

The Commoner.

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THE WONDERS OF THE WEST

A summer trip to the Rocky Mountain region answers a three-fold purpose; it gives rest and recreation to those who are weary; it repays the tourist who is in search of the rare, the beautiful and the sublime in nature, and it furnishes an inspiration and a moral stimulus that the fertile prairies, the growing cities and even the boundless ocean can not supply.

A fourth reason for a mountain trip can be found in the altitude, if one needs the tonic furnished by the rarer air, for to those who suffer from any sort of pulmonary trouble the breezes of the mountains bear healing in their wings. During the past seven years I have spent three brief vacations in the Rockies and they have not only been invigorating but they have furnished to my family and to myself an opportunity to view the wonders of the west.

YELLOWSTONE PARK.

In 1897 we made a tour of Yellowstone park. Leaving the Union Pacific in eastern Idaho at a little station near Beaver Canon, we spent seventeen days in making the trip to and through the government reservation known as Yellowstone park. About half way between the railroad and the park we found the hospitable home of Hon. A. S. Trude, the eminent Chicago lawyer, and made a brief stop there. His commodious cottage is on the bank of Snake river which at that point is a beautiful, transparent stream, about waist deep. The fishing is excellent there, and the same may be said of the hunting. In one day devoted to sport we secured a number of wild ducks, and about thirty sage chickens and a good string of trout. I say we, but my shooting was really not very satisfactory as Mr. Trude's father, a man past eighty and bereft of one eye, killed about two-thirds of the chickens.

We made our next stop at Dwelle's ranch, which is located near the edge of the park. Here, too, fish and game were abundant. In the park itself no hunting is allowed but fishing is permitted, and I never saw trout caught with such ease and rapidity as in the Yellowstone river, just as it leaves the lake.

Yellowstone lake is itself an object of interest, being one of the largest of the mountain lakes. A small steamboat takes the tourist a picturesque trip around its shores. It is in the edge of this lake that the famous hot spring is located. The spring is encased in a wall that seems to have been formed by a deposit of lime and is surrounded by the water of the lake. Here, the guide books tell us, one can catch a trout and without moving from the spot cook the fish in the water of this spring.

Not far from the edge of the lake there is a mud geyser, as it is commonly called. It is a funnel shaped hole and contains several feet of thin mud. Every few moments a puff of gas coming up from below spatters the mud against the sides of the hole and by the time the mud has fallen back into the pit, it is again blown out. When I visited the mud geyser the campaign of 1896 was fresh in my mind, and the working plan

of the mud geyser recalled the editorial policy of some of the opposition papers, especially the New York Tribune.

The hot water geysers of the Yellowstone are to many the chief attraction. Of these Old Faithful is the most constant though not the largest. One can not visit this section of the park, look upon these intermittent pillars of boiling water and thread his way among the smoking hot pools, without feeling that in spite of the altitude he is close to the infernal regions, and this impression is strengthened by the names that have been given to various localities and objects of interest. One place is called Hell's Half Acre, and it has earned the appellation for it not only contains a number of hot pools and geysers, but it is encrusted with a sediment from the hot springs that gives forth a hollow sound and makes one feel that there is but a thin crust between him and raging fires beneath. A cave in this vicinity is called the Devil's Kitchen, while a small spring which flows at intervals is called the Devil's Inkstand. The Devil is also the recognized owner of a frying pan, some paint pots and other articles of ornament and utility. Some of the pools of hot water are strikingly beautiful, reflecting from their depths all the colors of the rainbow, the principal of these being called the Morning Glory. In some instances the springs issuing from the hillside have formed terraces covering acres of ground. These terraces are richly colored by the various mineral deposits.

The canyon of the Yellowstone is one of the principal features of the park. The deep gorge with its brilliantly colored, sloping walls, the falls with dashing spray, the stream which in the distance looks like a tiny thread of green or white according to the rapidity of the current, and the fringe of verdure at the top of the canyon—all these combine to impress the view upon one's memory.

There are hotels at the principal points of interest, so that the tourist can find lodging and food at convenient hours. The animals in the park, protected from danger, have become very tame, so that it is not unusual to see both deer and bear. From a window of one of the hotels we saw a large black bear and two cubs eating the scraps from the table. They were frightened away by some horses and after waiting awhile for the danger to pass, the old bear arose upon her hind feet to take a survey of the field. The cubs followed her example and the three presented a picture that made me wish for a kodak. While we entered the park from the west in a private conveyance, the most convenient entrance is from the north. The Northern Pacific has a branch from Livingston to Cinnabar, from which point coaches make a tour of the park at rates fixed by the government.

YOSEMITE.

In 1899 we made our summer vacation include a trip to Yosemite valley. While it is difficult to compare two things as dissimilar as Yellowstone Park and Yosemite, it may be said of them that

of interest while the latter is built upon a more stupendous scale.

The Yosemite is in central California and is reached by the Santa Fe and the Southern Pacific. Leaving the main lines of these roads at Merced, the traveler takes a branch road to Raymond and from that point reaches the valley by stage. The ride is an interesting one, and one is constantly wondering at the magnitude of the trees. Enormous sugar pines, some of them eight or ten feet in diameter, line the way and prepare one for the giant red woods of the Mariposa group, which are but a short distance from the Yosemite road. These are the big trees of California, but they are so symmetrical that one can hardly believe his eyes or credit the measurements which he himself takes. The largest of these trees is more than thirty feet in diameter—nearly one hundred feet in circumference. Some idea of the size of the trees can be formed when one knows that a roadway has been cut through the base of one of the trees and that when a four horse, three-seated, coach is driven through, the coach and the wheel horses are concealed within the tree.

The road to the valley leads through a mining camp which bears the euphoniuous title of Grub Gulch. When we arrived here we found a rope stretched across the road and the citizens drawn up in line. They bore a banner which certified to the fact that I had carried the precinct by a large majority three years before and they insisted that they were entitled to a speech from the candidate, as a return for their partiality. At Wawona, the half-way house, we stopped for the night. The hotel nestles in a little valley by the side of a fertile meadow and the pine-clad hills which hem it in make the spot so picturesque that we were sorry to resume our journey. About noon on the second day we reached the point where the trail leading to the rim of the canyon leaves the wagon road. While the stage carried our baggage to the valley, we mounted the mules and horses and followed the path to Glacier Point, where the night was spent. From this point the view of the valley is enchanting. Looking down the walls of the canyon to the bottom of the valley, more than three thousand feet below, one sees a picture so beautiful that it hardly seems real. Five streams pour their waters, or rather their spray, into the valley, for the distance is so great that the water does not fall en masse. The Bridal Veil Falls greet one as he enters the valley and the name is not inappropriate, for the wild swaying the falling spray gives it the appearance of a fluttering veil. The falls of the Yosemite, the stream which has impressed its name upon the valley, were a disappointment, the water at that time being exceedingly low. These falls are at their best during the early summer months, when the snow is melting.

The most striking feature of the valley is the famous promontory known as El Capitan. It is a massive piece of granite a little more than half a mile high and considerably more than half a mile in width, without a crack or seam. It is