

ton, is 4200 feet high, protects from the cold winds from the Sierras in winter, and from the hot breath of the great San Joaquin valley in summer. The south lies open, ready for the coming of the warm rain cloud of the winter months, the never failing harbinger of plenty. The winds and fogs of the ocean are barred on the west by the Santa Cruz mountains. Thus cradled between mountain ranges, protected from blighting frost and scorching heat, yet open to cooling breeze and enriching rain, nature can do no more.

### AREA.

Santa Clara County has a mean length from north to south of about fifty-five miles. Its average breadth is thirty miles. Of its million acres of land one-quarter lies in the valley, 300,000 in rolling hills and mountain slopes. The remainder is mountainous, some rough and covered with timber, some clear and suitable for grazing. A great part of this mountain land when cleared has no superior for fruits and vines.

### SOIL.

The valley in some prehistoric age was part of the bed of an inland lake, and so its soil, as might be expected, is a rich sediment. Having received for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years, the mineral and vegetable wash from the mountains—the result is “a soil more fertile than the valley of the Nile and which now produces an income larger than that from any other territory of equal area on the face of the globe.”

### CLIMATE.

San Jose has about the latitude of Norfolk, Va., and of Southern Spain and the island of Sicily, but its proximity to the ocean and the cooling breezes that come from the north and are as constant as the succession of sunny days, render its midsummers delightful. The climate of the valley has none of the violent changes of the Atlantic Coast and none of the enervating effects found in southern Europe.

The late Judge Belden, for many years on the Superior Bench of the county, wrote perhaps the best description of the climate of the Santa Clara Valley that has anywhere been published.

“Beginning,” he says, “with the month of October, the signs of a coming change are apparent. The winds, no longer constant from one quarter, become variable both as to direction and force, or wholly cease. Sudden blasts raise miniature whirlwinds of dust and leaves which troop over the fields, and the stillness of the night is broken by fitful gusts and the sudden wail of the trees, as the breath of the coming winter sweeps through them. These are the recognized precursors of the season’s change, and are usually followed in the first ten days of October by an inch or more of rain; and this, usually, by weeks of the inest weather. The effect of these first rains is magical. The dust is washed from the foliage, and is laid on the roads and fields. The air has a fresh sparkle and life. The skies are of a deeper azure, and the soft brown hills seem nearer and fairer than before. It is the Indian Summer of the East; but, instead of the soft lassitude of the dying year, here it comes with all the freshness and vigor of the new born spring. If in this and the succeeding months there are further showers, the grass grows up on every hand, and the self-sown grain in all the fields. The hills change their sober russet for a lively green. Wild flowers appear in every sheltered nook. Hyacinths and crocuses bloom in the gardens, and the perfume of the violet is everywhere in the