



Picturesque America; or, the land we live in

a delineation by pen and pencil of the mountains, rivers, lakes, forests, water-falls, shores, cañons, valleys, cities, and other picturesque features of our country ; with illustrations on steel and wood, by eminent American artists

Bryant, William Cullen

New York, 1872

Northern California.

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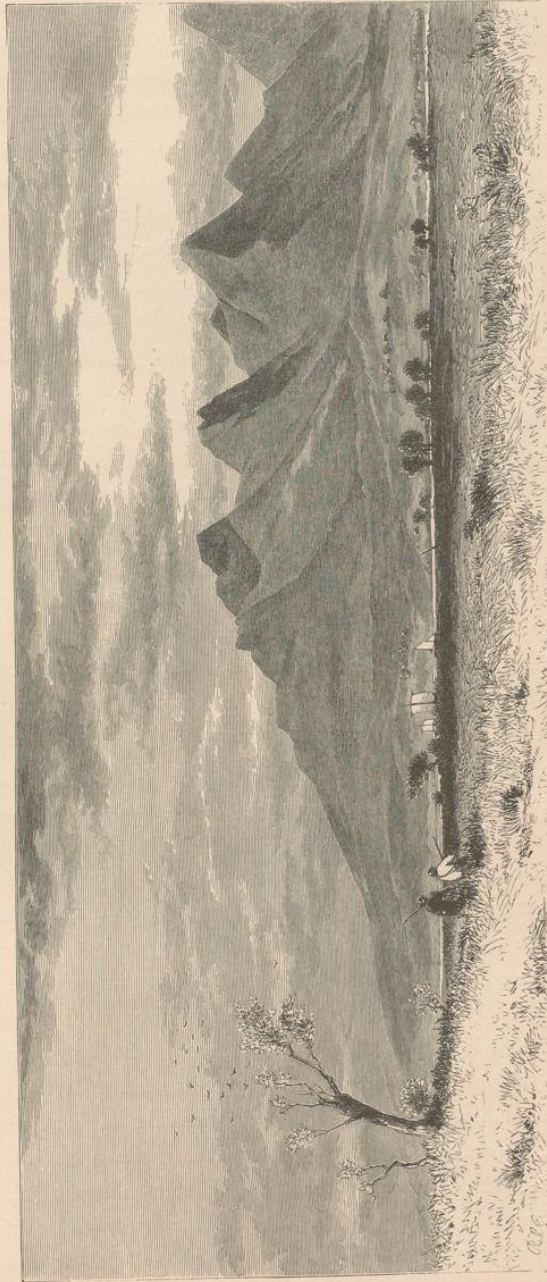
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY R. SWAIN GIFFORD.



THE immigrants who have determined to join their fortunes with the State of Oregon, are at present compelled to journey by stage from Sacramento to the head-waters of the Willamette, though here and there are portions, already completed, of the coming railroad that is to link the Columbia to the Sacramento. Wearisome as is the

transit in the immigrant-wagon, it is generally preferred, by those whose destination is Southern Oregon, to the sea-voyage round to Portland, and thence by steamer down the Columbia and its tributaries. The valley of the Sacramento, at first with an undulating surface, and diversified with earth-waves crowned with noble oaks, as we ascend northward spreads out into treeless prairies, as flat as those of Illinois. The first break in the monotony of the expanse is made by the Marysville Buttes—a short range of low, volcanic hills, which rise suddenly out of the prairie. The town of Marysville is at some distance, and is on a tributary of the Sacramento, called the Feather River; but the Buttes loom up from the eastern bank of the Sacramento, which here is lined with alders and cotton-trees. The latter are broad and umbrageous, but not high, and their dark-green foliage contrasts pleasantly with the gloomy brown hues of the fire-born hills. Native grape-vines trail along the ground, and cling



Marysville Buttes.

around the trunks of the trees, hanging like Arcadian curtains, and making picturesque bowers, unheeded by the inhabitants of the various ranches, who are somewhat prosaic in character, and given much to considerations of profits in wheat-raising. Between these one catches glimpses of the river, flowing onward with a still, deep current, reflecting placidly the masses of green foliage, and the trailing vines, and the white sails of the small vessels gliding downward with the tide. Deep pools here and there give back the blue of the cloudless sky; and, as a bass accompaniment, come in the dark shadows of the Buttes, with their sharply-drawn angles and their truncated cones. The slopes that rise from the banks have a very gradual ascent, and are dotted with ranches, pleasantly hid by orchards and vineyards. High up as far as vegetation goes the cattle graze; but, from the acuteness of the sides above the slopes, little earth can cling to them, and therefore they present a bare and hungry appearance, intensified by contrast with the smiling river, and the slopes blessed by Pomona and by Ceres. Not altogether deserted are these barren crests; for, where the cattle do not care to stray, the sportsman is sure of finding the California hare, whose numbers seem infinite. The flesh is capital, save where the animal feeds entirely on the wild-sage, which gives it an intensely bitter taste. Looking from the cones of these hills to the right and left, the eye glances over miles upon miles of flat plains, where fields of wheat succeed to vineyards and to groves of oak, broken only by the wooden buildings of the settlers. In the far distance can be faintly discerned the undulations of the foot-hills on either side—the first indications of the Coast Range to the left and the Sierra Nevada to the right.

When the traveller gets to the Lassens Buttes, he has reached the first mountains which are capped by perpetual snows. The river winds at the feet of these giants of stone, and its banks begin to show traces of the higher ground, in the degeneration of the cotton-wood-trees, and the improvement in the appearance of the oaks, which here are very lordly. The trunks are huge; and, though the height is not remarkable, the spread of the boughs is enormous, and the shade afforded is singularly refreshing to men and beasts fainting under the fierce sun. Not only are the banks crowned with groups of these trees, but the low, brown hills at the foot of these snow-clad summits are fairly embowered in their luxuriant groves. They impress the beholder forcibly as being very old, not only from the immense reach of their huge boughs, but from the masses of mistletoe that live upon their trunks. Seen in the early morning, when enveloped in sombre mist, they give a mysterious beauty to the bases of the mountains at this point. When the word has gone forth among the caravans of immigrants to get ready the morning's meal, preparatory to resuming the journey, the scene is one of peculiar beauty. Above is the vault of intense blue, with the stars glittering like "patens of bright gold." A few faint, rosy clouds fleck the heavens, and reveal the iridescent splendor of the snowy crests, which glow with all the colors of the opal or of an iceberg. The shadows from these summits are of the most brilliant purple, and blend slowly and gradually with the



LASSENS BUTTE, SACRAMENTO VALLEY.

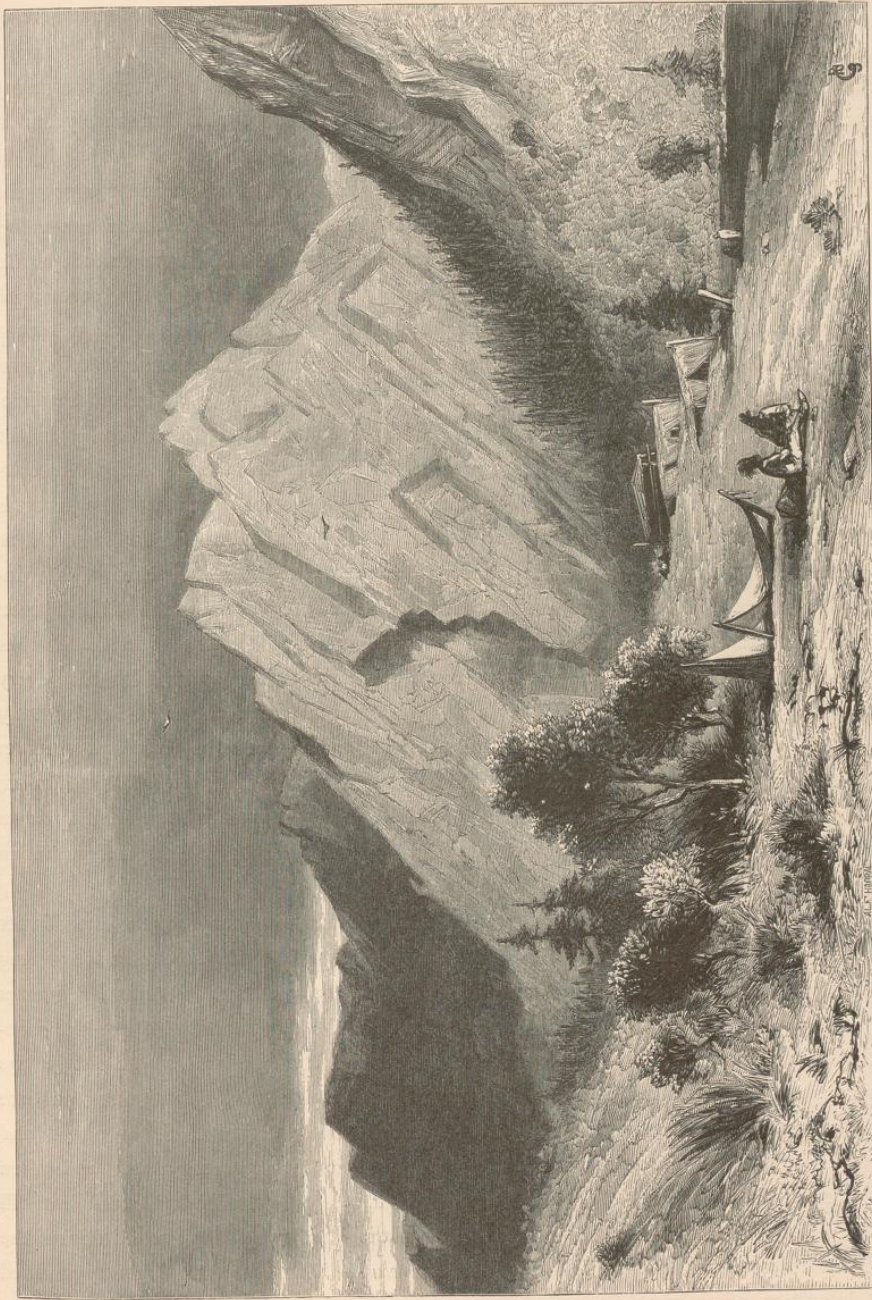
dull brown of the mountain-sides. The veil of mist, exquisitely thin and transparent half-way up, permits the eye to detect the scars and hollows channelled by fire and storm in the rude, volcanic sides. As the base is reached, the thickness of this silvery veil increases, until it hides every thing in its fleecy folds, save where, comparatively close at hand, the groups of oaks detach themselves from the mountains, and add an additional awe and mystery to the glory of the sunrising. Looking southward, the river, that before flowed with such a quiet, slumberous current through groves of alders, and clumps of cotton-wood, and curtains of clustering vines, laden in autumn with purple grapes, has now roused itself to energy, and courses along with a hoarse murmur, battling with the bowlders and the fragmentary rocks that have fallen into its bed and dispute its passage. Beyond the river, stretches the interminable prairie, where the fields of harvested wheat lie wrapped in slumber; and not a single ranch gives even a token of life. The light, stealing upon the broad shadows, first touches the tops of the prairie-wagons, and glorifies the brass ornaments of the patient mules. Then, making more and more progress, it shines upon the broken and fragmentary huts that Indians have left, and at last, in full glory of splendor, brings out the yellow of the cultivated fields and the coarse brown of the sandy soil. Where farming has not been attempted, the plain is covered with a stunted vegetation, diversified with the bitter-sage. There are frequent indentations of wagon-wheels, for these mountains are a spur of the Sierra Nevada, and this trail goes up to the mining regions. By this route most of the freight for that rough part of the world is carried, and the wagons come back laden with dull ingots of precious silver. The American ranch, where the accompanying view was taken, is never without scores of guests either going or returning to the mining territories of Northeastern California. To them the great cone of the extinct volcano is a well-known landmark, with whose appearance they are perfectly familiar. It remains in sight for days after it has been left behind.

The trail of the intended railroad now strikes into the deeply-wooded valley of Pitt River. This is reached through a road constantly ascending through sunny valleys, and among brown hills covered with superb oaks. On the crest that surmounts the valley of the Pitt, fine pines are reached, which are grouped in masses considerable enough to be styled a forest. This extends along the line of the river which, cutting its way through the Sierra, falls toward the west in a series of white, tumultuous rapids. Rising directly from this pine-laden crest is a range of granite and limestone rocks, which attains an elevation from the plain of three thousand feet, and is broken into a multitude of ragged forms. The granite is a bluish gray, which relieves the dazzling white of the limestone. When the sun shines upon the latter, the observer can hardly tell it from marble, so brilliant is its snowy hue. The line of these singular hills is of considerable length, extending, indeed, along the whole valley of the Pitt. When the crests are of granite, the forms are of that bold, bluff character so peculiar to crystalline rocks, but,



CASTELLATED ROCK.

where they are of limestone, their appearance is finely castellated. The peaks have been wrought, by the cunning hand of Nature, into the guise of gigantic castles of the El Dorado land. Battlement and bartizan and huge donjon-keep present their sharp angles and clearly-defined walls against the brilliant blue of the California sky. Here and there coniferous trees have attained a root-hold on the almost perpendicular walls, and flaunt their branches like the banners of a proud castellan. Nor is sound wanting to complete the illusion, for the shrill scream of the bald-eagle is heard from the loftiest and most inaccessible peaks, where these birds build their eyries, and whence they survey the land with that strange air of watchfulness which distinguishes birds of prey. The beasts that live by rapine, especially the *Felidae*, naturally assume attitudes of repose, and are essentially lazy, with a graceful indolence; but the birds of the *Raptores* group are ever on the lookout, ever piercing the distance with their bright, sun-defying eyes. And the natural blind that Providence has given to their eyes is of all places necessary here; for the glare of the noonday sun, falling upon these peaks of snowy limestone that rear themselves upward for three thousand feet like a huge ice-wall, without the relief of a single break, is positively blinding. There are no shadows, save where here and there a haughty crag overtops its fellows, and mounts up in the semblance of tower or Gothic spire of Giantland. Here, from the dazzling white, the shadows are a determined blue, and one might think one's self in Alpine countries, or among the everlasting snow-peaks of the Sierra. The eye turns, with a sense of exquisite relief, to the wooded crest below, where the sugar-pines stand in glorious phalanxes. These trees grow to an immense height, often not less than three hundred feet, though their diameter is only eight. This gives them an appearance of slenderness and grace resembling the effect produced by Saracenic columns; an effect heightened to the utmost pitch of idealism by the character of the trees. For fully one hundred and fifty feet these lovely trunks are branchless, and as symmetrically rounded as even a Neo-Greekish architect could desire. The hue is a bluish purple, delicately marked with a net-work of scorings. From the point where the branches commence, they stretch out with nearly level poise straight from the shaft, and their leaves are dark-green spiculæ, to which the noonday sun gives a yellow tinting. Lying down at the bases of these regal pines and gazing upward, one sees the foliage massed with fairy-like grace against the white walls of the limestone, and above these three thousand feet of blinding glare is the sky, like blue fire, into whose depths the eye seems to pierce. But the sugar-pines are not alone. Often they are mixed with firs of feathery, bluish-green foliage, hiding by its mass the dark-brown trunks. And then, more rarely, is found the big tree, *par excellence*, the *Sequoia gigantea*. These, however, are aristocratic, and are generally to be met with in open glades, green with herbage, and bright with the blossoms of many flowers. Some have a circumference at the base of one hundred and thirty feet, and rise to an altitude of three hundred feet. The bark is excessively thick, scored with deep, regular grooves,

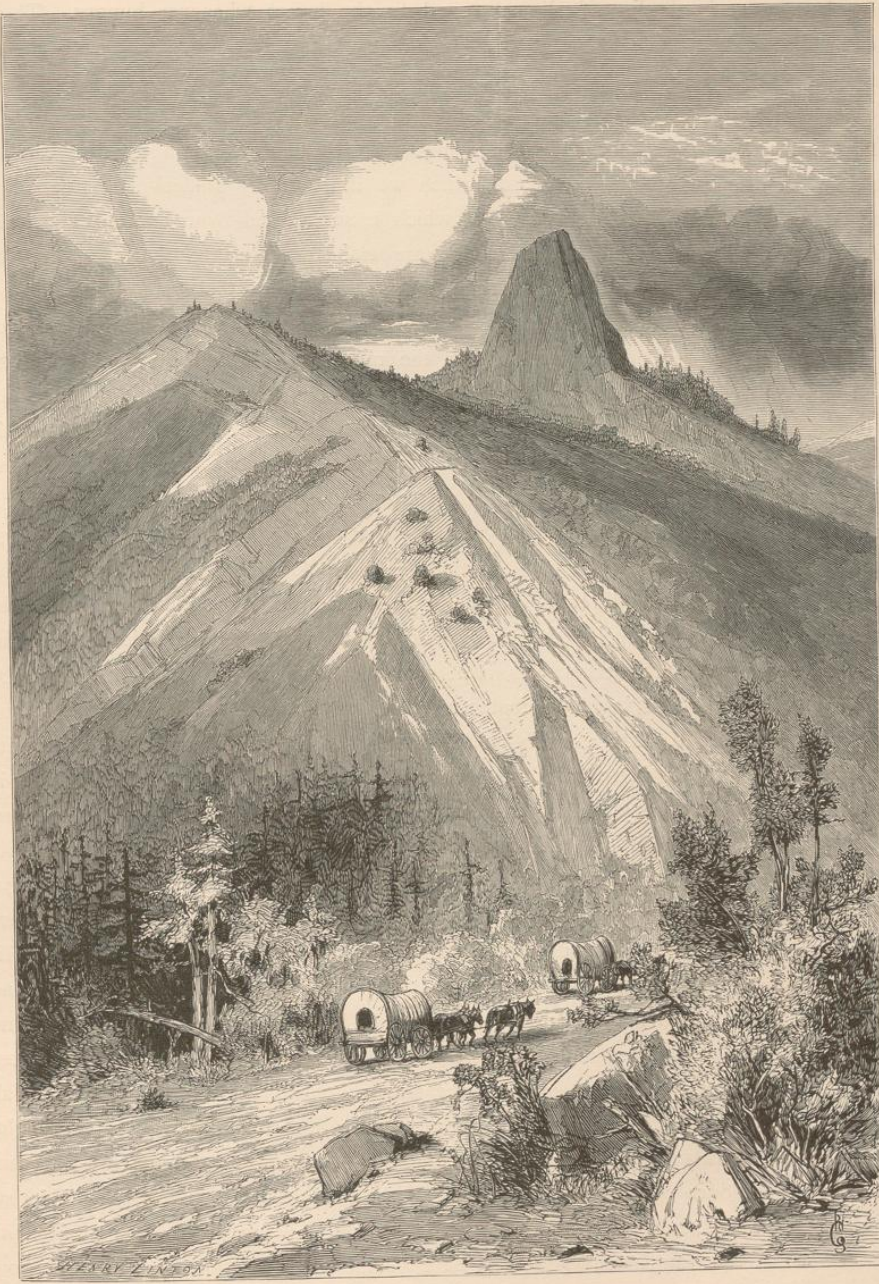


LIMESTONE FORMATION, ON PITT RIVER.

and of bright-brown color, mottled with purple and yellow. The foliage of these huge trees is delicate beyond description, and has been aptly compared to a pale mist of apple-green hue. Old, very old, are these trees, and many things have they seen, and many secrets do their Hamadryads keep. Many of the sugar-pines are a thousand years in being, and the giant *sequoias* more than double that tremendous age.

Though the granite and limestone hills extend with unbroken grandeur along the line of the Pitt River, the pine-grown crest is broken here and there where the valley broadens, and from the opposite bank the land stretches out into breadths of prairie. Here the Indians, known by the name of the river, are mostly to be found, encamped in great numbers on the plain, which is covered by a long, rank, tangled grass, almost overtopping the traveller's head. There are not wanting trees, for manzanitas and sugar-maples grow in clumps upon the plain; and on the opposing slopes, wherever the limestone is not too precipitous, there are dense, serried ranks of firs, and occasionally in the ravines a stunted growth of cotton-wood. And, wherever there are foot-hills, the oaks abound, displaying their far-reaching branches and their lustrous leaves. The river is quite rapid, but neither broad nor deep. It abounds in salmon, which are so thick as to shoulder each other, as the Irishman said. This accounts for the presence of the Indians, who secure the fish by spearing. With the habitual wastefulness of their race, they will only take the salmon that are in the highest condition, and, when a fish has been brought to the surface struggling on the cruel barbs of the spear, with his silvery sides flashing in the sunlight, if he does not please the fastidious "buck," he is instantly rejected, and committed in a dying condition to the water. High over head, wherever an Indian spears, will be found soaring a bald-headed eagle, too lazy to fish for himself, and having no osprey to rob here. As soon as the rejected salmon is seen floating down the swift current, the eagle descends like a falling-star, and, seizing the hapless victim in his strong talons, bears him away to his castellated eyry.

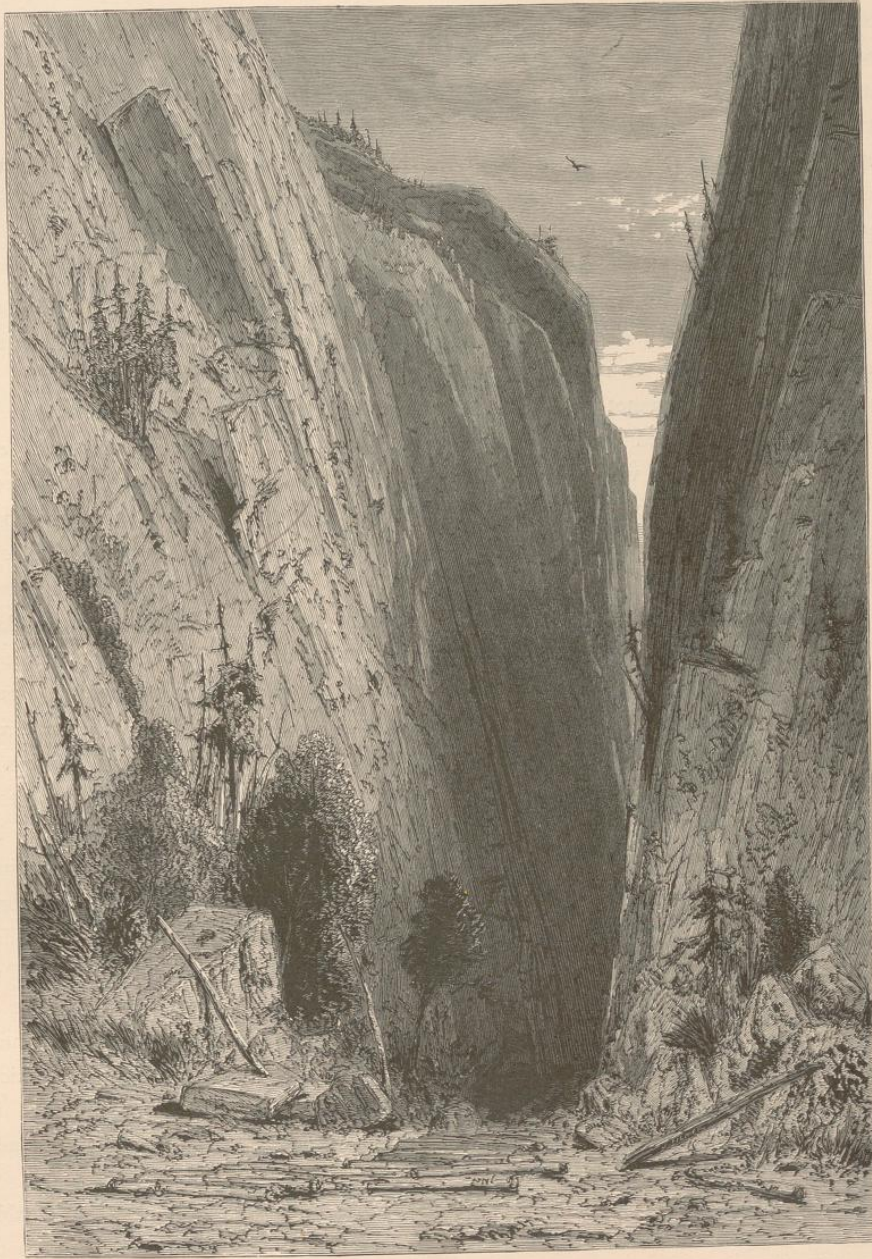
The region of the Pitt River, or, as it is termed by the map-makers, the Upper Sacramento, is an absolute wilderness. Lake and field and fell, naked crag and towering pine-clad crest, succeed each other with a savage grandeur similar to, but far greater than, that of the wilderness of the Adirondacks. To the south and east are the iron-hills, enfolding in their rocky clasp millions of treasure, that will be brought out by the future generations. At present the Indians give much trouble to the authorities, and are continually making combinations with the northern tribes, those of the MODOEC and ROGUE RIVERS. Their camps are somewhat picturesque in their general aspect, and when viewed from a distance; but a nearer look destroys the charm. In front of each hut will be found a squaw of preternatural ugliness, curing the salmon by splitting it, and drying the pieces in rows upon light scaffoldings of wicker-work. These are subsequently smoked over low fires of fragrant fir. Each squaw is expected to attend to this business, and to perform her maternal duties; and the papoose, stiffened in a mummy-like roll, is



PILOT KNOB.

slung handily at her back, and slipped round to the breast whenever hungry. These babies never cry, but stare at the stranger with weird, black, beady eyes, and with absurd gravity.

From the valley of the Pitt the traveller rises, continually traversing woods covered with fair mountain-pines, until, through a notch to the northward, a glimpse can be caught of the huge summit of Shasta, which we illustrate by a steel-plate engraving. The tents are generally pitched at Sissons, which is surrounded by a cluster of ranches embowered in vineyards and orchards, that are trebly inviting to the eye after the weary tramp through the wilderness. The ground, where not cultivated, gives only a thin sward of grass, with tufts of the bitter-sage. Rising from the plain are hundreds of small volcanic hills, built up out of the lava, the mud, and *scoria*, thrown out from the crater above in other times. Beyond, there is what may be termed the base of the mountain, attaining an altitude of some two thousand feet, and throwing out spurs in every direction. Above this the cone of the mountain rises in one tremendous sweep to a sheer height of eleven thousand feet. The stupendous proportions of this great snow-peak would alone be sufficient to rivet the attention of every traveller. But to these must be added a most wonderful play of color. The lava forming the body of the mountain, which penetrates often through the snow-part, is of a pale rosy hue, and, when the sun shines on this, it has a splendor which words are too weak to render adequately. The snow, with its pure, white, fleecy fields, is in many places diversified by great glaciers of ice and yawning crevasses, in whose depths are shadows of the most intense blue. Upon the veins of the ice the sunbeams fall with refracted glory, giving forth the most wonderful opalescent tints. Here, in some places, the hues are green as emerald; there, in others, there is a lurid purple, interstriated with a tender pink. In other spots, the prevailing tone is a rich cream-color, perfectly translucent. The snow, too, has its colors, but generally glows with an incandescent fire under the welcoming kisses of the solar rays. So beautiful, so varied, are the effects produced by the mingling colors of lava, of snow, and of ice-enamelling, that, for days, the beholder cannot consider other things. His eyes are ever strained upon the peak, and bent admiringly upon its lustrous hues and the deep, violet shadows that contrast them. He has but one thought—to watch the radiation of color at sunrisings and settings, and see the fiery rays slant and shoot across the great mass, working its parts up from the still white and steely gray of night to all the splendors of the northern lights. Sometimes, when the sun is at its greatest height, a thin, fleecy veil of vapor steals from the round rim of the topmost crater, and one cannot but feel a sudden contraction of the heart as the thought flashes upon the mind that Shasta is still active, and that that light, transparent cloudlet is smoke issuing from its inmost secrets. The imagination and the memory combine to tell how this might be, how volcanoes in Europe, notably Vesuvius, slept calmly, as if extinct and dead, for more than a thousand years, and then woke up to hurl death and destruction for leagues around.



UMFQUA CANON.

But, whether Shasta is dead in reality or only sleeping, it is certain that the vapor is not smoke, but is water collected in the crater at a sufficient depth to preserve it from congelation, which the sun's ardor has released in the form of cloud. It is pleasant to watch it wreathing softly around the royal giant's head, and to note the conduct of the stratus-clouds that, far below, come in contact with his breast. They sweep on, gliding gently in fair, straight lines, but, as soon as they touch him, begin to break up softly, and, having done their best to girdle him, are either converted into glittering snow-flakes, and lie softly upon his bosom, or appear as cirri, and float away into the upper air.

When the eye has been satiated with the radiant colors of Shasta, the mind begins to be impressed with its vast proportions. Its total elevation above the sea-line is fourteen thousand four hundred and forty feet, nearly the same height as Mont Blanc, the monarch of European mountains. But Mont Blanc is broken into a succession of peaks, which the eye cannot take in at the same time, except from such a distance as to dwarf the grand effect. Not so with Shasta. Standing in front of Sissons, the eye is permitted to take the whole at one glance. There was no cumulative series of effects of Nature in building up this mountain, for it is a gigantic peak set simply upon a broad base that sweeps out far and wide in every direction. From the base the cone rises upward in one tremendous sweep of lava and ice. Very sheer and precipitous is it to the north and south, but east and west there are two grand slopes, from the plain right up to the rim of the crater. These are the buttresses of Nature's great chimney. One of these, being free from impediments of crevasses and glaciers, is generally chosen by travellers who wish to make the ascent, which is not difficult. This is in the direction of Strawberry Valley, a charming place, rightly named, belonging to a gentleman whose peaches are yearly reckoned by the thousand bushels, and his grapes by the ton. He has built an excellent turnpike-road outside of the valley, on which the toll is by no means light. From the tower-house, the view of the great Shasta is very pleasing, because one loses sight of the vulgar little mud-hills which, from Sissons, insist on adorning the foreground, and one gets a noble idea of the glorious girdle of forest which clothes the base. Beyond a well-defined line the ascent toils upward without a tree or shrub to cheer it on the way, retaining nothing save a little stunted herbage. This is soon replaced by the pale, roseate lava, and above that comes the deep blue of the snow in shadow. The road winds through Strawberry Valley, over a soil entirely of pumice-stone; and it is odd to see great sugar-pines, whose roots are firmly embedded in masses of this substance. Around Shasta this tree produces its most enormous cones, some of them being fully eighteen inches in length.

The road passes, on its left, Black Butte, another extinct volcano of considerable size, which appears dimly in the far distance. After leaving behind Lower Klamath Lake, in a couple of days one sees rising in the blue air the singular form of Pilot Knob, an elevation of the Siskiyou Mountains which, becoming a landmark to

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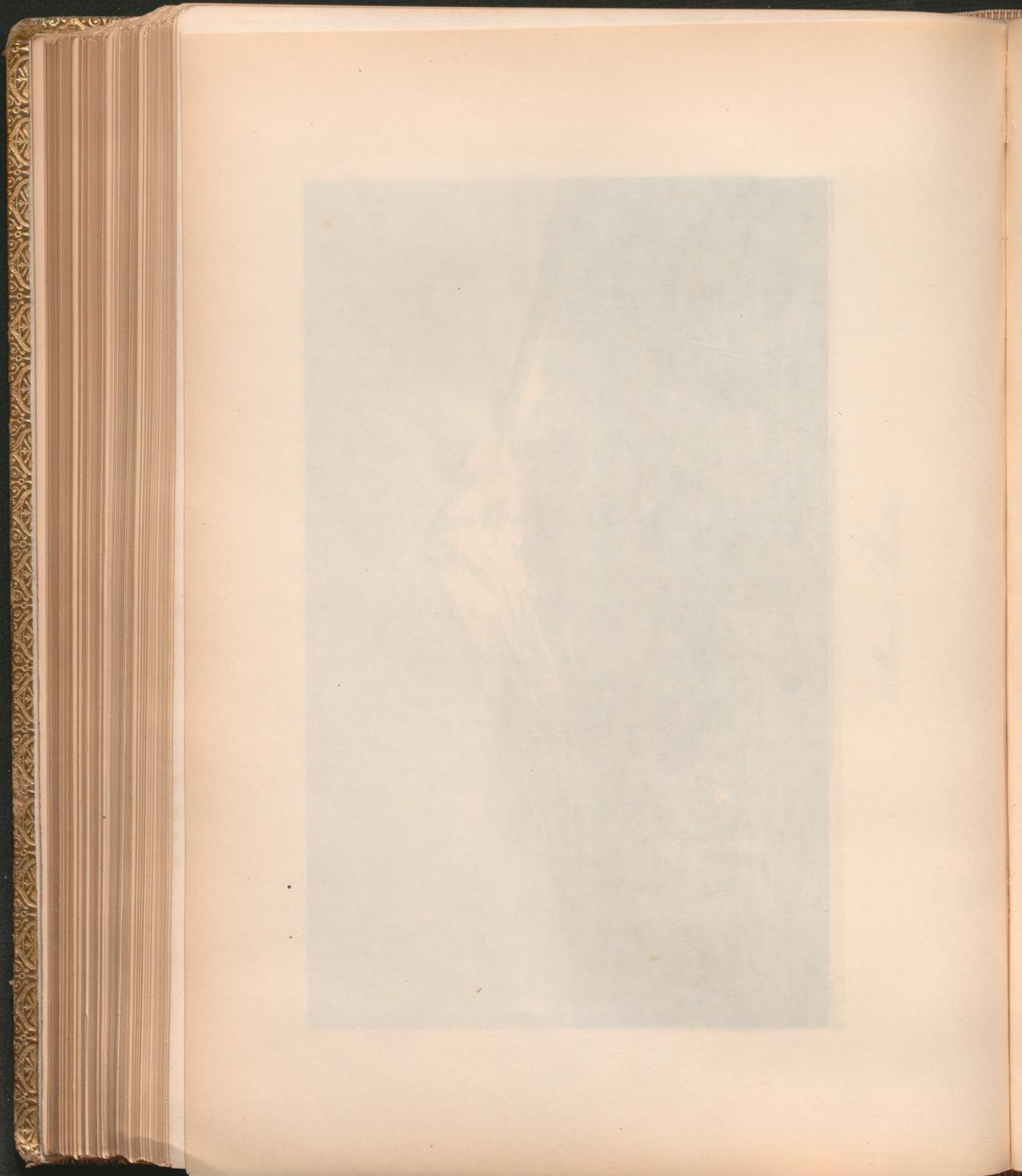
Engraved from a photograph by G. P. Anderson, A. S. in the office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C. 1854-1856.

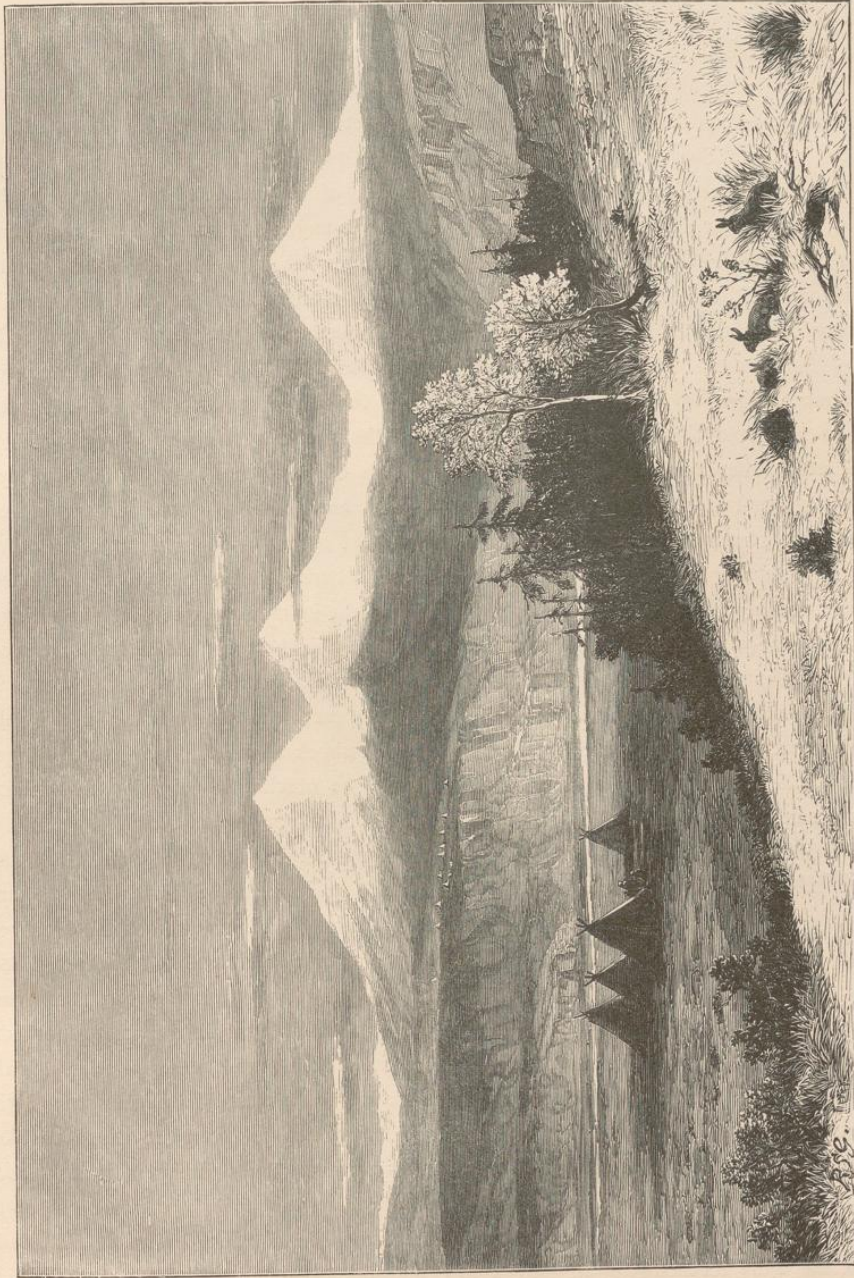
Mount Shasta

New York, D. Appleton & Co.



THE THICK BARK





THE THREE SISTERS.

immigrants journeying to Oregon, has attained its name. This rock is a great mass of black volcanic substance, which rises perpendicularly from the mountain-crest. The Siskiyou Range has here an elevation of twenty-five hundred feet, and the knob is about five hundred feet higher; but its singularity has led to great exaggeration, and many travellers have spoken of it as eighteen hundred feet high, and of the Siskiyou Mountains as next to Shasta in importance. This is simply ridiculous. The aspect of the pass is not very prepossessing. The volcanic origin of the mountains all through this region accounts for their singular lack of beauty. The angles are so sharp that the earth which covers their skeletons cannot adhere, and comes off in great land-slides, leaving the mountain-sides bare and exposed. But the trees which skirt the base of the hills are very beautiful. Every step toward Oregon from this point seems to increase the size of the forests. The trees grow thicker together, and the firs and pines are larger. There are also birches, balsams, ashes, spruces, and other trees of northern climates, and it must be noted that the number and size of the firs is continually increasing, until they predominate over the pines. There is no lack of oaks, too, through these valleys, and the wagon-trail often winds through groves that are park-like in the beauty of their natural arrangement; for there is this singularity about the oaks of this region, that they grow in groups or clumps, with just such distance between them as permits the fullest development of each individual, and yet preserves them in masses of the highest beauty. No landscape-gardener has completed his education who has not studied the oaks of Northern California. The mistletoe is found here also in immense quantities, and one sees occasionally trees that have perished from its embrace. But this appears to be only when the tree from some other cause had received a shock to its vitality. Healthy trees do not suffer from the clasp of the parasite, and one observes continually oaks whose lower trunks are one mass of mistletoe, without any injury or loss of strength.

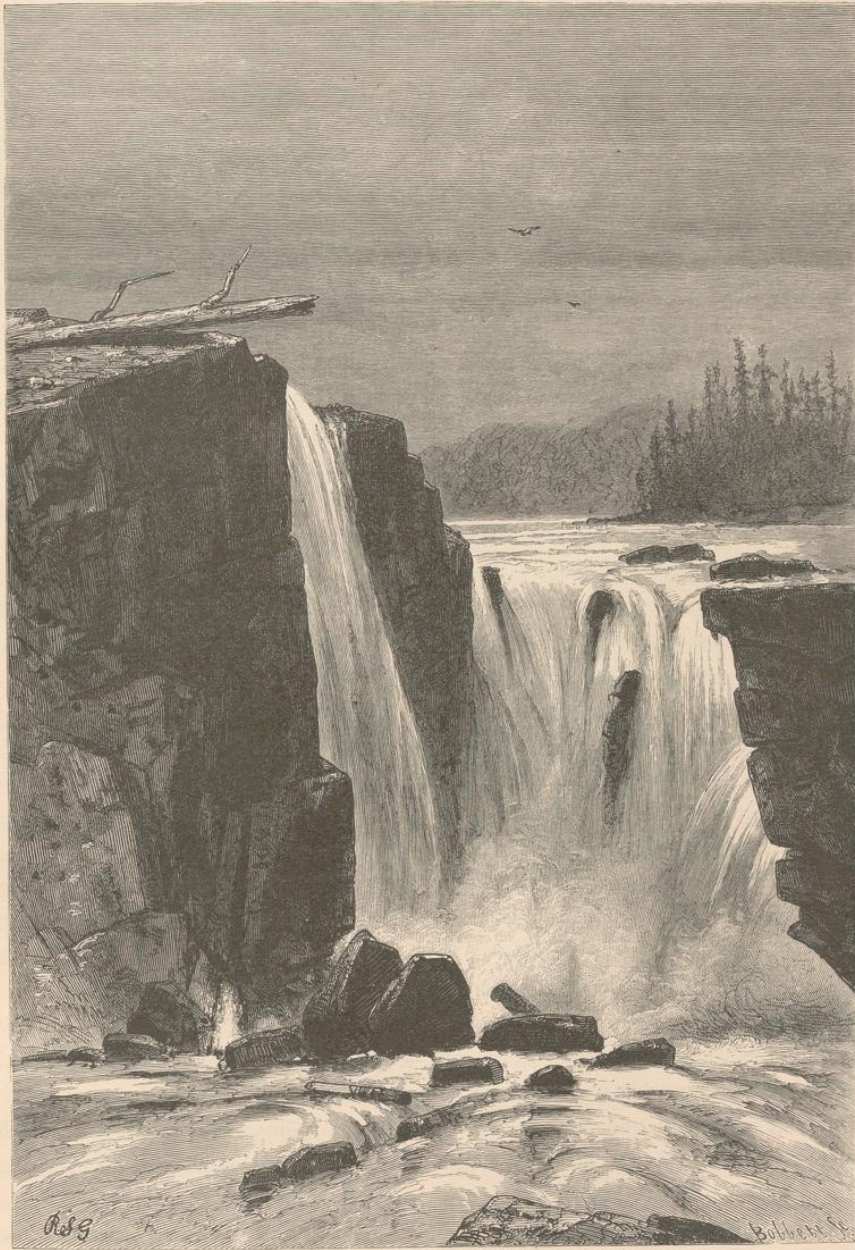
Beyond Pilot Knob the immigrant-trail crosses the Rogue River, a beautiful stream, full of salmon, but the country here is infested with quarrelsome Indians, who are continually committing depredations on the settlers and upon travellers. One of the branches of the Rogue River is ominously named Grave Creek, from the number of people killed by Indians and buried on its banks. Having crossed this pleasant stream, the road enters the Umpqua Mountains, and is soon involved in the terrors and the gloom of the Umpqua Cañon. This is a pass through the mountains, eleven miles in length, with sides twenty-five hundred feet in height. So high are these tremendous walls that it is with difficulty one can discern the blue sky. The wagons go along at the base like tiny insects, and the mules seem to be sensitive to the melancholy character of the place. The road is corduroyed in a very detestable fashion, and the poor beasts keep slipping all the way. Listen attentively, and you will hear a feeble trickling below the road, which, the walls reëchoing, swell into a low murmur. This is the Umpqua River, a narrow thread of water, which, in the summer and the fall, hides itself under the vege-



FALLS OF THE WILLAMETTE.

tation of the pass, and steals away unknown and unnoticed. But, in the winter and spring, it is a different stream altogether. Then, flushed with rains and with melting snows and ice, it becomes a dangerous torrent, occupying the whole width of the cañon, and sweeping away every thing that obstructs its course. Many a tale is told by settlers of immigrant-parties who have met death in this cañon from the furious waters of the Umpqua. Sometimes, in the late spring, it has been simply a thread of silver water, fed by incessant percolations from the overhanging walls. A rain-storm, bursting on the mountain-tops miles away, will swell it to an immense volume of water; and suddenly, as the wearied teams of the immigrants plod patiently on, and the poor strangers look in terror at the brown prison-walls that hem them in, they see, at a turn of the road, the river foaming with furious rage, and sweeping down upon them, intent on their destruction. Then rise upon the stifling cañon-air the wild shrieks of women, the fierce oaths of men, and the hoarse baying of hounds. Swept down by the irresistible force of the water—battered against the rocks and bowlders in the path—swept and crushed against its walls—the bodies float unresistingly here and there, until the waters, subsiding as rapidly as they had risen, leave a few whitening bones to tell the story of their fate to the next travellers through the ill-omened pass. Nor is this all. To these horrors must be added the ambuscades of the Rogue Indians, who, tracking a doomed caravan, will send parties into the cañon before them, and will follow after with others. Then, in some spot made terrible by graves ornamented with little wooden crosses, they will fall upon the wagoners, scalp them, and spoil their goods, bearing the women and the children away as captives. The sight of the settlement of Roseburg is one of the pleasantest that can be imagined to the travellers emerging from the cañon.

And here the troubles of the journey may be said to cease, and the beauties of the scenery can be admired with a full heart, without any terror of Indians or fear of dangerous rivers. The traveller is now in Oregon, and in the valley between the Coast Range of mountains on the west and the Cascade Range on the east. Striking the forks of the Mackenzie River near Eugene City, the snow-clad summits of the Three Sisters loom up into the pleasant air. They rise from a range of volcanic hills, of moderate height, to a considerable elevation, being capped with perpetual snows. They are nearly equal in size, and all have an exact pyramidal form, as seen from the road. The Mackenzie River flows along the edge of the plain; and, from the eastern side, bluffs of basalt rise perpendicularly to a great height. From the peculiar form of basalt, these rocks look like cyclopean masonry, being divided into huge blocks, with wonderful exactitude. The prevailing color is a dark, deep brown, varied by yellow. The summits of these bluffs spread out into a fair table-land, reaching, by a fine, gradual ascent, to the base of the mountain-range. These plains are covered with a thick, juicy herbage, much relished by the Indians' ponies, which feed here in great numbers. The tents of their masters are a conspicuous feature in the landscape. The sides of the Three Sisters are



SOUTHERN SIDE OF WILLAMETTE FALLS.

finely zoned with a broad belt of forest, which mounts to an altitude of six thousand feet. Great sugar-pines and silver-firs rise high above the other trees, and mass their dark-green foliage against the mountain-sides. Above these are broad fields of fair, untrodden snow. The angles of the Sisters are less acute than those of other snow-mountains in this region, and consequently there are fewer slides, and the peaks are always covered with the glistening folds. Very pure and virginal is the effect of these cones of clear white, unbroken by any sharp edges of volcanic tufas rising majestically from the lines of serried trees below. The clouds rest continually upon the peaks, adding their contributions of vapor, to be turned into tiny snow-flakes; and of mornings, oftentimes, the haze wraps them round in mazy folds, producing vague, fantastic images. Also, when there are rain-storms in the air, and clouds of heavy vapor ride through the upper world, they are attracted by the bold outlines of the peaks, and, settling on them, are changed into varied forms; sometimes appearing like a knight's helmet, with crest and feather backward streaming from the shock of tourney; sometimes wreathing and twisting like volumes of smoke from a great conflagration; sometimes pushing out circular cloudlets, like the bubbles of a mill-race. The Indians believe that these three peaks were three female giants, who had been wives of Manitou, and, having rebelled against him, were turned into stone. The banks of the Mackenzie have often furnished themes for the admiration of the poet, and fertile subjects for the pencil of the artist. The great columnar masses of basalt—suggestive of the glories of Staffa and Iona—come sheer down to the water's edge, and the brown and yellow colors are reflected on the surface of the stream. Indians, regardless of Nature's beauties, are intent on spearing salmon; while the Indian boys, with bows and arrows, hover about for a shot at the enormous hares which abound here, and feed on the juicy herbage of the high level and on the shoots of the manzanita—a tree which something resembles the laurel. The sugar-maple makes its appearance here in considerable quantities; and the silver-fir displays its cones of grayish green. These stand up in the form of a cup, and have, perchance, been used as such by the gambolling squirrels. On the plains level with the river the grass is coarse and rank, and the soil appears in patches of bare sand. The rock crops up, also, in boulder-like forms, which, combined with the poor grass, gives a barren, hungry appearance to the country. This, however, is not a true indication, for the hand of industry is rewarded plenteously for its efforts. Apples grow abundantly wherever orchards are planted; and it is said to be simply the finest country in the world for wheat. It is upon the line of the proposed railroad, and in a few years the Three Sisters will give back from their white walls shrill echoes of the steam-engine's scream.

Not far from them, in the same range, rises the Willamette River, on which Portland, the chief city of the State, is situated. The falls of this stream are justly celebrated for their beauty. The river, which is generally about a mile wide, narrows sud-

denly near Oregon City, as if preparing for its tremendous leap. The rocks on each side are of frowning basalt, of a deep black, rendered more intense by the foaming waters. By the action of the stream—the current being strongest in the centre—the falls have been worn into a horseshoe form, the two sides being so close that one can throw a stone to the other shore. The water, rushing with a very swift current precipitates itself down a sheer fall of seventy feet, rising, in smoke-like mist, from the mysterious depths below, where it issues in great swaths of turbid water, streaked with green, and curved like glass, jostling with the bowlders of basalt, and roaring in rage at the contest. The river has not very much water at any time; and the steamers on it are all of the stern-wheel order, which captains declare can be made to float on a heavy dew! Hence, most of the splendor of the falls is lost by reason of the great basalt cliffs, showing too plainly amid the boiling waters. The rocks in themselves are grand; the fall is prodigious; but it is seldom that there is water enough to get a really fine effect. From this cause travellers, who survey the falls in comfort from their hotel-windows in Oregon City, are very often disappointed, and apt to accuse the Oregonians of taking geese for swans. But those who wish to see the falls in their most glorious aspect, will do well to descend the river, and gaze upward from the south. Then, when below the falls, the tremendous proportions of the scenery forcibly impress the mind. The huge walls of basalt, built up in enormous blocks of masonry, quarried by Nature's own subtle and strong hand, excite the liveliest feelings of admiration. The two sides approach like giants determined to stay the progress of this turbulent Willamette, and drive him back to his sources in the far-off Cascade Range. The river, on the other hand, foreseeing the opposition of his rocky foes, draws all his water to the centre, and, contracting his flanks, makes one tremendous charge, and bursts his way through the opposing walls. Down, down, into the sheer depths below, where all is foam and mist and noise and mystery, plunges the river in great curves, that hurl themselves boldly into the air like so many Curtii plunging into the gulf. Masses of the basalt, broken and thrown down, show their black heads feebly in the centre through the rush of waters. But on one flank the wily enemy has gained a temporary advantage, and a great stream has been separated from the main flood. Yet to no end, for this divided portion precipitates itself in a fiercer, braver curve than the others, and joins its friends at the bottom of the maelstrom, amid a hoarse, congratulatory murmur, which mingles with the roar of the combat. There is not so much mist as in some less grand cataracts, but there is enough to hide the fortunes of the fallen river, and the confusions of its lines, as they beat against the masses of rock which they have detached through long successions of heroic charging. A poet might discern, in the midst of the steaming vapor, forms of fair Naiads and grotesque Nixes and Pixies; but the practic algray orbs of the Oregonians see only an unpleasant necessity for a portage, and for another steamer to Portland, twelve miles from the junction of this river with the grand Columbia.