

# SAN DIEGO HERALD.

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SAN DIEGO, CAL., THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 1851.

## Trip of Exploration.

The great difficulty of forwarding from this Point the supplies for the Post at the Junction of the Gila and Colorado Rivers by means of the wagon road has, since taking charge of this business, excited in me a deep solicitude to accomplish this object by a more direct route; and accordingly on the 6th of last month I set out from this place, with no other guide than the points of the compass, determined to go a direct course if possible, and by such explorations as I should be able to make, ascertain whether any facilities over the present route could be obtained. In nearly a direct course east from here, (and in nearly this direction the Post upon the Gila and Colorado lies,) two large mountains may be seen; the first called (I believe) "San Miguel," appears dark, being covered with vegetation,—the second, which

(I believe) "San Miguel," appears dark, being covered with vegetation,—the second, which is much higher, is white with granite boulders piled in huge masses upon it. The inviting appearance of the depression on the north side of these mountains, determined me to attempt a passage through it, which I accomplished with unexpected facility, realizing only such embarrassment as would naturally arise from ignorance of the country, and which was happily avoided on returning, by discovering an old Indian trail, long since abandoned, which led a very direct and easy course. From the foot of this second mountain, on the north, extends nearly in a direct course east for about 30 miles, (turning slightly south towards its eastern extremity) one of the most remarkable mountain gorges in nature; having on either side high, steep mountains, covered with huge



side high, steep mountains, covered with huge granite blocks, and approaching towards their base, with their repulsive surfaces, present a very discouraging prospect of a passage between them. But a fine valley, having grass and water, and beautiful oak groves, extends along at the foot of these mountains, through most of the distance, and the few difficulties to an easy passage can be easily removed by a little manual labor. The first water of this passage runs west and empties into Punta creek, and proceeding about eight miles we come to its source, and passing a slight elevation come upon water running east, which joins that coming from the eastern extremity of the gorge, and passes through a deep gorge to the south, and probably empties into the Fe Juan creek.

We now passed into high, undulating coun-

Juan creek.

We now passed into high, undulating country, extending far in every direction, and having oak grove vallies, with grass and water extending from north to south, and after going about twelve miles in a direction a little north of east, we come to a low ridge, not difficult of ascent from this side, but rocky and steep in the descent on the east, though an Indian trail which here leads along, affords great assistance when we come into a kind of basin, or large valley surrounded by mountains, called by the Indians living in it, "Jacum." The Indians here are spread over the valley, and seemed to be in considerable numbers; they were kindly disposed, cultivate the earth to some extent, many had been into the settlements, and some talked a little Spanish.

Leaving this valley in an easterly direction we come upon the mountains that border upon the Desert, among which we wind in a north-easterly direction without much ascent, and commenced descending in the same direction, when after a considerable and gradual descent, we come upon the steep and rocky declivity, which every where on the western side of the desert, presents the obstacle to a direct route. Having an Indian guide from the Jacum valley, he took me down (as he had promised to do) a tolerably gradual descent, and one which, with a little work upon it, might be easily practicable for pack mules, and which I have no doubt is the best descent, short of the present wagon road, that can be made on that side of the mountains. At the bottom of this descent are springs of water, sufficient for men and animals, and very little grass. We now wound our



springs of water, sufficient for men and animals, and very little grass. We now wound our way in a northerly direction for a distance of about five miles, most of the way along the bed of a dry creek, till we come out of the mountains upon the desert, a distance of about 20 miles west of the little Laguna; or about 15 miles south-west of the large Laguna.

This route shortens the present wagon road about 80 miles, and with a small amount of manual labor can be made an easy route for pack mules;—a wagon route cannot be obtained short of much labor previously bestowed.

Persons coming or going this route should stop at the springs mentioned as being at the foot of the steep declivity; as in coming from the desert, animals would be too much fatigued and the day too much advanced, to get through the mountains in time to encamp in the "Jacum" valley; and persons leaving that valley to

go east, would not find time, during that day, to reach the waters of either Laguna without too much fatigue to their animals.

The desert is much better known to others than to myself and I cannot therefore describe it to advantage. I did not make an exploration of New River below where the road leaves it, but persons who have been along it, consider it advantageous to those crossing the desert with animals, to follow the New river down (in going east) towards the Colorado, and those coming this way, to strike off from the Colorado in a more southerly course than the present road takes, and strike New river as soon as possible, and follow it up to the little Laguna. The Mesquit are found in abundance along New river, and grass is said to be found in some places.

N. L.

San Diego, June 1st, 1851.