

These were dotted with white oaks. To the right rose the sloping sides of a hill, which were covered with the brushwood called the chaparelle, in which grew the manzanita and the scrub-oak, with an occasional cedar-pine, not in the least like the cedars of Lebanon and Clapham Common. Hanging about in the jungle, or stretching its arms along the side of the dry watercourse which ran at the travellers' feet beside the road, was the wild vine, loaded with its small and pretty grapes, now ripe. Nature in inventing the wild grape has been as generous as in her gift of the sloe. It is a fruit of which an American once observed that it was calculated to develop the generosity of a man's nature, "because," he explained, "you would rather give it to your neighbour than eat it yourself."

The travellers were low down on the western slopes of the Sierra; they were in the midst of dales and glades—cañons and gulches, of perfect loveliness, shut in by mountains which rose over and behind them like friendly giants guarding a troop of sleeping maidens. Pelion was piled on Ossa as peak after peak rose higher, all clad with pine and cedar, receding farther and farther, till peaks became points and ridges became sharp edges.

It was autumn, and there were dry beds which had in the spring been rivulets flowing full and clear from the snowy sides of the higher slopes, yet among them lingered the flowers of April upon the shrubs, and the colours of the fading leaves mingled with the hues of the autumn berries.

A sudden turn in the winding road brought the foremost riders upon a change in the appearance of the country. Below them to the left stretched a broad open space, where the ground had been not only cleared of whatever jungle once grew upon it, but also turned over. They looked upon the site of one of the earliest surface-mining grounds. The shingle and gravel stood about in heaps; the gulleys and ditches formed by the miners ran up and down the face of the country like the wrinkles in the cheek of a baby monkey; old pits, not deep enough to kill, but warranted to maim and disable, lurked like man-traps in the open; the old wooden aqueducts run up by the miners in the year 'fifty-two, were still standing where they were abandoned by the "pioneers;" here and there lay about