

Due West lies the valley of Bitter Water, at a distance of twenty miles, which we travel by trail following the creek, the conformation of whose banks, now plunges us into a deep gorge or canyon, now elevates us upon the topmost ridge of the towering mountain range. The entire valley, containing three thousand acres, is owned by a gentleman who is engaged very largely in stock-raising. It is entirely devoted to this purpose, with the exception of an exceedingly small part, which is used for growing hay and grain. The name of this valley has a perfect fitness, realized in the fact that the soil is heavily impregnated with alkalies, imparting to the water the quality which suggested the name. It is really unfit for ordinary domestic purposes, though in the absence of anything better, it finds a use.

Five miles in a Northerly direction, we come upon a grant called Dry Lake Valley. This presents a surface of 1,000 acres, said to be good grain land. In the winter season the valley, fed by the mountain streams which pour into its basin, forms a veritable lake, which, as spring progresses into summer, by evaporation and other processes, leaves the valley again dry until the following winter. There is no settlement here, but the mountains lying about it are used for grazing. Adjoining this upon the west is Tapo Valley, two thousand acres in extent, also good grain land, although used merely as a stock range. Its water privileges are not great, there being no running streams within its limits. There are no residents here beyond the people necessary to the proper performance of the labor in connection with the range.

Some three or four miles north of Dry Lake is a sister valley, bearing the same name. The two are separated by a low-lying range of hills. This is by far the largest, containing some four thousand acres of land, and a population of one hundred persons. The soil is very fertile, and the entire surface is used for the cultivation of cereals and hay. Neither is it subject to the overflow which inundates the upper valley, the San Benito River forming an outlet, tributary to which are the mountain streams, which in winter eject themselves into the valley. All the surplus water is thus disposed of, an added richness and fertility is imparted by the alluvial deposits from the mountains, and the valley at the same time is habitable.

Proceeding three miles in a northern direction we reach Bear Valley, containing some 800 acres. A consideration for the eternal fitness of things would probably induce an alteration in the orthography of this name, *Bear*, making it read *Bare*, as we certainly saw more to warrant this reading than the other. But we fold it away with many another misnomer, and let it rest. Cereals and hay are cultivated to some extent, but hog and poultry-raising are the industries best represented, being considered most profitable. About one hundred and fifty persons reside here— independent of the hogs.

Considering the use and adaptability of the entire county, in its present condition of comparative isolation, it holds out far more inducements to the cattle or sheep-raiser, than to the agriculturist. What it may be in the years to come, when its territory shall be invaded by that great developer, the railroad, it is not difficult to predict. Its fields will teem with the golden grain which will enrich the cultivator, while it adds to the material wealth of the world, by assisting in the production of that article, so necessary, that a scarcity renders multitudes miserable, and reduces countless thousands to absolute pauperism. Young as a county, it promises a brilliant future, and many circumstances point toward a speedy realization of its promise. Joining one of the richest, most populous and best agricultural counties of the State, it cannot but be penetrated by thousands who have visited that county, found land too high, and the territory sufficiently populous. Once within the confines of San Benito, its manifold advantages of soil, climate, natural and perfect irrigation, and last but not least, the exceedingly low figures demanded for land, cannot but detain them. Thus the overflow from a great county will necessarily people this; the demand for railroad extension which will follow upon these accretions to its population will be acceded to, and prosperity will settle upon this community as quietly and quickly as a flock of buzzards upon the expiring anatomy of a Washoe canary.

Then will begin the sounds of rural strife—the strife waged by thrift and energy against nature and her forces; the plowshare will upturn many a stone, for years nestling in undisturbed quiet, and in its vacant place the golden sheaves will ripen in the warm sunlight, the wilderness will rise into the full bloom of a garden, rivaling the noted ones of the world; the hill sides,