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That Promised Letter. O'NEILL, Neb., February 18, 1895. EDITORS FRONTIER.—As I was about to take the train enroute to California on the morning of January 14, I asked you if you wanted to hear from me for publication. You replied that you did, providing what I said was not favorable to the coast country. Admiring your loyalty to your home country, and appreciating the fact that you did not wish to publish correspondence delineating the good points of other localities that your own might suffer in comparison, I at once decided to write nothing at all. And I was surprised upon my return to learn that you had promised the readers of THE FRONTIER a series of letters from the pen of its first editor and founder. It is always a sincere pleasure to me to talk through FRONTIER columns. I enjoy it whether the reader does or not. I feel that I am speaking to old, tried and true friends.

Under the circumstances I propose to be very brief, and deal very little with the country I have visited, referring more to the people I met and the things I noticed. It would be impossible, however, for any one to make a visit of a couple of weeks in the land of sunshine, flowers and fruit and not become somewhat enthusiastic. The change at this time of year from this climate to that, is so marked that one is impressed to a great degree with the exquisite tingling of ecstatic pleasure that permeates his entire anatomy, and he is forced to enjoy himself, as I did, every moment of the time. When I say that I had no use for overcoat or rain-coat, over-shoes or gloves, while on the coast, you can imagine what brand of weather was on tap. It was sunshine and calm every day. Now, reader, do not understand that I say these things because I have concluded that California is the best place in the world to live, and that I want to boom that country. Not so. Nebraska is all right, and the man who is settled here, either on farm or in town, would be foolish to make a change. It might be disastrous, and without doubt in nine cases out of ten would prove so. Let well enough alone. Stand by Nebraska and you are all right. I have been asked many times, "would you like to live in California?" Frankly I reply that I think I would, providing I was sufficiently provided with this world's goods to be able to do so in comfort. The climate is capitivating, her people are hospitable and devoid of that codfish aristocracy that to me is detestable, and there is an atmosphere of liberality and freedom of thought that is commendable, and the soil is capable of producing almost anything that grows anywhere. And in parenthesis I want to remark that it is irrigation that makes California. The soil is no better than ours, perhaps not as good, but the immense systems of irrigation ditches and canals have made the once barren wastes of sandy land into veritable gardens, where orchards of deciduous and other fruits, as well as all kinds of grain and vegetables, are sure crops. There are no failures where there is water. And if we can secure irrigation in Holt county, and it seems to be pretty well demonstrated that it can be done, no man will have occasion to seek a home elsewhere, because we have all the elements for wealth, and what is paramount to all else health, right here. So let us not be discouraged, but keep in view the fact that what has been done in California and other places where the rainfall is insufficient can be done here. If we can bring this about we will all be rich and there will be no grounds for complaint about Holt county and Northern Nebraska.

But about my trip. I bought a ticket over the Santa Fe, and accompanied a party that started from Ewing, consisting of G. W. French, W. F. French, Irve French and wife, Mrs. O. W. Farrell and two children, Link Shannon, wife and three children and his father and mother, C. These wife and three children. We had a tourist car all to ourselves, and the trip was very enjoyable indeed; at least to the writer. The tourist car is the way to travel on one of these long journeys, for somehow the Pullman appears stiff and precise, while the tourist car is democratic and you feel more at ease. With a party of acquaintances there is no formality, and doing your own cooking on the car makes the expense very moderate. The Santa Fe route is a good one this time of year, as the cold weather and storms are avoided. Of course there is not much to see of an agreeable nature through Arizona and New Mexico. It is desert all the time until you cross the Mjaya desert in California. Then all at once you come out of the mountains into what seems like Paradise. You have seen so much God-forsaken barren waste for the past three days that the change strikes you as most wonderful. From sand, cactus and grass wood to roses, orange groves and beautiful foliage of all kinds forces the contrast depicted by the word pictures so often painted of hell and heaven. Feelings of disgust are supplanted by feelings of ecstasy and admiration. It is really a good thing for California that so much poor country must be passed over to reach one of so much beauty and grandeur. Our car was switched off at the beautiful city of Madera, the county seat of Madera county, at about 4 o'clock on Madera morning, January 21st. We were all up to see the sun rise, and as even

that event was something novel to me I was filled with anticipation. But what a sunrise! It had rained the night before, and the atmosphere was laden with something that smelled and tasted good. It was warm and balmy like a May morning in Nebraska. We soon vacated the car that had been a comfortable home for us for nearly a week, and the pleasant associations connected with it made us just a little regretful after all. It looked so homelike. A first-class breakfast at the commodious Yosemite hotel and then a tramp around town made all feel better, although Mrs. Farrell, whose husband was back in Nebraska attending to E. E. and M. V. business at Ewing, looked a feeling of homesickness even if she did not express it. But all in all we were a jolly party.

The main object of most of the party was to buy a home in California, and they were induced to make the trip by W. F. French, representing the Howard and Wilson Colony company. On Monday, in company with Mr. Ogston, the local secretary, I examined the lands. In some respects I was disappointed. There was not as much improvements made as I expected. It was a newer country than I looked for. But when I considered that less than three years had elapsed since the first tree was planted, and the irrigating canal had only recently been completed, and I compared the country that had been developed with it, together with prices, etc., I concluded that if a man wanted to invest in California this lay-out was about right and perhaps as good as could be found. However I did not reach this conclusion until I had visited north to San Francisco and south to Los Angeles. Land \$800 to \$2,000 per acre at other places (improved of course) and here it appeared equally as good and could be had unimproved at \$60 to \$80, and planted, (three years in the spring) at from \$140 to \$200. The Shannons, French and Thede bought in colony number 2, four miles from Madera, at \$65 per acre, and were building houses and going to work with smiles on their faces and their sleeves rolled up. Their land has been cultivated for years, and they are putting in crops of grain and vegetables, and with the aid of their cows and chickens expect to make expenses from the start. No doubt they will. I finally bought a ten-acre tract in colony number one, one and a half miles from town, which is planted to prunes, peaches, pears and raisins. I have contracted to have some of the prunes replaced with orange, cherry, walnut, lemon, fig, almond, palm umbrella, cypress and other trees, and sometime in the dim future I may have an attractive little "farm" in California. It cost, or will when paid for, \$1,600. Perhaps it was a foolish speculation, but if it is it is not the first one I ever made. It does not appear to me that it can be worth any less, and to judge from the history of other portions of the state that are already made and where lands are selling for so very much more, it looks as though it would be a good investment. Madera is a rattling good town of 2,000 population, nicely located, and it strikes me as a bright future, if her people are the right brand, and they appear to be. The town needs a little more vigorous blood and will probably get it as it is attracting considerable attention.

My visit at San Francisco and Oakland was most enjoyable. Mr. W. G. Palmanteer, formerly president of the First National bank of O'Neill, insisted on my stopping with him, and while it is against a long established rule of mine I was induced to acquiesce, and I am very glad that I did, as Pal and his estimable wife made me feel perfectly at home, and without any ostentatious attempt to do so made my stay of three days with them very pleasant, and feel I under obligations for the courtesies so freely extended. Mr. Palmanteer's long residence in California and his position as manager of one of the largest banks in the state, gives him an extended acquaintance and he was able to show me all that could be seen in that limited time. We visited some of the finest suburban residences around Oakland, and I thought I had never seen flowers and plants before. I could fill your paper with accounts and descriptions, but must desist, as I promised to be brief and say but little of California. (Guess I have proven myself a prevaricator already.) We were on the go all the time, and I was always exclaiming, "Say, if my wife could see those plants and flowers she would go crazy." It was a poem all the time. The evidences of stability in and around Oakland are many, and I believe it is really the best part of the state to bank on. I was pleased to note that Mr. Palmanteer occupied a position clear at the top in financial circles. The Central Bank has a capital of \$1,000,000, deposits of \$1,500,000, and elegantly and modernly fitted quarters second to none in the state. To look after so vast an institution as this surely reflects credit on our former townsmen. Mr. Palmanteer, his cashier Mr. Yates (by the way one of the finest and most companionable men I have seen in many a day) and myself visited the Midwinter Fair on opening day, January 27. There was an immense crowd, the displays and buildings are fine, and altogether the enterprise is a success and reflects great credit on San Francisco and California. On this day I caught my first glimpse of the Pacific ocean from the Cliff house out to the beautiful Golden Gate. Of Golden Gate park, Sutro park, the Chinamen quarters and other interesting things I must not attempt to speak.

I wanted to visit our old and respected fellow townsmen, Michael Cavanaugh, but really had no time. He lives 70 miles from Oakland, and as my leave of absence was limited I couldn't get there. I am satisfied friend Cavanaugh made the greatest deal of his life, and has a home good enough for anyone. He made \$10,000 slick and clean, in the exchange. It was a lucky strike, and no one but Mike would have tumbled onto it. On my return south I met D. L. Cramer and O. W. Farrell at Madera. They had just come from Ewing. Mr. Farrell had come to stay, and as he is a reliable railroad man, worthy and well qualified, no doubt by this time has secured a position. He and his estimable wife will always have my best wishes for success and happiness. Cramer came to see the country, so he and I went to Los Angeles. Before I left home Barney Ryan told me he had a brother living at Los Angeles, so we proceeded to look him up. Inquiring for William A. Ryan we were directed to the court-house, and comfortably ensconced in the district attorney's office we found a pleasant appearing gentleman, with a sedate and solemn countenance, who confessed to the cognomen of Ryan. Introducing ourselves as pilgrims from cold Nebraska we were warmly greeted. After showing us over the most magnificent court-house we have ever seen, taking in the grand view from the tower with the rest, the Judge (that is what everyone calls him) proceeded to show us around town a little. And say! Well, guess we hadn't better say very much about it. Only this: That Judge Ryan knows everybody and every place in Los Angeles and environs, and he seemed imbued with the idea that he must make Cramer and I as familiar with people, places and things generally as he was, and if he did not succeed it is not his fault by any means. We kept our skates on all the time, night and day, although we had to get them sharpened occasionally in order to keep up with the procession. Judge Ryan appears to be one of the most popular men in the city with all classes, occupies a position that requires ability and sagacity, is a prince of good fellows, and the future before him is indeed bright. Cramer and I will never forget his kindness to us, and there is nothing too good in this world that we do not wish him.

Of our trip to Pomona, Pasadena, Riverside, the mountains, the beach at Santa Monica, the old friends we met, the many new ones we made, the sights we saw, the opportunities we improved, those we didn't, etc., we will not mention. I like the Los Angeles country generally. It is a paradise. The only objection we would have to living there is that a fellow would have to die sometime. I had a Premier camera with me, carried it everywhere, took eight dozen snap shots in the various localities, and when Grady and I get the plates all developed will have a gallery of which I can talk for a few days at least. I stopped one day at El Paso, Tex., and visited Juarez, Mex., where I got some twenty "snaps" that make interesting pictures. Notwithstanding I had an enjoyable trip, I was glad to get home again and put on the harness in Uncle Sam's service. Excuse "brevity." Yours, W. D. M.

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