

## The Mormons in San Bernardino.

Among the many singular features of California, one worthy of especial notice, is the San Bernardino settlement of Mormons—genuine Latter Day Saints, who believe that Jo Smith (not John) had a direct commission from Heaven to convert the earth, and to preach the only true doctrine suited to the advanced position of our times,—and who follow his evangel as their pillar of fire by night and cloud by day, through the wilderness of life.

The persecution of the Mormons in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, made them wanderers. Previous to '45 they had sent forth emissaries to seek a Canaan, it being nearly plain that they could not remain in peace in the Mississippi Valley.—Some of the emissaries came to California and made a favorable report. In '47 a battalion of Mormons came with Col. Cooke to the Pacific coast, and many of them remained here. A Mormon discovered the first gold, at Sutter's Mill; and the proximity of their settlement at Utah enabled them to be among the first to reap the golden harvest. The families returned to Salt Lake, but carried back with them the fame of the fertile soil and sunny clime of the valley on the California coast. In 1851 they determined to make a settlement near San Diego, to which point they have their shortest and best road to the Pacific.

Amasa Lyman, one of the Twelve, and Elder C. C. Rich, were deputed, with the approval of Brigham Young, to choose the new home of five hundred immigrants; and they purchased the San Bernardino Ranch, (on the San Diego and Salt Lake road) with cattle, horses, &c., for 70,000\$. In the fall of 1851 the immigrants arrived, fenced in a lot of 2000 acres, built a fort for protection against the Indians, put in their grain and built houses. The large enclosure was not common property; but each person had his share to sow and reap. There were some difficulties, quarrels among the congregation, as well as wants and trials, during the first year, but the settlement prospered, as every Mormon settlement has.—Roads were made; houses, grist mills and saw mills were built; new immigrants arrived; and in '52, before the colony was a year old, they sent flour to the San Francisco market, and made large purchases of San Francisco merchandise.

The present population is something more than a thousand, and it promises to increase. In no portion of the State is there a more busy or thriving settlement, or one which in proportion to number, is working more effectively.

They promise that San Bernardino shall be the most beautiful city of California; and to judge by their beginning, and what they have done elsewhere, their promise will be kept.

By the last Legislature, San Bernardino was constituted a separate county, and thus the Mormons have a little government of their own.—Jefferson Hunt has been elected as their representative in the next Legislature. Their nominal spiritual leader is their Bishop, Crosby, but Rich is perhaps more influential.

Their valley is an exceedingly beautiful place, with great natural advantages. It is about 30 miles long, by east and west, and 15 miles wide, by north and south. On the east is the San Bernardino mountain, which rises almost to the region of perpetual snow, and from the foot hills of which numerous and bountiful springs flow.—Besides a multitude of springs, the valley is watered by the Santa Anna river. About 60 miles to the southwest is the coast—Los Angeles being 60 miles, San Pedro 75 miles, and San Diego 80 miles distant.

San Diego is intended to be the principal trading point for the settlement. The distance from Salt Lake City is about 800 miles in a southwest direction. The road is good, considerably better than any other from Bear River Valley to the Pacific. The greater part of the way, there is plenty of water and grass; and in some places there is good timber.

The Saints have already awakened to the importance of a Railroad—to the construction of which the route is favorable; and if once the leaders declare it must be made, then it will be made; and it is not improbable that it will be the first finished portion of the Pacific Railroad.

The Mormons are generally looked upon as good neighbors, and are considered as upright and moral as the majority of the citizens of California. Little is said of the polygamic doctrine; and for the sake of peace they will probably not introduce the practice into the State. Our State is fortunately free from the prejudices and hate against the Mormons, which prevailed in the Mississippi valley—and it is to be hoped that it will continue so.

Their doctrines will command no great reverence; but they are not to be overthrown by persecution or ridicule.

It is worthy of notice, that the discoverer of gold, the first farmer, and the wealthiest man in California, are or were all Mormons.