

the Coast Range, and called it Tchastal. The early trappers adopted this name and handed it down to us as Chasta, the carelessness of the present generation having still further modified it to Shasta. The same name was applied by the trappers to the valley lying at its base, the river that bears its cold, snow waters to the Klamath, and the Indians occupying the valleys and mountains to the northwest. The various tribes designate the peak by different names. The Shastas call it I-e-ka, the white, and this name still remains to us, though terribly distorted, in Yreka, the chief town of Siskiyou County, within whose limits the mountain stands.

Nothing gives us so good an idea of its magnitude as a comparison with the surrounding hills, dwarfed into insignificance by its overshadowing presence. Professor Whitney gives its altitude as 14,440 feet, and this estimate is the one generally accepted, though observations of the Coast Survey add three feet to these figures. But two peaks in California exceed this altitude—Mount Whitney, 15,000 feet, and Mount Williamson, 14,500 feet. They, however, fall far short of Shasta in grandeur and magnificence, for their bases rest upon high mountain ridges, above which they rise but a few thousand feet; while the base of Shasta, in Strawberry Valley, is but 3,570 feet above the level of the sea, and the mountain towers up in a single peak, 11,000 feet, not with the gracefully sweeping lines of Mount Hood, but rugged and majestic. Towards the top it divides into two peaks, one rising 500 feet above the other. The craters of several extinct volcanoes can be distinctly seen from the apex, the largest one on the lower peak, and having a diameter fully a mile in length. Between these lies a deep gorge choked with snow and ice, while several living glaciers fill the canyons on the northern slope. In winter the mountain wears a spotless mantle of white from the timber line to the very summit; but as the summer months come on dark ridges appear, and in September, before the storms again set in, their blackness forms a strong contrast with the snow lying in the gorges and deep canyons that seam the mountain's sides.

The last evidence of the gigantic forces that heaped up this mighty mass and scattered the almost endless fields of lava that are found for miles around, is to be seen in the hot springs near the apex of the higher peak. They are thus described by the United States Coast Survey: "The extreme summit is a steep ridge, not more than 200 or 300 feet through on a level with the springs, and composed of shattered lava, which looks as though any water falling in rain or formed by melting snow on it would immediately run out through the cracks. There is in the material nothing which, when brought in contact with the air or moisture, would cause heat by chemical action; yet at the bottom of the steep ridge there is a little flat of half an acre full of hot springs, most of them very small, and the largest not more than three feet across. They have a temperature of 100 degrees [this must vary greatly at times, for it has been found by others to be as high as 180 degrees], and their water is strong with sulphur and other minerals. In some the

water bubbles up violently, and there are openings in the earth from which hot steam rushes out with great force and considerable noise. One of these vents throws out a jet of steam two feet in diameter. These springs and the earth around them retain their heat through winter as well as summer, notwithstanding the severe cold that must prevail there."

Until recent years the ascent of Shasta was an undertaking of considerable magnitude; but now, by means of the experience of years and the services of guides, it is possible to all who can endure the fatigue of so long a climb. There are but three months in the year when such a journey is considered safe—July, August and September. Long before the winter rains set in tempests rage about its lofty brow, and woe to him who has to contend with their fury. In the spring storms beat upon its face when all is calm below, and the frozen snow is so hard and slippery that danger attends every footstep. It is only when the weather is fairest, and after the warm rays of the sun have somewhat softened the snow, that the pleasure-seeker attempts to reach the top, though for scientific reasons ascents have been made in April and November. April 29, 1875, Professor John Muir and Jerome Fay went up to select a location for a monument, and were caught in a storm that prevented them from returning. All night they lay in the mud by the hot springs, the wind blowing a perfect hurricane and the thermometer many degrees below zero. Lying first in one position and then in another, they changed as often as the heat of the mud became unendurable, and, as they rolled over, the raw wind swept across the blisters raised by the heat and intensified their agony. As soon as morning dawned they started to descend, weak and almost crazed from suffering, and were met by friends who had gone to their relief, but not until their blistered feet had become frost-bitten, and their clothing had frozen and mercilessly chafed their parboiled flesh. Their experience was a terrible one, and will serve as a warning to any foolhardy man who may think April a safe month in which to test the fitful temper of Old Boreas on Mount Shasta.

It was four years after the miner penetrated this region before any one attempted to climb this peak, in whose very shadow they were washing out the yellow grains of gold. Early in September, 1854, Captain J. D. Pierce, a merchant of Yreka, made the ascent alone, and so incredible did it appear that but few would believe it. He therefore guided a party of thirteen to the top, and prove his claim of being the first mortal to place his foot upon the crown of Shasta; for the reverent fear of the Indians has kept them from thus profaning what they believe to be the abode of the Great Spirit.

Let us also make a journey to the top, but let us go by moonlight, and not in the glare and heat of the sun. In Strawberry Valley there is a little summer resort known as Berryvale, consisting of two hotels, a little store and a post office. This is the rendezvous of all who desire to become intimately acquainted with the mountain monarch.