

hid a further passage between them; but a mountain stream here conveniently pierces the range, and the road, traversing the pass thus made, is crowded between the precipitous rocks on either side. The narrow defile, the lofty cliffs, and the rushing torrent, which every winter carries immense boulders down its bed and tears the road and leaves it rugged, constitute a scene almost sublime. Gaining the summit of the range, one looks down on a charming pocket or little valley devoted to the plow, whose waving crops formed a most pleasing contrast to the pastoral strip along the sea. A little gorge enters this valley, and over its summit falls a stream a distance of 120 ft, making a picturesque miniature Yosemite, and we lingered lovingly in the dark ravine of Nojsqui almost all of one Lord's day. Crossing a few more spurs we dropped into the main valley of the Santa Ynez, whose mesa is crowned with one of the old Mission churches.

After leaving the valley and Mission of Santa Ynez (Saint Agnes), we passed through a well-wooded pastoral country, where the conditions are unfavorable to tillage, as in so many portions of the State, and "walk-away crops" necessarily go hand in hand with sparse populations.

Such numerous and extensive interspaces of mountains or unirrigable land, which must be devoted to pastoral life, must always give a special character to the rest of the population of the State. Long intervening distance between communities, combined with long, dry seasons and cheap horses, invite to excursions by wagon and horseback, and thus it is that nature impresses Californians with nomadic traits. She has other seductive conditions by which to instill nomadism into the citizens of the Pacific slope; by placing bonanzas in secluded nooks, on the tops of the ranges, even above the snow line, she tempts the young and energetic to lonely and adventurous wandering all over her mountains. Again, by having in a most niggardly way denied the boon of timber trees to southern California, she has made its citizens largely dependent upon Oregon for their lumber.

The housing of the people is influenced by the climatic conditions, for, where it is never cold nor hot, the house is not the essential thing that it is where great extremes prevail; and the home is in the open air rather than indoors. Thus nature is a foe to the domesticity that pertains to a winter fireside and a rainy region, and roaming habits replace permanence.

We found, after rising out of the Santa Ynez valley, some arable lands interspersed among the pastoral valleys; and passing on we crossed the Santa Maria mountains. In the valley of the latter salinas, the river was dry, and the sandy, rocky bed seemed at least a mile wide; but the tedium of the trip across it was relieved by the weird look of the bluff by which it was surrounded.

Arrived at San Luis Obispo, we found a country seat nestled among the mountains, but connected by a narrow-gauge railroad with an ocean port, at which there is a whale fishery. Monsters have been caught there, and one 84 ft long was stranded on the shore.

From the town of San (Saint) Luis the Bishop (Obispo) we came to El Paso de Robles (the Pass of the Oaks), where are hot and cold springs and baths of sulphur and other mineral waters, and where many miracles of healing are said to have been performed by the early Padres. Nech springs abound throughout the State, and the medicinal virtues of each have earnest advocates. Perhaps the *res mediatricis* of nature, when aided by rest, fresh air and good company, is the most powerful agent.

Coming down from the high uplands of the San Luis Obispo region, we reached the Salinas plains, which open out into Monterey bay. Across this plain, as also through the mountain passes and in certain localities, strong winds blow daily; and these sometimes increase to a storm of sand and even pebbles fearful to encounter. The wind was so cold and fierce as we crossed these Salinas plains, that at 3 o'clock in the afternoon in June we were glad to espy a house in the distance, under the lee of which

we were fain to drive up for shelter while we got out our blankets. Again, as we approached the Livermore pass, the wind was so furious that the face of the driver was actually cut and bled from being struck by the sharp sand flying in the air, while the rest of the company were glad to shelter themselves in the bottom of the wagon. But the effects of these winds is to make the interior valleys habitable which would otherwise prove too sultry for human endurance; the prevailing direction being from the west, carrying the fresh cool ocean atmosphere landward.

THE TURN EASTWARD.

Leaving these sad windy plains, we rose up over the San Juan mountains, and on the crest looked back to bid the sea good-bye and then down into the charming Santa Clara valley, one of the finest in the State. This valley opens out into the San Francisco bay and lies between the Coast and Contra Costa ranges. It is thickly settled and thoroughly cultivated, and is the residence of very many wealthy people.

Proceeding up the Santa Clara as far as Gilroy, we turned squarely to the east, and crossed the Contra Costa mountains by the Pacheco pass, which some of our party were disappointed to find was not a narrow defile, such as the Greeks defended at Thermopylae, but only an extensive depression in the range. The road to the top was one of easy grade, and on the summit we obtained an extended view of the San Joaquin valley and of the Sierra Nevada, which hems it in on the east. As agriculture is a greater source of wealth to California now than gold mining, some account of wheat culture is here in order. We rode for many days through continuous wheat fields, all unfenced, unmanured and unirrigated, which had been put in in the most economical manner that such a wholesale process can suggest. One day we camped next Mr. Funk, at Grayson, and watched his Leviathan harvester at work. Twenty horses in two lines were hitched one-half each side of the ponderous pole which extended behind, to propel the colossal machine. The end of the pole in the rear was supported on a castor wheel, and a man on a high seat on the pole guided the huge engine by a tiller. In front was a cutting-bar snipping off only the heads of the grain and making a swath 16 to 20 ft wide. The height of the cut was regulated by a man on the platform in front attending a large lever, and the heads fell on to an endless apron which carried them to an elevator, which in turn lifted them to a mammoth thresher, mounted on the platform of the machine. Another man attended the thresher, which ran out its debris on the cut stubble, and delivered its threshed grain into a fan, also carried on the platform. This fan also had an attendant, who swiftly supplied it with empty sacks, sewed up the full ones, and then dumped these overboard into the ocean of a grain field through which they were traveling. Thus 40 acres were cut, threshed, cleaned and sacked per day by only four men and 20 horses! Wagons following in the wake of the aurian monster, gathering up the precious freight and hauled it to the riverside for embarkation. Mr. Funk said he was only a one-horse ranchero, and yet he drove his machine two and a half miles through his grain in one straight stretch without turning. The harvester was attended by a kitchen on wheels, 30 ft. long and 10 ft. wide, walled and roofed with canvas, so that the men had no need to return for their meals to the ranch house.

Of fruit we saw a great deal in Alameda county, where we were, though entire strangers, most kindly received by Judge Russell, of Hayward, as we were indeed all along our route. He has a 30-acre currant ranch, and this fruit (as also the cherries of this region) is perhaps the largest and finest in the world.

We had been warned in leaving Santa Barbara that there were numerous lions in our path; but it had been especially impressed upon us that we should have a terrible time in crossing the San Joaquin, as it overflows its banks when the snow melts in the Sierras, and makes a swamp of the plain through which it runs, extending many miles on either side. As we

neared the river we had reports of the wide extent of country submerged, and found our safety was to follow the stage. Putting our baggage on the seats of our wagon and three of our ladies in the stage, we followed it as our pilot through the lake. For 14 miles we traveled through the water, which was sometimes only fetlock deep, and sometimes up to wagon bed; and in some of the sloughs there was a dangerously swift current. The driver even had to have the road indicated by poles part of the way; and we had the comforting assurance during a portion of the day, that if we deviated only a foot from the hidden causeway over which we were supposed to be driving, we should mire down in eight feet of water. Once on this causeway the mules fell down and it was an arduous task to get them up again. We had a 40-mile drive that day, and with a heavy load, soft roads and tired animals, it was an exacting work to keep the horses steady.

But all difficulties were soon surmounted and we reached our desired haven—Merced—and entered on the new task of going up into the mountains in search of the Happy valley.

ASCENDING TO THE VALLEY.

At Merced, our party of nine, including two drivers and a cook, was enlarged by the arrival of our friends from the East, who with their driver just doubled our numbers. Our train consisted of a four-horse baggage wagon, three two-horse wagons, and four saddle horses—a caravan of quite imposing proportion. The drive up steep hills, five and ten miles long, the narrow shelf or ledge which constitutes the road which winds so closely into and around spurs as to keep one of our nervous gentlemen in constant agony looking out for "the man coming around the turn just ahead," and the still more dangerous drive down the steep grades, has often been so vividly described as to enable the reader to realize the situation. But who shall portray the Yosemite? Who can wield a pen or brush so as to convey in its fullness the sublimity of height and massiveness of this great natural wonder?

The Yosemite empties west out of Sierra Nevada into the San Joaquin valley, and is coursed by the Merced river. A rapid descent on the Coulterville trail of about 3,000 ft., lets one down to the floor of the valley, which is a nearly level area about six miles in length and from half a mile to a mile in breadth, sunk almost a mile in perpendicular depth below the general level of the adjacent region. It may be likened to a gigantic trough, hollowed in the mountains, nearly at right angles to their regular trend. This trough is quite irregular, having several angles and recesses, let back, as it were, into its sides, and at its upper end it turns sharply and soon divides into three branches, through either of which we may (going up a series of gigantic steps, as it were) ascend to the general level of the Sierra. The great height of the almost vertical walls of the valley, especially as compared with the width of it, and the very small amount of debris at the base of these gigantic cliffs, give the trough a U shape, rather than the V shape of other California valleys.

THE FEATURES OF THE SCENES.

Having entered the valley at its western or lower end by either of the three wagon roads, one is soon face to face with the gigantic El Capitan, a rock standing out from the north side of the valley, so imposing in its stupendous bulk as to seem as if hewn from the mountains, squarely cut and lofty, on purpose to constitute the type of eternal massiveness. On the other side of the valley we have the Bridal Veil fall, unquestionably one of the most beautiful objects in the Yosemite. This fall, though divided into two cascades, one of 630 ft. and the other of 300 ft., has the effect of a continuous leap of 900 ft. vertical height, its base being concealed by the trees which surrounded it. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon the sun shines on it and a shifting rainbow is seen, now rising, now falling, now swaying to the right and now to left, now iridescent, now evanescent, as the leaping water shifts and sways about under the influence of the passing wind. Proceeding up