

Passage to India by Walt Whitman

-1-

Singing my days,
Singing the great achievements of the present,
Singing the strong, light works of engineers,
Our modern wonders, (the antique ponderous Seven
outvied,)
In the Old World the east the Suez canal, 5
The New by its mighty railroad spann'd,
The seas inlaid with eloquent gentle wires,
Yet first to sound, and ever sound, the cry with thee
O soul,

The Past! the Past! the Past!
The Past--the dark, unfathom'd retrospect!
10
The teeming gulf--the sleepers and the shadows!
The past--the infinite greatness of the past!
For what is the present after all but a growth out of
the past?
(As a projectile form'd, impell'd, passing a certain
line, still keeps on,
So the present, utterly form'd, impell'd by the past.)

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Passage O soul to India!
Eclaircise the myths Asiatic, the primitive fables.

Not you alone proud truths of the world,
Nor you alone ye facts of modern science,
But myths and fables of eld, Asia's, Africa's fables,
The far-darting beams of the spirit, the unloos'd
dreams,
The deep diving bibles and legends,
The daring plots of the poets, the elder religions;
O you temples fairer than lilies pour'd over by the
rising sun!
O you fables spurning the known, eluding the hold of
the known, mounting to heaven! 25
You lofty and dazzling towers, pinnacled, red as
roses, burnish'd with gold!
Towers of fables immortal fashion'd from mortal
dreams!
You too I welcome and fully the same as the rest;
You too with joy I sing.

Passage to India! 30
Lo, soul, seest thou not God's purpose from the first?
The earth to be spann'd, connected by network,
The races, neighbors, to marry and be given in
marriage,
The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near,

The lands to be welded together. 35

A worship new I sing,
You captains, voyagers, explorers, yours,
You engineers, you architects, machinists, yours,
You, not for trade or transportation only,
But in God's name, and for thy sake O soul. 40

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Passage to India!
Lo soul for thee of tableaux twain,
I see in one the Suez canal initiated, open'd,
I see the procession of steamships, the Empress
Eugenie's leading the band
I mark from on deck the strange landscape, the pure
sky, the level sand in the distance, 45
I pass swiftly the picturesque groups, the workmen
gather'd,
The gigantic dredging machines.

In one again, different, (yet thine, all thine, O soul,
the same,)
I see over my own continent the Pacific railroad
surmounting every barrier,
I see continual trains of cars winding along the Platte,
carrying freight and passengers, 50
I hear the locomotives rushing and roaring, and the
shrill steam-whistle,
I hear the echoes reverberate through the grandest
scenery in the world,
I cross the Laramie plains, I note the rocks in
grotesque shapes, the buttes,
I see the plentiful larkspur and wild onions, the
barren, colorless, sage-deserts,
I see in glimpses afar or towering immediately above
me, the great mountains, I see the Wind River
and the Wahsatch mountains, 55
I see the Monument mountain and the Eagle's Nest, I
pass the Promontory, I ascend the Nevadas,
I scan the noble Elk mountain, and wind around its
base,
I see the Humboldt range, I thread the valley and
cross the river,
I see the clear waters of Lake Tahoe, I see forests of
majestic pines,
Or crossing the great desert, the alkaline plains, I
behold enchanting mirages of waters and
meadows, 60
Marking through these and after all, in duplicate
slender lines,

Bridging the three or four thousand miles of land
travel,
Tying the Eastern to the Western sea,
The road between Europe and Asia.

(Ah Genoese, thy dream! thy dream! 65
Centuries after thou art laid in thy grave,
The shore thou foundest verifies thy dream.)

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Passage to India!
Struggles of many a captain, tales of many a sailor
dead,
Over my mood stealing and spreading they come, 70
Like clouds and cloudlets in the unreach'd sky.
Along all history, down the slopes,
As a rivulet running, sinking now, and now again to
the surface rising,
A ceaseless thought, a varied train--lo, soul, to thee,
thy sight, they rise,
The plans, the voyages again, the expeditions: 75
Again Vasco de Gama sails forth;
Again the knowledge gain'd, the mariner's compass,
Lands found, and nations born, thou born America, (a
hemisphere unborn,)
For purpose vast, man's long probation fill'd,
Thou rondure of the world at last accomplish'd. 80

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O vast Rondure, swimming in space,
Cover'd all over with visible power and beauty,
Alternate light and day and the teeming, spiritual
darkness,
Unspeaking high processions of sun and moon and
countless stars above,
Below, the manifold grass and waters, animals, 85
mountains, trees,
With inscrutable purpose, some hidden, prophetic
intention,
Now first it seems my thought begins to span thee.
Down from the gardens of Asia descending,
radiating,
Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny
after them,
Wandering, yearning, curious, with restless
explorations,
With questionings, baffled, formless, feverish, with
never-happy hearts,
With that sad incessant refrain, *Wherefore unsatisfied
Soul? and Whither O mocking life?*

Ah who shall soothe these feverish children?
Who justify these restless explorations?
Who speak the secret of impassive earth? 95
Who bind it to us? what is this separate Nature so
unnatural?
What is this earth to our affections? (unloving earth,
without a throb to answer ours,
Cold earth, the place of graves.)

Yet soul be sure the first intent remains, and shall be
carried out,
Perhaps even now the time has arrived. 100

After the seas are all cross'd, (as they seem already
cross'd,)
After the great captains and engineers have
accomplish'd their work,
After the noble inventors, after the scientists, the
chemist, the geologist, ethnologist,
Finally shall come the poet worthy of that name;
The true son of God shall come singing his songs. 105

Then, not your deeds only O voyagers, O scientists
and inventors, shall be justified,
All these hearts as of fretted children shall be sooth'd,
All affection shall be fully responded to, the secret
shall be told,
All these separations and gaps shall be taken up and
hook'd and link'd together,
The whole earth, this cold, impassive, voiceless earth,
shall be completely justified,
Trinitas divine shall be gloriously accomplish'd and
compacted by the true son of God, the poet,
(He shall indeed pass the straits and conquer the
mountains,
He shall double the Cape of Good Hope to some
purpose,)
Nature and Man shall be disjoin'd and diffused no
more,
The true son of God shall absolutely fuse them. 115

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Year at whose wide-flung door I sing!
Year of the purpose accomplish'd!
Year of the marriage of continents, climates and
oceans!
(No mere doge of Venice now wedding the Adriatic,)
I see O year in you, the vast terraqueous globe given
and giving all, 120
Europe to Asia, Africa join'd, and they to the New
World,
The lands, geographies, dancing before you, holding
a festival garland,
As brides and bridegrooms hand in hand.

Passage to India!

Cooling airs from Caucasus far, soothing cradle of
man, 125
The river Euphrates flowing, the past lit up again.

Lo soul, the retrospect brought forward;
The old, most populous, wealthiest of Earth's lands,
The streams of the Indus and the Ganges, and their
many affluents,

(I my shores of America walking to-day behold,
resuming all,) 130

The tale of Alexander on his warlike marches
suddenly dying,

On one side China and on the other side Persia and
Arabia,

To the south the great seas and the bay of Bengal;
The flowing literatures, tremendous epics, religions,
castes,

Old occult Brahma interminably far back, the tender
and junior Buddha,

Central and southern empires and all their
belongings, possessors,

The wars of Tamerlane, the reign of Aurungzebe,
The traders, rulers, explorers, Moslems, Venetians,
Byzantium, the Arabs, Portuguese,

The first travelers famous yet, Marco Polo, Batouta
the Moor,

Doubts to be solv'd, the map incognita, blanks to be
fill'd, 140

The foot of man unstay'd, the hands never at rest,
Thyself O soul that will not brook a challenge.

The medieval navigators rise before me,
The world of 1492, with its awaken'd enterprise,
Something swelling in humanity now like the sap of
the earth in spring,

The sunset splendor of chivalry declining.

And who art thou sad shade?

Gigantic, visionary, thyself a visionary,
With majestic limbs and pious beaming eyes,
Spreading around with every look of thine a golden
world, 150

Enhuing it with gorgeous hues.

As the chief histrion,
Down to the footlights walks in some great scena,
Dominating the rest I see the Admiral himself,
(History's type of courage, action, faith,) 155

Behold him sail from Palos leading his little fleet,
His voyage behold, his return, his great fame,
His misfortunes, calumniators, behold him a prisoner,
chain'd,

Behold his dejection, poverty, death.

(Curious, in time, I stand, noting the efforts of heroes,

Is the deferment long? bitter the slander, poverty,
death?

Lies the seed unreck'd for centuries in the ground? lo,
to God's due occasion,

Uprising in the night, it sprouts, blooms,
And fills the earth with use and beauty.)

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Passage indeed O soul to primal thought, 165
Not lands and seas alone, thy own clear freshness,
The young maturity of brood and bloom,
To realms of budding bibles.

O soul, repressless, I with thee and thou with me,
Thy circumnavigation of the world begin; 170
Of man, the voyage of his mind's return,
To reason's early paradise,

Back, back to wisdom's birth, to innocent intuitions,
Again with fair creation.

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O we can wait no longer,
175

We too take ship O soul,
Joyous we too launch out on trackless seas,
Fearless for unknown shores on waves of ecstasy to
sail,

Amid the wafting winds, (thou pressing me to thee, I
thee to me, O soul,)

Caroling free, singing our song of God,
180

Chanting our chant of pleasant exploration.

With laugh and many a kiss,
(Let others deprecate, let others weep for sin,
remorse, humiliation,)
O soul thou pleasest me, I thee.

Ah more than any priest O soul we too believe in
God;
But with the mystery of God we dare not dally.

O soul thou pleasest me, I thee,
Sailing these seas or on the hills, or waking in the
night,
Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space and
Death, like waters flowing,
Bear me indeed as through the regions infinite, 190
Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear, lave me all
over;

Bathe me O God in thee--mounting to thee,
I and my soul to range in range of thee.

O Thou transcendant,

Nameless, the fibre and the breath 195
 Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou
 centre of them,
 Thou mightier centre of the true, the good, the loving,
 Thou moral, spiritual fountain--affection's source--
 thou reservoir,
 (O pensive soul of me--O thirst unsatisfied--waitest
 not there?
 Waitest not haply for us somewhere there the
 Comrade perfect?)
 Thou pulse--thou motive of the stars, suns, systems,
 That, circling, move in order, safe, harmonious,
 Athwart the shapeless vastnesses of space,
 How should I think, how breathe a single breath, how
 speak, if, out of myself,
 I could not launch, to those, superior universes? 205

Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
 At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and
 Death,
 But that I, turning, call to thee O soul, thou actual
 Me,
 And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,
 Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death, 210
 And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space.

Greater than stars or suns,
 Bounding, O soul, thou journeyest forth;
 What love than thine and ours could wider amplify?
 What aspirations, wishes, outvie thine and ours O
 soul?
 What dreams of the ideal? what plans of purity,
 perfection, strength?
 What cheerful willingness, for others' sake, to give up
 all?
 For others' sake to suffer all?

Reckoning ahead O soul, when thou, the time
 achiev'd,
 The seas all cross'd, weather'd the capes, the voyage
 done, 220
 Surrounded, copest, frontest God, yieldest, the aim
 attain'd,
 As, fill'd with friendship, love complete, the Elder
 Brother found,
 The Younger melts in fondness in his arms.

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Passage to more than India!
 Are thy wings plumed indeed for such far flights?
 O Soul, voyagest thou indeed on voyages like these?
 Disportest thou on waters such as these?
 Soundest below the Sanscrit and the Vedas?
 Then have thy bent unleash'd.

Passage to you, your shores, ye aged fierce enigmas

Passage to you, to mastership of you, ye strangling
 problems!
 You, strew'd with the wrecks of skeletons, that,
 living, never reach'd you.

Passage to more than India!
 O secret of the earth and sky!
 Of you O waters of the sea! O winding creeks and
 rivers! 235
 Of you O woods and fields! of you strong mountains
 of my land!
 Of you O prairies! of you gray rocks!
 O morning red! O clouds! O rain and snows!
 O day and night, passage to you!

O sun and moon and all you stars! Sirius and Jupiter!
 Passage to you!

Passage, immediate passage! the blood burns in my
 veins!
 Away O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!
 Cut the hawsers--haul out--shake out every sail!
 Have we not stood here like trees in the ground long
 enough? 245
 Have we not grovell'd here long enough, eating and
 drinking like mere brutes?
 Have we not darken'd and dazed ourselves with
 books long enough?

Sail forth--steer for the deep waters only,
 Reckless O soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with
 me,
 For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to
 go, 250
 And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

O my brave soul!
 O farther farther sail!
 O daring joy, but safe! are they not all the seas of
 God?
 O farther, farther, farther sail! 255

The Hetch-Hetchy Valley (1908)

by John Muir (April 21, 1838 – December 24, 1914)

It is impossible to overestimate the value of wild mountains and mountain temples as places for people to grow in, recreation grounds for soul and body. They are the greatest of our natural resources, God's best gifts, but none, however high and holy, is beyond reach of the spoiler. In these ravaging money-mad days monopolizing San Francisco capitalists are now doing their best to destroy the Yosemite Park, the most wonderful of all our great mountain national parks. Beginning on the Tuolumne side, they are trying with a lot of sinful ingenuity to get the Government's permission to dam and destroy the Hetch-Hetchy Valley for a reservoir, simply that comparatively private gain may be made out of universal public loss, while of course the Sierra Club is doing all it can to save the valley. The Honorable Secretary of the Interior has not yet announced his decision in the case, but in all that has come and gone nothing discouraging is yet in sight on our side of the fight.

As long as the busy public in general knew little or nothing about the Hetch-Hetchy Valley, the few cunning drivers of the damming scheme, working in darkness like moles in a low-lying meadow, seemed confident of success; but when light was turned on and the truth became manifest that next to Yosemite, Hetch-Hetchy is the most wonderful and most important feature of the great park, that damming it would destroy it, render it inaccessible, and block the way through the wonderful Tuolumne Cañon to the grand central campground in the upper Tuolumne Valley, thousands from near and far came to our help, — mountaineers, nature-lovers, naturalists. Most of our thousand club members wrote to the President or Secretary protesting against the destructive reservoir scheme while other sources of city water as pure or purer than the Hetch-Hetchy were available; so also did the Oregon and Washington mountaineering clubs and the Appalachian of Boston and public-spirited citizens everywhere. And the President, recognizing the need of beauty as well as bread and water in the life of the nation, far from favoring the destruction of any of our country's natural wonder parks and temples, is trying amid a host of other cares to save them all. Within a very short time he has saved the petrified forests of Arizona and the Grand Cañon, and in our own State the jagged peaks of San Benito county known as "The Pinnacles," making them national monuments or parks to be preserved for the people forever. None, therefore, need doubt

that everything possible will be done to save Hetch-Hetchy.

After my first visit, in the autumn of 1871, I have always called it the Tuolumne Yosemite, for it is a wonderfully exact counterpart of the great Yosemite, not only in its crystal river and sublime rocks and waterfalls, but in the gardens, groves, and meadows of its flower park-like floor. The floor of Yosemite is about 4,000 feet above the sea, the Hetch-Hetchy floor about 3,700; the walls of both are of gray granite, rise abruptly out of the flowery grass and groves are sculptured in the same style, and in both every rock is a glacial monument.

Standing boldly out from the south wall is a strikingly picturesque rock called "Kolana" by the Indians, the outermost of a group 2300 feet high, corresponding with the Cathedral Rocks of Yosemite both in relative position and form. On the opposite side of the Valley, facing Kolana, there is a counterpart of the El Capitan of Yosemite rising sheer and plain to a height of 1800 feet, and over its massive brow flows a stream which makes the most graceful fall I have ever seen. From the edge of the cliff it is perfectly free in the air for a thousand feet, then breaks up into a ragged sheet of cascades among the boulders of an earthquake talus. It is in all its glory in June, when the snow is melting fast, but fades and vanishes toward the end of summer. The only fall I know with which it may fairly be compared is the Yosemite Bridal Veil; but it excels even that favorite fall both in height and fineness of fairy-airy beauty and behavior. Lowlanders are apt to suppose that mountain streams in their wild career over cliffs lose control of themselves and tumble in a noisy chaos of mist and spray. On the contrary, on no part of their travels are they more harmonious and self-controlled. Imagine yourself in Hetch-Hetchy on a sunny day in June, standing waist-deep in grass and flowers (as I have oftentimes stood), while the great pines sway dreamily with scarce perceptible motion. Looking northward across the Valley you see a plain, gray granite cliff rising abruptly out of the gardens and groves to a height of 1800 feet, and in front of it Tueeulala's silvery scarf burning with irised sun-fire in every fiber. In the first white outburst of the stream at the head of the fall there is abundance of visible energy, but it is speedily hushed and concealed in divine repose, and its tranquil progress to the base of the cliff is like that of downy feathers in a still room.

Now observe the fineness and marvelous distinctness of the various sun-illuminated fabrics into which the water is woven; they sift and float from form to form down the face of that grand gray rock in so leisurely and unconfused a manner that you can examine their texture, and patterns and tones of color as you would a piece of embroidery held in the hand. Near the head of the fall you see groups of booming, comet-like masses, their solid, white heads separate, their tails like combed silk interlacing among delicate shadows, ever forming and dissolving, worn out by friction in their rush through the air. Most of these vanish a few hundred feet below the summit, changing to the varied forms of cloud-like drapery. Near the bottom the width of the fall has increased from about twenty-five to a hundred feet. Here it is composed of yet finer tissues, and is still without a trace of disorder — air, water and sunlight woven into stuff that spirits might wear.

So fine a fall might well seem sufficient to glorify any valley; but here, as in Yosemite, Nature seems in nowise moderate, for a short distance to the eastward of Tueeulala booms and thunders the great Hetch-Hetchy Fall, Wapama, so near that you have both of them in full view from the same standpoint. It is the counterpart of the Yosemite Fall, but has a much greater volume of water, is about 1700 feet in height, and appears to be nearly vertical, though considerably inclined, and is dashed into huge outbounding bosses of foam on the projecting shelves and knobs of its jagged gorge. No two falls could be more unlike — Tueeulala out in the open sunshine descending like thistledown; Wapama in a jagged, shadowy gorge roaring and plundering, pounding its way with the weight and energy of an avalanche. Besides this glorious pair there is a broad, massive fall on the main river a short distance above the head of the Valley. Its position is something like that of the Vernal in Yosemite, and its roar as it plunges into a surging trout-pool may be heard a long way, though it is only about twenty feet high. There is also a chain of magnificent cascades at the head of the valley on a stream that comes in from the northeast, mostly silvery plumes, like the one between the Vernal and Nevada falls of Yosemite, half-sliding, half-leaping on bare glacier polished granite, covered with crisp clashing spray into which the sunbeams pour with glorious effect. And besides all these a few small streams come over the walls here and there, leaping from ledge to ledge with birdlike song and watering many a hidden cliff-garden and fernery, but they are too unshowy to be noticed in so grand a place.

The correspondence between the Hetch-Hetchy walls in their trends, sculpture, physical structure, and

general arrangement of the main rock-masses [and those of the Yosemite Valley] has excited the wondering admiration of every observer. We have seen that the El Capitan and Cathedral rocks occupy the same relative positions in both valleys; so also do their Yosemite Points and North Domes. Again that part of the Yosemite north wall immediately to the east of the Yosemite Fall has two horizontal benches timbered with golden-cup oak about 500 and 1500 feet above the floor. Two benches similarly situated and timbered occur on the same relative portion of the Hetch-Hetchy north wall, to the east of Wapama Fall, and on no other. The Yosemite is bounded at the head by the great Half Dome. Hetch-Hetchy is bounded in the same way though its head rock is far less wonderful and sublime in form.

The floor of the Valley is about three and a half miles long and from a fourth to half a mile wide. The lower portion is mostly a level meadow about a mile long, with the trees restricted to the sides, and partially separated from the upper forested portion by a low bar of glacier-polished granite across which the river breaks in rapids.

The principal trees are the yellow and sugar pines, Sabine pine, incense cedar, Douglas spruce, silver fir, the California and gold-cup oaks, balm of Gilead poplar, Nuttall's flowering dogwood, alder, maple, laurel, tumion, etc. The most abundant and influential are the great yellow pines, the tallest over two hundred feet in height, and the oaks with massive rugged trunks four to six or seven feet in diameter, and broad arching heads, assembled in magnificent groves. The shrubs forming conspicuous flowery clumps and tangles are manzanita, azalea, spiraea, brier-rose, ceanothus, calycanthus, philadelphus, wild cherry, etc.; with abundance of showy and fragrant herbaceous plants growing about them or out in the open in beds by themselves — lilies, Mariposa tulips, brodiaeas, orchids — several species of each,— iris, spraguea, draperia, collomia, collinsia, castilleia, nemophila, larkspur, columbine, goldenrods, sunflowers, and mints of many species, honeysuckle, etc. etc. Many fine ferns dwell here also, especially the beautiful and interesting rock-ferns — pellaea, and cheilanthes of several species — fringing and rosetting dry rock-piles and ledges; woodwardia and asplenium on damp spots with fronds six or seven feet high; the delicate maidenhair in mossy nooks by the falls, and the sturdy, broad-shouldered pteris beneath the oaks and pines.

It appears therefore that Hetch-Hetchy Valley, far from being a plain, common, rock-bound meadow, as many who have not seen it seem to suppose, is a

grand landscape garden, one of Nature's rarest and most precious mountain mansions. As in Yosemite, the sublime rocks of its walls seem to the nature-lover to glow with life, whether leaning back in repose or standing erect in thoughtful attitudes, giving welcome to storms and calms alike. And how softly these mountain rocks are adorned, and how fine and reassuring the company they keep — their brows in the sky, their feet set in groves and gay emerald meadows, a thousand flowers leaning confidently against their adamantine bosses, while birds, bees, and butterflies help the river and waterfalls to stir all the air into music — things frail and fleeting and types of permanence meeting here and blending, as if into this glorious mountain temple Nature had gathered here choicest treasures, whether great or small, to draw her lovers into close confiding communion with her.

Strange to say, this is the mountain temple that is now in danger of being dammed and made into a reservoir to help supply San Francisco with water and light. This use of the valley, so destructive and foreign to its proper park use, has long been planned and prayed for, and is still being prayed for by the San Francisco board of supervisors, not because water as pure and abundant cannot be got from adjacent sources outside the park - for it can, — but seemingly only because of the comparative cheapness of the dam required.

Garden- and park-making goes on everywhere with civilization, for everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul. This natural beauty-hunger is displayed in poor folks' window-gardens made up of a few geranium slips in broken cups, as well as in the costly lily gardens of the rich, the thousands of spacious city parks and botanical gardens, and in our magnificent National parks — the Yellowstone, Yosemite, Sequoia, etc. — Nature's own wonderlands, the admiration and joy of the world. Nevertheless, like everything else worth while, however sacred and precious and well-guarded, they have always been subject to attack, mostly by despoiling gainseekers, — mischief-makers of every degree from Satan to supervisors, lumbermen, cattlemen, farmers, etc., eagerly trying to make everything dollarable, often thinly disguised in smiling philanthropy, calling pocket-filling plunder "Utilization of beneficent natural resources, that man and beast may be fed and the dear Nation grow great." Thus long ago a lot of enterprising merchants made part of the Jerusalem temple into a place of business instead of a place of prayer, changing money, buying and selling cattle

and sheep and doves. And earlier still, the Lord's garden in Eden, and the first forest reservation, including only one tree, was spoiled. And so to some extent have all our reservations and parks. Ever since the establishment of the Yosemite National Park by act of Congress, October 8, 1890, constant strife has been going on around its borders and I suppose this will go on as part of the universal battle between right and wrong, however its boundaries may be shorn or its wild beauty destroyed. The first application to the Government by the San Francisco Supervisors for the use of Lake Eleanor and the Hetch-Hetchy Valley was made in 1903, and denied December 22nd of that year by the Secretary of the Interior. In his report on this case he well says: "Presumably the Yosemite National Park was created such by law because of the natural objects, of varying degrees of scenic importance, located within its boundaries, inclusive alike of its beautiful small lakes, like Eleanor, and its majestic wonders, like Hetch-Hetchy and Yosemite Valley. It is the aggregation of such natural scenic features that makes the Yosemite Park a wonderland which the Congress of the United States sought by law to preserve for all coming time as nearly as practicable in the condition fashioned by the hand of the Creator — a worthy object of national pride and a source of healthful pleasure and rest for the thousands of people who may annually sojourn there during the heated months."

The most delightful and wonderful campgrounds in the Park are the three great valleys — Yosemite, Hetch-Hetchy, and Upper Tuolumne; and they are also the most important places with reference to their positions relative to the other great features — the Merced and Tuolumne Cañons, and the High Sierra peaks and glaciers, etc., at the head of the rivers. The main part of the Tuolumne Valley is a beautiful spacious flowery lawn four or five miles long, surrounded by magnificent snowy mountains. It is about 8500 feet above the sea, and forms the grand central High Sierra camp ground from which excursions are made to the noble mountains, domes, glaciers, etc.; across the Range to the Mono Lake and volcanoes and down the Tuolumne Cañon to Hetch Hetchy. But should Hetch-Hetchy be submerged, as pro-posed, not only would it be made utterly inaccessible, but the sublime cañon way to the heart of the High Sierra would be hopelessly blocked. None, as far as I have learned, of all the thousands who have seen the park is in favor of this destructive water scheme.

My last visit to the Valley was made in the autumn of last year [1907], with William Keith, the artist. The

leaf-colors were then ripe, and the great godlike rocks in repose seemed to glow with life. The artist, under their spell, wandered day after day along the beautiful river and through the groves and gardens, studying the wonderful scenery; and, after making about forty sketches, declared with enthusiasm that in picturesque beauty and charm Hetch-Hetchy surpassed even Yosemite.

That any one would try to destroy such a place seemed impossible; but sad experience shows that there are people good enough and bad enough for anything. The proponents of the dam scheme bring forward a lot of bad arguments to prove that the only righteous thing for Hetch-Hetchy is its destruction. These arguments are curiously like those of the devil devised for the destruction of the first garden — so much of the very best Eden fruit going to waste; so much of the best Tuolumne water. Very few of their statements are even partly true, and all are misleading. Thus, Hetch Hetchy, they say, is a “low-lying meadow.”

On the contrary, it is a high-lying natural landscape garden.

“It is a common minor feature, like thousands of others.”

On the contrary, it is a very uncommon feature; after Yosemite, the rarest and in many ways the most important in the park.

“Damming and submerging it 175 feet deep would enhance its beauty by forming a crystal-clear lake.”

Landscape gardens, places of recreation and worship, are never made beautiful by destroying and burying them. The beautiful lake, forsooth, should be only an eyesore, a dismal blot on the landscape, like many others to be seen in the Sierra. For, instead of keeping it at the same level all the year, allowing Nature to make new shores, it would, of course, be full only a month or two in the spring, when the snow is melting fast; then it would be gradually drained, exposing the slimy sides of the basin and shallower parts of the bottom, with the gathered drift and waste, death and decay of the upper basins, caught here instead of being swept on to decent natural burial along the banks of the river or in the sea. Thus the Hetch-Hetchy dam-lake would be only a rough imitation of a natural lake for a few of the spring months, an open mountain sepulcher for the others.

“Hetch-Hetchy water is the purest, wholly unpolluted, and forever unpollutable.”

On the contrary, excepting that of the Merced below Yosemite, it is less pure than that of most of the other Sierra streams, because of the sewerage of camp grounds draining into it, especially of the Big Tuolumne Meadows campgrounds, where hundreds of tourists and mountaineers, with their animals, are encamped for months every summer, soon to be followed by thousands of travelers from all the world.

These temple destroyers, devotees of ravaging commercialism, seem to have a perfect contempt for Nature, and, instead of lifting their eyes to the mountains, lift them to dams and town skyscrapers.

Dam Hetch-Hetchy! As well dam for water-tanks the people’s cathedrals and churches, for no holier temple has ever been consecrated by the heart of man.

