

(For the Alta California.)

Messrs. Editors, — Presuming that any information, that a stray contributor may be able to give you, of the character and resources of such portions of California, as he may have visited, will be interesting to such of your readers as have not time and opportunity to see for themselves, I have no hesitation in giving you the result of my observations, during a short tour through the country lying north of Sonoma. — The overland immigration of this year brings with it numbers of our western farmers, with their families, anxious to locate themselves in such parts of the country as give promise of successful cultivation. The part which I have just visited, combines fertility of soil and abundance of water, with the advantage of nearness to the great market of California; and it is for the eye of those who intend to settle here permanently and to develop the agricultural resources of the country, that my communication is mainly intended.

Our party, equipped with a month's supplies, left Sonoma early in September. We crossed the low range of hills, which is the termination of the main chain of mountains separating the vallies of Sonoma and Napa, and entered Napa valley. The first two days of our road lay in this valley. It is unquestionably one of the most beautiful and fertile of which California can boast. No climate can be more delicious—far enough from the sea coast, you are rid of the fogs, which morning and evening, on the bay of San Francisco, penetrate every pore; and of the disagreeable winds which prevail. The valley runs nearly N. W. and S. E., extending from San Pablo Bay into the interior more than seventy miles, and will average from three to four miles in breadth, with a fine, clear stream running through its entire extent. This stream empties itself into the bay of San Pablo, near the straits of Karquinez; and is navigable for launches and steamboats as far as Napa City, fourteen miles above its mouth. During our course up the valley we passed several fine farms in good cultivation; among which may be named those of Don Salvador Vallejo, Mr. Yount, Dr. Bayle and Mr. Fowler. We camped, on our first night, near Mr. Yount's, where we were hospitably treated, and had the pleasure of eating some of the fine apples which his orchard produces. At Dr. Bayle's the next day we tasted the first grapes of the season. The second night we slept near Mr. Fowler's, and but a few hundred yards from a hot spring which bursts out at the foot of an isolated hill in the midst of the valley. — Here we met a victim to fever and ague from the mines, who had pitched his solitary tent at this spring, to bathe in its waters. There is an abundant growth of oak throughout this valley, for the purpose of firewood, and on the mountain crests which wall in the valley, is to be found red wood and pine, which gives you good building materials. Two mills are already established upon the stream, one just west of the

established upon the stream, one grist and the other a saw mill, which has hitherto supplied the town of Napa with lumber. Every where on our road we saw evidence of a good soil, but in dry seasons irrigation must be resorted to to secure a crop commensurate with the ability of the land to produce. After leaving Mr. Fowler's farm, our trail diverged from Napa valley, and we crossed the ridge of mountains separating the vallies of Napa and Clear Lake. This we accomplished in two days. Our route through this passage is not practicable for wagons; but I am informed by Mr. Kelsey, an old resident of the country, that a good road can be obtained from the lake to Napa, by taking a more southern route. On the third day, we reached the lake, and camped on its borders within two miles of Mr. Kelsey's house. Here we remained two days to recruit our animals, tired and foot-sore, from their travel over the last range.

Lake Clear is about fifty miles long, and throughout the greater part of its length, eight miles broad. Fine fish are caught in its waters, and form almost the sole article of food of the Indians living in its vicinity. Mr. Kelsey tells me that Cash Creek is the outlet of its waters. The southern shore is bold, and formed by the mountains which enclose it, but the upper shores have broad vallies resting upon them, containing fine farming land, well adapted to the growth of wheat. Few parts of California surpass the upper vallies of this lake, either in richness of soil, or beauty. They, like that of Napa have a fine growth of oak through the bottoms, and upon the dividing ranges, pine and red wood.

During our stay at the lake, we visited a hot spring, about twelve miles from Mr. Kelsey's, and three from the lake shore. This spring bursts from the solid rock, and leaping from fall to fall, forms a stream, with water for a mill, and empties into the lake. Its water, I have no doubt is medicinally valuable. Its temperature is about 110 deg. Fahrenheit. Some of our party drank largely of its water, and others enjoyed a warm bath, in a hollow of the rock below. On our way out a fine elk was shot by Mr. K., but as their rutting season had begun his meat was adjudged not to be good. On our return a number of large vultures had collected around him, and made a plentiful feast. We killed one, measuring eight feet six inches across the wings.

Leaving Clear Lake, we struck over to the head of Russian River, and followed that stream to its great bend at Carson's rancho; and from thence to Sonoma our route lay through the valley of Santa Rosa. The valley of Russian river is becoming rapidly settled, and presents the same advantages as those before mentioned. The river empties into the ocean a few miles above Bodega.

The country over which we have passed may be divided into a system of mountain ranges, separating fertile vallies, their direction being from N. W. to S. E. and nearly parallel to the great

valley of the Sacramento. These ranges, put off spurs at right angles to themselves, and form subordinate vallies, resting upon the main ones; It is plentifully supplied with game, quail, elk, deer, and we observe bear signs every day, though we saw but one during our trip. It is well watered and the streams give a constant supply during the dry season.

Yours, &c.

"FAR WEST."

CALIFORNIA EXTRAVAGANCE.—The correspondent of the Baptist Recorder, at San Francisco, says: On the day of our arrival, a man paid one hundred dollars for ten bottles of champagne, (the usual price,) and thirty dollars for a large arm chair, in which he seated himself, at the front of a house, drank and swore, and sung and drank, till five bottles were emptied, and then broke the remaining five upon the ground, his chair against the house, and walked off in all the glory of his liberty.

There is no semblance of truth in the above, and the correspondent of the Baptist Recorder, whoever he be, should better temper his articles for a religious paper. Of course the story is a hoax; but this *extravagance* of language does not become the sphere to which it is exalted.

Murder in the Red Woods.—Henry Parks was found murdered in the Red Woods, about twenty miles from this city, on the 5th inst., near the residence of Mr. Chas. Brown.