

THE RAILROAD OUTLOOK.

Terrible Damage by the storm—A Big Repair Job Ahead.

W. H. Atwater, Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express messenger, and W. W. Burgess, Postal Route Agent, who left here on the ill-fated train of Friday, February 13th, returned to town yesterday afternoon with the mail and express which went forward by that train. Mr. Atwater's experiences since leaving here have been exciting in the extreme, and will well bear narrating. It will be remembered that the train became blocked the same day she left here (Friday) on the Santa Margarita ranch, about three miles beyond the ranch house. Before the great storm of Sunday last, every one on board the train except Mr. Atwater had either made their way to the ranch house (Mr. O'Neil's) or gone forward to Fall Brook. Sunday morning Mr. Atwater attempted to reach Mr. O'Neil's, but found a great river of water between the train and the house, so he had to return to the train. He had had nothing to eat that day, as there was nothing on the train. A large number of gophers had taken refuge from the flood on the car-wheels, and Mr. Atwater killed a number of these to use in case it came to the worst. He stayed with the train throughout the day, Sunday. About twelve o'clock that night the track began to sink from the weight of the train, being undermined by water. Noticing this, Mr. Atwater got up steam and ran the train forward about a hundred yards to firmer ground; and there it still remains, with the track gone on either side for a mile or more. Monday morning the prospects for getting help from the ranch house were no better, as the river had not fallen; so Mr. Atwater cooked and ate a couple of gophers, and then set to work, and built a light raft. This he launched, and then taking off his clothes and tying over his head, pushed out from the bank, thinking to land on the other side without much difficulty. But he "reckoned without his host," for the raft was utterly unmanageable, and he was carried down stream at a fearful speed. He clung to his frail bark, however, and after being carried with the current about three miles, and passing over a couple of falls six feet or more high on the way, finally reached the opposite bank near the ranch house by catching a rope which was thrown to him by a sheep herder and being pulled ashore. It was late in the afternoon. However, before he reached Mr. O'Neil's and got a square meal, which was taken with a relief, as he had eaten nothing but the two gophers for two days. This adventure of Mr. Atwater's was as dangerous as it was thrilling, and one which he does not care to repeat again soon.

As soon as the river subsided sufficiently to be forded, Messrs. Atwater and Burgess got the express and mail from the train and made their way to town as best they could, using hand-cars where possible, and arrived yesterday, as above stated.

Mr. Atwater's account of the condition of the California Southern Railroad is discouraging in the extreme. He says that several miles of track are entirely gone in the Santa Margarita Valley; in the vicinity of Corral de Luz station, at the north of Temecula Cañon, there is nothing left to show that a railroad ever ran there. What the damage is beyond Corral de Luz is not definitely known, but it must be immense. Bridges were washed down the Santa Margarita from the Temecula Cañon, Temecula, and one even came down from San Jacinto, forty miles distant. The banks of the stream are strewn for miles with railroad timbers and telegraph poles, and some furniture also came down the stream.

An Italian made his way through Temecula Cañon on horseback before Mr. Atwater left Santa Margarita, and from him he learned that about all of the bridges and a large portion of the track, and practically the whole of the telegraph line, were washed away in the Cañon.

Nothing certain is known of the state of the road the other side of Temecula Cañon; but that it has fared no better than other portions is evidenced by the bridges washing down the Santa Margarita from Temecula station and San Jacinto.

This is a deplorable state of affairs, and one that it will take long to mend. From Mr. Atwater's statement and from what we have learned from other sources, we are of the opinion that it will be at least three months before the road is open to travel. The expense to the Company will be very great, and it is doubtful whether a quarter of a million dollars will repair the damages wrought by the late terrific storm.

—A game of base ball was played on Lockington's square yesterday afternoon by a couple of picked nines. We did not get the score, as no remarkable playing was done, our base ballists being rather "rusty." The National game has not been played in this city before for over two years. Let the boys wake up, and indulge occasionally in athletic exercises. Don't all be dudes.

Whipple House corner Tenth and G streets.—Sunny Suite, with fire, suitable for three persons. Good Board. MRS. H. C. HART.

(For The Un...)

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