NOTES OF TRAVEL.

GOING INTO THE YOSEMITE.

By Grace Greenwood.

The New York Times
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- See Wikipedia article on the
- on June 1, 1872, she gave a lecture in Santa Cruz (n.com)
  - she left from SF on June 4 (text)
  (I wish she said more about the Valley itself.)

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[illegible]

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The stage-ride from Merced over the plain, to the foot-hills, was not tedious, for the road led through magnificent golden grain-fields, ready for harvest; but we were not sorry to reach the rising ground and the shade of woods. Hornitos was our dining-place—a place to be remembered for its nice hotel and nicer landlady. The drive from this point to Mariposa is quite delightful, the air as you ascend becoming purer, and the way more green and flowery. At Mariposa we were obliged to wait, with another party of tourists, some five hours, till coaches should come down from White & Hatch's—the powerful Chicago and St. Louis combination having swept all before it. The little old mining town, so long associated with the fame and fortunes of Gen. Fremont, has but a dismal and dilapidated look, though it is said business is reviving there somewhat.

We quickly looked up all there was to be seen in the town, and were reduced to extremities for amusement. Finally, we observed that something unusual was going on in the office of a Justice of the Peace, contiguous to the hotel, something interesting to young Mariposaians. In fact, preparations were being made in those narrow and awful precincts for an exhibition, by a band of "champion minstrels," and a "celebrated female contortionist"—not a singer, but an acrobat. We strolled into the place, and found a few benches arranged for the generous public; a stage was partitioned off from the auditorium by a row of tallow candles in tin candlesticks, and backed by a mysterious green curtain. That stage and the vacant hall were somewhat suggestive and tempting to the male portion of our party of idle tourists, who proceeded to organize a Grant meeting on the spot. One gentleman, a Boston official, who, though a Grant man, controls a good many Democratic votes, he having charge of the City Jail, made a rousing speech and was followed by other orators. The entire burden of the laughter and applause did not fall upon us, for the occasion had called into the hall a motley little "cloud of witnesses," two or three miners and drovers, several small boys, a Mexican mule-driver, a Digger Indian and a Chinaman. A happy unanimity seemed to prevail in our meeting. The minstrels in the disguise of white men appeared from behind the curtain, declared for Grant, and respectfully solicited the honor of our patronage for the evening. One English traveler, late of the army, on whose military stomach the undigested Alabama matter evidently set hard, stood proudly neutral, but all the others, from the Sheriff of Boston and the rich shoe-dealer of Lynn, down to the small boys of Mariposa, the Chinaman, the Greaser, the Digger and the women, were loyal to the Administration. Yet, no—there was one hardy, grizzly old miner, with a throat like a hoisting-shaft and a fist like a quartz-crusher, who swung his dilapidated gray hat, which, perhaps, once was white, and hurraed for "Honest old Horace Greeley." I think Mr. Greeley would have been gratified by this brave demonstration, in the face of an arrogant majority. Even we were touched by it, and a hush fell on the gay assembly; but I am sorry to have to add that one of our party who had been in the bar-room, and knew whereof he affirmed, declared the gallant minority to be in a state of semi-inebriation.

As we looked every minute for the coaches, we dared hold out no hopes of patronage to our friends, the minstrels, and we almost grieved when came still evening on and twilight gray, to see them hurrying hither and thither to procure for us arm-chairs, which they placed before the rude benches provided for the common people. I am afraid that, gentle Bohemians and good Grant men though they were, they prayed for our detention at Mariposa that night, and I must confess to an amiable desire to listen to their wild warblings and to see their wilder audience. I even felt the [illegible] on the modest efforts of the [illegible], it being my principle [illegible] woman in entering on new careers of fame and emolument, and knowing well in what narrow and [illegible] feminine genius is driven by cruel disabilities. [illegible] what an interest we all took in the gathering of that small audience. An infant drummer stood at the door and drummed vigorously, but recruits came in slowly. I, having been in the show business a little myself, was the most sympathetic. I strolled anxiously up and down the side-walk [illegible], returning now and then to the [illegible] of the hotel with reports like these: "A force of one old miner just marched in," "a woman with a baby in arms," "a small detachment of boys," "a file of servant-girls," "a squad of infantry commanded by papa and mamma," "a reinforcement of grandma," "a rear-guard of [illegible] and greasers."

Our coaches arrived, but it was announced that they would not be ready to leave before 9 o'clock. During that half-hour we could see something of the performance. A commutation of half-price was proffered, and we went in—that is a select few of us. We declined the reserved seats, and quietly sat down on one of the benches among the people. We felt democratic. We fellowshiped the rough miner, the ranchman, the Mexican mule-driver, even the Greeleyite. We could have tolerated, at a distance, the stern and haughty Digger, rightful sovereign of the soil, whose name is a misnomer, for he toils not, neither does he dig. The orchestra-chairs we had declined did not remain unoccupied. Eight small girls in their Sunday best entered the hall, with an imposing rustle of starched ruffles, came calmly forward and filed into those seats of honor. There was more room than their small crinolines could fill, their little feet dangled uncomfortably, but they sat erect, stately and solemn, as so many delegates to a Female Suffrage Convention, gazing intently at the curtain, throbbing with dark dramatic mysteries. At last it was drawn aside and the minstrels appeared, bowed graciously, and set to work. Every rôle was duly filled; there was the aggravating conundrum man, and the proper middle-man, and the funny end-man, who played on the tamborine with his knees and his heels, and his nose, and banged it against his head till he struck fire from his wild, rolling eyes. It was curious to watch the effect this personage produced on a row of small boys just at his left. They watched him with rapt, unsmiling eagerness, unconsciously imitating every grimace and contortion of his countenance. It was as good as a play to watch the little chaps. As the one door of the hall was closed with jealous haste, and the shutters of the one window inexorably barred against the crowd of impecunious Peris outside, the air within was, to say the least, not bracing. So, when summoned to our coach we were quite resigned to go, even though the fair star of the evening had not appeared. We shall all, I am sure, long remember with a gentle human interest that melancholy row of minstrels, and their serious little audience.

We had a rather anxious night ride of twelve miles over a rough road, through streams and gullies, and along steep, rocky cañons, to the hotel of White & Hatch, which we did not reach till 1 o'clock in the morning. But the mountain air began to tell on us, and after a brief sleep and a good breakfast we were in condition thoroughly to enjoy the superb forest ride, up the Chouchilla Creek, over the Divide, and down by a descent of nearly three thousand feet to the end of the stage-road, the famous ranch of Clark & Moore, on the South Merced, a lovely, lonely, piny, primitive place, with a peculiarly peaceful, restful atmosphere pervading it. Here we were received with simple, hearty cordiality, and proffered the freedom of the Sierras and the ranch; here we were entirely comfortable and very happy throughout our too brief stay. The only drawback to the enjoyment of the ladies of our party was the discovery that the great Chicago monopoly had, by means of an *avant courrier* dispatched before daylight on a fiery mule, secured all the side-saddles—and that we must lie by indefinitely, or take to the Mexican saddle, and riding *en cavalier*, both for our excursion to the Big Trees, and our longer journey into the valley. So, with a tear for the modest traditions of our sex, and a shudder at the thought of the figures we should present, we four brave women accepted the situation, and, for the nonce, rode as woman used to ride, in her happy, heroic days, before Satan, for her entanglement and enslavement, invented trained skirts, corsets and side-saddles. We were fortunately provided with strong mountain suits of dark flannel and water-proof, which fitted us for this emergency, and for any rough climbing we had a fancy for, and that was not a little. Well, after a trial of some fifteen miles the first day, and twenty-six the second, we all came to the conclusion that this style of riding is the safest, easiest, and, therefore, the most sensible for long mountain expeditions, and for steep, rough and narrow trails. If nature intended woman to ride horseback at all she doubtless intended it should be after this fashion, otherwise we should have been a sort of land variety of the mermaid.

Though the days were warm in that charming resting-place, beside the unresting Merced, the nights were very cool, and a bright camp-fire in front of the hotel was surrounded till a late hour by a circle of tourists, guides, pack-mule men and stage-drivers. We took to reciting ballads and telling stories. Of the latter, the most horrible and hair-elevating sort were at a premium. There was a generous and amiable strife as to who should contribute most to the general discomfort, and produce the most startling and blood-curdling effects. The English ex-officer carried off the palm. His story, told in a characteristically cool way, so chilled us with horror that we drew closer around the camp-fire, and shuddered audibly. Just a little way off, under the pines, was a cluster of wigwams, and the camp-fire of the bloody Diggers—howling fitfully that night, over the bear-skin couch of a venerable savage, said to be over a hundred years old, and dying without benefit of clergy. Ah! how novel and wild and primitive and delightful it all was!

By the way, the old Indian didn't die after all the ado. He was only testing the affection of his kind.

The Mariposa Grove of Big Trees is about six miles from Clark's, up a trail somewhat rough, but leading through forests of great beauty. Many of the pines along our way were of imposing breadth and height, but the first regular *Sequoia Gigantea* we came upon was lying prone upon the earth, that had yielded to him, when he fell, almost as the sea gives place to the hull of a great ship. This mighty recumbent shape, whose battles with winds and tempests are over forever, is a majestic image of repose and release. What ephemeral creatures we seemed beside that scarred and moldering trunk, on the tender green of whose young branches had glistened the dews of the night, which was the shadow of the most blessed day of the world—the day that dawned in Judea, under the watching of angels and the singing of stars. Wild races had passed away under his shadow; he had crestened and towered—waited through the slow cycles, and decayed and fallen before the spiritual light of that dawning reached the dim solitudes of the vast Sierras.

The largest of these Mariposa trees is "The Grizzly Giant," but perhaps the most satisfactory is "The Faithful Couple," one solid tree at the base, but separating at the height of about forty feet into two equally fine Sequoias. Some of our party saw in it, or them, a type of an unsuitable early marriage, followed by divergence and divorce—others saw a type of perfect wedded life, and love, rooted and grounded in equality and assimilation, starting as one, but with a higher development, asserting a nobler independence and individuality. And so we speculated and discussed, while taking our lunch in the dual shade of this new-world Baucis and Philemon. We visited, I believe, all the groups and solitary big trees of the great grove, riding in solemn procession through two hollow trunks—one standing, and one fallen. This proceeding undoubtedly gives one the most accurate idea of the diameter of the trunks—but for a full realization of the height of any one of the finest standing trees, of the grand grip it has on the earth, there is nothing like lying on your back and looking up to its huge, immovable lower limbs, up, up, to where its tapering bole and highest branches stand above the ordinary green level of the forest tree-tops, like the mast and spars of a great ship sunken in a shallow sea.

Grander and grander they grow to you, these sombre, Titanic shapes, the longer you linger and look, and you feel that you shall never quite pass out from their solemnizing shadow, that fell on you like the shadow of the great past. Some of the stateliest trees are named for our poets. One noble trunk bears on it the name of Whittier. So simple yet grand a memorial of his character and genius is most fitting. Long may it keep his dear memory green. Only think, it may have been a middle-aged tree in Chaucer's time!

Before we left the haunted forest, we were conducted by our peasant guide to a high, beetling cliff, a favorite perch of Bierstadt's, from which we had an enchanting view of the lovely Merced Valley, with emerald-green meadows and waters flashing to the sun, and what a setting were the mountains for the woodrous picture!

Early the next morning we were mounted and away—eager for the Yosemite, yet reluctantly taking leave of our hosts, Clark & Moore, both very interesting men, mountaineers of the best type, and their kindly household. Mr. Moore walked out with us some little distance, and blessed us, with his pleasant blue eyes, as he said good-by.

Perhaps it is well that I feel the impossibility of describing that day's journey—the wild and constantly-varying scenery, the strange shrubs and flowers, the rocky steeps, the mountain torrents, the snow-banks, the bogs, over which led our narrow trail, the heaven of blue deeps and fleecy clouds far above us, the half-way heaven of snowy peaks and shining domes. It was a wondrous day to live and to remember.

As we jogged along, single file, we formed an odd but not a very picturesque procession. Still, we had our dash of color, one bright, graceful object in our moving picture. A lady of our party, a fair young girl from Boston, was charmingly dressed for effect, among the dim woods and gray rocks. Her short Yosemite suit was black, trimmed with scarlet, a long scarlet sash falling at the left side; to her straw hat was attached a blue, floating veil; her long, bounteous golden hair, all her own, fell in heavy trails, tied with blue ribbons. Mounted on a white horse, riding with quiet grace, she was a perpetual delight to the eye, quite illuminating our dull cavalcade.

We found our guide—Peter Gordon, at your service!—a remarkably agreeable young man—modest, but not averse to imparting information. I kept near him most of the time, plying him with questions. His patience was also severely tried by our pack-mule, a diminutive animal, so built on and about by valises, carpet-bags, and bundles, that of the original structure only four slender piers and two turrets were visible, from the rear, at least. The poor brute had a mild, melancholy face, but was of perverse and erratic tendencies. He seized upon every opportunity to leave the trail and go off prospecting. When brought back, by shouts and blows, to the path of rectitude and the Yosemite, his countenance always wore a touching look of humility and penitence that seemed to say:

"Prone to wander, lord I feel it."

We dined, and dined sumptuously, at Paragoy's, the new half-way house, sat under the pines, in the greenest of mountain meadows, with melting snows and rushing streams about it, and grand white-headed mountains above it. I think tourists, for whom the delay is possible, should spend the night here and go into the valley in the morning.

Only a few miles from Paragoy's, and we were on Inspiration Point, looking down on the mighty Mecca of our pilgrimage—on awful depth and vastness, wedded to unimagined brightness and loveliness—a sight that appalled, while it attracted; a sublime terror; a beautiful abyss, the valley of the shadow of God!

It seemed to me as I gazed that here was nature's last, most cunning hiding-place for her utmost sublimities, her rarest splendors. Here she had worked her divinest miracles, with water and sunlight—lake, river, cataract, cascade, spray, mist and rainbows by the thousand. It was but a little strip of smiling earth to look down on, after all—but ah! the stupendousness of its surroundings! There were arched and pillared rocks, so massive, so immense, it seemed they might have formed the foundation-walls of a continent,—and domes so vast, they seemed like young worlds, rounding out of chaos.

The trail down from Inspiration Point is steep, rough and somewhat perilous for inexperienced riders, but I prefer it, for its variety and cool, shadowy places, to the shorter new trail by Glacier Point, which is wide, even, monotonously good, and almost wholly without shade. On our way down our guide pointed out to us a large hollow tree fitted up with modern conveniences, in which a real hermit had kept house for some years. Disappointed in love or politics, he retired from the world to this rather public spot, when, finally, he died by his own hand. He left a large trunk, but with little in it.

This trail enters the valley near the Bridal Vail. Beautiful Pohono had dressed herself royally in rainbows to receive us. The sight of this fall, in the height of its Summer glory, and the surpassing loveliness of the valley through all the five miles that remained for us to ride, charmed away our fatigue and restored us to vigor and gayety. We forded countless streams, cold as snow and bright as sunshine; we passed through forests of blooming azaleas and sweet wild roses and wondrous ferns, grand natural parks of oak and cedar, groves and avenues of locusts and pines—indeed, of all sorts of trees, for the variety of foliage in the valley is wonderful. Much of the way we rode along the rapid Merced, pushed on by cataracts—a passionate, threatening stream. We readily recognized all the great rocks from Watkins' magnificent photographs—the Sentinel, the Three Graces, the Cathedral Spires, the Three Brothers, and El Capitan, bluff and lordly, shouldering his way to the front. At the second hotel—Black's—dear friends ran out to meet us with a joyous greeting, and we felt at home even before we reached our pleasant quarters at the Hutchings House and received from Mr. Hutchings the hearty, happy welcome he so well knows how to give.

It was wonderful to us, if not to others, how comparatively fresh we were after a day of unprecedented fatigue and excitement. There must be some magic of stimulus and sustainment in the air of the Sierras. A good supper and good company further cheered and supported us, and, last of all, before sleep, there was for us absolute physical rejuvenation in the warm baths of the Cosmopolitan Saloon, just opposite our cottage. Here we were astonished to find—when we had expected to rough it—absolutely sybaritic arrangements—large, bright bathing-rooms, spacious tubs, exquisitely clean, a limitless supply of pure, soft water, towels—fine and coarse—in profusion, delicate toilet-soaps, bottles of bay rum, Florida water and arnica, court-plaster, pins, needles, thread and buttons, for repairing dilapidations, and late *Altas* and *Bulletins* for fresh "bustles." The floors are all handsomely carpeted, the walls are hung with delicate paper and decorated with pictures and mirrors, and cornices are daintily gilded. Here, after all our long excursions, hard rides and harder climbs, we took baths of balm, of delicious soothing and healing. To find such luxury and comfort in the awful sunken fastness of this valley, seems something absolutely marvelous—the work of enchantment—but the magical agencies were only keen business foresight, energy, pluck, perseverance and pack-mules.

To Yosemite pilgrims to come, I would commend the brave, benevolent young proprietor of this establishment. I hope they will be careful accurately to remember his name. It is Smith—John Smith. The pilgrims that have been this year will be in no danger of forgetting it, or confounding it with Jones, Brown, or Robinson.

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The most popular present route to the valley, and I am inclined to think the most picturesque and comfortable, all things considered, is the Mariposa, via Merced. We went that way—our select party of seven, who left San Francisco on the 4th of June. At Merced we left the railway and spent the first night, stopping at the elegant new hotel, "El Capitan," built by the Central Pacific Railroad Company—that dreadful monopoly that brings about so many beneficent improvements. Things were in rather an unsettled, unfinished state, but we found excellent beds, and slept delightfully, as soon as we were able to sleep at all—but unluckily, here, as at several places further on, we "seven poor travelers" were sufferers from the untimely and unbounded hilarity of a large, conglomerate party of tourists, mostly from Chicago and St. Louis. These "young and joyous creatures" never subsided into dull slumber till some time in the small hours. To their ordinary nocturnal diversions of dancing, singing, shrieking and whistling, they occasionally added the unparalleled atrocity of the accordion.

This party afterward came to grief in various ways, as all large parties are like to do, and all extravagantly gay parties are sure to do, on this grand but difficult and trying trip. It is a pilgrimage to the most beautiful but awful, holy places of nature—her long secret, inaccessible shrines—and should be undertaken with at least a decorous seriousness, and something of thoughtful and intelligent preparation. Cheerfulness is, of course, desirable, for one's patience and courage may be severely taxed all through the expedition, and good humor and good sense are absolutely essential to anything like enjoyment of the trip. At the beginning I would say, let all mere lovers of pleasure, fond of benders and unbenders, all *bon vivants*, all dainty and dandiacal people, all aged, timid and feeble people, all people without a disciplined imagination, keep away from the Yosemite. The entire trip will prove to all such a disappointment and a drag, weariness and hardship, and the valley itself a great hollow mockery of wild, vague, extravagant hopes—the biggest man-trap of the world. When you hear a traveler ask of the Yosemite, "Does it pay?" you may set him down as not fit to go there. But to men and women of simple minds, to healthy, happy natures, to brave and reverential souls, in sound, unpampered bodies, to "spirits finely touched." I would say at the beginning and finally, come to the Yosemite, though you have compassed the world all but this; come for the crowning joy of years of pleasant travel; come and see

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go, even though the fair star of the evening had not appeared. We shall all, I am sure, long remember with a gentle human interest that melancholy row of minstrels, and their serious little audience.

We had a rather anxious night ride of twelve miles over a rough road, through streams and gullies, and along steep, rocky cañons, to the hotel of White & Hatch, which we did not reach till 1 o'clock in the morning. But the mountain air began to tell on us, and after a brief sleep and a good breakfast we were in condition thoroughly to enjoy the superb forest ride, up the Chouchilla Creek, over the Divide, and down by a descent of nearly three thousand feet to the end of the stage-road, the famous ranch of Clark & Moore, on the South Merced, a lovely, lonely, piny, primitive place, with a peculiarly peaceful, restful atmosphere pervading it. Here we were received with simple, hearty cordiality, and proffered the freedom of the Sierras and the ranch; here we were entirely comfortable and very happy throughout our too brief stay. The only drawback to the enjoyment of the ladies of our party was the discovery that the great Chicago monopoly had, by means of an *avant courrier* dispatched before daylight on a fiery mule, secured all the side-saddles—and that we must lie by indefinitely, or take to the Mexican saddle, and ride *en cavalier*.

both for our excursion to the Big Trees, and our longer journey into the valley. So, with a tear for the modest traditions of our sex, and a shudder at the thought of the figures we should present, we four brave women accepted the situation, and, for the nonce, rode as woman used to ride, in her happy, heroic days, before Satan, for her entanglement and enslavement, invented trained skirts, corsets and side-saddles. We were fortunately provided with strong mountain suits of dark flannel and water-proof, which fitted us for this emergency, and for any rough climbing we had a fancy for, and that was not a little. Well, after a trial of some fifteen miles the first day, and twenty-six the second, we all came to the conclusion that this style of riding is the safest, easiest, and, therefore, the most sensible for long mountain expeditions, and for steep, rough and narrow trails. If nature intended woman to ride horseback at all she doubtless intended it should be after this fashion, otherwise we should have been a sort of land variety of the mermaid.

Though the days were warm in that charming resting-place, beside the unresting Merced, the nights were very cool, and a bright camp-fire in front of the hotel was surrounded till a late hour by a circle of tourists, guides, pack-mule men

and stage-drivers. We took to reciting ballads and telling stories. Of the latter, the most horrible and hair-elevating sort were at a premium. There was a generous and amiable strife as to who should contribute most to the general discomfort, and produce the most startling and blood-curdling effects. The English ex-officer carried off the palm. His story, told in a characteristically cool way, so chilled us with horror that we drew closer around the camp-fire, and shuddered audibly. Just a little way off, under the pines, was a cluster of wigwams, and the camp-fire of the bloody Diggers—howling fitfully that night, over the bear-skin couch of a venerable savage, said to be over a hundred years old, and dying without benefit of clergy. Ah! how novel and wild and primitive and delightful it all was!

By the way, the old Indian didn't die after all the ado. He was only testing the affection of his kind.

The Mariposa Grove of Big Trees is about six miles from Clark's, up a trail somewhat rough, but leading through forests of great beauty. Many of the pines along our way were of imposing breadth and height, but the first regular *Sequoia Gigantea* we came upon was lying prone upon the earth, that had yielded to him, when he fell, almost as the sea gives place to the hull of a great ship. This mighty recumbent shape, whose battles with winds and tempests are over forever, is a majestic image of repose and release. What ephemeral creatures we seemed beside that scarred and moldering trunk, on the tender green of whose young branches had glistened the dews of the

night, which was the shadow of the most blessed day of the world—the day that dawned in Judea, under the watching of angels and the singing of stars. Wild races had passed away under his shadow; he had greatened and towered—waited through the slow cycles, and decayed and fallen before the spiritual light of that dawning reached the dim solitudes of the vast Sierras.

The largest of these Mariposa trees is "The Grizzly Giant," but perhaps the most satisfactory is "The Faithful Couple," one solid tree at the base, but separating at the height of about forty feet into two equally fine *Sequoias*. Some of our party saw in it, or them, a type of an unsuitable early marriage, followed by divergence and divorce—others saw a type of perfect wedded life, and love, rooted and grounded in equality and assimilation, starting as one, but with a higher development, asserting a nobler independence and individuality. And so we speculated and discussed, while taking our lunch in the dual shade of this new-world Baucis and Philemon. We visited, I believe, all the groups and solitary big trees of the great grove, riding in solemn procession through two hollow trunks—one standing, and one fallen. This proceeding undoubtedly gives one the most accurate idea of the diameter of the trunks—but for a full realization of the height of any one of the finest standing trees, of the grand grip it has on the earth, there is nothing like lying

on your back and looking up to its huge, immovable lower limbs, up, up, to where its tapering bole and highest branches stand above the ordinary green level of the forest tree-tops, like the mast and spars of a great ship sunken in a shallow sea.

Grander and grander they grow to you, these sombre, Titanic shapes, the longer you linger and look, and you feel that you shall never quite pass out from their solemnizing shadow, that fell on you like the shadow of the great past. Some of the stateliest trees are named for our poets. One noble trunk bears on it the name of Whittier. So simple yet grand a memorial of his character and genius is most fitting. Long may it keep his dear memory green. Only think, it may have been a middle-aged tree in Chaucer's time!

Before we left the haunted forest, we were conducted by our peasant guide to a high, beetling cliff, a favorite perch of Bierstadt's, from which we had an enchanting view of the lovely Merced Valley, with emerald-green meadows and waters flashing to the sun, and what a setting were the mountains for the wondrous picture!

Early the next morning we were mounted and away—eager for the Yosemite, yet reluctantly taking leave of our hosts, Clark & Moore, both very interesting men, mountaineers of the best type, and their kindly household. Mr. Moore walked out with us some little distance, and blessed us, with his pleasant blue eyes, as he said good-by.

Perhaps it is well that I feel the impossibility of describing that day's journey—the wild and constantly-varying scenery, the strange shrubs and flowers, the rocky steeps, the mountain torrents, the snow-banks, the bogs, over which led our narrow trail, the heaven of blue deeps and fleecy clouds far above us, the half-way heaven of snowy peaks and shining domes. It was a wondrous day to live and to remember.

As we jogged along, single file, we formed an odd but not a very picturesque procession. Still, we had our dash of color, one bright, graceful object in our moving picture. A lady of our party, a fair young girl from Boston, was charmingly dressed for effect, among the dim woods and gray rocks. Her short Yosemite suit was black, trimmed with scarlet, a long scarlet sash falling at the left side; to her straw hat was attached a blue, floating vail; her long, bounteous golden hair, all her own, fell in heavy trails, tied with blue ribbons. Mounted on a white horse, riding with quiet grace, she was a perpetual delight to the eye, quite illuminating our dull cavalcade.

We found our guide—Peter Gordon, at your service!—a remarkably agreeable young man—modest, but not averse to imparting information. I kept near him most of the time, plying him with questions. His patience was also severely tried by our pack-

mule, a diminutive animal, so built on and about by valises, carpet-bags, and bundles, that of the original structure only four slender piers and two turrets were visible, from the rear, at least. The poor brute had a mild, melancholy face, but was of perverse and erratic tendencies. He seized upon every opportunity to leave the trail and go off prospecting. When brought back, by shouts and blows, to the path of rectitude and the Yosemite, his countenance always wore a touching look of humility and penitence that seemed to say :

"Prone to wander, lord I feel it."

We dined, and dined sumptuously, at Paragoy's, the new half-way house, sat under the pines, in the greenest of mountain meadows, with melting snows and rushing streams about it, and grand white-headed mountains above it. I think tourists, for whom the delay is possible, should spend the night here and go into the valley in the morning.

Only a few miles from Paragoy's, and we were on Inspiration Point, looking down on the mighty Mecca of our pilgrimage—on awful depth and vastness, wedded to unimagined brightness and loveliness—a sight that appalled, while it attracted ; a sublime terror; a beautiful abyss, the valley of the shadow of God!

It seemed to me as I gazed that here was nature's last, most cunning hiding-place for her utmost sublimities, her rarest splendors. Here she had worked her divinest miracles,

with water and sunlight—lake, river, cataract, cascade, spray, mist and rainbows by the thousand. It was but a little strip of smiling earth to look down on, after all—but ah! the stupendousness of its surroundings! There were arched and pillared rocks, so massive, so immense, it seemed they might have formed the foundation-walls of a continent,—and domes so vast, they seemed like young worlds, rounding out of chaos.

The trail down from Inspiration Point is steep, rough and somewhat perilous for inexperienced riders, but I prefer it, for its variety and cool, shadowy places, to the shorter new trail by Glacier Point, which is wide, even, monotonously good, and almost wholly without shade. On our way down our guide pointed out to us a large hollow tree fitted up with modern conveniences, in which a real hermit had kept house for some years. Disappointed in love or politics, he retired from the world to this rather public spot, when, finally, he died by his own hand. He left a large trunk, but with little in it.

This trail enters the valley near the Bridal Vail. Beautiful Pohono had dressed herself royally in rainbows to receive us. The sight of this fall, in the height of its Summer glory, and the surpassing loveliness of the valley through all the five miles that remained for us to ride, charmed away our fatigue and restored us to vigor and gayety. We forded countless streams, cold as snow and bright as sunshine; we passed through forests of blooming azaleas and sweet wild

roses and wondrous ferns, grand natural parks of oak and cedar, groves and avenues of locusts and pines—indeed, of all sorts of trees, for the variety of foliage in the valley is wonderful. Much of the way we rode along the rapid Merced, pushed on by cataracts—a passionate, threatening stream. We readily recognized all the great rocks from Watkins' magnificent photographs—the Sentinel, the Three Graces, the Cathedral Spires, the Three Brothers, and El Capitan, bluff and lordly, shouldering his way to the front. At the second hotel—Black's—dear friends ran out to meet us with a joyous greeting, and we felt at home even before we reached our pleasant quarters at the Hutchings House and received from Mr. Hutchings the hearty, happy welcome he so well knows how to give.

It was wonderful to us, if not to others, how comparatively fresh we were after a day of unprecedented fatigue and excitement. There must be some magic of stimulus and sustainment in the air of the Sierras. A good supper and good company further cheered and supported us, and, last of all, before sleep, there was for us absolute physical rejuvenation in the warm baths of the Cosmopolitan Saloon, just opposite our cottage. Here we were astonished to find—when we had expected to rough it—absolutely sybaritic arrangements—large, bright bathing-rooms, spacious tubs, exquisitely clean, a limitless supply of

pure, soft water, towels—fine and coarse—in profusion, delicate toilet-soaps, bottles of bay rum, Florida water and arnica, court-plaster, pins, needles, thread and buttons, for repairing dilapidations, and late *Altas* and *Bulletins* for fresh "bustles." The floors are all handsomely carpeted, the walls are hung with delicate paper and decorated with pictures and mirrors, and cornices are daintily gilded. Here, after all our long excursions, hard rides and harder climbs, we took baths of balen, of delicious soothing and healing. To find such luxury and comfort in the awful sunken fastness of this valley, seems something absolutely marvelous—the work of enchantment—but the magical agencies were only keen business foresight, energy, pluck, perseverance and pack-mules.

To Yosemite pilgrims to come, I would commend the brave, benevolent young proprietor of this establishment. I hope they will be careful accurately to remember his name. It is Smith—John Smith. The pilgrims that have been this year will be in no danger of forgetting it, or confounding it with Jones, Brown, or Robinson.