

Correspondence.

A VISIT TO BEAR LAKE.

SALT LAKE CITY, Dec. 6, 1899.
 Editor Deseret News.—Dear Sir:—The late call of missionaries to settle in Bear Lake Valley has caused many to feel an interest in that locality. I have a brief description of that section of the Territory may not be undesirable to some of your readers.

On the journey, by what is called the Northern or Cache Valley road, there is much in the scenery to gratify the admirer of the grand and sublime in nature. Shortly after leaving Franklin the traveler enters a country of undulating slopes and rolling hills that stretch away all around as far as the rising grounds permit the eye to reach. On the way meandering mountain rivulets, fringed with fresh verdure and clumps of willows and brush, help to relieve the monotony of the scene, which appears as if a turbulent sea of huge waves had been transfixed by some great unseen power. About twenty-five miles north of Franklin the traveler has to climb the side of a high mountain; as this mountain is approached and the road is seen winding up to its summit it appears as if it would be next to impossible for a team, even with an empty vehicle, to make the ascent; but like the hills and difficulties of life, the obstacle appears of the greatest magnitude when viewed from a distance. As the top of the ascent is neared the surrounding scenery becomes more grand and wild; he who can gaze unmoved upon such sublime pictures is to be pitied. Mountains around above and below, covered here and there with tall pines, knarled, withered and fallen trees, huge piles of rugged rocks, clumps of brushwood of variegated hues, and, away beneath, the deep dark ravine and the little mountain stream winding its way like a little tiny thread. At last the summit is gained and the traveler enters North Creek Canyon, the sleeping sides of which are covered with excellent timber.

On emerging from this canyon the first glimpse is caught of Bear Lake Valley. On proceeding southward the scene widens and expands until the traveler finds himself in one of the most beautiful and picturesque valleys in the Territory. The first settlement approached is Liberty. This is a small but thrifty place, and possesses inducements for new comers in the shape of some available and yet unclaimed farming lands. About seven miles further south, Paris is entered; this is the headquarters of Rich county. It is the largest settlement in Bear Lake Valley, and is situated on the north-west side. Were it not for the rolling and uneven nature of the ground upon which it is built, the situation might be considered unexceptionably pleasant. On traversing the streets of this town I was surprised to see the many improvements that had been made since my last visit, a year ago. The dingy looking mud-roofed log cabins are being replaced by neat frame houses and shingled roofs; not only is private enterprise increasing among the citizens of this place, but public improvements are being entered into and pushed ahead with a vim. Suitable materials are being collected with which to erect a neat and commodious meeting house, to take the place of the long, squat, low-roofed school house in which meetings have hitherto been held. I understand that it is the intention of Elders C. C. Rich and D. P. Kimball to divide the town into several wards, and to build a school house in each ward. In order to give this idea shape brother Kimball, at his own expense, has already got together part of the material necessary to build a school house in the part of the town in which he resides.

Under the united presidency of Elders C. C. Rich and D. P. Kimball, I do not entertain any doubts but that this Stake of Zion will become one of the most flourishing in the Territory. The facilities for it becoming so are excellent. I do not consider that it is equalled, as a stock raising country, by any other part of the Territory, and as the winters are gradually becoming less rigorous and severe, its advantages in this respect are improving.

There is an excellent range for stock, large tracts of good hay land, also extensive tracts of eligible farming land that are yet untitled and unclaimed. There is room enough for several thousands of families to settle in this Valley and secure to themselves homesteads and lay a foundation for future comfort and temporal prosperity. The climate of Bear Lake Valley is salubrious. Since its first settlement there has been but little sickness amongst its inhabitants at any season of the year.

Bloomington and St. Charles are situated, the first two, and the other six, miles south of Paris; both settlements are well situated, commanding as they do a fine view of the Valley, St. Charles having the advantage of a view of the Lake. These settlements, like Paris, are being materially improved and built up. The same can be said of Montpelier and every other settlement in the Valley.

The Lake and its surroundings present a most enchanting picture, whether seen at early sunrise, when the king of day peeps over the eastern mountains, chasing away with the radiance of his countenance the sombre shades of night, whilst the beautiful lake reflects him from its placid face a welcome greeting; or in the full blaze of noon day, when the clear surface of the lake and surrounding mountains, whose bases seem to dip into the waters, are flooded in light; or when the sun is tipping the giant peaks of the Western mountains with rich golden tints, and causing a part of the lake to appear like a mixture of copper and gold, which combined with the deep shadows in the nooks and hollows of the mountain sides, forms a magnificent picture, well worth travelling some distance to see. Nor is the scene less striking when it is lit up by the queen of night, casting her delicate, shimmering light on the placid bosom of the lake, giving the scene the appearance of a picture conjured by the efforts of imagination rather than one of reality.

Bear River Valley lies at a distance of about thirteen miles, in an easterly direction, from the south end of the lake. This is an extensive valley, being about twenty miles in length, and, as

far as I was able to judge, in viewing it from the hills by which it is bounded on its western side, about three miles in width, at an average. As I did not descend into the valley I was unable to determine the nature and quality of the soil; I have no doubt, however, but the valley contains many thousands of acres of rich land, which invite the husbandman to till, cultivate and bring forth from it the good things of the earth; and it required no great stretch of the imagination to picture that, at present, desolate region peopled with thousands of busy and prosperous inhabitants in the due course of human events.

The early settlers of Bear Lake Valley have had their share of the trials, inconveniences and hardships attendant upon settling a new country. In past years, what with early frosts, grasshoppers, etc., the grain crops have been very meagre. In the present year, however, good crops have been raised nearly all over the valley, and no grasshoppers' eggs have been deposited there, so that, by the blessing of the Almighty, should the summer frosts be subdued, the prospects for another year are excellent.

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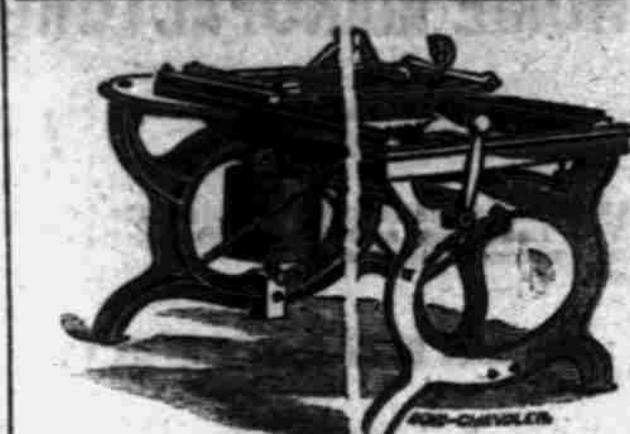
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