r The trunks of the trees are of a loftiness and a diameterr that, at first, are singularly impressive, and awaken inr you a very lively sentiment of wonder; but something ofr this feeling passes away as you turn from one giant tor another, and find in each very similar characteristics.r

r r

r The trees of which we are speaking belong to the *Taxodium* family,r and to the genus known by ourselves asr *Sequoia gigantea*, by our English cousins as *Wellingtonia gigantea*.r r The origin of these names we shall

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hereafter relate.

r r

r One of the most curious stems—it is little more—is named “Satan’s Spear,” allusion to Milton’s description of the weapon wielded by the fallen archangel in his battle with the hosts of heaven. Its circumference is 78 feet.

r r

r You are next taken to see a huge trunk, with a shattered top, that bears some resemblance to a ruined turret; it is 70 feet in circumference, and known as the “Giant’s Tower.”

r r

r The two double trees beyond are the “Twin Sisters;” and close together stand another couple—one scarred, and gnarled, and rugged; the other, smooth, straight and leafy—which have been not inaptly christened the “Twin Sisters.”

r r

r Across the ravine near “Satan’s Spear,” following Mr. Hutchings’ direction, we came to several noble trees on the side and summit of the mountainous ridge. One, with a circumference of 60 feet, and a dome of dense dark green foliage, is called “The Queen of the Forest.” And above it stands “The Artist’s Encampment,” 77 feet in circumference; but so large a portion of its trunk has decayed, or been burned by the Indians up to a height of 30 feet, as considerably to lessen its dimensions.

r r

r We subjoin a table of the size and number of the principal trees in the Mariposa Grove, as ascertained by Mr. Clark and Colonel Warren. It does not quite coincide with Professor Whitney’s statement, that the total number is 365 of a diameter exceeding one foot, and 125 trees over 40 feet in circumference, but is believed to be more accurate:—

Size.	No. of Trees.	Size.	No. of Trees.
102 feet in girth	1	61 feet in girth	1
100 ”	2	60 ”	12
97 ”	1	59 ”	4
92 ”	1	58 ”	1
82 ”	1	57 ”	3
80 ”	1	56 ”	1
77 ”	2	55 ”	3
76 ”	34	54 ”	2
75 ”	3	53 ”	1
72 ”	1	51 ”	3
70 ”	3	50 ”	10
68 ”	1	49 ”	7

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66	”	1	48	”	5
65	”	4	47	”	3
64	”	1	46	”	4
63	”	6	45	”	4
44	feet in girth	8	36	feet in girth	2
43	”	3	35	”	1
42	”	6	32	”	2
41	”	3	28	”	2
40	”	9			
					132*

r r * In this table no notice is taken of the *height* of the trees,r or of any under 28 feet in girth.r r r

r The foregoing table, however, doe not comprise ther whole group, which includes between 480 and 500, andr covers from two to three hundred acres. There are aboutr 300 sequoias.r

r r

r Mr. Clark and Colonel Warren named some of the morer workable of these mammoth trees, sad the traveller may amuse himself by endeavouring to identify them:—r

r r

r A group of four splendid trees, 250 feet high, and fullyr 83 feet in girth, were christened the “Four Pillars.”r

r r

r Two gigantic trees, 7 and 77 feet in circumference, receivedr the names of “Washington” and “Lafayette.”r

r r

r Another group, from their excelling beauty, were calledr “The Graces;” and a tree, 300 feet high, and 80 feet isr girth, suggested the poetical title of “The Lone Giant.”r

r r

r One monster tree that had fallen, and been burnedr r hollow, had recently proved large enough to accommodater a party of cavaliers, who rode through it, as they mightr have ridden through a tunnel 153 feet in length.r

r r

r The mightiest tree of the group, however, now liesr upon the ground, and, fallen as it lies, is a wonder still;r it is charred and blackened, and time has stripped it ofr its heavy bark. Yet “across the butt of the tree, as it layr upturned, it measured 35 feet without its bark; therer can be no question that in its vigour, with its bark on,r it was 40 feet in diameter, or 120 feet in circumference.r Only about 150 feet of the trunk remains, yet the cavityr where it fell is still a large hallow beyond the portionr burned oil, and, upon pacing it, measuring from ther root 120 paces; and estimating the branches, this treer must have been 400 feet high.”r

r r

r V.—THE MAMMOTH TREES.r

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r Crossing a ridge to the south-westward of the larger grove is another small one, the South Grove, containing many splendid specimens; among others, a gnarled and maimed veteran, 90 feet circumference, and a trunk prone upon the ground, 204 feet in length, which has been christened, by a lady, "King Arthur, the Prostrater Monarch." Another hoar, weather-beaten, and fire-scarred bulk, still 90 feet in girth, though the bark is almost entirely gone, bears the name of the "Grizzled Giant."

r r r

r THE FREZNO GROVE.r

r r

r Following to some extent the course of the Big Creek, and keeping in a direction due south, we arrive, after a journey of from six to seven miles, at the Fresno group, consisting of about five hundred trees of the Taxodium family, on about as many acres of undulating forest-land. Here the two largest measure 81 feet each in circumference, rising from the ground as straight and smooth as pillars. The others, not less remarkable for their pillar-like appearance, are from 51 to 75 feet in circumference. Other species of trees seem in these localities to attain a remarkable development, owing, we suspect, to their geological character of the soil. At all events, Mr. Hutchings saw some very large sugar pines (*Pinus Lambertiana*) among them, and so did we; but *he* measured them, and *we* did not; being content, like Virgil's enemies (*sic vos, non vobis*), to accept the labours of others. One lying on the ground is 29 1/2 feet in circumference, and 237 feet in length; a splendid specimen of a conifer! We saw numbers on our route, however, with a diameter of from 7 to 10 feet.

r r

r The groves of these remarkable trees discovered up to the present time are *ten*:—

r r

r 1. The *Calaveras*, containing about one hundred trees;

r r

r 2. The great *South Grove*, including one thousand three hundred and eighty;

r r

r 3. The *South Tuolumne Grove*, thirty-one;

r r

r 4. One unnamed, south of the watershed of the Tuolumne and Merced Rivers, below Crane Flat, forty-two;

r r

r 5. The *Mariposa Groves*, three hundred and sixty-five;

r r

r THE FREZNO GROVE.r

r 6. The *Frezno*, about five hundred;r

r r

r 7. The *San Joaquin* (12 miles east of Frezno), sevenr hundred;r

r r

r 8. The *Kings* and *Kaweah River*, “a belt of bigr trees extending for some ten miles,” supposed to containr thousands;r

r r

r 9. The *North Tule River*; andr

r r

r 10. The *South Tule River*, upon whose banks trees arer scattered over several square miles. These last-namedr groves were discovered by M. D’Heureuse, of ther Geological Survey, in 1867.*r

r r

r *Hutchings, “Scenes of Wonder in California.”r

r r r r

r The three commonly visited, however, are the Mariposa and Frezno, of which we have spoken; and ther Calaveras, of which we are about to speak.r

r r

r In no other part of the world, we believe, do ther sequoias flourish on so colossal a scale. There is anotheerr species, *Sequoia sempervirens*, popularly known as ther “Red Wood,” which also attains a height of 300 feet.r

r r

r r

r VI.—THE MAMMOTH TREES—*continued*.r

r r

r AT CALAVERAS.r

r r

r [*Route*.—By stage from Stockton to Murphy’s Camp, ar day’s journey. Then, next morning, by conveyance to ther Grove, returning in the afternoon about 2 o’clock.r

r r

The Yosemite Valley, and the Mammoth Trees and Geysers of California (c1870)

r *N.B.*—It is unnecessary for the traveller who has visitedr Mariposa, to visit Calaveras, or *vice versa*—the Mammoth Trees everywhere presenting the same characteristics.r

r r

r The Calaveras Grove of Big Trees was the first discovered,r and is, to our mind, the most beautiful. It liesr in lat. 30° N., and long. 120° 10' W., at an elevationr above the sea-level of 4370 feet.r

r r

r Here, within an area of fifty acres, we find oner hundred and three trees of stately proportions, twentyr of them exceeding 75 feet in circumference; and yetr these are mere saplings, not half arrived at the maturityr of treehood! Your guide will point you out ar stump which affords sufficient space for a good-sizedr public meeting; and on whose surface—so runs ther record—thirty-two persons danced four sets of cotillionsr at one time, without coming into chance collision.r This stump measures 25 feet across, withoutr the bark. It occupied the labour of five men forr twenty-two days to fell it, and this work was accomplished,r not with axe or saw, but by boring it offr with pump augers. A small—what do we say?—a larger pavilion has been erected upon this stump, and we canr assure the reader it will comfortably shelter him and allr his party, unless he goes attended by a retinue like ther President's!r

r r

r The largest tree now standing has been named—fromr its immense size, the two breast-like protuberances, orr *mammae*, on one side, and the number of small trees of ar similar species growing in its vicinity—the “Mother ofr the Forest.” That it is one of the “big facts” of California,r r r may be gathered from the followingr measurements:—*r

r r

At the base, its circumference is	84 feet.
At twenty feet from the ground	69 feet.
At seventy feet from the ground	43 feet, 6 inches.
At one hundred and sixteen feet	39 feet, 6 inches.
Height to the first branch	137 feet.
Total height	321 feet.

r r

r * The bark of this tree was removed to England, and putr up in the Crystal Palace, as a visible representation of ar mammoth tree. Unfortunately for the Londoners, it was destroyedr by fire in 1866.r

r r

r And here let ns remark that we. would fain have saidr something and original about the Calaveras Grove.r But we find it impossible. It is a gathering of ther hugest, but not the most picturesque, trees in the world.r We would not give up our cedars or pines, or maples orr chestnuts, for a whole forest of them. Their foliagegrr grows at too great an elevation to lend the tree any conspicuousr actor ante and what you *really* see is, trunkr after trunk of a surprising height, running up for twor hundred feet or more without the relief of a singler branch. We prefer, for beauty and majesty, the sugarr pines that cluster round about them, and which, on ther r whole, are of similar gigantic dimensions, but possess ar decidedly greater *romanticity* of appearance.r

The Yosemite Valley, and the Mammoth Trees and Geysers of California (c1870)

r r

r In fact, as Dr. Todd has honestly said,—and we shelter ourselves under his mantle,—on your introduction to the mammoth trees you are, at first, disappointed: the trees do not look as you expected; they are not as large; “they look as if somebody had stripped off their clothing, and left them in their night-dress.” Dr. Todd’s mode of realizing the stature of these giants we have not adopted, but we can recommend it to others.

r r

r “The height of enjoyment,” he says, “is to lie down on your back in the twilight of evening or under the full moon, and look up, say ten feet at a look, till the eye has travelled all the way up to the top—over three hundred feet. We forget, too, when looking at a tree thirty feet in diameter, and wonder why it is not larger, that a pine tree with us, which is five feet in diameter, is a monster. I never saw but one of that size at the North. Let us now walk into the grove: the first impression you receive is, that these giants must be very old; how old you cannot possibly say. By counting the concentric circles in the tree, some will count thirteen hundred, and some near three thousand, making the tree as many years old. For my own part, though I have heard it complained that they are four thousand years old, yet I should not be willing to certify for more than half that age. You are struck unpleasantly that the names of men, such as modern generals and colonels, should be screwed to trees that have been living and bearing the storms of earth centuries before these men were ever heard of. Why should such names as ‘Phil Sheridan’ be attached to a tree that perhaps saw light before the star arose over Bethlehem, or Titus besieged Jerusalem? But there they are, and you may speak of ‘George Washington,’ ‘Abraham Lincoln,’ ‘Daniel Webster,’ ‘W. H. Seward,’ ‘Andrew Johnson,’ and a host of other names; or, if you want to address whole states, there is the ‘Granite State,’ ‘Vermont,’ ‘Old Dominion,’ ‘Old Kentucky,’ and many others.”

r r

r In this last matter we don’t agree with our friend the doctor. If it is necessary to distinguish the trees by separate names, we do not see why we should not take them from contemporary history of our own country, as well as go back to “Titus” and “Jerusalem.” The only rule we are inclined to enforce is, that no grotesque or absurd designations be allowed—nothing inconsistent with the dignity and colossal bearing of the giants of Calaveras.*

r r

r *A lady of our party—Mrs. William Nelson, the wife of Mr. W. Nelson, of the well-known British publishing firm of Thomas Nelson and Sons—was allowed by the proprietors of these trees to name one of them, after the city of her residence, “Auld Reekie,”—that is, Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland. And we have that lady’s authority, and the authority of her friends, to say that they enjoyed their trip across the continent immensely, and will always entertain a kindly recollection of American hospitality.

r r

r *One* curious thing connected with them is the smallness of the cones which produce them. They are not larger than a hen’s egg, and the seed is a mere speck—about one-twelfth the weight of an apple-seed!

r r

r But we must resume our description:—Near the “Mother of the Forest” lies prone the “Father of the Forest,” less fortunate in his fate than his venerated consort. He lies half-embedded in the soil, but grand is

r AT CALAVERAS.

The Yosemite Valley, and the Mammoth Trees and Geysers of California (c1870)

his decay, and obviously worthy of the title given him. In circumference at the roots, he measures 110 feet. His trunk is 200 feet long before he throws off a single branch, and throughout the whole of this length the trunk is hollow, forming a kind of tunnel or corridor, wherein a man can walk erect. At a height of 300 feet from the roots, and at the point where it was rent in twain by falling against another huge tree, it measures 18 feet in circumference.

r r

r Now let us direct our attention to a graceful pair, which, from their seemingly affectionate approximation to one another, are appropriately known as "The Husband and Wife." Their dimensions are nearly equal: about 60 feet in circumference at the base, and, in height, about 250 feet.

r r

r The "Hermit" rises alone in individual grandeur; its tall and shapely trunk mounting upward, by sure degrees but slow, to an elevation of 318, and a circumference of 60 feet.

r r

r Another giant has been designated "Hercules; its girth is 95, and its height, 312 feet.*

r r

r * On the trunk is cut the name of "G. M. Wooster, Juner 1850," who was present with the party of Mr. Whitehead, when the latter accidentally discovered these lords of the forest.

r r

r Then there is another, the "Burnt Tree," which lies on the ground, and has been hollowed out by repeated burnings. At least you can ride into it sixty feet on horseback. It is calculated that its height, when standing, must have been 330 feet; its circumference, 97 feet.

r r

r A bowed, broken, and sad-looking tree is the "Old Maid" of this family of Anakim: 261 feet high, and 59 feet in circumference. And it has a suitable companion in a rugged and scarred old trunk, the "Old Bachelor," 298 feet high, and about 21 feet in diameter.

r r

r The "Siamese Twins" rise from the ground in a single stem; but, at an elevation of about 40 feet, divide into two separate trees, and attain an altitude of 300 feet.

r r

r But one of the most beautiful of the forest-giants is, as Mr. Hutchings points out, the "Pride of the Forest." It is exceedingly well-shaped, straight as a mast, and solid as granite: 275 feet high, and 60 feet in circumference.

r r

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r We must not overlook the picturesque couple of the “Mother and Son: the latter, 302 feet, has not attained, r as yet, the maternal stature, 315 feet. Taking them together, their circumference is 93 feet. r

r r

r The “Guardian” is a noble-looking tree, 312 feet high, by 81 feet in circumference. Somewhat inferior in elevation, but of more picturesque character, is the r r “Beauty of the Forest,” whose graceful head rises to the height of 307 feet, while measuring round the trunk 65 feet. r

r r

r There is also the “Horseback Ride,” a hollow trunk, r 100 feet long, which affords a sheltered arcade for equestrian display. Another hollow tree, but still erect, has been called “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” and accommodates in its interior twenty-five persons comfortably. r It is 305 feet high, and 91 feet in circumference. r

r r

r The “Two Guardsmen” stand by the roadside, and at the entrance of the clearing. They are 300 feet high, and while one is 65, the other is 69 feet in circumference. r

r r

r The “Three Graces” is one of the most attractive groups in the whole grove. In height they are nearly equal (295 feet); and they measure, jointly, 92 feet in circumference, at their base. r

r r

r It was long supposed that each concentric circle of any one of these sequoias, or about two inches in diameter, r represented the growth of *one* year; and as nearly three thousand concentric circles, it was supposed, might be counted in the trunks of the fallen trees, the conclusion r seemed inevitable, that they were in existence three thousand years ago—or nearly twelve hundred years r before the birth of our Saviour—in the very pride of prosperity of the mysterious Egyptian empire. But more careful researches have demonstrated the number of concentric rings to be exaggerated, and the actual age of these trees r is now stated at eleven hundred years. r

r r

r Let us add, as every traveller cannot fail to see, that among the giants of the grove are scattered a multitude of young giants, not more perhaps than two hundred or four hundred years old. These, if no catastrophe intervene, r will, in eight or ten hundred years, become worthy successors of the present race. The catastrophe most to be feared is a forest-fire; and we trust that due precautions r will be taken to prevent a calamity which would be irreparable, and which the whole civilized world would regret. r

r r

r Now for the story of the discovery of the Calaveras Grove. r

r r

The Yosemite Valley, and the Mammoth Trees and Geysers of California (c1870)

r As we have seen, its giant trees were first sighted byr Wooster, Whitehead, and their party, in 1850. At least, itr is said so; but we have never heard that they made theirr discovery known. In 1852 they were again discovered,r or re-discovered, by a man employed as a hunter, for ther purpose of keeping a body of miners supplied with freshr r r meat from the large quantities of game frequenting thatr district of California. One day, while ice pursuit of ar bear he had wounded, he suddenly found himself in sightr of these colossal trees; and the spectacle no filled himr with astonishment that he forgot all about the bear.r

r r

r Returning to the miners' camp, he related what he hadr seen; but his comrades laughed at the idea of trees threer hundred feet high; and ridiculed his enthusiasm in ther approved manner.r

r r

r At the time lie said no more; but, a few days afterwards,r he reappeared in camp with the news that her had slain an enormous bear, and that he required ther assistance of some of the men to bring it in.r

r r

r A party was sent with trim for this purpose. Theyr toiled on for miles, until they felt inclined to denouncer the bear as the unnecessary cause of a laborious journey.r All at once, however, the mammoth trees burst uponr their sight, and the hunter confessed that his "enormousr bear" was a fiction, intended to bring them to the grove,r and by so doing to prevail over their incredulity.r

r r

r In due time, an article appeared in the *North American Review*r describing the now Californian "sensation."r It attracted little attention in this country; but, whenr r republished in an English magazine, stirred up ther interest of the most distinguished botanists in the Old Country,r and Dr. Lindley named the species *Wellingtonia gigantea*.r When this became known in the States, ourr savants grew indignant that an American tree shouldr be named after an English hero. A warm discussionr ensued. It came, however, to a satisfactory result—thusr the English, might, if they liked, retain the appellationr of *Wellingtonia gigantea*; but that orthodox Americansr would adopt the name of all Indian chief, *Sequoia*.r

r r

r Let us add, in conclusion, that the traveller should gor on from the Grove to the Calaveras Caves (14 m. west),r situated on M'Kenny's Humbug, a tributary of the Calaveras River.r They were discovered in 1850. Throughr a narrow passage we cater the *Council Chamber*, 60 feetr by 20 feet; thence we pass on to view the huge mass ofr stalactites, appropriately called the *Cataract*. Anotherr apartment, with a lofty opening in the centre of the roof,r called the *Cathedral*. There are also the *Bishop's Palace*,r the *Musical Hall*, and a perfect fairy scene ofr wonder—the *Bridal Chamber*. This is decorated, mostr gorgeously and capriciously, with pillars and curtainsr r r and carved work of the finest description. When lightedr up, the scene produces an impression on the imaginationr which is not easily described, and, assuredly, is not soonr forgotten.r

r r

r There is a very comfortable and commodious hotelr situated near the entrance to this great cavern.*r

r r

r AT CALAVERAS.r

The Yosemite Valley, and the Mammoth Trees and Geysers of California (c1870)

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r VII.—THE CALIFORNIA GEYSERS.r

r r

r

r “Wonderful, indeed, are all His works,r
r Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be allr
r Had in remembrance always with delight;r
r But what created mind can comprehendr
r Their number, or the wisdom infiniter
r That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep?”r

r

r Milton.r

r

r r

r The reader must be pleased to suppose that he and wer have returned to San Francisco, and are now intent upon a new expedition to the celebrated Geyser Springs ofr California.r

r r

r We go by steamer to a place called Vallejo (25 miles),*r lying very near the town of Benicia, famous for its productionr of the pugilistic hero, the “Benicia Boy.”r Thence we take the cars up the Napa Valley, which inr loveliness, though not in grandeur, may compete with ther Yosemite. Its length is estimated at 30 miles, and itsr width at 5 miles. The hills on either side are of picturesquer outline and most luxuriantly wooded, while ther vale itself is a specimen of what cultivation can effectr under a genial climate and upon a fruitful soil.r

r r

r * At Vallejo, the tourist, if so inclined, may take the Napa Valley Railroad; or may drive, ride, or pedestrianize, as her feels inclined.r

r r

r At the end of this enchanted garden we reach Callistoga,r where we pass the night; and next morning, at sixr o’clock, we enter an open stage, and entrust ourselves tor the care of the illustrious Californian “whip,” Friendr Foss. On this occasion, he certainly displayed the utmostr skill and coolness. He started with six

The Yosemite Valley, and the Mammoth Trees and Geysers of California (c1870)

horses at full gallop, and this gallop was kept up as long as their condition of the road would permit. As, on our approach to the Geysers, we ascended a mountain nearly 4000 feet high, the pace maintained was truly wonderful. At length, after a splendid drive through a fine country, we pulled up at Geysers Hotel; rested and refreshed ourselves; and pushed forward into the Geysers Canyon.

r r

The traveller at first becomes aware of an extraordinary rush and roar, like the escape of steam from a hundred locomotive boilers. Next, his organ of smell is seriously titillated by a very strong stench of sulphur; and next he feels a remarkably uncomfortable degree of heat in the soil over which he laboriously limps.

r r

He now finds himself in front of a small boiling stream of alum; and at no great distance flows another of nitric acid, or it may be of Epsom salts, soda, sulphuric acid, or ammonia: for this canyon seems to be the great laboratory of Nature, where she keeps her inexhaustible supply of "chemicals." A deep opening, marked by a column of steam and filled with a volume of liquid black as ink, is called the "Devil's Inkstand." Further on lies the "Witches' Caldron," a pool of 3 feet in diameter, but so deep that it has never been fathomed. Here you may enjoy the unromantic but useful experiment of boiling some eggs in three minutes. But the scene is scarcely fitted for it. The caldron is a well deep in the precipitous side of a mountain; and the liquid with which it is filled being black and sulphurous, it seems fit to reserve it for some more appropriate feat than boiling eggs!

r r

There are upwards of a thousand jets of steam constantly escaping in this canyon, which—with its noises, its stench, and its mists and its intense heat—may not unfairly be regarded as a ravine let loose, in some mysterious way, from the infernal regions.

r r

To the left is the "Steamboat," where, high above your head, springs the roaring, hissing steam, until every nerve in your body is jarred and set shivering. Another, sounding like the whirring machinery of a mill in motion, has very fitly been called the "Devil's Grist-Mill." The same ubiquitous personage has, at another part of the canyon, his "Tea-Kettle." The "brew" is not one which mortals are likely to have a fancy for; and if you thrust your stick into it, it snarls and sputters like a huge cat when a strange dog enters her presence.

r r

Singular to say, the brook which traverses the canyon is cool and clear at its source, and for some distance into the canyon; but as the numerous springs pour into it, its temperature rises, and its purity is sullied. It flows into the Pluton River.

r r r

The canyon is full of interesting features. For instance, a little way up, you can find out a deep and shadowy pool, which engulfs the united waters of their springs above it, and these, growing cool in their progress, while retaining their medicinal properties, the basin becomes a bath fit for a Ninon L'Enclos—in fact, for any beauty that ever was or will be memorable.

r r

The Yosemite Valley, and the Mammoth Trees and Geysers of California (c1870)

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r VIII.—LAKE TAHOE.r

r r r

r

r “By the blue lake’s silver beach.”r Longfellow.r

r

r Longfellow.r

r

r r

r As we take this to be the most beautiful of the Californianr lakes, we shall particularly direct the stranger’sr attention to it. We cannot say that it lies exactly in ther route of the tourist who “does” Yosemite, the Big Trees,r and the Geysers; and then “makes tracks” for Oregon,r or hurries homeward to New York or Boston. However,r he who has an eye and a heart for Nature in herr tranquil loveliness will hasten thither; and if he can decider upon no other course, will run by rail to Truckee City, and thence take Campbell and Burke’s stage to ther Lake, a journey of 64 miles.r

r r

r The road is excellent, and follows the north bank of ther river Truckee, under the shade of melancholy boughs, orr r r in the open sunshine, where the woods are broken up byr breadths of rich meadow-laud.r

r r

r According to the State Survey, the lake lies in twor states and five counties. That is a statistical division.r The boundary line between California and Nevadar runs north and south, right across the lake, until itr reaches it certain point therein. where it changes to ar course 17° east of south. Hence it comes to pass thatr the counties of El Dorado and Placer (California), Washoo,r Ormsby, and Douglas (Nevada), can all claim a share ofr the translucent waters of Lake Tahoe.r

r r

r Physically speaking, the lake occupies the level of ar rich valley of the Sierra Nevada, at the eastern base ofr its central ridge, a few miles north of the main trail tor Carson Valley. It lies at an elevation of seine 5500 feetr above the sea-level, and about 1500 feet above Carsonr Valley, foam which it is separated by a backbone of mountainr about three to four miles wide.r

The Yosemite Valley, and the Mammoth Trees and Geysers of California (c1870)

r r

r The extreme southern latitude of the lake is 35° 57'.r It is bisected, or nearly so, by the 120th meridian ofr
twest longitude; the western section belonging to California,r the eastern to Nevada. It measures 22 miles inr
length, and 10 miles in breadth. The mountains encirclingr r it vary in elevation from 1000 to 3000 and evenr
4000 feet in height, and are chiefly composed of weather-wornr white granite, occasionally assuming the
finestr curves and sweepings. The shore is formed almost entirelyr of dazzlingly white granite sand. The
slopes runningr up from this shore are clothed with densest piner wood; the waters of the lake are darkly,
deeply, beautifullyr blue. Hence the reader may judge what a charmingr fantastic spectacle is made up with
this combination ofr ultramarine and dark purple, and glowing white andr emerald green.r

r r

r In making the circuit of the lake—a sapphire in orr silver setting—you meet with the following points ofr
interest:—the *Cave*, in the hill-side, overhanging ther waters at a height of 100 feet; the *Hot Springs*, just
across the Nevada border; *Cornelian Bay*, an exquisiter curve in the coast, where the water is of wonderful
limpidity;r *Tahoe City*, on the west side, where there arer hotels, stores, and livery stables: *Sugar Pine Point*,
ar mountain spur covered with riotous of pine-wood; *Emerald Bay*,r a kind of creek or inlet, two miles long,
andr broadening from 400 yards at the month to two miles atr the upper extremity; and *Lake Valley Creek*, fed
by r r mountain torrents and springs, and in its turn feedingr Lake Tahoe.r

r r

r So much for this very picturesque and charming lake. Ar glimpse of such a gem, of such a thing of beauty, is
positivelyr refreshing to a weary imagination, and revives andr renovates it; but to ascertain all its beauties the
traveller should take up his sojourn in Tahoe City, and daily sailr in and about-the exquisite shores. Then,
having filledr r his sketch-book, he may resort to rod and line; and whenr tired of catching trout, may shoulder
his rifle, awayr among the mountain-woods, and satisfy himself withr quail and grouse. Believe our words, O
stranger! Ifr you don't see Tahoe, you will just miss one of the prettiestr sights in this part of the continent.
But we haver a better opinion of you, and can rely that you will actr according to our instructions.r

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r OUTLINE MAP OF ROUTES TO YOSEMITE AND THE MAMMOTH TREE GROVES.r

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r r OUTLINE MAP OF ROUTES TO YOSEMITE AND THE MAMMOTH TREE GROVES.r r

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r THE THREE GRACES.r
r (Calaveras Grove.)r r

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r r r

r The GRIZZLED GIANT. r

r (Mariposa Grove.) r

r 33 FEET DIAM r

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r l r

r HOUSE ON STUMP OF BIG TREE.r

r (Calaveras Grove.)r r

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r HOTEL, CALAVERAS GROVE.r r

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r l r

r BIG TREE (PRIDE OF THE FOREST.)r

r (Calaveras Grove.)r r

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r r r

r VIEW FROM GLACIER POINT.r

r Looking towards the Vernal & Nevada Water Falls.)r r

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r r r r r

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r r r

r The BRIDAL VEIL FALL.r

r (Yo-semite Valley.)r

r 940 FEETr r

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r The YO-SEMITE FALLS.r

r (2634 FEET)r r

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r l r

r THE YO-SEMITE VALLEY.r
r (From the Mariposa Trail.)r r

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r r r r r

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r l r

r THE THREE BROTHERS.r
r (Yo-semite Valley.)r r

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r VERNAL FALL.r
r (Yo-semite Valley.)r r

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r THE NORTH & SOUTH DOMESr
r (Yo-semite Valley.)r r

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