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John Muir

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IN LABOR OF LOVE
FOR A BEAUTY PET.

John Muir, Noted Lover of Nature,
who says San Francisco wants to trade a hog ranch for the Hetch-Hetchy Valley, one of God's beautiful flower gardens.

WHY they want to trade a hog ranch—a hog ranch—for this most beautiful of God's natural flower gardens, and then do it as they please.

The fine face of John Muir, botanist and naturalist, clouded with indignation as he sat in The Times office yesterday and discussed the efforts of San Francisco to get possession of his favorite Hetch-Hetchy Valley, in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

It was largely through Mr. Muir, to his position of president of the Sierra Club of California and of the American Alpine Club, supplemented by his world-wide fame as a nature lover, that the beautiful valley was set apart as a national park. His very soul is stirred within him at the thought of the destruction of the picturesque trails and defiling the fern beds with wagon roads.

"I climbed these mountains forty years ago," he said, with a peculiar tenderness, "and for ten years lived among the Sierras all alone. I came to California to spend a year in studying the Yosemite Valley, but became so fascinated with the magnificence of it that time ran on and on, until I never wanted to go away.

"It was forty-one years ago, just after I came out of college, that I left my home in Wisconsin and started on my botanical travels. I went to Florida and Cuba and many other places before coming to California, and have made one trip around the world since.

"The Sierra Club was gotten up to encourage mountain-climbing and to give people first knowledge of our mountains and forests, so that they will stand up for their preservation.

"Among the noted discoveries of Mr. Muir is that of the glaciers of California, on the axis of the Sierra range, and his startling experiences in the glaciers of Alaska have been put in the form of a book, under the title, "Stickem," named for a dog that accompanied him and shared his dangers and privations. He has also published a volume entitled "Mountains of California," and another entitled "Our National Parks."

"The principal purpose we have at this time," said Mr. Muir, "is to save Yosemite National Park, including Hetch-Hetchy Valley, from the hands of the spoiler. The Hetch-Hetchy is a valley about three miles long and a half-mile wide, and of indescribable beauty. Before it was set apart as a park, a squatter had secured about a thousand acres, which he finally sold to the city of San Francisco for $160,000. The city also secured a piece of meadow land about three miles east of Hetch-Hetchy, known as "The Hog Ranch," which they now seek to exchange, acre for acre, for the portions of Hetch-Hetchy lying north and south of their present holdings.

"We do not wish to start in abolishing national parks; that's what we want to hold on to, and all the leading clubs of the entire country have joined us in the present issue. The San Franciscans hold a provisional grant for the valley at the present time from Secretary Garfield, but this does not suit their purpose, and a bill has been introduced in Congress to give it to them outright. It's declared that no other city in the world has at its command so many sources of water supply as San Francisco. When President Roosevelt was on the Pacific Coast in 1903, he arranged in advance with Mr. Muir to take him on a solitary trip in the Yosemite Valley. Alone, save for the cook and attendants secured for the purpose, they spent four days among the big trees, and the old naturalist is proud of the incident. This little side trip of the President may have had much to do with Secretary Hitchcock's refusal of a grant of the valley, that same year, but which was afterward given by Secretary Garfield, with a provision that makes it revocable by any of his successors.