

GLEN CANYON

DOWN THE GRAND CANYON

BY

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closed well, occupied by a whirlpool full of rocks and opening on one side to a fast-running riffle. This was due to no lack of interest on my part in the scenery of one of the most strikingly beautiful stretches of the Colorado, but only to the fact that my mind had been so occupied by the over-lapping duties of navigating an undermanned boat that it had failed to register extraneous impressions. This, I may add, continued to be the case to the end of the up-river voyage. Almost the only places which I recall clearly are those where a halt was made, and of these there is the most detail in the vistas that opened up from where we lounged lazily among the rocks in the half hour after lunch. Camps were too often made after dusk, and broken in a hectic rush the next morning, to leave much impression of their scenic features. Of the natural charms of that striking reach five miles above Lee's Ferry that is rated as possibly the most favourable of all Colorado River dam-sites, I have no recollections whatever beyond those gained when we halted there on the downward voyage.

Special Charm of Glen

Glen Canyon is the Grand Canyon on a slightly reduced scale; but what it lacks in sheer magnitude it makes up in the added charms of its gentler natural beauties. Although its walls are neither less sheer nor less lofty than the average run of those of the Inner Gorge of the greater chasm, the less torrential current of the river—due to a slighter declivity—in Glen Canyon has permitted the formation of more frequent and more fertile stretches of wooded bank and bench. One is never out of sight of trees,

nor often of flowers. Very rare are the reaches where there is not a fringe of willows at the foot of one wall or the other. But the crowning glory of Glen Canyon is in the bower-like amphitheatres of verdure that were responsible for its name. These are primarily due to the seepage of water down through the porous sandstone to drip in sparkling showers from the over-hangs and bubble in clear springs from the base of the cliffs. The loftier bowers—some a thousand feet above the river, close under the canyon rim—form an almost unbroken chain of hanging gardens throughout the hundred and fifty miles from the mouth of Fremont River to the head of Marble Canyon. As far as the glass reveals, their verdant brightness is that of trailing fern. The riverside bowers are larger but less frequent. They are veritable tropical jungles of oaks, berry bushes and blossoming flowers. And deep back under the cliff behind the masking verdure is always to be found a pool of clear, cold water. No more enchanting retreat from the blistering noonday heat of the river could have been designed by a Titania. Many a sun-scorched brow and riffle-ruffled temper did we cool in the lucent depths of these bowers of Glen Canyon.

With replenished tanks and freshly greased gears we shoved off after lunch to meet a very purposeful set of current that came swaggering down walls that sprang sheer from the water on either side. At one considerable stretch where there was no place to wade and tow in the event of engine failure, we faced our first real test. Tom seemed to get by with a shade to

bridges his first outstanding impression of the Rainbow is of the almost airy lightness and gracefulness that characterize its seemingly slender span. This is partly because the first view, whether from up or down the canyon, is restricted to the lightest section of the arch and does not take in swelling abutments that are socketed deep into the mountain itself. The almost overpowering sense of size and mass grow upon one as he approaches, reaching its climax when he stands in the shadow of the soaring span and sees it only as a titanic bar athwart the sky. This impression of appalling size is perhaps the predominant one in the end, though it can never eradicate from the mind that first suggestion of fairy lightness and airy grace.

To say that the Rainbow Bridge is two hundred seventy feet between abutments and over three hundred from the top of the arch to the bottom of the canyon conveys little real sense of its size and not any whatever of its form. The photographs do better as to form, but help little in coming to a conception of size. A human figure introduced as a "measuring stick" is too near the camera to give true scale if placed in the canyon; standing on top of the bridge it is almost impossible to find in the resultant picture. As an example: On our return trip Bill Jones, who in the meantime had attained great distinction as a scaler of cliffs, used his vacuum-cupped feet to clamber to a point on the left abutment almost level with the top of the arch. The pictures taken of the bridge while he was crowning this lofty pinnacle of vantage showed the climber's proudly upreared frame as a

of bed mornings he had failed to discover it. We all agreed with Andy that the human units of the outfit were showing the effects of attrition quite as badly as were the mechanical ones, and consequently were just as much in need of goings-over, replacements and general humourings. For an hour we hunched in an aura composed of about equal parts of firelight and self-pity, exhibiting gaunt torn legs and comparing notes on everything from running sores to creeping paralysis. Finally we cried ourselves to sleep. Afoot at five the next morning, we were afloat at six; and that was our best day's run of the voyage!

There are other parts of Glen Canyon more deeply engorged, and so disposing scenery on a grander, more imposing scale, than that of the stretch between the mouth of Aztec Creek and the San Juan; but for sheer seductive, alluring loveliness this almost continuous succession of rock-walled, oak-shaded, fern-tapestried dells is without a rival in the whole length of the Colorado Canyon series. "Titania's Bowers, Limited," which appears to have had a monopoly of the contracts for the decorative work in Glen Canyon, finding ideal form here, has been free to concentrate fairy artificers upon embellishment. The most tantalizing thing on the whole voyage (save perhaps the nesting flies that itched to make a home and raise a family on my battle-scarred legs) was the necessity of passing one after another of these veritable dells of delight without landing for a lounge or a lave. For every last fairy flat of them had, if not a parlour, bedroom and bath, at least a crystal shower, a silver beach for basking, and a ferny couch for drowsing.