

Whitney's High Sierra

by Josiah Whitney (1870 reprinted in 1971)

Swiss Alps are the focus of pleasure travel in the world. He compares the two: Alps have grassy slopes & more snow; Sierras have Yosemite & more trees between 5000 - 7000'. He enjoyed hiking around Yosemite & wrote most of this as a Yosemite guide book. Subsequent findings (with better equipment) found more accurate distances & elevations.

There is a beautiful view of Cathedral Peak from the Tuolumne Valley to the west. Near Soda Springs, Mt. Dana offers the hiker one of the grandest panoramic views. East side of Mono Pass drops 4000' in 3 miles. The summit of Half Dome is quite inaccessible, but climbing Sentinel Dome is a must. The view from Glacier Point (overhanging the valley) is stupendous.

If there was no Yosemite Valley, the Hetch-Hetchy Valley could attract world-wide fame. It is amazing how nature repeats itself. The granite in the middle of the HH closes up & creates a lake in the spring runoff. [The later dam would put the upper valley under water, leaving the lower exposed.] The water fall at the east end of the valley is larger (& louder) than Yosemite Falls.

Further south there are other wonders; namely some of the canyons on the San Joaquin, Kings & Kern Rivers. And he found that Mt. Whitney was higher than Mt. Shasta as most had thought. The area near Mt. Whitney is exposed granite (no vegetation). His expedition party went up several mountains with their animals & equipment, but found them inaccessible.

Quotes: "Time will soon come when 100's if not 1000's, will every year visit this region." (JW)