

Outdoor America

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Owned and Published by the Izaak Walton League of America

DEFENDER OF WOODS, WATERS AND WILD LIFE

VOLUME III

AUGUST, 1924

NUMBER 1



Kenesaw Mountain Landis—Zane Grey—James Oliver Curwood

Defender of Woods, Waters and Wild Life

Outdoor America

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Owned and Published by
The IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE of AMERICA
536 Lake Shore Drive Tel. Superior 1217
Chicago, Ill.

Issued Monthly
Single Copy 15c
Subscription rate \$1.00 per year in the U. S. and
Canada. Cuba and Mexico, 50c additional post-
age. Foreign countries \$1.00 additional postage.
Entered as second class matter August 9, 1922,
at the Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under the act
of March 3, 1879

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Colored cover printed by the Miehle Printing Press & Manufacturing Co. on their vertical press.

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Surprise Valley

By
Zane Grey.

The same Surprise Valley made famous by Zane Grey's world known novel, "Riders of the Purple Sage."

FROM Kayenta, the last outpost of civilization in northern Arizona, and incidentally the most remote settlement from a railroad in the southwest, to Surprise Valley, Utah, it is four days of very hard horseback riding, over the wonderful upland country of the Painted Desert.

Upland in this case really means up and down land, for the Navajo and Piute trails veritably stand on end. It takes half a day to cross Piute canyon. Standing on the eastern rim one looks across with wonder and awe at the tremendous red and yellow walls below the western rim; and down at the ghastly denuded depths with something of fear and doubt. "We do not go down there?" is the thought that presents itself. But that was exactly what we did, down the Piute trail, never traveled before by a white man!

My guide, John Wetherill, was the discoverer of Nonnezoshe, the great Rainbow Bridge of southern Utah. And I was the first fortunate man, not scientific or archeological, to accompany Wetherill to see this magnificent phenomenon of nature. That was ten years ago. Upon that trip Wetherill gave me the privilege of naming some of the places that so surprised and delighted me, among which were the Rainbow Trail, Marching Rocks, and Surprise Valley.

On my latest trip, in the spring of 1922, I importuned Wetherill to take me over some country known only to Indians. That was how I came to travel the roughest, wildest and most beautiful trail I ever rode. The danger of traversing the Glass Mountains, the tremendous exertions needful in crossing the canyons, the exquisite coloring and fragrance of the purple sage uplands, the grandeur of the Rainbow Bridge, the stunning surprise of Surprise Valley—these are facts which will always keep that remote and inaccessible section of the Painted Desert the most difficult and beautiful goal for nature-loving Americans.

Not even aeroplanes will ever make it easy to see this wonderland of sage and stone!

The third day out we camped on the brow of an upland of cedar that sloped in league-long benches, green and purple, with outcroppings of yellow and red rocks, up to the grand looming bulk of Navajo Mountain.

And after supper I climbed to the very summit of a lofty rock dome upon which stood one of the mysterious Indian monuments. I learned this time what I had never before known—that these monuments, so striking to the keen eye, marked noble and difficult heights where Indians climbed to pray. If it were needed, that alone would have made them inspiring. But every height I ever attained in that enchanted land left me richer for the splendid spectacle.

I wanted to watch the sun set over the Marching Rocks; and if possible get a glimpse down into Surprise Valley, which we expected to descend late the next afternoon.

The sun was hidden by clouds, and nowhere in the sky or over that vast rock waste shone yet any of the golds or reds characteristic of sunset. The immense dome of the sky dominated both cloud and earth with its intense blue. And standing there, with my hand on the monument, and the cold dry sweet wind in my face, I found myself trying to repeat a Navajo prayer.



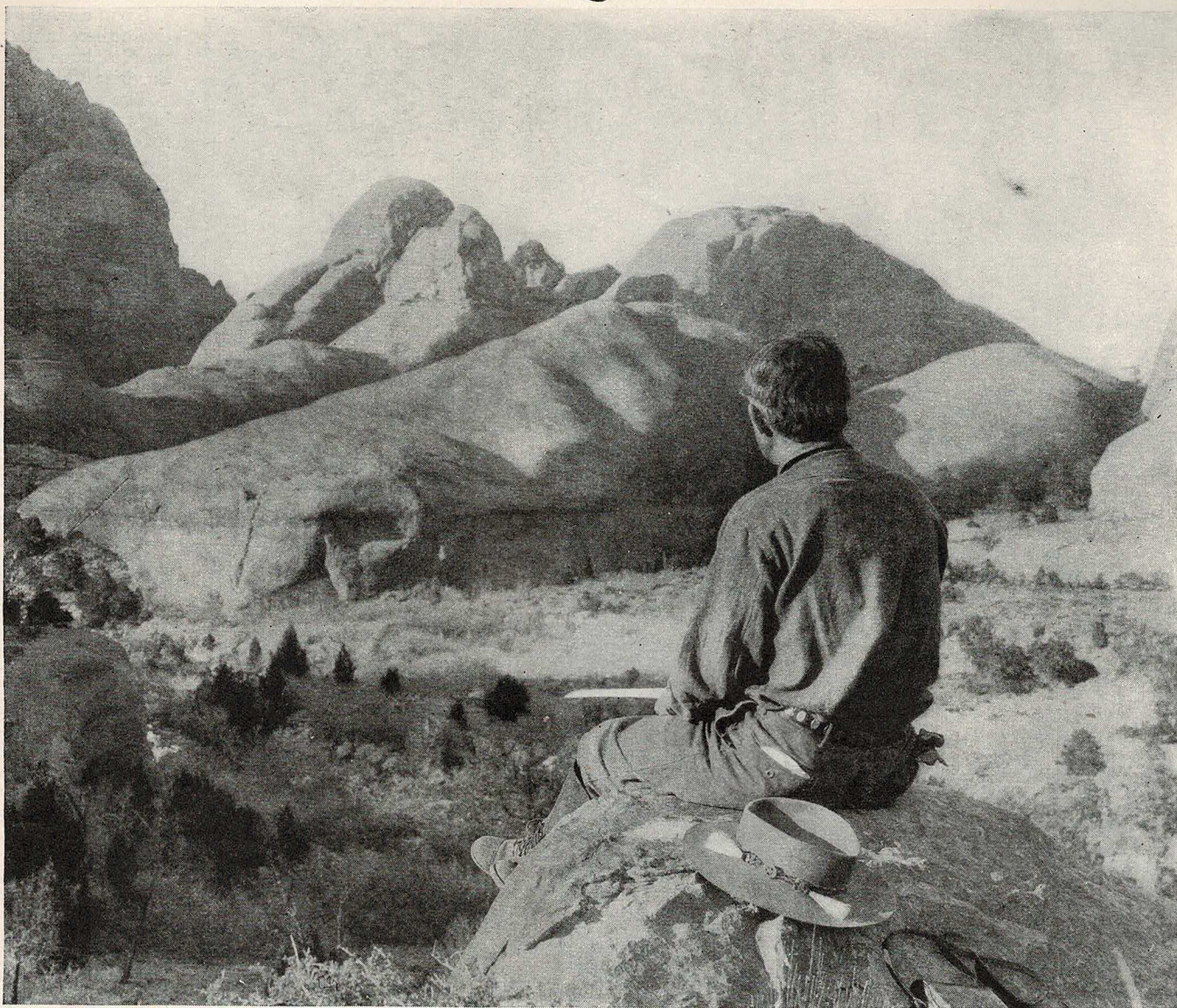
"Far below and away,

Blue wind, beautiful chieftess,
Send out a rainbow by which let me walk,
Blue clouds, blue clouds,
With your shoes let me walk,
Blue clouds, with your leggings make we walk,
Blue clouds, with your shirt let me walk,
Blue clouds, with your hat let me walk,
Blue clouds, make it dark behind me,
Blue wind, make it light before me,
Earth Woman, let it rain much for me,
By which let the green corn ripen.
Make all peaceful with me.

Moments spent on such a height fly imperceptibly; and by the time I had fixed in my mind some faint image of the range and immensity of the scene the cold clouds and rocks began to warm with the sunset. These next few moments were to be the end, the glory, the fulfillment of the Indian's day. What a pity white people seldom rise to see the breaking of the morning light! How infinitely much they lose by missing the last steps of dying day, the splendor of the declining sun!

To the west, over the Marching Rocks, where my gaze at last concentrated, the scale seemed the supreme manifestation of nature's sculpturing. Far below and far away, as far as eye could see—two hundred miles—waved the wind and rain-worn ridges of bare stone. And between them, dark lines of cleavage, lay the gorges and valleys, choked with cedar and sage. Soon the purple shadows began to define the canyons and lift the wavy knolls of red rock. Piute Canyon meandered down into that maze, and Escalante Canyon, and San Juan Canyon, and

"Fish and Game Cannot Vote"—J. M. Dickinson



waved the wind and rain worn ridges of bare stone."

the Grand Canyon, all ragged purple lines, strangely illusive and inconceivable, growing dim in the distance. Standing alone, grandly isolated, shrouded in thick sunset haze, loomed Wild Horse Mesa, with its seventy-five mile front of red wall and black-fringed level. It reminded me of my longing to climb where no white man had ever trod; and would now haunt me until that hope was fulfilled. From this mesa, lower down, swept majestic escarpments, level and dark, running out to the world of carved and graven Marching Rocks. Farther around, beyond the blazing center of the west, began the black jagged uplift of the Navajo's Mountain of Light. It sheered up to a round white-patched, black-fringed dome, where pure snow and lofty pine held dominion.

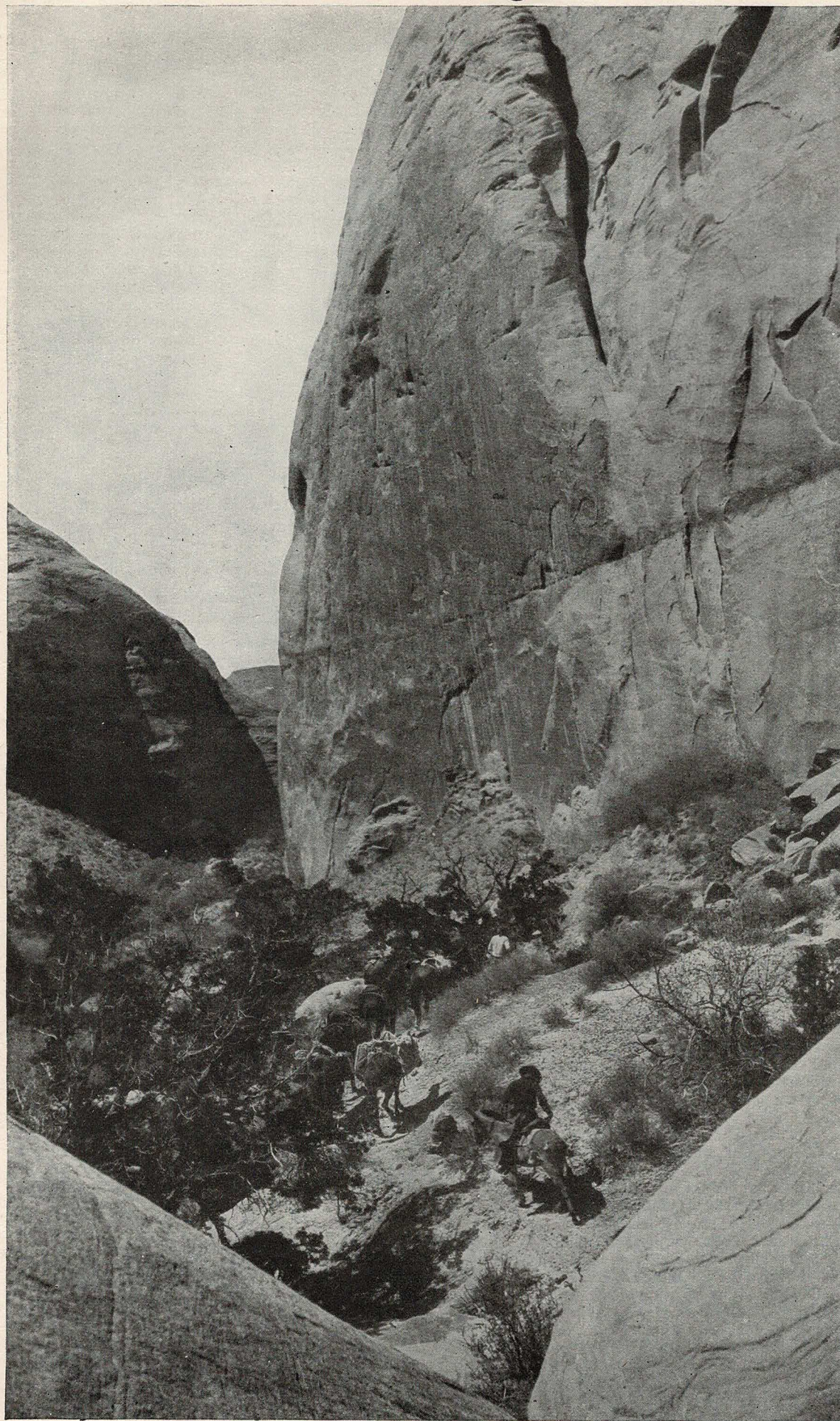
Every moment the spectacle changed, and out over the wasteland there was chaos of light and color. The purple shadows turned to black; the reds and yellows grew less intense. Vast rays of light slanted down from the broken sunset clouds. Before my eyes stretched a belt of naked earth, two hundred miles long and one hundred wide, curving from east to west. No human sight was adequate to grasp its tremendousness and its meaning. Eye of eagle or condor, most delicate and powerful of all organs of vision, must be limited here. There was no movement of anything—only the illusion of the Marching Rocks—no sound, nothing but the stark upflung nakedness of the earth, beyond comprehension to the human mind, exalting to the soul. A world of naked rock, and cedar and sage for the Indian! My heart cried out in pity for the Indians that eventually must be driven from this world, so still, so solemn, so awful, yet a refuge and an abode of life.

The dark walls of granite grew dusky red; the Marching Rocks moved like mammoths, mystic evidences of the ages.

Distance was made clear by the lifting of haze, the canyoned shadows, the last piercing light of the sun. It seemed that a million facets of chiselled rock caught this dying glow of sunset and reflected it, throwing the marvel of light upon the clouds. The shadows lengthened and widened and deepened. My sense of color and proportion grew magnified or dwarfed, I could not tell which. Thousands of rock ridges, facing the sun, marched down to meet it.

The air grew chill. Farthest away across the riven rock a grayness blotted out the horizon. The splendid landmarks seemed to be retrenching themselves, receding, dying with the sunset. Every moment grew more solemn. The great light was fading. Over most of the rocky area the strange gray shadow encroached while I gazed; only to the eastward did the bright gleams of sunlight fall upon the highest faces of the Marching Rocks. Again these rays shot slanting from out the rifts in the clouds, growing strong and glorious, vividly lighting for the moment the horizon peaks of white. Then all that far east, as had the north, paled and darkened. It was a blight. It spread towards the sunset. Low down ruddy gleams suddenly caught the van of the Marching Rocks. But that beauty of radiance was ephemeral. It was going—going—gone. The ball of half-clouded fire tipped the slope of the Mountain of Light, and the chasms became veiled in haze of rose. The Navajo's Mountain grew dark and clear against the steel blue sky. All the upland in its shadow seemed bathed in ethereal light. Then the desert darkened. The radiant disc of white fire vanished. The sun had set, leaving a golden glow on cloud and sky. The earth of naked stone seemed to gather power, to rise, to come out clear and cold, to reach for the encroaching twilight.

"A better America for Americans and better Americans for America!"—George E. Scott



"Not even aeroplanes will ever make it easy to see this wonderland of sage and stone."

Somewhere down there in that purple haze hid Surprise Valley.

The next morning the Piute trail led round under the brow of Navajo Mountain, and before noon ended in the Rainbow Trail, which I remembered. Not little was the thrill of recognizing landmarks of ten years past!

Down and down we rode, and out across a rolling green barren to the Glass Mountains. Three long trying hours must herein receive only slight mention. These smooth wind-worn hills of stone were formidable in any aspect; but the descent on the far side, where your horse followed in your footsteps, encouraged by your example, was a nerve-racking experience. Wetherill often lost horses here. We had only one accident—a pack mule slipped off the narrow granite, and rolled over twice, to lodge on the rim of a precipice. His escape was miraculous and his rescue difficult.

We descended into the canyons, where the Indian paintbrush and Sago lily bloomed in the sunlight. Many a labyrinthine ravine we wound through, riding along the edge of cliffs, under the great rust-stained walls, over the slopes of weathered rocks. It was hot down there. We had left the keen cold uplands behind. Here we could no longer see the cool sparkling white dome of Navajo Mountain. This canyon was one of the dim lines of cleavage we had sighted from the heights above, and

[CONTINUED]
[ON PAGE 51]



Reconstruction at Antler's

(Continued from page 34)

sently. "This was purty good cattle range in here once. Used to be some livelier than it is now, what with brandin' season once a year, an' maybe a rustler ever so often. Then a man was a whoopin', shootin', ridin' fool because he had to be." Terry nodded understandingly. There was an almost wistful expression in the old man's face as he continued.

"Cotton fields are not open range an' neither is a National Bank; but cotton seed makes fine feed for milk cows an' a bank helps the country. Some of 'em couldn't see it that way though. Now I reckon Cliff could go in that field there an' pick two hundred an' fifty pounds a day. Hate to lose a good hand like Cliff."

We rode on. I asked a question.

"Is Howard really a bad man?"

Cal considered the question before answering.

"Well, yes, Son, away down deep I reckon Cliff's just mean enough to slip up behind a preacher an' cut the buttons off his Sunday breeches."

Then I knew I could go back to work. I had gotten what I had come for.

From the Tribune's Columns

50 Years Ago Today
(FACSIMILE)

The Dubuque Herald has the following: "Fishermen say there is at present the finest fishing ever known in the Mississippi in this vicinity. Salmon, pickerel, bass, and other game are very plentiful, and are easily taken with the hook. Sunday afternoon a sportsman hooked seventy-five salmon from the river, opposite Eagle Point."

Reprint from the Chicago Tribune, June 20, 1924.

Surprise Valley

(Continued from page 8)

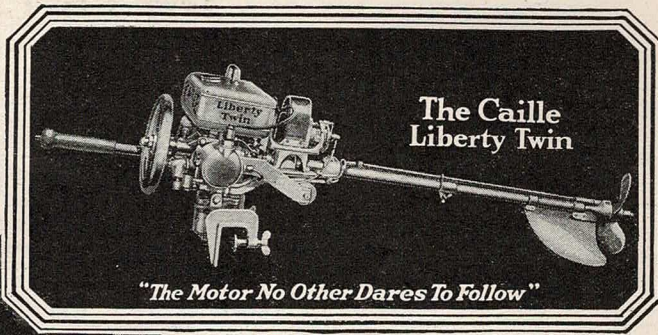
we were apparently lost in a red-walled winding lane that had no outlet.

At length we descended into a narrow defile, and rode round under a stupendous looming yellow wall that struck me as staggering as it had ten years before. I remembered that the magnificent frowning cliff was near the portal of Surprise Valley. And soon after we rode through a still narrower defile, a mere split in the rock wall, into the valley.

As if by magic our horses had led us down into the open, out of the shut-in narrow lanes of stone, into what seemed a strange beautiful colorful garden somehow dominated by the encompassing walls.

White grass waved in the soft summer breeze; purple sage lent its exquisite hue and fragrance to the sweetness of that scene; dark green pinons and light green cedars stood out sharply against the background of red and yellow stone.

Surprise Valley might well be compared in shape to that of an octopus. It has a main area, which may be likened to the body, and many long winding canyons
(Continued on page 63)



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secretary, Mr. Perham, has been unable to assume his duties at once, and this has resulted in a neglected membership. The death of Mr. Lawrie has aggravated matters still further, so that the Bulletins have not appeared on time. We beg your kind indulgence in this, as you fully understand that our efforts are a labor of love, given from the spare moments of men heavily burdened with responsibilities of business and homes. The writer, through this overwork, has been under the doctor's care for over six months.

Mr. Hillman, our publisher, promises to release the first one of these Bulletins at once, to be followed by others from time to time. Those who have not received their membership cards may kindly write me at 301 Shaw Street, Rockford, Ill., that this may be taken care of without further delay.

The membership is growing gratifyingly, but we must have many more. Mr. W. R. Lawrie, son of James A., has been asked to accept the unanimous appointment as treasurer of our Association.

Surprise Valley

(Continued from page 51)

that resemble the arms. Only a small part of Surprise Valley can be seen at one time.

Through the body of the valley runs a clear stream of cold water, that for man and horse is not the least of reasons to tarry there.

That night after supper I climbed to one of the more accessible domes and tried to see and realize Surprise Valley. I saw some of it and only partly realized it.

Under the glamour cast by those wind-sculptured and sun-painted walls it was almost impossible for me to grasp the place intelligently. It was not what it looked or seemed. Distance could not be judged, and it was as enchanting as it was deceiving. Sunset lent it a strangeness and beauty seemingly not of the earth.

I gazed long enough to perceive that the valley was a maze, a labyrinthine canyon of many branches, enclosed by denuded rock, wind and water-worn into walls of every contour and height. The lower slopes and slants were but steps to higher ones, until the yellow and white crags pierced the sky. Talus inclines, jumbles of weathered rock, marching mounds of stone and earth, relic of an avalanche, trees and brush and grass were not absent in this strange valley, but they were scarce. This was a many-armed canyon, clean-cut and smooth, with walls, slopes, summits, corners, domes, crags, all sculptured into contour. Nature here did not tolerate sharpness.

From where I sat the width of the valley was merely a mile, though it seemed scarcely a hundred yards. Its arms wound away out of sight, and as most of them were unexplored, there was little use to conjecture dimensions. Geologically this valley must have been of comparatively recent formation, despite the ages taken by the forces of erosion to cut it. Therefor its physical properties were nearly enough like those of other valleys and canyons to make it similar to hundreds all over the southwest. Yet Surprise Valley, to live up to its name had to be, and was singularly different.

To be continued.

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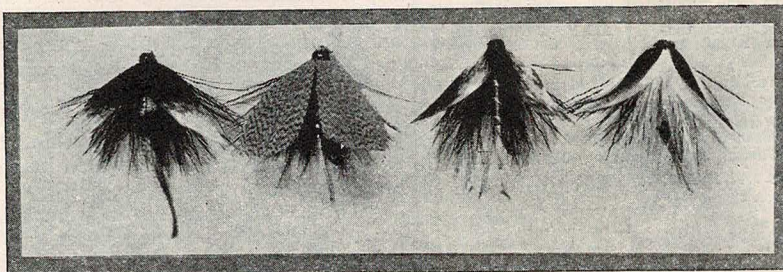
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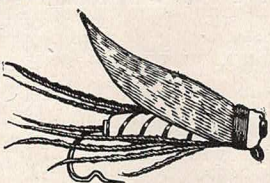
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