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TRAVELING THROUGH SOUTHERN UTAH INTO ARIZONA.

[FIFTH LETTER.]

I do not think there is another place in America where there is so marked an illustration of the wonderful transformation of a country when brought under the effects of irrigation, as is witnessed in this part of Arizona. I have seen in Utah, the sage brush growing in its primeval majesty upon its native soil beside waving fields of grain, and I thought the widest contrast between a desert waste and a fruitful field was there fully exemplified; but when one stands upon the banks of these Arizona canals and sees on one side nothing growing amid the burning sands but the thorny members of the cactus family and on the other side the fig, the pomegranate, the orange and the grapevine laden with their luscious fruit it seems to me the contrast has reached its widest limit.

Salt River valley is the richest part of Arizona. It is from fifteen to thirty miles wide and about sixty miles long, and is watered by the Salt river, Rio Verde, and in the valley by the Gila, Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa are its largest towns. Phoenix is a beautiful city. Its streets are wider than is usual in other towns in this country, and they are lined on each side with rows of umbrella trees, while its houses are lost amid a perfect sea of fruit and shade trees. It has many fine buildings, both public and private. It claims a population of 12,000. For miles out in every direction stretch the farming districts. Almost every farm is surrounded by a row of cottonwood trees that give the whole country from a little distance the appearance of a forest. Broad pastures of alfalfa are seen on every hand, on which numerous herds of cattle are fed.

The sun was getting low in the west when we resumed our journey, our course took us along the canal eastward for some distance and then down a long avenue by the Indian school and out past the insane asylum towards Tempe. The day had been unusually hot one. Way off to the southeast rose great banks of clouds that threatened a thunderstorm. As the day closed we noticed the clouds spread rapidly over the sky and as they did so a great cloud of yellow dust rose from the desert and spread

over the valley. As it approached us it presented one of the most beautiful, most unnatural, sights I ever saw. High up above the earth were the strata of snow-white clouds, below and forming a link between earth and sky was the whirling mass of yellow sands. I have seen pictures representing the great sandstorms so common on the deserts of Africa, and read of travelers who were caught in them being wrapped in a cloud of darkness and smothered and buried midst the sea of shifting sand. This was the nearest approach to anything of the kind I ever saw, but I am now ready to believe all that I have read concerning them.

We were fording the Salt river and just entering Tempe when the storm struck us. We were sheltered from the force of the wind, but the cloud of sand made everything as dark as night in less than a minute. We followed the road as best we could and got into the town. Being warned by the great scattering drops that fell, on the approach of a shower, we made camp in the street and, tying our horses under the shelter of some trees, just had time to get under the wagon cover as the storm broke upon us. The rain fell in torrents and as there seemed no immediate prospect of a let-up, we made up our bed as best we could and tried to sleep. When we crawled out next morning the rain had ceased, but the whole country seemed to be a lake of moving water. All around us was water—water everywhere. The horses stood in it half way to the knees; our harness that we had thrown under the wagon was covered; our "grub-box" was full; the water barrel was floating in it. After surveying the situation for a minute or two, I came to the conclusion that the Irishman was about right when he said that it rained with less judgment in this country than any country he ever saw.

We rolled up our breeches and wading about gathered up our traps and hitching up the mules spilled out. At 8 a.m. we reached Mesa, 895 miles from home. As we drove through the street we saw on the front of a brick structure the old familiar legend, "Z. C. M. I." There is no mistaking the meaning of these letters. They are exclusively Mormon.

Mesa City is the center of the upper Salt River valley. It has a population of between 1500 and 2000. Until quite recently the majority of the people

were Mormons, but of late Mormon immigration has almost ceased, while that of non-Mormons has increased until now they are in the majority. We cannot understand how it is that there are every year large numbers of people leaving Utah and coming south to seek homes, who go right by this valley; the richest, its climate considered, that there is in the entire West; and where for the last fifteen years there has been excellent opportunities for making homes, and where today I would rather take my chances of making a home than I would in any other part of the south I have seen. I cannot account for the seeming avoidance of this valley by our people, only that its climate is misrepresented and misunderstood. Before leaving Utah I was told to stay away from this section of Arizona, that the heat was just simply awful, and that I could never endure it. Now on the contrary I do not find the heat at all oppressive. I have felt the effects of the sun far more in Cache county than I felt it here, and for sultry heat during July and August, Salt Lake City beats this place all to pieces. The thermometer usually ranges higher here than in Utah, i. e., during the twenty-four hours; but you do not notice it as you do there. Here you can stand in the sun for hours in the heat of the day and not feel its effects, while there, it would almost scorch your hair. Farmers tell me that they work in the sun from morning till night and suffer no more from heat than they did in Utah. To perspire in Utah means to suffer from heat. Here perspiration has no inconveniences and leaves no bad results. I attended a dance on the evening of the Twenty-fourth of July, the thermometer stood at over 100 degrees in the room and I will warrant that the dancers felt the heat far less than they would in a room in Utah, where the thermometer stood at 80 degrees.

The people here sleep largely out of doors on cots. There may be during the season a few sultry nights but usually you can sleep comfortably with a spread thrown over you. The water is fairly good but can be improved by filtration. There is an ice factory near the town and you can have ice delivered at your door every morning at a nominal cost. It should be borne in mind that I am now describing the hot season from June until about the first of September.