

SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN.

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No. I

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All communications intended for publication by the SIERRA CLUB, and all correspondence concerning such publication, should be addressed to the Editor, Elliott McAllister, 206 Sansome Street, San Francisco, California.

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RAMBLINGS THROUGH THE HIGH SIERRA.*

BY JOSEPH LE CONTE.

PREFACE TO ORIGINAL EDITION.

About the first week before the end of the First Session of the University of California, several young men, students of the University, invited me to join them in a camping party for the Yosemite and the High Sierra. The party was to go in regular pioneer style, cooking their own provisions, and sleeping under the open sky whenever a convenient place was found; each man was to bestride his own horse, carry his own bedding behind his saddle, and his clothing, with the exception of one change of underwear, on his back.

This was, it is true, a little rougher and harder than anything I had ever undertaken; but still I was fond of adventure, and longed to enjoy the glories of Yosemite and the beauties of the Sierra, and, more than all, to study mountain structure and mountain sculpture, as exhibited there on a magnificent scale. I therefore at once accepted the offer. The party was forthwith organized, ten in number. Mr. Hawkins, who understood something of mountain life, was commissioned to buy the necessary supplies, and the general outfit, such as camp utensils, pack-horse and pack-saddle, and have all in readiness that we might start the very first day after commencement.

To while away my idle moments in camp, and to preserve some *souvenir* of the party, of the incidents, and of the scenery, I jotted down, from time to time, these wayside notes. J. L'C.

JULY 21, 1870. — Amid many kind and cheering words, mingled with tender regrets; many encouragements, min-

* Reprinted from "A Journal of Ramblings," privately printed in 1875.

our camps, our morning and evening rides, our jokes, etc., — but nothing in comparison with the dust and heat and fatigue. From this time we expect to commence the real enjoyment. We are delightfully situated here at Clark's; fine pasture for horses; magnificent grove of tall pines for camp; fine river — South Fork of Merced — to swim in; delightful air. We determined to stop here two days; one for rest and clothes-washing, and one for visiting the Big Trees. I have been sufficiently long with the party to become well acquainted with all. I have nothing to do, to-day, except to wash my clothes. I cannot have a better opportunity to describe our party. I do it very briefly.

We are in ten in number. Each man is dressed in strong trousers, heavy boots or shoes, and loose flannel shirt; a belt, with pistol and butcher-knife, about the waist; and a broad-brimmed hat. All other personal effects (and these are made as few as possible) are rolled up in a pair of blankets and securely strapped behind his saddle. Thus accoutered, we make a formidable appearance, and are taken sometimes for a troop of soldiers, but more often for a band of cattle or horse drivers. Our camp utensils consist of two large pans, to mix bread; a camp-kettle, a teapot, a dozen tin plates, and ten tin cups; and most important of all, two or three frying-pans. The necessary provisions are bacon, flour, sugar, tea, and coffee. Whenever we could, we bought small quantities of butter, cheese, fresh meat, potatoes, etc. Before leaving Oakland we organized thoroughly, by electing Soulé as our Captain, and Hawkins his Lieutenant, and promised implicit obedience. This promise was strictly carried out. All important matters, however, such as our route, how long we should stay at any place, etc., was decided by vote, the Captain preferring to forego the exercise of authority in such matters.

The names and descriptions of the members of the party are as follows:—

1. *Capt. Frank Soulé.*—Strong, well-formed and straight, with clear-cut features and handsome face. Mounted on a tall, raw-boned, high-stepping dappled-gray, with a high head, a high spirit and fine action, he presents a striking appearance. He evidently feels his rank, and so does his horse. As to the latter

“We shall not need to say what lack
Of leather was on his back,
For that was hidden under pad,
And breech of Knight, galled full as bad.”

2. *Lieut. Leander Hawkins.*—Strong, thick-set, almost herculean in build. Mounted on a fierce, vicious Indian pony, as wild as a deer, which he rides with a rope around his nose, instead of a bridle, and a blind across the forehead, which may be slipped over the eyes at a moment's notice; he is evidently a most fearless rider and horse-breaker. He is, besides, thoroughly acquainted with camp life and mountain life. He is, therefore, the most indispensable man in the party. At first he did everything; but he has gradually taught us the mysteries of cooking, dishwashing, and, above all, packing a horse. He is also treasurer and commissary, and always rides ahead, toward evening, and selects camp-ground. Generous almost to a fault, he is ever ready to help every one, and really does more work than any three in the party.

3. *Myself.*—Long and lean and lantern-jawed, and in search of romantic adventure, I was sometimes called by Linderman, but very secretly, “Don Quixote.” I accept the nickname with pleasure, perhaps with pride. I have a great respect for the old Don. There was nothing remarkable about my horse. A strong, tough, well-made gray, both gentle and careful, he was admirably suited for my purposes. My function in the party was that of surgeon and scientific lecturer.

4. *Everett B. Pomroy.*—Short, strong, compact, mus-

cular, with high roman nose, close-cropped hair, and coarse top-boots; very erect, somewhat grandiose in appearance and stilted in language. He is called "Our Poet." He is "A chiel amang us, takin' notes, and faith he'll prent it." He is mounted on a large mud-colored mustang, with a broad, flat head, deep-sunk, vicious eyes, and a sprung knee. He stumbles fearfully, and bucks whenever he can, but is a tough, serviceable beast, nevertheless. We call him "Old 67," from a brand on his thigh. Pomroy sits astride of this ill-favored, hobbling beast, majestic and solemn, like Jupiter Tonans shorn of his ambrosial locks.

5. *Dell Linderman*.—Full of wit and infinite humor, quick and unflinching at repartee, with a merry twinkle in his eye, and a humorous, reddish knob on the end of his nose. We call him "Our Jester." He keeps our table in a roar. All the nicknames of men and horses are of his invention. His own horse is a very stout, logy mare, with a very rough gait. He calls her "Dolly Ann, the Scab-grinder." A gun, slung over his shoulder, completes his equipment.

6. *George Cobb*.—Full of life and spirit, mercurial in temperament, with small, merry, coal-black eyes, and mouth always laughing and always chattering. He rides a neat, trim, round, frisky little mare, which seems well suited to him. He carries a splendid repeating rifle, with which he often shoots at *marks*. He is not known to have hit any living thing. He wears, also, neat strapped leggings. He is the fancy man and amateur sportsman of the party.

7. *Jack Bolton*.—Dark, grave, quiet; he rides a strong-boned, steady-going, grave-looking horse, of excellent gait and qualities.

8. *Charles Phelps*. Slender, long-limbed, loose-jointed, gothic in structure of body and features, Linderman calls him "Kangaroo." His horse is a thin, slender-limbed, weak-looking mare, which in walking wobbles its hinder

parts in a serpentine manner. On each side of his unsteady beast Phelps' long legs dangle in a helpless manner.

9. *Charles Stone*.—Tall, erect; very long, curved nose; very long, straight legs, and very high hips. Linderman calls him sometimes "Crow," from his nose, and sometimes "Tongs," from his legs. His horse is a pinto iron-gray; with whitish, imbecile-looking eyes, head down, nose stuck forward, and a straddling, cow-like action of his hind legs in trotting. A tough, serviceable beast withal, except that it is impossible to cinch a saddle on his cow-like form so tightly that it will not slip on his neck in going down hill. Linderman calls him "Samson Nipper"; why, I cannot tell; but the name seems to us all very expressive.

10. *Jim Perkins*.—A neat, trim figure, both active and strong; a fine face, with well-chiseled features; quiet, unobtrusive, gentlemanly. He was mounted on a compact, well-built horse, of excellent gait and qualities.

11. Last, but not least, is "*Old Pack*," as we call our pack-horse. A mild-eyed, patient, much-enduring beast, steady and careful, with every quality befitting a pack-horse. We all conceived a great affection for him.

Our party was divided into three squads of three each, leaving out Hawkins, as he helped everybody, and had more duties of his own than any of the rest. Each squad of three was on duty three days, and divided the duties of *cook*, *dishwasher*, and *pack* among themselves. On arriving at our camp-ground, each man unsaddled and picketed his horse with a long lariat rope carried on the horn of his saddle for this purpose. In addition to this, whoever attended to the pack-horse that day, unpacked him, laid the bags ready for the cook, and picketed the pack-horse. The cook then built a fire (frequently several helping, for more expedition), brought water and commenced mixing dough and baking bread. This was a serious operation to make bread for ten, and bake in two frying-pans.

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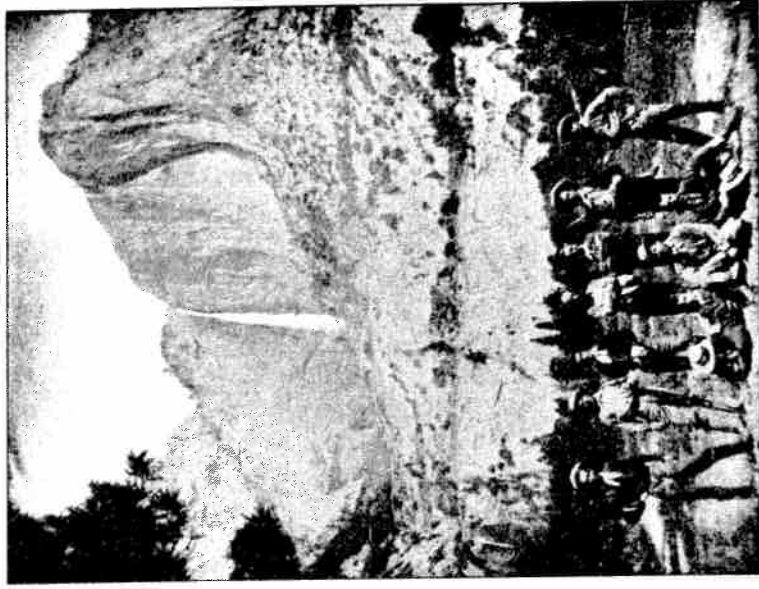
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PLATE I.



PHIELDS, ROLTON, PERKINS, PROF. I. R. CONTE, SOULÉ, LINDERMAN, COBB, STONE, HAWKINS, POMROY.

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