

YOSEMITE VALLEY AND THE BIG TREES.

WHEN Dr. Johnson wrote of that Happy Valley of W Amhara, in which Rasselas, the Prince of Abyssinia, and his sister Nekayah "lived only to know the soft vicissitudes of pleasure and repose," he must have been granted a mental vision of the great Yosemite of California. The pellucid lake, teeming with aquatic life, and the silvery stream which coursed through the valley, could not have been more enchanting than the watery mirror which mingles the reflected pictures of the fleecy clouds floating above and the towering rocky domes about which they hover, or the dashing Merced, bearing to the ocean the icy waters from the eternal glaciers of the mountain summits; nor did they, in their efforts to escape from this pleasure prison to search the world for the true source of happiness, encounter more unscalable cliffs or loftier walls of rock than those which encircle this valley in the heart of the Sierras. The fame of Yosemite has become co-extensive with the limits of civilization; yet the time was, and not many years ago, when reports of the grandeur of its canyon walls, its crystal lake and wonderful waterfalls, and of the giant trees of Calaveras, were classed as "California yarns," along with stories of enormous nuggets, marvelously rich quartz ledges, wonderful feats of road agents and bloody Indian fights. It took thousands of visits by travelers, hundreds of written descriptions and illustrations, to convince the world that the Yosemite and Big Trees actually existed as they are revealed in the following pages.



THE SENTINELS, CALAVERAS GROVE.

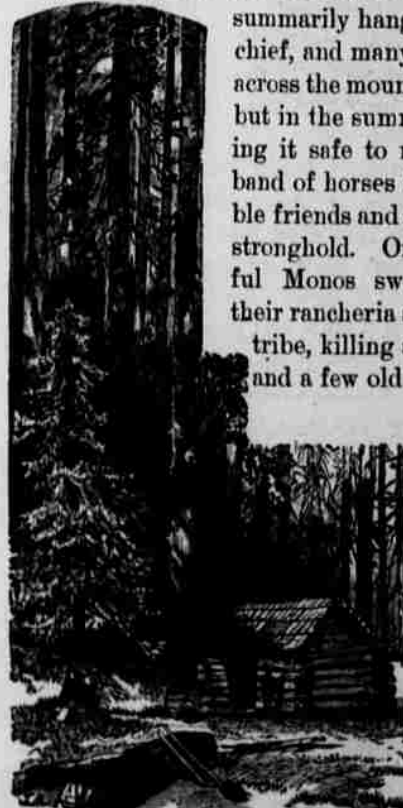
In November, 1850, the Indians living on the headwaters of the Merced, San Joaquin, Fresno and Chowchilla rivers, combined for the purpose of driving the white intruders from their country, emboldened by their exemption from punishment for frequent outrages previously committed. A number of trading posts and small mining camps were attacked, their occupants killed or driven away, and the property destroyed. A battalion of volunteers was raised to chastise them. A battle was fought, and the Indians were defeated with much loss. To all requests to surrender and end the war they returned a contemptuous refusal, asserting that they had secure retreats whither they could flee, and that one place in particular was such that, should the Americans enter it, they would be caught in a trap from which they

could not escape. This only whetted the curiosity of the volunteers, and in January, 1851, two companies of the battalion started upon an expedition in search of this aboriginal stronghold. In March, after many Indians had been captured, the command entered this wonderful mountain locked valley and captured all its human occupants, the last to succumb being the inhabitants of a rancharia on the shore of the now famous Mirror Lake. They were all taken to Fresno and soon after



LIBERTY CAP.

liberated upon a promise of future good conduct. In the spring of 1852 they attacked a small party which was visiting that region, and killed two of them and wounded a third. A company of United States troops entered the valley and captured five braves wearing portions of the clothing taken from the murdered men. These were summarily hanged. Ten-ie-ya, the chief, and many of his braves fled across the mountains to the Monos; but in the summer of 1853, deeming it safe to return, they stole a band of horses from their hospitable friends and drove them to their stronghold. One night the vengeful Monos swooped down upon their rancharia and blotted out the tribe, killing all but eight braves and a few old men, and carrying



FIRST LOG HUT IN MARIPOSA GROVE.

off the women as the spoils of war. These turbulent Indians were renegades from the various tribes from the Tuolumne to King's River, and called themselves "Yosemite" (Great Grizzly Bear). This name, at the suggestion of Dr. L. H. Bunnell, who accompanied all these expeditions and subsequently assisted in the survey made by George H. Peterson as engineer for General Fremont, was bestowed upon the valley by a vote of the volunteers who