

LETTER FROM SOLEDAD.

PHIZANO, Los Angeles County, October 23, 1873. EDITOR HERALD:—The permanent population of this town is quite limited—not more than 30 in all. About 20 are native Californians—men, women and children. Of the 10 Americans, eight are men and two are women. But there is almost daily an accession of travelers, prospectors, miners, hunters, laborers or teamsters, some of whom manage to tarry a few days and keep the hotel table reasonably well filled. So far, there seems to have been no breach of the laws, and no necessity for expensive municipal government. There is no town council—no judiciary—no police.

It is neither a commercial nor manufacturing town, although there are two quartz mills in the vicinity, that were used for crushing ores from the neighboring mountains. Expensive labor—high rates of transportation, and only a moderate yield of mineral, place a balance on the wrong side, and work was suspended until more favorable auspices would warrant resumption. Agriculture in its sense, has not dawned on the minds of the people of the Pass. There is a kind of infantile resemblance to it, in the manner of gardening adopted, partial cultivation being the most fashionable. We care and labor bestowed liberally, the yield would be remunerative in corn, barley, potatoes, squashes, and most vegetables in common use. There has been no successful effort, so far, in developing its capacity for producing fruit. As other trees flourish in most localities, it is reasonable to believe that ordinary fruits would succeed.

The most important business of the principal citizens, of both races, is stock raising. Although not extensively carried on, yet there are several bands of horses and mules, and also of cattle owned here. They feed in the Pass during spring and early summer, when pasturage becomes scarce, they are driven up the cañons that open on the Pass from among the foot hills, where feed is more abundant and water in good supply. But few sheep are owned here, large bands frequently pass from the lower pastures of the coast to the fresh mountain districts and plains beyond.

The chief reliance of the population that will gather around the springs, and along the pure streams of this Pass, will be on the mineral wealth of the mountains that border it. Gold has been found in several localities. Copper has been much sought after, and unfinished tunnels that penetrate far into the mountains, only await the stimulating influences of cheap labor and transportation, to be continued until the rich mass of ore shall have been reached, that is believed to lie a few hundred feet in advance of their present termination. Lead is also known to exist, but has never been mined as a specialty.

While these more attractive minerals engage the attention of those who are struggling for sudden wealth, there are in these mountains others of great intrinsic value; that require more patience and labor to mine, but that as surely lead to wealth—perhaps by a little longer road—that is far more likely to endure.

Commercial Shocks. Than that acquired on elective principles. These are the iron and granite found here. The former will be in demand as long as steamships and railroads continue to be useful to man, and the question is one of doubt whether the iron interest in all its departments of usefulness, is not the leading one of the age. The various industries engaged in its development and utilization are most astonishing when one undertakes to trace them. While cities, public edifices, aqueducts and bridges continue to be useful or ornamental, granite will be sought, especially for permanency and durability. A people employed in developing these two products of the

Soledad Pass. Would accumulate a competency in many instances, and often wealth. Let not the traveler who hails from the wheat regions of the upper Mississippi valley or the cornfields of the Missouri river, as he looks out on the bald mountains of Southern California or plains of sand and sage over which he rides for long and weary miles, exclaim "Get thee out of this God-forsaken country," once, and I will promise to never set foot in it again. Perhaps his wheat and corn may furnish food to a large and thriving population, within the next ten years, while it is developing treasures from beneath the barren sands, he little dreamed of when passing.

It is true that this remote portion of Los Angeles county, has not the attractions presented by the immediate surroundings of your city, but it may surprise your Assessors and Collectors some of these days, by the wealth that will roll from its foot-hills and mountains. The people are asking that their highways may be improved so as to encourage travel. It might be well to encourage them in this respect. A SUBSCRIBER.

WHY THE TELEGRAPH RATES ARE HIGH.—A recent number of the North American Review contains the following in a long discussion of the telegraph question: Telegraphing costs the public in this country about three times as much as it should, and this is on account of "watering" the stock. The average cost of each message in 1872 was 72 cents, yielding the companies about 64 per cent. dividend on the real. The people pay the Western Union Company nearly \$3,000,000 per annum on fictitious capital. In some of the rival companies each mile of wire is represented by \$800 though the cost is not over \$100.

The Sacramento Bee says: "We hear these persons mentioned as candidates for Speaker: Tully (D) of Monterey; Howe (D) of San Francisco; Tinnin (D) of Trinity; Estee (I) of San Francisco; Bradley (R) of Yuba; Freeman, (R) of Yolo. For Clerk of the House there are Boruck (R) of San Francisco; Owen (I) of Santa Clara, and Crawford (D) of Eldorado—but Crawford is not a newspaper man."

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