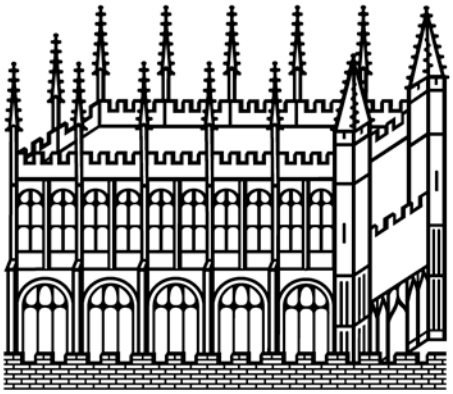


Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

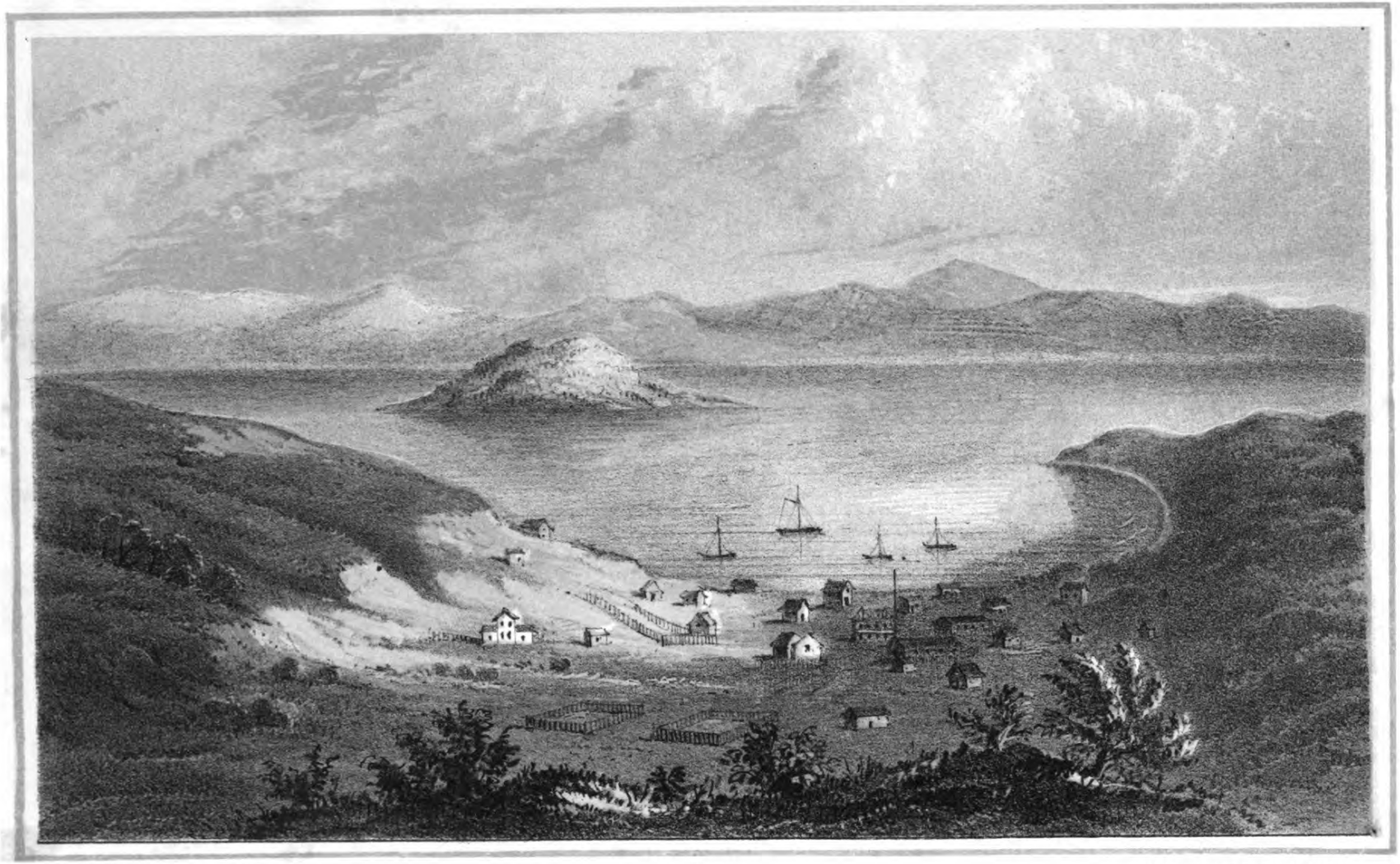
For more information see:

http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

50.1809.

323.12 A. 12



FROM A SKETCH by J.C. WARD. ESQ.

LITH. OF SARONY & MAJOR.

SAN FRANCISCO IN NOVEMBER, 1848.

ELDORADO;

OR,

ADVENTURES IN THE PATH OF EMPIRE;

COMPRISING

A VOYAGE TO CALIFORNIA, VIA PANAMA;
LIFE IN SAN FRANCISCO AND MONTEREY;
PICTURES OF THE GOLD REGION,
AND EXPERIENCES OF MEXICAN TRAVEL.

BY

BAYARD TAYLOR,

AUTHOR OF "VIEWS A-FOOT," "RHYMES OF TRAVEL," &c.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1850.

LONDON :
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.

TO

EDWARD F. BEALE, LIEUT., U. S. N.

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

WITH

THE AUTHOR'S ESTEEM AND AFFECTION.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

SAN FRANCISCO IN NOVEMBER, 1848,..... ..... Frontispiece
LOWER BAR, MOKELUMNE RIVER,.....Page 76
MONTEREY,..... ..... " 121
THE VOLCANO DIGGINGS,..... " 227

PREFACE.

This work requires but few words in the way of introduction. Though the author's purpose in visiting California was not to write a book, the circumstances of his journey seemed to impose it upon him as a duty, and all his observations were made with this end in view. The condition of California, during the latter half of the year 1849, was as transitory as it was marvellous; the records which were then made can never be made again. Seeing so much that was worthy of being described—so many curious and shifting phases of society—such examples of growth and progress, most wonderful in their first stage—in a word, the entire construction of a new and sovereign State, and the establishment of a great commercial metropolis on the Pacific coast—the author suffered no opportunity to pass, which might qualify him to preserve their fleeting images. As he was troubled by no dreams of gold, and took no part in exciting schemes of trade, he has hoped to give an impartial coloring to the picture. His impressions of California are those of one who went to see and write, and who sought

to do both faithfully. Whatever may be the faults of his work, he trusts this endeavor will be recognized.

A portion, only, of the pages which follow, were included in the original letters which appeared in the columns of the New-York Tribune. Many personal incidents, and pictures of society as it then existed in California, noted down at the time, have been added, and a new form given to the materials obtained. The account of the author's journey across Mexico, is now published for the first time. The Report of Hon. T. Butler King, on California Affairs, has been added as an Appendix, since many of the author's own statements receive from it additional confirmation, and since those wishing to learn something of California, will desire to possess it in a permanent form.

If, when a new order of things has been established and what has occurred is looked upon as a phenomenon of the Past, some of these pages should be preserved as a record and remembrance thereof, the object of this work will be fully accomplished.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.

From New York to Chagres—The Shores of Florida—Night in Havana Harbor—New Orleans—Chagres from the Sea 1

CHAPTER II.

Crossing the Isthmus—Quarrel with a Native—The Village of Gatun—Songs on the River—A Priest's Household—An Affectionate Boatman—Riding Through the Forests—We Reach Panama 11

CHAPTER III.

Scenes in Panama—Emigrants Arriving—Ruined Churches 26

CHAPTER IV.

The Pacific Coast of Mexico—Meal-time on the Steamer—A Midnight Call at Acapulco—The Mexican Coast—The Old Presidio of San Blas—Touching at Mazatlan 31

CHAPTER V.

The Coast of California—A Treacherous Coast—Harbor of San Diego—Narratives of Emigration—Gen. Villamil and his Colony—The Last Day of the Voyage—The Anchor Drops 42

CHAPTER VI.

First Impressions of San Francisco—Appearance of the Town—The New-Comer's Bewilderment—Indifferent Shopkeepers—Street Gold—People in Town 54

PAGE

CHAPTER VII.

To the San Joaquin, on Muleback—Scenery of the Inland—Ranches on the Road—Colonel Frémont—A Sonorian Comrade—Crossing the Coast Range—The Mosquitos and the Ferry..... 63

CHAPTER VIII.

Camp-Life and a Ride to the Diggings—Stockton—Rocky Mountain Men—Fiery Travel—the Mule's Heart—Arrival at the Diggings..... 76

CHAPTER IX.

The Diggings on Mokelumne River—Gold in the River-Bed—The Sonorians—The Process of Dry-Washing—Stories of the Gold-Diggers—Cost of our Visit... 84

CHAPTER X.

A Gallop to Stockton, with some Words on Law and Society—Appropriating a Horse—The Californian Horse—A Flogging Scene in Stockton—Law and Order—Moral Effect of Gold..... 94

CHAPTER XI.

A Night-Adventure in the Mountains—An Unceremonious Supper—The Trail Lost—Second View of San Francisco—Col. Frémont's Mine..... 104

CHAPTER XII.

San Francisco by Day and Night—The Streets after Breakfast—A Bull-Chase—The Afternoon—The Inside of a Gaming-Hell..... 112

CHAPTER XIII.

Incidents of a Walk to Monterey—Fisher's Ranche—Agriculture in California—A Mountain Panorama—Belated on the Road—The Gila Emigrants—Monterey at Last..... 121

CHAPTER XIV.

Life in Monterey—The Fleas Outwitted—The Growth of Monterey—Domestic Life and Society—Quiet of the Town—Population—National Feeling in California..... 135

PAGE

CHAPTER XV.

The State Organization of California—Steps toward Organization—The Convention Meets—The Question of Suffrage—Trouble about the Boundary—The Great Seal of the State—Distinguished Californians..... 146

CHAPTER XVI.

The Closing Scenes of the Convention—A Ball-Room Picture—Signing the Constitution—Gen. Riley and the Members—Moral of the Convention..... 159

CHAPTER XVII.

Shore and Forest—Swimming a Ravine—Dinner by the Sea-Shore—Geology and Indian Tradition—The Sea-Lions on Point Lobos..... 169

CHAPTER XVIII.

Old California—Its Missions and its Lands—Rise of the Missions—Their Downfall—Extent of the Mission Property—The Law for Granting Lands—Uncertain Boundary of Grants—Disposition of the Gold Land..... 179

CHAPTER XIX.

Return to San Francisco—Journey in an Ambulance—Night and Morning in the Mountains—Fording the Pajaro River—A Sirocco in San José—Night-Camp under the Oaks..... 192

CHAPTER XX.

San Francisco Again—Post Office Experiences—More Statistics of Growth—An Ague Case—Structure of the Post Office—Sounds on the Portico—Increase of Pay Needed..... 203

CHAPTER XXI.

Sacramento River and City—The Straits of Carquinez—New-York-of-the-Pacific—View of Sacramento City—Its Life and Business—Cattle of Experience—Sights at the Horse Market..... 214

PAGE

CHAPTER XXII.

Traveling on the Plains—Night, Rain and a Ranche—The Nevada at Sunset—Prairie and Wood Craft—Among the Hills—A Knot of Politicians 227

CHAPTER XXIII.

Journey to the Volcano—The Forest Trail—Camping in a Storm—The Volcanic Community—Appearance of the Extinct Craters—The Top of Polo's Peak—Return to the Mokelumne 239

ELDORADO.

CHAPTER I.

FROM NEW YORK TO CHAGRES.

On the 28th of June, 1849, I sailed from New York, in the U. S. Mail steamship Falcon, bound for Chagres. About eight months had elapsed since the tidings of an Eldorado in the West reached the Atlantic shore. The first eager rush of adventurers was over, yet there was no cessation to the marvellous reports, and thousands were only waiting a few further repetitions, to join the hordes of emigration. The departure of a steamer was still something of an incident. The piers and shipping were crowded with spectators, and as the Falcon moved from her moorings, many a cheer and shout of farewell followed her. The glow and excitement of adventure seemed to animate even those who remained behind, and as for our passengers, there was scarcely one who did not feel himself more or less a hero. The deck rang with songs, laughter and gaily-spoken anticipations of roving life and untold treasure, till we began to feel the heavy swell rolling inward from Sandy Hook.

Rough weather set in with the night, and for a day or two we were all in the same state of torpid misery. Sea-sickness—next to Death, the greatest leveler—could not, however, smooth down the striking contrasts of character exhibited among the pas-

sengers. Nothing less than a marvel like that of California could have brought into juxtaposition so many opposite types of human nature. We had an officer of the Navy, blunt, warm-hearted and jovial; a captain in the merchant service, intelligent and sturdily-tempered; Down-Easters, with sharp-set faces—men of the genuine stamp, who would be sure to fall on their feet wherever they might be thrown; quiet and sedate Spaniards; hilarious Germans; and some others whose precise character was more difficult to determine. Nothing was talked of but the land to which we were bound, nothing read but Frémont's Expedition, Emory's Report, or some work of Rocky Mountain travel.

After doubling Cape Hatteras, on the second day out, our monotonous life was varied by the discovery of a distant wreck. Captain Hartstein instantly turned the Falcon's head towards her, and after an hour's run we came up with her. The sea for some distance around was strewed with barrels, fragments of bulwarks, stanchions and broken spars. She was a schooner of a hundred tons, lying on her beam ends and water-logged. Her mainmast was gone, the foremast broken at the yard and the bowsprit snapped off and lying across her bows. The mass of spars and rigging drifted by her side, surging drearily on the heavy sea. Not a soul was aboard, and we made many conjectures as to their fate.

We lay to off Charleston the fourth night, waiting for the mails, which came on board in the morning with a few forlorn-looking passengers, sick and weary with twenty-four hours' tossing on the swells. In the afternoon we saw Tybee Lighthouse, through the veil of a misty shower. The sun set among the jagged piles of a broken thunder-cloud, and ribbon-like streaks of lightning darted all round the horizon. Our voyage now began to have a real in-

terest. With the next sunrise, we saw the Lighthouse of St. Augustine and ran down the shores of Florida, inside the Gulf Stream, and close to the edges of the banks of coral. The passengers clustered on the bow, sitting with their feet hanging over the guards, and talking of Ponce de Leon, De Soto, and the early Spanish adventurers. It was unanimously voted that the present days were as wonderful as those, and each individual emigrant entitled to equal credit for daring and enterprise. I found it delighful to sit all day leaning over the rails, watching the play of flying-fish, the floating of purple nautili on the water, or looking off to the level line of the shore. Behind a beach of white sand, half a mile in breadth and bordered by dense thickets, rise the interminable forests of live oak, mangrove and cypress. The monotony of this long extent of coast is only broken by an occasional lagoon, where the deep green of the woods comes down upon the lighter green of the coral shoals, or by the huts of wreckers and their trim, duck-like crafts, lying in the offings. The temperature was delicious, with a light, cloudy sky, and a breeze as soft and balmy as that of our northern May. The afternoons commenced with a heavy thunder-shower, after which the wind came fresh from the land, bringing us a rank vegetable odor from the cypress swamps.

On the morning of July 5th, I took a station on the wheel-house, to look out for Cuba. We had left Florida in the night, and the waves of the Gulf were around us. The sun, wheeling near the zenith, burned fiercely on the water. I glowed at my post, but not with his beam. I had reached the flaming boundary of the Tropics, and felt that the veil was lifting from an unknown world. The far rim of the horizon seemed as if it would never break into an uneven line. At last, towards noon, Capt. Hartstein handed me the ship's glass. I swept the southern dis-

tance, and discerned a single blue, conical peak rising from the water—the well-known Pan of Matanzas. As we drew nearer, the Iron Mountains—a rugged chain in the interior—rose, then the green hills along the coast, and finally the white beach and bluffs, the coral reefs and breakers. The shores were buried in vegetation. The fields of young sugar-cane ran along the slopes; palms waved from the hill-tops, and the country houses of planters lay deep in the valleys, nestling in orange groves. I drank in the land-wind—a combination of all tropical perfumes in one full breath of cool air—with an enjoyment verging on intoxication, while, point beyond point, we followed the enchanting coast.

We ran under the battlements of the Moro at six o'clock, and turning abruptly round the bluff of dark rock on which it is built, the magnificent harbor opened inland before us. To the right lay the city, with its terraced houses of all light and brilliant colors, its spacious public buildings, spires, and the quaint, half-oriental pile of its cathedral, in whose chancel repose the ashes of Christopher Columbus. The immense fortress of the Moro crowned the height on our left, the feathery heads of palm-trees peering above its massive, cream-colored walls. A part of the garrison were going through their evening exercises on the beach. Numberless boats skimmed about on the water, and a flat ferry-steamer, painted green and yellow, was on its way to the suburb of Regoles. Around the land-locked harbor, two miles in width, rose green hills, dotted with the country palaces of the nobility. Over all this charming view glowed the bright hues of a southern sunset.

On account of the cholera at New York, we were ordered up to the Quarantine ground and anchored beside the hulk of an old frigate, filled with yellow-fever patients. The Health Officers received the mail and ship's papers at the end of a long pole, and

dipped them in a bucket of vinegar. The boats which brought us water and vegetables were attended by Cuban soldiers, in white uniform, who guarded against all contact with us. Half-naked slaves, with the broad, coarse features of the natives of Congo, worked at the pump, but even they suffered the rope-end or plank which had touched our vessel, to drop in the water before they handled it. After sunset, the yellow-fever dead were buried and the bell of a cemetery on shore tolled mournfully at intervals. The steamer Isabel, and other American ships, were anchored beside us, and a lively conversation between the crews broke the stillness of the tropical moonlight resting on the water. Now and then they struck into songs, one taking up a new strain as the other ceased—in the style of the Venetian gondoliers, but with a different effect. "Tasso's echoes" are another thing from "the floating scow of old Virginny." The lights of the city gleamed at a distance, and over them the flaming beacon of the Moro. Tall palms were dimly seen on the nearer hills, and the damp night-air came heavy with the scent of cane-fields, orange groves and flowers.

A voyage across the Gulf is the perfection of sea-traveling. After a detention of eighteen hours at Havana, we ran under the frowning walls of the Moro, out on its sheet of brilliant blue water, specked with white-caps that leaped to a fresh north-easter. The waves are brighter, the sky softer and purer, the sunsets more mellow than on the Atlantic, and the heat, though ranging from 88° to 95° in the shade, is tempered by a steady and delicious breeze.

Before catching sight of land, our approach to the Mississippi was betrayed by the water. Changing to a deep, then a muddy green, which, even fifteen or twenty miles from shore, rolls its

stratum of fresh water over the bed of denser brine, it needed no soundings to tell of land ahead. The light on the South Pass was on our starboard at dusk. The arm of the river we entered seemed so wide in the uncertain light, that, considering it as one of five, my imagination expanded in contemplating the size of the single flood, bearing in its turbid waves the snows of mountains that look on Oregon, the ice of lakes in Northern Minesota and the crystal springs that for a thousand miles gush from the western slope of the Alleghanies. When morning came, my excited fancies seemed completely at fault. I could scarcely recognize the Father of Waters in the tortuous current of brown soap-suds, a mile in width, flowing between forests of willow and cypress on one side and swamps that stretched to the horizon on the other. Everything exhibited the rank growth and speedy decay of tropi cal vegetation The river was filled with floating logs, which were drifted all along the shore. The trees, especially the cypress, were shrouded in gray moss, that hung in long streamers from the branches, and at intervals the fallen thatch of some deserted cabin was pushed from its place by shrubbery and wild vines.

Near the city, the shores present a rich and cultivated aspect. The land is perfectly flat, but the forest recedes, and broad fields of sugar cane and maize in ear come down to the narrow levee which protects them from the flood. The houses of the planters, low, balconied and cool, are buried among orange trees, acacias, and the pink blossoms of the crape myrtle. The slave-huts adjoining, in parallel rows, have sometimes small gardens attached, but are rarely shaded by trees.

I found New Orleans remarkably dull and healthy. The city was enjoying an interregnum between the departure of the cholera

and the arrival of the yellow fever. The crevasse, by which half the city had lately been submerged, was closed, but the effects of the inundation were still perceptible in frequent pools of standing water, and its scenes daily renewed by incessant showers. The rain came down, "not from one lone cloud," but as if a thousand cisterns had been stove in at once. In half an hour after a shower commenced, the streets were navigable, the hack-horses splashing their slow way through the flood, carrying home a few drenched unfortunates.

The Falcon was detained four days, which severely tested the temper of my impatient shipmates. I employed the occasional gleams of clear weather in rambling over the old French and Spanish quarters, riding on the Lafayette Railroad or driving out the Shell Road to the cemetery, where the dead are buried above ground. The French part of the city is unique and interesting. All the innovation is confined to the American Municipalities, which resemble the business parts of our Northern cities. The curious one-storied dwellings, with jalousies and tiled roofs, of the last century, have not been disturbed in the region below Canal street. The low houses, where the oleander and crape myrtle still look over the walls, were once inhabited by the luxurious French planters, but now display such signs as "Magazin des Modes," "Au bon marché," or "Perrot, Coiffeur." Some of the more pretending mansions show the *porte cochère* and heavy barred windows of the hotels of Paris, and the common taverns, with their smoky aspect and the blue blouses that fill them, are exact counterparts of some I have seen in the Rue St. Antoine. The body of the Cathedral, standing at the head of the Place d' Armes, was torn down, and workmen were employed in building a prison in its stead; but the front, with its venerable tower and

refreshing appearance of antiquity, will remain, hiding behind its changeless face far different passions and darker spectacles than in the Past.

The hour of departure at length arrived. The levee opposite our anchorage, in Lafayette City, was thronged with a noisy multitude, congregated to witness the embarcation of a hundred and fifty additional passengers. Our deck became populous with tall, gaunt Mississipians and Arkansans, Missouri squatters who had pulled up their stakes yet another time, and an ominous number of professed gamblers. All were going to seek their fortunes in California, but very few had any definite idea of the country or the voyage to be made before reaching it. There were among them some new varieties of the American—long, loosely-jointed men, with large hands and feet and limbs which would still be awkward, whatever the fashion of their clothes. Their faces were lengthened, deeply sallow, overhung by straggling locks of straight black hair, and wore an expression of settled melancholy. The corners of their mouths curved downwards, the upper lip drawn slightly over the under one, giving to the lower part of the face that cast of destructiveness peculiar to the Indian. These men chewed tobacco at a ruinous rate, and spent their time either in dozing at full length on the deck or going into the fore-cabin for 'drinks.' Each one of them carried arms enough for a small company and breathed defiance to all foreigners.

We had a voyage of seven days, devoid of incident, to the Isthmus. During the fourth night we passed between Cuba and Yucatan. Then, after crossing the mouth of the Gulf of Honduras, where we met the south-eastern trades, and running the gauntlet of a cluster of coral keys, for the navigation of which no chart can be positively depended upon, we came into the deep

water of the Caribbean Sea. The waves ran high under a dull rain and raw wind, more like Newfoundland weather than the tropics. On the morning of the eighth day, we approached land. All hands gathered on deck, peering into the mist for the first glimpse of the Isthmus. Suddenly a heavy rain-cloud lifted, and we saw, about five miles distant, the headland of Porto Bello—a bold, rocky promontory, fringed with vegetation and washed at its foot by a line of snowy breakers. The range of the Andes of Darien towered high behind the coast, the further summits lost in the rain. Turning to the south-west, we followed the magnificent sweep of hills toward Chagres, passing Navy Bay, the Atlantic terminus of the Panama Railroad. The entrance is narrow, between two bold bluffs, opening into a fine land-locked harbor, surrounded by hills.

Chagres lies about eight miles to the west of this bay, but the mouth of the river is so narrow that the place is not seen till you run close upon it. The eastern shore is high and steep, cloven with ravines which roll their floods of tropical vegetation down to the sea. The old castle of San Lorenzo crowns the point, occupying a position somewhat similar to the Moro Castle at Havana, and equally impregnable. Its brown battlements and embrasures have many a dark and stirring recollection. Morgan and his buccaneers scaled its walls, took and leveled it, after a fight in which all but thirty-three out of three hundred and fourteen defenders were slain, some of them leaping madly from the precipice into the sea. Strong as it is by nature, and would be in the hands of an enterprising people, it now looks harmless enough with a few old cannon lying lazily on its ramparts. The other side of the river is flat and marshy, and from our place of anchorage we could only see the tops of some huts among the trees.

We came to anchor about half past four. The deck was already covered with luggage and everybody was anxious to leave first. Our captain, clerk, and a bearer of dispatches, were pulled ashore in the steamer's boat, and in the meantime the passengers formed themselves into small companies for the journey up the river. An immense canoe, or "dug-out," manned by half-naked natives shortly came out, and the most of the companies managed to get agents on board to secure canoes for them. The clerk, on his return, was assailed by such a storm of questions—the passengers leaning half-way over the bulwarks in their eagerness for news—that for a few minutes he could not make himself heard. When the clamor subsided, he told us that the Pacific steamer would sail from Panama on the 1st of August, and that the only canoes to be had that night were already taken by Captain Hartstein, who was then making his way up the Rio Chagres, in rain and thick darkness. The trunks and blankets were therefore taken below again and we resigned ourselves to another night on board, with a bare chance of sleep in the disordered state-rooms and among the piles of luggage. A heavy cloud on the sea broke out momently into broad scarlet flashes of lightning, surpassing any celestial pyrotechnics I ever witnessed. The dark walls of San Lorenzo, the brilliant clusters of palms on the shore and the green, rolling hills of the interior, leaped at intervals out of the gloom, as vividly seen as under the noon-day sun.

CHAPTER II.

CROSSING THE ISTHMUS.

I LEFT the Falcon at day-break in the ship's boat. We rounded the high bluff on which the castle stands and found beyond it a shallow little bay, on the eastern side of which, on low ground, stand the cane huts of Chagres. Piling up our luggage on the shore, each one set about searching for the canoes which had been engaged the night previous, but, without a single exception, the natives were not to be found, or when found, had broken their bargains. Everybody ran hither and thither in great excitement, anxious to be off before everybody else, and hurrying the naked boatmen, all to no purpose. The canoes were beached on the mud, and their owners engaged in re-thatching their covers with split leaves of the palm. The doors of the huts were filled with men and women, each in a single cotton garment, composedly smoking their cigars, while numbers of children, in Nature's own clothing, tumbled about in the sun. Having started without breakfast, I went to the "Crescent City" Hotel, a hut with a floor to it, but could get nothing. Some of my friends had fared better at one of the native huts, and I sat down to the remains of their meal, which was spread on a hen-coop beside the door. The pigs of the vicinity and several lean dogs surrounded me to offer their

services, but maintained a respectful silence, which is more than could be said of pigs at home. Some pieces of pork fat, with fresh bread and a draught of sweet spring water from a cocoa shell, made me a delicious repast.

A returning Californian had just reached the place, with a box containing $22,000 in gold-dust, and a four-pound lump in one hand. The impatience and excitement of the passengers, already at a high pitch, was greatly increased by his appearance. Life and death were small matters compared with immediate departure from Chagres. Men ran up and down the beach, shouting, gesticulating, and getting feverishly impatient at the deliberate habits of the natives; as if their arrival in California would thereby be at all hastened. The boatmen, knowing very well that two more steamers were due the next day, remained provokingly cool and unconcerned. They had not seen six months of emigration without learning something of the American habit of going at full speed. The word of starting in use on the Chagres River, is "go-ahead!" Captain C—— and Mr. M——, of Baltimore, and myself, were obliged to pay $15 each, for a canoe to Cruces. We chose a broad, trimly-cut craft, which the boatmen were covering with fresh thatch. We stayed with them until all was ready, and they had pushed it through the mud and shoal water to the bank before Ramos's house. Our luggage was stowed away, we took our seats and raised our umbrellas, but the men had gone off for provisions and were not to be found. All the other canoes were equally in limbo. The sun blazed down on the swampy shores, and visions of yellow fever came into the minds of the more timid travelers. The native boys brought to us bottles of fresh water, biscuits and fruit, presenting them with the words: "bit!" "picayune!" "Your bread is not good," I said to one of the shirt-

less traders. "Si, *Señor!*" was his decided answer, while he tossed back his childish head with a look of offended dignity which charmed me. While sitting patiently in our craft, I was much diverted by seeing one of our passengers issue from a hut with a native on each arm, and march them resolutely down to the river. Our own men appeared towards noon, with a bag of rice and dried pork, and an armful of sugar-cane. A few strokes of their broad paddles took us from the excitement and noise of the landing-place to the seclusion and beauty of the river scenery.

Our chief boatman, named Ambrosio Mendez, was of the mixed Indian and Spanish race. The second, Juan Crispin Bega, belonged to the lowest class, almost entirely of negro blood. He was a strong, jovial fellow, and took such good care of some of our small articles as to relieve us from all further trouble about them. This propensity is common to all of his caste on the Isthmus. In addition to these, a third man was given to us, with the assurance that he would work his passage; but just as we were leaving, we learned that he was a runaway soldier, who had been taken up for theft and was released on paying some sub-alcalde three bottles of liquor, promising to quit the place at once. We were scarcely out of sight of the town before he demanded five dollars a day for his labor. We refused, and he stopped working. Upon our threatening to set him ashore in the jungle, he took up the paddle, but used it so awkwardly and perversely that our other men lost all patience. We were obliged, however, to wait until we could reach Gatun, ten miles distant, before settling matters. Juan struck up "Oh Susanna!" which he sang to a most ludicrous imitation of the words, and I lay back under the palm leaves, looking out of the stern of the canoe on the forests of the Chagres River.

There is nothing in the world comparable to these forests. No description that I have ever read conveys an idea of the splendid overplus of vegetable life within the tropics. The river, broad, and with a swift current of the sweetest water I ever drank, winds between walls of foliage that rise from its very surface. All the gorgeous growths of an eternal Summer are so mingled in one impenetrable mass, that the eye is bewildered. From the rank jungle of canes and gigantic lilies, and the thickets of strange shrubs that line the water, rise the trunks of the mango, the ceiba, the cocoa, the sycamore and the superb palm. Plaintains take root in the banks, hiding the soil with their leaves, shaken and split into immense plumes by the wind and rain. The zapote, with a fruit the size of a man's head, the gourd tree, and other vegetable wonders, attract the eye on all sides. Blossoms of crimson, purple and yellow, of a form and magnitude unknown in the North, are mingled with the leaves, and flocks of paroquets and brilliant butterflies circle through the air like blossoms blown away. Sometimes a spike of scarlet flowers is thrust forth like the tongue of a serpent from the heart of some convolution of unfolding leaves, and often the creepers and parasites drop trails and streamers of fragrance from boughs that shoot half-way across the river. Every turn of the stream only disclosed another and more magnificent vista of leaf, bough and blossom. All outline of the landscape is lost under this deluge of vegetation. No trace of the soil is to be seen; lowland and highland are the same; a mountain is but a higher swell of the mass of verdure. As on the ocean, you have a sense rather than a perception of beauty. The sharp, clear lines of our scenery at home are here wanting. What shape the land would be if cleared, you cannot tell. You gaze upon the scene before you with a never-sated delight, till your

brain aches with the sensation, and you close your eyes, overwhelmed with the thought that all these wonders have been from the beginning—that year after year takes away no leaf or blossom that is not replaced, but the sublime mystery of growth and decay is renewed forever.

In the afternoon we reached Gatun, a small village of bamboo huts, thatched with palm-leaves, on the right bank of the river. The canoes which preceded us had already stopped, and the boatmen, who have a mutual understanding, had decided to remain all night. We ejected our worthless passenger on landing, notwithstanding his passive resistance, and engaged a new boatman in his place, at $8. I shall never forget the forlorn look of the man as he sat on the bank beside his bag of rice, as the rain began to fall. Ambrosio took us to one of the huts and engaged hammocks for the night. Two wooden drums, beaten by boys, in another part of the village, gave signs of a coming fandango, and, as it was Sunday night, all the natives were out in their best dresses. They are a very cleanly people, bathing daily, and changing their dresses as often as they are soiled. The children have their heads shaved from the crown to the neck, and as they go about naked, with abdomens unnaturally distended, from an exclusive vegetable diet, are odd figures enough. They have bright black eyes, and are quick and intelligent in their speech and motions.

The inside of our hut was but a single room, in which all the household operations were carried on. A notched pole, serving as a ladder, led to a sleeping loft, under the pyramidal roof of thatch. Here a number of the emigrants who arrived late were stowed away on a rattling floor of cane, covered with hides. After a supper of pork and coffee, I made my day's notes by the light

of a miserable starveling candle, stuck in an empty bottle, but had not written far before my paper was covered with fleas. The owner of the hut swung my hammock meanwhile, and I turned in, to secure it for the night. To lie there was one thing, to sleep another. A dozen natives crowded round the table, drinking their aguardiente and disputing vehemently; the cooking fire was on one side of me, and every one that passed to and fro was sure to give me a thump, while my weight swung the hammock so low, that all the dogs on the premises were constantly rubbing their backs under me. I was just sinking into a doze, when my head was so violently agitated that I started up in some alarm. It was but a quarrel about payment between the Señora and a boatman, one standing on either side. From their angry gestures, my own head and not the reckoning, seemed the subject of contention.

Our men were to have started at midnight, but it was two hours later before we could rouse and muster them together. We went silently and rapidly up the river till sunrise, when we reached a cluster of huts called Dos Hermanos (Two Brothers.) Here we overtook two canoes, which, in their anxiety to get ahead, had been all night on the river. There had been only a slight shower since we started; but the clouds began to gather heavily, and by the time we had gained the ranche of Palo Matida a sudden cold wind came over the forests, and the air was at once darkened. We sprang ashore and barely reached the hut, a few paces off, when the rain broke over us, as if the sky had caved in. A dozen lines of white electric heat ran down from the zenith, followed by crashes of thunder, which I could feel throbbing in the earth under my feet. The rain drove into one side of the cabin and out the other, but we wrapped ourselves in India-rubber cloth and kept out the wet and chilling air. During the whole day the river rose

rapidly and we were obliged to hug the bank closely, running under the boughs of trees and drawing ourselves up the rapids by those that hung low.

I crept out of the snug nest where we were all stowed as closely as three unfledged sparrows, and took my seat between Juan and Ambrosio, protected from the rain by an India-rubber poncho. The clothing of our men was likewise waterproof, but without seam or fold. It gave no hindrance to the free play of their muscles, as they deftly and rapidly plied the broad paddles Juan kept time to the Ethiopian melodies he had picked up from the emigrants, looking round from time to time with a grin of satisfaction at his skill. I preferred, however, hearing the native songs, which the boatmen sing with a melancholy drawl on the final syllable of every line, giving the music a peculiar but not unpleasant effect, when heard at a little distance. There was one, in particular, which he sang with some expression, the refrain running thus:

" Ten piedad, piedad de mis penas,
Ten piedad, piedad de mi amor!"
(Have pity on my sufferings—have pity on my love!)

Singing begets thirst, and perhaps Juan sang the more that he might have a more frequent claim on the brandy. The bottle was then produced and each swallowed a mouthful, after which he dipped his cocoa shell in the river and took a long draught. This is a universal custom among the boatmen, and the traveler is obliged to supply them. As a class, they are faithful, hard-working and grateful for kindness. They have faults, the worst of which are tardiness, and a propensity to filch small articles; but good treatment wins upon them in almost every case. Juan

said to me in the beginning "*soy tu amigo yo*," (*Americanicè:* I am thy friend, *well* I am,) but when he asked me, in turn, for every article of clothing I wore, I began to think his friendship not the most disinterested. Ambrosio told me that they would serve no one well who treated them badly. "If the Americans are good, we are good; if they abuse us, we are bad. We are black, but *muchos caballeros*," (very much of gentlemen,) said he. Many blustering fellows, with their belts stuck full of pistols and bowie-knives, which they draw on all occasions, but take good care not to use, have brought reproach on the country by their silly conduct. It is no bravery to put a revolver to the head of an unarmed and ignorant native, and the boatmen have sense enough to be no longer terrified by it.

We stopped the second night at Peña Blanca, (the White Rock,) where I slept in the loft of a hut, on the floor, in the midst of the family and six other travelers. We started at sunrise, hoping to reach Gorgona the same night, but ran upon a sunken log and were detained some time. Ambrosio finally released us by jumping into the river and swimming ashore with a rope in his teeth. The stream was very high, running at least five miles an hour, and we could only stem it with great labor. We passed the ranches of Agua Salud, Varro Colorado and Palanquilla, and shortly after were overtaken by a storm on the river. We could hear the rush and roar of the rain, as it came towards us like the trampling of myriad feet on the leaves. Shooting under a broad sycamore we made fast to the boughs, covered ourselves with India-rubber, and lay under our cool, rustling thatch of palm, until the storm had passed over.

The character of the scenery changed somewhat as we advanced. The air was purer, and the banks more bold and steep.

The country showed more signs of cultivation, and in many places the forest had been lopped away to make room for fields of maize, plantain and rice. But the vegetation was still that of the tropics and many were the long and lonely reaches of the river, where we glided between piled masses of bloom and greenery. I remember one spot, where, from the crest of a steep hill to the edge of the water, descended a flood, a torrent of vegetation. Trees were rolled upon trees, woven into a sheet by parasitic vines, that leaped into the air like spray, from the topmost boughs. When a wind slightly agitated the sea of leaves, and the vines were flung like a green foam on the surface of the river, it was almost impossible not to feel that the flood was about rushing down to overwhelm us.

We stopped four hours short of Gorgona, at the hacienda of San Pablo, the residence of Padre Dutaris, curé of all the interior. Ambrosio took us to his house by a path across a rolling, open savanna, dotted by palms and acacias of immense size. Herds of cattle and horses were grazing on the short, thick-leaved grass, and appeared to be in excellent condition. The padre owns a large tract of land, with a thousand head of stock, and his ranche commands a beautiful view up and down the river. Ambrosio was acquainted with his wife, and by recommending us as *buenos caballeros*, procured us a splendid supper of fowls, eggs, rice boiled in cocoa milk, and chocolate, with baked plantains for bread. Those who came after us had difficulty in getting anything. The padre had been frequently cheated by Americans and was therefore cautious. He was absent at the time, but his son Felipe, a boy of twelve years old, assisted in doing the honors with wonderful grace and self-possession. His tawny skin was as soft as velvet, and his black eyes sparkled like jewels. He is

almost the only living model of the Apollino that I ever saw. He sat in the hammock with me, leaning over my shoulder as I noted down the day's doings, and when I had done, wrote his name in my book, in an elegant hand. I slept soundly in the midst of an uproar, and only awoke at four o'clock next morning, to hurry our men in leaving for Gorgona.

The current was very strong and in some places it was almost impossible to make headway. Our boatmen worked hard, and by dint of strong poling managed to jump through most difficult places. Their naked, sinewy forms, bathed in sweat, shone like polished bronze. Ambrosio was soon exhausted, and lay down; but Miguel, our *corps de reserve*, put his agile spirit into the work and flung himself upon the pole with such vigor that all the muscles of his body quivered as the boat shot ahead and relaxed them. About half-way to Gorgona we rounded the foot of Monte Carabali, a bold peak clothed with forests and crowned with a single splendid palm. This hill is the only one in the province from which both oceans may be seen at once.

As we neared Gorgona, our men began repeating the ominous words: "*Cruces—mucha colera.*" We had, in fact, already heard of the prevalence of cholera there, but doubted, none the less, their wish to shorten the journey. On climbing the bank to the village, I called immediately at the store of Mr. Miller, the only American resident, who informed me that several passengers by the Falcon had already left for Panama, the route being reported passable. In the door of the alcalde's house, near at hand, I met Mr. Powers, who had left New York a short time previous to my departure, and was about starting for Panama on foot, mules being very scarce. While we were deliberating whether to go on to Cruces, Ambrosio beckoned me into an adjoining hut.

The owner, a very venerable and dignified native, received me swinging in his hammock. He had six horses which he would furnish us the next morning, at $10 the head for riding animals, and $6 for each 100 lbs. of freight. The bargain was instantly concluded.

Now came the settlement with our boatmen. In addition to the fare, half of which was paid in Chagres, we had promised them a *gratificacion*, provided they made the voyage in three days. The contract was not exactly fulfilled, but we thought it best to part friends and so gave them each a dollar. Their antics of delight were most laughable. They grinned, laughed, danced, caught us by the hands, vowed eternal friendship and would have embraced us outright, had we given them the least encouragement. Half an hour afterwards I met Juan, in a clean shirt and white pantaloons. There was a heat in his eye and a ruddiness under his black skin, which readily explained a little incoherence in his speech. "*Mi amigo!*" he cried, "*mi buen amigo!* give me a bottle of beer!" I refused. "But," said he, "we are friends; surely you will give your dear friend a bottle of beer." "I don't like my dear friends to drink too much;" I answered. Finding I would not humor him, as a last resort, he placed both hands on his breast, and with an imploring look, sang:

"Ten piedad, piedad de mis penas,
Ten piedad, piedad de mi amor!"

I burst into a laugh at this comical appeal, and he retreated, satisfied that he had at least done a smart thing.

During the afternoon a number of canoes arrived, and as it grew dark the sound of the wooden drums proclaimed a fandango.

The aristocracy of Gorgona met in the Alcalde's house; the *plebs* on a level sward before one of the huts. The dances were the same, but there was some attempt at style by the former class. The ladies were dressed in white and pink, with flowers in their hair, and waltzed with a slow grace to the music of violins and guitars. The Alcalde's daughters were rather pretty, and at once became favorites of the Americans, some of whom joined in the fandango, and went through its voluptuous mazes at the first trial, to the great delight of the natives. The Señora Catalina, a rich widow, of pure Andalusian blood, danced charmingly. Her little head was leaned coquettishly on one side, while with one hand she held aloft the fringed end of a crimson scarf, which rested lightly on the opposite shoulder. The dance over, she took a guitar and sang, the subject of her song being "*los amigos Americanos.*" There was less sentiment, but more jollity, at the dances on the grass. The only accompaniment to the wooden drums was the "*ña, ña, ña,*" of the women, a nasal monotone, which few ears have nerve to endure. Those who danced longest and with the most voluptuous spirit, had the hats of all the others piled upon them, in token of applause. These half-barbaric orgies were fully seen in the pure and splendid light poured upon the landscape from a vertical moon.

Next morning at daybreak our horses—tough little mustangs, which I could almost step over—were at the door. We started off with a guide, trusting our baggage to the honesty of our host, who promised to send it the same day. A servant of the Alcalde escorted us out of the village, cut us each a good stick, pocketed a real and then left us to plunge into the forests. The path at the outset was bad enough, but as the wood grew deeper and darker and the tough clay soil held the rains which had fallen, it

became finally a narrow gully, filled with mud nearly to our horses' bellies. Descending the steep sides of the hills, they would step or slide down almost precipitous passes, bringing up all straight at the bottom, and climbing the opposite sides like cats. So strong is their mutual confidence that they invariably step in each other's tracks, and a great part of the road is thus worn into holes three feet deep and filled with water and soft mud, which spirts upward as they go, coating the rider from head to foot.

The mountain range in the interior is broken and irregular. The road passes over the lower ridges and projecting spurs of the main chain, covered nearly the whole distance to Panama by dense forests. Above us spread a roof of transparent green, through which few rays of the sunlight fell. The only sounds in that leafy wilderness were the chattering of monkeys as they cracked the palm-nuts, and the scream of parrots, flying from tree to tree. In the deepest ravines spent mules frequently lay dead, and high above them, on the large boughs, the bald vultures waited silently for us to pass. We overtook many trains of luggage, packed on the backs of bulls and horses, tied head-to-tail in long files. At intervals, on the road, we saw a solitary ranche, with a cleared space about it, but all the natives could furnish us was a cup of thick, black coffee.

After ascending for a considerable distance, in the first half of our journey, we came to a level table-land, covered with palms, with a higher ridge beyond it. Our horses climbed it with some labor, went down the other side through clefts and gullies which seemed impassable, and brought us to a stream of milky blue water, which, on ascertaining its course with a compass, I found to be a tributary of the Rio Grande, flowing into the Pacific at Panama. We now hoped the worst part of our route was over,

but this was a terrible deception. Scrambling up ravines of slippery clay, we went for miles through swamps and thickets, urging forward our jaded beasts by shouting and beating. Going down a precipitous bank, washed soft by the rains, my horse slipped and made a descent of ten feet, landing on one bank and I on another. He rose quietly, disengaged his head from the mud and stood, flank-deep, waiting till I stepped across his back and went forward, my legs lifted to his neck. This same adventure happened several times to each of us on the passage across.

As we were leaving Gorgona, our party was joined by a long Mississippian, whose face struck me at the first glance as being peculiarly cadaverous. He attached himself to us without the least ceremony, leaving his own party behind. We had not ridden far before he told us he had felt symptoms of cholera during the night, and was growing worse. We insisted on his returning to Gorgona at once, but he refused, saying he was "bound to go through." At the first ranche on the road we found another traveler, lying on the ground in a state of entire prostration. He was attended by a friend, who seemed on the point of taking the epidemic, from his very fears. The sight of this case no doubt operated on the Mississippian, for he soon became so racked with pain as to keep his seat with great difficulty. We were alarmed; it was impossible to stop in the swampy forest, and equally impossible to leave him, now that all his dependence was on us. The only thing resembling medicine in our possession, was a bottle of claret. It was an unusual remedy for cholera, but he insisted on drinking it.

After urging forward our weary beasts till late in the afternoon, we were told that Panama was four hours further. We pitied the poor horses, but ourselves more, and determined to push ahead. After a repetition of all our worst experience, we finally struck

the remains of the paved road constructed by the buccaneers when they held Panama. I now looked eagerly forward for the Pacific, but every ridge showed another in advance, and it grew dark with a rain coming up. Our horses avoided the hard pavement and took by-paths through thickets higher than our heads. The cholera-stricken emigrant, nothing helped by the claret he drank, implored us, amid his groans, to hasten forward. Leaning over the horse's neck, he writhed on his saddle in an agony of pain, and seemed on the point of falling at every step. We were far in advance of our Indian guide and lost the way more than once in the darkness. At last he overtook us, washed his feet in a mud-hole, and put on a pair of pantaloons. This was a welcome sign to us, and in fact, we soon after smelt the salt air of the Pacific, and could distinguish huts on either side of the road. These gave place to stone houses and massive ruined edifices, overgrown with vegetation. We passed a plaza and magnificent church, rode down an open space fronting the bay, under a heavy gate-way, across another plaza and through two or three narrow streets, hailed by Americans all the way with: "Are you the Falcon's passengers?" "From Gorgona?" "From Cruces?" till our guide brought us up at the Hotel Americano.

Thus terminated my five days' journey across the Isthmus—decidedly more novel, grotesque and adventurous than any trip of similar length in the world. It was rough enough, but had nothing that I could exactly call hardship, so much was the fatigue balanced by the enjoyment of unsurpassed scenery and a continual sensation of novelty. In spite of the many dolorous accounts which have been sent from the Isthmus, there is nothing, at the worst season, to deter any one from the journey.

CHAPTER III.

SCENES IN PANAMA.

I saw less of Panama than I could have wished. A few hasty rambles through its ruined convents and colleges and grass-grown plazas—a stroll on its massive battlements, lumbered with idle cannon, of the splendid bronze of Barcelona—were all that I could accomplish in the short stay of a day and a half. Its situation at the base of a broad, green mountain, with the sea washing three sides of the narrow promontory on which it is built, is highly picturesque, yet some other parts of the bay seem better fitted for the purposes of commerce. Vessels of heavy draught cannot anchor within a mile and a half of the city, and there is but one point where embarkation, even in the shallow "dug-outs" of the natives, is practicable. The bottom of the bay is a bed of rock, which, at low tide, lies bare far out beyond the ramparts. The south-eastern shore of the bay belongs to the South-American Continent, and the range of lofty mountains behind it is constantly wreathed with light clouds, or shrouded from view by the storms which it attracts. To the west the green islands of Taboga, and others, rise behind one another, interrupting the blue curve of the watery horizon. The city was already half American. The native boys whistled Yankee Doodle through the streets, and Se-

ñoritas of the pure Castilian blood sang the Ethiopian melodies of Virginia to their guitars. Nearly half the faces seen were American, and the signs on shops of all kinds appeared in our language. On the morning after I arrived, I heard a sudden rumbling in the streets, and observing a general rush to the windows, followed the crowd in time to see the first cart made in Panama—the work of a Yankee mechanic, detained for want of money to get further.

We found the hotels doing a thriving business, though the fare and attendance were alike indifferent. We went to bed, immediately after reaching the Hotel Americano, that our clothes might be washed before morning, as our luggage had not arrived. Nearly all the passengers were in a similar predicament. Some ladies, who had ridden over from Cruces in male attire, a short time previous, were obliged to sport their jackets and pantaloons several days before receiving their dresses. Our trust in the venerable native at Gorgona was not disappointed; the next morning his mule was at the door, laden with our trunks and valises. Some of the passengers, however, were obliged to remain in Panama another month, since, notwithstanding the formal contract of the Alcalde of Gorgona, their luggage did not arrive before the sailing of the steamer.

The next day nearly all of our passengers came in. There had been a heavy rain during the night, and the Gorgona road, already next to impassable, became actually perilous. A lady from Maine, who made the journey alone, was obliged to ford a torrent of water above her waist, with a native on each side, to prevent her from being carried away. A French lady who crossed was washed from her mule, and only got over by the united exertions of seven men.

The roads from Cruces and Gorgona enter on the eastern side of the city, as well as the line of the railroad survey. The latter, after leaving Limon Bay, runs on the north side of the Chagres River till it reaches Gorgona, continuing thence to Panama in the same general course as the mule route. It will probably be extended down the Bay to some point opposite the island of Taboga, which is marked out by Nature as the future anchorage ground and dépôt of all the lines touching at Panama. The engineers of the survey accomplished a great work in fixing the route within so short a space of time. The obstacles to be overcome can scarcely be conceived by one who has never seen tropical vegetation or felt tropical rains. The greatest difficulty in constructing the road is the want of stone, though this is in some degree supplied by abundance of lignum-vitæ and other durable wood. The torrents of rain during the summer season will require the side-hill cuttings to be made of unusual strength. The estimated cost of the road appears small, especially when the value of labor is taken into consideration. The natives are not to be depended on, and there is some risk in taking men from the United States half way to California.

Panama is one of the most picturesque cities on the American Continent. Its ruins—if those could be called ruins which were never completed edifices—and the seaward view from its ramparts, on a bright morning, would ravish the eye of an artist. Although small in limit, old and terribly dilapidated, its situation and surroundings are of unsurpassable beauty. There is one angle of the walls where you can look out of a cracked watch-tower on the sparkling swells of the Pacific, ridden by flocks of snow-white pelicans and the rolling canoes of the natives—where your vision, following the entire curve of the Gulf, takes in on

either side nearly a hundred miles of shore. The ruins of the Jesuit Church of San Felipe, through which I was piloted by my friend, Lieutenant Beale, reminded me of the Baths of Caracalla. The majestic arches spanning the nave are laden with a wilderness of shrubbery and wild vines which fall like a fringe to the very floor. The building is roofless, but daylight can scarcely steal in through the embowering leaves. Several bells, of a sweet, silvery ring, are propped up by beams, in a dark corner, but from the look of the place, ages seem to have passed since they called the crafty brotherhood to the *oracion*. A splendid College, left incomplete many years ago, fronts on one of the plazas. Its Corinthian pillars and pilasters of red sandstone are broken and crumbling, and from the crevices at their base spring luxuriant bananas, shooting their large leaves through the windows and folding them around the columns of the gateway.

There were about seven hundred emigrants waiting for passage, when I reached Panama. All the tickets the steamer could possibly receive had been issued and so great was the anxiety to get on, that double price, $600, was frequently paid for a ticket to San Francisco. A few days before we came, there was a most violent excitement on the subject, and as the only way to terminate the dispute, it was finally agreed to dispose by lot of all the tickets for sale. The emigrants were all numbered, and those with tickets for sailing vessels or other steamers excluded. The remainder then drew, there being fifty-two tickets to near three hundred passengers. This quieted the excitement for the time, though there was still a continual under-current of speculation and intrigue which was curious to observe. The disappointed candidates, for the most part, took passage in sailing vessels, with a prospect of seventy days' voyage before them. A few months

previous, when three thousand persons were waiting on the Isthmus, several small companies started in the log canoes of the natives, thinking to reach San Francisco in them! After a voyage of forty days, during which they went no further than the Island of Quibo, at the mouth of the Gulf, nearly all of them returned; the rest have not since been heard of.

The passengers were engaged in embarking all the afternoon of the second day after my arrival. The steamer came up to within a mile and a half of the town, and numbers of canoes plied between her and the sea-gateway. Native porters crowded about the hotels, clamoring for luggage, which they carried down to the shore under so fervent a heat that I was obliged to hoist my umbrella. One of the boatmen lifted me over the swells for the sake of a *medio*, and I was soon gliding out along the edge of the breakers, startling the pelicans that flew in long lines over the water. I was well satisfied to leave Panama at the time; the cholera, which had already carried off one-fourth of the native population, was making havoc among the Americans, and several of the Falcon's passengers lay at the point of death.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PACIFIC COAST OF MEXICO.

THE following morning, at eleven o'clock, the last canoe-load of mails came on board. Ten minutes afterwards our parting gun was fired, and its echoes had not died away when the paddles were in motion and the boat heading for Taboga. We ran past several steep volcanic islands, matted in foliage, and in an hour came-to before Taboga, which is to Panama what Capri is to Naples, only that it is far more beautiful. In the deep and secure roadstead one may throw a stone from the ship's deck into the gardens of orange and tamarind fringing the beach. The village lies beside a cocoa grove in a sheltered corner, at the foot of hills which rise in terraces of luxuriant vegetation to the height of a thousand feet. The mass of palm, cocoa, banana and orange trees is unbroken from the summit to the water's edge. The ravine behind the village contains an unfailing spring of sweet water, from which all vessels touching at Panama are supplied. The climate is delightful and perfectly healthy.

The steamer Oregon was lying high and dry on the beach, undergoing repairs, having injured her keel by running on a rock during the voyage down. The remarkable adaptation of Taboga for a dry dock was shown by the fact that while at high tide the

Oregon floated, at low tide one might walk around her on dry ground; by building two walls and a gate in front, the dry dock would be complete. This is the only place between Cape Horn and San Francisco where such a thing is possible. These unrivaled advantages, as well as the healthiness of Taboga and its splendid scenery, point it out as the stopping-place for steamers and passengers, if not the commercial dépôt of this part of the Pacific.

A voyage from Panama to San Francisco in the year 1849, can hardly be compared to sea-life in any other part of the world or at any previous period. Our vessel was crowded fore and aft: exercise was rendered quite impossible and sleep was each night a new experiment, for the success of which we were truly grateful. We were roused at daylight by the movements on deck, if not earlier, by the breaking of a hammock-rope and the thump and yell of the unlucky sleeper. Coffee was served in the cabin; but, as many of the passengers imagined that, because they had paid a high price for their tickets, they were conscientiously obligated to drink three cups, the late-comers got a very scanty allowance. The breakfast hour was nine, and the table was obliged to be fully set twice. At the first tingle of the bell, all hands started as if a shot had exploded among them; conversation was broken off in the middle of a word; the deck was instantly cleared, and the passengers, tumbling pell-mell down the cabin-stairs, found every seat taken by others who had probably been sitting in them for half an hour. The bell, however, had an equally convulsive effect upon these. There was a confused grabbing motion for a few seconds, and lo! the plates were cleared. A chicken parted in twain as if by magic, each half leaping into an opposite plate; a dish of sweet potatoes vanished before a single hand; beefsteak

flew in all directions ; and while about half the passengers had all their breakfast piled at once upon their plates, the other half were regaled by a " plentiful lack." The second table was but a repetition of these scenes, which dinner—our only additional meal—renewed in the afternoon. To prevent being driven, in self-defence, into the degrading habit, eight of us secured one end of the second table, shut off by the mizen-mast from the long arms that might otherwise have grabbed our share. Among our company of two hundred and fifty, there were, of course, many gentlemen of marked refinement and intelligence from various parts of the Union—enough, probably, to leaven the large lump of selfishness and blackguardism into which we were thrown. I believe the controlling portion of the California emigration is intelligent, orderly and peaceable ; yet I never witnessed so many disgusting exhibitions of the lowest passions of humanity, as during the voyage. At sea or among the mountains, men completely lose the little arts of dissimulation they practise in society. They show in their true light, and very often, alas ! in a light little calculated to encourage the enthusiastic believer in the speedy perfection of our race.

The day after leaving Panama we were in sight of the promontory of Veraguas and the island of Quibo, off Central America. It is a grand coast, with mountain ranges piercing the clouds. Then, for several days, we gave the continent a wide berth, our course making a chord to the arc of the Gulf of Tehuantepec. The sea was perfectly tranquil, and we were not molested by the inexorable demon that lodges in the stomachs of landsmen. Why has never a word been said or sung about sunset on the Pacific ? Nowhere on this earth can one be overvaulted with such a glory of colors. The sky, with a ground-hue of rose towards the west and purple towards the east, is mottled

and flecked over all its surface with light clouds, running through every shade of crimson, amber, violet and russet-gold. There is no dead duskiness opposite the sunken sun; the whole vast shell of the firmament glows with an equal radiance, reduplicating its hues on the glassy sea, so that we seem floating in a hollow sphere of prismatic crystal. The cloud-strata, at different heights in the air, take different coloring; through bars of burning carmine one may look on the soft, rose-purple folds of an inner curtain, and, far within and beyond that, on the clear amber-green of the immaculate sky. As the light diminishes, these radiant vapors sink and gather into flaming pyramids, between whose pinnacles the serene depth of air is of that fathomless violet-green which we see in the skies of Titian.

The heat, during this part of the voyage, was intolerable. The thermometer ranged from 82° to 84° at night, and 86° to 90° by day—a lower temperature than we frequently feel in the North, but attended by an enervating languor such as I never before experienced. Under its influence one's energies flag, active habits of mind are thrown aside, the imagination grows faint and hazy, the very feelings and sensibilities are melted and weakened. Once, I panted for the heat and glare and splendid luxuriance of tropical lands, till I almost made the god of the Persians my own. I thought some southern star must have been in the ascendant at my birth, some glowing instinct of the South been infused into my nature. Two months before, the thought of riding on that summer sea, with the sun over the mast-head, would have given a delicious glow to my fancy. But all my vision of life in the tropics vanished before the apathy engendered by this heat. The snowy, bleak and sublime North beckoned me like a mirage over the receding seas. Gods! how a single sough

of keen north-west wind down some mountain gorge would have beaten a march of exulting energy to my spirit! how my veins would have tingled to the sound, and my nerves stiffened in the healthy embraces of that ruder air!

After a week of this kind of existence we passed the sun's latitude, and made the mountains of Mexico. The next night we came-to at the entrance of the harbor of Acapulco, while the ship's boat went to the city, some two miles distant. In about two hours it returned, bringing us word that thirty or forty Americans were waiting passage, most of whom were persons who had left Panama in the Humboldt in March, and who had already been three months in port. Captain Bailey determined to take them on board, and the Panama felt her way in through the dark, narrow entrance.

It was midnight. The beautiful mountain-locked basin on which Acapulco is built was dimly visible under the clouded moon, but I could discern on one side the white walls of the Fort on a rocky point, with the trees of the Alameda behind it, and still further the lights of the town glittering along the hill. As we approached the Fort we were hailed, but as a response was not immediately made the light was suddenly extinguished. Some one called out "*fuero! fuero!*" (outside!) and our boat, which had been sent out a second time, returned, stating that a file of soldiers drawn up on the beach had opposed any landing. It was followed by another, with four oars, containing a messenger from the Governor, who announced to us, in good English, that we were not allowed to come so near the town, but must lie off in the channel; the cholera, they had learned, was at Panama, and quarantine regulations had been established at Acapulco. This order was repeated, and the Panama then moved to the other

side of the harbor. The boat, however, came out again, bringing a declaration from the Governor that if we did not instantly fall back to a certain channel between two islands, we should be fired upon. Rather than get into a quarrel with the alarmed authorities or be subjected to delay, we got under way again, and by sunrise were forty miles nearer San Blas.

We had on board a choice gang of blacklegs, among whom were several characters of notoriety in the United States, going out to extend the area of their infernal profession. About a dozen came on from New Orleans by the Falcon and as many from New York by the Crescent City. They established a branch at Panama, immediately on their arrival, and two or three remained to take charge of it. They did not commence very fortunately; their first capital of $500 having been won in one night by a lucky padre. Most of them, with the devil's luck, drew prizes in the ticket lottery, while worthy men were left behind. After leaving Acapulco, they commenced playing *monte* on the quarter-deck, and would no doubt have entrapped some unwary passengers, had not the Captain put a stop to their operations. These characters have done much, by their conduct on the Isthmus and elsewhere, to earn for us the title of "Northern barbarians," and especially, by wantonly offending the religious sentiment of the natives. I was told of four who entered one of the churches with their hats pulled fast over their brows, and, marching deliberately up the aisle, severally lighted their cigars at the four tapers of the altar. The class was known to all on board and generally shunned.

There is another class of individuals whom I would recommend travelers to avoid. I saw several specimens on the Isthmus. They are miserable, melancholy men, ready to yield up their last

breath at any moment. They left home prematurely, and now humbly acknowledge their error. They were not made for traveling, but they did not know it before. If you would dig a hole and lay them in it, leaving only their heads above ground, they would be perfectly contented. Let them alone; do not even express your sympathy. Then their self-pity will change to indignation at your cold-heartedness, and they will take care of themselves for very spite.

Our track, now, was along and near the coast—a succession of lofty mountain ranges, rising faint and blue through belts of cloud. Through a glass, they appeared rugged and abrupt, scarred with deep ravines and divided by narrow gorges, yet exhibiting, nearly to their summits, a rich clothing of forests. The shore is iron-bound and lined with breakers, yet there are many small bays and coves which afford shelter to fishing and coasting vessels and support a scanty population. The higher peaks of the inland chain are occasionally seen when the atmosphere is clear. One morning the Volcano of Colima, distant ninety miles "as the bird flies," came into sight, shooting its forked summits far above the nearer ranges. It is in the province of Jalisco, near Lake Chapala, and is 16,000 feet in height—a greater than Mount Blanc! I was delighted with Cuba and the Isthmus, but forgot them at once when I viewed the grand outline of this coast, the only approach to which is seen in the Maritime Alps, on leaving Genoa.

On the third morning from Acapulco, we saw the lofty group of mountains bounding the roadstead of San Blas on the East. The islands called Las Tres Marias were visible, ten miles distant, on our left. They are too small and scattering to break the heavy seas and "southers" which come in to the very end of the

bight on which San Blas is built. Vessels of light draught may run across a narrow bar between breakers and find safe anchorage in a little inlet on the northern side, but those which are obliged to lie in the open road are exposed to considerable danger. A high white rock, of singular form, about a quarter of a mile from the shore, serves as a landmark for vessels. The village, which is a little larger than Chagres, and like it a collection of cane huts with a few stone houses, lies on one side of the inlet before mentioned, on flat swampy ground, and surrounded by rank forests and jungles. A mile behind it, on a high, precipitous rock, is the Presidio of San Blas, now almost deserted, all business being transacted at the village on shore.

We came-to, a mile from the place, and were soon after visited by the Alcalde, who, after exchanging the ordinary courtesies informed us there were plenty of provisions on shore, and departed, saying nothing of quarantine. A flock of cayucas, paddled by the natives, followed him and swarmed around us, ready to take passengers at three rials apiece. Three or four of us took one of these craft, and were paddled ashore, running on the edge of the breakers which roared and dashed along the mouth of the inlet. We landed on a beach, ancle-deep in sand and covered with mustangs, mules and donkeys, with a sprinkling of natives. Our passengers were busy all over the village, lugging strings of bananas and plantains, buying cool water-jars of porous earth, gathering limes and oranges from the trees, or regaling themselves at the fondas with fresh spring-water, (not always unmixed,) tortillas and fried pork. Several gentlemen who had come overland from Vera Cruz, awaited our arrival, and as the place was very unhealthy they were not long in embarking.

In company with some friends, I set out for the old Presidio

on the cliff. The road led through swampy forests till we reached the foot of the ascent. A native passed us, on a sharp-trotting mule: "*Donde va, hombre?*" "*Tépic,*" was his answer. Up we went, scrambling over loose stones, between banana thickets and flowering shrubs, till we gained a rocky spur near the summit. Here the view to the north, toward Mazatlan, was very fine. Across the marshy plain many leagues in breadth, bordering the sea, we traced the Rio Grande of the West by the groves of sycamore on its banks; beyond it another lateral chain of the Sierra Madre rose to the clouds. Turning again, we entered a deserted court-yard, fronted by the fort, which had a covered gallery on the inside. The walls were broken down, the deep wells in the rock choked up and the stone pillars and gateways overrun with rank vines. From the parapet, the whole roadstead of San Blas lay at our feet, and our steamer, two miles off, seemed to be within hail.

This plaza opened on another and larger one, completely covered with tall weeds, among which the native pigs rooted and meditated by turns. A fine old church, at the farther end, was going to ruin, and the useless bells still hung in its towers. Some of the houses were inhabited, and we procured from the natives fresh water and delicious bananas. The aspect of the whole place, picturesque in its desolation, impressed me more than anything on the journey, except the church of San Felipe, at Panama. The guns of the Presidio were spiked by Commander Dupont, during the war; there has been no garrison there for many years.

We descended again, made our purchases of fruit, and reached the beach just as the steamer's gun signalized us to return. The cayuca in which we embarked was a round log, about ten feet long, rolling over the swells with a ticklish facility. We lay flat in

the bottom, not daring to stir hand or foot for fear of losing the exact balance which kept us upright, and finally reached the gangway, where we received a sound cursing from one of the ship's crew for trusting ourselves in such a craft. A dozen others, pulling for life, came behind us, followed by a launch bringing two live bullocks for our provender. A quarrel broke out between one of our new passengers and a native, in which blows were exchanged. The question was then raised "whether a nigger was as good as a white man," and like the old feuds of the *Bianchi* and the *Neri* in Tuscany, the contest raged fiercely for the rest of the day.

The morning mist rose from the summits of the Sierra Madre of Durango. As we neared Mazatlan, a light smoke was discerned far on our left; and we had not been long in the harbor before the California came rounding in, her passengers cheering us as she passed and dropped anchor between us and the town. She looked somewhat weather-beaten, but was a pleasant sight to our eyes. Conversation was kept up between the two ships so long as they were in hearing, the Panama's passengers inquiring anxiously about the abundance of gold, and the Californians assuring them that it was as plenty as ever.

Few ports present a more picturesque appearance from the sea than Mazatlan. The harbor, or roadstead, open on the west to the unbroken swells of the Pacific, is protected on the north and south by what were once mountain promontories, now split into parallel chains of islands, separated by narrow channels of sea. Their sides are scarred with crags, terminating toward the sea in precipices of dark red rock, with deep caverns at the base, into which the surf continually dashes. On approaching the road, these islands open one beyond the other, like a succession of shift-

ing views, the last revealing the white walls of Mazatlan, rising gradually from the water, with a beautiful back-ground of dim blue mountains. The sky was of a dazzling purity, and the whole scene had that same clearness of outline and enchanting harmony of color which give the landscapes of Italy their greatest charm. As we ran westward on the Tropic of Cancer across the mouth of the Gulf, nothing could exceed the purity of the atmosphere.

CHAPTER V.

THE COAST OF CALIFORNIA.

"There is California!" was the cry next morning at sunrise. "Where?" "Off the starboard bow." I rose on my bunk in one of the deck state-rooms, and looking out of the window, watched the purple mountains of the Peninsula, as they rose in the fresh, inspiring air. We were opposite its southern extremity, and I scanned the brown and sterile coast with a glass, searching for anything like vegetation. The whole country appeared to be a mass of nearly naked rock, nourishing only a few cacti and some stunted shrubs. At the extreme end of the Peninsula the valley of San José opens inland between two ranges of lofty granite mountains. Its beautiful green level, several miles in width, stretched back as far as the eye could reach. The town lies near the sea; it is noted for the siege sustained by Lieut. Haywood and a small body of American troops during the war. Lying deep amid the most frightfully barren and rugged mountains I ever saw, the valley of San José which is watered by a small river, might be made a paradise. The scenery around it corresponded strikingly with descriptions of Syria and Palestine. The bare, yellow crags glowed in the sun with dazzling intensity, and a chain of splintered peaks in the distance wore the softest shade of violet.

In spite of the forbidding appearance of the coast, a more peculiar and interesting picture than it gave can hardly be found on the Pacific. Cape San Lucas, which we passed toward evening, is a bold bluff of native granite, broken into isolated rocks at its points, which present the appearance of three distinct and perfectly-formed pyramids. The white, glistening rock is pierced at its base by hollow caverns and arches, some of which are fifteen or twenty feet high, giving glimpses of the ocean beyond. The structure of this cape is very similar to that of The Needles on the Isle of Wight.

On the 12th of August we passed the island of Santa Marguerita, lying across the mouth of a bay, the upper extremity of which is called Point San Lazaro. Here, the outline of the coast, as laid down on the charts in use, is very incorrect. The longitude is not only placed too far eastward by twenty to thirty miles, but an isolated mountain, rising from the sea, eight miles northwest of Point San Lazaro, is entirely wanting. This mountain—a summit of barren rock, five miles in length and about a thousand feet in hight, is connected with the coast by a narrow belt of sand, forming a fine bay, twelve miles deep, curving southward till it strikes Point San Lazaro. The northern point of the headland is bordered by breakers, beyond which extends a shoal. Here the current sets strongly in shore, and here it was that a whale-ship was lost a few months since, her crew escaping to wander for days on an arid desert, without water or vegetation. The Panama, on her downward trip, ran on the shoal and was obliged to lay-to all night; in the morning, instead of the open sea promised by the chart, the crags of the unknown headland rose directly in front of her. The coast, as far as I could see with a good glass, presented an unbroken level of glaring white sand, which must extend in-

land for fifty or sixty miles, since, under the clearest of skies, no sign of rock or distant peak was visible. The appearance of the whole Peninsula, in passing—the alternations of bleak mountain, blooming plain and wide salt desert—the rumors of vast mineral wealth in its unknown interior and the general want of intelligence in relation to it—conspired to excite in me a strong wish to traverse it from end to end.

The same evening we doubled Cape San Lucas, we met the ship Grey Eagle, of Philadelphia, one of the first of the California squadron. She was on her way from San Francisco to Mazatlan, with two hundred passengers on board, chiefly Mexicans. Three cheers were given and returned, as the vessels passed each other. The temperature changed, as we left the tropics behind and met the north-western trades; the cool winds drove many passengers from the deck, and the rest of us had some chance for exercise. All were in the best spirits, at the prospect of soon reaching our destination, and the slightest thread of incident, whereto a chance for amusement might be hung, was eagerly caught up. There was on board a man of rather grave demeanor, who, from the circumstance of having his felt hat cocked up like a general's, wearing it square across his brows and standing for long whiles with his arms folded, in a meditative attitude, had been generally nicknamed "Napoleon." There was no feature of his face like the great Corsican's, but from the tenacity with which he took his stand on the mizen-yard and folded his arms every evening, the passengers supposed he really imagined a strong resemblance. One of those days, in a spirit of mischief, they bought a felt hat, gave it the same cocked shape, and bribed one of the negro cooks to wear it and take off Napoleon. Accordingly, as the latter began ascending the shrouds to his favorite post, the cook went up

the opposite side. Napoleon sat down on the yard, braced himself against the mast and folded his arms; the cook, slyly watching his motions, imitated them with a gravity which was irresistible. All the passengers were by this time gathered on the quarter-deck, shouting with laughter: it was singular how much merriment so boyish a trick could occasion. Napoleon bore it for a time with perfect stolidity, gazing on the sunset with unchanged solemnity of visage. At last, getting tired of the affair, he looked down on the crowd and said: "you have sent me a very fit representative of yourselves." The laugh was stopped suddenly, and from that time forth Napoleon was not disturbed in his musings.

The only other point of interest which we saw on the Peninsular coast, was Benito Island, off the Bay of Sebastian Viscaino, so named, after the valiant discoverer of California. Two mornings after, I saw the sun rise behind the mountains back of San Diego. Point Loma, at the extremity of the bay, came in sight on the left, and in less than an hour we were at anchor before the hide-houses at the landing place. The southern shore of the bay is low and sandy; from the bluff hights on the opposite side a narrow strip of shingly beach makes out into the sea, like a natural breakwater, leaving an entrance not more than three hundred yards broad. The harbor is the finest on the Pacific, with the exception of Acapulco, and capable of easy and complete defense. The old hide-houses are built at the foot of the hills just inside the bay, and a fine road along the shore leads to the town of San Diego, which is situated on a plain, three miles distant and barely visible from the anchorage. Above the houses, on a little eminence, several tents were planted, and a short distance further were several recent graves, surrounded by paling. A

number of people were clustered on the beach, and boats laden with passengers and freight, instantly put off to us. In a few minutes after our gun was fired, we could see horsemen coming down from San Diego at full gallop, one of whom carried behind him a lady in graceful riding costume. In the first boat were Colonel Weller, U. S. Boundary Commissioner, and Major Hill, of the Army. Then followed a number of men, lank and brown "as is the ribbed sea-sand"—men with long hair and beards, and faces from which the rigid expression of suffering was scarcely relaxed. They were the first of the overland emigrants by the Gila route, who had reached San Diego a few days before. Their clothes were in tatters, their boots, in many cases, replaced by moccasins, and, except their rifles and some small packages rolled in deerskin, they had nothing left of the abundant stores with which they left home.

We hove anchor in half an hour, and again rounded Point Loma, our number increased by more than fifty passengers. The Point, which comes down to the sea at an angle of 60° has been lately purchased by an American, for what purpose I cannot imagine, unless it is with the hope of speculating on Government when it shall be wanted for a light-house. In the afternoon we passed the island of Santa Catalina, which is about twelve miles in length, rising to a height of 3,000 feet above the sea, and inhabited by herds of wild goats. Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa, which lie opposite Santa Barbara and separated from it by the channel of the same name, were left behind us in the night, and the next day we were off Cape Conception, the Cape Horn of California. True to its character, we had a cold, dense fog, and violent head-winds; the coast was shrouded from sight.

The emigrants we took on board at San Diego were objects of

general interest. The stories of their adventures by the way sounded more marvellous than anything I had heard or read since my boyish acquaintance with Robinson Crusoe, Captain Cook and John Ledyard. Taking them as the average experience of the thirty thousand emigrants who last year crossed the Plains, this California Crusade will more than equal the great military expeditions of the Middle Ages in magnitude, peril and adventure. The amount of suffering which must have been endured in the savage mountain passes and herbless deserts of the interior, cannot be told in words. Some had come by way of Santa Fé and along the savage hills of the Gila; some, starting from Red River, had crossed the Great Stake Desert and taken the road from Paso del Norte to Tueson in Sonora; some had passed through Mexico and after spending one hundred and four days at sea, run into San Diego and given up their vessel; some had landed, weary with a seven months' psssage around Cape Horn, and some, finally, had reached the place on foot, after walking the whole length of the Californian Peninsula.

The emigrants by the Gila route gave a terrible account of the crossing of the Great Desert, lying west of the Colorado. They described this region as scorching and sterile—a country of burning salt plains and shifting hills of sand, whose only signs of human visitation are the bones of animals and men scattered along the trails that cross it. The corpses of several emigrants, out of companies who passed before them, lay half-buried in sand, and the hot air was made stifling by the effluvia that rose from the dry carcases of hundreds of mules. There, if a man faltered, he was gone; no one could stop to lend him a hand without a likelihood of sharing his fate. It seemed like a wonderful Providence to these emigrants, when they came suddenly upon a large

and swift stream of fresh water in the midst of the Desert, where, a year previous, there had been nothing but sterile sand. This phenomenon was at first ascribed to the melting of snow on the mountains, but later emigrants traced the river to its source in a lake about half a mile in length, which had bubbled up spontaneously from the fiery bosom of the Desert.

One of the emigrants by the Sonora route told me a story of a sick man who rode behind his party day after day, unable to keep pace with it, yet always arriving in camp a few hours later. This lasted so long that finally little attention was paid to him and his absence one night excited no apprehension. Three days passed and he did not arrive. On the fourth, a negro, traveling alone and on foot, came into camp and told them that many miles behind a man lying beside the road had begged a little water from him and asked him to hurry on and bring assistance. The next morning a company of Mexicans came up and brought word that the man was dying. The humane negro retraced his steps forty miles, and arrived just as the sufferer breathed his last. He lifted him in his arms; in the vain effort to speak, the man expired. The mule, tied to a cactus by his side, was already dead of hunger.

I was most profoundly interested in the narrative of a Philadelphian, who, after crossing Mexico from Tampico to San Blas, embarked for San Francisco, and was put ashore by his own request, at Cape San Lucas. He had three or four companions, the party supposing they might make the journey to San Diego in thirty or forty days, by following the coast. It was soon found, however, that the only supply of water was among the mountains of the interior, and they were obliged to proceed on foot to the valley of San José and follow the trail to La Paz, on

the Californian Gulf. Thence they wandered in a nearly opposite direction to Todos Santos Bay, on the Pacific, where they exchanged some of their arms for horses. The route led in a zig-zag direction across the mountain chain, from one watering-place to another, with frequent *jornadas* (journeys without water,) of thirty, forty and even sixty miles in length. Its rigors were increased by the frightful desolation of the country, and the deep gullies or *arroyos* with which it is seamed. In the beds of these they would often lose the trail, occasioning them many hours' search to recover it. The fruit of the cactus and the leaves of succulent plants formed their principal sustenance. After a month of this travel they reached San Ignacio, half-way to San Diego, where their horses failed them; the remainder of the journey was performed on foot. The length of the Peninsula is about eight hundred miles, but the distance traveled by these hardy adventurers amounted to more than fifteen hundred.

Among the passengers who came on board at San Diego, was Gen. Villamil, of the Republic of Ecuador, who was aid to Bolivar during the war of South-American independence. After the secession of Ecuador from Columbia, he obtained from Gen. Flores a grant of one of the Galapagos Islands—a group well known to whalers, lying on the equator, six hundred miles west of Guayaquil. On this island, which he named Floriana, he has lived for the past sixteen years. His colony contains a hundred and fifty souls, who raise on the light, new soil, abundant crops of grain and vegetables. The island is fifteen miles in length, by twelve in breadth, lying in lat. 1° 30′ S. and its highest part is about 5,000 feet above the level of the sea. The soil is but from twelve to eighteen inches deep, yet such is the profusion of vegetable growth, that, as Gen. Villamil informed me, its depth has in many places increased six inches

since he first landed there. The supply of water is obtained in a very singular manner. A large porous rock, on the side of one of the mountains, seems to serve as an outlet or filter for some subterranean vein, since on its base, which is constantly humid, the drops collect and fall in sufficient abundance to supply a large basin in the rock below. Pipes from this deposit convey the water to the valley. Its quality is cool, sweet and limpid, and the rocky sponge from which it drips never fails in its supply.

We were within sight of the Coast Range of California all day, after passing Cape Conception. Their sides are spotted with timber, which in the narrow valleys sloping down to the sea appeared to be of large growth. From their unvarying yellow hue, we took them to be mountains of sand, but they were in reality covered with natural harvests of wild oats, as I afterwards learned, on traveling into the interior. A keen, bracing wind at night kept down the fog, and although the thermometer fell to 52°, causing a general shiver on board, I walked the deck a long time, noting the extraordinary brilliancy of the stars in the pure air. The mood of our passengers changed very visibly as we approached the close of the voyage; their exhilarant anticipations left them, and were succeeded by a reaction of feeling that almost amounted to despondency. The return to laborious life after a short exemption from its cares, as in the case of travel, is always attended with some such feeling, but among the California emigrants it was intensified by the uncertainty of their venture in a region where all the ordinary rules of trade and enterprise would be at fault.

When I went on deck in the clear dawn, while yet

> "The maiden splendors of the morning-star
> Shook in the steadfast blue,"

we were rounding Point Pinos into the harbor of Monterey. As we drew near, the white, scattered dwellings of the town, situated on a gentle slope, behind which extended on all sides the celebrated Pine Forest, became visible in the grey light. A handsome fort, on an eminence near the sea, returned our salute. Four vessels, shattered, weather-beaten and apparently deserted, lay at anchor not far from shore. The town is larger than I expected to find it, and from the water has the air of a large New-England village, barring the *adobe* houses. Major Lee and Lieut. Beale, who went ashore in the steamer's boat, found Gen. Riley, the Civil Governor, very ill with a fever. As we were preparing to leave, the sun rose over the mountains, covering the air with gold brighter than ever was scratched up on the Sacramento. The picturesque houses of Monterey, the pine woods behind and the hills above them, glowed like an illuminated painting, till a fog-curtain which met us at the mouth of the harbor dropped down upon the water and hid them all from sight.

At last the voyage is drawing to a close. Fifty-one days have elapsed since leaving New York, in which time we have, in a manner, coasted both sides of the North-American Continent, from the parallel of 40° N. to its termination, within a few degrees of the Equator, over seas once ploughed by the keels of Columbus and Balboa, of Grijalva and Sebastian Viscaino. All is excitement on board; the Captain has just taken his noon observation. We are running along the shore, within six or eight miles' distance; the hills are bare and sandy, but loom up finely through the deep blue haze. A brig bound to San Francisco, but fallen off to the leeward of the harbor, is making a new tack on our left, to come

up again. The coast trends somewhat more to the westward, and a notch or gap is at last visible in its lofty outline.

An hour later; we are in front of the entrance to San Francisco Bay. The mountains on the northern side are 3,000 feet in hight, and come boldly down to the sea. As the view opens through the splendid strait, three or four miles in width, the island rock of Alcatraz appears, gleaming white in the distance. An inward-bound ship follows close on our wake, urged on by wind and tide. There is a small fort perched among the trees on our right, where the strait is narrowest, and a glance at the formation of the hills shows that this pass might be made impregnable as Gibraltar. The town is still concealed behind the promontory around which the Bay turns to the southward, but between Alcatraz and the island of Yerba Buena, now coming into sight, I can see vessels at anchor. High through the vapor in front, and thirty miles distant, rises the peak of Monte Diablo, which overlooks everything between the Sierra Nevada and the Ocean. On our left opens the bight of Sousolito, where the U. S. propeller Massachusetts and several other vessels are at anchor.

At last we are through the Golden Gate—fit name for such a magnificent portal to the commerce of the Pacific! Yerba Buena Island is in front; southward and westward opens the renowned harbor, crowded with the shipping of the world, mast behind mast and vessel behind vessel, the flags of all nations fluttering in the breeze! Around the curving shore of the Bay and upon the sides of three hills which rise steeply from the water, the middle one receding so as to form a bold amphitheatre, the town is planted and seems scarcely yet to have taken root, for tents, canvas, plank, mud and adobe houses are mingled together with the least apparent

attempt at order and durability. But I am not yet on shore. The gun of the Panama has just announced our arrival to the people on land. We glide on with the tide, past the U. S. ship Ohio and opposite the main landing, outside of the forest of masts. A dozen boats are creeping out to us over the water; the signal is given—the anchor drops—our voyage is over.

CHAPTER VI.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF SAN FRANCISCO.

I LEFT the Panama, in company with Lieut. Beale, in the boat of the U. S. ship Ohio, which brought Lieutenant Ells on board. We first boarded the noble ship, which, even in San Francisco harbor, showed the same admirable order as on our own coast. She had returned from Honolulu a few days previous, after an absence of three months from California. The morning of our arrival, eighteen of her men had contrived to escape, carrying with them one of the boats, under fire from all the Government vessels in the harbor. The officers were eager for news from home, having been two months without a mail, and I was glad that my habit of carrying newspapers in my pockets enabled me to furnish them with a substantial gratification. The Ohio's boat put us ashore at the northern point of the anchorage, at the foot of a steep bank, from which a high pier had been built into the bay. A large vessel lay at the end, discharging her cargo. We scrambled up through piles of luggage, and among the crowd collected to witness our arrival, picked out two Mexicans to carry our trunks to a hotel. The barren side of the hill before us was covered with tents and canvas houses, and nearly in front a large two-story building displayed the sign: "Fremont Family Hotel."

As yet, we were only in the suburbs of the town. Crossing the shoulder of the hill, the view extended around the curve of the bay, and hundreds of tents and houses appeared, scattered all over the heights, and along the shore for more than a mile. A furious wind was blowing down through a gap in the hills, filling the streets with clouds of dust. On every side stood buildings of all kinds, begun or half-finished, and the greater part of them mere canvas sheds, open in front, and covered with all kinds of signs, in all languages. Great quantities of goods were piled up in the open air, for want of a place to store them. The streets were full of people, hurrying to and fro, and of as diverse and bizarre a character as the houses: Yankees of every possible variety, native Californians in *sarapes* and sombreros, Chilians, Sonorians, Kanakas from Hawaii, Chinese with long tails, Malays armed with their everlasting creeses, and others in whose embrowned and bearded visages it was impossible to recognize any especial nationality. We came at last into the plaza, now dignified by the name of Portsmouth Square. It lies on the slant side of the hill, and from a high pole in front of a long one-story adobe building used as the Custom House, the American flag was flying. On the lower side stood the Parker House—an ordinary frame house of about sixty feet front—and towards its entrance we directed our course.

Our luggage was deposited on one of the rear porticos, and we discharged the porters, after paying them two dollars each—a sum so immense in comparison to the service rendered that there was no longer any doubt of our having actually landed in California. There were no lodgings to be had at the Parker House—not even a place to unroll our blankets; but one of the proprietors accompanied us across the plaza to the City Hotel, where we ob-

tained a room with two beds at $25 per week, meals being in addition $20 per week. I asked the landlord whether he could send a porter for our trunks. "There is none belonging to the house," said he; "every man is his own porter here." I returned to the Parker House, shouldered a heavy trunk, took a valise in my hand and carried them to my quarters, in the teeth of the wind. Our room was in a sort of garret over the only story of the hotel; two cots, evidently of California manufacture, and covered only with a pair of blankets, two chairs, a rough table and a small looking-glass, constituted the furniture. There was not space enough between the bed and the bare rafters overhead, to sit upright, and I gave myself a severe blow in rising the next morning without the proper heed. Through a small roof-window of dim glass, I could see the opposite shore of the bay, then partly hidden by the evening fogs. The wind whistled around the eaves and rattled the tiles with a cold, gusty sound, that would have imparted a dreary character to the place, had I been in a mood to listen.

Many of the passengers began speculation at the moment of landing. The most ingenious and successful operation was made by a gentleman of New York, who took out fifteen hundred copies of The Tribune and other papers, which he disposed of in two hours, at one dollar a-piece! Hearing of this I bethought me of about a dozen papers which I had used to fill up crevices in packing my valise. There was a newspaper merchant at the corner of the City Hotel, and to him I proposed the sale of them, asking him to name a price. "I shall want to make a good profit on the retail price," said he, "and can't give more than ten dollars for the lot." I was satisfied with the wholesale price, which was a gain of just four thousand per cent!

I set out for a walk before dark and climbed a hill back of

the town, passing a number of tents pitched in the hollows. The scattered houses spread out below me and the crowded shipping in the harbor, backed by a lofty line of mountains, made an imposing picture. The restless, feverish tide of life in that little spot, and the thought that what I then saw and was yet to see will hereafter fill one of the most marvellous pages of all history, rendered it singularly impressive. The feeling was not decreased on talking that evening with some of the old residents, (that is, of six months' standing,) and hearing their several experiences. Every new-comer in San Francisco is overtaken with a sense of complete bewilderment. The mind, however it may be prepared for an astonishing condition of affairs, cannot immediately push aside its old instincts of value and ideas of business, letting all past experiences go for naught and casting all its faculties for action, intercourse with its fellows or advancement in any path of ambition, into shapes which it never before imagined. As in the turn of the dissolving views, there is a period when it wears neither the old nor the new phase, but the vanishing images of the one and the growing perceptions of the other are blended in painful and misty confusion. One knows not whether he is awake or in some wonderful dream. Never have I had so much difficulty in establishing, satisfactorily to my own senses, the reality of what I saw and heard.

I was forced to believe many things, which in my communications to The Tribune I was almost afraid to write, with any hope of their obtaining credence. It may be interesting to give here a few instances of the enormous and unnatural value put upon property at the time of my arrival. The Parker House rented for $110,000 yearly, at least $60,000 of which was paid by gamblers, who held nearly all the second story. Adjoining it on

the right was a canvas-tent fifteen by twenty-five feet, called "Eldorado," and occupied likewise by gamblers, which brought $40,000. On the opposite corner of the plaza, a building called the "Miner's Bank," used by Wright & Co., brokers, about half the size of a fire-engine house in New York, was held at a rent of $75,000. A mercantile house paid $40,000 rent for a one-story building of twenty feet front; the United States Hotel, $36,000; the Post-Office, $7,000, and so on to the end of the chapter. A friend of mine, who wished to find a place for a law-office, was shown a cellar in the earth, about twelve feet square and six deep, which he could have at $250 a month. One of the common soldiers at the battle of San Pasquale was reputed to be among the millionaires of the place, with an income of $50,000 *monthly*. A citizen of San Francisco died insolvent to the amount of $41,000 the previous Autumn. His administrators were delayed in settling his affairs, and his real estate advanced so rapidly in value meantime, that after his debts were paid his heirs had a yearly income of $40,000. These facts were indubitably attested; every one believed them, yet hearing them talked of daily, as matters of course, one at first could not help feeling as if he had been eating of "the insane root."

The prices paid for labor were in proportion to everything else. The carman of Mellus, Howard & Co. had a salary of $6,000 a year, and many others made from $15 to $20 daily. Servants were paid from $100 to $200 a month, but the wages of the rougher kinds of labor had fallen to about $8. Yet, notwithstanding the number of gold-seekers who were returning enfeebled and disheartened from the mines, it was difficult to obtain as many workmen as the forced growth of the city demanded. A gentleman who arrived in April told me he then found but thirty or

forty houses; the population was then so scant that not more than twenty-five persons would be seen in the streets at any one time. Now, there were probably five hundred houses, tents and sheds, with a population, fixed and floating, of six thousand. People who had been absent six weeks came back and could scarcely recognize the place. Streets were regularly laid out, and already there were three piers, at which small vessels could discharge. It was calculated that the town increased daily by from fifteen to thirty houses; its skirts were rapidly approaching the summits of the three hills on which it is located.

A curious result of the extraordinary abundance of gold and the facility with which fortunes were acquired, struck me at the first glance. All business was transacted on so extensive a scale that the ordinary habits of solicitation and compliance on the one hand and stubborn cheapening on the other, seemed to be entirely forgotten. You enter a shop to buy something; the owner eyes you with perfect indifference, waiting for you to state your want; if you object to the price, you are at liberty to leave, for you need not expect to get it cheaper; he evidently cares little whether you buy it or not. One who has been some time in the country will lay down the money, without wasting words. The only exception I found to this rule was that of a sharp-faced Down-Easter just opening his stock, who was much distressed when his clerk charged me seventy-five cents for a coil of rope, instead of one dollar. This disregard for all the petty arts of money-making was really a refreshing feature of society. Another equally agreeable trait was the punctuality with which debts were paid, and the general confidence which men were obliged to place, perforce, in each other's honesty. Perhaps this latter fact was owing, in part, to the impossibility of protecting wealth, and

consequent dependence on an honorable regard for the rights of others.

About the hour of twilight the wind fell; the sound of a gong called us to tea, which was served in the largest room of the hotel. The fare was abundant and of much better quality than we expected—better, in fact, than I was able to find there two months later. The fresh milk, butter and excellent beef of the country were real luxuries after our sea-fare. Thus braced against the fog and raw temperature, we sallied out for a night-view of San Francisco, then even more peculiar than its daylight look. Business was over about the usual hour, and then the harvest-time of the gamblers commenced. Every "hell" in the place, and I did not pretend to number them, was crowded, and immense sums were staked at the monte and faro tables. A boy of fifteen, in one place, won about $500, which he coolly pocketed and carried off. One of the gang we brought in the Panama won $1,500 in the course of the evening, and another lost $2,400. A fortunate miner made himself conspicuous by betting large piles of ounces on a single throw. His last stake of 100 oz. was lost, and I saw him the following morning dashing through the streets, trying to break his own neck or that of the magnificent *garañon* he bestrode.

Walking through the town the next day, I was quite amazed to find a dozen persons busily employed in the street before the United States Hotel, digging up the earth with knives and crumbling it in their hands. They were actual gold-hunters, who obtained in this way about $5 a day. After blowing the fine dirt carefully in their hands, a few specks of gold were left, which they placed in a piece of white paper. A number of children were engaged in the same business, picking out the fine grains by

applying to them the head of a pin, moistened in their mouths. I was told of a small boy having taken home $14 as the result of one day's labor. On climbing the hill to the Post Office I observed in places, where the wind had swept away the sand, several glittering dots of the real metal, but, like the Irishman who kicked the dollar out of his way, concluded to wait till I should reach the heap. The presence of gold in the streets was probably occasioned by the leakings from the miners' bags and the sweepings of stores; though it may also be, to a slight extent, native in the earth, particles having been found in the clay thrown up from a deep well.

The arrival of a steamer with a mail ran the usual excitement and activity of the town up to its highest possible notch. The little Post Office, half-way up the hill, was almost hidden from sight by the crowds that clustered around it. Mr. Moore, the new Postmaster, who was my fellow-traveler from New York, barred every door and window from the moment of his entrance, and with his sons and a few clerks, worked steadily for two days and two nights, till the distribution of twenty thousand letters was completed. Among the many persons I met, the day after landing, was Mr. T. Butler King, who had just returned from an expedition to the placers, in company with General Smith. Mr. Edwin Bryant, of Kentucky, and Mr. Durivage, of New Orleans, had arrived a few days previous, the former by way of the Great Salt Lake, and the latter by the northern provinces of Mexico and the Gila. I found the artist Osgood in a studio about eight feet square, with a head of Captain Sutter on his easel. He had given up gold-digging, after three months of successful labor among the mountains.

I could make no thorough acquaintance with San Francisco

during this first visit. Lieutenant Beale, who held important Government dispatches for Colonel Frémont, made arrangements to leave for San José on the second morning, and offered me a seat on the back of one of his mules. Our fellow-passenger, Colonel Lyons, of Louisiana, joined us, completing the mystic number which travelers should be careful not to exceed. We made hasty tours through all the shops on Clay, Kearney, Washington and Montgomery streets, on the hunt of the proper equipments. Articles of clothing were cheaper than they had been or were afterwards; tolerable blankets could be had for $6 a pair; coarse flannel shirts, $3; Chilian spurs, with rowels two inches long, $5, and Mexican sarapes, of coarse texture but gay color, $10. We could find no saddle-bags in the town, and were necessitated to pack one of the mules. Among our camping materials were a large hatchet and plenty of rope for making lariats; in addition to which each of us carried a wicker flask slung over one shoulder. We laid aside our civilized attire, stuck long sheath-knives into our belts, put pistols into our pockets and holsters, and buckled on the immense spurs which jingled as they struck the ground at every step. Our "animals" were already in waiting; an *alazan*, the Californian term for a sorrel horse, a beautiful brown mule, two of a cream color and a dwarfish little fellow whose long forelock and shaggy mane gave him altogether an elfish character of cunning and mischief.

CHAPTER VII.

TO THE SAN JOAQUIN, ON MULEBACK.

It was noon before we got everything fairly in order and moved slowly away from the City Hotel, where a number of our fellow-passengers—the only idlers in the place, because just arrived—were collected to see us start. Shouldering our packs until we should be able to purchase an *aparéjo*, or pack-saddle, from some Mexican on the road, and dragging after us two reluctant mules by their lariats of horse-hair, we climbed the first "rise," dividing the town from the Happy Valley. Here we found a party of Sonorians encamped on the sand, with their mules turned loose and the harness scattered about them. After a little bargaining, we obtained one of their pack-saddles for eight dollars. Lieut. Beale jumped down, caught the little mule—which to his great surprise he recognized as an old acquaintance among the Rocky Mountains during the previous winter—and commenced packing. In my zeal to learn all the mysteries of mountain-life, I attempted to alight and assist him; but alas! the large rowel of my spur caught in the folds of a blanket strapped to the saddle, the girth slipped and I was ingloriously thrown on my back. The Sonorians laughed heartily, but came forward and re-adjusted the saddle with a willingness that reconciled me to their mirth.

All was finally arranged and we urged our mules along in the sand, over hills covered with thickets of evergreen oak. The guns of the Ohio, fired for the obsequies of ex-president Polk, echoed among the mountains of the bay, and companies of horsemen, coming in from the interior, appeared somewhat startled at the sound. Three miles from San Francisco is the old Mission of Dolores, situated in a sheltered valley, which is watered by a perpetual stream, fed from the tall peaks towards the sea. As we descended a long sand-hill before reaching the valley, Picayune, our pack-mule, suddenly came to a stop. Lieut. Beale, who had a most thorough knowledge of mule-craft, dismounted and untied the lash-rope; the pack had slightly shifted, and Picayune, who was as knowing as he was perverse, would not move a step till it was properly adjusted. We now kept the two loose mules in advance and moved forward in better order. The mountains beyond the Mission are bleak and barren and the dire north-west wind, sweeping in from the sea through their gorges, chilled us to the bones as we rode over them.

After ascending for some distance by a broad road, in which, at short intervals, lay the carcasses of mules and horses, attended by flocks of buzzards, we passed through a notch in the main chain, whence there was a grand look-out to the sea on one side, to the bay on the other. We were glad, however, to descend from these raw and gusty heights, along the sides of the mountains of San Bruno, to the fertile and sheltered plains of Santa Clara. Large herds of cattle are pastured in this neighborhood, the grass in the damp flats and wild oats on the mountains, affording them sufficient food during the dry season. At Sanchez' Ranche, which we reached just before sunset, there was neither grass nor barley and we turned our mules supperless into the corral. The Señora

Sanchez, after some persuasion, stirred up the fire in the mud kitchen and prepared for us a *guisado* of beef and onions, with some rank black tea. As soon as it was dark, we carried our equipments into the house, and by a judicious arrangement of our saddles, blankets and clothes, made a grand bed for three, where we should have slept, had fleas been lobsters. But as they were fleas, of the largest and savagest kind, we nearly perished before morning. Rather than start for the day with starved animals, we purchased half a *fanega*—a little more than a bushel—of wheat, for $5. Mr. Beale's horse was the only one who did justice to this costly feed, and we packed the rest on the back of little Picayune, who gave an extra groan when it was added to his load.

Our road now led over broad plains, through occasional belts of timber. The grass was almost entirely burnt up, and dry, gravelly arroyos, in and out of which we went with a plunge and a scramble, marked the courses of the winter streams. The air was as warm and balmy as May, and fragrant with the aroma of a species of gnaphalium, which made it delicious to inhale. Not a cloud was to be seen in the sky, and the high, sparsely-wooded mountains on either hand, showed softened and indistinct through a blue haze. The character of the scenery was entirely new to me. The splendid valley, untenanted except by a few solitary rancheros living many miles apart, seemed to be some deserted location of ancient civilization and culture. The wooded slopes of the mountains are lawns, planted by Nature with a taste to which Art could add no charm. The trees have nothing of the wild growth of our forests; they are compact, picturesque, and grouped in every variety of graceful outline. The hills were covered to the summit with fields of wild oats, coloring them

as far as the eye could reach, with tawny gold, against which the dark, glossy green of the oak and cypress showed with peculiar effect. As we advanced further, these natural harvests extended over the plain, mixed with vast beds of wild mustard, eight feet in height, under which a thick crop of grass had sprung up, furnishing sustenance to the thousands of cattle, roaming everywhere unherded. The only cultivation I saw was a small field of maize, green and with good ears.

I never felt a more thorough, exhilarating sense of freedom than when first fairly afloat on these vast and beautiful plains. With the mule as my shallop, urged steadily onward past the tranquil isles and long promontories of timber; drinking, with a delight that almost made it a flavor on the palate, the soft, elastic, fragrant air; cut off, for the time, from every irksome requirement of civilization, and cast loose, like a stray, unshackled spirit, on the bosom of a new earth, I seemed to take a fresh and more perfect lease of existence. The mind was in exquisite harmony with the outer world, and the same sensuous thrill of Life vibrated through each. The mountains showed themselves through the magical screen of the haze; far on our left the bay made a faint, glimmering line, like a rod of light, cutting off the hardly-seen hills beyond it, from the world; and on all sides, from among the glossy clumps of bay and evergreen oak, the chirrup and cheery whistle of birds rang upon the air.

After a ride of twenty-five miles without grass, water or sign of habitation, we stopped to rest at a ranche, in the garden of which I found a fine patch of grape vines, laden with flourishing bunches. We watered our mules with a basket of Indian manufacture, so closely plaited that scarcely a drop found its way through. At the ranche we met an emigrant returning from the mines, and

were strongly advised to turn back. He had evidently mistaken his capacity when he came to California. "You think you are very wise," said he, "and you'll believe nothing; but it won't be long before you'll find out the truth of my words. You'll have to sleep on the ground every night and take care of your own animals; and you may think yourselves lucky if you get your regular meals." We fully agreed with him in every respect, but he took it all for unbelieving irony. At Whisman's ranche, two miles further, we stopped to dinner. The sight of a wooden house gladdened our eyes, and still more so that of the home-made bread, fresh butter and milk which Mrs. Whisman set before us. The family had lived there nearly two years and were well contented with the country. The men go occasionally to the mines and dig, but are prudent enough not to neglect their farming operations. The grass on the vega before the house was still thick and green, and a well fifteen feet deep supplied them with good water. The vegetables in their garden, though planted late, were growing finely; the soil is a rich, dark loam, now as cracked and dry as a cinder, but which, under the Winter and Spring rains, is hidden by a deluge of vegetable bloom.

As evening drew on the white spire of Santa Clara Mission showed in the distance, and an hour's sharp riding brought us in front of its old white-washed walls. The buildings, once very spacious in extent, are falling into ruin, and a single monk in the corridor, habited in a very dirty cowl and cassock, was the only saintly inhabitant we saw. The Mission estate, containing twenty-five thousand head of cattle and many square leagues of land, was placed by Gen. Kearney in charge of Padre del Real, President of the Missions of the North. The Padre, however, exceeded his powers by making leases of the Mission lands to emigrants and others,

and devoting the proceeds to the benefit of the Church Personal. At the time we passed, several frame houses had sprung up around the Mission, on grounds thus leased. Beyond the buildings, we entered a magnificent road, three miles in length, and shaded by an avenue of evergreen oaks, leading to Pueblo San José, which we reached at dusk.

Pueblo San José, situated about five miles from the southern extremity of the Bay of San Francisco, and in the mouth of the beautiful valley of San José, is one of the most flourishing inland towns in California. On my first visit, it was mainly a collection of adobe houses, with tents and a few clapboard dwellings, of the season's growth, scattered over a square half-mile. As we were entering, I noticed a little white box, with pillars and triangular façade in front, and remarked to my friend that it had certainly been taken bodily from Lynn and set down there. Truly enough, it was a shoe store! Several stores and hotels had been opened within a few weeks, and the price of lots was only lower than those of San Francisco. We rode into an open plaza, a quarter of a mile in length, about which the town was built, and were directed to the Miner's Home, a decent-looking hotel, near its northern end. Our mules were turned into a stable at hand; tea, with the substantial addition of beefsteak, was served to us, and lighting the calumet, we lounged on the bench at the door, enjoying that repose which is only tasted after wearisome travel. Lieut. Beale went off to seek Col. Frémont, who was staying at the house of Mr. Grove Cook; Col. Lyons and myself lay down on the floor among half a dozen other travelers and fleas which could not be counted.

In the morning we went with Lieut. Beale to call upon Col. Frémont, whom we found on the portico of Mr. Cook's house,

wearing a sombrero and Californian jacket, and showing no trace of the terrible hardships he had lately undergone. It may be interesting to the thousands who have followed him, as readers may, on his remarkable journeys and explorations for the past eight years, to know that he is a man of about thirty-five years of age; of medium height, and lightly, but most compactly knit—in fact, I have seen in no other man the qualities of lightness, activity, strength and physical endurance in so perfect an equilibrium. His face is rather thin and embrowned by exposure; his nose a bold aquiline and his eyes deep-set and keen as a hawk's. The rough camp-life of many years has lessened in no degree his native refinement of character and polish of manners. A stranger would never suppose him to be the Columbus of our central wildernesses, though when so informed, would believe it without surprise.

After the disastrous fate of his party on the head waters of the Rio del Norte, Col. Frémont took the southern route through Sonora, striking the Gila River at the Pimos Village. It was exceedingly rough and fatiguing, but he was fortunate enough to find in the bottoms along the river, where no vegetation had been heard of or expected, large patches of wild wheat. The only supposition by which this could be accounted for, was that it fell from the store-wagons attached to Major Graham's command, which passed over the route the previous autumn. Otherwise, the bursting forth of a river in the midst of the Great Desert, which I have already mentioned, and the appearance of wheat among the sterile sands of the Gila, would seem like a marvellous coincidence, not wholly unsuited to the time. Col. Frémont had just returned from the Mariposa River, where his party of men was successfully engaged in go'd-digging. In addition, he had com-

menced a more secure business, in the establishment of a steam saw-mill at Pueblo San José. The forests of redwood close at hand make fine timber, and he had a year's work engaged before the mill was in operation. Lumber was then bringing $500 per thousand feet, and not long before brought $1,500.

At the house of Mr. Cook we also saw Andrew Sublette, the celebrated mountaineer, who accompanied Lieut. Beale on hi overland journey, the winter before. He was lame from scurvy brought on by privations endured on that occasion and his subsequent labors in the placers. Sublette, who from his bravery and daring has obtained among the Indians the name of Kee-ta-tah-ve-sak, or One-who-walks-in-fire, is a man of about thirty-seven, of fair complexion, long brown hair and beard, and a countenance expressing the extreme of manly frankness and integrity. Lieut. Beale, who has the highest admiration of his qualities, related to me many instances of his heroic character. Preuss and Kreuzfeldt, Frémont's old campaigners, who so narrowly escaped perishing among the snows of the central chain, were at the Miner's Home, at the time of our stay.

About noon we saddled our mules, laid in a stock of provisions and started for Stockton. At the outset, it was almost impossible to keep the animals in order; Picayune, in spite of his load, dashed out into the mustard fields, and Ambrose, our brown mule, led us off in all sorts of zigzag chases. The man to whom we had paid $2 a head for their night's lodging and fare, had absolutely starved them, and the poor beasts resisted our efforts to make them travel. In coursing after them through the tall weeds, we got off the trail, and it was some time before we made much progress towards the Mission of San José. The valley, fifteen miles in breadth, is well watered and may be made to produce the finest

wheat crops in the world. It is perfectly level and dotted all over its surface with clumps of magnificent oaks, cypresses and sycamores. A few miles west of the Pueblo there is a large forest of red wood, or California cypress, and the quicksilver mines of Santa Clara are in the same vicinity. Sheltered from the cold winds of the sea, the climate is like that of Italy. The air is a fluid balm.

Before traveling many miles we overtook a Sonorian riding on his *burro* or jackass, with a wooden bowl hanging to the saddle and a crowbar and lance slung crosswise before him. We offered him the use of our extra mule if he would join us, to which he gave a willing consent. Burro was accordingly driven loose laden with the gold-hunting tools, and our Bedouin, whom we christened Tompkins, trotted beside us well pleased. At the Mission of San José we dispatched him to buy meat, and for half a dollar he brought us at least six yards, salted and slightly dried for transportation. The Mission—a spacious stone building, with courtyard and long corridors—is built upon the lower slope of the mountains dividing San Francisco Bay from the San Joaquin valley, and a garden extends behind it along the banks of a little stream.

The sight of a luxuriant orchard peeping over the top of its mud walls, was too tempting to be resisted, so, leaving Lieutenant Beale to jog ahead with Tompkins and the loose animals, Colonel Lyons and myself rode up the hill, scrambled over and found ourselves in a wilderness of ripening fruit. Hundreds of pear and apple trees stood almost breaking with their harvest, which lay rotting by cart-loads on the ground. Plums, grapes, figs and other fruits, not yet ripened, filled the garden. I shall never forget how grateful the pears of San José were to our parched throats, nor what an alarming quantity we ate before we found it

possible to stop. I have been told that the garden is irrigated during the dry season, and that where this method is practicable, fruit trees of all kinds can be made to yield to a remarkable extent.

Immediately on leaving the Mission we struck into a narrow cañon among the mountains, and following its windings reached the "divide," or ridge which separates the streams, in an hour. From the summit the view extended inland over deep valleys and hazy mountain ranges as far as the vision could reach. Lines of beautiful timber followed the course of the arroyos down the sides, streaking the yellow hue of the wild oats, which grew as thickly as an ordinary crop at home. Descending to a watered valley, we heard some one shouting from a slope on our left, where a herd of cattle was grazing. It was Lieut. Beale, who had chosen our camping-ground in a little glen below, under a cluster of oaks. We unpacked, watered our mules, led them up a steep ascent, and picketed them in a thick bed of oats. I had taken the lash-rope, of plaited raw-hide, for the purpose of tethering Ambrose, but Tompkins, who saw me, cried: "*Cuidado! hay bastante coyotes aqui*," (Take care! there are plenty of coyotes here)—which animals invariably gnaw in twain all kinds of ropes except hemp and horse-hair. The picketing done, we set about cooking our supper; Tompkins was very active in making the fire, and when all was ready, produced a good dish of stewed beef and tortillas, to which we added some ham, purchased in San José at eighty cents the pound. We slept under the branching curtains of our glen chamber, wakened only once or twice by the howling of the coyotes and the sprinkling of rain in our faces. By sunrise we had breakfast and started again.

The first twenty miles of our journey passed through one of

the most beautiful regions in the world. The broad oval valleys, shaded by magnificent oaks and enclosed by the lofty mountains of the Coast Range, open beyond each other like a suite of palace chambers, each charming more than the last. The land is admirably adapted for agricultural or grazing purposes, and in a few years will become one of the most flourishing districts in California.

We passed from these into hot, scorched plains, separated by low ranges of hills, on one of which is situated Livermore's Ranche, whose owner, Mr. Livermore, is the oldest American resident in the country, having emigrated thither in 1820. He is married to a native woman, and seems to have entirely outgrown his former habits of life. We obtained from him dinner for ourselves and mules at $2 25 each; and finding there was neither grass nor water for twenty-five miles, made an early start for our long afternoon's ride. The road entered another cañon, through which we toiled for miles before reaching the last "divide." On the summit we met several emigrant companies with wagons, coming from Sutter's Mill. The children, as brown and wild-looking as Indians, trudged on in the dust, before the oxen, and several girls of twelve years old, rode behind on horses, keeping together the loose animals of the party. Their invariable greeting was: "How far to water?"

From the top of the divide we hailed with a shout the great plain of San Joaquin, visible through the openings among the hills, like a dark-blue ocean, to which the leagues of wild oats made a vast beach of yellow sand. At least a hundred miles of its surface were visible, and the hazy air, made more dense by the smoke of the burning tulé marshes, alone prevented us from seeing the snowy outline of the Sierra Nevada. After descending

and traveling a dozen miles on the hot, arid level, we reached a slough making out from the San Joaquin. The sun had long been down, but a bright quarter-moon was in the sky, by whose light we selected a fine old tree for our place of repose. A tent, belonging to some other travelers, was pitched at a little distance.

Feeling the ground with our hands to find the spots where the grass was freshest, we led our mules into a little tongue of meadow-land, half-embraced by the slough, and tied them to the low branches, giving them the full benefit of their tether. Tompkins complained of illness, and rolling himself in his sarape, lay down on the plain, under the open sky. We were too hungry to dispose of the day so quickly; a yard of jerked beef was cut off, and while Lieut. Beale prepared it for cooking, Col. Lyons and myself wandered about in the shadow of the trees, picking up everything that cracked under our feet. The clear red blaze of the fire made our oak-tree an enchanted palace. Its great arms, that arched high above us and bent down till they nearly reached the ground, formed a hollow dome around the columnar trunk, which was fretted and embossed with a thousand ornaments of foliage. The light streamed up, momentarily, reddening the deeps within deeps of the bronze-like leaves; then sinking low again, the shadows returned and the stars winked brightly between the wreathed mullions of our fantastic windows.

The meal finished, we went towards the tent in our search for water. Several sleepers, rolled in their blankets, were stretched under the trees, and two of them, to our surprise, were enjoying the luxury of musquito bars. On the bank of the slough, we found a shallow well, covered with dead boughs; Lieut. Beale, stretching his hand down towards the water, took hold of a snake, which was even more startled than he. Our quest was repaid by

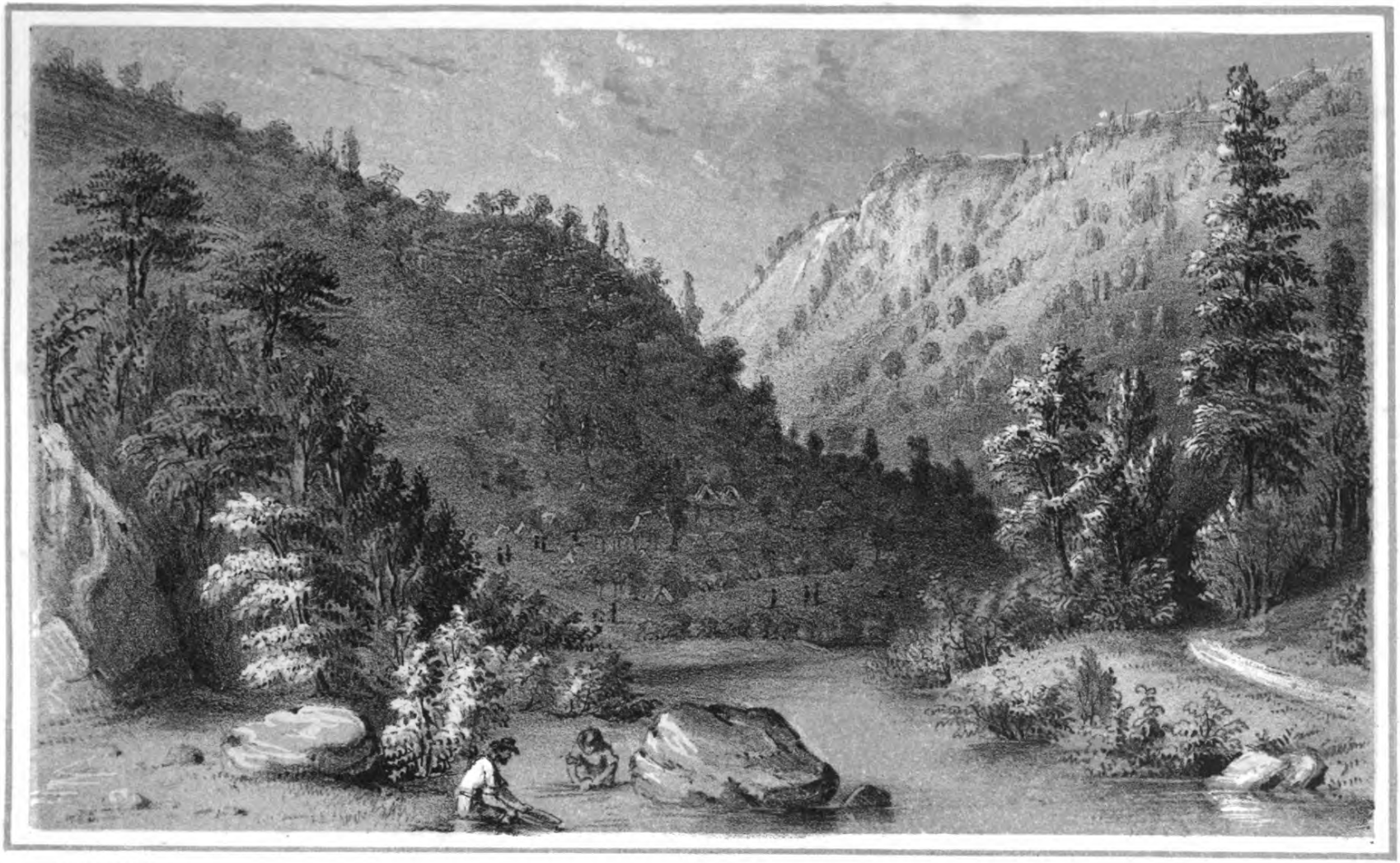
a hearty draught, notwithstanding its earthy flavor, and we betook ourselves to sleep. The mosquitos were terribly annoying; after many vain attempts to escape them, I was forced to roll a blanket around my head, by which means I could sleep till I began to smother, and then repeat the operation. Waking about midnight, confused and flushed with this business, I saw the moon, looming fiery and large on the horizon. "Surely," thought I, with a half-awake wandering of fancy, "the moon has been bitten by mosquitos, and that is the reason why her face is so swollen and inflamed."

Five miles next morning took us to the San Joaquin, which was about thirty yards in width. Three Yankees had "squatted" at the crossing, and established a ferry; the charge for carrying over a man and horse was $2, and as this route was much traveled, their receipts ranged from $500 to $1,000 daily. In addition to this, they had a tavern and grazing camp, which were very profitable. They built the ferry-boat, which was a heavy flat, hauled across with a rope, with their own hands, as well as a launch of sixty tons, doing a fine business between Stockton and San Francisco. Tompkins, who perhaps imagined that some witchcraft of ours had occasioned his illness, here left us, and we saw his swarthy face no more. Disengaging our loose mules from a corral full of horses, into which they had dashed, from a sudden freak of affection, we launched into another plain, crossed in all directions by tulé swamps, and made towards a dim shore of timber twelve miles distant.

CHAPTER VIII.

CAMP-LIFE, AND A RIDE TO THE DIGGINGS.

As we came off the scorching calm of the plain into the shadow of the trees, we discerned two tents ahead, on a gentle knoll. This was the camp of Major Graham, who commanded the expedition sent from Monterey, Mexico, overland into California, in the summer of 1848. He was employing a little time, before returning home, in speculating on his own account and had established himself near Stockton with a large herd of horses and cattle, on which he was making good profits. Lieut. Beale was an old acquaintance of the Major's, and as friends of the former we were made equally welcome. We found him sitting on a camp-stool, outside the tent, wearing a hunting-jacket and broad-brimmed white hat. With a prompt hospitality that would take no denial, he ordered our mules driven out to his *caballada*, had our packs piled up in the shade of one of his oaks, and gave directions for dinner. For four days thereafter we saw the stars through his tree-tops, between our dreams, and shared the abundant fare of his camp-table, varying the delightful repose of such life by an occasional gallop into Stockton. Mr. Callahan, an old settler, who had pitched his tent near Major Graham's, went out every morning to hunt elk among the tulé, and we were daily supplied with steaks



BAYARD TAYLOR.

LITH. OF SARONY & MAJOR.

LOWER BAR, MOKELUMNE RIVER.

and cutlets from his spoils. In the early morning the elk might be seen in bands of forty or fifty, grazing on the edge of the marshes, where they were sometimes lassoed by the native vaqueros, and taken into Stockton. We saw the coyotes occasionally prowling along the margin of the slough, but they took good care to sneak off before a chance could be had to shoot them. The plain was perforated in all directions by the holes of a large burrowing squirrel, of a gray color, and flocks of magpies and tufted partridges made their covert in the weeds and wild oats.

Our first visit to Stockton was made in company, on some of Major Graham's choicest horses. A mettled roan *canalo* fell to my share, and the gallop of five miles without check was most inspiring. A view of Stockton was something to be remembered. There, in the heart of California, where the last winter stood a solitary ranche in the midst of tulé marshes, I found a canvas town of a thousand inhabitants, and a port with twenty-five vessels at anchor! The mingled noises of labor around—the click of of hammers and the grating of saws—the shouts of mule drivers —the jingling of spurs—the jar and jostle of wares in the tents—almost cheated me into the belief that it was some old commercial mart, familiar with such sounds for years past. Four months, only, had sufficed to make the place what it was; and in that time a wholesale firm established there (one out of a dozen) had done business to the amount of $100,000. The same party had just purchased a lot eighty by one hundred feet, on the principal street, for $6,000, and the cost of erecting a common one-story clapboard house on it was $15,000.

I can liken my days at Major Graham's camp to no previous phase of my existence. They were the realization of a desire sometimes felt, sometimes expressed in poetry, but rarely enjoyed

in complete fulfilment. In the repose of Nature, unbroken day or night; the subtle haze pervading the air, softening all sights and subduing all sounds; the still, breathless heat of the day and the starry hush of the night—the oak-tree was for me a perfect Castle of Indolence. Lying at full length on the ground, in listless ease, whichever way I looked my eye met the same enchanting groupage of the oaks, the same glorious outlines and massed shadows of foliage; while frequent openings, through the farthest clumps, gave boundless glimpses of the plain beyond. Scarcely a leaf stirred in the slumberous air; and giving way to the delicate languor that stole in upon my brain, I seemed to lie apart from my own mind and to watch the lazy waves of thought that sank on its shores without a jar. All effort—even the memory of effort—came like a sense of pain. It was an abandonment to rest, like that of the "Lotos-Eaters," and the feeling of these lines, not the words, was with me constantly:

> "Why should we toil alone,
> We only toil, who are the first of things,
> And make perpetual moan,
> Still from one sorrow to another thrown;
> Nor ever fold our wings
> And cease from wanderings,
> Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm:
> Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
> 'There is no joy but calm!'"

There is one peculiarity about the Californian oaks, which I do not remember to have seen noticed. In the dry heat of the long summer seasons, their fibre becomes brittle, and frequently at noon-day, when not a breath of air is stirring, one of their stout arms parts from the trunk without the slightest warning sound,

and drops bodily to the earth. More than one instance is related, in which persons have been killed by their fall. For this reason the native Californians generally camp outside of the range of the limbs.

After discussing our further plans, it was decided to visit the Mokelumne Diggings, which were the most accessible from Stockton. Accordingly, on Monday morning, our mules were driven in from the plain and saddled for the journey. The sun was shining hotly as we rode over the plain to Stockton, and the tent-streets of the miraculous town glowed like the avenues of a brick-kiln. The thermometer stood at 98°, and the parched, sandy soil burnt through our very boot-soles. We therefore determined to wait till evening before starting for another stage to the Mokelumne. While waiting in the tent of Mr. Belt, the alcalde of the place, I made acquaintance with two noted mountaineers—Mr. William Knight, the first man who followed in the track of Lewis and Clark, on the Columbia River, and White Elliott, a young Missourian, who for ten years had been rambling through New Mexico and the Rocky Mountains. The latter had been one of Lieut. Beale's men on the Gila, and the many perils they then shared gave their present meeting a peculiar interest. Elliott, who, young as he was, had undergone everything that could harden and toughen a man out of all sensibility, colored like a young girl; his eyes were wet and he scarcely found voice to speak. I had many opportunities of seeing him afterwards and appreciating his thorough nobleness and sincerity of character.

Mr. Raney, who had just established a line of conveyance to the Mokelumne, kindly offered to accompany us as far as his ranche on the Calaveras River, twenty-four miles distant. We started at four o'clock, when a pleasant breeze had sprung up,

and rode on over the level plain, through beautiful groves of oak. The trail was crossed by deep, dry arroyos, which, in the rainy season, make the country almost impassable; now, however, the very beds of the tulé marshes were beginning to dry up. The air was thicker than ever with the smoke of burning tulé, and as we journeyed along in the hazy moonlight, the lower slopes of the mountains were not visible till we reached Mr. Raney's ranche, which lies at their base. We gave our tired mules a good feed of barley, and, after an excellent supper which he had prepared, betook ourselves to rest. The tent was made of saplings, roofed with canvas, but had cost $1,000; the plain all around was covered deep with dust, which the passing trains of mules kept constantly in the air. Nevertheless, for the first time in several days, we slept in a bed—the bed of Calaveras River, and in the deepest hollow of its gold-besprinkled sands. The stream, which in the spring is thirty feet deep, was perfectly dry, and the timber on its banks made a roof far above, which shut out the wind and sand, but let in the starlight. Heaping the loose gravel for pillows, we enjoyed a delightful sleep, interrupted only once by the howling of a large gray wolf, prowling in the thickets over us.

While waiting for breakfast, I saw a curious exemplification of the careless habits of the miners, in regard to money. One of the mule-drivers wanted to buy a pistol which belonged to another, and as the article was in reality worth next to nothing, offered him three dollars for it. "I will sell nothing for such a beggarly sum," said the owner: "you are welcome to take the pistol." The other took it, but laid the three dollars on a log, saying: "you must take it, for I shall never touch it again." "Well," was the reply, "then I'll do what I please with it;" and he flung the dollars into the road and walked away. An Irishman who

stood by, raked in the dust for some time, but only recovered about half the money.

Leaving the ranche soon after sunrise, we entered the hills The country was dotted with picturesque clumps of oak, and, as the ground became higher and more broken, with pines of splendid growth. Around their feet were scattered piles of immense cones, which had been broken up for the sake of the spicy kernels they contain. Trails of deer could be seen on all the hills, leading down to chance green spots in the hollows, which a month since furnished water. Now, however, the ground was parched as in a furnace ; the vegetation snapped like glass under the hoofs of our mules, and the cracks and seams in the arid soil seemed to give out an intense heat from some subterranean fire. In the glens and *cañadas*, where the little air stirring was cut off, the mercury rose to 110° ; perspiration was dried as soon as formed, and I began to think I should soon be done to a turn.

After traveling about fourteen miles, we were joined by three miners, and our mules, taking a sudden liking for their horses, jogged on at a more brisk rate. The instincts of the mulish heart form an interesting study to the traveler in the mountains. I would, were the comparison not too ungallant, liken it to a woman's, for it is quite as uncertain in its sympathies, bestowing its affections where least expected, and when bestowed, quite as constant, so long as the object is not taken away. Sometimes a horse, sometimes an ass, captivates the fancy of a whole drove of mules ; but often an animal nowise akin. Lieut. Beale told me that his whole train of mules once took a stampede on the plains of the Cimarone, and ran half a mile, when they halted in apparent satisfaction. The cause of their freak was found to be a buffalo calf, which had strayed from the herd. They were frisking around it

in the greatest delight, rubbing their noses against it, throwing up their heels and making themselves ridiculous by abortive attempts to neigh and bray, while the poor calf, unconscious of its attractive qualities, stood trembling in their midst. It is customary to have a horse in the *atajos*, or mule-trains, of the traders in Northern Mexico, as a sort of magnet to keep together the separate atoms of the train, for, whatever the temptation, they will never stray far from him.

We turned from the main road, which led to the Upper Bar, and took a faint trail leading over the hills to the Lower Bar. The winding *cañon* up which we passed must be a paradise in Spring; even at the close of August the dry bed of the stream was shaded by trees of every picturesque form that a painter could desire. Crossing several steep spurs, we reached the top of the divide overlooking the Mokelumne Valley, and here one of the most charming mountain landscapes in the world opened to our view. Under our very feet, as it seemed, flowed the river, and a little corner of level bottom, wedged between the bases of the hills, was dotted with the tents of the gold-hunters, whom we could see burrowing along the water. The mountains, range behind range, spotted with timber, made a grand, indistinct background in the smoky air,—a large, fortress-like butte, toward the Cosumne River, the most prominent of all. Had the atmosphere been clearer, the snowy crown of the Nevada, beyond all, would have made the picture equal to any in Tyrol.

Coming down the almost perpendicular side of the hill, my saddle began to slip over the mule's straight shoulders, and, dismounting, I waded the rest of the way knee-deep in dust. Near the bottom we came upon the Sonorian Town, as it was called, from the number of Mexican miners encamped there. The place,

which was a regularly laid-out town of sapling houses, without walls and roofed with loose oak boughs, had sprung up in the wilderness in three weeks: there were probably three hundred persons living in or near it. Under the open canopies of oak we heard, as we passed along, the jingle of coin at the monte tables, and saw crowds gathered to watch the progress of the game. One of the first men Lieutenant Beale saw was Baptiste Perrot, a mountaineer who had been in his overland party. He kept a hotel, which was an open space under a branch roof; the appliances were two tables of rough plank, (one for meals and one for monte,) with logs resting on forked limbs as seats, and a bar of similar materials, behind which was ranged a goodly stock of liquors and preserved provisions. We téthered our mules to a stump in the rear of the hotel, hastened supper, and made ourselves entirely at home.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DIGGINGS ON MOKELUMNE RIVER.

Our first move was for the river bottom, where a number of Americans, Sonorians, Kanakas and French were at work in the hot sun. The bar, as it was called, was nothing more nor less than a level space at the junction of the river with a dry arroyo or "gulch," which winds for about eight miles among the hills. It was hard and rocky, with no loose sand except such as had lodged between the large masses of stone, which must of course be thrown aside to get at the gold. The whole space, containing about four acres, appeared to have been turned over with great labor, and all the holes slanting down between the broken strata of slate, to have been explored to the bottom. No spot could appear more unpromising to the inexperienced gold-hunter. Yet the Sonorians, washing out the loose dust and dirt which they scraped up among the rocks, obtained from $10 to two ounces daily. The first party we saw had just succeeded in cutting a new channel for the shrunken waters of the Mokelumne, and were commencing operations on about twenty yards of the river-bed, which they had laid bare. They were ten in number, and their only implements were shovels, a rude cradle for the top layer of earth, and flat wooden bowls for washing out the sands. Bap-

tiste took one of the bowls which was full of sand, and in five minutes showed us a dozen grains of bright gold. The company had made in the forenoon about three pounds; we watched them at their work till the evening, when three pounds more were produced, making an average of seven ounces for each man. The gold was of the purest quality and most beautiful color. When I first saw the men, carrying heavy stones in the sun, standing nearly waist-deep in water, and grubbing with their hands in the gravel and clay, there seemed to me little virtue in resisting the temptation to gold digging; but when the shining particles were poured out lavishly from a tin basin, I confess there was a sudden itching in my fingers to seize the heaviest crowbar and the biggest shovel.

A company of thirty, somewhat further down the river, had made a much larger dam, after a month's labor, and a hundred yards of the bed were clear. They commenced washing in the afternoon and obtained a very encouraging result. The next morning, however, they quarreled, as most companies do, and finally applied to Mr. James and Dr. Gillette, two of the principal operators, to settle the difficulty by having the whole bed washed out at their own expense and taking half the gold. As all the heavy work was done, the contractors expected to make a considerable sum by the operation. Many of the Americans employed Sonorians and Indians to work for them, giving them half the gold and finding them in provisions. Notwithstanding the enormous prices of every article of food, these people could be kept for about a dollar daily—consequently those who hire them profited handsomely.

After we had taken the sharp edge off our curiosity, we returned to our quarters. Dr. Gillette, Mr. James, Captain Tracy and several other of the miners entertained us with a hospitality

as gratifying as it was unexpected. In the evening we sat down to a supper prepared by Baptiste and his partner, Mr. Fisher, which completed my astonishment at the resources of that wonderful land. There, in the rough depth of the hills, where three weeks before there was scarcely a tent, and where we expected to live on jerked beef and bread, we saw on the table green corn, green peas and beans, fresh oysters, roast turkey, fine Goshen butter and excellent coffee. I will not pretend to say what they cost, but I began to think that the fable of Aladdin was nothing very remarkable, after all. The genie will come, and had come to many whom I saw in California; but the rubbing of the lamp —aye, there's the rub. There is nothing in the world so hard on the hands.

I slept soundly that night on the dining-table, and went down early to the river, where I found the party of ten bailing out the water which had leaked into the river-bed during the night. They were standing in the sun, and had two hours' hard work before they could begin to wash. Again the prospect looked uninviting, but when I went there again towards noon, one of them was scraping up the sand from the bed with his knife, and throwing it into a basin, the bottom of which glittered with gold. Every knifeful brought out a quantity of grains and scales, some of which were as large as the finger-nail. At last a two-ounce lump fell plump into the pan, and the diggers, now in the best possible humor, went on with their work with great alacrity. Their forenoon's digging amounted to nearly six pounds. It is only by such operations as these, through associated labor, that great profits are to be made in those districts which have been visited by the first eager horde of gold hunters. The deposits most easily reached are soon exhausted by the crowd, and the

labor required to carry on further work successfully deters single individuals from attempting it. Those who, retaining their health, return home disappointed, say they have been humbugged about the gold, when in fact, they have humbugged themselves about the *work*. If any one expects to dig treasures out of the earth, in California, without severe labor, he is wofully mistaken. Of all classes of men, those who pave streets and quarry limestone are best adapted for gold diggers.

Wherever there is gold, there are gamblers. Our little village boasted of at least a dozen monte tables, all of which were frequented at night by the Americans and Mexicans. The Sonorians left a large portion of their gold at the gaming tables, though it was calculated they had taken $5,000,000 out of the country during the summer. The excitement against them prevailed also on the Mokelumne, and they were once driven away; they afterwards quietly returned, and in most cases worked in companies, for the benefit and under the protection of some American. They labor steadily and faithfully, and are considered honest, if well watched. The first colony of gold-hunters attempted to drive out all foreigners, without distinction, as well as native Californians. Don Andres Pico, who was located on the same river, had some difficulty with them until they could be made to understand that his right as a citizen was equal to theirs.

Dr. Gillette, to whom we were indebted for many kind attentions, related to me the manner of his finding the rich gulch which attracted so many to the Mokelumne Diggings. The word *gulch*, which is in general use throughout the diggings, may not be familiar to many ears, though its sound somehow expresses its meaning, without further definition. It denotes a mountain ravine, differing from ravines elsewhere as the mountains of California

differ from all others—more steep, abrupt and inaccessible. The sound of *gulch* is like that of a sudden plunge into a deep hole, which is just the character of the thing itself. It bears the same relation to a ravine that a "cañon" does to a pass or gorge. About two months previous to our arrival, Dr. Gillette came down from the Upper Bar with a companion, to "prospect" for gold among the ravines in the neighborhood. There were no persons there at the time, except some Indians belonging to the tribe of José Jesus. One day at noon, while resting in the shade of a tree, Dr. G. took a pick and began carelessly turning up the ground. Almost on the surface, he struck and threw out a lump of gold of about two pounds weight. Inspired by this unexpected result, they both went to work, laboring all that day and the next, and even using part of the night to quarry out the heavy pieces of rock. At the end of the second day they went to the village on the Upper Bar and weighed their profits, which amounted to fourteen pounds! They started again the third morning under pretence of hunting, but were suspected and followed by the other diggers, who came upon them just as they commenced work. The news rapidly spread, and there was soon a large number of men on the spot, some of whom obtained several pounds per day, at the start. The gulch had been well dug up for the large lumps, but there was still great wealth in the earth and sand, and several operators only waited for the wet season to work it in a systematic manner.

The next day Col. Lyons, Dr. Gillette and myself set out on a visit to the scene of these rich discoveries. Climbing up the rocky bottom of the gulch, as by a staircase, for four miles, we found nearly every part of it dug up and turned over by the picks of the miners. Deep holes, sunk between the solid strata

or into the precipitous sides of the mountains, showed where veins of the metal had been struck and followed as long as they yielded lumps large enough to pay for the labor. The loose earth, which they had excavated, was full of fine gold, and only needed washing out. A number of Sonorians were engaged in dry washing this refuse sand—a work which requires no little skill, and would soon kill any other men than these lank and skinny Arabs of the West. Their mode of work is as follows:—Gathering the loose dry sand in bowls, they raise it to their heads and slowly pour it upon a blanket spread at their feet. Repeating this several times, and throwing out the worthless pieces of rock, they reduce the dust to about half its bulk; then, balancing the bowl on one hand, by a quick, dexterous motion of the other they cause it to revolve, at the same time throwing its contents into the air and catching them as they fall. In this manner everything is finally winnowed away except the heavier grains of sand mixed with gold, which is carefully separated by the breath. It is a laborious occupation, and one which, fortunately, the American diggers have not attempted. This breathing the fine dust from day to day, under a more than torrid sun, would soon impair the strongest lungs.

We found many persons at work in the higher part of the gulch, searching for veins and pockets of gold, in the holes which had already produced their first harvest. Some of these gleaners, following the lodes abandoned by others as exhausted, into the sides of the mountain, were well repaid for their perseverance. Others, again, had been working for days without finding anything. Those who understood the business obtained from one to four ounces daily. Their only tools were the crowbar, pick and knife, and many of them, following the veins under strata of rock which lay deep below the surface, were obliged to work while lying flat

on their backs, in cramped and narrow holes, sometimes kept moist by springs. They were shielded, however, from the burning heats, and preserved their health better than those who worked on the bars of the river.

There are thousands of similar gulches among the mountains, nearly all of which undoubtedly contain gold. Those who are familiar with geology, or by carefully noting the character of the soil and strata where gold is already found, have learned its indications, rarely fail in the selection of new spots for digging. It is the crowd of those who, deceived in their extravagant hopes, disheartened by the severe labor necessary to be undergone, and bereft of that active and observing spirit which could not fail to win success at last, that cry out with such bitterness against the golden stories which first attracted them to the country. I met with hundreds of such persons, many of whom have returned home disgusted forever with California. They compared the diggings to a lottery, in which people grew rich only by accident or luck. There is no such thing as accident in Nature, and in proportion as men understand her, the more sure a clue they have to her buried treasures. There is more gold in California than ever was said or imagined: ages will not exhaust the supply. From what I first saw on the Mokelumne, I was convinced that the fabled Cibao of Columbus, splendid as it seemed to his eager imagination, is more than realized there.

I went up in the ravines one morning, for about two miles, looking for game. It was too late in the day for deer, and I saw but one antelope, which fled like the wind over the top of the mountain. I started a fine hare, similar in appearance to the European, but of larger size. A man riding down the trail, from the Double Spring, told us he had counted seven deer early in the

morning, beside numbers of antelopes and partridges. The grizzly bear and large mountain wolf are frequently seen in the more thickly timbered ravines. The principal growth of the mountains is oak and the California pine, which rises like a spire to the height of two hundred feet. The *piñons*, or cones, are much larger and of finer flavor, than those of the Italian stone-pine. As far as I could see from the ridges which I climbed, the mountains were as well timbered as the soil and climate will allow. A little more rain would support as fine forests as the world can produce. The earth was baked to a cinder, and from 11 A. M. to 4 P. M. the mercury ranged between 98° and 110°.

There was no end to the stories told by the diggers, of their own and others' experiences in gold-hunting. I could readily have made up a small volume from those I heard during the four days I spent on the Mokelumne. In the dry diggings especially, where the metal frequently lies deep, many instances are told of men who have dug two or three days and given up in despair, while others, coming after them and working in the same holes, have taken out thousands of dollars in a short time. I saw a man who came to the river three weeks before my visit, without money, to dig in the dry gulch. Being very lazy, he chose a spot under a shady tree, and dug leisurely for two days without making a cent. He then gave up the place, when a little German jumped into his tracks and after a day's hard work weighed out $800. The unlucky digger then borrowed five ounces and started a boarding-house. The town increased so fast that the night I arrived he sold out his share (one-third) of the concern for $1,200. Men were not troubled by the ordinary ups and downs of business, when it was so easy for one of any enterprise to recover his foothold. If a person lost his all, he was perfectly indifferent; two weeks of

hard work gave him enough to start on, and two months, with the usual luck, quite reinstated him.

The largest piece found in the rich gulch weighed eleven pounds. Mr. James, who had been on the river since April, showed me a lump weighing sixty-two ounces—pure, unadulterated gold. We had a visit one day from Don Andres Pico, commander of the California forces during the war. He had a company of men digging at the Middle Bar, about a mile above. He is an urbane, intelligent man, of medium stature, and of a natural gentility of character which made him quite popular among the emigrants.

From all I saw and heard, while at the Mokelumne Diggings, I judged there was as much order and security as could be attained without a civil organization. The inhabitants had elected one of their own number Alcalde, before whom all culprits were tried by a jury selected for the purpose. Several thefts had occurred, and the offending parties been severely punished after a fair trial. Some had been whipped and cropped, or maimed in some other way, and one or two of them hung. Two or three who had stolen largely had been shot down by the injured party, the general feeling among the miners justifying such a course when no other seemed available. We met near Livermore's Ranche, on the way to Stockton, a man whose head had been shaved and his ears cut off, after receiving one hundred lashes, for stealing ninety-eight pounds of gold. It may conflict with popular ideas of morality, but, nevertheless, this extreme course appeared to have produced good results. In fact, in a country without not only bolts and bars, but any effective system of law and government, this Spartan severity of discipline seemed the only security against the most frightful disorder. The result was that, except some petty

acts of larceny, thefts were rare. Horses and mules were sometimes taken, but the risk was so great that such plunder could not be carried on to any extent. The camp or tent was held inviolate, and like the patriarchal times of old, its cover protected all it enclosed. Among all well-disposed persons there was a tacit disposition to make the canvas or pavilion of rough oak-boughs as sacred as once were the portals of a church.

Our stay was delayed a day by the illness of Lieut. Beale, who had been poisoned a few days previous by contact with the *rhus toxicodendron*, which is very common in California. His impatience to reach San Francisco was so great that on Saturday afternoon we got ready to return to Stockton. Our bill at the hotel was $11 a day for man and mule—$4 for the man and $7 for the mule. This did not include lodgings, which each traveler was expected to furnish for himself. Some slight medical attendance, furnished to Lieut. Beale, was valued at $48. The high price of mule-keep was owing to the fact of barley being $1 per quart and grass $1 per handful. Dr. Gillette took a lame horse which had just come down from a month's travel among the snowy ridges, where his rider had been shot with an Indian arrow, and set out to accompany us as far as Stockton. One of our mules, which was borrowed for the occasion at Raney's Ranche, had been reclaimed by its owner, and I was thus reduced to the necessity of footing it. In this order, we left the town just before sunset, and took a mule-path leading up the steep ascent.

CHAPTER X.

A GALLOP TO STOCKTON, WITH SOME WORDS ON LAW AND SOCIETY.

INSTEAD of retracing our steps through the fiery depth of the cañon, we turned off eastward through a gap in the hills and took a road leading to the Double Spring. The doctor insisted on my mounting behind him on the limping horse, and we had an odd ride of it, among the dusky glens and hollows. At the Double Spring, where a large tent was pitched, three of us were furnished with supper, at a cost of $11—not an exorbitant price, if our appetites were considered. It was decided to push on the same night to another ranche, seven miles distant, and I started in advance, on foot. The road passed between low hills, covered with patches of chapparal, the usual haunt of grizzly bears. I looked sharply at every bush, in the dim moonlight; my apprehensions were a little raised by the thought of a miner whom I had seen one evening come down to the Mokelumne, pale as a sheet, after having been chased some distance by a huge she-bear, and by the story told me at the Double Spring, of the bones of two men, picked clean, having been found on the road I was traveling. I was not sorry, therefore, to hear the halting tramp of the doctor's horse behind me; the others came up after awhile, and we

reached the tent. The landlord lay asleep in one corner; we tied our animals to a tree, made one bed in common against the side of the tent, and were soon locked in sound repose.

Lieut. Beale, who was still unwell and anxious to hurry on, woke us at the peep of day, and after giving a spare feed to our mules, we took the road again. As the doctor and I, mounted on the lame horse, were shuffling along in advance, we espied a venerable old animal before us, walking in the same direction. The doctor slipped off the bridle, ran forward and caught him without any difficulty. There was no sign of any camp to be seen, and we came to the conclusion that the horse was an estray, and we might therefore lawfully make use of him. He was the most grotesque specimen of horseflesh I ever saw—lame like our own—and with his forehead broken in above the eyes, which did not prevent his having a nose of most extraordinary length and prominence. The doctor bridled him and mounted, leaving me his own horse and saddle, so that we were about equally provided. By dint of shouting and kicking we kept the beasts in a sort of shambling gallop till we reached Raney's Ranche, where the doctor took the precaution of removing the bridle and letting the horse stand loose; the custom of the miners being, to shoot a man who puts his gear on your horse and rides him without leave.

As it happened, the precaution was not ill-timed; for, while we lay inside the tent on a couple of benches, we heard an exclamation from some one outside. "There you are!" said the voice; "what do you mean, you old rascal? how came you here? you know you never left me before, you know you did n't!"—Then, turning to the tent-keeper, who was standing by the cooking-fire, he enquired: "how did that horse get here?" "Why," answered the former, with a slight variation of the truth, "he was

driven in this morning by some men who found him in the road, about three miles from here. The men have gone on to Stockton, but left him, thinking he might have an owner somewhere, though he don't look like it." "Three miles!" ejaculated the voice: "it was six miles from here, where I camped, and the horse never left me before; you know you did n't, you rascal!" Then, coming into the tent, he repeated the whole story to us, who marvelled exceedingly that the horse should have left. "He does n't look to be much," added the man, "but I've had him two years among the mountains, and never saw sich another wonderful knowin' animal."

Sergeant Falls, who owned a ranche in the neighborhood, came along shortly after with a *caballada* which he was driving into Stockton. The day was hot, but a fine breeze blew over the hazy plain and rustled the groves of oak as we went past them on a sweeping gallop, which was scarcely broken during the whole ride of twenty-five miles. No exercise in the world is so exciting and inspiring as the traveling gait or "lope" of the Californian horse. I can compare it to nothing but the rocking motion of a boat over a light sea. There is no jar or jolt in the saddle; the rider sits lightly and securely, while the horse, obeying the slightest touch of the rein, carries him forward for hours without slackening his bounding speed. Up and down the steep sides of an arroyo—over the shoulder of a mountain, or through the flinty bed of some dry lake or river—it is all the same. One's blood leaps merrily along his veins, and the whole frame feels an elastic warmth which exquisitely fits it to receive all sensuous impressions. Ah! if horse-flesh were effortless as the wind, indestructible as adamant, what motion of sea or air—what unwearied agility of fin or steady sweep of wing—could compare with it? In the power of thus speeding

onward at will, as far as the wish might extend, one would forget his desire to soar.

I saw at the Pueblo San José a splendid pied horse belonging to Col. Frémont—the gift of Don Pio Pico—on which he had frequently ridden to San Francisco, a distance of fifty-five miles, within seven hours. When pushed to their utmost capacity, these horses frequently perform astonishing feats. The saddles in common use differ little from the Mexican ; the stirrups are set back, obliging the rider to stand rather than sit, and the seat corresponds more nearly to the shape of the body than the English saddle. The horses are broken by a halter of strong rope, which accustoms them to be governed by a mere touch of the rein. On first attempting to check the gallop of one which I rode, I thoughtlessly drew the rein as strongly as for a hard-mouthed American horse. The consequence was, he came with one bound to a dead stop and I flew bolt upwards out of the saddle ; but for its high wooden horn, I should have gone over his head.

At Raney's Ranche, our notice was attracted to the sad spectacle of a man, lying on the river bank, wasted by disease, and evidently near his end. He was a member of a company from Massachusetts, which had passed that way three weeks before, not only refusing to take him further, but absolutely carrying with them his share of the stores they had brought from home. This, at least, was the story told me on the spot, but I hope it was untrue. The man had lain there from day to day, without medical aid, and dependant on such attention as the inmates of the tent were able to afford him. The Dr. left some medicines with him, but it was evident to all of us that a few days more would terminate his sufferings.

All the roads from Stockton to the mines were filled with *atajos*

of mules, laden with freight. They were mostly owned by Americans, many of them by former trappers and mountaineers, but the packers and drivers were Mexicans, and the *aparéjos* and *alforjas* of the mules were of the same fashion as those which, for three hundred years past, have been seen on the hills of Grenada and the Andalusian plains. With good mule-trains and experienced packers, the business yielded as much as the richest diggings. The placers and gulches of Mokelumne as well as Murphy's Diggings and those on Carson's Creek, are within fifty-five miles of Stockton; the richest diggings on the Stanislaus about sixty, and on the Tuolumne seventy. The price paid for carrying to all the nearer diggings averaged 30 cents per lb. during the summer. A mule-load varies from one to two hundred lbs., but the experienced carrier could generally reckon beforehand the expenses and profits of his trip. The intense heat of the season and the dust of the plains tended also to wear out a team, and the carriers were often obliged to rest and recruit themselves. One of them, who did a good business between Stockton and the Lower Bar of the Mokelumne, told me that his profits were about $3,000 monthly.

I found Stockton more bustling and prosperous than ever. The limits of its canvas streets had greatly enlarged during my week of absence, and the crowd on the levee would not disgrace a much larger place at home. Launches were arriving and departing daily for and from San Francisco, and the number of mule-trains, wagons, etc., on their way to the various mines with freight and supplies kept up a life of activity truly amazing. Stockton was first laid out by Mr. Weaver, who emigrated to the country seven years before, and obtained a grant of eleven square leagues from the Government, on condition that he would obtain settlers for the whole of it within a specified time. In planning the town of Stockton,

he displayed a great deal of shrewd business tact, the sale of lots having brought him upwards of $500,000. A great disadvantage of the location is the sloughs by which it is surrounded; which, in the wet season, render the roads next to impassable. There seems, however, to be no other central point so well adapted for supplying the rich district between the Mokelumne and Tuolumne, and Stockton will evidently continue to grow with a sure and gradual growth.

I witnessed, while in the town, a summary exhibition of justice. The night before my arrival, three negroes, while on a drunken revel, entered the tent of a Chilian, and attempted to violate a female who was within. Defeated in their base designs by her husband, who was fortunately within call, they fired their pistols at the tent and left. Complaint was made before the Alcalde, two of the negroes seized and identified, witnesses examined, a jury summoned, and verdict given, without delay. The principal offender was sentenced to receive fifty lashes and the other twenty —both to leave the place within forty-eight hours under pain of death. The sentence was immediately carried into execution; the negroes were stripped, tied to a tree standing in the middle of the principal street, and in presence of the Alcalde and Sheriff received their punishment. There was little of that order and respect shown which should accompany even the administration of impromptu law; the bystanders jeered, laughed, and accompanied every blow with coarse and unfeeling remarks. Some of the more intelligent professed themselves opposed to the mode of punishment, but in the absence of prisons or effective guards could suggest no alternative, except the sterner one of capital punishment.

The history of law and society in California, from the period of the golden discoveries, would furnish many instructive lessons to

the philosopher and the statesman. The first consequence of the unprecedented rush of emigration from all parts of the world into a country almost unknown, and but half reclaimed from its original barbarism was to render all law virtually null, and bring the established authorities to depend entirely on the humor of the population for the observance of their orders. The countries which were nearest the golden coast—Mexico, Peru, Chili, China and the Sandwich Islands—sent forth their thousands of ignorant adventurers, who speedily outnumbered the American population. Another fact, which none the less threatened serious consequences, was the readiness with which the worthless and depraved class of our own country came to the Pacific Coast. From the beginning, a state of things little short of anarchy might have been reasonably awaited.

Instead of this, a disposition to maintain order and secure the rights of all, was shown throughout the mining districts. In the absence of all law or available protection, the people met and adopted rules for their mutual security—rules adapted to their situation, where they had neither guards nor prisons, and where the slightest license given to crime or trespass of any kind must inevitably have led to terrible disorders. Small thefts were punished by banishment from the placers, while for those of large amount or for more serious crimes, there was the single alternative of hanging. These regulations, with slight change, had been continued up to the time of my visit to the country. In proportion as the emigration from our own States increased, and the digging community assumed a more orderly and intelligent aspect, their severity had been relaxed, though punishment was still strictly administered for all offences. There had been, as nearly as I could learn, not more than twelve or fifteen executions in all, about half of which

were inflicted for the crime of murder. This awful responsibility had not been assumed lightly, but after a fair trial and a full and clear conviction, to which was added, I believe in every instance, the confession of the criminal.

In all the large digging districts, which had been worked for some time, there were established regulations, which were faithfully observed. Alcaldes were elected, who decided on all disputes of right or complaints of trespass, and who had power to summon juries for criminal trials. When a new placer or gulch was discovered, the first thing done was to elect officers and extend the area of order. The result was, that in a district five hundred miles long, and inhabited by 100,000 people, who had neither government, regular laws, rules, military or civil protection, nor even locks or bolts, and a great part of whom possessed wealth enough to tempt the vicious and depraved, there was as much security to life and property as in any part of the Union, and as small a proportion of crime. The capacity of a people for self-government was never so triumphantly illustrated. Never, perhaps, was there a community formed of more unpropitious elements; yet from all this seeming chaos grew a harmony beyond what the most sanguine apostle of Progress could have expected.

The rights of the diggers were no less definitely marked and strictly observed. Among the hundreds I saw on the Mokelumne and among the gulches, I did not see a single dispute nor hear a word of complaint. A company of men might mark out a race of any length and turn the current of the river to get at the bed, possessing the exclusive right to that part of it, so long as their undertaking lasted. A man might dig a hole in the dry ravines, and so long as he left a shovel, pick or crowbar to show that he still intended working it, he was safe from trespass. His

tools might remain there for months without being disturbed. I have seen many such places, miles away from any camp or tent, which the digger had left in perfect confidence that he should find all right on his return. There were of course exceptions to these rules—the diggings would be a Utopia if it were not so—but they were not frequent. The Alcaldes sometimes made awkward decisions, from inexperience, but they were none the less implicitly obeyed. I heard of one instance in which a case of trespass was settled to the satisfaction of both parties and the Sheriff ordered to pay the costs of Court—about $40. The astonished functionary remonstrated, but the power of the Alcalde was supreme, and he was obliged to suffer.

The treatment of the Sonorians by the American diggers was one of the exciting subjects of the summer. These people came into the country in armed bands, to the number of ten thousand in all, and took possession of the best points on the Tuolumne, Stanislaus and Mokelumne Rivers. At the Sonorian camp on the Stanislaus there were, during the summer, several thousands of them, and the amount of ground they dug up and turned over is almost incredible. For a long time they were suffered to work peaceably, but the opposition finally became so strong that they were ordered to leave. They made no resistance, but quietly backed out and took refuge in other diggings. In one or two places, I was told, the Americans, finding there was no chance of having a fight, coolly invited them back again! At the time of my visit, however, they were leaving the country in large numbers, and there were probably not more than five thousand in all scattered along the various rivers. Several parties of them, in revenge for the treatment they experienced, committed outrages on their way home, stripping small parties of the emigrants by

the Gila route of all they possessed. It is not likely that the country will be troubled with them in future.

Abundance of gold does not always beget, as moralists tell us, a grasping and avaricious spirit. The principles of hospitality were as faithfully observed in the rude tents of the diggers as they could be by the thrifty farmers of the North and West. The cosmopolitan cast of society in California, resulting from the commingling of so many races and the primitive mode of life, gave a character of good-fellowship to all its members; and in no part of the world have I ever seen help more freely given to the needy, or more ready coöperation in any humane proposition. Personally, I can safely say that I never met with such unvarying kindness from comparative strangers.

CHAPTER XI.

A NIGHT-ADVENTURE IN THE MOUNTAINS.

On reaching Stockton, Lieut. Beale and Col. Lyons decided to return to San Francisco in a launch, which was to leave the same evening. This was thought best, as mule-travel, in the condition of the former, would have greatly aggravated his illness. The mules were left in my charge, and as the management of five was an impossibility for one man, it was arranged that I should wait three days, when Mr. R. A. Parker and Mr. Atherton, of San Francisco, were to leave. These gentlemen offered to make a single *mulada* of all our animals, which would relieve me from my embarrassment. I slept that night in Mr. Lane's store, and the next morning rode out to Graham's Camp, where the Major received me with the same genial hospitality. For three days longer I shared the wildwood fare of his camp-table and slept under the canopy of his oaks. Long may those matchless trees be spared to the soil—a shore of cool and refreshing verdure to all who traverse the hot plains of San Joaquin!

Messrs. Parker and Atherton, with three other gentlemen and two servants, made their appearance about sunset. My mules had already been caught and lariated, and joining our loose animals, we had a *mulada* of eight, with eight riders to keep them in

order. The plain was dark when we started, and the trail stretched like a dusky streak far in advance. The mules gave us infinite trouble at first, darting off on all sides; but, by dint of hard chasing, we got them into regular file, keeping them in a furious trot before us. The volumes of dust that rose from their feet, completely enveloped us; it was only by counting the tails that occasionally whisked through the cloud, that we could tell whether they were in order. One of my spurs gave way in the race, but there was no stopping to pick it up, nor did we halt until, at the end of twelve miles, the white tent of the ferry came in sight.

We crossed and rode onward to my old camping-place on the slough. A canvas tavern had been erected on a little knoll, since my visit, and after picketing our animals in the meadow, we proceeded to rouse the landlord. The only person we could find was an old man, lying under a tree near at hand; he refused to stir, saying there was nothing to eat in the tent, and he would not get up and cook at that time of night. My fellow-travelers, accustomed to the free-and-easy habits of California, entered the tent without ceremony and began a general search for comestibles. The only things that turned up were a half-dozen bottles of ale in a dusty box and a globular jar of East-India preserves, on which odd materials we supped with a hearty relish. The appetite engendered by open-air life in California would have made palatable a much more incongruous meal. We then lay down on the sloping sides of the knoll, rolled in a treble thickness of blankets, for the nights were beginning to grow cool. I was awakened once or twice by a mysterious twitching of my bedclothes and a scratching noise, the cause of which was explained when I arose in the morning. I had been sleeping over half a

dozen squirrel-holes, to the great discomfort of the imprisoned tenants.

The old denizen of the place, in better humor after we had paid for our unceremonious supper, set about baking tortillas and stewing beef, to which we added two cans of preserved turtle soup, which we found in the tent. Our mules had scattered far and wide during the night, and several hours elapsed before they could be herded and got into traveling order. The face of the broad plain we had to cross glimmered in the heat, and the Coast Range beyond it was like the phantom of a mountain-chain. We journeyed on, hour after hour, in the sweltering blaze, crossed the divide and reached Livermore's Ranche late in the afternoon. My saddle-mule was a fine gray animal belonging to Andrew Sublette, which Lieut. Beale had taken on our way to Stockton, leaving his own *alazan* at the ranche. Mr. Livermore was absent, but one of his vaqueros was prevailed upon, by a bribe of five dollars, to take the mule out to the corral, six miles distant, and bring me the horse in its stead. I sat down in the door of the ranche to await his arrival, leaving the company to go forward with all our animals to a camping-ground, twelve miles further.

It was quite dark when the vaquero rode up with the *alazan*, and I lost no time in saddling him and leaving the ranche. The trail, no longer confined among the hills, struck out on a circular plain, ten miles in diameter, which I was obliged to cross. The moon was not risen; the soil showed but one dusky, unvaried hue; and my only chance of keeping the trail was in the sound of my horse's feet. A streak of gravelly sand soon put me at fault, and after doubling backwards and forwards a few times, I found myself adrift without compass or helm. In the uncertain gloom, my horse blundered into stony hollows, or, lost in the mazes

of the oaks, startled the buzzards and mountain vultures from their roost. The boughs rustled, and the air was stirred by the muffled beat of their wings: I could see them, like unearthly, boding shapes, as they swooped between me and the stars. At last, making a hazard at the direction in which the trail ran, I set my course by the stars and pushed steadily forward in a straight line.

Two hours of this dreary travel passed away: the moon rose, lighting up the loneliness of the wide plain and the dim, silvery sweep of mountains around it. I found myself on the verge of a steep bank, which I took to be an arroyo we had crossed on the outward journey. Getting down with some difficulty, I rode for more than a mile over the flinty bed of a lake, long since dried up by the summer heats. At its opposite side I plunged into a ghostly wood, echoing with the dismal howl of the wolves, and finally reached the foot of the mountains. The deep-sunken glen, at whose entrance I stood, had no familiar feature; the tall clumps of chapparal in its bottom, seemed fit haunts for grizzly bear; and after following it for a short distance, I turned about and urged my horse directly up the steep sides of the mountain.

It was now midnight, as near as I could judge by the moon, and I determined to go no further. I had neither fire-arms, matches nor blankets—all my equipments having gone on with the pack-mule—and it was necessary to choose a place where I could be secure from the bears, the only animal to be feared. The very summit of the mountain seemed to be the safest spot; there was a single tree upon it, but the sides, for some distance below, were bare, and if a "grizzly" should come up one side, I could dash down the other. Clambering to the top, I tied my horse to the tree, took the saddle for a pillow, and coiling into the smallest

possible compass, tried to cover myself with a square yard of saddle-blanket. It was too cold to sleep, and I lay there for hours, with aching bones and chattering teeth, looking down on the vast, mysterious depths of the landscape below me. I shall never forget the shadowy level of the plain, whose belts and spots of timber were like clouds in the wan light—the black mountain-gulfs on either hand, which the incessant yell of a thousand wolves made seem like caverns of the damned—the far, faint shapes of the distant ranges, which the moonshine covered, as with silver gossamer, and the spangled arch overhead, doubly lustrous in the thin air. Once or twice I fell into a doze, to dream of slipping off precipices and into icy chasms, and was roused by the snort of my horse, as he stood with raised ears, stretching the lariat to its full length.

When the morning star, which was never so welcome, brought the daylight in its wake, I saddled and rode down to the plain. Taking a course due north, I started off on a gallop and in less than an hour recovered the trail. I had no difficulty in finding the beautiful meadow where the party was to have camped, but there was no trace of them to be seen; the mules, as it happened, were picketed behind some timber, and the men, not yet arisen, were buried out of sight in the rank grass. I rode up to some *milpas*, (brush-huts,) inhabited by Indians, and for two reals obtained a boiled ear of corn and a melon, which somewhat relieved my chill, hungry condition. Riding ahead slowly, that my horse might now and then crop a mouthful of oats, I was finally overtaken by Mr. Atherton, who was in advance of the company. We again took our places behind the mules, and hurried on to the Mission of San José.

Mr. Parker had been seized with fever and chills during the night, and decided to rest a day at the Pueblo San José. Messrs.

Atherton and Patterson, with myself, after breakfasting and making a hasty visit to the rich pear-trees and grape-vines of the garden, took a shorter road, leading around the head of the bay to Whisman's Ranche. We trotted the twenty-five miles in about four hours, rested an hour, and then set out again, hoping to reach San Francisco that night. It was too much, however, for our mules; after passing the point of Santa Clara mountain they began to scatter, and as it was quite dark, we halted in a grove near the Ruined Mission. We lay down on the ground, supperless and somewhat weary with a ride of about seventy miles. I slept a refreshing sleep under a fragrant bay-tree, and was up with the first streak of dawn to look after my mules. Once started, we spurred our animals into a rapid trot, which was not slackened till we had passed the twenty miles that intervened between us and the Mission Dolores.

When I had climbed the last sand-hill, riding in towards San Francisco, and the town and harbor and crowded shipping again opened to the view, I could scarcely realize the change that had taken place during my absence of three weeks. The town had not only greatly extended its limits, but seemed actually to have doubled its number of dwellings since I left. High up on the hills, where I had seen only sand and chapparal, stood clusters of houses; streets which had been merely laid out, were hemmed in with buildings and thronged with people; new warehouses had sprung up on the water side, and new piers were creeping out toward the shipping; the forest of masts had greatly thickened; and the noise, motion and bustle of business and labor on all sides were incessant. Verily, the place was in itself a marvel. To say that it was daily enlarged by from twenty to thirty houses may not sound very remarkable after all the stories that have

been told; yet this, for a country which imported both lumber and houses, and where labor was then $10 a day, is an extraordinary growth. The rapidity with which a ready-made house is put up and inhabited, strikes the stranger in San Francisco as little short of magic. He walks over an open lot in his before-breakfast stroll—the next morning, a house complete, with a family inside, blocks up his way. He goes down to the bay and looks out on the shipping—two or three days afterward a row of storehouses, staring him in the face, intercepts the view.

I found Lieut. Beale and Col. Lyons, who gave me an amusing account of their voyage on the San Joaquin. The "skipper" of the launch in which they embarked knew nothing of navigation, and Lieut. Beale, in spite of his illness, was obliged to take command. The other passengers were a company of Mexican miners. After tacking for two days among the tulé swamps, the launch ran aground; the skipper, in pushing it off, left an oar in the sand and took the boat to recover it. Just then a fine breeze sprang up and the launch shot ahead, leaving the skipper to follow. That night, having reached a point within two miles of the site of an impossible town, called New-York-of-the-Pacific, the passengers left in a body. The next day they walked to the little village of Martinez, opposite Benicia, a distance of twenty-five miles, crossing the foot of Monte Diablo. Here they took another launch, and after tossing twelve hours on the bay, succeeded in reaching San Francisco.

At the United States Hotel I again met with Colonel Frémont, and learned the particulars of the magnificent discovery which had just been made upon his ranche on the Mariposa River. It was nothing less than a vein of gold in the solid rock—the first which had been found in California. I saw some specimens which were

in Col. Frémont's possession. The stone was a reddish quartz, filled with rich veins of gold, and far surpassing the specimens brought from North Carolina and Georgia. Some stones picked up on the top of the quartz strata, without particular selection, yielded two ounces of gold to every twenty-five pounds. Col. Frémont informed me that the vein had been traced for more than a mile. The thickness on the surface is two feet, gradually widening as it descends and showing larger particles of gold. The dip downward is only about 20°, so that the mine can be worked with little expense. The ranche upon which it is situated was purchased by Col. Frémont in 1846 from Alvarado, former Governor of the Territory. It was then considered nearly worthless, and Col. F. only took it at the moment of leaving the country, because disappointed in obtaining another property. This discovery made a great sensation thoughout the country, at the time, yet it was but the first of many such. The Sierra Nevada is pierced in every part with these priceless veins, which will produce gold for centuries after every spot of earth from base to summit shall have been turned over and washed out.

Many of my fellow-passengers by the Panama were realizing their dreams of speedy fortune; some had already made $20,000 by speculating in town lots. A friend of mine who had shipped lumber from New York to the amount of $1000 sold it for $14,000. At least seventy-five houses had been imported from Canton, and put up by Chinese carpenters. Washing was $8 a dozen, and as a consequence, large quantities of soiled linen were sent to the antipodes to be purified. A vessel just in from Canton brought two hundred and fifty dozen, which had been sent out a few months before; another from the Sandwich Islands brought one hundred dozen, and the practice was becoming general.

CHAPTER XII.

SAN FRANCISCO BY DAY AND NIGHT.

A BETTER idea of San Francisco, in the beginning of September, 1849, cannot be given than by the description of a single day. Supposing the visitor to have been long enough in the place to sleep on a hard plank and in spite of the attacks of innumerable fleas, he will be awakened at daylight by the noises of building, with which the hills are all alive. The air is temperate, and the invariable morning fog is just beginning to gather. By sunrise, which gleams hazily over the Coast Mountains across the Bay, the whole populace is up and at work. The wooden buildings unlock their doors, the canvas houses and tents throw back their front curtains; the lighters on the water are warped out from ship to ship; carts and porters are busy along the beach; and only the gaming-tables, thronged all night by the votaries of chance, are idle and deserted. The temperature is so fresh as to inspire an active habit of body, and even without the stimulus of trade and speculation there would be few sluggards at this season.

As early as half-past six the bells begin to sound to breakfast, and for an hour thenceforth, their incessant clang and the braying of immense gongs drown all the hammers that are busy on a

hundred roofs. The hotels, restaurants and refectories of all kinds are already as numerous as gaming-tables, and equally various in kind. The tables d'hôte of the first class, (which charge $2 and upwards the meal,) are abundantly supplied. There are others, with more simple and solid fare, frequented by the large class who have their fortunes yet to make. At the United States and California restaurants, on the plaza, you may get an excellent beefsteak, scantily garnished with potatoes, and a cup of good coffee or chocolate, for $1. Fresh beef, bread, potatoes, and all provisions which will bear importation, are plenty; but milk, fruit and vegetables are classed as luxuries, and fresh butter is rarely heard of. On Montgomery street, and the vacant space fronting the water, venders of coffee, cakes and sweetmeats have erected their stands, in order to tempt the appetite of sailors just arrived in port, or miners coming down from the mountains.

By nine o'clock the town is in the full flow of business. The streets running down to the water, and Montgomery street which fronts the Bay, are crowded with people, all in hurried motion. The variety of characters and costumes is remarkable. Our own countrymen seem to lose their local peculiarities in such a crowd, and it is by chance epithets rather than by manner, that the New-Yorker is distinguished from the Kentuckian, the Carolinian from the Down-Easter, the Virginian from the Texan. The German and Frenchman are more easily recognized. Peruvians and Chilians go by in their brown ponchos, and the sober Chinese, cool and impassive in the midst of excitement, look out of the oblique corners of their long eyes at the bustle, but are never tempted to venture from their own line of business. The eastern side of the plaza, in front of the Parker House and a canvas hell called the Eldorado, are the general rendezvous of business and amusement

—combining 'change, park, club-room and promenade all in one. There, everybody not constantly employed in one spot, may be seen at some time of the day. The character of the groups scattered along the plaza is oftentimes very interesting. In one place are three or four speculators bargaining for lots, buying and selling "fifty varas square" in towns, some of which are canvas and some only paper; in another, a company of miners, brown as leather, and rugged in features as in dress; in a third, perhaps, three or four naval officers speculating on the next cruise, or a knot of genteel gamblers, talking over the last night's operations.

The day advances. The mist which after sunrise hung low and heavy for an hour or two, has risen above the hills, and there will be two hours of pleasant sunshine before the wind sets in from the sea. The crowd in the streets is now wholly alive. Men dart hither and thither, as if possessed with a never-resting spirit. You speak to an acquaintance—a merchant, perhaps. He utters a few hurried words of greeting, while his eyes send keen glances on all sides of you; suddenly he catches sight of somebody in the crowd; he is off, and in the next five minutes has bought up half a cargo, sold a town lot at treble the sum he gave, and taken a share in some new and imposing speculation. It is impossible to witness this excess and dissipation of business, without feeling something of its influence. The very air is pregnant with the magnetism of bold, spirited, unwearied action, and he who but ventures into the outer circle of the whirlpool, is spinning, ere he has time for thought, in its dizzy vortex.

But see! the groups in the plaza suddenly scatter; the city surveyor jerks his pole out of the ground and leaps on a pile of boards; the venders of cakes and sweetmeats follow his example, and the place is cleared, just as a wild bull which has been racing

down Kearney street makes his appearance. Two vaqueros, shouting and swinging their lariats, follow at a hot gallop; the dust flies as they dash across the plaza. One of them, in mid-career, hurls his lariat in the air. Mark how deftly the coil unwinds in its flying curve, and with what precision the noose falls over the bull's horns! The horse wheels as if on a pivot, and shoots off in an opposite line. He knows the length of the lariat to a hair, and the instant it is drawn taught, plants his feet firmly for the shock and throws his body forward. The bull is "brought up" with such force as to throw him off his legs. He lies stunned a moment, and then, rising heavily, makes another charge. But by this time the second vaquero has thrown a lariat around one of his hind legs, and thus checked on both sides, he is dragged off to slaughter.

The plaza is refilled as quickly as it was emptied, and the course of business is resumed. About twelve o'clock, a wind begins to blow from the north-west, sweeping with most violence through a gap between the hills, opening towards the Golden Gate. The bells and gongs begin to sound for dinner, and these two causes tend to lessen the crowd in the streets for an hour or two. Two o'clock is the usual dinner-time for business men, but some of the old and successful merchants have adopted the fashionable hour of five. Where shall we dine to-day? the restaurants display their signs invitingly on all sides; we have choice of the United States, Tortoni's, the Alhambra, and many other equally classic resorts, but Delmonico's, like its distinguished original in New York, has the highest prices and the greatest variety of dishes. We go down Kearney street to a two-story wooden house on the corner of Jackson. The lower story is a market; the walls are garnished with quarters of beef and

mutton; a huge pile of Sandwich Island squashes fills one corner, and several cabbage-heads, valued at $2 each, show themselves in the window. We enter a little door at the end of the building, ascend a dark, narrow flight of steps and find ourselves in a long, low room, with ceiling and walls of white muslin and a floor covered with oil-cloth.

There are about twenty tables disposed in two rows, all of them so well filled that we have some difficulty in finding places. Taking up the written bill of fare, we find such items as the following:

SOUPS.		ENTREES.	
Mock Turtle	$0 75	Fillet of Beef, mushroom sauce	$1 75
St. Julien	1 00	Veal Cutlets, breaded	1 00
FISH.		Mutton Chop	1 00
Boiled Salmon Trout, Anchovy sauce	1 75	Lobster Salad	2 00
BOILED.		Sirloin of Venison	1 50
Leg Mutton, caper sauce	1 00	Baked Maccaroni	0 75
Corned Beef, Cabbage,	1 00	Beef Tongue, sauce piquante	1 00
Ham and Tongues	0 75		

So that, with but a moderate appetite, the dinner will cost us $5, if we are at all epicurean in our tastes. There are cries of "steward!" from all parts of the room—the word "waiter" is not considered sufficiently respectful, seeing that the waiter may have been a lawyer or merchant's clerk a few months before. The dishes look very small as they are placed on the table, but they are skilfully cooked and very palatable to men that have ridden in from the diggings. The appetite one acquires in California is something remarkable. For two months after my arrival, my sensations were like those of a famished wolf.

In the matter of dining, the tastes of all nations can be gratified here. There are French restaurants on the plaza and on Dupont street; an extensive German establishment on Pacific street; the *Fonda Peruana;* the Italian Confectionary; and three Chinese

houses, denoted by their long three-cornered flags of yellow silk. The latter are much frequented by Americans, on account of their excellent cookery, and the fact that meals are $1 each, without regard to quantity. Kong-Sung's house is near the water; Whang-Tong's in Sacramento Street, and Tong-Ling's in Jackson street. There the grave Celestials serve up their chow-chow and curry, besides many genuine English dishes; their tea and coffee cannot be surpassed.

The afternoon is less noisy and active than the forenoon. Merchants keep within-doors, and the gambling-rooms are crowded with persons who step in to escape the wind and dust. The sky takes a cold gray cast, and the hills over the bay are barely visible in the dense, dusty air. Now and then a watcher, who has been stationed on the hill above Fort Montgomery, comes down and reports an inward-bound vessel, which occasions a little excitement among the boatmen and the merchants who are awaiting consignments. Towards sunset, the plaza is nearly deserted; the wind is merciless in its force, and a heavy overcoat is not found unpleasantly warm. As it grows dark, there is a lull, though occasional gusts blow down the hill and carry the dust of the city out among the shipping.

The appearance of San Francisco at night, from the water, is unlike anything I ever beheld. The houses are mostly of canvas, which is made transparent by the lamps within, and transforms them, in the darkness, to dwellings of solid light. Seated on the slopes of its three hills, the tents pitched among the chapparal to the very summits, it gleams like an amphitheatre of fire. Here and there shine out brilliant points, from the decoy-lamps of the gaming-houses; and through the indistinct murmur of the streets comes by fits the sound of music from their hot and crowded pre-

cincts. The picture has in it something unreal and fantastic; it impresses one like the cities of the magic lantern, which a motion of the hand can build or annihilate.

The only objects left for us to visit are the gaming-tables, whose day has just fairly dawned. We need not wander far in search of one. Denison's Exchange, the Parker House and Eldorado stand side by side; across the way are the Verandah and Aguila de Oro; higher up the plaza the St. Charles and Bella Union; while dozens of second-rate establishments are scattered through the less frequented streets. The greatest crowd is about the Eldorado; we find it difficult to effect an entrance. There are about eight tables in the room, all of which are thronged; copper-hued Kanakas, Mexicans rolled in their sarapes and Peruvians thrust through their ponchos, stand shoulder to shoulder with the brown and bearded American miners. The stakes are generally small, though when the bettor gets into "a streak of luck," as it is called, they are allowed to double until all is lost or the bank breaks. Along the end of the room is a spacious bar, supplied with all kinds of bad liquors, and in a sort of gallery, suspended under the ceiling, a female violinist tasks her talent and strength of muscle to minister to the excitement of play.

The Verandah, opposite, is smaller, but boasts an equal attraction in a musician who has a set of Pandean pipes fastened at his chin, a drum on his back, which he beats with sticks at his elbows, and cymbals in his hands. The piles of coin on the monte tables clink merrily to his playing, and the throng of spectators, jammed together in a sweltering mass, walk up to the bar between the tunes and drink out of sympathy with his dry and breathless throat. At the Aguila de Oro there is a full band of Ethiopian serenaders, and at the other hells, violins, guitars or wheezy accordeons, as

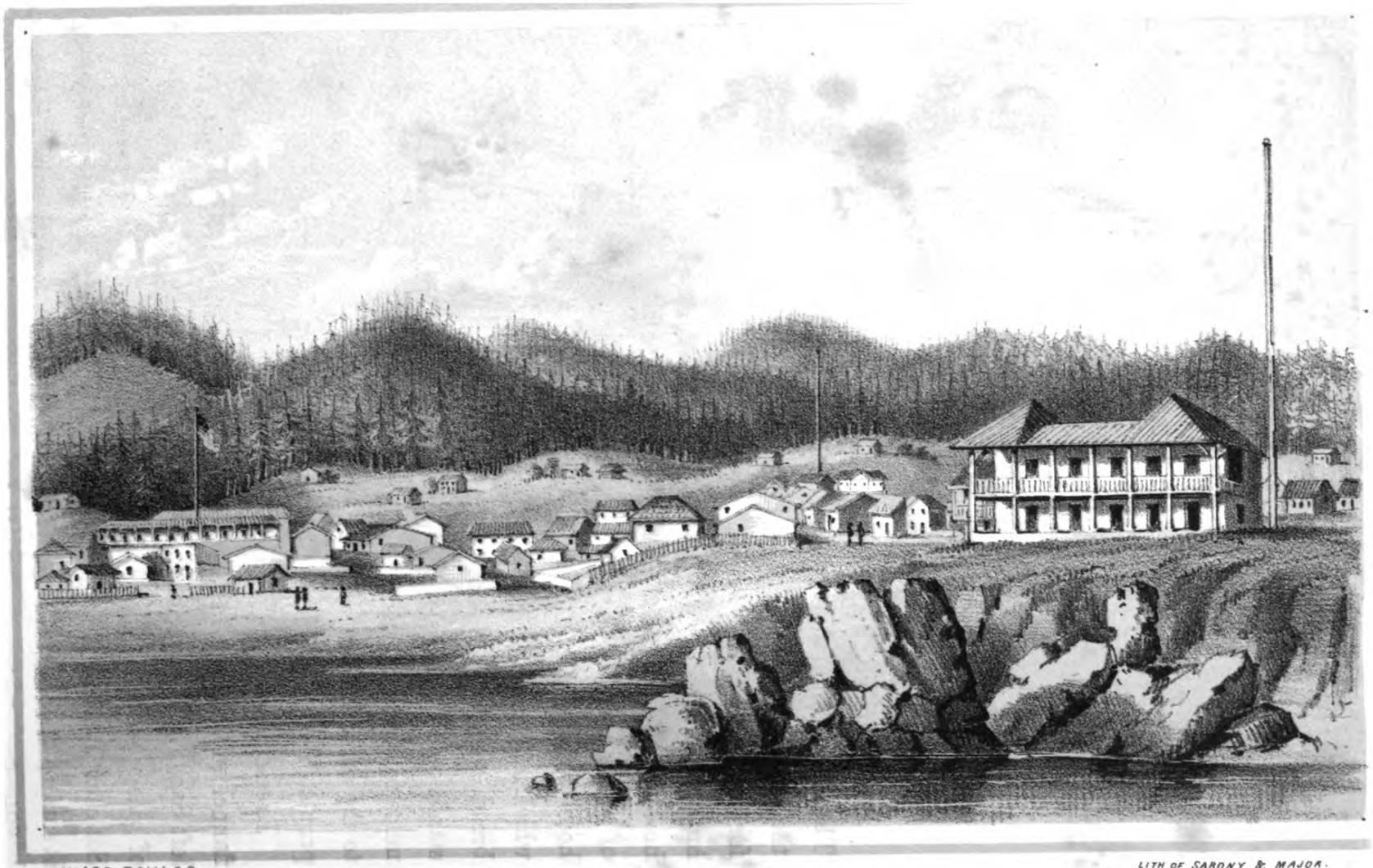
the case may be. The atmosphere of these places is rank with tobacco-smoke, and filled with a feverish, stifling heat, which communicates an unhealthy glow to the faces of the players.

We shall not be deterred from entering by the heat and smoke, or the motley characters into whose company we shall be thrown. There are rare chances here for seeing human nature in one of its most dark and exciting phases. Note the variety of expression in the faces gathered around this table! They are playing monte, the favorite game in California, since the chances are considered more equal and the opportunity of false play very slight. The dealer throws out his cards with a cool, nonchalant air; indeed, the gradual increase of the hollow square of dollars at his left hand is not calculated to disturb his equanimity. The two Mexicans in front, muffled in their dirty sarapes, put down their half-dollars and dollars and see them lost, without changing a muscle. Gambling is a born habit with them, and they would lose thousands with the same indifference. Very different is the demeanor of the Americans who are playing; their good or ill luck is betrayed at once by involuntary exclamations and changes of countenance, unless the stake should be very large and absorbing, when their anxiety, though silent, may be read with no less certainty. They have no power to resist the fascination of the game. Now counting their winnings by thousands, now dependent on the kindness of a friend for a few dollars to commence anew, they pass hour after hour in those hot, unwholesome dens. There is no appearance of arms, but let one of the players, impatient with his losses and maddened by the poisonous fluids he has drank, threaten one of the profession, and there will be no scarcity of knives and revolvers.

There are other places, where gaming is carried on privately

and to a more ruinous extent—rooms in the rear of the Parker House, in the City Hotel and other places, frequented only by the initiated. Here the stakes are almost unlimited, the players being men of wealth and apparent respectability. Frequently, in the absorbing interest of some desperate game the night goes by unheeded and morning breaks upon haggard faces and reckless hearts. Here are lost, in a few turns of a card or rolls of a ball, the product of fortunate ventures by sea or months of racking labor on land. How many men, maddened by continual losses, might exclaim in their blind vehemence of passion, on leaving these hells:

"Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends!"



BAYARD TAYLOR.

LITH OF SARONY & MAJOR.

MONTEREY.

CHAPTER XIII.

INCIDENTS OF A WALK TO MONTEREY.

I STAYED but four or five days in San Francisco on my return. The Convention, elected to form a constitution for California, was then in session at Monterey, and, partly as an experiment, partly for economy's sake, I determined to make the journey of one hundred and thirty miles on foot. Pedestrianism in California, however, as I learned by this little experience, is something more of a task than in most countries, one being obliged to carry his hotel with him. The least possible bedding is a Mexican sarape, which makes a burdensome addition to a knapsack, and a loaf of bread and flask of water are inconvenient, when the mercury stands at 90°. Besides, the necessity of pushing forward many miles to reach "grass and water" at night, is not very pleasant to the foot-sore and weary traveler. A mule, with all his satanic propensities, is sometimes a very convenient animal.

Dressed in a complete suit of corduroy, with a shirt of purple flannel and boots calculated to wear an indefinite length of time, I left San Francisco one afternoon, waded through the three miles of deep sand to the Mission, crossed the hills and reached Sanchez' Ranche a little after dark. I found the old man, who is said to dislike the Americans most cordially, very friendly. He

set before me a supper of beef stewed in red-peppers and then gave me a bed—an actual bed—and, wonder of wonders! without fleas. Not far from Sanchez there is a large adobe house, the ruins of a former Mission, in the neighborhood of which I noticed a grove of bay-trees. They were of a different species from the Italian bay, and the leaves gave out a most pungent odor. Some of the trees were of extraordinary size, the trunk being three feet in diameter. They grew along the banks of a dry arroyo, and had every appearance of being indigenous. I found the *jornada* of twenty-five miles to Secondini's Ranche, extremely fatiguing in the hot sun. I entered the ranche panting, threw my knapsack on the floor and inquired of a handsome young Californian, dressed in blue calzoneros: "Can you give me anything to eat?" "*Nada—nad-i-t-a!*" he answered, sharpening out the sound with an expression which meant, as plain as words could say it: "nothing; not even the little end of nothing!"

I was too hungry to be satisfied with this reply, and commenced an inventory of all the articles on hand. I found plenty of French brandy, *mescal* and various manufactured wines, which I rejected; but my search was at last rewarded by a piece of bread, half a Dutch cheese and a bottle of ale, nearly all of which soon disappeared. Towards night, some of the vaqueros brought in a cow with a lariat around her horns, threw her on the ground and plunged a knife into her breast. A roaring fire was already kindled behind the house, and the breath had not been many seconds out of the cow's body, before pieces of meat, slashed from her flank, were broiling on the coals. When about half cooked, they were snatched out, dripping with the rich, raw juices of the animal, and eaten as a great delicacy. One of the vaqueros handed me a large slice, which I found rather tough, but so remarkably sweet

and nutritious that I ate it, feeling myself at the time little better than a wolf.

I left Secondini's at daybreak and traveled twelve miles to the Mission of Santa Clara, where, not being able to obtain breakfast, I walked into the garden and made a meal of pears and the juicy fruit of the cactus. Thence to Pueblo San José, where I left the road I had already traveled, and took the broad highway running southward, up the valley of San José. The mountains were barely visible on either side, through the haze, and the road, perfectly level, now passed over wide reaches of grazing land, now crossed park-like tracts, studded with oaks and sycamores—a charming interchange of scenery. I crossed the dry bed of Coyote Creek several times, and reached Capt. Fisher's Ranche as it was growing dusk, and a passing traveler warned me to look out for bears.

Capt. Fisher, who is married to a Californian lady and has lived many years in the country, has one of the finest ranches in the valley, containing four square leagues of land, or about eighteen thousand acres. There are upon it eighteen streams or springs, two small orchards, and a vineyard and garden. He purchased it at auction about three years since for $3,000, which was then considered a high price, but since the discovery of gold he has been offered $80,000 for it. I was glad to find, from the account he gave me of his own experience as a farmer, that my first impressions of the character of California as an agricultural country, were fully justified. The barren, burnt appearance of the plains during the summer season misled many persons as to the value of the country in this respect. From all quarters were heard complaints of the torrid heat and arid soil under which large rivers dry up and vegetation almost entirely disappears. The

possibility of raising good crops of any kind was vehemently denied, and the bold assertion made that the greater part of California is worthless, except for grazing purposes. Capt. Fisher informed me, however, that there is no such wheat country in the world. Even with the imperfect plowing of the natives, which does little more than scratch up the surface of the ground, it produces a hundred-fold. Not only this, but, without further cultivation, a large crop springs up on the soil the second and sometimes even the third year. Capt. Fisher knew of a ranchero who sowed twenty fanegas of wheat, from which he harvested one thousand and twenty fanegas. The second year he gathered from the same ground eight hundred fanegas, and the third year six hundred. The unvarying dryness of the climate after the rains have ceased preserves grain of all kinds from rot, and perhaps from the same circumstance, the Hessian fly is unknown. The mountain-sides, to a considerable extent, are capable of yielding fine crops of wheat, barley and rye, and the very summits and ravines on which the wild oats grow so abundantly will of course give a richer return when they have been traversed by the plow.

Corn grows upon the plains, but thrives best in the neighborhood of streams. It requires no irrigation, and is not planted until after the last rain has fallen. The object of this, however, is to avoid the growth of weeds, which, were it planted earlier, would soon choke it, in the absence of a proper system of farming. The use of the common cultivator would remove this difficulty, and by planting in March instead of May, an abundant crop would be certain. I saw several hundred acres which Capt. Fisher had on his ranche. The ears were large and well filled, and the stalks, though no rain had fallen for four months, were as green and fresh as in our fields at home. Ground which has been

plowed and planted, though it shows a dry crust on the top, retains its moisture to within six inches of the surface; while close beside it, and on the same level, the uncultured earth is seamed with heat, and vegetation burned up. The valley of San José is sixty miles in length, and contains at least five hundred square miles of level plain, nearly the whole of which is capable of cultivation. In regard to climate and situation, it is one of the most favored parts of California, though the valleys of Sonoma, Napa, Bodega, and nearly the whole of the Sacramento country, are said to be equally fertile.

Vegetables thrive luxuriantly, and many species, such as melons, pumpkins, squashes, beans, potatoes, etc., require no further care than the planting. Cabbages, onions, and all others which are transplanted in the spring, are obliged to be irrigated. Grape vines in some situations require to be occasionally watered; when planted on moist slopes, they produce without it. A Frenchman named Vigne made one hundred barrels of wine in one year, from a vineyard of about six acres, which he cultivates at the Mission San José. Capt. Fisher had a thousand vines in his garden, which were leaning on the earth from the weight of their fruit. Many of the clusters weighed four and five pounds, and in bloom, richness and flavor rivaled the choicest growth of Tuscany or the Rhine. The vine will hereafter be an important product of California, and even Burgundy and Tokay may be superseded on the tables of the luxurious by the vintage of San José and Los Angeles.

Before reaching Fisher's Ranche, I noticed on my left a bold spur striking out from the mountain-range. It terminated in a bluff, and both the rock and soil were of the dark-red color of Egyptian porphyry, denoting the presence of cinnabar, the ore of

quicksilver. The veins of this metal contained in the mountain are thought to be equal to those of the mines of Santa Clara, which are on the opposite side of the valley, about eight miles from Pueblo San José.

The following morning I resumed my walk up the valley. The soft, cloudless sky—the balmy atmosphere—the mountain ranges on either hand, stretching far before me until they vanished in purple haze—the sea-like sweep of the plain, with its islands and shores of dark-green oak, and the picturesque variety of animal life on all sides, combined to form a landscape which I may have seen equalled but never surpassed. Often, far in advance beyond the belts of timber, a long blue headland would curve out from the mountains and seem to close up the beautiful plain ; but after the road had crossed its point, another and grander plain expanded for leagues before the eye. Nestled in a warm nook on the sunny side of one of these mountain capes, I found the ranche of Mr. Murphy, commanding a splendid prospect. Beyond the house and across a little valley, rose the conical peak of El Toro, an isolated mountain which served as a landmark from San José nearly to Monterey.

I was met at the door by Mr. Ruckel of San Francisco, who, with Mr. Everett of New York, had been rusticating a few days in the neighborhood. They introduced me to Mr. Murphy and his daughter, Ellen, both residents of the country for the last six years. Mr. Murphy, who is a native of Ireland, emigrated from Missouri, with his family, in 1843. He owns nine leagues of land (forty thousand acres) in the valley, and his cottage is a well-known and welcome resting-place to all the Americans in the country. During the war he remained on the ranche in company with his daughter, notwithstanding Castro's troops were scouring the

country, and all other families had moved to the Pueblo for protection. His three sons were at the same time volunteers under Frémont's command.

After dinner Mr. Murphy kindly offered to accompany me to the top of El Toro. Two horses were driven in from the caballada and saddled, and on these we started, at the usual sweeping speed. Reaching the foot of the mountain, the lithe and spirited animals climbed its abrupt side like goats, following the windings of cattle-paths up the rocky ridges and through patches of stunted oak and chapparal, till finally, bathed in sweat and panting with the toil, they stood on the summit. We looked on a vast and wonderful landscape. The mountain rose like an island in the sea of air, so far removed from all it overlooked, that everything was wrapped in a subtle violet haze, through which the features of the scene seemed grander and more distant than the reality. West of us, range behind range, ran the Coast Mountains, parted by deep, wild valleys, in which we could trace the course of streams, shaded by the pine and the giant redwood. On the other side, the valley of San José, ten miles in width, lay directly at our feet, extending to the North and South, beyond point and headland, till either extremity was lost in the distance. The unvarying yellow hue of mountain and plain, except where they were traversed by broad belts of dark green timber, gave a remarkable effect to the view. It was not the color of barrenness and desolation and had no character of sadness or even monotony. Rather, glimmering through the mist, the mountains seemed to have arrayed themselves in cloth of gold, as if giving testimony of the royal metal with which their veins abound.

After enjoying this scene for some time, we commenced the descent. The peak slanted downward at an angle of 45°, which

rendered it toilsome work for our horses. I was about half-way down the summit-cone, when my saddle, slipping over the horse's shoulders, suddenly dropped to his ears. I was shot forward and alighted on my feet two or three yards below, fortunately retaining the end of the lariat in my hand. For a few minutes we performed a very spirited *pas de deux* on the side of the mountain, but Mr. Murphy coming to my assistance, the horse was finally quieted and re-saddled. The afternoon was by this time far advanced, and I accepted Mr. Murphy's invitation to remain for the night. His pleasant family circle was increased in the evening by the arrival of Rev. Mr. Dowiat, a Catholic Missionary from Oregon, who gave us an account of the Indian massacre the previous winter. He was on the spot the day of its occurrence and assisted in interring the bodies of Dr. Whitman and his fellow-victims.

I traveled slowly the next day, for the hot sand and unaccustomed exercise were beginning to make some impression on my feet. Early in the afternoon I reached some *milpas* standing in the middle of a cornfield. A handsome young ranchero came dashing up on a full gallop, stopping his horse with a single bound as he neared me. I asked him the name of the ranche, and whether he could give me a dinner. "It is Castro's Ranche," he replied; "and I am a Castro. If you want water-melons, or dinner either, don't go to the other milpas, for they have nothing: venga!" and off he started, dashing through the corn and over the melon patches, as if they were worthless sand. I entered the milpa, which resembled an enormous wicker crate. In default of chairs I sat upon the ground, and very soon a dish of tortillas, one of boiled corn and another of jerked beef, were set before me. There was no need of knives and forks; I watched the heir of the Castros, placed a tortilla on one knee and plied my fingers with an assiduity

equal to his own, so that between us there was little left of the repast. He then picked out two melons from a large pile, rolled them to me, and started away again, doubtless to chase down more customers.

The road crossed the dry bed of a river, passed some meadows of fresh green grass and entered the hills on the western side of the valley. After passing the divide, I met an old Indian, traveling on foot, of whom I asked the distance to San Juan. His reply in broken Spanish was given with a comical brevity: "San Juan—two leagues—you sleep—I sleep rancho—you walk—I walk; *anda*, *vamos!*" and pointing to the sun to signify that it was growing late, he trudged off with double speed. By sunset I emerged from the mountains, waded the Rio Pajaro, and entered on the valley of San Juan, which stretched for leagues before me, as broad and beautiful as that I had left. The road, leading directly across it, seemed endless; I strained my eyes in vain looking for the Mission. At last a dark spot appeared some distance ahead of me. "Pray heaven," thought I, "that you be either a house, and stand still, or a man, and come forward." It was an Indian vaquero, who pointed out a dark line, which I could barely discern through the dusk. Soon afterwards the sound of a bell, chiming vespers, broke on the silence, but I was still more weary before I reached the walls where it swung.

At the inn adjoining the Mission I found Rev. Mr. Hunt, Col. Stewart, Capt. Simmons and Mr. Harrison, of San Francisco. We had beds, but did not sleep much; few travelers, in fact, sleep at any of the Missions, on account of the dense population. In the morning I made a sketch of the ruined building, filled my pockets with pears in the orchard, and started up a cañada to cross the mountains to the plain of Salinas River. It was a mule-path,

impracticable for wagons, and leading directly up the face of the dividing ridge. Clumps of the madrono—a native evergeen, with large, glossy leaves, and trunk and branches of bright purple—filled the ravines, and dense thickets of a shrub with a snow-white berry lined the way. From the summit there was a fine mountain-view, sloping off on either hand into the plains of San Juan and Salinas.

Along this road, since leaving San José, I met constantly with companies of emigrants from the Gila, on their way to the diggings. Many were on foot, having had their animals taken from them by the Yuma Indians at the crossing of the Colorado. They were wild, sun-burned, dilapidated men, but with strong and hardy frames, that were little affected by the toils of the journey. Some were mounted on mules which had carried them from Texas and Arkansas; and two of the Knickerbocker Company, having joined their teams to a wagon, had begun business by filling it with vegetables at the Mission, to sell again in the gold district. In a little glen I found a party of them camped for a day or two to wash their clothes in a pool which had drained from the meadows above. The companies made great inroads on my progress by questioning me about the gold region. None of them seemed to have any very definite plan in their heads. It was curious to note their eagerness to hear "golden reports" of the country, every one of them betraying, by his questioning, the amount of the fortune he secretly expected to make. "Where would you advise me to go?" was the first question. I evaded the responsibility of a direct answer, and gave them the general report of the yield on all the rivers. "How much can I dig in a day?" This question was so absurd, as I could know nothing of the physical strength, endurance or geological knowledge of the emigrant, that I invariably refused to

make a random answer, telling them it depended entirely on themselves. But there was no escaping in this manner. "Well, how much do you *think* I can dig in a day?" was sure to follow, and I was obliged to satisfy them by replying: "Perhaps a dollar's worth, perhaps five pounds, perhaps nothing!"

They spoke of meeting great numbers of Sonorians on their way home—some of whom had attempted to steal their mules and provisions. Others, again, who had reached the country quite destitute, were kindly treated by them. The Yuma and Maricopas Indians were the greatest pests on the route. They had met with no difficulty in passing through the Apache country, and, with the exception of some little thieving, the Pimos tribes had proved friendly. The two former tribes, however, had united their forces, which amounted to two thousand warriors, and taken a hostile position among the hills near the Colorado crossing. There had been several skirmishes between them and small bodies of emigrants, in which men were killed on both sides. A New York Company lost five of its members in this manner. Nearly all the persons I met had been seven months on the way. They reported that there were about ten thousand persons on the Gila, not more than half of whom had yet arrived in California. Very few of the original companies held together, most of them being too large for convenience.

Descending a long cañada in the mountains, I came out at the great Salinas Plain. At an Indian ranche on the last slope, several cart-loads of melons were heaped beside the door, and I ate two or three in company with a traveler who rode up, and who proved to be a spy employed by Gen. Scott in the Mexican campaign. He was a small man, with a peculiar, keen gray eye, and a physiognomy thoroughly adapted for concealing all that was

passing in his mind. His hair was long and brown, and his beard unshorn; he was, in fact, a genuine though somewhat diminutive type of Harvey Birch, differing from him likewise in a courteous freedom of manner which he had learned by long familiarity with Spanish habits. While we sat, slicing the melons and draining their sugary juice, he told me a story of his capture by the Mexicans, after the battles in the Valley. He was carried to Queretaro, tried and sentenced to be shot, but succeeded in bribing the sergeant of the guard, through whose means he succeeded in escaping the night before the day of execution. The sergeant's wife, who brought his meals to the prison in a basket, left with him the basket, a *rebosa* and petticoat, in which he arrayed himself, after having shaved off his long beard, and passed out unnoticed by the guard. A good horse was in waiting, and he never slacked rein until he reached San Juan del Rio, eleven leagues from Queretaro.

To strike out on the plain was like setting sail on an unknown sea. My companion soon sank below the horizon, while I, whose timbers were somewhat strained, labored after him. I had some misgivings about the road, but followed it some four or five miles, when, on trying the course with a compass, I determined to leave it and take the open plain. I made for a faint speck far to the right, which, after an hour's hard walking showed itself to be a deserted ranche, beside an *ojo de agua*, or marshy spring. Fortunately, I struck on another road, and perseveringly followed it till dusk, when I reached the ranche of Thomas Blanco, on the bank of the Salinas River. Harvey Birch was standing in the door, having arrived an hour before me. Tortillas and frijoles were smoking on the table—a welcome sight to a hungry man! Mr. Blanco, who treated us with genuine kindness, then gave us

good beds, and I went to sleep with the boom of the surf on the shore of the distant bay ringing in my ears.

Mr. Blanco, who is married to a Californian woman, has been living here several years. His accounts of the soil and climate fully agreed with what I had heard from other residents. There is a fine garden on the ranche, but during his absence at the placers in the summer, all the vegetables were carried away by a band of Sonorians, who loaded his pack-mules with them and drove them off. They would even have forcibly taken his wife and her sister with them, had not some of her relatives fortunately arrived in time to prevent it.

I was so lame and sore the next morning, that I was fain to be helped over the remaining fifteen miles to Monterey, by the kind offer of Mr. Shew of Baltimore, who gave me a seat in his wagon. The road passed over sand-hills, covered only with chapparal, and good for nothing except as a shooting-ground for partridges and hares. The view of the town as you approach, opening through a gap between two low, piny hills, is very fine. Though so far inferior to San Francisco in size, the houses were all substantially built, and did not look as if they would fly off in a gale of wind. They were scattered somewhat loosely over a gentle slope, behind which ran a waving outline of pine-covered mountains. On the right hand appeared the blue waters of the bay, with six or seven vessels anchored near the shore. The American flag floated gaily in the sunshine above the fort on the bluff and the Government offices in the town, and prominent among the buildings on the high ground stood the Town Hall—a truly neat and spacious edifice of yellow stone, in which the Constitutional Convention was then sitting.

In spite of the additional life which this body gave to the place,

my first impression was that of a deserted town. Few people were stirring in the streets; business seemed dull and stagnant; and after hunting half an hour for a hotel, I learned that there was none. In this dilemma I luckily met my former fellow-traveler, Major Smith, who asked me to spread my blanket in his room, in the *cuartel*, or Government barracks. I willingly complied, glad to find a place of rest after a foot-journey which I declared should be my last in California.

CHAPTER XIV.

LIFE IN MONTEREY.

MAJOR SMITH, who was Paymaster for the stations of Monterey and San Diego, had arrived only a few days previous, from the latter place. He was installed in a spacious room in the upper story of the *cuartel*, which by an impromptu partition of muslin, was divided into an office and bedroom. Two or three empty freight-boxes, furnished as a great favor by the Quarter Master, served as desk, table and wash-stand. There were just three chairs for the Major, his brother and myself, so that when we had a visit, one of us took his seat on a box. The only bedding I brought from San Francisco was a sarape, which was insufficient, but with some persuasion we obtained a soldier's pallet and an armful of straw, out of which we made a comfortable bed. We were readily initiated into the household mysteries of sweeping, dusting, etc., and after a few days' practice felt competent to take charge of a much larger establishment.

I took my meals at the *Fonda de la Union*, on the opposite side of the street. It was an old, smoky place not uncomfortably clean, with a billiard-room and two small rooms adjoining, where the owner, a sallow Mexican, with his Indian cook and *muchacho*, entertained his customers. The place was frequented by a num-

ber of the members and clerks of the Convention, by all rambling Americans or Californians who happened to be in Monterey, and occasionally a seaman or two from the ships in the harbor. The charges were usually $1 per meal; for which we were furnished with an *olla* of boiled beef, cucumbers and corn, an *asado* of beef and red-pepper, a *guisado* of beef and potatoes, and two or three cups of execrable coffee. At the time of my arrival this was the only restaurant in the place, and reaped such a harvest of *pesos*, that others were not long in starting up.

There was one subject, which at the outset occasioned us many sleepless nights. In vain did we attempt to forego the contemplation of it; as often as we lay down on our pallets, the thought would come uncalled, and very soon we were writhing under its attacks as restlessly as Richard on his ghost-haunted couch. It was no imaginary disturbance; it assailed us on all sides, and without cessation. It was an annoyance by no means peculiar to California; it haunts the temples of the Incas and the halls of the Montezumas; I have felt it come upon me in the Pantheon of Rome, and many a traveler has bewailed its visitation while sleeping in the shadow of the Pyramid. Nothing is more positively real to the feelings, nothing more elusive and intangible to the search. You look upon the point of its attack, and you see it not; you put your finger on it, and it is not there!

We tried all the means in our power to procure a good night's rest. We swept out the room, shook out the blankets and tucked ourselves in so skillfully that we thought no flea could effect an entrance—but in vain. At last, after four nights of waking torment, I determined to give up the attempt; I had become so nervous by repeated failures that the thought of it alone would have prevented sleep. At bed-time, therefore, I took my blankets,

and went up into the pine woods behind the town. I chose a warm corner between some bushes and a fallen log; the air was misty and chill and the moon clouded over, but I lay sheltered and comfortable on my pillow of dry sticks. Occasionally a partridge would stir in the bushes by my head or a squirrel rustle among the dead leaves, while far back in the gloomy shadows of the forest the coyotes kept up an endless howl. I slept but indifferently, for two or three fleas had escaped the blanket-shaking, and did biting enough for fifty.

After many trials, I finally nonplussed them in spite of all their cunning. There is a thick green shrub in the forest, whose powerful balsamic odor is too much for them. After sweeping the floor and sprinkling it with water, I put down my bed, previously well shaken, and surrounded it with a chevaux-de-frise of this shrub, wide enough to prevent their overleaping it. Thus moated and palisaded from the foe, I took my rest unbroken, to his utter discomfiture.

Every day that I spent in Monterey, I found additional cause to recede from my first impression of the dullness of the place. Quiet it certainly is, to one coming from San Francisco; but it is only dull in the sense that Nice and Pisa are dull cities. The bustle of trade is wanting, but to one not bent on gold-hunting, a delicious climate, beautiful scenery, and pleasant society are a full compensation. Those who stay there for any length of time, love the place before they leave it—which would scarcely be said of San Francisco.

The situation of Monterey is admirable. The houses are built on a broad, gentle slope of land, about two miles from Point Pinos, the southern extremity of the bay. They are scattered over an extent of three quarters of a mile, leaving ample room

for the growth of the town for many years to come. The outline of the hills in the rear is somewhat similar to those of Staten Island, but they increase in height as they run to the south-east, till at the distance of four miles they are merged in the high mountains of the Coast Range. The northern shore of the bay is twenty miles distant, curving so far to the west, that the Pacific is not visible from any part of the town. Eastward, a high, rocky ridge, called the Toro Mountains, makes a prominent object in the view, and when the air is clear the Sierra de Gavilàn, beyond the Salinas plains, is distinctly visible.

During my visit the climate was mild and balmy beyond that of the same season in Italy. The temperature was that of mid-May at home, the sky for the greater part of the time without a cloud, and the winds as pleasant as if tempered exactly to the warmth of the blood. A thermometer hanging in my room only varied between 52° and 54°, which was about 10° lower than the air without. The siroccos of San Francisco are unknown in Monterey; the mornings are frequently foggy, but it always clears about ten o'clock, and remains so till near sunset. The sky at noonday is a pure, soft blue.

The harbor of Monterey is equal to any in California. The bight in which vessels anchor is entirely protected from the north-westers by Sea-Gull Point, and from the south-eastern winds by mountains in the rear. In the absence of light-houses, the dense fog renders navigation dangerous on this coast, and in spite of an entrance twenty-five miles in breath, vessels frequently run below Point Pinos, and are obliged to anchor on unsafe ground in Carmel Bay. A road leads from the town over the hills to the ex-Mission of Carmel, situated at the head of the bay, about four miles distant. Just beyond it is Point Lobos, a promontory on

the coast, famous for the number of seals and sea-lions which congregate there at low tide. A light-house on Point Pinos and another on Point Lobos would be a sufficient protection to navigation for the present, and I understand that the agents of the Government have recommended their erection.

The trade of Monterey is rapidly on the increase. During my stay of five weeks, several houses were built, half a dozen stores opened and four hotels established, one of which was kept by a Chinaman. There were at least ten arrivals and departures of vessels, exclusive of the steamers, within that time, and I was credibly informed that the Collector of the Port had, during the previous five months, received about $150,000 in duties. Provisions of all kinds are cheaper than at San Francisco, but merchandize brings higher prices. At the Washington House, kept by a former private in Col. Stevenson's regiment, I obtained excellent board at $12 per week. The building, which belongs to an Italian named Alberto Tusconi, rented for $1,200 monthly. Rents of all kinds were high, $200 a month having been paid for rooms during the session of the Convention. Here, as in San Francisco, there are many striking instances of sudden prosperity. Mr. Tusconi, whom I have just mentioned, came out five years before, as a worker in tin. He was without money, but obtained the loan of some sheets of tin, which he manufactured into cups and sold. From this beginning he had amassed a fortune of $50,000, and was rapidly adding to his gains.

There was a good deal of speculation in lots, and many of the sales, though far short of the extravagant standard of San Francisco, were still sufficiently high. A lot seventy-five feet by twenty-five, with a small frame store upon it, was sold for $5,000. A one-story house, with a lot about fifty by seventy-five feet, in

the outskirts of the town, was held at $6,000. This was about the average rate of property, and told well for a town which a year previous was deserted, and which, only six months before, contained no accommodations of any kind for the traveler.

There is another circumstance which will greatly increase the commercial importance of Monterey. The discoveries of gold mines and placers on the Mariposa, and the knowledge that gold exists in large quantities on the Lake Fork, King's River and the Pitiuna—streams which empty into the Tularé Lakes on their eastern side—will hereafter attract a large portion of the mining population into that region. Hitherto, the hostility of the Indians in the southern part of the Sierra Nevada, and the richness of more convenient localities, have hindered the gold diggers from going beyond the Mariposa. The distance of these rivers from San Francisco, and the great expense of transporting supplies to the new mining district, will naturally direct a portion of the importing trade to some more convenient seaport. Monterey, with the best anchorage on the coast, is one hundred and twenty-five miles nearer the Tularé Lakes. By bridging a few arroyos, an excellent wagon road can be made through a pass in the Coast Range, into the valley of San Joaquin, opening a direct communication with the southern placers.

The removal of the Seat of Government to the Pueblo San José, will not greatly affect the consequence of the place. The advantages it has lost, are, at most, a slight increase of population, and the custom of the Legislature during its session. This will be made up in a different way; a large proportion of the mining population, now in the mountains, will come down to the coast to winter and recruit themselves after the hardships of the Fall digging. Of these, Monterey will attract the greater portion,

as well from the salubrity of its climate as the comparative cheapness of living. The same advantages will cause it to be preferred, hereafter, as the residence of those who have retired from their golden labors. The pine-crowned slopes back of the town contain many sites of unsurpassed beauty for private residences.

With the exception of Los Angeles, Monterey contains the most pleasant society to be found in California. There is a circle of families, American and native, residing there, whose genial and refined social character makes one forget his previous ideas of California life. In spite of the lack of cultivation, except such instruction as the priests were competent to give, the native population possesses a natural refinement of manner which would grace the most polished society. They acknowledge their want of education; they tell you they grow as the trees, with the form and character that Nature gives them; but even uncultured Nature in California wears all the ripeness and maturity of older lands. I have passed many agreeable hours in the houses of the native families. The most favorite resort of Americans is that of Doña Augusta Ximeno, the sister of Don Pablo de la Guerra. This lady, whose active charity in aiding the sick and distressed has won her the enduring gratitude of many and the esteem of all, has made her house the home of every American officer who visits Monterey. With a rare liberality, she has given up a great part of it to their use, when it was impossible for them to procure quarters, and they have always been welcome guests at her table. She is a woman whose nobility of character, native vigor and activity of intellect, and above all, whose instinctive refinement and winning grace of manner, would have given her a complete supremacy in society, had her lot been cast in Europe or the United States. During the session of the Convention, her house was the favorite

resort of all the leading members, both American and Californian. She was thoroughly versed in Spanish literature, as well as the works of Scott and Cooper, through translations, and I have frequently been surprised at the justness and elegance of her remarks on various authors. She possessed, moreover, all those bold and daring qualities which are so fascinating in a woman, when softened and made graceful by true feminine delicacy. She was a splendid horsewoman, and had even considerable skill in throwing the lariat.

The houses of Señor Soveranez and Señor Abrego were also much visited by Americans. The former gentleman served as a Captain in Mexico during the war, but since then has subsided into a good American citizen. Señor Abrego, who is of Mexican origin, was the most industrious Californian I saw in the country. Within a few years he had amassed a large fortune, which was in no danger of decreasing. I attended an evening party at his house, which was as lively and agreeable as any occasion of the kind well could be. There was a tolerable piano in his little parlor, on which a lady from Sydney, Australia, played "Non piu mesta" with a good deal of taste. Two American gentlemen gave us a few choice flute duetts, and the entertainment closed by a quadrille and polka, in which a little son of Señor Abrego figured, to the general admiration.

The old and tranquil look of Monterey, before the discovery of the placers, must have seemed remarkable to visitors from the Atlantic side of the Continent. The serene beauty of the climate and soft, vaporous atmosphere, have nothing in common with one's ideas of a new, scarce-colonized coast; the animals, even, are those of the old, civilized countries of Europe. Flocks of ravens croak from the tiled roofs, and cluster on the long adobe walls; magpies

chatter in the clumps of gnarled oak on the hills, and as you pass through the forest, hares start up from their coverts under the bearded pines. The quantity of blackbirds about the place is astonishing; in the mornings they wheel in squadrons about every house-top, and fill the air with their twitter.

But for the interest occasioned by the Convention, and the social impulse given to Monterey by the presence of its members, the town would hardly have furnished an incident marked enough to be remembered. Occasionally there was an arrival at the anchorage—generally from San Francisco, San Diego or Australia—which furnished talk for a day or two. Then some resident would give a fandango, which the whole town attended, or the Alcalde would decree a general *horn-burning*. This was nothing less than the collecting of all the horns and heads of slaughtered animals, scattered about the streets, into large piles, which burned through half the night, filling the air with a most unpleasant odor. When the atmosphere happened to be a little misty, the red light of these fires was thrown far up along the hills.

I learned some very interesting facts during my stay, relative to the products of California. Wisconsin has always boasted of raising the largest crops of talking humanity, but she will have to yield the palm to the new Pacific State, where the increase of population is entirely without precedent. A native was pointed out to me one day as the father of thirty-six children, twenty of whom were the product of his first marriage, and sixteen of his last. Mr. Hartnell, the Government translator, has a family of twenty-one children. Señor Abrego, who had been married twelve years, already counted as many heirs. Several other couples in the place had from twelve to eighteen; and the former number, I was told, is the usual size of a family in California. Whether or

not this remarkable fecundity is attributable to the climate, I am unable to tell.

The Californians, as a race, are vastly superior to the Mexicans. They have larger frames, stronger muscle, and a fresh, ruddy complexion, entirely different from the sallow skins of the tierra caliente or the swarthy features of those Bedouins of the West, the Sonorians. The families of pure Castilian blood resemble in features and build, the descendants of the Valencians in Chili and Mexico, whose original physical superiority over the natives of the other provinces of Spain, has not been obliterated by two hundred years of transplanting. Señor Soveranez informed me that the Californian soldiers, on account of this physical distinction, were nicknamed " Americanos" by the Mexicans. They have no national feeling in common with the latter, and will never forgive the cowardly deportment of the Sonorians toward them, during the recent war. Their superior valor, as soldiers, was amply experienced by our own troops, at the battle of San Pasquale.

I do not believe, however, that the majority of the native population rejoices at the national change which has come over the country. On the contrary, there is much jealousy and bitter feeling among the uneducated classes. The vast tides of emigration from the Atlantic States thrice outnumbered them in a single year, and consequently placed them forever in a hopeless minority. They witnessed the immediate extinction of their own political importance, and the introduction of a new language, new customs, and new laws. It is not strange that many of them should be opposed to us at heart, even while growing wealthy and prosperous under the marvellous change which has been wrought by the enterprise of our citizens. Nevertheless, we have many warm friends, and the United States many faithful subjects, among them. The

intelligent and influential faction which aided us during the war, is still faithful, and many who were previously discontented, are now loudest in their rejoicing. Our authorities have acted toward them with constant and impartial kindness. By pursuing a similar course, the future government of the State will soon obliterate the differences of race and condition, and all will then be equally Californian and American citizens.

CHAPTER XV.

THE STATE ORGANIZATION OF CALIFORNIA.

In some respects, the political history of California for the year 1849, is without a parallel in the annals of any nation. The events are too recent for us to see them in the clear, defined outlines they will exhibit to posterity; we can only describe them as they occurred, throwing the strongest light on those points which now appear most prominent.

The discovery of the Gold Region of California occurred in little more than a month after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, by which the country was ceded to the United States. Congress having adjourned without making provision for any kind of civil organization, the Military Government established during the war continued in force, in conjunction with the local laws in force under the Mexican rule—a most incongruous state of things, which gave rise to innumerable embarrassments. Meanwhile, the results of the gold discovery produced a complete revolution in society, upturning all branches of trade, industry or office, and for a time completely annulling the Government. Mexico and the South American republics sent their thousands of adventurers into the country like a flood, far outnumbering the native population. During the winter of 1848-9, the state of affairs was most critical;

the American and foreign miners were embittered against each other; the authorities were without power to enforce their orders, and there seemed no check to restrain the free exercise of all lawless passions. There *was* a check, however—the steady integrity and inborn capacity for creating and upholding Law, of a portion of the old American settlers and emigrants newly arrived. A single spark of Order will in time irradiate and warm into shape a world of disorderly influences.

In the neglect of Congress to provide for the establishment of a Territorial Government, it was at first suggested that the People should provisionally organize such a Government among themselves. Various proposals were made, but before any decisive action was had on the subject, another and more appropriate form was given to the movement, chiefly through the labor and influence of a few individuals, who were countenanced by the existing authorities. This was, to call a Convention for the purpose of drafting a State Constitution, that California might at once be admitted into the Union, without passing through the usual Territorial stage—leaping with one bound, as it were, from a state of semi-civilization to be the Thirty-First Sovereign Republic of the American Confederacy. The vast influx of emigration had already increased the population beyond the required number, and the unparalleled speed with which Labor and Commerce were advancing warranted such a course, no less than the important natural resources of the country itself. The result of this movement was a proclamation from Gov. Riley, recommending that an election of Delegates to form such a Convention be held on the first of August, 1849.

Gen. Riley, the Civil Governor appointed by the United States, Gen. Smith, and Mr. T. Butler King, during a tour through the mining districts in the early part of summer, took every occasion

to interest the people in the subject, and stimulate them to hold preparatory meetings. The possibility of calling together and keeping together a body of men, many of whom must necessarily be deeply involved in business and speculation, was at first strongly doubted. In fact, in some of the districts named in the proclamation, scarcely any move was made till a few days before the day of election. It was only necessary, however, to kindle the flame; the intelligence and liberal public spirit existing throughout the country, kept it alive, and the election passed over with complete success. In one or two instances it was not held on the day appointed, but the Convention nevertheless admitted the delegates elected in such cases.

Party politics had but a small part to play in the choice of candidates. In the San Francisco and Sacramento districts there might have been some influences of this kind afloat, and other districts undoubtedly sent members to advocate some particular local interest. But, taken as a body, the delegates did honor to California, and would not suffer by comparison with any first State Convention ever held in our Republic. I may add, also, that a perfect harmony of feeling existed between the citizens of both races. The proportion of native Californian members to the American was about equal to that of the population. Some of the former received nearly the entire American vote—Gen. Vallejo at Sonoma, Antonio Pico at San José, and Miguel de Pedrorena at San Diego, for instance.

The elections were all over, at the time of my arrival in California, and the 1st of September had been appointed as the day on which the Convention should meet. It was my intention to have been present at that time, but I did not succeed in reaching Monterey until the 19th of the month. The Convention was not regularly

organized until the 4th, when Dr. Robert Semple, of the Sonoma District, was chosen President and conducted to his seat by Capt. Sutter and Gen. Vallejo. Capt. William G. Marcy, of the New-York Volunteer Regiment, was elected Secretary, after which the various post of Clerks, Assistant Secretaries, Translators, Doorkeeper, Sergeant-at-Arms, etc., were filled. The day after their complete organization, the officers and members of the Convention were sworn to support the Constitution of the United States. The members from the Southern Districts were instructed to vote in favor of a Territorial form of Government, but expressed their willingness to abide the decision of the Convention. An invitation was extended to the Clergy of Monterey to open the meeting with prayer, and that office was thenceforth performed on alternate days by Padre Ramirez and Rev. S. H. Willey.

The building in which the Convention met was probably the only one in California suited to the purpose. It is a handsome, two-story edifice of yellow sandstone, situated on a gentle slope, above the town. It is named "Colton Hall," on account of its having been built by Don Walter Colton, former Alcalde of Monterey, from the proceeds of a sale of city lots. The stone of which it is built is found in abundance near Monterey; it is of a fine, mellow color, easily cut, and will last for centuries in that mild climate. The upper story, in which the Convention sat, formed a single hall about sixty feet in length by twenty-five in breadth. A railing, running across the middle, divided the members from the spectators. The former were seated at four long tables, the President occupying a rostrum at the further end, over which were suspended two American flags and an extraordinary picture of Washington, evidently the work of a native artist. The appearance of the whole body was exceedingly dignified and

intellectual, and parliamentary decorum was strictly observed. A door in the centre of the hall opened on a square balcony, supported by four pillars, where some of the members, weary with debate, came frequently to enjoy the mild September afternoon, whose hues lay so softly on the blue waters of the bay.

The Declaration of Rights, which was the first subject before the Convention, occasioned little discussion. Its sections being general in their character and of a liberal republican cast, were nearly all adopted by a nearly unanimous vote. The clause prohibiting Slavery was met by no word of dissent; it was the universal sentiment of the Convention. It is unnecessary to recapitulate here the various provisions of the Constitution; it will be enough to say that they combined, with few exceptions, the most enlightened features of the Constitutions of older States. The election of Judges by the people—the rights of married women to property—the establishment of a liberal system of education—and other reforms of late introduced into the State Governments east of the Rocky Mountains, were all transplanted to the new soil of the Pacific Coast.

The adoption of a system of pay for the officers and members of the Convention, occasioned some discussion. The Californian members and a few of the Americans patriotically demanded that the Convention should work for nothing, the glory being sufficient. The majority overruled this, and finally decided that the members should receive $16 per day, the President $25, the Secretary and Interpreter $28, the Clerks $23 and $18, the Chaplain $16, the Sergeant-at-Arms $22 and the Doorkeeper $12. The expenses of the Convention were paid out of the "Civil Fund," an accumulation of the duties received at the ports. The funds were principally silver, and at the close of their labors it was

amusing to see the members carrying their pay about town tied up in handkerchiefs or slung in bags over their shoulders. The little Irish boy, who acted as page, was nearly pressed down by the weight of his wages.

One of the first exciting questions was a clause which had been crammed through the Convention on its first reading, prohibiting the entrance of free people of color into the state. Its originator was an Oregon man, more accustomed to and better fitted for squatter life than the dignity of legislation. The members, by the time it was brought up for second reading, had thought more seriously upon the question, and the clause was rejected by a large majority: several attempts to introduce it in a modified form also signally failed.

It was a matter of regret that the question of suffrage could not have been settled in an equitable and satisfactory manner. The article first adopted by the Convention, excluding Indians and Negroes, with their descendants, from the privilege of voting, was, indeed, modified by a proviso offered by Mr. de la Guerra, which gave the Legislature the power of admitting Indians or the descendants of Indians, by a two-thirds concurrent vote, to the right of suffrage. This was agreed to by many merely for the purpose of settling the question for the present; but the native members will not be content to let it rest. Many of the most wealthy and respectable families in California have Indian blood in their veins, and even a member of the Convention, Dominguez, would be excluded from voting under this very clause.

The Articles of the Constitution relating to the Executive, Judicial and Legislative Departments occupied several days, but the debates were dry and uninteresting. A great deal of talk was expended to no purpose, several of the members having the same

morbid ambition in this respect, as may be found in our legislative assemblies on this side of the mountains. A member from Sacramento severely tried the patience of the Convention by his long harangues; another was clamorous, not for his own rights but those of his constituents, although the latter were suspected of being citizens of Oregon. The Chair occasionally made a bungling decision, whereupon two of the members, who had previously served in State Assemblies, would aver that in the whole course of their legislative experience they had never heard of such a thing. Now and then a scene occurred, which was amusing enough. A section being before the Convention, declaring that every citizen arrested for a criminal offence should be tried by a jury of his peers, a member, unfamiliar with such technical terms, moved to strike out the word "peers." "I don't like that word 'peers,'" said he; "it a'int republican; I'd like to know what we want with *peers* in this country—we're not a monarchy, and we've got no House of Parliament. I vote for no such law."

The boundary question, however, which came up towards the close of the Convention, assumed a character of real interest and importance. The great point of dispute on this question was the eastern limit of the State, the Pacific being the natural boundary on the West, the meridian of 42° on the North, and the Mexican line, run in conformity with the treaty of Queretaro, on the South. Mr. Hastings, a member from Sacramento, moved that the eastern boundary, beginning at the parallel of 42°, should follow the meridian of 118° W. long. to 38° N. thence running direct to the intersection of the Colorado with 114° W. following that river to the Mexican line. This was proposed late on Monday night, and hurried through by a bare majority. Messrs. Gwin and Halleck, of the Boundary Committee, with all the Cali-

fornian members, and some others, opposed this proposition, claiming that the original Spanish boundary, extending to the line of New Mexico, should be adopted. With some difficulty a reconsideration of the vote was obtained, and the House adjourned without settling the question.

The discussion commenced in earnest the next morning. The members were all present, and as the parties were nearly balanced the contest was very animated and excited. It assumed, in fact, more of a party character than any which had previously come up. The grounds taken by the party desiring the whole territory were that the Convention had no right to assume another boundary than that originally belonging to California; that the measure would extend the advantages and protecting power of law over a vast inland territory, which would otherwise remain destitute of such protection for many years to come; that, finally, it would settle the question of Slavery for a much greater extent of territory, and in a quiet and peaceful manner. The opposite party—that which advocates the Sierra Nevada as the boundary line—contended that the Constitution had no right to include the Mormon settlers in the Great Salt Lake country in a State, whose Constitution they had no share in forming, and that nearly the whole of the country east of the Sierra Nevada was little better than a desert.

After a hot discussion, which lasted the whole day, the vote was reversed, and the report of the Boundary Committee (including all the Territory as far as New Mexico) adopted. The opposition party, defeated after they were sure of success, showed their chagrin rather noisily. At the announcement of the vote, a dozen members jumped up, speaking and shouting in the most confused and disorderly manner. Some rushed out of the room;

others moved an adjournment; others again protested they would sign no Constitution, embodying such a provision. In the midst of this tumult the House adjourned. The defeated party were active throughout, and procured a second reconsideration. Major Hill, delegate from San Diego, then proposed the following boundary: a line starting from the Mexican Boundary and following the course of the Colorado to lat. 35° N., thence due north to the Oregon Boundary. Such a line, according to the opinion of both Capt. Sutter and Gen. Vallejo, was the limit set by the Mexican Government to the civil jurisdiction of California. It divides the Great Central Basin about two-thirds of the distance between the Sierra Nevada and the Great Salt Lake. This proposition was adopted, but fell through on second reading, when the boundary which had first passed was reädopted by a large vote. When it came to be designated on the map, most of the members were better satisfied than they had anticipated. They had a State with eight hundred miles of sea-coast and an average of two hundred and fifty miles in breadth, including both sides of the Sierra Nevada and some of the best rivers of the Great Basin. As to the question of Slavery, it will never occasion much trouble. The whole Central Region, extending to the Sierra Madre of New Mexico, will never sustain a slave population. The greater part of it resembles in climate and general features the mountain steppes of Tartary, and is better adapted for grazing than agriculture. It will never be settled so long as an acre of the rich loam of Oregon or the warm wheat-plains of California is left untenanted.

One of the subjects that came up about this time was the design of a Great Seal for the State. There were plenty of ideas in the heads of the members, but few draughtsmen, and of the eight

or ten designs presented, some were ludicrous enough. The choice finally fell upon one drawn by Major Garnett, which was, in reality, the best offered. The principal figure is Minerva, with her spear and Gorgon shield, typical of the manner in which California was born, full-grown, into the Confederacy. At her feet crouches a grizzly bear, certainly no very appropriate supporter for the Gorgon shield. The wheat-sheaf and vine before him illustrate the principal agricultural products of the country, and are in good keeping—for Ceres sat beside Minerva in the councils of the gods. Near at hand is a miner with his implements, in the distance the Bay of San Francisco, and still further the Sierra Nevada, over which appears the single word: "EUREKA!"

The discussion on the subject was most amusing. None of the designs seemed at first to tally with the taste of the Convention, as each district was anxious to be particularly represented. The Sacramento members wanted the gold mines; the San Francisco members wanted the harbor and shipping; the Sonoma members thought no seal could be lawful without some reminder of their noted "bear flag;" while the Los Angeles and San Diego members were clamorous for the rights of their vines, olives and wild horses —so that, no doubt, the seal they chose was the most satisfactory to all. The sum of $1,000 was voted to Mr. Lyon, one of the Secretaries, for the purpose of having it engraved. The Convention also voted the sum of $10,000 to Mr. J. Ross Browne, its reporter, on his contracting to furnish one thousand printed copies of the entire proceedings in English and three hundred in Spanish. This sum also included the remuneration for his labors as a stenographer.

After discussing various plans for meeting the expenses of the

State, at the outset, an ordinance was adopted, (subject to the action of Congress,) the substance of which was as follows:

1. One section out of every quarter township of the public lands shall be granted to the State for the use of the schools. 2. Seventy-two sections of unappropriated land within the State shall be granted to the State for the establishment and support of a University. 3. Four sections, selected under direction of the Legislature, shall be granted for the use of the State in establishing a Seat of Government and erecting buildings. 4. Five hundred thousand acres of public lands, in addition to the same amount granted to new States, shall be granted for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the State Government. And five per cent. of the proceeds of the sale of public lands, after deducting expenses, shall be given for the encouragement of learning. 5. All salt springs, with the land adjoining, shall be granted to the use of the State.

It may probably be thought, on reading these various provisions for the filling of the State Treasury, that the appetite for gold must surely grow by what it feeds on. California, nevertheless, had some reason for making so many exacting demands. The expenses of the Government, at the start, will necessarily be enormous; and the price of labor so far exceeds the value of real estate, that the ordinary tax on property would scarcely be a drop in the bucket. The cost of erecting buildings and supporting the various branches of government will greatly surpass that to which any state has ever been subjected. In paying the expenses of the Convention from the Civil Fund, Gov. Riley in many instances took upon himself weighty responsibilities; but the circumstances under which he acted were entirely without precedent. His course was marked throughout by great prudence and good sense.

Towards the close of the Convention, those of the members who aspired to still further honor, commenced caucusing and the canvassing of influence for the coming election. Several announced themselves as candidates for various offices, and in spite of vehement disclaimers to the contrary the lines of old parties were secretly drawn. Nevertheless, it is impossible at present to pronounce correctly on the political character of the State; it will take some time for the native Californians to be drilled into the new harness, and I suspect they will frequently hold the balance of power.

One of the most intelligent and influential of the Californians is Gen. Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, whom I had the pleasure of meeting several times during my stay in Monterey. As Military Commandant, during the Governorship of Alvarado, he exercised almost supreme sway over the country. He is a man of forty-five years of age, tall and of a commanding presence; his head is large, forehead high and ample, and eyes dark, with a grave, dignified expression. He is better acquainted with our institutions and laws than any other native Californian.

Among the other notable members were Covarrubias, formerly Secretary of Government, and José Antonio Carrillo, the right-hand man of Pio Pico. The latter is upward of fifty-five years of age—a small man with frizzled hair and beard, gray eyes, and a face strongly expressive of shrewdness and mistrust. I saw him, one day, dining at a restaurant with Gen. Castro—the redoubtable leader of the Californian troops, in Upper and Lower California. Castro is a man of medium height, but stoutly and strongly made. He has a very handsome face; his eyes are large and dark, and his mouth is shaded by moustaches with the gloss and color of a raven's wing, meeting on each side with his whis-

kers. He wore the sombrero, jacket and calzoneros of the country. His temperament, as I thought, seemed gloomy and saturnine, and I was gravely informed by a Californian who sat opposite me, that he meditated the reconquest of the country!

Capt. Sutter's appearance and manners quite agreed with my preconceived ideas of him. He is still the hale, blue-eyed, jovial German—short and stout of stature, with broad forehead, head bald to the crown, and altogether a ruddy, good-humored expression of countenance. He is a man of good intellect, excellent common sense and amiable qualities of heart. A little more activity and enterprise might have made him the first man in California, in point of wealth and influence.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CLOSING SCENES OF THE CONVENTION.

THE day and night immediately preceding the dissolution of the Convention far exceeded in interest all the former period of its existence. I know not how I can better describe the closing scenes than by the account which I penned on the spot, at the time :

The Convention yesterday *(*October 12*)* gave token of bringing its labors to a close ; the morning session was short and devoted only to the passing of various miscellaneous provisions, after which an adjournment was made until this morning, on account of the Ball given by the Convention to the citizens of Monterey. The members, by a contribution of $25 each, raised the sum of $1,100 to provide for the entertainment, which was got up in return for that given by the citizens about four weeks since.

The Hall was cleared of the forum and tables and decorated with young pines from the forest. At each end were the American colors, tastefully disposed across the boughs. Three chandeliers, neither of bronze nor cut-glass, but neat and brilliant withal, poured their light on the festivities. At eight o'clock—the fashionable ball-hour in Monterey—the guests began to assemble, and in an hour afterward the Hall was crowded with nearly all the

Californian and American residents. There were sixty or seventy ladies present, and an equal number of gentlemen, in addition to the members of the Convention. The dark-eyed daughters of Monterey, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara mingled in pleasing contrast with the fairer bloom of the trans-Nevadian belles. The variety of feature and complexion was fully equalled by the variety of dress. In the whirl of the waltz, a plain, dark, nun-like robe would be followed by one of pink satin and gauze; next, perhaps, a bodice of scarlet velvet with gold buttons, and then a rich figured brocade, such as one sees on the stately dames of Titian.

The dresses of the gentlemen showed considerable variety, but were much less picturesque. A complete ball-dress was a happiness attained only by the fortunate few. White kids could not be had in Monterey for love or money, and as much as $50 was paid by one gentleman for a pair of patent-leather boots. Scarcely a single dress that was seen belonged entirely to its wearer, and I thought, if the clothes had power to leap severally back to their respective owners, some persons would have been in a state of utter destitution. For my part, I was indebted for pantaloons and vest to obliging friends. The only specimen of the former article which I could get, belonged to an officer whose weight was considerably more than two hundred, but I managed to accommodate them to my proportions by a liberal use of pins, notwithstanding the difference of size. Thus equipped, with a buff military vest, and worsted gaiters with very square toes, I took my way to the Hall in company with Major Smith and his brother.

The appearance of the company, nevertheless, was genteel and respectable, and perhaps the genial, unrestrained social spirit that possessed all present would have been less had there been more uniformity of costume. Gen. Riley was there in full uniform,

with the yellow sash he won at Contreras ; Majors Canby, Hill and Smith, Captains Burton and Kane, and the other officers stationed in Monterey, accompanying him. In one group might be seen Capt. Sutter's soldierly moustache and clear blue eye ; in another, the erect figure and quiet, dignified bearing of Gen. Vallejo. Don Pablo de la Guerra, with his handsome, aristocratic features, was the floor manager, and gallantly discharged his office. Conspicuous among the native members were Don Miguel de Pedrorena and Jacinto Rodriguez, both polished gentlemen and deservedly popular. Dominguez, the Indian member, took no part in the dance, but evidently enjoyed the scene as much as any one present. The most interesting figure to me was that of Padre Ramirez, who, in his clerical cassock, looked on until a late hour. If the strongest advocate of priestly gravity and decorum had been present, he could not have found in his heart to grudge the good old padre the pleasure that beamed upon his honest countenance.

The band consisted of two violins and two guitars, whose music made up in spirit what it lacked in skill. They played, as it seemed to me, but three pieces alternately, for waltz, contra-dance and quadrille. The latter dance was evidently an unfamiliar one, for once or twice the music ceased in the middle of a figure. Each tune ended with a funny little squeak, something like the whistle of the octave flute in *Robert le Diable*. The players, however, worked incessantly, and deserved good wages for their performance. The etiquette of the dance was marked by that grave, stately courtesy, which has been handed down from the old Spanish times. The gentlemen invariably gave the ladies their hands to lead them to their places on the floor ; in the pauses of the dance both parties stood motionless side by side, and at its conclusion the lady was bravely led back to her seat.

At twelve o'clock supper was announced. The Court-Room in the lower story had been fitted up for this purpose, and, as it was not large enough to admit all the guests, the ladies were first conducted thither and waited upon by a select committee. The refreshments consisted of turkey, roast pig, beef, tongue and *pâtés*, with wines and liquors of various sorts, and coffee. A large supply had been provided, but after everybody was served, there was not much remaining. The ladies began to leave about two o'clock, but when I came away, an hour later, the dance was still going on with spirit.

The members met this morning at the usual hour, to perform the last duty that remained to them—that of signing the Constitution. They were all in the happiest humor, and the morning was so bright and balmy that no one seemed disposed to call an organization. Mr. Semple was sick, and Mr. Steuart, of San Francisco, therefore called the meeting to order by moving Capt. Sutter's appointment in his place. The Chair was taken by the old pioneer, and the members took their seats around the sides of the hall, which still retained the pine-trees and banners, left from last night's decorations. The windows and doors were open, and a delightful breeze came in from the Bay, whose blue waters sparkled in the distance. The view from the balcony in front was bright and inspiring. The town below—the shipping in the harbor—the pine-covered hills behind—were mellowed by the blue October haze, but there was no cloud in the sky, and I could plainly see, on the northern horizon, the mountains of Santa Cruz and the Sierra de Gavilan.

After the minutes had been read, the Committee appointed to draw up an Address to the People of California was called upon to report, and Mr. Steuart, Chairman, read the Address. Its tone

and sentiment met with universal approval, and it was adopted without a dissenting voice. A resolution was then offered to pay Lieut. Hamilton, who is now engaged in engrossing the Constitution upon parchment, the sum of $500 for his labor. This magnificent price, probably the highest ever paid for a similar service, is on a par with all things else in California. As this was their last session, the members were not disposed to find fault with it, especially when it was stated by one of them that Lieut. Hamilton had written day and night to have it ready, and was still working upon it, though with a lame and swollen hand. The sheet for the signers' names was ready, and the Convention decided to adjourn for half an hour and then meet for the purpose of signing.

I amused myself during the interval by walking about the town. Everybody knew that the Convention was about closing, and it was generally understood that Capt. Burton had loaded the guns at the fort, and would fire a salute of thirty-one guns at the proper moment. The citizens, therefore, as well as the members, were in an excited mood. Monterey never before looked so bright, so happy, so full of pleasant expectation.

About one o'clock the Convention met again; few of the members, indeed, had left the hall. Mr. Semple, although in feeble health, called them to order, and, after having voted Gen. Riley a salary of $10,000, and Mr. Halleck, Secretary of State, $6,000 a year, from the commencement of their respective offices, they proceeded to affix their names to the completed Constitution. At this moment a signal was given; the American colors ran up the flag-staff in front of the Government buildings, and streamed out on the air. A second afterward the first gun boomed from the fort, and its stirring echoes came back from one hill after another, till they were lost in the distance.

All the native enthusiasm of Capt. Sutter's Swiss blood was aroused; he was the old soldier again. He sprang from his seat, and, waving his hand around his head, as if swinging a sword, exclaimed: "Gentlemen, this is the happiest day of my life. It makes me glad to hear those cannon: they remind me of the time when I was a soldier. Yes, I am glad to hear them—this is a great day for California!" Then, recollecting himself, he sat down, the tears streaming from his eyes. The members with one accord, gave three tumultuous cheers, which were heard from one end of the town to the other. As the signing went on, gun followed gun from the fort, the echoes reverberating grandly around the bay, till finally, as the loud ring of the *thirty-first* was heard, there was a shout: "That's for California!" and every one joined in giving three times three for the new star added to our Confederation.

There was one handsome act I must not omit to mention. The Captain of the English bark Volunteer, of Sidney, Australia, lying in the harbor, sent on shore in the morning for an American flag. When the first gun was heard, a line of colors ran fluttering up to the spars, the stars and stripes flying triumphantly from the main-top. The compliment was the more marked, as some of the American vessels neglected to give any token of recognition to the event of the day.

The Constitution having been signed and the Convention dissolved, the members proceeded in a body to the house of Gen. Riley. The visit was evidently unexpected by the old veteran. When he made his appearance Captain Sutter stepped forward and having shaken him by the hand, drew himself into an erect attitude, raised one hand to his breast as if he were making a report to his commanding officer on the field of battle, and addressed him as follows:

"GENERAL: I have been appointed by the Delegates, elected by the people of California to form a Constitution, to address you in their names and in behalf of the whole people of California, and express the thanks of the Convention for the aid and coöperation they have received from you in the discharge of the responsible duty of creating a State Government. And, sir, the Convention, as you will perceive from the official records, duly appreciates the great and important services you have rendered to our common country, and especially to the people of California, and entertains the confident belief that you will receive from the whole of the people of the United States, when you retire from your official duties here, that verdict so grateful to the heart of the patriot: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'"

Gen. Riley was visibly affected by this mark of respect, no less appropriate than well deserved on his part. The tears in his eyes and the plain, blunt sincerity of his voice and manner, went to the heart of every one present. "Gentlemen:" he said, "I never made a speech in my life. I am a soldier—but I can *feel;* and I do feel deeply the honor you have this day conferred upon me. Gentlemen, this is a prouder day to me than that on which my soldiers cheered me on the field of Contreras. I thank you all from my heart. I am satisfied now that the people have done right in selecting Delegates to frame a Constitution. They have chosen a body of men upon whom our country may look with pride: you have framed a Constitution worthy of California. And I have no fear for California while her people choose their Representatives so wisely. Gentlemen, I congratulate you upon the successful conclusion of your arduous labors; and I wish you all happiness and prosperity."

The General was here interrupted with three hearty cheers

which the members gave him, as Governor of California, followed by three more, "as a gallant soldier, and worthy of his country's glory." He then concluded in the following words: "I have but one thing to add, gentlemen, and that is, that my success in the affairs of California is mainly owing to the efficient aid rendered me by Capt. Halleck, the Secretary of State. He has stood by me in all emergencies. To him I have always appealed when at a loss myself; and he has never failed me."

This recognition of Capt. Halleck's talents and the signal service he has rendered to our authorities here, since the conquest, was peculiarly just and appropriate. It was so felt by the members, and they responded with equal warmth of feeling by giving three enthusiastic cheers for the Secretary of State. They then took their leave, many of them being anxious to start this afternoon for their various places of residence. All were in a happy and satisfied mood, and none less so than the native members. Pedrorena declared that this was the most fortunate day in the history of California. Even Carillo, in the beginning one of our most zealous opponents, displayed a genuine zeal for the Constitution, which he helped to frame under the laws of our Republic.

Thus closes the Convention; and I cannot help saying, with Capt. Sutter, that the day which sees laid the broad and liberal foundation of a free and independent State on the shores of the Pacific, is a great day for California. As an American, I feel proud and happy—proud, that the Empire of the West, the commerce of the great Pacific, the new highway to the Indies, forming the last link in that belt of civilized enterprise which now clasps the world, has been established under my country's flag; and happy, that in all the extent of California, from the glittering snows of the Shaste to the burning deserts of the Colorado, no

slave shall ever lift his arm to make the freedom of that flag a mockery.

The members of the Convention may have made some blunders in the course of their deliberations; there may be some objectionable clauses in the Constitution they have framed. But where was there ever a body convened, under such peculiar circumstances?—where was ever such harmony evolved out of so wonderful, so dangerous, so magnificent a chaos? The elements of which the Convention was composed were no less various, and in some respects antagonistic, than those combined in the mining population. The questions they had to settle were often perplexing, from the remarkable position of the country and the absence of all precedent. Besides, many of them were men unused to legislation. Some had for years past known no other life than that of the camp; others had nearly forgotten all law in the wild life of the mountains; others again were familiar only with that practiced under the rule of a different race. Yet the courtesies of debate have never been wantonly violated, and the result of every conflict of opinion has been a quiet acquiescence on the part of the minority. Now, at the conclusion, the only feeling is that of general joy and congratulation.

Thus, we have another splendid example of the ease and security with which people can be educated to govern themselves. From that chaos whence, under the rule of a despotism like the Austrian, would spring the most frightful excesses of anarchy and crime, a population of freemen peacefully and quietly develops the highest form of civil order—the broadest extent of liberty and security. Governments, bad and corrupt as many of them are, and imperfect as they all must necessarily be, nevertheless at times exhibit scenes of true moral sublimity. What I

have to-day witnessed has so impressed me; and were I a believer in omens, I would augur from the tranquil beauty of this evening—from the clear sky and the lovely sunset hues on the waters of the bay—more than all, from the joyous expression of every face I see—a glorious and prosperous career for the STATE OF CALIFORNIA!

CHAPTER XVII.

SHORE AND FOREST.

No one can be in Monterey a single night, without being startled and awed by the deep, solemn crashes of the surf as it breaks along the shore. There is no continuous roar of the plunging waves, as we hear on the Atlantic seaboard; the slow, regular swells—quiet pulsations of the great Pacific's heart—roll inward in unbroken lines and fall with single grand crashes, with intervals of dead silence between. They may be heard through the day, if one listens, like a solemn undertone to all the shallow noises of the town, but at midnight, when all else is still, those successive shocks fall upon the ear with a sensation of inexpressible solemnity. All the air, from the pine forests to the sea, is filled with a light tremor and the intermitting beats of sound are strong enough to jar a delicate ear. Their constant repetition at last produces a feeling something like terror. A spirit worn and weakened by some scathing sorrow could scarcely bear the reverberation.

When there has been a gale outside, and a morning of dazzling clearness succeeds a night of fog and cold wind, the swells are loudest and most magnificent. Then their lines of foam are flung upward like a snowy fringe along the dark-blue hem of the sea,

and a light, glittering mist constantly rises from the hollow curve of the shore. One quiet Sunday afternoon, when the uproar was such as to be almost felt in the solid earth, I walked out along the sand till I had passed the anchorage and could look on the open Pacific. The surface of the bay was comparatively calm; but within a few hundred yards of the shore it upheaved with a slow, majestic movement, forming a single line more than a mile in length, which, as it advanced, presented a perpendicular front of clear green water, twelve feet in height. There was a gradual curving-in of this emerald wall—a moment's waver—and the whole mass fell forward with a thundering crash, hurling the shattered spray thirty feet into the air. A second rebound followed; and the boiling, seething waters raced far up the sand with a sharp, trampling, metallic sound, like the jangling of a thousand bars of iron. I sat down on a pine log, above the highest wave-mark, and watched this sublime phenomenon for a long time. The sand-hills behind me confined and redoubled the sound, prolonging it from crash to crash, so that the ear was constantly filled with it. Once, a tremendous swell came in close on the heels of one that had just broken, and the two uniting, made one wave, which shot far beyond the water-line and buried me above the knee. As far as I could see, the shore was white with the subsiding deluge. It was a fine illustration of the magnificent language of Scripture: "He maketh the deep to boil like a pot; he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment; one would think the deep to be hoary."

The pine forest behind the town encloses in its depths many spots of remarkable loneliness and beauty. The forest itself had a peculiar charm for me, and scarcely a day passed without my exploring some part of its solemn region. The old, rugged trees, blackened with many fires, are thickly bearded with long gray

moss, which gives out a hoarse, dull sound as the sea-wind sweeps through them. The promontory of Monterey is entirely covered with them, excepting only the little glens, or cañadas, which wind their way between the interlocking bases of the hills. Here, the grass is thick and luxuriant through the whole year; the pines shut out all sight but the mild, stainless heaven above their tops; the air is fragrant with the bay and laurel, and the light tread of a deer or whirr of a partridge, at intervals, alone breaks the delicious solitude. The far roar of the surf, stealing up through the avenues of the forest, is softened to a murmur by the time it reaches these secluded places. No more lovely hermitages for thought or the pluming of callow fancies, can be found among the pine-bowers of the Villa Borghese.

After climbing all of the lesser heights, and barking my hand on the rough bark of a branchless pine, in the endeavor to climb it for a look-out, I started one afternoon on an expedition to the top of a bald summit among the hills to the southward. It was apparently near at hand and easy of access, but after I had walked several miles, I saw, from the top of a ridge, that a deep valley—a chasm, almost—was to be passed before I could reach even its foot. The side seemed almost precipitous and the loose stones slid under my feet; but by hanging to the low limbs of trees, I succeeded in getting to the bottom. The bed of the valley, not more than a hundred yards in breadth, was one matted mass of wild vines, briars and thorny shrubs. I trusted to the strength of my corduroys for defence against them, and to a good horse-pistol should I stumble on some wild beast's lair—and plunged in. At the first step I sank above my head, without touching the bottom. The briars were woven so closely that it was impossible to press through or creep under them; I could only flounder along, draw-

ing myself up by the greatest exertions, to sink into another gulf a few inches in advance. My hands and clothes were torn, my mouth filled with dry and bitter pollen from the withered vines that brushed my face, and it was only after an hour's labor that I reached the other side, completely exhausted.

I climbed the opposite hill, thinking my object nearly attained, when lo! another, a deeper and rougher chasm still intervened. The sun was already down and I gave up the journey. From the end of the ridge I had attained, I overlooked all the circumference of the bay. Behind the white glimmer of the town the forest rose with a gradual sweep, while before me lay a wide extent of undulating hills, rolling off to the Salinas Plains, which appeared beyond—

> "Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom
> Of leaden-colored even, and fiery hills
> Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge
> Of the remote horizon."

Taking another road, I wandered home in the dusk, not without some chance of losing myself among the frequent hollows and patches of chapparal. I lay in wait half an hour for two deer, a glimpse of whom I had caught in the woods, but as I had not the keen sight of a Kentucky hunter, I was obliged to go home without them.

The opposite shore of the promontory contains many striking and picturesque points, to which the Montereyans often resort on parties of pleasure. One of the most remarkable of these is *Punta de los Cipreses*, or Cypress Point, which I visited several times. One of my most memorable days, while at Monterey, was spent there in company with my friend, Ross Browne. We started early in the morning, carrying with us a loaf of bread and a piece

of raw beef, as materials for dinner. After threading the mazes of the forest for several miles, we came upon the bleak sand-hills piled like snow-drifts between the forest and the beach. The bare tongue of land which jutted out beyond them was covered with a carpet of maritime plants, among which I noticed one with a beautiful star-like flower: another, with succulent, wax-like leaves, bears a fruit which is greatly relished by the Californians.

The extremity of the Point is a mass of gray rock, worn by the surf into fantastic walls and turrets. The heavy swells of the open sea, striking their bases with tremendous force, fill their crevices with foaming spray, which pours off in a hundred cataracts as the wave draws back for another shock. In the narrow channels between the rocks, the pent waters roll inland with great force, flooding point after point and flinging high into the air the purple flags and streamers of sea-weed, till they reach the glassy, sheltered pools, that are quietly filled and emptied with every pulsation of the great sea without. A cold mist hung over the sea, which heightened the wildness and bleakness of the scene and made it inspiring. Flocks of sea-gulls uttered their shrill, piping cry as they flew over us, and a seal now and then thrust up his inquisitive head, outside of the surf.

We collected the drift-wood which lay scattered along the shore, and made a roaring fire on the rocks. After having sliced and spitted our meat and set our bread to toast, we crept into the crevices that opened to the sea, and at the momentary risk of being drenched, tore off the muscles adhering to them. When well roasted, their flesh is tender and nearly as palatable as that of an oyster; it is of a bright orange color, with a little black beard at one end, which is intensely bitter and must be rejected. We seasoned our meat by dipping it into the sea, and when our

meal was ready, ate it from the pearly shells of the *avelone*, which strewed the sand. It was a rare dinner, that, with its grand accompaniment of surf-music and the clanging sea-gulls as our attendants. On our way home we came suddenly on a pack of seven black wolves, who had been feeding on the body of a large stranded fish. They gave a howl of surprise and started off at full speed, through the bushes, where I attempted to follow them, but my legs were no match for their fleetness.

I rode to Point Pinos one afternoon, in company with Major Hill. Our way was through the Pine Forest; we followed no regular path, but pushed our horses through chapparal, leaped them over trees that had been uprooted in the last winter's storms, and spurred them at a gallop through the cleared intervals. A narrow ridge of sand intervenes between the pines and the sea. Beyond it, the Point—a rugged mass of gray sandstone rock, washed into fantastic shapes, juts out into the Pacific. The tide was at its ebb, but a strong wind was blowing, and the shock and foam of the swells was magnificent. We scrambled from ledge to ledge till we gained the extremity of the Point, and there, behind the last rock that fronts the open sea, found a little sheltered cove, whose sides and bottom were covered with star-fish, avelones, muscles, and polypi of brilliant colors. There were prickly balls of purple, rayed fish of orange and scarlet, broad flower-like animals of green and umber hue, and myriads of little crabs and snails, all shining through the clear green water. The avelone, which is a univalve, found clinging to the sides of rocks, furnishes the finest mother-of-pearl. We had come provided with a small iron bar, which was more than a match for their suction power, and in a short space of time secured a number of their beautiful shells. Among the sand-hills and even in some parts

of the forest, the earth is strewed with them. The natives were formerly in the habit of gathering them into large heaps and making lime therefrom.

The existence of these shells in the soil is but one of the facts which tend to prove the recent geological formation of this part of the coast. There is every reason to believe that a great part of the promontory on which Monterey is built, was at no very remote period of time covered by the sea. A sluggish salt lagoon, east of the Catholic Church, was not more than twenty years ago a part of the bay, from which it is now separated by a sandy meadow, quarter of a mile in breadth. According to an Indian tradition, of comparatively modern origin, the waters of San Francisco Bay once communicated with the bay of Monterey by the valley of San José and the Rio del Pajaro. I should think a level of fifty feet, or perhaps less—above the present one, would suffice to have effected this. The other Indian tradition, that the outlet of the Golden Gate was occasioned by violent disruption of the hills, through the means of an earthquake, is not based on natural evidence. The sloughs and marshes in the valley of San Joaquin, and around the Tularé Lakes, present every appearance of having been left by the drainage of a subsiding ocean. A thorough geological exploration of California would undoubtedly bring to light many strange and interesting facts connected with her physical formation.

On our way home, we discovered a sea-otter, basking on an isolated rock. Major Hill crept stealthily to within about fifty yards of him, took good aim and fired. He gave a convulsive leap and tumbled into the sea, evidently badly wounded, if not killed. His boady floated out on the waves, and a flock of sea-mews, attracted by the blood, flew round him, uttering their piping cry

and darting down to the water. The otter is rare on this part of the coast, and the skin of one is valued at $40.

I shall notice but one other ramble about the forests and shores of Monterey. This was a visit to the ex-Mission of Carmel and Point Lobos, which I made in company with Mr. Lyon, one of the Secretaries of the Convention. A well-traveled road, leading over the hills, conducted us to the Mission, which is situated on the Pacific side of the promontory, at the head of a shallow bay. The beautiful but deserted valley in which it stands is threaded by the Rio de Carmel, whose waters once gave unfailing fertility to its now neglected gardens. The Mission building is in the form of a hollow Square, with a spacious court-yard, overlooked by a heavy belfry and chapel-dome of sun-dried bricks. The out-buildings of the Indian retainers and the corrals of earth that once herded thousands of cattle are broken down and tenantless. We climbed into the tower and struck the fine old Spanish bells, but the sound called no faces into the blank windows.

We bribed a red-headed boy, who was playing with two or three younger children in the court-yard, to bring us the keys of the church. His father—an American who had been many years in the country and taken unto himself a native wife—followed, and opened for us the weather-beaten doors. The interior of the Church was lofty, the ceiling a rude attempt at a Gothic arch, and the shrine a huge, faded mass of gilding and paint, with some monkish portraits of saints. A sort of side-chapel near the entrance was painted with Latin mottos and arabesque scrolls which exhibited a genuine though uncultivated taste for adornment. The walls were hung with portraits of saints, some black and some white, some holding croziers, some playing violins and some baptizing Indians. Near the altar is the tomb of Padre Junipero

Serra, the founder of Monterey and the zealous pioneer in the settlement and civilization of California.

We reached Point Lobos, which is three miles beyond the Mission, by a ride along the beach. It is a narrow, bluff headland, overgrown with pines nearly to its extremity. The path brought us to the brink of a stony declivity, shelving down to the sea. Off the Point, and at the distance of not more than two hundred yards, is a cluster of low rocks, some of which are covered with a deposit of guano. As we reined up on the edge of the bluff, a most extraordinary sound met our ears—a mingled bellowing, groaning and snorting, unlike anything I had ever heard. The rocks seemed to be in motion at the first glance, and one might readily have imagined that the sound proceeded from their uneasy heaving on the waves. But, on looking more closely, I saw that their visible surface was entirely covered with the huge bodies of the seals and sea-lions who had congregated there—great, unwieldy, wallowing creatures, from eight to fifteen feet in length, rolling to and fro among each other and uttering their peculiar bellowing cry. Occasionally, a group of them would slip off into the water, and attracted by their curiosity, approach the shore. The sea-lions, with their broad heads, rough manes and square fronts, showed some resemblance to the royal beast, when viewed in front. They are frequently captured and killed by whalers for the sake of their blubber, which yields a considerable quantity of oil.

I attended the Catholic Church in Monterey one Sunday, to hear good old Padre Ramirez. The church is small and with scanty decorations; the nave and gallery were both crowded by the Californian families and Indians. Near the door hung opposite pictures of Heaven and Hell—the former a sort of pyramid

inhabited by straight white figures, with an aspect of solemn distress; the latter enclosed in the expanded jaws of a dragon, swarming with devils who tormented their victims with spears and pitchforks. The church music was furnished by a diminutive parlor-organ, and consisted of a choice list of polkas, waltzes and fandango airs. Padre Ramirez preached a very excellent sermon, recommending his Catholic flock to follow the example of the Protestants, who, he said, were more truly pious than they, and did much more for the welfare of their church. I noticed that, during the sermon, several of the Californians disappeared through a small door at the end of the gallery. Following them, out of curiosity, I found them all seated in the belfry and along the coping of the front, composedly smoking their cigars.

There was a little gold excitement in Monterey during my visit, on account of the report that a washing of considerable richness had been discovered near the Mission of San Antonio, among the Coast Mountains, sixty miles to the southward. According to the accounts which reached us, a number of people had commenced working there, with fair success, and traders were beginning to send their teams in that direction. Gold was also said to exist in small quantities near the Mission of Carmel, where, indeed, there were strong geological indications of it. These discoveries, however, were too slight to affect the repose of the town, which a much greater excitement could scarcely have shaken.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OLD CALIFORNIA—ITS MISSIONS AND ITS LANDS.

THREE or four weeks of my stay in Monterey were principally passed in the office of the Civil Government, where I was employed in examining all the records relating to land titles and Mission property in California. Notwithstanding the apparent dryness of the subject, I found the documents curious and interesting. The smoky *papel sellado* on which they were written—the naïve and irregular orthography—the rude drawings and maps which accompanied them and the singular laws and customs of which they gave evidence, had a real charm to any one possessing the slightest relish for the odor of antiquity. Most interesting of all was a box of records, brought from La Paz, Lower California, where many similar boxes, equally precious, were used for the wadding of Castro's cannon. Among its contents were letters of instruction from the Viceroy Galvez, original letters of Padre Junipero Serra and mandates from the Bishops of Mexico to the Missionaries in Sonora and California. I was never tired of hearing Capt. Halleck, the Secretary of State, whose knowledge of the early history of California is not equalled by any one in the country, talk of those marvellous times and make clear the misty meaning of the rare old papers.

The extensive history of Vanegas, an abridgment of which has been introduced by Mr. Forbes into his work on California, is the most complete of all which have been written. It is mainly confined, however, to the settlement of the Peninsula, and throws no light on the after decay and ruin of the Missions of Alta California. These establishments, to which solely are owing the settlement and civilization of the country, have now entirely fallen from their former supremacy, and are of no further importance in a civil view. Some facts concerning the manner of their downfall, which I learned during my labors among the archives, may be not inappropriately given here. Henceforth, under the ascendancy of American institutions, they have no longer an existence: shall we not, therefore, now that their day is over, take one backward glance over the places they have filled and the good or evil they have accomplished?

The history of their original foundation is one of remarkable interest. Through the perseverance and self-denying labors of a few Catholic Priests alone, the natives, not only of the Peninsula and the Coast, as far north as San Francisco Bay, but the extensive provinces of Sonora and Sinaloa, were taught the arts of civilized life and subjected to the dominion of Spain. The lives of Padres Kino, Salvatierra and Ugarte exhibit instances of danger, adventure and heroic endurance scarcely inferior to those of Cortez and Coronado. The great work they accomplished on the Peninsula and in the Northern Provinces of Mexico, in the beginning of the last century, was followed fifty years later by Padre Junipero Serra, who in 1769 founded the Mission of San Diego, the first settlement in Alta California. In the succeeding year he landed at Monterey, and by a solemn mass which was performed under an oak-tree still standing near the fort, took posses-

sion of the spot. After laboring for thirteen years with indefatigable zeal and activity, during which time he founded nine missions, the good Padre died in 1784, and was buried in the grave-yard of Carmel. His successors continued the work, and by the year 1800 had increased the number of Missions to sixteen. Since that time only three more have been added. The Missions are named and located as follows: San Rafael and San Francisco Solano, north of San Francisco Bay; Dolores, near San Francisco; Santa Clara and San José, near Pueblo San José; San Juan, Santa Cruz and Carmel, near Monterey; Soledad, San Antonio and San Miguel, in the Valley of Salinas River; San Luis Obispo; La Purisima, Santa Ynez, Santa Barbara and San Buenaventura, near Santa Barbara; San Gabriel and San Fernando, near Los Angeles; and San Luis Rey, San Juan Capistrano and San Diego, on the coast, south of Los Angeles.

The wealth and power in the possession of these Missions naturally excited the jealousy of Government, after California was organized into a territory. The padres, however, had been granted almost unlimited privileges by the earlier Viceroys, and for a long time no authority could be found to dispossess them. A decree of the Spanish Cortes, in 1813, relating to the Missions of South America, was made the basis of repeated attempts to overthrow the temporal power of the padres, but without effect, and from 1800 to 1830, they revelled securely in the full enjoyment of their wealthy establishments.

That, indeed, was *their* age of gold—a right bounteous and prosperous time, toward which many of the Californian and even of the old American residents, look back with regret. Then, each Mission was a little principality, with its hundred thousand acres, and its twenty thousand head of cattle. All the Indian population,

except the "Gentiles" of the mountains, were the subjects of the padres, cultivating for them their broad lands and reverencing them with the same devout faith as they did the patron saint of the settlement. The spacious galleries, halls and courtyards of the Missions exhibited every sign of order and good government, and from the long rows of adobe houses flanking them an obedient crowd came forth, at the sound of morning and evening chimes. The tables of the padres were laden with the finest fruits and vegetables from their thrifty gardens and orchards, and flasks of excellent wine from their own vineyards. The stranger who came that way was entertained with a lavish hospitality for which all recompense was proudly refused, and on leaving, was welcome to exchange his spent horse for his pick out of the caballada. Nearly all the commerce of the country with other nations was in their hands. Long habits of management and economy gave them a great aptitude for business of all kinds, and each succeeding year witnessed an increase of their wealth and authority.

The first blow given to their privileges, was a decree of the Supreme Government of Mexico, dated August 17, 1833, by which the Missions of Upper and Lower California were secularized and became public property. They were converted by law into parishes, and the padres, from being virtual sovereigns of their domains, became merely curates, possessing only spiritual powers over their former subjects. Instead of managing the revenue of the estates, they were paid from $2,000 to $2,500, at the option of Government. The church was still kept for religious purposes, and the principal building for the curate's house, while other portions of the establishment were appropriated to the purposes of court-houses and schools.

This law of course emancipated the Indians from the authority

of the padres, and likewise absolved the latter from their obligations to maintain them. To provide for their support, therefore, the Government granted to every head of a family a lot from one to four hundred varas square, which was assigned to the use of themselves and their descendants, but could not be sold by them under penalty of the land reverting back to the public domain. The temporal affairs of each Mission were placed under the charge of an Ayuntamiento, who was commissioned to explain to the Indians the new relations, and put them in possession of the land. A portion of the revenue was applied to their benefit, and in return therefor they were obliged to assist in cultivating the common lands of the new pueblos or parishes. By a further decree, in 1840, Governor Alvarado substituted majordomos in place of the ayuntamientos, giving them power to manage the temporal affairs of the Missions, but not to dispose of the revenues or contract debts without the permission of Government.

These decrees put a stop to the prosperity of the Missions. The Padres, seeing the establishments taken out of their hands, employed themselves no longer in superintending their cultivation; while the Indians, though free, lost the patient guidance and encouragement they had received, and relapsed into their hereditary habits of sloth and stupidity. Many of them scattered from their homes, resuming a roving life among the mountains, and very soon several of the Missions almost ceased to have an existence. Gov. Micheltorena, therefore, in 1843, in a pompous proclamation setting forth his loyalty to the Catholic Faith, attempted to restore the former state of things by delivering twelve of the Missions into the hands of the priests. He declared, at the same time, that all the cattle and property should be given up to them, but that those portions of the Mission estates which had been granted to individuals should

still remain in possession of the latter. The proclamation, so far as I can learn, never went into effect, and the chasing of Micheltorena from the country soon put an end to his plans.

In the year 1845 Governor Pio Pico completed the obliteration of the Missions. By a Government decree he directed that the Missions of San Juan, Carmel, San Francisco Solano and San Juan Capistrano should be sold at auction on a specified day. One month's notice was given to the Indian neophytes of the Missions of San Rafael, Dolores, Soledad, San Miguel and La Purisima to return to the cultivation and occupancy of the lands assigned them by Government, otherwise the same should be declared unoccupied and disposed of like the preceding. All the remaining Missions, except the Episcopal Mansion at Santa Barbara, were to be rented. Of the proceeds of these sales and leases one-third was to be used for the support of the resident priests, one-third for the benefit of the Indians, and the remaining third constituting the Pious Fund of California to be applied to purposes of education and beneficence.

The Indian neophytes of the five last-named Missions having neglected to assemble, Pico, by a decree in October, 1845, ordered that they should be sold to the highest bidder; and at the same time, that those of San Fernando, Buenaventura, Santa Barbara and Santa Ynez, should be rented for the term of nine years. This was the last valid decree touching the Missions. The remaining Missions of Santa Clara, San José, Santa Cruz, San Antonio, San Luis Obispo, San Gabriel and San Diego were therefore thrown immediately into the hands of the United States after possession had been taken by our troops; and all Mission property not legally granted or sold under the laws of California, becomes part of the public domain.

I endeavored to obtain some statistics of the land, cattle and other property belonging to the various Missions. The data on record, however, partake of the same indefinite character as the description of lands for which grants are asked. I found, it is true, an account of the boundaries of most of the Missions, with the quality of the land embraced by them, but the particulars, notwithstanding they were given by the resident padres themselves, are very unsatisfactory. The lands are described as lying between certain hills and rivers, or embracing certain plains; sometimes they are spoken of as *cañadas* or *llanos* only. Some are of great extent; the Mission lands of San Antonio contain two hundred and twenty-five square leagues and those of San Miguel five hundred and thirty-two. The others vary from twenty to one hundred square leagues. At a rough guess, I should compute the original Mission lands at about eight millions of acres; probably four to five millions of acres have since been disposed of by sales and grants. The remaining three millions of acres, comprising the finest lands in California, are the property of the United States. As much of it has been cultivated, or is capable of immediate adaptation for the planting of orchards, gardens and vineyards, the sale or disposal of it would seem to require different regulations from those which govern other portions of the public domain.

The Mission buildings now are but wrecks of their former condition. The broken walls, deserted corrals, and roofless dwellings which surround them, are but melancholy evidences of their ancient prosperity. Their character for wealth and hospitality has passed away with the rule of the padres and the vassalage of the Indians. They have had their day. They have fulfilled (and nobly, too, be it acknowledged) the purpose of their creation. I see no cause for lamenting, as many do, over their downfall. The

spirit of enterprise which has now taken firm root in the soil, will make their neglected gardens blossom again, and deck their waste fields with abundant harvests.

A subject of more direct interest to the California emigrants, is that of the character and validity of the grants made to settlers previous to the acquisition of the country. The extravagant pitch to which land speculation has risen, and the uncertain tenure by which many of the best locations along the coast are held, render some official examination and adjustment very necessary. The amount of speculation which has already been done on an insecure basis, will give rise to endless litigation, when the proper tribunal shall have been established. Meanwhile, a brief account of the character of the grants, derived partly from Capt. Halleck's admirable Report on California Affairs and partly from an examination of the grants themselves, may not be without its interest and uses.

The first general decree for the granting of lands bears date of June, 1779, when Governor Neve, then established at Monterey, drew up a series of regulations, which were approved by the King of Spain, and for more than forty years remained in force, with little modification, throughout the territory. To each *poblador* (settler) was granted a bounty of $116 44 per annum for the first two years, and $60 per annum for the three following, with the loan of horses, cattle and farming utensils from the Government supplies. Settlers in pueblos, or towns, had likewise the privilege of pasturing their stock on the lands belonging to the town. Many of the minor regulations established in this decree of Gov. Neve, are sufficiently amusing. For instance, no poblador is allowed to sell any of his animals, until he shall possess fifteen mares and one stallion, fifteen cows and one bull, and so on, down to cocks and

hens. He must then sell his extra stock to the Government, which of course pays its own price.

These regulations, designed only for the first rude stage of colonization, were superseded by the decree of the Mexican Republic for the colonization of its Territories, dated Aug. 18, 1824, which was further limited and defined by a series of regulations, dated Nov. 21, 1828. Up to the time when California passed into the hands of the United States, no modifications were made to these acts, and they consequently remain in force. Their most important provisions are as follows:

The Governor of the Territory is empowered to make grants of lands to contractors (for towns or colonies) and individuals or heads of families. Grants of the first-named class require the approval of the Supreme Government to make them valid. For the latter the ratification of the Territorial Assembly is necessary; but in no case can the Governor make grants of any land lying within ten leagues of the sea-coast or within twenty leagues of the boundaries of any foreign power, without the previous approval of the Supreme Government. The authorities of towns, however, are allowed to dispose of lands lying within the town limits, the proceeds to be paid into the municipal fund. The maximum extent of a single grant is fixed at one square league of irrigable land, four of *temporal*, or land where produce depends on the seasons, and six of land for pasturing and rearing cattle—eleven square leagues (about fifty thousand acres) in all. The minimum extent is two hundred varas square (a vara is a little less than a yard) of irrigable land, eight hundred of temporal, and twelve hundred of pasturage. The size of a house lot in any of the pueblos is fixed at one hundred varas. The irregular spaces and patches lying between the boundaries of grants throughout

the country are to be distributed among the colonists who occupy the adjoining land, or their children, preference being given to those who have distinguished themselves by their industry and moral deportment.

All grants not made in accordance with these regulations, from the time of their adoption up to July 7, 1846, when the American flag was raised at Monterey and the Departmental Junta broken up, are not strictly valid, according to Mexican law. The restrictions against lands within ten leagues of the sea-coast were never removed. The only legal grant of such land, was that made to Captain Stephen Smith, of the port of Bodega, which received the approval of the Supreme Government. In the Macnamara Colonization Grant, made by Pio Pico, only four days before the occupation of Monterey by our forces, it is expressly stated that the consent of the Mexican Government is necessary to make it valid. Yet, in spite of this distinct provision, large tracts of this coast, from San Francisco to San Diego, were granted to citizens and colonists by Figueroa, Alvarado and other Governors. All these acts, having never received the sanction of the Supreme Government, would, by a literal construction of the law, be null and void. The Supreme Government of Mexico always reserved to itself the right of using any portion of the coast, promontories, harbors or public land of the interior, for the purpose of erecting forts, arsenals or national storehouses.

There are on file in the archives about five hundred and eighty grants, made by various Governors between 1828 and 1846. Probably one hundred of these lack the full requirements of the Mexican law—exclusive of those located on the sea-coast. Some are complete and satisfactory in all respects, to the signature of the Governor, but the concurrence of the Territorial Assembly

is wanting. In others the final concession is withheld for the purpose of procuring further information. Others again, appear to have been neglected by the proper authorities, and a few, on further testimony, have been denied. As the owners of such lands, in many instances, are entirely unaware of the imperfect nature of their titles, many sales and transfers have been made in good faith, which will hereafter be invalidated. Some individuals have acted in a more reprehensible manner, by making sales of lands to which they had no legal claim.

In settling the boundaries of grants, which are sound in every respect, there will nevertheless be some difficulty. Much of the land was never surveyed, the locality and character being rudely sketched on paper by the petitioner, sometimes without any specified extent, and sometimes with a guess at the quantity, which is often very wide of the mark. Such sketch, or topographical outline is, I believe, required by law, and the collection embraced in the number of grants and applications on file, exhibits a most curious variety of attempts at drawing. In the absence of any further clue, it would be difficult to find many of the localities or anything in the least resembling them. The boundaries are frequently given as included within certain hills, arroyos, rivers and marshes, but the space so designated frequently contains double the amount of land asked for.

On the lands throughout the country, known and recognized as belonging to the United States, a number of emigrants have established themselves, making choice of advantageous locations, and trusting to obtain possession by right of preëminence as settlers. Nearly all of the fords on the Sacramento and San Joaquin and their tributaries—the springs and meadow lands at the bases of the mountains—and all sites which seem calculated

for future towns or villages—have been appropriated in like manner. The discovery of gold has rendered any bounty unnecessary, to promote emigration.

I endeavored to ascertain the exact extent of granted land in California, as well as the amount which will remain to the United States; but owing to the indefinite character of many of the grants, and the absence of correct statistical information, was unable fully to succeed. The geographical limits within which the grants are embraced, are more easily traced. By referring to Frémont's Map of California, a line drawn from the mouth of Russian River, on the Pacific, north of Bodega, to the mouth of Rio Chico, a tributary of the Sacramento, and continued to the Sierra Nevada, would comprise the northern limit. From this line to the Oregon boundary—a region two hundred and fifty miles in length by two hundred in breadth—belongs to the public domain. The land about the mouths of the Sacramento and San Joaquin, with some tracts on the Rio Americano, Cosumne, Calaveras and Mariposa, is included in various grants, but the remainder of the settled land as you go southward, is upon the western side of the Coast Range, and all of it within ninety miles of the sea. The best agricultural districts—those of Napa, San José and Los Angeles—are already settled and cultivated, but the upper portion of the Sacramento country, the valleys of Trinity River and Russian River, and the lower slopes of the Sierra Nevada, embrace a great deal of arable land of excellent quality. The valleys of the Coast Range north of San Francisco Bay have been but partially explored.

The entire gold district of the Sierra Nevada belongs to the United States, with the exception of Johnson's Ranche on Bear Creek, Sutter's possessions on the Rio Americano, a grant on the

Cosumne, and Alvarado's Ranche on the Mariposa, now in possession of Col. Frémont. Some anxiety is felt among the mining population, as to the disposition which the Government will make of these vast storehouses of wealth. The day before the adjournment of the Convention, a resolution was offered, requesting Congress not to dispose of any part of the gold region, but to suffer it to remain free to all American citizens. It was defeated by a bare majority, but many of those voting nay, avowed themselves in favor of the spirit of the resolution, objecting to its adoption on the ground of propriety alone. The population, generally, is opposed to the sale of gold land for the reason that it would probably fall into the hands of speculators, to the disadvantage of the mining class. The lease of land would present the same objections, besides being but an uncertain privilege. The fairest and most satisfactory course would be the imposition of a small per centage on the amount of gold actually dug or washed out by each individual or company. The miners would not object to this; they only oppose any regulation which would give speculators a chance to elbow them out of their 'bars' and 'pockets.'

CHAPTER XIX.

RETURN TO SAN FRANCISCO.

After the adjournment of the Convention, Monterey relapsed into its former quiet, and I soon began to feel the old impatience and longing for motion and change. The season was waning, and barely time enough remained for the accomplishment of my design of a journey to the head of the Sacramento Valley. My friend, Lieut. Beale, with whom I had beguiled many an hour in tracing out plans for overland journeys and explorations, which should combine a spice of bold adventure with the acquisition of permanently useful knowledge, had left a week previous, in company with Col. Frémont and his family. A heavy fog had for several days lain like a bar across the mouth of the bay, and we feared that the anxiously-awaited steamer from Panama would pass without touching. This was a question of interest, as there had been no mail from the Atlantic States for more than two months, and the general impatience on that account was painful to witness. Under these circumstances, I grew tired of looking on the fresh, sparkling, intense blue of the bay and the dewy-violet shadows of the mountains beyond it, and so one fine morning thrust my few moveables into my knapsack and rolled up my sarape for a start.

I had a better reliance than my own feet, in making the journey Mr. Semple, ex-President of the Convention, with his son and two of the ex-Clerks, were about leaving, and I was offered the means of conveyance as far as Pueblo San José. Mr. Semple was barely recovering from a severe attack of typhoid fever, and was obliged to be conveyed in an army ambulance, which was furnished by Capt. Kane, of the Quartermaster's Department. We started at noon, under a hot, bright sun, though the entrance to the bay was still covered by the bar of dark fog. The steamer Unicorn was anxiously expected, and as a gun had been heard during the night, Gen. Riley ordered a shot to be fired from the fort every half-hour, as a guide for the steamer, should she be outside. Had there been any certainty of her arrival, our haste to receive the long-delayed mail would have induced us to postpone the journey.

We toiled through the desolate sand-hills to the Salinas River, and lanched again upon its broad, level plains. Our team consisted of four Californian horses, neither of which had ever been a week in harness, and consequently were not broken of the dashing gait to which they had been accustomed. The driver was an emigrant who arrived two months previous, by the Gila route, after suffering the most terrible privations. We had all our provisions, blankets and camping utensils stowed in the ambulance, and as it was not large enough to contain our bodies likewise, two of the party followed in a light wagon. Under the steady gallop at which our fiery horses drew us, the blue ridges of the Sierra de Gavilan soon rose high and bleak before us, and the timbered shores of the plain came in sight. Our crossing of the arroyos would have startled even an Alleghany stage-driver. When one of these huge gullies yawned before us, there was no check of our

speed. We dashed sheer off the brink at an angle of fifty degrees; there was a giddy sensation of falling for an instant, and in the next our heavy vehicle regained the level, carried half-way up the opposite steep by the momentum of our descent. The excitement of such a plunge was delightful: the leaping of a five-barred gate on an English hunter would have been tame to it.

On the skirt of the timber Mr. Semple pointed out the scene of a battle between the Californian and American troops, during the war. Foster, a scout belonging to the company of Emigrant Volunteers, while reconnoitering along the bases of the mountains, discovered a body of two hundred Californians on the plain. He immediately sent word to Burrows' company of Americans, then at the Mission San Juan, and in the meantime attacked them with the small force accompanying him. The fight was carried on among the trees. When the Americans—sixty-six in all—arrived on the field, they found Foster dead, with eleven wounds on his body. Four Americans and seven Californians were shot in the fight, which resulted in the defeat of the latter and their retreat up the plains to their post at the Mission of Soledad. Foster was buried where he fell, under a large oak, near the road.

We entered the mountains, and encamped about dusk in a sheltered glen, watered by a little stream. Some benevolent predecessor had left us a good stock of wood, and in a short time the ruddy lights of our fire were dancing over the gnarled oak-boughs, and their streamers of grey moss. I tried my hand, for the first time, at making coffee, while the others spitted pieces of meat on long twigs and thrust them into the blaze. My coffee was approved by the company, and the seasoning of the keen mountain air was not lost on our meal. The pipe of peace—never omitted by the genuine trapper or mountaineer—followed; after which we spread

our blankets on the ground and looked at the stars through the chinks of the boughs, till we dropped asleep. There is no rest so sweet as that taken on the hard bosom of Mother Earth. I slept soundly in our spacious bed-chamber, undisturbed even by the continued barking whine of the coyotes. The cool, sparkling dawn called us up betimes, to rekindle the fire and resume cooking. When the sun made his appearance above the hills, our driver said: "There comes old Hannah, to open the shutters of our house and let in the light"—the most ludicrous combination of scullionish and poetical ideas it was ever my lot to hear. I must acknowledge, however, that "Old Hannah" did her office well, giving our house the most cheery illumination.

As we wound through the lonely passes of the mountains, Mr. Semple pointed out many spots where he had hidden on his night-rides as messenger between San Francisco and Monterey during the war. From some of the heights we looked down valleys that stretched away towards Santa Cruz, and could discern the dark lines of redwood timber along their border. The forest near the Mission contains the largest specimens of this tree to be found in California, some of the trunks, as I was credibly informed, measuring fifteen feet in diameter. Captain Graham, an old settler, had five saw-mills in operation, which he leased to speculators at the rate of fifty dollars per day for each. The timber is soft and easily worked, susceptible of a fine polish, and when kept dry, as in the interior of buildings, will last for centuries.

Midway down one of the long descents, we met Messrs. Marcy and Tefft, who had been to San Francisco to attend to the printing of the Constitution, bundles of which, in English and Spanish, were strapped to their saddles. Our next incident was the discovery of three grizzly bears, on the side of a cañada, about a

quarter of a mile distant. Mr. Semple, who, with the keen sight of one accustomed to mountain life, was on the alert for game, first espied them. They were moving lazily among a cluster of oaks; their bodies were, apparently, as large as that of a mule, but an experienced eye could at once detect the greater thickness and shortness of their legs. We had no other arms than pistols and knives, and no horses of sufficient fleetness to have ventured an attack with safety; so we passed on with many a wistful and lingering look, for the gray hide of one of those huge beasts would have been a trophy well worth the capture. Indeed, the oldest hunter, when he meets a grizzly bear, prefers making a boy's bargain—"If you'll let me alone, I'll let you alone." They are rarely known to attack a man when unprovoked, but when wounded no Indian tiger is more formidable.

Towards noon we reached the Mission San Juan. The bands of emigrants from the South had stripped all the fruit-trees in its gardens, but at a *tienda* in the Mission building, we were supplied with pears at the rate of three for a real—plump, luscious fruit, with russet peel, and so mellow that they would scarcely bear handling. While we were idling an hour in the warm corridor, trying to maintain a conversation in Spanish with some of the natives, a brother of Mr. Semple, who had come from Benicia to meet him, rode up to the inn. He had a gray horse, whose trot was remarkably rough, and at his request I changed places, giving up to him my seat in the ambulance. We dashed out on the plain of San Juan at a full gallop, but my perverse animal soon lagged behind. He was what is called a "Snake horse," of the breed owned by the Snake Indians in Oregon, whence, in fact, he had been brought, still retaining the steady, deliberate pace at which he had been accustomed to haul lodge-poles. His trot was rack-

ing, and as a final resort to procure a gallop, I borrowed a pair of very sharp spurs from our driver. At the first touch the old Snake started; at the second he laid his ears flatly back, gave a snort and sprang forward with galvanic energy, taking me far in advance of the flying ambulance. It was so long since he had traveled such a pace that he seemed as much astonished as I was at the effect of my spurs.

The ambulance at last reached the Pajaro River, which flowed between deep and precipitous banks. The four horses plunged down the declivity; the ambulance followed with a terrible shock, which urged it into the middle of the stream, where it stuck, the king-bolt having been snapped off. We partly stripped, and after working an hour with the ice-cold water above our knees, succeeded in fastening with chains the fragment of the bolt. It was now dinner-time, and we soon had a blaze among the willows and a pot of coffee boiling before it. The beverage, which never tasted more refreshing, sent a fine glow into our benumbed nether limbs, and put us into traveling humor again. The Pajaro Plains, around the head of the river, are finely watered, and under proper cultivation would produce splendid crops. From the ridge descending to the valley of San José we overlooked their broad expanse. The meadows were still green, and the belts of stately sycamore had not yet shed a leaf. I hailed the beautiful valley with pleasure, although its soil was more parched and arid than when I passed before, and the wild oats on the mountains rolled no longer in waves of gold. Their sides were brown and naked to desolation; the dead umber color of the landscape, towards sunset, was more cheerless than a mid-November storm. A traveler seeing California only at this season, would never be tempted to settle.

As we journeyed down the valley, flocks of wild geese and

brant, cleaving the air with their arrow-shaped lines, descended to their roost in the meadows. On their favorite grounds, near the head of Pajaro River, they congregated to the number of millions, hundreds of acres being in many places actually hidden under their dense ranks. They form in columns as they alight, and their stations at roost are as regularly arranged as in any military camp. As the season advances and their number is increased by new arrivals, they become so regardless of human presence that the rancheros kill large quantities with clubs. The native children have a curious method of entrapping them while on the wing. They tie two bones at the ends of a string about a yard in length, which they hurl into the air so skilfully that in falling it forms an arch. As the geese fly low, this instrument, dropping into a flock, generally takes one of them across the neck; the bones fall on each side and drag the goose to the earth, where he is at once seized and dispatched.

We passed Murphy's Ranche and the splendid peak of El Toro and reached Fisher's Ranche as the blaze of camp-fires under the sycamores was beginning to show through the dusk. Here we found Major Hill, who, with Mr. Durivage and Midshipman Carnes, with six men from the wreck of the propeller Edith, had left Monterey the day before ourselves. Their fire was kindled, the cooking implements in order, and several of the party employed in the task of picking three wild geese and preparing them for the pan. While at supper, one of Capt. Fisher's men excited the sporting propensities of some of our party by describing a lake in the valley, where the geese roosted in immense quantities. As it was not more than a mile distant, muskets were got ready and four of the sportsmen set out by moonlight. They found some difficulty, however, in fishing out the geese after they were

shot, and only brought two with them at midnight. I, who was fatigued with my management of the Snake horse, crept into a cart-bed near the Ranche, laid a raw-hide over the top and was soon floating adrift on a sea of dreams.

We had harnessed and were off before the daybreak brightened into sunrise. As we passed the last mountain headland and the mouth of the valley lay wide before us, I noticed a dim vapor over the place where the Pueblo San José should stand. The reason of this was explained when we reached the entrance of the town. We were met by a hurricane of dust which for several minutes prevented our advancing a step; the adobe houses on each side were completely hidden, and we could only breathe by covering our faces with the loose folds of our jackets. Some wind intended for San Francisco had got astray among the mountains, and coming on San José unawares, had put in motion all the dust that had been quietly accumulating during the summer.

The two weeks which had elapsed since San José had been made a capital, were sufficient to have created a wonderful change. What with tents and houses of wood and canvas, in hot haste thrown up, the town seemed to have doubled in size. The dusty streets were thronged with people; goods, for lack of storage room, stood in large piles beside the doors; the sound of saw and hammer, and the rattling of laden carts, were incessant. The Legislative Building—a two-story adobe house built at the town's expense—was nearly finished. Hotels were springing up in all quarters; French *restaurateurs* hung out their signs on little one-story shanties; the shrewd Celestials had already planted themselves there, and summoned men to meals by the sound of their barbaric gongs. Our old stopping-place, the "Miner's Home," was converted into a "City Hotel," and when we drew up before

the door, we were instantly surrounded by purveyors from rival establishments, offering to purchase the two wild geese which hung at the wagon-tail. The roads to Monterey, to Stockton, to San Francisco, and to the Embarcadero, were stirring with continual travel. The price of lots had nearly doubled in consequence of this change, so that the town lost nothing by its gift of the legislative building to Government.

The ambulance, carrying Mr. Semple, set out for Benicia along the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay. Those of us who were bound for San Francisco made search for other conveyances. Hearing that a launch was about starting, I walked down to the Embarcadero, about seven miles distant, where I found a dozen vessels anchored in an estuary which ran up among the tulé. One of them was to leave that night at ten o'clock; the fare was $10, and the time dependent on the wind, but usually varying from two to four days. I gave up the chance at once, and retracing my steps to the nearest ford, crossed Coyote River and struck across the meadows towards Whisman's Ranche, which I reached after two hours' walk. Evening came on while I was journeying alone in the midst of the boundless landscape—boundless, but for the shadowy mountain-piles which lay along the horizon, seeming, through the haze, like the hills of another planet which had touched the skirts of the globe on its journey through space. Long lines of geese and brant sailed through the air, and the white crane, from his covert on the edge of the marsh, uttered at intervals his strong, guttural cry. As the sunset gathered to a blaze, the mountains across the bay were suffused with a rosy purple tint, while those against the western sky stood in deep violet shadow. At last, the sounds of animal life died away on the plain, and the stars were gradually kindled in the cloudless firmament.

By this time I had approached a fine old grove, detached from the shore of timber. The sound of musket shots and the braying of mules told that a party had encamped there. No sooner had I reached the shadow of the trees than my name was shouted, and I recognized Major Hill and my other friends of his party. I threw down my sarape, took a seat among them and employed myself on the breast of a goose. We sat cross-legged around a glowing fire, passing the pans and cups from hand to hand, and using fingers or knives according to the toughness of the meat. The mules were picketed among the oats which grew knee-deep under the trees, and a few paces off, around a still larger fire, the sailors and teamsters brewed their bucket of tea and broiled their huge slices of beef. Our meal over, we lighted our *puros* and stretched out at full length on the grass, enjoying to the full the quiet of the place and the soothing influence of the weed. And then came rest—rest delicious anywhere, but doubly so under the broad arms of the evergreen oak, with the full clear flood of moonlight broken into a thousand minute streams on the turf. It was a long time before I could compose myself to sleep. The solemn repose of the grove—the deep shadows of the trees—the far, misty, silvery glimpses of plain through the openings—wrought powerfully on my imagination and kept every faculty keenly alive. Even in sleep the impression remained, and when I awoke in the night, it was with a happy thrill at opening my eyes on the same maze of moonlight and foliage.

The next day I accompanied the party on foot, taking an occasional lift with the sailors in the wagon. The jolly tars were not at home on dry land, and seemed impatient to see the end of the journey. The driver was enjoined to keep a good look-out from the fore-top (the saddle-mule.) "Breakers ahead!" shouted

Jack, when we came to an arroyo ; " hard up !" was the answer. " Take a reef in the aft wheel !" was the order of the driver. The lock was clapped on, and we rode in triumph into a smoother sea. We nooned at Sanchez' Ranche, reached the Mission Dolores at dusk, and started over the sand-hills in the moonlight. The jaded team stalled at the foot of a steep hill but was afterwards got off by unloading the wagon. I pushed on ahead, hearing the bustle and mingled sounds of the town, long before I reached it. I struck the suburbs half a mile sooner than on my previous return, and from the first rise in the sand had an indistinct view of a place twice as large as I had left. I was too weary, however to take a long survey, but went directly to the Post Office, where I found Mr. Moore and his sons as cheerful, active and enterprising as ever, and was again installed in a comfortable nook of the garret.

CHAPTER XX.

SAN FRANCISCO AGAIN—POST-OFFICE EXPERIENCES.

DURING my absence in Monterey, more than four thousand emigrants by sea had landed in San Francisco. The excitement relative to gold-digging had been kept up by new discoveries on the various rivers; the rage for land speculation had increased; and to all this was added the gathering heat of political conflict. San Francisco was something of a whirlpool before, but now it had widened its sweeps and seemed to be drawing everything into its vortex.

The morning after I arrived, I went about the town to note the changes and improvements. I could scarcely believe my eyes. The northern point, where the Bay pours its waters into the Golden Gate, was covered with houses nearly to the summit—many of them large three-story warehouses. The central and highest hill on which the town is built, was shorn of its chapparal and studded with tents and dwellings; while to the eastward the streets had passed over the last of the three hills, and were beginning to encroach on the Happy Valley. The beautiful crescent of the harbor, stretching from the Rincon to Fort Montgomery, a distance of more than a mile, was lined with boats, tents and warehouses, and near the latter point, several piers jutted into the water. Montgomery street, fronting the Bay, had

undergone a marvellous change. All the open spaces were built up, the canvas houses replaced by ample three-story buildings, an Exchange with lofty sky-light fronted the water, and for the space of half a mile the throng of men of all classes, characters and nations, with carts and animals, equaled Wall street before three o'clock.

In other parts of the town the change was equally great. Tents and canvas houses had given place to large and handsome edifices, blanks had been filled up, new hotels opened, market houses in operation and all the characteristics of a great commercial city fairly established. Portsmouth Square was filled with lumber and house frames, and nearly every street in the lower part of the city was blocked up with goods. The change which had been wrought in all parts of the town during the past six weeks seemed little short of magic. At first I had difficulty in believing that what I looked upon was real, so utterly inadequate seemed the visible means for the accomplishment of such wonderful ends.

On my way to call upon Col. Frémont, whom I found located with his family in the Happy Valley, I saw a company of Chinese carpenters putting up the frame of a Canton-made house. In Pacific street another Celestial restaurant had been opened, and every vessel from the Chinese ports brought a fresh importation. An Olympic circus, on a very handsome scale, had been established, and a company of Ethiopian serenaders nightly amused the public. "Delmonico's" was the fashionable eating-house, where you had boiled eggs at seventy-five cents each, and dinner at $1 50 to $5, according to your appetite. A little muslin shed rejoiced in the title of "Irving House." A number of fine billiard rooms and bowling alleys had been opened, and all other devices for spending money brought into successful operation.

The gamblers complained no longer of dull prospects; there were hundreds of monte, roulette and faro tables, which were crowded nightly until a late hour, and where the most inveterate excesses of gaming might be witnessed. The rents of houses had increased rather than fallen. I might give hundreds of instances, but it would be only a repetition of the stories I have already told. Money brought fourteen per cent. monthly, on loan. A gentleman of Baltimore, who came out in the Panama, sold for $15,000 a steam engine which cost him $2,000. Some drawing paper, which cost about $10 in New York, brought $164. I found little change in the prices of provisions and merchandise, though the sum paid for labor had diminished. Town lots were continually on the rise; fifty vara lots in the Happy Valley, half a mile from town, brought $3,500. I met with a number of my fellow passengers, nearly all of whom had done well, some of them having already realized $20,000 and $30,000.

The population of San Francisco at that time, was estimated at fifteen thousand; a year before it was about five hundred. The increase since that time had been made in the face of the greatest disadvantages under which a city ever labored; an uncultivated country, an ungenial climate, exorbitant rates of labor, want of building materials, imperfect civil organization—lacking everything, in short, but gold dust and enterprise. The same expense, on the Atlantic coast, would have established a city of a hundred thousand inhabitants. The price of lumber was still $300 to $400 per thousand feet. In addition to the five saw-mills at Santa Cruz, all the mills of Oregon were kept going, lumber, even there, bringing $100 per thousand. There was no end to the springs of labor and traffic, which that vast emigration to Cali-

fornia had set in motion, not only on the Pacific Coast, but throughout all Polynesia and Australia.

The activity throughout the mining region during the fall season, gave rise to a thousand reports of golden discoveries, the effect of which was instantly seen on the new-comers. Their highest anticipations of the country seemed realized at once, and their only embarrassment was the choice of so many places of promise. The stories told were marvellous even to Californians; what wonder, then, that the green emigrants, who devoutly swallowed them whole, should be disappointed and disgusted with the reality? The actual yield on most of the rivers was, nevertheless, sufficiently encouraging. The diggers on the forks of the American, Feather and Yuba Rivers, met with a steady return for their labors. On the branches of the San Joaquin, as far as the Tuolumne, the big lumps were still found. Capt. Walker, who had a company on the Pitiuna—a stream that flows into the Tularè Lakes—was in Monterey, buying supplies at the time I left. His company was alone in that desolate region, and working to advantage, if one might judge from the secrecy which attended their movements. The placers on Trinity River had not turned out so well as was expected, and many of the miners were returning disappointed to the Sacramento. Several companies had been absent among the higher ridges of the Sierra Nevada, for a month or more, and it was suspected that they had discovered diggings somewhere on the eastern side.

The sickly season on the Sacramento and its tributaries, was nearly over, but numbers of pale, emaciated frames, broken down by agues and diarrhœas, were daily arriving in the launches and steamers. At least one-third of the miners suffered more or less from these diseases, and numbers of men who had landed only a

few months before, in the fulness of hale and lusty manhood, were walking about nearly as shrunken and bloodless as the corpses they would soon become. One of the most pitiable sights I ever beheld was one of these men, who had just been set ashore from a launch. He was sitting alone on a stone beside the water, with his bare feet purple with cold, on the cold, wet sand. He was wrapped from head to foot in a coarse blanket, which shook with the violence of his chill, as if his limbs were about to drop in pieces. He seemed unconscious of all that was passing; his long, matted hair hung over his wasted face; his eyes glared steadily forward, with an expression of suffering so utterly hopeless and wild, that I shuddered at seeing it. This was but one out of a number of cases, equally sad and distressing. The exposure and privations of a miner's life soon sap a frame that has not previously been hardened by the elements, and the maladies incident to a new country assail with double force the constitutions thus prepared to receive them.

I found the climate of San Francisco vastly improved during my absence. The temperature was more genial and equable, and the daily hurricanes of the summer had almost entirely ceased. As a consequence of this, the streets had a more active and pleasant aspect, and the continual whirl of business was enlivened by something like cheerfulness. Politics had taken root in this appropriate hot-bed of excitement, and was flourishing with a rapidity and vigor of growth which showed that, though an exotic plant, it would soon be native in the soil. Meetings were held nearly every night at Denison's Exchange, where the rival parties —for the different personal interests were not slow in arraying themselves against each other—had their speeches, their huzzas and their drinks. The Congressional candidates bore the brunt

of the struggle, since three or four of them were residents; but the Senatorship gave rise to the most deep-laid and complicated machinations. The principal candidates, T. Butler King, Col. Frémont and Dr. Gwin, had each his party of devoted adherents, who occupied the two weeks intervening between the nomination and election, in sounding and endeavoring to procure the votes of the candidates for the State Legislature, on whom the choice of Senators depended.

Col. Frémont was residing at the time in the Happy Valley, in a Chinese house, which he had erected on one of his lots. Mr. King was at Sonoma, where he had gone to recruit, after an illness which was near proving fatal. His friends, however, called a meeting in his favor, which was held in Portsmouth Square—an injudicious movement, as the consequence proved. Dr. Gwin was making an electioneering tour through the mining districts, for the purpose of securing the election of the proper Delegates to the State Senate and Assembly. It was curious how soon the American passion for politics, forgotten during the first stages of the State organization, revived and emulated the excitement of an election in the older States.

A day or two after my arrival, the Steamer Unicorn came into the harbor, being the third which had arrived without bringing a mail. These repeated failures were too much for even a patient people to bear; an indignation meeting in Portsmouth Square was called, but a shower, heralding the rainy season, came on in time to prevent it. Finally, on the last day of October, on the eve of the departure of another steamer down the coast, the Panama came in, bringing the mails for July, August and September all at once! Thirty-seven mail-bags were hauled up to the little Post-Office that night, and the eight clerks were astounded by the

receipt of forty-five thousand letters, besides uncounted bushels of newspapers. I was at the time domiciled in Mr. Moore's garret and enjoying the hospitalities of his plank-table; I therefore offered my services as clerk-extraordinary, and was at once vested with full powers and initiated into all the mysteries of counting, classifying and distributing letters.

The Post-Office was a small frame building, of one story, and not more than forty feet in length. The entire front, which was graced with a narrow portico, was appropriated to the windows for delivery, while the rear was divided into three small compartments —a newspaper room, a private office, and kitchen. There were two windows for the general delivery, one for French and Spanish letters, and a narrow entry at one end of the building, on which faced the private boxes, to the number of five hundred, leased to merchants and others at the rate of $1,50 per month. In this small space all the operations of the Office were carried on. The rent of the building was $7,000 a year, and the salaries of the clerks from $100 to $300 monthly, which, as no special provision had been made by Government to meet the expense, effectually confined Mr. Moore to these narrow limits. For his strict and conscientious adherence to the law, he received the violent censure of a party of the San Franciscans, who would have had him make free use of the Government funds.

The Panama's mail-bags reached the Office about nine o'clock. The doors were instantly closed, the windows darkened, and every preparation made for a long siege. The attack from without commenced about the same time. There were knocks on the doors, taps on the windows, and beseeching calls at all corners of the house. The interior was well lighted; the bags were emptied on the floor, and ten pairs of hands engaged in the assortment and

distribution of their contents. The work went on rapidly and noiselessly as the night passed away, but with the first streak of daylight the attack commenced again. Every avenue of entrance was barricaded; the crowd was told through the keyhole that the Office would be opened that day to no one: but it all availed nothing. Mr. Moore's Irish servant could not go for a bucket of water without being surrounded and in danger of being held captive. Men dogged his heels in the hope of being able to slip in behind him before he could lock the door.

We labored steadily all day, and had the satisfaction of seeing the huge pile of letters considerably diminished. Towards evening the impatience of the crowd increased to a most annoying pitch. They knocked; they tried shouts and then whispers and then shouts again; they implored and threatened by turns; and not seldom offered large bribes for the delivery of their letters. "Curse such a Post-Office and such a Post-Master!" said one; "I'll write to the Department by the next steamer. *We'll* see whether things go on in this way much longer." Then comes a messenger slyly to the back-door: "Mr. —— sends his compliments, and says you would oblige him very much by letting me have his letters; he won't say anything about it to anybody." A clergyman, or perhaps a naval officer, follows, relying on a white cravat or gilt buttons for the favor which no one else can obtain. Mr. Moore politely but firmly refuses; and so we work on, unmoved by the noises of the besiegers. The excitement and anxiety of the public can scarcely be told in words. Where the source that governs business, satisfies affection and supplies intelligence, had been shut off from a whole community for three months, the rush from all sides to supply the void, was irresistible.

In the afternoon, a partial delivery was made to the owners of

private boxes. It was effected in a skillful way, though with some danger to the clerk who undertook the opening of the door. On account of the crush and destruction of windows on former occasions, he ordered them to form into line and enter in regular order. They at first refused, but on his counter-refusal to unlock the door, complied with some difficulty. The moment the key was turned, the rush into the little entry was terrific; the glass faces of the boxes were stove in, and the wooden partition seemed about to give way. In the space of an hour the clerk took in postage to the amount of $600; the principal firms frequently paid from $50 to $100 for their correspondence.

We toiled on till after midnight of the second night, when the work was so far advanced that we could spare an hour or two for rest, and still complete the distribution in time for the opening of the windows, at noon the next day. So we crept up to our blankets in the garret, worn out by forty-four hours of steady labor. We had scarcely begun to taste the needful rest, when our sleep, deep as it was, was broken by a new sound. Some of the besiegers, learning that the windows were to be opened at noon, came on the ground in the middle of the night, in order to have the first chance for letters. As the nights were fresh and cool, they soon felt chilly, and began a stamping march along the portico, which jarred the whole building and kept us all painfully awake. This game was practised for a week after the distribution commenced, and was a greater hardship to those employed in the Office than their daily labors. One morning, about a week after this, a single individual came about midnight, bringing a chair with him, and some refreshments. He planted himself directly opposite the door, and sat there quietly all night. It was the day for dispatching the Monterey mail, and one of the clerks got up about

four o'clock to have it in readiness for the carrier. On opening the door in the darkness, he was confronted by this man, who, seated solemnly in his chair, immediately gave his name in a loud voice: "John Jenkins!"

When, finally, the windows were opened, the scenes around the office were still more remarkable. In order to prevent a general riot among the applicants, they were recommended to form in ranks. This plan once established, those inside could work with more speed and safety. The lines extended in front all the way down the hill into Portsmouth Square, and on the south side across Sacramento street to the tents among the chapparal; while that from the newspaper window in the rear stretched for some distance up the hill. The man at the tail of the longest line might count on spending six hours in it before he reached the window. Those who were near the goal frequently sold out their places to impatient candidates, for ten, and even twenty-five dollars; indeed, several persons, in want of money, practised this game daily, as a means of living! Venders of pies, cakes and newspapers established themselves in front of the office, to supply the crowd, while others did a profitable business by carrying cans of coffee up and down the lines.

The labors of the Post Office were greatly increased by the necessity of forwarding thousands of letters to the branch offices or to agents among the mountains, according to the orders of the miners. This part of the business, which was entirely without remuneration, furnished constant employment for three or four clerks. Several persons made large sums by acting as agents, supplying the miners with their letters, at $1 each, which included the postage from the Atlantic side. The arrangements

for the transportation of the inland mail were very imperfect, and these private establishments were generally preferred.

The necessity of an immediate provision for the support of all branches of Government service, was, (and still remains, at the time I write,) most imminent. Unless something be speedily done, the administration of many offices in California must become impossible. The plan of relief is simple and can readily be accomplished—in the Civil Department, by a direct increase of emolument, in the Military and Naval, by an advance in the price of rations, during service on the Pacific Coast. Our legislators appear hardly to understand the enormous standard of prices, and the fact that many years must elapse before it can be materially lessened. Men in these days will not labor for pure patriotism, when the country is so well able to pay them.

CHAPTER XXI.

SACRAMENTO RIVER AND CITY.

THE change of temperature following the heavy shower which fell the day after my arrival at San Francisco, seemed to announce the near approach of the rainy season. I made all haste, therefore, to start on my tour through the northern placers, fearing lest it might be made impossible by a longer delay. The schooner James L. Day was advertised to leave for Sacramento City about the time we had finished distributing the mail, and as no preparation is required for a journey in California, I took my sarape and went down to Clark's Point, which is to San Francisco what Whitehall is to New York. The fare was $14, which included our embarkation—a matter of some little consequence, when $5 was frequently paid to be rowed out to a vessel. There were about seventy passengers on board, the greater part of whom had just arrived in the steamer Panama. The schooner was a trim, beautiful craft, that had weathered the gales of Cape Horn. A strong wind was blowing from the south, with a rain coming up, as we hove anchor and fired a parting gun. We passed the islands of Yerba Buena and Alcatraz, looked out through the Golden Gate on the Pacific, and dashed into the strait connecting the Bay of San Francisco with Pablo Bay, before a ten-knot

breeze. This strait, six miles in length and about three in breadth, presents a constant variety of scene, from the irregularity of its mountain-shores. In the middle of it stands an island of red volcanic rock, near which are two smaller ones, white with guano, called The Brothers. At the entrance of Pablo Bay are two others, The Sisters, similar in size and form.

Pablo Bay is nearly circular, and about twelve miles in diameter. The creeks of Napa, Petaluma and San Rafael empty into it on the northern side, opposite Mare Island, so called from a wild mare who was formerly seen at the head of a band of elk, galloping over its broad meadows. We had but a dim glimpse of the shore through the rain. Our schooner bent to the wind, and cut the water so swiftly, that it fairly whistled under her sharp prow. The spray dashed over the deck and the large sails were motionless in their distension, as we ran before the gale, at a most exhilarating speed. A very good dinner at $1, was served up in the eight-by-ten cabin and there was quite a run upon the cook's galley, for pies, at $1 apiece.

We speedily made the entrance to the Straits of Carquinez, where the mountains approach to within three-quarters of a mile. Several of the newly-arrived emigrants expressed themselves delighted with the barren shores and scanty patches of chapparal. It was their first view of the inland scenery of California. The rain had already brought out a timid green on the hills, and the soil no longer looked parched and dead. "Ah!" said one of the company, "what beautiful mountains! this California is really a splendid country." "Very well," thought I, "but if you dig less gold than you anticipate, catch the ague or fail in speculation, what will you say then? Will not the picture you draw be as dark and forbidding as it is now delightful?"

We passed a small sail-boat, bound for Sacramento and filled with emigrants. Half of them were employed in bailing out the scud thrown over the gunwale by every surge. We shot by them like a flash, and came in sight of Benicia, once thought to be a rival to San Francisco. In a glen on the opposite shore is the little town of Martinez. Benicia is a very pretty place; the situation is well chosen, the land gradually sloping back from the water, with ample space for the spread of the town. The anchorage is excellent, vessels of the largest size being able to lie so near shore as to land goods without lightering. The back country, including the Napa and Sonoma valleys, is one of the finest agricultural districts of California. Notwithstanding these advantages, Benicia must always remain inferior, in commercial importance, both to San Francisco and Sacramento City. While in the country, I was much amused in reading the letters respecting it, which had been sent home and published, many of them predicting the speedy downfall of San Francisco, on account of the superior advantages of the former place. On the strength of these letters vessels had actually cleared for Benicia, with large cargoes. Now, anchorage is one thing, and a good market another; a ship may lie in greater safety at Albany, but the sensible merchant charters his vessel for New York. San Francisco is marked by Nature and Fate (though many will disagree with me in the first half of the assertion) for the great commercial mart of the Pacific, and whatever advantages she may lack will soon be amply provided for by her wealth and enterprise.

Benicia—very properly, as I think—has been made the Naval and Military Station for the Bay. Gen. Smith and Commodore Jones both have their head quarters there. The General's house and the military barracks are built on a headland at the entrance

of Suisun Bay—a breezy and healthy situation. Monte Diablo, the giant of the Coast Range, rises high and blue on the other side of the strait, and away beyond the waters of the Bay, beyond the waste marshes of tulé and the broad grazing plains, and above the low outlines of many an intermediate chain, loom up faint and far and silvery, the snows of the Sierra Nevada.

We came-to off New-York-of-the-Pacific in four hours after leaving San Francisco—a distance of fifty miles. The former place, with its aspiring but most awkward name, is located on a level plain, on the southern shore of Suisun Bay, backed by a range of barren mountains. It consists of three houses, one of which is a three-story one, and several vessels at anchor near the shore. The anchorage is good, and were it not for the mosquitos, the crews might live pleasantly enough, in their seclusion. There never will be a large town there, for the simple reason that there is no possible cause why there *should* be one. Stockton and Sacramento City supply the mines, San Francisco takes the commerce, Benicia the agricultural produce, with a fair share of the inland trade, and this Gotham-of-the-West, I fear, must continue to belie its title.

We anchored, waiting for the steamer Sacramento, which was to meet the schooner and receive her passengers. She came along side after dark, but owing to the violence of the rain, did not leave until midnight. She was a small, light craft, not more than sixty feet in length, and had been shipped to San Francisco around Cape Horn. She was at first employed to run between Sacramento City and San Francisco, but proved insufficient to weather the rough seas of the open Bay. The arrival of the steamer McKim, which is a good sea-boat and therefore adapted to the navigation of the Bay, where the waves are little less violent than

in the Pacific, drove her from the route, but she still continued to run on the Sacramento River. Many small steamers, of similar frail construction, were sent around the Horn, the speculators imagining they were the very thing for inland navigation. The engine of the Sacramento was on deck, as also was her den of a cabin—a filthy place, about six feet by eight. A few berths, made of two coarse blankets laid on a plank, were to be had at $5 each ; but I preferred taking a camp-stool, throwing my sarape over my shoulders and sleeping with my head on the table, rather than pay such an unchristian price.

As the day dawned, gloomy and wet, I went on deck. We were near the head of "The Slough," a broad navigable cut-off, which saves twenty miles in making the trip. The banks are lined with thickets, behind which extends a narrow belt of timber, principally oak and sycamore. Here and there, in cleared spots, were the cabins of the woodmen, or of squatters, who intend claiming preëmption rights. The wood, which brings $12 or $15 a cord, is piled on the bluff banks, and the steamers back up to it, whenever they are obliged to "wood up." At the junction of the slough with the river proper, there is a small village of Indian huts, built of dry tulé reeds.

The Sacramento is a beautiful stream. Its width varies from two to three hundred yards, and its banks fringed with rich foliage, present, by their continuous windings, a fine succession of views. In appearance, it reminded me somewhat of the Delaware. The foliage, washed by the rain, glistened green and freshly in the morning; and as we advanced the distant mountains on either hand were occasionally visible through gaps in the timber. Before reaching the town of Sutter, we passed a ranche, the produce of which, in vegetables alone, was said to have returned the owner

—a German, by the name of Schwartz—$25,000 during the season. Sutter is a town of some thirty houses, scattered along the bank for half a mile. Three miles above this we came in sight of Sacramento City. The forest of masts along the embarcadero more than rivalled the splendid growth of the soil. Boughs and spars were mingled together in striking contrast; the cables were fastened to the trunks and sinewy roots of the trees; sign-boards and figure-heads were set up on shore, facing the levee, and galleys and deck-cabins were turned out "to grass," leased as shops, or occupied as dwellings. The aspect of the place, on landing, was decidedly more novel and picturesque than that of any other town in the country.

The plan of Sacramento City is very simple. Situated on the eastern bank of the Sacramento, at its junction with the Rio Americano, the town plot embraces a square of about one and a-half miles to a side. It is laid out in regular right-angles, in Philadelphia style, those running east and west named after the alphabet, and those north and south after the arithmetic. The limits of the town extended to nearly one square mile, and the number of inhabitants, in tents and houses, fell little short of ten thousand. The previous April there were just four houses in the place! Can the world match a growth like this?

The original forest-trees, standing in all parts of the town, give it a very picturesque appearance. Many of the streets are lined with oaks and sycamores, six feet in diameter, and spreading ample boughs on every side. The emigrants have ruined the finest of them by building camp-fires at their bases, which, in some instances, have burned completely through, leaving a charred and blackened arch for the superb tree to rest upon. The storm which occurred a few days previous to my visit, snapped asunder

several trunks which had been thus weakened, one of them crushing to the earth a canvas house in which a man lay asleep. A heavy bough struck the ground on each side of him, saving his life. The destruction of these trees is the more to be regretted, as the intense heat of the Summer days, when the mercury stands at 120°, renders their shade a thing of absolute necessity.

The value of real estate in Sacramento City is only exceeded by that of San Francisco. Lots twenty by seventy-five feet, in the best locations, brought from $3,000 to $3,500. Rents were on a scale equally enormous. The City Hotel, which was formerly a saw-mill, erected by Capt. Sutter, paid $30,000 per annum. A new hotel, going up on the levee, had been already rented at $35,000. Two drinking and gaming-rooms, on a business street, paid each $1,000, monthly, invariably in advance. Many of the stores transacted business averaging from $1,000 to $3,000 daily. Board was $20 per week at the restaurants and $5 per day at the City Hotel. But what is the use of repeating figures? These dead statistics convey no idea of the marvellous state of things in the place. It was difficult enough for those who saw to believe, and I can only hope to reproduce the very faintest impression of the pictures I there beheld. It was frequently wondered, on this side of the Rocky Mountains, why the gold dust was not sent out of the country in larger quantities, when at least forty thousand men were turning up the placers. The fact is, it was required as currency, and the amount in circulation might be counted by millions. Why, the building up of a single street in Sacramento City (J street) cost *half a million*, at least! The value of all the houses in the city, frail and perishing as many of them were, could not have been less than $2,000,000.

It must be acknowledged there is another side to the picture.

Three-fourths of the people who settle in Sacramento City are visited by agues, diarrhœas and other reducing complaints. In Summer the place is a furnace, in Winter little better than a swamp ; and the influx of emigrants and discouraged miners generally exceeds the demand for labor. A healthy, sensible, wide-awake man, however, cannot fail to prosper. In a country where Labor rules everything, no sound man has a right to complain. When carpenters make a strike because they only get *twelve dollars* a day, one may be sure there is room enough for industry and enterprise of all kinds.

The city was peopled principally by New-Yorkers, Jerseymen and people from the Western States. In activity and public spirit, it was nothing behind San Francisco ; its growth, indeed, in view of the difference of location, was more remarkable. The inhabitants had elected a Town Council, adopted a City Charter and were making exertions to have the place declared a port of entry. The political waters were being stirred a little, in anticipation of the approaching election. Mr. Gilbert, of the Alta California, and Col. Steuart, candidate for Governor, were in the city. A political meeting, which had been held a few nights before, in front of the City Hotel, passed off as uproariously and with as zealous a sentiment of patriotism as such meetings are wont to exhibit at home. Among the residents whom I met during my visit, was Gen. Green, of Texas, known as commander of the Mier Expedition.

The city already boasted a weekly paper, the *Placer Times*, which was edited and published by Mr. Giles, formerly of the Tribune Office. His printers were all old friends of mine—one of them, in fact, a former fellow-apprentice—and from the fraternal feeling that all possess who have ever belonged to the craft, the

place became at once familiar and home-like. The little paper, which had a page of about twelve by eighteen inches, had a circulation of five hundred copies, at $12 a year; the amount received weekly for jobs and advertising, varied from $1,000 to $2,000. Tickets were printed for the different political candidates, at the rate of $20 for every thousand. The compositors were paid $15 daily. Another compositor from the Tribune Office had established a restaurant, and was doing a fine business. His dining saloon was an open tent, unfloored; the tables were plank, with rough benches on each side; the waiters rude Western boys who had come over the Rocky Mountains—but the meals he furnished could not have been surpassed in any part of the world for substantial richness of quality. There was every day abundance of elk steaks, unsurpassed for sweet and delicate flavor; venison, which had been fattened on the mountain acorns; mutton, such as nothing but the wild pastures of California could produce; salmon and salmon-trout of astonishing size, from the Sacramento River, and now and then the solid flesh of the grizzly bear. The salmon-trout exceeded in fatness any fresh-water fish I ever saw; they were between two and three feet in length, with a layer of pure fat, quarter of an inch in thickness, over the ribs. When made into chowder or stewed in claret, they would have thrown into ecstacies the most inveterate Parisian gourmand. The full-moon face of the proprietor of the restaurant was accounted for, when one had tasted his fare; after living there a few days, I could feel my own dimensions sensibly enlarged.

The road to Sutter's Fort, the main streets and the levee fronting on the Embarcadero, were constantly thronged with the teams of emigrants, coming in from the mountains. Such worn, weather-beaten individuals I never before imagined. Their tents were

pitched by hundreds in the thickets around the town, where they rested a few days before starting to winter in the mines and elsewhere. At times the levee was filled throughout its whole length by their teams, three or four yoke of oxen to every wagon. The beasts had an expression of patient experience which plainly showed that no roads yet to be traveled would astonish them in the least. After tugging the wagons for six months over the salt deserts of the Great Basin, climbing passes and cañons of terrible asperity in the Sierra Nevada, and learning to digest oak bark on the arid plains around the sink of Humboldt's River, it seemed as if no extremity could henceforth intimidate them. Much toil and suffering had given to their countenances a look of almost human wisdom. If their souls should hereafter, according to the theory of some modern philosophers, reäppear in human frames, what a crowd of grave and reverend sages may not California be able to produce! The cows had been yoked in with the oxen and made to do equal duty. The women who had come by the overland route appeared to have stood the hardships of the journey remarkably well, and were not half so loud as the men in their complaints

The amount of gambling in Sacramento City was very great, and the enticement of music was employed even to a greater extent than in San Francisco. All kinds of instruments and tunes made night discordant, for which harrowing service the performers were paid an ounce each. Among the many drinking houses, there was one called "The Plains," which was much frequented by the emigrants. Some western artist, who came across the country, adorned its walls with scenic illustrations of the route, such as Independence Rock, The Sweet-Water Valley, Fort Laramie, Wind River Mountains, etc. There was one of a pass in the Sierra Nevada, on the Carson River route. A wagon and team

were represented as coming down the side of a hill, so nearly perpendicular that it seemed no earthly power could prevent them from making but a single fall from the summit to the valley. These particular oxen, however, were happily independent of gravitation, and whisked their tails in the face of the zenith, as they marched slowly down.

I was indebted for quarters in Sacramento City, to Mr. De Graw, who was installed in a frame house, copper-roofed, fronting the levee. I slept very comfortably on a pile of Chinese quilts, behind the counter, lulled by the dashing of the rain against the sides of the house. The rainy season had set in, to all appearances, though it was full a month before the usual time. The sky was bleak and gray, and the wind blew steadily from the south, an unfailing sign to the old residents. The saying of the Mexicans seemed to be verified, that, wherever *los Yankis* go, they take rain with them.

It was therefore the more necessary that I should start at once for the mountains. In a few weeks the roads would be impassable, and my only chance of seeing the northern rivers be cut off. The first requisite for the journey was a good horse, to procure which I first attended the horse-market which was daily held towards the bottom of K street. This was one of the principal sights in the place, and as picturesque a thing as could be seen anywhere. The trees were here thicker and of larger growth than in other parts of the city; the market-ground in the middle of the street was shaded by an immense evergreen oak, and surrounded by tents of blue and white canvas. One side was flanked by a livery-stable—an open frame of poles, roofed with dry tulé, in which stood a few shivering mules and raw-boned horses, while the stacks of hay and wheat straw, on the open lots in the vicinity,

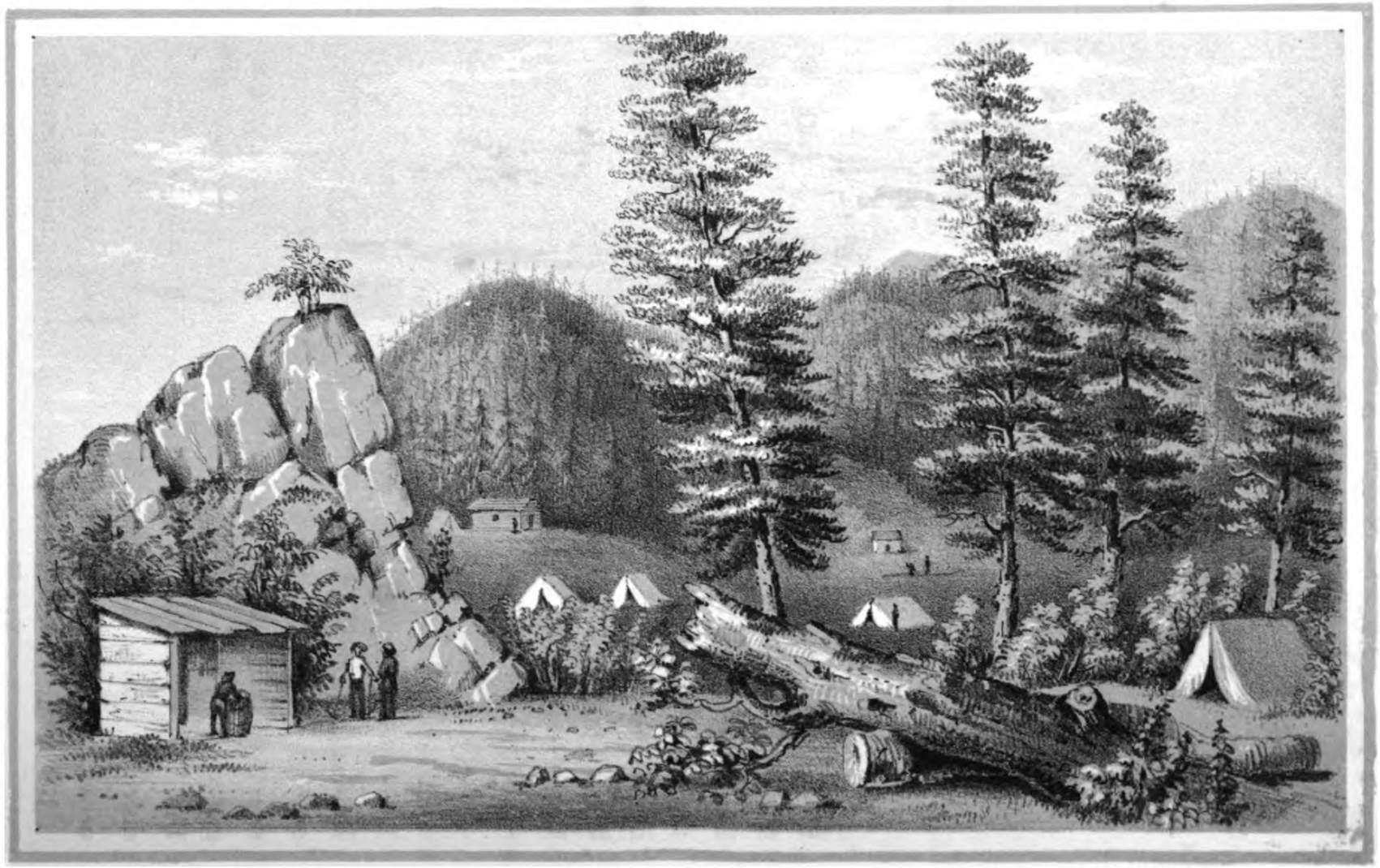
offered feed to the buyers of animals, at the rate of $3 daily for each head.

When the market was in full blast, the scene it presented was grotesque enough. There were no regulations other than the fancy of those who had animals to sell; every man was his own auctioneer, and showed off the points of his horses or mules. The ground was usually occupied by several persons at once,—a rough tawny-faced, long-bearded Missourian, with a couple of pack mules which had been starved in the Great Basin; a quondam New York dandy with a horse whose back he had ruined in his luckless "prospecting" among the mountains; a hard-fisted farmer with the wagon and ox-team which had brought his family and household gods across the continent; or, perhaps, a jocky trader, who understood all the arts of depreciation and recommendation, and invariably sold an animal for much more than he gave. The bids were slow, and the seller would sometimes hang for half an hour without an advance; in fact, where three or four were up at once, it required close attention in the buyer to know which way the competition was running.

I saw a lean sorrel mule sold for $55; several others, of that glossy black color and clean make which denote spirit and endurance, were held at $140, the owner refusing to let them go for less. The owner of a bay horse, which he rode up and down the market at a brisk pace, could get no bid above $45. As the animal was well made and in good condition, I was about to bid, when I noticed a peculiar glare of the eye which betrayed suffering of some kind. "What kind of a back has he?" I inquired. "It is a very little scratched on the top," was the answer; "but he is none the worse for that." "He'll not do for me," I thought, but I watched the other bidders to see how the buyer would be

satisfied with his purchase. The horse was finally knocked off at $50: as the saddle was not included the new owner removed it, disclosing a horrible patch of raw and shrinking flesh. An altercation instantly arose, which was not settled when I left to seek a horse elsewhere.

The owner of a stack of hay near at hand desired to sell me a mule out of a number which he had in charge. But one which he recommended as a fine saddle-mule would not go at all, though he wounded her mouth with the cruel bit of the country in the effort to force her into a trot; another, which was declared to be remarkably gentle, stumbled and fell with me, and a third, which seemed to be really a good traveler, was held at a price I did not desire to pay. At last, the proprietor of a sort of tavern adjoining the market, offered to sell me a gray mare for $100. Now, as the gray mare is said to be the better horse, and as, on trial, I found her to possess a steady and easy gait, though a little lazy, I determined to take her, since, among so many worn-out and used-up animals, it seemed a matter of mere luck whether I would have selected a good one. The mare was American, but the owner assured me she had been long enough in the country, to travel unshod and keep fat on dry grass. As saddles, blankets, and other articles were still necessary, my outfit was rather expensive. I procured a tolerable saddle and bridle for $10; a lariat and saddle-blanket for $5; a pair of sharp Mexican spurs for $8, and blankets for $12. With a hunting-knife, a pair of pistols in my pocket, a compass, thermometer, note-book and pencil, I was prepared for a tour of any length among the mountains.



BAYARD TAYLOR.

LITH. OF SARONY & MAJOR. N.Y.

THE VOLCANO DIGGINGS.

CHAPTER XXII.

TRAVELING ON THE PLAINS.

I WAITED another day for the rain to subside, but the wind still blew up the river and the sky remained hopelessly murk and lowering. I therefore buttoned up my corduroy coat, thrust my head through the centre of my sarape, and set out in the teeth of the gale. Leaving the muddy streets, swamped tents and shivering population of Sacramento City, a ride of a mile and a half brought me to Sutter's Fort, built on a slight rise in the plain. It is a large quadrangular structure, with thick adobe walls, and square bastions at each corner. Everything about it showed signs of dilapidation and decay. The corrals of earth had been trampled down ; doors and gateways were broken through the walls, and all kinds of building materials carried away. A two story wooden building, with flag-staff bearing the American colors, stood in the centre of the court-yard, and low ranges of buildings around the sides were variously occupied as hospitals, stores, drinking and gaming shops and dwellings. The hospital, under the charge of Drs. Deal and Martin, was said to be the best regulated in the district. It was at the time filled with fever patients, who received nursing and medical attendance for $100 per week.

Behind the fort, at the distance of quarter of a mile, flows the

Rio Americano, with several fine grazing ranches on its banks. The view on all sides is over a level plain, streaked with lines of timber, and bounded on the east and west, in clear weather, by the distant ranges of the Coast Mountains and the Sierra Nevada. Three or four houses have sprung up on the low ground in front of the fort during the summer. Riding up to a large unfinished frame building to make inquiries about the road, I was answered by a man whom I afterwards learned was the notorious Keysburg, the same who came out with the emigration of 1846, and lived all winter among the mountains on the dead bodies of his companions. He was of a stout, large frame, with an exceedingly coarse, sensual expression of countenance, and even had I not heard his revolting history, I should have marked his as a wholly animal face. It remains in my memory now like that of an ogre, and I only remember it with a shudder. One of those who went out to the Camp of Death, after the snows were melted, described to me the horrid circumstances under which they found him—seated, like a ghoul, in the midst of dead bodies, with his face and hands smeared with blood, and a kettle of human flesh boiling over the fire. He had become a creature too foul and devilish for this earth, and the forbearance with which the men whose children he had devoured while they were toiling back to his succor through almost fathomless snows, refrained from putting him to death, is to be wondered at. He had not the plea of necessity in the use of this revolting food; for the body of an ox, which had been thawed out of the snow, was found untouched near his cabin. He spoke with a sort of fiendish satisfaction, of the meals he had made, and the men were obliged to drag him away from them by main force, not without the terrible conviction that some of the victims had been put to a violent death,

to glut his appetite. There is no creation in the whole range of fiction, so dark and awful in its character, as this man.

After passing the first belt of timber, I was alone on the plains, which looked strikingly bleak and desolate under the dark and rainy sky. The road was filled with pools of mud and water, by which, when night came down on the changeless waste, I was enabled to find my way. The rain set in again, adding greatly to the discomfort of such travel. My gray mare, too, lagged more than I liked, and I began to calculate my chances of remaining all night on the plain. About two hours after dark, however, a faint light glimmered in the distance, and I finally reached the place of my destination—Murphy's Ranche on the Cosumne River. An Indian boy tied my horse to a haystack, and Mrs. Murphy set about baking some biscuit in a pan, and roasting a piece of beef for me on a wooden spit. A company of gold-diggers, on their way from the Yuba to winter on the Mariposa, had possession of one end of the house, where they lay rolled in their blankets, their forms barely discernible through the smoke sent out by the rain-soaked wood of which their fire was made. I talked an hour with them about the prospects of mining on the different rivers, and then lay down to sleep on the clay floor.

The next morning the sky was as thick, heavy and gray as a Mackinaw blanket, with a precocious drizzle, betokening a storm. Nevertheless, I saddled and started for Hick's Ranche, a day's journey distant, in the edge of the mountains. I forded the Cosumne River, (almost universally pronounced *Mokosumé*,) at this place a clear, swift stream, bordered by dense thickets. It was already up to my saddle-skirts, and rapidly rising. Two or three tulé huts stood on the opposite bank, and a number of dirty, stupid Indian faces stared at me through the apertures. Taking

a dim wagon-trail, according to directions, I struck out once more on the open plains. The travel was very toilsome, my horse's feet sinking deeply into the wet, soft soil. The further I went the worse it became. After making five miles, I reached some scattering oak timber, where I was forced to take shelter from the rain, which now beat down drenchingly. Cold and wet, I waited two hours in that dismal solitude for the flood to cease, and taking advantage of the first lull, turned about and rode back to the ranche. All that night it rained hard, and the second morning opened with a prospect more dreary than ever.

My companions in that adobe limbo were the miners, who had been spending the Summer on the upper bars of the Yuba. According to their accounts, the average yield of the Yuba diggings was near two ounces for each man. Those who had taken out claims of eight paces square in the beginning of the season, frequently made $10,000 and upwards. Owing to the severity of the Winter in that region, the greater portion o the miners were moving southward until the Spring. Several companies came up in the course of the day, but as the ranche was full, they were constrained to pitch their tents along the banks of the swollen Cosumne. Mr. Murphy, I found, was the son of the old gentleman whose hospitalities I had shared in the valley of San José. He had been living three years on the river, and his three sturdy young sons could ride and throw the lariat equal to any Californian. There were two or three Indian boys belonging to the house, one of whom, a solid, shock-headed urchin, as grave as if he was born to be a "medicine-man," did all the household duties with great precision and steadiness. He was called "Billy," and though he understood English as well as his own language, I never heard him speak. My only relief, during the wearisome detention, was

in watching his deliberate motions, and wondering what thoughts, or whether any thoughts stirred under his immoveable face.

The afternoon of the second day the clouds lifted, and we saw the entire line of the Sierra Nevada, white and cold against the background of the receding storm. As the sun broke forth, near its setting, peak after peak became visible, far away to north and south, till the ridge of eternal snow was unbroken for at least a hundred and fifty miles. The peaks around the head-waters of the American Fork, highest of all, were directly in front. The pure white of their sides became gradually imbued with a rosy flame, and their cones and pinnacles burned like points of fire. In the last glow of the sun, long after it had set to us, the splendor of the whole range, deepening from gold to rose, from rose to crimson, and fading at last into an ashy violet, surpassed even the famous "Alp-glow," as I have seen it from the plains of Piedmont.

An old hunter living on the ranche came galloping up, with a fat, black-tailed doe at the end of his lariat. He had first broken the hind leg of the poor beast with a ball, and then caught her running. The pleading expression of her large black eyes was almost human, but her captor coolly drew his knife across her throat, and left her to bleed to death. She lay on the ground, uttering a piteous bleat as her panting became thick and difficult, but not until the last agony was wholly over, did the dull film steal across the beauty of her lustrous eyes.

On the third morning I succeeded in leaving the ranche, where I had been very hospitably entertained at four dollars a day for myself and horse. The Cosumne was very much swollen by the rains, but my gray mare swam bravely, and took me across with but a slight wetting. I passed my previous halting-place, and was

advancing with difficulty through the mud of the plains, when, on climbing a small "rise," I suddenly found myself confronted by four grizzly bears—two of them half-grown cubs—who had possession of a grassy bottom on the other side. They were not more than two hundred yards distant. I halted and looked at them, and they at me, and I must say they seemed the most unconcerned of the two parties. My pistols would kill nothing bigger than a coyote, and they could easily have outrun my horse; so I went my way, keeping an eye on the most convenient tree. In case of an attack, the choice of a place of refuge would have been a delicate matter, since the bears can climb up a large tree and gnaw down a small one. It required some skill, therefore, in selecting a trunk of proper size. At Murphy's, the night previous, they told me there had been plenty of "bear-sign" along the river, and in the "pockets" of solid ground among the tulé. As the rainy season sets in they always come down from the mountains.

After traveling eight or ten miles the wagon trails began to scatter, and with my imperfect knowledge of prairie hieroglyphics, I was soon at fault. The sky was by this time clear and bright; and rather than puzzle myself with wheel-tracks leading everywhere, and cattle-tracks leading nowhere, I guessed at the location of the ranche to which I was bound and took a bee-line towards it.

The knowledge of tracks and marks is a very important part of the education of a woodsman. It is only obtained by unlearning, or forgetting for the time, all one's civilized acquirements and recalling the original instincts of the animal. An observing man, fresh from the city, might with some study determine the character of a track, but it is the habit of observing them rather than the discriminating faculty, which enables the genuine hunter to peruse the earth like a volume, and confidently pronounce on the number

and character of all the animals and men that have lately passed over its surface. Where an inexperienced eye could discern no mark, he will note a hundred trails, and follow any particular one through the maze, with a faculty of sight as unerring as the power of scent in a dog. I was necessitated, during my journey in the interior of California, to pay some attention to this craft, but I never got beyond the rudiments.

Another necessary faculty, as I had constant occasion to notice, is that of observing and remembering the form, color and character of animals. This may seem a simple thing; but let any one, at the close of a ride in the country, endeavor to describe all the horses, mules and oxen he has seen, and he will find himself at fault. A Californian will remember and give a particular description of a hundred animals, which he has passed in a day's journey, and be able to recognize and identify any one of them. Horses and mules are to him what men, newspapers, books and machinery are to us; they are the only science he need know or learn. The habit of noticing them is easily acquired, and is extremely useful in a country where there are neither pounds nor fences.

The heavy canopy of clouds was lifted from the plain almost as suddenly as the cover from a roast turkey at a hotel dinner, when the head waiter has given the wink. The snows of the Nevada shone white along the clear horizon; I could see for many a league on every side, but I was alone on the broad, warm landscape. Over wastes of loose, gravelly soil, into which my horse sank above the fetlocks—across barren ridges, alternating with marshy hollows and pools of water, I toiled for hours, and near sunset reached the first low, timbered hills on the margin of the plain. I dismounted and led my weary horse for a mile or two, but as it grew dark, was obliged to halt in a little glen—a most bear-ish looking place,

filled with thick chapparal. A fallen tree supplied me with fuel to hand, and I soon had a glowing fire, beside which I spread my blankets and lay down. Getting up at midnight to throw on more logs, I found my horse gone, and searched the chapparal for an hour, wondering how I should fare, trudging along on foot, with the saddle on my shoulders. At last I found her in a distant part of the wood, with the lariat wound around a tree. After this I slept no more, but lay gazing on the flickering camp-fire, and her gray figure as she moved about in the dusk. Towards dawn the tinkle of a distant mule-bell and afterwards the crowing of a cock gave me welcome signs of near habitation ; and, saddling with the first streak of light, I pushed on, still in the same direction, through a thick patch of thorny chapparal, and finally reached the brow of a wooded ridge just as the sun was rising.

Oh, the cool, fresh beauty of that morning! The sky was deliciously pure and soft, and the tips of the pines on the hills were kindled with a rosy flame from the new-risen sun. Below me lay a beautiful valley, across which ran a line of timber, betraying, by its luxuriance, the water-course it shaded. The reaches of meadow between were green and sparkling with dew ; here and there, among the luxuriant foliage, peeped the white top of a tent, or rose the pale-blue threads of smoke from freshly-kindled camp-fires. Cattle were grazing in places, and the tinkle of the bell I had heard sounded a blithe welcome from one of the groups. Beyond the tents, in the skirts of a splendid clump of trees stood the very ranche to which I was bound.

I rode up and asked for breakfast. My twenty-four hours' fast was broken by a huge slice of roast venison, and coffee sweetened with black Mexican sugar, which smacks not only of the juice of the cane, but of the leaves, joints, roots, and even the unctuous

soil in which it grows. For this I paid a dollar and a half, but no money could procure any feed for my famishing horse. Leaving the ranche, which is owned by a settler named Hicks, my road led along the left bank of Sutter's Creek for two miles, after which it struck into the mountains. Here and there, in the gulches, I noticed signs of the gold-hunters, but their prospecting did not appear to have been successful. The timber was principally pine and oak, and of the smaller growths, the red-barked madrono and a species of *esculus*, with a fruit much larger than our Western buckeye. The hills are steep, broken and with little apparent system. A close observation, however, shows them to have a gradual increase of elevation, to a certain point, beyond which they fall again. As in the sea the motion of the long swells is seen through all the small waves of the surface, so this broken region shows a succession of parallel ridges, regularly increasing in height till they reach the Sierra Nevada—the "tenth wave," with the white foam on its crest.

About noon, I came down again upon Sutter's Creek in a little valley, settled by miners. A number of tents were pitched along the stream, and some log houses for the winter were in process of erection. The diggings in the valley were quite profitable during the dry season, especially in a cañon above. At the time I passed, the miners were making from half an ounce to an ounce per day. I procured a very good dinner at Humphrey's tent, and attempted to feed my famishing gray with Indian meal at half a dollar the pound; but, starving as she was, she refused to eat it. Her pace had by this time dwindled to a very slow walk, and I could not find it in my heart to use the spur. Leaving the place immediately after dinner, I crossed a broad mountain, and descended to Jackson's Creek, where a still greater number of miners were

congregated. Not the Creek only, but all the ravines in the mountains around, furnished ground for their winter labors. A little knoll in the valley, above the reach of floods, was entirely covered with their white tents. The hotel tent was kept by an Oregonian named Cosgrove, and there was in addition a French restaurant.

From Jackson's Creek I took a footpath to the Mokelumne. After scaling the divide, I went down into a deep, wild ravine, where the path, notched along its almost perpendicular sides, threatened to give way beneath my horse's feet. Further down, the bottom was completely turned over by miners, a number of whom were building their log cabins. The rains had brought at last a constant supply of water, and pans and cradles were in full operation among the gravel; the miners were nearly all Frenchmen, and appeared to be doing well. The ravine finally *debouched* upon the river at the Middle Bar. I found the current deep and swollen by the rains, which had broken away all the dams made for turning it. The old brush town was nearly deserted, and very few persons were at work on the river banks, the high water having driven all into the gulches, which continued to yield as much as ever.

I forded the river with some difficulty, owing to the deep holes quarried in its channel, which sometimes plunged my horse down to the neck. On turning the point of a mountain a mile below, I came again in sight of the Lower Bar, and recognized the features of a scene which had become so familiar during my visit in August. The town was greatly changed. As I rode up the hill, I found the summer huts of the Sonorians deserted and the inhabitants gone; Baptiste's airy hotel, with its monte and dining tables, which had done us service as beds, was not to be found.

I feared that all of my friends were gone, and I had made the journey in vain. The place was fast beginning to wear a look of desolation, when as I passed one of the tents, I was hailed by a rough-looking fellow dressed in a red flannel shirt and striped jacket. Who should it be but Dr. Gillette, the sharer of my grotesque ride to Stockton in the summer. After the first salutations were over, he conducted me to Mr. James' tent, where I found my old comrade, Col. Lyons, about sitting down to a smoking dinner of beef, venison and tortillas. Dr. Gwin, one of the candidates for U. S. Senator, had just arrived, and was likewise the guest of Mr. James. I joined him in doing execution at the table, with the more satisfaction, because my poor mare had about a quart of corn—the last to be had in the place—for her supper.

After dinner, Mr. Morse, of New Orleans, candidate for Congress, and Mr. Brooks, of New York, for the Assembly, made their appearance. We had a rare knot of politicians. Col. Lyons was a prominent candidate for the State Senate, and we only lacked the genial presence of Col. Steuart, and the jolly one of Capt. McDougal (who were not far off, somewhere in the diggings,) to have had all the offices represented, from the Governor downwards. After dinner, we let down the curtains of the little tent, stretched ourselves out on the blankets, lighted our cigars and went plump into a discussion of California politics. Each of the candidates had his bundle of tickets, his copies of the Constitution and his particular plans of action. As it happened there were no two candidates for the same office present, the discussion was carried on in perfect harmony and with a feeling of good-fellowship withal. Whatever the politics of the different aspirants, they were, socially, most companionable men. We will not disclose the mysteries of the conclave, but simply remark that every

one slept as soundly on his hard bed as though he were dreaming of a triumphant election.

The flood in the river, I found, had proved most disastrous to the operations on the bar. Mr. James' company, which, after immense labor and expense, had turned the channel for three hundred yards, and was just beginning to realize a rich profit from the river-bed, was suddenly stopped. The last day's washing amounted to $1,700, and the richest portion of the bed was yet to be washed. The entire expense of the undertaking, which required the labor of forty men for nearly two months, was more than twenty thousand dollars, not more than half of which had been realized. All further work was suspended until the next summer, when the returns would probably make full amends for the delay and disappointment. The rich gulch was filled with miners, most of whom were doing an excellent business. The strata of white quartz crossing the mountains about half way up the gulch, had been tried, and found to contain rich veins of gold. A company of about twelve had commenced sinking a shaft to strike it at right angles. In fact, the metal had increased, rather than diminished in quantity, since my former visit.

CHAPTER XXIII.

JOURNEY TO THE VOLCANO.

My first care in the morning was to procure forage for my mare. The effects of famine were beginning to show themselves in her appearance. She stood dejectedly beside the pine stump to which she was tethered, now and then gnawing a piece of the bark to satisfy the cravings of her stomach. Her flanks were thin and her sides hollow, and she looked so wistfully at me with her dull, sunken eyes, that I set out at once in the endeavor to procure something better than pine-bark for her breakfast. The only thing I could find in all the village was bread, five small rolls of which I bought at half a dollar apiece, and had the satisfaction of seeing her greedily devour them. This feed, however, was far too expensive, and rather than see her starve outright, I gave her to Gen. Morse, for the ride back to Sacramento City, his own horse having broken loose during the night. The grass, which had already begun to sprout, was not more than quarter of an inch in height, and afforded no sustenance to cattle. I therefore reluctantly decided to shorten my journey, and perform the remainder of it on foot.

The same night of my arrival on the river, I heard many stories about "The Volcano"—a place some twenty miles further into

the heart of the mountains, where, it was said, a very rich deposit of gold had been found, near the mouth of an extinct crater. I made due allowance for the size which gold lumps attain, the farther they roll, but a curiosity to see some of the volcanic appearances which are said to become frequent as you approach the snowy ridge, induced me to start in the morning after having seen my horse's head turned again towards the region of hay.

Dr. Gillette kindly offered to accompany me on the trip—an offer the more welcome, on account of the additional security it gave me against hostile Indians. The entire mountain district, above the Upper Bar (about four miles from the Lower Bar)—and particularly at the Forks of the Mokelumne—was overrun with Indians, some of whom were of the tribe of the old chief, Polo, and others of a tribe lately made hostile to the Americans by an affray at the Volcano. Polo, it was rumored had been shot; but I gave no credit to the report. He was much too cautious and cunning, to be entrapped. To the miners about that region, he was as much of a will-o'-the-wisp as Abdel-Kader was to the French. More than once he visited the diggings in disguise, and no small company, prospecting above the Forks, was safe from having a brush with his braves.

We took care to provide ourselves with a good double-barreled rifle before starting. Our route lay up the river to the Middle Bar. Climbing the mountain behind that place, we took a line for the Butte, a lofty, isolated peak, which serves as a landmark for the country between the Cosumne and the Mokelumne. Descending through wild, wooded ravines, we struck an Indian trail, with fresh tracks upon it. The thick chapparal, here and there, made us think of ambuscades, and we traveled more cautiously and silently than was actually needful. In the deep nooks and re-

cesses of the mountains we noticed ruined huts and the ashes of deserted camp-fires. The gulches in all directions had been dug up by gold-hunters during the summer. One, in particular, at the foot of the Butte, showed—as we ascended it, for more than a mile—scarcely a foot of soil untouched. The amount of gold obtained from it must have been very great. The traces of these operations, deep in the wilderness, accounted for the fact of miners becoming suddenly rich, after disappearing from the Bars for a few days.

We climbed to the level of the mountain region, out of which the Butte towered a thousand feet above us. Our trail led eastward from its foot, towards the Sierra Nevada, whose shining summits seemed close at hand. The hills were dotted with forests of pine and oak, many specimens of the former tree rising to the height of two hundred and fifty feet. The cones, of a dark red color, were fully eighteen inches in length. The madrono, which rises to a stately tree in the mountains near Monterey, was here a rough shrub, looking, with its blood-red arms and lifeless foliage, as if it had been planted over a murderer's grave. The ground, in the sheltered hollows, was covered with large acorns, very little inferior to chesnuts in taste; the deer and bear become very fat at this season, from feeding upon them. They form the principal subsistence of the Indian tribes during the winter. In one of the ravines we found an "Indian wind-mill," as the miners call it—a flat rock, with half a dozen circular holes on its surface, beside each of which lay a round stone, used in pulverizing the acorns. We passed one or two inhabited camps a short distance from the trail, but were apparently unobserved. Further on, in the forest, we came suddenly upon two young Indians, who were going on a trail leading towards the Forks. They started at first to run, but

stopped when we hailed them; they understood neither English nor Spanish, but some tobacco which the doctor gave them was very joyfully received.

The stillness and beauty of the shaded glens through which we traveled were very impressive. Threaded by clear streams which turned the unsightly holes left by the miners into pools of crystal, mirroring the boughs far above, their fresh, cool aspect was very different from the glowing furnaces they form in summer. The foliage was still very little changed; only the leaves of the buck-eye had fallen, and its polished nuts filled the paths. The ash was turned to a blazing gold, and made a perpetual sunset in the woods. But the oak here wore an evergreen livery; the grass was already shooting up over all the soil, and the Winter at hand was so decked in the mixed trappings of Summer Autumn and Spring, that we hardly recognized him.

Late in the afternoon we accidentally took a side trail, which led up a narrow ravine and finally brought us to an open space among the hills, where a company of prospecters were engaged in pitching their tent for the winter. They were seven in number, mostly sailors, and under the command of a Virginian named Woodhouse. Their pack-mules had just arrived with supplies from their former camp, and a half-naked Indian was trying to get some flour. On learning the scarcity of the article on the river, they refused to sell him any. He importuned them some time, but in vain: "Very well," said he, "you shall be driven off to-morrow," and went away. We were very hungry, and employed the cook of the company to get us something to eat. He built a fire, fried some salt pork, and made us a dish of pancakes. I could not help admiring the dexterity with which he tossed the cake in the air and caught it on the other side as it came down

into the pan. We ate with an animal voracity, for the usual California appetite—equal to that of three men at home—was sharpened by our long walk.

It was now beginning to grow dark, and a rain coming on. We were seven miles from the Volcano, and would have preferred remaining for the night, had the miners given any encouragement to our hints on the subject. Instead of this, it seemed to us that they were suspicious of our being spies upon their prospecting, so we left them and again plunged into the forest. Regaining the proper trail we went at a rapid rate through gloomy ravines, which were canopied by thick mist. It grew darker, and the rain began to fall. We pushed on in silence, hoping to reach some place of shelter, but the trail became more and more indistinct, till at last we kept it with our feet rather than our eyes. I think we must have walked in it a mile after we ceased entirely to see it. Once or twice we heard yells in the distance, which we took to be those of a party of the hostile Indians. The air grew pitchy dark, and the rain fell so fast, that we lost the trail and determined to stop for the night. We had just crossed a sort of divide, and our position, as near as we could tell in the gloom, was at the entrance of a deep ravine, entirely covered with forests, and therefore a tolerably secure covert. I had two or three matches in my pocket, from which we struck a flame, at the foot of a pine tree. We fed it daintily at first with the dry needles and filaments of bark, till it grew strong enough and hungry enough to dry its own fuel. Swinging with our whole weight to the ends of the boughs, we snapped off sufficient to last for the night, and then lay down on the dark side of the tree, with our arms between us to keep them dry. The cold, incessant rain, pouring down through the boughs, soon drenched us quite, and we crawled around to the other side.

The Indians, like Death, love a shining mark; and the thought of an arrow sent out of the gloom around us, made our backs feel uncomfortable as we stood before the fire. Lying in the rain, however, without blankets, was equally unpleasant; so we took alternate half-hours of soaking and drying.

Salt pork and exercise combined, gave us an intolerable thirst, to allay which we made torches of cedar bark and went down to the bottom of the ravine for water. There was none to be found; and we were about giving up the search when we came to a young pine, whose myriad needles were bent down with their burden of rain-drops. No nectar was ever half so delicious. We caught the twigs in our mouths and drained them dry, then cut down the tree and carried it back in triumph to our fire, where we planted it and let the rain fill up its aromatic beakers. The night seemed interminable. The sound of the rain was like stealthy footsteps on the leaves; the howling of wolves and the roar of water-falls at a distance, startled us. Occasionally, the tread of some animal among the trees—possibly a deer, attracted by the flame—put all our senses on the alert. Just before daybreak the storm ceased, and in ten minutes afterwards the sky was without a cloud.

The morning broke brightly and cheeringly. We resumed the path, which led into a grassy meadow about a mile long, at the further end of which we struck a wagon trail. A saucy wolf came down to the edge of the woods, and barked at us most impertinently, but we did not think him worth the powder. The air was fragrant with the smell of cedar—a species of the *thuya*—which here grows to the height of two hundred feet. Its boles are perfectly straight and symmetrical, and may be split with the axe into boards and shingles. Many of the trees had been felled for this purpose, and lay by the roadside. From the top of a little

ridge we looked down into the valley of the Volcano, and could see the smoke rising from the tents. The encampment is in a deep basin, surrounded by volcanic hills, several of which contain extinct craters. A small stream flows through the midst. The tents and cabins of the miners are on the lower slopes of the hills, and the diggings are partly in the basin and partly in gulches which branch off from its northern side. The location is very beautiful, and more healthy than the large rivers.

Descending into the valley, we stopped at a tent for breakfast, which was got ready by the only female in the settlement—a woman from Pennsylvania, whose husband died on the journey out. A number of the miners were from the same place. Maj. Bartlett of Louisiana, with his company, were also at work there; and in another valley, beyond the wooded ridge to the north-east, Capt. Jones of Illinois was located, with a company of about sixty men. The whole number of persons at this digging was nearly one hundred and fifty, and they had elected an Alcalde and adopted laws for their government. The supplies on hand were very scanty, but they had more on the way, which the first favorable weather would enable them to receive.

In addition to my motives of curiosity, in visiting the Volcano, I was empowered with a political mission to the diggers. The candidates on the Mokelumne gave me letters to some of them, and packages of tickets which I was enjoined to commend to their use. On delivering the letters, I found I was considered as having authority to order an election—a power which was vested only in the Prefect of the District or his special agents. At the suggestion of some of the miners I went with them to the Alcalde, in order to have a consultation. I disclaimed all authority in the matter, but explained to them the mode in which the elections

were to be held on the river, and recommended them to adopt a similar action. Owing to the short time which elapsed between the Governor's proclamation and the day of election, it was impossible for the Prefect of each district to notify all the organized communities. The only plan, therefore, was to meet on the appointed day, publicly elect Judges and Inspectors, and hold the election in all other respects according to the requirements of the Constitution. This was agreed to by the law-givers of the Volcano as the most advisable mode of action. But behold how easy it is, in a primitive community like this, to obtain the popular favor! There was, on one of the tickets in the San Joaquin district, a candidate for the State Senate, whose surname was the same as mine, and the Volcanics, as I afterwards learned, took me to be the same individual. "We will vote for him," said they, "because he came here to see us, and because he appears to understand the law." Accordingly, the whole vote of the place was given to my namesake, but intended for me. Had I known this fact sooner, I might have been tempted to run for Alcalde, at least.

Major Bartlett went with us to examine the diggings. The alluvial soil of the basin contains little gold, but has been dug up very extensively by the miners, in search of the clay stratum; beside which the gold is found in coarse grains, mixed with sand and gravel. There is, however, no regularity in the stratum; everything bears marks of violent change and disruption. In holes dug side by side, I noticed that the clay would be reached eighteen inches below the surface in one, and perhaps eight feet in the other. This makes the digging something of a lottery, those who find a deposit always finding a rich one, and those who find none making nothing at all. In the gulches the yield is more certain. A Mexican had lately taken twenty-eight pounds out of

a single "pocket;" another miner, having struck a rich spot, dug $8,000 in a few days. Many made three, four and five ounces daily for several days. In the upper valley the average was about an ounce a day. From my hasty examination of the place, I should not think the gold was thrown up by the craters in a melted state, as the miners imagine. The fact of its being found with the layer of clay would refute this idea. From the strata, water-courses, and other indications, it is nevertheless evident that large slides from the hills, occasioned by earthquakes or eruptions, have taken place.

I climbed the hills and visited two of the craters, neither of which appeared to be the main opening of the volcano. On the contrary, I should rather judge them to be vents or escape-holes for the confined flame, formed in the sides of the mountain. The rocks, by upheaval, are thrown into irregular cones, and show everywhere the marks of intense heat. Large seams, blackened by the subterranean fire, run through them, and in the highest parts are round, smooth holes, a foot in diameter, to some of which no bottom can be found. These are evidently the last flues through which the air and flame made their way, as the surface hardened over the cooling volcano. The Indian traditions go back to the time when these craters were active, but their chronology is totally indefinite, and I am not geologist enough to venture an opinion. Pines at least a century old, are now growing on the rim of the craters. Further up the mountain, the miners informed me, there are large beds of lava, surrounding craters of still larger dimensions.

We took dinner at Major Bartlett's tent, and started on our return accompanied by Dr. Carpentier, of Saratoga, N. Y. Before leaving, I took pains to learn the particulars of the recent

fight with the Indians at the Volcano. The latter, it seems, first discovered the placer, and were digging when the whites arrived. They made room for them at once, and proposed that they should work peaceably together. Things went on amicably for several days, when one of the miners missed his pick. He accused the Indians of stealing it; the chief declared that if it was in their camp it should be returned, and started to make inquiries. Instead of walking he ran; upon which one of the whites raised his rifle and shot him. The Indians then armed at once. The miners called up the remaining white men from the placer, and told them that they had been attacked and one of their number killed. The consequence of this false information was a general assault upon the Indians who were at once driven off, and had not returned up to the time of my visit. The same day a man named Aldrich, from Boston, was found in the meadow on the trail by which we came, pierced with three arrows. The neighborhood of the Volcano was considered dangerous ground, and no one thought of venturing into the mountains, unless well armed. It is due to the miners to say, that on learning the true state of the quarrel, they banished the scoundrels whose heartless cruelty had placed the whole community in peril.

We retraced our steps, saw the snows of the Nevada turned by the sunset to a brighter gold than any hidden in its veins, and reached the camp of the prospecters in a starry and beautiful twilight. As we approached through the trees, in the gathering gloom, they shouted to us to keep off, taking us for Indians, but allowed us to approach, when we answered in English. We were kindly received, and again procured an excellent supper. The men were better than we imagined. They had been anxious about our safety the previous night, and fired their rifles as signals to

us. After we had grown tired of talking around the blazing camp-fire about grizzly bears, Mexicans, Gila deserts and gulches whose pockets were filled with gold, they gave us a corner in their tent and shared their blankets with us. I took their kindness as a rebuke to my former suspicions of their selfishness, and slept all the better for the happiness of being undeceived.

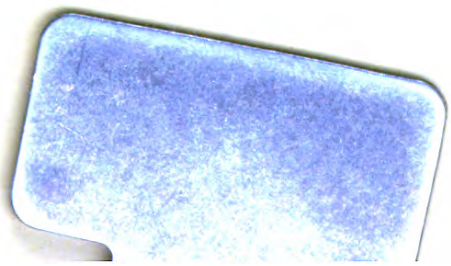
It was a model morning that dawned upon us. The splash of a fountain in the sun, the gloss of a white dove's wing, the winking of the beaded bubbles on Keats' cool draught of vintage, could not have added a sparkle to its brightness. The sky was as blue and keen as a Damascus blade, and the air, filled with a resinous odor of pine, cedar and wild bay, was like the intoxication of new life to the frame. We were up and off with the dawn, and walked several miles before breakfast. On reaching the foot of the Butte, Dr. G. and myself determined to make the ascent. Its ramparts of red volcanic rock, bristling with chapparal, towered a thousand feet above us, seemingly near at hand in the clear air. We believed we should be the first to scale its summit. The miners do not waste time in climbing peaks, and the Indians keep aloof, with superstitious reverence, from the dwelling-places of spirits.

After a toilsome ascent, at an angle of 45°, we reached the summit. Here, where we supposed no human foot had ever been, we found on the crowning stone—the very apex of the pyramid—the letters "D. B." rudely cut with a knife. Shade of Daniel Boone! who else but thou could have been pioneer in this far corner of the Farthest West! As the buried soldier is awakened by the squadron that gallops to battle over his grave, has the tramp of innumerable trains through the long wilderness called thee forth to march in advance, and leave thy pioneer mark on every unexplored region between sea and sea?

Nevertheless we gave the name of Polo's Peak to the Butte—in honor of the dauntless old chief who presided over the country round about. Before I left the region, the name was generally adopted by the miners, and I hope future travelers will remember it. The view from the top is remarkably fine. Situated about half-way between the plain and the dividing ridge of the Sierra Nevada, the Peak overlooks the whole mountain country. The general appearance is broken and irregular, except to the east, where the ranges are higher. The mountains within ten miles of us had snow on their crests, and the Nevada—immaculate and lustrous in its hue—was not more than thirty miles distant. The courses of the Calaveras, Mokelumne and Cosumne, with the smaller creeks between them, could be distinctly traced. In the nearer region at our feet, we could see the miners at work felling logs and building their winter cabins, and hear the far whoop of Indians, from their hidden rancherias. On the west, the horizon was bounded by the Coast Range, Monte Diablo in the centre and Suisun Bay making a gap in the chain. Between that blue wall and the rough region at our feet lay the great plains of Sacramento and San Joaquin, fifty miles in breadth, and visible for at least one hundred and fifty miles of extent. The sky was perfectly clear, and this plain alone, of all the landscape, was covered with a thick white fog, the upper surface of which, as we looked down upon it, was slowly tossed to and fro, moving and shifting like the waves of an agitated sea.

We enjoyed this remarkable prospect for an hour, and then made our way down the opposite side of the Peak, following bear and deer trails through patches of thorny chapparal and long slopes of sliding stones. We tarried for Dr. Carpentier in one of the glens, eating the acorns which lay scattered under the trees.

As he did not appear, however, we climbed the river hills and came down on the Upper Bar, reaching our starting-point in time for a dinner to which we did full justice.

END OF VOL. I.

BOUND BY
REMNANT & EDMONDS