

CALIFORNIAN LETTER

By Col. Randall, Author of 'Maryland, My Maryland!'

(Catholic Columbian)

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Los Angeles is geographically situated on a river of the same name, but, for about six months in the year, the river is entirely dry. In the rainy season, it is a narrow and shallow stream. There are 200,000 people in the city, one-fourth Catholics. In the early days, Western settlers brought A.P.A. bigotry and persecution here. Now, toleration reigns and the dissenting brethren are divided up into all sorts of isms. Christian Science gets an overflow of Protestant doubters. Every kind of witchcraft and fortune-telling abounds. Cranks are in tents, expounding the Book of Revelation and imitating the mad dervishes of the Orient. The town is closed tight against liquor-drinking on Sunday and the vaudeville shows are wide open on Sunday night. Race suicide, divorce and social tragedies prevail, as in other places, and many men have grown rich and miserably at the same time. As a tourist and convention city it is matchless. It can absorb 30,000 strangers in a vast multitude of hotels, of every grade, from the first class to the last, and in boarding houses innumerable. Hotels are still building. So are great edifices and private palaces. Property values have soared beyond belief and poor folks who held on to their city lots have grown opulent. Other men have lost their money. One friend of mine refused a mine, offered to him for a few thousand dollars, which the Rothschilds gave \$12,000,000 for within a year. Another friend made \$250,000 in town lot speculations and lost it in other ventures. Restaurants are everywhere, of all kinds and prices. "You pay your money and take your choice." An excellent meal can be obtained for 25 cents. It required 30 years to cut down and grade the heights on one side of the city, which are now crowned with hotels and residences. High mountains are round about, one with a covering of snow. The street cars, electric, run in all directions through the city and to the sea and the mountain suburbs. Carriages are few and automobiles plentiful. Two grand streets, shopping and business centres, would, for variety and splendor, be a credit to Paris or New York. One of them is as brilliantly illuminated as your famous Columbus thoroughfare at night. Woman's Clubs are numerous and, even here, there are three chapters of the Daughters of the Confederacy. I, by invitation, addressed them both—the Ebell Club and Mrs. Stephens' Confederate Daughters—and they, emotionally, declared that I should settle in the City of the Angels. Madame Modjeska is the distinguished lady favorite and Joseph Scott, English-born, but more Californian than the Californians, is the most popular. He is a Knight of Columbus grand knight, an eminent lawyer, everybody's friend, a near approach to perpetual motion and altogether fascinating. A once popular humorist is now in the city, a Baptist preacher. Here, too, are Frank Pixley, the famous comic opera author and Charles Lummis, who dresses like a cow-boy and writes like a classic. He is an authority on all Pacific coast subjects, the devoted friend of the Indians and a rare and original genius. Here, too, engaged on the noted and enterprising Times newspaper are Mrs. Louise George, grand-niece of the once celebrated Felix Grundy, of Tennessee, and John S. McGroarty, whose poems on Pacific coast wonders are giving him national as well as local fame. Bishop Conaty has performed prodigies here in extending the power and influence of the Church. His administration is not only notable for the building of new churches, convents and schools and supplying the spiritual needs of various nationalities united in the true faith, but in conversions and the dispersal of prejudice. He comes or is called to the front in many civic functions. He is an ardent believer in the potentialities of this Pacific coast country and especially that part of it in his ecclesiastical jurisdiction. He is a big man, every way, full of zeal, apostolic and practical with business sense. He knows how to look after the divine side of the Church and yet take care of its human side. He appreciates the contemplative, the ascetic and the mystical, without neglecting the material and progressive element. He has invited here the Benedictines, the Franciscans and the Lazarists, along with several Brotherhoods and female orders of nuns. He fosters the 5,000 Basques who required a pastor, and he loves the Indian remnant of the Missions. He is priest and financier, prelate and diplomatist. I might, with entire accuracy, repeat these words of

Archbishop Montgomery, of San Francisco, who, on a larger field, is all that a genuine prince of the Church should be as a man of God in authority and a patriot in action. In the assembling of nationalities, of Europe, Asia and America in this remarkable city and region, the missionary spirit has full scope. My experience, though brief, in this quarter, convinces me that there are many Protestants who have turned into dark channels, while seeking the light, and that a very large number have evolved into deism, infidelity, rationalism and agnosticism. Many deny the fundamental principles of Christianity and many would love and join the Catholic Church if their ignorance of it and prejudice against it were dissolved.

Patriotically United

Some of the reasons why this place, Los Angeles, is magnetic may be found outside its climate, productions and accommodations. One feature is the union of all residents of a permanent character in advertising and lauding it. They not only present one of the cleanest and most splendid of cities, but one full of all kind of diversion. Inside and outside the municipality, on the mountain range, in the valleys, by the sea and in mid-ocean, there are pleasure-places easily reached by rail or steamboat. When some person from the East—that almost boundless other part of the Union—complains that the climate is too monotonously fine, the reply is: "You would not be content in heaven." If one speaks of the marvels of Florida, the answer is that it has the curse of mosquitoes in the Summer time. A friend of mine, after visiting Palm Beach, in Florida, having also visited the show places of Europe and Southern California, gave the prize of excellence to the region around Lake Worth, Florida; but even Mr. Flagler has not been able to create a Los Angeles. Many rich people, East and West, prefer the country around Aiken and Augusta, as winter resorts to Florida and California. So, as there are many people of many minds, it is an all round good thing that, in their own Republic they can find different places to suit their peculiar predilections and varied tastes.

By the Sea

With Mr. F. E. Kuhn, of Nashville, I went on the electric cars to Casa Monica. We were rapidly whirled along the beautiful residence part of Los Angeles and then, for some seventeen miles, on either side were successions of ranches, great and small, with their harvesting wheat fields, their myriad of walnut, olive, orange and lemon groves, their fields of alfalfa and sugar beets. Then we reach the Pacific Ocean and skirt its beach for miles. Hundreds of persons abide here in cottages and health-seekers in tents. At Casa Monica there are convents, schools, churches and hotels. There are bathing beaches and pools, dancing halls, restaurants and stores. From the long pier, big and little fish are caught. The Ocean breeze is cool, in the day time and cold at night. You are a little remote from the city and its unending noise, but can reach it speedily. Mr. Maguire, superintendent of the Queen and Crescent route, who came down here with some of his family, and the good Father Tobin who is his pastor at Chattanooga, says that he never saw street cars so rapidly run. We must have travelled at the rate of fifty miles an hour, and, on some trains, there are no stops between stations. These cars run to many points of interest, by the bright hillside and by the never-resting sea.

San Juan Capistrano.

The, in some respects, most interesting trip taken by the Knights of Columbus was to San Juan Capistrano, 60 miles away, on the Santa Fe railway. All of the described panorama of irrigated land was beheld on a large scale. The station house at Capistrano is built in the Spanish style. Around about are the bare, mysterious mountains. A few steps from the station are the ruins of the old mission church and monastery partially destroyed by earthquake in 1812. The adobe and brick front of the edifice, with much of the side-walls, is wholly gone, leaving the apse, the altar foundation and the cloisters almost intact. The belfry remains and the old bells are in their accustomed position. The niches over the altar are vacant, deserted by saintly images, and swallows build their nests in the crevices. The sacristy, the library and the confessionals are in surviving paths. A chapel has been located in one apartment, with some of the old altar equipment and a number of richly adorned old vestments, still in use. The quaint devices for sounding Easter bells or Good Friday clapping substitutes are there. The old, dim Stations of the Cross are on the walls. Battered, but distinct in feature and coloring, the old images of the Blessed Virgin, Saints Mary Magdalen, Juan of

Capistrano and Dominic are newly shrined. In the patio or courtyard, once used for the meditation or recreation of the Sons of St. Francis and Father Junipero Serra, tables were spread and a Spanish-Indian barbecue provided ample food and drink for 2,000 visitors. Two brass bands, one of Indian boys and the other of American lads from a San Francisco college, alternately played popular airs. Bishop Conaty delivered a semi-historic sermon, reciting eloquently the glories of the Franciscan missions and the invaluable aid they gave to those who were to follow them in a different civilization, but the same religion. There were Japanese sword and wrestling exhibitions, Mexican lasso exercises, Indian horsemanship and the like. The sun was a little warm, the dust was not agreeable, but the breeze was refreshing. Everybody was delighted and all confessed that they had passed one of the most memorable days of their lives. The old Franciscans repose under mission altars or in mountain tops or valleys over the world, but other Franciscans have taken their places and adjusted themselves to modern habits while preserving the old discipline and the old faith. Some of the descendants of the Mission Indians remain and preserve the faith of their ancestors. Some of them were at Capistrano and one rang the Angelus on the old bells at noon, while we were there. Many men and women had travelled thousands of miles to behold this spectacle and to see the marvels of the City of the Angels, but none regretted the time and expense involved. On the contrary, they were thankful that such scenes were not missed by absence. The various publications about the Pacific Coast are as a rule, uncommonly veracious. If anything, many of us who had read them far away and hardly expected ever to become personally in contact with them, cheerfully admit that the literature sent out is not exaggerated and that the imagination does not equal the reality. But if a man is doing well in, let us say, Ohio, Georgia, New York or Massachusetts, he had better be content with letting well enough alone. In spite of the ethical tendency of the California people, they are among the sharpest business folks in the world and the transported Yankee, long settled here, can match the Jewish brother in trade. They say that the Chinaman will stick to his contract, while the Japanese are unreliable, cunning and hard to keep in place. In some of the fine houses, the servants are handsome, quiet Japanese boys. They will not remain long in any household, but roam from place to place, watching everything and learning everything. If they be permitted to enter this region at will by the thousands, they may eventually make even the "Yankees" and the Jews play second fiddle, and then will come a war of races and then perhaps a war with Japan that will be no child's play, as happened with the Spaniards at Santiago and Manila.

New England Next Year

I have met here some friends whom I had parted from more than twenty years ago, and whom I never expected to meet on earth again. I have made some very pleasant acquaintances among both sexes and experienced from them most agreeable attentions. The people here, in the mass, made the Knights of Columbus welcome, but one gathering after another assembles here and it will soon be the turn of some other very different organization to have pretty much the same reception. As the next meeting of the K. of C. will be at New Haven, Conn., I may, if alive, go there, next year, and run down to Salem Mass., and see the portraits of my great grandfather and great grandmother, which are still in their accustomed place on the walls of their manorial home, which is now the hall of the Y.M.C.A. These great grandparents were English Episcopalians. Their only son married my grandmother, a French woman, whose family had been driven out of Nova Scotia by the British. This grandmother was a faithful Catholic and that is the way I got into the True Fold, thanks be to God! I was specially pleased to meet Rev. J. L. Laubacher, of Oxnard, California, who evidently reads the Columbian, and sought me out under the walls of Capistrano, to take me by the hand on that account. What a singular power the press has. It is a pity that a larger number of our brethren do not properly appreciate the Catholic papers and sustain them with a more liberal and generous spirit. Bishop Conaty recognizes that fact and mightily helps "The Tidings" an excellent paper published in Los Angeles.

The Clergy

St. Vibiana's Cathedral is a large substantial church, with little adornment. It is to be replaced, in another part of the town by a magnificent struc-

ture. I went to the pontifical High Mass on Pentecost Sunday. At New Orleans and Los Angeles, the mixed, choir of men and women remains, by some dispensation, presumably. The Bishop announced that the Vicar-General, Father Harnett, had been appointed a member of the Pope's household and hence became a Monsignor. The priests of Los Angeles emulate the zeal of their prelates. A priest of one of the Orders, Father Meyer, died, some years ago, and it is said that so great was the concourse following his remains to the cemetery, six miles away, that when the head of the column reached the burial place the rear of the procession was still in the city limit.

To the Golden Gates

At 4 o'clock p.m., on Pentecost Sunday, I started for San Francisco, on the Southern Pacific train. We traversed the garden lands and fruit orchards of the city. For nearly 500 miles the valleys were resplendent with grain harvests and fruit and vegetable groves. The mountain ranges continued all of the way. At Ventura we saw lima bean fields that supply a large part of the continent. At Oxnard sugar beets prevail agriculturally and here too is established one of the greatest of sugar mills. Many Japanese are employed, and at this station, a throng of these pugnacious Orientals assembled to give a parting salute to some of their people who were going to fight the Russians. They uttered strange cries and waved American and Japanese flags. A little this side of Santa Barbara we ran, for many miles along the ocean coast, veiled in fog, which lasted until Monday morning. Giant eucalyptus trees are planted in rows to keep the wind from the sea partially in check for fruit protection. Santa Barbara has the best preserved of all the old mission churches and it is still in use for holy services. It is a picturesque town much frequented by tourists and has one of the grandest hotels in the State. As we left the orange and lemon region, the trees became more lusty and I was glad to see again gigantic live oaks. The trade wind and fog from the Pacific were chilly and, at night, down came our car windows and I was glad to have my overcoat along. Near San Francisco the creeks and rivers had still some energetic water flow. St. Jose, on this route is a fine populous city. Nearing San Francisco, one side was a vast sand plain, while, on the other side vegetation was bountiful. Several villages, thriving and charming, dotted the suburbs. A great cemetery comes into view. Busy manufacturing centres are clustered on the verge of the town, and presently, with bare mountains frowning down upon it but kissed by sunlight, we enter the union station where the great metropolis sits majestically with its Golden Gates welcoming the commerce of the world. Mr. Thomas A. Connelly, the accomplished and able editor of "The Monitor," welcomed me, after a parting seventeen years ago, in Baltimore, where we had connection with The Mirror. I was pleased to see that the years had dealt gently with him and that he was still youthful looking and kind and modest as ever. He is one of the most experienced and talented of Catholic editors, married to a model lady and the father of eight handsome and bright children. In the best days of old Rome a man like him would have been made rich and ennobled. He is a gentleman of faith, principle and chivalry. Well would it be for the world if the majority were like him.

JAMES R. RANDALL.

While last year a new high standard was set in connection with the quality of the entertainment provided for the pleasure seekers in front of the grand stand at the Winnipeg exhibition, the list of attractions which will be provided at this year's big fair on July 20 to 28 will be of an even higher order. The association recognizes the great educative influence this branch of the fair possesses and no expense is to be spared to make this one of the most enticing features of the annual festival.

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