

The PAINTED ROCKS of the CARISA

By
ANNIE LOUISE MORRISON

A CARISA is a plain some twelve miles wide, in its broadest part, by twenty miles long. It lies in the eastern part of San Luis Obispo County. It is bounded on the east by the Mt. Diablo range and on the west side by another range of low mountains. One peak in the Diablo range is snow-capped the greater part of the year. The plain is covered in spring with a beautiful growth of flowers and grass, except where there are fields of grain. When white men began to come to the county, great herds of deer,elope and elk roamed the plain and found abundant feed. This was true late as in the fifties and sixties. Warm springs and running streams were found in the near-by hills and there had even provided salt in the hot springs that are the head waters of the Saline (salt) river. The dry beds of these springs furnished salt for the pioneer's table and even yet stockmen haul blocks of salt from them to scatter about on the ranges. Thousands of cattle and sheep now find pasture where once the deer and elk roamed.

Soda Lake, almost pure Glauber salts, for the crystals in summer cover



Strangely like Hopi Indian drawings

Soda lake like glass, is another feature of Carisa. The soda lies like snow on the shores of the lake.

Piedra Pintada

About five miles from the foot of the Mt. Diablos, all by itself out in the desert, is a great gray sandstone rock, rising two hundred feet above the plain. It is fully three thousand feet in circumference and one thousand feet in diameter. On the eastern side, facing the rising sun, has been excavated a room 125 feet wide by 225 feet long, oval in shape. A short distance above the floor a gallery has been hewn out, and along the walls of this gallery are paintings in vivid colors of red, white, blue and

black, paintings that no doubt record the history and religion of a vanished race of sun-worshippers.

Just such paintings have been found in Peru, and on many mountainsides in California, also in caves of Arizona. Although exposed for countless centuries to the elements, the colors are as bright and clear today as when they were put on. There is no attempt to shut out the God of life and light, for the temple is open to the sky.

An altar of stone, the sacrificial altar, stands just within the portal, which is twenty feet wide. Back of the stone altar once was an altar of wood, but this has entirely disappeared. Fifty years ago there were plenty of the chalk-like rocks lying about the temple that were used to put on the paintings, but those too have been taken away or buried beneath debris.

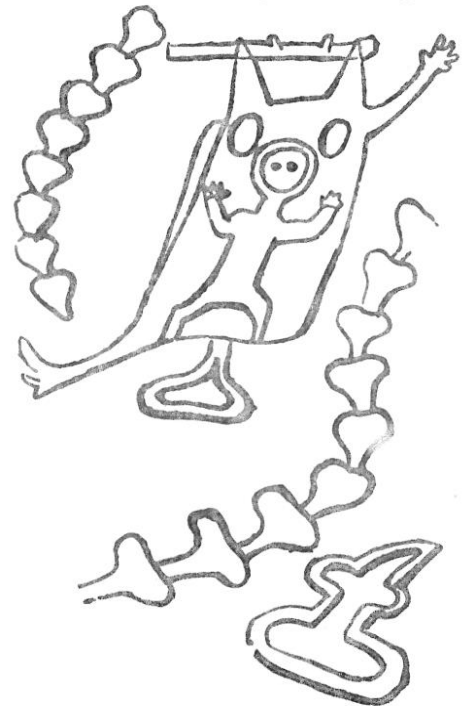
The floor sloped upwards from the portal to a wall one hundred and forty feet high at the west side. In this way all the worshippers were enabled to view the priests and assistants who performed the altar ceremonies. There was also a large room, opening into the temple, that, from its smoke-blackened walls, would lead one to think that here might have been burned the bodies of the victims slain on the sacrificial altar. At other points were openings leading into big caves. One had to crawl inside these caves, but once inside the cave became a room. These the settlers never explored much, for rattlers were too abundant to be pleasant. They have sought other homes since, and are no longer to be feared.

A gate was built across the portal of the temple by enterprising stockmen, and as many as 4000 sheep corralled within the temple at one time. When the gate was left down cattle sought refuge within the walls and always the wind blew sand and dust, so that now the floor is covered with refuse to a depth of twenty feet in some places. The mouths of the caves are hidden and vandals have greatly marred and defaced many of the paintings, but still it is a work for California or the nation as a whole to take over and preserve as a marvelous work of a past civilization.

The worship of the Sun as the Giver of all Good and Life is the oldest recorded form of worship. Always there have been sacred Mountains, Ararat, Sinai, Pisgah, Horeb, The Mount of Olives and, at last,

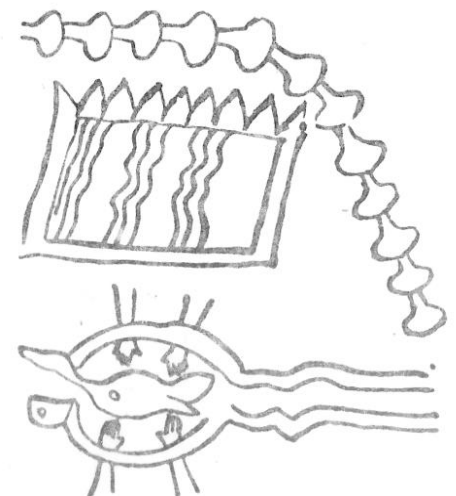
Calvary. China and Japan have their sacred mountains, so has India, and Piedra Pintada, standing alone and almost unknown on the Carisa Plain, is another.

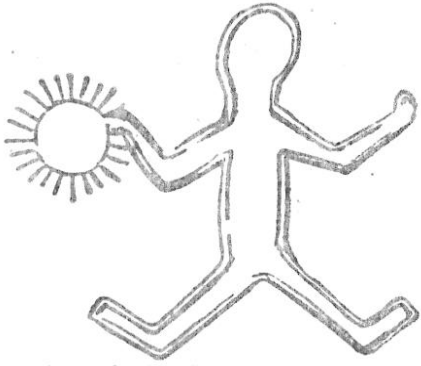
The Sphinx, facing the rising sun



Similar figures have been found in Peru

from the desert of Egypt, its great solemn face an unread riddle, Piedra Pintada, facing the rising sun on the Carisa Plain, with the distance of half the world between them, are, without question, both temples of Sun-worshipping peoples. The California temple may prove as well worth knowing and preserving as the Sphinx. If only some archaeologist would





Worship of the Sun God, perhaps, was responsible for this cave painting

discover another Rosetta stone, the riddle could be solved that Carisa plain has kept lo, these many years.

The Legend of La Madra (The Mother)

Almost seventy-five years ago, when the first white men began to take up land on Carisa, there was living in Piedra Pintada an old Indian woman and her son. The young man was often with her when his wanderings or work permitted. This youth had either once lived at Mission San Miguel or known well some one who had, for he had considerable



Suggesting flashing lightning

knowledge of the mission life. He had worked for a man whom the Mexican vaqueros had called a miser (sequatero) and, as the custom was, had been dubbed by them Jose Sequatero. To a pioneer rancher of Carisa he related the following tale:

La Madra had been the lawfully wedded wife of old Taquala, chief of the Mojaves. She had been given not in love, but at the request of the chief. A handsome young brave, Lataquana, was her lover. Jose was the child of La Madra and Lataquana. The lover was killed and only La Madra's life was spared because she and she alone knew the secrets of her ancestors. Her people lived far to the south of Mojave. Their religion was that of the early inhabitants of Mexico whose religion taught that the Sun was the Great Spirit, the giver of all life and all good. It was a religion of love, humility and charity.

The Aztecs came and conquered the people, forcing upon them a religion of cruelty and human sacrifice. The Dreamers or Priests at last told the oppressed people that a Messiah would come and restore the religion of love, humility and charity.

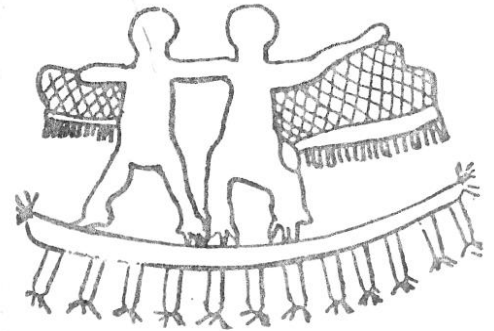
When in 1520 Cortez appeared off the Coast of Mexico he was hailed as that Messiah. His ship was thought to be a great bird. His guns tongues of flame, and Cortez and his men, wearing gorgeous raiment, carrying flashing swords, were gods. The white men, indeed, brought a new religion, but they did little for this sun-worshipping race.

The runners carried news of Cortez's arrival far and near. As proof of their speed Cortez tells of having found at the village, which later became the City of Mexico, a very accurate account of his arrival, the appearance and number of the men. The date showed that the runner had

come with the news just twenty-four hours after Cortez landed. The distance traveled was 260 miles.

The Messiah had come in a great cayucos (ship) with white wings, but the promised love, humility and charity of the sun-worshippers was not restored. Human sacrifices went on and Cortez led armies that killed and plundered.

The most devout of La Madra's ancestors fled from Mexico. They stayed, some, in what was later to be Arizona, and still others went far to the northwest and built temples and homes in secret places. Among the temples so built was Piedra Pintada, in its beautiful mountain-bound plain. La Madra's mother and grandmother had told her of this temple and of the



The prehistoric Charleston, perhaps

abundant water and food found there, also of the unmolested peace of the people.

When Lataquana was slain for love of her, she resolved to seek this temple as a refuge. Escaping, she swam the Colorado river, or it might be said she was swept down its turbid waters and landed in an eddy on its western bank with the infant safe in his basket. She sought shelter by day and night in the caverns and canyons of the mountains. They shielded her from the burning sun of mid-day and

DISC WHEELS REPAIRED

The life of your car depends upon the condition of its vital parts. Good wheels are essential if your machine is to give you the service you expect. We straighten and bake enamel all makes of disc wheels.

Maximum Charge for Straightening Wheels
\$3.00

except in extreme cases.

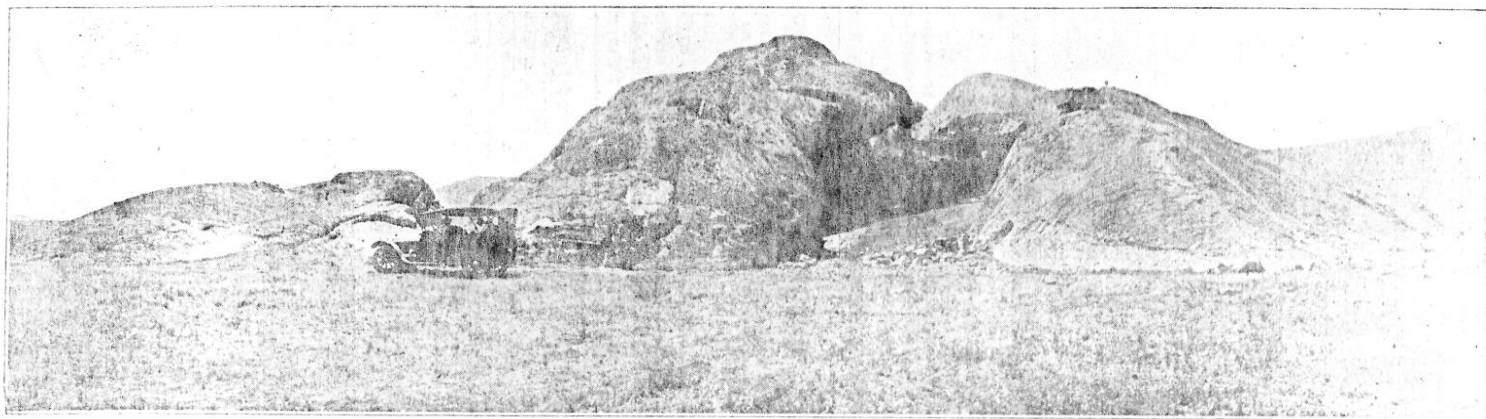
WIRE WHEELS

Repaired at correspondingly low prices.

BUDD WHEEL COMPANY OF CALIFORNIA

1581-1583 BUSH STREET

TELEPHONE PROSPECT 140



Panoramic View of the Painted Rocks of Carisa, near San Luis Obispo

the storms of the desert. She knew how to kindle a fire with flint and whirling stone. There were berries and seeds, roots and many small animals for food. The deep cavities of many rocks held water from some cloudburst or her sensitive feet told her when she was traveling in sand beneath which flowed water.

At first she felt that she was pursued, but, as the distance lengthened, she knew that she was utterly alone save for her child. No wanderer of the desert came upon her. The stars and moon gave light for the night journey and ever she followed her God, the Sun, as he sank in the west or rose in the east.

In her heart was the great epic of her people. In her arms the child of Lataquana. She never faltered but kept steadily on. How long she wandered, she could not say. It might have been only months, or it may have been a year or more. Certain it is she must have traveled over five hundred miles and that over deserts and mountains thought to be almost impassable.

One evening, as she descended the canyon of the Diablo range leading to the low land, she saw behind her a wall of spires and peaks, draped in all the colors of a flaming opal. Be-

fore her stretched a plain like unto that described by her mother and grandmother. Straining her eyes, she saw in the distance a low mountain rising from its surrounding levels. She felt that her journey was nearly done and hurried on to the Rock.

It was night when she reached the Rock, but the moon and stars showed her the portal and the stone altar gleaming. There were no people near the Rock, but she waited for dawn. Throwing herself down at the base of the Rock, she waited for her God to arise and show her his face. At the first glimmer of dawn she entered, placed her child upon the stone altar and soon the rays of the morning sun smote upon the babe and its worn mother. La Madra had accomplished her journey. She was in Piedra Pintada. On the walls of the gallery were the paintings as they had been described to her, but there were no worshipers. Then she recalled the story of the curse.

After the people who fled to Carisa had lived in love, humility and charity for some time runners brought to them stories of the failure of the Messiah to restore the old religion to those left in Mexico. The dreamer then in charge was a fanatical man and his own will was paramount with

him. Between the time that Hajguani the Dreamer spoke to the Great Spirit and the time of Hago the Dreamer, the man of iron will, there had been called a great convocation of the people and since the Messiah was so slow in coming some of the people sided with the priests and the stone altar had been set up ready for its human sacrifice, but up to the time of Hago no victim had been slain upon the altar.

Hago had one daughter, a beautiful maiden. She had been trained by her father in all his fanaticism and had his will. She was to be a priestess. Hago retired behind the curtain that hung in all its gorgeousness of feathered em-

Good Printing

The refinement of *good printing* is apparent in all work from the press of H. S. CROCKER COMPANY, INC. The *artistic touch* is dominant in the harmony of effect produced. Each order, whether a small engraved announcement or a bulky book, receives the same intelligent care from our experts. We are proud to offer the services of an organization composed of one hundred master craftsmen to buyers of printing who realize that *fine printing* does pay.

T

H. S. Crocker Co., Inc.

565-571 Market St. 242 Montgomery St.
SAN FRANCISCO

Radiator Repairing
Duco Enamel
Fender Repairing
Towing



Metal Work
General Overhauling
Body Work
Upholstering
Baked Enameling

Ask your
insurance man to let
us repair your car.
All work guaranteed

Repairing wrecked
autos
our specialty
Equipped for any kind
of work

broidery between the two altars. He was supposed to go to sleep and receive from the Great Spirit a message for the people.

When he came from behind the curtain he announced that the Great Spirit had told him that a maiden pure and beautiful must be slain upon the altar and her spirit come to the Great Spirit for a message to her people. The assembled people murmured and said it must not be. The religion of love, humility and charity must not be soiled by human sacrifice. Hago addressed the people again and called for an offering. Seriat, his daughter, stepped upon the altar and said she was ready for the sacrifice. The people tried to prevent it, but Hago plunged a stone dagger into the heart of his child. The kneeling priests caught the blood in vessels, but the people, with loud cries, fled. Seriat's body was then burned. The ashes, mixed with her blood, were sprinkled upon the altar of stone. The altar of wood was used by the Dreamer when he gave his message from the Great Spirit to the people.

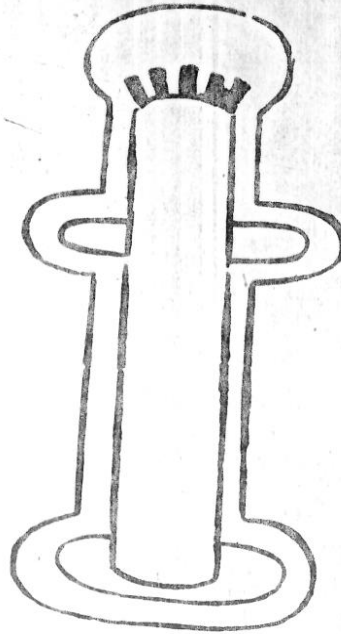
Again Hago called the people together and this time told them that the spirit of Seriat had returned to him, bringing a message that he should pronounce a curse upon all who should ever try to dispossess the people from Carisa. The curse was pronounced and the people again fled in terror from the fearful words. A painting was placed upon the walls to insure the curse.

When La Madra beheld the deserted temple she felt that the curse had been fulfilled, but she must stay. She lived alone with little Jose in Piedra Pintada for many years. At length came the white men, mostly Mexicans, who worked for the real owners of the land. They named her La Madra (the mother) and she never gave any other name. She was very kind, very just, and hospitable to all. At length she was persuaded to leave Piedra Pintada and go to live in a little adobe hut on the ranch of Phillip Biddel. Jose rode for a man named Biddel and later for the man to whom he told this legend. After he had told the story of La Madra, Jose seemed greatly relieved that some one should know the tale as well as himself.

"But," said Jose, "the curse has been fulfilled." He then spoke of the fate of some who had taken up land on the Carisa. Two had been murdered, the cattle of another had died, and one had been dragged to death at the heels of a favorite colt.

Of the Indians that Cabrillo said thickly populated this particular part of California when he discovered and partly explored it in 1542, there remained only a remnant of those that had once lived at the two missions of San Miguel and San Luis de Toloso.

They were a peaceable lot, not given to either war or overwork. So far as known Jose was the only person who



The representation of a tower of worship

ever claimed a knowledge of the story of Piedra Pintada, but there it stands a challenge to the one who will unravel its mystery.

Pioneers of Carisa

In the sixties, Charles and Ed Crocker took up land on the Carisa. They named the ranch El Temblor (earthquake), for some mighty upheaval had thrown up a jagged wall of volcanic rock upon the land. Borel and Berete, two Frenchmen, settled at a place and named it French Camp. They were murdered. Jack Gilkey settled the Cammatti (hair rope) ranch. In the early seventies Chester Brumley came down from San Francisco and took up land. He also acted as major domo for another large cattle and sheep ranch. In 1876 his wife, a refined, cultured woman,

and three lovely young daughters came to be with him. One was only part of the time, for she was teaching in a city school. All her life on the great plain entrance. They rode miles and miles on ponies and explored the temple. It is in the possession of one of the three sisters a set of very fine drawings of paintings on the temple walls. These drawings are invaluable. They preserve in a true manner many of the paintings since they were or defaced. These women did not find the Carisa a wilderness. In the days, however, when home folks, music, books and pictures were factors in happiness.

It was eighty miles to the town of any size at all, San Obispo, and one must go on horse back or in a wagon. The way over mountains and through canyons and there were no roads much better than trails. Still these women sometimes came to town for visits. They brought with them pretty dresses, gowns and went in to dinner on the arms of men wearing evening clothes. Oh, there were recompenses for the girls as the "Brumley girls," who dared to follow father wherever he felt it best to go.

I have told you the story so far as known of Piedra Pintada. Sure you have been interested in it.

(Continued on Page 22)

Larkins & Co.

Specialize in

Repairing Damaged
Cars



Built in San Francisco

A new

Motor Cruiser

The public is cordially
invited to inspect this
new boat on exhibition
at the Pacific Automobile Show.

ALLEN KNIGHT

Builder

519 California Street, San Francisco

Geary at First Avenue

San Francisco

Telephone Pacific 107

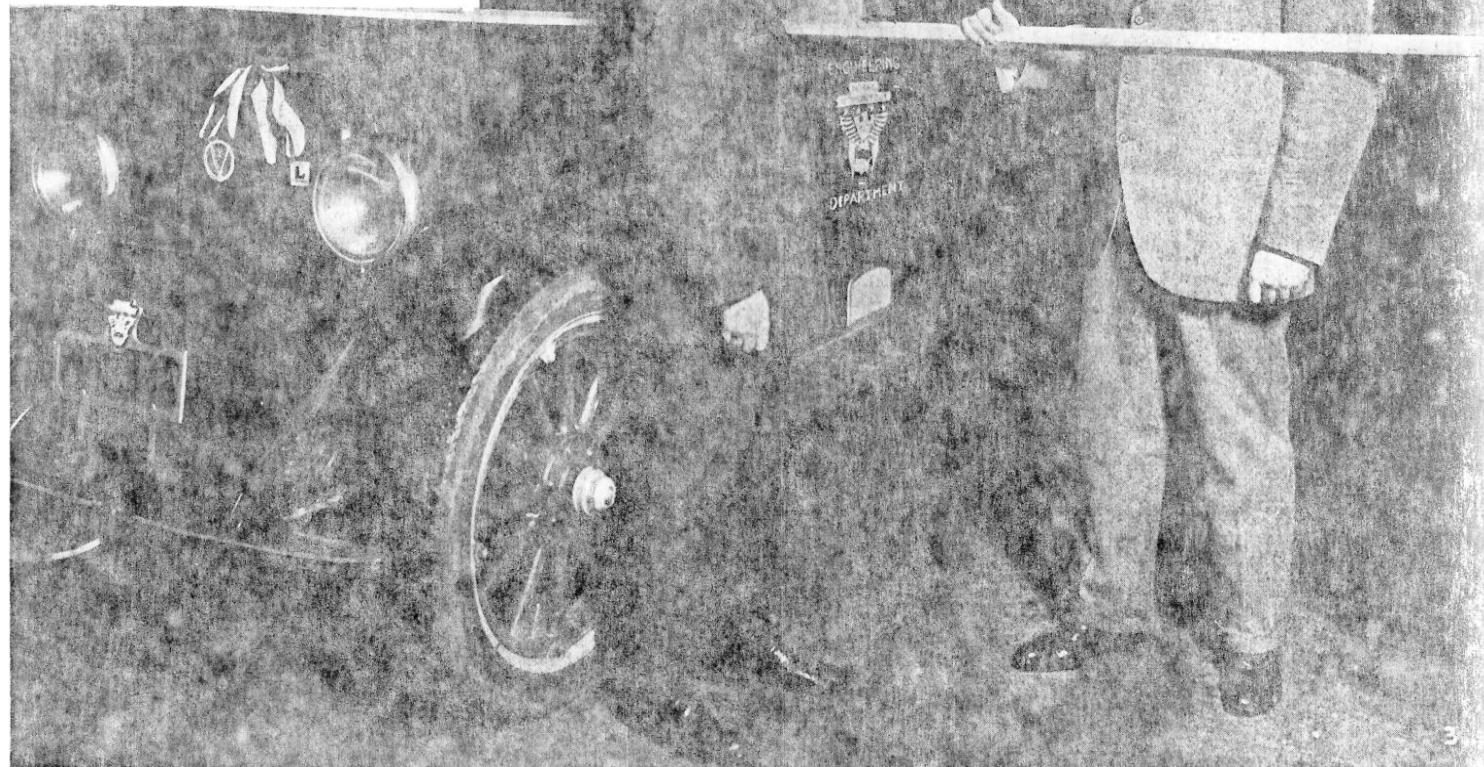
N. A. C. Car First to Cross New Antioch Bridge

Victory Highway Bridge

-Au+1-.90 - 0008 JAN-1-26

Ticket # 1.
Oscar H. Keatt
Vice-President

AMERICAN TOLL BRIDGE CO.



The National Automobile Club's Nash Scout Car was the first car across the Antioch bridge, important link in trans-continental Victory Highway. Left to right: Ben Blow, Field Secretary, National Automobile Club, and Aven J. Hanford, President of American Toll Bridge Company, builders of bridge. Inset, first ticket sold over Antioch bridge at 12:01 a. m., January 1, 1926.

The Painted Rock of Carisa

(Continued from Page 8)

you decide to visit it for yourself, it may easily be done.

Come by El Camino Real to Santa Margarita, the town about twelve miles north of San Luis Obispo. There turn east and go to Pozo (cup), a little village some eighteen miles away on the road to the Temple. The distance from Santa Margarita to the Rock is sixty miles over a very good graveled road. There are some grades, but not bad ones, and one may find accommodations at the villages or ranches if he does not want to carry along his own outfit. Take your own grub box and blankets! Cook out in the open and sleep beneath the stars! Once you breathe that wonderful air

of the Carisa you will hunger for more. Then you will become so interested in the Rock that you will want to stay and explore it and dream of La Madra. Perhaps her spirit will come and tell you what the Great Spirit has told her since she went to him.

May will be the ideal month for this trip. Then all the hills and plains will be rich with flowers and waving grain. There will be no rains to wet you or your outfit. If you time it right, there will be a golden moon and great white blazing stars at night. If a coyote comes down from the hills and howls his weird song, so much the better. You may, perhaps,

see shades of elk, deer, antelope and wild horses feeding in the moonlight. You may hear a wild mustang neigh and see his herd gallop away at his heels. All this, of course, if you have it in your heart to see the vanished beauty of a land once the home of a race akin to those who built the Sphinx and worshiped the same God the Sun, the God of La Madra, the source of life for all things that grow at least no thing can live and flourish if shut away from the sun.

All American
HOTEL ALTA AND CAFE
MADERA
Rooms—Bath—\$2.00 Up

LOOK FOR THE NATIONAL EMBLEM
HOTEL CAROLYN
FREE GARAGE TURLOCK