

Correspondence

For the Christian Messenger.

From Southern California.

LOS ANGELES VALLEY AND THE DROUGHT. A DRIVE OF OVER 40 SQUARE MILES OF THE FINEST AGRICULTURAL LAND— THROUGH WAVING CORN FIELDS—ALFALFA—TALL WILLOW AND COTTON HEDGES OR LINE FENCES. UNION MEETING AT ARTESIA AND RESULTS. DIVIDING OF CONVERTS LAST LORD'S DAY, &c.

NOVEMBER 16th, 1877.

Dear Bro. Selden,—

Not since the occupation of this country by the Americans has there been such a year of drought, the total rainfall this year having lacked several hundredths of five inches in the country. But notwithstanding the drought, small-pox, depression in commercial circles, &c., &c., this country has been remarkably prosperous. Within the time of my sojourn here, the assessed valuation of property in this county has risen from twelve millions of dollars to nearly sixteen millions, contrasting with what it was three years ago the progress is quite astonishing. In a tour of inspection recently we saw flourishing towns and fine farms where at that time we could detect nothing but waste land,—we found extensive neighbourhoods grown up in localities which were before, or at our former visit devoted to the grazing of cattle and mustang sheep. We found Santa Anna built up to quite a flourishing town, where, at a former visit three years ago, there was but one or two houses, and one of them a blacksmith's shop, and for the want of a better place we had to preach in a grove of sycamores. But mark my surprise when a few Sabbaths ago I was called to visit and preach there, I could scarcely believe my own eyes. Here now was a fine town, well laid out—a plaza in the centre, and surrounding it churches and noble edifices. The Baptist church is on this plaza, with its spire pointing upwards—a fine gothic structure;—also the Methodist Chapel, the next on the square, and others. Here I found quite a miscellaneous company, consisting of lawyers, doctors, merchants, farmers, a Doctor of Divinity, and a good brother from Spurgeon's church, a medical doctor who leads the Bible Class in this church, and Judge Stephens, a most attentive hearer. My subject was, "Almost a Christian."

The Southern Pacific Railroad will have reached this town in a few days on its way to San Diego, which will no doubt give it an impetus, as it is situated in one of the best farming localities in Los Angeles Valley; this town, and Orange, Austin City, and Westminster, in the south, were quite unknown at my first visit, only scattering farm-settlements.

Again, in the centre of the county, near Los Angeles, Pasadena, one of the most lovely settlements forming the wing of a series of new orange groves and vineyards, added to what is known as the Fruit Belt of "San Gabriel Mission, and Lake Vineyard Land and Water Company," which are all converted into most valuable plantations. These orange groves have a great celebrity, and are well worthy a day's drive to any one to witness the vast avenues of beautiful orange groves now about fifteen years old laden with luscious fruit. Now, if one turns towards the sea he will find the great Coyotes Rancho cut up by English gentlemen and others into flourishing agricultural settlements and signs of improvement as one proceeds northwards until he reaches the city of Santa Monica, the little city by the sea, which has arisen as if by magic; and after having "done" the rural districts take a drive through the city of Los Angeles and one will find astonishing changes. Improvements of the most costly character will greet one at every step, and will find the built up area of the city not only enlarged from its business centre, but amplified by a series of beautiful suburbs, grown into towns within less than three years, viz., Brookland Heights, East and West Los Angeles, &c., &c. Having learned the value of artificial irrigation, more especially during this year of drought, will now develop the great water resources as they never would have been developed but for this dry year. By this act of Providence the hundreds and thousands of mustang sheep which formerly grazed upon this fertile land

to the exclusion of industrious farmers, have disappeared, never to return, and are now being replaced by better breeds imported from England.

WHAT WE SAW IN OUR DRIVE.

Starting out behind a good span of horses, driven and owned by brother VanDicar, we were soon in the midst of waving corn fields, big pumpkins, and vineyards loaded with grapes, tons of which will perish for want of being gathered, the tax on grape brandy being too high for the manufacturer's price, 12 to 15 cents per one hundred pounds, there being more grapes raised in this county than in all the State beside, and more grape brandy manufactured than in all the other States combined. We soon reached

DOWNY CITY,

a town of some four hundred inhabitants, probably as live a little town as is to be found in California. At my first visit, three years ago, there was but one building—the Depot of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Now the scene is quite changed. A handsome two-story College is in course of erection, to cost \$10,000, and in addition there is another College, recently erected, equipped, and filled with students, and several large school houses, besides three large churches with spires. The Baptist Chapel is the largest, and the membership the greatest, of our denomination, in the county. In our extended trip through Los Nietus Valley we were hardly ever out of sight of a public school building, which are all tasteful, well kept, and filled with scholars. From the Depot one reads the sign, "Grand Central Hotel," but on making ones way there in search of accommodations, will find it converted into a College, well filled with students, and with the Nietus Valley Courier also occupying an angle of the building. This is the first thing which attracts the notice of the stranger, viz., the number and size of the school buildings everywhere, the most of them truly magnificent structures.

CHARACTER OF THE CROPS

raised this year in the Nietus Valley—about 25,000 acres. Out of this about 15,000 are devoted to small grains, vegetables, alfalfa, pasture, &c.; 10,000 in ordinary years, are devoted to corn raising. This land is all capable of irrigation; as the San Gabriel river passes through from the mountains the water is taken out by the Zanjias (pronounce Zankes) and distributed to every part, as the whole of this Los Angeles Valley is a vast plain with not a hill to prevent irrigation. The following will serve as a specimen for the distribution of all the crops: The Arroyo, Zanjias, —5,000 acres;—3,000 planted in corn; 1,000 in trees, alfalfa, &c., &c. The Arroyo is Spanish signifying the river bottom, so every Zanjias or ditch has its name. The water is presided over by an official, whose business is to regulate and see that every farmer has his allotted time. This official is called the Zanyora; his office only extends during the irrigating season, which is the summer season. The alfalfa is a very important crop; it is mowed eight times a year and yields fifteen tons to the acre, but six is about the average unless there is plenty of irrigation. Do you grow this in Nova Scotia? I do not remember about it. There is no such feed for cows, horses, hogs, fowls, &c. Corn will produce in this valley, to the acre, from 40, 60, 80, and as high as 100 bushels. In such years as this, the average is from 40 to 60. In some places we passed, the corn was from ten to fifteen feet high, and at Gospel Swamp it has attained an altitude of some 23 feet. The farm-houses are generally comfortable and shaded by weeping willows, ornamental trees, oranges, limes, English walnuts, &c., &c. This being the season for gathering the walnuts and corn, all hands are brought into requisition. A novel feature of tree growth is the planting of extensive tracts of land with eucalyptus and willow for fuel—thousands of acres being devoted to it. But the Yankes have been duped for once, with all their sharpness, by the Australians, for this variety of the eucalyptus is of no value for fuel or timber, only for ornament.

ARTESIA COLONY.

The Nietus having been inspected, we took a circuitous route, which brought us to Artesia, the land of flowing wells

and miniature lagoons, attached to every farm, into which the overflow from the wells fall and serve to supply the stream for irrigation. This is a very rich soil, as the immense vegetables testify. It exceeds Gospel Swamp in its productiveness in this direction, having taken the prize at the late agricultural exposition, for pumpkins, potatoes, &c., the weight of which I shall not mention lest some may think we are drawing too largely on their credulity. The Artesian church and school-house combined is quite an imposing affair; its spire was our land-mark during the greater part of our tour in the valley. The upper part of this immense building is devoted to God's service by the different denominations. The Baptists and Methodists have been for some three weeks holding a series of meetings, which are not yet concluded. Last Lord's Day our good Methodist brother, Revd. Washburn, gave an invitation for those who desired to join that society to come forward and occupy the right hand pews, stating that he could administer the rite of baptism either by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, which he regarded as quite immaterial. The invitation was then given to the Baptist converts, who believed only in immersion, to come forward and occupy seats opposite. About thirty young people, mostly young gentlemen, came forward and occupied the seats desired, three only taking the Methodist side of the house,—"a straw on the surface will tell which way the tide is setting." In the evening some forty mourners came forward for prayer, and next Lord's Day a large number of converts will be immersed in one of those magnificent lagoons which abound here, and join the Artesia Baptist Church, quite recently formed. This is a fine climate for camp-meetings, as they can be held any time of the year. Our Methodist brethren have just closed one in the vicinity of Gospel Swamp. The accommodations were ample and complete, exceeding the Baptist, of which I spoke in a former article, but the results were not satisfactory, as but few professed to have found the Messiah. A different location has been purchased by the Methodists North, to be occupied as a camp ground, at the sea side near the "City by the Sea," (Santa Monica), known as the "William Tell" sea-side resort. The South Methodists will hold one at Fountain City, or, as its original name is, "Gospel Swamp."

A circuitous route brought us to the fine towns of Anaheim and Orange, where we dined with Rev. A. S. Worrall, D. D., Baptist minister, recently the President of the Baptist College, Yackerville, but has removed to this valley, and has made large investments in land, &c. Leaving here we crossed the Santa Anna River, by another Doctor of Divinity Rancho, Revd. Mr. Tombs, formerly the President of a Baptist College east, but who also has removed here, and who, like Bro. Worrall, is ranching, and preaching on the Lord's Day at different points. Passing on towards Artesia, the shades of night hid from our view the Artesia Church spire, and our horses losing the road, and after several fruitless attempts to recover it, we concluded to camp for the night.

Our good brother being supplied with corn for the horses and ropes for tethers, which old Californians always have, and plenty of bed-clothes, we slept very soundly, and in the morning saw the 17 mile house and the tower of Artesia Church and knew our direction home. Dr. Worrall and myself had a very similar experience on this same road only a few weeks before, having lost our road and slept among the waving corn just as soundly as if we had been at home in our beds; our horses enjoyed the luxury of green corn to perfection. After our ablutions in the beautiful waters of the Zanjias, and commending ourselves to the protection of our Heavenly Father, we were invited by the owner to a good breakfast. We went on our way rejoicing. This county and climate is well adapted for camping out. The absence of nuisances are so great. No mosquitoes or flies to trouble, no winds or tornadoes, no thunder or lightning to hurt, no rains for nine months, no ferocious animals, except man, no rattle-snakes except on the tops of the highest mountains, no cloudy days nor stormy nights. Surely the people ought to be good and happy, but alas! man is the same everywhere—his heart

at enmity with God and not subject to His law, neither indeed can be, in his carnal state. And right here let me say that this Pacific Slope has always been, and still is, cursed by professing ministers, who have scattered and destroyed the flock of Christ, whose chief aim and end is to amass wealth and get gold. Do not understand me to say they are all so, for there are many honorable exceptions, but, alas! there are far too many of the opposite class, and the Baptists, as well as others, are not exempt in this direction. The Evangel of the last week, in its leader, speaks after this fashion:

"It has sometimes looked to us as if some of our brethren have a fatal facility for mischief in their method of leaving their churches.

A Methodist preacher used to warn his converts who were inclined to take the water, about this way: A Baptist church is a very easy thing to get into, but it will tear you all to pieces to get out of it. It seems easy enough to settle a pastor * * * everything goes on well until the time comes, as it is very apt to come, when it is time for the pastor to leave. This is not a very permanent world, and, especially here, no abiding city, however desirable it may be to have one. At any rate, in the opinion of many good people in the church, a change is desirable. Now, what will a good man do? If he wants to stay he will in a loving manner seek to convince them that he ought to stay. If he succeeds all is well, if he fails he will leave peaceably, pleasantly, and immediately. But what will a bad man do? He will say hard words of those who are opposed to him; he will array his friends against them; he will bring them before the church, brother against brother; fear the church to pieces, rend the seamless robe of Christ; he will stay just long enough to tear the church to pieces, and then leave. Such a man is not a shepherd, but a wolf. We never liked a church well enough to want to stay in it or preach to it after it did not want us. Are there no boots to black? Is there no wood to saw? Above all, are there no destitute fields white to harvest, that the man is reduced to the pitiable necessity of staying where he is not wanted."

This is true to the life, and a fac simile of many churches in this land as well as elsewhere. The late fearful war has had a demoralising effect not only on the people generally, but upon the ministers who took part, in a most particular manner, and until all the old fossils disappear we cannot hope for much good in certain quarters. Politics has been, and still is, the bane of our churches of different denominations, from all of which you in little Nova Scotia are most happily exempt. I have often felt envious when thinking of the peace and prosperity of my dear brethren in the Colonies, knowing full well that ignorance is this where it is folly to be wise.

Truly yours,
In love, purity, and fidelity,
W. HOBBS.

For the Christian Messenger.

From Burmah.

LETTER FROM REV. WM. GEORGE.

ZEEGONG, Oct. 10th, 1877.

Dear Brother Selden,—

Some good brother or sister, has been sending me the Christian Messenger for years past. I appreciate the paper, read and enjoy it, but am especially thankful to the donor for the love that suggested such a gift to the exile for Jesus' sake. Nova Scotia Baptists have their mission and their missionaries to love and pray for, so that we can not expect to be remembered except by dear personal friends, but we have evidence that one at least sympathizes with us to the amount of the subscription and foreign postage on the Christian Messenger. This being so may we not suppose that many remember us in their prayers? that the interest once operating with such good results towards Burma has not entirely died out. The interest excited by the Holy Spirit do live long in the heart, and those who in the olden time prayed and gave for Burma must love her still.

This great valley of Tharawaddi has been traversed more than once by the brave and noble, but now sainted Crawley, followed by a band of native preachers trained and supported by Nova Scotia money. How much they had to do with sowing seed that has produced the blessed results I have seen here, no one can tell: nor is it needful for us to know. The money was given and prayer offered in strong faith in Him who hath called us to

conquer in His might, and the simple gospel was preached, that we know.

Our brethren in India Proper are suffering from a terrible famine, the effects of which are severely felt in this country. Rice, which is bread and potatoes to the Burman, is three times the price it was ever known since I came to Burma, and is still being exported. High floods and unseasonable weather have destroyed much of the growing crop, and three-fifths of an ordinary crop is all that is expected. At present the common laborer can just about feed his family by working all the time. The cattle plague swept away a great many oxen and buffaloes, and the cholera has been doing its work of death for the past six months. The prospect is not encouraging. Already the weaker and baser sort have become demoralized and petty larceny is rife in every village. In a country like this there is always a large class of idle, dangerous characters, who in a time of scarcity or of political disturbance hope to become rich on the savings of others' industry.

The cause of Christ is slowly yet surely gaining ground in Burma. Old prejudices are passing away. A great many of the monasteries teach western science, in which their students are examined annually by the proper government officers. The Bhooist priests have not the power they had even a few years ago, and as the old priests, who have been revered by this generation with some degree of the awe and respect that was accorded their holy and influential men of old, die off, there is no one to take their place. As the Burmans now worship a God who has been annihilated, they will soon be led by the tradition of a priesthood that has passed away. The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, provided by the power of a living and ever present God, is so far superior to all creeds or philosophies of men, that retain their hold upon the heart by the traditions of a remote past, that it must triumph wherever it is known.

Again, I find that the priests can not retain their position, even in heathen communities where the gospel is preached. As light dawns the offerings diminish. The people learn to enquire, Who will reward us for the sacrifices we make? Since Gandama went to "Naik-ban" he can do nothing for us. The idols can not hear us pray; they can not aid us. The priests are men like ourselves. Why then should we make offerings to them? Five years ago there were three monasteries in a village a few miles from Zeegong, each with a number of novices wearing the yellow robe of the priesthood. Two of these have been literally starved out, and now there is one monastery with one head priest, with fewer novices than any one of the three formerly had. The fact is, to question Bhooism is to doubt it; it will not bear investigation and the people are investigating it.

We are all well now, although a few months ago it seemed evident that we must go home to recruit. It is to be hoped we can work some years more before we see the dear friends in Nova Scotia. It will be a great comfort to us and secure to us our letters two weeks earlier if friends will remember that we have moved from Henthada, and that our address now is "Zeegong, Burma," just that and nothing more, will bring letters directly to us.

Yours faithfully,
WM. GEORGE.

For the Christian Messenger.
United States Correspondence.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Nov. 26, 1877.

Senator Windom has introduced a bill in the Senate that is both novel and interesting, providing for a new Department of Commerce under the Government which would bring about the creation of another seat in the Cabinet. One of our leading journals comments thus upon it: "Its passage may not occur at this session of Congress, but it is inevitable in the near future. The great interests of this country are not war, a navy, public lands and Indians, but commerce, manufactures, agriculture, labor and transportation. We have no Secretary to attend to these interests, but three Cabinet officers to overlook the minor ones. Opinions are divided as to the advisability of maintaining an efficient army and navy, but there can be no two opinions as to the