

California sketches, by Thomas S. Chard

CALIFORNIA SKETCHES

BY

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TO HIS

COMPANIONS ON MANY A PLEASANT JOURNEY,

DAVID J. AND MARY P. STAPLES,

OF SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

JULY, 1888.

CALIFORNIA SKETCHES.

However dear the home may be, one should sometimes turn away from its attractions to study other scenes than those familiar to the eyes. Yet it is hard to leave Chicago. In this, the busiest city of the West, one becomes so entangled in the duties of the day and the engagements of the morrow that it requires a strong will to shut down the cylinder desk at the office and say good-bye to one's friends for a month's absence. Even when one reaches the depot the city draws like a magnet. Here are gifts of lilies and roses that inquire whether you are likely to find better friends abroad than those at home, and when the train is started Chicago reaches out after you with street after street and long rows of lighted lamps. You turn from the window, read your paper or chat with your friend, and wondering presently whether the train isn't in Wisconsin, you turn to the window again only to find around you still the streets and lights of the great city. Surely Chicago is an interminable spider's web and our train is a fly caught in its meshes.

At last we have escaped, and as darkness settles on field and wood we can only see in the south a red glow on the horizon which tells us where, with all its glory and misery, Chicago lies.

At Minneapolis we arrived at 8 o'clock next morning in a rain storm worthy of the energy of that remarkable city. There was no carriage to be had at the depot and we inferred that Minneapolis wishing to boom her real estate and attract a good class of settlers had shrewdly slaughtered her hackmen. However, one survivor was at last found to carry us to the West House. Here we met Secretary Dutton of the Firemans Fund, and Mrs. Dutton, our travelling companions to San Francisco. We had intended going to St. Paul, but the weather was so extreme that the only passengers from Minneapolis to St. Paul that day were the fish that went by the river. Furling our umbrellas we were compelled reluctantly to abandon our visit to the latter city. The same evening we departed from Minneapolis for San Francisco via the Northern Pacific R.R.

It might be mentioned that at Minneapolis we were advised by a local ticket agent, who spoke as one having authority and not as the scribes, that all the supposed rights, privileges and immunities, including stop-overs, which the Chicago ticket agent had certified as belonging to our tickets counted for nothing and that we must start again *de novo*. This we did with new tickets.

Once started, our conductor took yet another view of the case, only to be contradicted later on by another conductor. One thing that loomed up clearly in this fog of contradiction, was, that in the interests of morality there should be a general distribution of New Testaments along the line of the N.P.R.R. with leaf turned down upon the story of Ananias and Sapphira his wife.

April 30

we passed through Helena. It is a well built city, mostly brick buildings, and does a thriving business in gold and silver. The city lies at some distance from the depot, and so we take its good qualities upon trust. Before reaching Helena we were saddened by the presence in the car of a young wife in the last stages of consumption. She had been taken in vain to a mild climate with a view to her restoration to health, but Death would not release his claim.

3

Then there was a young mother of seventeen years, sick and pale, with a dying infant five weeks old, who appealed to our sympathies. The conductor kindly stopped the train near Maryville at an old farm house where her home was, and, as the train sped on again we could see the family crossing the field to meet them. Alas, for the sorrows of humanity! “And he said unto her, Is it well with the child? and she answered, It is well.”

We were reminded, May 1, of “moving day,” by being nearly moved into the Columbia river. It was blowing hard and the wind developed a sand storm. A rift of sand covered the track where the roadway passed over a steep embankment, about twenty miles east of The Dalles, and the engine and tender left the track. Had the train been running at a greater rate of speed, in all likelihood these sketches would never have been written. Still we felt sorry to disappoint the salmon awaiting their dinner in the river roaring fifty feet beneath us. We did our best, however, to make amends by inviting a canned salmon to dine with *us*

May 2 found us at Portland—“a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” It is a good city and has a good river connection with the ocean. A part of the year the lower stories of the buildings

whose rears abut upon the river are occupied by water and fish, rent free. Then the water and fish depart for a season under Nature's writ of ejectment, and the business men scour out their basements and store them with goods. Mammon and Neptune, as joint occupants, thus get along peaceably enough, and the population claim to be developing no present tendency toward webbed feet.

May 3, we travelled through a beautiful land approaching the north boundary of California. Ashland, Oregon, impressed us as a particularly attractive little city. It is in a sheltered and fertile valley, the land of which yields sixty bushels of wheat to 4 the acre, and is favorable to the peach. Peach orchards here yield a crop worth \$300 to the acre.

We came upon Shasta in the afternoon. Wrapped in clouds, and shut in from the gaze of curious worldings, its awful summits held secret communion with God. Later, the clouds parted like the door of a tent and the snowy mountain-top appeared for a moment shining with celestial brightness.

May 4, we arrived at Oakland pier where we were cordially welcomed by President Staples of the Firemans Fund Insurance Company, and tired and hungry, taken to his hospitable home. We had been seven days on the way.

San Francisco is to the West what Chicago and New York are to the Central and Eastern States. Its unsurpassable harbor makes it the natural gateway for the trade of the Orient, and the rich valley lands as well as the gold and silver mines tributary to it, ensure a permanent basis for its prosperity. The city is finely situated on rising ground, much of which is rolling and irregular, and the view which it presents from the bay is therefore very impressive. Especially is it so at night when seen from a distance. Then it appears like a vast tower of light.

The hotels of San Francisco are as fine as any in the world. Its street car cable system is absolutely perfect, and one can penetrate to any part of the city or its surroundings in an open car and enjoy meanwhile the cool invigorating air and beautiful prospects which open on every side. The important discovery of petroleum in various parts of the State, and the improved appliances for

its use as fuel, are likely to solve an important problem for San Francisco, and enable that city to compete with the East in manufacturing. At present, coal in California costs more than with us.

There is very little of the wretched poverty to be seen around San Francisco which so oppresses the senses in cities like New 5 York and Chicago. Even the dwellings of the poorest classes seem to indicate a reasonable degree of cleanliness and comfort.

The per capita wealth of the citizens of California is greater than that of the citizens of any other of our United States, and it is no uncommon thing for the savings banks of San Francisco to have on deposit from \$60,000,000 to \$75,000,000 of the savings of the people.

The two principal clubs are the Union and the Bohemian, the former club owns its own building, which is a large and stately structure, elegantly furnished. The Bohemian Club has a worldwide reputation. It draws together the literary men and wits of San Francisco, and every year queer celebrations are held in the country which are known as the "High and Low Jinks." The club rooms, which are over the California Street Market, contain a large assortment of the beautiful and diabolical, and the paintings on the walls represent scenes elsewhere visible only in nightmares. The patron saints of the club are Geo. Bromley and an owl.

The markets of San Francisco are the finest we have seen. In Chicago we depend on the corner grocery, but in San Francisco everything for the table can be found under one roof, and the offerings of the various stalls are brought into such contrast that each butcher or green grocer knows the importance of maintaining the highest standard. If you want soft shell crabs you get them for 50 cents a dozen, and a cauliflower that in Chicago would cost from 50 to 75 cents, according to the time of the year, would cost 10 cents in San Francisco.

These fruits and vegetables are not found in particular months only, as with us, but all the year round. The same soil producing, during the year, three or four continuous crops. No wonder that extreme poverty seems to be one of the lost arts in that favored city, and that the people generally are happy and contented.

The private residences of San Francisco are all constructed of wood, save that of James Flood, which is large enough to be the State Capitol. Many of these residences are of surpassing elegance, and there are few dwelling houses about which one cannot find a luxuriant growth of roses. Yet one feels like putting earmuffs on those which grow on the shady side of a San Francisco street, for there the air is likely to be uncomfortably chilly, whilst on the sunny side of the same street, any coat, like the grasshopper, is a burden. Notwithstanding the cool air of San Francisco and its winds, the flowers in their profusion and magnificence, put to shame their sisters in the languid south.

If you wish to see wild flowers, take the road to the Presidio and then to the Cliff House. They are there in millions, gemming the hillsides in countless varieties. And there you will see roses. Roses clambering over houses, peeping into windows, knocking at doors, rocking in the air, overrunning trees and hedges. Jack roses, Tea roses, Black Princes, La Frances, Bon Silenes, American Beauties laughing at the practical—making the whole landscape a ball room of roses, and themselves mad and merry dancers swinging to the orchestral breeze, which they fill with perfume as they dance to its measures.

The Inferno of San Francisco is represented by its Chinatown, and we visited it on the evening of May 5. The locality is absolutely bad. Opium dens are seen everywhere, with their drugged and stupid occupants. Dimly lighted and tortuous underground passages open upon nameless abominations and stench that would turn the stomach of an ostrich. Even as a Frenchman seasons every dish with garlic, the Chinaman flavors every stench with opium. No civilized man would eat pork developed under the sanitary conditions under which Chinatown thrives and *smiles*

There are weak sentimentalists who think that Christianity⁷ requires the emptying of these pagan hordes into Christian America. “They can be the better reached and converted.” So long as “America” in this connection means only San Francisco eastern philanthropists will probably continue to favor this theory. But does it never occur to them that the soul of the American lad is as

valuable as that of the Heathen Chinees? and that our own people have some claims to be protected from the contamination of this Canaanitish immigration?

One of these sentimentalists in advocating Chinese immigration to a friend of ours, said, "You know the Bible says that God 'hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.'" "Finish the sentence," was the reply, "and hath determined the times before appointed, *and the bounds of their habitations*" It is admitted that in constructing railways and other like work the Chinese have been valuable to the State of California. But the land is not wide enough for Jehovah and Joss, nor can it be permitted to non-assimilating aliens to build colonies in the heart of our American cities whose practices are fundamentally opposed to the interests of civilized labor and to everything which a western nation holds dear.

May 10 we left San Francisco for Monterey. The journey, of about four hours, is through a lovely valley decorated by the country seats of wealthy San Francisco business men, and possessing the singular fertility which everywhere characterizes California soil. On this journey we passed Menlo Park, Belmont, and the beautiful little city of San Jose, especially distinguished for the large and delicious strawberries which its vicinity produces. During the height of the season we understand there is sometimes a daily yield of forty tons of the berries.

The Hotel del Monte, or Hotel of the Woods, is doubtless one of the finest resorts in the world. The building itself was built by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company, with no apparent regard for expense, and it is of vast size. There are a hundred acres of ground around it devoted to groves and gardens. The groves which give the place its name consist of a number of oak, pine, and cypress trees, venerable with age, standing in front of the hotel and shading grounds in which can be found almost every variety of flower known to man.

A few hundred feet from the hotel is an amusing puzzle called the "Labyrinth." One enters, by a gate, a dense hedge of evergreens and turning to the right or left, at will, must find his way to the center of the labyrinth by paths that diverge every way through hedges which are several feet in height.

Fairly in, one wanders along, sick at heart and weary of limb, and takes paths which lead from nowhere to nowhere, or flattens his humiliated nose against a *cul-de-sac*. His theories of localities quickly go to pieces. He thinks he knows something and finds he knows nothing, and he fears at last that his bleached skeleton may be found in the tangle at some future epoch by some other idiot who may have ventured, like him, through the deceitful gate. Finally, after countless twists and turns, the victim stumbles into daylight.

May 11, we drove to Monterey, where the United States flag was first raised on the Pacific Coast. A deep sleep fell upon the town soon after its birth. The *adobe* houses are nodding into streets through which the wash of the bay resounds like a snore. The backbone of a whale, long dead, forms the walk up a weedy way to the old church, and with in the mouldering structure all is as dead as the whale, save a window of rich stained glass which lightens up the chancel with the hope of a better life.

In Monterey were Sherman's headquarters ere the War. The barracks is a ruin, the piazzas hang about it like rotten cobwebs, and no one answers the roll call there but the owl. We could not but offer up the supplication, as we drove through the town. "O 9 Lord, in wrath remember mercy, and let not thy servants be condemned to dwell in this place." But on and on we go by the shore of the beautiful Monterey Bay, which, curving around towards Santa Cruz, reaps the waves "with its sickle of white sand."

Leaving the bay, we came upon the grounds and the buildings occupied by the Methodist camp meetings, and then we passed through fragrant woods until we emerged at last upon the ocean shore, near to the seal rocks. These rocks are within a stone's throw of the hard beach, and on them and in the circumjacent waters were thousands of seals, swimming or sunning themselves, and making an uproar like that of the San Francisco hackmen. Here, also, we saw wild flowers again. They were clambering up the hills in countless millions, and then again running down to the water's edge to cool their lips in the sea. We counted thirteen varieties of these children of nature within a

space of ten square feet. We tried to find a flower whose name our companions did not know, but we could not. Lovers of nature and of California, they knew its flowers by heart.

Having passed the seal rocks, we came in our drive to groves of cypress trees. The Monterey cypress is a curious tree. It starts out well enough from the ground, but when its trunk is a dozen feet in the air, it suddenly remembers that it has a pressing engagement in the direction contrary to that of the prevailing wind. We saw a great many trees, the tops of which appeared to be a dozen feet away from their centers of gravity.

This delightful drive is seventeen miles long, and none should miss it who visit the Hotel del Monte.

May 12 , we left the famous hotel for Santa Cruz at 6:20 a.m., and reached the latter place at about 11 o'clock the same morning.

Santa Cruz is a cheerful little city overlooking the Bay of Monterey. It is specially sought after by summer boarders, and is built upon a plan that would delight a goat.

10

After lunch, we drove along a well shaded romantic road, over the Santa Clara mountains to the Santa Cruz big trees. The redwoods of California we will describe later. The Santa Cruz trees are smaller than those of Mariposa or Calaveras. However, one of these trees is eighteen feet in diameter, and others are seventeen feet. From the big trees we went by rail to San Jose, where we arrived for supper.

May 13, we left San Jose early in the morning for the summit of Mt. Hamilton, where we were to see the famous Lick Observatory and telescope. The journey involved a stage ride of fifty-two miles going and coming, but we felt well repaid for the exertion.

Mt. Hamilton is approached by an easy upland drive over a good road. As one climbs the San Jose hills overlooking the beautiful valley, the outlook constantly widens over a picturesque country.

We were considerably more than half way on our journey when we reached Smith's Creek, where an excellent meal awaited us. Another hour brought us within easy sight of the white dome of the Observatory. Far beneath us were the summits of the hills we thought were mountains. Beyond them is the fertile valley where San Jose stands. The orchards therein are but green squares on a checker board, and San Jose itself has diminished to a dot. Beyond all these is yon blue bank along the horizon. It is the Coast Range of mountains.

Our way is still upward, and as we look out upon the extended and magnificent prospect we think of the words, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" There are heights from which our earth must seem like a trembling star—a dewdrop sparkling in the hand of its Creator; yet even here not a sparrow falls without our Father, and to Him the little and the great are one.

We reached the Observatory buildings soon after noon, and were kindly welcomed by the professor in charge.

James Lick, a man of vast wealth, but of little or no education, had generously provided in his will for the rearing of this Observatory. His name has become inseparably linked through his beneficence with many of the best charities of the State, and with his name will go down in history with honorable mention, as the adviser of his charities, that of D. J. Staples. In his last illness, Mr. Lick, though weak in body and mind, and though not during his business life known as a philanthropist, turned with true instinct to one who united sound judgment with a generous heart, and who, though often tried by the invalid's perversities, wisely turned the current of the sick man's wealth into useful channels.

Mr. Lick was not a scientific man, and his intention at first was to locate the Observatory in the heart of San Francisco. From this purpose Mr. Staples dissuaded him, and Mt. Hamilton was at last chosen as combining the greatest altitude with the clearest atmosphere in California.

The object glass of this great telescope is the largest and most powerful ever made, and it is mounted in a steel tube sixty feet in length, supported by a stone pier at the base of which lies the

body of James Lick. Much cutting and grading were necessary to prepare a proper foundation for the Observatory and more than 75000 tons of solid rock were removed for this purpose. The telescope can be brought to any angle easily by hydraulic power, and the entire floor, perhaps fifty feet in diameter is lowered when it is desired to elevate the object glass for observation at the zenith. This powerful telescope gives the moon to us as that satellite would appear to the unassisted eye were it but two hundred miles away. We looked through a smaller telescope and saw Sirius twinkling like a diamond, and we thought of our early lessons in astronomy as we viewed this star.

Dr. Child, in referring to the star *α Centauri* as being twenty billions of miles from the earth, says, "How can we get into our minds some idea of so great a distance. The standard of miles 12 seems utterly vague and profitless. Do we succeed better when we are assured that it is equal to 206,000 times the space separating our planet from the sun; or that a ray of light darted from its surface could not reach our eye under three years and seven months, though it traveled with its usual speed of 192,600 miles a second? 'Such, then,' says Sir John Herschel, 'is the length of the sounding-line with which we first touch bottom in the attempt to fathom the great abyss of the sidereal heavens.'

"First, touch bottom." Let us try soberly to realize the fact that this flight has landed us only at the threshold of the starry universe. So far as it is yet known, this famous star of the Centaur is our nearest neighbor. The well known Sirius, which from being the brightest among the stars, was conjectured to be also the nearest, has been found to be at least six times the distance of *α Centauri*, from which it follows that every ray of that dazzling orb that now meets our eye, set out on its journey some twenty-two years ago."

James Lick gave this great telescope to explore with its farseeing eye the starry heavens. We do not know what thoughts were cherished in his simple heart about possible discoveries on distant planets, but as "the heavens declare the glory of God," we believe that the telescope will often give to science new reasons for revering the Creator and for thankfulness that God was pleased to move an unlettered man to place at its disposal this splendid gift.

On May 17, at 7 p.m., we left San Francisco *via* the Southern Pacific R.R., for the Yosemite. We reached Raymond the following morning at 7 o'clock, and there took the stage. The morning was hot and the road dusty. In the stage beside our own party of four, were a retired merchant from Milwaukee, Wis., and his wife, cultivated pleasant companions; and by contrast, an elderly person in petticoats. She possessed a tongue and temper sharpened like a saw. After a spirited passage-at-arms with each of her neighbors, and a vicious kick at all baggage within her reach, she devoted herself during the remainder of the journey to rendering miserable a meek Object supposed to be her husband, and whom she called John. Heaven help thee, John, and give thee a chance some day to better thy condition!

We dined at an eating station established by Judge James Grant, formerly of Chicago, who informed us in a biographical conversation that he had made a million dollars in the practice of law in that city; this, we thought, was better than the average luck. The Judge is a little man with a big heart. He has adopted, reared, and started in honorable careers, twenty-two children not his own. He has been a road builder on the mountains, and constructed the road from his station to the top of the Chowchilla range, from which may be seen one of the most extended and picturesque views in California.

Our afternoon drive was more interesting than that of the morning, and we passed vast sugar pines and yellow pines covered with artistic draperies of green moss. The soft bark of these trees is drilled like a sieve by the industrious woodpecker, and in the cavities thus made he stores with care his winter's supply of acorns for food. Along comes the thievish blue jay and steals the acorns he is too lazy to gather, and the defrauded woodpecker must do without. Ah, what a world of woodpeckers and blue jays this is!

Rushing down the narrow road with its projecting roots and rocks on the one side, and its uncertain edge on the other, we gazed at the tips of the mighty pines which rose from the awful gulfs below to brush the axles of our wheels, and we remembered the text, "There is but a step between me and

death.” In the present case, however, there was but the eighth of an inch. Even the tongue of John's wife was stilled by the 14 impending danger, and John gets a moment of blessed peace.

Soon the worse is over, and as a cool breeze is coming up, she asks the driver, “How long will it be before we get there?” “About two hours,” he replies, and mutters, “She has made everyone else miserable to-day, I'll see what I can do for *her*” The lady thereupon laboriously unpacks her satchels, and wraps herself and the Object in shawls. Her labors are hardly completed before we see Clark's near at hand; then the whip goes off like a pack of fire crackers, the horses leap forward, turn a semi-circle, and land us at our destination. Everyone is feather-dusted like a piece of furniture, and great is the need. The fine, penetrating red dust enters everywhere, and one never makes a presentable appearance again in a suit which has gone through the Yosemite.

Clark's, or Wawona, as it is more properly called, is a tavern in a lovely little valley thirty-eight miles by stage from Raymond.

Surveys have been made to this point for a railroad connection with the Southern Pacific. When constructed, the proposed road will increase the travel to the Yosemite by saving many miles of staging. The accommodations for travelers are excellent at Clark's. Near the hotel is the studio of Mr. Thomas Hill. He is an artist of wide reputation and great artistic ability. If any one could portray upon canvas the marvelous scenes in the Yosemite Valley, Mr. Hill would be that man.

At 7 o'clock next morning

we are off again, expecting to cover in seven hours the twenty-six miles which yet lie between us and the Yosemite. The road is more pleasant than that we followed the day before, being even more picturesque, and it has the advantage of being comparatively free from dust.

We visited the Yosemite in 1875, and then entered the valley by the old stage road from Merced. On the present occasion, our route was by way of Inspiration Point. Since the visit of 1875 we have travelled through some of the most noteworthy and 15 beautiful portions of the Old World, but we

saw no scene there that could compare in sublimity with the views in this wonderful Californian valley.

As the Yosemite cannot be fully represented on canvas, neither can it be described in words. In rare moments, which may not occur twice in a lifetime, one may have been brought deeply under the spell of perfect music. We remember it was so with us one evening in Lucerne. We wandered along the margin of the beautiful lake, in the twilight, until we came to an old cathedral reared by some master hand long crumbled into dust. There was just enough dusky light left to illuminate faintly the richly stained window in the chancel and enable us to find our way to a seat. One of the greatest masters of music in the Old World was at the organ, which is second largest in Europe, and for an hour the grand harmonies which he gave us lifted us out of time and sense, and seemed to bring us into the immediate presence of God.

Such emotions as we there experienced cannot be fittingly described in words, nor can the kindred feelings awakened by the first view of the Yosemite Valley. Its heights and depths can be measured and stated, but the impressions which they convey are beyond language.

We registered at the Stoneman House, on arrival, and spent the remainder of the day in resting. Next morning we took horses for the trail which leads up from the valley to the Vernal and Nevada Falls. The road is unpleasantly narrow, and Mr. Staples, whose experience in the State dates back to 1849, volunteered the explanation that whenever it is necessary to make a mountain trail in this country, it is done by drawing a chalk line on the side of the mountain. Gazing up from below at the alleged trail over which we were expected to travel, it certainly seemed as if this ingenious plan had been resorted to.

The heroine, who accompanied us, was mounted on a neat little 16 black pony. Mr. Staples' 200 pounds were carried by a small able bodied mule, while the writer was astride a melancholy sorrel brute with suicidal propensities. This wretched animal had the habit of spinning around like a teetotum whenever the trail was particularly narrow and dangerous, and then shaking his hind legs over the precipice in a manner fearful to contemplate.

Philip, our guide, a swarthy Spanish lad, was in the advance. Half way up, we came upon a rushing and roaring river, following which we soon saw the beautiful Vernal Fall. This fall is 475 feet high, and derives its name from the color of the water. The remainder of our way was steep and dangerous, yet the surpassing sublimity of the scenes which opened before us removed all fear. Midway up one gets a more satisfactory impression as to the height of the tremendous walls which enclose the valley. They are grey granite, with enough of mica in their composition to give them a sheen like silk.

We arrived at the base of the Nevada Fall at noon, thankful that we had escaped with our lives. The Nevada Fall is 639 feet high. about four times the height of Niagara. Well did we remember visiting this spot in 1875. On that occasion as on this, our companion was our friend, Mr. Staples. The latter, though an old pioneer, had never before seen this wonderful valley, and as his bosom swelled with the pride befitting a Californian on such an occasion, he turned to the writer and said, "If you have a particle of poetic sentiment in your breast, now is the time to express it."

Something like the following was penned by the equally loyal Chicagoan in response to this request: "The world might well com to gaze on this scene; These awful heights veiled in the Heavens serene, These boiling cascades—yon cataract's sheen: But the greatest of all of the wonders to me, Is that they from Chicago such distance should be."

17

I shall never forget the rueful glance that my friend bestowed upon me when he came upon the unexpected climax.

After reaching a safe level on our return we asked the guide what ailed the horse whose unseemly conduct we have described. He replied that the animal had probably eaten rattle-weed. This noxious weed grows thereabouts. The horse, that eats it, loses his usual good sense, and would as lief as not step over a precipice or break his stupid head against a stone wall. When he is in that condition they say he is rattle-weeded. Horses and underwriters are seldom cured of this disease.

May 21, we arose early for a drive to Mirror Lake. This little pond covers several acres and its greatest depth is said to be twenty feet. To see the spectacle which it affords, one must be there early in the morning and before the sun rises. Then the mirror-like surface of the lake reflects faithfully its surroundings—the trees on its shores, the stupendous cliffs which rise thousands of feet above its levels, and crowning all, the blue of Heaven. Like early childhood it mirrors back to the beholder whatever is beautiful of earth and heaven, but alas, like childhood, “the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but the grace of the fashion of it perisheth.”

Leaving Mirror Lake we drove through the entire valley, viewing again with interest its vast granite heights. Every day spent at their bases gives one a juster appreciation of their majestic proportions. At night they cast the valley into a deep shade through which the stars shine down with peculiar brightness. The walls are free from the appearance of decomposition which marks their noble rival, the Black Canyon of Colorado, and they stand with but little change. Occasionally from some dizzy height, a rock, large as a cottage breaks like a pebble, and striking the depths below, startles the valley with an earthquake shock. These fragments are everywhere seen. A few years ago 18 the Cathedral Rocks thus lost one of the spires from which they derive their name, The rocks known as the Three Brothers, show some signs of decomposition, but old El Capitan, rises undaunted nearly 4,000 feet above the surface of the valley in an almost vertical line, and looks as if he would endure for all coming ages.

The Yosemite Fall on the north side of the valley consists of three cataracts, which make a total descent of 2,500 feet. The volume of water varies with the season of the year. The great height from which the water falls reduces the apparent breadth of the cataracts which is really some thirty feet.

The Widows Tears is a trickling stream that falls into mist on the south side of the valley and is so called because it runs dry every few weeks.

The Bridal Veil Fall, opposite El Capitan, is surrounded by rainbows and dissolved into silver mist. Three merry pages clad in silver, carry the train of the lovely bride as she stands before her eternal altar.

The Yosemite is the property of the State, the gift of Congress, June 30, 1865, to be held forever for public use, resort and recreation. The grant provides that the premises shall be managed by the Governor, and eight other commissioners to be appointed by the Executive of California, who shall receive no compensation for their services.

May 22, we left the valley at 6 a.m. on our return trip, and with many a backward glance, reached Clark's again at one p.m. After dinner, we took the stage with a party of pleasant friends for the big trees of Mariposa, which are eight miles up the mountains from Clark's. Our driver was the same who had brought us up out of the Yosemite. A thin visaged, weather beaten fellow, with a pair of squinting, mischievous eyes, shaded by a sombrero and with a pleasant voice, that easily rippled into laughter.

If we had not been glugged with wonders in California, we 19 should have thought this driver a Hercules of falsehood. As it was, we hardly knew what to think. As we ambled toward the big trees, he referred to their height and assured us that they were so tall that it took a man and a boy to see to the top of them. The man looked until he was tired, and then the boy finished the job. One of these trees had recently fallen, he said, and the echoes did not die away for three days. This statement seemed like an exaggeration of the truth, but coming upon the trees themselves, and glancing up their colossal shafts, until the vision is lost in their star tangling heights, one can only mutter, "It may be true."

The approach to the big trees is through a beautiful country, and there is a general bigness of all varieties of trees in the vicinity. The largest sugar pine in the world grows here, and we saw many a sugar and yellow pine that must have been five or six feet in diameter.

Commenting on the combination of soil and climate necessary to produce such growths, our driver remarked that it was also a fairly good soil for melons. When a melon seed was planted, if one wished to secure the fruit, it was necessary to send a mounted cowboy after the vine with a revolver, with which to shoot the melons off. We were not in California during the melon season so that we could not personally verify this story, but we saw plenty of strawberries in the San

Francisco markets which may have been harvested in some such way. We decline to give the dimensions of the few we measured, as we have some desire to retain our reputation for veracity.

Finding that his information regarding the melon was well received, the driver proceeded to tell us that it was also a famous dairy country, and that there was a water-power saw mill hard by that in the dry season was run by buttermilk. It seemed necessary, at this point, to hint to the driver that he should educate us gradually, and so sacrificing a pawn to 20 check-mate his king, we suggested that after all, his wonderful big trees were not of the *Sequoia Gigantea* family. He unwarily asked us, what they were then. We answered "Chestnuts" and a dead silence fell upon the party.

The big trees of California cannot be comprehended even when seen. They are so vastly greater than the greatest trees to which we are accustomed, that we have no standard of comparison. The bark is shaggy and of a light tan color, so that the tree is seen distinctly at a distance, even when standing in a grove of pines. These pines, large as they are, look like saplings when surrounding the redwoods. The larger of the sequoias have been named by a strange anachronism after distinguished men of our own time. It would seem more fitting that they should draw their designations from the greatness contemporary with their birth. Our modern Generals, Statesmen and Poets might well consent that these vast columns of antiquity should bear such names as Constantine, Virgil, Plato, St. Paul or Julius Caesar. We, however, withhold such criticism in thankful recognition of the fact that the trees are not decorated with the names of Aldermen, County Commissioners or successful Speculators.

Many of the big trees have been partly burned at their base by camp fires built by miscreants, who, to broil a beef steak, would willingly destroy the noblest specimens of the Almighty's handiwork. The State has now assumed charge of the Mariposa Grove, and the trees are guarded with care.

Professor Whitney says of these trees, "the largest is thirty-four feet in diameter. There are two each of thirty-three feet, thirteen between twenty-five and thirty-two feet, etc; 427 trees in all. The greatest height of any tree is 272 feet." One may convey an idea of these diameters to Eastern friends by tying together the ends of a cord corresponding in length with the circumference of one

of the trees, and then stretching the cord into a circle on some 21 convenient lawn. Or, imagine a tree so large that a stage coach could pass through an opening in the trunk made by fire and the axe. Such a tree arches the roadway in the Mariposa Grove. One can hardly stand without emotion before these ancient denizens of the New World. From their great heights they have looked down for ages upon the fleeting generations of men. At their base the clamor and fret of time exhaust themselves. In their far green heights are the singing of untroubled birds and the breezes of eternal summer.

May 23, we left Clark's at 8 a.m. by stage and reached Grant's for dinner, thence by stage to Raymond, where we had supper. There we took the train for Berenda, at which place we parted with our traveling companions. They went north to San Francisco, and we south to Los Angeles.

Los Angeles is an old Spanish town with many low *adobe* houses still standing to mark the spot where the original white inhabitants dwelt. These Spaniards, sensuous, extravagant and indolent, yet religious, could not co-exist with the practical, driving, saving Yankee. In their sweet lipped language they installed a saint as the patron of each of their villages, and thus left their permanent record in the nomenclature of the State, but the Yankees came, and the Spaniard, desiring to add a new diamond to his spurs, orto tip his soles with gold, or to make a lovely present to his dark eyed lady love, mortgaged his saintly possessions, and the Anglo-Saxon device known as a foreclosure, in time installed the sagacious American in place of his spendthrift predecessor.

This good City of the Angels is now largely in the hands of men from the Eastern States, who, in making "real estate turns," seem to be avenging upon each other the wrongs of the original owners.

We first saw the city in 1875. Then it was in short clothes, so to say. It now claims 50,000 citizens. It contains many fine 22 mercantile buildings and more are projected. It has also a large number of tasteful private residences, with grounds handsomely decorated with trees and shrubs, save that here, as elsewhere, it is the custom to cut evergreen trees into hideous cubes, cones, gate arches, and other deplorable devices.

Los Angeles is famous for its orange orchards, and in a small way it has begun to raise ostriches. One sees in shop windows ostrich eggs large as small cocoanuts, lavishly displayed regardless of the wear and tear of their production.

The environments of Los Angeles enjoy the advantages of contrast with the arid and waterless wastes which characterize that part of the State. All that the Mojave Desert needs is water to make it a profitable tributary to Los Angeles. At present the crops chiefly grown upon the desert are "ifs" and sage brush. The climate of Los Angeles is good, though monotonous; the mean temperature in January is 52 degrees, and 75 degrees in July. The rainfall is less than that of the northern part of the State. The climate goes with the land in all real estate transactions.

We spent a few hours at Pasadena. The site of the city was a sheep ranch a dozen years ago. The shearing is now done by the real estate agents. Pasadena is rich in orange, lemon and lime trees, and in Raymond excursionists. The Raymond Hotel at East Pasadena commands a view of valley and mountain scenery of great beauty. Looking across the intervening shades and lights of the valley, one can see the site of the Sierra Madre villa, one of the loveliest spots on earth.

San Diego, our next resort, has the second best harbor on the Coast, with an abundance of water in the channel, and an ample bay. There is a large promontory running from the mainland which bounds this bay. This promontory was purchased two or three years ago, by the Coronado Beach Company, for \$110,000. The company proceeded to construct one of the largest and finest 23 seaside hotels in the world, and then sold to private parties perhaps a quarter of the land for \$3,000,000. They have three-fourths of the land yet on hand. The Coronado Beach Hotel is under the management of J. B. Seghers, Jr., formerly of Chicago. His exquisite taste is apparent everywhere, and the table is what might be expected from the reputation of the manager. From the glass enclosed piazza of the hotel one looks directly down and out upon the Pacific Ocean, and listens to the sound of the waters breaking along the shore. Here an invalid or tired-out business man can find health and happiness if anywhere.

The county in which San Diego is located has an area of about 15,000 square miles at present mostly desert land, which irrigation in time will doubtless reclaim, as the soil seems to be under cultivation, rich as cream.

There is nothing larger in California than the price asked for San Diego real estate. John Jacob Astor, many years ago concluded with good judgment, that the land where now stands the present city of Green Bay, Wisconsin, was likely to be at some time the site of a great city. He therefore bought it all, and held it at such prices that emigration passed westward and southward. Other cities were established, and Green Bay lost its golden opportunity through the rapacity of its owner. San Diego might well profit by this lesson. It has great natural advantages as a seaport town, and it needs thrifty settlers far more than it requires gamblers in land. Correcting the evil referred to San Diego will some day be one of the finest cities on the continent.

May 29, we visited Riverside, famous for its orange orchards. Water flows in abundance through ditches along the streets of the city, and a plentiful supply exists for the orchards. Magnolia Avenue Drive we found to be hot and dusty. It derives its name from the abundance of pepper and eucalyptus trees, which grow on 24 either side. We saw one orange orchard of twelve and a half acres, the crop of which we were told had sold this season for \$8,250. It was ninety degrees in the shade the day we visited Riverside. The place has been so eulogized by others that it is not necessary to enter upon the subject here. There is only an average annual rainfall of nine inches in Riverside, yet it is a Prohibition town. Even the grapes are dried into raisins. We should think the sun might readily do this.

June 1, found us in San Francisco again, and the following morning in company with Mr. and Mrs. Staples we took the Cloverdale route for the Geysers. Our journey to Cloverdale took us through San Rafael and the lovely Santa Rosa Valley—we think the prettiest valley in California.

We reached Cloverdale in time for dinner and began to realize that the shadow of his Satanic Majesty's sceptre was falling on us even as we dined. It changed our steak into leather and our coffee into mud. We took the stage at a little after one o'clock for the Inferno, and of all roads,

crooked, narrow and hair raising for danger, that from Cloverdale to the Geysers is the worst. For three hours we crumbled along on the edges of precipices and looked down upon black depths below, where crawled along the Pluton river like a silver snake. Our way was beset by a wilderness of poisoned oak, and there venomous serpents make their fitting abode. We saw one huge rattlesnake sunning himself by the wayside.

It was after three o'clock in the afternoon when we reached the Geysers. The hotel is at the bottom of the canyon and but a few hundred feet away from that indescribable place, which the first discoverer, a German, vowed was certainly the mouth of hell. A guide took us speedily to the Pit. It opened with fair promises, as Sheol always does. Here was an iron spring, which seemed to promise fair things for the health, and also a spring of eye-water, 25 which looked as if the eminently fair devil wished even the blind to see how broad is the road which leadeth to destruction.

But what is this? When we were here thirteen years ago, there was a cave at this entrance to Sheol, called the Devil's Office. It was full of vile smelling chemicals, and before it was a stone arm chair. There is no vestige of the Office now. The guide told us that an earthquake which visited the canyon four years ago, shook the Office out of existence. We thought of the Power, that will one day shake the infernal spirit out of the earth, and like St. Paul, we thanked God and took courage.

Passing along, we trod on a hollow sounding shell of earth, as we climbed up the Geysers. Jelly-mountains of steaming boiled mud surrounded us on all sides. Every color known to man was mixed together in an infernal, inextricable jumble to form these smoking masses. Greens, reds, blues, browns occur in streaks or in a conglomerate, and holes are seen everywhere, through which gush boiling waters, or come the hoarse breathings of steam. Sulphur, alum and salts of all kinds are mixed together without order, and look like the wreckage of a drug store blown up by dynamite.

We next came upon what is called the Witches Cauldron, a stone basin full of hissing, bubbling water, hot enough to boil an egg in a minute. Next we saw a spring of genuine indelible ink, and a cool stream that soon became heated by the addition of boiling waters. Crowning this utterly satanic and fantastic place, rises a lofty square rock, which has been given the name of the Devil's Pulpit.

We climbed to this eminence, from which we had a good view of the canyon, and then we took another path on the way back to the hotel. This led us by the celebrated Steamboat Geyser, which is merely a hole in the ground emitting great volumes of very hot steam.

We left the Geysers early the following morning. Our driver 26 was young Foss, the son of the Celebrated of that name, now dead. The road is a much more satisfactory one than the Cloverdale road. It is wider and better ballasted. A mountain rainstorm overtook us on our way, but did not prevent the songs with which we wiled away the time. On our way we stopped at a large wine warehouse filled with great casks of what we heard was good wine, and there we took up a mounted grind-stone, which our friend informed us was to sharpen our teeth for the next beefsteak. Fortunately, we were able to penetrate the steak at Calistoga without such assistance.

Calistoga used to be a famous watering place, and when we visited it in 1875, it had a natural spring of what would easily pass as the best kind of chicken soup. There was also in the vicinity, as we remember, or possibly it was at the Geysers, a spring of excellent lemonade. California seems to produce everything. From Calistoga we went by rail through the beautiful and fertile Napa Valley, and saw many fine vineyards and orchards. We arrived in San Francisco at 6 o'clock, just in time to keep our engagement with the green gosling smoking for our supper.

June 7.

The time has arrived for leaving San Francisco and California for the East. The minutes are moving all too swiftly for us, and there is a twingeing at our heartstrings, as we say good-bye. In all these weeks the most generous and considerate kindness has been ours, in the light of which the city stands in a glow, as we watch its receding hills from the Oakland Ferry.

May the stars to-night shine kindly on the home we are leaving, and on all homes everywhere under God's blue sky!