



# Yellowstone, Land of Wonders: Promenade in North America's National Park

*Jules Leclercq*

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In the summer of 1883 Belgian travel writer Jules Leclercq spent ten days on horseback in Yellowstone, the world's first national park, exploring myriad natural wonders: astonishing geysers, majestic waterfalls, the vast lake, and the breathtaking canyon. He also recorded the considerable human activity, including the rampant vandalism. Leclercq's account of his travels is itself a small marvel blending natural history, firsthand impressions, scientific lore, and anecdote. Along with his observations on the park's long-rumored fountains of boiling water and mountains of glass, Leclercq describes camping near geysers, washing clothes in a bubbling hot spring, and meeting such diverse characters as local guides and tourists from the United States and Europe. Notables including former president Ulysses S. Grant and then-president Chester A. Arthur were also in the park that summer to inaugurate the newly completed leg of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

A sensation in Europe, the book was never published in English. This deft translation at long last makes available to English-speaking readers a masterpiece of western American travel writing that is a fascinating historical document in its own right.

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