

EL CAJON.

This Valley is situated 15 miles northeast of San Diego. It is one of the largest and richest valleys in the County. Population about 1,000. It is filling up rapidly with the best class of people. Three lines of telephone connect the Valley with the City. The Cajon has over 15,000 acres of valley land, and nearly as much more mesa and hill land, adapted to the vine. The total area of the rancho is 57,000 acres. Of the valley land, there were last season about 2,000 acres in fruit trees and over 2,500 acres in raisin grape vines. The acreage in vines and fruits will be more than doubled this season. The soil in this Valley varies from bright red to chocolate color, showing the presence of oxide of iron, which gives the color and flavor to fruits. It is composed of a succession of deposits from sea water, containing calcareous matter, being, in fact, a red marl. A peculiarity of this soil has been noted by Prof. White, of the State Agricultural College of Ohio, who found that soil taken from the bottom of wells

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in the Valley will produce a ranker growth of vegetation than the top soil, showing that the nourishment is more than sufficient where the roots strike down for water. The water supply is abundant, wells reaching it in from 5 to 25 feet in any part of the Valley.

Among the largest owners of orchards and vineyards in this Valley are Maj. Levi Chase, Geo. A. Cowles, H. P. McKoon, Uri Hill, A. W. Hawley, M. Sherman, J. M. Asher, and B. P. Hill. There are several other large places whose owners have so lately purchased there that we cannot readily name them. A great deal of the planting is of recent date. The older orchards and vineyards now in bearing produce the very finest flavored fruits, showing a range of profitable production embracing the Orange, Olive, Raisin and Table Grape, Fig, Apricot, Peach, French Prune, Japanese Persimmon, Apple, Pear, and all the small fruits. Mr. Cowles has 40 "experimental" acres, containing nearly every variety of fruit and nut trees grown on this coast for profit, besides many ornamental trees and plants. He has 31 varieties of Apples, 22 of Pears, 19 of Peaches, 9 of Apricots, 10 of Plums, and 8 of Japanese Persimmons. There are 32 varieties of vines on his place. He cultivates without irrigation. Should any irrigation be necessary, he says 40 acres could be thoroughly irrigated from a well 20 feet deep, with a 16-foot windmill. The cultivation of the Raisin Grape is very largely carried on by Mr. Cowles, and his Raisins stand higher than any other packing in California, upon the authority of Wm. T. Coleman & Co. and A. Lusk & Co., of San Francisco, and Charles A. Wetmore, Chief Viticultural Commissioner of the State. They are pronounced by the leading New York importers superior to the very choicest Dehesias of Spain. In 1876 Maj. Levi Chase began an experimental orchard on his 100-acre tract, planting the different kinds of fruit trees and grape vines, increasing his planting from year to year up to last year. His trees include the Orange (of which he has 1,200), Lemon, Lime, Loquat, Peach, Apricot, Nectarine, Apple (700 trees of many varieties), Pear (many varieties), Quince, Cherry, Plum, French and German Prunes, English Walnut and Almond. Of vines he has planted principally the White Muscat of Alexandria for Raisins, but has all the finest varieties of the imported Table Grape. With all his fruit trees he has been remarkably successful, with the exception of the Cherry, Plum, and Almond. The Cherry and Plum made good growth of tree, but bore no fruit. The Almond bore very little, and he has cut the trees

back and grafted them into French Prunes. The Oranges and all the citrus fruits are of superior quality. His Apples and Pears are not excelled by any product of the coast, and his Peaches cannot be beaten anywhere. His only trouble with the Pear was the tendency to overbearing, showing the great richness of the soil. His grape vines have all done remarkably well. Major Chase informs us that he has never irrigated his vineyard at any time, and has never but in one year seen any necessity for irrigation. In that year the Grapes were a good crop, but rather smaller in size than they should be. All of the irrigation that he has ever employed on his 100-acre place has been taken from one surface well, striking the water at a depth of 16 feet. Major Chase has been packing about 600 boxes of Raisins per season. His pack will be largely increased as his vines come into bearing. With Raisins his success has been all that could be desired, his pack being of the very choicest quality. We have spoken at some length of these two places in the Cajon Valley, because of their representative character. The proprietors, being gentlemen of ample means, have prosecuted their experimental planting with thoroughness, and the results they have attained are of the greatest value to the entire fruit and vine growing interest of our section.

The Cajon for years past has been the largest wheat-producing valley of the County, this fact being due to the exceptionally fine crops obtained in good years and its nearness of access to the City. Grain farming is now, however, gradually giving way to vine and fruit growing. It is the opinion of Major Chase, backed by very substantial evidence, that the occasional failures of the wheat crop in this Valley in dry years might have been entirely avoided by thorough, deep plowing and cultivation of the soil, instead of the mere surface "scratching" that has been in vogue. On his own tract planted in grain, which he has regularly *plowed* since 1870, he has never had a failure of crop.

The climate of the Cajon is renowned for its salubrity, and its charming surroundings and picturesque scenery make it peculiarly desirable for residence.

The El Cajon Valley Company have laid out their 3,000-acre tract with streets and avenues, and given it the name of Lakeside. Near the center of the tract is the beautiful little sheet of water known as Linda Lake. Near the lake shore, a fine hotel (spoken of in previous pages) has been erected, and Lakeside will be one of the

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most attractive suburban points near San Diego. The Pacific Coast Land Bureau have laid off another town site near the center of the Valley, called Cajon; while still another new town called Cowleston has been started and is going ahead rapidly. With the railroad connection so soon to be made with the City, the Cajon will be brought within half or three-quarters of an hour's trip from town, and those who desire a delightful and quiet suburban residence may enjoy it without interference with their daily business in the City. At all of the points named in the Valley there are good hotel accommodations, and in the country around there is game in abundance for the sportsman. There are good public school facilities, and there is a Presbyterian church, with settled pastor. Wherever irrigation is required it can be supplied by the San Diego Flume Company, whose aqueduct comes into San Diego *via* the Cajon. Fruit lands in El Cajon are rated at \$50 to \$150 per acre, according to location, size of tract, etc.