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Yellowstone Park

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by

John H. Atwood



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Yellowstone Park in 1898

By John H. Atwood

I recognize that bad form is rarely more perfectly manifest than when one apologizes for that which one is about to attempt; but there are some things the essaying of which violates no propriety, and yet are so disproportionate to the powers of mediocrity that humility may be entirely seemly—and for that matter most things in nature are too near the infinite in minuteness of detail or magnitude of mass to be successfully approached with the pencil or verbiage of portraiture. Speaking of South America, Buckle said: “It is too great for man—its mountains are too high to climb, its rivers are too wide to span”; so can we say of all nature in her greater moods; she is beyond man’s power of description or control. I have seen a storm at sea; for five days I was in what, on the log of the steamship *Victoria*, was entered as a hurricane, and yet if I had an apostolic power of tongue I could not give one unacquainted with the ocean even the smallest conception of what those days marked deep upon my memory. I could tell you that the waves seemed like mountains of water—that the huge liner would rush up the long, foam-flecked slope of brine till it seemed that the ship must be shrouded in the clouds—and, on the billow’s crest, pause for a moment, and then plunge down into the swirling depths until it almost seemed that the nadir must be reached; but though I multiplied metaphors and

marshaled words in multitudes, yet you could not know the dizzy upward rush nor the sickening downward plunge—nor the roar of the storm, nor the crash of the waves on the vessel's side, nor the wild and eerie shrieking of the wind in the ship's metallic rigging. So it is with the wonders of the Yellowstone—they are wider than words, mightier than metaphors—sublime beyond similitudes, and too marvelous to be told of withal. And yet it seems to me a duty that devolves upon everyone who visits this place to tell of it as best he can that others may be induced to journey to this northern wonder land, and come to know more of the minuteness and majesty of Nature's creative power.

It is now some fifteen years ago that I first met Prof. Gooch, of the Yale faculty. I was a caller at the house of the gentleman, who, poor man, came, a little time thereafter, to call me son-in-law; a title that had already been bestowed upon the Professor. Gooch had some years before been employed by the government to do the work of a chemical expert for one of the government surveys of the Park. In some manner the subject of the Park was introduced, and the Professor at once grew enthusiastic, and could I tell you of it as he did, you would be instructed indeed. From that time I had a great desire to see the Yellowstone, but the desire was not gratified until last summer.

Many well-informed people there are that do not know that lying in the northwest part of the Louisiana Purchase, appropriating parts of Wyoming, Idaho and Montana, is a region that embraces

within a space of some fifty or sixty miles, more marvelous things than can be found in any other space a thousand times its size, if in truth the whole world can furnish forth their equals.

This land can be reached by many routes; I chose the Burlington from Kansas City, and the country through which runs the C. B. & Q. is a beautiful land indeed. During the first day's run through northern Kansas and southeastern Nebraska it was hot enough to transform everybody into a warm spring of perspiration, but the scenes from the car windows were pleasant to look upon.

For miles we looked out through the heat haze upon alternating stretches of billowing wheat, yellow ripe, ready for the shuttle-like blades of the harvester; and long deep lines of growing corn, standing like ranks of drilled hussars, with waving dolmans of Lincoln green—side by side stood the ripe wheat and growing corn—the gold of fruition touching garment hems with the emerald of vigorous promise.

The second morning we woke in a land of delicious coolness, of wide sweeps of prairie and rolling but treeless uplands—with a sameness to it like the sameness of the sea—till in the afternoon we came to the rougher and bolder outlines that mark the country of the Little Big Horn. And there, off to the right, on the hillside, gleaming white in the light of the sinking sun, we saw the headstones and monuments that mark the place where Custer and his men fell in the now famous battle of the Little Big Horn. Those marble marking stones, clustered as they were without order, were like a group of snowy chess men, left

standing as they were, when the two grim players in the terrible game of war, Fate and Disaster, rose from that bloody board. That night we rolled into Billings, Montana, a pretty town of six or eight thousand people, bounded on three sides by perpendicular cliffs of some considerable height. We had three hours to wait, and after eating a sorry meal at a hostelry with an imposing name, we took a night sleeper for Livingston, a town some miles to the west on the Northern Pacific. We arrived there in the night, and looked out in the morning upon snow-clad mountains that seemed near enough to be touched almost; and not alone did we see them, but felt them as well, for the cold was so piercing as to cause a Kaw-mouthier to think of the winter solstice with a vengeance. Our fast we broke at a less pretentious but more nutritious hostelry a block from the depot. We left Livingston early in the forenoon, and for something over an hour rode through scenes which alone would have paid for the trip. We passed through a two thousand foot canon into Paradise Valley, a rather extravagant name for a very pretty stretch between the mountains which rose majestically on either side. We then struck Yankee Jim gorge or canon, the height of whose cliffs would startle prairie-bred men. To the right is the Devil's slide, a smooth belt of trap rock, reaching in a slant from the foot to the top of the mountain. *Descensus Averni facilis* must have been thought of by Tullius after having had a vision of this Beelzebub's toboggan. We then arrived at Cinnabar, the railroad station nearest the park, a little hamlet that takes its name from

the mountains near which it stands, which in turn get their names from the mineral, reddish in color, appearing on all sides.

As we stepped upon the platform, up swept a handsome six-in-hand Concord coach, wheels, trap-pings and horses' coats glistening in the sunshine, and into the coach we climbed for a nine-mile up-hill drive to Mammoth Hot Springs. The road wound up the mountain beside Gardner River, which boiled and brawled many feet below. The view from any part of the road was inspiring; crags and peaks and snow and purple sky, the rollicking, yelling river, and wide-pinioned eagles sweeping to and fro.

In time for a rather late luncheon we drove up to the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel, a huge frame building covering considerable ground and four stories high. Here one found accommodations good enough for anyone; the beds are comfortable, and the food and service good. The afternoon is spent in examining hot springs formation. "Formation" is the name given to the results of the building done by the hot waters, bearing in solution carbonate of lime, which is deposited as the waters cool. Here has been built up by the deposits of these infinitesimal particles a mountain hundreds of feet high. It has been so built as to form a series of terraces, ranging from a few feet to many feet in height. On each of the terraces of the new or more recently built part of the mountain—what one might call the *live* part—is a boiling spring, bubbling up hot and steaming out of unknown depths to flow away to the edge and over it, to cool and make its granular deposits.

The water is as clear as absolute purity, and yet bears in its clear transparent waves that which builds and tints a mountain. I say tints, for while the prevailing color of the formation is white, parts of it are dyed from salmon pink to *terra cotta*, in the most exquisite shading. All sorts of fantastic shapes are taken by these strangely forming terraces so that they look like white or blushing marble carved by some Arab chiseler, into arabesque surpassing in delicacy and beauty the stone lace work of the Alhambra.

At a distance, the mountain shows pure white, glistening and bright; as one gazes one thinks of the description of the holy city—"like a jewel it shone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal, while its gates are pearl—even pearl of matchless price."

The upper part of the mountain is dead; it is white, but it is the chalky white of something dead with leprosy; its terraces are crumbling. The gleaming, steaming mass below and the saline, sepulchral mass above are the quick and dead of volcanic nature. It is said that those terraces are alone in the world—absolutely unique; now that the formation in new South Wales has been destroyed, they are the only structures extant, built by bubbling waters. Near the foot of the terraces stands Liberty Cap, a stone cone, about fifty feet high, built by some long since silenced spring, shaped like a Phygian cap, and hence the name.

We looked into the Devil's Kitchen, but were deterred from investigating Satanic cuisine by a blast of hot and sulphurous air. We drank of the cooling waters of these steaming springs, and

found them sweet to the taste. These terraces are all named and very appropriately; some of them I remember, but not all. There is Pulpit Terrace, Minerva, Jupiter and Angel; this last being by many feet the highest; and as we stood at its foot, and looked up the shimmering height with the thin veil of water pouring over it, it looked like a slow-moving cascade of molten glass flowing over a cliff in the marble quarries of Carrara.

Tired by our tramp we returned to the hotel to dine and rest. This last we did within warm overcoats, seated upon the wide veranda, looking toward a collection of government buildings dignified by the name of Fort Yellowstone. This is the headquarters of the United States troop kept always in the Park to protect the game from destruction, and the works of nature from vandalism.

The next morning we were waiting for the wagon at eight o'clock and in getting ready we had to solve the clothing question. And let me now say that the best time to make the trip is late in June or early in July. I was there Fourth of July week; circumstances selected the time of my going, and did it much more wisely than I could then have possibly done. At that time of year you may run some risk of encountering cold weather or perhaps a storm, though this risk is not great, but you avoid the terrible, terrific, and appalling dust that haunts as a demon almost every mile of the road, later in the season. The dust is something terrible as described by all, and as I know from one half day's experience. The coach horses cannot endure to do their work at the dusty season for more than a few weeks, when

they are sent to pasture and replaced by fresh ones. But late in June the forces of the frost have been pretty well dispersed and the dust is not yet. You should take with you two suits of clothing, and two pairs of shoes; hack suit and heavy shoes, for the walks from the road to see the various sights is hard on footwear, and the dirt of the journey will ruin good clothes. Do not burden yourself with heavy coats; they have for rental at the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel heavy driver's ulsters which will protect from the cold more perfectly than most overcoats. A coat such as one would want to carry is too good to be subjected to the treatment the park journey will give an outer wrap. These great coats are worn by ladies as well as men, and while not handsome are preferred by the experienced traveler.

Up come the wagons. They are large, roomy Concord coaches with three seats, and a wide seat for the driver. Each seat can accommodate three persons, but is not required to accommodate but two, and as the seats are cushioned and upholstered with leather, one can travel at ease. Our party comprised two coach loads. In my coach was Mrs. Atwood and myself, a native and citizen of Johannesburg, South Africa, very English, named Hay, and his sister, and three others. On leaving the hotel the road winds around the base of Angel terrace, which in the morning sunlight looks more than ever like the crystal mountain of a fairy tale.

After making a little dip we began another long climb passing through the Golden Gate. Why it is so called, I can't guess, unless it is because that is

its name. The road for a long way is cut out of the rocky mountain side, and for a mile or more you ride where a mishap to your vehicle would mean being dashed to waters boiling over boulders a thousand feet below. The climb finished, we found ourselves in Swan Lake Valley, a valley seven thousand feet above the level of the sea. Along this basin we bowled until we encountered Apollinaris Spring, a spring that they told me was as good apollinaris water as one can buy in bottles, but as I never drank apollinaris water by itself I did not attempt to judge. Next we encountered Obsidian Cliff or glass mountain. This is a sure enough mountain of glass, nearly black in color, that glistens in the sun like black diamonds. Understand, this is a mountain of glass—manufactured in the vast manufactory of nature. In making the road it became necessary to remove a spur of this cliff, and instead of blasting, the road-makers simply build huge fires about it, and after so heating, threw water on it, and the sudden contracting did the work of blasting power and dynamite. This mountain of glass was the nucleus of the many strange tales that for years after the Lewis and Clark Expedition came to the East from this region, about crystal mountains. There is also in the park petrified trees, and in a few places the silica-laden water has been drawn, by capillary attraction, up into sage brush and other bushes, silica-laden water which form on the outside crystal-like drops, gave rise to stories strange indeed. It was reported that acres of sage brush bore on their branches diamonds, and all manner of jewels, and that among these jewel-bearing

shrubs crouch petrified rabbits, wolves and bears. In a word, the tales that came forth from this land would make the Baron Munchausen seem like a worshiper at the shrine of veracity.

At noon we reached the canvas lunch station known as Norris Geyser Basin or Norris Station. There we were met by Larry, the incomparable and inimitable manager of this cloth-roofed tavern. He was a character indeed, with a different greeting for everybody. "How do you do all? God bless your souls, come in, come in!" was his salutation to us. To my traveling companion from South Africa with his English clothes and accent he said, "Come in, me Lord, come in. How is the Queen and yourself, bedad?" At the table the Englishman got to kicking about something until he was overwhelmed by a speech from Larry something like this: "Me friend, ye grieve me; you are setting in the very same chair, at the very same place, where two years ago me friend, Chauncey Depew, stood when he said, 'Larry,' he says, 'ye are a blessing to the world; when I came,' he said, 'to this wild and tangled wilderness, where the hand of man never set foot,' he says, 'I little thought to find a man like Larry Casey,' he says, 'who is a man of great charity,' he says, 'for,' he says, 'Larry will give you anything he has if ye only give him the price,' he says; 'and a man of nerve and courage is Larry,' he says, 'for he comes up here among the mountain peaks, where the lightning raises the devil, and then puts up his prices beyant the mountain tops, and without putting any lightning rods on them, either,' he says; 'why, talk about courage,' he says, 'see the seegars

he sells to perfect strangers, not knowing if they be dangerous men or no; sure Larry is a warm member,' he says; 'them geysers be hot stuff,' he says, 'but they ain't in it with Larry,' he says. No, me friend," continued Larry, "don't kick at me, please, for I am an angel in disguise; I'm bound to admit the disguise is a pretty good one, but still I'm an angel, or will be when I have a change of life, and, anyway, I am willing to be one when I die," and so on, almost without end.

The Norris Geyser Basin gives the first view of the spouters. A walk of about a mile and a half gives an opportunity to see most things to be seen at this point. Climbing a low ridge you look down into what might well be the valley and the shadow. The basin into which you look is pitted with hot spring craters filled with ever-boiling water; several small geysers are here; one is called the Constant or Minute Man, for every minute up shoots a little jet of water thirty or forty feet. The black growler is here—a black-throated opening which emits puffs of steam, and a roar that can be heard afar. But the feature of this basin that struck me the most forcibly was the baby geyser, which is only four or five years old. There can still be seen the raw and unhealed rent in the earth where this geyser burst through; there are the dead trees, killed at the time, mute monuments of the geyser's destructive heat. The outrush of water at this point is considerable, but the altitude to which it is thrown is not great.

Taking the coach again we proceeded through Gibbons Canon; the road gently declines until Gibbons Fall is reached, which led me to remark

that this was Gibbons's Decline and Fall, but nobody noticed the remark, and I subsided.

Sweeping down out of the canon we sighted and soon arrived at the Fountain Hotel. This is in the Lower Geyser Basin, which contains some of the most wonderful features of the whole park. We had hardly cleansed ourselves from the stains of travel when a cry attracted our attention. We looked from the window to see the famous Fountain Geyser in full play, but so far away that the full effect could not be obtained. When we arrived at the spot we found a great well-like opening nearly thirty feet across, from which presently rushed a great mass of water, not to a great height, not over forty or fifty feet, but spreading out in a fan-like fountain and producing an effect simply indescribable. The whole mass of water seemed disintegrated into drops, and standing as I was with my back to the sun, the whole seemed transformed into a multitude of brilliants; the volume of water is considerable. The controlling impression created was one of surpassing beauty. There are many other hot springs round about and for acres around nothing can be seen but the geyserite or chemically formed rocks.

Near by is what is to my mind one of the most remarkable things to be found in the whole park, and that is what is called the paint pots. Prof. Gooch had told me of them, but I failed to grasp anything like an idea of the reality, and I fear I shall be able to serve you to but little better purpose. They are well named, for nothing in nature or art can more perfectly resemble paint than the substance seen in the basins called the paint pots.

There are many of them near Fountain geyser, but the greatest is what is called the Mammoth Paint Pot. Imagine a circular basin some fifty feet in diameter, some fifty feet across, surrounded by a ridge of clay four or five feet high, and perhaps a little more, looking for all the world like the outer rim of a huge circus ring. This rim confines a mass of this paint, liquid and boiling. So perfect is the resemblance to the lead paint of commerce that when a quizzical soldier told me that all the buildings in the park were painted with paint taken from this pot, I bethought me of glass mountains, and apollinaris springs, and never dreamed of doubting the statement until I happened to think that none of the buildings were painted white, and then looked for and saw the twinkle in my informant's eye. This mass is composed of finely granulated clay, fine as the finest flour, and mixed with boiling water to the consistency of that which we see in the house painter's bucket. From a furnace far down in the earth steam is constantly sent up to keep the giant cauldron bubbling; from all over its surface little jets of steam are constantly leaping, and in their upward rush they carry little flecks of paint that on falling back on the mass take the most remarkable shapes—roses, lilies, lace work, but more often the shape identical with that of an egg when broken into the skillet for frying. When I say rose, I mean it appears as though you were looking down upon the open blossom of a full blown rose. And to stand and watch this steam modeling in clay suggests thermal possibilities that the ordinary imagination could but imperfectly grasp.

Other colors than white are here—red is here, in every shade from blush pink to royal purple. Surrounding the mammoth paint pot are many others with gamuts of color so complete that were a Raphael to here paint the diluvian sunset, with the bow of promise in the sky, he would never find his palette wanting a single tint. The beauty and strangeness of the paint pots, and the brilliant loveliness of the Fountain geyser made the stay at the lower basin a noteworthy day.

The next morning found us bowling along the banks of the Fire-hole River, whereon, in the course of an hour or so, we came to the Excelsior Geyser. It is in the midst of numerous other hot springs of high temperature; and when you look down into the pit from which this geyser springs when in action, remember you are looking into the throat of the greatest geyser in the world. The pit is some 250 or 300 feet in diameter. This immense column of water is, in eruption, raised to the height of 250 feet, and so great is the volume of water shot out by this geyser than the great Fire-hole River is raised several inches at every eruption. If this geyser has played during the last few years it has occurred in the winter and was not observed.

Not far from the Excelsior is Turquoise Spring, typical and representative of hundreds of tinted pools found in the park. They vary in size from a few feet to a hundred feet in diameter. They are nearly all of the shape of an inverted bell, starting from a narrow throat at the bottom, and expanding to an extended circle at the top; all of them are warm, and many of them above the boil-

ing point. The waters kept therein show every shade of blue and green. The green of the sea is there, and the green of the new unfolded leaves; the tender green of the grasses of June and the rich virile green of the sabrelike leaves of the corn. This infinity of greens shades into a marvelous variety of blues. The blue of the turquoise and the blue of the noon-day cloudless heavens shade into the darker blue of the star-lit midnight sky. We all remember the legend of Cleopatra dissolving pearls in the wine cup. As one looks down upon the blended splendor of emerald and sapphire flashing to the eye from the depths of these gleaming bells, one is almost constrained to believe that Dame Nature has here played the part of Egypt's erratic queen, and filled her steaming beakers with the distillations of gems and jewels.

A few miles farther we came to the Upper Geyser Basin, a space about four miles square, which embraces within its limits more geyser springs than all the rest of the world contains. There are twenty-five or thirty of sufficient magnitude for each to be entitled to pages of description, and did any one of them stand alone it would rank as an eighth wonder of the world. Never is the poverty of language more perfectly manifest than when it is employed in an attempt to convey an impression of one of these gigantic geysers. The first one that I saw was the Bee Hive. Out of a cone, some four feet high, and three feet in diameter on the inner side, shot a column of water of the thickness of the opening, straight up in the air two hundred feet; with a roar like a thousand steam engines, with the rushing sound

of a hundred sluice ways, with a power too tremendous for possible calculation, that column of water rushes up into the air to a height equal to the mighty monument that crowns the brow of Bunker Hill. It played, as I remember, for about ten minutes; at the distance of several hundred yards I viewed it, and then running to its side, touched the up-shooting water with my hand and thus grasped some notion of the overwhelming, unconquerable force that made of that mass of upward moving liquid, a crystal tree two hundred feet high. For very like a tree it was with a trunk, smooth and unbroken for one hundred and fifty feet, and then breaking into a spreading top not at all unlike the upper part of some beautiful elm that grows in perfected beauty by the banks of the Connecticut. But while the Bee Hive and the Giant, and the Splendid, and the Grand, may leap to greater heights, the most marvelous of all these geysers is Old Faithful.

Every hour and a little more, every seventy minutes, to be exact, with the regularity and constancy of the sun, Old Faithful sends a column of gleaming water, two and a half to three feet in diameter, to a height of one hundred and fifty feet. Old Faithful is no misnomer. In the gray of early morning, in the blazing splendor of noon, amid the golden glories of the sunset, and in the silvery sheen woven in the loom of Diana, can be seen gleaming Old Faithful's column of crystal and gems; in the green of the spring time and the russet of the autumn, and when the snow pall of winter is drawn over nature's rugged face, this mighty clepsydra, this mighty water clock of the

ages, hurls its sparkling pillar to meet the lances of the sun or the onward rush of the cohorts of the storm.

Another notable geyser is the Castle. It sends its water to a height of two hundred and fifty feet, but it is not the altitude to which its waters rise that makes it so worthy of observation; it leaps from a great mass of accumulated geyserite not unlike an ancient castle in form, and plays for a period of some twenty minutes, when it is followed by eruptions of steam, without water, with a roar that can be heard far away.

It would be a task that approximates the impossible to describe in detail each of the springs found within this basin. The description of one is bound to be very like the description of another, and while one can wander from geyser cone to geyser cone, and gaze upon the awe-inspiring splendors that ascend from these steaming bowls, such descriptions as I can muster might pall in a little time. The beautiful pools of which I spoke some minutes since are found scattered through this basin among the geysers as well as many other parts of the park. The naming of the springs is in most instances very apt. For instance, there is one called Economic Geyser because, strange to relate, not a drop of water that is upward thrown is lost from the well from which it is shot, but drops back into the basin from which it springs, and after the eruption is over, sinks away into the earth again.

On the morning of the fifth, we bade our final farewell to Fountain Valley and quickly arrived at the Upper Geyser Basin where we had spent the day before. It was our good fortune as we swept

through this basin to see five geysers play at once, Old Faithful, the Bee Hive, the Castle, the Jewel and the Fan; and as I gazed upon their leaping splendors, I bethought me of the time when in Paris many years before I had gone all the way to Versailles for the express purpose of seeing the Versailles fountains play; and while they were magnificent they sink into insignificance when compared with the aqueous wonders of the Yellowstone.

The larger part of the day is consumed by a not very interesting ride to Yellowstone Lake. One of the interesting thoughts that accompanies one on this ride is that one is passing over the continental divide where the head waters of the Columbia, that empties into the Pacific, part company, as it were, with the head waters of the Yellowstone, that after numberless miles of wandering finally find their way into the hoary arms of the Atlantic.

About half way of the journey one comes upon a magnificent view of the sentinel peaks of the Teton mountains, fifty miles away, towering seven thousand feet higher than where you stand and fourteen thousand feet above the level of the sea.

A little past noon you arrive at what is known as the thumb of Yellowstone Lake. The whole lake is in its outline not unlike the shape of a man's hand, when outspread, and the part which we approached first was the part called the thumb. Here we encountered another canvas lunch stand, and found here a series of paint pots as beautiful, if not as large as those we found in the Fountain Valley. Pink was the prevailing color and the shading was exquisite. Close by the shore of the

lake at this point is one of the scalding springs, its urn lying partly within the lake proper. There are doubtless other places in the park where it can be done, but this was the only point where I actually saw fish caught and cooked without the fisherman moving from his tracks. The water of the lake so teem with fish that to catch one is a task without labor, and if one stands close by the scalding bowl when doing his angling, he has only to turn and drop his still wriggling catch into the hot water at his side to have it cooked as perfectly as could be done in any pot that ever swung on crane, or that demonstrated the efficiency of the modern gas stove.

Here it was that we were brought to a complete realization of the actuality of the water's heat, for as we drove to the hotel we encountered another vehicle being driven with such care as to excite comment, when inquiry disclosed that its chief occupant was a poor fellow who had some days before fallen into one of the boiling springs in the neighborhood, and so cooked the flesh from his limbs below the knees, that amputation was deemed a necessity and he was being removed to the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel for better treatment.

Shortly after lunch you encounter the irrepressible Captain Waters, who is owner and manager and pilot of the only steamboat on Lake Yellowstone.

She is a trim little craft, capable of accommodating a couple of hundred, I suppose, and apparently in perfect repair. You are a little startled when you are informed that in order to test her many

qualities you have to give up three dollars, but the average man will think as I did, I suppose, that three dollars can be gotten somehow most any time, but a ride on the second highest body of water in the world is not an every-day possibility.

This is a sheet of water with an area of one hundred and fifty square miles and lacking about one hundred feet of being eight thousand feet above the level of the sea. Only one body of water in the world is higher, and that is Lake Titicaca in South America. An experience such as this was not to be missed, and giving up a trinity of dollars we sailed away over a surface nearly eight thousand feet higher than the waters that lap the base of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor; more than seven thousand feet higher than the great unsalted seas that bear on their surface the commerce of Chicago, Detroit and Buffalo; seven thousand feet higher than the level on which live and move seventy million of people who proclaim themselves American citizens.

As we sped over the lake surface, a more perfect idea of the topography of the whole park was obtained. It could be there seen that on all sides of the plateau or basin which is embraced in the park limits tower mountain ranges from ten to fourteen thousand feet in height, making indeed a mountain wall that the hardest could hardly climb. Away to the east as we sailed could be seen the sleeping giant of the Tetons, for clearly outlined against the skies was the upturned face of a sleeping man. Brow and nose and mouth and chin were there, upturned to the clear and flashing sunlight of this upper region. The mountains whose configuration

made this face were fifty to one hundred miles away, and yet no sculptor who wielded mallet in the Valley of the Nile, or wrought his wonders beneath the shadow of the Acropolis, ever more perfectly outlined a man's face than has the unnumbered chisels of the rain, driven by the hand of the storm, carved a human face among these far off mountain tops. There the giant of the peaks has slumbered since the days when the earth was young; when Semiramis ruled in Babylon, when Memnon sang to the morning, when Rameses reared aloft his huge towers of stone in the rainless air of Egypt, the silent slumberer of the Yellowstone still lay with face turned to the sky; there he slept when thrones crumbled beneath the blaze of Napoleonic batteries, and when again these thrones were built anew from the ruins of the great Corsican's Empire; and there he rested when Lexington and Yorktown gave to us a country which we pray may be permitted to continue until the final day of dissolution shall dissolve the mountain couch upon which this world-old slumberer has lain so long.

The hotel which stands close by the Lake is like that found at the Fountain and at the Mammoth Hot Springs, excellent in every way, and after a pleasant meal we again boarded the steamer for a run to an island where are gathered the animals that are indigenous to the park. There were the mountain sheep, buffalo and antelope, but the most interesting of all to me were the huge bison, being among the last of those vast hordes that used to wander over the prairies of the West. A moonlight sail across the lake, returning to the

hotel, was delightful indeed, although the keen mountain air made all our outer wraps exceedingly comfortable.

The next morning found us again aboard our coach, and after a ride of an hour or so we came upon one of the most peculiar features to be found within the Park. It is called a mud geyser or mud volcano. Climbing up the cone twenty-odd feet high, evidently reared by the action of the geyser, we looked down into the conical pit probably thirty feet in depth, at one side of which was a low cavern-like opening. The bottom of the pit was filled with a slate-colored mud of about the consistency of soft mortar, and every minute or so there would rush from the cavern-like opening a gush of steam and hot air that throws the muddy contents of the basin high upon its sides and even to the top. The odors of this sickening mass are far from pleasant, and yet there is a grewsome fascination about the place similar to that which is said to have characterized the dark tarn of Auber.

Another curious feature of this place is that within a distance of fifty feet is a spring, possessing all the characteristics that mark the mud geyser, except that the waters are as pure as crystal.

Upon leaving the mud geysers we sweep down into Hayden Valley, the largest and most picturesque valley in the Park reservation.

And now we come to the crowning glory of the Park, aye, of the natural world. As we rode down from the mountain top, the Grand Canon of the Yellowstone opened to our view.

The Grand Canon of the Yellowstone! The most stupendous sight that was ever mirrored on human retina! At the upper end is the great fall—a mass of foam three hundred and sixty feet high, as white as hammered platinum, while from its foot, like incense before an altar of silver, rises the mist eternally. Down from the falls the canon opens; a gorge piled with tower and dome and minaret and castellated wall and ragged arch as though it were a world wrought upon by a giant architect gone mad. Here are unnumbered capitals and columns upholding a mighty mass the whole of a yellow, as golden as the temples of the Incas whose walls and roofs of beaten gold blazed like mighty jewels in the bosom of the Cordilleras; there gleaming garish in the sunlight that just reaches it, is a pile, white as a whited sepulcher; over beyond is a huge red rock, crimson as an Aztec stone of sacrifice reeking with human blood. And the color of the whole! Every tint known to Titian's palette is there. The river below bounds the bottom of the picture with a framing of ultramarine; black is there and brown; the pinks and the purples, orange and ochre; and gray and blue; there hangs the blushing banner of the morning, and beside it the opalescent gonfalon of the dying day; while above and over all, at the cliff's edge, the solemn pines wave forever the dark green standard of the Prophet. It is as tho, some titan painter had in a rage hurled his colors against the canon's walls where innumerable fairy fingers had blent hue with hue into an infinitude of shading—into a perfected harmony of color that God alone can call into being. In such a presence all speech

seems as sacrilege and silence the only homage meet and fitting to be offered up in that faultless fane, built by nature in her grandest mood as an altar to the Infinite.

All this of course was not seen in a moment; the whole of that afternoon and a good part of the following morning was devoted to an imperfect study of this wonderful spot. Words cannot describe it; painters can never portray it; as the infinite is beyond the finite mind, so is this perfection of magnitude and beauty beyond the reach of human powers of presentment. Of such a sight "the hunger of the eye grows by feeding."

Our journey was nearly done and a short ride to Norris Basin to receive Larry's benediction and parting word, a little longer ride to the Mammoth Hot Springs with a couple of hours for rehabilitation, and we were again on the road by brawling Gardner River found for Cinnabar and civilization.

My parting word to you in connection with this subject is, trust no man's description of this wonderful place; go see it for yourself, for when you have imagined the most indescribable thing that lies within the range of your knowledge, multiply that description by a thousand, and you may approximate in your mind in some remote degree that which is beyond reproduction by tongue or pen or pencil, the might and the marvel of the wondrous Yellowstone Park.

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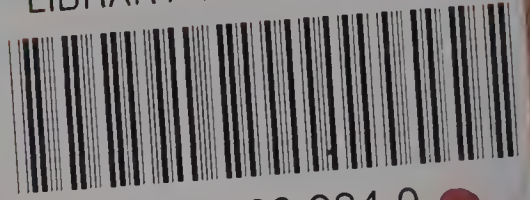


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