

Correspondence.

DIXIE IN AND OUT OF THE CAMERA.

Kanarra and Glauber Salts—Black Mountains—Pillars of Hercules—Black Ridge—Ash Creek—Thorns and Cacti—The Oose—Down 1900 Feet—Geological Speculations—Bellevue—Toquerville—Slam-bang—Dixie Wine and its Peculiar Effects—Virgin City—Mules and Fording—Grafton—Duncan's Retreat—Beaver Dam—Rockville—Indian and other Washerwomen—Rockville—Northrup—Springdale—Shonesburg—Little Zion Valley—The Yosemite of Utah—Hurricane Hill—Bury's Springs—Washington—Middleton—Mesquit—Brigham City Cotton Colony—St. George—J. E. Johnson's Garden—Dixie Wine—Lucern—The Temple—The Tabernacle—The Climate—Horticultural Productions—Grand Gulch—Copper and Coal—The Pahreah—Baptizing Indians—The Desert—The Needle Palm—The Spanish Bayonet—More Cacti.

SALT LAKE CITY.

April 15th, 1875.

The road from Kanarra slopes gradually to the South. On the right is the Black Mountain, from whose summit you may look into Arizona and Nevada to the south and west. On the left a ridge of mountains skirts the road some twenty miles. Two immense shafts of red sandstone rock point heavenward a few miles south of Kanarra. These have been called the Pillars of Hercules. The Canyons around Kanarra are full of wonderful rocky chasms and narrow passages, all composed of glaring red sand stone, from the pores of which exude a white substance called here *mineral*, but I believe it has been determined chemically to be Glauber salts. It is a neutral substance, and therefore not alkaline. Further south, where its presence is more easily seen, it is hurtful to vegetation. In many places the land is flooded with water to carry off the surplus *mineral*, so as to render it available for cultivation.

As we descend the Black Ridge we pass over a volcanic mass of rock, down a beautiful dogway, constructed at a heavy cost, following down Ash Creek. The traveler will be surprised at the many changes in the looks of the vegetation that now appear. I think it is the only part of Utah that you can find a useful article of hardwood. The Ash is found in most of the streams running south from the mountains on the Rim of the Basin, though not in large quantities. The constant companion of the traveller, the sage brush, in Utah and Nevada, begins to disappear. In its stead we find all kinds of undergrowth such as the bayonet cactus, the oose (*yucca baccata*), tree cactus (*opuntia oehno carpa*), and several kinds of greasewood, in every case covered with fine thorns. In fact on the native undergrowth of this southern climate, thorns infest everything. There are also several other kinds of cactus growth, that are very curious and interesting to the botanist and the general observer.

The oose plant is a very useful one for many reasons—the root is used for washing fine fabrics; the leaves are composed of a fibrous substance that is made use of in tying up grape vines; I saw a man with a halter made of the green oose stalk. Away down in Mexico a kind of oose plant is dried and the fibrous parts are packed in bales and sold to be used in making brushes—it is known in the trade as *tampico*. Whether our oose plants can be made available for the same purpose or not I do not know. I am told that a resident of Leeds makes ropes from the dried fibres.

I found that we had descended 1,000 feet from Kanarra to the first pine tree in Ash Creek. Cows are nibbling off the green grass and the buds are swelling on the cottonwood trees (March 10th). Away back in the unrecorded past, streams of molten lava poured over the mountains, on the left of us. In many places on the summits of the hills beds of volcanic rock may be seen perched upon the tops of white and red sandstone bluffs. Some geologists maintain that the valleys of Dixie were then mountains, they having been washed away, the valleys are now found where the mountains stood. But I must

beg leave to differ (all great men will do so), as in many places just enough and no more lava has run over the edges of the bluffs to fill up little hollows and crevices. The pathway of the stream is plainly seen, and what did run over just reached a certain point and stopped. If the bluff had not been there, the lava could not have taken the form it has. From this inference, I am inclined to believe that the valleys of Dixie are as old as the hills.

The first village we come to on our way down is Bellevue. On every hand the husbandmen are trimming up their grape vines and putting gardens in order. The air is warmer, the sand deeper, the rocks thicker as we descend. We diverge from the main road and pass over a rocky ridge to Toquerville. If I am rightly informed, this is one of the oldest settled places in Dixie. On our arrival there, we heard sounds of mirth and dancing, some folks had been getting married, and about 30 or 40 men had suspended work and were playing the scientific game of *Slam-bang*, with the staves of empty sugar kegs, to celebrate the event. From all appearances some wine had been disposed of—they were all as jolly as men could be. As we were in the land of wine we bought a pint for ten cents and found enough fire in it to make our party of three feel peculiar. I cannot say that the wine I have tasted made me feel jolly; it had the contrary effect. I felt as sleepy as though I had been drinking laudanum tea, but this is possibly on account of the way I have been raised.

Toquerville is a neat, trim, and pretty village. It has reached its full development as such. There is no more room for emigrants. Every spot of available land is swallowed up. It is watered by a beautiful spring. Its principal product is wine.

Virgin City is our next stopping-place. This is another village wrested from a sand hill by indomitable energy. It is on the banks of the Rio Virgen, a mean, insignificant river of moving quicksands, but under the influence of a fresher roaring torrent. This is a nice place when the wind don't blow, but when it does the town is all in motion, the sand is flying everywhere. In 1870 I saw a house partly buried up with sand after a heavy blow, but this is changed now, and Virgin City is a fixed fact.

Our first ford of the Virgin river developed the perversity of *mules*. No sooner had we started across the quicksand than they stopped short, which gave us a chance to wash our feet, and help out the fast sinking wagon.

Grafton and Duncan's Retreat are little settlements on the strip of land bordering the river, every spot of which is under cultivation. Beyond are stark, black, volcanic rocks, and high rocky ridges in the distance.

Every new change in the river bed cuts away somebody's bread and butter. In a few places freshets and the river had taken away parts of nice farms in a few hours. A man is likely to be impoverished at almost any moment. The Beaver Dam settlement was once a small paradise, but all at once it took a notion to go down stream, and is no more.

Rockville (and rightly named) is higher up the river than the two preceding places, and is also a pretty nest in the rocks. Improvements are going on here, that indicate a stirring community. Our Indian brethren may be seen cleaning out ditches and working at all kinds of jobs. This is certainly a more civilized occupation than gathering chignons. I learn that the squaws play upon the washboard with considerable dexterity, and work all day for a yard or two of calico. Salt Lake city needs an immigration of such cheap washerwomen. I look upon a first-class washerwoman as the most independent of mortals. Many a strong-minded woman has to knuckle down to their imperious demands.

The mountains bordering the river are higher and more precipitous as we leave Rockville. A few houses make up Northrup, and a mile or two further Springdale looms up. We are following the left fork of the Rio Virgen, and leave Shonesburg on the right hand fork. The road gets worse as we ascend the stream for Little Zion valley, but the increasing grandeur of the scenery makes up for it. The rocks on each side of us are getting higher

and the canyon narrower, until it finally culminates in a small valley of very rich soil, surrounded on all sides by wall rocks, from two to three thousand feet high, of white and red sandstone. Many of the peaks are very fine, and the bed of the creek is the paradise of studies for a landscape painter. At this season of the year the sun does not shine in the valley fully until ten o'clock and sets at three, so that one is well shaded. A few years ago a few families lived here, but they had to succumb and leave. What with freshets and the extreme loneliness of the place they could stand it no longer; their cabins are now for rent. We stayed there three days and nights. The wind howled through the canyon at night terribly, and the cold was intense. It would make a nice stone prison for those who are fond of loneliness. I think it may justly be called the Yosemite of Utah, with this drawback—the absence of water in the heights above. Those who admire the wonders of nature should pay a visit to Little Zion valley.

We retrace our steps back over the same road to Virgin City, thence follow down the river by the new road over Hurricane Hill. This is a bad road for nervous people, and one of the places you do not easily forget. The road follows the crest of a volcanic ridge so near to the edge as to make you wish you were on level ground if your team should be unreliable.

After the hurricane comes a calm of deep sand, for several miles through which you are obliged to wade. The vegetation is of the most interesting character—cacti, cactus, cactissimus everywhere. You wonder when the dream of the poet will be realized:—

"No more will sin and sorrow grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground."

All around you, east, west, north and south, are ridges of many colored rocks. Black rocks and white, red rocks and grey, extinct craters, cinder heaps, alkali barrens, and every element to make a country look God-forsaken and desolate in this particular locality.

Crossing the Virgin again, after passing a fort called Bury's Springs, built as a lookout post against Indian raids, and we finally reach Washington, boasting a woollen and cotton mill, and a good many nice residences, fine vineyards, and gardens. The peach and apricot trees are now in bloom, but rather blackened by frost. Springs of clear nice-looking water are abundant, but they are best let alone. There is very little good water away from the rivers, and that is very sandy.

Middleton is passed, going to St. George, and some nice-looking farms are seen on each side of the road. As we have left cedar and pine timber behind us, the mesquit brush comes in handy for making fences.

A colony of brethren from Brigham City are located near this place, on the Virgin River. Their object is to raise cotton for use in their woollen factory instead of importing it from the States.

St. George, as you approach it from the north, looks quite imposing. The tall spire of the meeting-house and a fine court-house building, with the ponderous walls of the Temple in the lower part of the city, give the look of an old settled town, instead of one of only fourteen years' growth.

The city is watered by large springs, that are taken great care of and economized to water a large tract of land, as St. George is well settled. The *mineral* crops out here plentifully, wherever the land has not been doctored to destroy it, and the streets in the lower part are white as though they had a coating of snow.

A high ridge of volcanic rocks walls in St. George on the west, and another one of red sandstone on the northeast. The land slopes down gradually to the Virgin River, and the distant view for many miles looks south. Verily a desert has been spoiled to make this a productive spot, but it is really wonderful to see the beautiful gardens and fine vineyards. Foremost among them all is the garden of J. E. Johnson, Esq. The visitor here will find an epitome of all the vegetation abounding in this climate. Figs, pomegranates, rare fruits and flowers, from every country, are nursed with tender care, and among them all I saw a banana plant. The experiment has not been fully tried to raise oranges and lemons, but with

a little care in winter I believe such delicacies may be successfully cultivated. The cactus growth of the country is represented here by specimens brought from different localities.

Whenever a railroad from the north reaches the south we can then enjoy early fruits and vegetables, instead of having to bring them from California. When that event occurs, the people of Dixie will have their day of rejoicing, as all their products will find a ready market in the north. Some of the residents have thousands of gallons of wine stored away in their cellars, and every year the wine producing capacity of the country is increasing, the value of which can be estimated by the fact that an acre of good vines will produce some 125 gallons of wine. This will generally trade when carried north for two bushels of grain for a gallon of wine, which would equal 250 bushels of grain to the acre—rather a productive enterprise. The codling moth and phyloxera have not yet troubled the fruit trees and vines so far south, and, as we never had the moth until we imported fruit trees, the people south had better go slow in buying fruit trees north.

Too much praise cannot be given to the patient early settlers of this region, as the privations they have passed through have been of the most trying character. Before the advent of the cultivation of lucern, it was almost impossible to keep a cow, but that thrifty herb has been one of the real blessings to the country. A few years ago, when hunting for a little horse feed, I found a little heap of dried lucern under an old bed quilt, and obtained it, as a great favor, through the order of President B. Young, from Bishop Smith, in Rockville. I think it was all there was on hand in the settlement. Now, there is plenty to be found for the cash, and a poor man with a patch of lucern can keep a cow and thus enjoy milk and butter, which was almost impossible to find five or six years ago. I am trying to decide in my own mind whether lucern is not really more conducive to the happiness of the southern parts of our Territory than grape vines. I think lucern will carry off the palm, on temperance principles.

The Temple will be a great ornament to the city. It is a fine looking structure as far as completed, but as it has been so often described I pass it by. The Tabernacle is in my judgment the finest meeting-house in Utah owned and controlled by the Latter-day Saints.

The climate of St. George is delightful during the Winter and Spring. The thermometer ranges as high as 115 in the shade in the Summer months. In the Winter it gets a few degrees below freezing point during cold snaps. I saw four inches of snow fall while there, but it was all dissolved in one hour after the sun shone. Some of the children had never seen it before, and were running out into it, it was such a novelty to them. I have heard it reported that the Muddy settlements were still warmer. They talk of pouring butter from bottles, and of eggs hatching on the shelves by the heat in Midsummer. Certainly residents of Dixie tell me that a chicken will not walk in the sand in full sunshine in Summer. The luxury of going barefoot among the children cannot be enjoyed in the very hot weather. But with all these disadvantages you could not persuade a resident of the country to leave it after living there a few years.

The elevation of St. George is 3,300 feet above the level of the sea, about 1,100 feet lower than Salt Lake City. It is the headquarters of the Southern mission. The church has a titling office and bakery established. The titling of most of the southern counties is received and disbursed here, which has been a great help to the city.

The productive character of the country has not yet been fully tested. It was not thought possible a few years ago to raise potatoes, but the advent of the Early Rose variety gave the residents a chance to raise two crops a year, by planting early and late. However their winter stock of this tuber comes from the north. The climate is rather too warm for apples, but just right for pears. These grow to perfection. The grape attains a flavor and size there that puts our productions in the shade. Mining matters in Dixie are receiving considerable attention. At Grand Gulch a copper mine is being worked, the depth and width of which have not been ascertained. It has been pierced

for sixty-five feet without reaching the end. Mr. Williams, the manager of the works, says it is the largest body of ore he has ever seen. It assays from 30 to 40 per cent of pure copper. There is plenty of wood and water handy. The parties interested are now erecting a smelter. The distance from St. George is sixty miles.

A vein of valuable coal has been discovered on the Pahreah, quality semi-anthracite. It is ten feet thick, crops out from a bluff, can be easily worked, and does not crumble on exposure to the air. It is 100 miles from St. George. Other important discoveries are reported. The great gold excitement mentioned in my last letter abated when it was found that the gold was composed of sulphurets of base metals.

As we were leaving St. George for the desert, we saw a great gathering of Indians near a pool north of the city. We found on arriving there that Qui-tuss and 130 of his tribe, composing part of the Shebit nation, were about to be baptized. The men and women were assembled in groups and appeared to feel as though they were about to do some important act. Their manner was as simple and childlike as could be. Bro. A. P. Hardy acted as interpreter, and when he announced that they would engage in prayer, these swarthy and fierce denizens of the mountains knelt before our Eternal Father with more earnestness of manner than some of their white brethren. I shall not forget the sight—some three or four hundred persons kneeling, Indians and Caucasians, side by side; men who had faced one another with deadly rifles, seeking each other's blood, were mingled together to perform an act of eternal brotherhood. These Indians had fought and robbed the very men from whom they were now seeking the performance of the act of allegiance that would make them brothers with their old enemies, animosities were buried, the past forgotten. These men and women were the brothers and sisters of the "Mormons." They were baptized without any manifestation of timidity or awkwardness. The brethren of St. George killed two beeves and distributed among them before they left for their homes on the Colorado. The Sunday following those who remained went to the meeting like other good brethren.

It may be asked, what good will it do the Indians? I answer it means with them that they must change their habits of life, they must wash themselves regularly, they must stop the use of paint on their faces, they must work and not let their ladies do it all, they must learn to live like their white brethren, they must accept directions from their superiors, they must not steal, they must accept the faith that points to the rule and guidance of God in all matters affecting us. As an evidence, I saw an Indian asking for work, and all he asked was that his squaw and papoose might be fed for his labor. He was engaged. Others were hunting old clothes, that they might dress like their white brethren, in fact doing all they could to show that they meant business.

During all the provocations suffered by the early settlers in these valleys from the Indians Prest. Young has never relinquished the determination to feed rather than fight them. He has never acted other than as the true friend of the red man. Thank God, he has lived to see the result of his humane policy. The Indians know, by years of experience, that we are their true friends. They have learned to trust us with their lives and their future destinies. This commencement of the acceptance of the gospel will spread until all the tribes around us will bow allegiance to faith in God and a higher civilization than their own.

Mr. Brooks, who lives on the Muddy, told me that runners from tribes on the Colorado were enquiring after the men that were to put them under the water. He pointed them to the "Mormons" at St. George.

From St. George we visited the desert on the road to the Muddy. A visit to Dixie is not complete without seeing the curiosities of vegetable growth that abound in that locality. After leaving the last camping place on the Santa Clara, the road takes over a summit as high as 6,300 feet. As you ascend you meet your old friend the sage brush, manzanita, bitterwood, and a host of new kinds of shrubs. Pines and cedars are found as you reach the highest point, but no water.