

THE COLORADO.

Colonel Powell's Report.

The Most Wonderful Scenery in the World—925 Miles of Canon and 300 Waterfalls—Rock Walls 4000 Feet High—Shooting Rapids and Cascades—Hair-breadth Scapes—Loss of Three Men—Ancient Indian Towns—Fascinating Story.

Colonel J. W. Powell, in a letter addressed to the New York Tribune, gives the following vivid description of the marvelous scenery of the Colorado river:—

In the great southwest region of the territory of the United States there is a belt of country that has long been the region of myths. Gorges with cliffs overhanging to shut out the day; underground courses of a great river that courses in sight of the great mountain cisterns; great cataracts, whose plunging waters make roaring music, heard on the distant mountain summits with a thousand insignificant embellishments, have been given as the characteristics of this region, known vaguely as the Grand Canon of the Colorado.

Many stories of wild adventure have been told by Indians, trappers, and prospectors—stories of walking along the brink of the canon walls in search of a passage down to the waters, but vainly travelling for days and then perishing for thirst in sight of the river below, which roared its mocking into dying ears. Other stories are current of men who have entered the gorge only to be overwhelmed in an abyss of waters; still others, of boats, and boats' crews gliding down the swift river into underground passages, to be lost forever from the light. Such are the legends told in the hunter's cabin and the prospector's camp away out among the mountains, and now and then these have found their way into public print.

Expeditions sent out by the Government to explore the Colorado region around about have reported the canon inaccessible. The traditions of the early Spanish adventurers make it a land unknown and forever to be unknown. The Indians of the countries adjacent have woven the mysteries of it into the myths of their religion. So Indians and Spanish adventurers, hunters and prospectors have all united in telling fabulous stories of its wonders and terrors. For two or three years I have been making some geographical studies in the mountains to the east and north, and while pursuing them, the thought grew in my mind that these canons were but a book of revelations in the rock-leaved bible of geology. The thought fruited with a determination to read the book; so I sought for all the available information with regard to the canon land. I talked with the Indians and hunters; I went among the Mormons to learn what they knew of this country adjacent to the "Kingdom of God," the home of the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." I read the reports of the surveys, and I explored canons of the tributary streams that I thought would represent some of the features of the Grand Canon, on account of similar geologies and physical characteristics. From these fabulous stories and reports, facts, and from a knowledge of other canons, I came to the belief that the "Grand Canon of the Colorado" could be explored by descending the river in small boats. I also arrived at the conclusion that what was known as the "Grand Canon" was in fact a series of canons, forming the banks or walls of the Upper Colorado, and the lower portions of the Green and Grand that unite to form it. These two streams unite in canons, and some persons held that the vaguely defined "Grand Canon" was continued up the Grand, while others still asserted that these streams united in a valley. One man assured me that he, with several others, had laid out a city at the junction, but was driven away by the Indians.

With this end in view, I came from the mountains to Chicago last spring, to procure outfit and build boats. Four of these were made on a model devised for the purpose of navigating canon streams; and taking them out to Green River Station, where the Union Pacific Railroad crosses the Green, I was ready to embark. There I had a party of nine men awaiting my arrival, and anxious to enter the "great unknown" with me—men all experienced in the wild life of the country, and most of them in boating on dangerous streams. On the 24th of May we started. For a few days our way was through a river of low canons, and small, green valleys, until we reached the Utah mountains. Through this range the river has cut a winding channel, forming the Utah system of canons. Near the lower end of this series Yampa river enters the Green by a canon. Further down, in a valley portion of the river, the Uintah and White come in. Below this point, about 30 miles, we enter still another series. Low walls of grey, buff, and rust-colored sandstone shut us in. These walls slowly increase in height as we advance. The grey rocks are lost; dark red sandstones appear; the walls are broken down by lateral canons, increasing in number until we are in the heart of the "Canon of Desolation." Sometimes these lateral canons are so crowded that the rock between them stands as a narrow wall, hundreds of feet high, the end toward the main canon. Some lateral canons have their own lateral canons—a third series—cutting the wall into sections, whose towering summits, though large enough to support cathedrals, seem scarcely to furnish footing for a man. Two thousand feet—three thousand feet over head—is the summit of the walls, while rocks and crags and peaks rise higher, and still higher away back from the river, until they reach an altitude of nearly five thousand feet. These rusty, grey, and dark red sandstones have no beauty of color. A few greenish-grey cedars are seen, looking not like pyramids of evergreen spray, but like clumps of knotty war-clubs bedecked with spines. These, with a little sage, constitute all the verdure.

We next ran through Coal-Canon, and passed the mouth of Little White river, then a valley region, passed the mouth of the San Rafael, and we enter Still Water Canon. The river winds through this with a quiet current, as if in no haste to leave this beautiful canon carved out of the orange sandstone. All along its walls domed alcoves and amphitheatres have been cut out of the solid rock; grottoes and caves abound, narrow lateral canons, channels of rivulets, born of a shower and born again of a shower, are cut as clefts in the rocks, and at every curve on the inner side is a spot of willow-bordered meadow. Then the walls grow higher, the river

swifter, and we glide around to the junction of the Grand and Green. Here the walls are nearly thirteen hundred feet high. But away back from the river are lateral canons and canon valleys, the floors of which are at about the same altitude as the immediate walls of the main canon, and the walls of this upper set are hundreds of feet high. Lateral to the second there is often a third series, with floors at a greater altitude than the floors of the second; then the country back is cut into a labyrinth of canons. The main walls at the junction are not vertical, but have the slope of broken rocks tumbled down, while the lateral canons have mostly vertical walls with a sloping talus at the base. We remained at this point several days and then roved out into Cataract Canon. Soon we heard the roar of waters, and came upon a succession of rocky rapids and cataracts. Over some of these we were compelled to make portages; usually only the cargoes were carried over the rocks, and the boats were pulled down with lines; but now and then boats and cargoes were unobstructed by rocks, or where there was any passage, we were able to run them, never finding any fall greater than nineteen feet in this canon. Sometimes the waves below would roll over a boat and fill the open part, but they could not sink it, as each one was decked fore and aft, and so had a water-tight compartment at each end. Now and then a boat would roll over, but clinging to the sides until they could right it, the men would swim to the shore, towing it with them.

We found much difficulty in the whirlpools below; it was almost impossible to get out of them at times. They would carry us back under the falls; they would dash us against the rocks, or they would send us whirling down the river. For twelve days we toiled through this canon, stopping once to measure the altitudes of its walls near the highest points, and finding it nearly 2500 feet. This was at the axis of a vast fold in the strata, and from that point the upper rocks slowly came down with a gentle dip to the southwest until we reached the foot of the canon, 45 miles from its head. A rocky valley canon was found here on the left, and the river made a bend around a sharp point on the right, which point was set with ten thousand crags and ragged rocks. We called it Mille-crag Bend, and sweeping around this in a rapid current our boats shot into Narrow Canon, down which we glided at almost railroad speed, the walls rising vertically from the water thirteen feet high at its head, and coming down, to high-water mark at the foot, seven miles below, where the Dirty Devil, a river of mud, entered from the right. Now we had come again to the red and orange sandstone, and the walls were of beautiful bright rock, low at first, but as we cut down through the strata, rising higher and higher. Now and then, on this side of the river, the rocks were vertical to the water's edge, but usually they were cut into rounded, and come, and hills of solid sandstone, rising one above the other as they stretched back in a gentle slope for miles. These mounds have been cut out by the showers from the bright orange rock, and glitter in resplendent beauty under the mid-day sun. Hour after hour we gazed entranced on them, as they faded in the perspective and retreated to the rear, for the river was gentle though swift, and we had but to steer our boats, and on we went through this land of beauty and glory.

On the 21st of July we reached the mouth of the San Juan, at the foot of Mount Canon, and went into camp for a few days' rest. Then we started again. We had now run once more into the dark red and chocolate-colored sandstones, with slate-colored beds below; these usually formed vertical walls, occasionally terraced or broken down, and from the crest of these the orange mounds sloped back, but variegated by monuments, now vertical, now terraced, now worn in steep slopes; others still combining these forms, and set with towers and pinnacles. These mountains stood alone or in groups, and spread over the landscape as far as the eye could reach. The little valley of Paria river terminates this canon, making it about 100 miles long. We named it Monument Canon. Here the river had cut through the sandstones and reached the limestones below, the same geological formation as that of Cataract Canon, and as we advanced the channel was cut into these new strata. We entered between walls low but vertical, that gradually increased in altitude to the foot, where they were 2000 feet high, terraced and broken into crags above. Half way down the canon we found the lower strata appearing as marble; they were white, and grey, and slate-colored, then pink and purple, and brown, and other strata variegated with these colors, until at last we had 400 feet of marble walls, mostly vertical from the water's edge. These were fretted by the waters, embossed with strange devices, and polished into beauty. Where there were patches of marble floor left bare by low water, basins have been carved out by the whirlpools of the flood season, and were filled with pools of clear water in beautiful contrast to the red mud of the river. Cool springs gushed from the rocks, sparkling, foaming cascades plunged into marble fountains, and in contrast to these, after every shower, cascades of red mud poured over the walls from the red sandstone above, with a fall of hundreds of feet. We called this Marble Canon; it terminated at the mouth of the Little Colorado, and was about 35 miles long.

Here a short rest, and then we pulled on the home stretch—not a very short one either—nearly 300 miles by river to the mouth of the Virgin. The lower members of this carboniferous formation are of dark, rust-colored sandstones, sometimes almost black. We soon ran through these, and through silurian red sandstone, and about fifteen miles below the mouth of the Little Colorado struck the granite. From the mouth of that stream to the mouth of the Virgin, our objective point, the general course of the river is to the west; but it makes three great curves to the south, and three corresponding curves to the north. At the extremity of the southern curves the walls are granite at the base, reaching to an altitude of 800 feet. This usually rises from the water in almost vertical cliffs, and above with ragged crags; then a sloping terrace 100 to 500 yards wide; then walls of sandstone and marble to a height of 200 or 300 feet towards the heavens. In the northern bends the marble comes down to the water's edge. In the southern bends the river runs raging through a narrow gorge filled with rapids and cataracts, often falling at a plunge from 5 to 20 feet, the greatest being 22 feet. Over these we usually had to run, as the granite walls rarely gave foothold, though some portages were made. The roar of a cataract could always be heard for half a mile or more, so that we never came upon them unapprehended of danger. In the last great bend to the south, we came upon a series of cataracts and rapids crowded together into a distance of three-fourths of a mile; a stream came down through a narrow canon on either side, and above their mouths we found a foothold to land; so we stopped to examine.

On the river there seemed to be great danger, and no portage could be made. Coming

on in the morning, the day was spent in exploring and trying to decide some method of getting over the difficulty. I found that we could climb to the summit of the granite 800 feet high, and, passing along the terrace, could descend to a point below; but it would require ten days to get our boats and cargoes over, and we had scant five days' rations. When I returned to camp at night, I announced to the men that we must attempt to run it. After supper one of them came to me and asked if we were willing that he and two others should leave the river and walk out over the mountains; they thought that they could climb out of the canon, up the channel of the right hand creek. Of course I objected, but they were determined to go. An hour's talk failed to shake their resolution, so I sat up all night, made observations for the latitude and longitude of that point, and then walked up and down a little sand beach morning. On the morning after we were still in mind to go, and I hastily fitted out the little party with guns, ammunition, and a small store of rations. In the mean time those going down the river were trying to start. Not being able to man it, I tied up one of the boats and abandoned it. When all was ready we shook hands, and some tears were started, as each party thought the other was going to destruction. "Good-bye," and away went our boats over the first cataract, then among the rocks, and now and then a second to the left of a huge rock and whirlpool, and over the third, and shot into an eddy below. The boats were half filled with water, but that had happened many times before; we really found it less dangerous than a hundred we had run above. The party that was left sat on the cliffs and watched us over, and we went into camp and waited two hours, hoping that they would join us with the boat tied to the rocks above; but we never saw them again, and they are yet unheard from. The names of these men were O. G. Howland, S. Howland, and W. H. Dunn. That afternoon we passed one more dangerous rapid, and then having nothing to fear, where the river abandoned into Mormon Valley, so named by our party.

This ended the exploration of the Grand Canon of the Colorado; its head at the confluence of the Little Colorado, its feet at the entrance of the river to Mormon Valley—its length about 238 miles, its altitude from 2500 to 1000 feet. A number of clear streams flow in from either side; the largest coming down from the Buckskin Mountains on the north, which we named Right Angle river. I have mentioned the terraces of the southern bend; these have been sites of ancient Indian villages, inhabited by a race of diminutive people now almost extinct. Their little clusters of houses found on the south side of the river were 800 or 1000 feet above the water. They were built of stone laid in mortar, and seem to have had reservoirs of water. Fragments of their pottery are found scattered about in great profusion, and deeply worn foot-paths leading from village to village, or down to the river, or up to the summit plain, were frequently seen. On the northern bend their dwellings were near the river. Some of these ruins seem to be centuries old, and others to have been inhabited by the present generation; the latter were found near the mouth of the Little Colorado. Other ruins and fragments of pottery were found in the canons above, and away up in the valley of the Uintah. Only a few villages of these interesting people now remain in the country to the southeast.

Below this canon the river and adjacent country had been explored by Mormon parties, and here ended the "Great Unknown," no longer thus to be designated. One party had crossed through Mormon Valley; another had brought a skiff down the Grand Wash, just below, and descended with it to the mouth of the Virgin, to Call's Landing; and still others have passed through the country, and I found their reports quite correct, except that they a little over-estimated the distances. Alternating valleys and canons were passed till we reached the mouth of the Virgin, where we came upon three white men dragging a seine. They proved to be Mormons, who had been sent on to prepare for a large settlement of people which will be sent here by the Church to build up another of those wonderful villages seen only in the "Kingdom." The whole region was one of great scenic beauty and grandeur; the constant change in geological structure made a constant change of scenery. The high walls enclosing a tortuous river shut off the view before, and, as we advanced, it opened out, ever bringing into view some new beauty or glory. The impression of this scenery was the rather accentuated by a little anxiety, the shadow of a pang of dread ever present to the mind.

Of my party, I should like to say that some left me at the start, cutting the number down to ten, including myself. One left me at the mouth of the Uintah, three left me as mentioned above, and five went through. These were Captain W. H. Powell, John C. Sumner, George Y. Bradley, W. Rhodes Hawkins, and Andrew Hall. I append a statement of APPROXIMATE DISTANCES.

Table with columns for location and distance in miles. Locations include Green River City, Utah mountains, White rivers, Junction of Green and Grand, Colorado River, Cataract Canon, Mount Canon, Narrow Canon, San Juan River, Mouth of Little Colorado, Mouth of Virgin River, Mouth of Callville, Nevada, and Total.

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LEGAL NOTICES. IN THE ORPHAN'S COURT FOR THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA. Estate of ALEXANDER DALLAS BACHE, deceased. The Auditor appointed by the Court, PETER McALL, and notary the first and second accounts of ALEX. ANDERSON & CO., executors of said estate, and to report distribution of the balance in the hands of the accountants, will meet the parties interested, for the purpose of the settlement, on WEDNESDAY, October 15, 1869, at 10 o'clock A. M. at his office, No. 40 WALNUT STREET, in the city of Philadelphia. WILLIAM D. BAKER, Auditor.

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Eight Million Dollars a Year, Which will be steadily augmented by the development of the Pacific Coast, by settlement along the line, and by the natural increase of traffic. The First Mortgage Bonds of the Company amount to \$25,000,000, and the interest liability to \$1,725,000, or about \$2,254,000 in currency. It will be noted that the present earnings provide an ample fund for the payment of this interest and leave a large surplus. We are also satisfied that, at present market rates, these bonds are a very desirable investment, and that they will advance in price as soon as the facts concerning the business and condition of the Company are generally understood.

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