
"The Great Yo-Semite Valley," *Hutchings' Illustrated California Magazine*, Oct. 1859, by James M. Hutchings

Introduction

James Mason Hutchings was born February 10, 1820 in England. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1848, then went to California in 1849 during the Gold Rush. He became wealthy as a miner, lost it all in a bank failure, then became wealthy again from publishing. In 1855, seeking material for his magazine, Hutchings led the first tourist party into Yosemite, then wrote about it in the October 1859 issue of his *Hutchings' Illustrated California Magazine*. This was the first illustrated article about Yosemite Valley, erasing much doubt about the scenic wonders of Yosemite Valley. Mr. Hutchings was one of the first settlers in Yosemite Valley, and was a tireless promoter of himself and Yosemite. For several years he ran a hotel in the Valley. Mr. Hutchings later wrote *In the Heart of the Sierras*, a comprehensive book about Yosemite based on his earlier magazine articles and books. Mr. Hutchings died while visiting Yosemite on October 31, 1902.

—Dan Anderson, 2004

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Bibliographical Information

Hutchings, James Mason (1820 - 1902) "The Great Yo-Semite Valley," *Hutchings' Illustrated California Magazine*, 4(4):1-28 (October 1859). This series continued in 3 other installments, November and December 1859, and March 1860. This series was reprinted as part of Hutchings' book *Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity in California*.

For more information about Hutchings and his *California Magazine*, see "Chapter II: James Mason Hutchings and His Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity; The Publicist-Innkeeper Who Brought Yosemite to the Attention of the World," in *Yosemite's Yesterdays* vol. 2 (Yosemite: Flying Spur Press, 1991) by Hank Johnston.

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—Dan Anderson, www.yosemite.ca.us

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HUTCHINGS' CALIFORNIA MAGAZINE

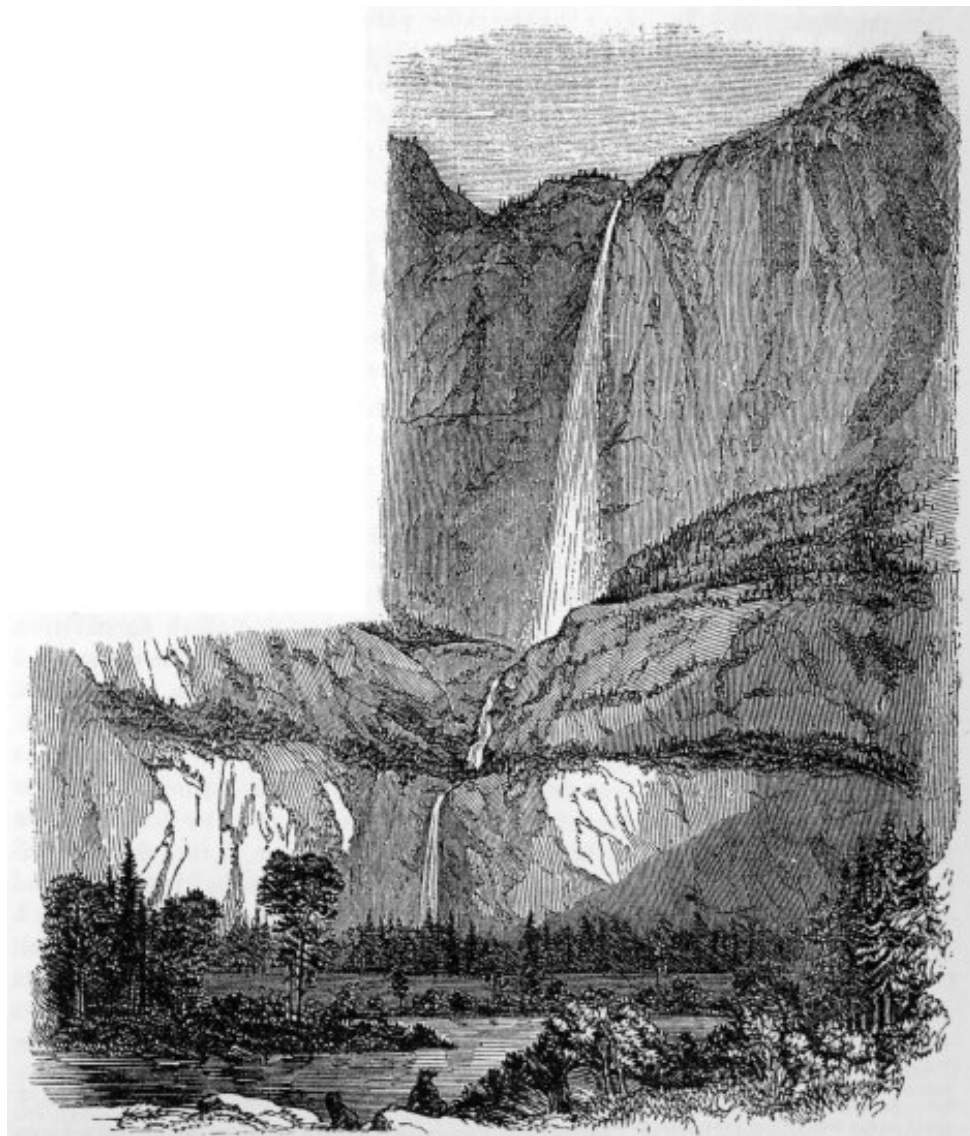
THE GREAT YO-SEMITE VALLEY.

CHAPTER I.

How it Came to be Discovered.

“I see you stand like grayhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start. The game’s a foot;
Follow your spirit; and, upon this charge,
Cry “—Ho! for the Yo-Semite!

The early California resident will remember that during the spring and summer of 1850, much dissatisfaction existed among the white settlers and miners on the Merced, San Joaquin, Chowchilla, and Fresno rivers and their tributaries, on account of the frequent robberies committed upon them by the Chook-chan-cie,



THE YO-SEM-I-TE FALL. TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED FEET IN HEIGHT.

[From a Photograph by C. L. Weed.]

Po-to-en-cie, Noot-cho, Po-ho-ne-chee, Ho-na-chee, Chow-chilla and other Indian tribes on the head waters of those streams. The frequent repetition of their predatory forays having been attended with complete success, without any attempted punishment on the part of the whites, the Indians began seriously to contemplate the practicability of driving out every white intruder upon their hunting and fishing grounds.

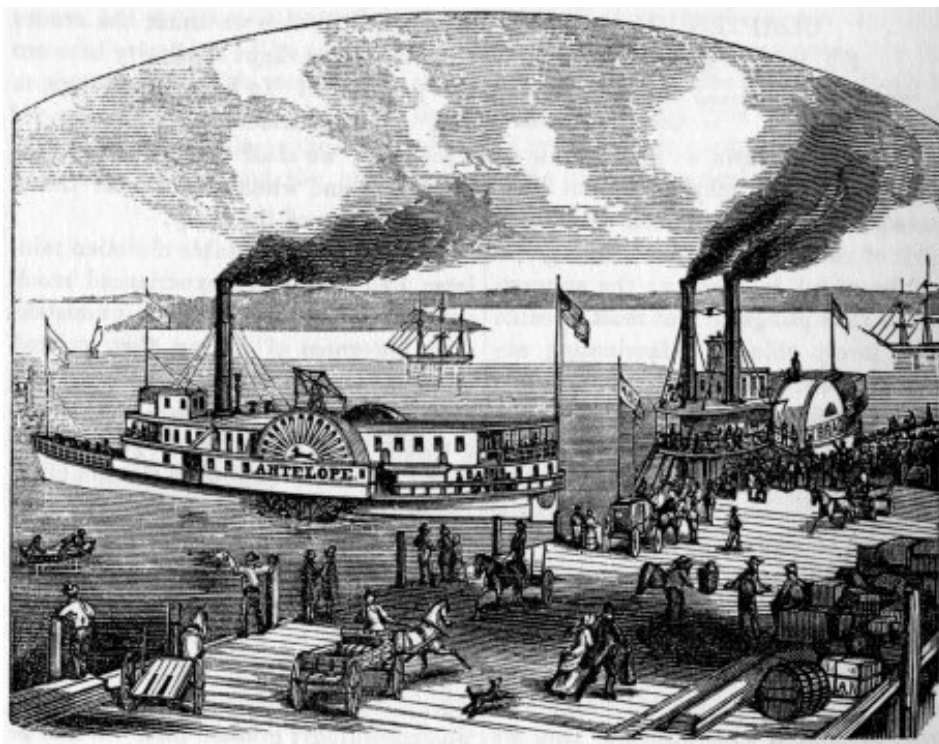
At this time, James D. Savage had two stores, or trading posts, nearly in the centre of the affected tribes; the one on Little Mariposa creek, about twenty miles south of the town of Mariposa, and near the old stone fort; and the other on Fresno river, about two miles above where John Hunt’s store now is. Around these stores those Indians who were the most friendly, used to congregate; and from whom, and his two Indian wives, Eekino and Homut, Savage ascertained the state of thought and of feeling among them.

In order to avert such a calamity, and without even hinting at his motive, he invited an Indian chief, who possessed much influence with the Chow-chillas and Chook-chances, named Jose Jerez [Editor’s note: “José Juarez”], to accompany him and his two squaws to San Francisco; hoping thereby to impress him with the wonders, numbers, and power of the whites, and through him, the various tribes that were malcontented. To this Jerez gladly assented, and they arrived in San Francisco in time to witness the first celebration of the admission of California into the Union, on the 29th of October, 1850,* [*The news of the admission, by Congress, of California into the Union, on the 9th of Sept. 1850, was brought by the mail steamer “Oregon,” which arrived in the Bay of San Francisco on the 18th

of Oct. 1850, when preparations were immediately commenced for a general jubilee throughout the State on the 29th of that month.] when they put up at the Revere House, then standing on Montgomery street.

During their stay in San Francisco, and while Savage was purchasing goods for his stores in the mountains, Jose Jerez, the Indian chief, became intoxicated, and returned to the hotel about the same time as Savage, in a state of boisterous and quarrelsome excitement. In order to prevent his making a disturbance, Savage shut him up in his room, and there endeavored to soothe him, and restrain his violence by kindly words; but this he resented, and became not only troublesome, but very insulting; when, after patiently bearing it as long as he possibly could, at a time of great provocation, unhappily, was tempted to strike Jerez, and followed it up with a severe scolding. This very much exasperated the Indian, and he indulged in numerous muttered threats of what he would do when he went back among his own people. But, when sober, he concealed his angry resentment, and, Indian-like, sullenly awaited his opportunity for revenge. Simple, and apparently small, as was this circumstance, like many others equally insignificant, it led to very unfortunate results; for, no sooner had he returned to his own people, than he summoned a council of the chief men of all the surrounding tribes; and, from his influence and representations mainly, steps were then and there agreed upon to drive out or kill all the whites, and appropriate all the horses, mules, oxen, and provisions they could find.† [† These facts were” communicated to us by Mr. J. M. Cunningham, (now in the Yo-Semite valley,) who was then engaged as clerk for Savage, and was present during the altercation between him and the Indian.]

Accordingly, early one morning in the ensuing month of November, the Indians entered Savage’s store on the Fresno. in their usual manner, as though on a trading expedition, when an immediate and apparently preconcerted plan of attack was made with hatchets, crow-bars, and arrows; first upon Mr. Greeley, who had charge of the store, and then upon three other white men named Canada, Stiffner,



BOATS LEAVING THE WHARF—THE ANTELOPE FOR SACRAMENTO, AND THE BRAGDON FOR STOCKTON.

and Brown, who were present. This was made so unexpectedly as to exclude time or opportunity for defence, and all were killed except Brown, whose life was saved by an Indian named “Polonio,” (thus christened by the whites,) jumping between him and the attacking party, at the risk of his own personal safety, thus affording Brown a chance of escape, and which he made the best of by running all the way to Quartzburg, at the hight of his speed.

Simultaneously with this attack on the Fresno, Savage’s other store and residence on the Mariposa was attacked, during his absence, by another band, and his Indian wives carried off. Similar onslaughts having been made at different points on the Merced, San Joaquin, Fresno, and Chow-chilla rivers, Savage concluded that a general Indian war was about opening, and immediately commenced raising a volunteer battalion; at the same time a requisition for men, arms, ammunition, and general stores, was made upon the Governor of the State (Gen. John McDougal,) which was promptly responded to by him, and hostilities were at once begun.

Without further entering into the details, incidents, and mishaps of this campaign—as a full account of this Indian war will make a very interesting and instructive subject of itself, for future consideration—we have thought it necessary to relate the above facts as they occurred, inasmuch as out of them originated the Mariposa Indian war, and the discovery of the great Yo-Semite valley. Therefore, with these introductory explanations, and the reader’s consent, we will at once proceed upon our tour to that wonderful, mountain-bound valley of waterfalls.

"The Great Yo-Semite Valley," *Hutchings' California Magazine*, Oct. 1859, by James M. Hutchings

CHAPTER II.

Off for the Mountains.

'Tis a dull thing to travel like a mill-horse.

Queen of Corinth.

The reader knows as well as we do that, although it may be of but little consequence in point of fact, whether a spirit of romance; the love of the grand and beautiful in scenery; the suggestions or promptings of that most loveable of all lovely objects, a fascinating woman, be she friend, sweetheart, or wife; the desire for change; the want of recreation; or the necessity of a restoration and recuperation of an over-taxed physical or mental organization, or both;—whatever may be the agent that first gives birth to the wish for, or the love of travel; when the mind is thoroughly made up, and the committee of ways and means reports itself financially prepared to undertake the pleasurable task; in order to enjoy it with luxurious zest, we must resolve upon four things—*first*, to leave the “peck of troubles,” and a few thrown in, entirely behind; *second*, to have none but good, suitable, and genial-hearted companions; *third*, a sufficient supply of personal patience, good humor, forbearance, and creature comforts for all emergencies; and, *fourth*, not to be in a hurry. To these, both one and all, who have ever visited the Yo-Semite valley, we know will say—Amen.

Now as we cannot in this brief series of articles, describe all the various routes to this wonderful valley, from every village, town, and city in the State; as they are almost as numerous and as diversified as the different roads that christians seem to take for their expected heaven, and the multitudinous creeds about the way and manner of getting there, we shall content ourselves by giving the principal ones; and after we have recited the following quaint and unanswerable argument of a celebrated divine to the querulous and uncharitable members of his flock, in which we think the reader will discover a slight similarity between the position of Yo-Semite travelers, to that of the various denominations of christians; we shall then proceed to explain how and when we journeyed there, and who were of the party.

An aged and charitable christian minister had frequently experienced much painful annoyance from an unmistakable bitterness of feeling that existed between the members of his church and those of a different sect; and as this was contrary to the word and spirit of the Great Teacher, and a great stumbling block to the usefulness and happiness of the members of both denominations, he notified them that on a certain Sunday, he wished his brother minister to close his doors, as he wished to address the members of both churches at the same time, on a very important subject. This was accordingly granted him. When he ascended the pulpit, he looked affectionately at his hearers, and thus began—“My christian friends, there was a christian brother—a Presbyterian—who walked thoughtfully up to the gate of the New Jerusalem, and knocked for admittance, when an angel who was in charge, looked down from above and enquired what he wanted. ‘To come in,’ was the answer. ‘Who and what are you?’ ‘A Presbyterian.’ ‘Sit on that seat there.’ This was on the outside of the gate; and the good man feared that he had been refused admittance. Presently arrived an Episcopalian, then a Baptist, then a Methodist, and so on, until a representative of every christian sect had made his appearance; and were alike ordered to take a seat outside. Before they had long been there, a loud anthem broke forth, rolling and swelling upon the air, from the choir within; when those outside immediately joined in the chorus. ‘Oh!’ said the angel, as he opened wide the gate, ‘I did not know you by your names, but you have all learned one song, come in! come in!! The name you bear, or the way by which you came, is of little moment compared with your being able to reach it at all, or the wonders you will now behold, and the gratification you will experience.’—As you my brethren,” the good man continued, “as you expect to live peaceably and lovingly together in heaven, you had better begin to practice it on earth. I have done.”



THE START.

As this allegorical advice needs no words of application either to the Yo-Semite traveler or the christian, in the hope that the latter will take the admonition of Captain Cuttle, “and make a note on’t,” and with an apology to the reader for the digression, we will now proceed *en route*.

The resident of San Francisco can have his choice of two ways for reaching Stockton; one, for the most part, overland by stage, as follows:—

	Miles.		
F ^m S. F. to Oakland, by ferry, which is		8	
F ^m Oakland,	by stage, to San Antonio,		2
“	San Leandro		7
“	San Lorenzo	11	

“	Hayward’s	13
“	Alvarado, or Union City,	18
“	Centreville	22
“	Mission of San Jose	27
“	Hart’s Station	30
“	Livermore’s	34
“	Mountain House	44
“	Harland’s Ferry	60
“	French Camp	66
“	Stockton	79

Whole distance from San Francisco to Stockton, by this route, 79 miles.

Or, making his way to Jackson street wharf, a few moments before four o’clock, he can take one of the California Steam Navigation Company’s boats, and arrive in Stockton, by water,—distance 124 miles—in time for any of the stages that leave that city for the mountains. We chose the latter route; and, on the evening of the 14th of June of the present year, found ourselves on board the Helen Hensley, Capiain Clark, (one of the oddest looking, and at the same time one of the most intelligent specimens of steamboat captains we ever met.)

As the steamboat Antolope, bound for Sacramento, was heavily freighted, we had the advantage of taking and keeping the lead, and arrived at Benicia at twenty minutes to seven o’clock—distance thirty miles, from San Francisco—at least half an hour ahead of her; a circumstance of very unusual occurrence, and which seemed to afford considerable satisfaction to the more enthusiastic of the passengers; for, whether a man may be riding on any four legged animal, from a donkey to a race-horse, or in any kind of vehicle, from a dog-cart to a train of cars; or in any sailing craft that floats, from a flat-bottomed scow to a leviathan steamer, such is his perverse desire to be able to crow over something or somebody, that if he breaks his neck in the attempt to pass a fellow traveler; or runs the risk of losing a wheel, or his life, while driving furiously; or takes an extra and speedy, though not always the most popular, method of elevation, upon the broken fragments of an exploded boiler, he is sure to wish for the success of that particular animal, vehicle, or craft, on which he may for the time be a passenger! We do not say that *we*, (that is, our boat), were “racing,” for we were not; nor do we say that we were in any danger, for the officers of the boat—and of all these boats—were too careful to run any risks, especially as all “racing” is strictly prohibited by the Company.

The run across the straits of Carquinez, from Benicia to Martinez, three miles distant, took us just ten minutes. Then after a few moments delay, we again dashed onward; the moonlight gilding the troubled waters in the wake of our vessel, as she plowed her swift way through the bay of Suisun and to all appearance deepened the shadows on the darker sides of Monte Diablo, by defining, with silvery clearness, the uneven ridges and summit of that solitary mountain mass.

At twenty minutes past eight, P. M., we entered the most westerly of the three mouths of the San Joaquin river, fifty-one miles from San Francisco and twenty-one above Benicia—after passing the city of New York on the Pacific, the intended “Eden” of speculators and castle-builders —without performing the fashionable courtesy of calling.

The evening being calm and sultry, it soon became evident that if it were not the hight, of the mosquito season, a very numerous band were out on a free-booting excursion; and although their harvest-home song of blood was doubtless very musical, it may be matter of regret with us to confess that, in our opinion, but few persons on board appeared to have any ear for it; in order, however, that their musical efforts might not be entirely lost sight of, they took pleasure in writing and impressing their low refrain in red and embossed notes upon the foreheads of the passengers, so that he who looked might read—mosquitoes! when, alas! such was the ingratitude felt for favors so voluntarily performed, that flat-handed blows were dealt out to them in impetuous haste, and blood, blood, blood, and flattened musqitoes was written in red and dark brown spots upon the smiter, and behold! the notes of those singers were heard no more “that we knows on.”

While the unequal warfare is going on, and one carcass of the slain induces at least a dozen of the living to come to his funeral and avenge his death, we are sailing on, up one of the most crooked and most monotonous navigable rivers out of doors; and, as we may as well do something more than fight the little bill-presenting and tax-collecting mosquitoes, if only for variety, we will relate to the reader how, in the early spring of 1849, just before leaving our southern home on the banks of ‘the mother of rivers,’ ‘the old Mississippi,’ a gentleman arrived from northern Europe and was at once introduced a member of our little family circle. Now, however strange it may appear, our new friend had never in his life looked upon a live mosquito, or a mosquito-bar, and consequently knew nothing about the arrangements of a good *femme de charge* for passing a comfortable night, where such insects were even more numerous than oranges. In the morning he seated himself at the breakfast-table, his face nearly covered with wounds received from the enemy’s proboscis, when an enquiry was made by the lady of the house, if he had passed the night pleasantly? “Yes,—yes,” he replied, with some hesitation, “yes—tol-er-a-bly pleasant—although—a—*small*—*fly*—annoyed me—somewhat! “At this confession, we could restrain ourselves no longer, but broke out into a hearty laugh, led by our good-natured hostess, who then exclaimed: “Mosquitoes! why, I never dreamed that the marks on your face were mosquito bites. I thought they might be from a rash, or something of that kind. Why! didn’t you lower down your mosquito-bars?” But as this latter appendage to a bed, on the low, alluvial lands of a southern river, was a greater stranger to him than any dead language known, the “small fly” problem bad to be satisfactorily solved, and his sleep made sweet.

Perhaps it would be well here to remark, that the San Joaquin river is divided into three branches, known respectively as the west, middle, and east channels; the latter named, being not only the main stream but the one used by the steamboats and sailing vessels, bound to and from Stockton—or at least to within about four miles of that city, from which point the Stockton slough is used. The east, or main channel, is navigable for small, stern-wheel steamboats, as high as Frezno City. Besides the three main channels of the San Joaquin, before mentioned, there are numerous tributaries, the principal of which are the Moquelumne, Calaveras, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced rivers. An apparently interminable sea of tules extends nearly one hundred and fifty miles south, up the valley of the San Joaquin; and when these are on fire, as they not unfrequently are, during the fall and early winter months, the broad sheet of licking and leaping

flame, and the vast volumes of smoke that rise, and eddy, and surge, hither and thither, present a scene of fearful grandeur, at night, that is suggestive of some earthly pandemonium. The lumbering sound of the boat's machinery having suddenly ceased, and



BOWER CAVE.

our high-pressure motive power having descended from a regular to an occasional snorting, gave us a reminder that we had reached Stockton. Time, forty-five minutes past two o'clock, on the morning of the 15th. At day-break we were again disturbed in our fitful slumbers by the rumbling of wagons and hurrying bustle of laborers discharging cargo; and before we had scarcely turned aver for another uncertain nap, the stentorian lungs of some employee of the stage companies announced that stages for Sonora, Columbia, Murphy's, Mokelumne Hill, Sacramento, Mariposa, and Coulterville, were just about starting. The moment that "Coulterville" was included in the list it recalled us to wide-awake consciousness that as we had come on purpose to go by that route, we had better be moving in the premises. Therefore, hurriedly making our toilet, and hastily going ashore, we each deposited seven dollars in the palm of the agent as our fare to the Crimea House, at which point another deposit of five dollars was to insure us safe and speedy transit in some other conveyance from that place to Coulterville.

A portion of our pleasant little party having joined us in Stockton; and, as we are now all snugly ensconced in the same stage, we will proceed to initiate the reader into the dramatis personae. of this (to us) deeply interesting performance. Rev. F. C. Ewer, and lady; (and when we mention "Rev." we hope that no one, at least in this instance, will associate it with anything prosy, or heavy, or dull, otherwise we wish at once to cut his or her acquaintance at the outset,) Miss Marianna Neill, Mr. L. C. Weed, our excellent photographer, and your humble servant, J. M. H. "All aboard!" cried the coachman; "all set," shouted. somebody, in answer.

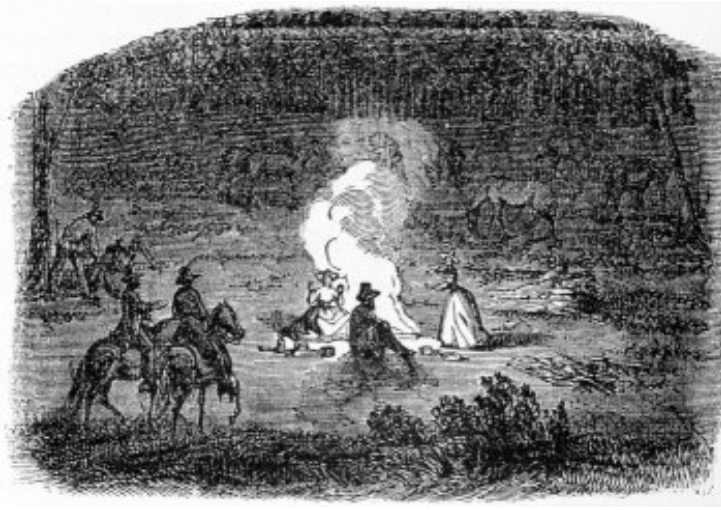
"Crack went the whip, and away went we."

There is a feeling of jovial, good-humored pleasurable that steals insensibly over the secluded residents of cities when all the cares of a daily routine of duty are left behind, and the novelty of fresh scenes opens up new sources of enjoyment. Especially was it so with us, seated as we were, in that comfortable, old stage, with the prospect before us of witnessing one of the most wonderful sights that is to be found in any far-off country either of the old or new world. Besides, in addition to our being in the reputed position of a Frenchman with his dinner, who is said to enjoy it in three different ways; first, by anticipation; next, in action; and third, on reflection; we had new views perpetually breaking upon our admiring eyes.

As soon as we had passed over the best gravelled streets of any town or city in the State, without exception, we threaded our way past the beautiful suburban residences of the city of Stockton, and emerged from the shadows of the giant oaks that stand on either side the road, the deliciously cool breath of early morning, laden as it was with the fragrance of myriads of flowers and scented shrubs, was inhaled with an acme of enjoyment that contrasted inexpressibly with the stifling and unsavory warmth of a lilliputian state room on board the steamboat.

The bracing air had partially restored the loss of appetite resulting from, and almost consequent upon, the excitement created by the novel circumstances and prospects attending us, so that when we arrived at the Twelve Mile House and breakfast was announced, it was not an unwelcome sound to any one of the party. This being satisfactorily discussed, in eighteen minutes, and a fresh relay of horses provided, we were soon upon our way. At the Twenty-five Mile House we again exchanged horses. By this time the day and our travelers had both warmed up together; and before we reached Knight's Ferry, as the cooling breeze had died out, and the dust had begun to pour in, at every chink and aperture, the luxurious enjoyments of the early morning were departing by degrees—in the same way that lawyers are said to get to heaven!—and when a group of sturdy, athletic miners was seen congregated in front of the hotel, and the bell and its ringer had announced that Knight's Ferry and dinner were both at band, it would have been the height of preposterous presumption in us to attempt to pass ourselves off for "white folks" before we had made the acquaintance of clean water and a dust-brush.

After taking refreshments with loss of our appetites and forty-five minutes, we not only again "changed horses," but found both ourselves and our baggage changed to, another stage—as the newest and best looking ones seemed to be retained for the level, and city end of the route, while the dust covered and paint-worn are used for the mountains. As we shall probably have something to say concerning these towns on our return, we will respond to the coachman's "all aboard," by calling out "all set," and thus leave it for the present.



CAMPING AT DEER FLAT—NIGHT SCENE.

At the Crimea House, our bags and baggage were again set down, and after a very agreeable delay of one hour, during which time the obliging landlord, Mr. Brown, informed us that errors of route and distance had been made by journalists who were not quite familiar with their subject, and by which those persons who travel in private carriages were liable to go by La Grange, some five miles out of their way.

Here a new line as well as conveyance was taken, known as the "Sonora and Coulterville," and as that had now arrived, we lost no time in obtaining possession of as good seats as we could find, and reached Don Pedro's Bar about six o'clock, P. M. But for an unusual number of passengers, we should have been here subjected to another change of stage; now, fortunately, the old and regular one would not contain us all, so that the only change made was in horses, and after a delay of twelve minutes, we were again dashing over the Tuolumne river, across a good bridge.

Now the gently rolling hills began to give way to tall mountains; and the quiet and even tenor of the landscape to change to the wild and picturesque. Up, up we toiled, many of us on foot, as our horses puffed and snorted like miniature steamboats, from hauling but little more than the empty coach. The top gained, our road was through forests of oaks and nut pines, across flats, and down the sides of ravines and gulches, until we reached Maxwell's Creek; from which point an excellent road is graded on the side of a steep mountain, to Coulterville, and all that the traveler seems to hope for, is that the stage will keep upon it, and not tip down the abyss that is yawning below. Up this mountain we again had to patronize the very independent method of going 'afoot'; and while ascending it, our party was startled by a rustling sound being heard among the bushes below the road, where shadowy human forms could be seen moving slowly towards us. Hearts beat quicker, and images of Joaquin and Tom Bell's gang rose to our active fancies. "They will rob and perhaps murder us," suggested one. "We cannot die but once," retorted another. "Oh, dear! what is going to be the matter," was sent in a loud, shrill whisper from the owner of a treble voice in the stage. "Let us all keep close together," pantomimed a fourth, an outsider. "I shall faint," (another sound from within.) "Please to postpone that exercise, ladies, until we reach plenty of water," respectfully and cheerfully responded a fifth, and who evidently had some particular interest in the speaker.

"That's a hard old mountain," exclaimed the ringleader of the party that had caused all our alarm, as he and his companions quietly seated themselves by the side of the road. "Good evening, gentlemen." "Good evening." Why, bless my, soul, these men who have almost frightened us out of our seven senses, are nothing but fellow travelers!" "Could'nt you see that?" now valorously enquired one whose knees had knocked uncontrollably together with fear only a few moments before. At this we all had to laugh; and the driver having stopped, said, "get in, gentlemen," we had enough to talk and joke about, until we reached Coulterville, at a quarter to ten o'clock, P. M. Here, by the kindness of Mr. Coulter, (the founder of the town,) our much needed comforts were duly cared for; and, after making arrangements for an early start on the morrow, we retired for the night, well fatigued with the journey; having been upon the road fifteen and one-half hours.

As we wish to make these sketches of use to future travelers, we have been particular in noting time, cost, distance, and numerous other particulars, and as we have reached the end of our journey by stage, we append the following:

TIME AND DISTANCE
TABLE FROM STOCKTON
TO COULTERVILLE.

	Time			Miles.
Left	Stockton	at 1-4 past 6, A. M,	made.	
From	Stockton	to 12 Mile House		1.35
From	"	to 25 Mile House		4.15
From	"	to Foot Hills		4.35
From	"	to Knight's Ferry		5.40
From	"	to Rock River House, (including detention for dinner)		7.40
From	Stockton to Crimea House		8.40	48
Here we exchanged stages, and delayed one hour.				
From	Stockton to Don Pedro's Bar, (including delay at Crimea House)		11.30	60

From Stockton to Coulterville, 15.30 71
(exchanged horses and was
delayed 12 min.)

Our first considerations the following morning were for good animals, provisions, cooking utensils, and a guide,-the former (all but the good) were supplied by a gentleman who rejoiced in the uncommon and somewhat ancient patronymic of Smith, at twenty-five dollars per head for the trip of eight days, almost the original cost of each animal, judging from their build and speed, so that the bill run as follows:—

5 saddle horses, one for each person,	\$125
1 pack mule	25
Guide	25

We hope before the next traveling season commences that reasonable arrangements will be made for a daily line of good saddle animals, both here and at Mariposa, (a most excellent starting point,) for it is much to be regretted that such exorbitant charges should preclude persons of limited means from visiting this magnificent valley. For the supply of provisions and cooking utensils, Mr. Coulter and the guide relieved us of all anxiety; and, at a quarter to nine the next morning, we were in our saddles, ready for the start. How we were attired or armed; what was the impression produced upon the bystanders; or, even what was our own opinion of appearances, “deponent saith not.”

"The Great Yo-Semite Valley," *Hutchings' California Magazine*, Oct. 1859, by James M. Hutchings

CHAPTER III.

The Route to the Valley.

Life, so varied, hath more loveliness
In one brief day, than has a creeping century
Of sameness.

Baley's Festus.

For the first three or four miles, our road lay up a rough, mountainous point, thro' dense chaparal bushes that were growing on both sides of us, to a high, bold ridge; and from whence we obtained a splendid and comprehensive view of the foot-hills and broad valley of the San Joaquin. At this point we entered a vast forest of pines, cedars, firs, and oaks, and rode leisurely among their deep and refreshing shadows, occasionally passing saw-mills, or ox-teams that were hauling logs or lumber, until we reached "Bower Cave," at about half past one, P. M., twelve miles distant from Coulterville.

This is a singular grotto-like formation, about one hundred feet in depth, and length, and ninety feet in width, and which is entered by a passage not more than three feet six inches wide, at the northern end of an opening some seventy feet long by thirteen feet wide, nearly covered with running vines and maple trees, that grow out from within the cave; and when these are drawn aside, you look into a deep abyss, at the bottom of which is a small sheet of water, made shadowy and mysterious by overhanging rocks and trees. On entering, you walk down a flight of fifty-two steps, to a newly constructed wooden platform, and from whence you can either pick your way to the water below, or ascend another flight of steps to a smaller cave above. But although there is a singular charm about this spot that amply repays a visit, we must not linger too long, but pay our dollar, (fifty cents too much), and renew our journey.



DESCENDING THE MOUNTAIN TO THE YO-SEMITE VALLEY.

As the day was hot, and the ride a novelty to most of us, we took a long siesta here, not fairly starting before a quarter to five o'clock, P. M. From this point to "Black's Ranch," our five miles' ride was delightfully cool and pleasant, and for the most part, by gradual ascent up a long gulch, shaded in places with a dense growth of timber, and occasionally across a rocky point to avoid a long detour or difficult passage. This part of our journey occupied us two hours. After a short delay, the ladies and a portion of our party started on, while Mr. Ewer and the writer having found one of the discoverers of the mammoth trees of Mariposa county, remained behind to glean some interesting facts concerning them, which will appear—in due season before this series of articles is finished. While thus engaged, we had not noticed the fast gathering night shadows; and, when we made the discovery, we gave the spurs to our horses and hurried off.

On account of the steep hill-side upon which our trail now lay, and the pious habits of one of our horses, as the night had become so dark that we could scarcely see our hands before us, this ride was attended with some danger, and required that in consideration of the value, on such a trip, of a sound neck, if only for the convenience of the thing, we remembered and practiced too, the Falstaffian motto concerning discretion, and took it leisurely; arriving at Deer Flat, six miles above Black's, at a quarter past nine o'clock, P. M.

As our absence had created no little anxiety to at least one of the ladies of our party, on account of a husband being among the missing, our safe arrival in camp was welcomed with rejoicing acclamations. A good hearty meal was then discussed, and preparations made for passing the night, as comfortably as possible, in our star-roofed chamber, but on account of the novelty of our situation, to several, in camping out for the first time, it was long past midnight

"Ere slumber's spell had bound us."

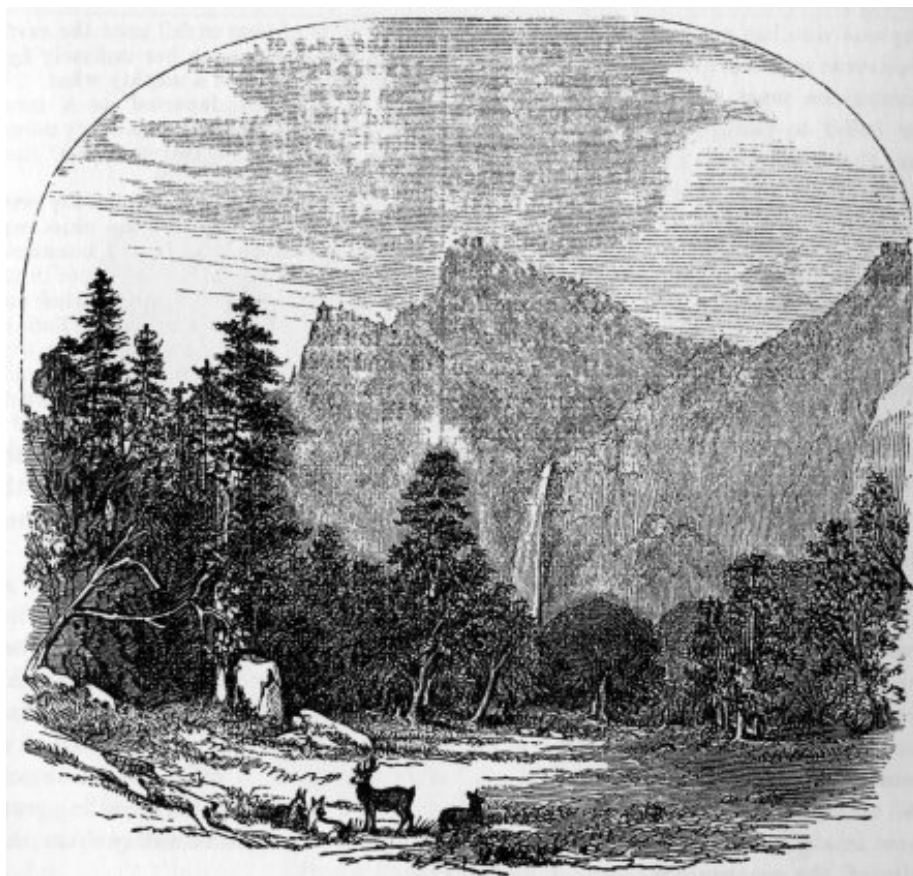
Deer Flat is a beautiful green valley of about fifteen or twenty acres, surrounded by an amphitheatre of pines and oaks, and being well watered, makes a very excellent camping-ground. By the name given to this place, we thought that some game might probably reward an early morning's hunt, and accordingly, about day-break, we sallied out, prepared for dropping a good fat buck, but as no living thing larger than a dove could be started up the amount of fresh meat thus obtained was not very troublesome to carry.

A few minutes after seven o'clock on the morning of the 17th, we again started, and although not in the possession of the brightest of feelings, either mental or physical, we had no sooner become fairly upon our way than the wild and beautiful scenes on every hand made us forget the broken slumber of the night, and the unsatisfactory breakfast of the morning, as we journeyed on towards Hazel Green, which point we reached in two hours,— six miles distant from Deer Flat.

From this point the distant landscapes began to gather in interest and beauty, as we threaded our way through the magnificent forest of pine on the top of the ridge. Here, the green valley deep down on the Merced; there, the snow-clothed Sierra Nevadas, with their

rugged peaks towering up; and in the sheltered hollows of the base, Nature's snow-built reservoirs, were glittering in the sun. These were glorious sights, amply sufficient in themselves to repay the fatigue and trouble of the journey without the remaining climax, to be reached when we entered the wondrous valley.

At ten minutes to eleven o'clock, A. M. we reached Crane Flat, six miles from Hazel Green; where, as there was plenty of grass and water, we took lunch and a rest of about two hours.



DISTANT VIEW OF THE "POHONO," (INDIAN NAME,) OR BRIDAL VEIL WATERFALL.

[From a Photograph by C. L. Weed.]

From this point parties visit the small grove of mammoth trees, to be seen on this route, but as our party was too anxious to look upon the great valley of waterfalls, we did not go down to see them; at our request, however, Rev. J. C. Holbrook has kindly favored us with the following extract from his note-book, which may happily supply the omission:—

"From Crane Flat we made a little detour to the right of about a mile and a half, to see some "Big Trees." We found them to consist of a little cluster on the side of a deep cañon, of the same species of cedar as those which form the celebrated grove in Calaveras county. They are monsters, and of almost incredible size. Two of them grow from the same root, and are united near the base, and hence we call them the "Siamese Twins." They are virtually one tree, being nourished by the same roots. We paced the distance *around* them at the bottom, close to the bark, and found it to be thirty-eight paces, or one hundred and fourteen feet, which would give as the *diameter* of both, thirty-eight feet!

The bark on one side has been cut into, and it measures twenty inches in thickness. At a few rods distance, interspersed among other trees, are four or five others of these monarchs of the forest, of which two or three are twenty-six paces each in circumference, or seventy-eight feet, with a diameter of twenty-six feet. They are perfectly straight, and tower up heavenward from 150 to 200 feet.

These trees are well worth visiting by any one who has not seen the groves in Calaveras and Mariposa counties. Such dimensions seem almost too marvelous for belief to persons at a distance: I sent the above statement to a daily paper in a western city, and in publishing it, the editor said: "We call particular attention to the statement relative to California forest trees. It *would be accounted apocryphal had it a less reliable source.*" The trail is very plain from Crane Flat to these trees, although the descent and ascent to and from them is rather laborious, especially on a day as intensely hot as was that on which I visited them."

It is difficult to say whether the exciting pleasures of anticipation had quickened our pulses to the more vigorous use of our spurs, or that the horses had already smelled, in imagination at least, the luxuriant patches of grass in the great valley, or that the road was better than it had been before, certain it is, from whatever cause, we traveled faster and easier than at any previous time, and came in sight of the haze-draped summits of the mountain-walls that girdle the Yo-Semite Valley, in a couple of hours after leaving Crane Flat—distance nine miles.

Now, it may so happen that the reader entertains the idea that if he could just look upon a wonderful or an impressive scene, he could fully and accurately describe it. If so, we gratefully tender to him the use of our chair; for, we candidly confess, that we can not. The truth is, the first view of this convulsion-rent valley, with its perpendicular mountain cliffs, deep gorges, and awful chasms, spread out before us like a mysterious scroll, took away the power of thinking, much less of clothing thoughts with suitable language.

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sack-cloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs; when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, bid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and bide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

These words from Holy Writ will the better convey the impression, not of the thought, so much, but of the profound feeling inspired by that scene.

“This verily is the stand-point of silence,” at length escaped in whispering huskiness from the lips of one of our number, Mr. Ewer. Let us name this spot “The Stand-point of Silence.” And so let it be written in the note-book of every tourist, as it will be in his inmost soul when he looks at the appalling grandeur of the Yo-Semite valley from this spot.

We would here suggest, that if any visitor wishes to see this valley in all its awe-inspiring glory, let him go down the outside of the ridge for a quarter of a mile and then descend the eastern side of it for three or four hundred feet, as from this point a high wall of rock, at your right hand, stands on the opposite side of the river, that adds much to the depth, and consequently to the height of the mountains.

When the inexpressible “first impression” had been overcome and human tongues had regained the power of speech, such exclamations as the following were uttered—“Oh! now let me die, for I am happy.” “Did mortal eyes ever behold such a scene in any other land?” “The half had not been told us.” “My heart is full to overflowing with emotion at the sight of so much appalling grandeur in the glorious works of God!” “I am satisfied.” “This sight is worth ten years of labor,” &c., &c.



RIVER SCENE IN THE YO-SEMITE VALLEY, NEAR THE FOOT OF THE TRAIL.

[From a Photograph by C. L. Weed.]

A young man, named Wadilove, who had fallen sick with fever at Coulterville, and who, consequently, had to remain behind his party, became a member of ours; and on the morning of the second day out, experiencing a relapse, he requested us to leave him behind; but, as we expressed our determination to do nothing of the kind, at great inconvenience to himself, he continued to ride slowly along. When at Hazel Green, he quietly murmured, “I would not have started on this trip, and suffer as much as I have done this day, for ten thousand dollars.” But when he arrived at this point, and looked upon the glorious wonders presented to his view, he exclaimed, “I am a hundred times repaid now for all I have this day suffered, and I would gladly undergo a thousand times as much, could I endure it, and be able to look upon another such a scene.”

Admonished by our excellent guide, (whom everybody called “Sam,”) we were soon in our saddles, and again on our way, never dreaming that we had spent more than a few brief minutes here, although our time-pieces told us that we had delayed forty-five, but which ought to have been prolonged to at least one day.

About a mile further on, we reached that point where the descent of the mountain commences; and where our guide required us to dismount, while he arranged the saddle blankets and cruppers, and straightened the saddle girths. Some were for walking down this precipitous trail to the valley, but as the guide informed such that it was nearly seven miles to the foot of the mountain, the desire, for the time being, was overcome; yet, in some of the steepest portions of the trail one or two of the party dismounted, neither of whom, we are proud to say, was a lady.

About two miles from the “Stand-Point of Silence,” while descending the mountain, we arrived at a rapid and beautiful cascade, across which was a bridge, and here we quenched our thirst with its delicious water. Here we will mention that there is an ample supply of excellent cool water, at convenient distances, the entire length of the route, whether by Coulterville or Mariposa.

Soon, another cascade was reached and crossed, and its rushing heedlessness of course among rocks, now leaping over this, and past that; here giving a seething, there a roaring sound; now bubbling, and gurgling here; and smoking and frothing there, kept some of us looking and lingering until another admonition of our guide broke the charm and hurried us away.

The picturesque wildness of the scene on every hand; the exciting wonders of so romantic a journey; the difficulties surmounted; the dangers braved, and overcome; put us in possession of one unanimous feeling of unalloyed delight; so that when we reached the foot of the mountain, and rode side by side among the shadows of the spreading oaks and lofty pines in the smooth valley, we congratulated each other upon looking the very picture of happiness personified.

But as the sun had set, and a ride of six miles was yet before us ere we reached the upper hotel (Hite's) to which we were going, we quickened our speed, and reached the ferry. Here a new difficulty presented itself, inasmuch as the ferry-man had left it for the night, and lived nearly half a mile above. This however, was overcome, by bringing a fowling-piece into excellent play, (nearly the only one called for on the entire route,) on account of the scarcity of game, and after a delay of nearly one hour we were ferried across, at the rate of thirty-seven and a half cents per head, for men as well as animals, and at half-past nine o'clock, P. M., we arrived at the end of our day's journey. We feel confident that we express the sentiment of each when we say that this day will be remembered among the most delightful of our lives.

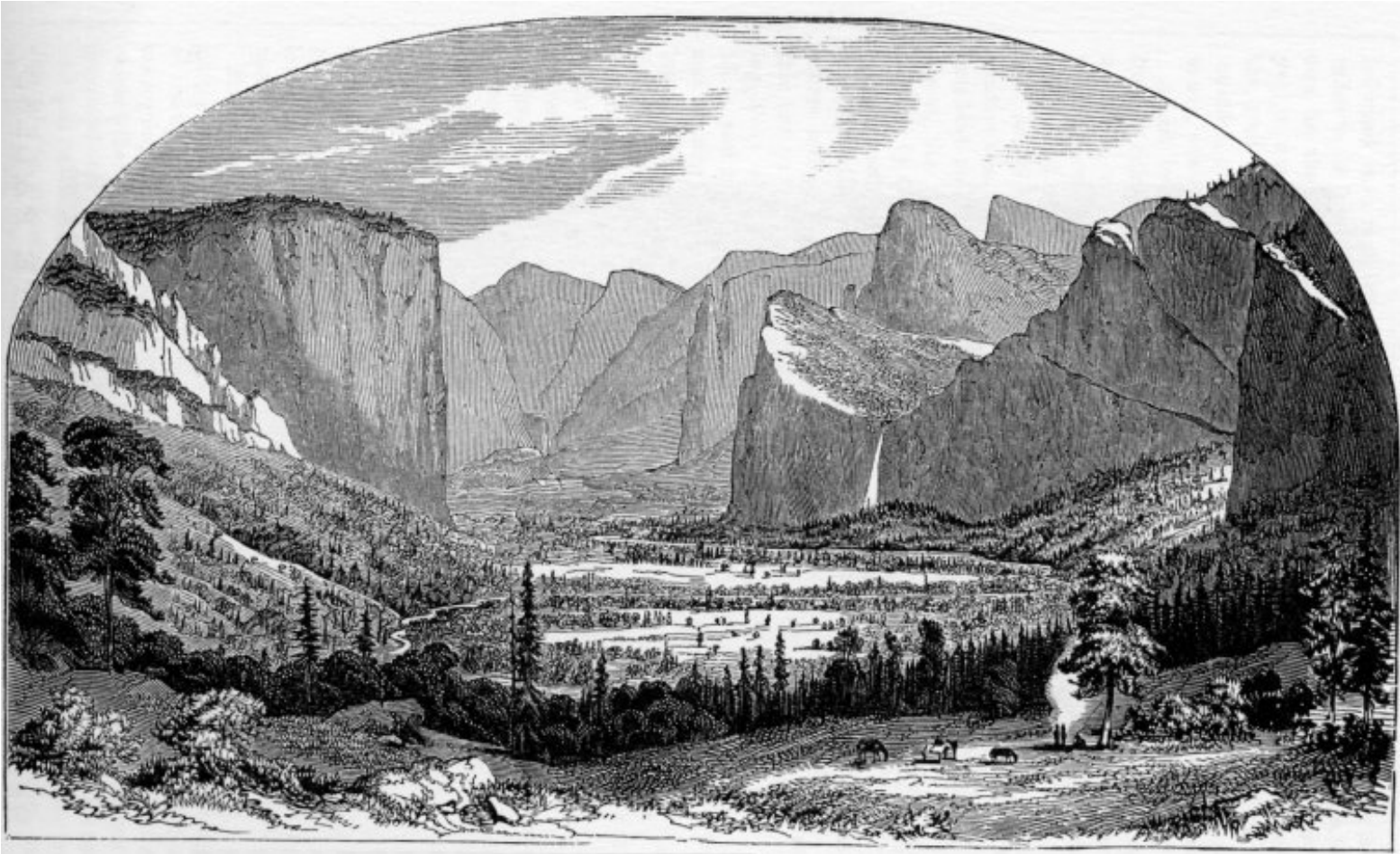
TABLE OF DISTANCES,
AND TIME OCCUPIED
BY OUR PARTY IN
GOING TO THE VALLEY.

	Time of travel h. m.	Rest'g, & campg. h. m.	Dist. miles.
From Coulterville to Bower Cave,	4 25		12
Rested at the Cave,		3 40	
From the Cave to Black's Inn,	2 00		5
Rested at Black's		20	
From Black's to Deer Flat,	1 45		6
Camped for the night at Deer Flat, from 9 p. m. till 5 min. of 7 a. m.,		9 55	
From Deer Flat to Hazel Green,	2 00		6
Rested at Hazel Green,		10	
From Hazel Green to Crane Flat,	1 30		6
Rested and lunched at C. Flat,		2 15	
From Crane Flat to "Stand-point of Silence,"	2 10		9
Stopped at "Stand-point of Silence,"		45	
From Stand-Point of Silence to 2d			2
Cascade Bridge,			
From 2d Cascade to foot of Trail, into Valley,			5
From foot of Trail to upper Hotel,			6
From Stand-Point of Silence to Upper Hotel,	5 15		
Total time of Travel,	13 5	17 5	
Total time of resting and camping,	17 5		
Total time from Coulterville to Hotel in Valley,	36 10		
Total distance,			57

In our next number we shall continue this series of articles on the Yo-Semite Valley, and present some of the most skilfully drawn and finely executed engravings of all its most remarkable scenes that have ever appeared in this work, from photographs and sketches taken from nature.



Near View of the YO-SEMITE FALLS,
2,500 FEET IN HEIGHT.
[From a Photograph by C. L. Weed.]



GENERAL VIEW OF THE YO-SEMITE VALLEY,
From Open-eta-noo-ah,—Inspiration Point,—on the Mariposa Trail.

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Dan Anderson