

their very mouths; so much disturbed by rocks, and so rapid that very few rivers having their source in the Cascade Mountains can ever be made navigable.

Very many curious things are found on the summits of the Rocky and Cascade Mountains; wonderful lakes, mountains of cinders, fresh as if just from the volcanic forge; sea-shells and corals. One of these wonderful mountain lakes is thus described by a gentleman who visited it:

"Upon rising the slope bounding the lake, the first impression made upon your mind is one of disappointment; it does not come up to your expectations; but this is only momentary. A second look and you begin to comprehend the majestic beauties of the scenery spread out before you, and you sit down on the brink of the precipice, and feast your eyes on the awful grandeur; your thoughts wander back thousands of years to the time when, where now is a placid sheet of water, there was a lake of fire, throwing its cinders and ashes to a vast distance in every direction. The whole surroundings prove this lake to be the crater of an extinct volcano. The appearance of the water in the basin, as seen from the top of the mountain, is that of a vast circular sheet of canvass, upon which some painter had been exercising his art. The color of the water is blue, but in very many different shades, and like the colors in variegated silk, continually changing. Now a spot will be dark blue, almost approaching black, in the next moment it will change to a very pale blue; and it is thus continually changing from one shade to another. I cannot account for this changeableness, as the sky was perfectly clear, and it could not have been caused by any shadows; there was, however, a gentle breeze which caused a ripple of the waters; this may account for it.

At first sight a person would not estimate the surface of the water to be more than two or three hundred feet below the summit of the surrounding bluffs; and it is only after a steady look, almost perpendicularly down into the water, that you begin to comprehend the distance. In looking down into the lake the vision seems to stop before reaching the bottom, and, to use a common expression, you have to look twice before you see the bottom.

Heretofore it has been thought by those who have visited the lake, that it was impossible to get to the water, and this was also my impression at first sight, and I should have been contented to remain on the summit, and view its beauties from that point, without attempting to get to the water, but for Sergeant Stearns and Mr. Ford, who, after gazing awhile from the top, disappeared over the precipice, and in a few minutes were at the bottom, near the water's edge, where no human being ever stood before. Their shouts induced Mr. Coats and myself to attempt the feat, which is in fact only perilous in imagination. A spring of water bursts out of the mountain near the top, on the side where we were, and by following down the channel which the water has made,