

YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

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HUTCHINGS'

CALIFORNIA

MAGAZINE



No. 1.—JULY, 1856.



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Yosemite Nature Notes

THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF
THE YOSEMITE NATURALIST DIVISION AND
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HE BROUGHT YOSEMITE TO THE WORLD

By Emil F. Ernst, Park Forester

One hundred years ago this month in July 1856 there appeared the first number of Hutchings' *California Magazine*. Like many another magazine it came and went its way but in its short life of five years it left behind marks of its passing that are still being felt today. The editor and guiding genius of its creation and management was James Mason Hutchings, who was connected intimately with the early history of Yosemite Valley and who became the chronicler of the Wonderous Valley's swaddling-clothes days.

For five full years, July 1856 to July 1861, this little magazine made its appearance regularly at the newly established homes of its California subscribers, at bookstores and exchange agencies of the mushrooming towns of the gold fields, and even in the domiciles of the Eastern tourists and living rooms of foreign residents. Maximum circulation appears to have been 6,000 copies. The subscription price was set at \$3 per year and it costs a copy.

Such ventures such as publishing the *California Magazine* are not undertaken on the spur of the moment without considerable preparation including financial support. In two years and four months of preparation gathering occurred before the *California Magazine* first saw the light of day a century ago this

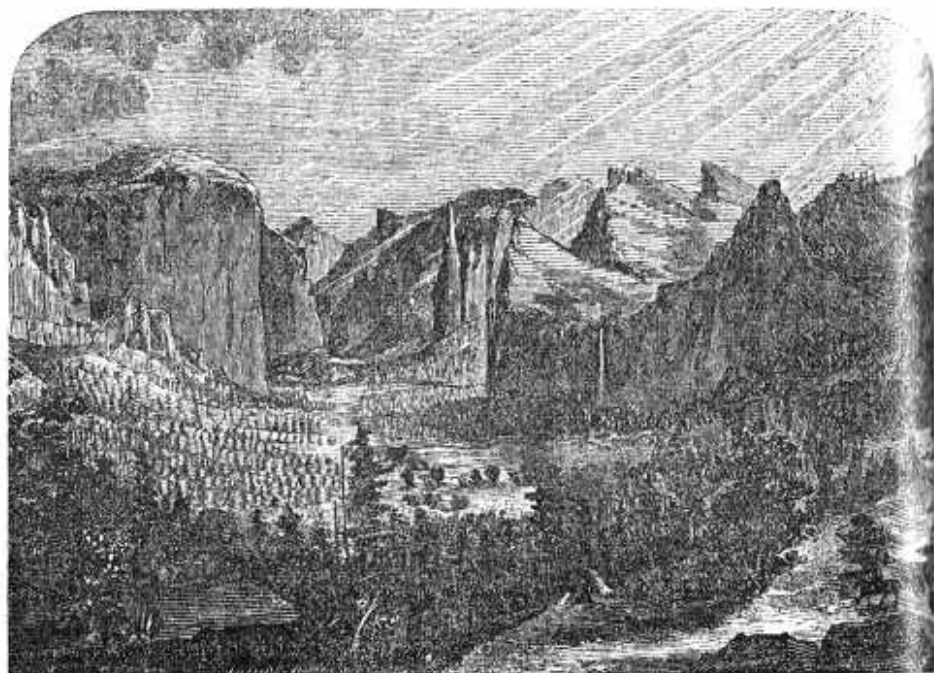
month. Hutchings, originator and managing editor, had a long and adventurous life. These experiences up to and including the years of publishing his brain-child were enough to last a normal person a lifetime. But these years were only the prelude of things to come.

James M. Hutchings was born in Towcester, Northhamptonshire, England, in February 1820. His higher education was obtained at the Edgbaston Proprietary School, which was then in the suburb of the Midlands city of Birmingham. His later writings show that his education in subjects including the sciences, particularly botany, English literature, and history was good. Perhaps the most important turning point of his life occurred in Birmingham when some time in 1844 he viewed George Catlin's American Indian Exhibition. Catlin had brought his immense collection of Indian paintings, sketches, artifacts, and two live grizzly bears to England in 1839.

Several Objibbeway and Iowa Indians joined the exhibition a little later to give it life and authenticity. Hutchings has said that his "love for adventure was awakened" after viewing Catlin's exhibition.

In May of 1848 Hutchings left England. After several months in New York he proceeded to New Orleans. There in the fall of 1848 he heard the

THE YO-HAM-I-TE VALLEY



GENERAL VIEW OF THE YO-HAM-I-TE VALLEY

stupendous news of the discovery of gold at Culloma in the newly-conquered land of California. The following spring he was on his way to the gold fields via the Overland route from St. Joseph on the Missouri. Arriving at Hangtown (now Placerville) in mid-October, after suffering much hardship on the journey across the plains, the Englishman thus became one of the fabulous Forty-Niners and he used "Forty-Nine" as a signature to several of his popular publications which appeared later.

The next several years Hutchings devoted to placer mining for gold, generally in the vicinity of Placerville. In his 1855 diary he mentions several times passing over rich deposits of gold that were discovered

later by more fortunate individuals. He had good times and bad - the "ups and downs" of the miners. By 1853 there were signs that most of the good deposits of placer gold had been found and removed. The literature indicates that Hutchings was employed in the spring and summer of 1853 on the Placerville *Herald* as a "greeter" to the newly arrived immigrants and he may also have been part-time editor. The *Herald* was a Democratic campaign paper published from April to November 1853 by Frederick A. Bee and W. Wadsworth, names well known in Hangtown and Placerville. His connection with this newspaper brought about the next important turning point in Hutchings' life.

In these rough days in the mining

owns it was the custom that all places of business including banks, express companies, stores, gambling halls, fandangoes and bordellos be wide open for trade on Sunday. A deeply religious man, Hutchings did not approve in the least this desecration of the Christian Sabbath day. He joined the campaign then under way to return Sunday to a day of rest, recreation and devotion as practiced in the more stable communities of the various homelands of the miners. He wrote a sort of Fourth Commandment, "Thou shalt not remember what thy friends do at home on this Sabbath day lest the remembrances should not compare favorably with what thou doest." It came to him that this was not enough so he went on to compose *The Miner's Ten Commandments*. This he signed with "Forty-Nine." The completed Ten Commandments were published in the July 2 issue of the Placerville Herald.

Within a year 100,000 copies, mostly in the form of the well known lettersheet, were sold. Hutchings copyrighted *The Miner's Ten Commandments* in this form and this lettersheet is undoubtedly the best known of his publications. Its tremendous success and popularity lead him to give up mining activities in favor of the more remunerative and less laborious business of writing and publishing. Although at this time there were several papers and magazines being published in California, Hutchings came to the conclusion that none did justice to California and Californians. He decided to publish a monthly magazine that would.

Needing more information on the "scenes of wonder and curiosity" in his adopted state, he embarked upon a two and one-third year fact-

finding tour which took him through most of the inhabited and much of the wild portions of California to the north of Mariposa. This undertaking he financed through the sale of lettersheets, and later, engraved envelopes which he composed, had illustrated and published. Sales were made to bookstores and through express agents in the various towns. Today these lettersheets and engraved envelopes are sought eagerly by collectors of Californiana, students of express company history, and philatelists.

Sometime in the spring of 1856 he went to San Francisco where, with Anthony Rosenfield, he formed the partnership of Hutchings and Rosenfield. This was a bookstore and publishing business partnership that existed until June 1861. Hutchings



THE YO-HAM-I-TE FALLS.
HEIGHT 2,500 FEET

had considerable courage entering into the bookstore business at this time in San Francisco. The fact that there were forty bookstores then serving the 40,000 population in the new City by the Golden Gate apparently did not cool off his intense desire to proceed with his project.

Settling down finally after his long and costly fact-finding tour of California, Hutchings undertook the publishing of his magazine. The first number was in the hands of subscribers and reviewers by the middle of June 1856. The reviews were good and boded well for the future. The high quality of writing and illustrations that graced the initial number prevailed throughout the five years of Hutchings' ownership and editorship. The text pages were uniformly 48 in number and 6x9½ inches overall in size. Early issues carried additional pages in back devoted exclusively to advertising. These advertisements are as interesting as the reading material. The cover design, illustrated on the cover of this issue of *Yosemite Nature Notes*, was engraved by Harrison Eastman. Eastman's cover continued to be used until the magazine was sold in 1861. Hutchings was clever in the selection of illustrations for his publications and the cover design was no exception. He wanted his magazine to be typically Californian. In the upper three-quarters is a scene showing a miner's cabin and four miners digging for gold at the junction of two streams in the mountains. A small illustration at the bottom shows the Golden Gate at the entrance to San Francisco Bay. This is undoubtedly an adaptation of a sketch purchased by Hutchings from

Thomas A. Ayres in the spring of 1855. Between these two scenes were inserted the number of the issue, the month, and the year.

With the publication of this first issue of his *California Magazine*, Hutchings launched himself upon a tourist promotional career of almost fifty year's duration. This career actually had its beginning with Catlin's exhibition in Birmingham. Catlin had proposed in 1833 a "nation's park" to preserve examples of the fast disappearing culture of the American Indians, the Plains tribes in particular. With his magazine Hutchings became a force that helped mature the "national park" idea.

During his fact-finding tour Hutchings employed daguerrotypers (photographers) and sketch-artists to obtain the pictorial materials he needed for his magazine. One of the sketchers was the well known Thomas A. Ayres. He was developing into an outstanding young artist when he met his death in the sinking of the schooner *Laura Bevan* near San Pedro in 1858. In late July of 1856 Hutchings had taken Ayres along with him on what is now considered to have been the first tourist party into the Yosemite Valley. It is obvious that this trip was a business proposition of Hutchings' to gather material for his magazine. In October 1856 Hutchings published the first Yosemite Valley scene to reach the public. This was a lithograph of Ayres' pencil sketch of Yo-ham-t-te Falls. Ayres had made five sketches on the 1856 trip into the Yosemite Valley.

Normally the advent of a new magazine includes a statement of the objectives of the venture by the publisher. Hutchings did this with his "Introductory" on the first page.

HUTCHINGS'

CALIFORNIA MAGAZINE.

No. I.—JULY, 1856.—VOL. I.

OUR INTRODUCTORY.



IND READER, this is the first of our greeting and acquaintance. We hope, with your approval, to spend many pleasant

hours in company with each other. It is our hope, as it will be our aim, to make our monthly visit to your fireside as welcome as the cheerful countenance and social converse of some dear old friend, who just drops in, in a friendly way, to spend the evening.

We wish to picture California, and California life: to portray its beautiful scenery and curiosities; to speak of its mineral and agricultural products; to tell of its wonderful resources and commercial advantages; and to give utterance to the inner life and experience of its people, in their aspirations, hopes, disappointments and successes—the lights and shadows of daily life.

Whatever is noble, manly, useful, intellectual, amusing and refining, we shall welcome to our columns.

It will ever be our pride and pleasure to

be on the side of virtue, morality, religion and progress.

We shall admit nothing that is partizan in politics or sectarian in religion; but, claiming the right to please ourselves, we shall accord to the reader the same privilege.

Whatever we believe to be for the permanent prosperity of California, we shall fearlessly advocate, in any way that suits us.

We have no expectation of pleasing every one; nor, that perfection will be written upon every page of its contents, for the simple reason that we are human; but we shall do our best, continually, and those who do not like the magazine are not required to—buy it.

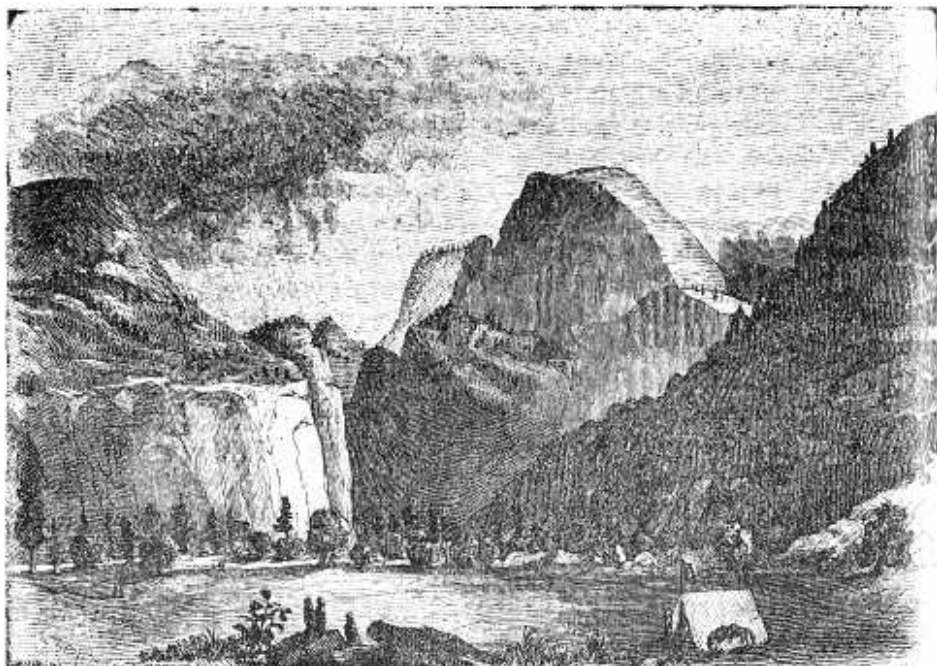
We have commenced its publication with the hope of filling a void—humbly it may be—in the wants of California, and the intelligent reader will see at a glance that the costly manner in which it is gotten up, and the price at which it is sold, the publishers rely upon a wide circulation for their pecuniary reward; but they are confident that altho' placed within the reach of those who could only take *one* per month, that others will be tempted to *take a dozen*.

Therefore, placing ourselves in the hands of a generous public, we make our bow, and introduce to your kindly notice the first number of HUTCHINGS' CALIFORNIA MAGAZINE.

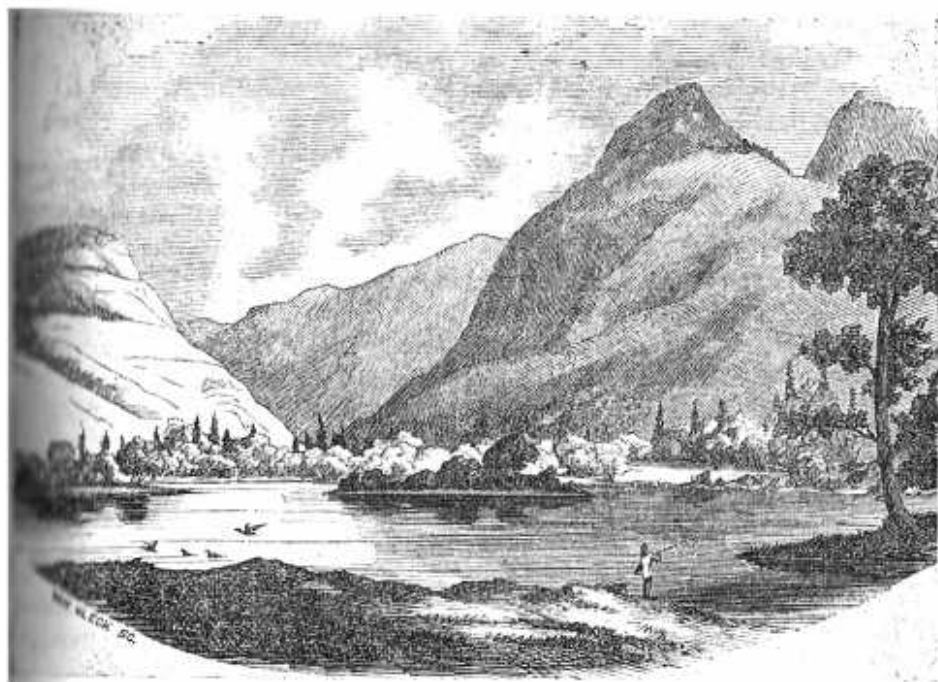
With the "Introductory" out of the way Hutchings presented on the next page his lead article. This was entitled "The YO-HAM-I-TE VALLEY." The first sentence, "There are but few lands that possess more of the beautiful and picturesque than California" shows his enthusiasm and dedication to his adopted state. This article of eight pages and four illustrations was the first of a tremendous number on the Yosemite Valley which Hutchings wrote and published. Its illustrations were engraved from 4 of the 5 sketches that Thomas Ayres had made the previous summer. The first illustration in the article was the well known general view of Yosemite Valley from Old Inspiration Point; the second was entitled *The Yo-ham-i-te Falls*; the third entitled *The Twin Domes*—today known as Half Dome and

North Dome; and a fourth illustration called *The Indian Lake*, today's Mirror Lake. Hutchings, apparently from notes he made on his trip, gave an excellent description of the scenes that the party saw and admired. The article also included the history of the marvelous valley as known up to the time of his visit. In concluding this outstanding article, he made the all-too-true prophetic statement "Before many years have passed away [the Yosemite Valley] will become famous as a place of resort."

Following the Yo-ham-i-te Valley article was one of the few spot-news items to appear in the five years' existence of the magazine. This was entitled *May 1856 in San Francisco* and gave a resume of the assassination by James P. Casey of James King of William, the fearless editor of the *Evening Bulletin*.



THE TWIN DOMES



THE INDIAN LAKE (MIRROR LAKE)

Hutchings describes the rebirth of the Committee of Vigilance, the execution of Casey and another for murders committed, and the tense situation prevailing in the Bay Region at the time. Several pages later he published the text of the Constitution of the Committee of Vigilance which had been adopted on May 15, and in later pages still, an Address of the Committee of Vigilance, June 9, 1856, signed by the Secretary. Although an enlisted member of the Committee, Hutchings, in conformity with the policies enunciated in the "Introductory," refrained from making any editorial comment on political angles. He gained his personal objectives through publication of the facts.

The clarion call to arms was handed cleverly by a full page poem on page 42 entitled *The Vigilance Call*. Four lines suffice for showing the tenor of the times:

"The Ballot-box is naught to thee,
'tis wrested from thy power,
Thy fathers purchased it with blood,
and left it as thy dower,
But villains of the darkest dye,
have wrested it from thee,
And now stand up a freeman,
or forever bend the knee."

Included with several more articles were a learned one on *The California Silk Worm*; a tear-jerker on *The Post Office*; *Dog Intelligence*; and a humorous sketch of an Irish school entitled *A Hedge School*. A serial, *Adventures of Dickory Hickleberry*, was started to encourage desire for future numbers. The author is not named but it could well have been Hutchings. Several poems, of not outstanding quality, graced the available spaces between the larger items. The droll humor for which the English are so well known pervades this, the first, and all the succeeding numbers of Hutchings' *California Magazine*.

With the first copy Hutchings started a department, the "Editor's Table," that appeared regularly each month. In this department he commented on the problems facing his fellow Californians. He copied the name from the *Knickerbocker*, a very successful magazine published in New York. Through this department the editor of *Knickerbocker* had made his publication popular with men of letters. In it editor Lewis Gaylord Clark encouraged budding writers. Although Hutchings used the name, he changed the objectives. Later in the career of the *California Magazine* Hutchings followed Clark's methods but gave the department another name, "Our Social Chair."



James M. Hutchings

The initial number of Hutchings' *California Magazine* gave to the world the first widespread illustrated publicity on the wonders of Yosemite Valley. For his lead article in his first issue he could not have selected a more fitting subject to do justice to California and Californians than the Yo-ham-i-te Valley story. Previous accounts were indefinite in description and buried in newspaper columns. The best of these had been written by Hutchings for the *Mariposa Gazette* in August 1855. He subsequently published in October 1855 the first sketch of a Yosemite Valley scene. The *Gazette* had a limited circulation but fortunately his description was reprinted in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of August 18. Even the *Chronicle* was limited and newspapers are usually quickly read and as quickly destroyed. The *California Magazine* must have come into the hands of people interested in California and its development. In later numbers additional illustrated articles on the Yosemite Valley appeared. The scenes illustrated undoubtedly were known to those active in

the moves that resulted in the grant which Abraham Lincoln approved to set apart "that Cleft or Gorge . . . known as the Yo Semite Valley . . . to the State of California . . . upon the express condition that the premises shall be held for public use, resort, and recreation, shall be inalienable for all time . . ." It should be noted that Hutchings used the word "resort" in the conclusion to the July 1856 article.

The 60 numbers of the *California Magazine* contain a wealth of contemporary information on California. It is quoted as often as any source of the day. A complete file is preserved in the library of the Yosemite Museum and the value of this file is considered greater than the price which Hutchings reputedly received for his right and title to Hutchings' *California Magazine* in June 1861 - a suit of clothes.

Articles in a Miner's Creed.

He believes in fifty cents to the pan and the hot-rock "pitching."

He believes that the feathers in straw pillows should not be over six inches long and an inch square.

He believes in the top dirt paying wages, and water money; and the bottom dirt—a fortune.

He believes that sheets in hotels should not be considered clean after five weeks' use without washing.

He believes that Gold is found in Quartz, but he would be satisfied to find it in pots—or even half-pints.

He believes in going to bed to sleep, and not to close-fists—even in dreams—moreover.

He believes that all over a quarter of an inch in length should be caught by the—handlady.

He believes there is plenty of gold here, but precious little falls to his share—someday; yet.

He believes that it don't pay to sell out everything to come to California, and then go home without the "ore."

He believes that butter sent to the mines should not be used as a motive power—although strong enough for anything.

He believes that labor is not the only capital now required for a good claim.

He believes in "the good time coming," but thinks it must have started for the mountains on a prospecting trip, and got lost in a snow storm.

He believes that if old Father Time had any regard for our prosperity, he would take the juvenile by the ear and thus admonish him—“My son, if you're coming, why don't you come along!”

He believes that hard work, hard prospects, hard beds and hard living will harden him into premature old age. Still.

He believes after all that three or four dollars a day is better than six bits.

He believes that hash set upon the table twice a day for two weeks, after that should be considered pickles.

He believes that "prospecting" may have paid others, but it never did him.

He believes that a good Sunday dinner is not hard to take after a week's work and fasting on stappacks and molasses.

He believes in Hope, but thinks he has lived on that long enough, and would now like something a little more substantial.

He believes it uncomfortable to feed flat-backed live stock in beds, after being charged for his lodgings.

He believes that every man separated, so long from his family or friends, and the comforts and pleasures of a good home, deserves to be well paid, after striving hard for it, if he isn't.

He believes—or rather thinks—that those who labor the hardest, are not always the best paid—at least that's his experience.

He believes in big vegetables, because he sees them; but wonders if there is any other kind of fruit than dried apples, dried apples scalded, and dried apples with the strings in.

He believes that every man who plays at cards when he should be at work, would look rather foolish and ashamed if his friends could just drop in and see him.

He believes that nine persons sleeping in one room only twelve feet by ten, should not allow the landlord to double the number—at the same charge.

He believes that hill diggings will last for ages, and quartz diggings forever; and that all the waters of every mountain stream will yet be required for mining purposes.

He believes that blankets used over three years without washing or airing, are entitled to "walk off" on their own account—for parts unknown; and that no saddle-hoese and lassos should be kept in readiness for their recapture.

He believes that his cabin looks rather lonesome at night; and further, that it would not, if some one that he knows lived within it.

He believes that men to be a leaver who foolishly squanders his hard earnings here, and allows his wife and children to be starving at home.

He believes that a change of cooks in hotels should not always be known by the different colored hairs in his pudding.

He believes that no able-bodied man need want in California—if he is willing to work. Moreover.

He believes it better not to wait for "something to turn up," but in going to work at once and turning something up.

He believes that where he is, there his family should be—and that one home for one family has less expense and immeasurably more comfort than two can have.

He believes, too, that with gentle hands to aid him, gentle words to cheer him, and gentle smiles to welcome him, he could enjoy life as it passes, and work hard and willingly until fortune should crown his labors with success—So.

He believes that California, with all its social drawbacks, is not only a "great country," but that it is in every sense the best place in the world for a working man, and only waits the coming of a good, sensible, intelligent, and contented class of middle-minded women to make "the desert blossom as the rose," and men to become rich, reconverted and happy.

So much it be.

FOURTY-NINE.



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Dan Anderson