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Grand Canyon - Joseph Wood Krutch.

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Grand Canyon Joseph Wood Krutch

A person could perch here and look across many miles and see not one human being - and probably there never has been. All the pop. of the world could get into the Canyon.

"Thousands come here from all parts of the world seeking solitude."

K. took up his position on one of the little promontories which jut out from the rim. Looked across the ten miles to the opposite rim, down the successive terraces to the inner gorge at whose marble bottom the great river still runs after having cut thru a mile of stone. The Permian limestone on which he sat, the hundreds of feet of sandstone below it, the great Redwall of the Carboniferous age, the resisting plateau of Cambrian sediments, and finally the black wall of Archean schist.

Swallows dip above and below the rim. Ravens. Lizards, gopher snakes, chipmunks, squirrels with white tails.

The widening of the Canyon is going on visibly. It is wider than it was a century ago. In 1957 two airplanes collided above the canyon and fell into the depths.

Cardenas dispatched by Coronado on a side trip to scout out the region came onto the Canyon probably the first white man to see it.

The Colorado River moves about 17,000,000 cubic yards of earth per year - and it has been working - at various rates, of course - for several millions of years. The river is swift, is still carrying sand that cuts the gorge.

The rim is limestone laid down at the bottom of a shallow sea, during the Permian period, or about 200,000,000 years ago. Permian at end of Paleozoic. 300 feet down you'd still be in the Permian age tho a few million years farther. Embedded in the topmost layer are fragments that on close observation turn out to be sea shells and coral. And teeth of sharks. The two top layers are solidified lime which fell quietly to the bottom of ~~XXXXX~~ quiet seas and lay there undisturbed; the next layer is of windblown sand, the outline of whose dunes, later covered by more sand, is so clear that from their outline one can see even from which direction the prevailing winds once blew over that desert." The opposite wall is ten miles away. How did the river get "up there" toward the rim where as a matter of fact it never had been?

The Havasupi Indians once farmed the Tonto Plateau more than 2,300 feet below the rim. In 1928 it was acquired by the Park Service for tourists on mules. The head of the trail at the top is 7000 ft. high. The 5000 ft. drop to the bottom is equivalent climatically to a journey of some 3000 miles southward. The canyon is in a dry climate. The top is so arid it will not grow much. Dominant plants are juniper and the small pinon pine whose nuts so important to wild life and were once to the Indians. The deer are there, squirrels, jays remind us this is mountain not coast. This rim was once the bottom of some sea.

The creatures which secreted these shells belong to species which lived during the Permian, the last major division of the Paleozoic, some 200,000,000 years ago. Geologists have named it the Kabab limestone and it once lay far down below sea level. It was lifted to present level a few million years before our time. There were no men or submen anywhere in the world and no longer any large ferns or dinosaurs but there were trees, birds, bearlike animals and horses.

The Indians saw the canyon because they came, so scientists now say,

from Asia thousands of years ago, not hundreds of thousands, and when they did they saw it as it is now.

The Redwood rock layers in the canyon once lay beneath the sea.

The Plateau looks grey-green, seen from the rim half a mile above, and like the supposedly vegetative areas on Mars.

After a wet spring the sago or Mariposa lily blooms at the Canyon plateau.

The plateaus are inhabited by wild burros, descendants of those used by prospectors in the old days who dispaired of their claims.

Time - the seas that came and vanished, the great mountain ranges that rose slowly and then more slowly dissolved into sand and mud.

"How far from solid is the solid ground beneath one's feet, and how far from eternal are the eternal hills!" "Two Himalayas or Alps had risen and vanished on the site of the Canyon before life had got farther than the protozoa and the jellyfish." Will what has happened - river deepening and widening, then giving place as it deposits more limestone etc. to mountain again take place? Presumably as the earth cools, the upheavals will become less frequent and less violent, and end maybe when the heat pressures finally reach an equilibrium.

E.A. Milne - with characteristic British calm: "I am now convinced that an unconditional prediction of a heat-death for the universe is an over-statement."

The silt-laden Colorado - "too thick to drink, too thin to plow." The Colorado has its high and low water stages. It can roll huge boulders along at high stage. Little clear streams flow into it down the rocks of the canyon in times of rain.

Canyon 200 miles long.

The Powell party in 1869 - Powell geologist - "Down in these grand, gloomy depths we glide, ever listening, for the mad waters keep up their roar;" Powell, geologist, teacher at colleges, conducted a research party. So many rapids and falls to run that three men deserted but Powell and others got through. First humans they met were an Indian and a Mormon. Had been known as Big Canyon. Now, Grand Canyon, called so by Powell. Powell was then granted \$10,000 to study the West. He took a camera that weighed, with its accessories, a ton.

Now a national park.

No man in presidential chair ever did so much to preserve wild places as T. Roosevelt. He said "the beauty of the Canyon. Leave it as it is. You can not improve on it. The ages have been at work on it, and man can only mar it."

Subtropical to Arctic temperatures here. Flowers that grow in the Arctic circle grow on tops of mountains here.

Lava Flows.

Navajo and Hopi Indians, Mormons - Santayana "to monopolize many women... is the dream, conscious or unconscious of every truly masculine bosom!"

Krutch, evergreens: "an aid to contemplation."

Havasupais Indians.

Point Sublime

Shiva Temple a large butte whose flat top covers 300 acres has never been climbed.