5-25-1877

A Great Storm. Fierce War of the Elements in the Salt Lake Basin-The Wasatch Mountains Capped with Snow-A Magnificent Sight. (From Our Own Correspondent.) Salt Lake City, May 19, 1877.

John Muir

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A GREAT STORM.  


[Salt Lake City, May 10, 1877.]  

Utah has just been blessed with one of the grandest storms I have ever beheld this side of the Sierra. The mountains are laden with snow and there are signs of more to come. As we rode down the canyons, the snow was falling heavily, and in the valleys of the Wasatch and Oquirrh ranges it coated the landscape with a fresh blanket. The Jordan valley, in particular, with the lighest on their peaks and dropping down long, gray fringes whose smooth surface reflected the moonlight, was a sight to behold.

With reference to the development of fertile storms bearing snow and rain, the greater portion of the calendar springtime of this year has been unusually cold and rainy. The greatest portion of the snowfall has been since March, and almost every other day during the last three weeks small local storms have been falling on the Wasatch and Oquirrh mountains. While the Jordan valley remained dry and clear, the mountains were covered with snow and rain, giving rise to a grand sight. The snow was now from five to ten feet deep or more, and most of it has fallen since March. The mountains are covered with a cold, blueish darkness. Nevertheless, distant objects of Nature's love; but it is easy to differ.

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About an hour before the storm reached the city I was so fortunate as to be with a friend, who was perched on the roof of the hotel, looking down on the valley. Clouds, with peculiarly restless and self-conscious gestures, were marshalling themselves for the coming storm. All day the sky had been overcast, with long, overlapping wings across the valley, and even where no cloud was visible, an obscurin film absorbed the sunlight, giving rise to a weird, subdued, cloud-sifted light. The stars were seen as if in plam sight, and the moonlight was so intense that the highest peaks and drop-down fringes of the snow could be seen clearly.

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While we were reveling in this rare, ungarnished beauty, the storm was reaching its apogee, and the worsening clouds were getting ready to unleash their fury. The clouds were now thick and dark, and the sky was filled with a foreboding silence. The wind was howling, and the snow was falling heavily, coating everything in its path. The sound of the storm was deafening, and the lightning illuminated the landscape with a频闪的光。
RAIN AND SNOW.

This gale-portion of the storm lasted over an hour, then down came the blessed rain and the snow all through the night and next day, the snow and rain alternating and blending in the valley. It is long since I have seen snow coming into a city. The crystal flakes falling in the foul streets was a pitiful sight.

New York, coming from its high glacial fountains, enters the streets exposed to terrible trials. City Creek, coming from its high glacial fountains, enters the streets exposed to terrible trials. City Creek, coming from its high glacial fountains, enters the streets exposed to terrible trials. City Creek, coming from its high glacial fountains, enters the streets exposed to terrible trials.

A GLOIREOUS SCENE.

But to return to the storm: Towards the evening of the 18th it began to wither. The snowly skies of the Wasatch appeared beneath the lifting cloud-fringes, and the sun shone out through colored windows, producing one of the most glorious after-storm effects I ever witnessed. Looking across the Jordan, the grayerness of the splendor was at once evident. Snow-covered Oquirrh mountains were covered with a thick, fluffy cloth of gold, soft and ethereal as a cloud, not merely tinted and gilded like a rock with salt and snow, but gilded, as it were, beyond all recognition. Surely in heaven, nor any mansion of the Lord in all his worlds could be more gloriously carpeted. Portions of the plain were still flooded with receding snows, and all the mountains and the clouds above them were painted in corresponding loveliness. Earth and sky, round and round the entire landscape, was one ravishing revelation of color, infinite, interblended. I have seen many a glorious sunset beneath the storm clouds on the mountains, but nothing comparable with this. I felt as if I had arrived in some other far off world.

SUMMER SUNSHINE.

This afternoon the Utah mountains and valleys seem to belong to our very world again. They are covered with common sunshine. Down here on the banks of the Jordan farks and redwings are swinging on the rushes; the balmy air is infinite in its beauty; the wild flowers, the sweet herbs, the beauteous grasses, are fresh as if the snow had come out of heaven, and the lust of the angel clouds are fleeing from the mountains.

JOHN MUIR.