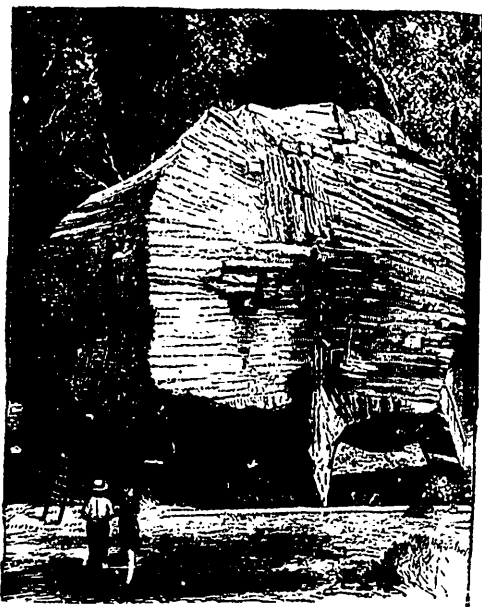


which has a total height of 2,500 feet; first a vertical leap of 1,500, then a series of cascades for 600 feet, and a final plunge of 400 feet. The valley has evidently been scooped out by glacier action; lateral moraines and a terminal moraine at its lower end can be readily traced.

The dominant feature of the valley is the tremendous cliff, "El Capitan," 2,300 feet high. The almost vertical walls are destitute of vegetation, save where a single pine clings to the cliff. Although 125 feet high, it looks like a tiny shrub. "Nowhere in the world," says Professor Whitney, "is so squarely cut, so lofty and imposing a mass of rock."

On either side of the valley are contorted, columned cliffs, assuming fantastic shapes; spires like those of a Gothic cathedral, 3,000 feet high. "Cathedral Rock" is a massively sculptured pile, 2,660 feet almost vertical; then



SECTION OF A BIG TREE, CALIFORNIA.

the "Three Brothers," 3,830 feet; and "Sentinel Rock," over 3,000 feet. On the perpendicular walls the fantastic figures of a hound, a woman, a man's head, a deer, and

so on, are pointed out, also "Pulpit Rock," "Tower Cliff," and many other fanciful features.

The grandeur grows as we approach the head of the valley. Here is the "Half Dome," a tremendous cliff, 4,740 feet high. At its base sleeps in quiet seclusion the exquisite little Mirror Lake, reflecting in its placid surface the lofty cliffs around. This lake is best visited early in the morning, to note the reflection of the mountains, and to see the sun rise with a jump, as it were, above their summits. A single movement of



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