

A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, one of the richest sections of the State in agricultural resources, possesses an area of 1,759 square miles, or 1,125,760 acres. Of this a trifle less than one-half is valley land, the residue being low, grassy hills or heavily timbered mountains.

The county is nearly 51½ miles in length, with an average width of about 34 miles, and has for its Northern boundary the Counties of Alameda and San Francisco Bay; for its Southern, Santa Cruz and San Benito; with Stanislaus and Merced for its Eastern; while Santa Cruz and San Mateo form its boundary upon the West. It derives its name from the old mission of Santa Clara, founded in the year 1777, by the Mexican Commander at the Presidio of San Francisco. An agricultural settlement having become a matter of necessity, as a point from whence to obtain supplies and subsistence for the garrison, a detachment was dispatched, with the result already named: the establishment of the mission. The present mission buildings were erected in 1822, but do not, however, occupy the site of the original mission. By a direct visitation of Providence the structures were twice destroyed; once by flood, in 1779, and again in 1781, by an earthquake. The history of the county, or, more properly, of the mission, from the date of its foundation to the ceding of Alta California to the United States, is involved in doubt, which nothing but the closest intimacy with the archives preserved in the Mexican capital would dispel. Tradition suggests much, but unfortunately it is the province of tradition to suggest, not to authenticate.

Santa Clara County has at the present time a population of about 30,000, and the assessed valuation of her real estate amounted, in 1873, to \$31,322,426.

The principal cereal products of the valley are wheat and barley. Fruit-growing of every variety, from that peculiar to the tropics to the growths of more hardy climes, is so largely conducted as to place it among the chief industries. Vegetable gardens abound in the valley, and the largest vegetables ever produced, are said to have been raised here. Much attention is also given to small fruits, this county outstripping, by far, any in the State, in the cultivation of the strawberry, hundreds of acres being devoted exclusively to this culture. But probably nothing deserves more especial mention, or more lavish encomiums, than the great nursery interest.

After utilizing everything peculiar to the country, in either fruiting or ornamental growth, those engaged in this branch of industry, by untiring and persistent effort, combined with liberal expenditure, have transplanted from the gardens of the world the choicest varieties of fruit, and the rarest exotic plants.

While at San Jose, recently, we visited several nurseries. Among the number, that of J. Rock, the Hannay Bros., the San Jose Park Nurseries, Mr. Sanderson's, and that also of Mr. Fox. The eye was gratified by every object it fell upon, and the air laden with a perfume so delicate as to induce the thought that a competition, even with "Araby the blest," would involve no doubtful issue. The northern lilly reared its pure white petals, tall, stately and symmetrical, side by side with a heathen sister, first ushered into life under Asiatic auspices, wondrously beautiful, in her