

visited it, though it was afterwards learned that the Indian name was "Ah-wah-ne," and the name of its original occupants "Ah-wah-ne-chee." It was first explored in the summer of 1855 by J. M. Hutchings, author of "Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity in California," who took with him Thomas Ayres, an artist of considerable



SOUTH, OR HALF, DOME.

note in San Francisco, to make sketches of the wonderful scenery. It is chiefly through the exertions and writings of Mr. Hutchings that the fame of this marvelous valley was spread abroad, and the name of Yosemite became as familiar to the people of every land as the ancient Rock of Gibraltar. He learned from the Indians that the proper pronunciation of the name is "Yo-ham-i-te," but, undoubtedly correct as it is, it never has, and probably never will, come into general use. In 1864, after the valley had become noted, and was annually visited by sight-seers who were willing to undergo the hardships of travel necessary to reach it, Congress granted it to the State of California, upon the condition that it be forever dedicated to the use and enjoyment of the people. It is now under the control of a board of commissioners appointed by the Governor, who have by purchase of private toll roads and the construction of highways, bridges, etc., rendered a trip to the valley easy of accomplishment. Excellent hotels can be found there, or, if a party prefer camp life, there is no objection to their making the tour of the valley in that manner, conveying their camp equipage

and provisions upon the back of a pack animal, and themselves making the journey upon saddle horses.

The Yosemite Valley lies on the headwaters of the Merced River, in the very heart of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. It is eight miles long, and varies from one-half to a mile in width, containing about 8,480 acres of ground. It is 3,950 feet above the level of the sea, and is surrounded by an almost unbroken wall of granite rock rising above it to a height varying from 2,500 to 3,300 feet, and overlooked by mountain peaks which pierce the clouds 10,000 feet above the sea level. The scene which

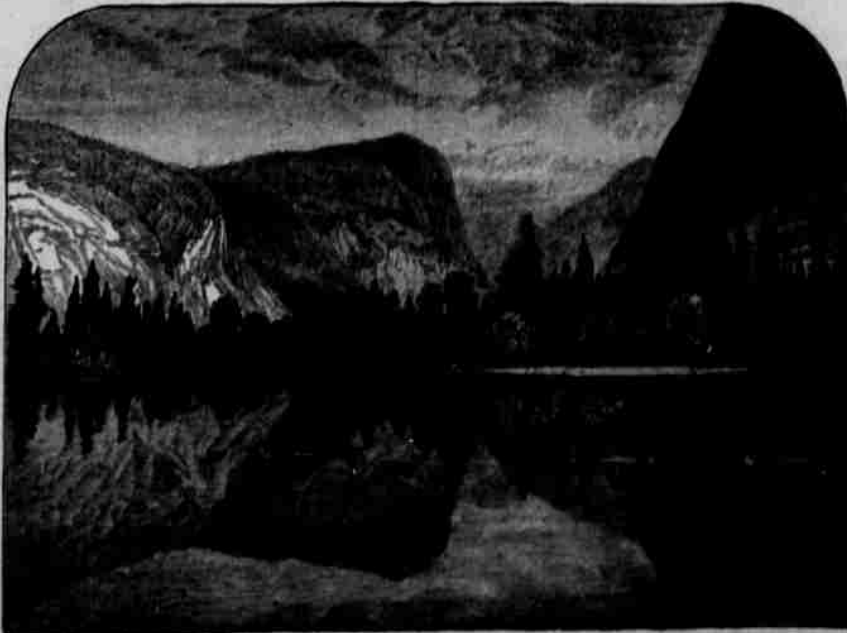


NORTH DOME AND ROYAL ARCH.

opens out before the traveler's eye at many points, while descending the tortuous trail, is one whose reflection can never grow dim on the glass of memory. Though not as grand a view as is offered from many points in the valley itself, yet being the first revelation of the wonders Nature has hidden in those mountain wilds, the impression made is the most vivid and enduring. In one long sweep the eye encompasses a large portion of the valley, taking in the lofty granite walls, the guardian domes of rock, and the numerous waterfalls pouring over the canyon's edge and plunging down hundreds, and even

thousands, of feet to form the Merced River, the crystal stream which meanders so peacefully through its entire length.

Entering at the lower end and following up the course of the stream, which flows midway between the opposing canyon walls nearly the entire distance, the first great wonder encountered is the Bridal Veil Fall, the "Po-ho-no"



MIRROR LAKE.