or advice regarding the matters covered by the foregoing article, even if these take the form of destructive criticism. It seems to me that here, as in so many other cases, no far-reaching plans should be adopted until we have had a free discusion in which all angles of the subject have been considered. I am therefore hopeful that this communication may call forth replies, either addressed to me personally or published in the columns of SCIENCE.[3]

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THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY COMPLETES ITS GIFTS OF BIG TREES

THE trustees and officers of the National Geographic Society are deeply gratified to announce to members that the society has been continuing its effort, begun in 1916, to preserve the Big Trees of Sequoia National Park.

By a final purchase in April, 1921, of 640 acres of land in Sequoia National Park, these famous trees, oldest and most massive among all living things, the only ones of their kind in the world, have been saved; they will not be cut down and converted into lumber.

Were a monument of human erection to be destroyed, it might be replaced; but had these aborigines of American forests been felled, they would have disappeared forever. The Big Trees could no more be restored than could those other survivals of indigenous American life, the red man and the buffalo, should they become extinct.

Members of the National Geographic Society will recall that, in 1916, Congress had appropriated $50,000 for the purchase of certain private holdings in Sequoia National Park, but the owners declined to sell for less than $70,000. In that emergency the National Geographic Society took the first step toward saving the Big Trees by subscribing the remaining $20,000. Thus 667 acres were purchased. The society's equity in them was conveyed to the government, and this tract became the property, for all time, of the American people.

In 1920, inspired by the first benefaction, three members of the society gave the society sums equivalent to the purchase price of $21,330 necessary to acquire three more tracts, aggregating 609 acres. Thus the original area of Sequoias saved from destruction was almost doubled.

At the request of the donors, this area was presented to the government by the National Geographic Society in June, 1920. This gift was made possible by the generosity of Stephen T. Mather, director of national park service, who personally contributed $13,130; by D. E. Skinner, of Seattle, who contributed $5,000; and by Louis Titus, of Washington, D. C., who contributed $3,200.

There still remained one other important private holding in Sequoia National Park amounting to 640 acres. Through this tract, which is covered by a splendid stand of giant sugar-pine and fir, runs the road to Giant Forest.

To acquire this approach to the unique forest and to eliminate the last of the private holdings in this natural temple, the National Geographic Society and friends of the society, in 1921, contributed $55,000, with which the tract was purchased. On April 20, 1921, it was formally tendered in the name of the society, through Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall, to the American people.

This sum of $55,000 includes $10,000 from the tax fund of Tulare County, California, within which the Sequoia National Park is

[3] Those who are desirous of reading fuller discussions of wild life conservation and the preservation of natural conditions are referred to articles by Harper ("Natural History," Vol. XIX., 1919), Van Name (SCIENCE, July 25, 1919), and Sumner (*Scientific Monthly*, March, 1920). Two books by Hornaday are also to be recommended: "Our Vanishing Wild Life" (N. Y., Scribner's, 1913), and "Wild Life Conservation in Theory and Practise" (Yale University Press, 1914). The Ecological Society of America is likewise about to publish a brief résumé of the "Reasons for Preserving Natural Areas," which will doubtless be rather widely distributed.

situated, a practical evidence that the people closest to the park are alive to the importance of our government owning the land.

The contributors and the amounts contributed were:

Research Fund of the National Geographic Society	$ 5,000
W. F. Chandler, Fresno, California	6,000
George F. Eastman, Rochester, New York	15,000
William Kent, Kentfield, California	250
Stephen T. Mather, Director National Park Service	14,000
Charles W. Merrill, Berkeley, California	250
James K. Moffit, San Francisco	500
John Barton Payne, former Secretary of Interior	2,000
Julius Rosenwald, Chicago, Illinois	1,000
Rudolph Spreckels, San Francisco	1,000
Special Tax Levy of Tulare County, California	10,000
	$55,000

Thus the National Geographic Society has conveyed to the United States government a total acreage in Sequoia National Park of 1,916 acres, purchased at a total cost of $96,330.

It should be noted that the gifts were not solicited by the society. The National Geographic Society asks its membership for no contributions of any sort. Its publications and its scientific and educational activities are entirely supported by their dues.

Every member of the society may feel that he had a part in this enduring gift to his country and to posterity, for the funds appropriated directly by the society for the purchase of the Sequoias came from the fraction of the dues of members set aside for such benefactions.

The tender was made in the name of the National Geographic Society because, as the director of the National Park Service, Mr. Mather, put it:

> It is only proper that this gift should come to the government through the National Geographic Society, in view of the keen interest which the society has taken in the purchase of the other private holdings in this park. It was through direct gifts by your society that we were able to save the Giant Forest, which contains the finest stand of *Sequoia Washingtoniana* in the Sierra.

Following the presentation, Albert B. Fall, Secretary of the Interior, wrote to Gilbert Grosvenor, president of the National Geographic Society:

> *Dear Mr. Grosvenor:* It was a very pleasant surprise when you called on me on April 20 and, on behalf of the National Geographic Society, presented the title deeds and other pertinent papers conveying to the United States the so-called Martin tract of 640 acres in the Sequoia National Park, recently purchased at a cost of $55,000 by your Society, through the generosity of its members, in order that this area with its fine stand of trees might be preserved for the American people.
>
> I have already personally expressed to you my sincere thanks and my acceptance of the proffered gift. Your society on several preceding occasions has stepped in at a critical moment and acquired several similar areas in this same park, thereby saving from extermination other wonderful trees that would otherwise have fallen under the axe.
>
> Your society is to be highly commended on its substantial expression of a high public spirit, and on behalf of the United States I again want to express to you, and through you to the contributors, my deepest appreciation of your generous and considerate action.
>
> Respectfully,
>
> Albert B. Fall
>
> Mr. Gilbert Grosvenor,
> President, National Geographic Society,
> Washington, D. C.

To mankind, throughout the ages, trees have been the most human-like, the most companionable, of all inanimate things. Aristotle thought they must have perceptions and passions. An infinitely more scientific generation still is sensible to their mystical power.

More and more will Americans visit Sequoia National Park to gaze upon the majesty of "Nature's forest masterpieces" in their last stand. National Geographic Society members may well be proud that they had a part in preserving for all time these mementos of a past far beyond the records of written history.