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(May 1929)
6-7410

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
PIUTE-----NATIONAL PARK

FILE NO. 0-35

PART 1

PIUTE
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
PROPOSED

LAST DATE ON TOP

IMPORTANT

This file constitutes a part of the official records of the National Park Service and should not be separated or papers withdrawn without express authority of the official in charge.

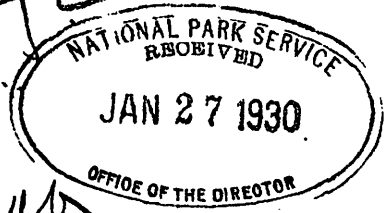
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ARNO B. CAMMERER,
Director.

Bishop, California.
January 21, 1930.

Honorable Horace Albright,
Director of National Parks,
Department of the Interior,
Washington, D. C.



Dear Mr. Albright:

Your brother Dewey wrote you a letter a short time ago relative to the Rock Writings, foot prints of animals and humans, stone huts etc. that exist from the Round Valley section to Fish Slough the through Chidago Canyon and up the branch canyon from Chidago to the old Milner Ranch, then across from the Dehy Ranch and on up to Watterson Meadows and then on the road between Benton and Benton Depot where the foot prints of a woman are shown quite plainly in the rock. These things are scattered as far as known now in an area about 30 miles long by 5 or 6 miles wide. They are both inside of and outside of an Indian Reservation which it is now proposed shall again become a part of the Public Domain by a Bill now before Congress. The reason given in the Bill for this restoration is that the area contains valuable building stone.

The enclosed map shows the area nicely and I have marked out the relative locations of the petroglyphs etc., only approximately as that is all that can be done without a survey.

These things have been a recent discovery and are not well known to the inhabitants here or elsewhere. As far as I know there has been no thorough exploration of the area and no examination by any one competent to judge whether these writings and pictures evidently some thousands of years old are valuable enough to save for posterity.

The reservation lines have been a partial protection to these relics of an ancient people, though many foot prints and petroglyph and pictographs have been taken away, I should say many tons.

The enclosed article from Touring Topics for May is a fair description and the photographs are very good of some of the foot prints which are both natural and artificial.

There are Billions and Billions of tons of the stone outside of the reservation, too much in fact to make it a good safe proposition from a business standpoint, in view of the fact that after spending a lot of money to introduce this stone, destructive competition in the way of a stone trust could run you out and take the market.

There are two motives suggested back of this Bill. One is a Stone Trust that is seeking to acquire the Tufa of the United States. The other is the City of Los Angeles desiring this land to come under the Grail Bill, which proposes to have the United States sell to the City a very large territory in this vicinity. This bill provides for the taking of the lands right up to the reservation line from Township 4 South, Range 33 East. Recently the City purchased the school sections within the reservation. Mr. Ford of the City, denies that the City is back of the Bill.

My interest is partially selfish as I have a quarry on the Eastern side of the reservation, but if Los Angeles is back of

Honorable Horace Albright, 2.

of the Bill, then these selfish interests of mine are fully protected, but there still remains the petroglyphs.

Last August due to the Museum Association here a withdrawal order was made of about four of these sections in different parts of the area containing petroglyphs etc. All that had been discovered at that time but there are several more sections that should be withdrawn now.

The purpose of this reservation was to aid the old and decrepit Piute Indians but it is valueless for this purpose, unless it is of sufficient importance to make it a National Park or Monument and charge the usual fee for going through and turning a part of this sum to the Indians, then it would be a perpetual source of revenue. I have interviewed some of the people that came to see these writings after the publication of the enclosed article and they stated they would be glad to have paid \$20.00 for what they had seen and consider the money well spent. These people were from Bakersfield, and used the greater part of two days in only seeing one area containing the foot prints.

The Museum Association is not so much interested in preserving these things where they are. Like other museums their tendency is to move those things that are movable into some building, where they may or may last as long as they would have in their native environment where they seem to be very well preserved during the past several thousand years. They also are not anxious for a National Park to preserve them as the rangers might interfere with their study of these relics and probably prevent them from carrying away those things that are loose.

I am therefore sending the stuff on to you with the idea in mind that before this Bill passes, there should be a withdrawal order covering these things, pending the determination of their value and whether it is worth while to save them permanently. If they are good enough for a National Park or Monument, then mining for the precious metals and grazing can be allowed in the area in such a manner as not to destroy or interfere with the petroglyphs etc. There are miles and miles of the stone on all sides of the reservation. It extends up to Adobe Meadows and on to Mono Lake on the North and West. It is several miles wide on the East and South and extends up between Rock Creek and Owens River on the West to Long Valley.

While my motive for protection may be more or less selfish, it takes a selfish motive to bring these things out. It is hard to believe that the motive back of the Bill to abolish the reservation is entirely philanthropic. Aside from their real value to science, these things have an advertising value and will bring tourists into this country. We have been pretty well whipsawed by a good many big interests and need all that we can get.

Very truly yours,

Charles D. McKersien

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

WASHINGTON January 28, 1930.

Memorandum for Mr. Albright:

Relative to the attached.

On July 23 Mr. Frank Parcher, Curator, Eastern California Museum Association, telegraphed the Secretary that certain lands in the area referred to contained petroglyphs and other archeological features which were being destroyed by vandalism, and requested that an investigation of the area be made with view to withdrawing the lands for national monument purposes.

An investigation was made by the San Francisco Division of the General Land Office, which resulted in a recommendation that some 15-3/4 sections (4-3/4 sections in California and 11 sections in Nevada) be withdrawn pending a study as to the desirability of including the lands in a national monument. These lands were withdrawn by Executive Order of August 29, 1929.

Following that, as I get it from the Land Office, the Indian Service, without any reference to the Land Office whatsoever, drew up a bill providing for the abolishment of the Piute Indian Reservation, which also contains considerable exhibits of archeological interest, with view to returning these lands to the public domain. This bill was introduced as S. 2755 and H. R. 7632. Passage of this bill as originally drawn would result in withdrawing even such little protection as they had under Indian Reservation withdrawal. When the Secretary was called upon for a report he referred the bills to the General Land Office, which recommended that the bills be amended to permit the Secretary to withhold any of the Indian Reservation lands believed to possess archeological, scientific or recreational value from disposition under the act until it could be determined that the lands are without such value.

There is nothing therefore that we can do towards giving further protection to the archeological features of the region, and I don't see where we could object to the passage of the bill abolishing the Indian Reservation as, if amended as suggested by the Land Office, all such exhibits would be given full protection.

You might be interested in knowing that on September 16 Assistant Secretary Edwards forwarded almost our entire file on this matter to Mr. Nusbaum requesting him to advise the Department as to whether, in his judgment, these objects of historic and scientific interest were of sufficient importance to warrant the expense necessary to send somebody to make a personal examination of them. We also transmitted to him some supplemental data.

The receipt of these papers was acknowledged by Chief Clerk Devilán on September 24 but there has been no sign of any report forthcoming from Mr. Nusbaum.

LEWIS.
Lewis

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

Mr. Wallis D. McPherson,
Bishop, California.

Dear Mr. McPherson:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of January 21, relative to a bill now before Congress which would abolish the Piute Indian Reservation.

Our official interest in this whole matter has, of course, to do with the archeological features. Last summer an investigator of the General Land Office went pretty well all over this area and recommended the withdrawal of about 16 sections, 11 of which are in Nevada and the remainder in California. These withdrawals were made pending a further investigation of the area as to its desirability for national monument purposes.

While the original bills that were introduced in the Senate and House did not provide for any protection of the archeological features, the General Land Office has recommended an amendment authorizing the Secretary to withhold from the provisions of the act any lands of historic or scientific interest until such time as they could be studied and a definite determination made as to their importance from this angle. In this way even though the reservation is abandoned there will still be an opportunity to withhold from entry any areas that might be determined of sufficient importance to preserve for scientific purposes.

Sincerely yours,

(SUS.) HORACE M. ALBRIGHT

HORACE M. ALBRIGHT,
Director.

WEL-bib

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARKS

Feb

Feb. 6, 1930.

MEMORANDUM.

Yesterday the Secretary signed letters to the Chairmen of the committees of the House and Senate handling this bill, transmitting copies of memorandums from the Indian Service and the General Land Office recommending that the bill be amended to provide that the Secretary may withhold from the provisions of the bill any lands of historic or scientific interest until such time as they could be studied and a definite determination made as to their importance from this angle.

The letters referred to have not been mailed, however, as extra copies of the memorandums have to be made. They will probably be mailed today.

Dawson

2-6

*Called Cong Leavitts office
giving the above inf.*

Jan

Mr. Mills Capital Br. 465

H. R. 7632

Lands in Clay County
to be restored to public
domain, Mr. Leabitt says
it is desired to preserve certain
Indian inscriptions and wants
to know whether this Service
has or intends to make this
request.

71ST CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7632

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 16, 1929

Mr. LEAVITT introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed

A BILL

To provide for restoration to the public domain of certain lands in the State of California which are now reserved for Indian allotment purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 That the public lands in townships 4 and 5 south, range
4 31 east, and townships 4, 5, and 6 south, range 32 east,
5 Mount Diablo meridian, California, temporarily reserved
6 from settlement, entry, sale, or other disposition by Execu-
7 tive order of May 9, 1912, for allotment to Paiute and other
8 Indians, be, and they are hereby, restored to the public
9 domain, subject to the provisions of Public Resolution Num-

1 bered 29, approved February 14, 1920 (Forty-first Statutes,
 2 page 434), as amended by Public Resolutions Numbered
 3 36 and 79, approved January 21 and December 28, 1922
 4 (Forty-second Statutes, pages 358 and 1067), respectively,
 5 on dates to be fixed by the Secretary of the Interior.

71ST CONGRESS }
 2^D SESSION } **H. R. 7632**

A BILL

To provide for restoration to the public domain of certain lands in the State of California which are now reserved for Indian allotment purposes.

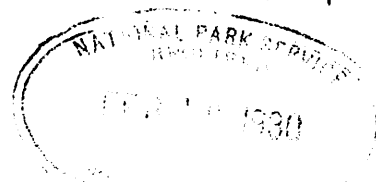
By Mr. LEAVITT

DECEMBER 16, 1929

Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and
 ordered to be printed

Mocalno, California.
February 6, 1930.

P.C.
Feb.



The Director, National Park Service,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Albright:

I have just received your letter of January 29th. I am more or less familiar with the investigation and withdrawals following, made by Mr. Leroy Palmer about last August and the circumstances leading up to the investigation.

Early in the year after reading John Von Blon's article which was sent you, I went over the ground myself and found the foot prints and petroglyphs. I was locating quite an area of this ground outside of the reservation at that time and among other locations, located the North West $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec 34. T. 3 S. R. 32 E. containing quite a number of foot prints and petroglyphs. I realized the importance of saving these things and went to Bishop and talked with Mr. Parcher and others about the importance of them, but could arouse no interest. I then sawed out a very nice foot print of a child and sent it to John Von Blon as custodian and to see what re-action I could get from him as to the value of these things and as to steps to save them.

I exhibited this foot print in several advertising sources and suddenly a big furore was started among the Museum Association. It had been reported to them that I was taking out quantities of these prints and selling them. I was called up on the carpet by a member of the aforesaid association and asked if I had taken foot prints. I admitted the crime and further stated that they were valuable to collectors of antiques, and as long as some one was destined to sell them it might just as well be myself. (No applause) I mentioned that I had brought up the matter of saving them without result and was then informed that no one would take them but myself. (wrong again as several tons had been taken before I discovered them). Then the statement was made, "well we want to save them." I replied if that was the case, I would help, but in as much as a great many things I had done and attempted to do, such as trying to save the water falls, getting the Tioga Road opened in seasonable time and working on the Montgomery Pass road to connect the East with the West by the shortest most scenic route and connecting Yellowstone- Zion- Cedar Brakes & Grand Canyon National Parks by personally building the 38 miles from Benton to Mono at my expense and irrigating Mono Basin, that my motives had been mis-contrued by those opposing me and the powers that be. I wanted it distinctly understood that my motive in this case was a selfish one to a certain extent.

The complaint from the Museum Association brought Mr. Palmer to the scene accompanied by his daughter who is studying archaeology. Mr. Palmer told me that he had seen some of the Fish Slough and the petroglyphs opposite here. He wanted at that time to withdraw a very large area so as to be sure and get all of the petroglyphs etc. I agreed with him and said that if he would do this and not with draw anything East of the line of my claims, that I would not contest his withdrawal of the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec 34. T. 3 S. R. 32 E. claimed by me.

Figure 1
Los Angeles

NEVADA CALLED CRADLE OF MAN

*Archeologist Believes All
Races From District*

*Traces Life Back to Lowly,
Single-Celled Amoeba*

*California - Nevada Border
Gives Up Secrets*

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 1. (AP)—

Man's first home was in what is now the bleak wasteland of Western Nevada and Eastern California, if the conclusions of Alan Le Baron, archeologist, are correct.

After months of study of the ancient writings, fossil remains and megalithic tombs of a considerable territory along the border line between the two States, Le Baron declares himself convinced that the district was occupied by a cultured race antedating the Glacial period.

The history of this territory, as read in its geology and archeological treasures is, he declares, "an encyclopedia of life on this earth" and is probably the only "land lying in the latitudes conducive to the growth and evolution of life that has remained constantly above water for a sufficient length of time to permit the complete evolution of animal life."

BEGINS WITH AMOEBA

Beginning with the lowly, single-celled amoeba, he states, life is traceable here with "scarcely a single break until it reaches the greatest physical expression in the giant mastodons."

The section which Le Baron conceives as having cradled the human race he envisions as a sub-tropical realm of 1,000,000 years ago. His theory, also advanced by another scientist years ago, holds that the Sierra range

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The section which Le Baron conceives as having cradled the human race he envisions as a sub-tropical realm of 1,000,000 years ago. His theory, also advanced by another scientist years ago, holds that the Sierra range was not then in existence to bar the warm moisture-laden winds from the Pacific but where the Sierras now rise there was a low range of hills from which issued sluggish streams that wound a devious way to the ocean.

Terming it "Cascadia," the name coming from the Cascade range of which the Sierras are a continuation, the ancient territory is seen as the "land literally flowing with milk and honey, with giant sequoias, hardwoods and fruit-bearing trees."

MONGOLIAN TRACES

In Cascadia, Le Baron believes, the Chinese written language had its beginning. "Carved on imperishable stone are the characters which determine these people to be the fathers of the Mongoloid race and perhaps the fathers of all people," he declares and holds that the migration was from this continent to Asia and not the reverse.

As for the cause of the migration and subsequent settlement of Asia Le Baron's theory is that:

"This land of Cascadia was destroyed when the growth of the Sierra Nevada range shut off forever the warm winds from the Pacific. It was a progressive drying up of a land, a process which endured for ages and in the end forced all living things to migrate or perish.

"The same growth of the Sierras which shifted the moisture-laden winds far to the north brought a warmer climate to Alaska and provided food for the migrating animals. And man followed his food supply."

Most of Le Baron's investigations have been on behalf of the Heye Foundation of New York.

Inclement weather has interrupted his research work but he expects to resume it when spring arrives.

COLORADO FIRE

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

FEB 19 1931

Mr. Wallis D. McPherson,
Mescalno, California.

Dear Mr. McPherson:

I have your letter of February 6 with further reference to the withdrawal of lands for the protection of archeological features north and west of Bishop.

Inasmuch as withdrawals made were based upon field investigation by a representative of the General Land Office and the details of the withdrawal were handled by that office, I do not like at this time to complicate the problem more by requesting additional withdrawals without more detailed information than we now have.

I am hopeful that it will be possible for us to send an archeological expert into that country next season to examine not only the lands that have already been withdrawn but also to study other lands as to their desirability for withdrawal and better protection.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD.) HORACE M. ALBRIGHT

HORACE M. ALBRIGHT,
Director.

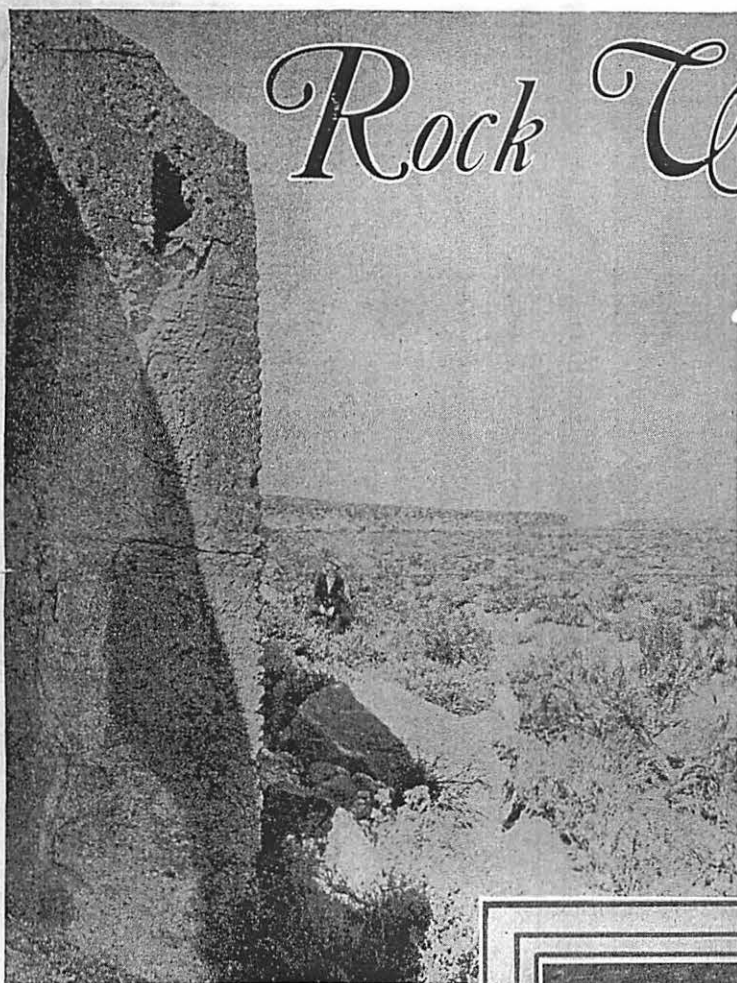
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Rock Writings of the C

9 Stories of aboriginal inhabitants of Eastern California are told in curious symbols on stone—

By John L. Von Blon

Photos by the Author



Is it a sun dial, calendar, flood gauge or what? This notched, sharp-edged rock of the Chalfant Valley group may be of great value to scientific investigators. The engraving upon it appears older than the nearby petroglyphs. The photograph was taken at noon, November 25, and shows the shadow cast by a cliff on the south. This edge faces due east and is eighteen feet high

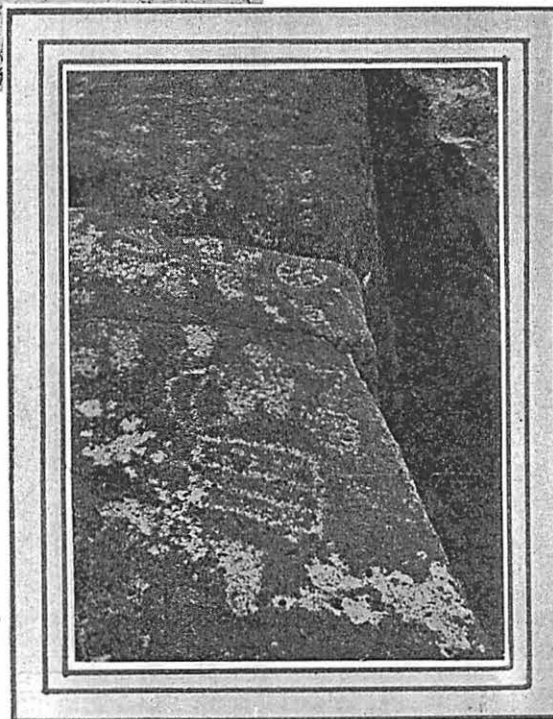
AMONG all the strange symbols inscribed on rock, up and down the globe, and especially in Southwestern America, by peoples since passed utterly out of human knowledge it would be difficult to designate any more mysterious or fascinating than certain specimens now revealed just without our own doors. These striking aboriginal works stand in Eastern California, within an easy day's drive from Los Angeles, present distinctive features found nowhere else, and are here described and illustrated for the first time. So there are, after all, some things new under the sun, although of antiquity beyond reckoning; new from the fact that even the most enthusiastic motor explorers have not seen them and the ever-alert scientists do not know of their existence, yet so old that they may antedate history and tradition.

Such are the major petroglyphic (incised) presentments, principally circular forms, located just above the Owens River Valley, seventeen miles north of Bishop and facing Chalfant Valley, in Mono County, hence appropriately referred to as the Chalfant Valley group. Somewhat general inquiry

tends to establish that they are the largest of this character ever discovered in the United States, though smaller circles are of common

where the old Bishop-Benton stage-coach route intersects Chidago (pronounced She-day-go) Canyon. Contact can also be made from the Mt. Montgomery road running northward via Laws. The extensive plateau, through which the Owens River plunges in a mighty gorge, is in the main an Indianless Indian Reservation, the boundary embracing the imposing drawings by a narrow margin. For nearly half a mile the towering wall, surmountable in few places, shows the carvings and paintings (pictographs) of the prehistoric pictorialists—medicine men or other strong factors in tribal life according to surmise.

Five and a half feet is the approximate diameter of the more prominent circle, and its proportionate accompanying figures serve to make up a



A weird, dramatic procession of human and animal footprints wends its way a hundred yards along the top of a broken rock ridge, twenty miles north of Bishop

Right—This scene exemplifies the character of petroglyph-pictograph country. The mountains in the background are the Sierra Nevada

occurrence throughout the Southwest.

They are cut into the eastern escarpment of a high and rough volcanic tableland between the lofty Sierra Nevada and the White Mountains; and while the site is so effectually hidden that it has been completely overlooked except locally, access is easy by walking two miles northeast from the point



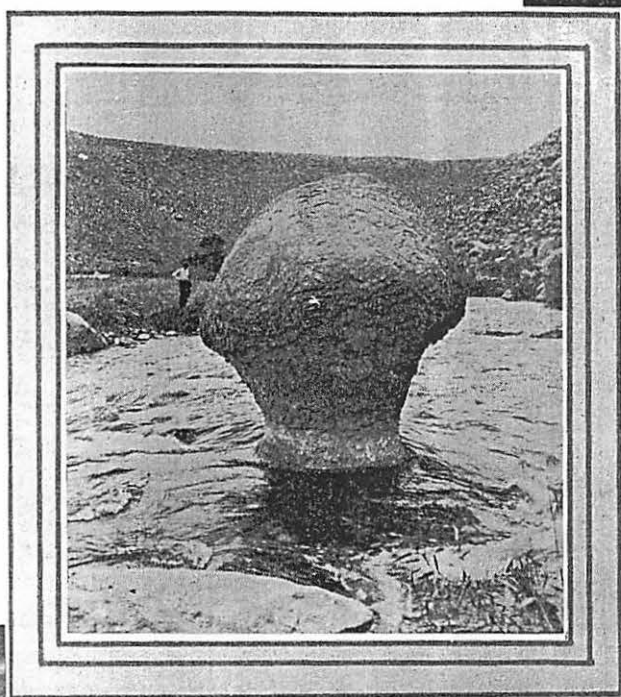
Owens Valley

series more than twenty feet long with the appearance of being connected. The photographic reproduction herewith discloses the details exactly as they are, no "chalking in" having been resorted to. Conspicuous is a quaint device in bold relief on a sunken field, measuring more than two feet across, that vaguely suggests the emblem of the Santa Fé Railway, though palpably very different. A "tailspinner" at the extreme left is six feet in length and a departure in that respect, all others observed being short.



The Birchim Canyon "Rosetta Stone," is asserted by a modern Indian to be the key to all writings, and about it weaves an amazing legend. The Piute papoose peeking over the top can't read it—yet

Left—Naughty Baby Rock in the Owens River is said to figure in the legend supposed to be set forth in the "Rosetta Stone"



guaranteed to produce an eerie sensation if unexpectedly encountered. It confronted me quite suddenly at a turn and I must confess to a decidedly creepy feeling up and down my spinal column! The spell of its blank, chilling stare is awesome. It holds more of mystic charm than the bigger round image, but is neither as artistic nor as attractive; but what a message might it divulge were its rock-locked secret unsealed!

Then we view what appeals as the masterpiece of the lot, itself a part of the inscriptive wall, and an object that must stir the imagination and arouse wonderment and speculation regarding its purpose. This is a projection eight feet beyond the rock body and having a sharp and straight vertical edge extending eighteen feet from top to bottom and the blade cutting due east. Its full length the edge has been beautifully and accurately notched, with corresponding horizontal lines on both sides. Though considerably worn because of the more exposed location the lines are fairly clear, and there remain traces of gravings all over. Near the apex is a cavity, not certainly natural but believed to be so. Means to approach it for close examination could not readily be improvised. A ladder would be requisite.

Did the designers essay a sun dial, calendar, flood gauge or other measuring contrivance, or did a random notion without special significance bring it about? Was it intended as a landmark to be thus peculiarly ornamented or does it call attention to the adjacent symbolisms? Ten steps southward is a higher cliff segment that casts its shadow along the entire edge, but to intimate that this circumstance has any bearing would be a wild guess indeed. In

the accompanying photograph, taken November 25, 1928, at sunny high noon, the shade line is just beginning its gradual upward movement at the lower indentations. At the base of the partially-hewn tower, and stretching for miles along the escarpment, is the usually-dry flood channel of half a dozen intermittent creeks having their sources in the White Mountains. During periods of rainfall the water rushes down that wide sandy waste in roaring volume.

The minor depictions in that situation comprise an exhaustive range—big-horn sheep, bear, deer, something that passes muster as a buffalo, the head of a goose, a cleverly-sketched dragon fly, three hands in intaglio, chicken or turkey tracks, one turtle, plenty of lizards and snakes, indifferent human figures, geometrical designs and a conventionalized drawing of the fabled Chinese thunder bird that flapped his wings to make the heavens crash and rumble and the earth tremble.

The formation bearing these and other inscriptions in the expansive plateau area is rhyolitic lava, a very acid volcanic rock—the lava form of granite—and geological authorities pronounce it so hard and enduring that they might remain intact for hundreds or even thousands of centuries, though here subject to severe climatic conditions. A glance at the illustrations will disclose clefts in the rock and consequent breaks in the devices.

The Chalfant Valley group, unseen save by an occasional stroller devoid of appreciation, is not the only important neglected one thereabout. Six miles away, twenty beyond Bishop and within a stone's throw of the Benton road, is a display of human and animal tracks in stone that would arrest the at-

layman or the specialist. For a full history of some parts narrow, in a

Nearby is a slightly lesser circular concept dissimilarly divided and vertical in arrangement, the whole assemblage three times as tall as a man. Wavy parallel lines, wide criss-crossings, a serpent of extreme angularity and other odd shapes leave scant space unfilled and evidence a vast amount of work on the layout. Looming white out of the shadows, spooky of mien and with features startlingly weird, this gigantic figure is



extends some distance from the immense tableland rock body the dramatic procession of footprints wends its precarious way, almost every individual headed northward. It conjures up a dark lost trail into another world. There literally are hundreds of tracks, prominent among others those of a giant who would have required an extra wide No. 12 shoe. Another is the size of a narrow No. 9; the soft baby feet of a child of three years and those of a boy or girl of seven. Here and there the imprint of a hand signifies that the walking was slippery and arduous. Heavy marks of bears' paws, the lighter steps of dogs or coyotes, cats and indistinguishable beasts and wriggling serpents complete the queer march, which begins and ends abruptly where the stone has broken off and crumbled or been swept away by a deluge.

Almost anyone would be willing to swear that every person and mammal represented trod carefully upon that smooth ledge before it had become fully hardened; possibly imperiled and in terror, to escape a flood, the evade enemies, or for some other pressing reason. The balls and toes of the feet sunk in more than half an inch and some of the heels deeper and they look perfect, but—those footprints are handmade! Close scrutiny brings to light plain proofs of chiseling; and there are interspersed geometrical and other figures conflicting with the tracks and chipped at the same time.

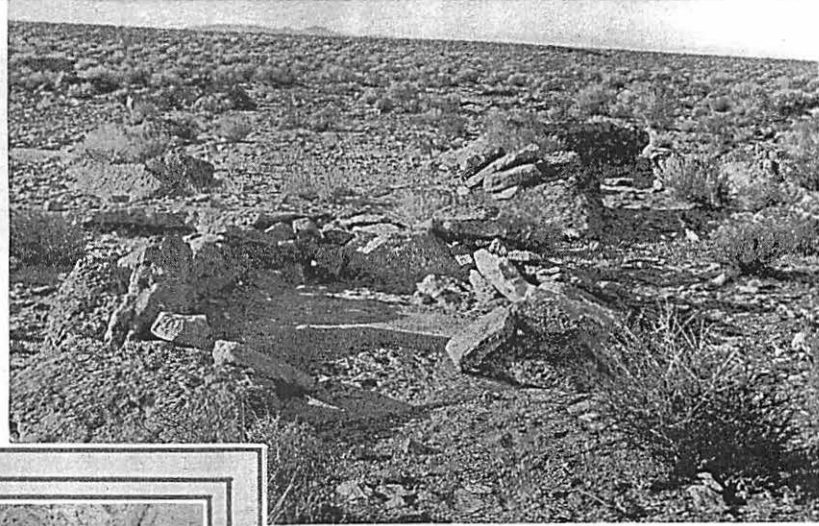
What prompted this extravagant and painstaking pedaneous deception? It is marvelously done and the toil its execution entailed almost inconceivable. Was the intent to relate some exceptional occurrence, an epochal migration, the safe deliverance from some dire menace, the capture of bears

and assurance of a bountiful food supply, or has it no extraordinary significance? Scattered about are both pictographs and petroglyphs, including grotesque life-size figures of men, but the presence of the path of tracks on the ridge above would hardly be suspected.

Chidago Canyon, framed by heaped masses of gigantic boulders, is a labyrinth of carvings, paintings and combinations where the road crosses the gash. The spectacle runs the gamut of the graphic arts of the time, the figures ranging from the minute to those requiring entire stones for expression. On the skyward surface of a block as large as a house and piled atop others is a large incised likeness of a deer surmounting a four-line circle with a heart in its center. When this comprehensive group first attracted notice, about forty-five

years ago, the Smithsonian Institution sent out an expedition to study it and the others then known, but the results were somewhat disappointing. Attempts at deciphering fail now as they did then.

High on the face of well-nigh unscalable bluffs at the head of Round Valley, where they may be glimpsed by any passing motorist, are more than a dozen blood-red human hand prints. With a single exception all were evidently made from the long, slender and daintily-shaped right hand of a woman, pointing upward; the other is from the heavier palm and fingers of a male. Eight

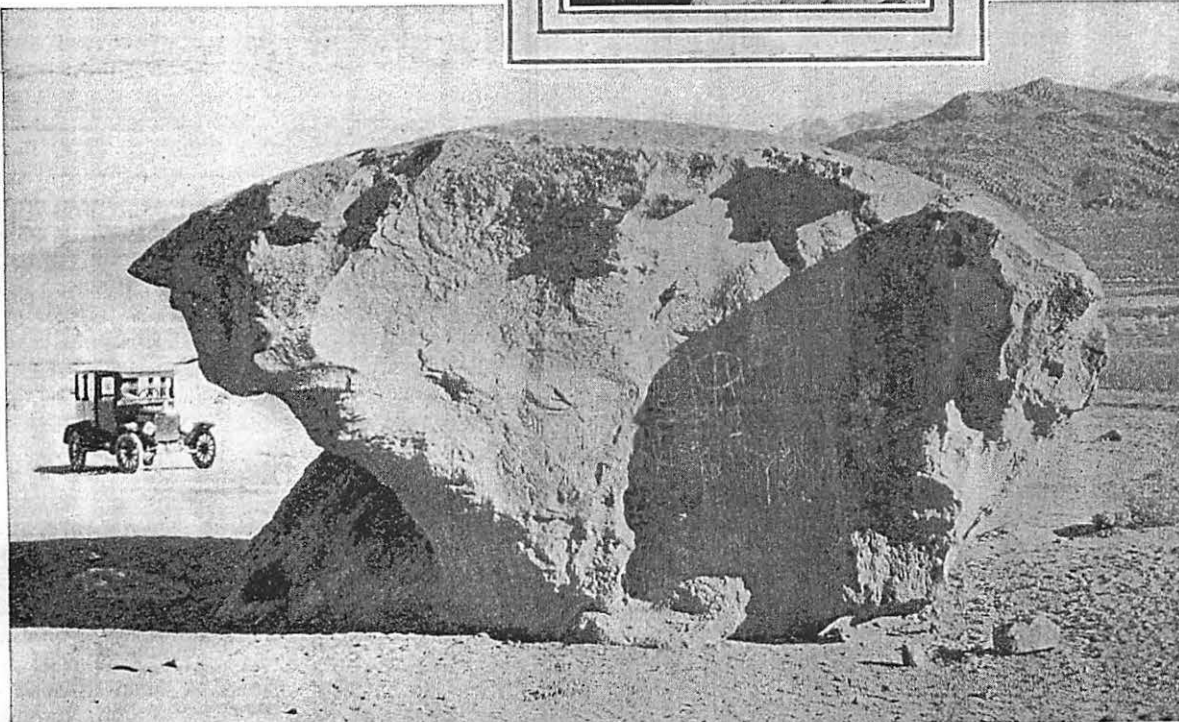


A typical stone house ruins on the tableland above Fish Slough. The circle is thirteen feet in diameter. Several hundred of these have been discovered. With the exception of the openings they are identical with the so-called fish traps of the Coachella Valley, 350 miles apart



Right—Charles T. Forbes (left) and Frank M. Pacher. These men have devoted a decade to the study of petroglyphs, pictographs and allied subjects and have developed much important information regarding them

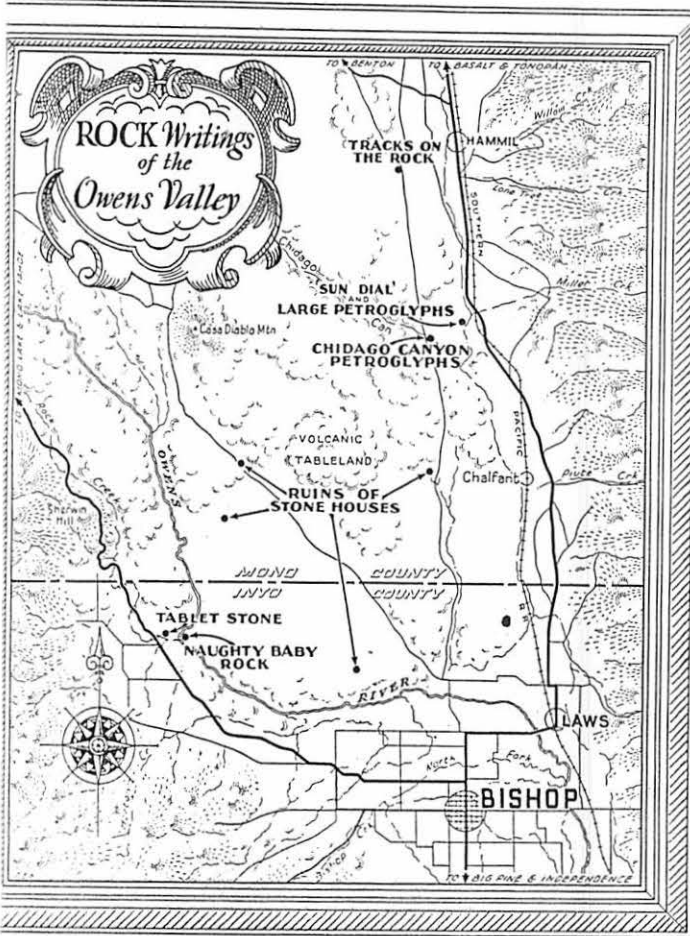
Below—Painted Rock, in Round Valley, is a conspicuous landmark



of these gruesome marks still are very distinct and valley residents say the color is as bright as when the earliest pioneers beheld them. Some are so dim that they are barely discernible. It seems incredible that they

should so long have withstood the blasts of mountain storms and the blaze of summer suns. On the beetling precipice and on boulders that jut into the State highway are superior small pictographs. The stone at this picturesque place is excellent for building purposes and a quarry has been established. Blocks of any size can be sawed out and quantities are shipped to Los Angeles and other cities. Some day the red hands may adorn the cornerstone of a skyscraper!

The Piute and Mono Indians, who still constitute a considerable proportion of the population of Eastern California, and as well the Shoshones of Nevada, stoutly disclaim any knowledge of or relationship to the authors of the rock writings and are in-



intelligence and some schooling, soberly informed me that this is the key to the entire system of writings—the Rosetta Stone, as it were; but that it has been translated only to the extent of setting out this amazing legend:

An Indian mother was nursing her first-born, a son, on that spot when the infant suddenly closed his sharp new teeth on her breast and refused to let go. She slapped him repeatedly and tried to jerk him away, but he continued to cling and bite until she screamed in agony. Now there are pat-see-was, or water babies, beautiful creatures that are supposed to look to the well-being of good young Indians and to improve the behavior of the naughty, and presently four or five of these came up out of the stream. By snapping the child sharply on the head with their fingers they made it release its hold. Then they took it under the water with them, not for punishment but to teach it better manners. For inexplicable reasons they decided to keep it there and the poor

the Owens River just above the confluence of the two streams. The body remained beneath, anchored forever. In substantiation of this fantastic tale my dusky friend pointed out the huge stone head, in truth a tangible object, which we may call Naughty Baby Rock for lack of a better name. Under its "chin," which does not appear in the illustration because the view is from the back, grows a bushy perennial weed that looks like a bunch of whiskers and in which a pair of birds build a nest and rear their young summer after summer. The Department of Water and Power of Los Angeles has constructed and maintains an auto road into the canyon and to this oddity.

Of course the cold facts are that it was a boulder like hundred of others in the locality but chanced to lie in the course of the swift river and the powerful current did the sculpturing. The water swirling about it and constantly splashing up and freezing and thawing during the winter months causes scaling and disintegration about the neck and eventually the "baby" will be beheaded. It is a phenomenon the public has missed.

The tale of Naughty Baby Rock manifests the surprising faculty for fanciful romancing with which Lo frequently is endowed. His mentality may seem dull, but it functions in whimsical channels.

Whatever the merit of the Indians' contention that their ancestors had no part in

clined to dread and shun their tokens. They will tell you that all are the handiwork of Hi-na-noo, the first man, whose father was a coyote and his mother a dove. He came into the valley (Owens) from the south-eastward in quest of the mother dove and in the course of his wanderings made the signs to attract her. This was in the fathomless past. One aged Indian said to me that when he was a small boy his grandfather told him the birds probably pecked the markings in the rock.

Piute Long Jim, who recently departed the Pahrump Valley, Nevada, for the Happy Hunting Ground, firmly declined to go nearer than half a mile to an important pictograph site. His awe was not feigned, though he could not make the reason clear. As to their origin he half whispered:

"In the night little man so high," indicating with his hand about fifteen inches above the ground, "come an' write um, then run away. Little man all same devil made mark in dark when no can see. He come long before Indian."

This brings to mind the tiny persons possessed of super-natural powers that have played so prominent a part in the strange stories of the Chinese from the beginning of their literature to the present. Where did Piute Long Jim get that corresponding superstitious idea?

Along Rock Creek in Birchim Canyon, ten miles northwest of Bishop and only several hundred yards from the State highway, lies a splendidly preserved tablet so clearly engraved that almost every stroke of the chisel shows white, the surface having been painted red. A Piute tribesman of unusual



The great Chalfant Valley petroglyphs are said to have been overlooked by scientists owing to their being located in a remote section of Eastern California. The circular design, five and a half feet in diameter, is considered the largest ever discovered in the United States. Note how the rock (Rhyolitic lava) has cracked since they were carved

squaw sought far and wide during the remainder of her life, but never saw the papoose again.

Long afterward, however, its head did emerge from the water, in the form of stone and heroically proportioned, a short distance up the canyon and in the middle of

producing the petroglyphs or pictographs, it is a fact of record, and within the memory of a few white men still living, that a little longer than fifty years ago a band of Piutes made an organized raid in the Chidago Canyon vicinity and methodically defaced

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horses and mules, in wagons and stages and buggies; on bicycles and motorcycles and automobiles, to visit Yosemite, and all have left their impressions upon the milled and frayed pages of the old registers. W. J. M., of Los Angeles, for instance, writes: "Walked 93 miles to spend three days in the valley. It was worth it." A cyclist of the "noughty-noughts," H. L. B., of San Francisco, takes a prideful satisfaction in his accomplishment: "It is good to be here, especially after wheeling from Stockton, via La Grange and Coulterville, in three and one-half days." This, by the way, was not record time for the journey by bicycle. Numerous are those who give as their running time, two and one-half days or less. Another cyclist,

R. W., of Napa, Cal., records that "A wheel beats a jackass for packing grub and blankets." Significant indeed is one of the entries under date of July 25, 1900, by A. E. and F. H. Holmes, of San Jose, Cal., who writes: "All the way in a automobile." This was the first automobile to enter Yosemite National Park—the forerunner of hundreds of thousands of self-propelled motor vehicles. The story of the Holmes' eventful and epochal journey was told in the July, 1925, issue of *TOURING TOPICS* (*Driving the First Motor Car Into Yosemite*). There's a laugh and a tear in every one of these old books and as time passes they will become increasingly valuable, not only as records of Yosemite's visitors but

as indices to human character and conduct. Anomalous as it may appear, the most captious critics of the valley are Californians; the most appreciative are middle westerners, residents along the Atlantic seaboard and foreigners. Just why this should be so I am unable to say unless it be that Californians are so surfeited with scenery that they regard Yosemite with a certain indifference. Familiarity, it has been said, breeds contempt and the close perspective of the valley obtained by most residents of the Golden State may be responsible for their critical attitude. However, Yosemite's fame continues to spread and annually the list of callers grows longer—callers who will continue to scribble

their appreciation and their criticisms in the big register, adding another, and another, and another testimonial to the lure the valley seems to exercise over all who enter its imposing portals. And we mustn't forget another faithful function these registers perform. They furnish an outlet for the emotions of visitors that otherwise might be expended in carving names and initials on convenient and beautiful trees, and painting symbols and cryptic references on conspicuous rocks. Yosemite is particularly free from this sort of thing and I hardly believe it to be due to the diligence of park rangers so much as to the fact that other means are provided for the poetically inclined.

Rock Writings of Owens Valley

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certain of the writings, devoting hours to their destruction. None would ever vouchsafe a reason for this drastic procedure, but obviously there was something in the delineations to which they seriously objected and which they must have been able to interpret. The effects of their harsh measure may be seen today. This incident forges at least a circumstantial link between the authors and effacers of the inscriptions. It removes doubt as to some degree of understanding.

Professor Julian Steward of the Department of Anthropology, University of California, who has spent much time among the Eastern California natives and made a deep study of the subject, concludes that the rock pictures were made by ancestors of our living Indians, although it is not known precisely what tribes draughted them. Professor Steward's enlightening treatise on the rock symbols of the Southwest's first Americans appeared in *TOURING TOPICS* for May, 1927, and is recognized as authoritative.

To Charles T. Forbes and Frank M. Parcher of Bishop, secretary-treasurer and curator, respectively, of the Eastern California Museum recently organized at Independence, is due credit for consistent research in that country and their activities brought out much of the information made available for this article. Mr. Forbes, a scholarly young college man, began this labor of love ten years ago and was soon joined

by Mr. Parcher, no less earnest a digger for knowledge, and they have covered the ground foot by foot insofar as time permitted. Notwithstanding their progress they feel that they have only begun, so widespread is their territory. Another energetic local investigator and co-worker is William Sanford of Bishop, whose forte is the collecting of relics and curios. Their field extends approximately from Death Valley to Benton, 150 miles, and includes Saline Valley, the White Mountains and the Fish Lake fossil beds, which the Government will be asked to protect by means of a national monument. The same type of carvings and paintings obtains throughout the region, but more and larger animals are portrayed in the southern portion, particularly in the dry chasms near Coso Springs.

Messrs. Forbes and Parcher are accredited with the discovery of the principal groups of ancient stone houses or rather the foundations of brush or skin huts which they believe sheltered the rock message people. The largest is a cluster of 150 on the barren plateau ten miles north of Chalk Bluff. Perched high above the Owens River and half a mile back upon the uninviting, wind-swept mesa is another group. At Fish Springs, near the toppled walls of the stage station, are forty; and two sets of former habitations comprise forty-five each, making up a total of several hundred. Through the efforts of Mr. Sanford a rep-

resentative hut, or what remains of it, has been faithfully assembled in the museum, which has ample quarters in the Inyo County courthouse, and is the only specimen on exhibition anywhere.

The individual "residences" are sometimes a hundred yards apart while in other instances they adjoined and assumed communal form, thus effecting an economy in labor. They are invariably round, average twelve feet in diameter, and open on the east. Usually the natural bedrock is the floor but occasionally sand serves the purpose. The walls, in which no mortar was used, are two or three feet high where not tumbled by the elements. The prevalent tufa was employed, frequently big blocks. With the single exception of those at Fish Slough these simple dwellings are remote from water and from petroglyphs and pictographs. Nothing has been found in them except metates, now and then built into the walls. These were there on the arrival of the Piutes, who admit the use of the walled circles for winter camps years ago, but profess to know nothing about their origin.

Except for the openings these remains and those in the Coachella Valley long known as "fish traps" appear to be identical, though 350 miles apart. Charles Amsden, curator of the Southwest Museum, probed the "traps" last summer, unearthed thin layers of ashes left from fires in the dim past, and concluded that the rock circles once

were the homes of prehistoric families instead of having held captive fish for the Indians. Mr. Amsden believes his proofs to be sound. They may be strengthened by the Chalk Bluff finds.

Excavations made by Messrs. Parcher and Forbes about numerous carvings and paintings have not disclosed a single implement, these being found only in the vicinage of the stone circles and consisting of handstones, large and small black obsidian arrowpoints, skinning knives and obsidian pins. All the incising must have been done with crude tools of obsidian or quartz; and a few miles below Big Pine are scores of designs and single figures cleanly cut in basaltic lava, a black substance that is adamant, heavy as iron, and practically everlasting. Master artisanship only could conquer it.

There is a deep note of tragedy and ineffable pathos in the ceaseless struggles and failures of races to hand their records understandingly down through the ages to other peoples and their efforts should at least be spared if not permanently preserved. That day may come to pass when our own elaborate chronicles, though writ in enduring letters of gold and bronze and silver and a thousand other mediums, shall be as unintelligible to our successors on this sphere as the puzzling messages we are striving to solve. In the slow attrition of time stretching into eons history itself becomes but transitory.

The Real Winner of the West

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a horse would perish, the pale donkey becomes at once burden bearer, companion and protector for the lone wanderer. A dog could not be fed; a horse would neither survive the heat or live on the vegetation; a mule might endure the climate, but would starve; and even the bronco of the cow country has failed on the desert. The burro and man alone survive.

Indeed, the burro seems to be as adaptable to the deserts of the New World as the camel is to

those of the old. Yet the burro's feet are small, scarcely larger than those of a mule deer, and altogether unsuited for travel in heavy sand. But the American desert is not composed, in large part, of beds of sand; rather, it consists of mountains, brush-covered plains, and vast reaches of hard-pan and gravel. Most of the sand is in the ancient river-courses and in dried-out lake-beds, so that the greater part of the New World's wastelands are well suited to the burro's little black feet.

The burro is noiseless save on those rare occasions when he shatters the night with his lonesome wail, and even that is most often welcome in the endless, smothering silence of the desert. Prospectors with burros for companions rarely go mad; the remote places of the desert are marked with the graves of those who tried to "go it alone." But the man must know his burro. The little donkey is faithful, obedient to the master who knows him, to the man who appoints only those tasks which a burro wishes

do—and the list of these is not long. He works without objection on these tasks. He keeps his heels and teeth to himself, and if the distances traveled by burros on the American desert could be placed end to end, they would reach to the nearest fixed star and back again.

According to all exterior evidences, the mind of the burro is given over to philosophy. He can do nothing for a longer time, and



