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THE HETCH-HETCHY.

A Valley Rivaling the Yosemite in Beauty.

Scenes of Grandeur but Rarely Visited.

Towering Precipices and Rocks of Peculiar Formation--Numerous Magnificent Waterfalls.

San Francisco Chronicle.

The Hetch-Hetchy valley is situated on the main Tuolumne river about twenty-five miles west of the crest of the Sierras, and sixteen in an air line north-west of Yosemite. The valley, it is but a widening of the bottom of the river canyon from the common "V" shape to that of a "U," and the substitution of nearly vertical solid granite cliffs for the ordinary slanting earth-covered sides of the California canyon. These two valleys are the only examples of this rock formation to be found in the Sierras, and in fact, exceed in height of walls, size, natural wonders and effect upon the observer any similar formation yet discovered in either hemisphere. A few years after the discovery of Yosemite were made known to the world, Hetch-Hetchy was visited by some person or persons of very vivid imagination, who gave a very exaggerated report of its scenery, stating that it far exceeded the former valley in height of waterfalls and cliffs. A survey of Hetch-Hetchy was made in 1890, by J. O. Gardner, acting under Professor Whitney, then State Geologist. In "Whitney's Guide-book," published by authority of the Legislature, these exaggerations are corrected, and a brief description given, accompanied by a small and somewhat incomplete map of the valley. An article on the valley, by John Muir, published in The Overland Monthly in 1873, completes the literature of Hetch-Hetchy. Volumes have been written describing Yosemite, but of her sister valley, equally beautiful, and in some respects even more remarkable, our public prints, our books of travel, and, with one exception, even our guide-books are silent. Here is a valley, which, were it in Europe, Americans would cross the ocean by thousands to see. Yet, lying, as it does, at our very doors, we doubt if one Californian in a hundred knows of its existence.

HOW TO REACH HETCH-HETCHY.
 I propose, in the present article, to give a description of Hetch-Hetchy from the standpoint of an unbiased observer, who has only to share with others dwellers of the town, the possession during the vacation months of this granite-walled garden of the gods. Hetch-Hetchy is reached from Colfax Springs, a small hotel at the toll-gate on the Big Oak Flat road to Yosemite, thirteen miles east of Garroto. This is a wild spot, being the junction of the middle and south forks of the Tuolumne with the main river. Half a mile west of the toll-gate the road winds along the canyon 2,000 feet above the river, and in view of cascades on the south fork, and a vertical fall on the middle fork 200 feet in height. Further east I crept down a bluff at the junction of the two forks, and from a perpendicular precipice 1,200 feet in height had a fine view of the middle-fork cascades directly opposite. The stream here falls fully 1,000 feet in half a mile. Scarcely a dozen feet from the edge of the cliff the Colfax Springs Hotel as guide and general camp man Eugene Elwell, son of the proprietor, I set out, on the 16th of June, for Hetch-Hetchy and Mount Dana. Each was mounted upon a sturdy mustang, which, in addition to the weight of the rider, carried the rider's provisions for the trip, mostly canned goods and bread. A fair marksman can easily keep the lead in half a mile with game. Crossing the south fork middle forks by substantial bridges--the latter stream, by the way, is well stocked with trout--the road up a steep rocky point, and up the ridge between the middle fork and the main river, though pleasant, breezy forests of yellow, pitch and sugar pine, black oak and cedar, along gentle slopes, where the soft, velvety verdure and pretty white blossoms of the black fern, covering acres of ground, lend a cheerful contrast to its usual carpet of pine needles; across beautiful mountain meadows; and along quiet ponds, where wild ducks disport among the lily pads and grasses. This is our road.

At the Hog Ranch, fifteen miles from Colfax, the wagon road ends, a trail leading from thence into the valley, a distance of ten miles. From Hog Ranch the trail rises rapidly, attaining, however, at its highest point, an altitude of but 4,850 feet, as against 7,400 feet on the Big Oak Flat to Yosemite. The descent into the valley is by a good zigzag trail, rocky in places, but nowhere dangerous, Hetch-Hetchy being easily accessible to ladies accustomed to horseback riding.

A SUPPRESSING SCENE.
 From a rocky bluff a half-mile down the canyon Hetch-Hetchy comes first into open view. It is a straight-out panorama is a noble one, embracing in one vast amphitheater all the most notable objects of interest of the valley. Yosemite cannot produce its equal. It is as if El Capitan, the South Dome, Sentinel Rock and the Yosemite and Nevada falls were brought together into one picture. And then we must borrow Hetch-Hetchy's broad green meadows to equal the panorama presented from the rock on which I now sit. The meadows, level as a floor, traversed by the river, now swollen by melted snows, but smooth and placid, as if its waters had never known tumult and battle, and fringed by noble trees, from the foreground of the picture. Now imagine this scene inclosed on three sides by nearly vertical walls of solid granite, rising from 2,000 feet, on the extreme left and right, to a grand culminating dome in the center of the picture, springing 3,200 feet above the level of the valley. Paint these cliffs a velvety gray, relieved by patches of white, red, yellow, brown, and vertical bands of jet black. Then throw over the foreground of these cliffs two of Yosemite's best falls. Add California sunlight and sky, and the remembrance that you are miles away from the principal objects which form

this gigantic amphitheater of nature, and you have in your mind's eye the first view of Hetch-Hetchy. The valley is about four miles in length, and varies in width from 150 yards in the center, to about half a mile midway of either end. It is irregular in shape, though its general form is that of a crescent. The trend of the valley is east and west. The Tuolumne river at this point is a stream about 300 feet in width. The surface of the lower half of the valley is meadow and the soil extremely rich. This becomes in the winter and early spring a lake of several hundred acres extent, caused by the extreme narrowness of the rocky gateway by which the river leaves the valley. The upper half is sandy and heavily wooded, the soil being poor and producing but little grass. The two sections are divided by a low wall of rock stretching from the mouth southward to the river and confining the stream to a narrow channel. In general shape and contour of the cliffs it greatly resembles Yosemite, yet has still a decided character of its own. It is much smaller than the Yosemite, and, unlike that valley, its attractions are grouped that nearly all may be seen in one panorama. You need to spend at least a week in Yosemite to see all its wonders. Hetch-Hetchy may be more fully seen and explored in three days. Yet one may properly spend a month in either valley.

CLIFFS AND PECULIAR ROCKS.
 The majestic cliffs of the upper valley are the highest, yet less remarkable than those of the lower, being more slanting and less peculiar in shape. The highest I have named, the "Great Eastern," owing to its remarkable resemblance to a mammoth ocean steamer in full sail. Its height above the valley is upwards of 4,000 feet. Just below is another cliff of nearly equal height, known as "Chimney Rock." Directly opposite is another cliff of fully equal height, but without distinctive features.

We have now approached the central and narrow portion of the valley. Here, with bases but 180 yards apart and heads separated by nearly more than a quarter of a mile of air, tower two cliffs. On the south, and pushing its almost vertical front boldly out into the valley, rises a monument of solid granite 2,400 feet in height. It springs directly from the valley without debris worthy the name, and impresses the beholder as does no other cliff about the valley. This is known by the Indians as Koto-nah Rock, and is the most prominent and wonderful feature of Hetch-Hetchy. It slightly resembles, in position and contour, Sentinel Rock in Yosemite, but is a far more wonderful formation. The view from Koto-nah is a grand one. It is easily climbed from a point on the trail leading into the valley, and I shall visit it ere I leave. Opposite Koto-nah a sloping cliff rises 2,000 feet, from the summit of which springs upward a smooth granite dome, lifting its hoary head 3,200 above the meadow and river level. The grand old pines which ornament the dome crest shrink to mere shrubs in the distance. This dome, though inferior in size and shape to the South Dome in Yosemite, presents from the valley level a most imposing appearance that does even that majestic rock, when similarly viewed. It is only when seen from Glacier Point that the South Dome assumes its true grandeur. This dome has never received a name. I leave its christening to able hands.

GARDINER ROCK.
 Just west of the last described dome is a cliff, which I have ventured to name "Gardiner Rock," in honor of the fearless engineer who, in company with Messrs. King and Hoffman, imperiled his life a hundred times upon the precipices of this canyon and the high Sierra. As the result of the work of these fearless men we have the only topographical map of a high mountain country, approaching accuracy and detail, ever yet issued. Gardiner took this cliff, it shall be, in shape this cliff is the Hetch-Hetchy El Capitan, its face and clear-cut corner bearing a close resemblance to that famous rock. It is, according to Gardiner, 1800 feet in height, and on a large portion of its face absolutely vertical. From this point the cliffs decrease in height and become more sloping, till they nearly meet at the narrow river-pass at the foot of the valley.

MAGNIFICENT WATERFALLS.
 Its waterfalls are three in number, besides numerous ephemeral torrents which slide and leap down the cliffs in the early spring or after heavy showers. At the upper end of the valley the canyon divides, as in Yosemite, the Tuolumne coming down the right fork. Here enters what is known as Rancheros creek. Both river and creek are crossed by narrow sheep bridges, and we set out on a half-mile scramble up the rocks overlooking the Rancheros. Any cascades. Any one wishing to gain a clear and perfect idea of pandemonium should visit these falls. The Rancheros creek, a stream forty feet in width, enters a narrow gorge with vertical walls from 75 to 175 feet in height. Down this gorge it plunges for nearly half a mile, making five distinct falls, its entire descent being nearly 600 feet. In this passage the stream everywhere fills its narrow canyon, which, with its straight-out, smooth granite walls, would appear to have been rent asunder by some terrific action of nature. Such another battle of the waters against rock can, perhaps, be nowhere witnessed from so good a vantage-ground. The cliff sides being perfectly upright, with clean-cut edges, allow one to walk with safety along the verge and look down into the foaming waters which fill the gorge below and roar like a lion in maddening pain. At the foot of every fall clouds of smoke-like spray fill the gorge, in which form miniature rainbows wherever the sunlight finds an entrance to the scene. The wild beauty of these waterfalls cascades I have never seen equalled anywhere in the Sierra, and the ease with which they may be viewed even by ladies unused to fatigue, is not the least of their attractions. Below the gorge the creek spreads out upon a broad table of granite and takes its final spring into the valley in a broad, fanlike cascade, in which may be seen spray effects of great beauty.

TU-EE-U-LA-LAH.
 From the summit of Gardiner Rock, about midway of the north side of the valley, looks Tu-ee-u-lah, one of the most beautiful waterfalls to be found in the entire range of the Sierras. It is at the lip about thirty feet in width, and makes a clear jump of from 800 to 1,000 feet. Here it strikes the cliff, and dividing into smaller streams, finds its way down the sloping debris pile to the valley below. As it leaves the cliff it is clean-cut, and darts downward a few hundred feet completely intact--a snow-white ribbon of foam. Then it separates into watery rockets, which run a made race, as if in haste to dash against the rocks below. These, in turn, are resolved into a beautiful lace-like drapery of mist and spray--the buffet of every passing breeze. In a fresh wind it aways back and forth a hundred feet across the face of the cliff. Tu-ee-u-lah is higher than Bridal Veil, possesses more than the beauty of that fall and far more of grandeur. Just east of Gardiner Rock, and but half a mile east of Tu-ee-u-lah, is Hetch-Hetchy or Wapama Falls, both being in plain view from all parts of the central portion of the valley. Hetch-Hetchy can scarcely be called a waterfall, being little more than a grand cascade of water chute. But as a cascade it exceeds anything I ever saw. Its height has been variously estimated at from 1,000 to 1,800 feet. Its position renders calculation by trigonometry extremely difficult. My computations by that method and observations with the aneroid barometer place the falls to the debris pile at 1,500 feet. There are two nearly vertical falls, the rapid descent descending at an angle of about 30 degrees. The fall is walked on one side by the vertical face of Gardiner Rock, but on the east is open, thus affording a view of its full length from the upper end of the valley. The stream forming Hetch-Hetchy is fully seventy-five feet in width, and carries nearly double as much water as Yosemite creek. Its descent is ponderous, grand, awe-inspiring, and in marked contrast to that of Tu-ee-u-lah, which is lightness and fairy-like grace itself. Hetch-Hetchy fills its gorge-like confines with smoke-like spray, and its roar is heard for miles up and down the valley. It is a milk-white mass of foam, showing no color, as do some of the Yosemite falls. Viewed from a central point in the valley Hetch-Hetchy has the appearance of one unbroken vertical fall, and from that standpoint is a grand spectacle. Thus viewed it exceeds all other Sierra waterfalls except Yosemite in height, and even that fall in amount of water. No greater contrast in waterfall can well be imagined than is presented in Tu-ee-u-lah and Hetch-Hetchy, and we doubt if such another is anywhere else presented on one granite wall.

THE VALLEY.
 The valley is 3,450 feet above the sea. Snow falls heavily in winter, and no one has passed the entire year here. There is a large variety of timber, oak, pine, cedar and soft maple being the predominant growths. The flora is varied, flowers and grass growing on the north side of the river to the height of a man's shoulders. The game consists principally of ducks, doves, gray squirrels and beaver. We name the bear last because it is the last game the average tourist wants to meet. Bears abound among the adjacent cliffs in large numbers, and descend to the valley, where they are often seen. Mr. Scrooch kills a dozen or more every season, shooting a large one near his camp, the day of my arrival. They will molest no one, however, unless first attacked, and need not be feared. They are the black, brown and cinnamon varieties, no grizzlies ever entering the valley. Other game, such as mountain quail, grouse and deer are numerous on the mountains and surrounding the valley. The river was stocked with trout a couple of years since, but angling will not be good for some time to come.

The road and trail to Hetch-Hetchy are free to all. Feed is abundant. Parties can drive to Hog Ranch, but ten miles from the valley, where there are excellent facilities for camping, and ride in on horseback next day. There is a small store at Colfax Springs, twenty-five miles distant, and larger ones at Garroto, thirteen miles farther away. All provisions but meat should be brought. Mutton can be bought in the valley, and game is plenty. For a cheap, enjoyable trip, particularly to those averse to trail-riding, and parties limited as to time, I would recommend Hetch-Hetchy. Lesser than the famous Yosemite, it has yet its own distinctive charms, which grow upon one with every day he lingers within its granite-walled depths.

W. P. B.
 Mrs. John Strobel, of Fort Dodge, the mother of eleven children, has become insane over religious excitement, and has been sent to the asylum. One of her delusions is that she is the bride of Jesus Christ.

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