

FROST JOHN

HISTORY OF
THE STATE OF
CALIFORNIA

John Frost
History of the State of California

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*History of the State of California / From the Period of the Conquest by Spain
to Her Occupation by the United States of America:*

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PREFACE

The occupation of California by the people of the United States, and the discovery of its rich gold mines, form a new era in the history of the world. According to present appearances, these events forebode a complete revolution in monetary and commercial affairs. The receipts of gold from California have already produced a sensible effect on the financial affairs of our country; and far-seeing people predict an entirely new state of things with respect to the relative value of money and property.

Still more important effects are anticipated from the establishment of a new, rich, and enterprising State of the American Union on the shores of the Pacific. Railroads across

the continent will soon transport the rich products of Eastern Asia, by a quick transit, to the Atlantic cities and to Europe; and a passage to China or India, which was formerly a serious undertaking, will become a pleasant excursion.

To gratify the public curiosity with respect to the history and present state of this new member of the Union, is the purpose of this volume. In preparing it, the author has passed rapidly over the early history, and dwelt chiefly on recent events, and the actual state of the country, as he considered that, by this course, utility would be more effectually consulted.

In the Appendix he has introduced the constitution of California, and some official documents, whose importance demanded their preservation in a permanent form.

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF CALIFORNIA

The territory called California is that part of North America situated on the Pacific Ocean, and extending from the 42° of north latitude southwardly to $22^{\circ} 48'$, and from 107° longitude, west from Greenwich, to 124° . It is bounded on the north by Oregon territory, east by territories belonging to the United States and the Gulf of California, and on the south and west by Mexico and the Pacific Ocean. California is naturally divided into two portions; the peninsula, called Lower California, and the territory extending northward from the peninsula, on the Pacific Ocean, called Upper California. The line of division between Upper and Lower California runs nearly along the 32d parallel of latitude, westward from the head of the Gulf of California.

The peninsula of California is about one hundred and thirty miles in breadth, where it joins the continent. It extends south-eastwardly, generally diminishing in breadth, till it terminates in two points. The point farthest south-west is called Cape San Lucas. The other, sixty miles east by north of San Lucas, is called Cape Palmo. The peninsula is about seven hundred miles long.

Upper California extends, upon the Pacific, from the 32d

parallel of latitude, northward to the 42d parallel, a distance of about seven hundred miles. It is separated from Oregon by a range of highlands, called the Snowy Mountains, or, by the Spaniards, the Sierra Nevada. The eastern limit of Upper California is rather uncertain. By some it is considered as including the region watered by the Colorado River, while others limit it by the great mountain range that extends along the western side of the continent.

The Californian peninsula seems to be a prolongation of the great western chain of mountains. It consists entirely of high, stony ridges, separated by sandy valleys, and contains very few tracts of level ground. In a general view, it might be termed an irreclaimable desert. The scarcity of rain and the small number of springs of water, with the intense heat of the sun's rays, uninterrupted in their passage, render the surface of the country almost destitute of vegetation. Yet in the small oases formed by the passage of a rivulet through a sandy defile, where irrigation is possible, the ground may be made to produce all the fruits of tropical climes, of the finest quality, and in great quantity. The southern portion of the peninsula contains several gold mines, which have been worked, though not to any great extent. On the Pacific side, the coast offers many excellent harbors, but the lack of fresh water near them proves an obstacle in the way of their occupation. The principal harbors are the Bay of la Magdalena, separated from the ocean by the long island of Santa Margarita, the Bay of Sebastian Vizcaino, east of the Isle

of Cedaro, Port San Bartolomé, sometimes called Turtle Bay, and Port San Quintin, a good harbor, with fresh water in the vicinity, and called by the Spanish navigators the Port of the Eleven Thousand Virgins.

The great westernmost range of mountains runs northward from the peninsula, nearly parallel with the Pacific coast, to the 34th parallel of latitude, below which is Mount San Bernardin, one of the highest peaks in California, about forty miles from the ocean. Farther northward, the space between the mountains and the coast becomes wider, and, in a few places, reaches eighty miles. The intermediate region is traversed by lines of hills, or smaller mountains joined with the great range. The most considerable of the inferior ridges extends from Mount San Bernardin to the south side of the entrance of the Bay of San Francisco, where it is called the San Bruno Mountains. Between this range and the coast runs the Santa Barbara range, terminating at the Cape of Pines, on the south-west side of the Bay of Monterey. Bordering on the Bay of San Francisco, on the east side, is the Bolbona ridge. Beyond these are lines of highlands which stretch from the great chain and terminate in capes on the Pacific.

There are many streams among the valleys of Upper California, some of which, in the rainy season, swell to a considerable size. But no river, except the Sacramento, falling into the Bay of San Francisco, is known to flow through the maritime range of mountains, from the interior to the Pacific.

The valleys thus watered offer abundant pasturage for cattle.

The principal harbors of Upper California are those offered by the Bays of San Francisco, Monterey, San Pedro, Santa Barbara, and San Diego. The Bay of San Francisco is one of the finest harbors in the world. The combined fleets of all the naval powers of Europe might there find safe shelter. It is surrounded by ranges of high hills, and joins the Pacific by a passage two miles wide and three in length. The other harbors can only be frequented in the fine season, and afford a very insecure shelter for vessels. San Diego is the farthest south. The bay at that place runs ten miles eastward into the land, and is separated from the ocean by a ridge of sand. Proceeding northward, about seventy miles, the Bay of San Pedro is next met. It is open to the south-west winds, but sheltered from the north-west. About a hundred miles north-west of San Pedro, is the harbor of Santa Barbara. It is an open roadstead sheltered from the north and west winds, but exposed to the violence of the south-westerly storms, which prevail during the greater part of the year. A hundred miles farther north is the Bay of Monterey. It is extensive, and lies in an indentation of the coast, somewhat semicircular. The southernmost portion is separated from the ocean by the point of land ending at the Cape of Pines. In the cove thus formed, stands the town of Monterey, for some time the capital of California. The harbor affords but a poor shelter from storms.

The Sacramento and San Joachim are the principal rivers of California, but the Sacramento alone is navigable to any extent

worthy of mention. There are numerous small streams and lakes in the interior, the principal outlet of which is the Colorado River. The valleys through which these streams flow are fertile, and afford good pasture for cattle; but the remainder of the region between the maritime and the Colorado ranges of mountains is a barren waste of sand.

CHAPTER II

DISCOVERY OF CALIFORNIA

The first exploration of the Pacific coasts of North America was made by the Spaniards, in the sixteenth century. After Hernando Cortes had completed the conquest of Mexico, he commenced exploring the adjoining seas and countries; no doubt, with the hope of discovering lands richer than those which he had conquered, and which would afford new fields for the exercise of his daring enterprise and undaunted perseverance. He employed vessels in surveying the coasts of the Mexican Gulf, and of the Atlantic more northerly. Vessels were built upon the Pacific coast for like purposes, two of which as early as 1526, were sent to the East Indies.

The first expedition of the Spaniards, sent along the western coast of Mexico, was conducted by Pedro Nunez de Maldonado, an officer under Cortes. He sailed from the mouth of the Zacatula River, in July, 1528, and was six months engaged in surveying the shores from his starting-place to the mouth of the Santiago River, a hundred leagues farther north-west. The territory he visited was then called Xalisco, and inhabited by fierce tribes of men who had never been conquered by the

Mexicans. Flattering accounts of the fertility of the country and of the abundance of the precious metals in it were brought back by the expedition, and these served to excite the attention of the Spaniards. When the expedition returned Cortes was in Spain, whither he had gone to have his title and powers more clearly defined. He returned in 1530 with full power to make discoveries and conquests upon the western coast of Mexico. From the opposition of his enemies, he was prevented from fitting out an expedition before 1532. The most northern post upon the Pacific coast, occupied by the Spaniards, was Aguatlan, beyond which the coast was little known.

The expedition sent by Cortes to the north-western coast of Mexico was commanded by his kinsman, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza. It sailed from Tehuantepec in July, 1532, and consisted of two vessels; one commanded by Diego Hurtado de Mendoza in person, and the other by Juan de Mazuela. Mendoza proceeded slowly along the shore of the continent as far as the 27° of latitude, where, his crew being mutinous, he sent back one of his vessels with the greater part of his men, and continued the voyage with the remaining vessel. Vague reports were afterwards received that Mendoza's vessel was thrown ashore somewhere to the northward, and that all on board had perished. The vessel which was sent back, was stranded near the mouth of the River Vandas, and after the murder of the greater part of the crew, she was plundered by Nuno de Guzman, Governor of Xalisco. About the middle of the next year, Cortes received the news

of the return of the vessel which Mendoza had sent back, and he immediately despatched two ships under the command of Hernando Grijalva and Diego Becerra, in search of the other. These ships sailed on the 30th of September, 1533, but were soon separated. Grijalva discovered the islands of St. Thomas, as he called them – a group of islands about fifty leagues from the coast. He remained there till the following spring, and then returned home. Becerra proceeded north-westward; but his crew mutinied, and he was murdered by Fortuno Ximenes. The mutineers, under Ximenes, then steered directly west from the main land, and soon reached a coast not known to them before. They landed, and soon after Ximenes and nineteen men were killed by the natives. The rest of the men carried the vessel over to Xalisco, where she was seized by Nuno de Guzman.

Soon after these unlucky expeditions, Nuno de Guzman sent out several exploring parties in a northerly direction, one of which traced the western shore as far as the mouth of the Colorado, and brought back accounts of a rich and populous country and splendid cities in the interior. When Cortes became acquainted with the seizure of his vessels, a dispute arose between him and Nuno de Guzman, which almost led to a battle between their forces. But no action occurred, and Cortes, having heard of the newly discovered country, which was said to abound in the finest pearls, embarked at Chiametla, with a portion of his men, and set sail for the new land of promise. On the 3d of May, 1535, the day of the Invention of the Holy Cross,

according to the Roman Catholic Calendar, Cortes arrived in the bay where Ximenes and his fellow-mutineers had met their fate in the previous year. In honor of the day, the place was called Santa Cruz, and possession of it was taken in the name of the Spanish sovereign.

The country claimed by Cortes for Spain, was the south-east portion of the peninsula, which was afterwards called California. The bay, called by Cortes, Santa Cruz, was, perhaps, the same now known as Port La Paz, about a hundred miles from the Pacific, near the 24th parallel of latitude. Cortes landed on the shore of this bay, rocky and forbidding as it appeared, with a hundred and thirty men, and forty horses. He then sent back two of his ships to Chiametla, to bring over the rest of his troops. The vessels soon returned with a portion of the troops, and being again despatched to the Mexican coast, only one of them returned. The other was wrecked on her way. Cortes then took seventy men and embarked for Xalisco, from which he returned just in time to save his troops from death by famine. A year was spent in these operations, and the troops began to grow discontented. A few pearls had been found on the coast, but the country was found to be barren, and without attractions for Spaniards.

In the mean time, the wife of Cortes hearing reports of his ill success, sent a vessel to Santa Cruz, and entreated him to return. He then learned that he had been superseded in the government of New Spain by Don Antonio de Mendoza, who had already

entered the capital as viceroy. Cortes returned to Mexico, and soon after, recalled the vessels and troops from Santa Cruz.

The viceroy, Mendoza, had received some information concerning the country north-west of Mexico, from de Cabeza-Vaca and two other Spaniards, who had wandered nine years, through forests and deserts, from Tampa Bay, Florida, until they reached Culiacan. They had received from the natives, accounts of rich and populous countries situated to the north-west. Mendoza, wishing to ascertain the truth of the reports, sent two friars, according to the advice of Las Casas, to make an exploration. They were accompanied by a Moor who had crossed the continent with Cabeza-Vaca and his friends, and they set out from Culiacan on the 7th of March, 1539.

Soon after the departure of the friars, Cortes sent out his last expedition. It was commanded by Francisco de Ulloa, and consisted of three vessels, well equipped. Sailing from Acapulco, on the 8th of July 1539, Ulloa reached the Bay of Santa Cruz, after losing one of his vessels in a storm. From Santa Cruz he started to survey the coast towards the north-west. He completely examined both shores of the Gulf of California, and discovered the fact of the connection of the peninsula with the main land, near the 32° of latitude. This gulf Ulloa named the Sea of Cortes. On the 18th of October, he returned to Santa Cruz, and on the 29th again sailed with the object of exploring the coasts farther west. He rounded the point now called Cape San Lucas, the southern extremity of California, and sailed along the coast

towards the north. The Spaniards proceeded slowly, as they were opposed by north-western storms, and often landed and fought with the natives. In January, 1540, Ulloa reached the island under the 28th parallel of latitude, near the coast, which they named the Isle of Cedars. There he remained till April, when one of the ships, bearing the sick and accounts of the discoveries, was sent back to Mexico. The returning vessel was seized at Santiago by the officers of the viceroy. The fate of the remaining vessel is uncertain. Some of the writers of that day asserting that he continued his voyage as far north as the 30° of latitude, and returned safely to Mexico; while one asserts that nothing more was heard of him after the return of the vessel he sent back.

In the mean time, the two friars and the Moor penetrated a considerable distance into the interior of the continent, and sent home glowing accounts of rich and delightful countries which they said they had discovered. The inhabitants had, at first, been hostile, and had killed the Moor; but in the end submitted to the authority of the King of Spain. Mendoza, believing the accounts of the friars to be strictly true, prepared an expedition for the conquest of the countries they described. Disputes with the different Spanish chieftains occupied some months, at the end of which Cortes returned to Spain, in disgust. Mendoza despatched two bodies of troops, one by land, the other by sea, to reconnoitre the newly discovered land, and clear the way for conquest. The marine expedition was undertaken by two ships, under the command of Fernando de Alarcon, who sailed from

Santiago on the 9th of May, 1540, and proceeding north-west along the coast, he reached the head of the California Gulf, in August of the same year. There he discovered the river now called the Colorado. The stream was ascended to the distance of eighty leagues, by Alarcon and some of his men, in boats, but all their inquiries were unsatisfactorily answered, and it was determined to return to Mexico. The vessels returned safely before the end of the year.

The land forces sent, at the same time, to the north-west, were composed of infantry and cavalry, and commanded by Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, who had been appointed governor of New Galicia, in place of Nuno de Guzman. The party left Culiacan on the 22d of April, 1540, and took their way north, following the course described by the friars. They found the route which had been represented as easy, almost impassable. They made their way over mountains, and deserts, and rivers, and, in July, they reached the country called Cibola by the natives, but found it a half cultivated region, thinly inhabited by a people destitute of the wealth and civilization they had been represented as possessing. What had been represented as seven great cities, were seven small towns, rudely built. A few turquoises and some gold and silver supposed to be good, constituted the amount of what had been termed immense quantities of jewels, gold and silver. The Spaniards took possession of the country and wanted to remain and settle there. But Vasquez refused to acquiesce; and after naming one of the towns he visited, Granada, he started for

the north-west, in search of other countries. The region called Cibola by the inhabitants, which Vasquez visited, is the territory now called Sonora, and is situated about the head waters of the Rivers Yaqui and Gila, east of the upper portion of the Gulf of California. The movements of the Spaniards after leaving Cibola, in August, 1540, have been the subject of very vague and contradictory accounts. All that is certain is, that the greater part of the force soon returned to Mexico, and that Vasquez, with the remainder, wandered through the interior for nearly two years longer, when, being disappointed in his expectations, he returned to Mexico in 1542.

In the spring of 1542, two vessels were placed under the command of Juan Roderiguez Cabrillo, a Portuguese navigator of great reputation. The two vessels sailed from Navidad, a small port in Xalisco, in June, 1542. They rounded Cape San Lucas, and proceeded north-west, along the coast, as far as the 88th degree of latitude, when he was driven back, and took refuge in a harbor of one of the San Barbara islands. There Cabrillo died and the command devolved on Bartolome Ferrelo. Ferrelo was a zealous and determined man, and he resolved to proceed with the expedition. He sailed towards the north, and on the 26th of February, reached a promontory near the 41st parallel of latitude, which he named Stormy Cape. On the 1st of March, the ships reached the 44th parallel, but they were again driven south; and the men being almost worn out, Ferrelo resolved to go back to Mexico. He arrived at Navidad on the 14th of April,

1543. The promontory called Stormy Cape by Ferrelo, was the most northern portion of California visited by that navigator, and it is probably the same which is now called Cape Mendocino.

From all accounts that they had been able to collect, the Spaniards concluded that neither rich and populous countries existed beneath the 40th parallel of latitude, nor was there any navigable passage between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans to be found in the same region. They, therefore, ceased to explore the north-western territory for some time after the return of Ferrelo in 1543.

Having thus given a somewhat detailed account of the discovery and explorations of the territory now called California, it will be sufficient to merely mention the various expeditions that visited it prior to the first regular settlement. In the spring of 1579, California was visited by Sir Francis Drake, the English navigator, who landed on the shores of a bay supposed to be that of San Francisco. He formally took possession of the country in the name of Queen Elizabeth, and called it New Albion. He left California on the 22d of July, 1579. In the spring of 1596, Sebastian Viscaino, under orders from the viceroy of Mexico, attempted to plant colonies on the peninsula of California, but the country was soon abandoned on account of the barrenness of the soil and the ferocity of the natives. Viscaino visited the coast of Upper California in 1602, and discovered and named some of the places Cabrillo had discovered and named long before. The Port San Miguel of Cabrillo was named Port San Diego; Cape

Galera was named Cape Conception, the name now borne by it; the Port of Pines was named Port Monterey. This was the last expedition made by the Spaniards along the coast of California for more than a hundred and sixty years.

Various attempts were made to establish colonies, garrisons, and fishing or trading ports, on the eastern side of the peninsula of California, during the seventeenth century, but all failed, either from the want of funds, the sterility of the country, or the hostility of the natives. The pearl fishery in the gulf was the principal bait that attracted the Spaniards, and they succeeded in obtaining a considerable quantity, some of which were very valuable.

CHAPTER III

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE REVOLUTION IN MEXICO

The first establishment of the Spaniards in California, was made by the Jesuits, in November, 1697. The settlement was called Loreto, and founded on the eastern side of the peninsula, about two hundred miles from the Pacific. On entering California, the Jesuits encountered the same obstacles which had before prevented a settlement of the country. The land was so sterile, that it scarcely yielded sustenance to the most industrious tiller, and as the settlements were all located near the sea, fishing was the resource of the settlers to make up the deficiency of food. The natives continued hostile, and killed several of the Jesuit fathers. By perseverance and kindness, the Jesuits overcame all the obstacles with which they met, and within sixty years after their entrance into California, they had established sixteen missions, extending along the eastern side of the peninsula, from Cape San Lucas to the head of the gulf. Each of these establishments consisted of a church, a fort, garrisoned by a few soldiers, and some stores and dwelling-houses, all under the control of the resident Jesuit father. Each of the missions

formed the centre of a district containing several villages of converted Indians. None of the Jesuits visited the western coast of the peninsula except on one occasion, in 1716.

Great exertions were made by the settlers to acquire a knowledge of the geography, natural history and languages of the peninsula, and they appear to have been generally successful. The result of their researches were published in Madrid, in 1757, and the work was entitled a "History of California." They surveyed the whole coast of the Gulf of California, and, in 1709, Father Kuhn, one of the Jesuit fathers, ascertained beyond doubt the connection of the peninsula with the continent, which had been denied for a century. But all the labors of the Jesuits were brought to an end in 1767. In that year, Charles III. of Spain, issued a decree, banishing members of that order from the Spanish territories; and a strong military force, under command of Don Gasper de Portola, was despatched to California, and soon put an end to the rule of the Jesuits by tearing them from their converts.

The Spanish government did not intend to abandon California. The peninsula immediately became a province of Mexico, and was provided with a civil and military government, subordinate to the viceroy of that country. The mission fell under the rule of the Dominicans, and from their mode of treatment, most of the converts soon returned to their former state of barbarism. The Spaniards soon formed establishments on the western side of the peninsula. In the spring of 1769, a number of settlers, with some soldiers and Franciscan friars, marched through the

peninsula towards San Diego. They reached the bay of San Diego after a toilsome journey, and the settlement on the shore of the bay was begun in the middle of May, 1769. An attempt was made, soon after, to establish a colony at Port Monterey; but the party under Portola that went in search of the place, passed further on to the bay of San Francisco, and could not retrace their steps before the cold weather set in, and they then returned to San Diego. The people left at San Diego had been several times attacked by the natives, and after the return of Portola's party they almost perished for want of food. But a supply arrived on the very day upon which they had agreed to abandon the place and return to Mexico. Portola again set out for Monterey, and there effected a settlement. Parties of emigrants from Mexico came to the western shore of California during the year 1770, and establishments were made on the coast between San Diego and Monterey. The multiplication of their cattle, independent of the fruits of agricultural labor, before 1775, made the settlers of Upper California able to resist the perils to which their situation exposed them.

In order to give efficiency to the operations on the western coast of North America, the Spanish government selected the port of San Blas, in Mexico, at the entrance of the Gulf of California, for the establishment of arsenals, ship-yards and warehouses, and made it the centre of all operations undertaken in that quarter. A marine department was created for the special purpose of advancing the interests of the Spaniards

in the settlement of the western shore of California. By the energy displayed in managing this department the Spaniards succeeded in making eight establishments on the Pacific coast between the California peninsula and Cape Mendocino, before 1779. The most southern post was San Diego, and the most northern, San Francisco, on the great bay of the same name. The establishments were almost entirely military and missionary, the object of the Spaniards being solely the occupation of the country. The missions were under the control of the Franciscans, who, unlike the Jesuits, took little care to exert themselves in procuring information concerning the country in which they were established.

Various expeditions for exploring the coast of Upper California above Cape Mendocino, were made by the Spaniards. One of these proceeded as far north as the latitude of 41 degrees, and some men were landed on the shores of a small bay, just beyond Cape Mendocino, and gave the harbor the name of Port Trinidad. The small river which flows into the Pacific near the place where they landed was called Pigeon River, from the great number of those birds in the neighborhood of it. The Indians appeared to be a peaceable and industrious race, and conducted themselves towards the Spaniards in the most inoffensive manner. In the same year, 1775, Bodega, a Spanish commander, returning from a voyage extended as far north as the 58th degree of latitude, discovered a small bay which had not previously been described, and he accordingly gave it his own

name, which it still retains. This Bay of Bodega is situated a little north of the 38th degree of latitude.

Few events worth recording occurred in California, during the whole period of fifty years, from the first establishment of the Spaniards on the western coast till the termination of the Mexican war of independence. An attempt of the Russians to form a settlement on the shores of the Bay of Bodega, in 1815, was met with a remonstrance from the governor of California. The remonstrance of the governor was disregarded, and his commands to quit the place disobeyed. The Russian agent, Kushof, denied the right of the Spaniards to the territory, and the governor being unable to enforce his commands, the intruders kept possession of the ground until 1840, when they left of their own accord.

CHAPTER IV

FROM THE REVOLUTION TILL THE WAR BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

Before the commencement of the struggle for independence in Mexico, the missions in California were, to some extent, fostered by the Spanish government, and supplies were sent to them regularly. But when the war began, the remittances were reduced, and the establishments soon began to decay. After the overthrow of the Spanish rule, in 1822, the territory of California was divided into two portions. The peninsula was then called Lower California, and the whole of the continental territory called Upper California. When the Mexicans adopted a constitution, in 1824, each of these territories became entitled to send one representative to the National Congress. At the same time, the adult Indians who could be considered civilized, were declared citizens of the republic, and had lands given to them. This, of course, freed them from submission to the missionaries, who, thus deprived of their authority, either returned to Spain or Mexico, or took refuge in other lands. The Indians being free from restraint, soon sank to a low depth of barbarism and vice.

Immediately after the overthrow of the Spanish authorities,

the ports of California began to be the resort of foreigners, principally whalers and traders from the United States. The trade in which they engaged, that of exchanging manufactured goods for the provisions, hide and tallow furnished by the natives, was at first irregular, but as it increased, it became more systematic, and mercantile houses were established in the principal ports. The Mexican government became dissatisfied with this state of things, and ordered the governor of Upper California to enforce the laws which prohibited foreigners from entering or residing in the territories of Mexico without a special permission from the authorities. Accordingly, in 1828, a number of American citizens were seized at San Diego, and kept in confinement until 1830. In that year, an insurrection broke out, headed by General Solis, and the captured Americans were of some assistance in suppressing it, and, in consideration of their services, they were permitted to leave the territory.

The Mexican government strove to prevent the evils expected to flow from the presence of numbers of foreigners in California, by establishing colonies of their own citizens in the territory. A number of persons were sent out from Mexico, to settle on the lands of the missions, but they never reached their destination. The administration which originated the scheme was overthrown, and the new authorities ordered the settlers to be driven back to Mexico. In 1836, the federal system was abolished by the Mexican government, and a new constitution adopted, which destroyed all state rights, and established a

central power. This was strenuously resisted in California. The people rose, and drove the Mexican officers from the country, declaring that they would remain independent until the federal constitution was restored. The general government issued strong proclamations against the Californians, and sent an expedition to re-establish its authority. But General Urrea, by whom the expedition was commanded, declared in favor of the federalists, and the inhabitants governed themselves until July, 1837, when they swore allegiance to the new constitution.

Things went on quietly in California until 1842. In that year, Commodore Jones, while cruising in the Pacific, received information which led him to believe that Mexico had declared war against the United States. He determined to strike a blow at the supposed enemy, and, accordingly, he appeared before Monterey, on the 19th of October, 1842, with the frigate United States and the sloop-of-war Cyane. He demanded the surrender of all the castles, posts, and military places, on penalty, if refused, of the visitation of the horrors of war. The people were astonished. A council decided that no defence could be made, and every thing was surrendered at once to the unexpected Americans. The flag of the United States was hoisted, and the commodore issued a proclamation to the Californians, inviting them to submit to the government of the United States, which would protect them in the exercise of their rights. The proclamation was scarcely issued, before the commodore became aware of the peaceable relations existing between the

United States and Mexico, and he accordingly restored the possession of Monterey to the authorities, and retired with his forces to his ships, just twenty-four hours after the surrender. This affair irritated the inhabitants considerably, and, no doubt, tended to increase the ill-feeling before existing between Mexico and the people of the United States.

CHAPTER V

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE WAR TILL ITS CLOSE

War was declared by Mexico against the United States, in May, 1846. The same month, orders were transmitted to Commodore Sloat, commanding the Pacific squadron, instructing him to protect the interests of the citizens of the United States near his station, and to employ his forces to the best advantage in operations directed against the Mexican territory on the Pacific. The fleet under Commodore Sloat was the largest the Americans ever sent to that quarter, and the men were anxious to commence active operations. Soon after receiving his first orders, the commodore was again instructed to take and keep possession of Upper California; or, at least, of the principal ports.

On the 8th of June, Commodore Sloat left Mazatlan, in the flag-ship Savannah, and on the 2d of July, reached Monterey, in Upper California. There he found the Cyane and Levant, and learned that the Portsmouth was at San Francisco, as previously arranged. On the morning of the 7th, Captain Mervine was sent to demand the surrender of Monterey. The Mexican commandant replied that he was not authorized to surrender

the place, but referred Commodore Sloat to the commanding-general of California. A force of two hundred and fifty marines and seamen was immediately landed, under Captain Mervine, and they marched to the custom-house. There they hoisted the American flag amid cheers and a salute of twenty-one guns. The proclamation of Commodore Sloat was then read and posted about the town.

After taking possession of Monterey, Commodore Sloat despatched a courier to the commanding-general of California, summoning him to surrender every thing under his control in the country, and assuring him of protection if he should comply. The general refused, and said he would defend the country as long as he could reckon on a single person to join his cause. A summons to surrender was also sent to the governor of Santa Barbara, but no answer was returned. Orders were despatched to Commander Montgomery, in the Portsmouth, at San Francisco, directing him to take possession of the Bay of San Francisco, and hoist the flag of the United States at Yerba Buena.

On the 9th of July, the day after the receipt of his orders, Montgomery landed at Yerba Buena with seventy seamen and marines, and hoisted the American flag in the public square, amid the cheers of the people. A proclamation was then posted to the flag staff, and Montgomery addressed the people. The greater part of the seamen and marines then returned to the ship, leaving Lieutenant H. B. Watson with a small guard, formally installed as military occupant of the post. Thirty-two of the

male residents of Yerba Buena were enrolled as a volunteer corps, choosing their own officers. Lieutenant Missroon was despatched with a small party of these volunteers to reconnoitre the Presidio and fort. He returned the same day, and reported that the Presidio had been abandoned, and that the fort, seven miles from the town, was dilapidated and mounted only a few old pieces of cannon. The flag of the United States had been displayed from its ramparts. On the 11th, Montgomery informed Commodore Sloat that the flag of the United States was then flying at Yerba Buena, Sutter's Fort, on the Sacramento, Bodega, on the coast, and Sonoma. The inhabitants of these places appeared to be satisfied with the protection afforded them by the Americans.

On the 13th of July, Commodore Sloat sent a flag to the foreigners of the pueblo of San Jose, about seventy miles from Monterey, in the interior, and appointed a justice of the peace in place of the alcaldes. On the 15th, Commodore Stockton arrived at Monterey, in the frigate Congress; and Commodore Sloat being in bad health, the command devolved upon Stockton, and Sloat returned home. The operations of Commodore Stockton, from the 23d of July to the 28th of August, 1846, have been rapidly sketched by himself in his despatches to the secretary of the navy. From these we condense a short account.

On the 23d of July, the commodore organized the "California Battalion of Mounted Riflemen." Captain Fremont was appointed major, and Lieutenant Gillespie captain of the

battalion. The next day, they were embarked on board the sloop-of-war Cyane, Commander Dupont, and sailed from Monterey for San Diego, in order to land south of the Mexican force, consisting of 500 men, under General Castro, well fortified at a place three miles from the city. A few days afterwards, Commodore Stockton sailed in the Congress for San Pedro, thirty miles from Monterey, and having landed, marched for the Mexican camp. When he arrived within twelve miles of the Mexicans, they fled in small parties, in different directions. Most of the principal officers were afterwards taken, but the mounted riflemen not getting up in time, most of the men escaped. On the 13th of August, Commodore Stockton being joined by eighty riflemen, under Major Fremont, entered the capital of California, Ciudad de los Angeles, or the "City of the Angels." Thus, in less than a month after Stockton's assuming command, the American flag was flying from every commanding position in California, conquered by three hundred and sixty men, mostly sailors.

The form of government established in California, after the conquest, was as follows: The executive power was vested in a governor, holding office for four years unless sooner removed by the President of the United States. The governor was to reside in the territory, be commander-in-chief of the army thereof, perform all the duties of a superintendent of Indian affairs, have a pardoning and reprieving power, commission all persons appointed to office under the laws of said territory, and approve

all laws passed by the legislature before they took effect. There was the office of the Secretary of the Territory established, whose principal duty was to preserve all the laws and proceedings of the legislative council, and all the acts and proceedings of the governor. The legislative power was vested in the governor and a council of seven persons, who were to be appointed by the governor at first, and hold their office for two years; afterwards they were to be elected by the people. All the laws of Mexico, and the municipal officers existing in the territory before the conquest, were continued until altered by the governor and council.

On the 15th of August, 1846, Commodore Stockton adopted a tariff of duties on all goods imported from foreign parts, of fifteen per cent. ad valorem, and a tonnage duty of fifty cents per ton on all foreign vessels. On the 15th of September, when the elections were held, Walter Colton, the chaplain of the frigate Congress, was elected Alcalde of Monterey. In the mean time, a newspaper called the "Californian," had been established by Messrs. Colton and Semple. This was the first newspaper issued in California.

Early in September, Commodore Stockton withdrew his forces from Los Angeles, and proceeded with his squadron to San Francisco. Scarcely had he arrived when he received intelligence that all the country below Monterey was in arms and the Mexican flag again hoisted. The Californians invested the "City of the Angels," on the 23d of September. That place

was guarded by thirty riflemen under Captain Gillespie, and the Californians investing it numbered 300. Finding himself overpowered, Captain Gillespie capitulated on the 30th, and thence retired with all the foreigners aboard of a sloop-of-war, and sailed for Monterey. Lieutenant Talbot, who commanded only nine men at Santa Barbara, refused to surrender, and marched out with his men, arms in hand. The frigate Savannah was sent to relieve Los Angeles, but she did not arrive till after the above events had occurred. Her crew, numbering 320 men, landed at San Pedro and marched to meet the Californians. About half way between San Pedro and Los Angeles, about fifteen miles from their ship, the sailors found the enemy drawn up on a plain. The Californians were mounted on fine horses, and with artillery, had every advantage. The sailors were forced to retreat with a loss of five killed and six wounded.

Commodore Stockton came down in the Congress to San Pedro, and then marched for the "City of the Angels," the men dragging six of the ship's guns. At the Rancho Sepulvida, a large force of the Californians was posted. Commodore Stockton sent one hundred men forward to receive the fire of the enemy and then fall back upon the main body without returning it. The main body was formed in a triangle, with the guns hid by the men. By the retreat of the advance party, the enemy were decoyed close to the main force, when the wings were extended and a deadly fire opened upon the astonished Californians. More than a hundred were killed, the same number wounded, and their whole force

routed. About a hundred prisoners were taken, many of whom were at the time on parole and had signed an obligation not to take up arms during the war.

Commodore Stockton soon mounted his men and prepared for operations on shore. Skirmishes followed, and were continually occurring until January, 1847, when a decisive action occurred. General Kearny had arrived in California, after a long and painful march overland, and his co-operation was of great service to Stockton. The Americans left San Diego on the 29th of December, to march to Los Angeles. The Californians determined to meet them on their route, and decide the fate of the country in a general battle. The American force amounted to six hundred men, and was composed of detachments from the ships Congress, Savannah, Portsmouth and Cyane, aided by General Kearny, with sixty men on foot, from the first regiment of United States dragoons, and Captain Gillespie with sixty mounted riflemen. The troops marched one hundred and ten miles in ten days, and, on the 8th of January, they found the Californians in a strong position on the high bank of the San Gabriel river, with six hundred mounted men and four pieces of artillery, prepared to dispute the passage of the river. The Americans waded through the water, dragging their guns with them, exposed to a galling fire from the enemy, without returning a shot. When they reached the opposite shore, the Californians charged upon them, but were driven back. They then charged up the bank and succeeded in driving the Californians from

their post. Stockton, with his force, continued his march, and the next day, in crossing the plains of Mesa, the enemy made another attempt to save their capital. They were concealed with their artillery in a ravine, until the Americans came within gunshot, when they opened a brisk fire upon their right flank, and at the same time charged both their front and rear. But the guns of the Californians were soon silenced, and the charge repelled. The Californians then fled, and the next morning the Americans entered Los Angeles without opposition. The loss of the Americans in killed and wounded did not exceed twenty, while that of their opponents reached between seventy and eighty.

These two battles decided the contest in California. General Flores, governor and commandant-general of the Californians, as he styled himself, immediately after the Americans entered Los Angeles, made his escape and his troops dispersed. The territory became again tranquil, and the civil government was soon in operation again in the places where it had been interrupted by the revolt. Commodore Stockton and General Kearny having a misunderstanding about their respective powers, Colonel Fremont exercised the duties of governor and commander-in-chief of California, declining to obey the orders of General Kearny.

The account of the adventures and skirmishes with which the small force of United States troops under General Kearny met, while on their march to San Diego, in Upper California,

is one of the most interesting to which the contest gave birth. The party, which consisted of one hundred men when it started from Santa Fé, reached Warner's rancho, the frontier settlement in California, on the Sonoma route, on the 2d of December, 1846. They continued their march, and on the 5th were met by a small party of volunteers, under Captain Gillespie, sent out by Commodore Stockton to meet them, and inform them of the revolt of the Californians. The party encamped for the night at Stokes's rancho, about forty miles from San Diego. Information was received that an armed party of Californians was at San Pasqual, three leagues from Stokes's rancho. A party of dragoons was sent out to reconnoitre, and they returned by two o'clock on the morning of the 6th. Their information determined General Kearny to attack the Californians before daylight, and arrangements were accordingly made. Captain Johnson was given the command of an advance party of twelve dragoons, mounted upon the best horses in possession of the party. Then followed fifty dragoons, under Captain Moore, mounted mostly on the tired mules they had ridden from Santa Fé – a distance of 1050 miles. Next came about twenty volunteers, under Captain Gibson. Then followed two mountain howitzers, with dragoons to manage them, under charge of Lieutenant Davidson. The remainder of the dragoons and volunteers were placed under command of Major Swords, with orders to follow on the trail with the baggage.

As the day of December 6th dawned, the enemy at San

Pasqual were seen to be already in the saddle, and Captain Johnson, with his advance guard, made a furious charge upon them; he being supported by the dragoons, the Californians at length gave way. They had kept up a continual fire from the first appearance of the dragoons, and had done considerable execution. Captain Johnson was shot dead in his first charge. The enemy were pursued by Captain Moore and his dragoons, and they retreated about half a mile, when seeing an interval between the small advance party of Captain Moore and the main force coming to his support, they rallied their whole force, and charged with their lances. For five minutes they held the ground, doing considerable execution, until the arrival of the rest of the American party, when they broke and fled. The troops of Kearny lost two captains, a lieutenant, two sergeants, two corporals, and twelve privates. Among the wounded were General Kearny, Lieutenant Warner, Captains Gillespie and Gibson, one sergeant, one bugleman, and nine privates. The Californians carried off all their wounded and dead except six.

On the 7th the march was resumed, and, near San Bernardo, Kearny's advance encountered and defeated a small party of the Californians who had taken post on a hill. At San Bernardo, the troops remained till the morning of the 11th, when they were joined by a party of sailors and marines, under Lieutenant Gray. They then proceeded upon their march, and on the 12th, arrived at San Diego; having thus completed a march of eleven hundred miles through an enemy's country, with but one hundred men.

The force of General Kearny having joined that of Commodore Stockton, the expedition against Los Angeles, of which we have given an account in this chapter, was successfully consummated, and tranquillity restored in California. General Kearny and Commodore Stockton returned to the United States in January, 1847, leaving Colonel Fremont to exercise the office of governor and military commandant of California. No further events of an importance worth recording occurred till the treaty of peace between the United States and Mexico.

CHAPTER VI

DISCOVERY OF THE GOLD PLACERS

By the treaty concluded between the United States and Mexico, in 1847, the territory of Upper California became the property of the United States. Little thought the Mexican government of the value of the land they were ceding, further than its commercial importance; and, doubtless, little thought the buyers of the territory, that its soil was pregnant with a wealth untold, and that its rivers flowed over golden beds.

This territory, now belonging to the American Union, embraces an area of 448,961 square miles. It extends along the Pacific coast, from about the thirty-second parallel of north latitude, a distance of near seven hundred miles, to the forty-second parallel, the southern boundary of Oregon. On the east, it is bounded by New Mexico. During the long period which transpired between its discovery and its cession to the United States, this vast tract of country was frequently visited by men of science, from all parts of the world. Repeated examinations were made by learned and enterprising officers and civilians; but none of them discovered the important fact, that the mountain torrents of the Sierra Nevada were constantly pouring down their

golden sands into the valleys of the Sacramento and San Joaquin. The glittering particles twinkled beneath their feet, in the ravines which they explored, or glistened in the watercourses which they forded, yet they passed them by unheeded. Not a legend or tradition was heard among the white settlers, or the aborigines, that attracted their curiosity. A nation's ransom lay within their grasp, but, strange to say, it escaped their notice – it flashed and sparkled all in vain.¹

The Russian American Company had a large establishment at Ross and Bodega, ninety miles north of San Francisco, founded in the year 1812; and factories were also established in the territory by the Hudson Bay Company. Their agents and *employes* ransacked the whole country west of the Sierra Nevada, or Snowy Mountain, in search of game. In 1838, Captain Sutter, formerly an officer in the Swiss Guards of Charles X., King of France, emigrated from the state of Missouri to Upper California, and obtained from the Mexican government a conditional grant of thirty leagues square of land, bounded on the west by the Sacramento river. Having purchased the stock, arms, and ammunition of the Russian establishment, he erected a dwelling and fortification on the left bank of the Sacramento, about fifty miles from its mouth, and near what was termed, in allusion to the new settlers, the American Fork. This formed the nucleus of a thriving settlement, to which Captain Sutter gave

¹ A gold *placera* was discovered some years ago, near the mission of San Fernando, but it was very little worked, on account of the want of water.

the name of New Helvetia. It is situated at the head of navigation for vessels on the Sacramento, in latitude 38° 33' 45" north, and longitude 121° 20' 05" west. During a residence of ten years in the immediate vicinity of the recently discovered *placéras*, or gold regions, Captain Sutter was neither the wiser nor the richer for the brilliant treasures that lay scattered around him.²

In the year 1841, careful examinations of the Bay of San Francisco, and of the Sacramento River and its tributaries, were made by Lieutenant Wilkes, the commander of the Exploring Expedition; and a party under Lieutenant Emmons, of the navy, proceeded up the valley of the Willamette, crossed the intervening highlands, and descended the Sacramento. In 1843-4, similar examinations were made by Captain, afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel Fremont, of the Topographical Engineers, and in 1846, by Major Emory, of the same corps. None of these officers made any discoveries of minerals, although they were led to conjecture, as private individuals who had visited the country had done, from its volcanic formation and peculiar geological features, that they might be found to exist in considerable quantities.³

² Farnham's Adventures in California. – Wilkes's Narrative of the Exploring Expedition. – Fremont's Narrative.

³ See Farnham's Adventures. Wilkes's and Fremont's Narratives, and Emory's Report. – In 1846, Eugenio Macnamara, a Catholic priest and Missionary, obtained a grant of a large tract of land between the San Joaquin and the Sierra Nevada, the Cosumnes and the Tulares in the vicinity of San Gabriel, from Pio Pico, governor of the Californias, for the purpose of establishing upon it a large colony of Irish Catholics;

As is often the case, chance at length accomplished what science had failed to do. In the winter of 1847-8, a Mr. Marshall commenced the construction of a saw-mill for Captain Sutter, on the north branch of the American Fork, and about fifty miles above New Helvetia, in a region abounding with pine timber. The dam and race were completed, but on attempting to put the mill in motion, it was ascertained that the tail-race was too narrow to permit the water to escape with perfect freedom. A strong current was then passed in, to wash it wider and deeper, by which a large bed of mud and gravel was thrown up at the foot of the race. Some days after this occurrence, Mr. Marshall observed a number of brilliant particles on this deposit of mud, which attracted his attention. On examining them, he became satisfied that they were gold, and communicated the fact to Captain Sutter. It was agreed between them, that the circumstance should not be made public for the present; but, like the secret of Midas, it could not be concealed. The Mormon emigrants, of whom Mr. Marshall was one, were soon made acquainted with the discovery, and in a few weeks all California was agitated with the startling information.

Business of every kind was neglected, and the ripened grain was left in the fields unharvested. Nearly the whole population of Upper California became infected with the mania, and flocked to

but the grant was not ratified by the Central Government, and the project was not carried into effect. There is no evidence that Father Macnamara was aware of the existence of gold in the valley of the San Joaquin.

the mines. Whalers and merchant vessels entering the ports were abandoned by their crews, and the American soldiers and sailors deserted in scores. Upon the disbandment of Colonel Stevenson's regiment, most of the men made their way to the mineral regions. Within three months after the discovery, it was computed that there were near four thousand persons, including Indians, who were mostly employed by the whites, engaged in washing for gold. Various modes were adopted to separate the metal from the sand and gravel – some making use of tin pans, others of close-woven Indian baskets, and others still, of a rude machine called the cradle, six or eight feet long, and mounted on rockers, with a coarse grate, or sieve, at one end, but open at the other. The washings were mainly confined to the low wet grounds, and the margins of the streams – the earth being rarely disturbed more than eighteen inches below the surface. The value of the gold dust obtained by each man, per day, is said to have ranged from ten to fifty dollars, and sometimes even to have far exceeded that. The natural consequence of this state of things was, that the price of labor, and, indeed, of every thing, rose immediately from ten to twenty fold.⁴

As may readily be conjectured, every stream and ravine in the valley of the Sacramento was soon explored. Gold was found on every one of its tributaries; but the richest earth was discovered

⁴ Official Despatch of Colonel Mason, Commander of the 10th Military Department, August 17, 1848. – Letters of Thomas C. Larkin, U.S. Consul at Monterey, to the Secretary of State, June 1, and June 28, 1848.

near the *Rio de los Plumas*, or Feather River,⁵ and its branches, the Yuba and Bear rivers, and on Weber's creek, a tributary of the American Fork. Explorations were also made in the valley of the San Joaquin, which resulted in the discovery of gold on the Cosumnes and other streams, and in the ravines of the Coast Range, west of the valley, as far down as Ciudad de los Angeles.

In addition to the gold mines, other important discoveries were made in Upper California. A rich vein of quicksilver was opened at New Almaden, near Santa Clara, which, with imperfect machinery, – the heat by which the metal is made to exude from the rock being applied by a very rude process, – yielded over thirty per cent. This mine – one of the principal advantages to be derived from which will be, that the working of the silver mines scattered through the territory must now become profitable – is superior to those of Almaden, in Old Spain, and second only to those of Idria, near Trieste, the richest in the world.

Lead mines were likewise discovered in the neighborhood of Sonoma, and vast beds of iron ore near the American Fork, yielding from eighty-five to ninety per cent. Copper, platina, tin, sulphur, zinc, and cobalt, were discovered every where; coal was found to exist in large quantities in the Cascade range of Oregon, of which the Sierra Nevada is a continuation; and in the vicinity

⁵ Feather River is the first considerable branch of the Sacramento below the *Prairie Buttes*. It has a course of about forty miles, and empties into the main river about fifteen miles above New Helvetia. Though the Sacramento is navigable for vessels only to that place, boats can pass up one hundred miles further.

of all this mineral wealth, there are immense quarries of marble and granite, for building purposes.

Colonel Mason had succeeded Colonel Fremont in the post of governor of California and military commandant. A regiment of New York troops, under the command of Colonel Stevenson, had been ordered to California before the conclusion of the treaty of peace, and formed the principal part of the military force in the territory.

Colonel Mason expressed the opinion, in his official despatch, that "there is more gold in the country drained by the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, than will pay the cost of the [late] war with Mexico a hundred times over." Should this even prove to be an exaggeration, there can be little reason to doubt, when we take into consideration all the mineral resources of the country, that the territory of California is by far the richest acquisition made by this government since its organization.

The appearance of the mines, at the period of Governor Mason's visit, three months after the discovery, he thus graphically describes:

"At the urgent solicitation of many gentlemen, I delayed there [at Sutter's Fort] to participate in the first public celebration of our national anniversary at that fort, but on the 5th resumed the journey, and proceeded twenty-five miles up the American Fork to a point on it now known as the Lower Mines, or Mormon Diggins. The hill-sides were thickly strewn with canvas tents and bush arbors; a store was erected, and several boarding shanties

in operation. The day was intensely hot, yet about two hundred men were at work in the full glare of the sun, washing for gold – some with tin pans, some with close-woven Indian baskets, but the greater part had a rude machine, known as the cradle. This is on rockers, six or eight feet long, open at the foot, and at its head has a coarse grate, or sieve; the bottom is rounded, with small cleats nailed across. Four men are required to work this machine; one digs the ground in the bank close by the stream; another carries it to the cradle and empties it on the grate; a third gives a violent rocking motion to the machine; while a fourth dashes on water from the stream itself.

"The sieve keeps the coarse stones from entering the cradle, the current of water washes off the earthy matter, and the gravel is gradually carried out at the foot of the machine, leaving the gold mixed with a heavy, fine black sand above the first cleats. The sand and gold, mixed together, are then drawn off through auger holes into a pan below, are dried in the sun, and afterward separated by blowing off the sand. A party of four men thus employed at the lower mines, averaged \$100 a day. The Indians, and those who have nothing but pans or willow baskets, gradually wash out the earth and separate the gravel by hand, leaving nothing but the gold mixed with sand, which is separated in the manner before described. The gold in the lower mines is in fine bright scales, of which I send several specimens.

"From the mill [where the gold was first discovered], Mr. Marshall guided me up the mountain on the opposite or north

bank of the south fork, where, in the bed of small streams or ravines, now dry, a great deal of coarse gold has been found. I there saw several parties at work, all of whom were doing very well; a great many specimens were shown me, some as heavy as four or five ounces in weight, and I send three pieces, labeled No. 5, presented by a Mr. Spence. You will perceive that some of the specimens accompanying this, hold mechanically pieces of quartz; that the surface is rough, and evidently moulded in the crevice of a rock. This gold cannot have been carried far by water, but must have remained near where it was first deposited from the rock that once bound it. I inquired of many people if they had encountered the metal in its matrix, but in every instance they said they had not; but that the gold was invariably mixed with washed gravel, or lodged in the crevices of other rocks. All bore testimony that they had found gold in greater or less quantities in the numerous small gullies or ravines that occur in that mountainous region.

"On the 7th of July I left the mill, and crossed to a stream emptying into the American Fork, three or four miles below the saw-mill. I struck this stream (now known as Weber's creek) at the washings of Sunol and Co. They had about thirty Indians employed, whom they payed in merchandise. They were getting gold of a character similar to that found in the main fork, and doubtless in sufficient quantities to satisfy them. I send you a small specimen, presented by this company, of their gold. From this point, we proceeded up the stream about eight miles, where

we found a great many people and Indians – some engaged in the bed of the stream, and others in the small side valleys that put into it. These latter are exceedingly rich, and two ounces were considered an ordinary yield for a day's work. A small gutter not more than a hundred yards long, by four feet wide and two or three feet deep, was pointed out to me as the one where two men – William Daly and Parry McCoon – had, a short time before, obtained \$17,000 worth of gold. Captain Weber informed me that he knew that these two men had employed four white men and about a hundred Indians, and that, at the end of one week's work, they paid off their party, and had left \$10,000 worth of this gold. Another small ravine was shown me, from which had been taken upward of \$12,000 worth of gold. Hundreds of similar ravines, to all appearances, are as yet untouched. I could not have credited these reports, had I not seen, in the abundance of the precious metal, evidence of their truth.

"Mr. Neligh, an agent of Commodore Stockton, had been at work about three weeks in the neighborhood, and showed me, in bags and bottles, over \$2000 worth of gold; and Mr. Lyman, a gentleman of education, and worthy of every credit, said he had been engaged, with four others, with a machine, on the American Fork, just below Sutter's mill; that they worked eight days, and that his share was at the rate of fifty dollars a day; but hearing that others were doing better at Weber's place, they had removed there, and were then on the point of resuming operations. I might tell of hundreds of similar instances; but, to

illustrate how plentiful the gold was in the pockets of common laborers, I will mention a single occurrence which took place in my presence when I was at Weber's store. This store was nothing but an arbor of bushes, under which he had exposed for sale goods and groceries suited to his customers. A man came in, picked up a box of Seidlitz powders, and asked the price. Captain Weber told him it was not for sale. The man offered an ounce of gold, but Captain Weber told him it only cost fifty cents, and he did not wish to sell it. The man then offered an ounce and a half, when Captain Weber *had* to take it. The prices of all things are high, and yet Indians, who before hardly knew what a breech cloth was, can now afford to buy the most gaudy dresses.

"The country on either side of Weber's creek is much broken up by hills, and is intersected in every direction by small streams or ravines, which contain more or less gold. Those that have been worked are barely scratched; and although thousands of ounces have been carried away, I do not consider that a serious impression has been made upon the whole. Every day was developing new and richer deposits; and the only impression seemed to be, that the metal would be found in such abundance as seriously to depreciate in value.

"On the 8th of July, I returned to the lower mines, and on the following day to Sutter's, where, on the 19th, I was making preparations for a visit to the Feather, Yuba, and Bear Rivers, when I received a letter from Commander A. R. Long, United States Navy, who had just arrived at San Francisco from

Mazatlan with a crew for the sloop-of-war Warren, with orders to take that vessel to the squadron at La Paz. Captain Long wrote to me that the Mexican Congress had adjourned without ratifying the treaty of peace, that he had letters from Commodore Jones, and that his orders were to sail with the Warren on or before the 20th of July. In consequence of these, I determined to return to Monterey, and accordingly arrived here on the 17th of July. Before leaving Sutter's, I satisfied myself that gold existed in the bed of the Feather River, in the Yuba and Bear, and in many of the smaller streams that lie between the latter and the American Fork; also, that it had been found in the Cosumnes to the south of the American Fork. In each of these streams the gold is found in small scales, whereas in the intervening mountains it occurs in coarser lumps.

"Mr. Sinclair, whose rancho is three miles above Sutter's, on the north side of the American, employs about fifty Indians on the north fork, not far from its junction with the main stream. He had been engaged about five weeks when I saw him, and up to that time his Indians had used simply closely woven willow baskets. His net proceeds (which I saw) were about \$16,000 worth of gold. He showed me the proceeds of his last week's work – fourteen pounds avoirdupois of clean-washed gold.

"The principal store at Sutter's Fort, that of Brannan and Co., had received in payment for goods \$36,000 (worth of this gold) from the 1st of May to the 10th of July. Other merchants had also made extensive sales. Large quantities of goods were daily

sent forward to the mines, as the Indians, heretofore so poor and degraded, have suddenly become consumers of the luxuries of life. I before mentioned that the greater part of the farmers and rancheros had abandoned their fields to go to the mines. This is not the case with Captain Sutter, who was carefully gathering his wheat, estimated at 40,000 bushels. Flour is already worth at Sutter's thirty-six dollars a barrel, and soon will be fifty. Unless large quantities of breadstuffs reach the country, much suffering will occur; but as each man is now able to pay a large price, it is believed the merchants will bring from Chili and Oregon a plentiful supply for the coming winter.

"The most moderate estimate I could obtain from men acquainted with the subject, was, that upward of four thousand men were working in the gold district, of whom more than one-half were Indians; and that from \$30,000 to \$50,000 worth of gold, if not more, was daily obtained. The entire gold district, with very few exceptions of grants made some years ago by the Mexican authorities, is on land belonging to the United States. It was a matter of serious reflection with me, how I could secure to the government certain rents or fees for the privilege of procuring this gold; but upon considering the large extent of country, the character of the people engaged, and the small scattered force at my command, I resolved not to interfere, but to permit all to work freely, unless broils and crimes should call for interference. I was surprised to hear that crime of any kind was very unfrequent, and that no thefts or robberies had been committed in the gold

district.

"All live in tents, in bush arbors, or in the open air; and men have frequently about their persons thousands of dollars worth of this gold, and it was to me a matter of surprise that so peaceful and quiet state of things should continue to exist. Conflicting claims to particular spots of ground may cause collisions, but they will be rare, as the extent of country is so great, and the gold so abundant, that for the present there is room enough for all. Still the government is entitled to rents for this land, and immediate steps should be devised to collect them, for the longer it is delayed the more difficult it will become. One plan I would suggest is, to send out from the United States surveyors with high salaries, bound to serve specified periods.

"The discovery of these vast deposits of gold has entirely changed the character of Upper California. Its people, before engaged in cultivating their small patches of ground, and guarding their herds of cattle and horses, have all gone to the mines, or are on their way thither. Laborers of every trade have left their work benches, and tradesmen their shops. Sailors desert their ships as fast as they arrive on the coast, and several vessels have gone to sea with hardly enough hands to spread a sail. Two or three are now at anchor in San Francisco with no crew on board. Many desertions, too, have taken place from the garrisons within the influence of these mines; twenty-six soldiers have deserted from the post of Sonoma, twenty-four from that of San Francisco, and twenty-four from Monterey. For a few days the

evil appeared so threatening, that great danger existed that the garrisons would leave in a body; and I refer you to my orders of the 25th of July, to show the steps adopted to meet this contingency. I shall spare no exertions to apprehend and punish deserters, but I believe no time in the history of our country has presented such temptations to desert as now exist in California.

"The danger of apprehension is small, and the prospect of high wages certain; pay and bounties are trifles, as laboring men at the mines can now earn in one day more than double a soldier's pay and allowances for a month, and even the pay of a lieutenant or captain cannot hire a servant. A carpenter or mechanic would not listen to an offer of less than fifteen or twenty dollars a day. Could any combination of affairs try a man's fidelity more than this? I really think some extraordinary mark of favor should be given to those soldiers who remain faithful to their flag throughout this tempting crisis.

"Many private letters have gone to the United States, giving accounts of the vast quantity of gold recently discovered, and it may be a matter of surprise why I have made no report on this subject at an earlier date. The reason is, that I could not bring myself to believe the reports that I heard of the wealth of the gold district until I visited it myself. I have no hesitation now in saying that there is more gold in the country drained by the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers than will pay the cost of the present war with Mexico a hundred times over. No capital is required to obtain this gold, as the laboring man wants nothing

but his pick and shovel and tin pan, with which to dig and wash the gravel; and many frequently pick gold out of the crevices of the rocks with their butcher knives, in pieces of from one to six ounces.

"Mr. Dye, a gentleman residing in Monterey, and worthy of every credit, has just returned from Feather River. He tells me that the company to which he belonged worked seven weeks and two days, with an average of fifty Indians (washers,) and that their gross product was two hundred and seventy-three pounds of gold. His share (one seventh,) after paying all expenses, is about thirty-seven pounds, which he brought with him and exhibited in Monterey. I see no laboring man from the mines who does not show his two, three, or four pounds of gold. A soldier of the artillery company returned here a few days ago from the mines, having been absent on furlough twenty days. He made by trading and working, during that time, \$1500. During these twenty days he was travelling ten or eleven days, leaving but a week in which he made a sum of money greater than he receives in pay, clothes, and rations, during a whole enlistment of five years. These statements appear incredible, but they are true.

"Gold is also believed to exist on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada; and when at the mines, I was informed by an intelligent Mormon that it had been found near the Great Salt Lake by some of his fraternity. Nearly all the Mormons are leaving California to go to the Salt Lake, and this they surely would not do unless they were sure of finding gold there in the same abundance as

they now do on the Sacramento.

"The gold 'placer' near the mission of San Fernando has long been known, but has been little wrought for want of water. This is a spur which puts off from the Sierra Nevada (see Fremont's map,) the same in which the present mines occur. There is, therefore, every reason to believe, that in the intervening spaces, of five hundred miles (entirely unexplored) there must be many hidden and rich deposits. The 'placer' gold is now substituted as the currency of this country; in trade it passes freely at \$16 per ounce; as an article of commerce its value is not yet fixed. The only purchase I made was of the specimen No. 7, which I got of Mr. Neligh at \$12 the ounce. That is about the present cash value in the country, although it has been sold for less. The great demand for goods and provisions, made by this sudden development of wealth, has increased the amount of commerce at San Francisco very much, and it will continue to increase."

The Californian, published at San Francisco on the 14th of August, furnishes the following interesting account of the Gold Region:

"It was our intention to present our readers with a description of the extensive gold, silver, and iron mines, recently discovered in the Sierra Nevada, together with some other important items, for the good of the people, but we are compelled to defer it for a future number. Our prices current, many valuable communications, our marine journal, and other important matters, have also been crowded out. But to enable our distant

readers to draw some idea of the extent of the gold mine, we will confine our remarks to a few facts. The country from the Ajuba to the San Joaquin rivers, a distance of about one hundred and twenty miles, and from the base toward the summit of the mountains, as far as Snow Hill, about seventy miles, has been explored, and gold found on every part. There are now probably 3000 people, including Indians, engaged collecting gold. The amount collected by each man who works, ranges from \$10 to \$350 per day. The publisher of this paper, while on a tour alone to the mining district, collected, with the aid of a shovel, pick and tin pan, about twenty inches in diameter, from \$44 to \$128 a day – averaging \$100. The gross amount collected will probably exceed \$600,000, of which amount our merchants have received about \$250,000 worth for goods sold; all within the short space of eight weeks. The largest piece of gold known to be found weighed four pounds.

"Labor has ever been high in California, but previous to the discovery of the *placera* gold, the rates ranged from \$1 to \$3 per day. Since that epoch common labor cannot be obtained, and if to be had, for no less price than fifty cents per hour, and that the most common. Carpenters and other mechanics have been offered \$15 a day, but it has been flatly refused. Many of our enterprising citizens were largely engaged in building, and others wish to commence on dwellings, warehouses, and the like, but all have had to suspend for the lack of that all important class of community, the working men."

The following extracts from the published journal of a physician in California, give accounts of the reception of the news of the gold discovery in San Francisco, with its consequent effects.

"May 8th.— Captain Fulsom called at Sweeting's to-day. He had seen a man this morning, who reported that he had just come from a river called the American Fork, about one hundred miles in the interior, where he had been gold washing. Captain Fulsom saw the gold he had with him; it was about twenty-three ounces weight, and in small flakes. The man stated that he was eight days getting it, but Captain Fulsom hardly believed this. He says that he saw some of this gold a few weeks since, and thought it was only 'mica,' but good judges have pronounced it to be genuine metal. He talks, however, of paying a visit to the place where it is reported to come from. After he was gone, Bradley stated that the Sacramento settlements, which Malcolm wished to visit, were in the neighborhood of the American Fork, and that we might go there together; he thought the distance was only one hundred and twenty miles.

"May 10th.— Yesterday and to-day nothing has been talked of but the new gold 'placer,' as people call it. It seems that four other men had accompanied the person Captain Fulsom saw yesterday, and that they had each realized a large quantity of gold. They left the 'diggings' on the American Fork, (which it seems is the Rio de los Americanos, a tributary to the Sacramento) about a week ago, and stopped a day or two at Sutter's Fort, a few

miles this side of the diggings, on their way; from there they had travelled by boat to San Francisco. The gold they brought has been examined by the first Alcalde here and by all the merchants in the place. Bradley showed us a lump weighing a quarter of an ounce, which he had bought of one of the men, and for which he gave him three dollars and a half. I have no doubt in my own mind about its being genuine gold. Several parties, we hear, are already made up to visit the diggings; and, according to the newspaper here, a number of people have actually started off with shovels, mattocks, and pans, to dig the gold themselves. It is not likely, however, that this will be allowed, for Captain Fulsom has already written to Colonel Mason about taking possession of the mine on behalf of the government, it being, as he says, on public land.

"May 17th.— This place is now in a perfect furor of excitement; all the work-people have struck. Walking through the town to-day, I observed that laborers were employed only upon about half-a-dozen of the fifty new buildings which were in the course of being run up. The majority of the mechanics at this place are making preparations for moving off to the mines, and several hundred people of all classes – lawyers, store-keepers, merchants, &c., – are bitten with the fever; in fact, there is a regular gold mania springing up. I counted no less than eighteen houses which were closed, the owners having left."

The mania continued to increase, and within a few months all the principal towns were nearly emptied of their population.

Gold was the universal object, and splendid and rapid fortune the universal hope. No occupation seemed to offer such a prospect as that of digging gold, and, accordingly, those who were not able to bear the fatigues of such work, or were at the head of any sort of business in the different towns, had to pay enormous prices for the labor of subordinates who performed the meanest services. The prices of all agricultural and manufactured products became treble the previous rates.

Soon came the first waves of the tide of emigration that was to flood the *placers* of the gold region. The first influx consisted of Mexicans of the province of Sonoma, Chilians, and some few Chinese. These, principally took possession of the southern mines, or those on the San Joaquin and its tributaries. Some few stopped at San Francisco, and secured lots of ground which they knew would become very valuable in a short time, and erected temporary stores and dwellings. This gave the impulse to the progress of the town, and it soon advanced rapidly in size and population. Then came the emigration from the Atlantic States of the Union, and the whole territory felt the progressive and enterprising spirit of the gold-seekers. The Americans generally took possession of the mines upon the northern tributaries of the Sacramento River; but as their numbers increased they pushed towards the southern mines, and frequent collisions with the foreigners were the consequence. Finally, a great number of the latter were compelled to leave the country.

CHAPTER VII

ADVENTURES OF SOME OF THE MINERS, AND INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH MINING

The adventures of the eager gold-seekers in the region of their hopes, among the washings and the diggings of the *placers*, cannot but be interesting. The toil to which the men have to submit if they would obtain any thing like a satisfaction to their desires, is of a very irksome character. In the summer season, the heat is intense, and the principal part of the labor of washing and digging must be performed exposed to the full blaze of the sun. In the "dry diggings," the miners suffer greatly from the want of water. Most of the provisions having to be transported from the towns on the Sacramento and San Joaquin, soon grow unwholesome from exposure to the sultry air of the day and the damp air of the night. This diet, conjointly with the exposure of the miners, tends to produce intermittent fever and dysentery. The miners generally reside in huts of a rude construction, or in canvas tents, which afford but poor protection from the changes of the weather.

The most prominent man in the neighborhood of the "diggins," is Captain Sutter, the Daniel Boone of that part of

the country. He was formerly an officer in the Swiss guards of Charles X. of France. After the revolution of 1830, in that country, he came to the United States. Emigrating to California, he obtained a grant of land from the Mexican government, and founded the settlement known as Sutter's Fort. Upon his land, the first discovery of the richness of the soil was made, and his house and the settlement around it has been, ever since, the resort of persons going to and from the *placers*, and a depot for provisions and articles used by the miners. Stores and workshops have been established, and a considerable amount of business is transacted there. Captain Sutter is held in very great respect by the people of the settlement and those stopping at his house on the road to the *placers*. Several versions of the account of the discovery of the gold mines have been circulated, but the true one, in the Captain's own words, is given in a work recently published.⁶ The account is here inserted, both on account of the interest connected with the discovery, and in order to correct wrong versions of the matter.

"I was sitting one afternoon," said the Captain, "just after my siesta, engaged, by-the-bye, in writing a letter to a relation of mine at Lucerne, when I was interrupted by Mr. Marshall – a gentleman with whom I had frequent business transactions – bursting hurriedly into the room. From the unusual agitation in his manner, I imagined that something serious had occurred, and, as we involuntarily do in this part of the world, I at once glanced to see if my rifle was in its proper place. You should

⁶ Four Months Among the Gold Finders of California, by J. Tyrwhitt Brooks, M.D.

know that the mere appearance of Mr. Marshall at that moment in the fort was quite enough to surprise me, as he had but two days before left the place to make some alterations in a mill for sawing pine planks, which he had just run up for me, some miles higher up the Americanos. When he had recovered himself a little, he told me that, however great my surprise might be at his unexpected reappearance, it would be much greater when I heard the intelligence he had come to bring me. 'Intelligence,' he added, 'which, if properly profited by, would put both of us in possession of unheard-of wealth – millions and millions of dollars, in fact.' I frankly own, when I heard this, that I thought something had touched Marshall's brain, when suddenly all my misgivings were put an end to by his flinging on the table a handful of scales of pure virgin gold. I was fairly thunderstruck, and asked him to explain what all this meant, when he went on to say, that, according to my instructions, he had thrown the mill-wheel out of gear, to let the whole body of the water in the dam find a passage through the tail-race, which was previously too narrow to allow the water to run off in sufficient quantity, whereby the wheel was prevented from efficiently performing its work. By this alteration the narrow channel was considerably enlarged, and a mass of sand and gravel carried off by the force of the torrent. Early in the morning after this took place, he (Mr. Marshall) was walking along the left bank of the stream, when he perceived something which he at first took for a piece of opal – a clear transparent stone, very common here – glittering on one of the spots laid bare

by the sudden crumbling away of the bank. He paid no attention to this; but while he was giving directions to the workmen, having observed several similar glittering fragments, his curiosity was so far excited, that he stooped down and picked one of them up. 'Do you know,' said Mr. Marshall to me, 'I positively debated within myself two or three times whether I should take the trouble to bend my back to pick up one of the pieces, and had decided on not doing so, when, further on, another glittering morsel caught my eye – the largest of the pieces now before you. I condescended to pick it up, and to my astonishment found that it was a thin scale of what appears to be pure gold.' He then gathered some twenty or thirty similar pieces, which on examination convinced him that his suppositions were right. His first impression was, that this gold had been lost or buried there by some early Indian tribe – perhaps some of those mysterious inhabitants of the West, of whom we have no account, but who dwelt on this continent centuries ago, and built those cities and temples, the ruins of which are scattered about these solitary wilds. On proceeding, however, to examine the neighboring soil, he discovered that it was more or less auriferous. This at once decided him. He mounted his horse, and rode down to me as fast as it would carry him, with the news.

"At the conclusion of Mr. Marshall's account," continued Captain Sutter, "and when I had convinced myself, from the specimens he had brought with him, that it was not exaggerated, I felt as much excited as himself. I eagerly inquired if he had shown

the gold to the work people at the mill, and was glad to hear that he had not spoken to a single person about it. We agreed," said the Captain, smiling, "not to mention the circumstance to any one, and arranged to set off early the next day for the mill. On our arrival, just before sundown, we poked the sand about in various places, and before long succeeded in collecting between us, more than an ounce of gold, mixed up with a good deal of sand. I stayed at Mr. Marshall's that night, and the next day we proceeded some little distance up the South Fork, and found that gold existed along the whole course, not only in the bed of the main stream, where the water had subsided, but in every little dried-up creek and ravine. Indeed, I think it is more plentiful in these latter places, for I myself, with nothing more than a small knife, picked out from a dry gorge, a little way up the mountain, a solid lump of gold which weighed nearly an ounce and a half.

"On our return to the mill, we were astonished by the work-people coming up to us in a body, and showing us small flakes of gold similar to those we had ourselves procured. Marshall tried to laugh the matter off with them, and to persuade them that what they had found was only some shining mineral of trifling value; but one of the Indians, who had worked at the gold mine in the neighborhood of La Paz, in Lower California, cried out, 'Oro! oro!' We were disappointed enough at this discovery, and supposed that the work-people had been watching our movements, although we thought we had taken every precaution against being observed by them. I heard, afterwards, that one of

them, a sly Kentuckian, had dogged us about, and that, looking on the ground to see if he could discover what we were in search of, he had lighted on some flakes of gold himself.

"The next day I rode back to the Fort, organized a laboring party, set the carpenters to work on a few necessary matters, and the next day, accompanied them to a point of the Fork, where they encamped for the night. By the following morning I had a party of fifty Indians fairly at work. The way we first managed was to shovel the soil into small buckets, or into some of our famous Indian baskets; then wash all the light earth out, and pick away the stones; after this, we dried the sand on pieces of canvas, and with long reeds blew away all but the gold. I have now some rude machines in use, and upwards of one hundred men employed, chiefly Indians, who are well fed, and who are allowed whisky three times a day.

"The report soon spread. Some of the gold was sent to San Francisco, and crowds of people flocked to the diggings. Added to this, a large emigrant party of Mormons entered California across the Rocky Mountains, just as the affair was first made known. They halted at once, and set to work on a spot some thirty miles from here, where a few of them still remain. When I was last up to the diggings, there were full eight hundred men at work, at one place and another, with perhaps something like three hundred more passing backwards and forwards between here and the mines. I at first imagined that the gold would soon be exhausted by such crowds of seekers, but subsequent

observations have convinced me that it will take many years to bring about such a result, even with ten times the present number of people employed.

"What surprises me," continued the Captain, "is, that this country should have been visited by so many scientific men, and that not one of them should have ever stumbled upon the treasures; that scores of keen eyed trappers should have crossed this valley in every direction, and tribes of Indians have dwelt in it for centuries, and yet that this gold should have never been discovered. I myself have passed the very spot above a hundred times during the last ten years, but was just as blind as the rest of them, so I must not wonder at the discovery not having been made earlier."

The plan of operations adopted by most of the miners who were not Indians or Californians, was to form bands of three, five or ten, under the command of one of the number, whose name the party took, and by which it was afterwards known. Some larger companies were formed in the United States, and repaired to California, and their operations were of course, on a more extensive scale; they having all the necessary equipments of gold-washers and miners. Written rules were generally drawn up for the government of the parties, varying in particulars according to the peculiar views of the framers. These rules provided for the *modus operandi* of procuring the gold, supplying the party with necessaries, attending to the sick, and the division of the fruits of their labor.

One of the most frequented placers of California is called the Stanislaus mine, situated near the Stanislaus River. It was one of the first places worked to any extent by the gold-seekers, but not satisfying the expectations of some of the most greedy, it has since been partially abandoned. A description of this mine, and of the living and operations of its workers in the winter of 1848-49, will give a good general idea of the toils and privations endured by the early gold-seekers in that region, and, also, of their mode of procuring the precious metal at most of the mines. We extract from a recently published work, distinguished for minuteness of detail and accuracy of description.⁷

"The mine was a deep ravine, embosomed amidst lofty hills, surmounted by, and covered with pine, and having, in the bottom itself, abundance of rock, mud, and sand. Halliday and I encamped at the very lowest part of the ravine, at a little distance from Don Emanuel's party; a steep rock which towered above our heads affording us shelter, and a huge, flat stone beneath our feet promising a fair substitute for a dry bed. Here then we stretched our *machees* and blankets, and arranged our saddles and bags, so as to make ourselves as comfortable and warm as possible, although, in spite of our precautions and contrivances, and of a tolerably good fire, our encampment was bitterly cold, and we lay exposed to a heavy dew. We had given up our horses into the charge of the Indians, and I saw to their being safely placed in the *cavallard*, whilst Halliday went to chop wood; a

⁷ Personal Adventures in Upper and Lower California, by William Redmond Ryan.

task I was too weak to perform. I cannot say we slept; we might more correctly be said to have had a long and most uncomfortable doze, and when morning broke, we were shivering with cold, and shook the dew in a shower from our clothes. I consulted with my companion, and urged upon him the prudence of our setting to work to construct ourselves a sort of log cabin; otherwise I felt certain, from the experience of the past night, our sojourn at the mines would be likely to prove fatal to one or both of us. He was, however, far too eager to try his fortune at digging to listen to my proposal, at which he even smiled, probably at the bare idea of weather, privation, or toil, being able to affect his powerful frame. I saw him presently depart up the ravine, shouldering a pick, and glancing now and then at his knife, whilst I proceeded in search of materials for constructing a temporary place of shelter.

"As my strength was unequal to the task of felling timber, I endeavored to procure four poles, intending to sink them into the ground, and to stretch on the top of them a bed-tick I had reserved for the purpose. The contrivance was a sorry one at the best, but shelter was indispensable; and great was my disappointment – though I procured the timber after a painful search – to find that the rocks presented an insuperable obstacle to my employing it as I intended. My efforts to sink the poles proved utterly futile, and I was at last compelled to renounce the attempt in despair. I then packed up our goods into as close a compass as possible; and, having requested one of the Spaniards

in Don Emanuel's party to keep watch over them, departed to explore the ravine.

"Within a few paces of our encampment there was a large area of ground, probably half a mile square, the surface of which consisted of dark soil and slate, and was indented with innumerable holes of every possible dimension, from six inches to as many feet or more, wide and deep. In all of these lay abundance of water, of which large quantities are to be found a little beneath the surface, the ravine being supplied with it in great abundance by the rains that pour down from the hills during the wet season. To the extreme right of our camp, the ground assumed a more rocky character; and, from the vast deposit of stagnant water, did not seem to offer many attractions to the miners. Yet there was scarcely a spot in any of these places where the crow-bar, the pick, or the jack-knife, had not been busy: evidence that the whole locality must have been extremely rich in the precious metal, or it would not have been so thoroughly worked.

"In crossing the ravine, I was obliged to leap from one mound of earth to another, to avoid plunging ankle-deep in mud and water. It was wholly deserted in this part, though formerly so much frequented; and, with the exception of a few traders, who, having taken up their station here when times were good, had not yet made arrangements for removing to a more productive place, not a soul was to be seen.

"I walked on until I reached the trading-post of Mr. Anderson,

formerly our interpreter in the Lower Country, whom I felt delighted to meet with again. His shed was situated in one of the dampest parts of the mine, and consisted of a few upright poles, traversed by cross-pieces, and covered in with raw hides and leaves, but yet much exposed at the sides to the wind and the weather. He had a few barrels of flour and biscuit, which he retailed at two dollars a pound; for he made no difference between the price of the raw and the prepared material. The flour would go further, it was true; but then the biscuit required no cooking on the part of the miner, whose time was literally money, and whose interest therefore it was to economize it in every possible manner. He also sold unprepared coffee and sugar at six Yankee shillings a pound; dried beef at one dollar and a half; and pork, which was regarded as a great delicacy here, at two dollars for the same weight. The various articles of which his stock-in-trade consisted he had brought all the way from Monterey at considerable labor and expense; but, by the exercise of extraordinary tact, perseverance, and industry, he had succeeded in establishing a flourishing business.

"I discovered, however, that he possessed another resource – by which his gains were marvellously increased – in the services of seven or eight Indians, whom he kept constantly at work, in the rear of his shed, digging gold, and whose labor he remunerated with provisions, and occasional presents of articles of trifling value to him, but highly esteemed by the Indians. They were watched by an American overseer, who was employed by him,

to assist in the general business, particularly in slaughtering; for, as beef was scarce, he used to send his man in quest of cows and oxen; which he killed, cut up, salted and dried, in his shed, and watching the most favorable moment for the operation – namely, when meat could not be procured at the 'diggings' – never failed to realize his own price for it.

"Proceeding higher up the ravine, I observed a large tent erected on the slope of a hill, within a few yards of the bottom, where the gold is usually found. It was surrounded by a trench, the clay from which, as it was dug up, had apparently been thrown out against the canvas, forming a kind of embankment, rendering it at once water and weather-proof. I ventured into it, encountering on my way an immense piece of raw beef, suspended from the ridge-pole. Upon some stones in front, inclosing a small fire, stood a frying-pan, filled with rich looking beef collops, that set my mouth watering, and severely tested my honesty; for, although acorns are all very well in their way, and serve to stay the cravings of the stomach for awhile, I did not find my appetite any the less sharp, notwithstanding the quantity I had eaten. But I resisted the temptation, and penetrated further into the tent. At one side of it lay a crow-bar, and an old saddle that had seen rough service; yet not a soul appeared, and my eyes were again ogling the collops, whilst an inward voice whispered how imprudent it was to leave them frizzling there, when, all at once, a little man, in a 'hickory shirt,' with his face all bedaubed with pot-black and grease, darted out of some dark corner, flourishing in one hand

a long bowie knife, and in the other three by no means delicate slices of fat pork, which he at once dropped into the frying-pan, stooping down on one knee, and becoming immediately absorbed in watching the interesting culinary process then going on in it.

"I came up next with a group of three Sonomeans, or inhabitants of Sonoma, busily engaged on a small sandy flat – the only one I had observed – at the bottom of the ravine. There was no water near, although I noticed several holes which had evidently been sunk in quest of it. These men were actively pursuing a process that is termed 'dry-washing.' One was shovelling up the sand into a large cloth, stretched out upon the ground, and which, when it was tolerably well covered, he took up by the corners, and shook until the pebbles and larger particles of stone and dirt came to the surface. These he brushed away carefully with his hand, repeating the process of shaking and clearing until the residue was sufficiently fine for the next operation. This was performed by the other men, who, depositing the sand in large bowls hewn out of a solid block of wood, which they held in their hands, dexterously cast the contents up before them, about four feet into the air, catching the sand again very cleverly, and blowing at it as it descended. This process being repeated, the sand gradually disappeared, and from two to three ounces of pure gold remained at the bottom of the bowl. Easy as the operation appeared to me to be, I learned, upon inquiry, that to perform it successfully required the nicest management,

the greatest perseverance, and especially robust lungs. The men I saw had lighted upon a productive sand; but very often, indeed, those who adopt this mode of gold washing toil long at barren soil before they discover the uselessness of laboring thus arduously.

"I noticed, that although the largest proportion of the gold obtained in this manner presented the appearance of a fine powder, it was interspersed, here and there, with large scales of the precious deposit, and with a few solid lumps. The metal was of a dingy hue, and, at a cursory view, might easily have been mistaken for particles of yellow clay, or laminæ of stone of the same color. The Sonomeans placed the product of their labor in buckskin bags, which were hung around their necks, and carefully concealed inside of their shirts. They work in this fashion at the mines in their own country; but I doubt if any other than a native constitution could very long bear up against the peculiar labor of 'dry-washing' in such a climate and under such difficult circumstances. I felt half tempted to try the process myself, for the surface of this sandy bed was literally sparkling with innumerable particles of the finest gold, tritured to a polish by the running of the waters – as I conjectured; but I soon discovered how fruitless my efforts would be. Had I possessed any chemical agents at hand, however, I might soon have exhausted the bed of its precious contents, and should, doubtless, have realized an immense weight of the metal of the very purest quality.

"I may as well mention here, that of the various new machines

manufactured and sent out to California for the purpose of digging and washing gold, the great majority have been found quite useless. There are two or three of them, however, that have been employed with great success. I have made a sketch of those most in use amongst the diggers, as my readers may feel desirous of acquainting themselves with the latest improvements introduced in the art of mining, as practised in this country. They consist, in the first place, of the washing-rocker, or 'cradle,' which has, in numerous instances, formed the model for ruder machines, constructed by the miners themselves, whilst in the mountains. The lid, at the bottom of which lie the holes through which the gold and soil pass, is fastened by hinges at the back, in order that it may be raised up, the more readily to throw off, from time to time, the stones that accumulate. Three men are required to work this rocker with success, and there are few processes in which a smaller number could operate without extraordinary labor. One person throws the soil upon the lid, another pours on the water, whilst a third is engaged in rocking the cradle by the handle attached to it for the purpose. In this way these men keep each other constantly employed; and, indeed, this cradle, like its prototype, has often proved the bond of union between individuals who would otherwise have separated, for this simple reason, that one man could not work it half so profitably alone. The cross pieces, observable at the bottom, serve to intercept the gold as it flows towards the smaller end of the machine, whilst the dirt is carried off by the admixture with the water produced

by the continual 'rocking.' As the earth becomes thoroughly dissolved, the gold naturally gravitates to the bottom; and thus it is impossible for any but the very finest particles of the ore to escape.

"The second machine, in importance, is the gold-borer. It is particularly useful in examining the bottom of streams, and consists of a short conical cylinder at the end of a long handle, containing inside, at its lower extremity, a valve, arranged so as to admit the earth and gold, and prevent their escaping when the receptacle is full. This instrument is used in the same manner as an augur. The third machine, the pan, is also of late introduction, but has been found rather too deep for the purpose for which it is intended.

"Notwithstanding the success which seemed to attend the labors of the Sonomeans, I subsequently discovered that the entire quantity of gold thus painfully obtained, disappeared at the gambling-stalls. They were generally clad most wretchedly, many of them wearing nothing more than a dirty shirt, a pair of light pantaloons, and the wide *sombrero* peculiar to the inhabitants of this country and Mexico. Some few sported a *serapa*, but they were men of superior native rank, of which this garment is a distinctive characteristic.

"Continuing my route up the ravine, I met a man named Corrigan, galloping along with two fine horses, one of which he was leading. He stopped as soon as he recognized me, and we were soon engaged in a very interesting conversation respecting

the doings at the 'diggins.' The substance of his information was, that he had made a great deal of money at the mines by digging, but infinitely more by speculation. He thought of buying a *ranché*, marrying, and settling down. He was then going to seek for pasture for his horses; and, bidding me a hasty good-bye, galloped off, and soon disappeared.

"As I advanced, the ground became drier and more sandy, rock and slate of various kinds abounding; some quite soft and friable, yielding readily to the pickaxe or the crowbar; and, in other places, so hard as to resist the utmost strength of the miners. Several of the diggers were perseveringly exploring the localities where the rotten sorts of slate were found in the largest quantities, and I saw them pick out a good deal of gold with their jack-knives. Their principal aim was to discover what they termed 'a pocket,' which is nothing more than a crevice between the blocks of slate, into which a deposit of gold has been washed by the heavy rains from the higher districts, and which, soon accumulating, swell into rapid torrents, which rush down these ravines with extraordinary swiftness and force, sweeping every thing before them.

"There did not appear to be many mining parties at the Stanislaus at this particular period, for the encampments were generally from two to five miles apart, the space between them increasing the higher you advanced towards the mountains, to the foot of which the ravine extended – altogether, a distance of many miles. The lower part of the mine, I concluded from this

fact, to be by far the richer, simply from the circumstance I have mentioned; richer, comparatively, because here the deposits of gold are more easily found and extracted; not richer, in reality, as the metal must exist in immense quantities in the upper regions, from which it is washed down by the rains and floods into the lower districts. The virgin deposit would, doubtless, be difficult to come at; but, if sought after at all, that it is to be sought in the mountains and high lands, I feel persuaded.

"I turned back, after prosecuting my excursion until the ravine became almost too rocky to allow me to proceed, and until I saw that the 'diggings' diminished materially in number. On clambering the hills at the side, I beheld abundance of pines, oak, cedar, and palm; but no grass, nor vegetation of any other kind, save prickly shrubs, with here and there a patch of extremely dry moss. On my way back, I passed several tents and huts erected by the miners, all of the very poorest and most wretched description.

"I found Van Anker's party at dinner, in front of their tent. Van showed me a leathern bag, containing several pounds' weight of very pure gold, and which was carelessly tossed about from one to the other for examination. It was the produce of his morning's work, he having fortunately struck upon a large pocket.

"On inquiring whether, as there existed such strong temptation, robberies were not very frequent, I was informed, that, although thefts had occurred, yet, generally speaking, the miners dwelt in no distrust of one another, and left thousands of dollars' worth in gold dust in their tents whilst they were absent

digging. They all felt, intuitively, that honesty was literally the best policy, and a determination to punish robbery seemed to have been come to by all as a measure essential to the security and welfare of the mining community, independent of any question of principle.

"Gambling and drinking were carried on, I found, to a most demoralizing extent. Brandy and champagne, whenever they were brought to the 'diggins,' realized enormous prices, varying from sixteen to twenty dollars a bottle; and some of the men would, after accumulating some hundred dollars, squander the whole in purchasing these beverages. Believing the supply of gold to be inexhaustible, they persisted in this reckless course, and discovered only when it became too late to redeem their error, that even here gold cannot always be procured. They went on until the *placers* failed to yield, and were then reduced to great extremities.

"The miners were by no means averse to lending 'dust' to those who required it, notwithstanding that the lenders often experienced some difficulty in getting back the advance. One of Van's party, for instance, lent another six ounces of gold, which not being returned at the stipulated period, nor for some time afterwards, he dunned his debtor every meal, until the latter, who had quietly submitted to the importunity, begged him to 'just wait ten minutes, and time it.' He shouldered his pickaxe, as he said this, and going out of the shed, returned within the time, bringing back more than sufficient to liquidate the debt. This little incident

created much amusement."

The whole of the gold region lies between the San Joachin and Sacramento Rivers and the California range of mountains. The principal mines are the Towallomie, the Stanislaus, the Macalamo, the Merced, Fremont's Diggings, or Mariposa, the Calaveras, the Macassime, the South, Middle, and North Forks, Bear Creek, Yuba, Feather River, and the Sacramento. The mines are nothing more than so many ravines, which run across from the range of mountains, and are flooded by the torrents which pour down from the upper region during the rainy season, and which have been supposed to bring the gold down with them.

The Macalamo Dry Diggings is considered one of the richest placers in the gold region. It is a long ravine, the soil of which is red, and sometimes blueish in places, sand predominating. The blue clay is thought to be the richest by the diggers. The sides of the ravine are so steep and irregular, that the miners are troubled to find resting places of a night. The gold taken out of this mine runs large; the average size of the lumps being that of a pea. Pieces have been taken out of it that weighed above two pounds.

Instances of robbery and murder have not been few in the gold region, as might be conjectured from a knowledge of the motley character of the miners, and the temptations offered to avaricious spirits. Yet, all things considered, the number of instances will not appear so very extraordinary. Lynch law, the only resort of the wronged in pocket, or the friends of the murdered, exercised its terrible power, and tended to prevent the crimes that would,

otherwise, have been frequent. An instance of this summary justice we here relate, to illustrate the means by which the miners protected their lives and property.

"A sailor, a deserter from the Ohio, took it into his head, one night, to rob one of the volunteers, who had set up a drinking store. He had already got two bags, containing about five thousand dollars' worth of gold; but, not satisfied with them, grasped at a third, half full of dollars in silver. The jingling of the coin awoke the owner, who, springing up, gave the alarm, and, after a hot pursuit, the thief was captured, and bound to a tree until morning. At about nine, a jury of twelve miners sat to consider the case, a volunteer named Nutman officiating for Judge Lynch. Of course, he was found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged; but, some opposition being raised to depriving him of life, and a milder punishment suggested; it was finally determined that he should receive a hundred lashes on his bare back, have his ears cut off, and his head shaved, so that he might be every where recognized in the mining districts. This sentence gave general satisfaction. The poor wretch was at once fastened by his hands to the branch of a tree, and the fellows proceeded to shave his head, whilst some sailors of the party set to work manufacturing cats. His feet were then tied together to the foot of the tree, and when his head had been shaved, a doctor lopped off his ears. He bled a good deal; but, when the blood was staunched, they set to flogging him, and they didn't spare him either. After this, they kicked him out.

"Well, he went off, and when he was about half a mile away, stole a mule, and rode over to the 'Calaveras' diggings, where the animal was claimed by the owner. He was thereupon tried for mule-stealing, and sentenced to receive another flogging; but when the miners came to strip him, they found his back so shockingly cut up, that they took compassion on him, and contented themselves with driving him out of the district, where he never appeared again."

During the summer season, when exposure and labor in the mines, together with unwholesome food, produce a great prevalence of fever and dysentery, the native Californians make use of a singular remedy. It is called the *temascal*; being a sort of hot air bath, shaped something like a sentry-box. It is built of wicker-work, and afterwards plastered with mud until it becomes air tight. The mode of application of this remedy is as follows: – A large fire is built close up to the door of the structure – a narrow aperture, just large enough for a man to squeeze through. This is allowed to burn itself out, having while burning, heated to a very high degree the air in the interior of the box. Into this the patient screws himself, and there remains until a profuse perspiration is produced, which is checked suddenly by a plunge into the chilly waters of the river. This is of the nature of a Thompsonian remedy.

The absorbing interest with which the gold-seekers proceed in their work is admirably depicted by one of the adventurers, in

a book published after his return.⁸

"Arriving on the *bar*, the scene presented to us was new indeed, and not more extraordinary than impressive. Some with long-handled shovels, delved among clumps of bushes, or by the side of large rocks, never raising their eyes for an instant, others with pick and shovel worked among stone and gravel, or with trowels searched under banks and roots of trees, where, if rewarded with small lumps of gold, the eye shone brighter for an instant, when the search was immediately and more ardently resumed. At the edge of the stream, or knee deep and waist deep in water, as cold as melted ice and snow could make it, some were washing gold with tin pans or the common cradle rocker, while the rays of the sun were pouring down on their heads, with an intensity exceeding any thing we ever experienced at home, though it was but the middle of April.

"The thirst for gold and the labor of acquisition overruled all else, and totally absorbed every faculty. Complete silence reigned among the miners; they addressed not a word to each other, and seemed averse to all conversation. All the sympathies of common humanity, all the finer and noble attributes of our nature seemed lost, buried beneath the soil they were eagerly delving, or swept away with the rushing waters that revealed the shining treasure."

This extract is suggestive of considerable reflection. The same amount of attention given to any pursuit must produce results equally as satisfactory as that given to gold-seeking. But gold

⁸ Sights in the Gold Region, or Scenes by the Way, by Theodore T. Johnson.

carries with it such obvious enjoyments to the grosser minds, that the pursuit of it alone can attract their attention sufficiently to effect any thing considerable. Could the pure enjoyments connected with the practice of virtue be made as obvious to all minds, the result would be something at which the philanthropist might rejoice.

The extremes of heat and cold, during the summer, in the valleys and *cañons* of the gold region, are very remarkable. From nine o'clock in the morning till five in the afternoon, the heat is almost intolerable. The sun's rays pour down through an atmosphere clear and dry, and their power is increased by reflection from the sides of the *cañons* and mountains, and from the surface of the streams. During the night, the air becomes so cold as to render blankets very serviceable. This is caused by the waters of the different streams rising during the night, their volume being increased by the melting of the snows of the Sierra Nevada, by the heat of the previous day.

Thousands of Indians, belonging to the Snake, Shoshonee, and Crow tribes, are at work at the mines. They are generally employed by some of the wealthy white men, and are paid in provisions and a sort of liquor made from California grapes, called pisco. What money or gold they get for themselves is spent in gambling – a vice to which they are most excessively addicted. Instances are not few of their having staked the produce of their labor during some weeks subsequent to the game. Many of the Indians desire no other pay than as much pisco as they can drink,

with a little acorn bread.

The native Californians form a goodly proportion of the gold-seekers. Many of the men are accompanied by their wives, who are attended by Indian girls. The graceful Spanish costume of the Californians adds quite a feature to the busy scene at the mines. There may be seen the long, lank forms of the Yankees, with their wide white trousers and straw hats; the half-naked Indians; the native born Californians, with their dusky visages and lustrous black eyes. The latter are generally clad in a short, tight jacket, with lace trimming, and velvet breeches, with a silk sash fastened round the waist. With regard to the appearance of the women, and, also, for the sake of the description of one of the evening entertainments in the gold region, we quote from a recent tourist, to whom we have been indebted before.⁹

"The appearance of the women is graceful and coquettish. Their petticoats, short enough to display in most instances a well-turned ankle, are richly laced and embroidered, and striped and flounced with gaudy colors, of which scarlet seems to have the preference. Their tresses hang in luxuriant plaits down their backs; and in all the little accessories of dress, such as earrings, necklaces, &c., the costume is very rich. Its distinguishing feature, however, is the *reboso*, a sort of scarf, generally made of cotton, which answers to the mantilla of Old Spain. It is worn in many different and graceful fashions – sometimes twined round the waist and shoulders; at others, hanging in pretty festoons

⁹ Four Months Among the Gold Finders of California, by J. Tyrwhitt Brooks, M.D.

about the figure, but always disposed with that indescribable degree of coquettish grace which Spanish women have been for ages allowed to possess in the management of the fan and the mantilla. Since these arrivals, almost every evening a fandango is got up on the green, before some of the tents. The term fandango, though originally signifying a peculiar kind of dance, seemed to be used here for an evening's dancing entertainment, in which many different *pas* are introduced. I was present at a fandango a few nights ago, when a couple of performers were dancing 'el jarabe,' which seemed to consist chiefly of a series of monotonous toe and heel movements on the ground. The motions of the foot were, however, wonderfully rapid, and always in exact time to the music. But at these entertainments the waltz seems to be the standing dish. It is danced with numerous very intricate figures, to which however, all the Californians appear quite *au fait*. Men and women alike waltz beautifully, with an easy, graceful swinging motion.

"It is quite a treat, after a hard day's work, to go at nightfall to one of these fandangos. The merry notes of the guitar and the violin announce them to all comers; and a motley enough looking crowd, every member of which is puffing away at a cigar, forms an applauding circle around the dancers, who smoke like all the rest. One cannot help being struck by the picturesque costume and graceful movements of the performers, who appear to dance not only with their legs, but with all their hearts and souls. During the interval between the dances, coffee is consumed by the

senoras, and the coffee with something stronger by the senors; so that, as the night advances, the merriment gets, if not 'fast and furious,' at least animated and imposing."

The dangers which the adventurers are subjected to encounter are often increased by the hostility of the Indians. These, however, only molest those who are daring enough to frequent the outskirts of the gold region. There the Indians are treacherous, and will attack small parties, even after smoking the pipe of peace with them. Their principal weapons are bows and arrows; for though many of them have guns in their possession, the scarcity of ammunition prevents them from using them to any purpose. The following description of an encounter with them by a small party, encamped in the valley of the Bear River, then seldom frequented by white men, will give an idea of their mode of attack:

"We were just on the point of returning to the camp to dinner, when Dowling, who was standing near some sage bushes at the upper part of the ravine, heard a rustling among them, and on moving in the direction of the noise saw an Indian stealthily creeping along, who, as soon as he perceived he was discovered, discharged an arrow which just missed its mark, but lacerated, and that rather severely, Dowling's ear. The savage immediately set up a most terrific whoop, and ran off, but tumbled before he could draw another arrow from his quiver, while Dowling, rushing forward, buried his mattock in the head of his fallen foe, killing him instantaneously.

"At this moment we heard the crack of a rifle in the direction of the camp, which, with the Indian's whoop at the same moment, completely bewildered us. Every man, however, seized his rifle, and Dowling, hastening towards us, told us of what had just occurred. All was still for the next few moments, and I mounted a little hill to reconnoitre. Suddenly I saw a troop of Indians, the foremost of them on horseback, approaching at full speed. I hastily returned to my companions, and we sought shelter in a little dell, determined to await there, and resist the attack, for it was evident that the savages' intentions were any thing but pacific.

"It was a moment of breathless excitement. We heard the tramp, tramp of the horses coming on towards us, but as yet, they and their riders were concealed from our view. I confess I trembled violently, not exactly with fear, although I expected that a few moments would see us all scalped by our savage assailants. It was the suddenness of the danger which startled me, and made my heart throb violently; but at that moment, just as I was reproaching myself with the want of courage, a terrific yell rung through the air at a short distance from us, and forty or fifty warlike Indians appeared in sight. My whole frame was nerved in an instant, and when a shower of arrows flew amongst us, I was the first man to answer it with a rifle-shot, which brought one of the foremost Indians off his horse to the ground. I instantly reloaded, but in the mean while the rifles of my companions had been doing good service. We had taken up our position behind a

row of willow trees which skirted the banks of a narrow stream, and here we were protected in a great measure from the arrows of our assailants, which were in most cases turned aside by the branches. A second volley of rifle-shots soon followed the first; and while we were reloading, and the smoke had slightly cleared away, I could see that we had spread consternation in the ranks of the Indian warriors, and that they were gathering up their wounded preparatory to retiring. I had my eye on an old man, who had just leaped from his horse. My finger was on the trigger, when I saw him coolly advance, and, taking one of his wounded companions, who had been shot through the leg, in his arms, place him on a horse, then mounting his own, and catching hold of the other animal's bridle, gallop off at full speed. Although I knew full well that if the fortune of the day had gone against us, these savages would not have spared a single man of our party, still I could not find it in my heart to fire on the old chief, and he carried off his wounded comrade in safety.

"In a few minutes the hill-sides were clear, and when we emerged from our shelter, all that was visible of the troop of warriors was three of them weltering in their blood, a bow or two, and some empty quivers, and a few scattered feathers and tomahawks, lying on the ground."

The grizzly bear is also one of the terrors encountered by the gold-seekers. This animal grows to the size of four feet in height and six in length. It is one of the most ferocious animals of North America. Mules and cattle of various kinds, and even men,

are attacked by it, and its great strength generally enables it to come off with its prey. Great quickness and courage are absolute essentials of those who hunt these animals, or encounter them accidentally. An adventure of two or three gold-seekers, on their road to the mines, accidentally meeting with a grizzly bear, is thus shortly detailed in the journal of a returned adventurer.¹⁰

"About half way from the *rancheria* a loud braying, followed by a fierce growl, attracted our attention, and in a few moments a frightened mule, closely pursued by an enormous grizzly bear, descended the hill-side within forty yards of where we stood leaning on our rifles. As the bear reached the road, Higgins, with his usual quickness and intrepidity, fired, and an unearthly yell from the now infuriated animal told with what effect. The mule in the interval had crossed the road, and was now scampering away over the plains, and Bruin, finding himself robbed of his prey, turned upon us. I levelled my rifle and gave him the contents with hearty good will, but the wounds he had received only served to exasperate the monster, who now made towards us with rapid strides. Deeming prudence the better part of valor, we ran with all convenient speed in the direction of the camp, within a hundred yards of which my foot became entangled in the underbrush, and I fell headlong upon the earth. In another instant I should have fallen a victim to old Bruin's rage, but a well-directed ball from my companion's rifle entered his brain and arrested his career. The whole party now came to our assistance

¹⁰ Six Months in the Gold Mines, by E. Gould Buffum

and soon despatched Mr. Grizzly. Dragging him to camp, we made a hearty supper from his fat ribs, and, as I had probably been the more frightened of the two, I claimed as an indemnity his skin, which protected me afterward from the damp ground many a cold night. He was a monstrous fellow, measuring nearly four feet in height, and six in length, and a stroke from his huge paw would, had he caught us, have entirely dissipated the golden dreams of Higgins and myself."

The same writer gives quite a graphic description of an attack of the scourge of the miners, the disease called scurvy. He says:

"I was again dreaming of fortune and success, when my hopes were blasted by an attack of a terrible scourge that wrought destruction through the northern mines during the winter of 1848. I allude to the land scurvy. The exposed and unaccustomed life of two-thirds of the miners, and their entire subsistence upon salt meat, without any mixture of vegetable matter, had produced this disease, which was experienced more or less by one-half of the miners within my knowledge. Its symptoms and progress may not be uninteresting. It was first noticed in the 'Dry Diggings,' where, about the middle of February, many persons were rendered unable to walk by swellings of the lower limbs, and severe pains in them. It was at first supposed to be rheumatism, and was treated as such. But it withstood the most powerful applications used in that complaint, and was finally decided to be scurvy. So long as the circumstances which caused it continued, the disease made rapid progress. Many, who could

obtain no vegetables, or vegetable acids, lingered out a miserable existence and died, – while others, fortunate enough to reach the settlements, where potatoes and acids could be procured, recovered. I noticed its first attack upon myself by swelling and bleeding of the gums, which was followed by a swelling of both legs below the knee, which rendered me unable to walk; and for three weeks I was laid up in my tent, obliged to feed upon the very articles that had caused the disease, and growing daily weaker, without any reasonable prospect of relief. There were, at that time, about eight hundred persons at work on the river, and hoping to get some medicine, I despatched one of my companions one morning, with instructions to procure me, if possible, a dose of salts, and to pay for it any price that should be asked. He returned at night with the consoling news that he had failed, having found only two persons who had brought the article with them, and they refused to sell it at any price.

"I was almost in despair; with only a blanket between myself and the damp, cold earth, and a thin canvas to protect me from the burning sun by day, and the heavy dews by night, I lay day after day enduring the most intense suffering from pain in my limbs, which were now becoming more swollen, and were turning completely black. Above me rose those formidable hills which I must ascend ere I could obtain relief. I believe I should have died, had not accident discovered the best remedy that could have been produced. In the second week of my illness, one of our party, in descending the hill on which he had been deer hunting,

found near its base, and strewn along the foot-track, a quantity of beans which sprouted from the ground, and were in leaf. Some one, in descending the hill with a bag of them on his back, had probably dropped them. My companion gathered a quantity and brought them into camp. I had them boiled, and lived entirely on them for several days, at the same time using a decoction of the bark of the spruce tree. These seemed to operate magically; and in a week after commencing the use of them, I found myself able to walk, – and as soon as my strength was partially restored, I ascended the hill, and with two companions walked into Culoma; and by living principally upon a vegetable diet, which I procured by paying three dollars per pound for potatoes, in a very short time I recovered."

Thus life in the gold region is made up of variety and contrast. Sometimes the diggers and washers pass weeks busily engaged at their toilsome occupation, without the monotony of the time and scene being disturbed. Again, adventures and exciting incidents will be plentiful and various. At one time, pleasant weather and fandangos offer easy enjoyment; at another, extremes of weather, hard work, and bad food render the life of the miner almost intolerable. Frequently, the gold-seeker chances to meet spots that yield ample reward for his toil; and often he works beneath the fierce rays of a broiling sun, while his legs are in chilly water, and his day's toil scarce yields more than enough to pay for his living. The trading-posts, situated at and near the mines, do a far more certain and an equally profitable business. They

are generally the establishments of shrewd, speculating Yankees, who know what sort of labor is requisite to make a gold-seeker successful, and prefer to trust to the profits of bargaining in provisions and mining necessities for gold.

That the country is pregnant with an enormous quantity of the precious metal is unquestionable. But that severe and weakening labor, together with tough constitutions, are indispensable requisites for procuring it, scarcely admits of a doubt. Very few spend any considerable time in working at the "diggings," who do not suffer from exposure, and lose a portion of their constitutional stability. So far, all attempts at the construction of machines for washing the gold from the sand, have been of little avail. Machines have been invented and carried out to the gold region by some of the numerous companies, which, upon trial, have soon been abandoned for the "cradle," and common wash pan; but still, the field for invention is open, and the labor now necessary for procuring the gold is susceptible of considerable diminution. Of course, the means of transporting provisions and other necessities to the mines are constantly improving, as the country is becoming settled; and thus, one great source of privation and disease is rapidly diminishing.

CHAPTER VIII

DESCRIPTION OF SOME OF THE CITIES AND TOWNS OF CALIFORNIA, BEFORE AND AFTER THE DISCOVERY OF THE GOLD MINES

At the time of the discovery of the existence of gold in the region of the Sacramento, San Francisco was a very inconsiderable town. As soon as the news of the discovery was spread among its inhabitants, it became almost deserted. Indeed, at one time, there was only seven male inhabitants left in the town. The site of the present city of San Francisco was not then occupied by more than fifty houses in all. These were occupied by a few foreign merchants and some native Californians. The houses were rudely constructed, the principal materials being adobés, or unburnt bricks. They were generally one story high, and most of them were erected near the beach; while at the rear of the "town," was a sandy plain terminated by a range of hills. But as soon as the news of the gold discovery reached the United States, and other countries, companies for mining purposes were immediately formed, and emigrants soon crowded every route to the "Land of Promise." Then San Francisco began to be the

great receptacle of the emigrants and the merchandise of various kinds necessary for their maintenance. The following is a very complete picture of the city after the spreading of the gold news, and the flood of emigration had commenced.

"Numberless vessels, mostly from the United States, filled the bay, in front of San Francisco, many of them being deserted by their crews, and unable to procure others to take their places. On landing, I had to clamber up a steep hill, on the top of which, and opposite to where I stood, was a large wooden house, two stories high, and scarcely half finished. In the rear of this, rose another and a steeper hill, whose slopes were covered with a multiplicity of tents. To my right, ran a sort of steep, or precipice, defended by sundry pieces of cannon, which commanded the entrance to the harbor. I next came to the 'Point,' and, crossing it, found myself within the town.

"The first objects that attracted my notice were several canvas houses, measuring from ten to forty feet square, some being grog-shops, others eating establishments, and the larger set apart as warehouses, or places of storage. The proprietors of the latter were making enormous sums by the accommodation their tents afforded to the hundreds of travellers who were arriving every day from different parts, and who, being extremely embarrassed as to what they should do with their luggage, were heartily glad to find any safe place to store it in, and content to pay for the convenience.

"The spectacle which the beach presented from a convenient

opening, whence I could comprise the whole at a glance, was singularly interesting and curious. A crowd of individuals, in motley garb, and of every variety of race, might be seen pressing eagerly upward towards the town, jostling and pushing one another, in their anxiety to be first, yet looking eagerly about them, as if to familiarize themselves at once with the country of their adoption. Here were dandies from the United States and from France, picking their steps mincingly, as they strove to keep pace with the sturdy fellows who carried their luggage; their beaver hats, fashionable frock-coats, irreproachable and well-strapped pantaloons, exciting the derisive remarks of the spectators, the majority of them 'old Californians,' whose rough labor at the 'diggins' had taught them to estimate such *niaiseries* at their proper value. By their side stalked the stately and dignified Spaniard, covered with his broad-brimmed, low-crowned *sombrero*, and gracefully enveloped in his ample *serapa*, set off by a bright scarlet sash. He turns neither to the right nor to the left, nor heeds the crowd about him, but keeps on the even tenor of his way – though even he has occasionally to jump for it – presenting, in his demeanor and costume, a striking contrast to the more bustling activity of the Yankees, who are elbowing every one, in their anxiety to go a-head. A lot of shopboys, too – mere lads, as spruce and neatly attired as though they had just stepped out of some fashionable emporium, mingle with the rest, and, as they enter the town, strike up the popular parody —

'Oh, California. That's the land for me!
I'm bound for the Sacramento, with
The wash-bowl on my knee.'

And presently, their brother-adventurers, excited by hopes of the wildest kind, join vociferously in chorus, in the exuberance of their joy.

"A group of Englishmen, muscular in form, and honest in feature, are chaffering with the keen-witted Yankee porters for the carriage of their luggage. There is an air of dogged resolution about them, that plainly indicates they will not submit to what they evidently consider an imposition. Such a sum for so slender a service! Well, then, they can carry their baggage themselves: so they will; and, quickly shouldering it, some depart in the track of the rest, whilst two or three remain behind, to watch what is left, until their friends return. They are manifestly well known to one another, and seem to be almost intimate; the voyage has made them friends.

"Here come a number of Chilians and Peruvians, and a goodly number of natives from the Sandwich Islands. A couple of Irishmen, too! I know them by their vivacity, and by the odd trick they have of getting into every body's way; to say nothing of their broad, merry faces. Their property is in common, it seems; for they have only one small pack between them.

"Here come ten or a dozen plainly but comfortably dressed mechanics; hard-working men they seem, and just the sort of

persons to make their way in a country where the artisan occupies his proper position, and where honest toil – and dishonest, too, sometimes – is almost certain to reap a harvest. Far differently will you fare, and far preferable, too, will be your lot, in regions where privation is the rule, to that of many amongst your numerous fellow-travellers, unaccustomed as they are to laborious occupations – with frames uninured to fatigue, and constitutions unhabituated to scanty fare, to exposure to heat and cold, and wet and sudden changes! Whilst you are succeeding in your object, they will grow wearied, disappointed, and homesick, and long to be back again on the theatre of their former struggles.

"The human stream ceases not to flow from the vessels in the harbor; no sooner is one boat-load disposed of than another arrives, and so on, until the town is gorged with new-comers, who, after a few days' sojourn, to recruit their strength, after the fatigues of a long and irksome voyage, depart, and are seen no more for months; many, perhaps, never to return. Very few of this vast multitude deserve the epithet of poor. To get here at all requires money; and to maintain one's self after getting here, the emigrant must have some little means.

"The majority of the emigrants are men occupying a respectable station in society; some are even distinguished in their calling; but the eager desire of making a fortune in a hurry has induced them to throw up good employments and comfortable homes; to leave friends, relatives, connexions, wife,

children, and familiar associations, to embark their strength, intelligence, and activity, in this venture. All is bustle where they have landed: boats going to and fro; rafts slowly discharging their cumbrous loads; porters anxiously and interestedly civil; all excited; all bent on gain; ships innumerable in the bay; mountains around; a clear, blue sky above; and the bright waters dancing in the sun, until they touch the horizon in the distance, blending their brightness with his golden track.

"I walked on until I came up to a group of men, who, like myself, were looking on the busy scene before us with no small degree of interest. I recognized amongst them two of the volunteers, with whom I forthwith claimed acquaintance. The whole party had come from the mines, as was easily to be seen from their appearance, which was something the worse for wear, their countenances being weather-beaten and bronzed by exposure; whilst their attire, consisting of buckskin coats, leather leggings, and broad-brimmed hats, denoted the sort of labor in which they had been recently engaged. I learned from them, in the course of a subsequent conversation, that they had all of them been successful at the 'diggings.' One of the number had made, or 'picked,' two thousand dollars, and the rest, from that to nine thousand dollars each, within the space of a few months. With this, however, they were far from satisfied, most of them being determined to realize a large fortune before they quitted the country; for not one of them seemed to have the remotest intention of settling.

"The party had come down from the mines to make purchases, and to enjoy a little recreation. They were admirable specimens of their class – hardy in appearance and rough in demeanor; but shrewd, withal, and toil-enduring. For the moment, their conversation turned upon the prospects of the newly-landed emigrants – for I should have stated that there were one or two arrivals in the harbor – and they were unsparing of their remarks upon such of the new comers as by their dress, or any physical peculiarity, offered a fair target for their witticisms, which were not less pointed than coarse.

"The discovery of the gold mines, has done at once for San Francisco what it was reasonable to anticipate time only could have effected; and its progress in importance has far outstripped the most sanguine expectations which could be based upon any hypothesis hazarded on the strength of its admirable position and facilities for trade. Nevertheless, its growth seems unnatural; and, looking at it as I saw it then, it left on my mind the impression of instability, so marvellous was it to gaze upon a city of tents, wood, and canvas, starting up thus suddenly, forming but a halting-place to the thousands who visited it; having for citizens a large majority of gamblers and speculators; and presenting of civilization but the rudest outline, and some of its worst vices. It was impossible, indeed, for an observer to contemplate San Francisco, at this particular period of its history, and not to feel that every thing about it savored of transition. A storm or a fire must have destroyed the whole in a few hours; for every house,

shed, or tent, had manifestly been constructed merely to serve the end of the actual occupier; they were all adapted for trading, but not a convenience or a comfort appertained to them, to indicate a desire or an intention of settlement. Every day brought new-comers, and added to the number of ephemeral structures which crowded the hill-sides. Mechanics of every description of calling were at work, earnestly, busily, and cheerfully; and, whichever way I turned, there was bustle and activity; yet, withal, I felt that such a state of things was unsound, because resting on what was essentially speculative, and I doubted not but a great change must come before the city could be regarded as substantially advancing. Comprised at a glance, it presented no other appearance save that of a confused crowd of tenements, of every variety of construction; some high, some low, perched upon the steep hills, or buried in the deep valleys – but still tents and canvas every where and any where, their numbers defying calculation, their structure and position all analysis. There existed neither wells nor ponds within a very considerable distance; and what struck me as most singular, being aware that the Spaniards had a mission here, there was no sign of a church. I subsequently ascertained that the site of the Mission of Dolores, about five miles distant, had been preferred by the Spaniards, and that divine service was performed there still.

"As I proceeded along the road leading into the principal street of the city, I was uncomfortably reminded that it would soon become necessary for me to select a place where I could procure

refreshment; and in connexion with this necessity, arose another consideration no less important, namely, where I should lodge? There was no other mode of solving the difficulty, save by an exploration of the localities; accordingly, I kept these objects in view, whilst I also gratified my curiosity by continuing my perambulations.

"In this same road, but nearer to the entrance of the main street than I should say was, under any circumstances, altogether pleasant, stood the *correl* of the Washington Market, being a spacious area of ground, inclosed with stakes, over which were stretched raw hides. Owing to the large number of cattle slaughtered here for the use of the inhabitants, the odor from this place was insufferable, and I quickened my pace until my olfactory organs became sensible of a purer atmosphere.

"I turned into the principal street, and soon came up to the market itself, which is a wooden house, about thirty feet square, kept by an American. To my right, as I advanced, were some stores and hotels, and a confectioner's shop of remarkably neat and clean appearance: these were all one story, wooden buildings. One of the hotels was appropriately designated as 'The Colonnade.' It was kept by a volunteer named Huxley, and differed from every similar establishment in the town, inasmuch as the proprietor allowed neither gambling nor drunkenness on his premises. To this the 'Gotham Saloon,' a little further on, offered a perfect contrast, for here there were several *monté* rooms and a large bowling-alley, where persons who had a

taste for the latter amusement might indulge in their favorite pastime for a dollar a game. This saloon was likewise kept by two volunteers, as was also the confectioner's by a fourth; so that three of the most noted houses in the town were rented by men, who, a few months before, scarcely possessed any thing save their enterprise and their industry, but who were now on the high road to opulence. The more credit was due to them, and others of their brethren whom fortune had similarly favored, because, at first, they had deep-rooted prejudices to encounter, which prudence and perseverance only could have enabled them to overcome.

"I came next to the Square, or 'Plaza,' on one side of which, and fronting it, stood the 'Miner's Bank,' established by a Mr. Wright, a keen speculator, who had secured possession of a large extent of landed property, which he was turning to the very best account. On the left of the Plaza, I noticed a spacious-looking wooden building, two stories high, called the 'Parker House;' but the handsome piazza in front caused me to hesitate on the threshold; for I apprehended – and not without reason – that, even in California, appearances must be paid for; as, therefore, my purse was not overstocked, I prudently sought a more modest establishment.

"I passed another hotel, similar to this one, but not quite so large, and came presently to a low wooden house, of most unattractive and unprepossessing exterior, which was dignified by the name of the '*Café Français*.' As this seemed likely to suit my present convenience, and to promise a scale of prices on a par

with its external appearance, I entered boldly, and seated myself at the dining-table. I noticed, as I went in, that, notwithstanding the poverty without, there was abundance within; the counter being literally overcharged with French pastry, a variety of ingenious culinary preparations, and some foreign liquors.

"After I had finished my repast, consisting of a beef-steak, two eggs, and a couple of cups of coffee, I prepared to depart. I specify the items of which my repast was made up, because of the price I paid for them – namely, two dollars and a half. I was informed, on hazarding an observation respecting the amount, that the charges were excessively moderate, any thing in the shape of a dinner being usually charged one dollar and fifty cents; half a dollar each for the eggs, which were extras, was only a reasonable price for such luxuries, as they frequently sold for double. I considered the information thus obtained to be cheap, of its kind, and went away with a mental reservation not to eat any more eggs in California, unless they were of another description than the golden ones.

"As I repassed the 'Parker House,' the *hotel, par excellence*, of San Francisco, I went in, knowing that, like all similar establishments, there were the usual amusements going on within.

"This is not only the largest, but the handsomest building in San Francisco; and, having been constructed at enormous expense, and entirely on speculation, a concurrence of fortunate circumstances alone, such as had followed upon the discovery

of the gold mines, could have insured its prosperity. It was now one of the most frequented, fashionable, and firmly established hotels in the country; and, in so far as it presented a model to the builders and settlers in the town, was a signal illustration of the shrewdness and enterprise of the Yankee character, and a standing credit to the projectors and proprietors.

"It is built entirely of wood, and contains two very spacious principal rooms; the one a dining-room, the other set apart for billiards. Besides these, there are three saloons of lesser dimensions, especially devoted to gambling, and two well supplied bars – one below, to the right of the entry, the other in the billiard-room. The portion of the hotel that is not set apart for the usual offices and conveniences is divided off into innumerable chambers, which are occupied by the superior classes of emigrants – lawyers, doctors, money-brokers, *cum multis aliis*.

"The saloon contains two very handsome billiard-tables, which are constantly occupied by players, chiefly Americans, some of them of first-rate excellence. The charge was a dollar per game of a hundred, and they were no sooner vacated by one party than another came in.

"The establishment contained nine gambling-tables, which were crowded day and night, by the citizens and the miners; many of the latter staking very large sums upon the turn of a card. The stakes, however, varied from twenty-five cents to five thousand dollars; and the excitement of some of the

losers was frequently fearful to contemplate. Some who gained largely prudently withdrew; and I was informed that, a few days previously to my arrival, a new-comer from the States, who was bound for the mines, having come into the saloon, and tried his fortune at the *monte* tables, luckily made twenty thousand dollars, with which he returned home, by the steamer, two days afterwards.

"The 'Golden Eagle,' (*l'Aguila d'Oro*) is another gambling establishment, situated in one of the streets leading into the Plaza. It is a canvas house, about fifty feet square, fitted up with the requisites for play, and let out by the proprietor at the rate of fifteen hundred dollars a month. Every available spot around the tables was crowded to inconvenience by persons who were engaged deeply in the game, the majority standing up and watching the chances with countenances betokening the greatest excitement.

"I now proceeded to the City Hotel, a large but somewhat antiquated building, constructed of *adobé*, after the Spanish fashion, but hybridized by American improvements. The interior was even more insufferable than the El Dorado, in respect of the boisterousness of its frequenters. In the first room that I entered were five gambling-tables, doing a 'smashing business' – a term employed, somewhat in contradiction to its import, to denote prosperity. The majority of the players were Americans and other foreigners, intermixed with a goodly number of Spaniards of the lowest order. There was the same excitement, the same

recklessness, and the same trickery here, as at the other gambling saloons, only infinitely more noise and smoke, and swearing and inebriety.

"Here I met with another of the volunteers, who proposing a walk, we went out together, and proceeded to the Plaza. I found a good many old acquaintances set up in business at this spot; one, who had been a captain, had recently turned money-broker, and now kept an office for the exchange of coin and gold-dust, having entered into partnership with a highly respectable and agreeable individual, of active business habits, who promised to prove a great acquisition to the concern.

"We soon reached a low, long, *adobé* building, situated at the upper side of the square, and which my companion told me was the Custom House. To the right of the Plaza stood the Saint Charles's Hotel, a wooden edifice covered in with canvas, and the Peytona House, an establishment of a similar description, in both of which we did not fail to find the usual games carried on.

"The streets leading down to the water-side contain comparatively few hotels or eating-houses, they being chiefly wood and canvas trading-stores. I observed amongst them several newly opened auction and commission-rooms, where goods were being put up, recommended and knocked down in true Yankee style. An immense number of wooden frame-houses in course of erection met our view in every direction; and upon remarking that many of them appeared to have been purposely left incomplete, I ascertained that this arose from the extreme

difficulty of procuring lumber, which, on account of its scarcity, occasionally fetched an incredibly high price. A good deal of it is brought from Oregon, and some from South America. Many of the larger houses, but far inferior, notwithstanding, to such of the same kind as could easily be procured in New York at a rental of from 300 to 400 dollars a-year, cost here at least 10,000 dollars to build them, the lots on which they were erected being valued at sums varying from 30,000 to 50,000 dollars, according to the locality. Many spots of ground, just large enough for a small trading-house or a tent to stand upon, let at from 1200 to 2000 dollars.

"Amongst the various emigrants who daily flocked into the city – for each day brought its fresh arrivals – were numerous Chinese, and a very considerable number of Frenchmen, from the Sandwich Islands and from South America. The former had been consigned, with houses and merchandise, to certain Americans in San Francisco, to whom they were bound by contract, as laborers, to work at a scale of wages very far below the average paid to mechanics and others generally. The houses they brought with them from China, and which they set up where they were wanted, were infinitely superior and more substantial than those erected by the Yankees, being built chiefly of logs of wood, or scantling, from six to eight inches in thickness, placed one on the top of the other, to form the front, rear, and sides; whilst the roofs were constructed on an equally simple and ingenious plan, and were remarkable for durability.

"These Chinese had all the air of men likely to prove good citizens, being quiet, inoffensive, and particularly industrious. I once went into an eating-house, kept by one of these people, and was astonished at the neat arrangement and cleanliness of the place, the excellence of the table, and moderate charges. It was styled the 'Canton Restaurant;' and so thoroughly Chinese was it in its appointments, and in the manner of service, that one might have easily fancied one's self in the heart of the Celestial Empire. The barkeeper – though he spoke excellent English – was a Chinese, as were also the attendants. Every article that was sold, even of the most trifling kind, was set down, in Chinese characters, as it was disposed of; it being the duty of one of the waiters to attend to this department. This he did very cleverly and quickly, having a sheet of paper for the purpose, on which the article and the price were noted down in Chinese characters, by means of a long, thin brush, moistened in a solution of Indian or Chinese ink. As I had always been given to understand that these people were of dirty habits, I feel it only right to state that I was delighted with the cleanliness of this place, and am gratified to be able to bear testimony to the injustice of such a sweeping assertion.

"As for the French, they seemed entirely out of their element in this Yankee town; and this circumstance is not to be wondered at, when the climate and the habits of the people are taken into consideration, and also the strange deficiencies they must have observed in the ordinary intercourse of life between the

citizens, so different from the polished address, common even amongst the peasantry in their rudest villages; to say nothing of the difficulty of carrying on business amongst a people whose language they did not understand. But their universal goal was the mines; and to the mines they went, with very few exceptions.

"Speaking of them reminds me of a '*Café Restaurant*,' in San Francisco, kept by a very civil Frenchman, and situated on the way to the Point. I mention it, because I one day made here the most uncomfortable repast it had ever been my lot to sit down to. Yet this was not owing to any lack of attention on the part of the proprietor, to any inferiority in the quality of his provisions, or to any deficiency of culinary skill in their preparation; but simply to the prevalence of the pest to which I have already alluded as invading my own tent, namely, the dust. The house was built chiefly of wood, and had a canvas roof, but this was insufficient to keep out the impalpable particles with which the air was charged, and which settled upon and insinuated themselves into every article in the place. There was dust on the counter, on the shelves, on the seats, on the decanters, and in them; on the tables, in the salt, on my beef-steak, and in my coffee. There was dust on the polite landlord's cheeks, and in his amiable wife's eyes, which she was wiping with the corner of a dusty apron. I hurried my meal, and was paying my score, when I caught sight of my own face in a dusty-looking and dust-covered glass near the bar, and saw that I too had become covered with it, my entire person being literally encrusted with a coat of powder, from which I

experienced considerable difficulty in cleansing myself.

"Notwithstanding all I had seen of San Francisco, there yet existed here a world apart, that I should never have dreamed of, but for my being one day called upon to act upon a jury appointed to sit in inquest over a person who had died there. This place was called the 'Happy Valley.'

"Previously to our repairing thither, we attended at the court-house, to take the usual oath. Proceeding then through the lower part of the town, we reached the beach, along which, by the water-side, we walked for a distance of three miles – up to our ancles in mud and sand – until we came to a spot where there were innumerable tents pitched, of all sizes, forms, and descriptions, forming an irregular line stretching along the shore for about two miles.

"The ground was, of course, low, damp, and muddy; and the most unmistakeable evidences of discomfort, misery, and sickness, met our view on every side, for the locality was one of the unwholesomest in the vicinity of the town. Yet here, to avoid the payment of enormous ground-rents, and at the same time to combine the advantage of cheap living, were encamped the major portion of the most recently arrived emigrants, and, amongst the rest, those of the ship Brooklyn, on one of the passengers of which the inquest was about to be held.

"This, then, was the 'Happy Valley,' a term no doubt applied to it in derision, taking into consideration the squalor, the discomfort, the filth, the misery, and the distress that were rife

there.

"I am satisfied that much of the crime and lawlessness that is prevalent in California – particularly in towns like San Francisco, where the ruder sex are congregated exclusively and in large multitudes – is attributable to the want of the humanizing presence of women. In San Francisco there were about ten thousand males, and scarcely a hundred females; for, although in many parts of California the latter outnumber the former, the national prejudice against color was too strong for legitimate amalgamation to take place."

Such was San Francisco soon after the discovery of the riches of the Sacramento region. From an insignificant settlement, sometimes the resort of whaling-vessels, and of a few traders, it was quickly transferred into a city, with an extensive and constantly increasing commerce. In its streets and squares, erected where, just before, was a desert plain, people of almost every nation were seen busily engaged in traffic, or preparing for departure to the gold region. It seemed the work of the enchanter.

Although, like San Francisco, *Monterey* was almost deserted by its inhabitants upon the receipt of information of the gold discovery, it soon began to give signs of improvement. The bay, upon the shore of which the town is located, is more exposed to the swell of the sea, and to the north-west storms, than the Bay of San Francisco, and therefore the harbor is inferior. Yet Monterey received a considerable share of the tide of emigration. Those who stopped there were generally persons who intended to make

a permanent settlement, and engage in mercantile pursuits; and, therefore, though the increase of the town was not so rapid as that of San Francisco, it carried with it more denotements of stability.

The town is situated on a short bend near the entrance of the bay, upon its southern side. The point of land which partly protects its harbor from the sea is called Point Pinos. A very neat and pretty appearance is presented by the houses of the native Californians, which are generally constructed of *adobés* and white-plastered. Those of the Americans are easily distinguished by their being built of logs and planks, and presenting a more substantial, but rougher appearance. The town is surrounded by hills, covered with lofty pine trees. Upon a height which overlooks the town and harbor, a fort was built by the Americans during the war with Mexico, and a military force continued there till after the treaty of peace.

The country in the neighborhood of Monterey is fertile, and yields ample reward to the agriculturist. There would, therefore, be no lack of supplies of provisions, but for the indolence of the Californians, owning the different *ranches* in the surrounding country. From this cause, great scarcity of provisions of all kinds is often the result. Notwithstanding the additions made by Yankee enterprise and innovation, the general manners and customs of the inhabitants of Monterey retain all their old Spanish character; and some of the customs of the natives, particularly their amusements, are heartily joined in by the more susceptible of the new-comers. The fandango and the

serenade with the guitar, still hold their sway as freely and as undisturbed as in old Spain. The winters are severely felt here. The rain causes torrents of water to pour down from the hills in the rear of the town, deluging the principal streets, and rendering their passage almost impossible. During this period, the only resort of the inhabitants for passing away the time is the vice of gambling, in which they early become adepts. This gambling propensity, noticed among the Californians, induced a considerable number of the initiated to emigrate from the United States, and Monterey received a goodly proportion of them. Such an increase of the population, however, could not be considered desirable. Upon the whole, though in a less degree, the effect of the golden attractions of California could be seen at Monterey as at San Francisco. Though it did not spring at once from a small settlement to a large city, it was considerably improved, and in 1849, it numbered more than a thousand inhabitants.

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