

The First woman to ascend Tinker's Knob
Gold Discovered on Donner Summit!
The Magnificence of the Sierra and Donner Summit

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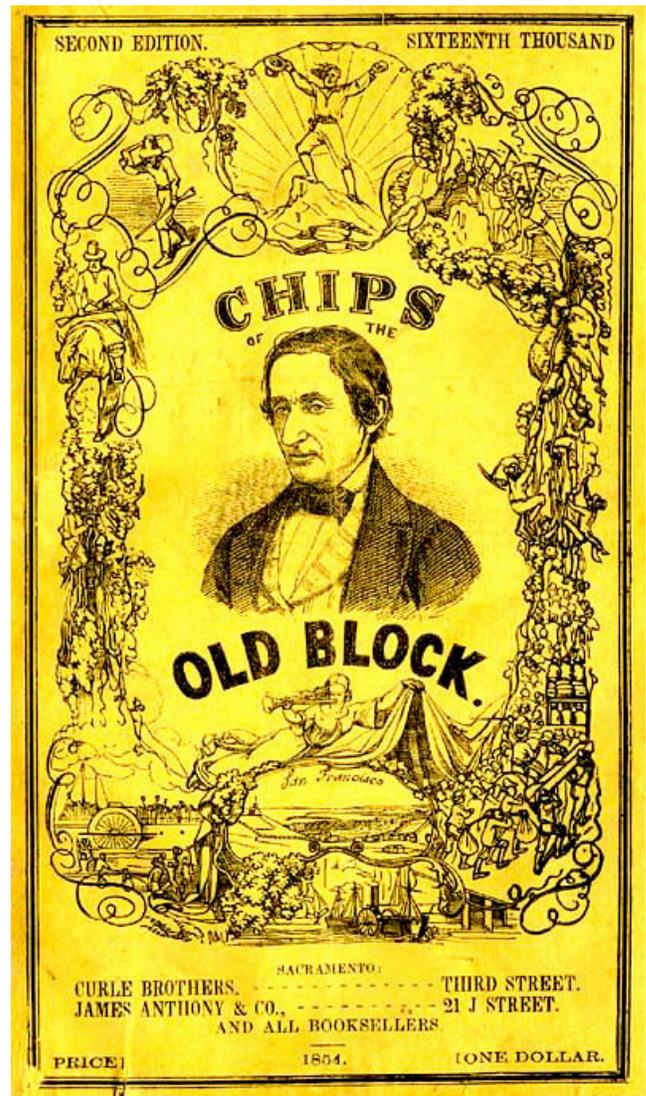
CAMPING IN THE SIERRAS.
A WATERING-PLACE IN CALIFORNIA.
Old Block.
(Alonzo Delano emigrant to California 1849)

Alonzo Delano was an emigrant to California in 1849. He arrived on horseback. Among other things he wrote many pieces for California newspapers including this one about a camping trip to Donner Summit. "Old Block" was a pen name. Delano also wrote a number of books.

You can read a good biography here:
<http://www.sierracollege.edu/ejournals/jsnhb/v3n1/Delano.html>

A Camping Expedition.

Did you ever go upon a camping expedition for pleasure? Did you ever breathe the pure air of the summit of the Sierra Nevadas from your own tent? Oh, I tell you it is exhilarating with the grand scenery around you, the old volcanoes, the craggy peaks reaching to the clouds, the charming valleys, the fairy lakes which lie nestled so quietly among the mighty hills. I like to read Grace Greenwood's letters on California. They are good as far as they go, but they are all on one side. She shows you the parlors and grounds of the aristocracy, but she does not describe the parlors and grounds of heaven among the mountains. I tell you, that is the place to elevate one's ideas and teach him the greatness and power of the Almighty. I can worship the Great Architect among the mighty hills with a fervor which I do not feel in the tamer portions of earth. But I don't want to stray off into heroics. Let me get on to the trail, and there I feel at home. You'll come out next year and go "camping" with me among the everlasting bills, perhaps; if you don't, somebody else surely will. I never lack for company. I am an old mountaineer, and always have more



applications than I can accept, and so have to choose my company. It is not every one that is fit for a camp-life. With a little labor there is a large fund of enjoyment provided you take things quietly as they come – no fretting, no swearing, no putting on airs. You are no better than anybody else. You've got your part to perform. You must do it cheerfully. No grumbling.

Duties to Perform.

You must wait upon yourself nobody will wait upon you. You will just exactly be your own servant. You will do your part in unloading the wagon, pitching tents, gathering wood, bringing water, arranging blankets, building fires, cooking, eating, shouting, laughing, snoring, telling stories and making things pleasant generally. You understand, do you? If you don't, you had better stay at home. But let us get started. We have a five wall tent, I big enough for six, but four is better — big parties in camping out — small parties get along better. You must have a ham which after being boiled pretty well should be baked to finish the cooking, because it is better and will keep several days; then boiled corned beef, bologna sausage, baked pork and beans, dried beef, sardines, deviled tongue and chicken; fresh bread and butter to start with, a little flour for biscuit and; slapjacks, canned sweetmeats, plenty of sugar and syrup, pickles, dried apples and peaches, lots of hard boiled eggs, they go well with lunch, to which add any nick nacks you please, such as ginger cakes and crackers. Of course coffee and tea are essentials, and condensed milk, for this is much easier than driving a cow with you, and then you get rid of milking and it answers every purpose well. A small flask of brandy may come into play, for probably the ladies "of the party may need a little stimulus now and then. Men, you know, never get thirsty! And don't forget a box of pills, a few papers of Hamburg tea and a little arnica, for we go where Esculapius never dreamed of sending a disciple, and ten to one you'll get bruised in taking involuntary slides down rocky steeps. It is always best to have the tools along whether you need to use them or not; and, speaking of tools, you should take a shovel, pick, ax, hatchet and saw, with two or three pounds of nails. You'll need them— and don't forget plenty of small rope and strong twine. If you break down you'll have to do your own repairing. No blacksmiths about the volcanoes since Pluto dismissed old Vulcan. Of course you need knives and forks. Your Sevres China should be made of tin — plates, cups and everything. These will neither crack nor break, and are as good as new when you get home. You will have a provision chest, but pack everything else in bags so as to save room and weight. Also take a bag of hay or straw to spread on the ground; it softens the lumps under your comforters, and you get used to a hard bed gradually. Don't forget combs, brushes, soap, towels and a portable looking glass, for although you are going where you can throw the conventionalities of fashionable life to the man in the moon, you may make yourself as comfortable as circumstances will permit, and there is no necessity for your making a brute of yourself. A clean face and hands look well anywhere. Now, girls, one thing more. No Saratoga trunks are tolerated in the snowy mountains. A carpet-bag will hold all the extras you need. Make a regular Bloomer suit of strong calico to travel in and climb the mountains — you can't even waddle or wriggle in long skirts and a regular Pike county sun-bonnet to keep the hot sun from peeling your face. That's what my wife did, and she is— well — as handsome as you are, at least I think so. O, pshaw ! I'm tired of getting ready —

Let us Start Off.

August had come with its burning sun, and with it the necessity of relaxation from the cares of business. We had a light but strong express wagon, a good pair of horses, and a faithful driver. Everything had been snugly stowed in the wagon— even to bake kettle, frying pan and camp kettle— the night before. Seven o'clock the following morning (you don't care for the exact date),

my wife, Rosalie, and I, with Fowler, the driver, on the box, left our vine-covered cottage for our annual trip to the mountains. Our first camp was to be in Bear Valley, twenty-four miles distant from Grass Valley. In an hour and a half we began the ascent of the ridge above Nevada City, through a fine timber tract, where the tall pines spread their fragrant branches to a height of from 200 to 250 feet. From the summit of the ridge the precipitous sides sloped to the bottom of the canyon probably 1,000 feet or more, narrowing at times to a little more than the width of the road. Our ascent was continuous through the day, though mostly gradual, and at times we had fine views of the distant mountain peaks, at once grand and interesting. In the dim distance, on the west, we caught views of the Valley of the Sacramento, with the coast range which reached to the sea. and of the Marysville Buttes, which rise from the center of the valley like an island (as it once was) in a lake. A ride of about sixteen miles brought us upon the rim of

An Old Volcano,

near the mining town of Washington. The old crater remained intact; the sides were of lava and volcanic debris, and it seemed as if its mighty fires were scarcely extinguished. It was four o'clock when we descended the long grade into Bear Valley — a charming oasis about two miles long by one in breadth. At one period of the world this beautiful valley was the crater of an immense volcano. Its almost vertical walls, 1,000 feet in height, are composed of lava, scoria and volcanic debris, in strange contrast with the bright green of the valley. It is here that the river of the same name takes its rise, which flows many miles through canyons and mountain passes till it reaches the Sacramento Valley, and finally unites with the Feather river, near Nicolaus, ten or twelve miles below Marysville. It was into this valley that the emigrants of '49 let their wagons down its steep sides with ropes from what is now known as Emigrant Gap, on the Pacific Railroad. I had camped here in 1853, with a couple of Indians, when out upon a tour of observation which led me to the summit. - Our present camp was in a pretty meadow upon the banks of the clear stream, and but a few minutes was required to pitch our tent, build our fires, and our supper was soon ready, which we discussed with mountain appetites. For days before leaving home, the thermometer had stood at 90 degrees. Here, only twenty-four miles from Grass Valley, the night was so cold that ice formed in our pail and wash-basin. By the time breakfast was ready on the following morning our tent and materials were packed, and the meal over, we

Resumed Our Upward Journey.

Instead of the almost impassable walls of nineteen years ago, we now found a well-graded road, and our exit from the valley was made with ease and comfort, and we were following the line of the railroad, which passes immediately on the ridge above. As we ascended the mountains the air became more pure and exhilarating, and we needed no laughing gas to elevate our spirits. How it would have been in the case of toothache I cannot say. We might have felt the forceps as it wrenched the tooth from the jaw, but we had neither tooth nor headache that lovely morning, and blessed reader, if you ever do have an extra ache, I recommend a Summer morning's ride over the Sierra as an antidote. I charge nothing for this advice, so I need not show my diploma as a toothache doctor. Our road was now pretty rough, a sure cure for dyspepsia; a perfect movement cure. Alas! we would have been glad of a cure for the movement, for there was no such thing as sitting still in our seats. Jolt, jolt, jolt. I put my arms around the girls — hem! Don't you wish you had been in my place? I couldn't hold 'em down. They put up their arms around me. Girls, wouldn't you have liked to have been there? They couldn't hold me down; but it was all good for digestion, and I'll whisper something in your ear

confidentially — don't mention it. The way the girls did make those plebeian baked beans fly at dinner — I won't tell. And such a shaking as we got till, crossing the railroad track through a snow shed, we descended the ridge, a long, rough distance, to the Yuba, and where

Cisco Once Stood.

"When the railroad was being built this was a lively town, where a thousand people found a local habitation. It had its hotels, its saloons, its livery stables and stores, and wore the air of busy life and activity. Now there was not a single soul left and not a single house standing. The inhabitants were all gone, every building a mass of ruins, crushed to earth by the weight of Winter snows. "Why," asked Rosalie, "is Cisco unlike truth?" Because "crushed to earth" it cannot rise again. Rosalie, will you take a cigar, and meditate still more over the conglomerate mass of doors, windows, joists, scantling and crushed roofs which cumber the ground. We were now in an uninhabited country; a wild, weird view was before us. Bare granite mountains on either side of the valley, with here and there a tall pine wherever it could gain a foothold, it was a picture of desolation, yet of grandeur. On the south mountain the railroad ran midway along the granite abyss, and in looking up from the great depth below it seemed a wonder that a passage could have been blasted out so many miles in the rock. It was a continuous line of snow-sheds, for here the avalanche comes in all its destructive fury, the snow often falling to a depth of twenty feet. Huge columns of lava, black and ragged, have forced themselves through the granite, at intervals, during some awful convulsion, and the whole scene is awe-inspiring and grand. The traveler on the railroad sees little or nothing of this, the view being obstructed by snow-sheds and tunnels. It is a fit home for the grizzly bear and lion, and they are still common in this locality. Here

The Yuba

pursues its turbid course over its rocky bed; now in a narrow valley and then through grim canyons as the mountains close in upon it with falls and bars, and rocky water worn, caves, while towering peaks, thousands of feet above, seem almost ready to topple over and I overwhelm the weird scene in one grand and universal crash. The wagon road, which had been built years ago by the railroad company for the purpose of getting supplies to their workmen, had been long neglected, and we found many bridges across smaller streams swept away, others with rotting timbers almost ready to fall and dangerous to cross. There was no object in keeping the road in repair, nobody lived on the line and for many miles there was no track of wheels but our own. Yet the ground was familiar to me. I had slept in its canyons, and climbed over its rocks years before, and to this day it has been a mystery to me how the early emigrants could ever have made their way with their wagons and families over these mighty rocks and terrible hills. It must have been a work of desperation before a road had been cut through. Once in there was no retreat — they must go forward or die. Some did die, but the mass of the weary, toil-worn and hungry emigrants made their way in safety over this dreadful pass.

Along the route were the remains of many buildings which had been erected years ago, before the railroad was completed, but disused as soon as travel was transferred to the great passage-way. Large barns and hotels still stood as wrecks, their roofs crushed by the weight of snow, and in some cases only the blackened remains of large hotels were left that had been consumed by fire, the work of accident or design. Now and then a herder had crept in with his cattle from the lower valley, where they could get the grass which is green all Summer long along the streams at this altitude,

white it was parched and dried up in the foothills. As we went on, sometimes over roads so rough that we were forced to walk, the snow sheds over our heads seemed to lessen in distance, for our ascent was continuous, till they seemed to leave the hillside and stretch away beyond the bills into vacancy. We were nearing Summit Valley, an altitude of over 7,000 feet, where the railroad passes through the mountains and commences its descent to the great basin, the far famed American Desert. We were indeed glad to occupy an old camping ground which I had used nineteen years before in the valley, for our ride had been a hard one. A good cup of tea and tenderloin steak, with sweet potatoes, and a roaring camp fire against the cool night air, soon put us in good humor with ourselves and all the world. Would you like to know a little about

Our Domestic Economy?

Well, our table was our two wagon seats turned bottom side upward, a clean table cloth spread upon it, and with knives and forks, our tin Sevres China set out, our tin plates, platters and cups tilled with inviting edibles, even to peaches and cream (for we brought an abundance and variety of our luscious fruits) we felt that even the St. Nicholas could hardly present a more inviting meal — with our appetites — the Hotel de Block at the summit of the Sierra. Then we could have warm biscuit [sic] with our bake kettle, and the sweetest butter, which is obtainable at the Summer ranches of the herdsmen. As we drew our camp stools to our primitive table we felt as happy and contented as millionaires in the metropolis. Summit Valley is a charming oasis in the lap of the summit, about two miles long by one in breadth. High peaks surround it, and through this valley and over its eastern boundary the emigrants of '49 began their labors of making their desperate way to the settlements of the Sacramento Valley, 75 mile 3 below.

Old Reminiscences

crowd upon me. In fancy I see the weary throng, I hear the wails of suffering women and children, see the wan, sunken faces of starving men, the —no, I will not go on. I've suffered, too — vamoose [sic], memory ! Rosalie, another dish of peaches and cream. God forgive me — if the poor sufferers had — no, no, I will not go on. Ten miles south of our camp was the

Soda Springs,

a new watering place which is beginning to attract public attention. People from the cities below, anxious to get relief from the fervid heat of Summer, and to enjoy a little relaxation from the cares of life, take the cars at Sacramento, and after a pleasant ride of six hours, find themselves at Cardwell's, at the eastern end of the valley, where the comforts of a first-class hotel await them. From here daily lines of carriages convey them through some of the most grand scenery in the world, to the springs, where another most excellent hotel is established by Wm. Jones, where the guests are supplied with every comfort, including venison and grizzly bear steak in profusion. I had never visited these springs, and we decided to drive there. So after leisurely packing up our traps the next morning, we left our pleasant camp. A ride of a mile and a halt, over a smooth road, brought us to a couple of those fairy lakes which abound throughout the summit range. In 1854 I had camped within a hundred rods of these mountain gems without knowing their existence, so dense was the growth of the magnificent pines by which they are surrounded, and I saw them now for the first time. The ride was most delightful. The flowers of Spring were in full bloom, for this altitude knows no intermediate seasons between Spring and Winter. Among the beautiful and variegated hues which bloomed on the mountain sides, we recognized the tall white lily, which we cultivate and think so I pretty in our gardens. Soon we emerged from the timbered track, and came out on a

ridge which presented one of the finest views I ever beheld. Mountains seemed piled up in heterogeneous masses, deep canyons sank into earth, peaks and battlements of lava, dark and forbidding, raised their jagged points high towards the clouds, and here and there buttes (solitary mountains) raised their fantastic forms towards the arch of heaven. Now and then we caught glimpses of pretty valleys with their green velvet bosoms, through which crystal streams flowed gaily on, and in gulches and crevices along the mountain tops the Winter snows still sparkled in the sun. It was a most interesting ride, and we enjoyed it every moment. An excellent grade had been made down the mountain, and the descent was made entirely without danger, and with ease. Winding around between high mountains, we reached the spring, situated in a wild amphitheater of volcanic hills, about noon. We pitched our tent in a charming grove, about thirty rods below the spring, and on the bank of a pure, ice-cold stream of crystal clearness, which made down from the snows from the high peaks before us. It was one of the principal branches of the Rio Americano and here its waters had never been disturbed by the busy miner. Before going to the spring, we decided to dispatch dinner, and so went into active preparation for that grand essential to human happiness. We had just got seated at our luxurious table, little dreaming of the great surprise which awaited us. Years before, I had stood guard all night against the Indians at the summit, to prevent their depredations against our property, which they were intent upon appropriating but now, deeming ourselves in a friendly country. I had not established a watch. I did not dream of danger. I was in the act of raising a sweet potato to my mouth, when my wife exclaimed, with a look of horror:

" They're Coming— They're Coming—

What shall we do?" Looking up in alarm, I saw no Indians, indeed, but a party of six or eight ladies approaching. I had grasped the handle of my pistol at the first alarm, but as they showed no hostile demonstration, I, with as much calmness as I could assume, swallowed my potato, and observed, in reply to my wife, "they appear friendly — let's invite them to take dinner with us. I don't think they will hurt us."

"But my dress; how we look," exclaimed both of my femininities at once.

"I never saw you look better in my life for a mountain trip. Your faces are clean, anyhow ; don't be alarmed."

As for that matter we were dressed for receiving company. Maria wore bloomers of very common calico and a regular Pike-county sun-bonnet; her stout calfskin shoes were innocent of blacking, and the deep-red dust of the mountains had left its mark in palpable stains on all our clothes.

Rosalie was dressed in a short calico dress, well fitted for climbing hills, and a regular Shaker bonnet, which prevented the sun from skinning her nose; and as for me, being captain of the party, I was a little more particular. I wore neither bloomer nor skirt. My pants and coat were old and threadbare and parti-colored — that is, their original color was nearly hidden by dirt; grease and stains, which wouldn't brush off, and my Zip Coon hat was one that I had discarded three years before. Like Cassius, "accoutered as I was," I arose from my campstool, and with that grace which I ought to possess I invited the marauders to approach and to share our dinner. There were not half stools enough, but the ground afforded substitutes which no weight could break down, and in much less time than it takes to tell it, the ice was broken. There is but little conventionality at a California

watering-place in the Sierra Nevadas, so with a laugh they joined our party, and all were on familiar terms. There were Mrs. and Miss of Sacramento, Mrs. and Mrs. of San Francisco, others from New York and St. Louis and — but what do you care for names. Everyone was modest, handsome and refined — I was a little that way myself, but let us pass that. They had somehow heard of our arrival, and here in the mountains Old Block was considered public property, and they came to give us a welcome. It was a jolly party, and notwithstanding our outre looks, I doubt whether there was ever more fun at a country wedding than was improvised at our camp on the 7th day of August, Anno Domini 1873. Later in the day, when the call was returned at the hotel, my girls had donned their aristocratic garments, which they had stuffed somehow into carpet-bags or hand trunks. Their appearance was so much changed by the disguise that I had to introduce them to the crowd, and while we stayed, a pleasant running fire was kept up between Jones' Hotel and Old Block's house of canvas, which, as Bernal Diaz del Castillo would say, when he was slaughtering the Aztecs, "was pleasant to behold." Among the guests I had the pleasure of meeting B. P. Avery of the San Francisco Bulletin, an old friend, an accomplished writer, a talented and worthy gentleman, who, with his amiable lady, was rustivating in the mountains. The water of the springs (there are several in the vicinity) is very pleasant to the taste.

It is bottled in large quantities, and sent to the lower towns, but when put up for this purpose, gas is pumped into the bottles from generators made for the purpose. By an analysis made by Dr. Hatch, of Sacramento, of the water, the result was as follows:

Carbonic acid gas,	186.86	cubic inches.
Bicarbonate of lime	43.20	grs
Carbonate of Magnesia	4.20	"
Chloride of Sodium .	20.22	"*
Carbonate of Soda	9.50	"
Oxide of Iron	1.75	"
silica	2.06	"
Alumina	1.75	"
Potassa-a taste	-----	
Total	88.68	grs

So dear reader you will see just what portions of a drug-shop you will swallow if you ever visit the Soda Springs of Placer County in California. While the water is very pleasant and agreeable to the taste, it is not as strong as that of the Soda Springs of Bear River, in the Desert basin of Utah, which I visited in 1849. Those springs, which some day will become a place of resort, held properties which the analysis will show viz:

Carbonate of lime	92.55
Carbonate of Magnesia.	42
Oxide of iron	1,03
Silica, Alumina, water and loss	5.85
Total	100.00

There are many iron springs in the neighborhood of the Soda, Springs, but I am not aware that they

have ever been analyzed. I have told you that we were in a lava amphitheatre. Directly on the east, two huge volcanic outcrops, lifted their black, dismal peaks, separated from each other about a mile, and united by a bare, narrow ridge, the rim of an ancient volcano. The highest, Tinker's Knob, had an elevation of 9,500 feet above the sea, and about 3,500 feet above the point where we stood. The other, at the northern extremity of the ridge, Anderson's Peak, was a huge battlement of lava, or a series of battlements and high walls, interspersed with loose rocks and stones which had slid down its steep sides, which were at an angle of nearly 45 degrees. The altitude of Anderson's Peak was a little less than that of Tinker's Knob, which ended in a sharp and nearly pointed cone. We could see from where we stood that up as high as about one-third of the altitude there were only a few scattering trees, and above a certain line, the mountains were perfectly bare. An ascent appeared to be feasible on horseback, provided we could gain a certain point on the mountain. On inquiry at the hotel, I learned that there was no trail or path, in fact no one had ever been ridden to the summit, but parties on foot had climbed to the apex of

Tinkers Knob.

My wife, who loves the mountains with the ardor of an old pioneer, and I, resolved to make the attempt to reach the summit of the knob. Some of the other ladies proposed to go, but their courage oozed out when the time came. It was on the third day after our arrival at the springs that we decided to make the attempt. Procuring two excellent horses of the kind proprietor of the hotel, and putting up a good lunch, and strapping my pistol around my waist, we started off at 8 o'clock in the morning. The distance to the summit in a direct line may have been about four miles, but to attain a point by which we could pass, we were obliged to make a circuit over a steep, rocky hill, of a mile and a half, a passage difficult in itself, but we had to pass up the stream to avoid high falls and precipices, and to cross it, before we could even begin the grand ascent. As no side saddle arrangement could have encountered the passage, my wife, dressed in bloomers, was mounted en cavalier on a man's saddle. Reaching the stream which we were to cross, we found it was fringed with willows in such a dense mass that it was only by skirting the stream for a considerable distance, that we

Found a Passage

across where a long skirt would have been torn to shreds, and then we had to lead our horses up an almost perpendicular bank on the opposite side, but this done, we were on the big mountain, and our labor fairly begun. We found it much steeper than it looked from the spring, and its sides were gullied by avalanches and ravines, with frequent rough and sharp outcrops of lava, which required the utmost care in passing, but we felt sure of success, and kept on. We were obliged to skirt the lower battlement of Anderson's Peak, hoping to gain the ridge by a gradual ascent, but the farther we went the more the sides were broken by ravines, the steeper the ascent became, and more laborious, and thick thorny chaparral, through which a passage was impossible, became more and more frequent, and often changed our direction. The tracks of grizzly bears now became as numerous as those of cattle in a corral, for here they had remained undisturbed by man. Tracks appeared which apparently had but just been made, but knowing the habits of the animal, that they rarely attack man without provocation, we resolved on being circumspect in our deportment towards them and let them alone, if they would be equally forbearing. We were soon above the timber, the steepness increased, and it was only by zig-zag courses that we were able to make any progress. The rarification of the air began now to trouble us and we could go not more than two or three rods without stopping to breathe, and we were careful not to urge our gentle and willing

animals beyond their strength. With much difficulty we at last reached the base of the first battlement of Anderson's Peak. I had designed passing around that outcrop and by a gradual rise reach the ridge, but we found the chaparral so dense that our progress was stopped in that direction, and we must either find another passage or give up the attempt. This we could not think of so long as a prospect of success remained, and on searching awhile we found a break in the perpendicular wall which rose more than one hundred feet over our heads, and a series of irregular steps and platforms which I thought it possible to pass. We made the attempt, carefully leading our horses, which followed our footsteps with perfect docility and apparent intelligence, and at last reached the bench above. But here we were little better off, the chaparral still reached upward over loose sliding rock hundreds of feet, to where the loose, heavy shale lay at an angle of forty five degrees, quite up to the upper strata of black, jagged lava. There was but one way. We must reach the shale, pass over it, or return, and it was doubtful even if we could get our horses down the steps which they had just surmounted. We climbed upwards, still leading our horses, sometimes over stunted chaparral, then around sharp and loose rocks, falling and sliding at nearly every step, or being pierced with sharp spines, till we were bruised all over, and the blood actually starting from our excoriated limbs. Another trouble now assailed us. As we ascended still higher, the difficulty of breathing became greater. We felt loud roaring in our ears, and vertigo troubled me. At times I sank exhausted upon the ground after a great effort at climbing, and all was dark before me. The sun was pouring its hot rays upon the mountain side, there was scarcely a breath of air, and we began to feel the pangs of thirst intensely, My courageous wife stood the trial even better than I did, and gave me words of encouragement instead of yielding to any weakness of her own.

At one time she felt a strong desire for food, but she could not eat without water. Our mouths were dry, our lips parched. Strangely enough, in a short time this craving for food passed away, and I may here say that neither of us wanted or tasted a morsel till our return to camp at night. At last we reached the shale, where there was no foothold for even the thorny chaparral to grow. Still leading our horses, we followed the sideling base of the upper battlement, which loomed hundreds of feet over our heads, till we came to the brink of a lava flow, which extended a long distance down the mountain. We could not cross this and regain the ridge opposite, but we discovered a passage nearly a mile distant, if we could reach it, by which we could gain the summit of Tinker's Knob, now lying southeast of us. Along the steep flow of lava and volcanic cement, we found a passage through which we led and slid our horses, till after a most desperate attempt, we at length reached the bottom of the gulf in the direction of the coveted spur. Our thirst became almost unendurable — it seemed as if every particle of moisture had left our bodies, and we looked with longing eyes to the bank of snow which glistened in the sun high above us. Riding slowly along, I saw a cluster of willows and tall weeds, and I caught the glimpse of a little stream coming from the mountain side, and shouting with my parched lips "Water," we were soon sitting by that ice-cold rill, and quaffing its liquid treasures with all the pleasure of thirsty sufferers upon the desert, and our poor animals seemed to enjoy it as much as we did. The only tracks around the little rill, besides our own, were those of the grizzly and of deer. It was a place for them to drink as well as us. But we had overcome our greatest difficulty. We had still probably fifteen hundred feet to climb, which grew steeper as we ascended, but it was comparatively free from chaparral and loose rocks, although there were heavy outcrops and walls of lava to pass. But we saw that this was practicable, so after a good rest we resumed our labors. By short, zigzag turning, we finally accomplished the ascent to the great ridge, the rim of the volcano, passing in our course a heavy body of snow lying in a depression of the mountain.

A short and easy ride now brought us to the base of the lava cone of Tinker's Peak, which still rose one hundred and fifty feet above, a sharp point, which we had to climb on our hands and feet. I had hitched our horses to a clump of stunted cedars that formed a dubious foothold on the ridge among the volcanic debris, and casting my eye along the bare and barren ridge I saw a huge grizzly starting out from another small clump about thirty or forty rods distant, and run parallel to us at full speed. "Here's a bear Maria, come quick or you will not see him," I exclaimed, and she came to my side in time to see the rascal lope off with long bounds for a quarter of a mile. Our coming had probably disturbed his meditations, and as is usual with them when they are not pressed, he sought a more secure place from invasion. We saw him settle himself in another clump of stunted growth with much more satisfaction than if he had come directly towards us, and there appeared no particular desire in either party to taste the other. But it was for us an exciting show, and didn't cost a cent. Without much difficulty we clambered over the rough, loose, black volcanic slabs, and stood upon the very apex of Tinker's Knob. And what

A Magnificent View

met our sight. It looked like the wreck of a world and as if we were standing among the fragments. For miles and miles were the sharp, black lava outcrops of old volcanoes mingling with the clouds rough, jagged mountains, their sides furrowed by avalanches and water courses. The Eagle's Nest, a frowning mountain, forbidding as Erebus; and the Devil's Peak, a strange, fantastic butte, under which I had encamped in 1854, were on our western view, and on the east, almost at our feet, Lake Tahoe spread its clear and now placid waters, like the great mirror of the mountains, as it is, set in a grand frame of huge, everlasting hills. Oh I it was a glorious view, and we felt well repaid for the labor of our ascent.

It seems to me that no one can fully understand and appreciate the power of the Great Architect of the universe till they can view his work from those grand old mountains.

We were not the first visitors to this interesting spot, although I believe that my wife was the first woman who had accomplished the ascent. Some daring climber had planted a stake on the apex of the cone, and built a cairn of stones around it to preserve its upright position, and we found under the slabs a little tin box containing the names of a dozen or more adventurers, who had come in advance of us, but there was no woman's name recorded, so I guess my wife will take that honor. We added our names to the list, where, probably, dear reader, you'll find them if you ever go there. But another wonder was in store for us. In looking over the loose slabs of volcanic stone, I observed metallic indications. Scrutinizing them more closely, I saw yellow streaks passing across the face of many pieces. I rubbed them with my sleeve. I scratched them with other pieces of stone. It only made them brighter. Turn them any way in the sun, wet them with my tongue, they still held their golden hue. Gracious heaven! is it possible. Gold! gold, sure as the sunlight. Maria, we have found a gold mine richer than ever was found before. The mountain is all gold. Ha ! ha ! ha ! Croesus was a beggar in comparison to us now. Vanderbilt may give up his railroad speculation. I shall build a road to New York on my own hook and carry passengers and freight for nothing. I'll endow Wells College, and every other college in the land, with a million each. I'll establish schools among the heathen. I'll have a theological seminary of my own. I'll— I'll take a chew of tobacco and consider what else I will do. But it was truly wonderful. It was there sure. You could see it with the naked eye.

I was not unhappy. If I owe you anything, blessed reader, present your bill. You shall have it in gold; no more currency now. I've got a mountain of gold and I'll pay every dime and lend you a few thousands beside.. I did just what any sensible person would do, wrote out a notice of location of my claim— fifteen hundred feet in length —following all dips, spurs and angles, signed my name and that of my wife, and fastened it to the stake. My next move was to have hurried to Auburn, the county seat of Placer, have it duly recorded, and I was all right. After drinking in the glorious view for an hour and gathering as many specimens as we could well carry from our mine we began our descent. I will not fatigue the reader with that. We were obliged to take a different route a part of the way, where we met obstacles even worse and more fatiguing than we found in our ascent. It was even a matter of desperation at one point; it was do or die; but we overcame it at last and reached our camp at 5 o'clock r. m. perfectly exhausted, after nine hours" of the most toilsome and often perilous, labor that I ever performed. It may not be in good taste, but I cannot close without tribute to

My Noble Wife.

In all our difficulties, in our worst and most doubtful situations, she bore up bravely not a word of complaint, hesitation or doubt. She seemed to care more for me than for herself, and when I sank exhausted to the ground, overcome with fatigue and vertigo, she was ready with kind and encouraging words and willing hands to do for me all that could be done, and may I not say with Schiller,

"Honored be woman ! , She beams oh the s'ght,
Graceful and fair as a being of light;
Scatters around her wherever she strays
Roses of bliss on oar thorn-covered ways."
Old Block.

Postscriptum.— A few days after the remarkable discovery of our mountain gold mine I was in Truckee, and I thought I would satisfy myself and the world as to the real value of the mine. Taking one of the best specimens into a drug store I applied the test of nitric acid to the gold and found it, dear reader — copper. There are no shares in the market. O. B.