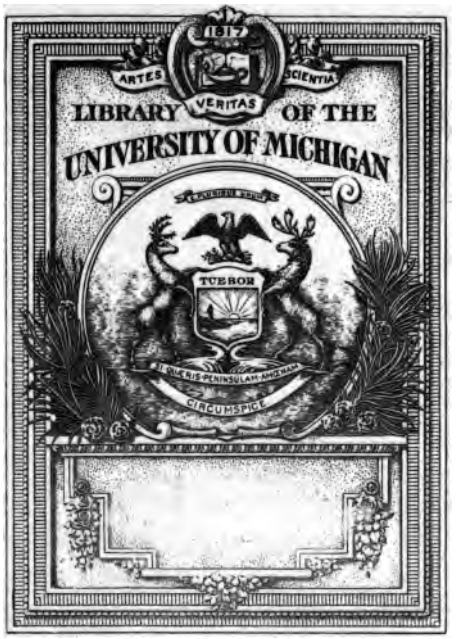
California and the Californians

The Alps of King-Kern Divide

DAVID STARR JORDAN



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AND

THE ALPS OF KING-KERN DIVIDE

BY

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CALIFORNIA AND THE CALIFORNIANS

BY DAVID STARR JORDAN
PRESIDENT OF STANFORD UNIVERSITY

The Californian loves his state because his state loves him, and he returns her love with a fierce affection that men of other regions are slow to understand. Hence he is impatient of outside criticism. Those who do not love California cannot understand her, and, to his mind, their shafts, however aimed, fly wide of the mark. Thus, to say that California is commercially asleep, that her industries are gambling ventures, that her local politics is in the hands of professional pickpockets, that her small towns are the shabbiest in Christendom, that her saloons control more constituents than her churches, that she is the slave of corporations, that she knows no such thing as public opinion, that she has not yet learned to distinguish enterprise from highway robbery, nor reform from blackmail,—all these things and many more the Californian may admit in discussion, or may say for himself, but he does not find them acceptable from others. They may be more or less true, in certain times and places, but the conditions which

have permitted them will likewise mend them. It is said in the Alps that "not all the vulgar people who come to Chamouny can ever make Chamouny vulgar." For similar reasons, not all the sordid people who drift overland can ever vulgarize California. Her fascination endures, whatever the accidents of population.

The charm of California has, in the main, three sources—scenery, climate, and freedom of life.

To know the glory of California scenery, one must live close to it through the changing years. From Siskiyou to San Diego, from Mendocino to Mariposa, from Tahoe to the Farallones, lake, crag, or chasm, forest, mountain, valley, or island, river, bay, or jutting headland, every one bears the stamp of its own peculiar beauty, a singular blending of richness, wildness, and warmth. Coastwise everywhere sea and mountains meet, and the surf of the cold Japanese current breaks in turbulent beauty against tall "rincones" and jagged reefs of rock. Slumbering amid the hills of the Coast Range,

"A misty camp of mountains pitched tumultuously,"

lie golden valleys dotted with wide-limbed oaks, or smothered under over-weighted fruit trees. Here, too, crumble to ruins the old Franciscan missions, each in its own fair valley, passing monuments of California's first page of written history.

Inland rises the great Sierra, with spreading

"A misty camp of mountains pitched tumultuously "

ridge and foothill, like some huge, sprawling centipede, its granite back unbroken for a thousand miles. Frost-torn peaks, of every height and bearing, pierce the blue wastes above. Their slopes are dark with forests of noble pines and giant sequoias, the mightiest of trees, in whose silent aisles one may wander all day long and see no sign of man. Dropped here and there rest purple lakes which mark the craters of dead volcanoes, or which swell the polished basins where vanished glaciers did their last work. Through mountain meadows run swift brooks, over-peopled with trout, while from the crags leap full-throated streams, to be half blown away in mist before they touch the valley floor. Far down the fragrant cañons sing the green and troubled rivers, twisting their way lower and lower to the common plains. Even the hopeless stretches of alkali and sand, sinks of lost streams, in the southeastern counties, are redeemed by the delectable mountains that on all sides shut them in. Everywhere the landscape seems to swim in crystalline ether, while over all broods the warm California sun. Here, if anywhere, life is worth living, full and rich and free.

As there is from end to end of California scarcely one commonplace mile, so from one end of the year to the other there is hardly a tedious day. Two seasons only has California, but two are enough if each in its way be perfect. Some have called the

climate "monotonous," but so, no doubt, is good health. In terms of Eastern experience, the seasons may be defined as "late in the spring and early in the fall";

"Half a year of clouds and flowers, half a year of dust and sky,"

according to Bret Harte. But with the dust and sky comes the unbroken succession of days of sunshine, the dry invigorating air, and the boundless overflow of vine and orchard. Each season in its turn brings its fill of satisfaction, and winter or summer we regret to look forward to change, because we would not give up what we have for the remembered delights of the season that is past. If one must choose, in all the fragrant California year the best month is June, for then the air is softest, and a touch of summer's gold overlies the green of winter. But October, when the first swift rains

"dash the whole long slope with color,"

and leave the clean-washed atmosphere so absolutely transparent that even distance is no longer blue, has a charm not less alluring.

So far as man is concerned, the one essential fact is that he is never the climate's slave; he is never beleaguered by the powers of the air. Winter and summer alike call him out of doors. In summer he is not languid, for the air is never sultry. In most regions he is seldom hot, for in the shade or after

"Far down the fragrant canyons sing the green and troubled rivers"

nightfall the dry air is always cool. When it rains, the air may be chilly, in doors or out, but it is never cold enough to make the remorseless base-burner a welcome alternative. The habit of roasting one's self all winter long is unknown in California. The old Californian seldom built a fire for warmth's sake. When he was cold in the house he went out of doors to get warm. The house was a place for storing food and keeping one's belongings from the wet. To hide in it from the weather would be to lay a false stress on its function.

The climate of California is especially kind to childhood and old age. Men live longer there, and, if unwasted by dissipation, strength of body is better conserved. To children the conditions of life are particularly favorable. California could have no better advertisement at some world's fair than the visible demonstration of this fact. A series of measurements of the children of Oakland has recently been taken, in the interest of comparative child study; and should the average of these from different ages be worked into a series of moulds or statues for comparison with similar models from Eastern cities, the result would surprise. The children of California, other things being equal, are larger, stronger, and better formed than their Eastern cousins of the same age. This advantage of development lasts, unless cigarettes, late hours, or grosser forms of dissipation

come in to destroy it. A wholesome, sober, out-of-door life in California invariably means a vigorous maturity.

A third element of charm in California is that of personal freedom. The dominant note in the social development of the state is individualism, with all that it implies of good or evil. Man is man, in California: he exists for his own sake, not as part of a social organism. He is, in a sense, superior to society. In the first place, it is not his society; he came from some other region on his own business. Most likely, he did not intend to stay; but, having summered and wintered in California, he has become a Californian, and now he is not contented anywhere else. Life on the coast has, for him, something of the joyous irresponsibility of a picnic. The feeling of children released from school remains with grown people.

"A Western man," says Dr. Amos Griswold Warner, "is an Eastern man who has had some additional experiences." The Californian is a man from somewhere or anywhere in America or Europe, typically from New England, perhaps, who has learned a thing or two he did not know in the East, and perhaps has forgotten some things it would have been as well to remember. The things he has learned relate chiefly to elbow-room, nature at first hand, and "the unearned increment." The thing he is most likely to forget is that escape from public opinion

is not escape from the consequences of wrong action.

Of elbow-room California offers abundance. In an old civilization men grow like trees in a close-set forest. Individual growth and symmetry give way to the necessity of crowding. There is no room for spreading branches, and the characteristic qualities and fruitage develop only at the top. On the frontier men grow as the California live oak, which, in the open field, sends its branches far and wide.

With plenty of elbow-room the Californian works out his own inborn character. If he is greedy, malicious, intemperate, by nature, his bad qualities rise to the second degree in California, and sometimes to the third. The whole responsibility rests on himself. Society has no part of it, and he does not pretend to be what he is not, out of deference to society. "Hypocrisy is the homage vice pays to virtue," but in California no such homage is demanded or accepted. In like manner, the virtues become intensified in freedom. Nowhere in the world can one find men and women more hospitable, more refined, more charming, than in the homes of prosperous California. And these homes, whether in the pine forests of the Sierras, in the orange groves of the south, in the peach orchards of the Coast range, or on the great stock ranches, are the delight of all visitors who enter their open doors. To be sure, the bewildering hospitality of the great financiers and greater

gamblers of the sixties and seventies is a thing of the past. We shall never again see such prodigal entertainment as that which Ralston, bankrupt, cynical, and magnificent, once dispensed in Belmont Cañon. Nor do we find, nowadays, such lavish outgiving of fruit and wine, or such rushing of tally-hos, as once preceded the auction sale of town lots in paper cities. These gorgeous "spreads" were not hospitality, and disappeared when the traveler had learned his lesson. Their avowed purpose was "the sale of worthless land to old duffers from the East." But real hospitality is characteristic of all parts of California where men and women have an income beyond the needs of the day.

To a very unusual degree the Californian forms his own opinions on matters of politics, religion, and human life, and these views he expresses without reserve. His own head he "carries under his own hat," and whether this be silk or a sombrero is a matter of his own choosing. The dictates of church and party have no binding force on him. The Californian does not confine his views to abstractions. He has his own opinions of individual men and women. If need be, he will analyze the character, motives, and actions of his neighbor in a way which will horrify the traveler who has grown up in the shade of a libel law.

The typical Californian has largely outgrown provincialism. He has seen much of the world, and

"Purple lakes which mark the craters of dead volcanoes"

he knows the varied worth of varied lands. He travels more widely than the man of any other state, and he has the education which travel gives. As a rule, the well-to-do Californian knows Europe better than the average Eastern man of equal financial resources, and the chances are that his range of experience includes a part of Asia as well. A knowledge of his own country is a matter of course. He has no sympathy with "the essential provinciality of the mind which knows the Eastern seaboard, and has some measure of acquaintance with countries and cities, and with men from Ireland to Italy, but which is densely ignorant of our own vast domain, and thinks that all which lies beyond Philadelphia belongs to the West." Not that provincialism is unknown in California, or that its occasional exhibition is any less absurd or offensive here than elsewhere. For example, one may note a tendency to set up local standards for literary work done in California. Another, more harmful idea would insist that methods outworn in the schools elsewhere are good because they are Californian. This is the usual provincialism of ignorance, and it is found the world over. Especially is it characteristic of centers of population. When men come into contact with men instead of with the forces of nature, they mistake their own conventionalities for the facts of existence. It is not what life is, but what "the singular mess we agree to call life" is, that

interests them. In this fashion they lose their real understanding of affairs, become the toys of their local environment, and are marked as provincials or tenderfeet when they stray away from home.

California is emphatically one of "earth's male lands," to accept Browning's classification. The first Saxon settlers were men, and in their rude civilization women had no part. For years women in California were objects of curiosity or of chivalry, disturbing rather than cementing influences in society. Even yet California is essentially a man's state. It is common to say that public opinion does not exist there; but such a statement is not wholly correct. It does exist, but it is an out-of-door public opinion,—a man's view of men. There is, for example, a strong public opinion against hypocrisy, in California, as more than one clerical renegade has found, to his discomfiture. The pretense to virtue is the one vice that is not forgiven. If a man be not a liar, few questions are asked, least of all the delicate one as to the "name he went by in the states." What we commonly call public opinion—the cut and dried decision on social and civic questions—is made up in the house. It is essentially feminine in its origin, the opinion of the home circle as to how men should behave. In California there is little which corresponds to the social atmosphere pervading the snug white-painted, green-blinded New England villages, and this little exists

chiefly in communities of people transported in block, —traditions, conventionalities, prejudices, and all. There is, in general, no merit attached to conformity, and one may take a wide range of rope without necessarily arousing distrust. Speaking broadly, in California the virtues of life spring from within, and are not prescribed from without. The young man who is decent only because he thinks that some one is looking, would do well to stay away. The stern law of individual responsibility turns the fool over to the fool-killer without a preliminary trial. No finer type of man can be found in the world than the sober Californian; and yet no coast is strewn with wrecks more pitiful.

There are some advantages in the absence of a compelling force of public opinion. One of them is found in the strong self-reliance of men and women who have made and enforced their own moral standards. With very many men life in California brings a decided strengthening of the moral fibre. They must reconsider, justify, and fight for their standards of action; and by so doing they become masters of themselves. With men of weak nature the result is not so encouraging. The disadvantage is shown in lax business methods, official carelessness and corruption, the widespread corrosion of vulgar vices, and the general lack of pride in their work shown by artisans and craftsmen.

In short, California is a man's land, with male standards of action,—a land where one must give and take, stand and fall, as a man. With the growth of woman's realm of homes and houses, this will slowly change. It is changing now, year by year, for good and ill; and soon California will have a public opinion. Her sons will learn to fear "the rod behind the looking-glass," and to shun evil not only because it is vile, but because it is improper.

Contact with the facts of nature has taught the Californian something of importance. To have elbow-room is to touch nature at more angles; and whenever she is touched she is an insistent teacher. Whatever is to be done, the typical Californian knows how to do it, and how to do it well. He is equal to every occasion. He can cinch his own saddle, harness his own team, bud his own grapevines, cook his own breakfast, paint his own house; and because he cannot go to the market for every little service, perforce he serves himself. In dealing with college students in California, one is impressed by their boundless ingenuity. If anything needs doing, some student can do it for you. Is it to sketch a waterfall, to engrave a portrait, to write a sonnet, to mend a saddle, to sing a song, to build an engine, or to "bust a broncho," there is some one at hand who can do it, and do it artistically. Varied ingenuity California demands of her pioneers. Their native originality has

"Half a year of clouds and flowers"

been intensified by circumstances, until it has become a matter of tradition and habit. The processes of natural selection have favored the survival of the ingenious, and the quality of adequacy has become hereditary.

The possibility of the unearned increment is a great factor in the social evolution of California. Its influence has been widespread, persistent, and, in most regards, baneful. The Anglo-Saxon first came to California for gold to be had for the picking up. The hope of securing something for nothing, money or health without earning it, has been the motive for a large share of the subsequent immigration. From those who have grown rich through undeserved prosperity, and from those who have grown poor in the quest of it, California has suffered sorely. Even now, far and wide, people think of California as a region where wealth is not dependent on thrift, where one can somehow "strike it rich" without that tedious attention to details and expenses which wears out life in effete regions such as Europe and the Eastern States. In this feeling there is just enough of truth to keep the notion alive, but never enough to save from disaster those who make it a working hypothesis. The hope of great or sudden wealth has been the mainspring of enterprise in California, but it has also been the excuse for shiftlessness and recklessness, the cause of social disintegration and moral decay.

The "Argonauts of '49" were a strong, self-reliant, generous body of men. They came for gold, and gold in abundance. Most of them found it, and some of them retained it. Following them came a miscellaneous array of parasites and plunderers; gamblers, dive-keepers and saloon-keepers, who fed fat on the spoils of the Argonauts. Every Roaring Camp had its Jack Hamlin as well as its Flynn of Virginia, and the wild, strong, generous, reckless aggregate cared little for thrift, and wasted more than they earned.

But it is not gold alone that in California has dazzled men with visions of sudden wealth. Orange groves, peach orchards, prune orchards, wheat raising, lumbering, horse-farms, chicken-ranches, bee-ranches, seal-poaching, cod-fishing, salmon-canning, —each of these has held out the same glittering possibility. Even the humblest ventures have caught the prevailing tone of speculation. Industry and trade have been followed, not for a living, but for sudden wealth, and often on a scale of personal expenses out of all proportion to the probable results. In the sixties, when the gold-fever began to subside, it was found that the despised "cow counties" would bear marvelous crops of wheat. At once wheat-raising was undertaken on a grand scale. Farms of five thousand to fifty thousand acres were established on the old Spanish grants in the valleys of the Coast Range and in the interior.

The working out of most of the placer mines and the advent of quartz-crushing with elaborate machinery have changed gold-mining from speculation to regular business, to the great advantage of the state. In the same manner the development of irrigation is changing the character of farming in many parts of California. In the early days fruit-raising was of the nature of speculation, but the spread of irrigation has brought it into more wholesome relations. To irrigate a tract of land is to make its product certain; but at the same time irrigation demands expenditure of money, and the building of a home necessarily follows. Irrigation thus tends to break up the vast farms into small holdings which become permanent homes.

On land well chosen, carefully planted, and thriftily managed, an orchard of prunes or of oranges should reward its possessor with a comfortable living, besides occasionally an unexpected profit thrown in. But too often men have not been content with the usual return, and have planted trees with a view only to the unearned profits. To make an honest living from the sale of oranges or prunes is quite another thing from acquiring sudden wealth. When a man without experience in fruit-raising or in general economy comes to California, buys land on borrowed capital, plants it without discrimination, and spends his profits in advance, there can be but one result.

The laws of economics are inexorable even in California. One of the curses of the state is the "fool fruit-grower," with neither knowledge nor conscience in the management of his business. Thousands of trees have been planted on ground unsuitable for the purpose, and thousands of trees which ought to have done well have died through his neglect. Through his agency frozen oranges are sent to Eastern markets under his neighbor's brands, and most needlessly his varied follies have spoiled the reputation of the best of fruit.

The great body of immigrants to California have been sound and earnest, fit citizens of the young state, but this is rarely true of seekers of the unearned increment. No one is more greedy for money than the man who can never get any. Rumors of golden chances have brought in a steady stream of incompetents from all places and all strata of social life. From the common tramp to the inventor of "perpetual motions" in mechanics or in Sociology, is a long step in the moral scale, but both are alike in their eagerness to escape from the "competitive social order" of the East, in which their abilities found no recognition. Whoever has deservedly failed in the older states is sure at least once in his life to think of redeeming his fortunes in California. Once on the Pacific slope the difficulties in the way of his return seem insurmountable. The dread of the winter's cold alone is

"While from the crags leap full throated streams"

in most cases a deterrent factor. Thus San Francisco, by force of circumstances, has become the hopper into which fall incompetents from all the world, and from which few escape. The city contains about three hundred thousand people. Of these, a vast number, thirty thousand to fifty thousand, it may be, have no real business in San Francisco. They live from hand to mouth, by odd jobs that might be better done by better people; and whatever their success in making a living, they swell the army of discontent, and confound all attempts to solve industrial problems. In this rough estimate I do not count San Francisco's own poor, of which there is a moderate proportion, but only those who have drifted in from the outside. I would include, however, not only those who are economically impotent, but also those who follow the weak for predatory ends. In this last category I place a certain number of saloonkeepers; a class of so-called lawyers; a long line of soothsayers, clairvoyants, lottery agents, and jointkeepers, besides gamblers, sweaters, promoters of "medical institutes," magnetic, psychical, and magic "healers," and other types of unhanged, but more or less pendable, scoundrels that feed upon the life-blood of the weak and foolish. The other cities of California have had a similar experience. Each has its reputation for hospitality, and each has a considerable population which has come in from other

regions because incapable of making its own way. It is not the poor and helpless alone who are the victims of imposition. There are fools in all walks of life. Many a well-dressed man or woman can be found in the rooms of the clairvoyant or the Chinese "doctor." In matters of health, especially, men grasp at the most unpromising straws. In one city lately visited, I found scarcely a business block that did not contain at least one human leech under the trade name of "healer," metaphysical, electrical, astral, divine, or what not. And these will thrive so long as men seek health or fortune with closed eyes and open hands.

In no way has the unearned increment been more mischievous than in the booming of cities. With the growth of towns comes increase in the value of the holdings of those who hold and wait. If the city grows rapidly enough, these gains may be inordinately great. The marvelous beauty of Southern California and the charm of its climate have impressed thousands of people. Two or three times this impression has been epidemic. At one time almost every bluff along the coast, from Los Angeles to San Diego and beyond, was staked out in town lots. The wonderful climate was everywhere, and everywhere men had it for sale, not only along the coast, but throughout the orange-bearing region of the interior. Every resident bought lots, all the lots he could hold. The tourist

took his hand in speculation. Corner lots in San Diego, Del Mar, Azusa, Redlands, Riverside, Pasadena, anywhere, brought fabulous prices. A village was laid out in the uninhabited bed of a mountain torrent, and men stood in the streets in Los Angeles, ranged in line, all night long, to wait their turn in buying lots. Worthless land and inaccessible, barren cliffs, river-wash, sand hills, cactus deserts, sinks of alkali, everything met with ready sale. The belief that Southern California would be one great city was universal. The desire to buy became a mania. "Millionaires of a day," even the shrewdest lost their heads, and the boom ended, as such booms always end, in utter collapse.

Mr. T. S. Van Dyke, of San Diego, has written of this collapse: "The money market tightened almost on the instant. From every quarter of the land the drain of money outward had been enormous, and had been balanced only by the immense amount constantly coming in. Almost from the day this inflow ceased money seemed scarce everywhere, for the outgo still continued. Not only were vast sums going out every day for water-pipe, railroad iron, cement, lumber, and other material for the great improvements going on in every direction, most of which material had already been ordered, but thousands more were still going out for diamonds and a host of other things

already bought—things that only increase the general indebtedness of a community by making those who cannot afford them imitate those who can. And tens of thousands more were going out for butter, eggs, pork, and even potatoes and other vegetables, which the luxurious boomers thought it beneath the dignity of millionaires to raise."

But the normal growth of Los Angeles and her sister towns has gone on, in spite of these spasms of fever and their consequent chills. Their real advantages could not be obscured by the bursting of financial bubbles. By reason of situation and climate they have continued to attract men of wealth and enterprise, as well as those in search of homes and health.

The search for the unearned increment in bodily health brings many to California who might better have remained at home. The invalid finds health in California only if he is strong enough to grasp it. To one who can spend his life out of doors it is indeed true that "our pines are trees of healing," but to one confined to the house, there is little gain in the new conditions. To those accustomed to the close heat of Eastern rooms the California house in the winter seems depressingly chilly.

I know of few things more pitiful than the annual migration of hopeless consumptives to Los Angeles, Pasadena, and San Diego. The Pullman cars in the winter are full of sick people, banished from the

"Passing monument of California's first page of written history"

East by physicians who do not know what else to do with their incurable patients. They go to the large hotels of Los Angeles or Pasadena, and pay a rate they cannot afford. They shiver in half-warmed rooms; take cold after cold; their symptoms grow alarming; their money wastes away; and finally, in utter despair, they are hurried back homeward, perhaps to die on board the train. Or it may be that they choose cheap lodging-houses, at prices more nearly within their reach. Here again, they suffer for want of home food, home comforts, and home warmth, and the end is just the same. People hopelessly ill should remain with their friends; even California has no health to give to those who cannot earn it, in part at least, by their own exertions.

It is true that the "one-lunged people" form a considerable part of the population of Southern California. It is also true that no part of our Union has a better population, and that many of these men and women are now as robust and vigorous as one could desire. But this happy change is possible only to those in the first stages of the disease. Out-of-door life and physical activity enable the system to suppress the germs of disease, but climate without activity does not cure. So far as climate is concerned, many parts of the arid regions in Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado as well as portions of Old Mexico (Cuernavaca or Morelia for example) are more favorable

than California, because they are protected from the chill of the sea. Another class of health-seekers receives less sympathy in California, and perhaps deserves less. Jaundiced hypochondriacs and neurotic wrecks shiver in California winter boarding-houses, torment themselves with ennui at the country ranches, poison themselves with "nerve foods," and perhaps finally survive to write the sad and squalid "truth about California." Doubtless it is all inexpressibly tedious to them; subjective woe is always hard to bear—but it is not California.

There are others, too, who are disaffected, but I need not stop to discuss them or their points of view. It is true, in general, that few to whom anything else is anywhere possible find disappointment in California.

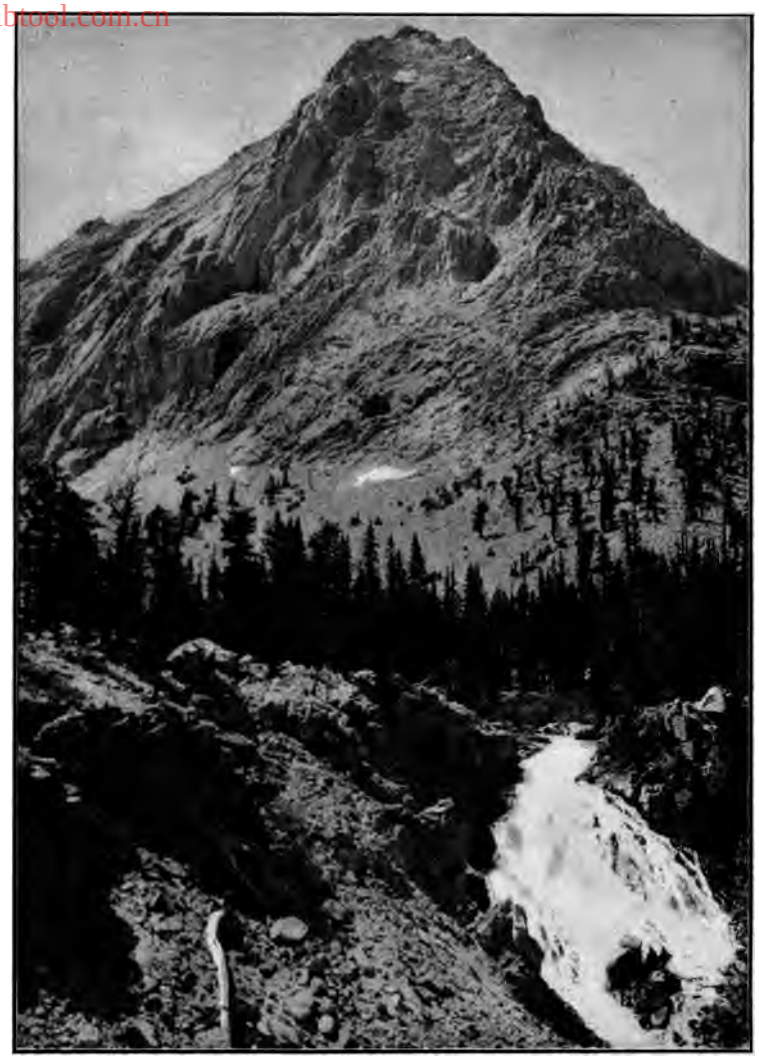
With all this, the social life is, in its essentials, that of the rest of the United States, for the same blood flows in the veins of those whose influence dominates it. Under all its deviations and variations lies the old Puritan conscience, which is still the backbone of the civilization of the republic. Life in California is a little fresher, a little freer, a good deal richer, in its physical aspects, and for these reasons, more intensely and characteristically American. With perhaps ninety-five per cent of identity there is five per cent of divergence, and this five per cent I have emphasized even to exaggeration. We know our friends

"Crumble to ruins the old Franciscan Missions"

by their slight differences in feature or expression, not by their common humanity. Much of this divergence is already fading away. Scenery and climate remain, but there is less elbow-room, and the unearned increment is disappearing. That which is solid will endure; the rest will vanish. The forces that ally us to the East are growing stronger every year with the immigration of men with new ideas. The vigorous growth of the two universities in California insures the elevation as well as the retention of these ideas. Through their influence California will contribute a generous share to the social development of the East, and be a giver as well as a receiver.

To-day the pressure of higher education is greater to the square mile, if we may use such an expression, than anywhere else in our country. In no other state is the path from the farmhouse to the college so well trodden as here. It requires no prophet to forecast the educational pre-eminence of California, for the basis of intellectual development is already assured. But however close the alliance with Eastern culture, to the last certain traits will persist. California is the most cosmopolitan of all the states of the Union, and such she will remain. Whatever the fates may bring, her people will be tolerant, hopeful, and adequate, sure of themselves, masters of the present, fearless of the future.

THE ALPS OF THE KING-KERN DIVIDE



From a photo by Le Conte

The East Vidette

THE ALPS OF THE KING-KERN DIVIDE

The high Sierras, the huge crests at the head of the King's, Kern, Kaweah, and San Joaquin rivers, are Alps indeed, not lower than the grandest of those in Europe, and scarcely inferior in magnificence. The number of peaks in this region which pass the limit of 13,000 feet is not less than in all Switzerland. The highest of these peaks, Mount Whitney, is given by Prof. J. N. Le Conte as 14,522 feet in height. It is thus a little lower than the Matterhorn (14,705), while Mt. Blanc (15,731), Monte Rosa (15,366), the Mischabelhorn (14,941), and the Weisshorn (14,803), outrank it a little more. But virtually all reach much the same level, and between these peaks, and the next in rank in Switzerland, the Finster Aarhorn (14,026), California claims a good many, notably Mount Williamson (14,448), Tyndall (14,360), Jordan (14,212), Junction (about 14,200), two of the Kaweahs (14,139 and 14,141), and Barnard, Keith, Agassiz's Needles, Dusy, Sheep Mountain, Milestone, and the South Palisade, each something over 14,000 feet, and a host of high points as University of California Peak (13,900), Gould Peak (13,391), Rixford, Brewer (13,886), Stanford (14,100), Ericson (13,900), Lyell, and a

host of others named and unnamed which fall but little below. In this we need not mention Shasta (14,400), tall, lone and tremendous, but which is put up independently on a different plan in another part of the State.

If for a moment we compare the high Sierra Nevada with the Alps, we find in the mountains of Switzerland greater variety of form, and of rock formation, and with greater picturesqueness in color, the white of the snow being sharply contrasted with the green of the flower-carpeted pastures. The rainfall and the snowfall of the Alps is far more excessive, hence all the deep valleys are filled with snow, the cañons are glaciers, the vast slow-melting snow masses become compacted into ice before they disappear.

The Sierras are richer in color, and they throb with life. The dry air that flows over them is stimulating, balsam-laden, and always transparent to the vision. The Alps are almost always bathed or swathed in clouds. Their air is clear only when it has been newly washed by some wild storm. When a storm is over, the sky soons needs washing again, and in its blue reaches is full of a streamy suggestion as though it had not been properly dried.

The glacial basins of the high Sierras, huge tracts of polished granite, furrowed by streams and fringed with mountain vegetation, are far more impressive

From a photo by Le Conte

View South from the Summit of Mt. Brewer

than similar regions in the Alps. In the Alps the glaciers are still alive and at work. In the Sierras, a few little ones are left here and there, high on the flanks of precipices, but the valleys below them, once filled with ice, are now bare, slicken and sharp-backed or clogged with moraines, just as the glaciers left them. The wreck of the vanished glacier, as in Ouzel Basin of Mt. Brewer, and Desolation Valley of Pyramid Peak, may tell us more of what a glacier does than a living glacier itself.

The forests of the Sierras are beyond comparison nobler than those of the Alps. The pine, fir, and larch woods of Switzerland are only second growth, mere brush, by the side of the huge pines (Sugar Pine, Yellow Pine, and High Mountain Pine) of the flanks of the Sierras. Giant firs and spruces, too, rival the largest trees on earth, while above all, supremely pre-eminent over all other vegetation, towers the giant Sequoia, mightiest of trees. On a small tree, ten feet through, cut at Sequoia Mills, I counted 1902 rings of annual growth. This tree was a sapling, four feet through, at the time of the fall of Rome. The greatest Sequoias, happily yet uncut, have doubtless four times this age, and it is safe to say many of them have stood on earth at least 8000 years. Converse, the discoverer of the Converse Basin, in Tulare County, claims to have counted 11,000 rings.

So far as man is concerned, there are great differences between the Sierras and the Alps. The Alps have good roads, trails, hotels everywhere. They are thoroughly civilized, provided with guides, guide-posts, ropes and railings, and the traveler, whatever else he may do, cannot go astray. If he gets lost he has plenty of company. The Sierras are uninhabited. In their high reaches there is no hotel, and not often a shed or a roof of any kind. The trails are rough, and when one climbs out from the cañons he has only to go as he pleases. But wherever he goes he cannot fail to be pleased. The Sierras are far more hospitable than the Alps, and the danger of accident is far less. Every day in the Alps may be a day of storm, and no one can safely sleep in the open air. In the Sierras there are but two or three rainy days in the summer, and these are thunder-showers in August afternoons. The weather is scarcely a factor to be considered; every day is a good day, one or two perhaps a little better.

The traveler is sure of dry, clear air, a little brisk and frosty in the morning, making a blanket welcome, but all he needs is a blanket. For luxury he will make a bonfire of dry branches—pine, cedar, cottonwood, all burn alike—and there is always a dead tree ready to his hand. He will build his fire near the brook that he may put out its smoldering embers in the morning. No matter how high his

From a photo by Le Conte

The North Guard of Mt. Brewer

flame may rise in the evening, with morning only embers are left. And surely no mountain lover will leave his fire uncovered to burn and murder its way through the forest. The United States government now has its rangers out to protect the forests from fire, and to punish the careless camper, be he angler, mountaineer, or prospector. This is most wise, and it should have been done long ago. More than this the State or government should never let another acre of land on the Sierras be denuded of its timber. On the preservation of our forests depends the fertility of our plains. To California this matter is vital above all others. Commerce will come in due time whatever we do; but a forest once uprooted, we can never restore. The great Calaveras grove of Sequoias is now for sale, the first known, and, perhaps, the most picturesque of all, going to the lumber man who will make the highest bid. To destroy this noblest of groves for the lumber that is in it would be barbarous. There should be but one bidder for the Calaveras grove—the people of the United States. We cannot call ourselves civilized if we stand by, consenting to its destruction, as we have done to the slaughter of the great Sequoias of the Converse Basin, with brush, sawdust and soil, all, save the primeval granite, all vanishing in the final conflagration of the abandoned lumber camps.

In the high Sierras, the form of the mountains

favors the climber. Each peak is part of a great anticlinal fold, broken and precipitous on the east side, retaining the original slope on the west. Most of the mountains about Mt. Whitney share the form of that mountain. A gentle slope on the west side, covered by broken, frost-bitten rocks; on the east side a perpendicular descent to an abyss. On the east and north almost every peak is vertical and inaccessible, while the west side offers no difficulty. Only time and patience are demanded to creep upward over the broken stones and climb the highest of them. All of them require endurance, for they are very high, but few of them demand any special skill or any nervous strain, and the views the summits yield are most repaying.

To reach the best of them one should leave the Southern Pacific railroad at Sanger. Here he meets the stages which run to the Converse Basin. In a ride, preferably taken at night, all night, he crosses the hot plains of the foothills. Turning in at midnight, he sleeps till morning, then taking the stage again, he rides up hill all day, past Millwood, the General Grant National Park, with its giant Sequoias, and through the pine forests to Huckleberry Camp. Here he is met by a troop of saddle horses, and a charming day's ride obliquely down the slopes of King's River Cañon, brings him at night to a camp in the river bottom. There may be a house

From a photo by Le Conte

Crag Ericsson

there or a tent, but he needs neither, for night is full of stars—and the stars keep off the rain. Taking his horse again in the morning, by noon he reaches the Sentinel Camp, which is the best center for excursions. Hence are usually horses, mules, tents, and blankets for rent, and provisions for sale, so that henceforth all the traveler needs to take with him will be strong clothing, stout nailed shoes, and good temper.

The King's River Cañon he will contrast with the Yosemite. The Yosemite has finer single rocks, higher single cliffs, far more majestic waterfalls, and a general air of perfection as scenery. The King's River Cañon is on a larger scale, with higher walls, which slope backward out of sight, and the mountains into which it rises are far wilder and more stupendous.

The traveler will not be long in the Cañon before he will want to climb up to take a look at some of these. He may wind up the dusty trail to Goat Mountain and see them all at once in glorious waves of distances. He may, perhaps, crawl to the top of the grand Sentinel and see some of them at another angle. He may wander to Kearsarge Pass, on the Main Divide, at the head of the Cañon, and see the world from one of the three great peaks, Rixford, Gould, or the highest of all, the huge mass of crumbling granite called University of California Peak.

Or he may turn toward the heart of the mountains themselves and lay his camp at East Lake in the Ouzel Basin, the wonderful glaciated north slope of Mt. Brewer. Here John Muir studied the water-ouzel in its home, and wrote of it the best biography yet given of any bird; and here, too, you may watch the ouzel and the winter wren, the marmot and the mountain chipmunks.

Here you may climb Mt. Brewer (13,886 feet), the culminating outpost of the cross-divide between the King's and the Kern. Or you may go farther, turning eastward into the very center of the frost-king's domains, climbing the gorge of turbulent Stanford brook, past stately Crag Ericsson, over Harrison's Pass, an old sheep trail, steep, dusty, and hopeless, to the frost-bitten crag named Stanford. This peak lies in the King's-Kern divide, in the very center of the high Sierras. It is a double-topped ridge, the highest summit 14,100 feet, the southern-most, known as Gregory's Monument, about 20 feet lower.

From this peak one may see nearly all the high Sierras, from the San Joaquin Alps on the north to the Kern Alps on the south; and whoso once climbs this crag or the peak of its sister university, or any other of their craggy brethren, has earned a place in the roll of honor of those "whose feet are beautiful on the mountains." He will join the Sierra Club.

From a photo by Le Conte

Mt. Brewer and the North Guard from Charlotte Peak