

directly across the broken land bordering the lake meadows, for the foot of the Sierras. Then skirting along the hill-side, through long snow sheds, with the sparkling Coldstream on our right, winding through the grassey valley and among waving pines, for 6.52 miles, we pass

Strong's Canyon—and bend, around the southern end of the valley, which borders Donner Lake, then crossing Coldstream, commence the ascent of the mountains. Soon after passing this side-track, our train enters a snow-shed, which—with a number of tunnels,—is *continuous for twenty-eight miles*, with but a few "peek-holes," through which to get a glimpse at the beautiful scenery along this part of the route—yet, we shall describe it, all the same. As the train skirts the eastern base, rising higher and higher, Donner Lake is far below, looking like a lake of silver set in the shadows of green forests and brown mountains. Up still, the long, black line of the road bending around and seemingly stealing away in the same direction in which we are moving, though far below us, points out the winding course we have followed.

Up, still up, higher and higher toils the train, through the long line of snow-sheds leading to the first tunnel, while the locomotives are snorting an angry defiance as they enter the gloomy, rock-bound chamber.

Summit—is 14.31 miles west of Truckee, the highest point on the Sierra Nevada Mountains, passed over by the Central Pacific railroad, 7,017 feet above the level of the sea. Distance from Omaha, 1,669 miles; from San Francisco, 245 miles. This is not the highest land of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, by any means, for bleak and bare of verdure, rise the granite peaks around us, to an altitude of over 10,000 feet. Piles of granite—their weather-stained and moss-clad sides glistening in the morning sun—rise between us and the "western shore," hiding from our sight the vast expanse of plain that we know lies between us and the golden shores of the Pacific Ocean. Scattering groups of hardy fir and spruce, line the mountain gorges, where rest the everlasting snows that have rested in the deep shady gulches, near the summit of these towering old mountains—who can tell how long? They have lain, evidently, since Adam was a very small boy, or the tree sprouted from which our apple-loving ancestor, Eve, plucked that bedeviled fruit.

We are on the dividing ridges which separate the head-waters of several mountain rivers, which, by different and tortuous courses, find at last the same common receptacle for their snow-fed waters—the Sacramento River. Close to our right, far down in that fir-clad gorge, the waters of the South Yuba leap and dance along, amid dense and gloomy forests, and over almost countless rapids, cascades and waterfalls. This stream heads against and far up the Summit, one branch crossing the road at the next station, Cascade. After passing Cisco, the head waters of Bear River can be seen lying between the Divide and the Yuba, which winds away beyond, out of sight, behind another mountain ridge. Farther on still, and we find the American River on our left. These streams reach the same ending the Sacramento River but are far apart, where they mingle with that stream. There is no grander scenery in the Sierras, of towering mountains, deep gorges, lofty precipices, sparkling waterfalls and crystal lakes, than abound within an easy distance of this place. The tourist can find scenes of the deepest interest and grandest beauty; the scholar and philosopher, objects of rare value for scientific investigation; the hunter and the angler can find an almost unlimited field for his amusement; the former in the gorges of the mountains, where the timid deer and fierce grizzly bear make their homes; the latter among the mountain lakes and streams, where the speckled trout leaps in its joyous freedom, while around all, is the music of snow-fed mountain torrent and mountain breeze, and over all is the clear blue sky of a sunny clime, tempered and softened by the shadows of the everlasting hills.

TUNNELS AND SNOW-SHEDS.—From the time the road enters the crests of the "Summit," it passes through a succession of tunnels and snow-sheds so closely connected that the traveler can hardly tell when the cars enter or leave a tunnel. The Summit tunnel, the longest of the number, is 1,659 feet long, the others ranging from 100 to 870 feet in length.

The snow-sheds are solid structures, built of sawed and round timber, completely roofing in the road for many miles (see illustration, pages, 85–101.) When the road was completed, there were 23 miles of shed built, at an actual cost of \$10,000 per mile. With the additions since made, the line reaches about 45 miles, which includes the