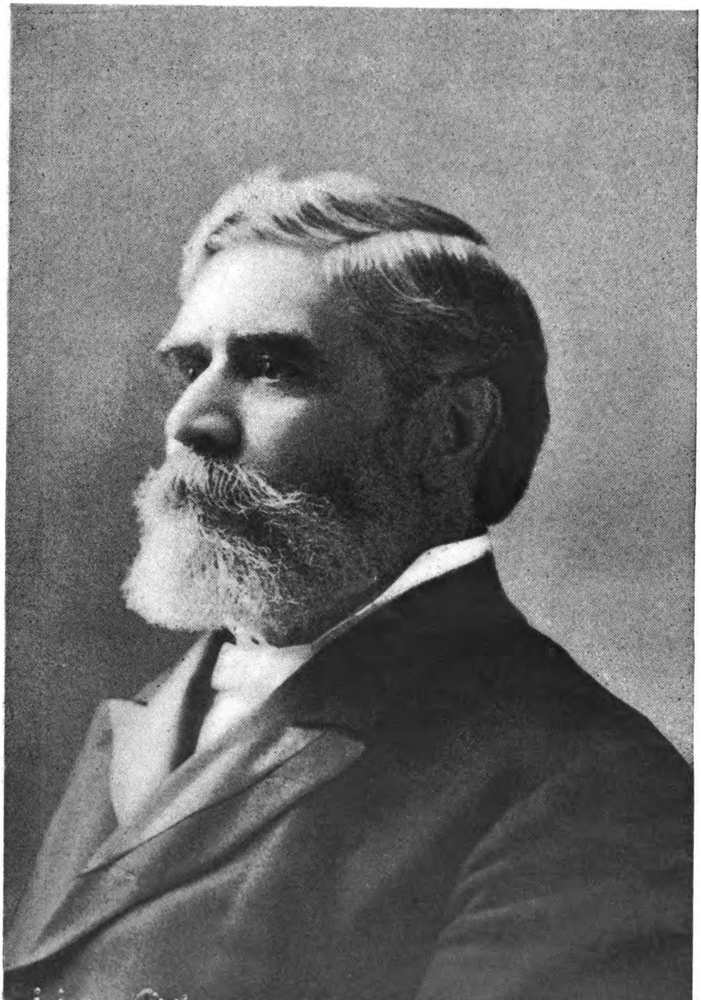

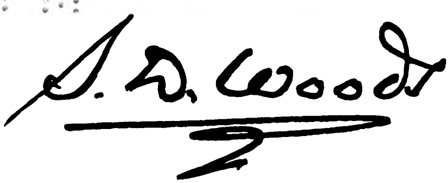

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF LIFE ON THE PACIFIC COAST

By
S. D. WOODS

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The Hon. Samuel D. Woods, the author of this volume, is one of the first citizens of California. He rose in life through his own resolute efforts; took up the practise of law; was for a long period a member of the Congress of the United States; and has been an actor in all the crowded and picturesque events of the Far West since the Civil War.

Mr. Woods has earned the right to be heard. So now, at the request of his many friends, he is printing the varied and entertaining reminiscences of his long and honorable career.

DEDICATED

TO

EDWIN MARKHAM

My beloved pupil of long ago—he and I can never forget the little schoolhouse in the sunny Suisun hills, where we together found our lives.

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Chapter XIX

A SUMMER JAUNT IN THE HIGH SIERRAS

THE Sierras, before they lose themselves in the Mojave Desert, rise to an average elevation of twelve thousand feet, from which at various points lift peaks several thousands of feet higher,—Lyall, Williamson and Whitney in the latitude of Mono and Inyo Counties are chief of these, and were they not part of the general range, as a mass, where it towers over the lands at their base, would command attention from the lovers of mountains, who find exhilaration in the lofty upheaval of cliff and summit. The eastern and western slopes of the Sierras, in the latitude of Nevada County, where the Central Pacific Railroad crosses them, stretch out for miles, and unless one is told, he would never know just when the summit is reached, except he noticed carefully the flow of the streams or the increased speed of the cars on the downward grade. Those who have crossed on the railroad at this point will remember the long climb begun at Rocklin in Placer County, on the western slope, and the equally long descent on the eastern slope, ending just before reaching Reno in Nevada. This distance is piled with a great breadth of highlands tangled into mountain shapes of majesty, and

relieved by woods and streams,—wild, rugged places of beauty, white with snows in winter and abloom with flowers in the springtime and summer. To the traveler, weary with the almost endless miles of dreary desert, this is a fairyland, and with increasing delight he looks over the tops of nearby summit lines on to loftier and higher hills that climb and tower until in the far-off horizon, in the mellow lights of perfect skies, they bound the landscapes with "delectable mountains." These are the swiftly dissolving views of the high Sierras from a Pullman window and nothing but the general effect is visible as the cars rush down the swift slopes, plunging through snowsheds and diving through tunnels, and sweeping around the acute curves of the high per cent. grades. To the quality of the imagination must be left the things that lie nestled in the heart of this great empire of wonder and beauty—slopes of forest; cool and fragrant beds of blossoms; lakes whose limpid waters rival the color of the mirrored sky; streams that laugh and leap and sing in the abandon of the glorious wilderness they make sweet and beautiful. These are visible only to him who leaves the railroad and with patience and direction seeks out the coverts in which they hide.

As the great mass dives southward towards the Mojave Desert, where it halts as if hesitant to invade the Kingdom of Silence and Desolation, it puts on new shapes,—beauty is exchanged for majesty, and as from some commanding summit the eye takes in so far as it can the bulk first and then the details, the head swims with the survey of the tremendous

shapes that crowd the field of vision, reaching on and on into the distance, summit after summit, range after range, peak lifting over peak, until the whole world seems to be built of mountains, great sublime piles of rock rising out of the foundations of the world. These massive piles are not bare of adornment, for to the lines where the eternal snows defy the sun, woods crowd the slopes with a mantle of variegated green, whose leaves shine in the sunlight and under whose shade ferns and flowers make beautiful the nooks where they find life during the sunny hours of the summer. From out the higher slopes melting snows send down pure waters that leap from fall to fall, or spread out into pools, whose cool deeps are the home of the trout. If it were not so grand and majestic, it would be called a land of enchantment, but it is too big for such phrases and only words that are fit to express great things, of power, strength and majesty, are to be used in describing them.

We know this land of wonder for in the late summer of 1883, after our return from Death Valley and the sere, dead desolate things that make up its sceneries, we sought relief from the strain by two weeks of life here, wandering at will, climbing peaks, descending into valley levels, casting our lines into its lakes and streams, and generally abandoning ourselves to the alluring idleness that seems to possess one when he enters into the quiet and fragrance of the soaring altitudes that lie just under the sky.

West of the summit of the Sierras, just over the high line where they rise for more than twelve thousand feet above the sea, and more than eight thou-

sand feet above the Owens River Valley, from the base of Mount Whitney to the head waters of Kings River, for a distance of more than forty miles, flows Bubb's Creek, foaming along over its rocky bed, leaping its falls and cataracts, resting at times in serene stretches of quiet waters. The name is not musical, and the intrepid tourist, who now and then is lured by the fame of the region and climbs into it, wonders how the stream flowing through so wonderful a region and having its birth in the snows of one of America's noblest mountains, and at last bearing its waters into another stream historic, for Bierdstadt, the great scenic painter of America, and Muir, the renowned lover of the Sierras, have made it immortal by brush and pen, should have so ordinary a name. We know why, for years ago in San Francisco, we became acquainted with old man Bubb, for whom the stream was named. We met him when he had come to the city to spend the winter, as he usually did when the deep snows and extreme perils from storms in those high altitudes made life impossible in the winter months. His Christian name we have forgotten, for he was known always as "old man Bubb." We first saw him in 1871, but years before he had made his summer home in this wild region, living alone for months, seeing no human being, and having for companionship only the wild animals that in freedom roamed through the forest at will, without fear of man. He built in a magnificent environment of crag and cliff, sheltered in the heart of a noble group of pines, a log cabin, to which during the early summer, for many years, and until his death, he returned. He

was a quaint soul, a rugged, silent man, but genial and kindly. He had a fine mind, but except to his friends, of whom he had only few, as such men usually have, he was slow of speech. There was one thing, however, which he was always ready to discuss, and of which he never seemed to be tired, and that was the glories of the mountains and the grandeur of what he always called his home.

We were fascinated by his glowing descriptions, and while he gave us a longing to see the splendid things of which he spoke with such eloquence of loving words, we did not then hope to see them, for it seemed as though they were as far off as if in another world. When he died we do not know, but we remember that one winter he failed to appear in his usual city haunts, and we never heard of him again.

During this trip, of which we now write, we sought his old cabin, falling in ruins, battered and beaten down by the awful storms that rage here during the tempestuous winters. The weight of snows had broken in its roof, and the rot of the years was eating up its wall of logs. His memorial is the great creek that flows through this land of wonder, and no monarch of the world has a monument to perpetuate his memory as splendid as this lone recluse of the wilderness, whose passion for the solitudes led him from the noisy life of cities to solace his spirit with the communion he had with nature in this antechamber of the Almighty. If some desperate heartache drove him into these solitary wilds, he made no sign. No man knew whether by accident or design he first alone made his way into the pathless woods and

set his habitation within their shades. We often wondered, as we looked into his eyes, in which always lurked the pathos of a heart that knew the gnaw of a "lifelong hunger at the heart," and when he did not know he was being observed, we saw the curves that cut into the brow and cheek lines of the face of "a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief." Whether sometime, somewhere, some woman's hand had torn the fibers of his heart, perhaps unconsciously mutilating his life and making havoc with his years,—who knows? Such things have been; such things will be.

At Independence, the County seat of Inyo, we sought an outfit of mules and guide. There is only one approach to the creek from the eastern side of the Sierras in this altitude, and one wishing to make the trip must be sure of the guidance of one who knows surely this one avenue, the last leg of which is a short canyon that leads from the table-lands down to the creek. For much of the way from Independence a rough, faint trail guides one, but before the last shoulder of the mountains is reached, this trail is often obliterated by the shale and rock that the winter avalanches carry across it.

After some inquiry we found a woman guide who owned a train of pack mules, who with her late husband had made frequent trips into the Bubb's creek country. She was a hardy mountaineer, fond of the excitement of mountain life, and was as glad as we were for an opportunity to make the trip, and she gladly placed ten pack mules and herself as guide at our disposal without cost. We needed men, and soon

found a couple of hardy tributors, who were more than willing, also without cost, to give their services and time for an opportunity to fish in the lakes and streams with which the region abounds.

One bright August morning found us ready, with five mules packed with provisions, bedding and supplies, and five more ready for the mount, and with a shout and a handwave to the well-wishing crowd, we were off. We sang and shouted in the abandon of the hour, with hearts beating strong, pulses thrilling in rhythm, and nerves that made living a delight. With us were several gentlemen and ladies who were to go to the first camp, and after a couple of days and nights would return, leaving us to climb higher and beyond into the heart of the mountains.

Our trail led up a sloping mesa until it entered a long, wide canyon that opened out into the valley. A wild stream dashed down over boulders piled in its bed and gave motion to the scene. It was an exquisite hour and beautiful place, and to a perfect physical harmony was added the exultation of the spirit. From off the high summits, not far distant, there blew across our faces the morning airs, sweet with the breath of pines and the aroma of mountain blossoms. The ascending sun filled the depths of canyons and gorge with radiance and painted the snowy peaks with gold. There were happy birds that homed here, and, as if they were as happy as we, filled the sky with song. Such glorious hours are not possible to those who cling to cities and find their joys in the corridors of hotels and foyers of theaters and the light and folly of the night. They come only to the up-

lifted soul capable of interpreting the mysteries of the heart in the face of a flower as wonderful as the sweep of a comet through the arches of the universe. To these exalted souls the speech of the woods, the voice of the stream, the utterances of the myriad voices of minor insects and the song of birds are the voices of the everlasting power and beauty of creation. Our hearts ache at times as we stand on the city streets, and there pass back and forth before us the endless throng of the blind and the dumb.

Just below the apex of the range, we came in the mid-afternoon to a cup-like hollow containing several acres carpeted with green grasses and beautified by beds of many-hued flowers. It was known as Onion Valley—another misnomer. It was an exquisite spot, high up on the mountains. A stream of clear water tumbled into it, over the granite wall that rose sheer several hundred feet in height—a noisy waterfall that enlivened the scene by its dash.

From an elevated platform we looked out over the levels of the valleys, on toward Arizona and Nevada, into a landscape of mountains that in great procession filled the horizons as far as the eye could reach, range rising on range, a land of stone, bearing on its face the scars of turbulent ages, when the world was building. The lofty sky was cloudless, and a great calm rested upon the scene like a benediction. Here we cast our tents, fascinated and satisfied. Our animals were soon reveling in the rich grasses of a virgin pasture, and we sat down to dream and to watch the lights and shadows of the glorious afternoon play hide and seek among the peaks and canyons that made

up the slopes. It was no time or place for speech, for the delicious sweetness of the camp thralled the senses and touched the emotions, as a master touches the keys of a great instrument. Silence was our best contribution until a sweet-voiced girl, moved by the unutterable beauty, softly sang, "Some day we'll wander back again," to which our reverent and delighted hearts answered "Amen."

The night fell upon us with a thrall of the stars, the great moon and the glory of the moonlight mountains. For two free, gladsome days we just lived. Behind us we had left the tumult and the care, and for a time knew what life could be when one was absolutely free from the weight of responsibilities. As to all enticing human things comes the end, so came the end of this adventure, and on the morning of the third day we broke camp, and bidding our companions good-by, began our climb toward the summit. So abrupt do the mountains rise here, that a couple of miles brought us to the apex of the range where the trail crossed the summit, so clear-cut that while the front feet of our mules were on the western slope, their hind feet were still on the eastern—where a drop of rain falling upon a sharp rock and cut in two would divide, one-half to fall back into the desert and the other half to lose itself finally in the waters of the far-off Pacific.

A glance backward to the mighty sweep of the desert range, with a rod or so of advance we were in the midst of a world as different from that we had left as if it were upon another planet. The view was of endless shapes of rock, measureless miles of pines,

the sheen of lakes, the silver of streams and piles of summer clouds—a great panorama of uninhabited spaces, whose vastness made us hold our breath as its majesty suddenly unrolled before us. We seemed at times giddy with the sense of soaring through the high heavens and instinctively clutched the horns of our saddles to steady ourselves against a momentary weakness. We stood upon the threshold of a kingdom of might and power and splendor. The desolation, the mutilation, the scorching airs and the silences of Death Valley were forgotten, except for the wonder that within a distance of less than one hundred miles could exist such vastly dissimilar creations,—such contrasts of Nature, one the antithesis of the other, and yet both equally great and compelling. The marvel of it all is that from the summit, where we crossed, one could at the same moment look into the heart of each.

Is there any land or latitude, such as California, where multitudes and variety—things delicate and stupendous—appalling and alluring—winsome and awful—are tangled together almost within the same horizon? The vast sweep of the sky above us and the far-off sky-lines are not the least of the great things that made up the wonderful scene that was before us.

A half hour of inspiration, and down the trail we rode into the bosom of a valley closed in by walls of granite, darkened by the shadows of the dense forest, and beautified by a clear blue lake. It was another ideal spot, and as the sun was sinking behind the western mountains, we pitched our tent and settled

down to further hours of content and dreams. Like the desert, the mountains have a presence and a spirit, which seem to the sensitive human spirit an intelligence which seeks to speak through manifold lips, to disclose its secrets, and to make audible the silence seldom broken except by the scream of the eagle, the loo of the deer for its fawn and the whistle of the bird for its mate.

The spell was irresistible, and one can not shake off its influence, for it will have its way, and he is wise who yields and lets his senses drift at will until they become fully in touch with the indefinable something that at least counts for enlargement of mind and heart. This attitude is like unto one who has to learn a new language before he can understand its poetry and song. We felt this influence first in the little valley, and while we were in the flush of perfect health and our nerves were like steel wires, a profound sadness seized us and would not be denied. We lifted eyes of inquiry to the things about us, but they were as inscrutable as the face of the Sphinx. The squirrel in the tree-top, the bird on the wing, the lights and shadows through the trees suggested no solution. It must have been the weight of the tremendous things about us that bore down the senses, for it seemed to be a growing pain of the spirit striving to grow large enough to be worthy of the visible glory.

The mood of that afternoon worked into our minds, and to this day, when we recall the time and the scene, the law of relation works and some of the same peculiar loneliness seems to descend upon us. It had some psychological basis. The little blue lake

was alive with myriads of mountain trout, and our men and woman guide put in the hours fishing. The trout is by nature a wary thing, and these we found no exception. It was not because they had learned by the presence of fishermen the danger, for seldom were these wilds visited by those to whom the sport of the fisherman was a pastime. They were true to their instinct, and a shadow on the water, the fall of a hook on its surface, sent them flying to safety beyond the radius of the line. Our men were, however, skilled in their craft and familiar with the habits of these cunning fish, and so were able before the set of sun to land enough to give us a fine meal. The cold, clear waters had hardened the flesh of these fish, and made them delicious provender for a lot of hungry men whose appetites had been whetted by the day's climb and toil. A king's feast would not have equalled our supper, cooked as only those used to mountain camps can cook. It was a fine hour and our dining-room a royal one.

The night had drawn its curtain about our camp and a pleasant pine-log fire filled the nearby woods with fleeting lights and shadows. There was witchery in it all. There was gladness in the *comaraderie* of our spirits, from which for the time had fallen all disturbing things, and there was in the heart the joy of those who have forgotten the strife and jealousy of life. We talked and laughed and sang as we ate the simple fare made delicious by abundant hunger. You, who love the café and grill, electric light, the cocktail and the champagne, are welcome to them, but for us are the wild woods, the camp fire, the sweet

waters, and the companionship of true comrades sitting about a Spartan feast. We thrilled with the charm that has so often lured men from the centers of the world, from the glitter of society with its manifold opportunities, from noble careers, even, to seek the peace passing understanding, that abides in solitary places, severed from the passion and strife of modern civilization.

It has been written that it is not a good thing for man to be alone. This philosophy is relative only, for it is the loneliness only of an inert life that leaves its mark upon the mind. The story of John Muir's life in the Sierras, where he grew from mediocrity to greatness, the experiences of Audubon, who wandered for years in the depths of Eastern woods, the wise lover of its winged dwellers, refute the statement. They sought for and found the beauty of the world in the pathless woods, and grew in strength, both mental and moral, upon the majesty of the great spaces wherein the mountains are set as monuments. They learned that. "To him who in the love of Nature holds communion with her visible forms, she speaks a varied language."

There was in the chill of the night a freshness that intoxicated. We filled the lungs with deep, sweet draughts of mountain air, untainted by the poison of the city. The pine trees distilled from their resinous needles healing perfumes. Soon the influence of the night had its perfect work and we grew silent, yielding at last to the languor that woos one in perfect health to a dreamless sleep, and the light of the fire was reflected upon the faces of five sleepers in absolute

peace, so exquisite that even the splendor of a glorious sky had no power to tempt or disturb. What wonder that the worn invalid, weak and pale from his conflict with disease, who is wise enough to seek these sanitariums of nature, finds again perfect health, nerves calmed, lungs cleaned, heart steady, and blown from the brain all of its disturbing dreams.

At the dawn following this glorious night, the dwellers of the mountains awoke, and from the tree-tops, waving in the breeze came the song of birds, sinless warblers voicing praise for life unto that Creator whose care is so infinite and personal that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without His notice. From invisible perches floated out a multitude of voices wherein the morning was made eloquent, and as the ascending sun shot its shafts of light through vibrating leaves and quivered on the face of the lake, we gathered together our packs and soon were on the trail again for descent further into the heart of this domain where every step was a revelation of unmatched splendor.

Great things are achieved only by great effort. There is no royal road even into the Kingdom of Heaven and it is written in the Scriptures that few tread the rocky trails that lead unto it. There are many Kingdoms of Heaven in this material and misunderstood world, but no man ever reached one of them except by toil, travail, and self-sacrifice. The road is narrow and hard, and therefore the multitudes prefer the broad, smooth-paved highways that lead to ease and satiety.

We found the trail before us no exception to the

rule, and more than once during the day we were compelled to unpack our mules and carry up to more level places their loads. These almost impassible parts of the trail were over ledges of rock, leaning at swift angles, and slick and slippery from the polish of ages of friction. It was a difficult feat for our mules, without packs, to cling and climb over these hard places, but they did climb, and upon higher level we were able from the new platform to look still further into the heart of the eternal hills.

The climbing of rocky ledges was not the complement of our difficulties, for there lurked in seductive levels new dangers, and before we were aware we found a couple of our animals, upon which were packed our blankets and bedding, mired in the slime of a mountain morass, formed by the percolating waters of nearby minor glaciers. This situation was more serious than the rocky heights of the trail, for the frightened mules floundered until our blankets and bedding were wet and muddy, and it was no easy task to extract them and their loads, for there was no fulcrum upon which to base our lever of relief. It was a question of do something quick, and, up to our waists in the mud, we unslung our packs and pulled and hauled and turned the struggling mules until by main strength and awkwardness, we landed them upon firm ground. We repacked them and sat down to rest and devise a way of escape from further disaster, for the morass extended on between high walls enclosing a little valley which seemed impossible to scale. We were not the first, however, who had met with this disaster, and with patient search-

ing we discovered the prints of hoofs leading up a crevice in the north wall, and we knew that what had been done, we could do, and with infinite toil we worked our way on to the heights above, and scrambled and stumbled along until we found our way back again to the trail beyond the treacherous morass.

We were but a short way now from the canyon that led down into Bubb's Creek. While we were congratulating ourselves upon our good luck, we noted a troubled expression upon the face of our guide and that her eyes bore the shadow of a disturbing indecision, and we said to her, "What is the matter now?" She replied, "We have lost the trail, I can find no trace of it anywhere." We cheered her up and said, "Oh, no, you could not lose the trail; the trail has lost you, and you will both come together again." It was a grateful smile that illuminated her rugged face, for she was not beautiful, and she said, "You people rest here and I will explore." She was in command, and we obeyed. Down the slope she hurried with her eyes glued to the ground, except now and then when she would stand still and study the peaks and slopes about, seeking, like a mariner approaching a coast, for some headland by which on previous voyages he had steered safely into port. An hour or more she spent in this patient search, and she covered more than a mile of distance. Just as we began to harbor a little doubt, for the day was fading into the late afternoon, we heard her faint shout, and her waving arms told us to come on. Over the surface of loose rock we worked our way, to find where she stood the well-worn trail. She had been right, and the trail had lost

her instead of her losing the trail. An avalanche had for more than half a mile buried the trail under its debris, that was all.

Here we desire to make a part of literature, so far as this book may become such, the courage, skill and kindliness of this simple woman, a daughter of the wilds, uncouth in manner, rude at times in speech, but of heroic mold and with a generous soul. There was about her a certain dignity which lifted her into the deferential consideration of all of us, her comrades on this great trip into a great domain. She was certain of herself always, knew where she was, knew what to do, and how to do it. Through her guidance and suggestion we were able during two weeks, without waste of time or distance, to take in the glorious things that make this lonely but sublime wilderness the most wonderful place of all the wonderful places of California.

From the discovered trail we descended through the little canyon which leads down from the high lands to the level of Bubb's Creek, and before the day died, we were camped upon its banks—and what a glorious place it was! No pen can describe it, for no mind could put its glories into language worthy of the theme. We spread our blankets for the night at the foot of a wall of granite four thousand feet in sheer uplift, so perfect that when we rested our tired heads against its base, we could lift our eyes to its apex. Could words make any reader understand what such a wall of granite is, nearly three-quarters of a mile in height, a sheer, clean uplift of rock. The shadows began to gather about us, and we drifted in

the glorious environment to the dreams of what the white light of the coming day would reveal unto us.

We awoke from our dreams at dawn,—and such a dawn! The East was hidden by the great wall of rock that formed the background of our royal sleeping place, and we could not see its glory, but we knew that there were splendid colors there, for over our heads streamed great pinions of light, long shafts that shot their glory into the hearts of the clouds crowning the heights beyond us in the West, framing the headlands on whose stony brows, from Creation's dawn, eternal snows had held their life against all the battles of the sun—fleecy clouds, great continents of white, loosely floated into the blue, changing each moment like a drilling regiment on parade, and as they shifted took on new shapes and piled into the higher heavens—visions of one of Nature's marvels, and pure as the soul of a child. Thus the day opened and brightened from dawn until the whole stupendous mass of mountains, the intervening canyons, dells and coverts, were overflowing with the fulness of noon, and the great sun sailed into the zenith, melting the clouds, disclosing the faces and ridges and near glories of the most wonderful groups of scenery in the heart of the High Sierras. Here there was mass, range and beauty, which first stuns, then moves to tears, and then lifts the spirit into its first real appreciation of the Mind that could dream of such and of the creative hand that, in the warp and woof of building forces, could give them such shapes of unutterable beauty. We can hint only at it all. Seldom, in the presence of things that are really great, are we able

to take in at first the great beauties. The mind must be stirred out of its normal conditions, exalted by the quickened imagination, and into it all must be poured the very richness of our spiritual endowment.

Splendor floods the mind and we grow as we look. This was our mood on that first morning on the banks of Bubb's Creek. A description of our camping ground and the views from it will best expose the wonders of this glorious mountain heart, silent, supreme, masterful, where from the shadows of deep canyons there towered into the empire of the sun peaks set in the swing of the world, headlands standing out into the reaches of distance, impressive, grand and lonely in their mighty solitudes.

In the foreground a wild, rock-walled valley, dark with the tangled shade, rested the eyes, which grew dim at times with the endless vision of the far-off mightier thing. Down through these sunless woods leaped and dashed the great creek, almost a river in its volume of waters. Just a mile away in front of us were three perpendicular cliffs akin to the one at whose base we had set our camp. Out over the sky-lined rim of these, three great waterfalls, neither less than twenty-five hundred feet in height, sprang into the air and swayed like long ribbons into the valley below. The distance was so great, that as these falls swayed in the breeze like delicate laces, they lost the solidity of their first outleap and dissolved into mists. Now and then the breeze swayed toward us and we caught the faint splash of waters, evanescent voices full of poetic suggestion. These waterfalls were exquisitely beautiful, and during the days we were at

this camp of the gods, many an hour we spent, lying as if in a trance, against the granite battlements of our camp, and let the delighted senses sway and drift with the falling waters.

There are times when men hunger to be great, and this was one of my hours of such hunger. If I could only make visible to others the marvel and beauty of these waterfalls and their environments, I feel that I would not have failed in some moral contribution to mankind. It is not true always that the will is equivalent to the deed. The traveler who comes to California, expecting to view its marvels from the window of a Pullman, will be disappointed. Its real glories are hidden in almost inaccessible places, and climbing, weariness and discomfort are the price one is compelled to pay, and he who is not willing to pay the price will be denied.

In the depths of the great canyons in this region there are trees that flourished when Rome was mistress of the world; when Demosthenes was delivering his immortal orations in Greece; Homer singing his songs for the Immortals; Cæsar throwing away his empire for a woman's smile; Antony toying with Cleopatra in Egypt, wasting the hours of empire in dalliance, "drinking the Libyan sun to sleep and then lighting lamps that outburned Canopus." Christ was in his cradle in Bethlehem more than eighteen hundred years after the tiny seedlings of these majestic monarchs of the forest lifted their heads to the morning dews and the silence of the Sierra hills.

A week of glorious days we spent here, days of rest to mind and spirit—days we will not forget—

days whose peace and beauty were engraved into our life, immortal days made of golden hours. Things fragile and delicate are often the attendants upon those of power. Here in the shadow of the cliffs towering toward the sun, we found blossoms peculiar to these high altitudes, living only in the short summer, ferns waving their arms in great fan-like shapes, or nestling at the base of protecting rocks, most exquisite members of the same family, fine as a maiden's hair. This floral and fern life constitutes one of the most attractive sights, for it seems a paradox of Nature that in places given over so frequently to storm and tempest, there should come and flourish flowers brilliant in color and perfect in form, of abundant richness in quality and quantity. We have always associated the ferns with the tropics, yielding their beauty only to the allurement of warm climates. It seems as if these lofty solitudes are a law unto themselves, and as if they were great enough to be and to do as they please. This is manifest in the atmosphere, for the days had as many moods as a coquettish girl. Often the cloudless sky, full of the sun, would in a moment fill with lowering clouds and the drenching downpour would drive to shelter, and then as if by magic the clouds would break, and the cliffs and the peaks and the woods would shine under the sky without a cloud, from horizon to horizon.

Here we found the grandest fishing ground in California. The great creek was alive with trout, and day by day our men caught them by the hundreds. Often we were compelled to stay the sport, which would otherwise from excitement have become a

"slaughter of the innocents." Our guide was a famous cook. She was an artist in her skill to brown without burning, and at every meal she piled up before each of us a heaping plate of these delicious fish. We feasted like kings for a long week. We were satiated but not sated; nothing in this wonder-land could sate. There could be no weariness, for pure air, perfect health, excellent spirits, buoyed every sense, and to be alive was enough to make one happy.

The late summer waned into autumn, and now and then the clouds warned us by a fall of fleecy snow-flakes, and so we gathered together our mules, who had reveled in abandonment among juicy grasses, and with adjusted packs climbed the trail to the high land again, and near the noon of a perfect day, from the last point from which the glorious cavern with its wondrous views was visible, we turned for one long, grateful look, and then to its silence and splendor we left this empire of glorious things, hidden in the heart of tremendous mountains, whose breadth and height had enlarged the measure of our own natures.