

My friends:

I would like to share with you today, the dream I had when I first came here, to Eden at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. In 1869, precisely on August 7, I wrote a letter to my Queen, telling of this place and what I saw for it.

"One word to finish my description of Monument Park (shall we change its name to Bijou?) what do you think about it?

Stretching off to the eastward from the foothills at the base of the mountains are the green slopes which terminate in the waters of the Fontaine, or rather a branch of the Fontaine, called Monument Creek. Beyond still farther, in the Divide, or spear which juts out from the Rocky Mountains, covered with a pinery, and southeastward, the great plains open out as far as the eye can reach, the softened outline of the earth blending finally with the sky. This, I think is the finest scene of all. It reminds you constantly of the ocean, on whose shore you seem to be standing while gazing out into its billowing depths. I must not forget the wildflowers with which the park is covered. How you would enjoy making up bouquets here and to fill the vases and hanging baskets for the decoration of our country home. I have never before seen such a wealth of coloring. Nobody seems to know the name of them-they are peculiar to this elevation, latitude, and climate, and exist in great variety, and even after they have departed from the plain, you can trace them on the higher elevations in the mountains. Perhaps it would be possible to bring the soda spring from Colorado City, over by log pipes to our park, a distance of some five miles. If so, it would be equivalent to having a natural soda fountain, jetting out mineral water that tingles as you drink it, at your very door. And the baths of this water, though cold instead of ~~the~~ tepid as at Idaho are exceedingly agreeable and healthful. They remove the roughness and burns from the skin and leave it soft and white as Colorado flour. Or perhaps by further search, other soda springs gushing out from the footwall of the Rocky Mountains-nearer the park, may be discovered. Down in the valley of Monument Creek- a beautiful view from the heights near the mountain base, will be the farms of industrious rancheros that will supply this Eden with what is required for the material wants of its occupants. And among other practical advantages are these- It is only 30 or 40 miles from the line of our railroad on the Bijou- a good team or blooded saddle horses will take us across to it in 4 or 5 hours. It is also within two or three ~~miles~~ miles from the line

of a railroad that in a few years must be built from Denver, south ward to the Arkansas-and so on by the San Luis Park to Mexico. It is in a country of rich soil- and the most luxuriant grasses-it is close to great supplies of timber. The soil is such that the best roads in the world may be made over it everywhere, with~~xxxx~~ ~~xxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ scarcely any cost, and there can never be any mud, that great drawback to country life.

What shall we do with it,? It is wild government land now, waiting for someone to take hold of it and bring ~~it~~ out its natural advantages. What an inexhaustible field is here for landscape gardening. A lifetime might be spent in improving and decorating it for much as nature has done for it, she has left it just ripe for the hand of art. It seems almost finished now, so perfect in the distribution of grove and grass and rock- of hill, meadow and slope- but never the less every touch put to it would yield increased beauty and grace.

Mr. Carr and I concluded to buy it, if it could be had at the government price-several thousand acres of it. And I have been dreaming ever since of how I would treat my portion of it,(after you selected it). How the castle should be on one of the bold, pine topped hills near the mountain foot, and the farmhouses in the smooth, rounded valley- how there should be fountains and lakes and lovely drives and horseback trails through groves- all planned and planted by us. How better this would be than to find it made to our hand. And then the happiness of portioning out the deer park which we would stock with antelope and black tailed deer: and the range for our buffalo, and all other animals native to the plain, not forgetting even, the agile, little prairie dog with its twinkle of a tail. These inhabitants of the great plain, soon to disappear before the advancing tread of civilization and emigration- should here all be preserved, and with them a few Indians recall more vividly the wild prairie life- which the Americans of a few years hence will know only from the pages of story books.

Can you imagine anything more delightful that to carry out such a plan? Nor would we be without society when we wished it, for sharing in the grand estate should be the homes of our friends- those really our friends. No fear but they would join in- for they could find nothing more attractive perhaps in the whole range of the Rocky Mountains, and they would be glad to make their summer homes here also- here where the air is fraught with health and vigor- and where life would be poetry, an idyll of blue sky, clear, intense,atmosphere, fantastic rock

dancing water, green meadow, graceful hillside, high mountain, rugged canon, and distant view- of the kind that gives wing to the imagination, and allows no foothold for it to halt upon short of infinity. How will this do?

Heaven no doubt intended that instead of finding everything to their hand as they do in Florida, for instance, men should be stimulated out here to exert their energy and brain for the creation of beautiful groves, orchards, and fields. Thus it is quite consistent with what we everywhere see of the compensations of providence, that these unlovely plains may produce the finest citizens- who will by their own handiwork, in turn, make the plains lovely. The Heart of the Andes has no doubt, all the trees, and luxuriant growth, all the moisture, and all the calm that Mr. Meekes disaffected emigrants could desire. But no people of any account ever came from such a delightful country. And then to think of the satisfaction of creating one's own 'Heart of the Andes'."

These are the ideas reflected to me when I first came to this land of plains, canons, lakes, streams, mountains and abundant wildlife. It is good to see how well my dream is being fulfilled. And now, if you will follow me to the dining area, we have something special for you.

Compiled from a letter, written by William J. Palmer, August 7, 1869, to Queen, from Grahams, on the upper Arkansas, Colorado. Letter from Gen. W^m. Jackson Palmer File, at the Pioneers Museum.

Much thanks to Rosemary Hetzler, Historian, for her valuable time and incredible knowledge on General Palmer.