

An Interesting Letter.

NEWS OF OLD FRIENDS.

Mrs J. Clarke has received the following very interesting letter from her son, Mr J. M. Clarke, and has kindly placed the same at our disposal; -

SAN FRANCISCO, June 2.

We sailed from Yokohama just a month ago, and experienced a severe gale when two days from land. We had 60 saloon and 560 steerage passengers, so you can imagine the amount of sorrow and sea-sickness there was. The extent of damage done was two boats stove in, and we lost some deck cargo. For the remaining 17 days we enjoyed the voyage on the old City of Teking, arriving at Golden Gate, the entrance of San Francisco, on 20th May, and had considerable difficulty in landing, as Honolulu had plague. We just missed being quarantined. San Francisco is a large city, with fine parks, and some palatial residences, also boasting the best system of street trams in America. The living here is unique. We stay at the Grand Hotel, or rather sleep there, and have our meals anywhere. The city is full of restaurants, and quite a number of residents never have a meal at home, preferring to go to a well-furnished and a liberal tabled cafe. On looking up a directory, I happened on Mr K. F. Gray's address, and called there. Mrs Gray gave me quite an exciting welcome, and later I spent an evening there. Mr Gray is looking remarkably well. Mr Gray, sen., is working at the Iron Union Works, The old people do not take kindly to the change of home, and wish themselves back in Temuka again, but the family are quite Americanised, and N. Z. would be too slow for them. Forbie is in business in Iowa State, and Willie is managing for D. M. Osborne & Co., a large farm implement concern. Both are married. Two of the girls are yet at school, and the three elder ones are occupied. I was Willie's guest one afternoon. He has a nice home, and I think is now doing well, but from their account they did not find things all lavender after their emigration. I have yet to see them before leaving for the East. It will probably be to-morrow, Sunday, as we leave on Tuesday for Chicago. They would like Mr Twomey, Mr Russell, and other friends to know of their welfare. From the Grays I heard that Mr Martin Melvin had been here on his return from Alaska, but he left before he intended, if not for New Zealand, probably for the new gold rush at Cape Nome, as people are flocking there.

May 25.

We left for Yosemite Valley, one of the finest valleys in America, leaving at 5 p.m. Here we had our first ride in a Pullman Palace car. You know you are travelling on these trains — fancy sleeping at the rate of 50 miles an hour—but the coaching is slow, seventy miles takes 18 hours, but it is hilly country. We

stayed five days in the mountains, and drove through the big tree of Mariposa Grove, returning to San Francisco yesterday. News has just been received tonight of the holding up of three stage coaches and 300 dollars collected by two masked and armed men from the passengers . These are the coaches which we used to reach the Yosemite and returned in yesterday. Fancy this in an enlightened and settled country like California. I was sorry they did not come along yesterday. I would willingly sacrifice my old watch for the experience, but some of our party would not pass through so cheap. We are leaving for New York on Tuesday, visiting Chicago, Salt Lake City, Niagara Falls, and other places of interest en route. The total distance is 3330 miles, but we stay at Chicago three days, thus breaking the journey, which, however interesting, is wearying when travelling at 50 miles an hour for four days. We reach New York in about seven days, and sail for Liverpool on July 5th. We expect to reach London about the middle of July. Our party are all well.

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Writing from Canada, Mr J. M. Clarke, the well-known Mt. Cook guide, who is touring with Dr. Bell, says that they have been having a splendid time on the immense lakes and rivers in the north, and were about to wind up an interesting and eventful trip by “doing” the fabulously rich [rich?] silver mine of Cobart. They were then to proceed east and to England, spend a short time in the Indian Alps, and leave Europe in time to arrive in Wellington about the New Year.