

**THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
JOHN MUIR**
**The Story of My Boyhood and
Youth, My First Summer in the
Sierra, The Mountains of
California, Stickeen and others**
Illustrated

OUR NATIONAL PARKS

*TO CHARLES
SPRAGUE SARGENT
STEADFAST LOVER
AND DEFENDER
OF OUR
COUNTRY'S FORESTS
THIS LITTLE BOOK
Is Affectionately
Dedicated*

PREFACE

In this book, made up of sketches first published in the Atlantic Monthly, I have done the best I could to show forth the beauty, grandeur, and all-embracing usefulness of our wild mountain forest reservations and

NATIONAL PARKS

(In black on map)

1. Yellowstone, Wyo., Mont., and Ida.
2. Hot Springs, Ark.
3. Sequoia, Cal.
4. Yosemite, Cal.
5. General Grant, Cal.
6. Casa Grande, Ariz.
7. Mt. Rainier, Wash.
8. Crater Lake, Ore.
9. Platt, Okla.
10. Wind Cave, S. D.
11. Sully's Hill, N. D.
12. Mesa Verde, Colo.
13. Glacier (see pp. 368, 369), Mont.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS

(Cross-hatched)

14. Devil's Tower, Wyo.
15. Petrified Forest, Ariz.
16. Montezuma Castle, Ariz.
17. El Morro, N. M.
18. Chaco Canyon, N. M.
19. Lassen Peak, Cal.
20. Cinder Cone, Cal.
21. Gila Cliff-Dwellings, N. M.
22. Tonto, Ariz.
23. Muir Woods, Cal.
24. Grand Canyon, Ariz.

25. Pinnacles, Cal.
26. Jewel Cave, S. D.
27. Natural Bridges, Utah
28. Lewis and Clark Cavern, Mont.
29. Tumacocori, Ariz.
30. Wheeler, Colo.
31. Mt. Olympus, Wash.
32. Navajo, Ariz.
33. Oregon Caves, Ore.

NATIONAL FORESTS

(Shaded)

34. Absaroka, Mont.
35. Alamo, N. M.
36. Angeles, Cal.
37. Apache, Ariz.
38. Arapaho, Colo.
39. Arkansas, Ark.
40. Ashley, Utah and Wyo.
41. Battlement, Colo.
42. Beartooth, Mont.
43. Beaverhead, Ida. and Mont.
44. Bighorn, Wyo.
45. Bitterroot, Mont.
46. Blackfeet, Mont.
47. Black Hills, S. D.
48. Boise, Ida.
49. Bonneville, Wyo.
50. Cabinet, Mont.

51. Cache, Ida. and Utah
52. California, Cal.
53. Caribou, Ida. and Wyo.
54. Carson, N. M.
55. Cascade, Ore.
56. Challis, Ida.
57. Chelan, Wash.
58. Cheyenne, Wyo.
59. Chiricahua, Ariz. and N. M.
60. Clearwater, Ida.
61. Cleveland, Cal.
62. Cochetopa, Colo.
63. Coconino, Ariz.
64. Cœur d'Alene, Ida.
65. Columbia, Wash.
66. Colville, Wash.
67. Coronado, Ariz.
68. Crater, Cal. and Ore.
69. Crook, Ariz.
70. Custer, Mont.
71. Dakota, N. D.
72. Datil, N. M.
73. Deerlodge, Mont.
74. Deschutes, Ore.
75. Dixie, Ariz. and Utah
76. Fillmore, Utah
77. Fishlake, Utah
78. Flathead, Mont.

79. Fremont, Ore.
80. Gallatin, Mont.
81. Garces, Ariz.
82. Gila, N. M.
83. Gunnison, Colo.
84. Hayden, Wyo. and Colo.
85. Helena, Mont.
86. Holy Cross, Colo.
87. Humboldt, Nev.
88. Idaho, Ida.
89. Inyo, Cal. and Nev.
90. Jefferson, Mont.
91. Jemez, N. M.
92. Kaibab, Ariz.
93. Kaniksu, Ida. and Wash.
94. Kansas, Kan.
95. Klamath, Cal.
96. Kootenai, Mont.
97. La Sal, Utah and Colo.
98. Las Animas, Colo, and N. M.
99. Lassen, Cal.
100. Leadville, Colo.
101. Lemhi, Ida.
102. Lewis and Clark, Mont.
103. Lincoln, N. M.
104. Lolo, Mont.
105. Madison, Mont.
106. Malheur, Ore.

107. Manti, Utah
108. Manzano, N. M.
109. Medicine Bow, Colo.
110. Minidoka, Ida. and Utah
111. Minnesota, Minn.
112. Missoula, Mont.
113. Moapa, Nev.
114. Modoc, Cal.
115. Mono, Cal. and Nev.
116. Monterey, Cal.
117. Montezuma, Colo.
118. Nebo, Utah
119. Nebraska, Neb.
120. Nevada, Nev.
121. Nezperce, Ida.
122. Olympic, Wash.
123. Oregon, Ore.
124. Ozark, Ark.
125. Payette, Ida.
126. Pecos, N. M.
127. Pend d'Oreille, Ida.
128. Pike, Colo.
129. Plumas, Cal.
130. Pocatello, Ida. and Utah
131. Powell, Utah
132. Prescott, Ariz.
133. Rainier, Wash.
134. Rio Grande, Colo.

135. Routt, Colo.
136. Salmon, Ida.
137. San Isabel, Colo.
138. San Juan, Colo.
139. San Luis, Cal.
140. Santa Barbara, Cal.
141. Sawtooth, Ida.
142. Sequoia, Cal.
143. Sevier, Utah
144. Shasta, Cal.
145. Shoshone, Wyo.
146. Sierra, Cal.
147. Sioux, Mont, and S. D.
148. Siskiyou, Ore. and Cal.
149. Sitgreaves, Ariz.
150. Siuslaw, Ore.
151. Snoqualmie, Wash.
152. Sopris, Colo.
153. Stanislaus, Cal.
154. Sundance, Wyo.
155. Superior, Minn.
156. Tahoe, Cal. and Nev.
157. Targhee, Ida. and Wyo.
158. Teton, Wyo.
159. Toiyabe, Neb.
160. Tonto, Ariz.
161. Trinity, Cal.
162. Uinta, Utah

163. Umatilla, Ore.
164. Umpqua, Ore.
165. Uncompahgre, Colo.
166. Wallowa, Ore.
167. Wasatch, Utah
168. Washington, Wash.
169. Wenaha, Ore. and Wash.
170. Wenatchee, Wash.
171. Weiser, Ida.
172. White River, Colo.
173. Whitman, Ore.
174. Wichita, Okla.
175. Wyoming, Wyo.
176. Zuñi, Ariz. and N. M.

CHAPTER I

The Wild Parks and Forest Reservations of the West

“Keep not standing fix’d and rooted,
Briskly venture, briskly roam;
Head and hand, where’er thou foot it,
And stout heart are still at home.
In each land the sun does visit
We are gay, whate’er betide:
To give room for wandering is it
That the world was made so wide.”

The tendency nowadays to wander in wildernesses is delightful to see. Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life. Awakening from the stupefying effects of the vice of over-industry and the deadly apathy of luxury, they are trying as best they can to mix and enrich their own little ongoings with those of Nature, and to get rid of rust and disease. Briskly venturing and roaming, some are washing off sins and cobweb cares of the devil’s spinning in all-day storms on mountains; sauntering in

rosiny pinewoods or in gentian meadows, brushing through chaparral, bending down and parting sweet, flowery sprays; tracing rivers to their sources, getting in touch with the nerves of Mother Earth; jumping from rock to rock, feeling the life of them, learning the songs of them, panting in whole-souled exercise, and rejoicing in deep, long-drawn breaths of pure wildness. This is fine and natural and full of promise. So also is the growing interest in the care and preservation of forests and wild places in general, and in the half wild parks and gardens of towns. Even the scenery habit in its most artificial forms, mixed with spectacles, silliness, and kodaks; its devotees arrayed more gorgeously than scarlet tanagers, frightening the wild game with red umbrellas,-even this is encouraging, and may well be regarded as a hopeful sign of the times.

All the Western mountains are still rich in wildness, and by means of good roads are being brought nearer civilization every year. To the sane and free it will hardly seem necessary to cross the continent in search of wild beauty, however easy the way, for they find it in abundance wherever they chance to be. Like Thoreau they see forests in orchards and patches of huckleberry brush, and oceans in ponds and drops of dew. Few in these hot, dim, strenuous times are quite sane or free; choked with care like clocks full of dust, laboriously doing so much good and making so much money,-or so little,-they are no longer good for

themselves.

When, like a merchant taking a list of his goods, we take stock of our wildness, we are glad to see how much of even the most destructible kind is still unspoiled. Looking at our continent as scenery when it was all wild, lying between beautiful seas, the starry sky above it, the starry rocks beneath it, to compare its sides, the East and the West, would be like comparing the sides of a rainbow. But it is no longer equally beautiful. The rainbows of to-day are, I suppose, as bright as those that first spanned the sky; and some of our landscapes are growing more beautiful from year to year, notwithstanding the clearing, trampling work of civilization. New plants and animals are enriching woods and gardens, and many landscapes wholly new, with divine sculpture and architecture, are just now coming to the light of day as the mantling folds of creative glaciers are being withdrawn, and life in a thousand cheerful, beautiful forms is pushing into them, and new-born rivers are beginning to sing and shine in them. The old rivers, too, are growing longer, like healthy trees, gaining new branches and lakes as the residual glaciers at their highest sources on the mountains recede, while the rootlike branches in the flat deltas are at same time spreading farther and wider into the seas and making new lands.

Under the control of the vast mysterious forces of the interior of the earth all the continents and islands

are slowly rising or sinking. Most of the mountains are diminishing in size under the wearing action of the weather, though a few are increasing in height and girth, especially the volcanic ones, as fresh floods of molten rocks are piled on their summits and spread in successive layers, like the wood-rings of trees, on their sides. New mountains, also, are being created from time to time as islands in lakes and seas, or as subordinate cones on the slopes of old ones, thus in some measure balancing the waste of old beauty with new. Man, too, is making many far-reaching changes. This most influential half animal, half angel is rapidly multiplying and spreading, covering the seas and lakes with ships, the land with huts, hotels, cathedrals, and clustered city shops and homes, so that soon, it would seem, we may have to go farther than Nansen to find a good sound solitude. None of Nature's landscapes are ugly so long as they are wild; and much, we can say comfortingly, must always be in great part wild, particularly the sea and the sky, the floods of light from the stars, and the warm, unspoilable heart of the earth, infinitely beautiful, though only dimly visible to the eye of imagination. The geysers, too, spouting from the hot underworld; the steady, long-lasting glaciers on the mountains, obedient only to the sun; Yosemite domes and the tremendous grandeur of rocky cañons and mountains in general,-these must always be wild, for man can change them and mar them hardly more than

can the butterflies that hover above them. But the continent's outer beauty is fast passing away, especially the plant part of it, the most destructible and most universally charming of all.

Only thirty years ago, the great Central Valley of California, five hundred miles long and fifty miles wide, was one bed of golden and purple flowers. Now it is ploughed and pastured out of existence, gone forever,-scarce a memory of it left in fence corners and along the bluffs of the streams. The gardens of the Sierra, also, and the noble forests in both the reserved and unreserved portions are sadly hacked and trampled, notwithstanding, the ruggedness of the topography,-all excepting those of the parks guarded by a few soldiers. In the noblest forests of the world, the ground, once divinely beautiful, is desolate and repulsive, like a face ravaged by disease. This is true also of many other Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain valleys and forests. The same fate, sooner or later, is awaiting them all, unless awakening public opinion comes forward to stop it. Even the great deserts in Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and New Mexico, which offer so little to attract settlers, and which a few years ago pioneers were afraid of, as places of desolation and death, are now taken as pastures at the rate of one or two square miles per cow, and of course their plant treasures are passing away,-the delicate abronias, phloxes, gilies, etc. Only a few of the bitter, thorny, unbitable shrubs are left, and the sturdy

cactuses that defend themselves with bayonets and spears.

Most of the wild plant wealth of the East also has vanished,-gone into dusty history. Only vestiges of its glorious prairie and woodland wealth remain to bless humanity in boggy, rocky, unploughable places. Fortunately, some of these are purely wild, and go far to keep Nature's love visible. White water-lilies, with rootstocks deep and safe in mud, still send up every summer a Milky Way of starry, fragrant flowers around a thousand lakes, and many a tuft of wild grass waves its panicles on mossy rocks, beyond reach of trampling feet, in company with saxifrages, bluebells, and ferns. Even in the midst of farmers fields, precious sphagnum bogs, too soft for the feet of cattle, are preserved with their charming plants unchanged,-chiogenes, *Andromeda*, *Kalmia*, *Linnæa*, *Arethusa*, etc. *Calypso borealis* still hides in the *arbor vitæ* swamps of Canada, and away to the southward there are a few unspoiled swamps, big ones, where miasma, snakes, and alligators, like guardian angels, defend their treasures and keep them as pure as paradise. And beside a' that and a' that, the East is blessed with good winters and blossoming clouds that shed white flowers over all the land, covering every scar and making the saddest landscape divine at least once a year.

The most extensive, least spoiled, and most unspoilable of the gardens of the continent are the vast

tundras of Alaska. In summer they extend smooth, even, undulating, continuous beds of flowers and leaves from about lat. 62° to the shores of the Arctic Ocean; and in winter sheets of snowflowers make all the country shine, one mass of white radiance like a star. Nor are these Arctic plant people the pitiful frost-pinched unfortunates they are guessed to be by those who have never seen them. Though lowly in stature, keeping near the frozen ground as if loving it, they are bright and cheery, and speak Nature's love as plainly as their big relatives of the South. Tenderly happed and tucked in beneath downy snow to sleep through the long, white winter, they make haste to bloom in the spring without trying to grow tall, though some rise high enough to ripple and wave in the wind, and display masses of color,-yellow, purple, and blue,-so rich that they look like beds of rainbows, and are visible miles and miles away.

As early as June one may find the showy *Geum glaciale* in flower, and the dwarf willows putting forth myriads of fuzzy catkins, to be followed quickly, especially on the dryer ground, by *mertensia*, *eritrichium*, *polemonium*, *oxytropis*, *astragalus*, *lathyrus*, *lupinus*, *myosotis*, *dodecatheon*, *arnica*, *chrysanthemum*, *nardosmia*, *saussurea*, *senecio*, *erigeron*, *matrecaria*, *caltha*, *valeriana*, *stellaria*, *Tofieldia*, *polygonum*, *papaver*, *phlox*, *lychnis*, *cheiranthus*, *Linnæa*, and a host of *drabas*, *saxifrages*,

and heathworts, with bright stars and bells in glorious profusion, particularly Cassiope, Andromeda, ledum, pyrola, and vaccinium,-Cassiope the most abundant and beautiful of them all. Many grasses also grow here, and wave fine purple spikes and panicles over the other flowers,-poa, aira, calamagrostis, alopecurus, trisetum, elymus, festuca, glyceria, etc. Even ferns are found thus far north, carefully and comfortably unrolling their precious fronds,-aspidium, cystopteris, and woodsia, all growing on a sumptuous bed of mosses and lichens; not the scaly lichens seen on rails and trees and fallen logs to the southward, but massive, roundheaded, finely colored plants like corals, wonderfully beautiful, worth going round the world to see. I should like to mention all the plant friends I found in a summer's wanderings in this cool reserve, but I fear few would care to read their names, although everybody, I am sure, would love them could they see them blooming and rejoicing at home.