

are more properly divided into Wet and Dry. The natural laws governing the meteorology of the Pacific are such that the great wind currents from the northwest strike upon the coast during the summer months, and, though filled with moisture, instead of condensing in rain, their moisture is absorbed and lost in the dry and warmer air of the land. In winter, the regularity is disturbed, and southern winds, particularly those from the warm regions of the southeast, bring abundant rains, or snow at an altitude of from 2,500 to 3,000 feet. The climate is thus divided into two seasons, Wet and Dry. The wet season commences in November, the heaviest rains falling in the latter part of December, and continuing until April or May. During the severest winters, not more than half the days are rainy, and below the snow-line the temperature is mild, and when not raining, the weather is peculiarly pleasant and lovely. This is the season of plowing and planting, giving the farmer the long period of six months to prepare and seed his ground, though, to insure a good crop, it is necessary that cereals be sown previous to the fall of the latest rains. During the winter months, when other sections of the Union are covered with snow and the ground hardened by frost, the hills and valleys of California are clad in verdure, presenting a scene of loveliness that gives peculiar charm to the country, redeeming it from many detracting features it may possess. The month of February is usually exempt from excessive rains, is warm and pleasant, and is the season in the lower valleys for the springing of buds and flowers, which in the following month expand in beauty and fill the air with fragrance. The last months of the rainy season close in glory. There is no dismal Winter to "linger in the lap of Spring." The trees are crowned with the brightest green, and fields and gardens are bedecked with tints of every hue. California is then the "land of sun and flowers," and then is the most happy season of the year.

The rainfall varies regularly with the locality and with different years. The least fall is upon the Colorado desert, where the average does not exceed three inches per annum, and the greatest is in the mountains of the northern coast, where a fall of 130 inches in a year has occurred. The towering ridge of the Sierra Nevada intercepts the cloud-bearing winds of winter, and, however dry the season may be in the valleys and along the coast, always receives vast deposits of snow, which, measured as water, varying with the season, is from fifty to one hundred inches in a year of rainfall, and droughts are unknown. The southern portion of the State receives the least, and the northern mountain region the most. The Colorado desert, however, is in a section of different seasons from those which prevail west of the dividing line, it being between the seasons of the California coast and those of Mexico, where the months of July and August furnish the most rain.

At San Diego, on the southern coast, the annual rainfall is about ten and a half inches; at San Francisco it is twenty and a third; at Sacramento, nineteen; and at Nevada City, in the Sierra, at an altitude of 2,350 feet, the average fall is fifty-five inches. The least fall measured at the last locality was in the season of 1838-4, that being seventeen and a quarter inches, and the greatest in 1811-2, 109 inches. At greater elevations the fall is almost entirely in the form of snow, which attains a depth of from eight to twenty-five feet.

The Dry season is the summer and autumn of California, the season of maturity and harvest. It extends from May to November, a period of six months, when rain seldom falls. Showers sometimes occur in the interior and mountains in July, and a few light rains may occur in September and October; at other times no fall of water need be expected. Journeys may be undertaken, and the gathered crops of the field be exposed without fear of interference or damage by rain. The harvest commences in May, first in the cutting of grass for hay, and continues with the cereals at the convenience of the farmer. The great labor of turning, drying and sheltering grain, required of the farmer in the East, from the frequency of summer rains, is never exacted in California, as the long dry season gives ample time for the harvest, and prepares the grain in a condition superior to any possible attainment in rainy countries.

Three different climates may be found from the ocean to the mountain summits: that of the coast, with its cold winds and fogs; the warm valleys of the interior; and the frosty region of the high mountains.

The temperature of the elevated region is severe in winter, though not approaching the extreme cold of the Atlantic coast, and frosts occur during every month of the year. Below the altitude of a thousand feet, frosts are rare, and oranges and other semi-tropical fruits are cultivated with great success, and without protection from the climate. It is quite singular that the temperature of the sheltered valleys or mountain-tops varies but little with the latitude. The peaks of San Bernardino or San Gabriel are soon covered with snow with the earliest storms, and at about the same elevation as along the northern Sierras. The orange groves, which give such beauty to the fields of Los Angeles, present as bright a foliage and as golden fruit in the gardens of the north; and the palms and agaves, or century plant, which give such picturesque effect to the scenery of the south, flourish equally well in the northern valleys.

On the coast, however, a great change is observable south of Point Conception. Thence the shore line trends to the east, and the cold northwest winds which have swept so fiercely along the land to this point are broken and warded off, and the climate of the south is like the protected valleys of the north. This refers only to that portion of the south, west of the dividing range. East of that, the heat and aridity are excessive, rendering the country a cheerless desert, although much of it possesses every element of fertility in its soil.

San Diego is distinguished for the equability of its climate, the temperature seldom varying as much as twenty-five degrees during the year, the average being but little more than 60° of Fahrenheit, and the extremes 50° and 75°. At Fort Yuma, the average is about 70°, and the heats of summer often reaching to 120°. But these are exceptional localities. At Los Angeles, frosts sometimes occur, and the temperature of summer reaches from 90° to 100°, with an average of about 60°; but its extremes are rarely experienced, and the locality is distinguished for the mildness and salubrity of its climate.

The climate of San Francisco may be taken as the representative of the northern coast, although in the extreme north the cold winds, whose chilling dampness is felt as they strike the land, are more severe than in the central portion. These winds give a disagreeable character to the climate of summer, but coming from their long circuit over the broad ocean, are uncontaminated with any malaria, and bring with them the vigor and health which characterize the sections exposed to their influence. There is but little change in the temperature of the coast during the year, the summers being colder and the winters warmer than in the interior. This equability is undoubtedly caused by the even temperature of the water of the ocean, which always stands at about 52° or 53°. The land temperature, as measured at sunrise and noon, during the past twenty years, at San Francisco, by Dr. H. Gibbons, shows a mean of about 56° for the year, the warmest month, September, being from 59° to 63°, and the coldest, January, the lowest mean for the month being 46°; in 1818, the usual mean being above 50°.

The great Valley of California and its contiguous mountain region has a climate of ardent warmth in summer, and few light frosts in winter, the extremes slightly exceeding those of Los Angeles, the mean being one or two degrees higher. Near the entrance to the basin, the sea breeze is felt, and modifies the heat, while in the northern and southern portions the thermometer often shows 100°, and seldom a summer passes but that a heat of more than 100° is experienced at Marysville; such extremes are only reached on one or two days of a year. But owing to the uniform dryness of the air, which promotes evaporation from the surface of the body, and to the uniformly cool and refreshing nights, this excessively warm weather is not so oppressive as it would appear. With the announcement of the "heated term" at the East, when the thermometer shows 90°, come reports of scores of people killed by sunstroke or dying by prostration from the heat, and of the loss of life by the terrible hydrophobia, but such things are unknown