12-28-1874

Modoc Memories. A Visit to the Lava Beds by Muir the Geologist and Explorer - The Spot where Gen. Canby Fell - Sad Relics of the War. (From Our Special Correspondent.)

John Muir

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/jmb

Recommended Citation

Muir, John, "Modoc Memories. A Visit to the Lava Beds by Muir the Geologist and Explorer - The Spot where Gen. Canby Fell - Sad Relics of the War. (From Our Special Correspondent.)" (1874). John Muir: A Reading Bibliography by Kimes. 25.
https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/jmb/25

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the John Muir Papers at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in John Muir: A Reading Bibliography by Kimes by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact mgibney@pacific.edu.
MODOC MEMORIES.

A VISIT TO THE LAVA BEDS.

The Lava Beds, rendered famous by the Modoc war, lie on the southern slopes of Mount Shasta, on the east side of Lake Siskiyou, California.

They are a portion of an ancient floor of solid black lava, formed during the last glacial period, and have an area of about 12,000 acres, extending about as far as set off as a grazing pavilion, yet the surface is generally level, it is dotted with old lava lakes, and large calderas, and broken by a network of yawning fissures, and surrounded by a zone of cinder cones and cinder deposits.

The character and appearance of the lava beds are peculiarities of a very rare and striking character. While hunting the wild sheep around Mount Bremner, our camp was not far from a lava bed near the north shore, and we were much interested in the appearance of the country. We were struck with the beauty of the unusual aspect of the landscape, and were much engaged in comparing the different stages of lava formation.

The Modoc nation was familiar with the whole bluffs, making a journey some six or seven hours in distance by foot, and a Modoc guide, a distance of twenty or thirty miles.

The lava beds at the mouth of the river, where General Canby met the Indians, while the Modoc castle is in the north-east angle of the foreshore, is only a few miles from the mouth of the river. It is a grave-yard where the Modocs buried their dead.

The Lake—The Lava-Plain.

The lake formed by the lava beds is a large plain, and is surrounded by a range of bluffs, which commands a fine range view of the land below, and is a beautiful sight.

The lake is a beautiful spot, and is full of interest. It is one of the most interesting features of the Modoc region, and is full of wonderful and unique features. It is a fine spot for a visit, and is well worth a visit.

A TRAGIC SPOT—THE MODOC CASTLE-HOLM.

When the Indian war was over, the Modocs were allowed to return to their homes. The Modoc nation was familiar with the whole bluffs, making a journey some six or seven hours in distance by foot, and a Modoc guide, a distance of twenty or thirty miles.

The Modoc nation was familiar with the whole bluffs, making a journey some six or seven hours in distance by foot, and a Modoc guide, a distance of twenty or thirty miles.

A TRAGIC SPOT—THE MODOC CASTLE-HOLM.

When the Indian war was over, the Modocs were allowed to return to their homes. The Modoc nation was familiar with the whole bluffs, making a journey some six or seven hours in distance by foot, and a Modoc guide, a distance of twenty or thirty miles.

A TRAGIC SPOT—THE MODOC CASTLE-HOLM.

When the Indian war was over, the Modocs were allowed to return to their homes. The Modoc nation was familiar with the whole bluffs, making a journey some six or seven hours in distance by foot, and a Modoc guide, a distance of twenty or thirty miles.

A TRAGIC SPOT—THE MODOC CASTLE-HOLM.

When the Indian war was over, the Modocs were allowed to return to their homes. The Modoc nation was familiar with the whole bluffs, making a journey some six or seven hours in distance by foot, and a Modoc guide, a distance of twenty or thirty miles.

A TRAGIC SPOT—THE MODOC CASTLE-HOLM.

When the Indian war was over, the Modocs were allowed to return to their homes. The Modoc nation was familiar with the whole bluffs, making a journey some six or seven hours in distance by foot, and a Modoc guide, a distance of twenty or thirty miles.

A TRAGIC SPOT—THE MODOC CASTLE-HOLM.

When the Indian war was over, the Modocs were allowed to return to their homes. The Modoc nation was familiar with the whole bluffs, making a journey some six or seven hours in distance by foot, and a Modoc guide, a distance of twenty or thirty miles.

A TRAGIC SPOT—THE MODOC CASTLE-HOLM.

When the Indian war was over, the Modocs were allowed to return to their homes. The Modoc nation was familiar with the whole bluffs, making a journey some six or seven hours in distance by foot, and a Modoc guide, a distance of twenty or thirty miles.

A TRAGIC SPOT—THE MODOC CASTLE-HOLM.

When the Indian war was over, the Modocs were allowed to return to their homes. The Modoc nation was familiar with the whole bluffs, making a journey some six or seven hours in distance by foot, and a Modoc guide, a distance of twenty or thirty miles.

A TRAGIC SPOT—THE MODOC CASTLE-HOLM.

When the Indian war was over, the Modocs were allowed to return to their homes. The Modoc nation was familiar with the whole bluffs, making a journey some six or seven hours in distance by foot, and a Modoc guide, a distance of twenty or thirty miles.

A TRAGIC SPOT—THE MODOC CASTLE-HOLM.

When the Indian war was over, the Modocs were allowed to return to their homes. The Modoc nation was familiar with the whole bluffs, making a journey some six or seven hours in distance by foot, and a Modoc guide, a distance of twenty or thirty miles.

A TRAGIC SPOT—THE MODOC CASTLE-HOLM.

When the Indian war was over, the Modocs were allowed to return to their homes. The Modoc nation was familiar with the whole bluffs, making a journey some six or seven hours in distance by foot, and a Modoc guide, a distance of twenty or thirty miles.

A TRAGIC SPOT—THE MODOC CASTLE-HOLM.

When the Indian war was over, the Modocs were allowed to return to their homes. The Modoc nation was familiar with the whole bluffs, making a journey some six or seven hours in distance by foot, and a Modoc guide, a distance of twenty or thirty miles.
hand, the Modocs were at home. They had hunted the wild sheep and the bear in these lava beds; now they were hunting men in the very same way. Their guns were thrust through chinks while they lay's Foley concealed. If they wished to peer above their breastworks they tied bunches of sage-brush around their heads. They were familiar with by-ways both over and under ground, and could at any time sink out of sight like squirrels among bowlders. Our bewildered soldiers heard and felt them shooting, now before them, now behind them, as they glided from place to place along fissures and subterranean passas. all the while maintaining a more perfect invisibility than that of modern ghosts. Modocs, like most other Indians, are about as unknighthly as possible. The quantity of the moral sentiment developed in them seems infinitely small, and though in battle they appear incapable of feeling any distinction between men and beasts, even their savageness lacks fullness and cordiality. The few that have come under my own observation had something repellent in their aspects, even when their features were in sunshine and settled in the calm of peace; when, therefore, they were crawling stealthily in these gloomy recesses, in and out on all fours, unkempt and begrimed, and with the glare of war in their eyes, they must have looked very devilish. Our guide led us through the mazes of the castle, pointing out its complicated lines of redoubts and redens, and our astonishment at the wild strength of the place was augmented at every turn.

CAPTAIN JACK'S CAVE—GEOLOGICAL PHENOMENA.

Captain Jack's cave is one of the many sombre mansions of the castle. It measures about 25 or 30 feet in diameter at the opening, and extends but a short distance in a horizontal direction. The floor is littered with bones and horns of the animals slaughtered for food during the war—a good specimen of a human home of the Stone Age. The sun shines freely into its mouth, and graceful bunches of grasses and eriognae and sage grow around it, redeeming it from all its degrading associations, and making it lovable notwithstanding its unfinished roughness and blackness. One of our party was a relic-seeker and we were unremitting in our endeavors to satisfy his cravings. Captain Jack's drinking-cup, fragments of his clothing, buttons, etc., were freely offered, but only gold watches or pistols said to have been plundered from the dead and hidden, in some of these endless caves were sufficiently curious for his refined tastes.

The lava beds are replete with phenomena of great geological interest. Here are true fissures from a few inches to 8 or 10 feet in width, abrupt and shear-walled as the crevasses of glaciers, and extending continuously for miles. Miniature hills and dales also and lake basins and mountain ranges, whose formation is due neither to direct upheaval nor to erosion. Where the lava meets the lake there are some fine curving bays beautifully embroidered with rushes and polygonums, a favorite resort of waterfowl. Riding homeward we created a noisy splashing and beating of wings among the cranes and geese, but the ducks were more trustful and kept their places, merely swimming in and out through openings in the rushes, and rippling the glassy water on which the sun was beamimg. The countenance of the lava beds became beautiful. Tufts of pale grasses, relieved on the jet-rocks, looked like bouquets on a mantel; besides, gray and orange lichens, cushions of green mosses appeared, and one tuft of tiny rock-fern. Bountiful Nature gives all this "beauty for ashes" in this sombre region of volcanic fire.

JOHN MUIR.