THE EVENING NEWS.

Monday. Jan. 5, 1874.

The Colorado Desert.

Where is it? Between parallels 32 and 34 degrees north latitude, and the meridians 114 and 116 degrees west. It is, in fact, the southwestern corner of California. Its western boundary is the Sierra; its northern and eastern margins are formed by a spur or branch range of the Sierras starting from near Mount San Bernardino, running easterly someforty miles,and thence bending southeasterly and southerly, and falling away into the lower and lower hills until it flattens out into barren plains near Fort Yuma. On the south it opens up through a gradual ascent upon the head of the Gulf of California. Its width varies from thirty to forty miles, and its average length is something over a hundred and twenty-five miles. What is it? Probably if not unquestionably, it is the old bed or bottom of the Gulf of California which once extended at least a hundred and fifty miles northwesterly beyond its present limits.

Its surface has a gradual ascent from the northerly end, to the present sandy shore of the gulf, its temporary limit. In a very able, ingenious and interesting article by Dr. J. P. Widney, of Los Angeles, published in the Overland Mouthly for January of the present year, he thinks that the Colorado, entering the east side of the ancient gulf, nearly a hundred and fifty miles above its head, brought down millions of tons of quicksand and thick red mud, which gradually formed an immense shoal and, in time, a delta, which after many years, stretched quite across to the opposite shore of the gulf, which was narrow at that place. This, of course, cuts off the upper hundred and fifty miles of the gulf and changed it into a large, shallow lake. This lake, receiving neither rain-fall nor rivers sufficient to replace its loss by the evaporation of this extremely hot locality, finally dried completely away and left its sandy bed a desert basin.

This annual alluvial deposit has steadily increased the distance between the river bed and the southern margin of the old, lake bed desert, till it has formed a neck of land nearly forty miles wide, lying but slightly above the sea.

The taking away of such an immense body of water, presenting over five thousand square miles of surface, constantly subjected to an extremely rapid evaporation, must have made the climate much dryer and hotter, for one or two hundred miles east or west—that is, through southern California and western Arizona. That this is exactly what did take place, on one side at least, western Arizona furnishes two conclusive proofs:

1. The ruins of cities once large and populous, and the remains of wide and deep canals for extensive systems of irrigation.

2. Remains of old forests evidently dead for want of moisture.

If any one questions the modifying influence of evaporation upon climate, let him consider the fact, given in the published proceedings of the Bombay Geographical Society, that the annual evaporation of the Bay of Bengal is more than sixteen feet! But this upper part of the old Gulf of California, flanked on both sides by high mountains, whose steeply-sloping sides daily reflected an amount of heat which greatly increased the evaporating power of the sun's direct rays, must have lost a proportionately greater amount. Assuming, however, for the sake of a safe argument, that its evaporation only equaled that of the Bay of Bengal, we should have an amount of vapor which, if condensed and precipitated, would supply twelve inches of rain over 86,400 square miles, an area more than double that of the entire State of Ohio, and more than half of the land surface of all California.

Submerge the desert again; make it once more the bottom of a vast lake, an inland sea, in fact, sending up thousands of tons of vapor every day, cooling the overlying and surrounding air for hundreds of miles, and thus causing the precipitation of a large part of the vapor now held in suspension by the ocean winds. This would restore not only the humidity but the mildness of those climatic conditions which once made fertile thousands of leagues now desert for more than a hundred years, but which under the restoration of former conditions, might and would bud and blossom again, as surely as cause produces effect.

The dampness of the atmosphere thus increased, and the lower temperature thus secured, would have yet another and most beneficial effect. They would retard and diminish the evaporation of the rains which do fall, and the greater rain which would fall, over the adjacent country. This would work three good results: 1. A milder climate. 2. A moister soil. 3. More springs and streams.

How could the present desert be flooded again? In either one of two ways:

1. By a canal from the present head of the gulf across the forty miles of sand which now separates the present head of the gulf from its old bed which is now the desert. This would be extremely difficult and costly, if not impracticable, not only on account of the great length and width required, but on account of the constant sand-drift which would continually tend to fill the canal again. Then, too, the action of the river and gulf waves would tend to obstruct the gulf end of the canal, and to increase the width of the sandy belt or isthmus across which it would be cut. This plan would restore the desert to its old condition of a salt water lake. It has been often suggested and strongly advocated.

2. Open a canal from the Colorado river into the desert, turn the river into the desert and thus make it a fresh water lake. During the flood season of the last twenty years the river has been doing this itself. This natural annual overflow already forms a stream a hundred yards wide and four feet deep, with a strong current, which pours so much water into the desert, as to make a lake several miles across, but so shallow that it dries up in a few weeks, after the subsidence of the floods in the main river cuts off its supply.

Comparatively little artificial help would turn the whole volume of the Colorado into this new channel, which would presently deepen so as to remain permanent.

3. Combine the two projects; open the canals from both the gulf and the river. This would insure an ample and speedy filling of the desert with a flood which the river supply would constantly tend to keep at a level a little above that of the gulf, thus creating a current through the canal to deepen and widen and make it more permanent all the while.

This can be done, and I believe it will be. For greater and more costly things have been done to reach results far less important and not near as certain.

It is the grand climatic problem, on whose solution depends the population and the civilization of millions of the most fertile miles of western Arizona and southern California.

Those who wish fuller statements of most of the ideas here hurriedly condensed, may find them in Dr. Widney's article already cited. And who do so will find in the question with which he closes: "Would it be money wasted if the government were to send a commission of scientific men of engineers, carefully to examine the subject, to run levels and report the result."—*San Bernardino Guardian.*

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3d " Jacob Weiler.
4th " Thomas Jenkins.
5th & 6th, W. H. Hickenlooper.
7th " Wm. Thorn.
8th " E. F. Sheets.
9th " S. A. Woolley.
10th " John Proctor.
11th " Alex. McRae.
12th " L. W. Hardy.
13th " E. D. Woolley.
14th " Thomas Taylor.
15th " R. T. Burton.
16th " Frederick Kesler.
17th " Nathan Davis.
18th " L. D. Young.
19th " A. H. Raleigh.
20th " John Sharp.
Sugar House Ward, W. C. A. Smoot.
Brighton, A. H. Raleigh.
Big Cottonwood, David Brinton.
Mill Creek, Reuben Miller.
South Cottonwood, J. S. Rawlins.
West Jordan, Archibald Gardner.
South Willow Creek, I. M. Stewart.

TOOELE COUNTY.

JOHN ROWBERRY, Presiding Bishop.

E. T. City, G. W. Bryan.
Pine Kanyon, Moses Martin.
*Tooele City, John Rowberry.
Grantsville, William Jeffries.
St. Johns, G. W. Partridge.
Centreville, James Jordan.
Vernon, Hyrum Reunion.
Deep Creek, Edwin Tadlock.
Skull Valley, R. F. Knowlton.

UTAH COUNTY.

A. O. SMOOT, Presiding Bishop, Provo.

First Ward, J. P. R. Johnson.
Second Ward, A. Hickenlooper.
Third Ward, Tyrant Tanner.
Fourth Ward, Wm. Follett.
Lehi, David Evans.
Cedar Fort, H. F. Cook.
Fairfield, John Carson.

DAVID EVANS, Presiding Bishop over the three last named places.

American Fork, L. E. Harrington.
Alpine, B. J. Stoddard.

L. E. HARRINGTON, Presiding Bishop over the two last named places.

Pleasant Grove, John Brown.
*Provo, A. O. Smoot.
Springville, Wm. Chipman.
Spanish Fork, C. H. Spencer.
Salem, *alias* Pondtown, Robt. H. Davis.
Payson, J. S. Tanner.
Santaquin, D. H. Ballard.
Spring Lake Villa, B. F. Johnson.

J. S. TANNER is presiding Bishop over the four last named places.

Goshen, Wm. Price.

JUAB COUNTY.

JOEL GROVER, Presiding Bishop

Juab, Joseph Kay.
Nephi, *alias* Salt Creek, Joel Grover.
Levan, Elmer Taylor.

SANPETE COUNTY.

Fountain Green, R. L. Johnson.
Moroni, G. W. Bradley.
Fairview, Amasa Tucker.
Ephraim, Canute Peterson.
Manti, A. J. Moffit.
Gunnison, J. S. Horne.
Fayette, John Bartholomew.

SEVIER COUNTY.

J. A. YOUNG, Presiding.

Salina, Peter Rasmussen.
Glenwood, Heleman Pratt.
*Richfield, Nelson Higgins acting.
Monroe, Moses Gifford.
Annabella, Edward Roberts.
Joseph, [illegible]

MILLARD COUNTY.

THOMAS CALLISTER, Presid. Bishop.

Scipio, Daniel Thompson.
Cedar Springs, Alfred Sanders, David Stoppenbach.
*Fillmore, Edward Partridge.
Meadow Creek, W. H. Stott.
Oak Creek, D. D. Lyman.
Kanosh, [illegible]

BEAVER COUNTY.

JOHN R. MURDOCK, Presiding Bishop.

*Beaver, John R. Murdock.
Minersville, James McKnight.

IRON COUNTY.

Paragonah, A. Smith.
Parowan, [illegible]

W. H. DAME, Presiding Bishop over the three last named places.

Paragonah, G. W. Bere.
Cedar City, Henry Lunt.

KANE COUNTY.

Kanarra, L. W. Roundy.
Harmony, W. D. Pace.
Glendale, [illegible] Johnson.
*Alton, J. T. Willis.
Virgin, John Parker.
Rockville, Jesse Smith.
Long Valley, James Lostbeed.
Kanab, Levi Stewart.

WASHINGTON COUNTY.

Harrisburg, G. S. Adams.
Washington, C. W. Overton.
St. George, D. D. McArthur.
Santa Clara, Edward Bunker.
Pine Valley, Wm. Snow.
Kina Bloomington, [illegible]

LINCOLN COUNTY, NEVADA.

Panaca, [illegible] Crosby.
Clover Valley, [illegible]
Meadow Valley, T. J. Tolman.
*County Seats.