

FRANCE LEWIS

B.

MR. DIDE, HIS VACATION
IN COLORADO

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Mr. Dide, His Vacation in Colorado / L. France — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

CHAPTER I.	5
CHAPTER II.	9
CHAPTER III.	13
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	17

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CHAPTER I. A COLD SLOT

The upper end of the mercury is anchored, say in the vicinity of twenty degrees below zero, and there are two feet of snow on the ground. I have to travel a hundred miles or more from Denver; one mile on foot, the others by rail.

As I make my way down street early in the morning, with the rising sun turning the white peaks into rose-color, I feel disposed to halt and watch the changes. But I am denied the privilege of even walking slowly; I must wipe the tears from my eyes and hurry. The few people I meet seem cheery, and they steam along, reminding me of the cigarette smokers; the men wear icicles for beards, and one woman has a luminous nose, and I think is aware of it, for she holds her handkerchief to her face as she passes by. No one says good-morning – we have become too metropolitan for such courtesies – but every one expresses by a glance, "Cold! ain't it?" and steams on. One should always keep one's mouth shut on such a morning; one's inspirations will always be full and the shoulders thrown back without trying – that is if one be healthy. There is not the faintest indication of a breeze, and the iron tires of a heavy freight wagon, laboring slowly along, ring out like the music of tiny bells, close and smooth, as though the master of the baton were directing a legato movement. The driver walks by the side of his team, thrashing one hand against his shoulder and holding the lines with the other; the horses are half hidden in the steam of their own providing and are frosted even to their flanks. Thunder and Mars! but it is cold! and a cloud of cold air rushes into the car with me. The ebony deity presiding over the coach looked on with a wide, white smile as I thawed my beard.

"Ain't gwine fishin' to-day?"

He seemed a little puzzled when I said I might indulge in a bit of angling. Perhaps he had never fished through the ice, or was not aware that the art of angling depended upon other things than bait and hook and line, or was not aware, in fact, that these tools might be dispensed with, and the votary of the gentle art still be successful.

The only other occupants of the car were two young ladies, neither of them over twenty years of age, I dare be sworn, and behind whom the porter assigned me a seat. They sat facing each other. One of these young ladies was a blonde with fluffy hair daintily banded, her cheeks were rosy and she reveled in the faintest intimation of brevity of nose – just enough of heavenward proclivity to make it cunning. Her companion was a brunette in glasses, possessing a delicate creamy complexion and a close-fitting dainty ear, not marred by a ring or a place for one. I speak of one ear, the one immediately under my observation. I subsequently learned that she was endowed with a pair, and they were mates, very pretty, and uninfluenced by the cold, of a delicate pink that seemed to rival the exquisite tint of sea shells I had seen; a very bewitching ear, an ear into which a lover – but perhaps I would better not follow the lead of that ear any farther, and will let go before I fall into trouble. Being absorbed I did not catch what the blonde said to the ear, but having released myself, I took in the reply:

"Darwin's theory is, to my mind, correct, and the strongest argument in favor of immortality within my experience."

An experience of less than twenty years! Think of it!

The blonde put on a look of deeper interest; as for myself, a feeling of weak dependence began to creep over me and finally settled in my back. The brunette continued:

"We know that man is an improvement on the monkey, and we know how imperfect man is even in his best estate – are we not authorized in believing that the next change will present something grander?"

I began to wonder whether some man had not failed in his contract with this young lady. The glasses suggested Boston, and yet she was too young for a vagrant schoolma'am or a victim in a desert world. I debated concerning the man and whether I should blame him, if one were in the case, and my wonder quite resolved itself into a conviction in favor of the man. To set my mind at rest if possible, I changed my seat to one behind the blonde. When I saw the pretty, quiet face, and the eloquent, brown eyes appealing to the blonde for approval, I was more in doubt than ever. To get out of the labyrinth I went into the smoking room and took counsel of my briar-root and the foot-hills.

Snow everywhere! The willows are dressed in gray and the pines are almost black; the purple haze of summer has changed into a veil of white and the shrub oaks are garmented in ragged coats of brown. No living thing, except the snow-birds, is in sight between me and the hills, piling tier upon tier to the summit of the range. It is not like looking back from the front seat in the pit upon a grand-opera night – the colors are all sober. Where the rugged cliffs are too precipitous for the snow to cling, I find Titanic jewels with white settings. It is a good time to learn, in truth, how rough and broken are the outlines that the summer's breath makes smooth. Stripped of their finery their majesty is sterner, that is all, but they are still to be revered – there is the difference, merely, between the smile and the frown of one we know to be worthy of love, but always lovable. The fences make the white fields look like great, clean napkins edged with black lace and spread out smoothly, to dry.

As we get farther away from the Platte Valley a bird of evil omen shows himself, looking blacker, if possible, as he hovers over this ocean of white. I wonder what has become of the ravens? In the early days they were plentiful and tame, coming into town and perching on the fences and housetops, alert for food, and in the evening, before twilight would set in they were wont to string along overhead, upon lazy wing, to their roost up the river. We must have become too metropolitan also for these sable friends and they are going out with the pioneers! When I saw this solitary representative of the old abundance, he brought to me the remembrance of other changes – I realized thirty miles an hour and steam, instead of ten miles and mules; a luxurious car with scarcely a vibration, instead of the swaying Concord redolent of old leather, musty hay and the stables. Overcoats, buffalo shoes and blankets are necessities no longer. Yet the old coach possessed some excellent attributes: it was a great leveller of artificial barriers; its patrons were democratic in its presence if never so before or after; they were rarely otherwise than jolly; the emergency demanded cheerfulness, as hardship always does if one would succeed in overcoming obstacles; one might not sit and dream with open eyes in such surroundings. Shadows of familiar faces are flitting about me, very eloquent they are in their silence. And now and then will come one, and another, demanding deeper recognition and whose ways are so sweet to remember that I forget all except the old coaching days and —

But I declare! while I have been drifting, the window has grown dim – it must be with the frost – and I am compelled to wipe it off that I may see a bevy of snow-buntings; bright little fellows in mottled jackets and black neckties. They easily make, in their billowy flight, twenty-five miles an hour. The train is going at that rate, or more, and they keep along with it as if to cheer us on the road for a few hundred yards and then alight to have their places taken by others. They are very numerous, thanks to some one who loved them and placed a penalty in the statute books against their destruction.

Down there in a hollow, sheltered by the bluffs, are a cabin and a corral, and a few stacks of hay protected by a fence. Outside stand three creatures drawn up, and shivering, it must be, wishfully feeding their minds on the unattainable luxury under their noses. I would like to halt long enough to drive the owner out of bed, or away from his fire, with hydraulic appliances. A magpie alights on the back of one of the cows, perhaps to inspire her with hope and to remind her that summer will come again.

As we climb toward the summit of the Divide I catch a glimpse of one of my castles. When travelling by I always look out for this property of mine, to assure myself that it has not been trespassed upon. Some one has taken the liberty of levelling a camera at it, and bestowing a name upon it, thinking it deserted, perhaps, and assuming a claim upon it for that reason. But it is not, nor has it ever been deserted since my knowledge of it; my people are always there. Sweeping round a certain curve in the road the grand pile, without moat or drawbridge, now comes into full view. Its white turrets shine in the morning sun and its grand doorway is always open as a token of the hospitality ever to be found in its spacious halls. It is the old-time hospitality, of course – say of the feudal age – rude, maybe, but bestowed with royal munificence, to be in keeping with the precincts. Claw-hammer coats, vests of percale cut low, and glaring shirt fronts of linen would be novelties amid the concourse of mailed cavaliers and hardy retainers wont to gather here. Its great banqueting hall is decked with ghosts of armor and the rugged walls are hung with rude implements in keeping with the ghosts; the skins of beasts serve as beds or floor cloths as occasion may demand; rough benches and a long table with no sign of covering; a high stiff-backed chair at the end above the salt, where may sit the master. The broad fireplace is aglow this cold day and the fire roars and sparkles up the wide chimney, and dogs lie dozing in its cheerful warmth, while leather-clothed servitors clank back and forth. But how quickly the dogs awake and all the surroundings vanish at the sound of the shriek ahead of me! We have seen much at the rate we are going – and it is better so – we are not moving backward; the broadcloth claw-hammer is, after all, an improvement on the coat of mail.

My other grand estate south of the Divide is also encumbered with the winter mantle, and because of it the red ruins over under the foot-hills are more sharply defined. The red castle on the left with its arched porchway stands out grandly against the clear blue background. But there is no one at home, the place seems deserted for the time; the usual inmates may be away on a hunt in those groves beyond, or perhaps they may have vanished for the same reason as did those we found on the north side.

The air grows warmer as we go on. Above the Peak a few clouds are hovering, and I notice above the summits of the lower mountains two long, slender clouds of a deadwood color. Presently these join at one end, and soon the other ends swing together and form an oval with a stretch of blue between, and there is a lake above the horizon. It requires no stretch of the imagination; on the contrary, I find I am compelled to satisfy my mind that one part of the cloud must be above the other, else the highest is the near shore, in the plane of my vision, and I look across a sheet of blue water to the farther side. An irregular rift in one place makes a cove, and on the bank is a cabin, and around the edges is fallen timber. Thanks to the absent winds, I am for twenty minutes or more treated to this view of a lake and its wooded surroundings, made of a strip of blue sky and a cloud.

It is not necessary that I disclose where I had dinner this day – there were no bills of fare printed, and as I took a seat at one of the small tables I saw that the others were not crowded. It was evidently a cold day for the landlord as well as the rest of us. At one of the tables stood the blonde, her hat and cloak off, and a dainty white apron, with frills and pockets, tied about her waist. She was evidently not here in the character of a guest. Before I had time to wonder why she might be here in the other capacity, a voice at my shoulder said rapidly:

"Roast-beef-boiled-mutton-caper-sauce-pork-and-beans-veal-pie."

I thought I recognized the tones and squared myself to take in the glasses and brown eyes of the brunette. While I studied them she said it all over again in the same key and without pause, as though under conviction that she would forget a part if she failed in the stereotyped manner. She smiled at the end of the second stanza and I saw that her teeth were very white and even – were pretty, indeed, and so was the smile. She sang it again, a note higher, and at the conclusion I could trace only the ghost of the smile. It was time for me to respond. I was painfully aware of it, but somehow I persisted in wandering away thousands of ages and drifting about in the mysteries of the primary period, barking my shins on the azoic rocks trying to find the starting-point and to trace the connection.

"Will you tell me what you want?"

The mood was now imperative. I said I could not tell her that, but I would take pork and beans.

CHAPTER II. A WARMER TRAIL

A scientific knowledge of botany is by no means essential to happiness. Latin does not add an atom of beauty to the wild clematis. One can admire a healthy, bright-eyed baby without knowing its name. This morning after I start out on the railroad I notice that the July flowers are abundant on the slopes leading up to the foot-hills. Great patches of wild poppies grow here and there – it is not an infatuating plant, but one loses sight of the coarse leaves in the delicate white of the bloom. The bluish-gray of the wild chamomile of itself makes a rich carpet, but into this the hand of the Master has woven a countless variety of colors. Hanging in bountiful clusters of crimson and scarlet is a little flower, shaped like that of the honeysuckle; beside it, pendant from their slender stems, a wealth of purple bells, while a little canary-colored gem – a tiny, perfect, five-pointed star – peeps up modestly, as if asking permission to add its atom to the gorgeous pattern. So we have acres of tender beauty. I am glad to know that I am not alone in the enjoyment of it. At the first station, where the liberty of a few minutes' pause is allowed, a gentleman with his trousers in his boots gives us to understand that appearances are deceitful, by gathering a bouquet, and a young man in light-colored tweed, small umbrella and eyeglass redeems himself also, in like manner. The ladies are delighted and full of wonder, so beautiful they are – the flowers, I mean, yet lacking fragrance; how can it be? Two senses at least expectant and only one can be gratified? A little three-year-old, disappointed, stigmatizes them as "weed flowers," but is compelled, at the instance of a juvenile friend, to admit: "They are pretty, anyway." They have a generous influence too; people who had barely looked at each other for forty miles, pleasantly express a common sentiment one to another, it may be a smile or a glance merely, but it is sufficient to make them know they are of kin; even the young man with the umbrella unbends and feels on the same plane with humanity.

The delicate haze of summer is again upon the hills; the great, white napkins of a little while ago are changed into fields of grain shimmering in the sun as they are brushed by the gentle wind; the cattle no longer haunt the hay-stack, but slowly feed along the mesas, or, filled and sleek, complacently chew their cuds in the shadows of the pines; my castles on the Divide give evidence of thrift in the surroundings, and in their summer garb display the exquisite taste of their mistress; the song of the meadow lark strikes high above the roar of the car wheels, and you lose entirely the clang of the iron in the clear, sweet trill from the golden-throated beauty perched upon an adjacent fence, or half hid in some grassy tussock; the pines have turned to a lighter green, the willows are in full leaf, and as the eye sweeps over the brilliant carpet toward the foot-hills and beyond, it encounters the only sign of winter in the patches of snow lingering in the clefts of the distant range; you mark the irregular skyline of the towering summits against that background of delicate blue, while the loftier peaks may be kissed by a cloud. Does disease weigh you down; do you fret under the vexations and disappointments of the daily drudgery; has the sordid strife among your fellows made you feel that life is not worth living; does sorrow brood in your heart? Why, look you, this leaf is a panacea for hurt minds! it was not created for you, but you are so constituted that you may find solace in it if you will – it is one of the many out of the book that gives our copper-hued, untutored brother, *faith*. Will you accept less than he?

But I am reminded that if I loiter so, I shall not reach Cascade in a week. The Deacon, a young friend of mine, and the Major, are to join me there, fully equipped for a campaign in the Roan Range. I propose, however, to make them stop by the way, as the humor moves me.

Speeding across and down the south side of the Divide, I notice trespassers on a part of my whilom wild estate under the foot-hills at the right. Specks of cottages perched upon the slope of one of my glades do not add to the romance of the picture, yet I feel a bit flattered in that the

builders have exhibited good taste in selecting a location for their brown-roofed boxes. They can be cool in summer and enjoy a view of mountains and plains. Then they may speculate, too, upon what preceded the pines and grass-covered earth about them. The gorge just back of them, and the meagre creek tumbling out from it, give a hint, and as we move quickly down the narrow valley dolmens here and there indicate that the little creek is only the remains of a river of ice. These monuments of the centuries are very abundant hereabouts. I have seen fossilized bivalves from this same drift down which I am speeding, and am set to wondering what kind of mortals inhabited these shores when those oysters were growing, and whether the brown-roofed cottages on the slope above are an improvement upon the architecture of that epoch. Or how many millions of years preceding that ice and ocean age this same valley was a bed of verdure, as now; and whether those who stirred up the soil are permitted to look on us and whether they do so in sympathy with us in our tragedies, or are our tragedies all comedies to them?

Loitering again! well, why may one not loiter when he finds a thrifty city of his own time flourishing on an old ocean bed? This new city is filled with the refinement and culture of the age, even its outlying shanties have an air of respectability. It has its share of vices too, no doubt; however, reformation is not my mission, the duties are too delicate; I might be admonished to "throw the first stone" if I dared. But there is no harm in wondering whether the culture and refinement that flourished in the same spot a great many centuries ago was different from the present ideal. We will not discuss it, as you suggest, but sweep round and into the mountain gorge at our right, looking down, as we speed along, upon Manitou. The Spirit invites one to linger again, and there is comfort in the reflection that the Kind Mother will welcome our coming, without stopping to inquire whether we are compelled by the result of our vices to seek her beautiful places, or are prompted by our virtues.

Thirty years since, the way we are travelling was an unbroken wilderness; the Ute was only then being succeeded by the prospector. Had it been suggested to the latter that his successors would ever journey by rail, it would have moved him to pity for the unfortunate mental plight of the prophet. A broad-gauge train of cars speeding over the way where he found it toilsome to creep! Could anything be more preposterous? Yet we are careening round graceful curves upon the precipitous mountain sides, rushing over bridges that span yawning chasms, plunging from light into darkness and out again from the short tunnels into the light, ever on and up without impediment. Surely, for the first time, it is like a pleasant dream, and one almost forgets to take in the gorgeous, ever-changing panorama made up of pinnacles, pine-clad hills, towering cliffs and flashing stream. Soon the gorge widens into a cozy dell; to the right, a gentle grass-covered slope, with countless wild flowers woven into the pattern, and groups of young pines here and there, leads up to a tier of hills with rock-crowned summits. To the left is Cascade Cañon, sentineled by lofty cliffs, and from out its shady recesses comes tumbling the bright mountain stream that suggested the name.

The departing train leaves, besides myself, the gentleman with the eyeglasses and slim umbrella. After dinner, while I solace myself with the briar-root, this gentleman sits a little way off on the veranda puffing a cigar. There is another, an obese party, walking up and down; he is not to be mistaken; his boots are shiny, so are his coat and trousers, and his felt hat gives token of grease and dust about the band. His shirt bosom discloses a compromise between cheviot and wool, and he wears an immense gold nugget for a breast-pin. He possesses the air of one with prospects and bestows an occasional glance of inquiry upon the gentleman with the umbrella. He catches the latter's eye, and halts, almost imperceptibly, feels encouraged, nods and approaches; then with an expression of boundless hospitality pervading his entire person, bursts forth:

"A stranger in Colorado?"

The gentleman with the eyeglasses pauses in the middle of a puff, looks up staringly, and the next moment relapses into his wonted contentment, while the native takes a seat.

"Ya-a-s."

"The grandest country in the world; scenery unsurpassed, and the climate superb; the air – there's nothing like the vivifying air – do you notice the air?"

"Notice – ah – notice the aha?"

The stranger dropped his eyeglass, replaced it suddenly and stared a further inquiry at his interrogator.

"Exactly – the lightness of it – its purity – the ozone, as it were – "

"Aw – y-a-s – I smell the fwagwance of the pines, and I feel sleepy when – "

"You've struck it, my dear sir – that's what every one says – they always feel sleepy on first coming out – but you'll overcome that in time – it's a wide-awake country, you will find."

"You have wesided some time in Colowado, y-a-s?"

"Well, y-e-s, so, so – a few years, long enough to become acquainted with the ways of the country. I came out to see about certain little mining interests," he continued in a burst of confidence, "and was detained longer than I expected, and now, I could not be induced to go anywhere else to live."

There was an air of firmness in this avowal of attachment that carried conviction with it.

"You are intawested in mines – y-a-s?"

"Slightly – enough to occupy my leisure time, that is all."

From the manner of the man he might have owned the State, exclusive of the mines.

"I have one nice little piece of property over in Dead Man's Gulch, I think of developing some day."

And while he patted this property on the back, so to speak, he plunged his hand into his pocket for – a specimen, of course – "ruby silver" – fabulous in ounces to the ton.

"Wooby silvah?" I heard the stranger inquire, as I relighted my pipe and started for the cañon.

The broad avenue quickly narrows into a trail, leading into charming nooks and shady retreats. The air is fragrant with the perfume of the pines and the half mile of cascades contributes to the delight with its music. The bed of this mountain brook is precipitous and has no still reaches in its current. There are seemingly a dozen picturesque waterfalls in its course, and the giver of names seems for once to have been moved with happy intelligence and good taste. At the Naiads' Bath I come to a halt in search of an Old Man, who, I am told, presides over this place sacred to the spirits that flit hereabout, to indulge in their holy ablutions. The early afternoon sun lights up the gray and brown of the cliffs almost overhead and helps work the stately rocks into fantastic shapes. I find him at last, on the opposite mountain side, a tutelary deity carved out of the cold rock by the hand of old Time, and looking down silent and grim upon the consecrated pool of crystal. Not a great way below his chin, sits a modern belle, thin at the waist and with flowing skirts. The sculptor must have anticipated the day when she would be in the fashion, and set her up as a satire in the sanctuary.

While I rest here, peering into the depths in search of the ethereal beauties which I know must be sporting there, and who will be revealed to me by the bright rays glinting through the foliage, and while I listen in vain to catch some change in the deep notes of the silvery organ almost at my side, I am conscious of another presence and look up. The young woman in glasses and her companion with the fluffy hair are standing within a few feet of me. I am at once reduced to plain diet; even Darwin is forgotten, as his fair disciple with uplifted hands exclaims:

"Is it not lovely!"

Her companion had barely time ecstatically to coincide, when the man with the mine and his newly-found acquaintance climbed into sight. The man with the mine remarked for the benefit of all:

"Splendid site for an overshot wheel."

The gentleman with the umbrella said:

"Chawming," leaving one in doubt.

But a startled and evident feeling of astonishment made itself manifest in this gentleman's face as the Darwinian, hearing voices behind her, turned in his direction.

"Why, Miss Gwace," he exclaimed, dropping his umbrella and extending both hands, "this is a vewey gwatifying supwise."

Miss Grace did not seem so much gratified, accepting one hand only, and allowing "Mr. Dide," as she named him, to recover his umbrella with the other.

I considered it high time for me to move on. I had not gone far when I heard a footstep behind me, and looking back, discovered the native puffing up the trail. He had taken off his coat, and was perspiring freely, so I halted, feeling a weakness for the practical mind. At the same time I took comfort in the reflection that there were many economical methods of exit from this life, and that the man with the mine might find one to his taste. If he would only fall off a rock! When he came up very red in the face and had mopped his thinly-covered temples with a questionable handkerchief, he told me it was "hot." I acquiesced by a nod, and he felt encouraged. I knew intuitively what he would say next, and in that affirmative sort of way that precludes denial:

"Stranger in Colorado? What part of the east are you from?"

"Italy."

"No! why, you talk like a native."

As it was the only word he heard me utter I considered him a competent judge, and felt flattered.

I inquired if he had explored the cañon, and he reluctantly denied that he had, but was going now to the top, notwithstanding it was "hot work" for a man of his "build." I wanted to give him credit, and would have done so, but for his remark touching the beautiful waterfall below. While I kept moving it was impossible for him to talk without discomfort, and I prayed that the way might become more precipitous. Suddenly the trail presented a termination. The rocks towered up grandly to the right, to the left was a steep incline, and directly in front a pile of rocks blocking up the way, save for a slight rift that might admit my working through. "The prayer of the wicked availeth not." I felt that I was one of the righteous: the man with the mine could never accomplish that keyhole, nor could he get around it. I went on with reverence and humility. When I looked around he stood on the lower side of the impassable barrier in evident contemplation, his hat pushed back, his coat still on his arm, and one hand poised in the act of mopping his dripping face. I found the grotto: great slabs of granite leaning together at the top and edges made smooth by the tempests of the ages, leaving a capacious, cool retreat below. I felt a momentary regret at the condition of the man with the mine, and lay in the shade listening to the music of the brook singing to me its mysteries: whence it came, whither it was going, and of its adventures thus far by the way.

CHAPTER III. TWIN LAKES

When the Deacon put in his appearance the next day according to appointment, he desired to know, first, whether I had gone up the cañon. I told him I had, then he wanted to know what I had seen to be pleased with. I advised him that when I had a week's leisure, and he felt inclined to listen, I would "dilate fully" my afternoon's experience; that a week devoted to the relation of each half day's enjoyment would be none too much; whereat he seemed tickled, for the cañon is a weakness with him. When I told him I had returned from the grotto in the cool of the afternoon after a delightful interview with the nymphs of the neighborhood, he insisted that I had made a mistake; that I should have climbed on up to the carriage road, and returned by that way, whence a delightful view of the valley and the wooded mountain sides could be obtained. But I reminded him I was in the humor to court the hidden recesses rather than the sunlight, and besides, that just above the grotto it was necessary, if I would go on, to swing-off a perpendicular rock six feet, and I did not care to risk the leap. Then he advised me of another trail turning off to the road, just below the Naiads' Bath, where the ascent was easy, and exacted a promise that the next time I would come out that way.

The Deacon being assigned to the office of guide and general counsellor concerning the early part of this expedition, he suggested that we take a trip into Manitou Park. It became my duty to inform him that we could not in a season, let alone three weeks, visit all the places of interest this side of White River; that we might stop a day or two at Twin Lakes and thence we must go straight into the wilderness.

"But there is a party going over into the park this afternoon; the station is only eight miles up the road, and we can have a delightful drive of half a dozen miles, and be back in time for the west-bound train to-morrow."

"Whom shall we have in this party, Deacon?"

"A couple of ladies, and a man – a dude – with an eyeglass; the ladies are pretty – "

"Deacon! Deacon! none o' that – "

"But see here, I mean the ladies are attractive, and – "

"Yes, I understand – one talks Darwin and wears glasses, and the other is a blonde."

"Exactly – where did you become acquainted with them? I had thought to introduce you."

I was compelled to set the Deacon right and inform him of my last winter's trip. Then I declined his offer of an introduction. He seemed a little nettled at my indifference, and thereupon I pleaded old age in extenuation of my lack of gallantry.

"But, Deacon, how long have you been acquainted with these ladies; and who are they?"

"Oh, several months – the train is coming, let us go in to dinner."

I conjectured that there was a sensitive spot in the Deacon's anatomy, and I had unconsciously touched it with a rude hand. To apologize further at present might provoke embarrassment, and yet I feared something more was demanded of me. He came to my relief by taking a seat at the same table with the parties in question, leaving me in company with the Major, who had arrived on the train.

"Where is the Deacon?" was the Major's first inquiry. I motioned in the direction.

"Whom have we there?" I could give him no information, of course, and we discussed our dinner with the prospects which Twin Lakes might afford.

From the rear end of the train as it nears Manitou Park station, a view is had of the great peak which dwarfs that from the plains. The mountain seems to quadruple in size and grows in grandeur, until the great mass overtopping its companions appears to be standing alone, endowed with the consciousness of its own majesty. Miles beyond, and when we are traversing the lower end of the great South Park, the noble pile still stands out, from its azure background, the gray of its rocks

and the snow-drifts flashing down a royal smile in the afternoon light. Ahead of us is the Musquito Range, with Buffalo Peak serving as another grand landmark in the bewildering assemblage of lofty mountains; and the park, for thirty miles, seemingly as level as a floor, reposes peacefully in its cordon of hills.

At Idlewild our list of travellers is added to – a broad-shouldered young man and a young woman. The boot heels of the young man appear uncomfortably high, and he consequently bears his weight upon his turned-in toes. The new doeskin trousers incase a pair of caliper legs, carrying with them the impression that their owner is astride an invisible something and is not at all accustomed to walking; the Prince Albert is unbuttoned and the white vest is ornamented by a large chain with a silver horse pendant; a low-crowned, broad-brimmed, white felt hat with a wide leather band, is thrown back from a face that is sunburned but smiling; the eyes of the young man are, no doubt, keen even in repose, but there is a shade of embarrassment lingering about them; he evidently feels that everybody in the car understands the situation, and he is ready to be friendly or defiant as occasion may demand. The color in the young woman's cheeks deepens as she smilingly bustles into the only unoccupied seat, and when the couple have settled down there is plenty of room on the end of the seat for another. She has a paper bag of cookies; she takes a bite from one and reaches it up to him, he absorbs the remainder as complacently as a two-year-old being fed with a spoon. The cookies disappear rapidly after this fashion; meantime a sleeve of the Prince Albert, with an arm in it, has quietly stolen along the back of the seat, and a strong brown hand rests tenderly on the plump shoulder where it has a right to be. A backward look through the car discloses a smile on every face, but our new friends are busy with the sunny prospects of the radiant world just opening up to them, and have forgotten that they are objects of interest. The Major leaning a little toward me, whispers:

"I don't know just what you think of it, my boy, but I hope it will always be sunny for them to the end of the long trail."

From Hill-top, at the western side of the park, our way is well up on the mountain sides along well-timbered gorges. Presently, from the shelf in the gray granite, one may look down into the beautiful valley of the Arkansas. The pioneers and familiars of the neighborhood will tell to this day the delight they would feel on reaching the summit over the old trail, whence they could look into this vale. Sloping from the foot of what is now called Mount Princeton down to the river, is an emerald floor of six miles in width, skirted far to the east by pine-covered mountains; the river winds along the northerly side until it disappears through a gorge in the distant hills. Beyond Mount Princeton stand gray and solemn the massive piles of Mounts Yale and Harvard, as if they would shut out from intrusion and guard the lovely valley in perpetual tranquillity. From our vantage-point it seems quiet even now, with the busy town just below. Before the advent of the railroads and the multitude, one may understand why the early miners looked upon it as another dwelling-place of the Genius of Peace.

We lodge at Granite, one of the old mining camps, prominent early "in the sixties," and with golden prospects yet. I get a good bed in a room that reminds me of old times; clean, eight feet square, with a pipe running through the floor from the office stove beneath. The pipe is not to be despised, as an addition to one's bedchamber, if one is unaccustomed to a sudden drop to 45° from 90°. As I stand on the doorstep next morning and take a survey of the town, no longer to be called a camp, I conclude that it must have been named Granite because there is less of that rock here than anywhere else in the vicinity.

After breakfast, at which we taste our first trout of the season, we start on a six-mile ride over a splendid road to the lakes. Though we are fairly in the heart of the mountains the way may not be called mountainous; an exaggerated rolling prairie surrounded by magnificent peaks gives a better idea of the land. The air is fresh and cool, the sun is bright, with no sign of clouds save in the direction we are going. Reaching the mesa from the valley a storm seems to be gathering about the summits of the Twin Peaks and Mount Elbert. Climbing the last rising ground between our starting-point and destination, I find we are upon what I conceive to be a terminal moraine, or the remains of one, and

can look down into the grand court where the Ice King, at some remote date, held high carnival; his throne, twenty or more miles away, guarded on either side by peaks over fourteen thousand feet in height; at my feet the ancient floor of his palace, covering an area of six thousand acres or more, no longer solid, but a pair of crystal lakes flashing under the bright rays of the morning sun. The July heat has not yet melted the white helmets on the sentinels' heads, and back of them the clouds I had seen but a little while before, fleecy and drifting in the azure, are gathering volume and blackness. Between them and me a gray mist, driving earthward in perpendicular sheets, tells of the rain coming down; the long lines brushed by the breath of the storm will wave to the right and left, and then drop again straight as a plummet, while the sun's rays here and there flash in the rainbow tints. The background of the sullen clouds begins to pale a little, then breaks, and a great mass of white and gray and rose-tinted vapor rolls majestically to the left, while the main storm, with its artillery in full play, follows south, down the range, and once more lets in the light upon the seat of ancient royalty.

We catch only a few scattering drops while we trot briskly around the south side of the lower lake to the rustic hotel. The landlord takes possession of my grip and I walk off alone to the stream that holds in bond the beautiful lakes; it is barely fifty feet wide by a hundred yards long.

I put my rod together with a coachman on the end of the leader. I had not taken time to soak anything and the kinks were not out, but nevertheless the fly had hardly touched the water before I hooked a ten-inch trout. He gave up readily and I lifted him out with an impression of a good time at hand. But a half-hour's work disclosed not another fin, and I concluded he was the last one there.

Wandering toward the shore of the Upper Lake, I overhauled a man with a cane pole and a bag. I gave him my trout by way of encouragement, as he said he was out of luck, and then I tried the head of the outlet without avail. The man said there were trout in the lakes, but the best way to catch them was to row about with half a dozen poles stuck out at different angles, and "hooks baited with grasshoppers and such-like." I sat on a rock and watched the tints of the Twin Peaks and Mount Elbert mirrored in the smooth water, and prayed for the destroyer, that if he had not already overtaken the pot-hunter, he would; and would burn, not drown him; toast him on a fork and turn him around and toast him some more; toast him slowly just in sight of the cool, clear waters he had helped to almost ruin. But the government promises to establish a hatchery here and to restock the waters. When that is accomplished what more attractive spot can be found in all these mountains for a summer sojourn for wife, babies and your precious self? It can be made a headquarters, if you wish, and thence you may make easy runs farther into the wilderness. With sweet air, pure water, grand scenery and trouting, what more can mortal ask when he is tired and the baby teething?

Though injured, the lakes are by no means depleted; the fishing is not quite so gratifying as it was twenty years ago, that is all. There are three different varieties of native trout here: the red or salmon-tinted, the lighter-colored variety, and a slender, active trout, different from the denizens of any other waters in the State except, perhaps, Trapper's Lake. The back is a pale green, just the color of the water in the lake, the lateral lines are fine and black, and the spots perfectly round and smaller than the finest shot; it is a graceful fish in its contour, running to three-quarters of a pound in weight, and possessed of excellent fighting qualities.

The State has made an attempt at improving the lakes, and I met the superintendent of the State hatchery here. He said I must go a-fishing. I asked him where, and he said on the lake, if I was not disposed to take a run of a couple of miles up to the falls, where the fishing was good. I told him what I had heard, that the trouting was nothing to boast of except as the market hunter potted his game. To this he replied that when I came to the lakes I must do as the lakers do. I told him I had not had an oar in my hands for a great many years and was in no humor to be drowned. But he promised to attend to the rowing while I fished. With this assurance and to oblige him I rigged up, under his directions, four pine poles, tied on the lines and fixed up a cast of a coachman for a stretcher and a brown hackle and a gray for droppers. I persuaded him to allow me to take my bamboo, and armed with the implements of torture and my rod, like Hyperion among Satyrs, we stepped into a skiff and

started for the lower end of the lake. I stuck out those pine poles with their ten feet of line, two over the stern and one out each side, and sat on the butts. The flies trailed along on the water and I had room to ply the bamboo astern beyond the annoyances floating there. After fifteen minutes of this business, I asked the skipper if he did not think a fellow who called this trouting, ought to drown and go to – sheol. He laughed; I took to praying again and in my earnestness lost one of the poles. Shortly after I had a rise to the coachman on the bamboo and hooked a trout. Inside of two minutes I could not tell whether the fish was on the hook that struck him, or the other three lines, or whether I had four trout in tow. I found out very soon that there was one trout and four lines snarled. I pulled them all in, took off the trout, untangled the knots and stowed the poles. The man wanted to know whether I had become tired and I told him I had, whereat he proposed to tell everybody that I didn't know how to fish. I said he would oblige me by circulating the report, and that I was mortified only at having tried. With this I sent the coachman astern again and caught another trout; that was all; one trout to the mile. Then I prevailed on him to row me back to the landing at the hotel.

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