

and lakes serve to water it, yet in dry seasons or droughts, not only the crops but the herbage also suffers extremely, and the cattle are deprived of food.

The Sierra affords little scope for cultivation, being much broken, barren, and sandy. It is in places covered with cedar, pine, and oak; but it offers few inducements to the settler. The great valley of Buena Ventura next succeeds, which, although it offers more prospects of profitable cultivation, is by all accounts far inferior to that of San Juan. It lies nearly parallel to the latter, and is watered by the San Joachim river and its branches.

In this valley the Californian Indians principally dwell. The San Joachim receives its waters from the many streams that issue from the Californian range of mountains. These are well wooded, their base being covered with oaks, to which succeeds the red California cedar (*Schubertia abertina*), and after it, in a still higher region, pines, until the snows are encountered. On the eastern side of this range, there is found very little timber, and in consequence of the want of moisture, trees do not flourish, even on the west side. The inland plain, constituting a large part of Upper California, is, according to all accounts, an arid waste; the few rivers that exist being periodical, and losing themselves in the sandy soil.

Of the latter portion of country, however, there is little known, and the accounts given of it vary extensively. It has been crossed by seven persons, who differ altogether in respect to its appearance. One declared that the horses and men had not only a scanty supply of water, but were actually nearly famished for want of food; while others have found both grass and water plentiful. The only thing that can reconcile these contradictory statements is, that these different persons had visited the country at different seasons of the year. It seems not at all improbable that the first of these accounts should be the correct one, for we find great aridity throughout the rest of California, and Oregon also. All agree that the middle and extensive portion of this country is destitute of the requisites for supplying the wants of man.

In climate, California varies as much if not even more than in natural features and soil. On the coast range, it has as high a mean temperature in winter as in summer. The latter is in fact the coldest part of the year, owing to the constant prevalence of the northwest winds, which blow with the regularity of a monsoon, and are exceedingly cold, damp, and uncomfortable, rendering fire often necessary for comfort in midsummer. This is, however, but seldom resorted to, and many persons have informed me that they have suffered more