

brackish and strongly impregnated with alkali. The general characteristics of the other lakes in the great basin belong to this also; the description of one embracing all points belonging to the others.

White Plains—is 12.17 miles west of Brown's. This station is the lowest elevation on the Central Pacific railroad east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. As indicated by the name, the plains immediately around the station are white with alkali, solid beds of which slope away to the sinks of Carson and Humboldt lakes. No vegetation meets the eye when gazing on the vast expanse of dirty white alkali. The sun's rays seem to fall perpendicularly down on this barren scene, burning and withering, as though they would crush out any attempt which nature might make to introduce vegetable life.

The water to fill the big tank at the station is pumped from the "Sink" by means of a stationary engine, which is situated about midway between the station and the Sink.

Mirage—is 7.96 miles from White Plains. This station is named for that curious phenomenon, the mirage (meerazh) which is often witnessed on the desert. In early days the toil-worn emigrant, when urging his weary team across the cheerless desert, has often had his heart lightened by the sight of clear, running streams, waving trees and broad, green meadows, which appeared to be but a little distance away. Often has the unwary traveler turned aside from his true course and followed the vision for weary miles, only to learn that he had followed a phantom, a will-o'-the-wisp.

What causes these optical delusions no one can tell, at least we never heard of a satisfactory reason being given for the appearance of the phenomenon. We have seen the green fields, the leafy trees and the running waters; we have seen them all near by, as bright and beautiful as though they really existed, where they appeared too, in the midst of desolation, and we have seen them vanish at our approach. Who knows how many luckless travelers have followed these visions, until, overcome with thirst and heat, they laid down to die on the burning sands, far from the cooling shade of the trees they might never reach; far from the music of running waters, which they might hear no more.

Onward we go, reclining on the soft cushions of the elegant palace car, thirty

miles an hour; rolling over the alkali and gray lava beds, scarcely giving a thought to those who, in early days, suffered so fearfully while crossing these plains, and, perchance, left their bones to bleach and whiten upon these barren sands.

Hot Springs—is 6.57 miles west of Mirage. Here, to the right of the road, can be seen more of these bubbling, spurting curiosities—these escape pipes, or safety valves for the discharge of the super-abundant steam inside the globe, which are scattered over the great basin. Extensive salt works are located at this station, from which a car-load or more of salt is shipped daily. The salt springs are about four miles west of the station.

The Saxon American Borax Co. have erected works here which cost about \$200,000. They are situated a half-mile south of the station, in plain view.

Passing on, we find no change to note, unless it be that the beds of alkali are occasionally intermixed with brown patches of lava and sand. A few bunches of stunted sage-brush occasionally break the monotony of the scene. It is worthy of notice that this hardy shrub is never found growing singly and alone. The reason for it is evident. No single shrub could ever maintain an existence here. It must have help; consequently we find it in clumps for mutual aid and protection.

Desert—is 11.7 miles from Hot Springs. This is, indeed, a desert. In the next 5.97 miles, we gain about 100 feet altitude, pass Two Mile Station, descend 82 feet in the next 2.37 miles, and arrive at

Wadsworth—This town is situated on the east bank of the Truckee River and the western border of the desert, and contains some good buildings, and a population of about 450.

The division workshops are located here, and consist of a round-house of 20 stalls, car, machine and blacksmith shops. Adjoining the workshops, a piece of land has been fenced in, set out with trees, a fountain erected, and a sward formed, by sowing grass-seed and irrigating it—making a beautiful little oasis. Considerable freight is shipped from this station to mining camps to the south.

Pine Grove Copper Mines lies six miles south of the town. They attract little attention, that mineral not being much sought after. Ten miles south are the Desert mines, which consist of gold-bear-