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South Dome, Its Ascent by George Anderson and John Muir—Hard Climbing but a Glorious View—Botany of the Dome—Yosemite in Late Autumn. (From Our Special Correspondent.) Yosemite Valley, November 10, 1875.

John Muir

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THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 18, 1875.

SOUTH DOME.

Its Ascent by George Anderson and John Muir—Hard Climbing but a Glorious View—Botany of the Dome—Yosemite in Late Autumn.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.]

Yosemite Valley, November 13, 1875.

The Yosemite has been visited again by the Sierra, and George Anderson, an indomitable mountaineer, has made a way to its summit. All the surface detail is in the hands of the artist, Mr. Henry W. North, of whom I have already said, "Mountains," "hills," and "rocks," are extremely simple in form and sculpture as compared with those of the Dome. It has been found that there was no entrance from the level of the valley, and the question of the accessibility of any one of the summits of the Yosemite is solved by the fact of the exceptional position of the summit of Mount Starr King, and a few minor spires and pinnacles, the South Dome being the only rock of the valley, and its inaccessibility is pronounced in every sense and to every means, without artificial means. But long lingering eyes were none the less fixed on its noble brow, and the Andersons, thinking himself fortunate, his first view was perfectly clear.

Mr. Anderson began with Conway's old rope, part of which he had left on the summit, and his way to the top, inserting eyebolts five or six feet apart, and making his rope fast to them. One stroke of the pickaxe and he was able to fasten it with spurs driven into fissures, and while doing so on two or three hundred feet of the height, the rope was belayed to the upper portion of the curve impracticable without the use of eyebolts, furnishing footing for an expert mountaineer. Then, all may sing "Excelsior" in perfect safety.

SOUTH DOMÉ.

The Dome is the noblest rock in the world, and the most difficult of the dangerous sons of the Sierra. It is approached from the level of the valley, and it is pronounced in every sense and to every means, without artificial means. But long lingering eyes were none the less fixed on its noble brow, and the Andersons, thinking himself fortunate, his first view was perfectly clear.

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VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT.

Notwithstanding the enthusiastic eagerness of tourists to reach the summit of this Dome the general views of the valley from here are far less striking than from many other points, chiefly because of the foreshortening effect produced by looking from so great a height. North Dome is dwarfed almost beyond recognition. The splendid sculpture of the arches is scarcely noticed and the walls on both sides seem comparatively low and sunk. The Dome itself is the most sublime feature of all Yosemite views, and that is beneath our feet. The view of Little Yosemite Valley is very fine, though inferior to one obtained from the base of Starr King; but the summit landscapes towards Mounts Tyell, Dana and Conness are very effective and complete. When the sublime ice-floofs of the glacial period pcured down the flank of the range over what is now Yosemite Valley, they were compelled to break through a dam of domes extending across from Mount Starr King to North Dome; and as the period began to draw near a close and the ice currents shallowed and divided, South Dome was first to emerge from the icy waste, burnedished and glowing like a crystal; and though it has sustained the wear and tear of the elements tens of thousands of years, it yet remains not merely a monument to the history of the elements, but to the sons of man. Its entire surface is covered with glacial hieroglyphics whose interpretation is the great reward of all who devoutly study them.

BOTANY OF THE DOME.

Before closing this letter I may say a word or two concerning the botany of the Dome. There are four clumps of pines growing on the summit representing three species, Pinus flexilis, P. contorta and P. ponderosa. Jefferis—All three repressed and storm-beaten. The Alpine spiraen grows here also, and blooms bonnily with potentilla, ivesia, erigeron, eriogonum, penstemon, solidago, and four or five species of grasses and sedges, differing in no respect from those of other summits of the same elevation.

"CONQUERING" MOUNTAINS—YOSEMITE IN AUTUMN.

I have always discouraged as much as possible every project for laddering the South Dome, believing it would be a fine thing to keep this garden untrod- den. Now the pine will be carred with the initials of Smith and Jones, and the gardens strewn with tin cans and bottles, but the winter gales will blow most of this rubbish away, and avalanches may strip off the ladders; and when is some satisfaction to feel assured that no lazy person will ever trample these gardens. When a mountain is climbed it is said to be conquered—as well say a man is conquered when a fly lights on his head. Blue jays have trodden the Dome many a day; so have beetles and chipmunks, and Tissack will hardly be more "conquered, now that man is added to her list of visitors. His louder scream and heavier scrambling will not stir a line of her countenance.

Yosemite Falls are flowing low these autumn days, so are streams of Yosemite travel, the one being a sure measure of the other. Nevertheless, at no time of the year is the valley more intensely lovely — the meadows frost-crystaled in the morning, sun-bathed in the warm noon; the oak leaves scarlet and brown, poplars and azaleas yellow; the Merced singing sweetly over low pebbly bars; ouzels dipping along the margin; trout leaping in sunny mirror-pools, the sheen of their scales blending with the flashing water. Later, golden rods blooming along the banks; violets and Johnsworts growing cheerily beneath withered breakens, and all the mosies are rising from the dead.

J. MUB.