THE OUTING OF 1932

BY HOLLIS T. GLEASON

From this hour, freedom! . . .
I inhale great draughts of space;
The east and the west are mine, and
the north and the south are mine . . .
All seems beautiful to me . . .
Now I see the secret of the making
of the best persons,
It is to grow in the open air, and to
eat and sleep with the earth. —WHITMAN.

WHO can recall without a feeling of reverence the golden days spent in the High Sierra of California? For here "immortal shapes of bright aerial spirits live inspered in regions mild of calm and serene air, above the smoke and stir of this dim spot which men call earth." Here "none may come to the trial till he or she brings courage and health, and only those may come who come in sweet and determined bodies." Rejoicing here under the shadow of the great peaks, in the dazzling sunshine of the high plateaus, in all the radiant coloring of this land of the sky, we tread once more the undisturbed delightful paths of earth.

Who has not waked from peaceful slumber in the high places to see the day-star trick his beams and with new-spangled ore flame in the forehead of the morning sky? Who has not risen under the opening eyelids of the morn refreshed and primed for the unknown pleasures of a new day? Strike out on the High Sierra trail long ere the burning sun flames over yonder ridge; swish under foot the meadow-grass dew-pearled, before the shadows flee away. In silent worship marvel at the "hells and flowrets of a thousand hues," the blue clusters of lupine and larkspur, the brilliant red of the castillea, the soft pink of the alpine shooting-star. Breathe deep the cold clear air of the morning, tune heart and soul to the music of the roaring stream as it swirls all white among the boulders; hearken to the songs of birds in the forest, lift up your eyes to the heights of glistening snow, and behold who hath created these things.

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On Saturday morning, July 9, A.D. 1932, the hot discomforts of the
San Joaquin Valley and the manifold tribulations of the business depression were fast fading into oblivion; for we were rapidly ascending the tortuous and magnificent highway that leads up the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River to the serene and pellucid atmosphere of the Giant Forest. Here, at Wolverton Creek, the efficient commissary of the Sierra Club had established our first camp-site. Here for two days and nights we could either repent, or groom ourselves for the long trail to the Delectable Mountains. We were two hundred strong, or weak, as the case might be, and our repentance was reserved, if at all, for our sojourn in the wilderness.

The classic remark that all persons are born into the Sierra Club with a steel spoon in their mouths might be supplemented by observing that their earliest plaything is a bright tin cup bearing the imprint of the clan. These are the pearls of great price to be preserved at all cost, and woe unto him or her who fails to cherish them. They are rather to be chosen than great riches, and the loser thereof may well be forced to revert to barbarism. Nor is that enviable state difficult to attain in this high country, notwithstanding the presence of such notably civilizing implements. Who, for example, would deny that the ripened bandanna, particularly as a food container, has high barbaric content? A better mixer in this democratic group of ours would be hard to find.

In an amphitheater of giant Sequoias our first camp-fire was notable for the presence of Gilbert Grosvenor, President of the National Geographic Society, who had flown from the national capital in order to attend the ceremonies of the morrow. Colonel John R. White, Superintendent of the Sequoia National Park, graciously accorded us proper entrée to his domain, surrounded by his staff of stalwarts, whom our manager, Francis Tappan, in a burst of eloquence described as “the best damn rangers” in the country. William E. Colby, past master of successful campaigns of the Sierra Club, launched us on our way with final words of wisdom, followed by detailed instructions from our competent manager as to some of the best ways of avoiding trouble and even disaster.

All those who remember Stephen T. Mather, the great friend and former director of our national parks, are not likely to forget the impressive exercises on Sunday morning, July 10th, at the unveiling of a bronze tablet to his memory. In one of the finest of all groves of Sequoia gigantea, on a simple granite boulder resting peacefully upon the lap
of earth, under the spreading arms of the ancient trees which he strove so mightily to protect and to preserve, the pilgrims of future years may ponder well the noble inscription: "There will never come an end to the good that he has done."

The remainder of our day of respite was spent in quiet enjoyment of delightful surroundings. We were charmed and allured by the lights and shadows of the forest, by the green and flowered meadows interlaced with streams, by the huge and stately trees lifting their massive branches into the luminous depths of blue—the selfsame trees that measure their mighty girth from the days of the Pharaohs, and have weathered the shocks of doom through all succeeding time. Not a few of our number, eager to anticipate the morrow, climbed up the new-cut steps of Moro Rock to gain glorious vistas of the cloud-banked mountain masses of the Great Western Divide.

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Pulling out on a long voyage into unknown seas can have no greater thrill than the spell of the open trail on the first bright morning of a long hike into the mountains. We were fresh and rarin' to go. The park trucks brought us to Crescent Meadow, and there at last we gained the High Sierra Trail, with Lone Pine Meadow for our goal. Fifteen miles and a paltry thousand feet or two for a climb. A bagatelle! At peace with all the world we sallied forth on the well-built trail along the cliffs, filled with that perfect sense of freedom which follows a sharp break from exacting cares and the sure knowledge that there can be no interruption for weeks. As we covered mile after mile, "turning flanks and dodging shoulders," or following the windings of ravines, it seemed impossible that we should ever tire. On our right far across the deep valley of the Kaweah, in a rich mantle of forest, stood the Castle Rocks and other peaks, soft in a haze of blue, while in front and to the east in ever-mounting grandeur rose the stark and gleaming sentinels of the Divide—Sawtooth Peak, Mount Lippincott, Mount Stewart, and many others. In the liquid light the rocky slopes with their deep glacial scourings assumed strange forms. We were constantly entranced by waterfalls leaping in playful fury down the steep ravines, or by the hanging gardens decked with myriad colors. Along the trail in the driest of gravel-banks small intricate flowers sprang from the dust.

Strangely enough we had lost a bit of our freshness when we
reached Buck Cañon at noon, and were quite ready to sit and eat by the edge of the rushing stream. Here we could watch the patient mule-trains swinging into view at the bend of the cliff, then jogging down the last incline into the crystal creek where the thirsty animals would pause for a drink of the cool water. Nor can it be said that all the ladies in their crossing stepped forth with ease and grace upon the slender log athwart the torrent. The gusty breeze played artful pranks with the smoke of our little fire, around which at brief intervals appeared new faces eager to share the hot tea from our canteens. And for some this was merely the beginning of one long tea-party which was to last the entire trip.

It was a long dry trail in the early afternoon up through the forest in the dust, with feet and legs beginning to complain. But on reaching open country once again who can forget the strange and novel sight of our many strings of mules, like a hyphenated serpent winding up the rounded cliff, in order to gain the higher level of Lone Pine Meadow? And what were our burdens-bags and the finding of a dry spot for a camp! And then the sudden chill in the air as the sun’s rim dipped behind the long western ridge, and the vain regrets at the icy bath drawn from the fields of snow. Even the heat of a roaring fire in the darkness and a parting word of cheer from Colonel White could scarcely hide our shivering in the frosty air. At last, rolled snugly in our sleeping-bags, under the clear and star-sown vault of heaven, we dreamed away our weariness, nor sensed the brilliant half-moon sinking in the west.

What stiffness of ponchos in the early dawn, what slabs of ice upon the water-pails! What struggle to return to life at the heartless cry, “Everybody up! Get up! Get up!”—at four-thirty in the morning! Of what avail to pity our comrades of the commissary who rose in a darker hour? We were now facing the big test of Elizabeth Pass, over 11,000 feet in altitude and 3000 feet above our starting-point. Once over the ridge and onto the broad upland sweep of the plateau we could view the distant summit of our hopes, a spacious opening with massive rocks piled high on either side. At times, to strengthen our morale, we would pause for a snatch of food or a welcome drink from one of the countless brooks. Then came the final zigzags to the crest and the last thin patches of snow. Breath became shorter, fatigue more intense, while alarming weakness sapped our sinews. In the final lift we were eased along in a powerful surge of air rushing up from the depths below. Victory and refreshment at last! For there in the warm sun, well sheltered from the wind, on a rugged slope of broken granite slabs, sat a host of new-found friends reveling in their cups of snow and apricot jam. Over all the northern slope below, and down into Deadman Cañon at our left, there stretched a mighty snow-field dazzling in the noonday light, and close at hand in startling contrast moved the bronzed athletic form of one of our most enterprising photographers setting up his tripod.

Can you see the screaming parties sliding down the long steep snow-field, some trying to keep their feet, others rolling helplessly, with their belongings scattered far and wide? Is it a horse that wallows in the depths below led by a woman badly in need of a friend? Volunteers descend and with helpful hands finally drag the horse to better footing. The snow is full of pockets of odd shapes with patches of pink here and there which you are told not to eat. Do you remember the sunburn, the greased lips and faces, and how hot you became on the long descent, your feet and legs floundering and staggering in the uneven furrows? Did you look back over the snow to the top of the pass and see the great clouds milling through and enveloping all the peaks and upper snow-fields? Were you chilled by the cold wind and fog pouring down the cañon after the clouds had covered the sun? And what of tea and friendly faces in the shelter of the big boulders below, where you could see the strings of mules loaded with commissary boxes and heaps of dunngage slumping along on the muddy trail after their eventful struggle on the snow above?

"Till the snow ran out in flowers, and the flowers turned to aloe, And the aloes sprung to thicket and a brimming stream ran by."

It was raw and cold that night in Deadman Cañon amid the endless cadence of many waters, and with flurries of snow settling down upon our sleeping-bags.

We soon grew used to our new routine of life, and before we knew it a fortnight was slipping by. We left behind the heights of Big Bird Lake, the lush meadows of the lower cañon with its smooth meandering stream, and green fields bright with cyclamen and hosts of yellow flowers. In lower country by the Roaring River we found it dry and warm. We crossed the foaming torrent in the early morning sunlight, we ascended the steep moraine through beautiful open forest, we rested in pleasant vales of purple lupine partly in sun and
shade. Up through the forest with heart-throbs in our ears we mounted shoulder after shoulder, making way from time to time for our commissary huskies tramping by with measured tread, their bare backs blackened with the sun and dust. We came to a broad plateau covered with thrifty foxtail pines, affording noble vistas of sharp peaks to the east, Mount Gardner and Mount King, and to our right, as we descended the dusty slope, Cross Mountain and the great North Guard.

Those were enchanting nights at Sphinx Creek, with the flood-light of the full moon penetrating the aisles of the forest, the bright stars resting on the treetops, and the rush and gurgle of many streams. It was much too pleasant to sleep, and yet too peaceful not to slumber. Nor will you forget that witching hour of night when the mules sought pasture in the ladies' camp. “What horrid shapes and shrieks and sights unholy!” What hasty exodus from lovely bowers! What tinnitus of the bells! Remember also that notable performance of the great tragedy—Exhaustos. The highly versatile author and prologizer, clad in toga and ivy crown, with much vicarious twangling of his rustic lyre, seemed far removed from his more frequent rôle as Lord High Executioner of the “Lost and Found.”

In the shades of early dawn we packed for Vidette Meadow, dropping down 2000 feet along the edge of the ravine, and hugging fast to the ingenious zigzags carved in the solid rock. We were awed by the giant spectacle near at hand of stupendous granite walls raising their massive forms across Bubbs Creek and down the deep cañon of the Kings River. Memories of Yosemite hold nothing more superb. We soon passed over the flashing white water of the creek, and after a brief rest about seven in the morning we struck up the cañon with its long gradual rise and intermittent views of the boiling stream. Overhead on our left the smooth majestic cliffs of variegated hues grew more tremendous as we advanced.

In open country up beyond East Peak, peering down into the cavernous depths of the waterfalls below, we were showered by rainbow mists thrown back in the fresh westerly breeze. Then followed open timber and the promise of four restful nights and days under the graceful Kearsarge Pinnacles and the abrupt sharp peak of East Vidette. But woe unto them that are at ease in Zion! This lovely dream was immediately dispelled at our first camp-fire by a call for volunteers to open up the trail to Foresters Pass. The heavy snows of winter were still blanketing this trail for long stretches, and the whole success of our trip depended on the ability of the pack-train to get over into the valley of the Kern. Building trails and shoveling frozen snow at twelve thousand feet is no idle pastime, but the stalwarts volunteered—and some who were not so stalwart.

It was a long climb the next morning up to the snow-fields, some using the new trail of the Forest Service and others going straight up the slopes to where the work began. As we gazed up to the top of the pass, over 13,000 feet high, the great patches of snow seemed endless. How could any group of thirty hope to open this trail so that the animals in two more days could make the grade? The snow in places was up to our necks or over, and had thawed and frozen for weeks on end. There was nothing to do but build a new trail for a long distance just below the snow, and then cut through the remaining snow by laborious shoveling. At this altitude it was a breath-taking, back-breaking job, dislodging great stones and sliding them down to bolster the lower edge of the trail, or cutting deep into the hard snow to open up the path.

Weared with our work half done, it was drudgery to descend two thousand feet, but at last we reached our temporary base on a high plateau, with a sweeping grandstand view of Center Basin and the white granite peaks of Stanford and Deerhorn sharply outlined in the twilight of the western sky. High above us, like the Great Wall of China, stood the battlements and bastions leading up to the pass. Here, “under the wide and starry sky,” the rising moon still hidden behind the eastern escarpment, we could watch the ever-growing light creep down the western peaks until at last the moon itself stole over the crest, bathing in brilliance all the “mountains of light” and the sleeping silver of the streams below.

The following morning a group of the same volunteers went again to the top of the pass and succeeded in opening what appeared to be a passable trail. Soon the first mule-trains arrived, bearing many days' rations to be cached in the basin of the Kern. They plodded on up the trail, and could eventually be seen standing on the sky-line of the ridge waiting for the snow work to be finished. Reports came later that some of the animals had rolled and floundered in the snow. It looked for a time as if they might not get over. Like Kipling’s explorer, they might have retraced their steps—but they didn’t, but they didn’t; they went down the other side. The day was saved, and
the tired shovelers returned to Vidette to let the sun get in its work on the paths that had been opened; for two days later the main party would advance.

The variety of scene easily reached from Vidette Meadow is bewildering in attractions. If, by chance, you climbed to Bullfrog Lake, you beheld one of the marvels of the Sierra. Here, if ever, was a perfect atmosphere, a veritable garden-spot of the world, where it is always afternoon and the soul of Nature smiles; a crystal gem of blue in a circle of diamond peaks, reflecting cirrus clouds that slowly float on high, a bright retreat where care and sorrow vanish and the shadows flee away.

On our last night at Vidette, the Freshman Show was held; and if a freshman may boast, it was a smart collaboration. It was also the farewell fire for the first two-weeks’ party. Friday morning, July 22, the regulars moved up to Center Basin to break the long hike to the promised land of the Kern; and the first two-weekers, casting perchance “one longing, lingering look behind,” moved out on foot and horse to Kearsarge Pass and the mild inferno of Owens Valley. It was a cold night in Center Basin for a paper-dress parade.

The long-awaited call for Foresters Pass came in a dim religious light. Our movement was rapid, up past the trail-builders’ camp of the Forest Service, up the long frozen windings under the serrated ridge that kept our trail in shadow until we had done our hardest work. Then came the trail of the volunteers and the paths opened through the snow. Such was the heat of the sun in the last two days that a full three feet of snow had gone in many places and the once narrow path had opened wide, insuring safe passage for the muletrains with the heavy equipment.

Emerging from the snow-fields near the top of the pass, can you see once more the wondrous purple clusters of polemonium springing from barren crevices of rock? Do you recall your sense of conquest without undue fatigue, so different from the long grind to Elizabeth Pass? Slipping in single file through the narrow slot of the pass, with the pyramid of Junction Peak towering far above, we almost gasped at the sheer drop into the yawning gulf below; for there, spread out before us, was the immense plateau of the Kern, the great open spaces, the wide barrens far above tree-line, the frozen lakes—a remote and desolate country given over to winter, a giant fragment of the “vast edges drear and naked shingles of the world.”

We found ourselves admiring the engineering feat of the Park Service that had made feasible this link between two great river basins. Long cuts into the solid granite of the precipitous cliffs, with very gradual inclines, enable the hiker to descend some two thousand feet in a short distance, and, although the riders of horses might feel strange qualms as they balanced on the edge, they too need have no fear. On reaching the snow-fields below we were soon wallowing in the slush of the trail leading down to Tyndall Creek. The friendly foxtail pines once more came into view and the creek widened and the rush of water increased. The purple of the distant cañon became invitingly romantic, and we soon had glimpses of the many high peaks of the range—Mount Tyndall, Mount Williamson, Mount Whitney—all the great peaks of the Kern. We finally reached our camp-site by Tyndall Creek, where the glacier in former times had disgorged such a plentiful harvest of boulders that it was almost impossible to find any rock-free space for a bed.

Early on the morrow we partly retraced our steps, going back up Tyndall Creek, then over barren ridges and down into Milestone Basin. Scattered far and wide in the rough gravel and boulders, the dead but strangely vital foxtail pines, stripped of all bark, their huge ocher trunks and contorted branches reaching up into the deep purple sky, proclaimed their ceaseless battle with the elements. Liked specters they stood in proud isolation, mute sentinels to the fell clutch of circumstance. While some of our group struggled up the rocky heights of Tyndall and Williamson, most of us sauntered down to Milestone Creek and picked out restful quarters for the next three nights. What splendid slabs of ledges, what brooks rushing between, what crystal cascades casting their far-flung waters into the upper reaches of the Kern, and back of it all, high up in the western sky, a mass of broken peaks with the monument of Milestone in their midst!

Few places in the whole Sierra Nevada can have superior charm to this great basin, with its numerous lakes, its rugged cliffs, its many easy climbs, and its tough old mountains—Milestone, Thunder Mountain, Table Mountain. Here were alpine lakes and streams teeming with fish for the ambitious angler, sheltered lakes for swimming, colder lakes for heroic divers, and gushing streams filled with snowy waters. From the heights above the basin what inspiring views could be had of the whole contour of the Whitney range—
Mount Russell, Mount Langley, and others! What ethereal lights and shadows ever-changing, what infinite variety of puffy clouds sailing over the far scene, what terrifying drops to the lakes below shimmering in the sun and breeze! And deer were near at hand if one strolled quietly and alone in the forest.

At Milestone Creek the second two-weeks' party joined us on Monday, July 25th. A score or so came in from Independence, stopping the first night at Onion Valley and the second at Center Basin at the camp-site we had left. On the third day, after the toils of Foresters Pass and without our two-weeks' preparation, they also entered into the kingdom. Here at Milestone we knew the luxury of longer slumber, and once postponed our breakfast even until eight o'clock. Our stay ended with the packers' entertainment—the plaintive guitar, the rope-spinning, the mournful songs and touches of color, the chill in the air, and the big camp-fire.

Crossing over to Tyndall Creek once more we pressed on to our big objective—Mount Whitney. It was a long, steady climb to the broad expanse of the Bighorn Plateau, with the whole panorama of the Western Divide and the Kaweah Peaks in full view on our right; one of the sublime waste places of the world, a land where earth and sky seemed intimately close, and all the works of nature loomed on a vast and mighty scale. Plunging down to Wallace Creek through a graveyard of rocks and trees, and climbing once again up the side of a long ridge, we came to delicate purple carpets of dwarf lupine under the scattered trees as far as we could see, and occasionally a broad meadow, full of yellow flowers, sloping to the west. We had thrilling glimpses to the east of the great mass of Whitney and the other giants with their jagged peaks, then dropped to treadmill sands that seemed to have no end. At last we reached the open timber of Crabtree Meadow, to find a bubbling spring and tea and cheerful faces and the pack-train dusting along and dumping our dunnage once more so that we might not be idle. By sunset the many clouds departed that had proved an all-day blessing, and the white granite steeps of Whitney, broken with many chimneys, invited us to climb. They were so inviting that many of our jaded group who craved a new sensation insisted on a midnight party with a sunrise goal. The story of this raid upon the mountain fastnesses, 'twixt flashlight and starlight, cannot here be told, but there were rumors of some faltering in the darkness before the good horse-trail.
was gained. Those aspirants who viewed the orient pearls of sunrise through the V-shaped apertures of the crest record a sublime experience, but they seemed a trifle tired in the late afternoon.

The more orthodox mountaineers were quite content to delay their start until the bluish dawn. Gaining the high lawns above, we chose a promising chimney for our climb. In the long upward struggle we would often halt that we might better view the magnificent spectacle below, the great gulf with its giant cirque and huge Gothic buttresses supporting mighty walls of rock, the glassy surfaces of ovoid lakes, still black in the heavy shadows. On the last long slope to the summit big clouds high overhead shut off the blinding glare. We suffered strange weakness in our legs and shortness of breath and not a little faintness and hunger, but eventually we all arrived (a hundredfold) on the very pinnacle of the United States — 14,496 feet above the sea. As we approached the topmost rocks, two roaring airplanes swooped out of an empty sky and zoomed in giant circles near at hand. And filling the atmosphere as far as the eye could reach were endless waves of purple lights and shades and streamers from the sun, forever changing and forever new, suffusing with radiant hues the whole vast scene of mountains and their countless patches of snow. To the west across the valley were the somber reds and browns of the Kaweah Peaks, and to the east the awful and stupendous void opening down, down, down to the Owens Valley 11,000 feet below; and beyond, the shifting, wavering colors of all the desert mountains, and the distant Panamint Range wailing Death Valley.

Four o'clock risings were so habitual by now that the tinkling mule-bells in Crabtree Meadow became soft music to our ears. With loud cries and galloping, the packers rounded up the protesting animals, and before sunrise in the dewy air we were winding down the creek, a route unmarked by any trail. The gorge descent of Whitney Creek two thousand feet into the cañon of the Kern, down an endless chain of cascades and waterfalls, through heavy shrubbery and over great logs felled across the stream, with dancing sunbeams sparkling in the spray, was a rare and delightful experience. Few are the natural scenes that are improved by human touch; but if an artist ever builds a trail down Whitney Creek and removes the choking shrubbery and foliage, he will fully reveal one of the incomparable gems of the Sierra.
We were at last in the deep cañon of the Kern, its towering walls rising from two to three thousand feet on either side, unspoiled by the hand of man, and beside us at all times the ceaseless rush of the widening river over the rounded stones. As we proceeded down the cañon on our long march, the strong wind blew hot in our faces and the noonday heat became intense. Eventually we came to Upper Funston Meadow, where the high Chagoopa Falls come clear from the sky. Here we made our camp, and here on the hot dry ground under the tall pines there were rattlesnakes to kill, but hardly enough for a stew. It was a warm night at the camp-fire, for we had dropped well below seven thousand feet. In a wakeful moment of the night perchance you heard strange rustlings near at hand and sought deeper refuge in your sleeping-bag.

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We were now entering the last phase of our trip leading back to the Giant Forest. Our zest for life had enormously increased. New courage and hope had revived and restored our once flagging souls. We had suffered a rebirth and an awakening. Our annoying infirmities of the first few days had been slowly transformed into a new and boundless energy. We felt the “chews of Anakim, the pulses of a Titan’s heart.” Uncloyed by all our past delights, we still hungered and thirsted for fresh charms of infinite variety hallowed in the sunshine and the beauty of our world. We were insatiable.

Let it be said, however, that moments come even on such an outing when all is not heroic and life seems drab and uninspiring. Our dawns were never gray, but they were often raw and cold. You may recall a particular morning when you felt a bit depressed with everything. In the fading starlight you had been rudely aroused by a boisterous call. You had crawled into damp and dirty clothes once more. With cracked and swollen fingers you had struggled with your mule-scented dunmage-bag, swinging it at last to your shoulder. Cold and faint with hunger and stumbling down through dust and boulders, or across the slippery log that spanned a treacherous stream, you finally hung your heavy burden on the weighing-scales. Yesterday it passed, but today it was overweight. Defeated and chagrined you retreated from the line, reaping the bag to withdraw some hoary article for consignment to your knapsack. Delayed by this unfortunate maneuver, you had to play the waiting game in the long breakfast-line, where you could not choose but note the dirty and unshaven men and not a few disheveled women. And you reached the bacon platter just too late to rescue the last six pieces from a lean and hungry packer who had sneaked behind the line. But the next hour all had changed. You were on the trail again. The sun was up. The lark was on the wing. And so it was through all days and nights. In times of momentary trial you would almost weary of it all; and then would come some new and startling scene or happy human contact to give you fresh vitality.

And let a neophyte and an Easterner pay tribute here to the efficient planning of the whole trip, the almost perfect functioning of the organization, the unsparing devotion of the commissary (Tachets and attachés), the able handling of the pack-train, and the cheerfulness and friendliness that surrounded all our activities, and the ever-watchful care that no lost sheep should stray from the fold. If now and then we missed the splendor of an Eastern sunset and the freshness of earth after rain, we were more than compensated by the continuously dependable weather for camping, unknown in most parts of the world. The variety of entertainment—musical, histrionic, scientific, historical, or managerial—furnished at our wilderness camp-fires, was sometimes amazing, and honorable mention should here be made of the contributions of Ansel and Virginia Adams, Ernest Dawson, the two Dots—Leavitt and Baird, Francis Farquhar, Ernest Arnold, Ed Rainey, Francis Tappan, and many others.

Nor would any account of our outing be at all complete without some reference to the ascents of various peaks by our nimble mountaineers led by Norman Clyde, Bill Horsfall, Glen Dawson, Jules Eichorn, Ralph Chase, Lewis and Nathan Clark, Bob Lipman, and others. One or more parties of enthusiasts reached the summits of the following peaks, in some cases by routes never before attempted: Brewer and Cross Mountain (from Sphinx Creek), Kearsarge Pinnacles and East Vidette, University Peak, Junction Peak, Tyndall and Williamson, The Milestone, Table and Thunder Mountains, Barnard, Russell, Whitney, Muir, Kaweah Peak, the Red Kaweah and the Black Kaweah.  

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And so we gained the heights of the broad Chagoopa Plateau, leaving behind the deep blues and purples of the symmetrical cañon of
the Kern. Emerging from the forest, we suddenly burst onto the
miracle of Skyparlor Meadow, with its bright consummate flowers,
and passed on to the clear waters of Moraine Lake, finding a perfect
camp-site under the pines along the shore. It was a stunning view at
sunset from the ridge above the Big Arroyo, and behind us the high
eastern crest of the Sierra, a strange green in the alpenglow. There
were German folksongs at the camp-fire.

How the ladies enjoyed their early morning swim and “eas’d the
putting of these troublesome disguises which we wear,” and how the
welkin rang at nightfall with the entertainment of the younger set
and the smart costume party! There were dancers in the dust, and
Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like any of these. What
pipes and timbrels, what wild ecstasy!

Passing down through the Big Arroyo, the main party ascended
to Little Five Lakes Basin for a three-nights' stay, while three small
groups advanced along the ridge to meet the challenge of the Black
Kaweah. Do you recall our last evening by the lakes and the novel
sight of falling raindrops, with campers scurrying to cover? In three
minutes it was over and we settled down to the enthralling presenta-
tion of the ‘Trudgin’ Women, far indeed from the ringing plains of
windy Troy. And don't forget the display of paintings, bandannas,
wild flowers, hot-water bottles, and other effete paraphernalia, in
the late afternoon.

Comes another call under the fading stars and we are off to Ka-
weah Gap. We cross the Big Arroyo in the dark shadow of the
Kaweah Peaks, we ascend the slopes of dewy lawns sprinkled with
blue and yellow flowers, we wander up through saturated meadows
and overflowing streams, we strike hordes of ravenous mosquitoes
that spur us up the zigzags to the opening in the divide. And these
were the only mosquitoes on the entire trip that really bothered us.
On the downward march we come to wintry scenes where snow lies
heavy on the trail, and the black glassy depths of partly frozen lakes
reflect the giant precipices above. We assemble in full array at the
trail-builders’ camp, to be guided down over the steep bluffs to
Hamilton Lake, 2000 feet below. The tough bushes between the
rocks gave excellent handholds, but it was slow work for the entire
party to reach the lake, for every step had to be carefully watched
and no stones must be dislodged on the parties below.

In our drop to River Valley in the hot afternoon we had more

scenery of great magnificence. On our right the colossal granite walls
towered perpendicular and forbidding under heavy thunderheads;
but as usual the threatened deluge failed to materialize, except per-
haps upon the mountaintops. We passed down a long series of
splendid waterfalls and over bench after bench of granite cliffs. Then
came deciduous trees and dry leaves and powdery dust at the 5000-
foot level, but the rushing stream was there again to purify. Here in
a heavy forest growth we made our last camp-fire, graced by the
presence of Horace Albright, Director of National Parks, Colonel
White and his rangers, and other friends, who spread before us fresh
fruits sweet to the taste. The important thought was expressed that
all who are interested in Sierra trails should be forever watchful to
spread the gospel of their use.

Sweet was the breath of morn for our last hike in the mountains
and sad the thought of parting; but with fifteen miles to go we found
it easy to suspend regrets. The climb up over the dusty ridge through
heavy pines and firs became exacting work, but we were down again
at last by the waters of Buck Cañon and from there retraced our first
day’s march on the High Sierra Trail. What then was short and easy
now seemed to have no end. Would we never gain that final turn
that leads to Crescent Meadow? But all along the way we revealed in
the freshness of the air and the marvelous distant blues of the lower
altitudes across the valley of the Kaweah. Finally, in the shadow
of the giant trees we reached the Eden of our goal and the manna
sent from heaven. Oh, the red and luscious watermelon! ... Must
we thus “leave thee, Paradise, ... these pleasant walks and shades?”