



Visitor.

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BY LOVE UNFEIGNED.—ST. PAUL.

Rev. E. D. VERY, Editor.

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over the falls, as a waste gate, on the East. What a glorious cataract was Niagara in those times.

The upper and first stratum of the prairies is in some places a sandy, and in others, where there appears to have been more of decayed vegetable matter, a dark loam; the second is sand, or clay, and sometimes gravel of large size, that bears evidence of having been rolled about by the action of the water, which thus rendered the stones round and smooth. Fresh water shells, fossils, &c., are also found in most of the strata. Besides this, the large block or boulders found scattered over the prairies are evidences that the water once overflowed the now fruitful fields, for they all present appearances apparently resulting from its action; some of these stones we have seen, which were several feet in circumference, and others must have been many tons weight. A writer, we do not know his name, states, wherever the superficial gravel has been removed from the rocky strata, the latter appear ploughed by straight parallel furrows running generally in a southern direction, and always preserving their parallelism.

Geologists account for the existence of boulders or granite blocks by supposing that they were carried off by water and ice. During the submergence of the country, these huge boulders were perhaps caught up by the ice, and firmly embedded in its solid masses, carried off by the force of the current, or by the winds blowing from the North and West. Thus, when the ice melted upon the return of warm weather, they were deposited in the various places in which they are now found.

The different strata of rocks in the Fox River country, and, in fact, the appearance of the banks of all the Western Rivers where rock is to be found, is that presented at the sea shore upon the recession of the tide. High up the banks a line is perceptible, evidently caused by the washing of the current, and this at the height of 40 or 50 feet in some places, showing a vast difference in the height of the water now and what it must have been when it flowed on a level with those ancient marks. The limestone strata are almost made up, in many places of fossil remains, most probably salt water depositions.

Some geologists consider the alluvial lands of the West of recent formation. Actual discovery will scarcely bear them out in this. There are changes going on imperceptible even now in the formation of bottom lands and the washing away of strata, and its deposition in other places, but we think that from the beginning this change has been going on, and that a vast period of time must have elapsed ere the face of the country assumed its present appearance. Indian remains, such as warlike weapons, &c., have actually been found embedded in the solid limestone, seventeen feet from the surface.

Our opinion is [but it is only conjecture] the prairies were not originally as some have been led to suppose covered with timber, which was burned off by the annual fires; but that they were the bottoms of lakes which eventually, as the waters receded, became covered with herbage, thus affording ranges for cattle, and finally capable of sustaining man. It will be noticed that the heaviest and greatest quantity of timber is to be found on the eastern banks of the rivers. This is the result of the wind's blowing oftener and with more steadiness from the west and the south west, than from any other points, while the fire being checked by the stream does not consume the timber on its opposite bank.

The immense bodies of water which flow through the west, depositing their muddy tribute as they go, have made it the garden of the American Continent. It appears to us that the West offers the richest fields for enquiry and speculation to the Geologists of any other portion of the earth. The whole face of the country seems to have been changed, not by those terrible disruptions common to other parts of this and the old world, but by a gradual process

which has left her an Eden blooming in virgin beauty, and bearing offerings to Heaven of every shade and hue, which present to the naturalist a field, laid open as the pages of a wonderful book, for his inspection.—*Chicago Journal.*

The Mountains of India.

The mean height of the Himalaya is stupendous; certainly not less than from 16,000 to 20,000 feet, though the peaks exceeding that elevation are not to be numbered, especially at the sources of the Sutlej; indeed, from that river to the Kalee the chain exhibits an endless succession of the loftiest mountains on earth; forty of them surpass the height of Chimborazo, the highest but one of the Andes, and many reach height of 25,000 at least. So rugged is the magnificent chain that the military parade at Sabathoo, half a mile long, and a quarter of a mile broad, is said to be the only level ground between it and the Tartar frontier on the north, or the valley of Nepal to the East. Toward the fruitful valleys of Nepal and Bhotan the Himamlaya is equally lofty, some of the mountains being from 25,000 to 28,000 feet high, but it is narrower, and the descent to the plains excessively rapid, especially in the territory of Bhotan, where the dip from the table-land is more than 10,000 feet in ten miles. The valleys are crevices so deep and narrow, and the mountains that hang over them in menacing cliffs are so lofty, that these abysses are shrouded in perpetual gloom, except when the rays of a vertical sun penetrate their depths. From the steepness of the descent the rivers shoot down with the swiftness of an arrow, filling the caverns with foam and the air with mist. At the very base of this wild region lies the elevated and peaceful valley of Bhotan, vividly green, and shaded by magnificent forests. Another rapid descent of 1,000 feet leads to the plain of the Ganges. * * * * *

Most of the passes over the Himalaya are little lower than the top of Mont Blanc; many are higher, especially near the Sutlej, where they are from 18,000 to 19,000 feet high; and that north-east of Khoonawur is 20,000 feet above the sea, the highest that has been attempted. All are terrific, and the fatigue and suffering from the rarity of the air in the last 500 is not to be described. Animals are as much distressed as human beings, and many die. Thousands of birds perish from the violence of the wind; the drifting snow is often fatal to travellers, and violent thunder storms add to the horror of the journey. The Niti pass, by which Mr. Moorcroft ascended to the sacred lake of Manassas in Tibet, is tremendous; he and his guide had not only to walk bare-footed from the risk of slipping, but they were obliged to creep along the most frightful chasms, holding by twigs and tufts of grass, and sometimes they crossed deep and awful crevices, on a branch of a tree, or loose stones thrown across; yet these are the thoroughfares for commerce in the Himalaya, never repaired, or susceptible of improvement, from the frequent landslips and torrents. The loftiest peaks being bare of snow, give great variety of color and beauty to the scenery, which in these passes is at all times magnificent. During the day the stupendous size of the mountains, their interminable extent, the variety and sharpness of their forms, and, above all, tender clearness of their distant outline melting into the pale blue sky, contrasted with the deep azure above, is described as a scene of wild and wonderful beauty. At midnight, when myriads of stars sparkle in the black sky, and the pure blue of the mountains looks deeper still below the pale white gleam of the earth and snowlight, the ef