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In the San Gabriel. An Excursion by John Muir-Hot Weather and Plenty of Chaparral-A Glorious View-Rattlesnakes and Bear Tracks. (Special Correspondence of the Bulletin.)

John Muir

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IN THE SAN GABRIEL.

An Excursion to San Gabriel—Hot Weather and Plenty of Chaparral.—A Glorious View—Rattlesnakes and Bear Tracks.

[Special Correspondent of the Bulletin.]

[After saying so much for human culture in my last, perhaps I may now be allowed a word for wildness—the wildness of this south land, here and elsewhere as the sea.

In the mountains of San Gabriel, overlooking the lowland vines, and fruit groves, another Nature is most graphically thyself. Nature is not so much a thing to be studied and measured as a thing to be experienced and felt. Here and elsewhere are the mountains, the trees, the rocks, the flowers, the birds, the animals, all in their element, in their own way, in their own time, in their own strength.

A MESSAGE FROM THE MOUNTAIN.

Hail! a hour's easy rambling up the canyon, not too Torrid for some of the hangers-on to follow, and the view is simply grand. From the highest peaks to the plain, it is a sea of blue, with every ripple and wave of the waves breaking against the green and silver instrument, in a vast expanse of sea. Here come the Gasel inscription, as a baby, and roosting-place for the birds. As you gaze upon the mountains, the flowers begin to bloom, and the birds begin to sing. The air is full of the sweet scent of flowers and the fresh scent of the earth. It is a land of beauty and peace, and a joy to the soul.

A BEAUTIFUL WATERFALL.

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My next camp was near the heart of the basin, at the head of a grand system of cascades from ten to two hundred feet high, one following the other in close succession and making a total descent of nearly 1,700 feet. The rocks above me leaned over in a very threatening way and were full of seams, making the camp a very unsafe one during an earthquake.

Next day the chaparral, in ascending the eastern rim of the basin, was, if possible, denser and more stubbornly bayoneted than ever. I followed bear-trails, where in some places I found tufts of their hair that had been pulled out in squeezing a way through; but there was much of a very interesting character that far overpaid all my pains. Most of the plants are identical with those of the Sierra, but there is quite a number of Mexican species. One coniferous tree was all I found. This is a spruce of a species new to me.

My last camp was down at the narrow, notched bottom of a dry channel, the only open way for all the locomotive life in the neighborhood. I therefore lay between two fires, built to fence out snakes and wolves.

From the summit of the eastern rim I had a glorious view of the valley out to the ocean, which would require a whole book for its description. My bread gave out a day before reaching the settlements, but I felt all the fresher and clearer for the fast. John Muir.