

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA: ITS  
VALLEYS, HILLS AND STREAMS;  
ITS  
ANIMALS, BIRDS, AND FISHES; ITS  
GARDENS, FARMS, AND CLIMATE**

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Southern California: Its Valleys, Hills and Streams; Its Animals, Birds, and Fishes; Its Gardens, Farms, and Climate by Theodore S. Van Dyke

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*ITS VALLEYS, HILLS, AND STREAMS;*

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*ITS GARDENS, FARMS, AND CLIMATE.*

BY

THEODORE S. VAN DYKE,

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## PREFACE.

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IN an age when the study of Nature has become the most popular of all subjects, no apology seems needed for a book treating of a land where the leading features of animate and inanimate nature are quite unknown to the great majority of those who love fresh fields and pastures new. To many who live in Southern California, its fields, streams, and mountains are the country's powerful charm, and they hold here in bondage many of its best and wealthiest citizens. Yet, outside of the residents the knowledge of them is comparatively slight, and the present writer is the only one who has thus far touched upon them to any extent,—nearly all of the literature about California treating only of its advantages for settlers. The present work is mainly a condensation of a book originally written for *The American Field*, and published in that journal some two years ago. Some of it has also appeared in letters to *The New York Evening Post*, *The New York Sun*, *Forest and Stream*, and other papers. As thus published, it contained much relating to the *flora* and *fauna* that must now be omitted because of its secondary importance. Nearly all too that treated of the habits and features of the

game birds and animals, together with the manners and kinds of hunting, is passed over in these pages because fully treated in my other books.\*

The main object of this work is to describe the natural, out-of-door attractions of Southern California. It will, of course, be quite incomprehensible to many how any one can admire a wild-duck anywhere except upon a plate; look at a mountain quail with any feeling but a desire to murder it, or see anything in a mountain brook except a source of water for an orange grove or alfalfa patch. And how any one can dwell upon such things to the exclusion of town-sites, harbors, or commercial advantages, and write of weeds, brush, and uncut firewood, instead of the excellence of this locality for apricots, and of that for wine-grapes, the marvelous profits of this, and the productiveness of that; the shortest road to this place, and the best hotel at the next town, will be positively astounding. Yet there are those who will value the book the more for these omissions: and for such only it is written. At the same time it would hardly do to pass over the features of this new civilization; for these are quite as unique in their way as are the natural features of the land. Southern California has in a few years changed as no other part of the world has ever changed: and the transition is one, not of degree, but of kind. Though limited, it seems boundless within those limits, and increases in geometrical progression as the years go on.

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\* *The Still Hunter, and The Rifle, Rod, and Gun in California.*



Throughout the eastern country there are thousands of men who have won fortune enough and are now anxious only for its enjoyment by an easy ride down the western slope of life. "Why toil forever up the tumbling wave to sink next moment in the ocean's hollow? For what reward upon our little pinhead in space do we worry and wear ourselves away? If men can be judged by their exclamations, when both unpremeditated and disinterested, in what do they take more genuine and enduring pleasure than in a fine prospect and a fine day? And why should such pleasures be reserved for special days and seasons? Why not enjoy them continuously? We can indeed go to Florida in winter, but must fly from it with the opening of spring. We would not always be birds of passage. Along the shores of the Mediterranean or in Mexico we might possibly find what we want; but there we are exiles from our people and country. Is there no spot in our own land where both winter and summer shall bring pleasure and comfort?"

Such are the questions that men ask themselves, and many turn their eyes hopefully toward Southern California for an answer. Its distance and its "dullness," as some would call it, do not alarm them in the least. For while it is probably true enough that the majority of men would rather be lamp-posts in Gotham than princes in Arcadia, it is equally true that there is a respectable minority that would not,—a minority to whom the difference between the densest crowd in a city street and a few travelers on

a country highway represents only the difference between so many head of cattle that care nothing for you, and which feeling you cordially reciprocate. People of the minority way of thinking are fast filling the habitable parts of this southern land with homes such as no other part of the world can show, and the end of their work no man can foresee. Yet, while cities, homes, and gardens arise, and the productions of the land increase in number and importance in the world of trade and traffic, still to the end of time Southern California will be a land chiefly characterized by its climate, scenery, and out-of-door attractions.

If the reader fancies he detects some flavor of partiality in this book, let him remember that it will always be quite impossible to get a book on Southern California that will not be tinged with either ignorance or affection. The tourist of a few weeks or months may give you his faithful impressions, but instead of looking at a country you will be reading a diary of travel. You would hear the rattle of car-wheels under him, the clatter of the plates at the hotels where he stopped, and the clink of the glasses in the wine-cellars he visited; would see buildings and towns and people that you might see better in any Eastern State; but you would look in vain for California. Whether or not the description of the man whom Dante saw in Hell, carrying his head by the hair for a lantern, is intended for a satire on human observation, certain it is that the great majority of tourists and excursionists would know about as much

of California if, instead of bearing their heads on their shoulders, they carried them in their hands after the manner of *Bertram dal Bornio*. On the other hand, if one stays long enough to learn all its peculiar features,—to know it in all seasons and in good and bad years; to see all its different kinds of land, its cultivation and improvements; and especially if one is a sufficient lover of nature to learn it from coast to mountain-top, and see all its birds, animals, and fishes in their native haunts,—the chances are a hundred to one that by the time such a person gets ready to write, he will be like the present writer—writing only of *home*.

T. S. VAN DYKE.

SAN DIEGO, CAL., May, 1886.

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