

## IMPRESSIONS OF FAIR OAKS, SUBURB OF SACRAMENTO, CAL.\*

A COMPARISON WITH OTHER PARTS OF CALIFORNIA.

Fair Oaks, July 15, 1897.

James W. Wilson, Business Manager:

Dear Sir: You see I have returned to Fair Oaks after my trip south and to say that I am glad to get back expresses it mildly. The thermometer at Fresno, the day I was there stood at 119 degrees in the shade at five o'clock p. m., and similar conditions prevailed during my whole trip in the south. I see by the papers that you have had a little warm weather in Chicago but I don't believe it will compare with that. Imagine my surprise and delight, therefore, to find it as cool and delightful at Fair Oaks as it was when we left. At no time during my stay has the thermometer been above 75 degrees here, and the air is deliciously invigorating and full of ozone, not to mention the perfume of the oleander and tulip trees, now in full bloom. It certainly makes one appreciate the difference between our climate and this to see the plants we cherish so tenderly at home growing in all their luxuriance out of doors the year round.

Our first impressions of Fair Oaks were as pleasant as possible. The first installment of the big excursion, about seventy-five people altogether, started from the Western Hotel, Sacramento in great barges or tallyhos, as they call them out here, with four horses each. We rolled merrily

\*So many of our readers are now inquiring about California, and so many are already interested in Fair Oaks that we do not hesitate to publish this letter from one of our recent excursionists.  
J. W. W.

through the wheat fields and stretches of live oak and white oak forest till we came to the big gates with the emblem of a heart over them, and knew we had arrived at the beautiful spot we had looked forward to, some of us, for several months.

The horses pricked up their ears and quickened their pace but it was still some distance to the hotel and we had a chance to appreciate the size of Fair Oaks as we rolled along beside oak groves, newly planted orchards, looking like rows of canes stuck in the ground, and the last year's planting already showing six feet of new growth, in many cases covered with bright green foliage. Before long we caught sight of the hotel through the trees and drove up in fine style to find our host, Dr. Orr, and his hospitable wife, together with several of the most charming young ladies of Fair Oaks standing on the veranda to greet us. The flower beds and gravel walks in front of the hotel, laid out in the shape of a gigantic heart, proclaimed once more that we had reached the Heart of California and our own hearts beat high in expectation at the beautiful prospect as we looked from the hotel steps over the low tree tops to the edge of the bluffs and then across the river to the wide expanse of vineyard and orchard as far as the eye could reach, from the snow-capped mountains on the east to the western horizon, where the golden rays of the setting sun filled the air with its glorious effulgence.

Some of the poets and artists in the party were willing to live on the scenery alone; but we, more ordinary mortals, were delighted to hear the sound of the supper bell and after washing up, to be ushered into the long low dining room and to see the magnificent fruit pieces on all the tables. Peaches, plums, prunes, nectarines, figs, apricots, pears, lemons, limes and a few green oranges, massed in profusion made as beautiful a table decoration as I have ever seen and represented at the same time the resources of Fair Oaks. The hotel is to be congratulated on its new management. Everything is clean and comfortable, the cooking is first-class and while we do not look for elegance we find solid comfort which is better.

A morning drive through the colony and through Orangeville surprised all the members of our party, first at the progress made in Fair Oaks in a short two years, and second, at the wonderful development of fruits and orchards which has been brought about in the seven years of successful operation at Orangevale. We are all satisfied beyond question that this country is the natural home of the orange, lemon and olive and that the deciduous fruits and nuts are not excelled by any place in California.

I will reserve for another letter an account of my examination of the splendid water system and a romance of Fair Oaks which has just come under my observation. The regular stage runs to meet the train at Salisbury—a mile and a half away and I don't want to miss it, so good bye.

A. G. Walker.