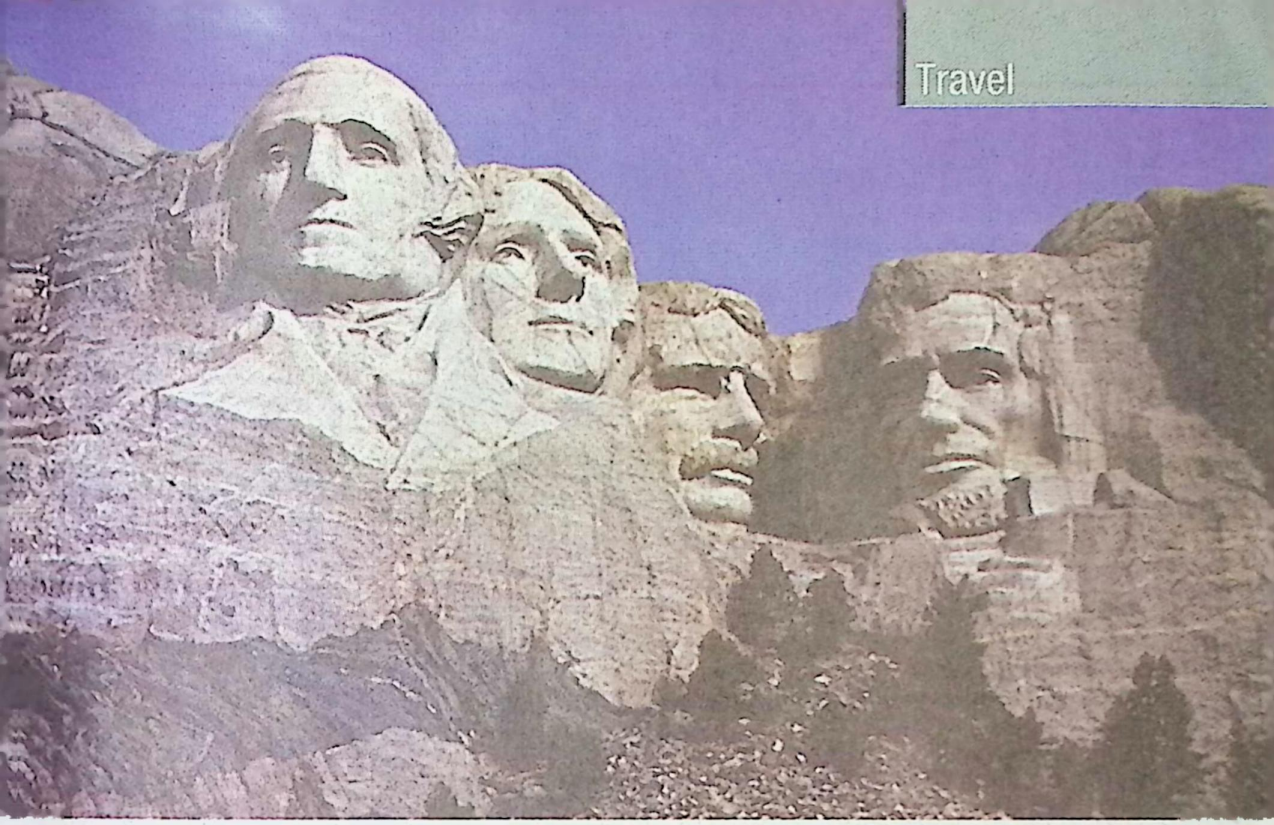


George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln.

Nature's Exquisite Beauty and Variety

AZIZUL JALIL

In late-June of this year we traversed by car the beautiful expanse of the landscape in South Dakota and Wyoming in North-Western region of the United States. With its rugged snow-capped mountains, studded by green pine and silvery leaved trees, wild flowers, crystal-clear streams, musical fountains and big and small lakes that abound in this area, it was an unforgettably serene experience. But the most spectacular scene to me was the clear medium-blue sky in which clusters of white clouds of infinite size and shape floated on both sides of the road, as if dancing their way through. Like Tagore, we wondered who indeed had crafted these scenes! These made us go into a contemplative mood, which was deepened by the devotional songs of Tagore playing in the car. The cup of beauty and satisfaction was indeed filled to the brim!

The journey - driving over eleven hundred miles, would take us from Rapid City in South Dakota in the east, then going west through six to ten thousand feet granite mountains to the vast Yellowstone National Park and beyond to Jackson Hole and the Grand Teton Mountains. At places and at great heights the road had horseshoe turns and sharp bends protected only by low metal rails, occasionally strengthened by wood posts bolted to the rails.

We went by air to Rapid City to visit the Mount Rushmore National Memorial- a 25 miles drive from the city. The airport shuttle took us from the pretty airport in the midst of barren and flat land, surrounded by the low Black Hill Mountains to our hotel. The shuttle driver quipped that the name Rapid City was a good, white lie! The people there were not rapid but slow and the city was not a city at all as it had a small population of only seventy thousand. We proceeded the same afternoon in pouring rain for a look at the giant-sized heads of four US presidents - an impressive and imagina-