

HOLIDAYS IN THE VALLEY

The first holiday season in Imperial valley has been observed in appropriate manner by the largest assemblages of people yet known in this section and by feasting and presentation of gifts in all the homes and boarding places. The mail brought in many presents from friends in other portions of the country, and the children of the valley fared as is the custom with children through the civilized world.

At Hotel Imperial Mr. and Mrs. Lathrop gave a Christmas feast to their guests and the walls of the dining room were beautifully decorated with pictures and wild creosote bushes, which latter make a fine substitute for holly.

Christmas at Calexico was also a time for feasting at Company headquarters, while the Indians had a particularly lively game of peone which lasted far into the night and ended by one Indian getting all the money and other valuables held by the participants.

There were hunting parties at Cameron Lake, one of which came to an unpleasant end. J. K. Auer, J. B. Hoffman and C. E. Reinhart were in this party, and Messrs. Hoffman and Reinhart were unceremoniously dumped into water over their heads by the swamping of their boat. But game was plentiful and the fact that the water was cold was soon forgotten.

SCHOOL CELEBRATION

There were about a hundred persons, mainly children, in attendance at the school exercises Christmas eve. The fact of the school being twelve miles from Imperial barred citizens of this town from attending, but a number of people drove in from Calexico, while the fifty pupils of the school and their parents were in attendance.

The programme consisted of recitations and songs by pupils of the school, a handkerchief drill and a number of other novel features, while Messrs. Hoffman and Razy of Calexico gave violin selections.

The good spirit of the occasion was enhanced by the fact that it was the first school entertainment in the history of the valley.

CHRISTMAS AT CHURCH

Rev. John C. Hay prepared an interesting entertainment for Christmas night at the Christian church. The church had been beautifully decorated under the supervision of Mesdames Hector White and H. C. Oakley, and the attendance was the largest assemblage of people in the history of Imperial. Extra seats were necessary to accommodate the people, and the exercises proved highly enjoyable.

After the audience had sung the National hymn, Miss Edna Winters gave a pleasing Christmas recitation and Carl Huddleston sang "How the Froggies Learn to Swim."

Mrs. W. A. Edgar gave the Christmas recitation, "Three Kings," followed by a recitation by Huntington McKusick.

Volunteer recitations or songs by children who were there from the school vicinity were called for, and Mrs. W. F. Gillett sent three little girls to the front who sang a song to Santa Claus, and they were followed by Master Van Horn, who gave as a humorous recitation, "Mr. Brown's Office on the Twenty-third Floor," and in response to an encore, "How I Make a Speech."

Music was rendered by a vocal quartette composed of Messrs. Hay and Slane, Miss Clark and Mrs. Edgar, and brief speeches were made by Messrs. Hay, Harbour, Hammers and others.

A purse was presented to Rev. Mr. Hay, on behalf of the people of Imperial, by H. C. Oakley.

Cake and chocolate were served to adults and candy to the little people.

THANKS TO STRANGERS

Lovely, historic, grand old San Diego—first to welcome Cabrillo, (the discoverer of Alta California in September, 1542)—first to receive the saintly benediction of Junipero Serra, (July 1st, 1769, California's natal day). 'Twas here on that never-to-be-forgotten 16th of July, first, "the Mission bells amidst the oak boughs swung," whose silvery peals slowly drifted above the sacred spot sanctified to our mother mission, and announced with glad acclaim the planting of civilization among a benighted heathen race. 'Twas here the good priests planted the fruits, vines and flowers, that made Alta California a flower embowered, fruit laden paradise.

Then thrice blest is he who now is permitted to feast upon her luscious fruits, and drink in with every breath of life giving ozone the fragrance of her choicest flowers: and to experience that fresh, stimulating emotion, borne, as it were, upon every gentle breeze that steals with soft foot-falls across the undulating hills and dancing vales, to mingle its sweet perfume with the arid atmosphere of the erstwhile desert—the scene of the greatest development to be found in the west.

Somewhere in the "book of books" it is written, that, "in the beginning, on the third day thereof," a wise Creator separated the land from the water, and was pleased with his job.

Doubtless he was a busy personage in those days, considering the size of the contract, and the limit of time to complete it, hence it is not at all surprising that minor details were wisely left to the experience of his superior creatures, who were fore-ordained to dominate the whole. The entire contract however, the manner and time of its completion, has received criticism and commendation, "throughout the onward speeding years," even unto these "latter days", when the "Lords of creation," combined capital and brains to undo the work—portions of this land and this water have been brought together again, and the projectors too are pleased with the job—and "there are others."

Imperial in size as well as name! Here is room for thousands of industrious families, to build profitable and happy homes, many are already on the ground, others on the way, and a veritable rush will soon set in: dwellings, school houses, towns, and a city will spring up like Jonah's gourd, in a night. This, the richest of all her grand possessions—this great and growing valley—with its heavy and profitable trade, will be forever lost to San Diego, unless chained now with an iron rail.

As one of your recent visitors, dear Editor, who was surprised out of his wits—if he ever had any—at the magnitude of this great irrigation enterprise, the absolute certainty of its speedy and successful termination, and the wonderful transformation now taking place in the very heart of the so-called desert, permit me to mingle my testimony with that of the many appreciative visitors gone before, in commending the genuine merit of this gigantic undertaking, the untiring zeal and plucky perseverance of the men behind it, who have made possible a glorious future for the eastern portion of our county.

The Mosaic wisdom and heroic faith displayed by the men composing the Imperial Land and Water companies, in projecting and prosecuting the work of this great canal, will dwarf into insignificance, the brightest page in San Diego county development, and should shame into renewed activity, the sluggish "bay'n climate" pulse, and cause a perceptible tremor in the

rusty purse-strings of San Diego's noted money bags. May

"The atmosphere betray a golden glow.
"And make distant profits nearer flow:
"A premonition of approaching light,
"To startle the peace of San Diego's night."
Surprised was I! Where's the wonder! From the time when I can first remember, I've been wont to look upon the desert as a bounteous storehouse, teeming only with mining possibilities, mythology, and Indian traditions, garlanded with heat, hunger, thirst and death. I have contemplated with horror the bleaching bones and straggling graves, that dot the landscape, which stretches away from the rock-ribbed sentinels of the Cuyamacas to the margin of the limitless sand-dunes of the Colorado.

"Retracing the years, mile upon mile,
"These marks of the past go by in file,"
as I conjure upon the agony of her many victims. Standing now upon the bank of this great canal, and peering out wistfully into the desert's watery grave, is it surprising, dear reader, that I shudder with a nameless dread, while I drop a joyful tear, lest this dream of five decades, which is at last becoming realistic, should fade away in some delusive mirage, and present to our visions, as of old,

"Afar and near, and everywhere,
"The scills denuded, brown and bare?"
"Fame, fame, 'twere oft a fitful flame," haunting the foot-steps of progress; of thee not so, kind friends—strangers though you be. For centuries past, old Mother Earth has patiently awaited the successful wooing of King Water, to rear unto you a lasting monument. At last the nuptial knot is tied, the honey-moon over, and this royal pair promise to make an amend-de-honorable for ages of idleness, in causing the "wilderness to bloom," and the "waste places to be peopled."

Watching over this drama of industry and commercial activity which is now being enacted in this gigantic amphitheater, stands

"Signal Mountain, in a mantle of grey,
Guarding this treasure reclaimed in a day;
With stroke of the lyre of on-marching time,
She wreathes thee a name on honor's scroll,"

"With the many who tread the toilsome way,
To scatter with flowers your Imperial sway,
In this land, from weary wastes set free,
Strangers, friends—I doff my cap to thee!"

JAMES A. JASPER.

El Rancho de Chaparal,

December 20, 1901.

Two School Districts

It looks now as though in April the Imperial school district would be cut into two, with a prospect of an additional district being created the next year. At the present time the district is thirty-five miles in greatest width and eighty-four miles in greatest length. From Imperial it is twenty miles to the northern line, twenty-five miles to the western line, thirteen miles to the southern line and sixty miles to the southeast corner. So far as territory is concerned there is room for two districts and three might be created without over crowding. The population of the present district is about 1000, but it is increasing very rapidly. The greatest drawback is the lack of taxable property, the land not being subject to taxation until it is proved up. The railroad is the principal subject of taxation at present. With the two districts, it is probable that schools will be maintained near Calexico, as at present, and in Imperial.

Below Yuma

The Irrigation, Land and Improvement Company of Yuma expects to add 5000 acres to the irrigated territory under its canal during the coming season. This is one of the steps being taken toward redeeming the entire delta of the Colorado river.

VARIETIES TO PLANT

Editor Wickson of the Pacific Rural Press in his last issue answered two correspondents, who wrote regarding this country, as follows:

"To the Editor:—I should like your advice as to what varieties of table grapes would be best adapted to the Colorado desert. I want to grow about 40 acres of the best early varieties and desire advice as to what kind and what proportion of each to plant.—Colonist, San Diego county.

"The experience of grape growers at Palm Springs, which is on the edge of the Colorado desert, is that the grapes most successful there are the Sweet-water, or Chasselas Fontainebleau, the Chasselas Rose and Thompson Seedless for very early white grapes. The Malaga is successful as a later white grape. The Rose of Peru and Black Hamburg are good as dark colored varieties, ripening later. The Muscat does not seem to be well adapted to the conditions. The proportion of these to be planted is pretty difficult to determine. It seems to us, however, that we would plant at least three quarters of the acres of the two Chasselas varieties and the Thompson Seedless, with say five acres of black varieties and five acres of Malaga. This you know is merely a matter of opinion and subject to error. The large acreage of early white grapes is based upon a good shipping demand for table grapes in advance of the same varieties grown elsewhere and this seems to be reasonable to expect. Thompson Seedless is also a good wine grape and a good raisin grape, while the Malaga is also fair for raisins. These are safety propositions as an alternative in case shipping does not develop as anticipated.

"To the Editor:—As a subscriber to your valuable paper I wish to be informed whether rye grass is a good grass for fattening stock and which is the best kind for such purposes, as I understand that there are several kinds of rye grasses. I propose to try it in the Imperial country of the Colorado desert.—R. D. Perry, San Diego county.

"There are two species of rye grass in common use, Lolium perenne and Lolium Italicum. The former is the English, or as commonly called in this State, the Australian rye grass. This is the hardier species; most drouth resistant and longer lived in the root. This is the one which has been most widely used and approved in this State, though recently the Italian species has come into use and is so far approved on low moist lands. Just what it will endure is not fully known. Neither of these grasses need be expected to do at all on the desert country except with irrigation, and how far they will stand the high heat and dry air even when irrigated is still to be determined. So far as irrigation or overflow go they are durable, and make great growth even with sewage irrigation if the temperature conditions suit them. They are both grasses of rather coarse character and medium richness. They cannot compare with alfalfa in feeding value, but they are good winter growers and in this way are available while alfalfa is dormant. To find their local value in the Imperial region experiments must be made—wisely on a small scale."

Are Making Brick

Harbour & Carter have completed work on the mud mill for their brick yard, and on Tuesday they begin moulding brick, having brought a gang of Indians from Calexico to work for them. Every indication now is that brick making will be a profitable business in the Imperial valley.