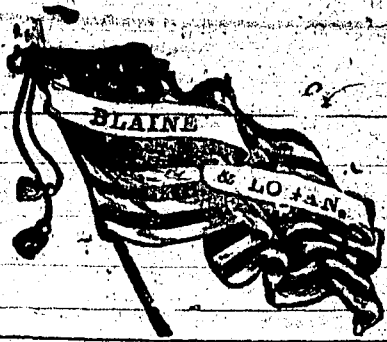


South-Jersey

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Letters From the Far West. NO. VIII.

BY MRS. MARIA M. KING.

BRECKENRIDGE.

To the Editor of the South Jersey Republican:

We are now having delightful summer weather here in the mountains. The days are warm and bright, and the nights cool. We always need a fire to sit by in the evening. The rainy season has not yet commenced; or rather, it was rainy season up to July, and now we are having a respite before the regular summer rains set in. These usually begin about the first or second week in July. And, Mr. Editor, our strawberry harvest has commenced. Perhaps your readers may have imagined that we have none of this delicious fruit at this elevation; if so, they are mistaken; we have. One can, upon a pinch, pick a quart or two in half a day, if particularly lucky in finding "thick spots"; and their average size is about that of common peas. We think ourselves favored if we can have a thimble full to a person on our tea-table. But they are a luxury especially with the delicious cream we have here, and the children who worked hard gathering them are sometimes rewarded by a strawberry shortcake, that even a Hammontonian might envy them. Our strawberry plants are of Nature's own planting and cultivating; and, besides growing plentifully in the warm, sheltered valleys, abound high up on the peaks above the timber line on the very verge of the snows, from which they are watered and made productive, with the added aid of the sunshine. I was out this morning picking strawberries, and I observed Nature's way of cultivating them. I saw that where the little streams had overflowed the soil, supplying moisture and depositing fertilizing elements, and where the cattle had tramped and broken up the sod, there the berries were largest and most abundant. From circumstances like these, thought I, it is quite probable that primitive man took his first hints, his first lessons in agriculture. Observing in his contact with Nature how the spontaneous products of the soil were susceptible of improvement, it is quite natural that he should learn to assist Nature by degrees, and thus learn to help himself when Nature withheld the bounty his necessity required.

Necessity—what a boon it has been to the race—this tyrant, this merciless task-master, that goads all men on to labor of some sort, whether they will or no! Urged on by necessity, men have, from the period of the infancy of the race, bestirred themselves to the outworking of the faculties within them—their true manhood. Without this spur to individual effort, forced upon man by the circumstances of his situation and surroundings, what would he have been, or how long would the race have escaped complete stagnation and utter extinction? In the opinion of many, it was well for the perpetuity of the race that the "first parents" were driven out of the "Eden" when they had naught to do but to dress and keep "the garden" and to pluck and eat, and rest in comparative inactivity of mind and body in the luxurious garden Nature had prepared for their infant children to enjoy and to foster their progress while they were incapable of providing for their own welfare. How pregnant with meaning is the language which is to the effect that as soon as they knew, they were driven out of the garden and forced to exert themselves for their own support. They were incapable of this before, and so were nursed and fed where nature was rich in spontaneous productions, like children needing the fostering care of tender guardians. If woman, through her influence over man and from possessing an inquiring mind, brought about this banishment, to my mind she proved a helpmeet indeed, and served her race better than she knew. The "flaming sword" that pointed every way, guarding the entrance was a fitting warning to the early fathers to beware of the fatal bowers of ease and indolence, which would

prove more dangerous to them and their posterity than hunger and cold, nakedness and prowling beasts of prey, outside of this favored region, where the necessity for exertion should be forced upon them. The scriptural account of creation, our first parents, etc., is replete with grand meaning to those who will use reason, and take into consideration the experience of the human race in its various stages of development to the present. God gave to man the instinct for inquiry and experimentation, and the faculty for improvement by observation and experiment, and placed him in a world where his only means of existence was in the use of his faculties in making the most of Nature, about him; then endowed him with faculties by the use of which he might preserve the life bestowed—by which means alone he could live and his race after him, to glorify the wisdom and beneficence of his creator by making his heritage a fruitful garden, a world displaying more and more the grand results of human energy and industry, the powers of the human intellect and its near relationship to Divine? Out upon such notions of God and his dealings with men as belittle him below a frail, ignorant and unjust man! God's grandest revelations to the human race, which has been a living inspiration from first to last, is the truth, that the more man tries to imitate God by imitating his works, his wisdom, his insight into Nature's laws and modes of action in all its realms, the more is he blessed in every way, becoming a benefactor to his race, and working out that perfection which shall be his near likeness to Deity.

But I have wandered away from my subject for which I humbly crave pardon. I was speaking of the fruit products of this section. Later in the season there will be some raspberries and whortleberries growing in nooks among the hills or on the hill sides. Then, there are service berries and black currants in considerable abundance, which those can find who know where to look for them, and these are comparatively few. All these wild fruits are great luxuries here where fresh fruit is such a rarity.

People here have been pining for a sensation; and now they have it, in the shape that pleases them best; viz., a "rich strike." Some gold hunters last week found some rich gold leads on "Gibson Hill," a mile and a half from town. I have before mentioned that Breckenridge is surrounded by placers on every side, from which many millions of dollars in gold have been washed in years past, and that the town itself is a placer, its soil throughout being impregnated with gold dust. These placers still yield gold, but most of them less than in years past. Below Gibson Hill on our side is "Gold Run Placer" which is washed every season and continues to yield gold in abundance. It has long been the effort of prospectors to find the sources of the gold which has been washed down and enriched these placers. Last season two prospectors from Southern Colorado, who learned their art of finding gold leads of experienced Spanish miners, and who have been very successful in it in the south, came here and began a search for the leads that have enriched Gold Run Placer. They did not succeed then, and returned to work this season, and have been, as it seems, richly rewarded. People are greatly excited over the matter, and the hill is the magnet that attracts everybody that can by any means reach it. Numbers are searching and staking out claims. Men, women and children hie to the hills with gold pans and get dirt to wash, some getting as high as from five to eight dollars to the pan—about six quarts of dirt,—and some one, two and three dollars. I believe however that that this gratuitous distribution of the rich dirt has been stopped, but it continued for days. There is surely gold there, but how much, the future only can disclose. We look at the hills all about us with placid diggings at their base, and wish that prospectors might be as fortunate in searching every one of them as those alluded to have been, for it seems a pity that these treasures

should forever remain locked against needy humanity.

There are many fine trout streams in the mountains about here, and Mr. King and myself have seen some of the "speckled beauties" sporting in the limpid water, but they are wary of the hook. We make excursions either on horseback or in a buggy around among the hills by these beautiful sparkling streams, sometimes with the intent of trout fishing as well as in search of recreation; and if we ever succeed in catching a trout, I shall surely inform the readers of the Republican of the important fact. Now that the bulk of the snow is gone and the streams lower, fishing will be in order.

MARIA M. KING.

BRECKENRIDGE, Col. July 22, 1884.

The East Cleveland Street Railroad Company on Saturday put into successful operation an electric road for general public use.

The commander of a Spanish gunboat in West India waters, has been taken in charge by British officer on the charge of firing into a British cutter.

The revenue receipts for the fiscal year ended June 30 show a decrease as compared with last year of \$22,963,305.

President Thompson, of the Chase National Bank, New York, thinks that the worst of the financial trouble is over, and that the recovery will be speedy; that the imports of gold during the next six months will exceed the exports of the last twelve, and that receipts of gold will inspire new confidence.

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