



Fraser's Photos, Pomona

Independence Area *of the* High Sierra

IN THE old stage coach days the high Sierra, forming the west wall of the Owens River Valley, lay undisturbed, except for the occasional ringing of some lone prospector's pick against hard rock, or the echoing report of the rifle of a valley settler or hunter in search of "meat." Now, with good roads, and the automobiles, thousands of city dwellers spend their summer vacations along the fringe of these wondrous mountains.

But seeing the Sierra from an automobile, while a pleasant and often thrilling experience, gives but a hint of the real beauty and grandeur of the highest mountain range in the United States. To explore the innermost recesses, to fish for trout in the ice cold waters of glacial streams, or to stand on a high mountain pass and look down on glistening ice fields bordering lakes of deepest blue, one must follow the trails to the lands of solitude.

To ride the trail on a sure-footed mountain-bred horse, to camp beside a virgin pine-circled lake, to sleep on a bed of boughs, two miles above the sea, is an experience never to be forgotten.

Independence, the county seat of Inyo county, is a favorite starting point for those wishing to reach the "back country" by a short and safe route. At this place The Tourists Saddle and Pack Livery

maintains one of the largest and best equipped pack and saddle trains to be found in the Sierra.

Directly to the west of Independence and about fifteen miles as the crow flies, is Kearsarge Pass. For some fifty miles it is the lowest pass along the crest of the Sierra Nevada and is reached by an excellent trail. After leaving Onion Valley, at an elevation of about 8,000 feet, the trail begins immediately to zigzag up the precipitous slopes that occur between several benches on which there are a dozen or so of beautiful Alpine lakes, excellent places at which to camp, both on account of the rugged scenery and the good trout fishing which the lakes afford. Within a few miles the trail reaches Kearsarge Pass an elevation of 11,823 feet above sea level. Perhaps no pass in the high Sierra possesses a more sublime panorama. To the south and southwest is the craggy, serrated line of peaks that form the Kings-Kern Divide—a view that never ceases to fascinate no matter how frequently it may be seen.

Several miles west of Kearsarge Pass one comes to Bullfrog Lake, some 10,500 feet in elevation, a pleasant location in which to camp for those who are fond of high altitudes. Fishing is good and the view to the south with the beautiful East Vidette in