

JOHN MUIR-KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK

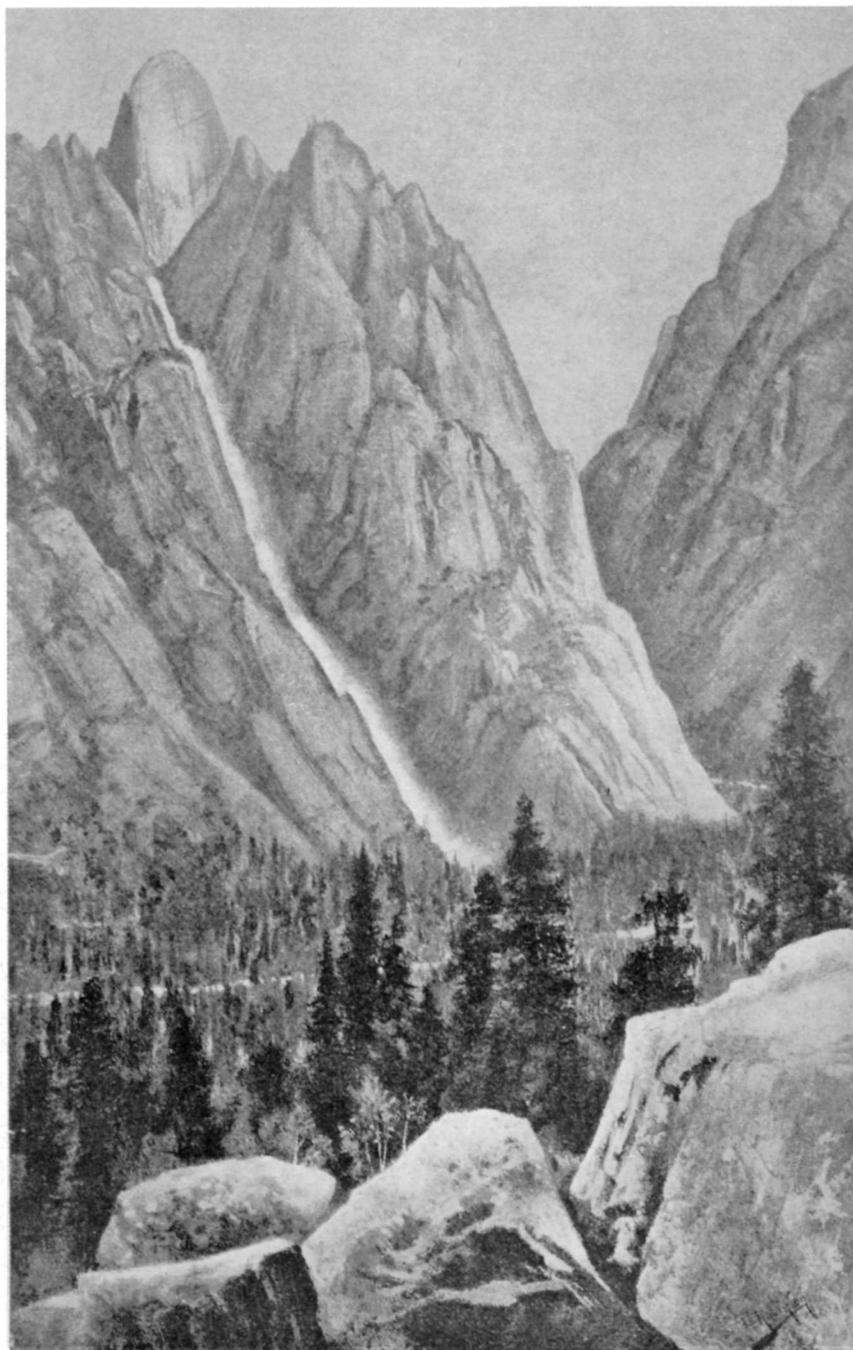


PLATE IX. Part of South Wall of Tehipitee Valley

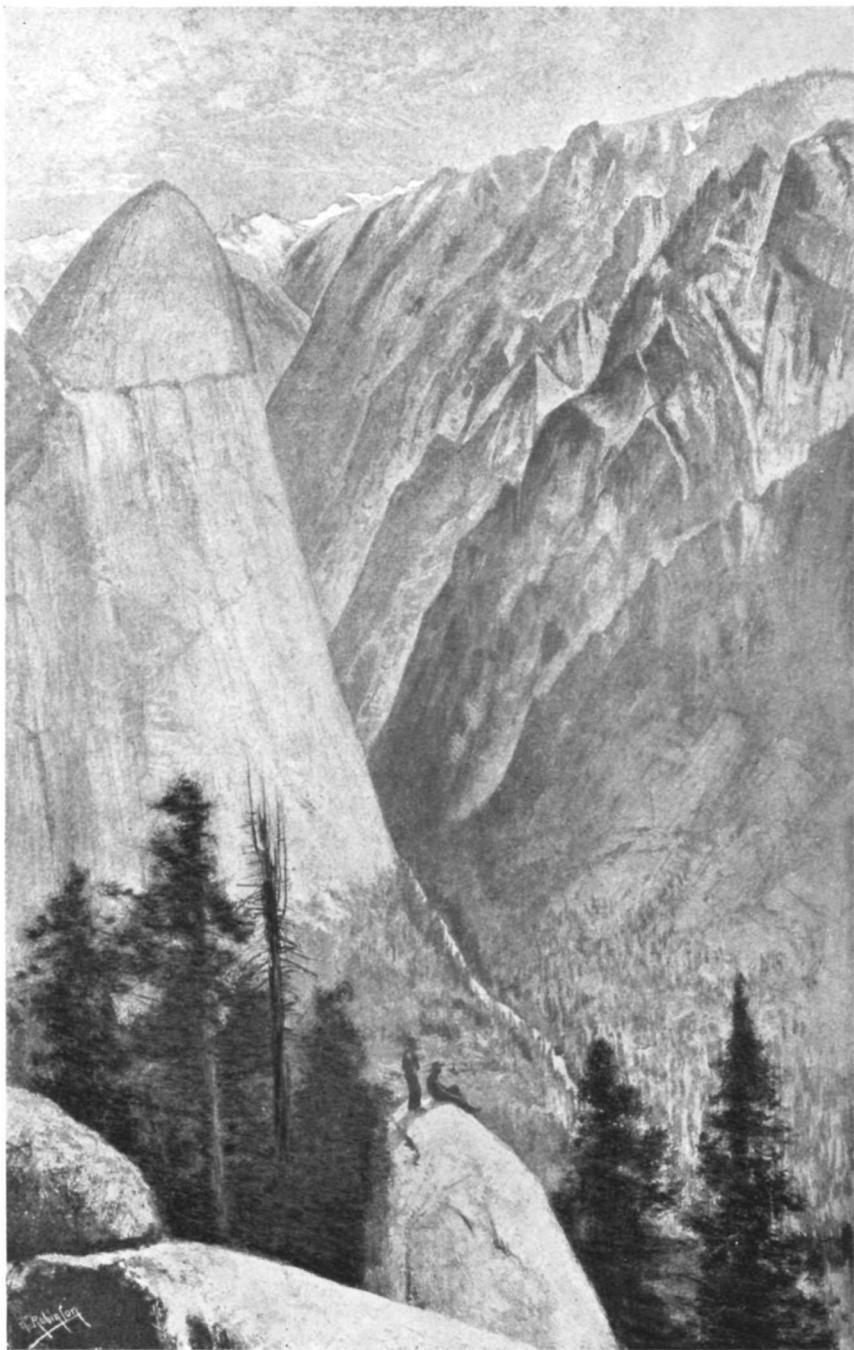


PLATE VIII. Tehipitee Dome, Upper End of Tehipitee Valley
(Middle Fork of the Kings River)

PROPOSED

John Muir-Kings Canyon
National Park

Including a Summary of

A RIVAL OF THE YOSEMITE

THE CANYON OF THE SOUTH FORK OF THE
KING'S RIVER, CALIFORNIA

By JOHN MUIR

WITH PLATES OF ORIGINAL DRAWINGS BY CHARLES D. ROBINSON

WHICH APPEARED IN THE CENTURY MAGAZINE

November, 1891

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

John Muir-Kings Canyon National Park Commands Wide Support

The proposed John Muir-Kings Canyon National Park would preserve for all time in the National Park System the superlative canyons of the Kings River, described by John Muir in the accompanying *Century* article, first published in 1891, together with the Evolution Basin and the high peaks of the finest part of the Sierra Nevada, including Mt. Clarence King, Mt. Hutchings, the Sphinx, Tehipite Dome, Paradise Peak, Glacier Monument, Avalanche Peak, Grand Sentinel and scores of others. The park would encompass Muir, Cartridge, Mather and Granite Passes, and, along the boundary would touch Mts. Darwin, Haeckel, Pinchot, and the Palisades as well as Bishop, Taboose, Sawmill, Kearsarge and Forester Passes. General Grant National Park would become General Grant Grove in the new park and the Big Trees of Redwood Canyon, now unprotected, would form another grove in the park.

The project has commanded wide support in the State of California and has been approved by the following organizations:

Sierra Club.	Hanford City Trustees.
California State Grange.	Selma Farm Bureau.
John Muir Association	Kerman Farm Bureau.
Kings River Water Association.	Fresno County, Pomona Grange.
Hotel Men's Association of Southern California.	Fig Gardens Farm Bureau.
Santa Barbara City Chamber of Commerce.	Selma Rotary Club.
Kings County Board of Supervisors.	Kingsburg Kiwanis Club.
Lemoore American Legion Post No. 100.	Avenal Chamber of Commerce.
Santa Barbara County Planning Commission.	Kingsburg Farm Bureau.
Tulare City Chamber of Commerce.	Riverdale Chamber of Commerce.
Kingsburg City Chamber of Commerce.	Fresno County Chamber of Commerce.
Hotel Greeters' Association, Charter No. 61.	Kings County Farm Bureau.
San Joaquin Hotel Council.	Orange Cove Chamber of Commerce.
Selma Chamber of Commerce.	Woodlake Chamber of Commerce.
Los Angeles Hotel Greeters', Charter No. 30.	Riverdale Lions Club.
Lemoore Chamber of Commerce.	Hanford City Chamber of Commerce.
Stratford Chamber of Commerce.	Kings County Central Democratic Committee.
Lemoore City Council.	Ventura County Board of Supervisors.
	Federal Business Men's Garden Club of Oakland.
	Brentwood Lions Club.

The American Planning and Civic Association commends this project to the Nation as one entitled to enthusiastic support. Copies of this Bulletin may be secured from the Association, 901 Union Trust Building, Washington, D. C.

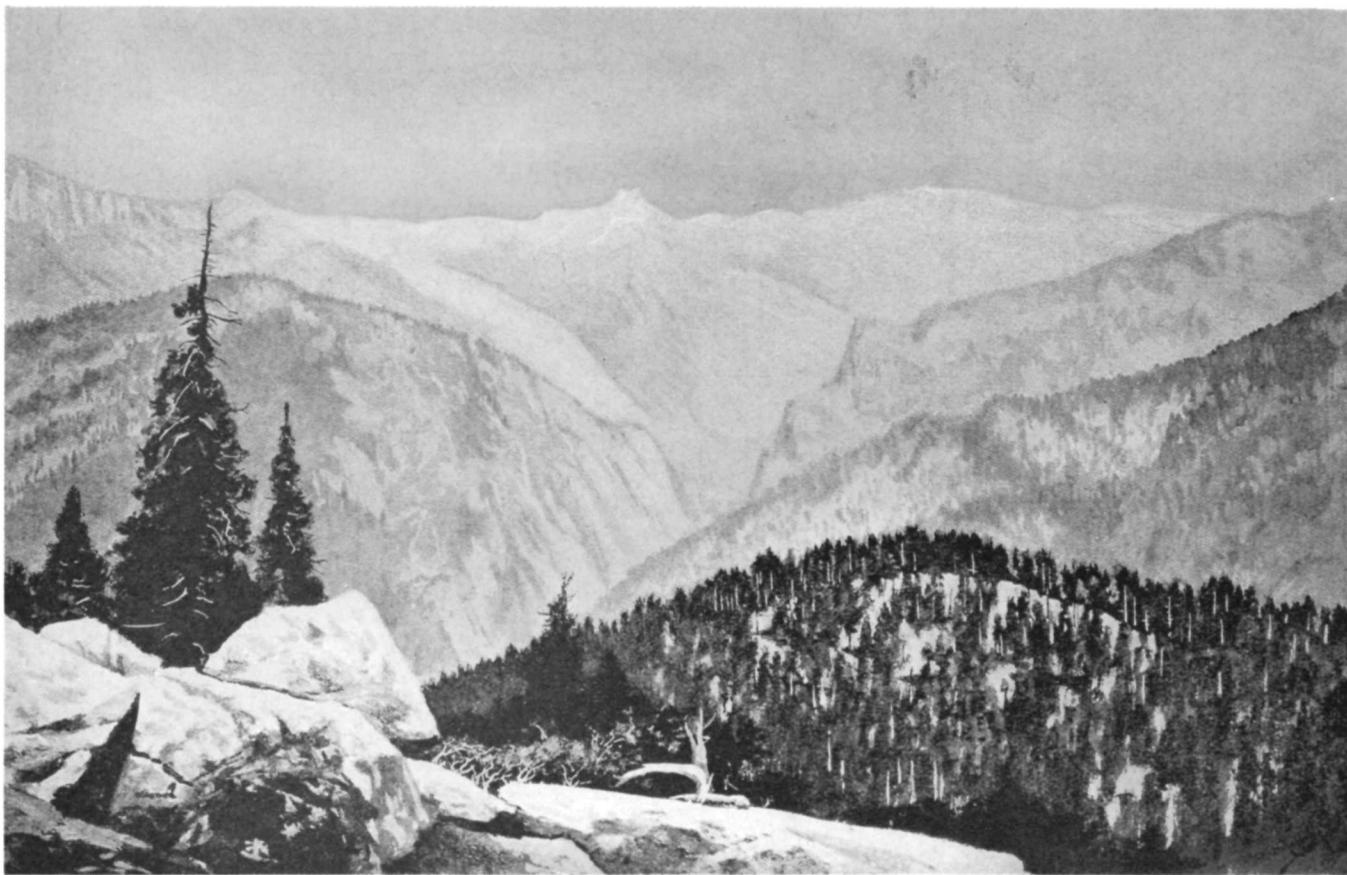


PLATE I. General View of Kings Canyon from Grand Lookout

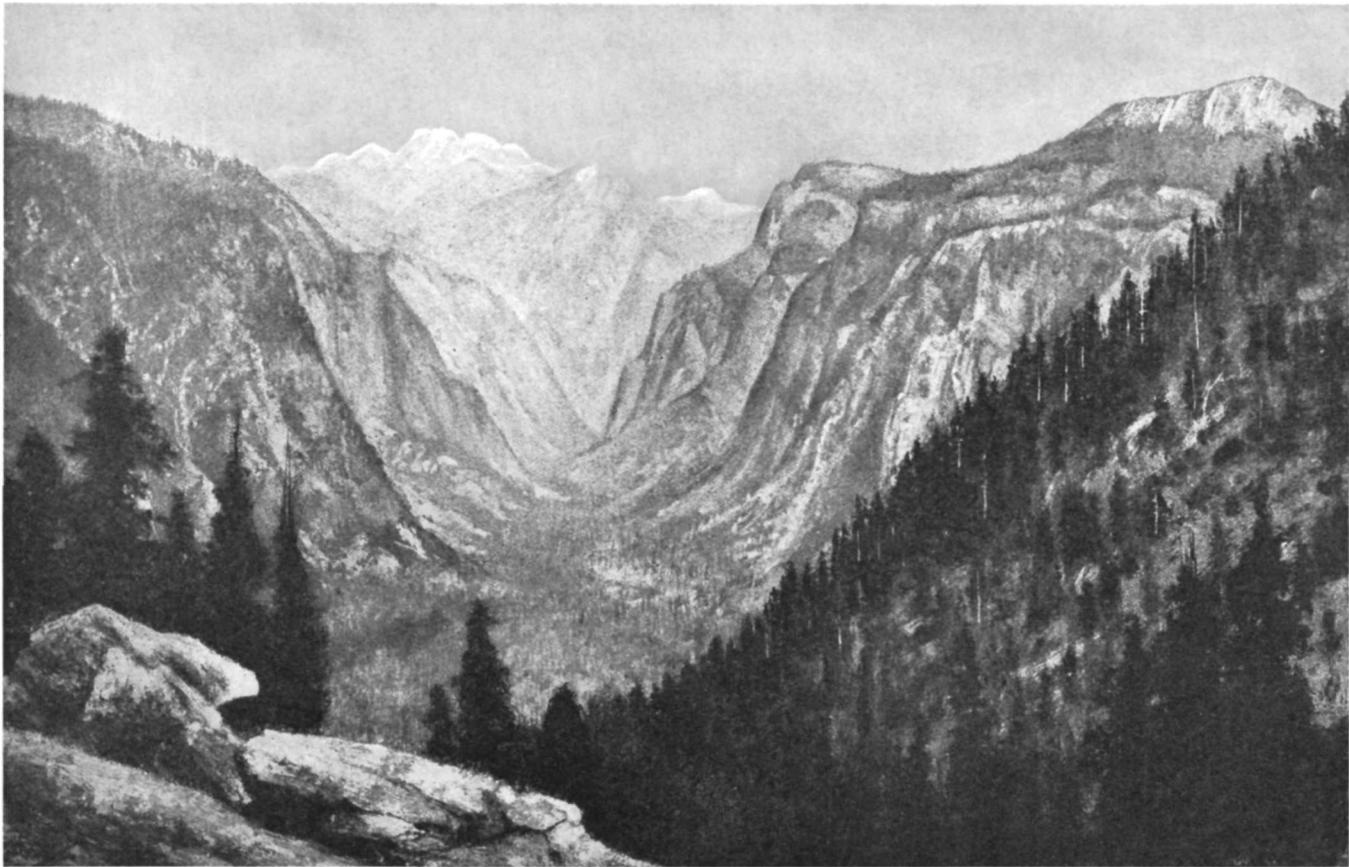


PLATE II. General View of the Canyon, looking east

Proposed John Muir-Kings Canyon National Park

JOHN MUIR first visited the Kings River Canyon in 1875. For the fourth time he inspected the canyon in 1891, just after the squeezed-down Sequoia National Park had been established. This gave to the American people some of the best of the "Big Trees" in the vicinity and some fine mountain scenery, but failed to include the spectacular Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the United States outside of Alaska, and the marvelously beautiful valleys of the Kings and Kern Rivers.

As far back as 1881, just 9 years after the creation of Yellowstone National Park, a bill was introduced into Congress by Senator Miller of California to create a national park of "the whole west flank of the Sierra Nevada from Tehipite to a point southeast of Porterville, and from the higher foothills eastward to the summit of the range." The bill never came out of committee. On September 25, 1890, the Sequoia National Park was established, but the boundaries omitted Mount Whitney, the Kern and Kings canyons, and by this time, even within the smaller area to be preserved, there were private properties which had to be purchased through the efforts of public-spirited citizens. On October 1 of the same year, General Grant National Park of some 2500 acres was created to preserve "General Grant" and other fine big trees.

From 1916 to 1926 there was a pending bill before each session of Congress to enlarge the Sequoia National Park to include the Kings and Kern canyons and the Mount

Whitney area. In 1926 the Kern country and Mount Whitney were added to the Sequoia National Park, and this with private lands purchased gave to the park the custody of 27 groves containing many thousands of the great red trees of the Sierra Nevada, the California Big Trees (*Sequoia gigantea*).

During all these years, ever since the Miller bill of 1881, repeated efforts have been made to bring the marvelously beautiful Kings canyons and high country into a national park, but the bills have always failed of passage. Measures for the general public good which run counter to real or fancied financial interests are notoriously hard to pass, especially as the commercial exploitation of a region centers in the population around it and this population makes itself vocal to its representatives in Congress, who by custom sponsor measures affecting the disposition of public lands in their State and District. The bills to bring the Kings country into the National Park System have been no exception. In the early days the lumbermen and the stock men opposed the creation of a park, though many of the huge trees which were cut have never been removed from their graves and no one was the gainer. Then came the power companies who opposed the proposed park. When the application of the power companies was denied by the Federal Power Commission, they came to the conclusion that the sites for commercial power were not feasible within the boundaries as proposed in the twenties, and with-

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drew their opposition. Then the irrigationists, who can find adequate storage for irrigation purposes outside of the proposed park, have opposed the park *because they may find* two or three sites for power reservoirs within the proposed boundaries which will permit them to develop power to help them pay for their irrigation water. Some of the short-sighted business interests of California have organized to oppose any further national parks in California, forgetting that the revenues to the people of the State from recreation tourists and sojourners are among the principal financial assets of California. As solutions for the problems raised have been found, support for the project has grown.

Even within the 75 years which have elapsed since the early discoveries in this region, the untouched wilderness in the United States has shrunk from seemingly illimitable regions to easily counted tracts. Such country has steadily acquired increased value, because of its comparative scarcity and increasing demands for outdoor recreation and refreshment.

For the benefit of those who appreciate inspiring scenery, who value the opinion of John Muir and revere his memory, we condense an article which he wrote for *Century Magazine* and which appeared in November of 1891, together with the nine superb illustrations which accompanied the eloquent words of Muir.

A Rival of the Yosemite

The Canyon of the South Fork of King's River, California

In the vast Sierra wilderness far to the southward of the famous Yosemite Valley, there is a yet grander valley of the same kind. It is situated on the south fork of King's River, above the most extensive groves and forests of the giant sequoia, and beneath the shadows of the highest mountains in the range, where the canyons are deepest and the snow-laden peaks are crowded most closely together. It is called the Big King's River Canyon, or King's River Yosemite, and is reached by way of Visalia, the nearest point on the Southern Pacific Railroad, from which the distance is about forty-five miles, or by the Kearns Pass from the east side of the range. It is about ten miles long, half a mile wide, and the stupendous rocks of purplish gray granite that form the walls are from 2500 to 5000 feet in height, while the depth of the valley below the general surface of the mountain mass from which it has been carved is considerably more than a mile. Thus it appears that this new Yosemite is longer and deeper, and lies embedded in grander mountains, than the well-known Yosemite of the Merced. Their general characters, however, are wonderfully alike, and they bear the same relationship to the fountains of the ancient glaciers above them.

As to waterfalls, those of the new valley are far less striking in general views, although the volume of falling water is nearly twice as great and comes from higher sources. The descent of the King's River streams is mostly made in the form of cascades, which are outspread in flat plume-like sheets on smooth slopes, or are squeezed in narrow-throated gorges, boiling, seething, in deep swirling pools, pouring from lin to lin, and breaking into ragged, tossing masses of spray and foam in boulder-choked canyons—making marvelous mixtures with the downpouring sunbeams, displaying a thousand forms and colors, and giving forth a great variety of wild mountain melody, which, rolling from side to side against the echoing cliffs, is at length all combined into one smooth, massy sea-like roar.

The bottom of the valley is about 5000 feet above the sea, and its level or gently sloping surface is diversified with flowery meadows and groves and open sunny flats, through the midst of which the crystal river, ever changing, ever beautiful, makes its way; now gliding softly with scarce a ripple over beds of brown pebbles, now rushing and leaping in wild exultation across avalanche rock-dams or terminal



PLATE III. Looking up the Valley from the Manzanita Orchard

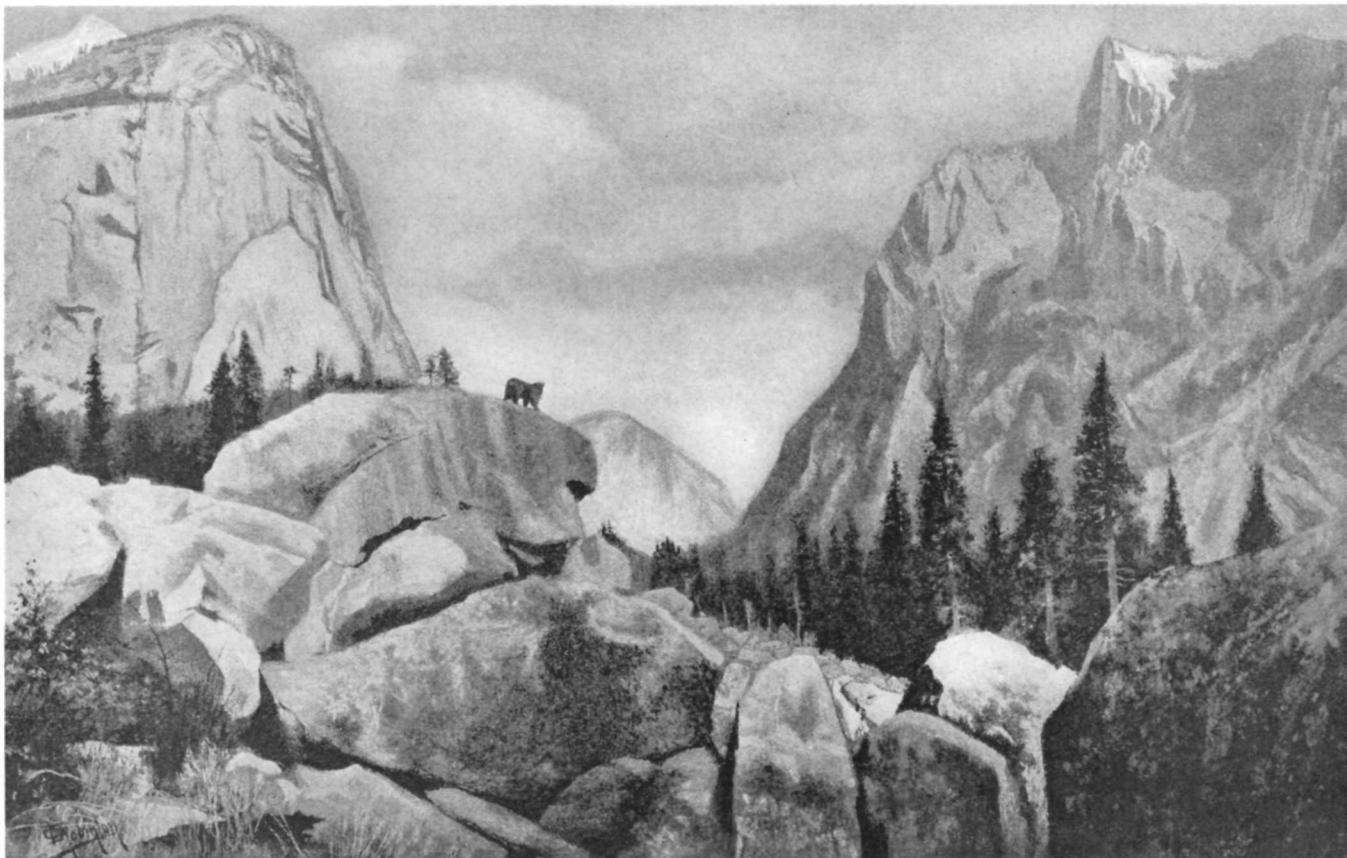


PLATE IV. View from Talus at Foot of North Dome, looking up the Valley

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moraines, swaying from side to side, beaten with sunshine, or embowered with leaning pines and firs, alders, willows, and tall balsam poplars, which with the bushes and grass at their feet make charming banks. Gnarled snags and stumps here and there reach out from the banks, making cover for trout which seem to have caught their colors from rainbow spray, though hiding mostly in shadows, where the current swirls slowly and protecting sedges and willows dip their leaves.

From this long, flowery, forested, well-watered park the walls rise abruptly in plain precipices or richly sculptured masses partly separated by side canyons, displaying wonderful wealth and variety of architectural forms, which are as wonderful in beauty of color and fineness of finish as in colossal height and mass. The so-called war of the elements has done them no harm. There is no unsightly defacement as yet; deep in the sky, inviting the onset of storms through unnumbered centuries, they still stand firm and seemingly as fresh and unworn as new-born flowers.

From the brink of the walls on either side the ground still rises in a series of ice-carved ridges and basins, superbly forested and adorned with many small lakes and meadows, where deer and bear find grateful homes; while from the head of the valley mountains other mountains rise beyond in glorious array, every one of them shining with rock crystals and snow, and with a network of streams that sing their way down from lake to lake through a labyrinth of ice-burnished canyons. The area of the basins drained by the streams entering the valley is about 450 square miles, and the elevation of the rim of the general basin is from 9000 to upward of 14,000 feet above the sea; while the general basin of the Merced Yosemite has an area of 250 square miles, and its elevation is much lower.

When from some commanding summit we view the mighty wilderness about this central valley, and, after tracing its tributary streams, note how every converging canyon shows in its sculpture, moraines and shining surfaces that it was once the channel of a glacier, contemplating this dark period of grinding ice, it would seem that here was a center of storm and stress to which no life would come. But it is just where the ancient glaciers bore down on the mountain flank with crushing and destructive and most concentrated energy that the most impressive displays of divine beauty are offered to our admiration. Even now the snow falls every winter about the valley to a depth of ten to twenty

feet, and the booming of avalanches is a common sound. Nevertheless the frailest flowers, blue and gold and purple, bloom on the brows of the great canyon rocks, and on the frosty peaks, up to a height of 13,000 feet, as well as in sheltered hollows and on level meadows and lake borders and banks of streams.

At the head of the valley the river forks, the heavier branch turning northward, and on this branch there is another yosemite, called from its flowery beauty Paradise Valley; and the name might well be applied to the main canyon, for notwithstanding its tremendous rockiness, it is an Eden of plant-beauty from end to end.

THE TRIP TO THE VALLEY

Setting out from Visalia . . . from the base of the first grand mountain plateau we can see the outstanding pines and sequoias 4000 feet above us, and we now ascend rapidly, sweeping from ravine to ravine around the brows of subordinate ridges. The vegetation shows signs of a cooler climate; the golden flowered *Fremontia*, *manzanita*, *ceanothus*, and other bushes show miles of bloom; while great beds of blue and purple bells brighten the open spaces . . . the whole forming a floral apron of fine texture and pattern, let down from the verge of the forest in graceful, flowing folds. . . . We have now reached an elevation of 6000 feet. . . . Down through the shadows we make our way for a mile or two in one of the upper ravines of Mill Creek. . . . Climbing a steep mile from the mill we enter General Grant National Park of Big Trees, a square mile in extent, where a few of the giants are now being preserved amid the industrious destruction by ax, saw, and blasting powder going on around them. . . .

We now descend to Bearskin Meadow, a sheet of purple-topped grasses enameled with violets, gillias, larkspurs, potentillas, ivesias, and columbine; *parnassia* and sedges in the wet places, and majestic trees crowding forward in proud array to form a curving border, while Little Boulder Creek, a stream twenty feet wide, goes humming and swirling merrily through the middle of it. . . .

The next place with a name in the wilderness is Tornado Meadow. Here the sequoia giants stand close about us, towering above the firs and sugar-pines. Then follows another climb of a thousand feet, after which we descend into the magnificent forest basin of Big Boulder Creek. Crossing this boisterous stream as best we may, up again we go 1200 feet through

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glorious woods, and on a few miles to the emerald Horse Corral and Summit Meadows, a short distance beyond which the highest point on the trail is reached at Grand Lookout, 8300 feet above the sea. Here at length we gain a general view of the great canyon of King's River lying far below, and of the vast mountain-region in the sky on either side of it, and along the summit of the range. (See Plate I.) Here too we see the forest in broad, dark swaths still sweeping onward undaunted, climbing the farther mountain-slopes to a height of 11,000 feet. But King Sequoia comes not thus far. The grove nearest the valley is on one of the eastern branches of Boulder Creek, five miles from the lower end.

CHIEF FEATURES OF THE CANYON

Going down into the valley we make a descent of 3500 feet, over the south shoulder, by a careless crinkled trail which seems well-nigh endless. It offers, however, many fine points of view of the huge granite trough, and the river, and the sublime rocks of the walls plunging down and planting their feet on the shady level floor. (See Plate II.)

At the foot of the valley we find ourselves in a smooth, spacious park, planted with stately groves of sugar-pine, yellow pine, silver fir, incense-cedar, and Kellogg oak. The floor is scarcely ruffled with underbrush, but myriads of small flowers spread a thin purple and yellow veil over the brown needles and burrs beneath the groves, and the gray ground of the open sunny spaces. The walls lean well back and support a fine growth of trees, especially on the south side, interrupted here and there by sheer masses 1000 to 1500 feet high, which are thrust forward out of the long slopes like dormer-windows. (See Plate III.) Three miles up the valley on the south side we come to the Roaring Falls and Cascades. . . . On the east side of the fall the Cathedral Rocks spring aloft with imposing majesty. . . .

Next to the Cathedral Rocks is the group called the Seven Gables, massive and solid at the base, but elaborately sculptured along the top and a considerable distance down the front into pointed gothic arches, the highest of which is about 3000 feet above the valley. Beyond the Gable group, and separated slightly from it by the beautiful Avalanche Canyon and Cascades, stands the bold and majestic mass of the Grand Sentinel, 3300 feet high, with a split vertical front presented to the valley, as sheer, and nearly as extensive, as the front of the Yosemite Half Dome.

Projecting out into the valley from the base of this sheer front is the Lower Sentinel, 2400 feet high; and on either side, the West and East Sentinels, about the same height, forming altogether the boldest and most massively sculptured group in the valley. Then follow in close succession the Sentinel Cascade, a lace-like strip of water 2000 feet long; the South Tower 2500 feet high; the Bear Cascade, longer and broader than that of the Sentinel; Cave Dome, 3200 feet high; the Sphinx, 4000 feet, and the Leaning Dome, 3500. The Sphinx, terminating in a curious sphinx-like figure, is the highest rock on the south wall, and one of the most remarkable in the Sierra; while the whole series from Cathedral Rocks to the Leaning Dome at the head of the valley is the highest, most elaborately sculptured, and the most beautiful series of rocks of the same extent that I have yet seen in any Yosemite in the range.

Turning our attention now to the north wall, near the foot of the valley a grand and impressive rock presents itself, which with others of like structure and style of architecture is called the Palisades. Measured from the immediate brink of the vertical portion of the front, it is about 2000 feet high, and is gashed from top to base by vertical planes, making it look like a mass of huge slabs set on edge. . . .

The next notable group that catches the eye in going up the valley is the Hermit Towers, and next to these the Three Hermits, forming together an exceedingly picturesque series of complicated structure, slightly separated by the steep and narrow Hermit Canyon. . . .

East of the Hermits a stream about the size of Yosemite Creek enters the valley, forming the Booming Cascades. It draws its sources from the southern slopes of Mount Hutchings and Mount Kellogg, 11,000 and 12,000 feet high, and on the divide between the Middle and South Forks of the King's River. . . .

Above the Booming Cascades, and opposite the Grand Sentinel, stands the North Dome, 3450 feet high. (See Plate IV.) . . . Above the Dome the ridge still rises in a finely drawn curve, until it reaches its culminating point in the pyramid, a lofty symmetrical rock nearly 6000 feet above the floor of the valley.

A short distance east of the Dome is Lion Rock, a very striking mass as seen from a favorable standpoint, but lower than the main rocks of the wall, being only about 2000 feet high. Beyond the Lion, and opposite the East Sentinel, a stream called Copper Creek comes chanting down



PLATE V. Glacier Monument

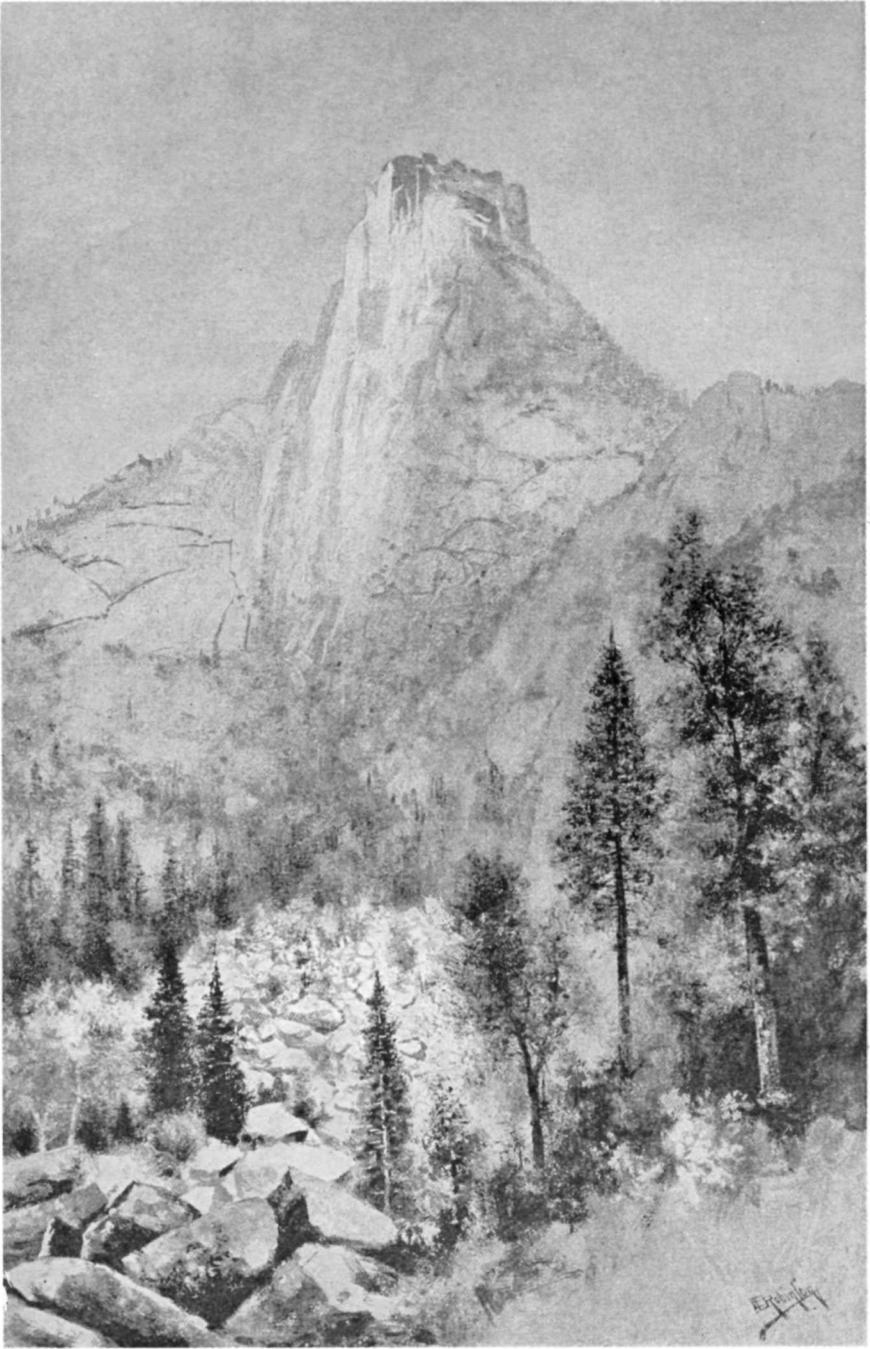


PLATE VI. North Tower, from Talus Slope of Glacier Monument

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into the valley. It takes its rise in a cluster of beautiful lakes that lie on the top of the divide between the South and Middle Forks of the King's River, to the east of Mount Kellogg. The broad, spacious basin it drains abounds in beautiful groves of spruce and silver fir, and small meadows and gardens, where the bear and deer love to feed, but (sic!) it has been badly trampled by flocks of sheep.

From Copper Creek to the head of the valley the precipitous portion of the north wall is comparatively low. The most notable features are the North Tower, a square, boldly sculptured outstanding mass 2000 feet in height, and the Dome arches, heavily glaciated, and offering telling sections of domed and folded structure. (See Plate VI.) At the head of the valley, in a position corresponding to that of the Half Dome in Yosemite, looms the great Glacier Monument, the broadest, loftiest, and most sublimely beautiful of all these wonderful rocks. It is upward of a mile in height, and has five ornamental summits, and an indescribable variety of sculptured forms projecting or countersunk on its majestic front, all balanced and combined into one symmetrical mountain mass. (See Plate V.)

THE VALLEY FLOOR

The bottom of the valley is covered by heavy deposits of moraine material, mostly outspread in comparatively smooth and level beds, though four well-characterized terminal moraines may still be traced stretching across from wall to wall, dividing the valley into sections. . . .

With the exception of a small meadow on the river bank, a mile or more of the lower end of the valley is occupied by delightful groves, and is called Deer Park. Between Deer Park and the Roaring Fall lies the Manzanita Orchard, consisting of a remarkably even and extensive growth of manzanita bushes scarcely interrupted by other bushes or by trees. . . .

The largest meadow in the valley lies at the foot of Grand Sentinel. It is noted for its fine growth of sweet-brier rose, the foliage of which as well as the flower is deliciously fragrant, especially in the morning when the sun warms the dew. At the foot of South Tower, near the Bear Cascades, there is a notable garden of Mariposa tulips. . . .

On the north side of the valley the spaces that bear names are Bee Pasture, Gilia Garden, and Purple Flat, all lavishly flowery, each with its own characteristic plants, though mostly they are the same

as those of the south side of the river, variously developed and combined; while aloft on a thousand niches, benches and recesses of the walls are charming rock-ferns, such as adiantum, pellaea, cheilanthes, allosurus, and brilliant rugs and fringes of the alpine phlox, Menzies penstemon, bryanthus, Cassiope, alpine primula, and many other small floral mountaineers.

PARADISE CANYON

. . . Ascending the Paradise Canyon we find still grander scenery, at least for the first ten miles. . . . The walls of the canyon on either side rise to a height of from 3000 to 5000 feet in majestic forms, hardly inferior in any respect to those of the main valley. The most striking of these on the west wall is the Helmet, 4000 feet in height; and on the east side, after the Monument, Paradise Peak. (See Plate VII.) . . .

FROM YOSEMITE TO KING'S RIVER ALONG THE SIERRA

One of my visits to the great canyon was undertaken from the old Yosemite along the Sierra. . . . We followed the old trail to Wawona and the Mariposa sequoias, then plunged into the trackless wilderness. We traced the Chiquita San Joaquin to its head, then crossed the canyon of the North Fork of the San Joaquin below the Yosemite of this branch, and made our way southward across the Middle and South Forks of the San Joaquin to a point on the divide between the South Fork of the San Joaquin and the North Fork of the King's River, 10,000 feet above the sea. . . . Pushing on with difficulty over the divide, we entered the upper valley of the North Fork of the King's River, and traced its course through many smooth glacier-meadows, and past many a beautiful cluster of granite domes, developed and burnished by the ancient glaciers. Below this dome region the canyon closed, and we were compelled to grope our way along its forest-clad brink until we discovered a promising side canyon, which led us down into the North Fork Yosemite, past a massive projecting rock like El Capitan. . . . We at length made a way out of this little Yosemite by a rude trail that we built up a gorge of the south wall, and on to the crest of the divide between the North and Middle Forks of the river. Here we gained telling views of the region about the head of the Middle Fork of King's River,—vast mountains along the axis of the range, seemingly unapproach-

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able, a broad map of domes and huge ridge-waves and canyons extending to the summits far to the west of us in glorious harmony. Tracing the divide through magnificent forests we at length forded the main King's River, passed through the sequoia groves, and entered the great Yosemite on the 9th of October, after a light storm had freshened the colors. . . .

DESTRUCTIVE TENDENCIES

At first sight it would seem that these mighty granite temples could be injured but little by anything that man may do. But it is surprising to find how much our impressions in such cases depend upon the delicate bloom of the scenery, which in all the more accessible places is so easily rubbed off. I saw the King's River valley in its midsummer glory sixteen years ago, when it was wild, and when the divine balanced beauty of the trees and flowers seemed to be reflected and doubled by all the onlooking rocks and streams as though they were mirrors, while they in turn were mirrored in every garden and grove. In that year (1875) I saw the following ominous notice on a tree in the King's River Yosemite:

"We, the undersigned, claim this valley for the purpose of raising stock.

MR. THOMAS
MR. RICHARDS
HARVEY & Co."

and I feared that the vegetation would soon perish. This spring (1891) I made my fourth visit to the valley, to see what damage had been done, and to inspect the forests. . . . I left San Francisco on the 28th of May, accompanied by Mr. Robinson, the artist. At the new King's River Mills we found that the sequoia giants, as well as the pines and firs, were being ruthlessly turned into lumber. Sixteen years ago I saw five mills on or near the sequoia belt, all of which were cutting more or less of "big-tree" lumber. Now, as I am told, the number of mills along the belt in the basins of the King's, Kaweah and Tule Rivers is doubled, and the capacity more than doubled. As if fearing restriction of some kind, particular attention is being devoted to the destruction of the sequoia groves owned by the mill companies, with the view to get them made into lumber and money before steps can be taken to save them. . . . It seems incredible that Government should have abandoned so much of the forest cover of the mountains to destruction. As well sell the rain-clouds, and the snow, and the rivers, to be cut up and carried away if that were possible.

Surely it is high time that something be done to stop the extension of the present barbarous, indiscriminating method of harvesting the lumber crop.

THE TEHIPITEE VALLEY

. . . By ascending the valley of Copper Creek, and crossing the divide, you will find a Middle Fork tributary that conducts by an easy grade down into the head of the grand Middle Fork Canyon, through which you may pass in time of low water, crossing the river from time to time, where sheer headlands are brushed by the current, leaving no space for a passage. After a long, rough scramble, you will be delighted when you emerge from the narrow bounds of the great canyon into the spacious and enchantingly beautiful Tehipitee. It is about three miles long, half a mile wide, and the walls are from 2500 to nearly 4000 feet in height. The floor of the valley is remarkably level, and the river flows with a gentle stately current. Nearly half of the floor is meadow-land, the rest sandy flat planted with the same kind of trees and flowers as the same kind of soil bears in the great canyon, forming groves and gardens, the whole enclosed by majestic granite walls which in height, and beauty, and variety of architecture are not surpassed in any Yosemite of the range. Several small cascades coming from a great height sing and shine among the intricate architecture of the south wall, one of which when seen in front seems to be a nearly continuous fall about 2000 feet high. (See Plate IX.) But the grand fall of the valley is on the north side. . . . This is the Tehipitee Fall, about 1800 feet high. The upper portion is broken up into short falls and magnificent cascade dashes, but the last plunge is made over a sheer precipice about 400 feet in height into a beautiful pool.

To the eastward of the Tehipitee Fall stands Tehipitee Dome, 2500 feet high, a gigantic round-topped tower, slender as compared with its height, and splendidly simple and massive in structure. It is not set upon, but against, the general masonry of the wall, standing well forward, and rising free from the open sunny floor of the valley, attached to the general mass of the wall rocks only at the back. This is one of the most striking and wonderful rocks in the Sierra. (See Plate VIII.) . . .

THE NEED OF ANOTHER GREAT NATIONAL PARK

I fancy the time is not distant when this wonderful region will be opened to the

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world. . . . Some of the sequoia groves were last year included in the national reservations of Sequoia and General Grant Parks. But all of this wonderful King's River region, together with the Kaweah and Tule sequoias, should be comprehended in one grand national park. This region contains no mines of consequence, it is too high and too rocky for agriculture, and even the lumber industry need suffer no unreasonable restriction. Let our lawgivers then make haste before it is too late to set apart this surpassingly glorious region for the recreation and well-being of humanity, and all the world will rise up and call them blessed.

JOHN MUIR

NOTE. *The illustrations of this article were drawn by Charles D. Robinson from nature or from sketches from nature by himself or, in three instances, by Mr. Muir. The plates for this reprint were reproduced by permission of D. Appleton-Century Company.*

No one who reads these detailed descriptions by John Muir can fail to believe that here in the Kings country is found some of the most superlatively fine scenery to be found on the North American continent. A contemporary described John Muir as having an eye within an eye which could see not only the obvious but the underlying forces of creation. John Muir *felt* his scenery, but he spent days and years studying the Book of Nature in the Sierra so that he could *read and interpret* its story to the world. It was he who discovered the traces of the great glaciers which carved the yosemites of the Sierra. He knew its trees, its flowers and shrubs. He knew the animals which roamed its virgin fastnesses. He knew its weather and its habits of flood and storm. He knew its sunshine.

It is fitting that this part of the high Sierra country which he knew

and loved so well should be a National Park. As proposed, the JOHN MUIR-KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK would include the canyons of the South and Middle Forks of the Kings and a portion of the South Fork of the San Joaquin, except possibly for two encroachments which may be insisted upon by the California irrigationists to develop power reservoirs to help pay for a proposed irrigation reservoir lying outside of the proposed park boundaries. If a way can be found to aid the irrigationists with *federal money* rather than with the *sacrifice* of national-park area, there is an opportunity to bring into the National Park System these lands and waters which have been under consideration for fifty years.

There would thus be brought into the JOHN MUIR-KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK the canyons and crests of the upper Kings country, which would be transferred from the U. S. Forest Service to the National Park Service. For many years, the current Chief Forester has agreed with other conservationists that the superlative scenery in the Kings country was of national-park calibre and successive bills in Congress referred to the Department of Agriculture have received qualified or complete approval.

In the present proposal the park would include the famous Evolution Valley, described by Mr. Muir in his trip down the Sierra crests from the fountains of the North Fork of the Kings River until he reached the big valley. All this, together with the General Grant National Park, and Redwood Canyon, now in private ownership, containing some

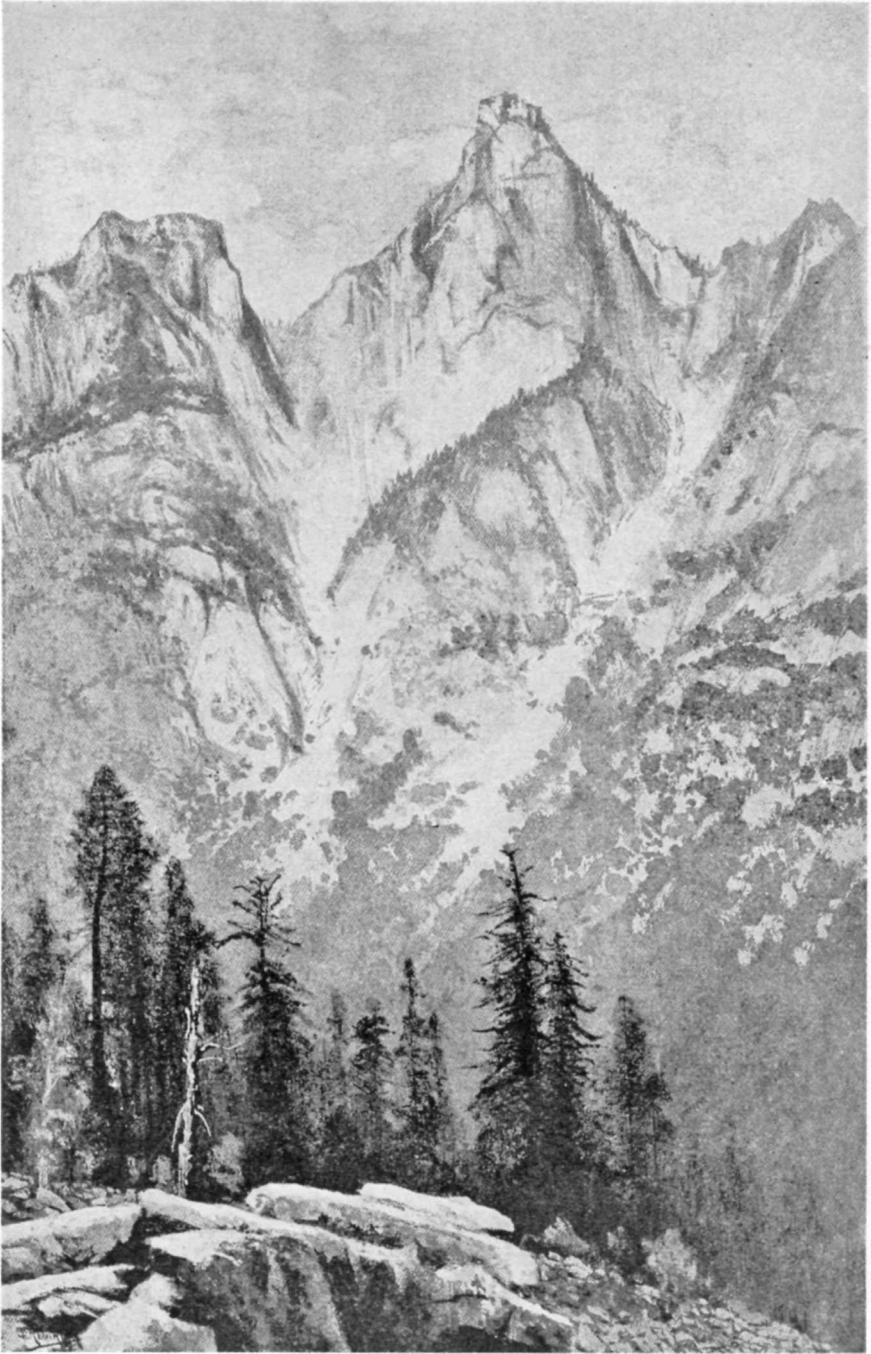


PLATE VII. Paradise Peak, looking east from slopes at foot of Helmet

Proposed John Muir-Kings Canyon National Park

3,000 of the Big Trees, would be embraced in the JOHN MUIR-KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK.

The John Muir Trail already provides a foot and horse trail down the crest of the Sierra from Tuolumne Meadows in Yosemite National Park to Mount Whitney in Sequoia National Park—a distance, as the main trail runs, of 187.7 miles. In the introduction to the “John Muir Trail and the High Sierra Region” by Walter Starr, Jr., published posthumously in 1934, we read: “The grand crescendo of the Sierra Nevada begins in the Yosemite National Park and culminates in the southern group of fourteen-thousand-foot peaks at the headwaters of the Kings River and the Kern.” The proposed John Muir

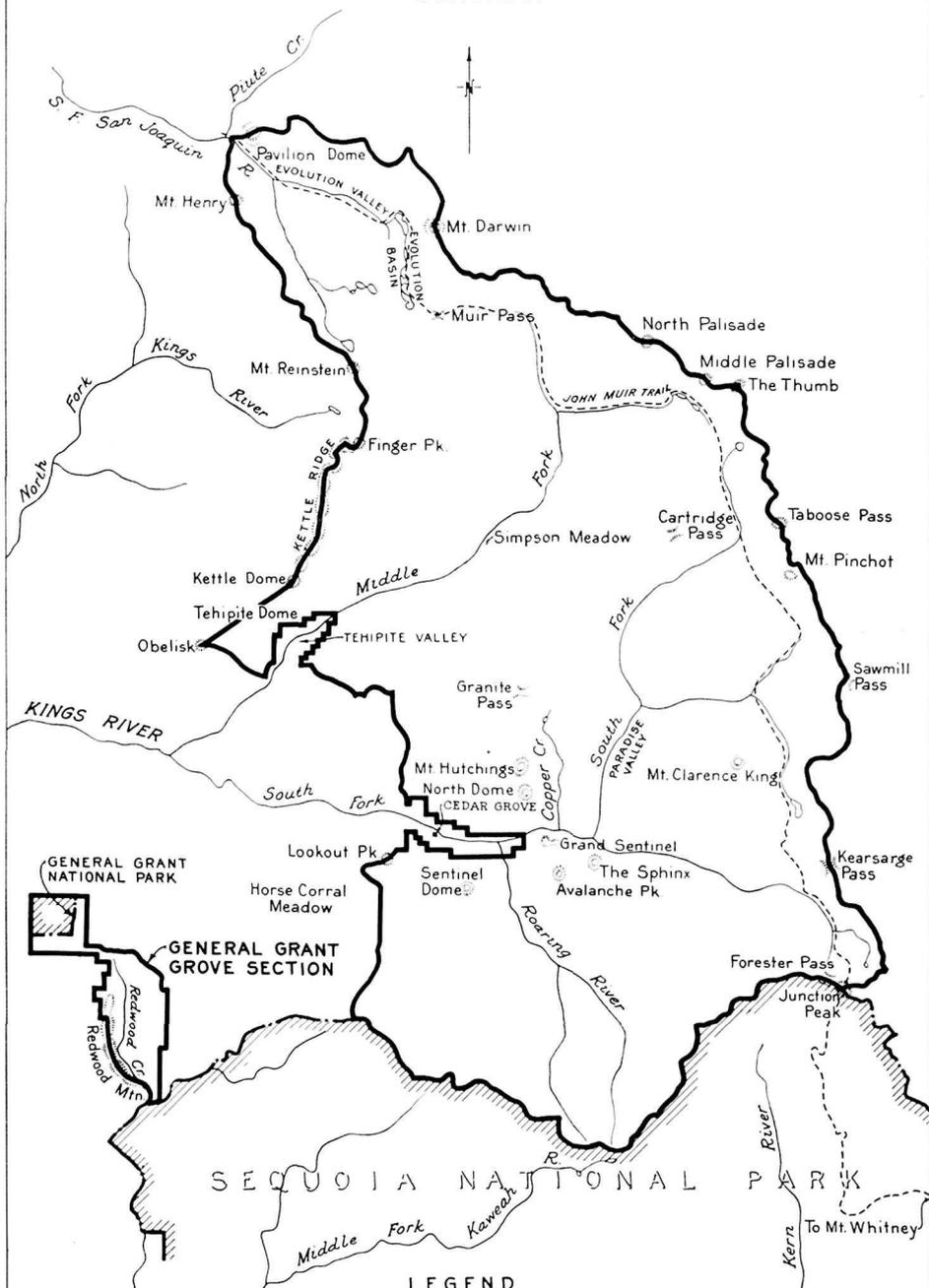
National Park would bring some ninety miles of the John Muir Trail into the new national park. This with the 13.4 miles in Yosemite and 21.5 miles in Sequoia would mean that 126.5 miles of the main John Muir Trail would be protected in national parks, leaving 71.2 miles along the headwaters of the various forks of the San Joaquin in the National Forests.

“Breathes there a man with soul so dead” who does not thrill to the opportunity offered through these proposals for Congress to create the JOHN MUIR-KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK which would for all time preserve and protect this marvelous country from all adverse uses and bequeath it as a worthy heritage to the American people?

THE GEARHART BILL

On February 7, 1939, Representative Bertrand W. Gearhart, of California, introduced into Congress H.R. 3794, to establish the John Muir-Kings Canyon National Park, to transfer thereto the lands now included in the General Grant National Park, to be hereafter known as the General Grant Grove, and to provide that the Redwood Canyon, when purchased, may be brought into the park by executive order. (See accompanying map.) The grazing rights within the area are to continue during the life of the present holders of permits, and, as in other national parks, will terminate when the present holders die. There is a provision to preserve the wilderness character of the new park. No exclusive privileges are to be placed above Copper Creek in the South Fork of the Kings River. While the measure does not abrogate existing contracts and easements, no new housing structures may be leased for summer homestead purposes and no exclusive privileges granted. If the Cedar Grove and Tehipite Reclamation Dam and reservoir projects are built, the Secretary of the Interior may administer unused lands in the withdrawals for recreation purposes and if the projects are abandoned, after certification to that effect to the President by the Secretary of the Interior, with the advice of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, after public notice and hearings, the President may by proclamation add these two sites to the John Muir-Kings Canyon National Park.

PROPOSED JOHN MUIR NATIONAL PARK CALIFORNIA



- LEGEND**
- Proposed John Muir National Park boundary
 - John Muir Trail