

THE OVERLAND MAIL.

[Letter No. 2.]

SALT LAKE CITY, July 10.—Life on the overland mail line was a dangerous occupation. Exposure to the storms and deep snows of winter and extreme cold weather, the raging streams in the spring, irregular and improper food, deprived of comfortable beds and natural rest for days at a time. I have seen riders and drivers with their finger ends burst open and covered with running sores, and their knees and thighs black and blue and endamed from pounding them to keep from freezing, in the winter of 1858-7. A passenger froze to death at the Little Mountain in 1859-60. West, an agent of the road, was frozen at Cache Cave, so that he was a cripple for life. John Miller had his feet frozen so badly that both had to be amputated, and in July, 1859, at Strawberry Creek, in one of those South Pass storms of sleet and wind, Ashton had one side of his body so badly frozen it had to be thawed out in snow and several heads of mules perished at the same time.

In the spring and early summer the streams were high, the floods, if any, shifting and treacherous. In 1862 Tom London and the coach team were drowned in Bear river, and a short time before a coach team was drowned and the mail lost in a swollen gulch. In the winter the channels of the streams would be open, and it was like crossing a ravine with perpendicular banks to attempt to pass them, and often the coach would be left in the channel, and the team taken for shelter and feed miles away, and for help to return and out the ice.

These streams in the spring and be-
gining of summer were swollen out of their banks, flooding the country from butte to butte, and one or two instances will serve to illustrate the difficulty and danger in passing these streams at that season of the year. In the spring of 1862, John Burnett, Thos. Dobson, "Bat" Worley, myself and a Mr. Boardman, booked for Carson City as passenger, and although no mails were being carried at the time, we had started out to take Boardman to Salt Lake City, and when we came to Yellow creek, insignificant in its normal condition, it was swollen out of its banks, and flooding the country, its channel a raging torrent. Of course we had to cross it and Dobson stripping, mounted Grey Lucy, an animal as true as truth itself, and with a cord in his teeth attached to a rope and the other end of the rope fastened to the team, he plunged in and swam, the horse across pulled the rope over with the cord, and with the aid of the horse assisted the team over with the rope. Burnett, the driver riding the rear wheeler, Dobson with the rope recrossed. The rope was fastened to the pole and Dobson returning to the team the coach was eased into the channel and pulled over. Boardman having been first lashed to the hind "boot" and in raising the opposite bank the boot with Boardman was submerged. Worley and I went up stream and stripped with our clothes fastened to our heads swam across and dressed on a snow drift, and the sensations produced from the headlong current, half frozen slush

and blocks of ice buffeting our naked bodies. I never want to experience it again. Boardman never forgave Worley for fastening him to the hind boot instead of the front, for if the team halted or failed to raise the coach out of the channel he would have surely drowned. It was Boardman's first essay at life in the wild and woolly West. He had just been held up by the Indians and some of his party wounded, and I manifested some sympathy for him, to return for which he gave me an "order" on the Indians for his clothes, revolver and toilet set they had robbed him of. I respected his simplicity and accepted the order, but learning afterwards that the young Arapahoe who got his toilet set had set up a barber and dentistry shop in his village. I was loath to deprive the Indians of these civilizing influences and did not present the order.

On another occasion Dobson exhibited the stuff of which he is made. In May, 1862, we were returning the stock to a portion of the road from which we had moved it on account of Indian depredations. We came to Ham's Fork where was collected a large body of men and teams on their way east to assist the Mormon immigration. The stream was fearfully swollen and Bromley the agent of the Overland arranged with the men to assist us in return for our help. So wagon boxes were caulked to supply the place of boats, some teams were gotten across, ropes attached to each end of the improvised boats and loaded with the baggage and supplies. This sea-saw ferry apparatus was set in motion, the boats being drawn across by the teams attached to the ropes and then pulled to dry land. After the baggage and supplies were over the coaches and wagons were taken over in the same manner. Then came the fording over of the oxen, horses and mules. In driving the mail animals into the stream it was necessary for several of us to gather some of the most refractory and timid ones by the tails and so (this is more safe than riding on their backs) over with them. In struggling with the current some of the animals became excited and one large mule in attempting to climb onto Dobson struck him with its forefeet forcing him under and narrowly escaping drowning. "Tom," no doubt, has often speculated who would be on his beat had that been his end. On this occasion Dobson and others were in the water during daylight for some three days.

The fare on the road except near the towns and trading posts was of the coarsest kind, consisting of salted bread, beans, rice, dried apples (old style) Ben Holiday's "chicken," and occasionally some of Ben's turkey. Ben Holiday's chicken, though the sacks containing it were branded B. C., its pedigree was supposed to date from the Mexican war, and perhaps it was incubated about the time of that interesting event in our national history. It consisted of large, flabby blubbery slabs, of what had once been bacon. It was full of holes and was diagnosed by the medical faculty of the company as enlargement of the pores in the porcine hide, attended with gangrene. And for for "variegation" it was up to the best specimens

of the handy work of St. Rollox, and the way Time had worked the beautiful yellow, green, blue and purple into it would eclipse a prism or make an imitator of onyx or Jasper despair and abandon his art. It had lain on wharves, been stowed in commissary buildings, been used as ballast for steamboats; it had been condemned and repurchased by the government a scores of times. It had sat down so many times and under such favorable conditions that it was stuck full of nail, the rust from which gave it an additional zest. It had been across the Plains in those symmetrical vehicles of Russell Majors & Waddle. It had been used for breastworks and targets in sham battles at Fort Crittenden. It was condemned and bought at a fourth of a cent per pound and sent out to the boys with special instructions to be sparing with it, to reserve it for important and deferred occasions such as when the paymaster was seeking signatures to the payroll or when the Muccamucks were passing over the road.

Ben Holiday turkey was those portions of the article that had escaped the disease diagnosed above, and when any of this was discovered, invitations were sent out to the station above and below, and with a "big brown," a "big duff," "slim gullion" and a few slabs of the chicken mixed with some green cottonwood, the boys would have a cheerful time, and a delicious meal.

WILLIAM P. APPLEBY.

WEEKLY CROP BULLETIN.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah.

July 6th, 1897.

The weather during the forepart of the week ending July 5th, was moderately warm and generally cloudy, the latter part was unseasonably cool with well distributed showers over the greater part of the State on the 2nd and 3rd. Upon the whole, the conditions were quite favorable to agricultural interests, though a trifle too cold for the growth and advancement of crops. The rain during the week was heaviest throughout the central and northern sections, and did an immense amount of good to crops in general, being especially beneficial to corn, potatoes, lucern and late grain. Haying operations were retarded by the rain, and in some districts a great deal of unharvested lucern was damaged by the frequent showers. Throughout the central and northern portions the first cutting of lucern is practically finished, and in the southern portion the second cutting is now progressing. The harvesting of wheat and barley is under way in the extreme southern counties, and will soon commence in some of the northern districts. In a few localities the grain is very poor and will not pay for cutting. All irrigated crops are reported in a satisfactory condition and indicate about average yield. Corn bugs and cut worms are doing some damage to garden and field crops in the central and southern sections. The strawberry season is over and cherries and raspberries are now being marketed in large quantities. The fruit crop continues very promising.

Beaver.—Weather generally un-