

## A GLIMPSE OF OWENS VALLEY.

An Interesting Description of  
It by A. Schelling.A Healthy Home for Half a Million  
People.Conservative Statements About Its  
Scenery and Resources, Both Ag-  
ricultural and Mineral—Need  
of a Railroad.

A. Schelling, the well-known vinegar and pickle manufacturer of Los Angeles, lately sold his business to James Hill, a prominent vinegar and pickle manufacturer from Keokuk, Iowa, and spent a few weeks in Owens valley, Inyo county, for a rest. He returned from there this week and is fully satisfied that the Owens valley, which is of a mountainous scenery like Switzerland, not developed yet, but will in a very short time be as densely populated as any good country of the United States.

Mr. Schelling expresses the impression which he received from Owens valley as follows:

I consider Owens valley as one of the nicest, healthiest and most fertile countries I ever saw; a good home for the poor and for the rich. The elevation of the valley is 2600 to 4000 feet above sea level. This elevation, the good, dry air and the total absence of fog makes it one of the healthiest countries on earth. The temperature in summer rises sometimes to 100 deg. and falls in winter to 25 deg.

Occasionally one or two inches of snow falls in the valley, but it disappears soon after the sun has risen.

The heat during the summer is always moderated by an agreeable breeze from the snow-clad mountains. In spring this breeze changes into a pretty strong wind, but not of a velocity to do any damage. October 26th the thermometer at Citrus station showed 70 degrees, F., at 8:30 a.m., and the weather was bright and clear. There was only one cloudy day during my presence in Owens valley. The rainfall very seldom exceeds three inches. This dry climate makes Owens valley exceedingly fit for drying fruits, especially for the culture of raisins.

The present population of Owens valley is about 3000. There are about 800 Indians of the Pinte tribe in the valley. They are all good-natured and civilized. Their children attend an English school and are as intelligent as the white children.

Owens valley could very easily support half a million inhabitants, as it contains about 500,000 acres of good tillable land and plenty of mineral resources. The reason why it is not better settled is probably the want of good communications with more densely populated countries, and, therefore, the want of facilities for a good market. As the valley is situated between two high mountain ranges, the Sierra Nevadas on the west and the White and Inyo mountains on the east, it naturally has only two outlets—one towards the north and one south.

Toward the north a narrow-gauge railroad—the Carson and Colorado railroad—runs a train every other day from Keeler to Reno and vice versa, in connection with the Central Pacific railroad, but the charges of this railroad are so high that it is almost impossible for the farmers to ship their products to the principal market places of Northern California, Sacramento and San Francisco. At the southern outlet of the valley is a stage road through the Mojave desert to Mojave, a distance from the southern part of the valley of about 100 miles. A four-horse stage is running between Mojave and Keeler, a little village on the Owens lake. The stage leaves Mojave for Keeler every Tuesday and Saturday evening, and Keeler for Mojave every Monday and Thursday morning. It changes the horses four times on each trip, which is made in about 24 hours. A railroad is projected and franchised from Mojave to the Owens valley, and as soon as this railroad is running the valley will come to the very front and be settled rapidly.

The soil of the Owens valley is very productive where it is irrigated, and there is abundance of water there to irrigate with. The water is taken partly from numerous mountain streams, partly from the Owens river, which carries water enough to irrigate almost a million acres of land. An English syndicate intends to construct a big canal to convert part of the water of the Owens river to a valley south of the Owens valley, called Indian Wells valley. This valley contains about 350,000 acres of good government land, and will, after the completion of said canal, will become one of the nicest countries in California.

In the upper part of Owens valley, in Bishop, the largest town of the valley, with a population of about 1000, are a good number of well-cultivated farms, and there is such an abundance of water that on some places it is actually wasted.

Very nice settlements are also in Big Pine, in Independence, the county seat, in George's Creek, in Lone Pine, all on the west side of the river and near Citrus and Alvord on the east side.

Stock raising is the principal occupation of the farmers in Owens valley, and the horses look very fine. The farmers in Bishop carry besides horses also a good stock of milk cows. They have recently paid special attention to the butter and cheese industry by starting a creamery, and I believe this industry can, because of the abundance of very good food, be made a success, if properly managed. There are good openings in the Owens valley for well-trained butter and cheese manufacturers.

Besides alfalfa they raise in the Owens valley wheat, barley, oats, corn and vegetables. All these products grow to perfection, and the deciduous fruits, apples and pears, and also the grapes, which had been raised there are of a very fine flavor and taste. Peaches and apricots, etc., are a sure crop only in the southern part of the valley, but for grapes, wine and raisin grapes, there is hardly a better country in California.

A farmer told me he raised a bunch of grapes last summer which weighed 11 pounds. The land along the Owens river is good for pasture. The higher located land is the best for alfalfa, fruit and grapes. All the land contains more or less soda, but the soda does not injure the crops where there is no water standing on the land. The water can very easily be drained off, as the land slopes towards the river. Alfalfa yields from 5 to 10 tons per acre in one season, corn and wheat about a ton. The prices for partly improved land, including water for irrigation, varies from \$10 to \$30 per acre, according to the quality. There is also lots of government land in the valley, for which water can be bought

at a reasonable price, but the best land is all located. There is a good chance in Owens valley for poor people to get a good home for very little money, and to get wealthy by and by. For people of means there is a very good chance for investments.

The White mountains and the Fugo mountains carry lots of minerals.

The best mines which are operated at present are the Defiance at Darwin (silver and lead), the Lookout (silver and lead), the Georgia, opposite Bishop, (gold) and the Sacramento (gold).

There is also an extensive mine of the finest Cava marble opposite Lone Pine in the southern part of the valley, and a large deposit of borax in the Salome valley, east of the southern part of Owens valley.

The Owens lake in the Southern land of Owens valley contains a very high percentage of soda. An English syndicate bought all the land along the lake, where they evaporate the water and manufacture it into soda.