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VALUABLE DISCOVERIES

Resulting from the Exploration of the Box Cañon.

An Unlimited Timber Supply and an Unequalled Point for Constructing a Reservoir.

Last evening the GAZETTE reporter interviewed John Meaders, one of the members of the daring party which recently passed through the Box cañon of Salt river in a small boat. The party had a most interesting and exciting trip, being five days in making the voyage, which from Armer's place, about 4 miles above the point where Tonto creek debouches into the Salt river, to the dam of the Grand canal where the boat was tied up, includes a distance of about 100 miles calculating upon the sinuosities of the stream. The box cañon pierces the foot hills of the Four Peak range, which

is to the north of the stream, while lower down Superstitious mountain forms the south bank. The cañon proper is about 60 miles in length, and begins at the mouth of Tonto creek. For a distance of about eight miles the explorers passed down the river where precipitous banks arose varying from 200 to 1000 feet, then came a rolling country for a few miles and the boat entered the main box which continued for a distance of perhaps 20 miles. Before entering the second cañon the bed of the stream narrows to only 11 feet. This discovery is perhaps the most important made, simply through

the fact that a dam may be placed across the river at that point, and at comparatively small expense, which would form a reservoir or lake of fully 20 miles in length. The walls at this point are precipitous only for a height of 15 feet, but a granite mountain rises on one side, while rolling hills come down to the other bank. A dam of 11 feet at the bottom, and rising to a height of 300 feet would not be over 600 feet in width at

the top, and would form a reservoir sufficient to irrigate millions of acres of farming lands. The water is not particularly swift at this point and Mr. Meaders thinks that engineering skill could easily devise a way for constructing a reservoir.

Mr. Meaders tells the reporter that the character of the rock forming the cañon is a dark syenite, in which several iron dikes were seen.

At one point they passed through a mineral belt, the appearance of which was very good, but owing to lack of time it was not prospected. Timber exists in the Four Peak range in large quantities. Game and fish are most plentiful, the party having killed one mountain sheep and several deer, while they caught large quantities of Salt river trout—called by some white salmon. These fish closely resemble the lake trout of California but are not so game. Several of these fish, weighing eight and ten pounds, were caught by the explorers, but in previous instances fish of this specie weighing forty pounds have been caught. The boat on one occasion shot under a cave, but a few feet high, and where its inmates commenced to fear that the end had come; here the fish were so thick that the boat floated on their backs.

Besides the two cañons we have referred to there are a succession of others of various lengths, aggregating a distance of about thirty miles. They are all of the same character, however. The water flows very swiftly through most portions of the cañon, and its depth varies from six to twenty feet, the stream being held in very narrow limits. No drift wood or any other debris exists in the cañon, the force of the water driving everything before it.

As was stated in the GAZETTE report of yesterday, the object of the exploration was to ascertain the practicability of floating logs down the river to this city, and the absence of drift and the general character of the cañon demonstrates most fully that such a project may be successfully undertaken. This in itself is an important discovery, for the reason that it will open to this valley the timber belt of the Sierra Anche, which is undoubtedly the best and most extensive in the territory.

Of course the voyage of Messrs. Burch, Robinson, Logan and Meaders was not without its excitement and pleasures as well as dangers. They were exploring a section man never before penetrated. Dashing along in a frail craft in some instances at a rate of twenty miles an hour, and the banks of the stream rising above them on either side to a height of 1,000 feet, is of course sufficiently exciting to satisfy the most adventurous. They expected every minute to strike a waterfall and have their boat dashed to pieces, as they feared when they shot the cave. On one occasion their boat upset and much of their supplies were lost. In case of losing their vessel in the cañon but one recourse would be left, that of swimming down the stream to a break in one bank or another and that might not be encountered for a distance of twenty miles. The description of the scenery as given by Mr. Meaders, is grandly beautiful and awe inspiring, and if an artist could reproduce it, a fortune would award his genius. It was a desperate undertaking, successfully accomplished, but cannot be considered a fool-hardy attempt, for the reason that it was made for a laudable purpose.