

JUDGE C. C. GOODWIN'S DESCRIPTION OF SHOSHONE FALLS HAS BEEN AWARDED A PERMANENT PLACE IN CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

Senator William E. Borah read before the United States senate December 6th, Judge C. C. Goodwin's description of Shoshone falls, Idaho, written by the dean of western editors in his book, "The Comstock Club," twenty-five years ago. The Record printed the excerpt in full, giving official governmental recognition of the beauty of the description. The following is taken from the Congressional Record of December 6:

Mr. Borah—Mr. President, I am going to take the liberty of reading to the senate a description of one of the great scenic displays of this country, about which very few people know anything, and which, to is going the way of all others, to destruction. I want to put in the Record as a permanent piece of literature a description of this piece of great natural scenery from the gifted pen of the veteran editor of the west, C. C. Goodwin. This is a description of what are known as the Shoshone falls, in the state of Idaho:

"They are the rivals of Niagara. Never anywhere else was there such a scene; never anywhere else was so beautiful a picture hung in so rude a frame; never anywhere else on a background so forbidding and weird were so many glories clustered.

"Around and beyond there is nothing but the desert—sere, silent, lifeless, as though Desolation had builded there everlasting thrones to sorrow and despair.

"Away back in remote ages, over the withered breast of the desert, a river of fire 100 miles wide and 400 miles long was turned. As the fiery mass cooled its red waves became transfixed and turned black, giving to the double desert an indescribably blasted and forbidding face. But while this river of fire was in flow a river of water was fighting its way across it or has since made the war and forged out for itself a channel through the mass. This channel looks like the grave of a volcano that has been robbed of its dead.

"But right between its crumbling and repellent walls a transfiguration appears. And such a picture! A river as lordly as the Hudson or the Ohio, springing from the distant snow crested Tetons, with waters transparent as glass, but green as emerald, with majestic flow and ever increasing volume, sweeps on until it reaches this point, where the august display begins.

"Suddenly, in different places in the river bed jagged, rocky reefs are upraised, dividing the current into four rivers, and these, in a mighty plunge of eighty feet downward, dash on their way. Of course, the waters are churned into foam and roll over the precipice white as are the garments of the morning when no cloud obscures the sun. The loveliest of these falls is called 'The Bridal Veil,' because it is made of the lace which is woven with a warp of falling waters and a woof of sunlight. Above this and near the right bank is a long trail of foam, and this is called 'The Bridal Train.' The other channels are not so fair as the one called 'The Bridal Veil,'

but they are more fierce and wild, and carry in their furious sweep more power.

"One of the reefs which divides the river in midchannel runs up to a peak, and on this a family of eagles have through the years, maybe through the centuries, made their home and reared their young, on the very verge of the abyss and amid the full echoes of the resounding boom of the falls. Surely the eagle is a fitting symbol of perfect fearlessness and of that exultation which comes with battle clamors.

"But these first falls are but a beginning. The greater splendor succeeds. With swifter flow the startled waters dash on, and within a few feet take their second plunge in a solid crescent over a sheer precipice, 210 feet, to the abyss below. On the brink there is a rolling crest of white, dotted here and there, in sharp contrast, with shining eddies of green, as might a necklace of emerald shimmer on a throat of snow, and then the leap and fall.

"Here more than foam is made. Here the waters are shivered into fleecy spray,

creates that endless panorama is comprehended; all the deep throbbings of the mighty river's pulses are felt; all the magnificence is seen.

"In the reverberations that come of the war of waters one hears something like God's voice, something like the splendor of God is before his eyes, something akin to God's power is manifesting itself before him; and his soul shrinks within itself, conscious as never before of its own littleness and helplessness in the presence of the workings of nature's immeasurable forces.

"Not quite so massive is the picture as is Niagara, but it has more lights and shades and loveliness, as though a hand more divinely skilled had mixed the tints and with more delicate art had transfixed them upon that picture suspended there in its rugged and sombre frame.

"As one watches, it is not difficult to fancy that away back in the immemorial and unrecorded past the angel of love bewailed the fact that mortals were to be given existence in a spot so forbidding, a spot that apparently was never to be warmed with God's smile, which was never to make a sign through which God's mercy was to be discerned; that then Omnipotence was touched; that with his hand he smote the hills and started the great river in its flow; that with his finger he traced out the channel across the corpse of that other river that had been fire, mingled the sunbeams with the raging waters, and made it possible in that fire blasted frame of scoria to swing a picture which should be, first to the red man and later to the pale races, a certain sign of the existence, the power, and the unapproachable splendor of the great first cause.

"And as the red man through the centuries watched the spectacle, comprehending nothing except that an infinite voice was smiting his ears, and insufferable glories were blazing before his eyes, so through the centuries to come the pale races will stand upon the shuddering shore and watch, experiencing a night-dream to put off the sandals from ^{on would cost} der an overmastering con^{der the lasting} the spot on which they a ^{of fact Mexico} much better holy ground.

"There is nothing elsewhere like ^{ment} ing half so weird, so wild, so beautiful. ^{The} clothed in majesty, so draped with terror, nothing else that awakens impressions at once so startling, so winsome, so profound. While journeying through the desert to come suddenly upon it, the spectacle gives one something of the emotions that would be experienced to behold a resurrection from the dead. In the midst of what seems like a dead world suddenly there springs into irrepressible life something so marvelous, so grand, so caparisoned with loveliness and irresistible might that the head is bowed, the strained heart throbs tumultuously, and the awed soul sinks to its knees."



Shoshone Falls, Idaho.

whiter and finer than any miracle that ever fell from India loom, while from the depths below an everlasting vapor rises—the incense of the waters to the water's God. Finally, through the long, unclouded days, the sun sends down his beams, and to give the starting scene its crowning splendor wreathes the terror and the glory in a rainbow halo. On either sullen bank the extremities of its arc are anchored, and there in its many colored robes of light it stands out, stretched above the abyss like wreaths of flowers above a sepulcher. Up through the glory and the terror an everlasting roar ascends, deep toned as is the voice of Fate, a diapason like the rolling ocean chants when his eager surges come rushing in to greet and fiercely woo an irresponsive promontory.

"But to feel all the awe and to mark all the splendor and power that comes of the mighty display one must climb down the steep descent to the river's brink below, and, pressing up as nearly as possible to the falls, contemplate the tremendous picture. There something of the energy that