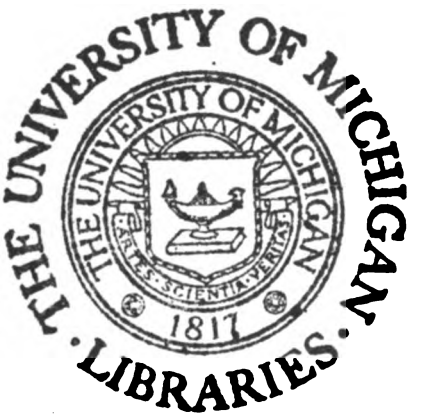
The Gentleman's magazine



THE

Gentleman's Magazine

VOLUME CCLXXVI.

JANUARY TO JUNE 1894

PRODESSE & DELECTARE  E PLURIBUS UNUM

Edited by SYLVANUS URBAN *Gentleman*

London

CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1894

CONTENTS *of* VOL. CCLXXVI.

LIFE IN THE SAGE-BRUSH LANDS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

"In the sad south-west, in the mystical sunlands."

AWAY to the east of the Sierra Nevada range, which intersects the State of California, lies a strange, little-known region of desert and mountain, sage-brush, waste, and borax lakes. Long deep valleys alternate with mountain chains from the Sierras to the Rockies. This is the home of the Puite and the Shoshonee, of the "side-winder" rattlesnake, and of the horned toad. The hills are rich in minerals, and the valleys fertile if irrigated. They are especially adapted for raising fruit and alfalfa—the Lucerne grass of Europe. Grapes, peaches, pears, apples, apricots and nectarines are equal to any grown elsewhere on the Pacific slope.

The particular portion of this great tract, which I would describe in the following pages, is "Owens Valley," in Inyo county, California, which was so called after a gold prospector—the first white man who visited it. I remember well my feelings of awe when I found myself one evening gazing at the tallest peak in the United States outside Alaska—Mount Whitney, 15,000 feet in height—rising up out of a great serrated wall of rock. This valley is over a hundred miles long by about fifteen wide. Owens Lake, situated in the southern half, is a small edition of the Great Salt Lake of Utah. It is filled with borax and other chemicals, and has no fish or animal life in its waters except a kind of worm, which supplies food to millions of duck. These worms are also gathered and used as food by the Puite and Manatche Indians, being mixed with the flour made of the nuts of the dwarf piñon pine of the foothills. Owens Lake is at present about twenty miles long by about twelve wide, but it is receding fast, and may in time be drained off altogether by borax companies. Never in any other part of the world have I seen so many birds—mainly of the duck family—resting on a sheet of water as here.

To the east the valley is walled in by the Inyo or White Mountains, which rise in places, it is said, to 12,000 feet, and contain many

valuable mines of gold, silver and lead. The famous and mysterious Death Valley, 200 feet below sea-level, and as hot as an oven, is away some sixty miles to the south-east. Only one man lives permanently there, and he is a regular hermit. Many a miner has died of thirst while prospecting along the edges of this awful place. It received its name from the fact that a train of emigrants to California lost their way there in "forty-nine" and all perished of thirst. The remains of their "prairie schooners" are yet to be seen sticking out of the sand. Dogs taken there feel the heat so much that they rush into the first water they come to. In a little time their hair falls off as if scalded and they die. It is by no means an uncommon occurrence to find the dried-up remains of prospector or tramp lying amongst the sage-brush in the desert. Owens Valley is very much higher than Death Valley, ranging from 3,000 to 4,000 feet above sea-level, but it is also very hot. Even in the fall I have seen the mercury at 110° in the shade. It is a strange fact that in this Inyo county the highest and the lowest points in the whole United States are to be found—Mount Whitney and Death Valley. More minerals are also said to exist here than perhaps anywhere else in America. The most serious earthquake that has occurred in California since it has been known to white men happened in Owens Valley in 1872, when the whole village of Lone Pine, composed of adobe houses was shaken down and twenty-six Mexicans killed. For four days after that quake the ground trembled and shook, and many suffered as if from sea-sickness. If you ask a man in Lone Pine when a certain sheriff was killed, or when some Indian fight took place, he will always answer, "Oh, before the earthquake," or, "That was after the earthquake, I reckon." For miles along the west side of the valley is a wall of red earth, showing how the adjoining land sank down a distance of ten or twelve feet. As an "oldtimer" remarked to me, "it shook the bottom out of her, and don't you forget."

Owens River, a rapid, deep stream, rises in the mountains to the east of the famous Yosemite Valley, and flows down some 150 miles into Owens Lake, which seems to swallow it, as there is no visible outlet. Along this river, and the streams which flow into it, are numerous ranches, and some fruit farms; but the greater portion of the valley is still sage-brush desert. Three or four villages, varying in size from two hundred to four hundred inhabitants, are strung in a line down the valley at intervals of twenty miles or so. Bishop, at the north end of the valley, is the largest, and is surrounded by more farms than the others. The country around is very swampy and wet, consequently malaria is rather prevalent, although it is unknown in

any other portion of Inyo county. Independence, in the centre of the valley, is the county town, and Lone Pine, sixteen miles south, is the last town to be met with until you come to Mojave, 150 miles away. On my first visit to Inyo I came from Reno on the Central Pacific Railroad to Carson City and Mound House, Nevada, and from there by the narrow-gauge railroad—the "Carson and Colorado"—down through the Nevada deserts and over the White Mountains into Inyo. This road was built principally to haul out ore from the mines and soda and borax from the desert. Three trains a week for passengers run from Mound House to Keeler, the terminus on Owens Lake. From Keeler a stage coach runs twice a week through the desert to Mojave in Southern California. On the "Carson and Colarado," or the "C. & C." as it is locally called, only half a car is reserved for passengers, and that has rarely more than a couple of occupants. More than once I have been the only traveller on the train. The other half of the coach is used as a baggage car. Trains are not run at night on this road, so that travellers have always to stop over at Belleville, once celebrated as "the wickedest town in Nevada. This was only a few years ago when it had two large quartz mills running, and, money being plentiful, gamblers and fast women flocked in, and every place was "wide open" all the time. Now, the hotel, kept by the Railroad Company, is about the only thing that shows signs of life in Belleville. Candalaria, a town eight miles away, enjoys the distinction of being "pretty tough" still, as are many of the mining camps in that "sage-brush country." It takes about two days to get to Inyo from San Francisco, although in a direct line they are not more than 250 miles apart. However, the distance by rail is about 600 miles. The most interesting way to reach the valley is by stage from Mojave, 150 miles to the south. Mojave, pronounced "Moharvy," is a miserable railroad town where the "Southern Pacific" and the "Sante Fé" meet. It is situated in the middle of the great Mojave Desert, and is about the windiest place I know. Only once in over a dozen visits that I have paid there did I find it unnecessary to tie on my hat. I remember in Auckland, New Zealand, the people used to sneer at the capital city of the colony, and say that they could always tell a Wellington man by his habit of holding on his hat on coming to every street corner. However, in Mojave, it is necessary to hold it on all the time. During one visit there I noticed a number of ants walking over my bed, and was rather disturbed on making some explorations to discover a nest of them under the pillow.

The stage takes about thirty hours to go up from Mojave to

Keeler. I had a rather exciting journey over this stage road last year. We left Mojave at seven in the evening, the driver seeing that I had a gun case, told me to take out my gun and "load up for Indians," as a fight had taken place the day before, in which two deputy sheriffs and three Indian "bucks" had been killed. He seemed to think we might drop across the Puites on the warpath. All through the night and next day we kept a sharp look-out, and the few people we passed at the places where horses were changed seemed nervous and were "packing guns" every man. We passed by the mouth of Sage Cañon where the fight had taken place. The Indians had all left the "rancheria" and gone into the mountains, first killing their fowl and "cachéing" or burning the rest of their belongings. Later on, we met a party of mounted "rangers" as they called themselves, more than half of whom were Indians or "half-breeds." They were scouring the desert looking for "tracks," and if they met the "murderers" would certainly have given them short shrift. During the second night as the horses were toiling along through the heavy sand, we saw a couple of figures coming out of the darkness ahead of us, and the driver and myself immediately "covered" them, until we found they were a couple of drunken prospectors who had got lost on the desert.

On this journey we saw some very curious and beautiful rock formations at a place called "Red Rock Cañon." Red terraces of rock, looking for all the world as if carved or quarried by the human hand, arose in all directions. In the centre ran the pass or cañon with perpendicular sides, and a track as level as a French road.

The people of Owens Valley are occupied mainly as miners, ranchers, traders, or packers. Half the nationalities of the globe seem to be represented. The miners are a mixed lot, Cornish, Danish, Irish, English, Swiss, Yankee, Canadian, Missourian and Californian. The ranchers are mostly of American stock. The store-keepers chiefly American-born Jews of German origin, and the "packers" or mule drivers mainly Mexican or half-breed Indian. Numerous sheep "outfits" or caravans pass through the valley, all composed of Basques from the Pyrenees. Many of these men are rich, owning thousands of sheep, but dress as roughly as their "herders," and live as rough lives. They hardly mix at all with the local people and are much disliked, as the sheep eat the grass that the ranchers want for their own cattle, and destroy the range. Again, as they never buy any land, or do anything to enhance the value of real estate, they are looked upon as being in every sense detrimental to the best interests of the country. All sheep that pass through

are taxed five cents a head. The sheep winter in the San Joaquin Valley and are then driven round the southern end of the Sierra Nevada through Walker's Pass, up the east slope into Inyo and Mono counties; then across the Sierras again and down the west side to Kern and Tulare counties in southern California. Sheepmen and cattlemen are deadly enemies everywhere. Cattle do not eat where sheep have passed. All these Basques trade at one particular store in each town they come to. They never have any ready money, they always pay with cheques to avoid the risk of robbery in their lonely march. The owners of the "band" of sheep, with their wagons, pack-mules and donkeys or "curros," as they are called, travel ahead, and form camp near some water, while the sheep come along slowly in charge of a few "herders" with dogs. Some of these dogs are very clever. One is always left behind in the morning to wait for any sheep that may have dropped out on the march. In the afternoon this dog starts away after the band picking up all laggards. I have rarely met one of these Basques who could talk English. Of course they have little or no opportunity of learning, as they are constantly with the sheep and amongst their own compatriots. They occasionally get to a town, when they carouse heavily on Californian wine. Most of them return home to Europe after they have made some money. The "herders" are paid in sheep, not money, and in time they own a good-sized band. Then they generally separate and start off on their own account, getting a new recruit out from the Pyrenees to assist.

A lonely monotonous life it is walking all day, slowly over the rough foothills and desert. They usually carry their long poles across the shoulder blades, with both arms extended. These men are a surly-looking lot, and do not resemble either French or Spaniards. They are chiefly the cause of the forest fires that destroy so much of what is perhaps the most magnificent timber in the world on the west side of the Sierra Nevadas. They know that after a fire the grass grows more plentifully, and that their sheep will consequently have better pasturage. Horses and horned cattle are raised in considerable numbers in the valley, and are driven in large bands through the desert to Los Angeles and the southern counties. On the way down they exist on sage-brush, and an occasional tuft of bunch grass. Cattle in Owens Valley do not thrive well unless driven up into the "meadows" on the "High Sierra" during the summer months for change of air and food. In a few places in the valley the "loco weed" grows. Horses that eat this plant are said to become practically useless. They

are "locoed" or crazy, and are said to have the greatest aversion to cross water. All western men agree that this is the result.

Of all the villages in Inyo, Lone Pine perhaps is the most picturesque. Situated in the centre of Owens Valley, it lies between two great ranges of mountains. The highest peaks of the Sierra Nevada stand right over it to the west, while the Inyo mountains, almost as high, are about the same distance to the east. The great expanse of Owens Lake spreads out five miles to the south of the town. Small orchards lie around most of the detached wooden houses. It is almost entirely a Mexican village, four-fifths of the inhabitants being of Spanish-American origin, which is rather a curious fact, as this region had never been occupied by the Spanish Californians in the early days. These Mexicans came from the province of Sonora to work the Cerro Gordo mine, and afterwards settled in the vicinity. There are also some Chileños here, political refugees, but they are undistinguishable from the ordinary Mexican. A good many of these men have married Puite women or "mehalies," as they are called, and the race is getting very mixed indeed. Most of the men are "packers," and live by bringing down ore on mules or "burros" from the mines to the railroad, or firewood from the mountains to the towns. As no wood—excepting some small cottonwood trees—grows in the valley, and as there is no coal, all firewood has to be brought down in this manner, a distance of from ten to twenty miles. It fetches from eight to nine dollars a cord in the towns. In time the Eucalyptus tree—the Australian blue gum—will doubtless be planted, as in other parts of California, to raise fuel. The houses of Lone Pine were built of mud or "adobe," until the time of the earthquake; since that they are of wood. When an adobe house falls the inmates are usually buried alive, and killed in its ruins, while in a frame house they escape with a few scratches at the worst. As all timber has to be brought by rail from Carson City, Nevada, a distance of over 300 miles, it makes house-building a rather expensive operation. Red peppers are hung all over the outsides of these Mexican houses, and give them a gay appearance.

The great amusement of the men is gambling. I have frequently seen one ride twenty miles to some neighbouring town to play with a miner who was reported to have come in with a full purse. The game goes on day and night until one or other gets stone-broke—the losing player often even staking the horse on which he has ridden in. These Spanish-Americans are fond of all kinds of sport and amusement—especially of dancing. At Christmas they go in for

horse-racing. The usual distance is a dash of about 150 yards. Almost every Mexican rides well, and looks well in the saddle. Shooting with rifle and revolver at chickens is also another favourite sport, the man who kills the bird taking it as a prize. Once I remember a dozen or so of these fellows had been blazing away at one particular "rooster," at a distance of a couple of hundred yards, for about an hour. As they had been "celebrating" all the previous night, their nerves were anything but steady, and none of them seemed able to touch the bird. Finally, a tall young American appeared on the scene, carrying his ·44 Winchester. He was a man who had broken down his constitution by exposure and every kind of hardship as a professional deer-hunter in the woods of Wisconsin and northern Minnesota. However, he could still shoot. Slowly he threw up his gun, pointing it at the sky, then lowering it gradually, and over went the chicken. The "Greasers" were disgusted at being beaten by a "Gringo." These Mexicans constantly make a "bluff" of fighting. They are always ready to draw their "guns," but generally have friends about, who rush in and interfere at the crucial moment. If they have any enmity to some poor Indian, they often take the opportunity on these festive occasions of clubbing him over the head with a heavy revolver. I was at a trial once where a half-breed Mexican was charged with killing and cutting up an Indian "mehali" with whom he had been living. The evidence was thought to be too circumstantial to hang him on and the man was acquitted. A couple of weeks later this same fellow was arrested for firing off his revolver half-a-dozen times on the main street of Lone Pine, in an indiscriminate sort of a way, considered undesirable, on a quiet Sunday afternoon. He managed to get clear of this too by the loss of three mules as a fee to the best lawyer in the county. As a rule, in the course of time, a "tough" of this description runs up against some man who has nerve enough to "fill him up with lead." A Mexican is always a dignified man. He loves to get on a horse and go for a "Pasear" through the village. He wears his straight-brimmed hat pulled down a little over his eyes, and sits very erect in his saddle, with his legs as straight out as possible from the horse's sides. His style is the direct opposite of the English. He always has his raw hide lariat, or lasso, coiled up on the front of his saddle. He wears his trousers pulled down outside his boots invariably, and has immense spurs. He may be compelled to live on one meal a day and an unlimited quantity of "cigareet" smoke, but he always has a mount of some description—if only a "burro." As a rule he is intensely ignorant, and knows and cares nothing for anything outside his immediate environment. He thinks that everybody who is "no

catholique" is on a bee line to the infernal regions. He still imagines the Indians to be as powerful and as numerous as of old, and has an idea that they may swoop down at any moment and massacre all whites. Mexicans are generally polite and courteous to everybody, although they may not be very sincere in their friendship. They are imbued with the idea that they are the only men on earth who can ride a horse properly, and certainly, as I have said, they are good riders and "vaqueros."

The Sixteenth of September, which is the anniversary of the independence of Mexico, is one of their festive occasions. Christmas is also a great time with them. Then they have their "cascaroni" and "campadre" balls. At the former the guests supply themselves with "cascaroni" eggs. The shells are coloured and filled with scraps of scented paper and dust. If you want to pay a compliment to anyone you break a "cascaroni" on his or her head. The belle of the ball is usually covered all over with powder and paper. Generally a few old Mexican señoras are in a corner of the room with baskets of these egg-shells, which they sell to the dancers. Almost all people of Spanish origin can dance well. Of course, in an American town like Lone Pine, a great many representatives of other nationalities drop in and take part in the entertainment. It is rather curious to see some graceful blonde girl—perhaps with the refined face and air of the Eastern States or of Europe—dancing amongst the very pronounced brunettes, some of whom differ very little in appearance from Indian squaws. At New Year the "campadre" ball comes off. Then the names of the guests are written on slips of paper and thrown into a hat. Señorita and señor as drawn together remain partners for the ensuing year. It is the gentleman's privilege (?) to make the lady a present and to act as her escort at all entertainments until the next annual drawing comes off. The señora or señorita, as the case may be, responds to the present with a bouquet. This drawing business is not always on the square, I am afraid, as lovers usually manage to get drawn together, and the Americans, as all who are not Mexicans are called, generally find themselves left in the cold or coupled with some very unsuitable and unprepossessing partner. Thus a friend of mine, an elderly Englishman, a civil engineer, found himself drawn with a very ancient Spanish lady, whose complexion would have made a Niger negress green with envy. This same señora happened to be the engineer's washerwoman. She never seemed able to get hold of his name, but, knowing that he was engaged in canal and ditch construction, always addressed him as "Señor Don Ditchman." A Mexican girl will on

no account go for a walk with a young man alone, as an English girl would, or for a "buggy ride," after the fashion of the American. She must always have a duenna along to chaperon her. In all Inyo county there is not a Catholic priest, so the people of Lone Pine have to be married by a "justice of the peace." One can always tell when a wedding is to take place by seeing the "justice," who on ordinary occasions wear "overalls" and a battered low hat, clothed in a frock coat and silk "stove-pipe." I have not known a silk hat to be worn at any other time in the Valley. In the matter of dress there is considerable latitude in the mountains. I have seen, at a ball in Lone Pine, a teamster sporting an old cloth cap all the evening, and smoking and chewing at a big cigar at the same time. He did not dance, however. He was naturally a bit "tough," being originally from the backwoods of Maine, and now what is known as a "squawman," the father of half-a-dozen half-breed youngsters. A good type of the old time "mountain man," and one you could rely upon in an emergency.

Here, as everywhere else, the Irishman shows up with his strong frame and stronger brogue, which he never seems to lose. He dances, drinks "40 rod" whisky, pays broad compliments to the ladies, and is ever ready for a fight, often rather heedless whether his opponent is "packing a gun" or a knife. Many of the Irish-American miners are looked upon as the most dangerous men in the country. One of them has a record in that county for shooting five persons. Of course it is well known that the first man who has the nerve to kill him will get off without any difficulty. This man is a successful miner and an inveterate gambler. He is nervous and quick tempered, and being rather fond of "whisky straight" is a very ugly customer to have an argument with. He owns a couple of silver mines, and his employés run considerable danger of getting "leaded," either from the fumes in the mine below or from their boss's revolver above. Some of these miners are rather addicted to what is known as a "big drunk" whenever they come to town. I have known one very intelligent man who would stay at his mine for a couple of months, and then ride to town, change his clothes, shave, get drunk and stay drunk for three weeks. That was about his limit. I have known him to keep it up longer, but after three weeks of a "bust" he generally pulled himself together and got away to the mountains. It is very uncommon in that country for a man who gets drunk one day to "sober up" the next. He keeps at it as long as he has any money or credit, or can get anyone to "set 'em up" for him. Gambling is prevalent among all classes. The Chinaman, who

never drinks, is always ready to take a hand at "poker." At one hotel where I frequently put up, the Chinaman cook invariably lost his month's wages the night after he received it, playing poker with his boss, a smart little German Jew. This Chinaman, like most of his race, was a smart, intelligent fellow, but the temptation to show the bar-room loafers that he "savvyed" the game "all same as Mellican man," was too great to be resisted by the culinary artist from Canton. His forty dollars a month wages seemed to have had a string attached, so that they invariably reverted to the pockets of his Hebrew employer.

Any description of Owens Valley would be incomplete without a reference to the great perpendicular wall of mountain which cuts it off from what the natives call the "other side," or the slope "from the Sierras to the sea." Only for a few months in the summer is it possible to cross the Sierra Nevada at all, and then only in a couple of places in the two hundred miles of mountain that lie between "Bloody Cañon"—which leads into the Yosemite Valley—and Walker's Pass at the southern end of the range. Having camped for some time up in one of these trails, I shall add a few words about the manner of life in the "High Sierra."

Away up in the Kearsage Cañon, 8,000 feet above sea level, we "batched" two of us. Our house was a deserted shanty, once used by the manager of the "Rex Montes" mine. The old mill house was still standing, but the houses occupied by the miners had been swept away by one of the "cloud bursts" common to these mountains. All through July and August my companion and myself stayed up there. We lived on game and trout principally. He did the fishing, I the shooting. It was hot, and no mistake. Sometimes we would get a fit of nervousness—perhaps from the amount of tea we drank—and a feeling of anxiety to find how things were going in the valley below, and even in the world outside the mountains, and we would tramp down to Independence. It was not so bad going down, and we generally stayed a night below; but the coming back up the grade—a nine-mile tramp over soft sand, rocks, and brush—was no "picnic." Our only neighbour was an old Dane, once a mine manager, now a hermit. He was well educated, and managed by studying the papers to keep himself posted in the affairs of the world, but his lonely life had turned him into what is known in America as a crank, so that his society was not much sought after. Our shanty was some distance above him in the cañon, and in my hurry to town on a couple of occasions I passed his place without calling to see him. This made him decidedly hostile, and at times

I half expected that I might receive a charge of quail shot when passing the place. However, we afterwards became very good friends. It was lonely up in that cañon, the only people who went over the trail being an odd Basque sheep man going down for supplies, or a packer from the saloons in the valley going up for snow. This is brought down in sacks on pack mules to be used in the composition of mixed drinks. Once I saw it used for another purpose. Everybody in town was attending a dance given in a large room over a livery stable. Suddenly the news came in that an old ex-judge had "passed in his checks," and had "gone over the range." He was the biggest man physically and socially in the town. The dance was stopped instantly, and three men pulled on "overalls," threw pack saddles on the backs of some mules, and started in the darkness up the trail for snow. They got back next afternoon. It was necessary—the weather was broiling, and as the deceased had been a leading member of the masonic brotherhood, the funeral had to be delayed for a couple of days to give all the "masons" in the county a chance of attending. Once we had a visit from two brothers—Germans, who had a ranch below, and had driven up their stock to the mountain meadows for summer. Good-natured fellows they were, but a little too fond of whisky and lager. A few months after I shook hands with the elder brother one day in Independence, and the next day I carried the news to the younger one, "Pete," that "Billy" had had his head kicked in by his horse. Yes, it was lonely after the sun went over the top of the Sierra. We could see the shadow gradually creeping across Owens Valley over to the Inyo range, up higher and higher, and then night; with the darkness every sound seemed intensified, and one fancied he heard strange noises. Only one man lived anywhere near, and he a mile down the mountain. The nearest village was eight miles below, and above and all around us arose the great jagged peaks and gloomy cañons of the giant Sierras. Plenty of rattlesnakes were all about us, under the house, amongst the stones that made the foundation, under all the large boulders, and in the scrub. It was trying to the nerves when, tramping with a gun through the brush, the sound of the rattle would break the stillness of the wilderness. Once my partner on going out to the creek with the tea kettle, found a big rattler before him also taking his evening drink.

Trout of small size but fine flavour were plentiful. Our chief difficulty was in getting bait. The ground was so hard and dried up there that worms were only to be got in one or two places in all the cañon. The largest trout I ever killed, strange to say, I shot in

some shallow water away up at an altitude of 10,000 or 11,000 feet. In the lakes above us a very large description of salmon trout was to be found. My chief work was in keeping the frying-pan supplied with "cotton tail" rabbits, mountain and valley quail. Hard, hot work it was, carrying a shot-gun over those ragged rocks and loose gravel and brush in that blazing sun. We had a dog, but he was almost useless; the heat was too much for him, and he was always looking for the shadow of a great rock in that weary land. Lovely views were to be had, too, of Owens Lake and the mountains beyond. Beautiful pictures did those mountains give, clothed as they were in purple, dark blue, deep brown, yellow. How far away from home it seemed to us two Britishers in that lonely cañon; and yet we liked it as a change from the monotonous life of the little settlements of the valley, where the saloon is the club and the general store the "stamping ground" of the entire community! How a man values the magazines and papers of civilisation in an isolated region such as that! Twelve miles or so across the range from us lay King's River Cañon, considered to be, if anything, grander than the far-famed Yosemite. The latter is seven miles long by a mile wide, with perpendicular walls rising to about 4,000 feet, while King's River Cañon is ten miles long by half a mile wide, with straight cliffs, 5,000 feet high. It has no such rock as El Capitan for massiveness, but has rocks higher, sharper, and more sculptured in appearance than anything in the Yosemite. Of the grandeur of its position and the magnificence of its scenery the ranchers and miners of Inyo, who visit it, never speak; they only talk of the size and number of the fish they have caught, and the ferocity of the mosquitoes and gnats which inhabit it.

Up in the snow above us one old Englishman lived for years, and worked at his mine at an altitude of over 11,000 feet. Almost every other miner had given up the Sierra Nevada side, and had changed over to the more accessible Inyos, but "old man" Ward still stayed with his first love, and dug a precarious living out of that mighty mass of quartz. He stayed too long. One winter, after the snows began to melt, it was noticed in Independence that the old man had not come down. A search party went up and found that he had been a corpse for months away up in the eternal snow. The search party had to resolve itself into a coroner's jury, and then into an undertaking establishment before all was finished. Such is life in the "High Sierra."

GEORGE H. BAILEY.