

An excursion to California over the prairie, Rocky mountains, and great Sierra Nevada. With a stroll through the diggings and ranches of that country. By William Kelly

AN EXCURSION TO CALIFORNIA OVER THE PRAIRIE, ROCKY MOUNTAINS, AND GREAT SIERRA NEVADA. WITH A STROLL THROUGH THE DIGGINGS AND RANCHES OF THAT COUNTRY.

BY WILLIAM KELLY, J.P.

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CHAPTER I.

Geographical Sketch of California—Its Boundaries—Its Extent of Territory—Its peculiar Position—Its Rivers—Its Second Grand Division—Persia its Type as to Structure and Appearance—Italy as to Climate, Soil, and Productions—Valleys of the Sacramento and San Joaquin—Contrast between the Past and Present Aspect of the Country—What Vancouver and Humboldt found it—Its Property under the Missions—Its Productions under their Establishment—The Rivers Sacramento and San Joaquin—The Tributaries of those Rivers—Fremont's Description of the Bay of San Francisco and adjoining Country—Its Size—Mount Diavolo—Chrysopylae—Valleys of San José and San Juan—Cuestas de los Gatos—Quicksilver Mines—Mission of Santa Clara—Strait of Carquines connects San Pablo and Suisoon Bays—Sonoma—California compared with Italy—Its unique Advantages and favourable Geographical Position—Some of Colonel Fremont's Opinions combated—The Influences of high behests on Authors.

THIS, I conceive, is the proper place for briefly adverting to the geographical position of the country for the general information of the reader, who is, for the most part, under the impression that the celebrated region of California is confined between the ranges of the Sierra Nevada and the coast range mountains. Geographically speaking, California is bounded on the north by Oregon, the 42nd degree of 2 north latitude, being the boundary line between the two territories; on the east by the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra de los Mimbres, a continuation of the same range; on the south by Sonora and Old or Lower California; and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. Its extreme length is seven hundred miles, and its breadth close upon eight hundred miles, comprising an area of 400,000 square miles; but only a comparatively small portion of this extensive territory

is fertile or fit for settlement, a mere fraction of that part lying in the Great Interior Basin, between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, being aught else than arid sand deserts, covered with artemesia, and wholly incapable of cultivation or reclamation; and the border between the coast range and the ocean, being also for the most part uninviting to the emigrant, save he who sits down in quest of minerals; so that I may say California, properly speaking, is confined to the valleys of the Sacramento and the San Joaquin, lying between the west flank of the Sierra Nevada and the eastern base of the coast range mountains.

In the Great Basin, besides the rivers I have before adverted to as having been met directly in my route, there is the Rio Colorado or Red River, which has a course of one thousand miles, emptying into the Gulf of California, and having for its northern tributaries Green and Grand Rivers, both of considerable volume, rising in the Rocky Mountains; and Sevier, Virgin, and Gila Rivers, which it receives near its mouth. The inhospitable region through which the Colorado flows has not even been partially explored, and little is known about the river save the vague narratives of adventurous trappers who have penetrated to its banks in pursuit of beaver, who describe it as unfit for navigable purposes from the extreme rapidity of its current, and the stupendous falls and cañons it passes in its course, running for several miles at a time in a series of roaring cataracts, so deep between the perpendicular cliffs of mountain precipices, that even the white foam of its waters are only dimly discernible in the gloomy chasms, while its thundering voice penetrates days' journeys over the echoless wastes of the surrounding deserts.

Curiosity or science may stimulate private individuals, or those in the employ of government, to trace and describe it minutely; but from the nature of the tracts in which its channel lies, its waters, even if navigable, could not be subservient to useful or civilising ends. The Utah and Timpanagos discharge themselves into the Utah Lakes on the east, after gathering their copious streams in the adjoining parts of the Wah-Satch and Timpanagos Mountains. Nicolett River rising south, in the long range of the Wah-Satch Mountains, falls into a lake of its own name, after making an arable valley of 200 miles in length, through a mountainous country. Salmon-trout River rising in the west, running down from the Sierra Nevada, falls into Pyramid Lake after a course of about 100 miles from its source; one-third of the valley is a pine timbered country, and for the remainder of the

way it runs through very rocky naked ridges. It is remarkable for the abundance and excellence of its salmon-trout, and presents some good ground for cultivation. Walker River, a clear, handsome stream, nearly 400 miles long, coming, like the preceding, down the eastern flank of the Sierra Nevada, forms a lake of its own near its base: it contains salmon-trout, and forms some bottoms of good arable land. Owen River, issuing from the Sierra Nevada on the south, is a large bold stream, about 120 miles long, gathering its waters in the Sierra Nevada, and, flowing to the southward, forms a lake about fifteen miles long at the base of the mountain. At a medium stage it is four or five feet deep—in places fifteen—wooded with willow and cotton wood, and makes continuous bottoms of fertile land, at intervals rendered marshy by springs and small affluents from the mountains: the water of the lake in which it terminates has an unpleasant smell and bad taste, but around its shores are found small streams of pure water and good grass. The only lakes of the Great Basin, except those that constitute the Sinks of their respective rivers, are Salt, Utah, and Pyramid Lakes, which latter takes its name from a very high pyramidal island in its centre. The mountains have already been described in Colonel Fremont's account of the Great Basin.

“West of the Sierra Nevada (I quote from the same authority), and between that mountain and the sea, is the second grand division of California, and the only part to which the name applies, in the current language of the country. It is the occupied and inhabited part, and so different in character, so divided by the mountain wall of the Sierra from the Great Basin above, as to constitute a region to itself, with a structure and configuration, a soil, a climate, and productions of its own; and as Northern Persia may be referred to as some type of the former, so may Italy be referred to as some point of comparison for the latter. North and south this region embraces about 10 deg. of latitude; from 32 deg. where it touches the peninsula of California, to 42 deg. where it bounds Oregon. East and west from the Sierra Nevada to the sea, it will average, in the middle parts, 150 miles; in the northern, 200—giving an area of about 100,000 square miles.

“Looking westward from the summit of the Sierra, the main feature presented is the long, low, broad valley of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, the two valleys forming one 500 miles long and fifty broad, lying along the base of the Sierra, and bounded to the west by the low range of coast mountains, which separates it from the sea. Long dark lines of timber indicate the streams,

and bright spots mark the intervening plains; lateral ranges, parallel to the Sierra Nevada and the coast, make the structure of the country, and break it into a surface of valleys and mountains—the valleys a few hundred, the mountains to 4000 feet above the level of the sea. These form greater masses, and become more elevated to the north, where some peaks, as the Shastl, enter the regions of perpetual snow, stretched along the mild coast of the Pacific, with a general elevation in its plains and valleys of only a few hundred feet above the level of the sea, and backed by the long and lofty wall of the Sierra Nevada, mildness and geniality may be assumed as the characteristic of its climate. The inhabitant of corresponding latitudes on the Atlantic side of the continent, can with difficulty conceive the soft air and southern productions in the same latitude in the maritime regions 6 of Upper California. The singular beauty and purity of the sky in the south of this region is characterised by Humboldt as a rare phenomenon, and all travellers realise the truth of this description.

“The present condition of the country affords but slight data for forming correct opinions of the agricultural capacity and fertility of the soil. Vancouver found at the Mission of San Benaventura, in 1792, latitude 34 deg. 16 min., apples, pears, plums, figs, oranges, grapes, peaches, and pomegranates growing together, with plantain, banana, cocoa-nut, sugar-cane, and indigo, all yielding fruit in abundance, and of excellent quality. Humboldt mentions the olive oil of California as equal to that of Andalusia, and the wine like that of the Canary Islands. At present but little remains of this high and varied cultivation which had been attained at the Mission, under the mild and paternal administration of “the fathers.” The docile character of the Indians was made available for labour, and thousands were employed in the fields, the orchards, and the vineyards. At present but little of this cultivation is seen; the fertile valleys overgrown with wild mustard, vineyards and olive orchards decayed and neglected, are among the remaining vestiges. Only in some places do we see evidences of what the country is capable. At San Benaventura we found the olive-trees, in January, bending under the weight of neglected fruit; and the Mission of San Louis Obispo (latitude 35 deg.) is still distinguished for the excellence of its olives—considered larger and finer than those of the Mediterranean. The productions of the south differ from those of the north and the middle. Grapes, olives, and 7 Indian corn have been its staples, with many assimilated fruits and grains.

Tobacco has been recently introduced; and the uniform summer-heat that follows the wet season, and is uninterrupted by rain, would make the southern country well adapted for cotton. Wheat is the first production of the north, where it always constituted the principal cultivation of Missions. This promises to be the grain-growing region of California. The moisture of the coast seems particularly suited for the potato and vegetables common to the United States, which grow to an uncommon size.

“Perhaps few parts of the world can produce in such perfection so great a variety of fruits, and vegetables, and grains, as the large and various regions enclosing the Bay of San Francisco, and drained by its waters. A view of the map will show that region and its great extent, comprehending the entire valleys of the Sacramento and San Joaquin, and the whole western slope of the Sierra Nevada. These valleys are one, discriminated only by the names of the rivers which traverse it. It is a single valley—a single geographical formation—near five hundred miles long, lying at the western base of the Sierra Nevada, and between it and the coast range of mountains, and stretching across the head of the Bay of San Francisco, with which a delta of twenty-five miles connects it. The two great rivers, the Sacramento and the San Joaquin, rise at opposite ends of this long valley, receive numerous mountain streams, many of them bold rivers, from the Sierra Nevada, become themselves navigable rivers, flow towards each other, meet half-way, and enter the Bay of Francisco 8 together in the region of tide water, making a continuous water-line from one end to the other.”

The other rivers are all tributaries of those main ones, with the exception of Trinity, which disembogues into the Pacific Ocean, near the confines of Oregon. The principal affluents of the Sacramento are the Rio de los Plumas, the Juba, the North, Middle, and South Forks (as they are called), and the Rio de los Americanos, most of which are partly navigable, flowing from the western flank of the Sierra Nevada, and running in large portions of their courses through fertile land, over-abounding in salmon, and rich in golden deposits. Those of the San Joaquin are the Mo-kel-um-ne, the Stanislaus, the Rio de los Coscumnes, the Yo-wal-um-ne, the Aux-um-nes, and the Tulare Lakes River, one of the largest and handsomest in the valley, being one hundred yards wide, and having, perhaps, a larger portion of fertile land than any other. Like the affluents of the

Sacramento, they flow down from the Sierra and are partially navigable, abounding in salmon and golden treasures. There is no system of lakes in this portion of California, the few that exist not being of such dimensions as to render them worthy of that appellation, the entire drainage of the immense valley being carried in quick copious streams by the rivers above enumerated, and their several smaller tributaries into the main ones, and thence into the Bay of San Francisco, in its upper estuary called Suisoon Bay.

Fremont thus describes the Bay of San Francisco:—"It has been celebrated from the time of its first discovery as one of the finest in the world, and is justly entitled to that 9 character even under the seaman's view of a mere harbour; but when all the accessory advantages which belong to its fertile, picturesque, dependent country; mildness and salubrity of climate; connexion with the great interior valley of the Sacramento and San Joaquin; its vast resources for ship timber, grain and cattle—when these advantages are taken into account with its geographical position on the line of communication with Asia, it rises into an importance far above a mere harbour, and deserves particular notice in any account of maritime California. Its latitudinal position is that of Lisbon—its climate is that of southern Italy. Settlements on it for more than half a century attest its healthfulness; bold shores and mountains give it grandeur; the extent and fertility of its dependent country give it great resources for agriculture, commerce, and population.

"The Bay of San Francisco is separated from the sea by low mountain ranges, looking from the peaks of the Sierra Nevada. The coast mountains present an apparently continuous line, with only a single gap resembling a mountain pass. This is the only water communication from the coast to the interior country; approaching from the sea the coast, it presents a bold outline. On the south the bordering mountains come down in a narrow ridge of broken hills, terminating in a precipitous point, against which the sea breaks heavily. On the northern side the mountain presents a bold promontory, rising in a few miles to a height of two or three thousand feet. Between these points is the strait, about a mile broad in the narrowest part, and five miles long from the sea to the bay.

Passing 10 through this gate^{*} the bay opens to the right and left, extending in each direction about thirty-five miles, having a total length of more than seventy miles, and a coast of two hundred

and seventy-five miles. It is divided by straits and projecting points into three separate bays, of which the northern two are called San Pablo and Suisoon Bays. Within, the view presented is a mountainous country, the bay resembling an interior lake of deep water, lying between parallel ranges of mountains. Islands which have the bold character of the shores, some mere masses of rock, others grass covered, rising to the height of three and eight hundred feet, break its surface, and add to its picturesque appearance. Directly fronting the entrance, mountains a few miles from the shore rise about two thousand feet above the level of the water, crowned by a forest of lofty cypress, which is visible from the sea, and make a conspicuous landmark for vessels entering the bay. Behind, the rugged peak of Mount Diavolo, nearly four thousand feet high, overlooks the surrounding country of the bay and the San Joaquin. The immediate shores of the bay derives, from its proximate and opposite relation to the sea, the name of Contra Costa (counter coast or opposite coast).

Called Chrysophylae (golden gate) on the map, on the same principle that the harbour of Byzantium (Constantinople afterwards) was called Chrysoceres (golden horn), the form of the harbour and its advantages of commerce; and that, before it became an entrepôt for Eastern commerce, suggested the name to the Greek founders of Byzantium. The form of the entrance into the Bay of San Francisco and its advantages for commerce (Asiatic inclusive) suggests the name which is given to this entrance.

“It presents a varied character of rugged and broken hills, rolling and undulating land, and rich alluvial shores, 11 backed by fertile and wooded ranges suitable for towns, villages, and farms, with which it is beginning to be dotted. A low alluvial bottom land, several miles in breadth, with occasional open woods of oak, borders the foot of the mountains around the southern arm of the bay, terminating in a breadth of twenty miles in the fertile valley of St. Joseph, a narrow plain of rich alluvial soil, lying between ranges from two to three thousand feet high. The valley is openly wooded with groves of oak, free from any underbrush, and, after the spring rains, covered with grass. Taken in connexion with the Valley of San Juan, with which it forms a continuous plain, it is fifty-five miles long, and from one to twenty broad, opening into smaller valleys amongst the hills. At the head of the bay it is twenty miles broad, and about the same at the southern end, where the soil is beautifully fertile, covered in the summer with four or five varieties of wild clover. In many places it is overgrown with wild mustard, growing to ten or twelve feet high, in almost impenetrable fields, through which roads are made, like lanes.

“On both sides the mountains are fertile, wooded, or covered with grasses and scattered trees. On the west it is protected from the chilly influence of the north-west winds by the Cuestos de los Gatos (wild cat ridge), which separates it from the coast. This is a grassy, timbered mountain, watered with small streams, and wooded on both sides with many varieties of trees and shrubbery, the heavier forest pine and cypress occupying the western slope. Timber and shingle are now obtained from this mountain, and one of the recently discovered quicksilver 12 mines is on the eastern side of the mountain, near the Pueblo of San José. This range terminates in the south in the Anno Nuevo point of Monterey Bay, and in the north declines into a broken ridge of hills, about five miles wide, between the bay and the sea, and having the town of San Francisco on the bay shore near its northern extremity, sheltered from the cold winds and fog of the sea, and having a soil of remarkable fertility. The Valley of St. Joseph (San José) is capable of producing in great perfection many fruits and grains that do not thrive on the coast or its immediate vicinity, without taking into consideration the extraordinary yields which have sometimes occurred. The fair average product of wheat is estimated at fifty-fold. The Mission establishments of Santa Clara and San José, in the north of the valley, were formerly, in the prosperous days of the Mission, distinguished for the superiority of their wheat crops.

“The slope of alluvial land continues around the eastern shores of the bays, intersected with small streams, in which good landing and deep water, with advantageous positions between the sea and the interior of the country, indicate for future settlement. The Strait of Carquines, about one mile broad, and eight to ten fathoms deep, connects the San Pablo and Suisoon Bays. Around these bays smaller valleys open into the bordering country, and some of the streams have launch navigation, which serve to convey the produce to the bay. Missions and large farms were established at the head of navigation on these streams, which are favourable sites for towns or villages.

“The country around Suisoon Bay presents low smooth 13 ridges and rounded hills, clothed with wild oats, and more or less openly wooded on their summits. Approaching its northern shores from Sonoma, it assumes, though in a state of nature, a cultivated and beautiful appearance; wild oats cover its continuous fields, and herds of wild cattle, and bands of wild horses, are

scattered over low hills and partly isolated ridges, where blue mists and openings amongst the abruptly terminating hills indicate the neighbourhood of the bay. The Suisoon is connected with an expansion of the river, formed by the junction of the Sacramento and the San Joaquin, which enter the Francisco Bay at the same latitude nearly as the mouth of the Tagus at Lisbon. A delta of twenty-five miles in length, divided into islands by channels, connects the bay with the valleys of the Sacramento and the San Joaquin, into the mouth of which the tide flows, and which enter the bay together as one river.

“Such is the bay and proximate country; it is not a mere indentation of the coast, but a little sea to itself, connected with the ocean by a defensible gate, opening out between seventy and eighty miles to the right and left, upon a breadth of fifteen, deep enough for the largest ships; with bold shores suitable for towns and settlements, and fertile adjacent country for cultivation. The head of the bay is about forty miles from the sea, and there connects it with the noble valleys of the Sacramento and the San Joaquin. Thus California, below the Sierra Nevada, is about the extent of Italy, geographically considered, in all the extent of Italy from the Alps to the termination of the peninsula; it is of the same length, same breadth, and 14 consequently the same area (about one hundred thousand square miles), and presents much similarity of climate and productions. Like Italy, it lies north and south, and presents some differences of climate and productions—the effect of the difference of latitude, proximity of high mountains, and configuration of the coast. Like Italy, it is a country of mountains and valleys; different from it in internal structure, it is formed for unity, its large rivers being concentric, and its large valleys appurtenant to the great central Bay of San Francisco, within the area of whose waters the dominating power must be found. Geographically, the position of California is one of the best in the world, lying on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, fronting Asia, on the line of an American road to Asia, and possessed of advantages to give full effect to its geographical position.”

I quote thus liberally from Fremont, because he is the very highest and most correct authority on most matters connected with the new and unsettled portions of the North American continent. But, while I admit that everything he lays down or asserts, so far as geography or science are involved, is as correct as possible, I beg leave respectfully to question his opinions as to the agricultural

resources of California, the salubrity of its climate,^{*} and general healthfulness. The soil, I admit, is of unsurpassing quality, made up of constituent qualities and ingredients, capable of producing any crop only for the 15 adverse operation of the seasons, which keep it saturated, and in most places submerged in water, from November until April, rendering it physically impossible to prepare the land, much less to sow the seed during that period; and then before July it is so baked and cracked under a hot and cloudless sun, that not only is all further vegetation arrested, but everything above ground is crisped, and ready to fall into powder at the touch; while the streams that might be supposed available for irrigation are, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, completely dry. Thus there would be only three months to plough and harrow, sow and reap—a period infinitely too circumscribed for the maturation of any grain, and most vegetables. There are a few highly-favoured localities where, I believe, wheat might be raised; but even in those places, peopled as they now are with enterprising settlers from the old country, I did not see a single patch of grain, and only heard vague missionary traditions of it once having been grown there.

When I first arrived in California, before I had extensive opportunities of observation, I wrote to a leading London journal describing the climate as genial, and generally suitable for those afflicted with pulmonary complaints; however, a lengthened sojourn has given me reason to change that opinion.

But, after all, the state of agricultural advancement and prosperity at the Missions noticed by Vancouver and Humboldt, is no criterion to go by in ascribing a general character of similar fertility to an entire country of such vast extent as California. It would be quite as fair to assert that a whole kingdom must be educated and enlightened because in some few of its provinces or subdivisions there are colleges or seminaries that turn out accomplished scholars. We all know that when men are accorded an unlimited choice, the instigations of human nature will prompt them to make the most promising selections; and when to the dominion of free will is superadded the proverbial acuteness and discrimination of the Jesuits, since the days of Ignatius Loyola, it may be taken for granted that they picked out the most fertile and favoured positions in California for the foundation of their establishments, and, with their accustomed energy and perseverance, taxed and stimulated the soil in those pet positions to the utmost extent of its fecundity, taking care that sources of irrigation were contiguous and available, to make up for the short-comings of nature in its ministrations of fertilising moisture. So, I repeat, it is unfair to parade the productions of those

An excursion to California over the prairie, Rocky mountains, and great Sierra Nevada. With a stroll through the diggings and ranches of that country. By William Kelly <http://www.loc.gov/resource/calbk.054>

picked and forced gardens, which, taken together, would not constitute a respectable parish, as evidence that the whole wing of a great continent is capable of yielding similar productions.

I will go with Colonel Fremont in saying, that the great natural wall of the Sierra Nevada produces many modifying influences on the climate, owing to which tropical fruits may be produced at high northern latitudes. But, according to my experience, my humble opinion is, that California must ever be mainly dependent on the States, Oregon, Chili, and the Sandwich Islands, for its supply of bread-stuffs and the other great vegetable staples of existence; as to the climate, there is only one opinion amongst the people now resident there, which is, that it is highly unhealthy. I was not surprised to find it so in the mines, where people were working hard under unusual circumstances and severe privations; but even in the cities and towns robust health is the exception, there being a regular invalid passenger trade between Francisco and Honolulu, while burial-grounds in every settled locality extend their 17 dimensions with a fearful rapidity, that is quite as convincing as the most regular bills of mortality—strong confirmation of both of which opinions will appear in the course of the work. But Colonel Fremont wrote at the instance of the United States' Government, who were anxious to array their newly-acquired territory in all the choicest attributes of nature; and I believe it is generally admitted (even in the case of Sir Walter Scott's "Life of Napoleon") that men, acting under high behests, are liable to adopt the partialities and prejudices of their patrons. Even painters of celebrity have been known to jeopardise their fame as faithful delineators, in order to suit the views of parasites who had flattered a dear friend to sit for his portrait.

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CHAPTER II.

How our Party split up into Sections—Our Apprenticeship to Gold-washing—The Mode of Proceeding—Average Returns—Cradles or Gold-washers; how constructed—Visit the Mill—The System of transacting Business there—Arrival of Mr. Goodyear and a Pack Mule Train—The Sad News they bring—Dandy Diggers—Their Tools, and the Way in which they used them—Ungenerous Conduct of the Americans towards the Chilians—The Weber Diggings—Miners' Laws—Summary Punishment—Sickness in the Weber Diggings—Leave my Companions on a Tour—

Lower Weber Diggings—A Californian Ranchero—Charge for Grazing—Returns on the Lower Weber—Dysentery there—Cutaneous Poison—The Great Canon Diggings—A Description of them—Sly Trick—The Trade of the Canon.

While on the road we were a sort of joint-stock company, but now that we reached the sphere of operations we divided into different parties, some starting for the cities to build up their fortunes, others remaining to accumulate them in the mines. Fifteen of the latter remained, in three independent parties of five each, but though our gains were distinct, we erected our quarters beside each other, selected our working locations in the same neighbourhood, and communicated candidly to one another all the information we could collect. We spent a novitiate of three days amongst the Chilians and Mexicans, looking on at their operations, and getting odd lessons in the art of imparting the rotatory motion to the contents of wash-basin, so as to surge a portion of the liquid mud over the edge at each sweep, until nothing but the gold and black sand remained; the process being simply, after throwing aside the surface-clay or sand, to loosen the hard packed soil with picks, scrape it with a horn-scoop into a basin, then dip it until it became saturated with water, when you sink your hands into the mass, removing the stones, and in searching for them mixing all into a thick fluid. This you cause to go round and round, some of the top escaping at each revolution; more water is occasionally taken in, until all the earthy particles are carried away; then comes the process of separating the black sand, which, being of great specific gravity, requires great care and nicety, else some of the finer particles of gold may escape with it. But in places where it particularly abounds, and the gold runs small, the separation is effected by the agency of quicksilver, simply by pouring it amongst the black sand and gold dust, adding some water, and mixing it about; the quicksilver, in its great affinity for the precious metal, gathering all the particles it comes in contact with, until it becomes a little massive tangible heap, devoid of its elusive character, when it is put into a buckskin cloth, and the quicksilver separated by being compressed through the pores of the leather, the slight portion remaining adhered to the gold being evaporated on a heated pan or shovel.

An expert hand, in anything like ready ground, can gather and wash a panful every ten minutes, and the place that does not yield a quarter of a dollar to the panful is not considered worth working

by that process, though it would give 1 dol. 50 c. per hour, or twelve 20 dollars per day of eight hours' working—good wages for those who at home would have considered it a fair weekly wage, at twelve hours' constant labour each day, but vastly too small for the large class “who, just for a lark,” come out to rough it a bit, and get enough in a few months to enable them to set up as fine gentlemen for life. But places that would not pay according to the above estimate with pans can be made to yield satisfactorily with cradles, or washers as some call them, because so much larger a proportion of work can be got through in that machine, which is constructed by making a semi-circular trough, say five feet long by sixteen inches in diameter, and placing on the upper end of the top a perforated iron or copper plate, eighteen inches long, the exact breadth of the trough, with a raised wooden rim of four inches, and, immediately under it, tending to the centre of the cradle, a bar or ridge about half an inch high, with another of a similar description at the extreme end, where an upright handle (if the cradle is of a large size) about four feet long is stuck, by which the motion is imparted. In smaller ones, where the number of the mess is limited, the rocker sits at the end of the cradle, rocking with one hand and pouring in the water with the other on the dirt which is thrown on the plate, and as the gold and gravel are separated from the stones, and washed down, the current carries the gravel over the bars, while the gold, being of so much greater gravity, is intercepted, the lower bar arresting any that by a jolt or awkward shake may have got over the upper one.

At the end of three days we acquired a sufficient proficiency to set up for ourselves, in a place kindly selected by a Chilian acquaintance, and succeeded in gathering a daily average of a good ounce to each hand—rather better than half what our more experienced neighbours were making; but as our provisions were running low, I made one of a party to go to the Mill, which town takes its name from a saw-mill being its nucleus, in the direction of which the gold was first discovered. It is situated on the south fork of the Sacramento, about forty-five miles from the embarcadero, as the city of Sacramento is called by the miners, and being a point from which several rich and favourite diggings radiate, is fast growing into a large and flourishing place, with a goodly proportion of stone buildings, from the convenience of quarries. I here got my first sample of Californian prices,

in paying fifty cents “for a drink,” as a small glass of bad brandy is designated, and in a like ratio for everything else.

Almost every house was a tap, and contained an apartment consecrated to the god of gambling, where a parcel of hawks, with whetted beaks, were lying in wait for green pigeons; and although improvident miners were invariably relieved of their gold-dust in those nefarious haunts, they punctually came every Saturday evening, as if under the spell of some mystical fascination, to deposit their gold in those sinking-funds, spending their week's earnings and their Sundays in this insensible and reprehensible manner, first reduced to a state of partial stupefaction by adulterated drink, and then cheated according to the most compendious mode of modern greeking. I found, too, in my limited transactions, that the 22 malpractices of the Millites were not confined to the gaming table, false weights and measures being consistently associated with false dice, which told with double effect against the purchaser, dust being the circulating medium; for he had his goods weighed with light weights, and his gold weighed with heavy ones. I, of course, bought as sparingly as I could, determined to go to Sacramento for further supplies. I brought, however, with me a small cradle, for which I paid the moderate sum of 3 oz., 48 dollars, two of which a tradesman could make in a day, and all the materials of both would not cost, even at the Mill, more than 1 oz., 16 dollars, which left a very handsome margin for remuneration.

The country between our encampment and the Mill is a succession of hills and dales, tapering down from the Sierra Nevada, moderately wooded, with great numbers of quail, some deer, and hares. I fully expected to have seen some handsome varieties of the feathered tribe, but there were no birds of any gaudier tints of plumage than my old acquaintance the crow, the blackbird, and the magpie, who seemed to be all “chips of the old block” peculiar to Britain.

On my return to camp, I found Mr. Goodyear's caballada, together with a pack-mule train, had arrived, the latter in a wretched state, and reporting, even at that early date, great sufferings on Humboldt River. By means of the cradle we augmented our daily income by half an ounce, and on one day actually divided fifty dollars per man; but this was a most unusual amount, and occurred by our meeting a peculiar shelve, where the 23 deposit was very thick. By the end of the week another

pack-mule company came in, and several fresh hands from the coast, all the latter of the amateur or dandy class of diggers, in kid gloves and patent leather boots, with flash accoutrements and fancy implements, their polished picks with mahogany handles, and shiny shovels, resembling that presentation class of tools given to lords, baronets, and members of parliament, to lay a first stone, or turn the first sod on a new line of railway. It was good fun to see those “gents” nibbling at the useless soil, and then endeavouring to work their pans, with out-stretched hands, lest they should slobber their ducks. Subsequently I used to meet numbers of that school wending back to the coast from the various diggings, “damning the infernal gold,” and “cutting the beastly diggings” in disgust.

Nine-tenths of the new arrivals were Americans, who resorted, as we did in the first instance, to the Chilians and Mexicans for instruction and information, which they gave them with cheerful alacrity; but as soon as Jonathan got an inkling of the system, with peculiar bad taste and ungenerous feeling he organised a crusade against those obliging strangers, and ran them off the creek at the pistol mouth. Our messes were canvassed to take part in the affair, but declined becoming engaged in any such proceeding, which had like to have led to our own expulsion likewise; in fact, the Yankees regarded every man but a native American as an inteloper, who had no right to come to California to pick up the gold of the free and enlightened citizens.

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The gold at the Weber diggings was all in moderate sized particles, and of particularly fine and pure quality, less capriciously deposited than in most of the other diggings I visited, the average returns of all being tolerably uniform where similar industry was employed. All hands fixed themselves on the borders of the creek for the convenience of water, but I found the dirt (the technical name of the soil subjected to the washing ordeal) on the hillside, at a good elevation above the stream or its winter water-marks, fully as rich as that along its banks. I even carried dirt in a kerchief from the very hill tops, and got a good return from it—a proof that it was not altogether scattered over the country by the influence of the floods, the prevalent opinion amongst the earlier miners.

In a comparatively short time we had a large community on the creek, which led to rows and altercations about boundaries, that eventuated in an arrangement, entered into by unanimous

agreement, that each person should have ten feet square, which, multiplied by the number of the mess, gave the limits of the allotment in a particular location; it did not debar a man, however, from moving from one site and fixing on another, and as long as any one left his tools in the space his claim was respected. There was another branch of legislation soon called for to repress a system of thieving that was fast spreading; but the code of the famous Judge Lynch was unanimously adopted, and under its oral provisions any person caught “in flagrante delicto” was shot down without ceremony, or subjected to any other summary punishment the detector might prefer. I heard of several cases²⁵ of instantaneous execution, and saw at the Weber one lad shorn of the rims of his ears, and seared deeply in the cheek with a red-hot iron, for the theft of a small coffee-tin. I never took part in any of those proceedings, nor did any of the company with which I was associated; but while disapproving of the modicum of punishment, and the manner of putting it in force, I must admit that some very stringent measures were necessary to keep in check the lawless and abandoned characters that flocked to the mines.

The weather was particularly fine all the time I remained at the Weber, the days bright and warm, the nights cloudless and without dew; but dysentery made its appearance in its most malignant form, soon prostrating the majority of the miners, carrying off many, and reducing all who were attacked to the lowest possible state of bodily feebleness. I had a turn, and found cayenne pepper in large doses checked it effectually, while with others it produced no visible effect, owing, I should say, to the want of self-denial in diet. Its origin was attributed to the use of fresh beef, though in coming over the plains I never remarked that fresh meat had any such tendencies, even when, as on the Platte, we lived on it for days together, using it largely at each of three meals.

The second week in August I took leave of my companions, for the purpose of travelling over the country, visiting the different mines, and comparing their various returns, as well as looking for a solution of the phenomenon of finding gold in more or less quantities at every elevation in the extensive region of its field. I employed²⁶ a half-caste Californian (who make excellent vaquerous herders of stock) to help me to drive my proportion of mules and horses to a rancho on the Sacramento, between our camp and the city, and on my way down struck the Weber again eight miles lower below a cañon, where it formed a pond, or small lake, on the margin of which

there was a solitary tent and a small party of three at work, amongst whom was a Cornish man, who welcomed me as a countryman, and invited me to stop a day or two; an invitation I gladly accepted, as the grass was good about the little lake. In the course of the evening, Mr. Williams, the proprietor of another rancho on the Sacramento, arrived with a train of vaquerous on his way up to meet the emigration, and either buy their stock, or canvass for the grazing. He took charge of mine there, and then giving me a receipt, and saving me the trouble of going down, as I wished to visit all the mines in that district before leaving. I kept a mule for my own riding, and was thus enabled to get rid of my aid after a short employ of one day. Mr. Williams's charge was two dollars a month per head for pasturage, and two dollars per month for insurance, which my Cornish friend advised me to pay by all means, as horse and mule stealing was becoming most prevalent, the temptation being very great, from the enormous price given below for animals by emigrants arriving by the Isthmus and Cape Horn route, who could not stir without them.

I spent that evening and next day with Mr. Jones's company, who was a practised hand at the business, and set his party to work more systematically than any other I had yet seen. They took their dirt from a steep incline considerably above the winter level of the stream, in a stratum of hard packed dry bluish clay, almost as hard as rock, with a slight surface covering of earth, which yielded prodigiously, giving seventeen ounces for their day's work, nearly 100 dollars per hand, while Jones admitted to me that in some days they divided as much as one pound each. He showed me, by washing panfuls gathered at different spots about, that the deposits were pretty general and alike, and pressed me to take up my quarters beside him, which I was not prepared to do at the time; but I wrote a note to my friends above by the returning Californian, recommending them to shift their quarters as soon and as quietly as they could—advice they followed promptly and with great profit.

Dysentery found its way into Mr. Jones's small company, one of his comrades being only recently recovered from a severe attack, Jones himself suffering from the effects of poison, which produced an angry and most annoying cutaneous affliction. It is caught from a vine that grows amongst the brush and shrubs, and is most likely to lay hold when the pores are exuding perspiration. Some people, from peculiar constitutional tendencies, are not susceptible of its infection, while

others, again, are not only predisposed to catch its virus, but suffer dreadfully from the itching and inflammation, which spread with great rapidity over the body, thickening the skin, and raising it in large hives like a confluent pock, that become highly irritated by the 28 slightest contact. Washing the skin well with the soap-root, and then bathing it in salt and water, helps to allay the irritation; but to eradicate its effects thoroughly, it is necessary to adopt a low scale of regimen, and take cooling medicines.

I took leave of my friend Jones and my countryman Williams, and went to another digging, called the Great Cañon, lying north-east from the Weber, where I got into a chain of lofty hills, thinly wooded with fir and white oak (*Quercus longelanda*), steeper on the sides than I ever before saw mere clay hills, the Cañon lying between two parallel ranges, at a depth of several hundred feet, shaped like a wedge, and so narrow below that there was barely standing-room: the gold was all at the bottom, for the slopes were too quick to afford it a resting-place. There was a large Spanish camp, or settlement, adjacent when the first American diggers arrived, who were said to have gathered vast quantities; but even then there was quite enough to repay hard work very liberally. From the nature of the place, it did not admit of operations on a large scale at any one place. Four-fifths of those I saw working there were doing so individually, with pans, using most generally large bowie-knives, with which they picked the gold from the crevices of the rocks in the bed of the stream, then almost dry, and scratching the gravelly soil from amongst the roots of the overhanging trees, which was generally rich in deposits. It was one continuous string of men, single file, throughout its entire length (about four miles), all admitting they were doing well, so far as acquisition was concerned, but complaining of their health and bad air, as no refreshing breeze could ever visit them at the bottom, and the labour of going up and down morning and evening would be too great to permit of their erecting their camps above. I stopped one night in the cañon, but could not catch any sleep, from the sultry, suffocating effects of the confined atmosphere.

The gold at the Great Cañon ran both larger and smaller than on the Weber, and was associated with large quantities of fine black sand, which the miners—most of whom were raw hands—blew off from the gold, in their anxiety to arrive at the final process. But a keen old blade turned their impatience to account, by shamming decrepitude, and pretending that in his weakly state,

being unequal to the toil of mining, he was compelled to resort to the poor and profitless branch of gathering the black sand, which he sold as a substitute for emery; in pursuance of which trade he went about in the evening with a large bag and a tin tray, requesting the “green'uns” to blow their black sand on to it, returning to his tent with his daily burden, when, by the agency of quicksilver, he secured double the average of the hardest working miner in the cañon. I saw the old lad going circuit the evening I was there, as his game was not then discovered, though I remarked to Dr. S—k, with whom I stayed, that I was certain he carried away large quantities of gold-dust in the sand.

At each end of the cañon there was a calico shanty, called a grocery, the great staples of which were 30 infamous brandy and corrosive alcohols, that would burn through the peritonoeum of a rhinoceros; while amongst the glasses were several packs of dirty cards, with which the rehearsals were nightly gone through in preparation for the grand affair at the Mill on the Saturday night, for distance was no object in those weekly reunions.

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CHAPTER III.

Leave for the South Fork—Tricks of the Coyotes—Join a Party going there—Their Charge for Victuals—Miners and their Operations at the American Fork—Average Returns—Kanaka Diving—Mining Monopoly Question—Jealousy towards Foreigners—American Tactics—Mining Morality—Adulteration of Provisions—Visit the Middle and North Forks—General Average at those Diggings—Flash Company—Their Proceedings—The Jealous Epidemic—American Trickery and Avarice—How the Affair terminated—Shade of National Character—Mr. Smith's narrow Escape—Dysentery—Leave for the Mormon Island Diggings—Description of the Country—Sleep in the Shanty of a Sydney Acquaintance—How he got to that Colony and out of it—His other Quests—The Valley of the Sacramento—Its Appearance—Mormon Island, and the Miners and Mining there—General Observations on the Golden Deposits—Mr. Brackenridge's Remarks touching the Theory of its Formation.

From the Great Cañon I went to the South Fork of the Rio de los Americanos, starting early in the morning, but taking a wrong trail, which led me into the hills, where neither mines nor groceries were to be met with, I not only lost my dinner, but had to go supperless to bed under a white oak, afraid to sleep lest the Coyotes should take liberties with me in my unconscious moments. The mischievous brutes kept barking and howling about my couch all night, and succeeded in eating away the raw hide lariat by which I had my mule tethered, so that when I sought him at daylight I found he had rambled away; but following up the line-mark of the lariat, which was 32 apparent in some places, I brought him to view after a good two hours' hunt, with my saddle, bridle, and blanket on my back, and soon after described three men driving pack-mules, to whom I went up to enquire my route, finding, to my great gratification, they were going to the same destination with provisions. I gladly joined them, getting some biscuit and rancid bacon to break my long fast, with a glass of bitter brandy to wash it down, at the moderate cost of two dollars, which, it strikes me, eclipses the tariff of the Clarendon or Mivart's for that meal.

We reached the bar where the principal diggings are situated before night, after some ascents and descents very little inferior in rugged quickness to those of the pass of the Sierra Nevada. Great numbers of miners were located there, and some large associated companies with considerable capital, employed in turning branches of the river, having several Indians and Kanakas at work. I did not await the result of those ambitious operations, which would occupy a long time; but by the returns per pan, I should say they must have been paid well, for I think they would average twenty dollars per day, according to my own experience, during three days, in which time I took out with my pan fifty-four dollars, without working full time either. The particles here were all of a good size, with occasional large specimens, and handsome quartz amalgamations. I saw some Kanakas (who are perhaps the most expert divers in the world) go down and bring up fine chunks, which suggested the construction of a dredging machine; but it could not be got to work with effect, from the inequalities of the bottom. Diving-bells were also thought of, but I never saw any in use.

There was a question raised there amongst the Americans themselves, which led to much angry feeling, being an objection on the part of one class, that large companies should have the privilege

of employing Indians or any other labour, taking advantage of their capital to engage a great number, staking off a space for each hand, whether an employer or not, and thus establishing a system of monopoly. There were several “extensive jawing matches” on the subject, without leading to any arrangement during my sojourn; but I know that afterwards it was not permitted in any of the mines to stake off allotments for employed hands, and in some, even the hiring of them was altogether interdicted.

The jealousy towards foreigners was very strong indeed, the Americans calling out for the enforcement of that order for their expulsion which General Smith had issued, declaring he would not require any troops to carry it out, as they would act as volunteers on the occasion. This feeling I could see was especially levelled at the English, while they condescended a most patronising regard for the Irish, evidently with a view of getting up a row betwixt them; but I was highly delighted to see them, for the nonce, agree in terms of friendly nationhood, notwithstanding all the angry political incentives that were used to set them by the ears.

In consequence of the insufferable heat of the weather, which told with double effect in the glens and gulches where the miners were employed, they made it a practice of turning out at the earliest dawn, working till ten o'clock, 34 then lying by till two o'clock, and working again in the evening till eight o'clock. They were a mixed class, made up of various nations, representing every vice that morality, religion, or law hold in abhorrence, reminding me strongly in their turbulent demeanour of a parcel of convicts during the absence of the overseer. No doubt some good citizens were scattered amongst them, but they were like isolated grain-blades, smothered with noxious weeds.

Prices of provision rated much higher there than at the Weber, owing to the great difficulty of access, it being wholly unapproachable by waggons; and every article that at all admitted of adulteration, was mixed to the full with its particular alloy.

I went from thence to the Middle and North Forks, which were both crowded, especially the former, and miners' returns good. At the Middle Fork the general average at that time was two ounces, the particles a good size, with numerous handsome specimens, that fetched far above their intrinsic

value; there were several of the dandy class in those diggings, but, as might be expected, they were not particularly successful; there was also a very flash company of that school, who regulated their movements by sound of trumpet, with tents, uniform, and implements to match, whom it was quite a treat to see turn out in the morning, with military order and precision, managing everything with great system and success, save and except the matter of getting gold, which appeared to be repelled by their polished tools and formal appearance; for while ragged fellows with rusty picks and clumsy shovels carried home of evenings their nice little pannikins of clear glittering gold, the Pittsburghers could scarcely boast a 35 particle to the hand; the fact was, they would not take the trouble of removing the soft surface soil, lying over the compact stratum that retained the gold, and their time was therefore employed merely in manufacturing muddy water.

The jealous epidemic was raging here to a great extent, and broke out fiercely on a German company under the following circumstances, which every candid man, be he Yankee or Israelite, must admit were inexcusable, unjust, and disgraceful. An American company, who had been working a barren spot very unprofitably, put up a notice that their “valuable site was for sale,” as they were going up to the Juba, and a lot of Germans, who had just come in, offered themselves as purchasers. The price asked was exorbitant, as the proprietors said it returned so largely, and the following day was appointed for the Germans to come and see the fruits of an hour's working, the sellers going in the course of the night and secreting gold dust in the banks, so that it would come to light as the natural deposit during the course of the experiment, and getting their worthy countrymen to puff up the cheat in the mean time. The following morning the poor Germans were so charmed with the apparent richness of the place, they gave 500 dollars and two valuable gold watches for the property; and oh! what indecent laughing there was at the “stupid dupes,” and lofty commendations of the “almighty cuteness” of Jonathan when the transfer was completed. I felt for the strangers, who were neither strong enough to enforce a restoration of their property, or rebuke the unbecoming insolence they were exposed to. However, like cool, sensible fellows, they 36 stoically put up with what they saw they could neither remedy or resent, and went to work amid jeers and taunts. It is unnecessary to say, that the proceeds of their first day's labour was not very encouraging; nevertheless, they persevered the following morning in a spirit of perfect contentment,

and, before night, had their perseverance rewarded by some very promising indications. The third day the indications led to veritable realities, enabling them to turn out the best day's work done in the diggings up to that period, and to proceed with an increasing daily average, which turned the laugh against Mr. Jonathan, who, with the most unprincipled impudence, sought to reclaim by force what he disposed of by a swindle. The Germans, however, were not so easily scared as the Mexicans, though I believe they would have been forced to move off only for the timely arrival of another German emigrant company from the States. This occurrence may serve to convey an idea of the spirit that actuated the Americans throughout the mines, and congenially blends with repudiation as a typical colouring of national character.

I also saw here, as the gentlemen of the long robe say, a nice point raised, on which there was much discussion and difference of opinion. A man named Smith, who was about the first to work in the locality, was so very successful in a short time, that he had his pile made before the crowd came, and went down to the city to make arrangements about getting home, burying his gold-dust till he returned; but lo and behold, when he came back he found the uninscribed tombstone of his treasure within the stakes of a new company, who, in a few days, would have brought 37 to light the astounding revelation, that bountiful Nature not only showers gold on California, but leathern pruses too, to hold it. The party in possession at first sternly resisted the attempts of Smith to exhume his dust, but the matter was referred to a full court of arbitration, where all Smith's proofs, marks, and tokens would have weighed as air had he not the good fortune (as they conceive it) of being a *native* Yankee.

Dysentery was very active in the North and Middle Forks, but not so fatal in its results as at the American Fork or the Weber. I got another slight attack, which I attributed to having my feet and legs so much immersed in cold water; nevertheless, I took out while there 87 dollars over and above my expenses; so that my travelling, instead of being attended with expense, added to my purse as well as my stock of information.

I next turned my steps to the Mormon Island diggings, emerging altogether from the hills into a handsome rolling country, beautifully wooded, and decked with several lovely flowering shrubs,

and manzanita rushes, with their handsome bunches of crimson berries, under which the quail were as thick as chickens in a poultry-yard, not caring to take wing as you came upon them, but running in amidst the thicket. I now came upon a well-beaten road, leading from the mill to Sacramento city, which presented a great growing thoroughfare of miners and waggons, carrying goods from one town to the other. There was no lack of houses of call either on the way, for every hollow tree was the nucleus of a grog-shop, while in the neighbourhood of every spring, or stream, a sort of tavern sprung up as from the soil, “like a rose-tree in full bearing,” 38 embowered in blooming flowers of printed calico, but deplorably remote from any analogy or affinity to nature in respect of their contents or charges.

I had the honour of spending the night with a boniface, who, though a native of England, hailed last from Sydney, where he would have appeared to have cultivated assiduously the acquaintance of all the penal authorities, whose names he was perfectly familiar with. He said “he was cast away on the coast, but not liking the infernal place, he left it *without leave*”—a piece of inadvertent candour that smacked strongly of a “misunderstanding with the law,” in which, of course, he was the aggrieved party. There were no such things as beds, so after staking my mule, I coiled up in a blanket, but could not enjoy much rest, as there were two pair of waggoners playing cards upon the springy counter, who brought down their trumps with an energy that made the tumblers ring, snapping the sweet bonds of repose at each thump and attestation.

Next morning my road opened into the flat, spacious valley of Sacramento, spreading out into immense tracts, marked in places with lines of timber, a thick belt showing the course of the Rio de los Americanos. It was a magnificent prospect—wanting only the grateful tint of verdure to render it transcendent. But the tall grass was scorched to the earth, and the fine poppy, peculiar to the country, shrivelled into decrepitude, the crisp vegetation going into snuff beneath the tread, while the baked surface was split into dry chinks and fissures gaping for moisture; yet men of reputation can be found to extol this as an agricultural country, and paint it in alluring colours, as an unequalled field for husbandry, though the spot on which 39 I then stood was about the general elevation of the lower valley of the Sacramento, full twenty feet above the river at its summer level

—a demonstration of the impossibility of ever calling in irrigation to compensate for the lack of natural moisture.

I rode on through the valley, now and then taking shelter under the huge oaks that are scattered over the face of the country, and arrived at Mormon Island early in the evening, before the miners knocked-off working, as they term it. They take their name from being first discovered and worked by a body of Mormons, who got out great quantities before the public came to find it out. There was not room, I may say, for another man there at the time of my visit, its convenient position and easiness of approach leading all new comers to it. The great majority of the miners had entered into a joint association for turning the river, between the island and the shore, and were then engaged in cutting the new channel, expecting to derive extraordinary profits from the undertaking, in which the contiguous tests fully justified them, causing great excitement pending its completion, which ripened into a regular share market; sanguine men purchasing the expectations of less impulsive co-operators, and original shareholders selling out to new comers, who stepped into their shoes; so that before the job was finished, very few, I afterwards learned, of the originators were in the concern—which turned out only moderately well, averaging as much as miners were ordinarily in the habit of making, but infinitely below the standard by which purchasers of shares made their calculations.

I had now visited all the principal diggings of the lower 40 Sacramento (as I may call them), without being able to satisfy myself in what manner or by what agency the gold came to be so wonderfully diffused through the soil; for at every place where I tried, in the proper stratum, I invariably found it, in greater or smaller quantities, at considerable elevations, and on quick slopes remote from the operation of water-courses or inundations, looking as if it were a part and parcel of the original soil. Had it been confined to ravines, gullies, and dried-up river-beds, or the bars or banks of rivers, it might be easily and feasibly accounted for, by the detritus being carried down and deposited by winter torrents—which, in the mountain regions, perform the expensive and mechanical part of mining, stamping, and breaking up the quartz, through the natural agency of rocks hurled from great heights, which either crush it to a powder, or chip off plentiful abrasions, that are more and more disintegrated as they are carried down, becoming finer in the particles the farther they are carried, from the original seam; but being diffused, as I have described it, I must

leave to more patient and scientific travellers to account for its anomalous appearances, merely adding a short extract from the scientific observations of Mr. Brackenridge, touching the theory of its formation:

“Let us suppose a series of horizontal strata, one above another, but of unequal depth, incumbent on the original unstratified mass, which forms the nucleus of the globe. According to geologists, this was the natural position; now, in consequence of some great volcanic agency, the lower mass is thrown up, and becomes the nucleus of a mountain, and that which was before the lowest, now 41 appears on the top, while the various strata, which lay flat upon it, are tilted up the sides; these being cut through, there is exposed to view the various strata and their contents, in the same manner as if a shaft had been sunk through them in their horizontal position. If there be any metallic seams to the right or left of these cuts, they will be seen like threads, and running lengthwise with the range of the mountains. The metals contained in the now vacant spaces of those ravines, have been carried away and deposited below. The masses then separated may be the work of thousands of years; but the quantity may be estimated by the number and width of the natural cuttings of the gold seams now disconnected. It is certain the gold at the bottom cannot exceed the amount carried down from these original deposits.

Without assuming that the gold on the Sierra Nevada is greater than in the same range further south, its peculiar geographical and geological character may be a reason why gold may be found in California in greater abundance than any other part of the world. It is found along the whole range, from Sonora to Chili, although in greater or less abundance; and there is no doubt that a variety of other metals will be met with, perhaps as valuable, when the passion for gold-washing will have somewhat abated. It is remarkable that gold has been found almost invariably on the western, or Pacific side, of the great range, while silver, copper, and lead, are discovered on the eastern side, at a much higher elevation. It is probable that, instead of gold, silver and copper exist on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada, toward 42 the Great Basin; but by what process or operation of nature, came these seams, or veins of gold, or other metals, to be thus deposited? Was it the agency of fire, or by water and alluvion? I think it probable that both may have been at work, being the two greatest solvents in nature, and at the same time the greatest crystalisers: perhaps metallic ores may

be the work of alluvion, and the production of pure metallic substances that of heat. With respect to gold, I think the latter theory is more reasonable, as it is always found in a pure state, while the quartz (pure siliceous) in which it is contained may be alluvial, and one of the earliest deposits, from the decomposition of the original unstratified mass. But where shall we seek for the original supply of the precious metal? How is it formed, or whence has it been extracted by the agency of heat?

It is not enough to say that, like other metals, it is found diffused through all nature—for an appreciable quantity of gold has been extracted from violets. In my opinion, it exists in the original unstratified mass, in imperceptible proportions, but proportions varying in different places, other metals being more or less abundant. The greater proportion of our soils were formed, according to Sir Humphrey Davy, by decomposition of the original mass, and this accounts for the diffusion of gold or small particles, which may be taken up by plants, and enter into the composition of organised bodies. If, then, the unstratified rock is the original seat of the metal, but in particles infinitely minute, it may have been separated by a very high degree of heat, by which it would be sublimated, or volatilised, and thus carried upward by chemico-electric force, and by a process resembling distillation. In this way it would penetrate the quartz rock, or be condensed in the spaces of the laminated strata, such as talc-schist or mica slate. Such is the theory of Buckland and other modern geologists. It may be mere speculation; but one thing is certain, as may be seen at once by those who have examined the larger masses of gold brought from California, that the finer particles of gold have been run together by a second operation of heat, sufficient only to fuse them and separate them from the quartz; the first was distillation, the second smelting, or rather simple fusion. It is possible that these great operations of nature have been repeated at different intervals, and different seams of quartz and gold may be found on ascending the ravines, the lower more completely scattered (but in finer particles) through, and the higher having undergone afterwards simple fusion.”

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CHAPTER IV.

Leave for Sacramento City—Description of the Country—Traders' Exactions—Their Mode of dealing with Indians—Their Ethical Notions—The Quantities of Salmon in the River—Yet no Fisheries—Colonel Cranshaw's Account of the Emigrant Suffering on the Humboldt and the Desert—Sutter's Fort—Look in vain for his great Corn-fields—The Captain sells his Interest in the Land at the Embarcadero, and endeavours to found Suttersville—The Appearance of Sacramento City—Description of it—Value of Town Lots—Accommodation for Visitors—A Californian Dormitory—Active Trade of the City—Anxiety of the Traders to secure Custom—The Pandemoniums—Their motley Frequenters—National Characteristics—Miners' Recklessness—The Harbour—The Shipping—Their anomalous Value—Wages at Sacramento—No Women or Children there then—Californian Horsemanship—Indian Idleness—Sickness in the City—The Unhealthiness of its Situation—Go down the Sacramento in a Whale-boat—Suttersville—Call on Captain Sutter—Schwartz's Settlement—The old Russian Embarcadero—Meet Vessels full of Gold Hunters—Sleep on the River Bank—The Sacramento a noble River—Indian Encampments—Scenes on the River—The Slough—Evening Party there—Its melancholy Termination—Enter the Upper or Suisoon Bay—New York—Carquine's Strait—Bernicia—Its Prospects—Visit Sonoma—The Valley and the Town—General Vallejo anxious to have it made the Seat of Government—Ride over the Neighbourhood—Leave for Sacramento in a small Schooner.

I LEFT Mormon Island for Sacramento city, travelling along the Rio de les Americanos, the noble valley expanding as I proceeded, and, as I before remarked, wanting only in moisture to render it one of the most fertile in the world. The timber followed the river, and appeared in large clumps on the plain, in the places where the water last recedes from, superb trees standing singly here and there, covering a space that at a little distance appeared much greater than the radius of any single tree. 45 Wherever one of those stood contiguous to the road, it was certain to be the axis of a grog-shop; and numerous though they were, they all appeared to be well patronised, nor did you ever hear a grumble about their exactions, though they demanded three dollars for a bottle of stout, and one dollar for four little enrolments of trash, that had no more the flavour of tobacco than they had of honey. I saw three Californian Indians come into one of those places while I was resting there, to buy a bottle of spirits, of which they are passionately fond; when the host better than half filled a

bottle with alcohol, making up the residue with water, for which he charged them three dollars; and afterwards, taking the scale to weigh their dust, put in the quarter-ounce weight, which I know was above the standard, and kept that full quantity in payment, thus robbing those ignorant creatures in the three branches of that simple transaction; first, giving them half water; secondly, putting in a four-dollar weight to get three dollars; and, thirdly, having the said weight twenty-five per cent. above par; in addition to which, he charged a most unconscionable price for an abominable compound.

As soon as they went out, he turned to me, and said, "I reckon you smoked how I sarved them at B—out." To which I nodded. "You know," he continued, "no Christian man is bound to give full value to those infernal red-skins; they are onsoffsicated vagabones, and have no more bissnis with money than a mule or a wolf; they've no religion, an' tharfore no consciences, so I deals with them accordin."—"But," I replied, not caring to get into an ethical controversy with so undiluted a reprobate, "I 46 believe you missionaries have already begun to enlighten them, and are making preparations on a large scale to convert and bring them into the Christian fold."—"No doubt they have," he said; "but it is time enough for men in trade to oncourage them when they laarn the truths of the gospel."

A new batch of customers interrupted the dialogue, so I left this impressive moralist, who I am satisfied deals with all alike when he finds he can try on his cheating with impunity. A good many batches of cattle and mules now began to dot the plain; some that had crossed the land route, and just arrived, presenting a wretched contrast to those sleek-sided beasts that were bred in the country. Looking down the steep river-bank as I sauntered along, I could distinctly see great numbers of enormous salmon and trout in the clear water below, which, as I have already remarked, abound in the Sacramento, San Joaquin, and all their tributaries, in all of which there are countless favourable places for erecting weirs, where any amount of fish might be taken, which always commands an exorbitant price in the Sacramento and Francisco markets; but no one seems to give the matter any attention, though most other projects, which present a profitable aspect, are jumped into with avidity. I talked over the subject with some gentlemen of intelligence and capital in both cities, but I could not induce them to entertain it, though they would unhesitatingly give eight or ten dollars for

a good fish, their general objection being the great rises of the river, though, as I told them, weirs might be constructed that could be removed on the approach of floods.

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About four o'clock I saw a flag waving on the end of a tall pole, a few miles ahead, in the line of the river, where the valley opened out in a south-easterly direction further than the eye could follow its bounds. This I was told was Sutter's Fort, the place where Captain Sutter first established himself when he reached that country. As I was riding slowly on, I was overtaken by a pack-mule train, just coming in from the States, under the guidance of Colonel Cranshaw. Both men and animals appeared terribly cut up, complaining of many accidents and great hardships, and the loss of several animals by exhaustion and Indian treachery. They drew a frightful picture of the sufferings of the emigrants on Humboldt River and the desert, Colonel Cranshaw giving it as his opinion that they would all perish unless early succour were sent to them. I recommended him to represent it to the authorities as soon as he got to the city, which he did; and I believe it was the means of bringing about the organisation for their rescue which was subsequently so effectively got up. He also informed me of the spread of cholera in the States, and mentioned several fatal cases as having occurred amongst the emigrants along the Platte.

We pulled up at Sutter's Fort, which is about two miles from the embarcadero on the Rio de los Americanos. It is an oblong pile, erected on a rising ground, with a few of the characteristics of a fortress about it, built of adobes, the external wall being from eighteen to twenty feet in height, shedded down all round inside, with an adobe house two story high in the centre. This was originally the captain's residence, and all the sheds, his stores, stables, &c. But now the house is an hotel, and the sheds are 48 fitted up into hospitals, billiard-rooms, and taps. There are two large gates, at each of which there were a pair of Indians couchant; but the whole is in a state of decline, fast crumbling into original dust, in which it would not surprise me if there was a small per centage of the golden quality. I looked about the fort for Captain Sutter's immense fields of wheat and corn, which should then be ready for the sickle, but not a head of either was to be seen, the captain having declined agricultural pursuits about the time they would have recompensed him best, if the pursuit was a thriving one; but I suppose the captain made the experiment, and, finding the climate

unsuitable for the maturation of grain, discontinued it, for he is not the man to abandon a project if he thinks it can be made to answer expectations by perseverance and industry. He no longer resides at the fort, his headquarters being at Suttersville, on the banks of the Sacramento, about three miles below the city, where he is endeavouring to found a new town, having sold his interest in the site of Sacramento before it grew into its present importance—a piece of over-anxiety which threw a countless fortune into the hands of the purchasers, and which he will not be able to repair in his new project, for it does not appear to take in the slightest.

Sacramento city, as the embarcadero is called, was clearly visible from the fort, reposing on the plain in its white summer costume; the plains on both sides down stocked with cattle, mules, and horses, from which the ocean emigrants purchased their supplies, there being no animal market in San Francisco. For a mile out from the city. There was a suburb of snow-white tents of different shapes and sizes, erected amongst the fine open trees that skirted it, presenting a most pretty and unique appearance; and on entering the town I found nine-tenths of the houses made of the same material, nailed on very light frames indeed; the streets laid out with great regularity, and of a fine width, many of the majestic trees being permitted to remain, casting their delicious shade about, and adding wonderfully to the novel and pleasing effect. The shops and stores are very spacious, and excellently assorted, quantities of even light portable goods being piled out under the verandahs, where they remain night and day—strange as it may appear in this mixed community, with perfect security, such was the apprehension of summary punishment that followed detected theft.

Town lots were fetching wonderful prices at that period; sites with frontages twenty-five feet by twenty-five feet bringing from 3000 dollars to 5000 dollars, with a steady upward tendency. There were no hotels; but in lieu of them there were boarding-houses, where your bare meals cost you twenty-five dollars per week, attached to each of which there was a large apartment, littered over with hay, where you paid one dollar for the privilege of lying on the ground in your own blanket. If you remained over one night you rolled your blanket up on the spot you lay and left it there; but as all did not come to bed at the same time, or in the same trim, you were subject to have your snoring interrupted, by the iron-heel of a huge boot on your nose, or the knee of a staggering emigrant in search of his nest on the pit of your stomach; nor was it unusual in the morning to find a congealed

tobacco spittle on your cheek, 50 or like a big soot-drop on your blanket. There was one gent that retired generally about the same hour I did, who told me as, “a curiosity,” that on last night we had the honour of having as bedfellows two real judges, five ex-governors, three lawyers, as many doctors, streaked with blacksmiths, tinkers, and tailors, “that made a most almighty beautiful democratic amalgam, that's a fact.” Our board was as good as it could be without fish, milk, butter, or vegetables; but the drink was dire stuff.

There was an active business doing throughout in every shop with emigrants fitting out for the mines; and so anxious were shopkeepers to secure a trade at their large scale of profits, they never exhibited any hesitation about giving credit to large amounts to parties they were wholly unacquainted with, without any introduction whatever. I saw several instances of this, and heard emigrants expressing their astonishment at the wonderful liberality of the traders, who, however, took care in all the cases to palm off a second-rate article, or one that had suffered damage in its long transit, knowing that customers accommodated with long credits could not be over scrupulous in their examinations; while their knowledge of the richness of the mines afforded them a guarantee that their customers would have the means of easy repayment within their reach.

But the establishments that commanded the largest and steadiest trade, and where the circulating medium beat with the strongest pulsation, were the pandemoniums, which were crowded morning, noon, and night, and certainly with the most mixed and motley congregations I ever before witnessed—whites, half-castes, copper, 51 mahogany, and blacks—delegates from every nation that takes any part or interest in the commerce or intercourse of the world, their features more varied than their features more varied than their colours, and their costumes representing the fashions of their several countries. The jargon of voices, mutters, and exclamations of those votaries of fortune, made a most strange medley of sounds, and you could pretty well discover the various national characteristics of the players in the progress of the game; the cool indifference of the Russian or the Turk, the latter placidly stroking his beard under the frowns of the fickle goddess; while the Frenchman at his elbow was sibilating his sacrès, and the Yankee opposite cursing and thumping the table with boisterous vehemence; Paddy down at the end consoling himself with the philosophic reflection, “that the worse luck now the better again”—“Come my hearties, send round the ball

—a faint heart never won a fair lady—hurroo;” the cloaked Spaniard and the phlegmatic German laying down their stakes mechanically from the outside; the Scotch chiel poking in his head from the same region, just to see how the chances ran “afore he risked his siller;” while Italians smoked and hummed, and Chinese looked as innocent as if tricks were no part of their training. All the newcomers staked coin, the miners dust, some of them putting down large purses at a single venture, exclaiming, “Now for it—home or the diggings?” “The diggings by Heaven!” as the president raked the bag into the infernal coffers; and up got the miner to go dig another fortune, and again to have it charmed from his grasp.

There was a large fleet of fine shipping in the river lying afloat, close enough to the banks to discharge by 52 gangway, the river being very deep, and tidal for fifty miles above the city. Several splendid ships were dismantled and converted into stores, boarding-houses, and hospitals, their crews having all deserted, and there being no possibility of getting them down to the coast. I saw A1 ships there, 400 tons burden, offered for 8000 dollars without getting a customer; and fifteen ton boats, suited to river trade, selling readily as high as 2500 dollars. Wages of all sorts were very high at that time, a common labourer getting twelve dollars and his keep, and any sort of tradesman from one ounce to twenty dollars. The cost of tightening the tyres of a waggon was thirty-two dollars, and that of shoeing a horse twelve dollars; however, as the emigration came in, those unparalleled charges were gradually fined down, but never to what I would call a reasonable level.

There was one peculiarity about the city, then containing about 10,000 souls, that could not fail striking a stranger immediately, which was the total absence of women and children. Native Californians were constantly coming to and fro, galloping, as is always their custom, at full speed, even through the most crowded thoroughfares; but they manage their horses with admirable skill, and can rein them up in an instant, from the tremendous severity of their bits. Numbers, too, of the native Indians were constantly strolling about, too idle to hire themselves out, even at the high rates offered, engaged in groups, gambling, not with cards, but a kind of thimble-rig, in which one man takes a small ball, and after shuffling his hands, so as to puzzle the sight, then holds them out for the parties to guess in which the ball is, each taking their turns 53 at hiding it. I was greatly amused

standing over them as they were squatted under a large tree at the end of one of the main streets, swaying their bodies about and grunting during the progress of the game.

Sickness prevailed in the city in the shape of dysentery and diarrhoea, and great apprehensions were entertained that the incoming emigrants would carry the cholera with them. I fear the city, from its position, will never be a peculiarly healthy one, for it stands in a hollow, several feet below the level of the river-bank, which renders it an absolute impossibility to drain it properly, while the ground at the back, towards the fort, and again on the south, towards Suttersville, rises so considerably, that unless the authorities can establish a Mediterranean sink to swallow the impurities, they must let them dry up and fester in their several pools that stand under the houses, which are raised on piles.

After inspecting this new gossamer city, I started with a few new acquaintances in a whale-boat down the Sacramento, leaving at the turn of the tide, and dropping down to Suttersville, where there were a few ships lying; and although several streets were staked out, very few houses were erected, and no appearance of any trade or bustle, except that resulting from a small garrison of U.S. troops stationed there, greatly thinned, as I heard, by desertion, while at the back of the town stood the residence of Captain Sutter, on whom I called, but he was at his rancho on Feather River; a circumstance I much regretted, as I expected to have derived a good deal of information from him concerning the country, and obtain his candid opinion as to its agricultural capabilities.

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Four miles further down, on the opposite side of the river, there is a German settler named Schwartz, who has cleared a lot of land, on which he raises water and musk melons and pumpkins, and now derives a very good income from their sale. He has a squad of half-civilised Indians about him, whom he keeps mostly employed in draughting for salmon, which they catch in great quantities and of immense size, some of them, that I saw split and suspended to dry in a shed behind his house, weighing as much as thirty pounds, only used for the diet of his Indian servitors, who relish them exceedingly. I told him it would pay him better than his vegetable gardening to send the fish fresh to the Sacramento market; an experiment he said he would try. He is a long time in the

country, and said to be enormously rich, but lives in a rude and comfortless state, without any idea of hospitality. Below him, again, a few miles on the opposite bank, is what is called the Russian embarcadero, a sloping indentation on the shore, where the Russians at one time formed a small settlement, but at present there is no vestige of the place, nor does the adjoining country furnish any evidence that they were improving settlers, for beyond a small clearance for the supply of firewood, I could not see any trace of industry.

We pulled eight or nine miles further down, against a strong flood tide, passing two schooners and several smaller craft on their way up, choke full of passengers; and, as the shades of evening set in, made fast our boat to a tree stem, cooking our supper, and fixing our couches on the bank; often hearing throughout the night the jocund song of embryo gold-diggers, gladly gliding over the waters to the golden goal. Next morning we got under weigh early, stealing down by the lofty banks under the shade of the impending trees, getting an occasional slant of favourable wind at some of the bends of this truly noble river, which is almost of a uniform depth, without snag or sawyer, or any other obstruction to interfere with or endanger navigation—a peculiarity the more striking, from the great height and impetuosity of its winter floods, and the proximity of timber to the banks. There are scarcely any water-fowl on its lower waters, and rarely, if ever, an open space in the impenetrable forest that skirts its shores. I landed in several places where I thought I discovered breaks; but they were of no extent, caused by lagoons too swampy for the growth of timber. We passed two small Indian encampments during the day, but they had nothing to trade, and appeared to be living in a state of great squalor, many of them covered with blotches and loathsome ulcers, the fruits of a certain disease, which, I learn, is fast diminishing their already limited numbers.

However, if silence and solitude reigned along the shores, the songs of the sailors and boatmen, and the chants of cheery emigrants enlivened the waters as they swept along, in quick succession, towards the seat of their fortunes, and many a time were we hailed for information by those sanguine voyageurs, to know how matters went on in the mines, as they conceived it “passing strange,” to see men turning their backs upon Plutus as we were. We came on the second night to the mouth of the Slough, a narrow gut that runs in a straight course for eight miles, joining the river again at the end of that distance, the river taking a sweep of forty miles to arrive at the

same point. It is deep enough for any vessel, and all come through it to effect the saving. According to the computation of an American settler there, we were ninety miles from Sacramento. In the course of the evening we were joined by four other boats on their way up, and made "right merrie" on the strength of our pleasing intelligence; for, though I did not disguise the drawbacks, such as sickness and privations, they never overcast the bright anticipations which the certain abundance of gold engendered. There were myriads of mosquitoes filling the air in the neighbourhood, the first I saw in the waters of the Sacramento, and of a very poisonous genus, inflammation setting in immediately after the sting. They resisted all our efforts to banish them, and continued dreadfully annoying, coming in clouds from the tule marshes that lay between the Slough and the river. Like our party coming up the Platte, the Americans betook themselves to the water, performing all sorts of capers, and, in their exuberant glee, indulging in every manner of joke, one fellow, after a heavy plunge, shouting out, "Bottom, bottom;" another hallooing in reply, "Take care you don't knock it out, and let through all the gold," and such like badinage; but in the height of the merriment a sharp cry of distress arose, and before assistance could be rendered, a young man, named Flintner, had passed from the hopes and anxieties of this world to an endless eternity.

After passing the Slough next morning, the river commenced expanding, forming bars in places, the timber getting thinner, and the banks lower and more flat, until we passed the delta, through which the waters of the 57 Sacramento and the San Joaquin disembogue into Suisoon Bay. On getting into the bay we encountered a heavy sea, driven up by a north-westerly breeze, that was quite enough for an open boat to contend with, and continued to freshen so much that we were forced to bear off for a small harbour on its eastern shore, where a new city has been started, under the proud name of New York; but it is a perfect mystery to me on what its founders build their expectations of future eminence, for it stands on a swamp, with a shoal channel to approach it, and a bald, barren country behind it. As the afternoon advanced the breeze lulled, and we entered Carquine's Strait under a resplendent sky, gemmed over with celestial jewels, that shed a glittering light on the high bold cliffs of its southern shore, the infant city of Benicia, on the hanging slope opposite, with its ships in front, and military cantonments spread out on the hill behind, presenting a novel but beautiful spectacle.

Benicia stands on the northern shore of the strait which connects the Suisoon and the San Pablo Bays; the strait is a mile wide, and several fathoms deep. The shore along the town is bold and deep, admitting vessels of the largest burden to come close alongside. The head-quarters of the American troops in California are fixed here, which, I imagine, led to the idea of starting the city, in expectation that extensive government works would follow. As yet, however, there is no symptom of any move of that sort, and town lots, which were for a while at a high premium, now drag out a precarious existence at par. There are a good few houses and stores, but no stir of trade about it. Like New York, the country behind it is of 58 mediocre character, the hills approaching it closely, and having no connexion with any of the mines. I therefore cannot predict any great things for this new place, which has, however, many natural advantages.

When leaving Sacramento I intended going on to Francisco, then moving south, and wintering in the district of the Valley of San José; but I here accidentally met with two of my companions across the continent, with two other friends of theirs, on their way up to Sacramento, to start for Trinity River, of which they recounted me marvellous tales, derived from indubitable authority, pressing me to join them, which I finally consented to, having, as I calculated, nearly three months to visit the northern diggings before the rainy season would set in; so I arranged to meet them at Sacramento in three days, giving them authority to include my requisites in their outfit, as I determined to take this opportunity of visiting Sonoma, which was represented in the most glowing colours as a valley of great beauty and extraordinary fertility, where grain had been raised, and could be grown to meet the requirements of the entire country, being anxious to see a place so particularly specified as possessing agricultural qualifications, which I doubted existed for any extent in any part of the whole valley of the Sacramento. the valley and the town, which was one of the sites of the old Missions, are situated on the northern shores of the bay, about eighteen miles inland, on a creek of its own name, which is navigable for twelve or fourteen miles for vessels of light draft in seasons of high water, but at this season (10th September) the embarcadero cannot be approached, 59 even by a canoe, except at the top of high water. The shores of the bay, for some miles inland, are marshy and fit for nothing unless it be the cultivation of rice; however, as I proceeded the land improved wonderfully in quality, but the fine grass was brown and crisped

for want of moisture; several herds of tame cattle and horses were scattered over it, in magnificent condition, and some good log-houses of new settlers. The valley is bounded at the back by low rounded hills, with scarcely any timber, but green all over with wild oats, on which the cattle feed when other herbage is scant, and from those hills there issue several streams, that might be made subservient to the purposes of irrigation in the earlier season, but very few of them now contained any water.

The town, like all the old Missions, is built round a plaza, but there is now scarce a vestige of the old establishments; in their stead, good modern houses and stores have been erected, as it is a favourite place for settlement by those not carried away by the mania of gold-digging, and will rise into importance, if the proprietor, General Don Mariano Gaudalope Vallejo, succeeds (as it is thought he will) in having the seat of government transferred there, when it would become the residence of the governor, and the place where the senate and assembly would congregate. The general, who is an enormously rich man, would be greatly benefited by such an arrangement, for almost all the property around belongs to him. The position and natural beauty of the place will tell in its favour, over and above which I understand the general has offered to advance a sum sufficient to cover the erection of all the offices and public buildings 60 required by the government. I waited on the general, who is a native of the country, and was received with the greatest courtesy and hospitality. He is a fine, handsome man, in the prime of life, of superior attainments and great natural talent, the only native Californian in the senate. His lady is also possessed of unusual personal attractions, and of that easy dignity and warmth of manner so peculiarly characteristic of Spanish ladies. His house is a fine one, superbly furnished, and wanting in nothing that comfort or luxury requires.

I hired a horse, and rode over the whole of the adjacent country known as the Valley of Sonoma, but could only meet a few places, of inconsiderable extent, where crops could be raised, as only in those localities could irrigation be kept up to the proper period of maturation. I finished my survey time enough to get down to a nice schooner lying at the mouth of the creek, in which I engaged my passage to Sacramento, but, being late, was obliged to put up with deck accommodation, all the

berths below being occupied; a disappointment I did not much regret in such a climate, on one of its finest nights, after such an apprenticeship as I served to unsheltered sleeping in crossing the plains.

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CHAPTER V.

Set sail and get Aground—How we bumped, thumped, and staggered—Scene in the Cabin—Sleeping in the Foresail—Providential Deliverance—Joking next Morning—Dead Calm and hot Sun—Cast Anchor—Amusements on Board—The Californian Prayer-book—Short Commons—Wild Cattle—Shoot a Steer—Their fine Shapes—How they originated and increased—Substitute for the Buffalo—Get the Beef on Board—Sharp Exercise and cold Evening Air superinduce Illness—Symptoms—Californian Ague—The Sufferings it Entails—How I dealt with it, and Conquered it—Causes of its Virulence in the Mines—Wonderful Progress of Sacramento—Attempt to Defeat the Charter by the Gambler—Their Motives—First Hotel in Sacramento—Its Style of Architecture—Internal Construction—The Opening Banquet—Cost and Rent of the Concern.

We weighed anchor by moonlight with a fine breeze; but just as we hove in stays on our first tack, we had reached on to a bank, getting fast aground, and, as the tide rose, kept thumping and drifting for some hours. Although the sea did not run very high, our situation was attended with danger, as our bark was one of those frail craft got up hurriedly to meet the demand for river navigation, and was neither timbered, fastened, or found substantially, without even a kedge on board to bouse her off. However, as the wind sets steadily from the same point from February till October, we knew she would forge in the same direction all night, and probably stagger into deep water ere morning's tide. The air was very sharp, but sleep or comfort was not to be obtained, for she would 62 be awhile on her larboard beam-end, bumping and thumping, then suddenly rising on even keel in deeper water, as suddenly fall down on her starboard beam, huddling passengers, furniture, and all odds and ends in the cabin into a kaleidoscopic heap, inflicting several serious wounds, cuts, and bruises. The deck was altogether unsafe, for the bulwarks were so low they afforded no protection from a sharp list; but as her sails were lowered and not furled, I bethought me that probably the bag of the foresail might afford a tolerable hammock. So crawling forward during an

interregnum, I made fast the boom of it securely, and, dropping myself down, was soon swayed into a profound sleep, which was broken in upon in the middle of the night by the noise of the crew and the shouting of the captain to hoist the sails. I could not instantly bring to mind my situation, and made no effort to arise till I found the canvas slipping sensibly in folds from under me, and the boom swinging violently, when I became conscious of my situation and danger, roaring with might and main without making myself heard. I then endeavoured to get upright, but every lift of the sail upset me, and as it was fast getting chock up, I felt the peril of my position: grasping at the reef-points, two of which I got hold of, and being in the second row, they just enabled me to reach my toes to the boom; however, as I was to leeward, the bagging of the sail to a stiff breeze made my hold very insecure and fearfully dangerous, being wholly unperceived in the dark, and the vessel going free, full eight knots. I tried again to attract attention, but my efforts were drowned by the rushing of the waters and the whistling of the wind through the cordage; my hold and footing now got more difficult and uncertain, rendering me dreadfully nervous and and exhausted. Just as I was about abandoning all hopes, the man at the helm, suffering her to take a yaw to leeward, the sail jibed, and, as it passed over the deck, I dropped down almost in a state of insensibility. It was a miraculous and providential deliverance, and led to the registration of a vow on the subject of hammocks, which I would recommend all travellers to imitate. It seems our bark got afloat in deep water earlier than we expected, and there being no more shoals or banks in our course, and tolerable starlight, the captain ordered the men to make sail, my lucky star being in the ascendant, else there would have been an abrupt conclusion to my Californian rambles and adventures.

As the morning sun arose, warm and unclouded, my vapours, excitement, and displeasure evaporated, leaving me, however, as the sailors term it, “an appetite like a handsaw,” and making me merge every cranky feeling into a keen desire for breakfast, which was prolonged, to the annoyance of the second-table candidates, by the recital of the hammock adventure, as the crowded state of the vessel and her limited accommodation rendered such an arrangement inevitable. There were divers and sundry mishaps of a more unpretending character, evidenced by patches and discolourations of different tints and shades; but the only querulous sufferer was an old alchemist, on his way to the mines, to cheat Nature of the great secret, who lost one pane out of his spectacles,

and was apprehensive the glaziers in Sacramento were unprovided with any but what the trade term a C.C. article. Various were the sly jokes and bad puns manufactured on 64 the occasion, till a rough countryman of my own suggested a piece of "Patt's hat," which fairly roused Caderallader from a simmer to a boil over.

As the day advanced the wind declined, the sun's heat increasing in intensity till noon, when it lulled into a dead calm, which, together with an ebb tide, obliged us to cast anchor nearly abreast of the mouths of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. Every one now adopted his favourite method of killing time, which was rather a difficult labour with the limited armoury on board, as library there was none, neither were there fish-lines, nor nets, nor yet musical instruments, nor even a shady retreat from the solar blaze; for dread notes of preparation were audibly issuing from the little cabin, where the torpid mosquitoes, who were paralysed by the chills of San Francisco, began buckling on their armour, reinforced by fresh drafts from the neighbouring delta. Cigars were employed by some, others were engaged at rifle-practice at empty bottles thrown into the water, but by far the greater number were engaged in the study of the "Californian prayerbook"—as a pack of cards are profanely designated—a weapon which a native or an acclimatised settler rarely ever stirs abroad without, such is their all-absorbing passion for the game; and most careful, too, are they of their missal, which they carry in a nicely fitting case, something like those sandwich-boxes which hard-worked lawyers in the Westminster courts carry about to swell their bags.

As I was surveying the various groups of Monte professors, Porker pushers, and Uker players, I overheard the steward telling the captain, "that not calculating on such 65 a crowd of passengers, he feared all his fresh provision would run out." While they were discussing how the difficulty was to be met, I called the captain's attention to a moving mass, as it appeared to me, on the side of one of the remote hills, which proved, on a survey through the glass, to be a large herd of cattle that I imagined belonged to a neighbouring rancho, and therefore would not have minded them further, only that the captain ordered a boat to be lowered, and commenced canvassing for recruits to go in pursuit of "the wild steers yonder;" but, with the exception of myself and another, there were no volunteers to reinforce the regular crew of the vessel; so we pushed off, seven in number, dividing ourselves, when we reached the shore, into three parties, a centre and two wings, creeping

as covertly as the naked pasture would permit, until the mate and his companion, who came first within range, fired, when the herd broke in our direction, and by the time they approached close enough for our guns to play, we could discern one badly crippled, unable to keep up with the rest, stopping frequently, looking back wildly, and lowing lowly in a piteous tone, during one of which pauses my comrade shot him again, and fatally, for life was quite extinct ere we came up—a distance of not more than one hundred and fifty yards.

He was in prime order, and from his marks and nice points, would not disgrace the paddocks of the best Leicestershire feeder. While cutting him up, I inquired if those herds were numerous, or if there was no ownership claimed by any parties. But it seems unless a beast in that country is duly branded, he is public property, and that the number of those independent herds in the valleys ⁶⁶ of the Sacramento and San Joaquin are immense, originating in animals that wander out of company on those vast plains, which, after once breeding in the wilderness, are never disposed again to rejoin the more domesticated droves. Settlers, too, who, ere the discovery of the gold mines, were attracted to Oregon as a country more suited for agricultural purposes, made convenient selections from their large herds, driving them over the mountains, and leaving the culls to “increase and multiply,” in a state of perfect nature; from which parent stock the country is supplied with a substitute for the buffalo, which, as I have before observed, is not found westward of the Rocky Mountains; and most opportunely do they often minister to an empty stomach, or a system rife with scurvy, from the constant use of salt provisions unaccompanied with vegetables.

By the time we got on board with all the prime pieces, a fresh breeze began to spring up with the flood tide, but as evening came on, the air became uncomfortably chill, which was more sensibly felt by me, from the state of the blood, after the sharp exercise of the day, having had a long distance each, to pack a heavy load of beef. The cabin being crammed to suffocation, and dark with tobacco smoke, I rolled myself up in my blanket on the deck, at a respectful distance from the foresil; but the extreme cold banishing the luxury of sleep, I shifted my position close to the cook's quarters; however, the caloric in that region was insufficient to modify my shivers. I tried the virtues of brandy-and-water, but they were of no avail, and by the time every resource was exhausted, and day breaking, I felt sickish and out of sorts—the breakfast ⁶⁷ preparations hissed

unheeded round my ears, and were wafted without effect under my nostrils—my aching joints causing me to apprehend a fever, as head-ache began stealthily to take its place, with which the stomach soon avowed a kindred sympathy, until a complete over-allsiness forced me to resume my blanket. The dinner, with its wild beef attractions, had none for me; and as the day again declined into shade and cold, I felt thrills along my spine, followed by an uncontrollable shivering quite foreign to me, but recognised by the initiated as the premonitory symptoms of ague—which, sure enough, as another night came round, had gathered sufficient strength to shake me without mercy.

Nor were the cold fits the worst; the dry roasting fever that succeeded had incomparably more horrors for me; and for four days that we continued to creep up this fine river, on which the high banks and lofty timber permitted only the topsails to draw with effect, did my ailment increase in virulence, my strength becoming so thoroughly prostrated, that I had to be carried on shore in a hammock, to where my friend's tent was erected on the outskirts of the city. I tried a whole catalogue of ague recipes, but my daily visitant, which came as punctually as if its movements were regulated by a chronometer, set them all at defiance, until I was unable to sit erect to take a drink, my shoulders, hips, knees, and ankles getting stripped and ulcerated from the terrible shaking and the hardness of my couch. My case was now considered hopeless, and, believing my recovery impossible, I made an effort, but an ineffectual one, to scrawl a line to my absent friends, which was performed by a friend, whose kindness and tender attention shall never be forgotten by me.

In addition to my bodily weakness, I also conceived that my mind was forsaking me, which caused an agony of fear and contrition at the thought of going before my Eternal Judge without any religious consolation. While in this state, I overpersuaded my friend, as a last resource, to procure me some quinine, sufficient for three doses of double the ordinary quantity, the first of which he reluctantly administered in a little brandy, and, to his great dismay, saw it followed by the most aggravated and prolonged shake I ever had; but as it subsided, instead of its usual concomitant, a burning fever, I found a genial glow begin to creep over me, accompanied by a gentle perspiration, and a soothed state of mind and body, that caused the first visitation of refreshing sleep I had for several days. I awoke, mightily refreshed, and, feeling that my enemy was staggered, insisted on another dose to follow up the blow, and again a delicious slumber, unbroken by dreams, shed its

sanative influence upon me, when waking consciousness returned, I felt stout enough to demand imperatively the remaining dose, and as I swallowed it, I felt as assured of my victory as if I had my knee on the chest of a footpad, with a pistol at his brain.*

I subsequently got a recipe from a gentleman whom I met, the efficacy of which I once tested in a renewed attack, and in numerous other cases where I administered it, which I subjoin for the benefit of future travellers:—

Twenty-five grains of blue pill, twenty-five grains of quinine, and twelve grains of oil of black pepper, made into twelve pills; one to be taken every hour, for six hours, on the morning of the shake; one, every hour, for four hours, the morning following; the remaining two, at the same interval, on the third morning.

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The Californian ague is said to be the very worst type of that fearful malady; and its victims being, for the most part, unprovided with the means and appliances to mitigate its attacks, suffer proportionately, living in cold tents, sleeping on the damp earth, working very generally knee-deep in water, rarely provided with changes of clothing, and using unwholesome diet, they become an easy prey to its ravages.

When able to toddle about town, I was amazed at the extent of improvement in the limited period of my absence—to be sure, its edifices were of simple construction, and capable of being erected with great facility; nevertheless, when I surveyed one fine new street of godly proportions, with well-stored shops and a busy population, which had sprung into being and bustle in so brief a space, I could not repress my wonder and amazement; others also ambitiously planned were fast approximating to occupation, the most imposing piece of architecture in each being, as a matter of course, a capacious hell, or gaudy gambling rendezvous, one of which was emblazoned in letters of immense magnitude, with the quaintly characteristic name of the “The City Diggings.”

There was an unusual ballot just then proceeding, to take the sense of the community as to the propriety of having a charter for the city, which was near being defeated, owing to wondrous

An excursion to California over the prairie, Rocky mountains, and great Sierra Nevada. With a stroll through the diggings and ranches of that country. By William Kelly <http://www.loc.gov/resource/calbk.054>

activity and profuse expenditure in treating and bribing of the gambling community, who feared, that if the city became endowed with a regular corporation, energetic steps would be taken to put down their nuisances. Two ounces of gold was the ordinary rate of a vote, and all those nefarious receptacle were turned into open 70 cellars for the occasion, where every reckless opponent to law, order, or good society, could walk in and help himself as he listed. However, after a close contest, the vampires and their myrmidons were defeated; and the city is now governed by municipal laws and regulations, emanating from a corporation who are interested in the real and permanent prosperity of the place, which I trust has, ere this, abolished or abated those crying abominations.

I was awakened the morning after the election by the booming of cannon at regular intervals; and supposing it to be either in celebration of the auspicious termination of that event, or announcing the arrival of a frigate that was expected, I took a stroll towards the shipping, from whence the reports came, my strength being sufficiently restored to enable me to exercise moderately; but I discovered those *feu-de-joie* were in honour of the opening of the first attempt at a regular hotel, which was just noticeable above the surface when I went down the Sacramento. It is called the "City Hotel," and is a fine lumber or wooden building of considerable dimensions intended to be *the* great architectural feature of the city, with decorations of as pretending a character as green wood would admit; but as to their affinity to any of the celebrated orders of antiquity, or the incongruous medleys of modern date, I believe it would be just as difficult a task to decide upon the exact relationship of Dermot Mac Fig's Dulcinea, which she pleaded in extenuation of Being caught dancing a jig With a mealman so tall so tall and so big,

as to say whether the Corinthian, the Gothic, the Ionic, or which other of the nics or niches could lay best claim 71 to the flattering connexion. In a word, it is a showy edifice, with a good deal of cutting, carving, and scratching, clothed in a gaudy suit of flaring paints, and a large projecting verandah and balcony to relieve the "broad Atlantic of its countenance.

The interior is laid out more with a view to profit than comfort, the saloons for the *table d'hôte* and wet smokers being more than ordinarily capacious, while the dormitories were on the other extreme; those with single beds being cramped, pinched-up little cells, wide enough in one

proportion for a split mattress, and in the other for a slim wash-hand-stand, a narrow chair, the occupant, and his valise. There were some half-dozen state sleeping-rooms of more extensive dimensions, with one or two more articles of attenuated furniture, and space enough for the attendant when summoned to come in bodily, on which a corresponding high tariff was exacted; and one large omnibus apartment, with sleeping traps, or bunks, as they are called, four deep all around, festooned with printed or daubed calico, calculated to accommodate, or more properly speaking, hold an entire regiment; in the centre of which stood an undressed dressing-table, surmounted with an exaggerated basin, and looking-glass to match; while from its horns hung in chains an elephantine rack and brush on either side, the tooth-brush being exempt from restraint, either because it was comparatively valueless, or because the eccentric motions of dental purification required it to be free. The order of each day is “one *done* another come on,” in conformity with which a rank of candidates, with tucked-up sleeves and tucked-down collars, stand in exact file for their turns. The man 72 next the person in process very generally taking a rasp at the tooth-brush, either to while away the time, or have so much of his job over. The main apartment is one having a spacious bar at one end, with an elongated counter, on which were ranged the different potatory implements and instruments, arranged in their most attractive positions; behind which were rows of nicely-decorated kegs, with their polished brass cocks and distinctive designations, the space over them being garnished with bottles of every variety of size, shape, and hue, labelled most picturesquely. At the other end stood a billiard-table, and sundry other tables, where folks might either sip their beverage or open their prayer-books, or both; each of which were rented out to Monte dealers, roulette players, or chuck-a-luck men; chairs, rocking and rickety, being distributed at convenient intervals, and the “walls hung around” with prints of the lions indigenous to the States.

It was not exactly the most propitious day for inspecting the premises, as the crowd that thronged it was immense, the hospitable lessees having spread a gratuitous board for all comers, where the fare was most plentiful and excellent, attendance most prompt, every call being attended to with as much alacrity and apparent cheerfulness as if the screw was at work, Champagne being produced as quickly as water, and pastry—which bears a most exorbitant price—being as plentiful as hard

bread; while demolished hams, joints of beef, mutton, and venison, were magically replaced by most becoming successors, permitting me to take for granted that the culinary department was most conveniently and efficiently contrived. The feast was prolonged for several hours, and the drinking, until its effects, 73 were irresistible. Putting the current price upon the different meats, drinks, esculents, condiments, &c., which were put to the sacrifice on that day, I could fearlessly assert that five thousand dollars would not cover the expense. The building and furniture of the concern cost fifty thousand dollars, and it is rented at a yearly impost of ten thousand dollars—rather a respectable rent for such a concern, in a city not of twelve months' standing.

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CHAPTER VI.

Prepare for the Northern Trip—Admiral Stockton's magnanimous Conduct—Select an Ox-Team—Price of Hay—Lose some of our Animals—Obliged to travel our First Stage by Night—Road Marks—Our Nap on the Trail—Disappointed Hopes—Distress of the Oxen—Reach the River—Resume our Journey—Find good Quarters, and kill a Deer—Fair's Ranch—Those Establishments in Days of Yore—The Contrast now—Mr. Fair's Tariff on the Productions of his Ranch—The Juba Indians—We Trade with them—Their Mode of Fishing—The River and the Crossing—Visit a Mining Encampment—Our Trail to Feather River—Our Camp and our Neighbours—Their treacherous Conduct—Attempt at Explanation—Declaration of Hostility—Disposition of our Forces—Night Attack—Appearances in the Morning—Order of Crossing—The Action—The Retreat of the Indians to their Village—Its Appearance—Get over in Safety—Precautionary Arrangements—Scenery along the River—More Night Travel—Its Object—Bad Roads—Emigrant Encampment—Their wretched State and sad News—Unparalleled Sufferings of the later Emigrants—Caught in the Snow—Their fearful Privations and Struggles—Fatal Results—Disease and Insanity on the Humboldt—Ague on the Sacramento—Bitter Regret of those Emigrants for leaving a comfortable Home.

My health and strength now rapidly improving, we began turning our attention to the trip northward, but discovered that we should proceed by the slow medium of oxen, as the

magnanimous resolve of Admiral Stockton to appropriate 150,000 dollars to aid the suffering emigrants in reaching their destination, suddenly enhanced the price of mules, and swept the market of every serviceable animal. We therefore selected three yoke of choice steers, and having laid in all our stores, mining implements, and a riding-nag each, which I was enabled to supply from 75 my stock in a neighbouring ranch, we moved about six miles out, crossing the Rio de los Americanos, to avoid the dust, din, and heat of the city, and secure cheap food for our animals, as hay was then ten dollars per hundred-weight in town. After two days spent in revising our schedule and completing our preparations, we set about hunting up our cattle and horses, that were permitted to roam at large over the plain, but after a most toilsome day's search, two yoke of our oxen were missing. Early on the following day we went out mounted, traversing the interminable plains, and diligently looking amongst the crowds of oxen with which they were dotted, only finding another yoke; but rather than lose any more time, we purchased another pair of steers, resolved on starting the same evening.

We were constrained to travel during the night, having to cross a space of about thirty miles without either grass or water—a feat difficult for a veteran Mexican mule, but altogether impossible for oxen, if attempted during the heat of the day—so, just as the sun's red disc was sinking behind the ridge of the distant coast-range mountains, we got into motion. The moon was young, but the star-spangled heavens enabled us to keep our trail without difficulty until we came fairly on the open prairie, when we resorted to the old arrangement of taking it in turns to walk in advance and pick out the line, which was not much travelled at the time; for should it happen that we diverged much, we might be caught in the succeeding sun at a great distance from pasture, water, or shelter, as the vegetation on this entire tract was actually singed to the roots. Our progress was slow but sure, with a few 76 scattered guarantees of dead oxen and broken-down waggons. When we were six hours at work, we unhitched, to give the cattle a little rest in the absence of any other comfort, they seemed perfectly aware of their position; for, after a very limited survey, they all lay down, while we unsaddled the horses, and fastening the lariats to our legs or wrists, followed their example on our well-aired couches, the ground being still unpleasantly warm; all, however, enjoyed a sound nap, the first that awoke starting up the balance.

We plodded on steadily, expecting that daylight would reveal to us some natural hospitality; and never did sailors, after a long cruise, yearn for the loom of the land more eagerly than did we, for the indications of water and vegetation. But daylight broke, and expanded into warmth without disclosing any of the wished-for symptoms, producing a general pause of disappointment; and as we strained our vision in the search, I conceived the poor beasts peered piteously with pricked ears in the same direction. All around and about, however, was a flat, brown plain, bounded by the horizon; that our course was right we were assured of, by the solitary trail and the sun's elevation; still it pained me as we urged on our tired animals. We journeyed for two hours' more, the sun beginning to blaze out with great strength, when a long line of faint specks were descried, which, in our apprehensive frame of mind, led us to fear we were surveying the shadowy phantoms of mirage. Another mile, however, relieved our suspense, exhibiting the unmistakable outline of timber, the bare view of which revived us, and had clearly an exhilarating effect on both horses and oxen, who mended their pace of their own accord; but it was blazing noon ⁷⁷ ere we got into the shade of their foliage close by the golden stream of the Sacramento; and although the cravings of appetite were very importunate, the predominance of languor and fatigue asserted their influence on both men and beasts; for, after slaking our thirsts in long and reiterated draughts from the cool current, all lay down to rest without partaking of any food.

We resumed our journey after a few hours' repose and a hurried repast, coming to excellent quarters for the night, about nine miles further on, by the margin of a cool, pellucid creek, flowing towards the Sacramento, where one of our party killed a fat doe—on some chops from which we regaled ourselves sumptuously. Our next day's march involved the crossing of another parched plain, of about seventeen miles in extent, which brought us to a ranch occupied by a person named Fair, who had numerous droves of oxen and horses herded by Indians. His house stands in the centre of a fenced-in space, on which, by means of irrigation, he raised a sickly crop of corn and vegetables. It is a comfortable tenement, two stories high; the first constructed of logs, the other of clabboards, roofed with shingles, with a verandah around three sides; stables, sheds, and a corral adjoining the fourth, strewed over with corn-cobs and straw, on which young foals, calves, and pigs were disporting themselves.

Before the discovery of the mines such establishments as this were the head-quarters of genuine unaffected hospitality; where the enterprising emigrating settler, or the investigating traveller, might take up his abode without invitation, and enjoy, not only the products of the ranch, but whatever grocery luxuries the premises could afford, 78 all ministered with a bountiful, good-natured cheerfulness (as I am informed), leaving the travel-toiled recipient at comfortable ease, to recruit himself until he chose to resume his wanderings, when a leave-taking, mutually regretful, ensued, unleavened by either guile or hypocrisy; but now-a-days, “a change has come o'er the spirit of their dreams;” the emotions of nature are transmuted into the promptings of avarice, and the greetings of friendly communion have degenerated into a calculating welcome, without even a traditional tinge of that hospitality which bloomed and bore its sweet fruit one short year before. The rural host has now donned the airs of a clumsy boniface; the wife drops the propitiatory curtsy of the landlady; the helps, waiting for orders, survey the equipage, as if to calculate the resources of the owners; the very children affected by a trained reserve, which completed the melancholy triumph of sordid avarice over the natural emanation of kindness and the best feelings of humanity. Such is one of the revolutions wrought by the discovery of gold, and no doubt others of as strange and more portentous character will follow.

We called at Mr. Fair's domicile, and found the interior even more comfortable and better furnished than we expected. Seeing so many young calves about, we made sure of a profusion of milk and butter—rarities we had not tasted since we left the Mormon city; but they were rarities for which we had to pay smartly—a small-sized cup full being estimated at twenty-five cents—a rate of charges that curbed our longings effectually. After getting a way-bill from the host (which he gave with a bad grace from our stingy expenditure), we proceeded 79 eight miles further to the crossing of the Juba, where there was a formidable encampment of Indians, of more stalwart stature and proportions than those further south, and exempt, so far as I could see, from any external indications of that insidious complaint so prevalent on the Lower Sacramento, whither, I presume, it was carried by mariners, who had easy access from the coast. Mr. Fair told us we had nothing to apprehend from them, as they were in the habit of living amongst and working for the miners in the contiguous diggings; however, their number and our paucity counselled precaution.

They learned the art of gold-digging, it was clear, for they came to offer a trade of dust for guns or pistols, but there was only one old carbine that we would part with, for which they readily gave two ounces, all we asked; we got in addition, two fine trout for a few biscuits, for they are very expert in catching fish with spears and in willowtraps, with an aperture like that of a salmon-box, into which a fish can enter with ease, but cannot return. Those they place in artificial currents; into which they turn different shoots of the river by rows of stakes and brush, constructed in the shape of eel-wires. Juba River is a fine stream of good dimensions, deep enough for navigable purposes, a considerable distance up to where it widens out at the ford, passing over a broad, level, gravelly bed. Its waters in the stream appear of a greenish hue, but when taken into a glass are perfectly colourless, clear, and well-tasted; it is a tributary of the Sacramento joining Feather River a few miles above its mouth. The ford itself offers no obstruction to the traveller, but the entrance and exit are very bad indeed, both steep, and composed of loose fine sand that slips from the tread, rendering anything like heavy draught impossible. We accomplished it mainly with ropes, and encamped rather early a few miles beyond it, in a sycamore grove, where odd tufts of coarse grass, that retained some remnant of their succulent properties under the fostering shade of some scattered timber, offered middling feed for the animals.

I rode on a few miles to see the mining operations, for which the river had attained a high character, and found a considerable settlement, I saw by the result of their afternoon's labours that they were making very good wages. There was one large cumbrous machine driven by a stream, diverted from the river higher up, in which there was a quicksilver compartment to perfect the entire process at the one operation; but it worked lazily, and, as I heard, ineffectively, not turning out as much gold as the simple cradle, worked with half the number of hands, for this leviathan washer kept a troop of men raising and feeding it with dirt. The gold of the Juba ran larger than any I had previously seen, but not of so pure a quality as that of the Weber, and was beside exceedingly capricious in its deposits, one mess making handsomely, while their next neighbours, to use a mining phrase, were scarce able to "raise the colour;" so that when a good location on it is worked out, it may be a matter of tedious search to hit upon another. I got a billet for the night with a party, amongst whom

there was a few of the “hereditary bondsmen,” but was at my own camp in the morning before they had made their toilet.

Our trail next day over to Feather River took a more north-west course, and was very trying from the number 81 of deep gullies and dry river-beds we had to cross. There was nothing of a fertile character in the nature of the soil, nor any striking feature in the aspect of the country, beyond the few old oaks that were met with at long intervals on our march. We pitched our tents on a high bank overhanging the ford of the river, from which we had under our gaze a large Indian village below it, on the opposite side; there was a sort of half-shaded dell near our camp, where we drove the animals, the grass being tall, but of the tinge and nature of old hay; however, for want of better, they eat it with a good appetite. We were not well settled when a party of Indian visitors waited upon us—good-looking fellows, and well limbed: they both talked, and understood a little Spanish, promising us fish, and giving us all assurances of friendship, which, nevertheless, they soon after attempted to betray. Two of our party, having gone out in pursuit of deer, parted company, each attended a few Indians, who, the moment “D.” discharged his rifle, seized hold of it by the barrel, endeavouring at the same time to pinion him and extract his bowie-knife from the sheath: he was fortunate, however, in having a revolver in his belt, with which he soon put them to rout, the savage who wrested the rifle from him dropping it in his flight. The other deer-stalker did not happen to meet any game, and consequently escaped with his rifle and his scalp, for had he had occasion to shoot he might probably have been minus both, not having any side-arms.

Some short time after our men returned to camp, the chief and his squaw, with four attendants, approached, evidently with the intention of explaining away the affair, 82 and apologising for his subjects' conduct; but we resolved they should not come again into our quarters. So I went forward, beckoning them back in rather an angry mood, at which I could see the old potentate was nettled, but, like a good tactician, who understood and appreciated the seductive influences of female interposition, he brought forward his royal partner, both making soothing and conciliatory gestures. However, by an unusual effort, my duty overcame my gallantry, and I resisted the soft blandishments, repeating my repulsive motions with a growl in the unknown tongues; upon which the old chief flared up with great rage and savage dignity, rushing forward a few steps, and shouting

out, in a voice of madness, “Arra, arra, arra!” at the same time swinging the back of his hand very violently towards us, which one of our friends understood was tantamount to warning us off his territory in the most peremptory manner. He then retired, and we had sufficient light to see, when he returned to the village, that he mustered all his men around him, gesticulating violently, all looking in the direction of our camp.

I felt so satisfied they would attack us before morning, that I arranged a general watch of all hands for the night, carrying all the arms we could stick around our persons, which we previously shot off, for the double purpose of loading them anew and letting the enemy know the strength of our armoury. Between rifles, revolvers, double and single-barrelled pistols, and double-shot guns, we came up to the formidable number of fifty-three discharges—a pretty fair amount for a cohort six strong, which produced a very warlike effect, fired in quick but regular succession. We then picketed our horses in a crescent 83 from, hemming in the oxen between them and the steep bank, on the edge of which stood the waggon, distributing ourselves at equal intervals, marching and countermarching, without exchanging a word for a few hours, or being able to notice any strange or hostile movement.

At length the uneasiness of one of the horses put us upon the alert, and the next moment some arrows whizzed past us, upon which Mr. S—e fired a load of buck-shot in the direction he supposed them to come from, which elicited a perfect shower, one taking effect in his shoulder, others wounding three of the oxen and one of the horses. The discharge was followed by a quick movement, rendered audible by the crushing of dried leaves and branches, which guided us, in some measure, in our aims, as we fired one round; soon after which all noise was hushed for the night. Mr. S—e's wound was slight and superficial; but there was one of the oxen rendered unfit for present use, thus reducing our team to two yoke. We could not ascertain if we wounded or killed any of the assailants, as, if at all possible, they carry off their dead to prevent their being scalped, which next after death they are most fearful of. But when morning broke we saw them mustered in all their forces on the bank above the ford; from which position, I suppose, they calculated to

intercept our crossing and enjoy perfect security, while we would be altogether exposed to their arrows and missiles.

Their numbers, as closely as we could compute them, were from ninety to one hundred—rather an overmatch for six; but our fire-arms counted largely in our favour, and our prompt determination turned the balance; for had we hesitated or wavered in the least, it would have given those savages a confidence which might have 84 completed our destruction before we could check it. So, after a very early and simple breakfast, we commenced preparations as if nothing occurred, or nothing was apprehended, another and I going to the edge of the bank, with two rifles of the largest calibre, that would carry well over to our opponents—a distance of five hundred yards—which I believe they conceived impossible; for when I raised my gun to cause them to retire, they set up a hideous yell of derision, which was soon lulled by the fall of one of them. My companion, an excellent marksman, also fired, and hit the chief, reeled, but did not fall; after which a hurried and general movement in retreat took place, that stayed us from repeating our discharges, showing them all we required was a free and unmolested passage.

After some little delay in tending their wounded, they planted themselves in about equal numbers on the tops of their huts, which are formed by excavating the earth in a circular form, about twelve feet in diameter and four feet deep, then bending over them, in a semiglobular form, stout saplings, and binding and twining them closely with vine tendrils, over which they put a coating of adhesive clay, that renders them impervious to rain, an opening large enough to admit of entrance in a crawling posture being left in the side, on a level with the ground. In external shape they resemble a mound; consequently, at a distance, the village had the appearance of a number of little tumuli, and the Indians on their crowns, armed with all their primitive weapons, produced a strange picture, entirely in keeping with the locality. They took up their position with a quiet but determined air, showing they were resolved to repel our 85 apprehended assault, defend their “household gods” to the death. As soon as we observed their determination, my companion and I crossed over, leaving two others in our old position, and under cover of our guns the waggon commenced crossing—a task of doubtful completion, owing to the steepness of the banks, the crippling of our team, and the absence of manual assistance, as we were otherwise employed; however, after a multitude of

pauses, and a large expenditure of wattles, the thing was accomplished, and our march continued, with all our arms in requisition, having for despatch made cartridges for all our guns and rifles.

As we receded from the village the Indians descended, but did not attempt following; nevertheless, we bore in mind the rule of Indian retribution which is two lives for one, and resolved to keep a vigilant look-out while in their territory. It is a deplorable circumstance that, even after the offending party have passed on, they satiate their unquenchable revenge on the first whiteskin they catch in their power, which often hurries an innocent and unsuspecting victim to a premature death.

The trail now wound through a sycamore and white oak grove that fringed the river, whose sloping bank was covered with an infinite variety of shrubs and evergreens, arrayed in glossy verdure, bearing flowers and blossoms of most delicate beauty and exquisite fragrance, amidst which, tangled festoons of the indigenous vine drooped with the pendant bunches of purple grapes. Arbutus was the only shrub I was familiar with, but its unusual size made me almost doubtful of its identity. The manzanita was also thickly interspersed, whose berry I found was equally a favourite with the Indian and the grizzly bear: it seems to me a hardy bush, that would flourish in our soil, and be a desirable addition to our horticultural collections. The plain in the neighbourhood was less parched than those we passed over, openly wooded, with enormous oaks, devoid of underwood, just far enough apart to stretch out to full length their gigantic arms. This was the only district I saw since I left Sacramento that bore the most remote resemblance to the ideal charms of that flattered valley; but even it was a wan and faded representation of the gorgeous and florid pictures painted by enthusiasts or speculators.

We nooned very early, for the purpose of allowing time for repose, sufficient to compensate us for what we lost the previous night, and enable us to forego it again on the coming one, which we agreed to occupy in travelling, for the double purpose of evading our foes and getting over a barren prairie of about eighteen miles, on which there was neither pasture nor water. We started at four o'clock, and before dark got upon this bleak and truly desolate district, on which there was not a shred of vegetation, the ungrateful soil being seamed and scored with cracks and flaws, resulting from the heat, and covered with a red cindery stone and drossy gravel, that made it resemble the

vast hearth of a great volcano. The poor bullocks limped tenderly over it; and our horses yielded so sensitively, we got off and led them. Several deep, rocky, dry river-beds, added to the difficulties of our march, and tested the creaking joints and mortices of our waggon, none of the soundest at the first.

Before dawn we saw a fire a long way off, and, as we ⁸⁷ came closer, could see figures moving about it, but were unable to discern whether they were Indians or not; however, as we approximated, two waggons were observable in the glare, which at once quieted our suspicions, and led us to anticipate the neighbourhood of water. They were a section of an emigrant party just coming in from the plains by the northern pass route, and their tale of sufferings was truly heart-harrowing, being piteously corroborated, not only by their own wasted and cadaverous appearances, but by the wretched and emaciated condition of their animals. Still they suffered many, many degrees short of the unimaginable horrors and miseries of those behind them, who were principally constituted of families contemplating a permanent settlement in California, whose waggons were larger, more cumbersome, and more heavily laden with the greater quantity of provision and necessaries a larger mess stood in need of, and the numerous articles indispensable where women and children formed a main portion of the company. From the start those ponderous equipages were difficult to haul; but as the oxen became footsore and leg-weary, and the different camping locations were cropped completely bare of herbage by the multitudes who preceded them, their progress was miserably slow, protracted by long halts of some days at a time, which so consumed the season, that by the time the ridges of the Sierra Nevada were discernible, its peaks and passes were arrayed in their winter drapery, presenting a fearful barrier to the worn-down travellers.

Then, but, alas! too late, did stern but inexorable necessity demand a thorough revision of their loads, and ⁸⁸ a casting aside of food, clothing, implements, and furniture, which, if abandoned earlier, would have ensured by that time their destinate arrival; and the stupendous ascent commenced with empty waggons, men and grown boys packing the little they could carry, and weakly mothers wading through the snow-drifts, with their younger offspring on their backs; but out of the many who made this inevitable attempt, few were so fortunate as to gain those glaciated crests that gave them a distant view of the land of promise, and those only by forsaking their

waggons, animals, and everything save the meagre kit they could carry over such paths in such an enfeebled state of body. The remainder, making barricades of their waggons, huddled themselves together, hoping to sustain existence on their starved animals till the return of the genial season; but the rigours of this shelterless life proved too much for numbers of those unfortunate beings, many a stalwart man, as well as tender woman, being consigned to their cold graves in a shroud of snow, ere the philanthropic measures of the state came to their relief; and it is difficult, indeed to decide whether the revolting fate of those wretched creatures who yielded up their spirits on the burning sands of the arid Desert, or those who breathed their last on the icy pillows of the Sierra Nevada, was the most shocking.

We soon sunk the feeling of our minor hardships in the sad interest of the many melancholy episodes related to us by those men, who even in their early passage witnessed scenes and occurrences of the most distressing and revolting character, especially along the Humboldt 89 and on the Desert, where the trail was so thickly strewn with dead, dying, and decaying animals, as to impregnate the circumambient atmosphere with a sickening stench, the unfortunate emigrants, in addition to the horrors of burning thirst, being afflicted with virulent scurvy, and loathsome ulceration of the lips, mouth, and throat, from the use of the abominable water. The poor fellows we met came in for their share of the miseries of the journey; and when they imagined they had surmounted all their trials, on reaching the fabled glories of the Valley of the Sacramento, they were pounced upon by the dire ague of the country, only one out of thirteen having escaped it. Many a bitter tear they shed as they recounted their sufferings, and contrasted the comforts of the home they left with the drear prospects before them. We parted from them before they could muster energy to move, ministering all we could to their grievous requirements.

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CHAPTER VII.

Appearance of the Country—The distant Mountains—Reach the Banks of the Sacramento—More Emigrant Camps—Prevalence of Disease—Lawson's Rancho—His Exactions—Dispense some Medicine—Shoot two wild Steers, and divide the Beef—Lawson's Conduct and Ours—Take a

Day's Rest—Campfire Stories—Superior Endurance of Females—Leave the Northern Emigrant Trail—Country improves—Friendly Indian Visit—Fork and Ford of the Sacramento—Difficulties of the Passage—Dangerous Affair—Attain the Western Side in Safety—Profusion of Grapes—Pleasing Scenery—Cotton-wood Creek—Returning Diggers—Clear Creek—More invalided Diggers—Lose our Horses—Fruitless Search—The Hire of a Mule—Uncomfortable Night—Give up all Hopes of the Horses—Fresh Bear-prints—Misgivings about the Prudence of an Encounter—Preparations—The Assault—The Chase—The Escape and Conquest—Return to the Trading-post with a paw as a Trophy—Estimate of his Weight—Great Size they attain—French Trapper's Advice how to act when pursued—Their Mode of killing their Victims.

OUR course for three days lay over barren hills and plains covered with calcareous rocks and stones, and a reddish calcined clay, that more resembled coarse ashes than earth in its appearance and feel, all clearly the result of great volcanic convulsions. The horsemen were obliged to be constantly on the scout in quest of water and pasture, but their most diligent researches failed in securing a sufficiency of either, which we endeavoured to make up for by giving the animals cornmeal gruel twice a day. As we advanced in our north-west course the ridges of the Sierra Nevada kept quickly slanting in the same direction, until the hills abutting them appeared in the extreme 91 distance to merge into those which jutted from the coast range mountains on the other side, through which the Sacramento forced its copious channel.

On the evening of the third day our eyes were again gladdened by the appearance of timber betwixt us and the horizon, and by forcing our pace we were able to reach the banks of the Sacramento late in the night, where the tinkling of bells and the glowing embers of camp-fires assured us of company who had all retired to rest; but we stirred up, and made use of their fires in cooking our supper, which we enjoyed the more from the conviction that our poor animals, too, had plenty to eat. All hands turned in for the first time, as we had no apprehension about Indians, and the grass was too good to permit the stock to ramble. In the morning, we found our new neighbours were a wing of another broken company of emigrants, quite as afflicted as those we parted from a few days before, both with the sufferings of the journey and the prevalence of scurvy and ague, several cases of the former being of the most aggravated and shocking form. They had been resting and

recruiting there for some days; but though wild cattle were abundant in the neighbourhood, they had not strength or energy to make an effort to kill any, and had run down their limited means to a very low ebb in purchasing fresh provision at a large rancho hard by, owned by an unconscionable fellow of the name of Lawson, who established himself there with the view of battenning on the destitution of his fellow-creatures, whose line of travel unavoidably passed his door. His tariff of prices were unparalleled even in the diggings; and he appeared just as devoid of charity or the milk of 92 human kindness, as of conscience—exemptions that run and count as sequins in the great game of worldly cribbage in general.

To some of those most seriously afflicted we gave such pickles and medicine as we could spare from our small chest, while a party of our men went out and shot two fine steers, which we drew into camp on waggons, and distributed amongst our new acquaintances, keeping one quarter for ourselves to jerk: it was a most timely and welcome gift, received and acknowledged with tearful gratitude. In the course of the day, however, the fellow Lawson came to our camp in a very rude and insolent manner to lecture us for our conduct, demanding the price of *his* beeves, as he called them; but we met his impertinence with a spirit and determination that very soon changed his swaggering into servility, showing him the hides were without a brand, and giving him a spice of our minds about his cruel exactions, which caused him to sneak off in a most discomfited manner.

We took a day's rest here also, and employed ourselves in cutting up and drying our meat, which was first-rate. In the evening, all those that were able to sit up gathered round our great joint-stock camp-fire, detailing “all their accidents by flood and field,” and giving us melancholy corroboration of the sad account we got from those who preceded them. It was a strange feature in the journey, that the few women and grown up girls were comparatively robust and healthy, while the men were worn and ailing, notwithstanding that the greater portion of the hard labour, since their sufferings commenced, even to the hewing of wood and driving the teams, had been 93 performed by the females. Their spirits, too, were high and elastic, and often seemed to counteract the lethargic despondency of the men.

We left them on the morning of the second day, and immediately beyond Lawson's diverged from the emigrant trail, getting into a more fertile and picturesque country than we had travelled through since we left the city, closely intersected with brawling rivulets flowing from the contiguous hills into the Sacramento. The soil was a rich black loam, peculiarly adapted to agriculture, and capable of being irrigated over a large section of its extent; the grasses and clover were not entirely decayed, and must have formed a luxuriant crop earlier in the season. It was thinly wooded with oak, and teemed with wild cattle, deer, and bears, close in by the ravines of the mountains. We had no trouble in selecting a good camping location, where we had a friendly call from some Indians, who brought with them a string of capital trout, which they gladly bartered for biscuit and an article or two of old clothing. They wanted to remain with us all night; but this we would not permit, giving us to understand (as they went away reluctantly) by signs and noises, that they were afraid of being attacked by the bears; but we knew, if we suffered them to stay, the eyes of Argus would not prevent them from stealing.

Our next camping-ground was equally good, close by the banks of the Sacramento, which here forks for some distance, offering the only ford that occurs in its entire course, the first branch of which was not over 100 yards wide, but rapid, and so deep as to enforce the operation of propping up the waggon-bed. The banks, however, were firm and sloping; so, by taking a down stream slant, we got over tolerably easy; but we had then an exceedingly trying tug, through deep sand and loose gravel, for half a mile, over the bar or island to the other prong, which was a formidable obstacle, from its extreme breadth, swiftness, and the round smooth cobble-stones which constituted its bottom, covered with a green slimy coating, that rendered the footing fearfully insecure, while the pellucid water rushing over them in an unbroken current produced a dizzy giddiness, that seemed to affect the animals as well as the men. Another serious disadvantage arose in the necessity of crossing it exactly at right angles with the flood, the formation of the shores only admitting of one going out place; for those only who have tried the experiment can conceive the magnitude of the task of endeavouring to keep oxen (especially) in a point blank course through a rapid river, where, if one happened to fall, the fate of the rest and the waggon would be sealed, as such a check

would be sure to involve all in the accident; and, to crown the undertaking, the deep water was not far below, ready to sweep all into eternity.

I rode in just to make trial; but my horse, who was always shy of water, soon slipped to his knees, bringing his nose and half-head under water; he, however, made a gallant struggle, regaining his feet, but wheeling about in the effort, made for the shore, maugre all my efforts to the contrary, which, perhaps, an impartial observer would not set down as of the most resolute order; nor could I get him to try it again in advance. Had he been swept on his side, I verily believe both he and I would have been drowned, for in such a stream I do not think it would be 95 possible to recover from such a position. It was subsequently arranged that one should ride ahead, one ride the near lead ox, one drive from the waggon, two ride below the team to keep them straight, and the other bring up the rear; in this order we went on with really serious misgivings, the more particularly from seeing the lead horse stumbling and floundering every few yards. The oxen managed better in that respect than the horses, but the surging of the current against their sides made them swerve so violently at times, that they jostled the horses almost to throwing them. Once they leant so long and obstinately against them, I resigned all hope, and shuddered for the fate of my companions; but with a heroism worthy of higher achievements, the riders struggled and persevered until we gained a shoal, where we got a breathing lapse, and going up its extreme length head to stream, more than regained our lost ground; besides, the bottom for the remainder of the way was much more level and compact, by which means we proceeded steadily until we pulled out, exhausted, to be sure, one and all agreeing that nothing in the whole overland route was more trying or dangerous.

We stopped to noon on the river edge, where the pasture was good, and the brush along the banks interlaced with vines, bearing “a bacchanal profusion of purple and gushing grapes,” not over large, but exceeding juicy and well-flavoured, on which we regaled ourselves not only to repletion, but I believe to excess. We followed the river for eight or ten miles, gradually ascending all the time, until the banks attained an elevation that made one dizzy on looking down them: the country on both sides was 96 charming, its undulating surface studded with noble trees, which to some extent

preserved its verdure, backed by bold mountain ranges, the translucent river shining at intervals in its wooded vales.

Next day our course lay as if towards the point of a triangle, not in a straight line, though, but winding through sinuous labyrinths round the bases of hills, through ravines, and along dry river-beds that finally led us into an open plain, pleasingly adorned with crowded clumps of planting, bounded on its northern border by a small river called Cotton-Wood Creek, from the prevalence of that timber along it. There were three waggons encamped there, returning from the diggings on the North Sacramento, in consequence of the prevalence of dysentery and ague there. Their party were all, without an exception, invalids, and strongly remonstrated with us about going further. However, we left them early next morning, and after crossing the creek, entered rather a fertile valley, circumscribed in breadth, skirted by timber, behind which, to the westward, lofty hills arose in fanciful shapes; stretching north, as far as the vision could penetrate, the valley gradually expanded as we travelled upwards, widening into an immense plain, where we again struck the Sacramento; thence it contracted as we approached Clear Creek, which flows eastward into that river. There is a trading-post there, a rude log-building, covered with canvas, got up for the purpose of cheating the diggers under pretence of supplying their wants: we crossed over the creek, camping on the other side amongst a large party of sickly diggers, on their down journey. The grass was all eaten up by the stock kept by the traders, so that ours 97 had no aliment but what they browsed off the thick brush around them; and next morning, when we came to catch them up, we only got our oxen after a crouching search through the jungle.

The waggon went on, another and I remaining to recover the horses, keeping two saddles and bridles. The space on which we camped was in the shape of a peninsula, formed by the junction of Clear Creek with the Sacramento, and not so extensive that they could evade a diligent search; so, after satisfying ourselves they were not in it, we recrossed the creek, and saw by the fresh footmarks and the lines formed by the dragging of the lariats, that they had taken the back trail. We followed up those marks for four miles, until they diverged into the bush, when they were no longer apparent. My comrade and I then chose each a direction and separated, agreeing to meet at the trading-post; but after a three hours' anxious search I commenced retracing my steps, partly

abandoning all hopes, and partly in the expectation my friend had found them; but on my return I found him there before me, without having any tidings whatever of them. We then cooked a rude repast of fried pork and hard bread, that cost us the moderate sum of two dollars each, and set out upon another trial, giving ourselves a latitude as far back as Cotton Wood (sixteen miles), where we thought they might have been allured by the good grass, for without them we could not proceed to Trinity, our destination. The last ninety miles being merely a pack-trail, over steep mountains, and one of the most impracticable character, we deemed it prudent to separate ourselves, my companion taking the home circuit; and mine, being the more distant, 98 I hired a mule of a most Rozenantish pattern from one of the traders, such an animal as is called a “Crowbait” in Yankeeland; however, his threadbare appearance did not subtract from the owner's estimate of his services, one ounce per day being the rate of hire. We moved off briskly, for his movements were better than his looks gave promise of, and I did not encumber him with a heavy knapsack of provisions. I saw nothing of the horses up to the point where I before halted, and from thence I kept quartering the plain until night, like a vessel beating to windward, without getting any trace of them; then picketing my mule and taking some slight refreshment, I lay down to rest, but did not enjoy much repose, from the nipping coolness of the night and the incessant howling of the coyotes, who came at times so close, and in such numbers, I was afraid to encourage sleep. I therefore looked anxiously for the dawn, getting into the saddle at the first peep of twilight, and reached Cotton Wood without any better fortune, not having left a nook or likely clump unsearched.

I now took a long farewell of the horses, and turned northward, selecting a line close in by the base of the hills, going along at an improved pace, with a view of reaching the trading-post the same night; but stopping in a gully to look for water, I found a little pool, evidently scratched out by a bear, as there were footprints and claw-marks about it; and I was aware instinct prompts that brute where water is nearest the surface, when he scratches until he comes to it. This was one of very large size, the footmark behind the toes being full nine inches; and although I had my misgivings about the prudence of a *tête-à-tête* with a great grizzly bear, still the “better part of valour” 99 was overcome, as it often is, by the anticipated honour and glory of a single combat, and conquest of such a ferocious beast. I was well armed, too, with my favourite rifle, a Colt's revolver, that

never disappointed me, and a nondescript weapon, a sort of cross betwixt a claymore and a bowie-knife; so, after capping afresh, hanging the bridle on the horn of the saddle, and staking my mule, I followed the trail up a gully, and much sooner than I expected came within view and good shooting distance of Bruin, who was seated erect, with his side towards me, in front of a manzanita bush, making a repast on his favourite berry.

The sharp click of the cock causing him to turn quickly round, left little time for deliberation; so, taking a ready good aim at the region of the heart, I let drive, the ball (as I subsequently found) glancing along the ribs, entering the armpit, and shattering smartly some of the shoulder bones. I exulted as I saw him stagger and come to his side; the next glance, however, revealed him, to my dismay, on all fours, in direct pursuit, but going lame; so I bolted for the mule, sadly encumbered with a huge pair of Mexican spurs, the nervous noise of the crushing brush close in my rear convincing me he was fast gaining on me; I therefore dropped my rifle, putting on fresh steam, and reaching the rope, pulled up the picket-pin, and, springing into the saddle with merely a hold of the lariat, plunged the spurs into the mule, which, much to my affright, produced a kick and a retrograde movement; but in the exertion, having got a glimpse of my pursuer, uttering a snort of terror, he went off at a pace I did not think him capable of, soon widening the distance betwixt us and the bear; but having no means of guiding his motions, he 100 brought me violently in contact with the arm of a tree, which unhorsed and stunned me exceedingly. Scrambling to my feet as well as I could, I saw my relentless enemy close at hand, leaving me the only alternative of ascending a tree; but, in my hurried and nervous efforts, I had scarcely my feet above his reach, when he was right under, evidently enfeebled by the loss of blood, as the exertion made it well out copiously. After a moment's pause, and a fierce glare upwards from his bloodshot eyes, he clasped the trunk; but I saw his endeavours to climb were crippled by the wounded shoulder. However, by the aid of his jaws, he just succeeded in reaching the first branch with his sound arm, and was working convulsively to bring up the body, when, with a well-directed blow from my cutlass, I completely severed the tendons of the foot, and he instantly fell, with a dreadful souse and horrific growl, the blood spouting up as if impelled from a jet; he arose again somewhat tardily, and limping round the tree with upturned eyes, kept tearing off the bark with his tusks. However, watching

my opportunity, and leaning downwards, I sent a ball from my revolver with such good effect immediately behind the head, that he dropped; and my nerves being now rather more composed, I leisurely distributed the remaining five balls in the most vulnerable parts of his carcase.

By this time I saw the muscular system totally relaxed, so I descended with confidence, and found him quite dead, and myself not a little enervated with the excitement and the effects of my wound, which bled profusely from the temple; so much so, that I thought an artery was ruptured. I bound up my head as well as I could, loaded my 101 revolver anew, and returned for my rifle; but as evening was approaching, and my mule gone, I had little time to survey the dimensions of my fallen foe, and no means of packing much of his flesh. I therefore hastily hacked off a few steaks from his thigh, and hewing off one of his hind-feet as a sure trophy of victory, I set out towards the trading-post, which I reached about midnight, my friend and my truant mule being there before me, but no horses.

I exhibited the foot of my fallen foe in great triumph, and described the conflict with due emphasis and effect to the company, who arose to listen; after which I made a transfer of the flesh to the traders, on condition that there was not to be any charge for the hotel or the use of the mule. There was an old experienced French trapper of the party, who, judging from the size of the foot, set down the weight of the bear at 1500 lbs., which, he said, they frequently overrun, he himself, as well as Colonel Fremont's exploring party, having killed several that came to 2000 lbs. He advised me, should I again be pursued by a bear, and have no other means of escape, to ascend a small-girthed tree, which they cannot get up, for not having any central joint in the fore-legs, they cannot climb any with a branchless stem that does not fully fill their embrace; and in the event of not being able to accomplish the ascent before my pursuer overtook me, to place my back against it, when, if it and I did not constitute a bulk capable of filling his hug, I might have time to rip out his entrails before he could kill me, being in a most favourable posture for the operation. They do not generally use their mouth in the destruction of their victims, but, hugging them closely, lift one of the hind-feet, which are armed 102 with tremendous claws, and tear out the bowels. The Frenchman's advice reads rationally enough, and is a feasible theory on the art of evading unbearable compression; but, unfortunately, in the haunts of that animal those slim juvenile saplings are rarely met with, and a

person closely confronted with such a grizzly *vis-à-vis*, is not exactly in a tone of nerve for surgical operations.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Our Travelling Kit—Beautiful Country—Description of the Scenery—Gold Diggers' Colony—Stop there—Situation of the Settlement—Salt Springs—Mining Operations—Extraordinary Seat of the Gold—Universality of the Deposits in that Region—Make up an Exploring Party to break fresh Ground—Starting of the Expedition—Our Accoutrements—Another Bear Spring—Mr. Myers' Advice—Monster Fire—It attracts Deer—Early Start—Unexpected Indian Visit—Their Appearance—Their Name for Gold—Coney-cum-Quero—Its mode of Preparation and Cooking—How it was relished—Advice to Mr. Soyer—Indian Propensities—Water in their Language—Character of those Indians—Their Jealousy and want of Hospitality—Find abundant Evidence of Gold—Our Party scatter, and the Stragglers are attacked—We disperse the Indians—They rally, and show Signs of Fight—Their Style of Warfare—The Result—Strike the Sacramento unexpectedly—Indian Camp on the other side—Their Demeanour and its Cause—Our Night Quarters.

We left next morning, with our saddles, saddle-blankets, and bridles on our backs, which we found exceedingly cumbersome in the heat of the day, so much so that we were on the point of abandoning them several times. The country through which we passed was beautiful in the extreme;—no grand expansive views, but circumscribed tracts, resembling pretty parks and lovely lawns, with shady dales and glades, enclosed by sloping hills, abutting against others that reared their pine-clad heads aloft, until their peaks diminished into points, their ridges into blades, forming the mighty spurs of the leviathan ranges east and west, from whose cones, in the early season, 104 started those numerous rivulets, whose dry beds crossed our path, and along whose banks still flourished the beauteous shrubs indigenous to the country, trelliced by vines laden with luscious grapes, venerable oaks standing at intervals, like guardians of the locality, under whose shade wild cattle screened themselves from the glare of the sun, narrowly watching the movements of the

two travellers who were plodding wearily along. On our right the Sacramento flowed noiselessly past, at times approaching and inviting us to taste its cool translucent current, and again receding so abruptly amidst the hills, as if taking a farewell leave. The trail was admirably chosen, now stretching boldly along the level surface of those sylvan grounds, and then winding cunningly round the hips of the hills, so as to cheat them of their acclivities; but as we advanced we ceased to meet a continuation of those sweet scenes, whose sequestered loveliness deliciously enchanted the senses, hushing for the time the pinchings of fatigue and the promptings of avarice.

Our course now became sensibly steeper and more rugged, the timber and brush increasing in density, and stirring with animal life both bear and deer, as their tracks indicated; but as we were not in a hunting mood we did not molest them. Towards evening we gained a considerable elevation, on which the sound of rushing waters, and the faint report of fire-arms, struck gladly on our ears, giving us assurance of the contiguity of our comrades; so we pushed gaily forward, and reached in the gloaming the brow of a lofty bluff, along the base of which, by the margin of the river, was a regular little colony of gold diggers, whose snow-white tents, distributed 105 neighbourly clusters in the open spaces, the several camp-fires, with the groups around them preparing the evening repast, and the cattle, with their many tinkling bells coming down from the adjacent heights to slake their thirst, formed a scene over which the distended eye was delighted to gaze, and the fond imagination to hover, conjuring up pictures of sweet primitive habits and unalloyed felicity; illusions, alas! the very antipodes of the reality. We lingered here awhile, not so much for the sake of rest, as to feast upon the view beneath us.

Supper was just commenced when we descended, and we contributed in bringing it to an over-hasty conclusion, our names, to use a vulgar phrase, not being put on the pan; and afterwards held a consultation as to our further movements, when it was unanimously agreed that, in consequence of the loss of our horses, we should halt where we were for some days, to examine the mines, and endeavour to obtain other animals. In the morning, taking a survey of the locality, the first object that attracted our admiring attention was the Sacramento, which, even at that distance from its mouth, was a noble stream, though at its lowest level. It was not amazingly broad, but very deep, and rapid exceedingly, rushing complainingly through the scraggy channel awarded it by

the contiguous hills. The banks were bold, leaving no marginal space save at the settlement, which stood on either side of a stream called Middle Creek, from its central position betwixt two others, called Salt and Rock Creeks, all three having their rise in the western hills towards the coast range, holding parallel courses, and emptying into the Sacramento on its western bank, within half a mile of each other, and all 106 rich in golden deposits, proving that the grand golden laboratory is not confined exclusively to the bowels of the Sierra Nevada.

Those creeks are all deeply impregnated with the saline mineral, especially Salt Creek, where there are numerous springs, round which pure coarse salt can be gathered in large quantities. Their streams had then subsided into strings of stagnant pools, which were crowded with diggers, who formed, at the time, the northernmost parties on the Sacramento or its tributaries, making, then, from one to three ounces per day, though the richest superficial veins had been exhausted. There were very few cradles or washers at work, nearly all being employed in scraping out the crannies and pockets of the rocks with spoons, and splitting the chinks with narrow picks and large knives. It was a process new to me, but so simple, and involving so little labour, that I was soon at work amongst the busy throng. The loose rocks and stones in the beds of the creeks were hard, and of different formation generally from the stratum forming the beds of the creeks, probably rolled down, in the process of time, by the action of the water, from the granite masses at the source of those rivulets. Amongst them had been found, by the earlier visitants, innumerable large chunks and lumps, some perfectly pure, others largely amalgamated with the gold blossom, as the miners call the crystallised quartz. Several large specimens were found during my sojourn, weighing from two to six ounces, and one as much as seven pounds, with a very insignificant amalgamation. The bed was a sort of fleaky sandstone, in irregular strata, which, when struck with a sledge or hammer, 107 opened into countless minute seams, joints, and fissures, into which the miner inserted the point of his knife, very rarely requiring the pick to prize them asunder, finding betwixt the laminae thin cakes of gold almost incorporated with the rock by the adhesion of cohesion, existing in greater or less quantities throughout the entire stratum, even to its lowest depth, evidently established there since its original formation, for no process, however subtle, could subsequently so insinuate it into the heart of a solid rock.

I have seen some miners go clean down through a very deep stratum, and find gold in large quantities below, which impressed me with the idea that the gold on the surface is but the crumbs of volcanism, and that the great deposits of the solid metal are deep in the bowels of the earth. Many old miners were so firmly impressed with this conviction, that they resolved, in spring, when powder and proper implements could be procured from below, to sink deep shafts in select places, and give the experiment a fair trial. I did not confine myself to one system or one locality, but had a turn at each, trying in the course of my rambles the soil in innumerable places and at various elevations, finding, I may say, gold, more or less, everywhere, in many instances exposed on the surface on lofty hills. I also visited an extensive mining settlement to the westward, called "The Springs," or "Redding's Diggings," said to be very rich. Here the miners had no streams or riverbeds for the seat of their operations, working in the various ravines and gulches, where the drainage of hills formed their several little streamlets. Theirs was almost all dirt cleansing, and, from the results I saw, was highly 108 lucrative; but the health of the miners was very bad, owing to the property of the water in the springs, which became more unwholesome as the season advanced, and the want of vegetables with their salt junk.

After having explored every nook and corner in this extensive neighbourhood, I was anxious to break fresh ground, and did not experience much difficulty in getting up a party for the purpose, as from the crowds that daily came flocking in the place became uncomfortably thronged. A meeting was held at which the feasibility and practicability of getting beyond the Sacramento was discussed, where the creeks and gulches looked most invitingly towards us, when it was resolved that an exploring party, chosen at the time, should set out the day but one after, employing the following one in constructing a raft. It was also determined not to confine their researches merely to the edge of the river, but to go back to the cañons of the loftier ranges, which could be seen about thirty miles to the eastward.

Twenty men assembled on the morning of the appointed day, our mess contributing another and myself, but from the rapidity of the current, and the unwieldy piece of naval architecture on which we had to cross it, evening was close at hand when the last man jumped ashore, where white man

never trod before; and this very circumstance gave an air of romance to the expedition, not without its peculiar stimulant. As it was a pure matter of chance where we might strike water, particularly in the dark, we formed our camp for the night on a hill-side close by the river, and devoted the few hours we had to spare in trying the creeks close by, some of which we found very rich 109 indeed, and the remainder promising. We started before sun up in the morning with very heavy packs, for in addition to our tools, provisions, and arms, we were obliged to carry a heavy blanket, as the nights now set in piercingly cold, notwithstanding the sultry and oppressive temperature of the days. We shaped our course directly for the highest and most distant of the ridges in view, and had for several miles a most fatiguing march, either climbing, descending, or shouldering through thick tall brush, through which it was a matter of extreme difficulty to drag our heavy packs. There were legions of game about, bear, deer, rabbit, and quail, but we did not shoot any, as we found our loads quite cumbrous enough without any addition.

About three o'clock we emerged into a more open country, entirely free of underwood, and presently came upon a verdant basin of clear land, where, from the richness of the grass and elasticity of the sod, we conjectured there must be water near, which we were all in great need of at the time. We dug in a few of the most likely places without finding any, and were about making another trial, when a cheer from one of our comrades told us the treasure was discovered, in a little pool bearing all the marks and tokens of having been scratched out by a bear, holding very little over a pint, and replenishing so slowly that a long time elapsed before all were satisfied. We then picked out the hole to about two feet in diameter, and left it to rise, in order to get a supply for our coffee, while we set about making a monster fire near at hand, the order of the watch being four to each guard, and two hour spells; for Mr. Myers, the most experienced Californian mountaineer, gave us special warning of the treachery of the tribes of Digger Indians we were likely to meet, and we already aware that all Indians are particularly fierce on the first invasion of their territories.

The night set in clear, but biting cold, and about midnight it came on to blow a gale of wind for a couple of hours, which made our great fire bellow and roar, and vomit forth sheets of sparks, that ignited the dry bunch grass and surrounding withered boughs in many places, enabling us plainly to see the deer around them coming up in numbers to look at the novelty, gazing with distended orbs,

and stamping the ground in puzzled bewilderment, the guard could have easily shot some, only that the report of fire-arms would start up the sleepers, imagining an Indian surprise.* We were amove at early dawn, and found a more clear and level country to march through than that of yesterday; but Indian trails were becoming more numerous, and appeared as if in constant use; yet still no Indians showed themselves. We moved forward cautiously and compactly, having agreed not to halt for refreshment until we gained the base of the mountains, and towards noon began drawing close to them, crossing several deep dells and close ravines, in which there were abundance of grapes and manzanita berries. We pushed on till we reached the bosom of a steep glen, through which a clear but slender brook trickled, faintly babbling amongst the rocks—a sweet spot to rest in; but as we halted to unburden ourselves, six Indians were positively in the midst of us, no one being cognisant of their 111 approach, so stealthily and noiselessly did they advance. They were perfectly naked, only one carrying a bow and quiver.

It is a common stratagem in deer-hunting in America to go into their haunts of dark nights and light a bundle of fagots, the blaze of which attracts any within sight of the blaze, when they become an easy prey to the hunter.

If we followed Mr. Myers' advice, or yielded to our own first impulses, we would have driven them off; but they looked so mild and inoffensive we permitted them to remain. They were rather below the middle stature, but strong, well-knit fellows, their faces daubed with a thick dark glossy substance like tar, in a line from the outside corners of the eyes to the ends of the mouth, and back from them to the hinge of the jawbone, looking at a distance like exaggerated whiskers; some also had their entire foreheads coated over. We endeavoured to disabuse their minds of any hostile intent by signs and gestures, and little presents of bread and tobacco, neither of which they seemed to understand the use of. In order to show them more plainly the object of our visit, we took them to the stream, going through the form of using our picks, shovels, and pans, and then showed them the gold we had in our purses; when they all laughed, exclaiming, “Booie, Booie, Booie,” which it seems in their language signifies gold. They made signs to us that it was to be had everywhere around, which was so far satisfactory that we brought them into camp, where we found Mr. Vyse, a Dutch gentleman of our party, in the act of cutting up a noble buck he shot a little up the glen, he proposed we should cook a regular trapper's feast, composed and made up of a dish called “Coney-

cum-Quero” (derivation unknown), the *chefs de cuisine* on the occasion being two gentlemen that before had their fingers in a similar pie.

It is made by cutting off a large piece of flesh from a 112 carcass, together with the skin, then paring away a good margin of the meat, so as to afford a selvage of hide that will lap over what remains in the centre, on which you can shake whatever seasoning you have, and then skewer or tie it up closely, placing it on hot embers or stones made red hot (which we did), when, if carefully tended, before the hide is burned through the meat is thoroughly done, juicy and savoury beyond conception, being stewed in its own peculiar gravy. Ours was a regular duodecimo, as indeed it needed to be, from the number of our mess and foreign auxiliaries, being made up of the entire side of venison, from the vertebrae, round by the hips, flank, chest, and shoulder-blade. While it was in process, we took off the keen edge of our appetites by roasting on the coals the scraps and pieces that were cut away in forming the selvage, all watching it with the most careful attention, until “cooked to a curiosity;” and whether it was the whim of a quizzing imagination or not I cannot tell, but I never before tasted a dish that so filled up every crevice of the mouth with an all-satisfying enjoyment, saturating the pleased palate with its succulent tenderness, and leaving such an agreeable after-taste, that one was almost loth to use aught else for fear of dispelling it.

I would advise M. Soyer to give it a place in the next edition of his book; and I hope I may not be deemed presumptuous in expecting that the great abdominal worshippers of the omniverous London corporation will present me with a handsome premium for adding a new idol to their creed in the shape of a “Coney-cum-Quero.” It is not necessary it should be made of venison, the flesh of any other animal whose hide is sufficiently tough to bear 113 the fire, would do as well; in fact, I think a fatter meat would suit better.

The Indians remained all night, and lit a second fire at a little distance, stretching themselves, mouth under, between both. There was little doubt but they had a design in staying, for whenever the watchmen's tread ceased, and unbroken silence prevailed, they raised up their heads cautiously, looking round anxiously, but dropping again the moment they saw they were perceived, simulating sleep, which caused us to keep a close eye on them. In the morning, as we continued to feed them,

we determined on making them do something to earn their diet, by sending them to bring up water for the morning's use (which in their tongue is called "Bawlee"), and afterwards making them carry a moiety of our packs, which they did with great reluctance, from sheer laziness, being out and out, far and away, the most thoroughly lethargic set of beings, even of their own degraded tribe, I ever encountered. Were it not so, here they could have shambles of meat for food, and skins to trade, after supplying themselves with raiment, which they appear to want, from the sensitive manner in which they bore the evening air. Yet such is their inherent sloth, they are contented to remain entirely destitute of covering, living through the summer and autumn on crickets, berries, and roots, and in the winter and early spring on acorns, which they save, and dried spent salmon, which they catch without much trouble, spearing them in the shallow fords of streams flowing into the Sacramento. Unlike most other Indians, they have nothing to trade or barter; neither are they, as far as I could see, expert bowmen; the only thing in which they attain a respectable mediocrity is swimming. They are excessively jealous of their squaws, for whenever we headed towards any of their burrows, they sent a courier ahead to remove them all; and, as a cap to the climax of their forbidding qualities, they are stingy and inhospitable. It is supposed to be a trait of Indian character, universal amongst the race, their hospitality to strangers when they chance to come amongst their wigwams, no matter how hostile soever their feelings and intentions might be under other circumstances; but amongst those wretches no such virtue seems to exist, for, on one occasion, in passing through their huts, I took a few from a heap of acorns, when the very savages to whom we were so kind, and fed so plentifully, commenced a pitiful whining howl until I restored them; the entire selfishness of which was enhanced by the fact that thousands of bushels of them covered the ground in every direction.

Their information about the gold was perfectly correct, for we found some, I may say, in every place we tried, but, except at our camp, had no water in the neighbourhood to give a full test to our experiments, as the rivulets, gulches, and ravines, were all dry. We tried the dry-digging process; and on winnowing the sand, that we took from the cavities of rocks, in a rough manner, got, in most instances, a residue of gold, sometimes insignificant, at others considerable. After examining all the auspicious-looking places on the western flank of the Sierra in this neighbourhood, we branched

into a gloomy defile, with the intention of penetrating to the north-eastern side of the range; but, after advancing a few miles, it took a westerly slant, which we thought it prudent to follow, as 115 our stock of provision would not admit of too protracted an absence.

The country we had now to push our way through were groups of immense hills, covered to the tops with oak and fir, without brush, not so close as to impede our progress, but sufficiently umbrageous to shield us from the sun. As we went along we tried every likely place we came across, and got some gold in all. We soon turned into another and wider branch of the defile, bending more towards the south, hoping to strike the Sacramento and follow its course home, testing its bars and the stream flowing into it as we proceeded, and marched in an elongated string, as the trail, like all Indian trails, would not admit of more than one deep; but some of our party, beginning to lag under the weight of their packs, had tailed off considerably, of which those in advance were unconscious, until the distant report of a gun, followed by a holloa, brought us suddenly up; on hearing which, all simultaneously dropped their packs, leaving four to watch them, and hurried back, in double-quick, nearly a mile, when we espied several Indians on the heights watching our movements, which caused us to apprehend our comrades had been overwhelmed, murdered, and stripped. We raised a lusty cheer to encourage them in extremity, and hurried our pace to a run, until we came to the fork of the defile, where we saw our five absent men standing in a bunch, rifles in hand, and a horde of those savages in front of them, yelling and gesticulating; amongst whom were our right trusty henchmen, who levanted with the packs we constrained them to carry. They were beyond bow, but within easy rifle 116 shot; but when our reinforcement came up, they moved away further, and after a momentary pause, the chief, with a staff of about a score, showed a disposition to approach us in a pacific mood; a movement we repudiated, beckoning him off, and presenting at him, when he in turn beckoned us away, sputtering gibberish at the top of his voice; but a Mr. Davis put an end to his fierce oration by a double discharge of buck-shot, which made his royal highness and some of his aids skip most ungracefully, the whole body breaking away in fear and confusion

This occurrence counselled circumspection for the future, as there is no manner of doubt but that the murder of the five men would have ensued only for our return, for they not only tried some

long-bow shots at them, but got others to ascend the heights at their back, from whence they had commenced hurling down logs and stones. As we all came together again, and got into motion, we saw our enemies on the heights above in considerable force; and what we seriously apprehended they now began to put in practice, letting loose rocks and blocks of decaying timber, which plunged down the steep hill-sides with a force and velocity that required all our watchfulness and alertness to evade them, so that our progress was, I may say, arrested altogether. They were not slow to perceive our jeopardy, and for once in their lives, at least, were industrious, for they worked with might and main, yelling and screaming as they set their projectiles in motion, getting bolder and bolder, as we could not well make an effort to dislodge them, we crept slowly on, the ridge of the hill declining rather quickly, 117 the inclination of its curve, too, bringing the savages within shooting distance, and as they crowded to a point close beneath which we were constrained to pass, we put forward four men, who carried rifles of the largest calibre, one of which, especially, owned by a Mr. Smith, was admitted to be the “great gun” of the diggings, he first elevated at the savage looking most like the generalissimo, who, curiously enough, seeing he was selected, advanced a few paces, with an air of contemptuous defiance, imagining himself perfectly secure; but Mr. Smith took his measure most accurately, sending his bullet into the centre of his chest, on which, making a frantic leap, he fell prostrate, producing a pause of stupefaction, during which the other three marksmen fired into the crowd, bringing two others down. This kicked the balance of hesitation instantaneously, all of them bursting away for the summit of the ridge, over which we could discern their dark heads timidly peeping to see if we intended pursuit; but of this we had no idea, our object being, if possible, to get to the river before dark.

We were much nearer the Sacramento than we conceived, for in less than a mile, the trail descending rapidly almost all the time, we came square upon it, and directly on the opposite side discovered a very large settlement of Indians, who raised a demoniac yell as soon as they saw us; all their squaws at the same time running up a narrow gorge in the hills, carrying their papposes. On our side there was a scrap of beach, on which a vast number of miserable spent salmon of enormous size, split, were hung along on poles to dry in the sun, there being a better aspect and exposure than at their camp; and I believe it was the notion 118 that we would carry a portion of them away that

begot the tumult. But we never touched them; and finding that the cliffs were too precipitous to allow of our following the river, we reascended the hills, as around our watchfires, at the base of such a steep, we could not expect to get over the night in peace or security. A few miles further on we met a creek, where, in the cavity of a rock, we eked out as much water as sufficed for supper.

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CHAPTER IX.

Find Gold in the Creek—Strange Excavation in its Bed—Determine on clearing it out—Our large Expectations—Our mode of Procedure—Immense Frogs and Land Turtle—Another new Dish, called “Omnium Gatherum”—Unexpected size of the Hole—Share Market—Anxiety increases as the Bottom is Approached—Wonderful Result—Food for Conjecture—Mining Incident—Continue our Search down the Creek—Indian Village near its Banks—Homeward-bound—First Rain of the Season—Raft Accident—Miraculous Escape—Raft-building by Torchlight—How it did Pour—Californian Rain—The Sacramento rises—Had the Wet Season set in so early?—Its Effects on our Comforts, our Clothes, our Food, our Weapons, and Implements—How we employed ourselves during the Spell—Novel Occupations—Ludicrous Success—Musical Amateur—Strange Musical Contest—Amphibious State—The Sacramento rises higher—The Rain ceases and the Sun reappears—Change of Scene and Employment—Piebald Appearance of the Camp—State of the Ground—All the Stock get Mired—How we Manage—The Miners at Work again.

In the morning we found gold in the bed of the creek all along as we proceeded, so we followed it down a considerable distance to a point, where, after receiving two respectable affluents and innumerable smaller streamlets (all dry then), it took a decided southerly course. We tried the banks in many places, and several of the bars, in all of which we found abundant evidence that it would be a most remunerative stream to work on when the proper season came round. In the course of our explorations we came to a rocky cañon, where the water tumbles over a fall of twelve or fifteen feet, at the bottom of which there was a large cavity in the rock, quite round at the 120 orifice, about eight feet in diameter, and four feet down to where there was moist gravel, the hole enlarging in dimensions as it descended. Some expressed a great desire to clear it out, and one of the men

finding over an ounce of fine dust in a crack on the lip of the rock from which, in the wet season, the torrent is discharged, all hands agreed on the experiment, indulging in golden anticipations of all sorts, many of the over-sanguine setting down the proportions at 1000 dollars, which would not, after all, appear exorbitant, considering the circumstances.

We put in two men with shovels to fill the pans, which were passed up by two others, and sent along a string of four above, from hand to hand, to a place where it was discharged, the empty pans returning by another line, coming up and down with the regularity of elevators in a corn-mill. In a few hours we thus accumulated a large heap of gravel on the bank, but did not appear to make a deep impression on the hole, which bulged out in the sides like a pot. Nevertheless, we worked unremittingly—albeit on empty stomachs, and nothing in prospect to appease the painful gnawings of the worm of appetite—as the presence of water on round stones and coarse gravel afforded us a guarantee that there was no chasm or aperture through which the gold could escape. From the round stones and coarse gravel we came to a layer of coarse sand, in which, curious enough, were frequently sent up immense frogs, as large as young monkeys, and a description of land turtle, that, on the other hand, was of dwarfish proportions, all alive and kicking; the wonder being, that they could have existed under such a superincumbent weight as we removed, which of course was only to be accounted for by the mysterious agency of the *genius loci*, who stationed them there to watch the golden treasure; for if the great dragon of Hesperides himself was only saddled with half the load, the celebrated fruit would not have so long cumbered its branches. In the absence of all other nutriment, we became sudden converts to French cookery, calling into requisition the services of our Coney-cum-Quero artists, who invented an entirely new dish, characteristically christened “Omnium Gatherum,” which I cannot, however, so confidently recommend to a generous and confiding public as their previous effort, being composed principally of bull-frogs and land turtle, thinly interspersed with the limbs of a few woodpeckers and one ground squirrel (a much nicer animal than a rat), stewed in the green water that we took from the hole in two of our largest wash-pans, without either pepper, or salt, or any other sauce or seasoning but keen, pungent hunger.

As we left off work at dusk, we took soundings with a pole, and found there were fully five feet yet to clean out; but the hole at this level took an inward curve, that would quickly diminish its

capacity for holding; not so the “Omnium Gatherum,” which found receptacles capacious enough, and, simple and unadorned as it was, would have all disappeared if we conceded to appetite; but we reserved a portion of this composite mess for breakfast, and were at work under the auspices of the morning star, as it was absolutely necessary we should reach home that evening.

Two feet more brought us to a finer, darker, and heavier sand, the usual concomitant of the precious dust, which sent up the mercury of expectation to such a pitch, that speculators freely offered from four hundred to five 122 hundred dollars a share without effecting a purchase, and, circumscribed as the time was, a miniature system of the Bull and Bear system was got into operation, which hatched its small clutch of lame ducks with a rapidity in keeping with the vegetative and generative character of the country. The game momentarily increased in interest as the bottom was approached; but the increasing depth necessitated us to put in a rude ladder to enable the work to proceed. It was also deemed prudent to appoint experienced washers to test each pan, for the indications of the sand became now truly promising. Silence reigned omnipotent, yet during the intervals of each shovel-stroke, although every one appeared to hold their breathing, there were smothered foreign ventriloquistic sounds, repeated with a rapid regularity, which at last brought me to listen, and discover that “the beating of our own hearts was all the sounds we heard.” The sun, too, came at this juncture to take a peep into the nearly empty hole; but the polished shovel returned no lurid flash to his bright ray, the predominant reflection being from the black sand, which, by the time the last panful was removed (sand et preterea nihil), had communicated quite a leaden tinge to our complexions; and then “we looked each other's faces round,” but not a word of banter or regret as the men slowly and sadly came up from this great polished deceiver, each wondering, but unable to solve the miracle of the total absence of even a particle of the metal. Wanting other diet, it supplied us amply with food for conjecture and surmise; but the most ingenious and sophisticated could not compose a feasible explanation why it was that the gold, which assuredly came in from above, 123 and which we found in quantity below, being the heavier substance, should be scrupulously ejected, leaving stones, gravel, and even black sand, at the bottom. All the natural and usual operations of cause and effect being at length exhausted, a metaphysical gentleman agreed with himself that preternatural spells must have been at work as

well, and that, if the frogs could speak, “they would a tale unfold” that would suit as an appendix to the legends of Croker.*

While working on Rock Creek, the weather being so very hot, we always had by us a pan of drinking water, and close to it stood a tin cup, in which we put the particles of gold as we gathered them. One morning, as we were at work, a thisty prospector came by, who asked permission to take a drink, which being accorded him, he filled up the cup and quaffed off the costly draught, without either drinking our healths or leaving even the semblance of a sediment at the bottom. I first suspected there was a little sleight-of-hand in the matter; but from the sincere compunction of the man, and the honest manner he pressed to replace the gold, I firmly believe he swallowed it;—a circumstance which caused us for the future not to rely implicitly, in such cases, on a saving slip, “inter poculum et labra.”

We now shouldered our traps and went down the creek for at least a mile, finding prospects throughout calculated to console us somewhat for our morning's disappointment; and just when about diverging for home, we saw, further down on the banks of the creek, a large Indian village, of a more permanent character than I thought the Diggers could boast of, the huts being unusually well constructed for that tribe. It was thickly inhabited; the red-skins, arrayed with their bows and arrows, ready as if for an encounter; but we moved off at right angles, marching steadily until we reached the Sacramento at our raft-moorings, about two hours before sundown, when we commenced shipping our first cargo, which consisted of four men with their packs, chosen by lot, as the fumographic attractions on the other side, the dislike of crossing (as 124 the last batches should) in the dark, and the indications of a coming change in the weather, made each anxious to be amongst the first.

It took over an hour to make the first trip to and fro, during which time the clouds began to gather and drop rain, the wind, too, sighing in ominous gusts. I was in the second batch, and got well wet from the heavy rain before I landed, the wind still increasing in violence; and, unfortunately, as the third party were coming over (being now dark), by some bad management or other the raft parted, three clinging to one portion and one to the other. A shout was instantly raised, lanterns and fagots lit, and the shore lined to see how succour could be brought to bear; but their fate appeared inevitable, as over the rapids they should go, where we were apprehensive they would loose their hold and be drowned; but as good luck would have it, that portion to which the three were attached went slick over, and was rounded to in an eddy that whirled it to the shore, not more than two

hundred yards below; the other, taking a different shoot, straddled on a pointed rock, over which the intercepted current surged in a frothy foam. There was a deep gut between the rock and the shore which cut off all personal aid, so that the only thing we could do was to shout encouragement to the poor fellow, urging him to try and work his log over the obstacle, telling him how his companions got safely on shore, and throwing lines, with weights attached to the ends, that he might lay hold of them; but he was almost altogether unconscious, from the dashing of the water; still holding, however, with the proverbial tenacity of a drowning man. He remained in this fearful predicament nearly 125 a quarter of an hour, when we saw the log wobbling, as the current evidently rose a little, the rain falling in torrents all the time: another swing, and it broke afloat. “Does he cling?” uttered a hundred mouths. Yes! we could see his head in the torchlight as his log also whirled into the protective eddy; but life was nearly extinct; nor could we release his grasp without using actual violence, and for a long time after we carried him to the nearest tent he did not appear to resuscitate; however, we were overjoyed to see him at length give signs of returning animation; when, leaving him in charge of the only female in the community, we all proceeded up stream to construct a new raft to bring over the remainder, as the river began rising so rapidly, if deferred until morning rafting would be impracticable. It was a truly novel and picturesque sight to see a file of blazing torches and fagots, and the dusky forms of the men at work with their gleaming axes and augurs of a dark stormy night, singing cheerfully, to keep up the spirits of those on the opposite shore. Two first-rate large rafts were solidly constructed in an incredibly short space of time, capable of taking all over at a single trip each; so that, ere midnight, they were safely landed amidst their companions.

Oh, how it did pour! I never before saw such torrents. The biggest tears of *ould* Ireland were but intermittent imitations —mere mizzle—compared with it, as it sluiced down, making the blazing logs “pale their ineffectual fires,” until they fairly struck to the rival element. It drummed upon the tents, spitting through the closest canvas, covering the upper blankets and the pendant clothing with a condensed vapour like hoar-frost; but 126 being unusually early for the regular seasonal spell, only the 30th October, we all crept into our damp beds, trusting that in its fury it would expend itself ere morning. But morning came, and brought with it no cessation. Down, down it flowed in perpendicular streamlets, as thick as an ordinary ramrod, puncturing the ground, which

was not as yet mashed into mortar, as if the points of that instrument were inserted into it with mathematical precision. The select few who had stoves could alone make the “sparks fly upwards;” the remainder, with their waggoncovers, endeavouring to construct a species of hearth umbrella to shield them from the water. Noon came, and still down it came, and up rose the Sacramento, turbid and turbulent, its rapid centre and quiescent edges sheeted out into the bush, forming quite a contrast. You could see all hands digging deep channels round their tents, and carrying in limbs of timber and hurdles to elevate their couches from off the cold damp earth. Every one was wet through, and everybody's bedclothes were so thoroughly saturated with damp, we turned in without divesting ourselves of our wet garments.

A second night, chilly and cheerless, converted us to the belief that the rainy season had arrived, and set us cogitating how we should employ ourselves during its continuance. The lighting of fires in the morning was quite a prolonged and doubtful experiment in the ash-pools—no longer pits—where the crackling wood was wont to revel. We built them as close to our tent mouths as possible, prepared to suffer any inconvenience from the smoke for the faintest countervailing glow of heat; all insufficient, however, to dry our dripping clothes or bed covering. Our knives, 127 forks, spoons, tin dishes, and knightly implements, soon got coated over with rust; our fire-arms got woodbound; the provisions, too, suffering their quota. The jerked beef got blue moulded, the flour caky, the sugar treacly, the tea relaxed, the coffee sodden, the powder lumpy, and the brandy *weakly*. Even my fine watch, which I never before caught in a wayward mood, took it into its head to spend the season in a state of torpidity. There was nothing now for it but either a thorough revision and repair of the wardrobe, or card playing, or drinking, or both, for there were no books in the concern, while damp paper was calculated to obscure the clearest ideas committed to it; nevertheless, the dull, trieste influences of the time were often chequered with a hearty laugh, resulting from the amusing bumbles of the many unlicensed imitators of Crispin and Cabbage, who undertook to flourish the awl and the needle. Boots were in the most urgent want of relief, as most of the crowd, to use a slang phrase, “were addicted to top-boots”—“case why, they got no bottoms;” worn on the principle which induced my countryman to walk in the mud under the canopy of a sedan-chair. Coats, not being previously much used, did not stand in need of repair; but

pantaloons became so grotesquely metamorphosed under the “stars and stripes” with which they were so liberally garnished, it required a strong effort of memory to recognise them. One gentleman in particular, evidently of a retail education, not from any jocosely freak, either, caused us an hour of merriment by freckling over his stern with those minute patches until it resembled a map of the Archipelago or Carribean Sea. You could see shirts, in the absence of either father or mother-o'-pearl 128 studs, ornamented with buttons that would be quite at home in the breast of a pea-jacket; and hats that curled up their broad brims under a crisping sun, driven into the slouching attitude; together with many other strange and curious contrasts too numerous to mention.

In the midst of those our multifarious avocations, one raw gushing evening our ears were brought to full cock by the laudable efforts of a gentleman who possessed a rheumatic key-bugle, that perhaps like its owner was suffering from the roughness of the journey or the climate, for his choicest strains were not of that “charming” quality calculated to “soothe the savage breast,” maugre those of a Christian. On the contrary, to travesty the phrase, they were “a discord of harsh sounds,” which, as a friend of mine observed, would be certain death to any cow of advanced age in the *ould* country, where they understand music. However, this painful solo was opportunely challenged by the appearance on the sod of a canine amateur, whose musical powers were so decidedly superior, that he silenced his opponent with a few of his quavers, and retired amidst torrents *and* applause. The gentleman and the bugle subsequently made two other paralytic efforts to renew the contest, but old Pompey, who, for fear of such surprises, kept his organ at concert pitch, came promptly to the scratch, and effectually consummated his conquest.

There were some ugly broils arising out of gambling contentions, and disgusting exhibitions from over-deep potations; but, strange to say, no serious accident occurred, nor sickness supervened, even though I may say “we lived, and moved, and had our being” in water, or positive 129 moisture, making us incline to the supposition that habitude endowed us with semiamphibious natures. This state of things continued without a jot of abatement for nine whole days and nights; the river rising higher and higher, roaring in frantic fury, whirling, like straws on its surging bosom, huge logs and trees that it uprooted and snatched along in its headlong rage, its frenzied temperament madly ministered, too, by the innumerable torrents along its course vomiting in their

foaming stimulants. Rock, Middle, and Salt Creeks, now presented impassable barriers to any communication betwixt those encamped on either side, being so backed up by the monster current that they spread athwart the limited level, and compelled the whole settlement to pull up stakes and retreat up the hill-side.

On the morning of the tenth day we were all mightily gladdened and rejoiced at the reappearance of our old friend Sol, beaming effulgently, but somewhat moderated in his fierce temperament. Presto! now there was a magical change of scene, lolling listlessness giving place to bustle, tents were struck in a trice, everything laid bare, and everybody bustling as briskly as the slushy state of the ground would permit to give their spongy cloths and provisions the benefit of the change. Blankets—white, red, blue, green, Mackinaw, and Mexican—were spread out in close contact on the slope with shaggy buffalo robes and sleek counterpanes, flanked with flannel, cotton, hickory, and Jersey shirts, of every tinge and colour; coats, fancy vests, and very unfanciable pants, in companionship with shreddy drawers, together with stockings, long and short, in a most porous condition, judiciously interspersed, in every available vacancy, with green boots, flabby hats, collapsed carpet-bags, powder-flasks, shot pouches, and the various other hunting and defensive accoutrements dangling from the branches; provisions exposed and arms piled where no shade could reach or screen them; forming altogether a unique and variegated scene most curious to behold.

This done, we went to look after our cattle, which were not seen since the storm commenced; but it proved rather more of a task than any of us anticipated, for at every step, unless the foot was planted on the point of a rock or log, you sank right down to the knee, frequently further, even on the slopes the earth being almost in a liquid state, with barely enough of adhesive consistence to prevent its running in a stream. I could not imagine such a state of things had I not witnessed it. When we reached the cattle, we found them, without an exception, mired down to their bellies, unable to budge; some few were dead, and some mules and horses greatly lacerated in their wild endeavours to extricate themselves; the oxen were more passive, but nearly starved to death, while it was utterly impossible to liberate them until the wet drained off and the ground became firm. The only mode of meeting the emergency was to gather provender and strew it within their reach, which was not a

labour of exceeding trouble, as acorns were overabundant, and they all had become accustomed to use them. Thus we ministered to them for a few days, until we were able to extricate those that were unable to relieve themselves.

Each mess now went to work with their rockers in the different gulches and in select places along the creek's 131 banks, washing the dirt, and getting well paid for their trouble, averaging fully two ounces per man. But the soil was too wet to work to the best advantage, being almost in a state that masons call grout, the heavy metallic particles sinking to the flag or rock as it became disturbed in digging, and escaping the shovels in the crevices and inequalities, whereas, in a drier state, they would be taken up with earth and separated in the process. Some that took the pains of scooping and scraping up the mud from those inequalities with large spoons were amply requited, and many made good wages by following the creek and gulch courses, picking up particles on the margin from which the water had receded, and gathering bits of considerable size that protruded from the bank edges, where flakes of earth broke off by the undermining of the torrents.

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CHAPTER X.

More Rain—Digging ceases—The Damp and Chills are attended with Sickness—Doctors and their Charges—Addition to our Mess—Commence Digging out a Canoe—The Agreeabilities of our New Associate—How we hewed, and joked, and promoted Health—Perforated state of the Bark—Studded with Acorns—How caused—Foresight of the Woodpecker—Their Ingenuity and Discrimination—Finish our Craft—Weather clears up—Transport our Goods and Chattels over the River—Miners' Theory—Our Cloak—Miners' Practices—Their Perseverance—We blink them a Good While—The Hunt at Last—Our Seclusion Invaded—What we previously averaged—Hours of Work—Appearance of the Mines—Geological Puzzle—Capital and Machinery required to develop the Wealth of California—Fruitless Search for a Scientific Traveller—Winter sets in—Hunt for new Diggings—Our old Gulch re-enriched—Fresh Irruptions—Make a Party to Visit the Maiden Creek—Find the Water too high—Indian Visits and Thievery—Give some of them condign Punishment—A slight Brush—Our comfortless and insecure Situation—Return to Home Quarters

—Diabolical Murder—Perpetrated by Indians—Enrolment of a Volunteer Party to Punish them—
The Regions of the Expedition—Position and Number of our Adversaries—The Battle—The Result
—Onerous Task of getting home our Wounded Man—Boisterous Night—Both Freeman and Coyle
die.

THIS state of affairs kept the miners in buoyant spirits; but they were soon damped again, for, at the end of three days, heavy, humid clouds kept floating overhead, accompanied with sharp squalls and smart showers, which, towards evening, settled down into a thick mizzly mist, of a most dampening and penetrating character, continuing for five nights and days, occasionally changing into wetting rain as a brisk breeze blew up, which rendered the soil wholly unfit for digging, and begat a raw chill 133 atmosphere that began to exhibit its effects in short ague fits, rheumatism, stiff swollen joints, and scurvy. My ankle, which got maimed in the buffalo chase on the Platte, gave me considerable annoyance, both from pain and enlargement; but I prescribed for myself, as the medical tariff all over the mines made a patient shudder more sensitively than the most nauseating tinctures or painful operation: one ounce a visit was the fixed charge, the simplest dose costing one dollar, and anything of a compound quality a quarter of an ounce. Yet, notwithstanding those rates, some got so nervous in their ailments, and anticipated such golden harvests throughout the coming year, that they paid them without a murmur.

As one might as well be outside as under a tent where everything was dripping with damp, our mess, which was enlarged by the admission of two gentlemen, who, from the first, were camped close beside us, concluded we would employ ourselves in digging out a canoe, for having resolved on crossing the river at the earliest opportunity, we were determined on having some more safe and expeditious mode of navigation than rafting. We accordingly selected a noble fir-tree, out of which we got a superb log, thirty feet long, and fifty-four inches in girth, free of bark, on which we set to work in rough-shaping our craft, under the direction of one of our new associates—a seafaring gentleman of great experience, whose natural cleverness, vivacity, and varied information, constituted him a most cheerful and delightful companion, more particularly under circumstances where any agreeable social attribute was sure to be liberally appreciated. None of us were expert choppers, but the best were placed at the points 134 where the most delicate strokes were required,

and as we kept hacking and hewing away in the perpetual mizzle, joking, singing, and quickening the circulation, we felt all the better for the exercise, in health, appetite, and spirits.

In stripping off the bark I observed it perforated with holes larger than those which a musket-bullet would make, spaced with most accurate precision, as if bored under the guidance of a rule and compass, and many of them filled most neatly with acorns. Earlier in the season I remarked the holes in mostly all the softer timber, but imagining they were caused by wood insects, I did not stop to examine or inquire; but now, finding them studded with acorns firmly fixed in, which I knew could not have been driven there by the wind, I sought for an explanation, which was practically given me by Captain S—'s pointing out a flock of woodpeckers busily and noisily employed in the provident task of securing their winter's provisions, for it appears that that sagacious bird is not all the time thriftlessly engaged in "tapping the hollow beech-tree" for the mere idle purpose of empty sound, but spends its summer season in pecking those holes, in which it lays in its store of food for the winter, where the elements can neither affect or place it beyond their reach, and it is considered a sure omen that the snowy period is approaching when those birds commence stowing away their acorns, which otherwise might be covered by its fall. I frequently paused from my chopping to watch them in my neighbourhood with the acorns in their bills, half clawing, half flying, round the tree, and admired the adroitness with which they tried it at different holes until they found one of its exact calibre; when, inserting the 135 pointed end, they tapped it home most artistically with their beaks, and flew down for another. But their natural instinct is even more remarkable in the choice of the nuts, which you will invariably find sound; whereas it is a matter of impossibility, in selecting them for roasting, to pick up a batch that will not have half of them unfit for use, the most safe and polished-looking very frequently containing a large grub generated within. Even the wily Indian, with all his craft and experience, is unable to arrive at anything like an unerring selection; while in a large bagful that we took from the bark of our log there was not one containing even the slightest germ of decay. They never encroach on their packed store until all on the surface are covered, when they resort to those in the bark, and peck them of their contents without removing the shell from the holes.

Four days sufficed to finish our craft, about which time the weather began again to improve, a brilliant sun favouring us on the day of the launch, which was not a very laborious affair, for, being cleanly scooped out, she was as light as so much bark, and we were highly delighted to find, on placing her in her future element, that she floated evenly and buoyantly, and was easily impelled at a very rapid rate. We spent the remainder of the day in transporting our traps, provisions, &c., across the river, which was more hazardous than we opined, as the current was alarmingly rapid, and our little barque not altogether so much to our taste when reeling under a smart cargo; however, we got over everything safe before dark, and, ere noon next day, had our tents erected on a nice knoll, in good shelter, with wood convenient, and a clear brook 136 flowing within ten yards of us. There was another one coming down the same slope of much larger dimensions, where we commenced our operations; but it was poor in its deposits, which was not considered strange as running from the westward, for all the old hands insist that no creeks or streams are worth working save those that flow either to the north or south; many experienced Georgian and Wisconsin miners affirming that such is the case in the mines they were in the habit of working, where all the rich leads or veins point north and south, or nearly so. This, if it be the case, may have been influenced by the same natural laws that regulate the vast chains of mountains all over the continent, which uniformly tend in those directions, and may have produced similar results in the greater and deeper seams of gold that I am satisfied exist in California; but that it could effect the disintegrated particles which are abandoned to the caprice of the mountains' thaws, and coerce them into parallel currents, is a doctrine too large for my belief, even though asseverated on authority.

However, we began our drains and excavations on an ostentatious scale on this unpropitious site, intending it to serve as a cover, should we find a better (of which I got a tolerable inkling when last over), as we were well aware that every Sunday we would be visited by our old neighbours, as well from feelings of friendship, *perhaps*, as to find out if we had discovered a better place than their own, when they would not fail to give us the charms of their society, for no mess can shift quarters, either by stealth or otherwise, that they are not thus visited or traced; if by stealth, the moment they are missed a party 137 is chosen of the men most gifted in that species of chase to hunt their trail, who pack provisions and necessaries, setting about it in a most deliberate manner, and are rarely

ever foiled—in fact, never returning until they run into their prey, ascertaining the motives of their change, and the results of the movement. I met many of those parties in my rambles, and was often highly amused, where from the nature of the ground the trail would be imperceptible, to see them take a cast like hounds at fault, prying around in a stopped attitude as if bringing in the aid of the olfactory nerves, until one gave tongue, when they all would hark in, and run it breast high again.

Our plan, however, blinked them for a good while, during which we went to work to our rich gulch every day, about a mile distant, working very profitably too, and when any of them came over to test our location by washing a few panfuls out of that at our door, they not only gave up any idea of joining us, but expressed their astonishment that we should be so misspending our time as to persevere in working there. But a little time, and the “cat got out of the bag,” as it was but too perceptible that our home mines remained in *statu quo*; so that it was supposed, from the ingenious device, we found out a regular gold quarry. Then commenced the preparations for the hunt, a hurried digging out of canoes, as they could not expect ours (freely given for visiting intercourse) to aid in bringing to light our little mint; but, once started, the sport did not last long; as the hounds were so numerous, and the cover so small, they soon brought the game to view. Within two days afterwards the entire course of the gulch was one continuous file of men, picking and 138 rocking away, converting our secluded, silent, golden retreat into a profane and tumultuous thoroughfare. So long as we were uninterrupted, we generally washed out from fifteen to eighteen ounces a-day, confining our operations entirely to the bed and edges of the stream. The gold was of the purest quality, for the most part in nice sized particles; those of a larger size being always streaked with quartz veins, which, in the hands of jewellers (as I afterwards saw them in Francisco), could be shaped and polished into handsome rings, brooches, and ladies' ornaments. This, it must be admitted, was a very good yield, when it is taken into consideration that, from the cold sharpness of the mornings and evenings, we could not commence washing before ten o'clock, and were obliged to give over at two o'clock, or a little after.

Our new neighbours came across and returned in their canoes every morning and evening, and widened the harvest-field by excavating the banks, most generally with complete success. But the weather, taking a dry and frosty turn for a few days, the slender stream was completely intercepted,

and, as a matter of necessity, the whole character of our proceedings changed into dry-digging operations; and not unprofitably either, for, both in the deep crevices and imbedded in the rock, we found the metal in greater quantity, and much larger particles. Like at Salt Creek, it was quite in the heart of the rock, where it must have abided since the original formation, as the rock was sound to the core, and free on the surface from the slightest flaw or fissure through which the gold, even in a molten state, could have gained insertion; the gold fitting its bed with the accuracy of the nicest specimen of 139 inlaying, but in no instance showing that affinity for the rock that it exhibits with regard to quartz, convincing me, as I have before observed, that the surface-scratchings, although their aggregate amount is enormous, are but as the shedding of the grain; and while leaving me still a hesitating sceptic as to its origin and mode of distribution, confirming me in the creed that the great mineral wealth of California is seated deep in the bowels of the earth, only to be developed by associated companies possessed of large capital, who can afford sinking deep shafts and applying mechanical contrivances in removing the unprofitable soil, and keeping under the subterranean drainage.

I often inquired in my rambles, and eagerly sought for some zealous member of the British Association, or equally learned savan, to enlighten me on the subject of this geological puzzle, but never was fortunate enough to stagger across one. If any of such a class did come out to dive into and lay bare the bosom of nature, cupidity must have vanquished their yearnings for immortality, transforming the divine philosopher into the mundane mammon-hunter.

The weather now took a decided winter change; tremendous showers of sleet and frequent heavy falls of dry snow occurring, which precluded the possibility of work, confining our opposite neighbours to their own quarters. But I must do them the justice to say, they improved their opportunity most industriously, as, to all appearances, they swept the gulch clear of its rich contents, constraining us to cast about to find another favoured one, to keep us employed until we could make up a party to go back into the interior, to the creek we discovered when exploring. We met many rivulets with promising indications, but 140 none that would bear comparison with the other. However, before making a selection which we should work, one day, as symptoms of returning fine weather began to manifest themselves, a soft rain succeeding the sleet, the snow

melting from off the slopes and hill-sides, a member of our mess, impelled by such commendable feelings as would prompt one to visit an old friend who once upon a time had rendered him a substantial service, before leaving his neighbourhood took a stroll over to the favourite gulch to see how it was affected by the weather, when, to his extreme surprise and delight, he saw through its clear waters the bed freckled afresh with golden deposits; upon which he hastened back with the pleasing tidings; and the day but one after, the water had so far subsided as to allow of our working on our old haunt, with fully our original success, the new treasure having been washed down from the surrounding hills by the melting of the snow; but the folk over the way, in coming back for some of their implements, were also made aware of this rather marvellous state of things, and commenced again their diurnal incursions, until the premises were a second time cleared out.

We now began to arrange definitely for sending a detachment, in conjunction with others, back to the maiden creek, christened, from its richness, “Gold Creek,” as an entire transference of our camp-equipage, provisions, &c., &c., would be clearly impossible, even if we had animals, from the deep state of the ground. Things were soon in train, and a party of fifteen set out on a sadly unpropitious morning, with cold sleet driving in our teeth, but we went at it head to wind, carrying immense packs, three of our mess being of the party. The march was a 141 very harassing one, occupying two days; and, to add to our chagrin and disappointment, the waters of the creek were so high that all the banks and bars were flooded beyond the possibility of working them, leaving the field of our labours confined to the little steep gulches running into it, none of which were what might be termed rich in comparison; the weather, moreover, continuing so cold and inclement we could not get more than two hours out of any day for work—even those, such as none but gold-diggers would care to turn out in; and, as if to crown our sufferings and anxieties, we were visited by the Indians, first in a friendly guise; but they soon convinced us they had other designs in view, as our axes, knives, and other articles became suspiciously scarce.

By a little vigilance two of the delinquents were caught “in flagrante delicto,” and with a view of checking or abolishing the practice, we seized and tied them up, giving them a right good hiding, under which they howled and cried most lustily. One then was liberated, to whom we made known by signs that the other would be detained, and flogged every day until the several stolen articles

were restored, and that; unless this was done within “two suns,” we would shoot him. The liberated convict returned rather more promptly than we expected; but instead of being a bearer of the missing goods, he was accompanied with a large band of savages, all armed with bows and arrows, who, by their menacing gestures and loud talk, indicated they came with the intention of releasing the captive, and avenging his and his companion's injuries. As they seemed resolved on coming into close quarters, when we would not have a shadow of a chance, 142 we tried a discharge of buck-shot against their shins, which produced a highly saltatory and salutary effect—such a one precisely as we desired, for they retired in double-quick time, discharging obliquely in their retreat a flight of arrows, none of which took effect; but as we did not follow up the fire, they took courage, and halted on a rise about five hundred yards off, from which they kept yelling and gesticulating at a furious rate. The prisoner, when he saw them retiring without effecting his liberation, set up such an infernal howling we were only too glad to liberate him, giving him a sort of postscript that contained the pith and essence of our feelings.

Well acquainted with their vengeful disposition, we put on an extra guard that night, who could plainly observe the dusky forms of our enemies prowling round in the gloomy shadows of the contiguous trees; but as they saw we were on the alert they did not trouble us. From this we foresaw there would be an absolute necessity for a constant nightly watch, and, as this was most harassing to men faring badly, with insufficient clothing, with our provisions, too, nearly exhausted, the weather inclement, and the gold not over-abundant, together with divers and sundry other persuasive reasons, we commenced our retreat—I should, perhaps, have said, our return to the camp at headquarters—on the following day, the trail being so affected by the constant wet weather, that it was far advanced in the second night before we got to our destination.

Two mornings after our return Captain S—r went to the door of his tent, from which there was a good view across the river to the mouth of Rock Creek, where a fine 143 old gentleman named Colville, together with his son, a most promising young man, and a respectable Swede named Mansfeldt, had been camped by themselves about a mile from the main settlement, when he immediately remarked that their tent was not observable as heretofore, although there was light in it late the previous night. He called us all to look; but no one could discover any trace of it, nor could

we frame a conjecture as to the cause of its sudden disappearance. Feeling some sad misgivings, and having a high esteem for the party, three of us paddled over, and on coming to the site of the tent saw that it was assuredly removed in haste, some slight marks of blood being apparent; but the rain had so effaced them it was difficult to determine, and the space immediately about was in such a puddle it retained no marks of any sort. However, on extending the sphere of our searches, we found at a little distance the iron portion of a pick, with blood and light hair on its point the colour of the Swede's, while further on there was something resembling clotted brains, together with a crowd of Indian footprints, amongst which was one of immense magnitude.

It was now clear a foul and bloody deed had been perpetrated, so we made an active and anxious search, tracing down the footmarks to the river edge, where it was evident they crossed; and a little below, to our great horror and dismay, we discovered the leg of a corpse sticking out of the water in a bunch of willows, which, on being taken out, proved to be that of young Colville, most shockingly mutilated; the head battered to a mummy, seven large knife wounds on the back, and two in the abdomen. There was not any trace of the others, but we conjectured that all 144 must have been thrown into the river after the murder, some eddy of which brought one body to the shore. We immediately assembled the people in the encampment to hold a sort of general inquest into all the circumstances and appearances connected with the deplorable affair, at which but one opinion prevailed as to who were the perpetrators of the slaughter. A rude coffin was next made and the remains interred; and then a consultation was held as to what course should be pursued with regard to the Indians, who, from the footprints on the side where the body was found and those on the opposite shore, most assuredly came from the eastern side of the river; instigated, we sadly concurred in thinking, by feelings of revenge for our late chastisement of them, and the shooting of those who attacked the party of exploration.

It was unanimously agreed that a party should be enrolled forthwith to proceed to their village, and by inflicting summary punishment teach them a lesson that would deter them from again attempting a deed of such bloody treachery. Fifty-two gave down their names for muster and march next morning, but only twenty-seven came to roll call, alleging as their excuse the state of the day, which was certainly awful; but as the prompt retribution would enhance the effect of our vengeance, we

set out, nothing daunted, either by the fierceness of the weather or the defalcation in our forces; having arranged our packs on as light a scale as we could safely or prudently venture with, taking only a single blanket each, and four days' provisions measured scant, in order that our movements might be as little hampered as possible with incumbrances.

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By great exertions we reached within about a mile of their village the night of the second day, which was piercingly cold; but rather than forewarn them of our proximity, it was agreed to forego the comfort and advantages of a fire, supping, and breakfasting next morning on bread, water, and raw bacon. We thus managed to get within view of the enemy's quarters a little after sun up, which, as I before partly described them, were on an elbow of land, formed by a bend of the creek, that was now so swollen and swift as to leave them very poor chances of retreat, rendering a stubborn fight inevitable. Their men, as we calculated from the number of huts, must have been close upon 200—a very large disproportion to our small band; and what rendered our position more serious, was the fact that, if at any juncture in the affair we slackened, paused, or exhibited the slightest symptom of weakness or repulse, our doom would be sealed; for, hemmed in as they were, they would certainly rush in and overwhelm us; but our mission, we one and all agreed, should be accomplished, as far as in us lay, even should annihilation be the consequence.

We were observed before we came within rifle range, and a wild whoop simultaneously emptied the wigwams of all their male inhabitants, who, with their bows in their hands, were hurriedly slinging on their quivers. We could hear a humming noise of earnest conversation, as if they were advising with each other how to act; during which they often anxiously pointed to the huts, as if in doubt what course to adopt with regard to their squaws and children, whose only mode of escape would be across the creek, where the flood at the time would test the powers of the best swimmer. In the centre of the horde was discernible a savage of overtopping stature, who we set down as the one that left the large footmarks at the scene of the murder. We continued to advance slowly but steadily, under a blinding sleet shower, and as we raised our arms to the word “Ready,” they discharged a full flight of arrows, which, however, either fell short or reached us so languidly, that they were easily dodged, as, indeed, most of them can, if well watched, after sixty or seventy yards.

Immediately after the discharge, the big Indian rushed to the front, changing the bow into the left hand, and brandishing a tomahawk in the other as if to head a charge; but a discharge of nine rifles, with deadly effect, checked them as they were in the act of bounding to his call.* We still continued closing and reloading, and were met with a second discharge of arrows, the big Indian and a large group following their flight, bent upon coming to close quarters, and approaching with hellish yells within short pistol range; when they received a volley of balls and buck-shot from the other eighteen guns, that stunned, staggered, and turned their advance. Once turned, the flight became general and tumultuous, all rushing back amongst the wigwams, and many plunging into the stream, followed by women holding little children in their arms, who were soon swallowed in its curling eddies. We fired a few more shots into their bark tenements, and, from the howls that followed, I should say with fatal results; but deeming that our measure of 147 retribution was amply filled, we ceased firing, and retired in a cool deliberate manner, after having counted twenty-three bodies on the ground.

Our arrangement was to fire by sections of nine, thus making three of the whole. There were two double-shot guns assigned to each section, and unless under necessitous constraint a second section was not to fire until the first reloaded—the third never; our ammunition being made into cartridges for despatch.

It was only then it became generally known that two of our men, William Freeman and Thomas Coyle, had been wounded, the former in the arm through the biceps, the other in the thigh a little below the groin. There was an artery severed in Freeman's case, and the bleeding was so profuse as to produce syncope, notwithstanding all our efforts to stanch it, even with the aid of a tourniquet; leaving us in an anxious state of suspense as to whether we would be able to get him alive to the settlement, where surgical aid, such as it was, could be obtained; indeed, it was a great oversight in the expedition to set out without a surgeon, where there was every reason to anticipate the want of his services, there being, too, so liberal a sprinkling of that profession in our community.

We constructed a sleigh of stout branches and brush, on which we placed Freeman, every man giving up his blanket to make him as comfortable as possible. We made traces and breast-straps of vine tendrils, by means of which six at a time attached themselves to the rude vehicle: it was a most fatiguing undertaking, and slow almost to total discouragement, while it sleeted and stormed

An excursion to California over the prairie, Rocky mountains, and great Sierra Nevada. With a stroll through the diggings and ranches of that country. By William Kelly <http://www.loc.gov/resource/calbk.054>

without mercy. Never shall I forget the wretched night we passed; without any fire, and all our covering around the poor sufferer; without the slightest shelter either, as the heavy dripping from the trees drove us for choice into the open space, with uncooked food and short commons for our fare. The pipe and cigar, which were ignited with difficulty, seemed to afford the only 148 resource or comfort, and, for the first time in my life, I made an abortive attempt to smoke. The raw, penetrating sleet all but stopped the circulation as we stood knee deep in the mud huddled around the sleigh, to see and concentrate a glow of animal heat around the wounded man; but long before the approach of day we became so woefully benumbed, it was physically unbearable; so we determined on getting into motion, taking chance for the trail, in order, by exertion and exercise, to counteract the paralysing effects of the cold, three of the most active amongst us going forward to the camp for help and provisions, who sent out a relief corps that found us halted, early in the day, from sheer inability to drag the sleigh any further, in consequence of our exhaustion, arising principally from want of food and clothing. We were enabled to light a fire this evening, the rain and sleet having ceased, and were also cheered with warm coffee, or brandy for those who preferred it, which revived poor Freeman, who was at a very low ebb; but he did not survive many days after he reached home, mortification having set in, and soon putting an end to his sufferings. Coyle, too, who foolishly persisted in taking part in the sleigh drawing, found his wound inflamed violently, and, a bad fever setting in at the same time, he was carried off; so that, after all, our victory was rather dearly earned.

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CHAPTER XI.

Change back our Quarters amongst the Crowd—Excitement caused by the Regrators—State of the Food Market—Arrival of a Whale-boat with Provisions—Decline of Prices—Sickness on the increase—Its Cause and Character—Doctors abundant—Simplicity of their Laboratories—Obstinacy of Ailments—Novel Deputation—Banishment of the Quacks—Simple and gratuitous Remedies were successful—December Weather—Christmas-day and its Reminiscences—Christmas Fare—Division of Labour—Christmas Morning—Observance of the Day in the Middle Creek Diggings—Devotional Feelings—Our Dinner-table—Get a Present of a fine Dog—Evening

Assembly—Arrangements for the Future—Start again for Gold Creek—Richness of the Diggings there—Change of Weather—Indian Attack—Provisions run low—Continued bad Weather—Indian Tradition about the Weather—A Party start for Head-quarters—Stopped by the unusual Height of the Sacramento—Without Food or Night covering—Torturing Reflections—Dreadful Sufferings—Day-dreams of Home, Friends, and Happiness—Pangs of Despair—Revolting Proposition—My tearful Assent—Wonderful Instinct of the poor Dog—State of my Feelings—His melancholy Fate—Flood Subsides—Weather improves—Our Release—Return of the Remainder.

THE day after we got Freeman to his quarters we recrossed the river with our camp-equipage to join the crowd, as we felt we could not retire to repose with any sense of security in open war with the savage tribes, with our number so small and our position so isolated, while we derived no peculiar advantage by being camped on the east side of the river, in a perpetual state of apprehension, when, like the other miners, we could cross over to work, and return again every evening. On our arrival at the main camp, or city, as some jocularly called it, we found the inhabitants in a great state of excitement, which 150 threatened to eventuate in a violent commotion, owing to the avaricious and unconscionable conduct of the few parties that kept stores in those diggins, who, taking advantage of the state of the roads and rivers, which precluded the possibility of fresh supplies coming forward for a lapse of time as they conceived, as if with one accord, acting, as I believe, in concert, jumped up flour from 50 cents per pound to 1 dol. 50 cents; pork, from 40 cents to 1 dollar 25 cents; beans, coffee, sugar, mackerel, and all other indispensable necessaries in the same proportion, together with boots, which were in great demand, for which they charged two ounces for the commonest pegged manufacture. Had the advance been gradual, appearing to keep pace with a diminishing stock, it would have been patiently borne with, but the sudden and unreasonable rise was so transparent a piece of extortion, it created a feeling which it required all the remonstrance and dissuasions of the cool heads to allay; while, curious enough, about a fortnight afterwards, the same violent parties bore without a murmur a further advance of just 100 per cent, raising flour to the famine rate of 2 dols. 50 cents per pound—a state of prices that not only absorbed all the daily earnings, but trenched deeply on the reserve-fund of the miners. However, they were unexpectedly relieved from this ruinous tariff by the arrival of a whale-boat

laden with provisions, she worked up within a mile of the settlement, which was eighty miles higher up the stream than any craft had before penetrated. Prices now tumbled to one dollar for flour, all other articles participating in the decline, not so much from the addition to the stock brought in the boat, but from the fear that other 151 similar cargoes would be constantly coming forward; and although none did actually arrive, prices continued at the same reasonable level until a change of weather rendered the waggon-track practicable for light loads, when more than sufficient for six months' consumption came to hand, reducing prices full fifty per cent. lower, at which standard they remained while I continued in the diggings.

We found, also, that sickness prevailed to an alarming extent, particularly land scurvy, owing to the constant use of salt and greasy provisions without vegetables. In many instances it assumed a fearfully loathsome shape, swelling the limbs to an enormous bulk, changing the skin to a deep purple hue, contracting the muscles and main tendons of the legs and arms, so that those members were rigid and useless; enlarging the gums immensely, and imparting to them a gangrenous appearance, not only disgusting to look at, but highly offensive to smell. There was also rheumatism, simple and acute, sciatica, fever, and ague, and several cases of pulmonary ailments, that generally ended fatally, all owing, I suppose, to the severity of the season, and especially to sleeping in damp clothes on the cold wet ground.

But if sickness was rife, doctors were abundant; that is, a class of men who eschewed digging and roamed about, carrying a pair of saddle-bags, one side containing a select assortment of cutlery adapted either for trade or surgical uses, the other stored with a "beggarly array" of little boxes and flint vials, not stuffed with any perplexing variety of drugs, but almost invariably confined to calomel, castoroil, and blue mass, which were administered in every 152 ailment, skilfully alternated, and judiciously prescribed with regard to the hours of repetition—as to which they were stern and emphatic in their injunctions. I regret, however, to say, that neither the professional skill of this erudite fraternity, nor the virtue of their prescriptions, inspired their patients with either confidence or satisfaction; for it came to be remarked by comparison, that Nature was more successful than Art, and a series of scientific misfortunes having occurred close on the heels of each other, an impromptu deputation of the real democratic order was formed, and proceeded on a round

of visits to those disciples of Galen, to indulge their curiosity in inspecting their diplomas, which invaluable documents, they said, they could not think of exposing to the vicissitudes of travel, having left them for security in the States, whither the deputation politely directed them to return for them forthwith; in simple fact, this host of impostors and empirics were a lot of fellows too lazy to work; and, from the high scale of medical remuneration, deeming it the easiest and most lucrative mode of employing their time, with the versatility characteristic of the American nation, where it is an every-day occurrence to see the blacksmith of yesterday transmuted on the morrow into the professor of some polite school of science or literature, they adopted the medical profession, “making the food they fed on,” as they advanced in their practice, until, as in the Middle Creek diggings, things came to a crisis, and they were summarily expelled. On their disappearance, an old mountaineer stepped into the gap, whose simple remedies, administered without fee or reward, brought about very beneficial and salutary results, his doctrine being a 153 regimen devoid as much as possible of salt, grease, or sugar, and moderate in quantity. He interdicted the use of tea or coffee, allowing in their stead a decoction of sassefras and the leaves of the spruce, or (as it is there called) the hemlock-tree, which made very palatable substitutes, and proved their sanitary efficacy in scurvy in every instance where they were regularly used.

It was on the 21st of December we recrossed the river, favoured with a fine day for our task; the weather in its change looking as if it took a deliberate turn, not a rapid transition, as on former occasions, a genial mildness pervading the shade as well as the sunshine, which was not of that glary character so little to be relied on, but of a mellow ruddy hue, producing comfort without inconvenience, tempering the air with a salubrious mildness, so that even the most enfeebled invalid could not complain the winds of heaven “visited him too roughly.” The grass and herbage began to sprout and peer up from the soil under its vegetating influence, and by Christmas morning this state of atmosphere seemed so completely confirmed and established, we all gave way to the hope that the unusually early winter had passed away to give place to a very early spring.

I was truly delighted to find that the miners, without an exception, had come to the resolution of observing the great Christian festival, which was now close at hand, if not with a devotional reverence, at least by an abstinence from all labour on that day, which, from earliest childhood at

home, we are taught to look forward to with a rapturous eagerness, and hail with a pious pleasure a pure, tranquil delight, that day so fraught with family hospitality, 154 when benignity and brotherly love, so truly emblematic of it, pervade every breast; when feuds, jealousies, and misunderstandings fade and vanish before the sublimating spirit of kindness and sanctification; that holy occasion, commemorative of the divine mission to earth, undertaken to establish unity of worship, and promote, by glorious example, “peace and good will amongst men.”

Our joint mess, in accordance with the custom in the old country, had agreed upon the additional recognition, so generally in vogue there, of amending and enlarging our bill of fare to the full limits that our circumscribed markets would admit of; with which view we secured a loin of grizzly bear meat, some six scattered bottles of wine, and two pounds of raisins, which, together with the contents of our own larder and cellar, furnished us such a dinner as dwellers in the mountains are rarely enabled to enjoy, each member of the mess undertaking that portion of the preparation he was best prepared to deal with; one agreeing to bake, another to roast the venison, another to boil the bacon, one gentleman taking in charge the manufacture of short and sweet bread, a second choosing for his department the pies, made from preserved apples; but Captain S—r's was the *chef-d'oeuvre* of the feast, being a plum-pudding, made ship-shape, not to be excelled in composition, which he launched into a liquid so truly exquisite and congenial, as to leave one in doubt whether to prefer the pudding or the sauce. The part assigned me was to rig a table, and get the Sheffield ware in order, which I managed admirably by means of the front and end boards of the waggon, making shins of willow sticks, that squeeled and bent, not being far enough advanced in 155 years to “groan” under the superincumbent profusion, a purified waggon-sheet serving the purposes of the cloth; and, if the cutlery was not all to match, it was matchless in its peculiar variety, a sufficiency being secured by supplying the carvers with bowie-knives, and short swords in lieu of their legitimate instruments.

Christmas morning was ushered in by a glorious sun, clear and lovely as a dawn in May, undisturbed by servile sounds or noises, a calm air of delicious repose and heavenly tranquillity pervading hill, dell, and dwelling, every one seeming to merge his mission in the memory of the regenerating era; the miners donned their holiday costume, interchanging visits before unusual, and

divesting themselves of that turbulent demeanour that seemed their study to excel in; every tent was prepared with some little hospitable welcome, manufactured specially, and every estrangement was forgotten and forgiven; in fact, everything was in pleasing keeping with the day, and the soothed soul, soaring above all worldly cares and vanities, bathed in an exquisite devotional feeling, revelled in those pious impulses which, buried how deeply soever, have a place in the bosom of every Christian. I knew some on that day who led lives of indifference and impiety, long strangers to the duties of their creed, to sigh and pine for religious consolations, which they despised and neglected when quite within their reach, and retire into seclusion, to commune with their Creator in a spirit of devout sincerity before those sublime and eternal altars, the mighty mountains, that in themselves inculcated silent homilies of reverence and awe, and as impressive sermons on the omnipotence of God as ever issued from the carved and cushioned pulpit; 156 and oh! if all Christians who repine at their destinies, cavil at the dispensations of Providence, and trample on the divine injunctions of the Decalogue, were more frequently to contrast the life of self-denial, the perpetual mortifications, the cruel tortures, the bitter passion and death of the divine Being who assumed humanity on that day to vanquish death, and open up a path to Paradise for repentant sinners, with their own trivial or imaginary grievances, how many more penitential mourners would there not be seeking to hide and forget them, under remorse and contrition, imploring their Creator for that “peace of mind which surpasseth all understanding.”

Our dinner-table was quite a spectacle in its way in the diggings, with its studied instrumental arrangements, its bear meat, venison, and bacon, its apple-pies pleasingly distributed, its Gothic columns of plain and fancy breads, interspersed at becoming intervals, and its Cardigans flanking the whole gastronomical array; the plum-pudding alone being reserved for second course, from motives of expedition and economy, as waiters were only to be had by express order from the cities. We had two guests, natives of the *ould* country, settlers in Oregon, who were about returning home, as gold mines, it was said, had been discovered on Rogue's River, which runs through their own territory, one of whom brought me, as a present, a noble dog that I often desired to possess, as their vigilance about a tent at night supersedes the trying necessity of keeping guard. I had at first some

difficulty in keeping him, but by coaxing and kindness I conciliated him at length, and converted him into a most faithful and affectionate companion.

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After a most cheerful and agreeable meal, we went and joined a full congregation of all the neighbours, smoking, not with perspiration, but with their pipes, seated on the felled firewood logs, enjoying the glorious afternoon, and chatting over times past, present, and to come. Before we separated it was arranged that one large party should go to Gold Creek, the stream of the battle-field; and another to Trinity River, about forty miles to the northward, discharging into the Pacific Ocean, from which quarter some golden news had lately found its way. Both of those parties having completed their preparations by the evening of St. Stephen's (the next) day, took their departure on the morning of the 27th. I was of the Gold Creek division, and being by this time so intimate with the trail, we made a quick march of it, though carrying packs to the full extent of our physical ability; but we were doomed to have our anticipative calculations concerning the season disagreeably confounded by the premonitory symptoms of an approaching change, which arrived, without much threatening, in a decided and angry mood. We erected rather comfortable quarters, having taken along tents, and went to work the morning after our arrival, under heavy sleet and rain, being desirous to get what we could from the creek (which had fallen low in the good weather) before it rose again. There was time sufficient to obtain full confirmation of our very extravagant expectations as to its richness, but the gold was in excessively fine particles, as we could not then penetrate to where we expected to find it in greater size. However, under all the disadvantages of weather, water, and short days, we took out a quantity that 158 averaged three ounces to the man per day; but the creek soon raised so that we were, to use a sailor's phrase, obliged "to rest on our oars."

Up to this period we were unmolested by the Indians, owing, as we all ascribed it, to the presence of my fine dog; but our mutual gratulations on that score were ended a few nights afterwards on our all being aroused from our lairs by his violent barking, and the moment we lit our lamps to get the arms, which, from disuetude and damp, were not much to be relied on, a shower of arrows came through the canvas, wounding nine individuals slightly, and five more rather seriously; but we got

rid of them without much trouble, for after a random discharge from the few guns that could be got to explode, we heard or felt no more of the savages for the night. Although unable to work, we hung on in expectation of outwaiting the bad weather, until our provisions began to get scant, and the incessant rain submerged all the low lands, driving us up to rising ground at a distance from the creek. At length, as there was no indication of improvement in the weather, and the new moon, according to the Indian tradition, was unpropitiously seated,^{*} three of us set out for head-quarters, to get animals, if possible, to carry home four of the wounded men, who were yet in a crippled state, as, from experience of the job in poor Freeman's case, we knew the impossibility of 159 doing so of ourselves, from the slushy state of the ground, and the swollen state of the brooks and streams, which also made it a very doubtful experiment with the animals; for even travelling without any packs, with only the materials for one meal, and our rifles, it gave us quite enough to do to pull through.

The Indians, when the new moon, in scollop shape, is placed level on its bottom, as a canoe should sit on the water, look for dry weather during its continuance, for in such a position a canoe would hold what water it might contain; but that just in proportion as it is cocked up on end it discharges rain—a primitive tradition which, though it may suit certain latitudes, is not to be relied on as a general index of barometrical accuracy.

By a very early start we calculated on reaching the river in one day, and did accomplish it a few hours after sunset, accompanied most attentively by a deluge of rain. We brought the men on the opposite bank to hail, by discharging our rifles, but they declined attempting the ferry until morning; so we had no shift but sit down supperless in the teaming torrents; and when morning came we found the river had risen far beyond any of its former limits still rising and roaring with terrific import, the heavens sending down their liquid contents in actual streams, giving rise to a feeling of nervousness at the idea of crossing in a crank little canoe; but men supperless overnight, shaking in soaked clothes, and with extra stowage for breakfast, were satisfied to risk a little in getting to comfortable quarters. However, we were soon relieved from all anxiety about our personal safety, by the information that no one on the other side would undertake the hazard of ferrying us over.

Placed in this dilemma, there was no resource by which we could procure food but by killing a deer; so out we all sallied, and after a good deal of tiresome beating succeeded in wounding a

An excursion to California over the prairie, Rocky mountains, and great Sierra Nevada. With a stroll through the diggings and ranches of that country. By William Kelly <http://www.loc.gov/resource/calbk.054>

large buck; but not so as to deprive him of the powers of locomotion. The consequence was, he led us a chase, in which we easily tracked him by his blood, until from hunger and fatigue we were compelled to desist, and labour back to the river bank—a much longer stretch than we had any notion of—where, far from any comfort or relief awaiting us, we were met by the surly thunders of a swelling torrent, fed and pampered by the deluge from above. Hunger, now overmastering all other sensations, gnawed with torturing importunity, until it produced an actual disinclination for sustenance; by the morbid anguish it caused in the realms of appetite, when lassitude supervened in shivering sleep—not so profound as to render us insensible of the pelting storm that pattered unpitifully over our miserable unsheltered beds; still it was after sunrise when we awoke from this horrible repose, so completely were all the physical energies numbed and prostrated; and although the rain had become perceptibly lighter, the river was as certainly higher, rushing, roaring, and boiling up with a maddened fury that shut out all hopes of a crossing for the day.

Famine and starvation now began to conjure up dreadful ideas of a wretched death, as, from weakness, we were incapable of going in quest of game; and even supposing we could retrace our steps to the camp we left, we knew that the slender stock of provisions which remained at our departure would have been entirely consumed, and that the probability was they were almost as ill off for food as ourselves—a conjecture which was confirmed in the course of the day by the arrival from thence of two more of our comrades, to urge the despatch of the supplies, as their store had become entirely exhausted. Our gaunt and altered appearance amazed and alarmed them; and as they had not yet become enervated by long fasting, they left us next morning to try the chances of the forest, first gathering some herbs and cresses, to endeavour to allay the pangs with which we were afflicted. The rain ceased soon after daybreak, and we spent the day in a state betwixt sleep and stupor, in an agony of suspense as to success of the hunters; but in the early afternoon, when we saw them coming down the hill-side without any game, we abandoned all hopes, as the river could not in the nature of things be practicable, ere exhausted nature should have sunk into the repose of death.

I lay down on a gentle slope, from which I never expected to arise, breathing, as I imagined, my last prayers to the throne of Divine grace, my saddened memory at intervals carrying back my thoughts

to my native land. Home, friends, and early associations, at times dreamily weaving themselves into groups and pictures of happiness and enjoyment, in which, for a moment, I would fancy myself participating—a gleam of delight flitting through my distempered imagination, too soon, alas! to be dispelled by the gloomy reality, the melancholy transition deepening my emotions of misery into a keen thrill of utter despair that would have been maddening, were they not sweetly soothed by the consoling hopes of Divine mercy and a glorious eternity. I prayed for sleep, to come and relieve me from the anguish of my physical pains and sufferings; but that fitful slumber, which was unable to subdue consciousness, would alone visit me.

While lying in this state on the morning of the fourth day, with my faithful dog at my feet, I overheard the men, who last joined us, discussing the necessity of killing him, as that, with proper economy, his flesh would sustain us until the river so far subsided as to render a passage practicable. 162 It added to my wretchedness, while revolving the expedient in my mind, that I was constrained to coincide in its policy; but as my comrades aroused me to communicate the suggestion, and extract my consent, I gazed upon my dumb friend with a tearful eye and sickened heart—the more so, as I fancied he looked wistfully in my face, standing in an attitude of dejection unusual to him, with drooped tail and hanging ears. I was unable to assent in words, but gave them silently to understand that I would interpose no obstacle; and no sooner had I done so, than poor “Sligo” (so I called him), instead of coiling himself beside me as was his wont, slunk away to some distance, sitting in a mournful attitude, and watching our movements with a grievous steadiness that perfectly unmanned me, impressing me with the steadfast conviction that his intuitive sagacity forewarned him of our cruel intentions.

It was clearly perceptible to all that his attachment and confidence were altered into fear and distrust, for no calling or coaxing would induce him to come nearer us; while, if any approached him, he receded slowly, but declined to run. S—, who was the steadiest shot, and had the best rifle, agreed to do the deed; and as he commenced loading, the poor brute betrayed increased uneasiness, moving and shifting restlessly as if about to run off; but finally sitting firmly still on a little mound, as if he came to the determination of yielding himself up as a victim for the salvation of his master, the warm tears trickled freely down my cheeks, and I felt a disposition to go and embrace him when

looking at him for the last time. As S—raised the rifle to his shoulder, the poor animal at the same moment fairly confronted his executioner, throwing back 163 his ears with a low piteous whine, awaiting his doom like a hero.

Our first meal on poor Sligo was on his raw flesh, before the animal heat had cooled out, all evincing resolution enough to eat sparingly, supported, as I believe, by a natural repugnance to the diet; but next morning, when we succeeded in lighting a fire, we got on better with our fare in a broiled shape. Furthermore cheered by seeing from our marks that the flood was subsiding, and continued shrinking and calming down all day so rapidly, that we looked forward to get over in the morning; there was sufficient food till then, as the dog was large and fleshy, but we spent a night of nervous inquietude, lest the fickle elements should interpose betwixt us and rescue. However, a bright dawn opened upon us, disclosing to our delighted vision the river so fallen, as to divest the trip across of much of its terrors; and while we stood upon its brink, joyously and thankfully comparing our present with our late position, a crowd from the settlement came up along the opposite bank, cheering lustily to apprise us that relief was approaching, nor was it long till a gallant youth, named Anderson, was cleaving the stream in the canoe built by our mess, the smallest but most manageable of the fleet. He was quickly carried down several hundred yards; but as he reached the mid stream, a curling eddy swept the slight bark round with a velocity that appalled those on each bank, shooting her from its embrace into a current that carried her without an effort close in on our side, where we followed down to secure her when she touched. Having done so, a sonorous cheer filled the air, and shortly after two of the larger canoes 164 with two paddles each emerged from the opposite shore, taking their departure much higher than the point from which Anderson started, thereby avoiding the current that hurried him down, and succeeding in making a tolerably direct landing. We hauled the little craft up by the bank, the three skiffs starting from the same place, and landing us safely, though with a large quantity of water taken in during the passage.

A fresh party recrossed before evening, carrying a supply of provision to the other sufferers, and a promise that if possible animals should be swam over the following day to bring home the wounded, which was punctually accomplished, and both men and baggage safely landed; the

wounds, with one exception, proving trivial, and even that requiring only rest and attention to ensure a perfect cure.

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CHAPTER XII.

Snow on the Trinity Mountains—The Party that went there Return—Their Sufferings—Their wretched Appearance—Confirmation of the Golden Character of the Trinity—Daily Averages—Superior Character of the Trinity Indians—Successful Experiments under adverse Circumstances—Trinity Diggers—Their extravagant Expectations—Coast Indians and their Squaws—They make Signs that Gold abounds towards the Coast—Bad Weather and short Provisions restrain the Men from going there—Price of Provisions at Trinity—Effect of the News at the Middle Creek Settlement—Our Mess and two others determine on going to the City of Sacramento—Motives for the Trip—My Feelings on the Subject—State of Society at the Settlement—Effects of the Season on it—Scenes of Grossness and Debauchery—Idleness the Parent of Mischief—I yearn for rational Companionship—My Accomplishments do not suit the prevalent Taste—Consequent irksomeness of my Position—The Taste for Blasphemy—Card-playing at the Mines—Skill of the Players—Consequences of the detestable System—Illustrative Anecdote—Hard Drinking increases—Digging Practices amongst the Miners—Characteristic Mode of observing the Sabbath.

IT was quite clear, from the appearances of the Trinity Mountains, that the storm which had fallen on us, in a liquid shape, came down there in snow and hail, which left little doubt but that the party who went north must have also had their quota of suffering; nor were we astray in our surmises, for in seven days after our escape they came staggering into camp, in a state of exhaustion and emaciation, that rendered their recognition dubious at a first glance, and even their survival a matter of uncertainty. Hunger, too, had seized on them with its penetrating fangs; intense cold and exposure had frequently almost arrested the current of life, and the compulsory toils of daily attempts at progress had worn down their strength to a mere thread. They set out with seven animals, but returned without one, six having given out and died for want of sustenance; the seventh, a sort of pet, that would take a crust from the hand, and lie beside the camp-fire like a dog,

it was, that saved their lives, the story of whose sacrifice formed a curious coincidence with the sorrowful fate of poor Sligo. Our greatest care only produced slight advances towards recovery, for their appetites appeared to be annihilated beyond the reach of stimulants, and their legs were prodigiously swollen, contracted, and lacerated, from the constant breaking through the ice-crust over which they travelled.

But they brought back great tidings of the richness of the Trinity diggings, particularly of a new location, some thirty miles down the river, where the few who were encamped admitted that, before the bad weather set in, it was no unfrequent achievement to take out from one to three pounds of gold each daily, but access with animals was the next thing to impracticable. The Indians there are of another tribe and nature from those along the Sacramento: majestic in person, chivalrous in bearing, incapable of treachery, but ready to fight to the death in avenging an insult or injury. They are active and energetic in the extreme, hunting down game, with which the country abounds, for their food, which also supplies them with raiment; and endowed with a germ of enterprise or ambition, which instigates them to work, in order to become possessed of a flannel shirt or a blanket.

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Our men did not receive as gospel truths the apparently marvellous tales about the extraordinary mineral wealth of those regions, which, according to the received accounts, would place them so far ahead of all the discovered mines, but commenced testing them by personal experiment, in as far as the state of the weather and the waters would admit. As it was impossible to try the bars that had been already operated on, the banks of the river, where the diggings were usually carried on, being totally submerged, there was no field, but the more elevated grounds, where the old Trinity hands scorned to expend their time and labour—spoiled children of fortune as they were—rather contented to grant themselves a vacation until the rich golden depôts became again accessible, than toil for what in other diggings would be estimated as a right reasonable remuneration. Our party working and washing the despised soil, under many disadvantages, averaged daily about fifteen dollars each, taking out from twelve to twenty dollars daily to the hand, which, it must be admitted,

was “confirmation strong” of the wonderful fertility (if I may use the phrase) of the region, judging by analogy of greater productiveness of the more favoured locations.

The day before our party set out on their return they received further and more enticing proof of the preeminence of Trinity treasures, by the arrival of a band of noble-looking Indians from the direction of the coast, their first visit among the whites, accompanied by a few squaws, who, strange to say, in this latitude are ugly, illfavoured, stunted in stature, lumpy in figure, and awkward in gait; the men, on the other hand, as I have already described them, being singularly endowed with 168 all the opposite personal advantages. They had not anything to trade; but, from their watchful attention to all the movements, it was evident their object was to ascertain the motives that led to an invasion of their huntingground. However, as soon as they found out what the pale faces wanted, by observing the result of their operations, they broke out into a simultaneous laugh, shaking their heads derisively, at the same time pointing down the river, and making signs that the gold was more plentiful and more easily procured there, exhibiting a few golden-barbed arrows in proof of their statement. Our folk were half-inclined to venture down, but the weather was so dreadful, and their stock of provisions at such a very low ebb, they chose rather to endeavour to reach home with the welcome tidings.

The price of flour at the small settlement, when they left, was five dollars per pound; pork, four dollars; beans, three dollars; coffee was cheap, being over-abundant, and sugar nominal, as nine-tenths of the miners dispensed with its use; but spirits of any kind attained the monstrous figure of sixteen dollars per pint. Oh! for a few puncheons of Cambeltown or Islay whisky there, and a fig or a snap of the fingers for the diggings.

The news, as might be expected, at once decided the inhabitants of the migratory city of Middle Creek, on taking wing to the El Dorado as soon as the state of the weather and country would admit of a passage; but as that should necessarily be some weeks in coming round, our mess and two others conceived they would be employing the intervening time profitably and pleasantly in going down to Sacramento City, as the late arrival of some 169 lightly-laden waggons proved the attempt was practicable. They were naturally anxious to get some news from home, and, together

with enjoying the comparative luxuries of city fare, and taking a fling through its gaieties and amusements, they laid out their accounts to supply themselves for the ensuing campaign with many trivial but useful necessaries, that traders above never thought of providing, which past experience had convinced them subtracted materially from their comfort and general health.

It was my intention, had not the expedition been organised, to have started alone with a pack-mule, for I had fully accomplished the objects of my mission to the mines, and began to get heartily sick of the society at the settlement. In the early season, when the state of the weather never interrupted the employment, and the people were regularly occupied at work throughout the day, retiring to rest at rational hours to repose from fatigue, matters went on orderly, and the time, though dull and monotonous, passed smoothly enough, without resorting to any of those expedients for cheating and consuming the tedious hours of idleness which society, in all its grades, has ordained with ingenious if not laudable adaptability; but since the rainy season set in, and the community were confined to quarters, the system of dividing the day was no longer practicable, and the yawning miner, in the great majority of cases, devoid of any mental resources, embraced the indulgences of degrading appetites and propensities as a cure for ennui, stimulating the dullness of unenlightened rumination with intoxicating drink, and ministering to the cravings of the lust for acquisition and excitement by gaming in its most odious guise, giving rise to unintermitting scenes of disgusting debauchery, that partook in their grossness of the reckless character of the class who flocked to snatch up fortunes, where there were no curbs or restraints to check the natural bent of their dispositions. The seed once sown in so congenial a soil, shot up with luxuriant rapidity, the prolonged period of idleness affording ample time for the full maturation of its odious and contaminating fruit.

Matters thus daily deepened in repulsiveness, until even my own mess became imbued with the vicious contagion, when I fairly lost all heart, and yearned piningly for the pleasures of rational companionship, and an interchange of those educational acquirements and accomplishments, which, after all, constitute the great charm of intercourse in life. I could not suit my narratives and small talk to the prevalent tone or taste, nor yet “lend my ears” as a good listener to the current conversation, or take part in the favourite games in vogue amongst them, in consequence of which

my position became uncomfortably irksome; for without arrogating to myself any unusual degree of morality, I may be permitted to say, I stood out in a prominent contrast there that did not contribute to the personal pleasantness of my situation, however self-consoling it might have been to my mind and conscience; and although I do not pretend to say I was myself above reproof at any period of my mortal pilgrimage, I had not sunk to so low a depth as to relish society when it discoursed in a series of oaths and imprecations of the most impious character, in which the rarest flowers, the choicest gems, of ribaldry and blasphemy, were scattered about 171 with a spendthrift profusion that would muzzle the “recording angel” to keep pace with; where no man's story was worth listening to that was not linked together with infernal curses; where nothing could occur, either of a pleasing or disagreeable nature, that would not elicit an ebullition of diabolical swearing; where the man was cock-of-the-walk who could devote himself most fluently to damnation, calling down the direst imprecation on his own head, or concoct and narrate the most abominable story with the most obscene effect, originating an infamous rivalry for this disgusting pre-eminence, in which even men, advanced in years, whose very presence should restrain such odious displays, contested the palm of depravity with an ardour and accomplishment that was positively appalling.

Neither was I free from a penchant for the recreation arising out of games of skill or science; but it did not follow from this that I should become fascinated with the sinister attractions of card-playing, conducted in accordance with all the most modern and inscrutable devices of legging and cozening; for the miners never thought of sitting down to dawdle over an honest game to pass the evening; they would not give a cheese-paring for the dull, stupid monotony of fair play; the excitement of cheating, in card stealing, card dropping, packing the deal, or defrauding the pool, constituted, according to their standard, the main interest of the amusement; merit never was awarded to mere skill in play; but when a fellow won by a gross fraud, a shout of approbation complimented his knavery in some such terms as “D—n it,” or “G—d A—y d—n it! any 172 dunce can win with good cards—the clever fellow alone by quickness and dexterity;” and so thoroughly were they indoctrinated with this maxim, and practised in its use, that I verily believe a disciple might have been picked from this clumsy crowd, who it would puzzle the most accomplished kid-gloved Greek in any of the fashionable clubs of Paris or London to get to windward of. As a

necessary consequence, serious rows and bloody encounters sprung out of those debasing scenes. On one occasion, at the national game of "Poker," I observed a player slyly dropping kings into his lap, as opportunity offered, until he assembled all the male portion of the royal family in a cluster, and then with the full confidence of an all but an invincible hand, he substituted ounces for dollars, bragging a half-dozen to begin with, an opposite competitor covering the amount, and advancing an extra half-dozen, on which the other further improved, doubling the sum (both at this juncture placing large buckskin purses of dust on the table), but being met by a similar advance, he began to "smell a rat," and "called him," when, to his utter mortification and discomfiture, four aces were displayed to his astonished gaze; but while his opponent was enjoying the applause of his superior sleight-o'-hand, the patron of royalty snatched his gold from the bench, exclaiming, in virtuous indignation, "Cheating!" "Villainy!" &c., which originated a right royal row of the regular "rough and tumble" sort, "knives, biting, scrooging, and gouging all in," that eventuated in wounds and gashes, the more miraculous that they were not mortal.

And while to wind up, I honestly plead guilty to a 173 respect and partiality for a well-edited tumbler of "whisky negus" at the proper season of the day. The spell was broken when I saw it swallowed at all hours; and, instead of contributing its coruscant influences to convivial intercourse, balefully ministering to the fiercest and most turbulent passions.

The diggings also furnished a field for a kindred species of adroitness; for when miners found their "lead giving out," they devised some feasible pretext for selling out, extolling their "claim" to the skies, and religiously swearing to the Johnny Raws, who are always to be found, that it yielded a most marvellous average; and as the expectant purchaser approached to inspect the location, the man rocking would unobservedly empty his purse upon the screen, so that when the washer came to be inspected, the quantity it appeared honestly to contain, quickly brought about a bargain at the outside terms demanded, leaving the dupe to be laughed at, and the "downy cove" to be patted on the back, as a paragon worthy to be held up for imitation; and what tickled my fancy exceedingly, was to see the class of Christians I have been describing abstaining from work of a Sunday, which they invariably did, avowing their scruples of conscience about labouring on the Sabbath, while canvassing for a party to sit down to cheat, swear, and drink over a game of "Poker," or listen to the

filthy homilies of some hoary debauchee, who gloried the more in his audacious impiety because it was the Lord's-day. The only exception to those scenes on a day of rest was the one I have already recorded, the Nativity of our Saviour, which I can only account for by the supposition, that their time was employed in the feasting preparations I have described in a previous chapter.

I am now done with the mines and miners, having visited all the diggings of note or celebrity on the Sacramento, or its various tributaries, and carried away specimens of minerals and manners from most of them; but, as I have more than once before repeated, I only regard the operations I witnessed as the mere picking up of the crumbs from the rich man's table—the rich remains of the costly and substantial repast being only approachable by the union of science and capital. I shall not weary the reader any further with my own crude speculations on the origin, distribution, and extent of those precious deposits, but beg to refer him to the report of the Honourable Thomas Butler King on the subject, which was read before and approved of by the United States' Congress, as I have no doubt it will prove both interesting and satisfactory.

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CHAPTER XIII.

Prepare for a Start—The Picturesque—Fair Roads and Fordable Creeks—Stop at Clear Creek—The Contrast betwixt Autumn and Spring—The Crossing of the Creek—Providential Interference of some Packmen—Practices of Californian Travellers—The Mode of Rearing Youngsters in Missouri—Cotton-wood Creek and Plains in their new Garb—Distressing Accident—Recover some of the Property—But poor Eiffe's Gold is wanting—His Affecting Story—His Youthful Enterprise—His Successful Industry—His Calamity, Resignation, and Spirit—Vegetation improves as we go Southward—Mr. Hudspeth's Rancho—Its Favoured Position—His English Housekeeper—Her Salary—Her Perquisites—Compared with old Country Wages—No Field or Garden Cultivation—Remarks on the Subject—The Pretensions of California to be classed as an Agricultural Country—Opinions of Practical Men—Early Emigrants deceived by Mis-statements—Advantages of Mr. Hudspeth's Location—Description of the Road Downwards—Our Supply of Milk—Magnificent Prairie—Covered with Game—The great size Elk Attain—Expert Nigger Butcher—Comparison

between Negro and Indian Capabilities—The Niggers in the Mines—Their Conduct there at Variance with their Behaviour in the States—A few loose Reflections on Slavery.

Now, my good reader, I am again ready for the road, having disburdened my mind of the reflections and observations contained in the last chapter, and in a more lightsome mood to point out all “places of kuriositee,” as poor Power used to sing in the “White Horse of the Peppers.” It was on the 23rd of February we got into motion with our waggon of six-ox power, accompanied by two others of like capabilities—a more lovely morning never shone from the heavens, calm and clear, the white mountain tops glistening in the sun, while from the valleys a dense fog 176 arose, lazily rolling up their sides in elongated volumes, shutting out the landscape over which they passed, and occasionally illuminated for a moment with a most strange and picturesque effect, as a slanting ray of light issuing through a ravine penetrated their sombre folds; the earth showed signs of active vegetation, and sounds of gladsome glee were warbled in the grove as we went along, more chirping than melodious, I must admit; for the feathered choristers throughout all the districts of California I visited, seem sadly devoid of natural musical taste or talent. We whistled merrily, too, finding the ground in fair travellable order, and the creeks not over deep or rapid, stopping at Clear Creek, as the next stage would protract our day's journey too much. It was near where we pitched our tents as we came up, but its present surface, clothed in a mantle of rich, thick, succulent herbage, beautiful in its garniture of emerald green, exhibited a marked contrast to its brown, withered, and unwelcome aspect in the fall.

The creek was much swollen, and the going out so steep, we saw there was a job in prospect for the morning; and, sure enough, in the crossing, just as we reached the critical point, the near-side led-steer funk'd the passage, and turning round suddenly, took the middle yoke off their legs, involving the whole team in a mass of confusion, the waggon, partially afloat, bumping and drifting as the current surged around it; nor do I think we could have escaped without an upset in the stream, or the loss of most of our oxen, only that some packmen, passing at the moment, rode in at great risk, and whipped the refractory leaders into line, continuing at their sides until they made 177 a landing. Another of the waggons also got into difficulty, nearly involving the untimely end of a fine young lad named Eiffe, the driver, who jumped into the stream to set matters to rights, when

he was immediately swept away, and not being a swimmer, would have inevitably perished had not one of the same party, who kindly relieved us, dashed down after him and dragged him ashore. Beyond the sousing, he was not a whit the worse; for, throwing off his wet clothes into the waggon, he was as fresh as ever in a few moments. In California, it is an invariable practice of travellers—like the coaches in the olden time—to pull up at meeting and exchange their news, and as we felt under so many obligations to the packmen, we gladly and minutely gave them all the information they sought respecting the mines; the principal querist asking me as a wind-up, “If there was much sickness in the diggings?” to which I replied “Yes;” commencing my enumeration of the ailments with “fever and ague,” when he stopped me with the exclamation, “Oh! if that is all, it's o' no account, we Missourians are raised on them,” uttering it, in as cool and literal a tone, as if they really constituted a main portion of his infantile pabulum.

As we approached Cotton Wood we could scarcely recognise the face of the fine plains, decked in their luxuriant garb of clover, grass, wild oats, and barley, of which the oxen snatched mouthfuls as they trudged along; having been forewarned by the packmen that the creek would present rather a formidable obstacle to our progress, we drove on briskly to reach it early, resolved to attempt the crossing before night; the more especially, as the skies lowered, as if a change was about to take place before 178 morning. Although we led the van at Clear Creek, the conduct of our led yoke there absolved us from that position on the present occasion, giving way to Eiffe, whose pluck, far from being cooled, appeared to have been fresh braced by the late ducking. A stiffish breeze having sprung up, he stripped off the waggon-cover, which created a considerable wind-draught, and then got astride the near led steer, stationing a comrade in front of the waggon with a whip to urge those in the tongue and centre, making a straight and excellent shoot across to a low gravelly bar, where all difficulties would have terminated; but from some cause we could not discover, or Eiffe subsequently explain, the whole team turned right down with the flood, and, getting off the ridge of the ford, were all soon beyond their depth. In their struggles, the oxen got disengaged somehow or other from the waggon, and as Eiffe stuck to the steer on which he was mounted, he got safely to shore; but his comrades getting to the same side to jump out, upset the waggon, emptying all the contents into the creek, the cover having been unluckily removed. The boys got ashore after a

sharp struggle, and while I was congratulating them on their escape, a stifled but piteous sobbing caught my ear, when looking round, I saw poor Eiffe shedding tears abundantly. I sought to console him by the assurance that everything of consequence would be recovered, as trunks would float, and even bags containing clothes would be carried ashore in some of the eddies; while, as regarded the provisions, we had enough for both messes, besides which, two days' more would bring us to Hudspeth's rancho, where abundance could be obtained. But my consolations conveyed no comfort; in fact in his 179 abstraction I believe he never heard them, for heaving a sad sigh, he mournfully said, "I care not for myself, it is my dear mother and sisters I grieve for." I repeated my assurance that the trunks would be got, thinking it was their loss he bewailed, as most probably they contained his all. "I know," he said, "the trunks will be found, but my belt with all my gold in it is at the bottom and will never float or be found." The poor fellow, when he got wet before in Clear Creek, stripped off everything, even the filleted leather belt, in which miners generally sew up their gold, and threw all loosely into the bottom of the waggon, where they remained until the unfortunate accident. The waggon came to shore on a point about half a mile down, the loose cloths nearer hand, and the three trunks in some willows at a bend below the waggon, but the flour and pork sunk, and the belt, containing 1800 dollars, was nowhere to be found.

I don't remember ever experiencing a more poignant sensation of sorrow and commiseration than while listening to the youthful sufferer, narrating his own story at the camp-fire that night. He ceased weeping, but there was an air of sadness and patient resignation in his manner, and a melancholy cadence in his voice much more affecting than the more violent demonstrations of grief. His family resided in the northern part of Indiana, on a pleasant profitable farm, on which his father raised 1000 dollars by mortgage, to enable him to build a new house, and convert the original log erections into stables, but died soon after (fifteen months previous to the accident), leaving the boy, seventeen years of age, the oldest of the family, to struggle for the support of his mother and six sisters. The 180 idea of the mortgage, bearing a high rate of interest, terrified the boy, but he took heart on hearing of the golden valleys of California, resolving to reap one harvest there, while, by extraordinary exertions, he put in an early spring crop on his farm at home, sufficient to meet the wants of the family, and a gale's interest on the mortgage; and then, under his mother's sanction,

hired himself to a wealthy neighbour about starting for that country, undertaking to drive the team for his mere support on the road. They had rather a successful journey, and poor Eiffe reached our encampment by a similar engagement to a party of miners coming up to northern mines. It was late in the fall when he got to work, but he was industrious, and, stimulated by a son and a brother's love and affection, he laboured late and early, on wet days and cold days, to try and return, lest the unfeeling mortgagee should harass or impose on his mother in his absence. With what a proud and happy spirit he started homeward on the morning of the 23rd of February, shortening (as he described it) at every step the distance that intervened betwixt him and his beloved mother and sisters, carrying along with him more than the amount he required to release them from debt and anxiety.

He often felt the unfortunate belt to assure himself it was no cheat of imagination; but there were the well-packed fillets that were to carry competence and happiness to his dear home. His ambition was satisfied, and he never again intended travelling beyond the precincts of his farm, save with its produce to the nearest market; whiling away the tedium of the journey revolving projects in his mind calculated to add to the comforts and enjoyments of those he loved so tenderly; two months more and he would have been in the midst of them, standing erect on his own hearth in all the innocent pride of independence, a free man, absolved from debt, with health, energy, and hopefulness to fight the battle of life; but the chalice of happiness was dashed from his lips; he was again a man of straw; he trusted, however, a benignant Providence would watch over and protect the widow and the orphans, while he returned to the mines and dug out 1800 dollars more.

It was a pitiful tale, and I never so wished for riches as at the moment he concluded, that I might place within his hand an equivalent for his loss, and speed him on his filial and holy mission. He seemed relieved by the telling of his painful story; and next morning his stoical composure, nay, cheerful resignation, quite surprised me in so young a lad, for it is rarely indeed that the sanguine and impatient temperament of youth can calmly and uncomplainingly brook a disappointment of so harrowing a nature. All that remained to refit himself again for the diggings—and it was barely sufficient—was his share in the team and waggon. He came with us as far as Hudspeth's rancho, where he sold out to his companions; and having laid in his supplies, took his leave of us in a spirit

of gaiety and self-reliance that showed a nobility of nature rarely to be met with, returning without a murmur to the scene of his late labours, and giving me a letter to post when I reached the States, containing, I suppose, an account of his misfortune. I sincerely trust that God has prospered him, and that he is now in a happy home enjoying the fruits of his sterling industry.

As we proceeded downwards the vegetation was more forward, and the fine plains, which now began expanding to a 182 great width, were thickly stocked with herds of wild cattle, interspersed with great quantities of elk and deer, all driven down into the plains by the snow on the mountains. One of our men shot an elk, and for the first time I tasted the flesh of that animal: it is coarse-grained and dark, and as I surveyed my steak before tasting it, looked like a tough morsel, but much to my surprise, I found it tender and well-flavoured.

On the evening of the 27th we reached Mr. Hudspeth's rancho, situated most admirably on a highly fertile plain, sufficiently elevated to escape inundation from any but extreme floods, and favourably placed with regard to water, having the Sacramento as its eastern boundary, and Stoney Creek traversing its southern extremity all the way to the coast range, to which the prairie here uninterruptedly extends, leaving the cattle an immense range. The whole extent, as far as the eye could survey it, was absolutely waving in the gentle wind the wild oats, and indigenous grasses springing up with extraordinary luxuriance, thickly commingled with clover and wild vetches; and, as might be expected, all the cattle and horses were in the finest possible condition. His house was on a large scale, for the country built of logs, calculated for the accommodation of miners who usually made a halt there, the housekeeping being conducted by an English girl who fled in a passing train from the Salt Lake City—an admirable cook—and made the nicest butter I ever used, for which services she was requited by the liberal salary of 1000 dollars per year, and the right to dispose of, as her proper perquisites, all the milk, butter, cheese, and eggs that remained after supplying the wants of the household. 183 Those she admitted to me: according to the amount they then realised weekly, would increase her yearly income to 2500 dollars, which on explanation did not surprise me, as she obtained twenty-five cents a piece for eggs, which sometimes got so high as fifty; one dollar per quart for milk, four dollars for butter, and I forget how much for cheese; then the overplus of each must have been immense, from the legions of hens about the premises and

the incredible number of calves I saw in the corrall, while the constantly passing waggons, pack-companies, and whale-boats, never suffered a stock to accumulate or spoil in her hands. Only think of £500 a year, ye cooks and dairy-maids of old England, and leave off your pert and saucy airs. Let us hear no more emulous boasting amongst the West-End Clubites about the princely salaries they give their foreign artists, while an humble girl in a log-hut in the wilds of a new country, receives close on the amount that would qualify a country squire to represent his native county in the Imperial Parliament.

It was here I got my first drink of milk since I left Salt Lake, and, oh, what a glorious treat it was, one I would not have exchanged for the choicest productions of French or Rhenish vineyards, and it was healthful as well as agreeable, for after a three days' sojourn we all sensibly felt altered, and improved habits of body. Our elk meat was now disregarded in our love for fresh butter and eggs, which we consumed in quantity, even at the rural rate of 25 cents per egg; but there were no vegetables or cultivation of any sort, nor was there even a garden attached to premises, nor to any of those we passed in our up journey, while as to field cultivation such a project was deemed to be 184 so entirely preposterous that it was never attempted, except in some of those more favoured spots, which are so few and circumscribed in extent that any crop which could be raised on them could scarcely be taken into account in the supplies of the country.* Many people emigrated to California, intending to confine themselves entirely to agricultural pursuits, but even in the limited tracts along the valleys of the Sacramento and the San Joaquin, where wheat, corn, and potatoes might be raised, with the aid of irrigation, the great expense of making and keeping fences in repair, and the enormous price of labour, forbid all hopes of making it a profitable speculation as a general thing; while those articles, raw and manufactured, can be imported at the rates they are from the States, Chili, Oregon, the Sandwich Islands, and the Australian colonies, some few that have been lucky enough to secure small scopes of good land in convenient situations, have been well paid by raising potatoes and garden vegetables; but if the country were dependent on those meagre supplies, with its rapidly increasing population, we would not only hear of a scarcity of esculents, but of a prevalence of scurvy.

An excursion to California over the prairie, Rocky mountains, and great Sierra Nevada. With a stroll through the diggings and ranches of that country. By William Kelly <http://www.loc.gov/resource/calbk.054>

Colonel Fremont grounds his argument in support of the agricultural capabilities of California on the products of the Missions; but to show how difficult it was even to select sites for the few establishments of that sort in the country, I will quote an article from the laws regarding their foundation:—"Art. 7. The place where a mission settlement is to be made, ought to be selected, *if possible*, where there will be sufficient water to drink, and for the irrigation of the fields."

When treating of the pretensions of California to be classed amongst agricultural countries, it should be known that the rainy season there prevails over the period at which fall-sowings might be put in, and early spring preparations should be made, when the earth, so far from 185 being in a state fit for the plough, could not be trod over by cattle; the general sowing, then, of necessity, must always be late, and the parching season arriving before the crop is half ripe, it withers and dies, in a state of forward semi-maturation. The only crop that can be depended on is the hay-crop, but beyond what the ranchero wants for his own use, it is valueless, save in the vicinity of the few cities and villages scattered over the country: those are not merely my own notions and ideas, but the opinions of practical men long settled in the country, who tried and failed in the experiment; in point of fact, if it were feasible, there would now be large tracts in tillage, as from the numbers of Americans there who were bred and brought up to farming, many of them would be following the plough. But California is essentially a grazing country—which it must remain, and I know none other that can excel it as such; though we were sometime since accustomed to hear it cried up as "the finest country for agriculture on the face of the globe," and to see this and such like assertions circulated by the American press, the political and private purposes it was sought to promote by the propagation of such a belief having been superseded by the discovery of the gold mines, we cease latterly to have those resources so diligently puffed and relied on—not, however, before numerous families thus fooled emigrated from the States and Oregon; most of whom, finding out the imposition, returned to the latter country. The few who remained accommodating themselves to the circumstances, turned their attention to stock raising, which, from subsequent events, has become a highly lucrative occupation.

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The rancho of Mr. Hudspeth over and above the natural advantages I have before referred to, is situated, I may say, at the head of the deep-water navigation of the Sacramento, which, immediately above it, forks and shoals, and, thence upwards, gets concentrated at several points into rapids,

which must for ever, I conceive, forbid the idea of trading with large craft; and, most probably from this circumstance and its position with regard to the northermost mines, it will soon become the site of a new city. Miners, travelling thus far by water, being constrained to use animals for the remainder of the journey, purchase all Mr. Hudspeth can supply, paying whatever price the tender conscience or caprice of that gentleman may choose to affix; in addition to which he has, also, a ready market for fat beeves, at the adjacent mines, and derives a large income by grazing the cattle, that companies so soon as they arrive at their destinations, send there to recruit; so that to use a common phrase, “putting this and that together,” I think Mr. Hudspeth is likely to skim the cream of the diggings.

It was about thirty miles higher up, on the opposite side, where we experienced such extreme difficulty and danger in crossing the Sacramento in the fall on our up journey, so that the country downwards is yet untrodden ground for the reader, who will therefore be kind enough to bear with me in calling his attention to the various objects of interest on the route. The morning we left was clear and cool, the temperature, contrary to what might be looked for, becoming more and more so as we proceeded southwards, our trail lying close by the river edge, through a fringe of timber, which in the more advanced season 187 must afford a fine umbrageous avenue to the jaded traveller, continuing as it does, with scarcely a break throughout the entire journey, following all the sinuosities of the river, and consequently lengthening the road. In the spring and fall this is unavoidable from the soft state of the prairie, while along the course of the river there is an elevated ridge of ground extending the width of the grove above the influence of the floods, which furnishes a dry and firm road during the summer months. However, case-hardened travellers, for whom the blistering orb has no terrors, have the option of choosing the diameter instead of the semi-circumference of those elongating bends.

Maugre the cost, we filled every canteen, bottle, flask, and vial we had with new milk—that sweet natural nectar so far before all the drugged and fermented distillations of human invention when you obtain it in its virgin purity; and as our pretty Hebe poured the genuine lacteal stream from her well-scoured pail, I thought of the sky-blue parodies of London concoction, and the civic dialogue, “You put dirty water in the milk this morning, you hussy, you.” “No, indeed marm, it was clear

from the well.” We estimated our day's progress at eighteen miles as we pulled up in the evening, after having skirted along a splendid prairie all day, even excelling that we had previously gone over in its luxuriant verdure, forming quite a downy couch beneath our blankets, and saving us our usual mornings' task of hunting up the scattered cattle, who filled themselves to repletion on the spot, and lay down beside the waggons. There were innumerable herds of wild cattle and elk scattered over the rich natural pasture, grazing in quiet communion like the tame flocks 188 of the settler. The plains here began to widen out considerably, the coast range taking the shape of the segment of a circle, while the surface of the land was as level as a lake, but totally devoid of water-courses for a great distance, exhibiting a smooth and settled aspect as if it retained its primeval formation unwrinkled, undisturbed by any of those angry convulsions that distorted the face of the country on the east side of the river, causing it to appear that the stream interposed between it, and the volcanic parturitions of the Sierra Nevada a singularity of feature that extends to the coast mountains, whose rounded outline form a striking contrast to the jagged and pointed peaks of the inland range.

Although we had soft beds, it was impossible to sleep in the early part of the night from the packs of coyotes that surrounded us, serenading us with an uninterrupted chorus of shrill, discordant barking, that would have overpowered the virtues of the most powerful narcotic. Being up by times in the morning from this annoyance, I got an opportunity of shooting a large buck, with which we displaced our elk meat that was getting a little the “worse of the wear,” emitting a racy odour, that I believe brought the wolves to our door the preceding night. Some of those elk arrive at an uncommon size, much beyond what I imagined they ever attained. I saw one shot the same morning by a party, whose night-quarters were a few miles below us, that was fully as large as an average sized mule, and I could not help admiring the flippant dexterity and neatness with which a nigger belonging to the “crowd” denuded him of his hide, and disembogued the entrails, separating, with all the skill of 189 a regular practitioner, the lard, fat, heart, and liver, which were retained for use; but as I remarked during my limited experience in the States, they are handy and expert at whatever they try or give attention to, whether as servants as tradesmen, making, as we all know, famous cooks, nonpareil barbers, excellent sailors, capital blacksmiths (puns

apart), carpenters, and tailors, at each of which trades I saw them at work—in short, attaining and *retaining* a respectable mediocrity in whatever business or calling they are apprenticed to. Standing on a towering eminence above the Indian, who is incapable of acquiring any art or handicraft that involves the slightest exercise of mind or judgment, and even if he does arrive at any moderate degree of skill by laborious teaching, he relapses into his original ignorance and indolence whenever he is placed in an independent position—as the story is told, taxing the soil to reproduce what he was accustomed to make in the workshop. The most that can be made of him, with an infinity of pains, is the primitive occupation of a herder of stock; yet place the head of an Indian beside that of a Negro, and compare and contrast the fine, intellectual-looking features and phrenological developments of the one with the low, animal cast and construction of the other, and how totally irreconcilable will not the result be with the plausible doctrines of Lavater or the ingenious theories of Spurzheim.

While on the subject I will take the opportunity of remarking a strange circumstance relating to the Negro slaves in California, who are said to be so sensibly impatient under the yoke at home, always on the look-out for a slip to escape over the border, or by sheer thrift striving to acquire a sum sufficient to purchase their freedom, and whose emancipation is now the great political question of the States. Yet not one, in any instance that I could ascertain after the most minute inquiries, deserted in the mines; where they were in great numbers, without any law to restrain them, and therefore no punishment to overtake them, the road wide open, without obstacle, or any sort of espionage, which would have been equally absurd and ineffectual, and equal opportunities with their owners of aggrandisement within their reach.

It formed a riddle I never could read so as to convince myself, or get others to solve satisfactorily. There appears only one of two modes of accounting or explaining it. The first, want of moral courage to risk a separation, where disease was so prevalent, medical attendance so difficult to procure, life so precarious, and remuneration of labour, according to their views and fears, so problematical in good health, and so certain to be absorbed by the continuation of any disabling ailment; the second, the sincerity of their attachment to their masters, and real indifference to their state, notwithstanding the thunders of the press, the magniloquence of stump orators, the moans

of superannuated vestals, and the pulpit denunciations of philanthropic divines, who have kept anathematising the slaveholder and encouraging the negro, until those sable gentry in the free States have become so inflated with the idea of their importance, that they have actually nominated the Honourable Mr. Seward as their candidate for the next presidency, and a man of colour for his vice; some of their orators predicting that the day is close at hand when the rice swamps of Carolina, 191 the tobacco fields of Virginia, and the cotton plantations of Alabama, will not only change the colour of their masters, but the colour of their slaves.

I do not pretend to be a profound observer; still it would appear to me that on the slavery question hinges the continuance and integrity of the great federal union, the prosperity of all the southern, and, collaterally, that of the north-eastern or manufacturing states. For it is admitted, because it cannot be denied, that the products of that section of the union can only be cultivated and secured by the labours of the coloured race; and we have before our eyes the recent experiment of Great Britain trying graduated manumission in the West Indian colonies, at the enormous cost of twenty millions sterling, which resulted in the surcease of all cultivation, and the utter annihilation of the value of property in those islands, from which it is not unreasonable to presume that like effects would be entailed by like causes in America; and should it turn out so, and that cotton, tobacco, sugar, molasses, rice, and coffee, came to be subtracted from the exports of that country, her much boasted commerce would soon dwindle down into paltry and miserable insignificance, and the flourishing, healthy condition of the New England manufacturing section of the union become afflicted with premature decay and atrophy.

And while such important consequences are at stake, there does not appear to be a scintilla of pure philanthropy in the motives of the abolitionists, whose violent agitation seems to me rather the fermentation of wounded, over-weening pride, making an effort to shake off a reproach which the older and more civilised nations of Europe are 192 perpetually throwing in their teeth; for with all their cant and whine about the pitiable moral condition of the Negro, together with their favourite democratic doctrine of perfect equality and toleration," they themselves do not hesitate placing the ban upon the manumitted darkies, shunning and avoiding all intercourse with them, as if they were an infected race, manifesting an amount of insulting scrupulosity that creates a

moral thralldom, infinitely less bearable, to an independant man, than actual slavery to a captured Negro. I recollect, in travelling from Lancaster to Buffalo (the free region), I got into a railway carriage that was crowded to a crush in every corner, with the exception of a long seat, at the end of which sat a respectable-looking man of colour, beside whom I took my place, to the great astonishment of my fellow-passengers, which ripened into impertinent sneers and audible whispers of contempt, when I entered into conversation with this free citizen—conduct, I maintain, that is wholly incompatible and inconsistent with a sincere advocacy of the great moot question; first labouring to elevate a raw people to their own level, and then studying to convince them they are in a false position, producing, what struck me, as a remarkable contrast betwixt the free Negro and the slave, that was altogether in favour of the latter; the one having attained the acme of social privileges is suddenly left to look after his own interests and concerns, and corroding with rancour at not being received with brotherly equality by his white brethren, becomes a disappointed, discontented, vicious member of society; the other having all his wants supplied, without cares to vex him, and no goading ambition to torture his mind, goes through life on 193 the broad grin, full of fun and merriment, working with a smile, and enjoying the occasional indulgence accorded to him with a gleeful relish. This contrast I found in New York and Missouri, in which latter state, if a laughing eye and a joyous countenance are an index to a happy and satisfied mind, Sambo was as well off as heart could wish; and I must certainly affirm, that it is a gratuitous and very questionable philanthropy that would pour an acid into such a breast, turning the sweet calm feelings of contentment into sour jealousy and vain ambition.

Let it not be supposed, however, that I am an advocate of slavery. No such thing. I abhor it. I abominate all tyrannical restraint, even to the chaining of a dog, caging of a bird, or confinement of a horse; but I do not hesitate to say that the negro must be in a better position with his master in the States, where he receives the light of Divine truth, and learns to become a useful member of society, than in his original savage condition, where he ekes out a mere animal existence in the most cruel state of thralldom, liable to be offered up as a sacrifice by his savage king to cure the barrenness of a favourite wife, or assuage the dyspeptic pangs of a pet monkey; after which his majesty would—if his larder afforded the delicacy—turn round to enjoy a snack on the remains of a cold missionary.

Of all great public questions at home or abroad, slavery evermore has been the one agitated in most fierce extremes, and debated with the greatest cant and most consummate hypocrisy. I have, on the one hand, seen a puling abolitionist shedding crocodile tears over imaginary sorrows that he knew in his soul were never perpetrated, and was told on the other, by a holder in —, “that such 194 was his tender affection for his slaves, that in his glass factory he always employed white men for the furnace-work, which was so destructive to health.” The abolitionist looked for tears of sympathy and commiseration for his fabricated grievance, and the holder, in bidding for the commendations of benevolence, *over* looked the glaring drawback that his motives originated, in his solicitude for the preservation of *a property* at the expense of a white brother's fate, who most probably had a wife and family depending on his life for support.

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CHAPTER XIV.

Change of Weather—Quantities of Wild Geese—Wild Duck—Their Variety—Anecdote illustrative—The Country and its Adaptation for Settlement—Effects of browsing on the Fertility of the Soil—Demonstrated by Comparison—Williams's Ranch—One of the Olden Establishments—Nature of their Origin—Culpable Indifference of Early Settlers—Mania of Land Speculation after the Conquest—Over-eagerness of Purchasers—Alarming Revelations—Consequent Excitement—U.S. Agent specially commissioned to investigate the Matter—Spanish and Mexican Colonial Law and Practice—Mode of obtaining Grants—Consecutive Steps to acquire Rights—Courts of Record—Final Step to perfect Title—Subsequent Proceedings, embracing Survey, &c.—Mission Property—How constituted—When transferred from the Jesuits to the Franciscans—Subject to be secularised—Reference to Laws and Authorities concerning them—Their actual Rights—No Reservation in Mexican Grants as to Minerals—Concluding Paragraphs in the Report—Its general Tendency to soothe Public Feeling—Probability of a State Compromise.

The morning was chill, but dry, as we continued our journey, with a stiff breeze ominously increasing, and absolute clouds of wild geese winging it away south, splitting the air with their screams, the wind and noise of their wings reaching us perceptibly as they passed, settling in

myriads over the plains, and keeping up a strain of incessant shrieks, as they flapped out of the way of the elk and wild cattle in moving over the pasturage, to which they imparted a strange and unique aspect, with their long thin necks moving in the midst of the waving herbage, contrasting softly with its verdant hue. They 196 are precisely of the same genus of those peculiar to our own islands, and, not being driven as yet by the progress of settlement to seek for sustenance on the coast, are free from the fishy flavour which excludes our wild goose from epicurean destruction, they attain a plumpness and rotundity of body fully equal to the largest barn-fed fowl, while they are so tame, from being unused to interruption, they can be shot with a little revolver. The wild duck, likewise, are devoid of apprehension, and sail past you, as you sit on the bank of the river, with as much confidence and nonchalance as the west-end pets in St. James's Park. Of those there are a considerable variety. Besides the duck and mallard, teal and widgeon, indentical with the British family, there is rather a curious species, called the "tree duck," from its habit of perching on branches and laying and hatching their eggs in the hollow forks of trees; and two or three other unchristened tribes, one as piebald as the magpie, the other perfectly white, the flesh of which latter one is soft and tasteless, and their skins so exceedingly flimsy, that it is impossible to pluck them without tearing them to atoms.

Sitting, one fine Sunday afternoon, on the banks of the Sacramento, the varieties were pointed out and described to me by the unfortunate Mr. Colville, who was murdered afterwards, who, while proceeding through the catalogue, pointed up, saying, "and here we have *tree* ducks," as a brace of birds skimmed closely over our heads. "You must be more accurate," I said, jokingly, "if I am to chronicle all your descriptions." "But I am quite correct," he replied. "I appeal to Mr. Mansfeldt; 197 —and there sit the pair in yonder tree." "Ay, but where is the third one?" said I. "I made no allusion to a third one." "Then both my eyes and ears are at fault; for that is precisely what constitutes our appeal. You exclaimed, 'There go *three* ducks,' while I could only count two." On which, they both burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, that was explained by a description of the peculiarities of those web-footed roosters.

The country continued to exhibit the same appearances of fertility, but without any picturesque features to vary the sameness or charm the capricious eye, as it expanded over an ocean of waving

grass, extending from the river edge to the mountain base; unless it were the animal life with which it was studded. We passed by several places where nature seemed to invite the emigrant, from their peculiar adaptability to settlement; the river getting embayed at those points into what are termed sloughs, extending for miles inwards, affording a desideratum for grazing and domestic conveniences that will not, under the present order of things, continue to be long neglected. I observed a marked difference in the character of the herbage in those unsettled localities as compared with that around the various ranches, where the feeding is more regular and continuous, showing that the constant browsing brings on a thicker skin upon the soil; the close crop as it grows up in the early spring forming a perfect sheltering shade, effectually protecting the earth from the parching, baking effects of the sun, and enabling it to retain its moisture, which it yields gradually to the natural cravings of vegetation, instead of the thirsty demands of evaporation; whereas the natural grass and wild barley 198 (as would be the case in a greater degree with cultivated crops) grow so rank and sparsely that, ere they stool and spread out, the hot season arrives, cakes and cracks the exposed soil, evaporating the material essence of fertility, absorbing the very pabulum of vegetation, and leaving the bereft crop to sicken and wither prematurely. Thus it was, in coming up in the autumn, herbage powdered into snuff in the unsettled districts, while around the few scattered ranches it retained a degree of verdure and succulence up to a very late period of the season; affording, in my humble opinion, a demonstrative proof that without irrigation agriculture can never be successfully followed in that country.

We arrived at noon at a Mr. Williams's ranch—a late purchase—where recent improvements, superadded to more antique erections, give it quite an extensive appearance. It is one of those few and far between establishments originally founded either by the early Spanish settlers—the emigrants I have alluded to in a previous chapter—or by Europeans, principally British, thinly but surprisingly scattered over the country, long, long before even Captain Sutter dreamt of fixing his abode there; some of those came seawards, cast away upon the coast, as they told me; others worked their way upland from the Mexican mines, intermarrying, and getting portions of land, with members of Spanish families that came to the country under the auspices of *emprarios*,* many of whom neglected complying with the formalities 199 of the colonisation laws of the government;

An excursion to California over the prairie, Rocky mountains, and great Sierra Nevada. With a stroll through the diggings and ranches of that country. By William Kelly <http://www.loc.gov/resource/calbk.054>

or, getting direct grants from the governors, heedlessly omitted procuring the ratification of their titles, from the listless habits acquired by association, living in a sunny clime, surrendered to sensual enjoyments, and never once harbouring an idea that internal policy or foreign interference would call those unauthenticated documents in question; until, after the late conquest, when, in the delirious demand for land, most of them sold out to American speculators, who, in their rash eagerness to become possessed of the property, and their ignorance of Spanish law and language, concluded and consummated bargains without becoming cognisant of the invalidity of the conveyances; purchasing also from Spaniards similarly circumstanced, and from the incumbents of missions, who avowed that the absolute property vested in them, being unconditionally granted, not only for ecclesiastical uses, but as a reward for their labours in promoting the colonisation of the country,—an assertion which had a colourable authenticity about it, from the well-known policy of Spain in invariably establishing missions in remote provinces as instruments of their colonial system, making them the precursors of the more extensive emigration. Thus, in an incredibly short space of time, a vast quantity of lands changed hands; those with imperfect titles, as might naturally be expected, taking the lead in the transfers, the persons in possession not exacting the most extreme terms in their anxiety to dispose of their insecure tenures.

Emprasarios were, properly speaking, contractors, who stipulated for an absolute concession of large tracts of territory, proportioned in extent to the number of families they undertook to carry with them as permanent settlers in the new country.

But when the actual state of affairs came to be disclosed, a high feverish excitement ensued, that threatened to convert the meek sheepskins into a sea of trouble, and a very angry and tempestuous one, too; more particularly as news arrived that the United States' Government had come to the resolution of recognising and respecting all Spanish and Mexican grants, duly fulfilled and properly executed, before the conquest, and of treating as waste paper all those imperfect titles above alluded to; sending out, for the purpose of discriminating, a special agent, in the person of William Carey Jones, a gentleman, as I understand, eminently qualified, from his professional attainments, for discharging the duties of the arduous office; who, after a most strict and patient inquiry into all the Spanish and Mexican laws and precedents touching the subject, and a most rigid

search amongst the archives and records of the late government, has compiled a clear and concise report, that exhibits the matter in all its bearings, divested of doubt or mystification.

With regard to the grants to individuals and *emprasarios*, he states: “All grants of land made in California (except pueblo, or village lots, and except some grants north of the Bay of San Francisco, as will be hereafter noticed), subsequent to the independence of Mexico, and after the establishment of that government in California, were made by the different political governors. The great majority of them were made subsequent to January, 1832, and consequently under the Mexican Colonisation Law of 18th of August, 1824, and the government regulations adopted in pursuance of the law, dated 21st of November, 1828. In January, 1832, General José Figueroa became governor of the then territory of California, under a 201 commission from the government at Mexico, replacing Victoria, who, after having the year before displaced Echandrea, was himself driven out by a revolution. The installation of Figueroa restored quiet after ten years of civil commotion, and was at a time when Mexico was making vigorous efforts to reduce and populate her distant territories, and consequently granting lands on a liberal scale. In the act of 1824, a league square (being 4428 402/1000 acres) is the smallest measurement of rural property spoken of; and of these leagues square, eleven (or nearly 50,000 acres) might be conceded in a grant to a single individual. By this law, the *states* composing the federation were authorised to make special provision for colonisation within their respective limits, and the colonisation of the *territories*, ‘conformably to the principles of the law,’ charged upon the central government. California was of the latter description, being designated a territory in the *Acta Constitutiva* of the Mexican federation, adopted 31st of January, 1824, and by the constitution adopted 4th of October same year.* The colonisation of California, and the granting of lands therein, was, therefore, subsequent to the law of 18th of August, 1824, under the direction and control of the central government. That government, as already stated, gave regulations for the same 21st of November, 1828.

The political condition of California was changed by the constitution of 29th of December, and the act for the division of the republic into departments, of the 30th of December, 1836. The two Californias then became a department, the confederation being broken up, and the states reduced to departments. The same colonisation system, however, seems to have continued in California.

An excursion to California over the prairie, Rocky mountains, and great Sierra Nevada. With a stroll through the diggings and ranches of that country. By William Kelly <http://www.loc.gov/resource/calbk.054>

“The directions were very simple. They gave the government of the territories the exclusive right and 202 faculty of making grants within the terms of the law; that is, to the extent of eleven leagues, or *sitios*, to individuals, and colonisation grants (more properly contracts), that is, grants of larger tracts, to *emprasarios*, or persons who should undertake, for a consideration in land, to bring families to the country for the purposes of colonisation. Grants of the first description, that is, to families or single persons, and not exceeding eleven sitios, were ‘not to be held definitively valid until sanctioned by the *territorial deputation*.’ Those of the second class, that is the *emprasario*, or colonisation grants (or contracts), required a like sanction from the *supreme government*. In case the concurrence of the deputation was refused to a grant of the first-mentioned class, the governor should appeal in favour of the grantee from the assembly to the supreme government.

“The ‘*first inception*’ of the claim, pursuant to the regulations, and as practised in California, was a petition to the governor praying for the grant, specifying usually the quantity of land asked, and designating its position, with some descriptive object or boundary, and also stating the age, country, and vocation of the petitioner. Sometimes, also (generally at the commencement of the system), a rude *map* or *plan* of the required grant, showing its shape and position with reference to other tracts or natural objects, was presented with the petition. This practice, however, was gradually disused, and few of the grants made in late years have any other than a verbal description.

“The next step was usually a reference of the petition made in the margin by the governor to the prefect of the district, or other near local officer, where the land 203 petitioned for was situate, to know if it was vacant and could be granted, without injury to third persons or the public, and sometimes to know if the petitioner's account of himself was correct. The reply (*informe*) of the prefect, or other officer, was written upon, or attached to the petition, and the whole returned to the governor. The reply being satisfactory, the governor then issued the grant in form. On its receipt, or before (often before petition even), the party went into possession. It was not unfrequent, of late years, to omit the formality of sending the petition to the local authorities, and it was never necessary if the governor already possessed the requisite information concerning the land and the parties. Again: it sometimes happened that the reply of the local authorities was not explicit, or that

third persons intervened, and the grant was thus for some time delayed. With these qualifications, and covering the great majority of cases, the practice may be said to have been—1st, the petition; 2nd, the reference to the prefect, or alcalde; 3rd, his report, or informe; 4th, the grant from the governor.

“The originals of the petition and informe, and any other preliminary papers in the case, were filed by the secretary in the government archives, and with them a copy (the original being delivered to the grantee) of the grant, the whole attached so as to form one document (entitled, collectively, an ‘expediente’). During the governorship of Figueroa and some of his successors—that is, from the 22nd of May, 1833, to the 9th of May, 1836—the grants were likewise recorded in a book kept for that purpose (as prescribed in the regulations above referred to) in the archives. Subsequent to that time there was no record, but a brief memorandum 204 of the grant, the expediente still filed. Grants were also sometimes registered in the office of the prefect of the district where the lands lay; but the practice was not constant, nor the record generally in a permanent form.

“The next, and final step in the title, was the approval of the grant by the territorial deputation (that is, the local legislature afterwards, when the territory was created into a department, called the ‘Departmental Assembly’). For this purpose it was the governor's office to communicate the fact of the grant, and all information concerning it, to the assembly. It was here referred to a committee (sometimes called a Committee on Vacant Lands, sometimes on Agriculture), who reported at a subsequent sitting. The approval was seldom refused; but there are *numerous instances* where the governor *omitted to communicate the grant to the assembly, and it consequently remained unacted on*. The approval of the assembly obtained, it was usual for the secretary to deliver to the grantee, on application, a certificate of the fact; but no other record or registration of it was kept than the written proceedings of the assembly. *There are, no doubt, several instances where the approval was, in point of fact, obtained, but no certificate applied for;* and as the journals of the assembly, now remaining in the archives, are very imperfect, it can hardly be doubted that *many grants* have received the approval of the assembly; *but no record of the fact now exists*. Many grants were passed upon, and approved by the assembly, in the winter and spring of 1846, as I discovered by the loose memoranda, apparently made by the clerk of the assembly for future entry, and 205 referring

to the grants by their numbers—sometimes a dozen or more on a single small piece of paper—but of which I could find no other record.

“There was not, as far as I could learn, any regular surveys made of grants in California up to the time of the cessation of the former government; there was no public or authorised surveyor in the country. The grant usually contained a direction that the grantee should receive judicial possession of the land ‘from the proper magistrate’ (usually the nearest alcalde) in virtue of the grant, and that the boundaries of the tract should then be designated by the functionary with ‘suitable landmarks.’ But this injunction was usually complied with only by procuring the attendance of the magistrate, to give judicial possession, according to the verbal description contained in the grant. Some of the old grants have been subsequently surveyed by an officer appointed for that purpose by the governor. I did not see any official record of such surveys, or understand there was any. *The perfecting of the title* I suppose to have been accomplished when the grant *received the concurrence of the assembly, all provisions of the law, and of the colonisation regulations of the supreme government, prerequisites to the title being ‘definitively valid’ ‘having been fulfilled.’ These, I think, must be counted complete titles.*

As to Mission property, he labours to show by law, practice, and precedent, that the missionaries had no power to sell or assign; proving that those establishments were subject to be secularised at will, reverting or vesting in the sovereign or supreme government; thus opening all those sales or assignments, and leaving the purchases 206 either at the mercy of the American Government, or to look to those astute parties to whom they paid over the purchase-money. He says:

“I took much pains, both in California and Mexico, to assure myself of the situation, in a legal and proprietary point of view, of the former great establishments known as the Missions of California. It had been supposed that the lands they occupied were grants, held as the property of the Church, or of the Mission establishments as corporations. Such, however, was not the case. All the Missions in Upper California were established under the direction, and mainly at the expense of the government; and the missionaries there never had any other rights than to the occupation and use of the lands for missionary purposes, and at the pleasure of the government. This is shown

by the history and principles of their foundation, by the laws in relation to them, by the constant practice of the government towards them; and, in fact, by the rules of the Franciscan order, which forbid its members to possess property.*

Although, as Mr. Jones says, the Missions are now governed and administered by the Franciscan order, they were transferred to them from the Jesuits when the royal decree for abolishing that order was enforced in New Spain; but it was the Jesuits, who, under license from the Viceroy, commenced the reduction of California in 1697, by the establishment of fifteen Missions in that country. At the time of the transfer three were suppressed, and the remainder put in charge of the Franciscan monks of the College of San Fernando, in Mexico; hence sometimes called Fernandinos.

“It was the custom throughout New Spain (and other parts of the Spanish colonies also) to secularise, or to subvert the Mission establishments, at the discretion of the ruling political functionary; and this not as an act of ruling political functionary; and this not as an act of arbitrary power, but in the exercise of an acknowledged ownership and authority. The great establishments of Sonora, I have been told, were divided between the white settlements and settlements of the Indian pupils, or neophytes of the establishments. In Texas, the Missions were broken up and the Indians dispersed, and the lands have been granted to white settlers. In New Mexico, I am led to suppose the Indian pupils of the Missions, or their descendants, still in great part occupy the old establishments; and other parts are occupied by white settlers, in virtue of grants or sales. Their undisputed exercise of this authority over all the Mission establishments, and whatever property was pertinent to them, is certain.

“The liability of the Missions of Upper California to be thus dealt with at the pleasure of the government, does not rest only on the argument to be drawn from this constant and uniform practice; it was inherent in their foundation—a condition of their establishment. A belief has prevailed, and it is so stated in all the works I have examined, which treat historically of the Missions of that country, that the first act which looked to their secularisation, and especially the first act by which any authority was conferred on the local government for that purpose, or over their temporalities, was an act of Mexican Congress of 17th August, 1833. Such, however, is not the case; their secularisation, their subversion, was looked for in their foundation; and I do not perceive that the local authority (certainly not the supreme authority) has ever been without that lawful

jurisdiction over them, unless subsequent to the colonisation regulations of 21st November, 1828, which temporarily exempted Mission lands from colonisation. I quote from a letter of 'Instructions to the 208 Commandant of the new Establishments of San Diego and Monterey,' given by Viceroy Bucareli, 17th August, 1773: 'Article 15. When it shall happen that a Mission is to be formed into a pueblo (or village), the commandant will proceed to reduce it to the civil and economical government which, according to the laws, is observed by other villages of this kingdom; then giving it a name, and declaring for its patron the saint under whose memory and protection it was founded.'

“The right, then, to remodel these establishments at pleasure, and convert them into towns and villages, subject to the known policy and laws which governed settlements of that description, we see was a principle of their foundation. Articles 7 and 10 of the same 'Letter of Instructions' show us also that it was a part of the plan of the Missions that their condition should be thus changed, that they were regarded only as the nucleus and bases of communities, to be thereafter emancipated, acquire proprietary rights, and administer their own affairs; and that it was the duty of the governor to choose their sites, and direct the construction and arrangement of their edifices, with a view to their convenient expansion into towns and cities. And not only was this general revolution of the establishments thus early contemplated and provided for, but meantime the governor had authority to reduce their possessions by grants within and without, and to change their condition by detail. The same series of instructions authorised the governor to grant lands, either in community or individually, to the Indians of the Missions, in and about their settlement on the Mission lands, and also to make grants to white persons. The governor was likewise authorised, 209 at an early day, to make grants to soldiers who should marry Indian women trained in the Missions; and the first grant (and only one I found on record) under this authorisation, was of a tract near the Mission edifice of Carmel, near Monterey. The authorisation given to the captains of *presidios* to grant lands within two leagues of their posts, expressly restrains them within that distance, so as to leave the territory beyond—though all beyond was nominally attached to one or other of the Missions—at the disposition of the superior guardians of royal property. In brief, every fact, every act of government, and principle of law applicable to the case which I have met in this investigation, go to show that the Missions of Upper California were never from the first reckoned other than

government establishments, or the founding of them to work any change in the ownership of the soil, which continued in, and at the disposal of the Crown or its representatives. This position was also confirmed, if it had needed confirmation, by the opinions of high legal and official authorities in Mexico. The Missions—speaking collectively of priests and pupils—had the *usufruct*, the priests the administration of it, the whole resumable, or otherwise disposable, at the will of the Crown or its representatives.”

Mr. Jones's attention was also specially directed to inquire as to whether in any of the alleged grants, or all grants in general (under the Mexican Government), or in California in particular, there were not reservations as to mines of gold, silver, quicksilver, and other minerals; but it appears that the Mexican laws regulating colonisation do not enjoin any such reservation in their grants, nor was there any such contained in the few *bonâfide* documents 210 that came under his inspection. After an able and lucid review of Spanish and Mexican law, and practices regulating and bearing upon colonisation, he thus concludes:

“Having met, Sir, as far as in my power, the several inquiries set forth in the letter of instructions you were pleased to honour me with, my attention was turned, as far as they were not already answered, to the more detailed points of examination furnished me, with your approbation, by the Commissioner of Public Lands. The very minute information contemplated by those instructions it would have been impossible, as you justly anticipated, to obtain in the irregular and confused state of the archives and courts of record. My examination, moreover, was sufficient to show me that such minute and exact information, on many of the heads proposed, is not attainable at all, and that the only mode of approximating it must be through such measures as will produce a general registration of written titles, and verbal proof of possession where titles are wanting, followed or accompanied by a general survey; by such means only can an *approximation* be made to the minute information sought, of the character, extent, position, and date, particularly of the old grants of California.

“The grants in California, I am bound to say, are mostly perfect titles,—that is, the holders possess their property by titles that under the law that created them were equivalent to patents from our

government; and those which are not perfect—that is, which lack some formality, or evidence of completeness—have the same equity as those which are perfect, and were and would have been equally respected under the government which 211 has passed away; of course I allude to grants made in good faith, and not to simulated grants, if there be any such issued, since the persons who make them cease from their functions in that respect.

“I think the state of land titles in that country will allow the public lands to be ascertained, and the private lands set apart by judicious measures, with little difficulty. Any measure calculated to discredit, or cause to be distrusted, the general character of titles there, besides *the alarm and anxiety* which it would create amongst the ancient population and *present holders of property*, would, I believe, also retard the substantial improvement of that country: a title discredited is not destroyed, but every one is afraid to touch it, or, at all events, to invest labour and money in improvements that rest on a suspected tenure; the holder is afraid to improve; and others are afraid to purchase, or, if they do purchase at the discredited value, willing only to make inconsiderable investments in it. The pressure of population and the force of circumstances will soon operate to break up the existing large tracts into farms of such extent as the nature of the country will allow of, and the wants of the community require; and this under circumstances, and with such assurance of tenure, as will warrant those substantial improvements that the thrift and prosperity of the country in other respects invite.

“I think the rights of the government will be fully secured, and the interests and permanent prosperity of all classes in that country best consulted, *by no other measure in relation to private property* than an authorised survey, according to the grants; where the grants are modern, or 212 since the accession of the Mexican Government, reserving the overplus, or, according to ancient possession, where it dates from the time of the Spanish Government, and the written evidence of the grant is lost, or does not afford data for survey. But providing that in any case where, from the opinion of the proper law officer, or agent of the government in the state, or from information in any way received, there may be reason to suppose a grant invalid, the government (or a proper officer of it) may direct a suit to be instituted for its annulment.”

The importance of the subject must be my excuse for quoting so freely from this report, which, while it appears to treat the subject in a spirit of candour and impartiality, is replete with internal evidence that it was framed at once with a view of relieving government from a delicate and difficult dilemma, by suggestive expedients of a mild and temporising character, and of annihilating the pretensions of missionary grants, which claim to be so numerous and extensive, dealing with them in a special pleading and black-letter temper that foreshadows the doom of Church property in California; the alienation of which, independent of sectarian prejudices, would be a highly popular measure amongst Americans in their rapacious greed for land in the new territory. The diffusion of the report, indicating, as it does, the course government is likely to pursue, has already had the effect of “oil on the troubled waters,” allaying the violent feeling that existed amongst the land and lot speculators—a much more numerous class than could at first have been imagined, multiplied prodigiously by the myriads of town lot purchasers in the several towns and cities 213 started throughout the country—who, in the bitterness of their apprehension, openly avowed their determination of fomenting and joining in a counter-revolution rather than have their properties, for which they paid so dearly, wrested from them. There is no danger, however, that matters will come to violent extremities; for, independent of the troublous consequences that would result from a strict and stern line of procedure, it would deal a fatal blow at that indomitable spirit of enterprise, so distinguishing a characteristic of the nation, which, in the short space of two years has reared up a great commercial territory on the silent and unfrequented shores of the Northern Pacific, giving birth to a city without a parallel in ancient or modern times; springing, as it were, from the cranium of the volcanic mountains, which constitute its marvellous wealth, completely accoutred in the full panoply of trade, commerce, and science. In such a case a wise government can afford to make large compromises and concessions, rather than crush and ruin a large community, who made their investments in good faith, and who deserve so well of the parent country for their unprecedented energy and perseverance.

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CHAPTER XV.

Business at Williams's Ranch—Sycamore Slough—State of the Trail—An unenviable Night's Board and Lodging—Sleetstorm—How we got over the Slough—A better Night's Quarters—An unwelcome Visit from Wild Cattle—They abduct our Oxen—Our Pursuit; its Difficulties, Dangers, and Success—How we dealt with the Truants—Feel the want of Water while trudging through the Mud—The Lone Oak—Mr. Harbin's Station—Cheap Beef—Mr. Harbin supplies with a Party to recover our missing Cattle—Their Mode of Procedure—Accept an Offer of a Morning's Amusement—Lassoing Wild Horses—Description of the Feat—Californian equestrian Accoutrements—The Sequel—Fatal Accident—Daring Feat of Horsemanship and Horse-training—Travel by Night to make up for lost Time—Reach Mr. Harbin's Head-quarters on Cash Creek—Californian Swine—Profitable and secure Stock—Scarcity of Sheep, and the Cause—Peculiar Conformation of the Rams—Wood-choppers on the Sacramento and its Tributaries—Shocking Aspect of the Plains as we approximate the City—How Sacramento grew in my short Absence—A Winter's Effect on the Style of Architecture—The City during the Flood—Evaporation *versus* Drainage—The March of Enterprise—Scarcity of Lime—Its domestic Consequences—Feeling on my Transition from Nomadic to City Life—Hotels and Pandemoniums increase in a like Ratio—Absence of Churches and Clergymen—A Field for Moral Reflections—The Press at Sacramento—Its pharisaical Conduct—An editorial Leader—Its natural Tendency—Editorial Puffs; how manufactured—Sacramento and its probable Destiny—How accounted for—Steam Navigation on the River—A public Convenience a Private Mine of Wealth—A moderate Calculation—A Supper on board the *Senator*—Prodigious Gastronomic Performance—“Odorous” Comparisons.

There was great bustle about Mr. Williams's ranch, what with the calling of waggon companies and packmen, and the arrival of small launches. An active trade was going on in buying, selling, and exchanging mules, horses, and oxen, and a lively bibulous business in the alcoholic line; but our favourite beverage was not to be had for “love or money,” there being no dairy. The calves were 215 permitted to run with the cows, so that we were reluctantly obliged to return to our old fare. The afternoon became exceedingly cold, the wind increasing to a furious gale, spitting sleet so bitterly that we could not face it only that we were proceeding in excellent shelter along the river skirting, which was not altogether without its drawbacks, for now and then a dozed and rotten

limb, fractured by the gale, would come smashing down amongst the branches, to our imminent risk. However, we managed to go on tolerably well until we came to what is called the “Sycamore Slough,” a gut of still water, connecting the river with a laguna, which extends the greater part of the distance back to the mountains, expanding considerably in some places, but never attaining a great depth. It is thinly fringed for a short distance by the timber from which it takes its name, the remainder of its shores being low sticky swamps, covered with tule.

In summer you can follow in the trail by the river edge, but it was now so deep we were forced to diverge, and travel up along it for several miles, the cattle constantly miring, the waggon-wheels working the entire way up to the hubs in mud. Still we struggled on till night, in expectation of reaching some spot that would afford a little feed, but were not so fortunate, a mud-hole arresting our progress in the worst and most inhospitable part of the marsh, where the state of the ground would not admit of the pitching of a tent, without an atom of firewood, the raw wind and sleet driving amongst us with most chilling effect. There was no shift but to chain our exhausted animals to the waggon-wheels—otherwise they would stray back in search of grass and shelter—we ourselves 216 being obliged to put up with the cold comfort of a raw pork supper, and a night's repose, cramped and huddled up, in a sitting posture, in the waggons.

The morning opened with a fierce hailstorm, the rain that had fallen during the night rendering the ground so soft that, with our starved and half-famished animals, it appeared a hopeless expectation to think of moving; nor could we budge an inch until we completely emptied the waggons, carrying the contents on our backs about three miles, to where the crossing was practicable, then returning and assisting the oxen. When we got them as far as the crossing we gave them a rest, while we again shouldered our loads, and waded, waist deep, with empty stomachs, over the laguna, which was about five hundred yards wide, the water intensely cold, and the sleet so penetrating that, by the time we returned, we were in a chattering, if not a communicative mood. However, move forward we should, prefacing the attempt by cutting down numerous bundles of tule, and strewing it thickly the entire breadth of the waggon trail, to form a foot road for the oxen, as well as one for the wheels; but, after several ineffectual trials, we had to unyoke them, finding it altogether impossible to get them to pull evenly and simultaneously, for at the time one yoke would get on

tolerably firm footing, those behind or before them would be floundering belly deep in the mire. We even had great difficulty in getting them singly, and unattached, as far as the water, where our chief trouble ended, the bottom of the laguna being comparatively firm, enabling them to ford it without an accident. We had a long and laborious job in getting over the waggons by hand; but the hauling 217 and spoking had one good effect in quickening and warming the circulation, which was checked and almost frozen up by the cold and exposure. Fortunately the land on the opposite side was more elevated, enabling us to put in our teams again, and reach a good camping spot early in the evening, where we amply indemnified ourselves for our late privations.

Soon after, in the early part of the night, we were aroused by the lowing and bellowing of wild cattle, which is easily distinguishable from that of the American breed; and as we offered no interruption, they kept approximating, attracted by the strange oxen, until, by the tumult, we began to fear they might trample down our tents. However, a few shots fired in the air, that we might not cripple any of our own in the dark, sent them scampering off in wild confusion; but when morning dawned we discovered, to our dismay, that they carried off in their retreat all our steers, notwithstanding the fatigues and sufferings of the two previous days. Their tracks showed the direction they took; but to the view, bounded only by the horizon, there was no appearance of their whereabouts. One course alone remained to pursue—to follow up the footmarks, which we did for about five or six miles, when a dark streak, about as far more ahead, discovered the herd we were in quest of, numbering, at least, one thousand head, taking in calves and yearlings. They permitted us to come close enough to see that our cattle were amongst them, but how to disconnect them was the question, for whenever we attempted closing on them they broke away in a burst, outstripping in fleetness our heavy, lumbering beasts, who, however, commingled with them 218 again as soon as they stopped. We had well-nigh despaired of regaining them, but, as a last resource, divided our small party into four groups, approaching them at four opposite points, and closing cautiously, which plan, though attended with great danger, succeeded admirably, detaching sixteen, who, I may say, surrendered at discretion—being left completely isolated by the impetuous burst the wild cattle finally made—on seeing themselves hemmed round by our manoeuvre. We abandoned the balance

as irrecoverable, dividing what we secured equally amongst the four waggons, for some only got one yoke, while others got their entire team.

It was too late to start when we returned to camp, so we put the truants in chains until morning, and made a twilight start, right through the heart of the prairie, our detour up the slough having separated us from the river—a circumstance we felt very inconvenient, even at that early period of the season, for though the ground was deep and slushy, we could not get a drop of water all day. Travelling up to a very late hour of the night before we made the “Lone Oak,” a large tree, standing alone on the vast plain, close by a pond of water, which forms a sort of natural tavern to the wayfarer; not far from which a Mr. Harbin has what may be properly denominated a draft farm, without any other permanent fixture than a large corral, his house and head-quarters being about twenty miles below, and as he thins the stock, by sale or slaughter, he replenishes it from the upper station, where he keeps immense herds of cattle and horses; and it so happened that he and his partner—a young Californian (whose name I forget)—were then upon a drafting 219 expedition. I was rather surprised in the morning on seeing a tent so contiguous under the arms of the Lone Oak, from one of whose branches was suspended an entire beeve; and as soon as I saw the inhabitants of the tent amove, I went over to inquire if there was any of the meat for sale, when Mr. Harbin told me “they shot it for their own use, and not to sell; but as they had more than they required, I could have what I wanted without any charge;” at the same time marking a portion of the best part of the hind-quarter for an Indian to cut off, that would at least weigh one hundred weight.

After making my acknowledgments for the kind favour, I told him of our mishap, and proposed hiring horses for our men to go and hunt the remainder of our cattle from the wild drove, which were then within view, not much over two miles away. But he obligingly said he would lend us his Indians, who would perform the task with much greater celerity, without the same risk; for inexperienced hands would be in danger not only of getting the horses gored, but of losing their own lives. I again gratefully thanked him for his great civility, and collected our men to follow the Indians, that we might drive the cattle to camp as soon as they were detached. The Californian—a fine, agile, athletic young fellow—rode out for the mere fun of the thing, and certainly was more efficient than the whole of the Indians, who adopted somewhat similar tactics to those we ourselves

employed the day before—outflanking the herd, by making a circuit sufficiently wide to prevent alarm, preconcerting that “when they got directly opposite us both infantry and cavalry should charge;” and as we moved, down they came with whirlwind speed, 220 directing their course to where they could discern a foreign oxen. The Californian cattle immediately broke away with the swiftness of antelopes, leaving our steers as cleanly separated as heavy wheat from the chaff in a gust of wind. They then rode round and gathered them into a cluster for us, after which we got them home without any trouble.

We all spent the evening jovially together; and as they would not take any return for their services, we endeavoured to make some slight remuneration for favours conferred, by the production of some excellent brandy, that we carried along with us; but next morning, as we were about hitching up, to proceed on our journey, my Californian friend invited us to wait a few hours, to see some sport, as he said they intended to lass, and back one of their finest horses. We gladly delayed to witness the sport, and got a good start towards the herd, while he went to make his preparations; and, as he dashed up after us, mounted on a fiery steed, divested of coat and vest, his broad sombrero compressed on his handsome brow, the *facha* * tightened round his waist, the *riata* * coiled in his hand, and a pair of huge spurs, with rowels large and stout enough to mount a small piece of ordnance, he presented a subject worthy of the pencil of Edwin Landseer.

Facha is a silken sash, worn in lieu of suspenders.

Riata is the rope with which the operation of lassoing is effected.

In his first charge he did not get within throwing distance, as the destined captive, with about six others, headed the flight, while those they outstripped retarded the pursuit; but when he got through the rear ranks he 221 slackened his pace for a few moments, when those in advance wheeled round, puffing and snorting wildly from their distended nostrils, as with proudly arched necks, flowing manes, and extended tails, they circuitously returned towards the main body, trotting with that grand majestic action which, with all our art, the trained horse can never be made to attain, and only faintly imitate, their eyes lit up with the fire of freedom, and tossing their heads from side to side with an air of haughty independence. Watching an aversé toss, our friend, with the quickness of thought, made his second dash, gaining wonderfully by the opportunity and the suddenness of his

start, and throwing in mid career, effected the lasso,* being obliged, however, to let go his hold, from the rapid dart the lassoed horse made when the noose got over his head, but still following him at full speed, until his pace, being somewhat checked as he came upon the herd, his pursuer made what I can only compare to a dive, without dismounting, and catching the end of the *riata*, gave it a turn round the horn of the saddle,* reining in at the same time; again giving the spurs for a spurt, and soon after reining in again; in fact, playing with his captive as an angler would a salmon, until he brought about 222 exhaustion, the noose acting all the while on the windpipe. The struggle was a tough one; but, in less than one hour from the first charge, the wild horse was a prisoner within the corral.

Many people (as I was myself) were under the impression that “*lasso*” was the name of the instrument or cord; but it is called “*riata*.” *Lasso* is the noose at the extremity, the throwing of which is designated “throwing the lasso.”

All Californian and Mexican saddles are made with an upright fixture in front, about nine inches long, called a horn, either a natural part of the tree, or so firmly attached, that it cannot be broken off without tearing the saddle apart. The front of the saddle is made particularly strong, to give stability to the horn, which is indispensable in lassoing wild animals, the strain being too much at times for the strongest arm. It is used also for slinging the rifle, or holsters, and the *riata*, and is frequently adorned with a handsome head, emblematically carved; and, amongst the grandees, generally composed of gold or silver.

There was now another rope, but round his neck, and by means of both he was drawn up short to a tree, that formed one of the corners of the corral, and a bridle, with a bit of fearful leverage, got into his mouth, after a hard tussle; but the saddle could not be properly secured until another noose was got on one of his legs and the others then tangled in the ropes. The coil of the *riata*, in this operation, was made smaller, with one edge placed on the toes—the foot being cocked up—the other leaning against the shin, the man about to throw it keeping his leg swinging, until, as the horse gave either a kick or a high bound, he gave the foot a quick jerk and discharged it. The Californian succeeded in the third attempt, and so managed in cramping the horse's legs that the saddle was adjusted and girthed up with a broad haircloth sirsingle, impossible to burst from its elasticity, and affording the rider a place for sticking his spurs in, which, together with their skill in horsemanship, makes his seat next thing to a fixture. As soon as the horse was fully accoutred, an Indian—a sort of professional in the calling—was put up, the animal humping his back and plunging as well as he could in the mesh-work that surrounded him. As he got calmer, he was gradually extricated and

led out of the corral, with an Indian holding each cheek of the bridle, and then liberated; after a few steps, finding the legs free, he set to plunging in the most violent manner, but was brought up after a little by a liberal use of the powerful bridle. He then stood 223 stockstill for about half a minute, until the rider gave him a slight prick, when he bounded away with a mad impulse, every few strides making a wild jump all fours, with his head doubled down, and then rushing forward and kicking out fiercely. At one moment he appeared to have got complete self-control, darting off with lightning speed over a considerable space, but was again brought back on his haunches by a violent pull, when he commenced rearing, kicking, plunging, and buck-jumping without intermission for full ten minutes. When at length he did pause, from physical exhaustion, we remarked the rider drooping forward, as if from fatigue or a strain, but not recovering himself with his usual celerity, the Californian ran up to ascertain the cause, and found, to his dismay, the unfortunate Indian quite dead, held in his seat by the spurs, some internal rupture having taken place during the struggle. There was no external effusion of blood that would likely have followed the bursting of a blood vessel in the lungs, so that we were not able to decide on the immediate cause of his death.

A feeling of gloom and sadness at this fatal occurrence overcast us all, except the Californian, who seemed animated and excited by a feeling of revenge and retribution, as, leading the horse back to the corral, assisted by the other Indians, he swore he would suffer the same fate or break his froward temper, from which resolution all our entreaties failed to dissuade him; while, in a spirit of fair play, he even took off the bridle and slackened the girth to let him recruit during the delay of an early dinner. This time, in accordance with a suggestion of mine, they blindfolded the animal while arranging his caparisons, 224 which, as I anticipated, ensured his passiveness: a much easier bridle, too, was substituted, our friend vaulting into the saddle with all the confidence of invincibility. The horse gave a few awkward leaps when he found himself again bestrode, and then stood extended in a sort of tremble, from which even the spurs could scarce make him move, being got outside by a series of nervous starts, that showed the terror which possessed him. The Californian then (having previously headed him towards a copse of low brush, about knee high, which extended more than a mile) reached forward and pulled the shawl from his eyes; the bandage removed, the noble animal gazed about for a few moments with a strained look of bewilderment, and then, rearing forward, set

off with a vigour unabated by his previous exertion. Nor was he restrained in the slightest degree, but rather urged, as he tore through the scrub with terrific velocity; sods and sticks flying from his heels in showers, he soon gained the clear plain, and with head stretched forward, seemed to make fresh efforts to fly from beneath his rider; but nature's energies at length began to yield and the pace to slacken; his head was soon after plucked up, and his course directed straight towards where we stood, the rider hustling and spurring him as if at the finish of a race. Ere long the close compact stride was changed into a spread, sprawling gallop as he laboured through the sticky ground; and, by the time the poor brute reached the waggons, he was run to a perfect stand-still, panting and vanquished, the tame slave of his future master, no more to revel unrestrained, or gambol in the sportive wantonness of primitive freedom; the sparkling eye, the curved crest, the elastic step of the prairie's pride 225 being thenceforward doomed to give place to the dull, passive, comeliness and gait of a daily drudge.

We left about one o'clock with a determination of reaching Cash Creek, where Mr. Harbin and two other rancheros have established themselves, even though it involved the necessity of travelling by night to do so. The country became rolling and undulating, covered with luxuriant verdure, but saturated with moisture in the dips and level spaces. A range of bluffs arose betwixt us and the coast mountains, along the ridges of which elk and wild cattle roamed about and fed in unusual numbers, while in the low grounds along which we travelled the wild geese would scarcely condescend to make a lane for us to pass through. The *habitans* were all abed when we arrived; but the noise of our geeing and whoing soon brought a glimmer to the windows and a blaze to the hearth, that quickly awakened the savoury music of the pan—sounds much more agreeable than would have been the piping of the great original Pan on the occasion. Here we found milk galore, butter in abundance, with elk-meat, beef, pork, venison without stint, and a pair of truly pretty girls to shed a charm over the dispensations—a charm co-existent with creation, as potent, as delightful, but one that came upon us with a spell akin to divinity, as their sweet and tender tones fell softly and suasively on ears so long attuned to gruff, discordant voices, deliciously enhancing the kind and delicate attentiveness of female ministration so unexpectedly rendered to men almost weaned from the habit of such social beatitudes.

There were plenty of swine rooting and grunting about the ranches on Cash Creek; the first I saw in California 226 of an excellent breed and in prime condition, though left entirely to their own resources. It is a matter of surprise that all the rancheros do not keep them, multiplying as they do so rapidly, and commanding so high a price; besides which, there is a peculiar security in that kind of property, as the Indians there, like the Jews, have a repugnance to the use of their flesh, and, therefore, never interfere with them; while the coyotes—whether it be from a similar disrelish, or a dread of attacking them—do not molest them in the slightest; not so, however, with sheep, which they persecute with such an insatiable rapacity, that very few, indeed, undertake the trouble and risk of breeding them. Those that engage in the pursuit have Indian herds, who live out amongst the flocks all the time, with a sort of sheep-dog that is littered and reared on the prairie, and never wanders from his charge in search of domestic tit-bits other than those to be had about the Indian herd's primitive establishment. The sheep are of a very inferior description, stunted in growth, with coarse wool, and tasteless flesh; but the ram is remarkable from his frontal conformation, never having less than two pair of horns, and not unfrequently three and a half; one pair standing out in the ordinary way, two curled closely along the jaws and side of the head, the odd one, like that assigned to the unicorn, jutting from the centre of the forehead.

The plains about Cash Creek are vastly extensive, pleasantly wooded, offering a fine field for settlement, but subject to that dropsical endemic that mars systematic or extensive cultivation. The trail from this point was very bad, and our progress not much above a snail's pace, 227 from the depth to which our wheels sunk in the slushy soil, even though we selected the highest lines, irrespective of direction. We struck the Sacramento again near the mouth of Cash Creek, where commences the encampments of wood-choppers, who continue in an almost unbroken line all the way down to the city, all actively employed; the heavy timber making fine lumber, the lighter limbs and branches firewood, which they get to market in rafts; * the former commanding a profitable price at the saw-mills below, which has induced many of the emigrants from the Western States, frontiersmen, and necessarily familiar with the axe, to go into the chopping business along Feather River and the Juba,—the first thing that tended to reduce the exorbitant rates of lumber. Vegetation, though we proceeded south, was much more backward than above, as the land, being

more depressed in level with respect to the river, was longer submerged, great tracts being still under water.

A new era in rafting has arisen with the other wonders of California, rafts being now constructed on Columbia River, Oregon, put out to sea, and towed by sailing-vessels along the coast to Francisco; the first time it ever was attempted on the open ocean. Should it come on to blow, the tow-line is passed forward, and the vessel hove to during the gale, riding as comfortably behind the raft as she would to leeward of a breakwater. It should be observed, however, that wind almost always prevails there from the north to north-west, making it a free wind the entire passage.

We now began to meet numerous ox and mule carcasses, drowned in the winter floods; but our last day's journey displayed a spectacle unequalled in character, our route, for many miles, being a perfect labyrinth through the rotting remains of cattle, emitting a thick putrid stench, amounting to vapour, that almost made the atmosphere palpable with the sickening abominations, and must have rendered those fertile districts valueless the ensuing season for either hay or pasture. Those were the animals of the late emigration, worn down and enfeebled by the dreadful fatigues of the journey, which were sent on arrival to the most contiguous pasture, and, weakly as they were, soon were engulfed in the swelling waters.

I have already twice noticed the city of Sacramento, and yet I must be pardoned for again saying a few words on its wonderful increase in size, and improvement in appearance and reality; streams of busy life flowing where I left filthy suburbs; the old streets elongated, the two principal ones, which run parallel, being connected at regular and convenient interval, with cross streets laid out with great regularity, and that fronting the river extending north and south the full length of the long line of shipping, while innumerable infantile thorough-fares were indicated by the scattered houses that stood at intervals along their margins; all the gossamer edifices, of which the city was composed when I left it in the fall, having vanished before the frowns of winter, like so many gaudy butterflies, making room for handsome, substantial lumber buildings, firmly put together, relieved by light balconies, tastefully constructed, with fanciful balustrades, supported on neatly carved brackets and covered with decorative verandahs, ornamental tracery mouldings twining round the windows and underneath the projecting barges, altogether conferring a graceful picturesque appearance to the whole. They are raised on log piles, intended to be sufficiently elevated to place them above the level of the floods; but the very highest were reached by the late inundations,

which converted the 229 streets into canals, too deep for either wading or riding; so that during its continuance, like Venice, all communication or transition was by means of boats, without, however, a dry spot to form a Rialto where merchants could congregate.

Though the waters had subsided to their ordinary seasonal level before my arrival, large pools remained in various places unabsorbed, into which all the floating nuisances had receded, which were now reeking with foetid odours, presenting objects equally repugnant to the sight. Many of those pools were underneath the houses, serving as receptacles for the slops and nuisances of the families, without a chance of draining, from the position of the city, and, as I have already remarked, must be highly prejudicial to the health of the inhabitants, who boldly maintain that the absorption and evaporation are so great, that they supersede the necessity of sewerage; an opinion I will not stay to combat beyond the extent of its personal effects, being merely a bird of passage.

The reader will remember I recorded the particulars of a *fête* that took place the previous fall, on the opening of the first hotel, conducted according to usages and requirements of civilised life; but betwixt September, 1849, and February, 1850, no less a number than seventeen of a similar class, together with others of humbler pretensions, had sprung up, and were in good business; a circumstance calculated to demonstrate the marvellous march of enterprise, intercourse, and settlement in California. I put up at the City Hotel, from a feeling that my participation in the opening feast constituted a claim on my patronage; and everything, I must say, was well 230 conducted, except the attendance in the dormitory department, where you were obliged to be content with the chance accommodation that was most stingily distributed, and keep a sharp look-out that some more neglected and unceremonious neighbour did not invade your cell, carrying off water, towel, basin, brushes—in fact, “leave not a *rack* behind.” The want of lime leads to a dreadful nuisance, in the facilities those odious vermin, rats and mice, are afforded in secreting and disporting themselves, for, in the absence of mortar and putty, ceilings and framed partitions are covered with a strong grey calico, over which they gallop with a noise that at first is perfectly startling, and always annoying. My first night on a regular bed, in a close pent-up room, after the nomadic life I had been leading, was far from being one of repose; the compound atmosphere of fumes and exhalations being such a stranger to my lungs, that my respiration was quick and

irregular, while the incessant tumult of my new neighbours was so perfectly distracting, that, when a feverish doze did once happen to close my eyelids, I started up frantically, under the impression that I was nailed into a coffin, with the impatient rats running over the lid in search of an aperture to get at their favourite repast.

I must not omit noticing how gambling-houses increased about in the same ratio as hotels, exhibiting the usual sequence of demand and supply. The increased number of travellers, indicated by the multiplication of hotels, requiring an additional area for recreation, had new pandemoniums fitted up for their accommodation; but I searched about and looked over the roofs of the city in vain for some emblem of religion—some external evidence of Christianity—some stately steeple or tapering spire rearing its hallowed head amidst this crowd of worldly edifices—some house or tent where “two or three might gather together in the Lord's name;” but no such place existed in Sacramento, nor was there a regular clergyman of any creed within its precincts; yet zealous missionaries penetrate with hope amongst the most savage Indians. Let me ask, then, was it absolute despair that caused them to shun those Christianised children of Mammon? The press, whose duty it should be to correct and improve this state of society, I regret to say were sadly wanting in that high moral duty; for, instead of wielding the scourge with the chastening sincerity of honest reformers, they winked at and indirectly encouraged the great leviathan vice, which sheltered every other species of depravity beneath its infernal wings. I might, to be sure, take up a newspaper and find a mild deprecation timidly shrinking into the corners of one page; while staring out on the opposite one, in the most flaunting and attractive type, would be a “*true story*,” calculated to sow the black seed even in virgin soil, uncontaminated by a germ of indigenous vice; in illustration of which I will copy verbatim an article—a leader—in the principal Sacramento journal:

“GRAND STROKE OF GOOD FORTUNE. “A man, lately returned from the diggings, where he made the respectable rise of 5000 dollars, turned into one of those fashionable haunts where gaming in its most attractive guise is carried on; after looking on for a little, his good genius prompted him to try his luck; so he sat down, and in less than one hour won the great sum of 100,000 dollars; but foolishly persevering, in expectation of achieving the fame of ‘breaking the bank’ (a thing, we need scarcely say, not to be accomplished, from the large capital those gentlemen invest in their

concerns), his pile became reduced to 50,000 dollars, when, with a very commendable prudence, he transferred it into 'button park,' and took his leave. We regret to say that this fascinating vice is greatly on the increase in this country."

It is unnecessary to add, that the whole story was a wilful lie from beginning to end, being merely a puffing advertisement, for a "valuable consideration," to forward the vice it hypocritically pretended to deplore. There can be little doubt about the tendency of the article, or its intent to entrap some other miner, who has made "a respectable rise," to yield to the promptings of his "good genius," which, pointing to one of those "fashionable haunts," bids him enter, and win "100,000 dollars, if only he can refrain from attempting the *impossible achievement* of breaking the bank." What a pity it is so "fascinating a vice should be on the increase in the country." Another complaint is sustainable against the press of a similar complexion—I allude to its habit of lending itself to the propagation of those baseless stories, got up by speculators to advance the lot market of some "city in buckram," started solely with a view of gulling the public, causing a rush of miners to the neighbourhood of a new ranch, by calling public attention to "the recent discoveries at—Creek, where several leads were found, yielding 6 ounces 233 to the hand, of the purest metal, specimens of which can be seen at this office, a friend having favoured the editor with the *inspection of a few*;" the price of the fabulous puff, which most generally takes, hurrying hundreds off from the place they were making average wages, to this extraordinary creek, where they work their six days without gaining the sixth part of an ounce, and then lie "like *yellow*—," as they say, to entrap fresh pigeons, and get themselves reimbursed for lost time by getting high prices for valueless claims.*

I must say, that on my return from the Sandwich Islands, I found the tone and character of the press much improved, the original proprietors—who were not actuated by any higher feeling than making it a marketable investment—having in most cases sold out to men possessed of the *amour propre* devoted to it as a permanent profession, and bringing principle and talent to the task.

The general trade of Sacramento increased correspondingly with its other improvements, but from the number of towns and cities springing into existence higher up on the river and its tributaries, equally accessible, so far as draught of water is concerned, to vessels of large burden, I am of opinion that its precocious start will not continue to be sustained, for goods can be carried much cheaper by water than by waggon, especially in a country without thoroughfares; and as it is the

An excursion to California over the prairie, Rocky mountains, and great Sierra Nevada. With a stroll through the diggings and ranches of that country. By William Kelly <http://www.loc.gov/resource/calbk.054>

cost of carriage that so prodigiously enhances their value, the miner will be enabled to purchase them at a reduced rate, exempted from the necessity of undertaking a tedious, toilsome journey, and of absenting himself from profitable employment for a long time in getting his supplies. I am therefore persuaded that the second-rate great cities destined to arrive at eminence in California, will be those located at the head of deep water navigation, in as proximate positions as 234 possible to the mines. The mines contiguous to Sacramento are those that were discovered at the start, and having been so worked, in every shape and way, they must by this time be pretty nigh exhausted—a surmise which, if it have a base to rest upon, fixes the present position of the city as the topmost rung of its ladder of destiny; and I should add, emigrants coming by any of the land routes, strike the various diggings far away from it, where they can as cheaply supply all their wants in the immediate vicinity; while those arriving seawards go right away to their several destinations, by means of steamers, with which the rivers are now crowded, without any necessity beyond curiosity for stopping there—a venerable motive which gets very little countenance or encouragement amongst the miners. Stockton, on the San Joaquin, stands where it bids defiance to competition, and will assuredly become the capital of the southern mines; but Sacramento, situated according to the taste and views of Captain Sutter, will yet be eclipsed by many cities still in embryo.

The increase of the river steam navigation perceptibly thinned the forests of masts that lined the levee of the embarcadero, all those that remained having apparently taken leases for life of their moorings, with nothing but their lower masts and standing rigging left, let out as tenements, of all characters and descriptions; the trip to Francisco, which used to occupy from seven to nine days, coming to be a journey of as many hours, two magnificent boats running up and down alternate days, under arrangements admirably calculated for the convenience of the mercantile community.

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I booked myself on board the *Senator*, a new boat, of great power and accommodation, built for the Boston and Halifax trade, but her owners were induced to hazard the dangers of doubling Cape Horn, that they might have the first of the Sacramento trade, for which numerous steamers were preparing; and that they succeeded in doing so can be shown by a few figures, without getting into any very abstruse calculation. The evening I came down there were 137 passengers, at 32 dollars

passage and bed, which is far below the number she might calculate on in the more advanced season; but averaging it at 130 all the year round, after subtracting 52 Sundays, and 13 days—the balance to 65—for repairs, &c., we have 300 working days, for which 130 passengers, at 32 dollars, gives a daily receipt of 4160 dollars, making a yearly aggregate of 1,248,000 dollars by passengers alone. Then there is the large freight with which she fills every up trip, and the rent of the bar and supper table, a something beyond belief. I could not get at the exact particulars, for obvious reasons; but this I was given to understand, that “the freight and rent fully covered all expenses,” leaving the prodigious profit of one million and a quarter of dollars, or, in round numbers, 250,000 *l.*, in one fleeting year. Talk of Cunard, Oriental, or Ocean lines if you will, but I verily believe their joint and aggregate yearly earnings would not amount to that of this single boat, plying on a river whose tranquil waters a year before had never been disturbed by any greater paddle than that of the Indian canoe.

Supper is an old and commonplace meal; but a supper on board the *Senator*—such a one as I witnessed—is not 236 to be enjoyed every evening of one's life. I hope, therefore, the reader will bear with me, while describing the one in question. When the gong sounded, having a lame ankle, and not an over-keen appetite, I refrained from rushing into the tumultuous *mêlée* down the brass-shod stairway, waiting patiently to bring up the rear; but long before I reached the saloon, or imagined any portion of the party could be seated, a din of clamorous calls for coffee, chops, rolls, steward, *sarse lasses*, with a brisk rattattoo of cutlery, announced that “havoc” had been “cried;” and as I shouldered my way in I met many a gravy-stained plate *in transitu* for a fresh supply, and hot stewards with cold steaks, hurrying to stop the mouths of importunate passengers, showing me practically how *go-a-head* energy will carry a man *in medias res*, before its more polished prototype will have made the primary effort.

I happened to be placed beside a gentleman of vast abdominal capacity, as well as having for our *vis-à-vis* two others of large similar endowments, who did not permit a moment to escape them unprofitably, as the barrenness of the surrounding neighbourhood too convincingly attested; for while every other part of the table was covered with a mosaic coating of edibles, that which constituted our territory, like the tract within the radius of an upas-tree, was denuded, blighted,

wasted—even the standing decorative dishes, with their curiously cut-paper embroidery, intended to last the season, vanished from the scene in the intervals betwixt order and supply; hot rolls being spirited away with the magic of Chinese jugglers, and a species of slim biscuit, into whose warm embrace I modestly inserted a bit of butter, were slipped, double 237 crusted, into their mouths, like a dollar in a till slit, crowned with a lump of the same substance; stewards, with all the steam up, were waylaid as they hissed along, and eased of their burdens; and gentlemen above and below assailed with requests to “shove along” the butter, or the “sweetnin’.” My uppermost feeling was ineffable disgust; but it rapidly gave way to one of utter amazement, as I saw the unabated demolition of sodden steak, and chops, and cutlets, shivering in congealed gravy. The table was nearly deserted before the two gentlemen on the opposition benches shut up, when I arose, from a feeling of shame lest the astounded stewards, who got concentrated into a group behind us, should suppose I was “any connexion of the person possessing such an inhuman attribute as the one that remained,” who, as I retired, had placed before him the balance of a dish of chops, shaking in their gravy blanc-mange, which he affectionately pulled towards him with the eagerness of a new beginner: The last cove at supper, left guzzling alone, All his hungry companions were feasted and gone.

I regretted having left before the finale, and was spellbound at the head of the stairs, musing on miraculous maws and gastronomical giants, a full quarter of an hour before he came up, without any plethoric indication about him, looking as lank and pliant as an anchorite, with a brow as dry and unflushed as if he was only after rinsing out his mouth with cold water. I have seen some accomplished trenchermen in my time, but all comparisons I can call to mind are feeble and inadequate. I remember being present at Ascot Heath meeting as a spectator at an eating match, where the victor, in the full 238 flush of conquest, offered to “eat any man in Britain for 100 l., and give him a sheep a week odds;” but he was a pettifogging nibbler compared with my supper companion. I never witnessed, or imagined, anything that would convey the remotest idea of his masticatory prowess. Even the remembrance of my boyish visit to Wombwell's menagerie, to see the lions devouring, does not recur to me in such amazing guise as his stupendous performance; leaving me to come to the conclusion that the engulphment of the goat, horns and all, by the boa

constrictor, stands on the apex of abdominal triumphs, and that the next greatest achievement in that line was the gormandising on board the *Senator*.

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CHAPTER XVI.

A Francisco Counting-house—A Ship converted into a land Dwelling—Makes more Money on shore than in her native Element—Marine Hotels and Boarding Houses—Magnificent View of the Bay of San Francisco—The immense Merchant Fleet in the Harbour—A melancholy Prospect—The Site of the Town—Its novel Appearance—Its picturesque Suburb—Shoalness of the Water along the Beach—Expense of discharging Vessels—Gradual filling up of the inner Harbour—Submarine lot Speculations—Floating Warehouses—Character of the Buildings—Style of the Shops—Hotels, their Rates and Accommodations—Taverns and their Varieties—Chinese Settlers—Their Habits—Gaming-houses and their various Attractions—The Vice on the Decline—Probable Causes—Anecdote—Motley Groups—Bowling Alleys and Cockpits—Want of Theatrical Taste—The Courts and the Judges—Court Practices—Desk Protectors—The Custom-house and its Officials—Bad Feeling towards the British—The Quarantine Laws—The Tax on Foreigners.

WE arrived at our moorings before I awoke, and, finding a good breakfast ready, I partook of that meal on board, very few of the passengers remaining. On inquiring where my friend's (Mr. S—m's) office was located, I was told I could be landed at a stair-foot leading right to it; and was not a little surprised when pulled alongside a huge dismantled hulk, surrounded with a strong and spacious stage, connected with the street by a substantial wharf, to find the counting-house on the deck of the *Niantic*—a fine vessel of 1000 tons—no longer a buoyant ship, surmounted with lofty spars, and “streamers floating in the wind,” but a mud-stuck tenement, covered with a shingle roof, subdivided into stores and offices, and painted 240 over with the signs and showboards of the various occupants. To this “base use” my friend was obliged to convert her, rather than let her rot at anchor, there being no possibility then of getting a crew to send her to sea. Her hull was divided into two large warehouses, entered by spacious doorways on the sides, and her bulwarks raised upon about eight feet, affording a range of excellent offices on the deck, at the level of which a

wide balcony was carried round, surmounted with a verandah, that was approached by a broad and handsome stairway. Both stores and offices found tenants at higher rents than tenements of similar dimensions on shore would command, returning a larger and steadier income, as my friend told me, than the ship would earn if afloat. Others were not slow in following his example, while those who could not get water lots to purchase, let out their ships, as they swung at anchor, as marine stores and boarding-houses.

The office of my friend stood aft, over where the cabin used to be, with windows in three sides, and, as I remarked to him, only suited a person of essentially mercantile mind, unleavened by the slightest tinge of poetry or romance, as none else could set down pouring over ponderous account-books, while his desk commanded a series of the most splendid views of nature and art that the pencil of the painter could find to delineate or create under the impulses of the most glowing imagination. On three sides lay spread out the glorious bay, its shores beautifully diversified with bold headlands, verdant promontories, and shaded inlets, where the streamlets, stealing down from the sloping hills, commingle with the blue waters of the Pacific; lofty mountain ranges, amongst 241 which the aspiring crest of Mount Diavolo stands in towering pre-eminence, forming a grand and striking background, holding the bay and its contiguous shores in their embrace, like a large inland lake; the broad expanse of its rippled bosom charmingly relieved by the flitting course of small schooners and barges as they scudded and tacked across with snow-white sails, and the more stately progress of ships of large burden; while more immediately under the eye lay at anchor the immense fleet of merchantmen, comprising many of the finest ships in the world, in the midst of which might be discerned the lofty spars of two sloops of war, that took up their stations like a pair of stern marine monitors, presenting a most transcendently grand spectacle, but one overcast by the remembrance that those splendid vehicles of commerce were moored idly there, deserted, rotting under the influence of the weather, and checking the proud spirit of enterprise that steered them to those shores.

Outside, arising from the waters, is the picturesque island of Yerba Buena (Goat Island), with its beetling cliffs, about equidistant from each horn of the crescent, on which the infant city is built, and lies smiling with preternatural pretensions, setting at nought all antiquated rules and ideas of

cosmopolitan progression, as it closely circles the curved shores, heaving up its swelling breast in the natural amphitheatre formed by the contiguous heights, the centre formed by the plaza or square, which constituted the old town in its entirety; branching off from which, in rectangular courses, run the modern additions, ascending the hill-sides in handsome rows, until they reach the transverse terraces on the steeper acclivities, while on the north and 242 south sides, two natural openings between the hills, pleasingly graduated, invite extension, leading to the beach above and below each point of the crescent, where harbours almost equal to the principal one exist, giving scope sufficient for all improvements that may be projected for years to come. Already skeleton avenues are stretching out in those directions; and also, creeping around the shores towards those wings of the city, which will soon be full fledged, and spread out in commercial activity, several fanciful villas, lightsome cottages, and pretty tents are perched upon the steep brows around, looking like so many aërial visitants, peering about for a vacant spot to descend and settle on; and, above all, on the loftiest eminence stands the telegraph with outstretched arms, as if beckoning the whole human family to hurry forward and locate.

There is one great drawback to the harbour in the shoalness of the water around its rim, which prevents vessels from approaching within a mile of a landing; while the expenses of discharging by means of scows, or flat-bottomed boats, from the enormous rates of labour, involves an outlay tantamount to the freight. To obviate this, some very long and substantial piers have been lately constructed, extending out a great distance, but still far short of the deep water, only affording accommodation for small craft; but their continuation to that point is contemplated, and will certainly be soon carried into effect, from the assurance they hold out of yielding enormous incomes to the proprietors. The space within the area of the crescent is (I am informed by an officer of the port) fast filling up, the mud raised by the dragging of 243 the anchors outside being carried in by the eddies of the tide, rendering it more than probable that in the process of time the beach line will run straight from horn to horn; indeed, so steadily is this natural operation going on, speculators have not hesitated purchasing at extravagant terms submarine building lots, not even bare at low water, requiring buoys to mark out the area of their prospective properties. Intercourse between the shipping and town is so costly and inconvenient, that judiciously-assorted shops,

constructed on lighters, ply amongst the fleet, to supply those various wants that it would not be worth while to go ashore for at the expense of two dollars. They form a novel spectacle to the eye of the stranger, but a very vexatious object to those aquatic extortioners the ferrymen, whose insolence and rapacity throws entirely into the shade the accomplishments of the jolly young watermen of the Tower Stairs or old Wapping.

The houses of the city are principally of wood, though some handsome brick ones have lately been erected, as well as a few iron ones, and some—fewer still—of stones taken off the coral reefs at the Sandwich Islands; but the great scarcity of lime causes timber to be the great building staple. The streets are regularly laid out, occupied, as might be expected, exclusively with warehouses and shops; some amongst which were arrayed with the most attractive varieties of fancy goods, splendid shawls and scarfs, neat bonnets, lively dress patterns, and delicious little corsets, ingeniously arranged on stands and lines, in the spacious windows with a skill worthy of a London artist, where that branch of business has almost attained the rank of a science. As yet, those emporiums are driving but a slender trade as compared with the other bustling marts; but every arrival augments the *softer* sex, whose increase will serve to correct and abate many of the social evils of the city, and diversify its busy throng, who plunge from the excitement of business to that of vice, in the absence of any domestic attractions.

Hotels are numerous, but mediocre at best; varying in their comforts and charges very considerably. At the St. Francis you get good fare and the luxury of sheets at the rate of seven dollars per day, the others sliding down to twenty-one dollars per week, simplifying the fare in a proportionate ratio, and consigning you to repose in a narrow bunk, on a shaving mattress, betwixt a pair of bearded blankets, that can scarcely be included in the category of woollen manufactures; the titillation of which, superadded to the voracity of the Californian fleas, are more than a match for any amount of patience or lassitude. There are houses of refreshment at every turn—the American Tavern, the French Réstaurant, the Spanish Fonday, and the Chinese Chow-Chow. But amidst the host of competitors the Celestials carry off the palm for superior excellence in every particular. They serve everything promptly, cleanly, hot, and well cooked; they give dishes peculiar to each nation, over and above their own peculiar soups, curries, and ragouts, which cannot be even imitated

elsewhere; and such is their quickness and civil attention, they anticipate your wants, and secure your patronage.

There are great numbers of Chinese in California, most of whom settle in the cities, partially adopting the 245 prevailing costume, constituting a very useful class of men, quick in acquiring a proficiency in the duties required of them, industrious, and persevering in attending to it; they are systematic, sober, and cleanly, and when treated with proper kindness and indulgence, become attached and interested. They, above all others, appear successful in finding employment; for you never see a Chinese lolling about, or amongst the groups of idlers, content, as I believe, with more moderate wages, and unconnected with the confederate gangs, who laugh contemptuously at an offer far exceeding a colonel's pay. They soon become possessed of means, from the simplicity of their habits and economy of their domestic *ménage*, and do not hesitate to share it in establishing their countrymen, who generally leave their fatherland without any other resources than their brains and sinews—a trait of character that usually affords a guarantee for other commendable attributes. The Americans seek assiduously to inspire them with a hatred of the British, by reprobating, in terms of affected indignation, “their wanton cruelty during their unjust war;” avowing sympathies of the tenderest complexion. But those relatives of the sun and moon do not appear prone to retrospective reflections; present prospects and future anticipations more profitably and pleasingly occupying their minds.

From my experience in Sacramento, I was quite prepared for the number and style of the gaming-houses, which invariably occupy the most prominent sites; and lest their conspicuous exteriors should fail to attract the eye, a crash of music issues from their capacious portals and balconies that is certain to arrest the ear. Some of 246 them have really fine bands, as they spare no expense in securing the best musicians; and I am fully persuaded the charm of sweet sounds entices many abhorers of the vice to enter who would never otherwise have overstepped their thresholds; but when once the rubicon of temptation is crossed, and the turrets of gold and silver with which the tables are heaped, glitter, as they are pushed about from hand to hand, on the turn of a card or the

destiny of a ball, the dazzled vision vanquishes all virtuous resolves, tinges the acquisitive senses, And those who came to scoff remain to *play*.

Gaming is followed, in Francisco, with a spirit accordant with its pre-eminence above the other cities of California, standing in about the same degree of comparison with the profession in Sacramento as the grand houses of aristocratic resort in St. James's and Albemarle-street do with the silver hells in the purlieu of Leicester-square. They are never closed, morning, noon, or night. Dealers and presidents succeed each other; and as yawning crowds disperse at daybreak, new victims rush from their beds to the sacrifice, so that there is no intermission, the only difference being that the evening attendance is the greatest and most adventurous. There are various games, adapted for every prejudice or caprice; but “the game” is monte. It is on this that all large investments are made, and which leviathan gamblers patronise. I was present myself on one occasion when a gentleman lost 6000 dollars at three stakes. It is, however, remarked, by those qualified to enunciate statistically, that while the numbers who resort to those rendezvous are undiminished, the amounts 247 played for are fast dwindling in magnitude—a consequence not to be wondered at, for communities, no more than bodies corporeal, can bear up against bleeding beyond a certain point without having syncope to ensue; and some conception of the drainage may be formed, when one establishment, the El Dorado, can afford to pay a rent of 6000 dollars per month, independent of taxes and expenses, enabling its proprietors to indulge in the most expensive style of living, and to set aside enormous sums for other speculative investments.

There are capacious refreshment-counters in all those saloons, plentifully supplied, but with a greater and more tempting variety of fluids than edibles—a very natural arrangement, no doubt, where excitement is the great aim, but leading occasionally to the maddened despair of a victim's revenge, to guard against which each table is provided with its secret armory, which is used without hesitation or remorse in the event of a row. I saw, at the Eagle Saloon, in Montgomery-street, a monte dealer deliberately draw a pistol from beneath the cloth, and shoot a young lad, who was, I believe, honestly scuffling for his stake; and then, with the most perfect *sang froid*, call the coroner, whom he recognised amongst the bystanders, to hold an inquest, which actually took place on the spot where the bloody deed was committed, in presence of the murderer, a volunteer jury of pals

returning a verdict of “accidental death” almost before the last throb of pulsation had beaten; and as the body, still warm with animal heat, was being removed, the blood-stained villain audaciously resumed his position at his infernal altar, surrounded by an inhuman crowd, who pressed forward to the game, nowise 248 restrained by the consciousness that they were standing in the undried gore of a fellow-creature. Ladies may sometimes be seen presiding over the game, exerting their insinuating blandishments to charm the “nice young men” to their ruin; and every table is attended by a set of accomplices, or “bonnets,” who stake their money on the right cards, and move away with large sums, to make room for the eager dupes behind them. There is scarcely a country on the face of the globe that has not a delegate in those dens—Russians, Swiss, French, Swedes, Spaniards, Italians, Greeks, Turks, Jews, Chinese, Hindostanees, Niggers, Yankees, Indians, English, Scotch, Malays, and some of the real *ould* ancient Milesian stock, no longer “hereditary bondsmen,” but Thumping, lumping, tearing, swearing, Ranting, roaring Irishmen,

presenting a motley group, that could not be equalled in any of the capitals of the oldest empires.

Bowling alleys also come in for a respectable share of public patronage. And a new and successful mode of *diverting* the public is in operation, under the auspices of a rollicking Emeraldler, in the shape of a cock-pit, which seems to take amazingly, and pay proportionably as over and above the admission fee of twenty-five cents; the *pull* in knowing the respective merits *and chances* of the birds must be a source of large income, round sums being staked on the issue of every battle; while, as Mr. M’Cluskey jocularly informed me, “he was at no cost for an *orkisthre*, as the crowing of the *darlints* was worth all the money;” and, I must say, challenged public attention with signal effect. Theatricals were attempted, but 249 soon expired of inanition, as will every other attempt at public recreation that is not highly seasoned with gambling incentives, so deeply is that vice rooted in the community.

Persons above all temptation, who find time hanging heavily on their hands, can beguile an hour or two in the different law courts, where justice is administered in a manner that comes home to the meanest capacity, divested of all that stupid etiquette and solemn decorum, so irksome according to British discipline. Judges there sit on the bench, attired like other men, and taking

a leaf out of Chief Baron Nicholson's book, puff their cigars while laying down the law on the enlightened principle of “ex fumo, dare lucem;” nor do they haughtily hesitate to accommodate with the glowing butt any of the learned counsel or audience who may require a light; in fact, there is a degree of charming republican familiarity existing betwixt the bench, the bar, and the public, which makes a man feel as much at ease in court as in a tavern, and must be seen to be properly appreciated. Law arguments under such a system are no longer dry and uninteresting, but flow smoothly along, liberally lubricated with tobacco saliva, and garnished with colloquial episodes that come with a delicious freshness upon the ear of a person before only accustomed to the oppressive profundity of Westminster practice.* I was being thus edified, sitting in 250 the jury-box (no jury being empanelled at the time), where I observed a row of new pine sticks, about the dimensions of a shillelah, standing in exact order in front of the seats; and finding their number amounting precisely to twelve, it struck me they were part of the legal machinery of the place; nor was I astray, for a sort of factotum—crier, usher, tipstaff, &c.,—who wore his hat *ex officio*, commiseratingly informed me they were “desk protectors,” which it was part of his duty as court-keeper to provide as “whittling stuff for the gents,” who would otherwise cut all sorts of hieroglyphics and incongruous devices upon the desks; an operation I afterwards saw gone through by a witness under the ordeal of a sharp cross-examination, who cut with an increasing into the rail as the counsel cut into his credibility.

Judge: “Holloa, Mr. Taper! I spose you come here to realise the price of them ar pants,” slapping the nether tegument on his legs, which described two sides of a triangle in the desk; “but afore I stumps up, it would tickle me to know on what math *ee* matical rule you cut them out.”

Mr. Taper: “Well, I reckon it would be considerable of a kurioss rule as would apply to your cqueer posters.”

Facetious Counsel: “I humbly move we make it a rule of court.”

Judge. “Mr. Proser, go on.” Argument resumed.

The custom-house department is only remarkable for the insolence of the officials, and the arbitrary demeanour of the autocratic collector, who, like a late Irish judge of punning celebrity, sticks it on with a vengeance it parties before his tribunal betray the slightest emotion of discontent as their invoices are assessed; * taking, as it appeared to me, a peculiar delight in throwing stumbling-blocks in the path of Englishmen, and confiscating British property without any embarrassing investigations. In connexion with this department we have the board of health, actuated by a similar anti-British spirit, and using the quarantine laws to gratify it in a manner degrading to humanity, stretching them cruelly when a poor tempest-tossed British emigrant comes within their jurisdiction, 251 who, though dried up with sea-sickness, scurvy, and short ship's allowance, need plead for no indulgence, no mercy, if there exist the flimsiest excuse for prolonging his misery.

Lately, business goes on more methodically and legally, since California has been admitted into the Union.
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CHAPTER XVII.

The Post-office—Slow Process of sorting—Eagerness for Intelligence—*Letterary* Speculators—Rules of Approach—Scenes on Mail Deliveries—Jokes and Tricks—Amusing Occurrence—Effect of the System of changing Officials in the States—Houses of Worship—Their thin Congregations—Divine Service interrupted by the Bands of the Gambling-houses—Anomalous Progress of Vice in Francisco—It tinges Mercantile Integrity—Case in Point—A woeful Disappointment—Lot Property in San Francisco—Invisible Suburbs—The Future of the City—Influx brings down Wages and favours small Capitalists—Indications of a Bachelor—Disproportion of the Sexes—Its probable Consequences—Auctioneers *versus* Wholesale Merchants—Value of Money in California—Disagreeabilities of Francisco—The Climate provocative of pulmonary Ailments—The Markets—Number of Daily Papers—The old Spanish Presidio and Fort—The Entrance of the Harbour—Washerwoman's Bay—Sansolito—De los Angelos—Its picturesque Position—Advice to Emigrants—A little plain Reasoning—A simple Calculation.

IT is a rare treat for a stranger to watch the proceedings about the post-office, after the arrival of a mail steamer; and one that neglects the opportunity, throws away a chance of seeing fun and

novelty that he cannot make up for elsewhere. As soon as the mail-bags go ashore, all public communication with the establishment is shut out for four-and-twenty hours—sometimes much longer, if the mail is a large one—a period in which those unapproachable officials might not only sort the letters, but con over their contents. During this interregnum, you cannot even post foreign letters, as you can find no one to whom you can pay the postage—a necessary 253 preliminary to their transit. On the evening previous to the completion of the job, notices are affixed inside the different windows, announcing the hour at which the delivery will commence on the ensuing morning, and such is the extravagant desire to obtain the earliest news, that there is a class of men who derive a comfortable livelihood by securing and selling the places most contiguous to the windows. You will find those “*letterary*” speculators taking up their stations at midnight on little canvas stools, with their stock of cigars, and provisions laid in for the siege, sitting in close column, as the inexorable rule is, that all applicants must be served in rotation.

The earliest dawn brings to the ranks those who prefer a little suffering to a little expenditure, every moment adding new recruits, until the lines become so elongated that the rear extends into remote streets. The march is so slow, parties come prepared with newspapers and magazines to wile away the time; and cafés, rigged upon hand-carts, move along, dealing out hot coffee, juleps, and sangarees; for if you leave the ranks under any necessity, you must fall in behind. A peripatetic grog-shop is also in attendance, in the person of a huge hirsute Frenchman, with a keg of brandy slung over one shoulder, so as to come conveniently into the embrace of the opposite arm for filling up the different potatory utensils that dangle from his jacket buttons. The crawling nature of the progress not unfrequently superinduces drowsiness, and sometimes, when a somnolescent gentleman happens to get a comfortable *lean*, yielding to the pleasing influence, he neglects to close up, when he is passed 254 by and shut out—technically, “caught napping,”—to the infinite mirth of the multitude, who poke fun at him, as he retires without the latest intelligence. Tradition informs us, that in the early, primitive days of San Francisco, it sometimes occurred that people, bowed down as if with sickness, crawled upon crutches, imploring the fortunate leaders of the forlorn hope to waive their privilege for the moment in favour of them “unfortunate cripples,” who, like the infirm cardinal that stood up erect so soon as he got hold of the keys of St. Peter within his clutch,

became miraculously stalwart the moment they became possessed of their letters; thus rendering the present generation uncharitably sceptical, and exploding the dodge. I came in for rather a laughable scene, in which the principal actor was a tight lad from my own province, who, when his turn came, demanded, in a loud tone,

“Are thir any letthers from my father in Ireland, inside?”

“Sam, may I be — if the kuroosity nailed to the post must not be for this *critter*. I say, Pat, I believe thar's summut for you here. Would you take atall figure for it?”

“For the matther o' that, the hole's rather small to make a bargain through; but if you come out here in the afthernune, instead of takin anything I will be afthir giving you such a lambaeæstin, that all the *soretin* clerks, in there wouldn't be able to make out yer direckshuns.”

“Keep your temper, Paddy; here's a line from your guvnor; no other man's father could direct a letter ‘to my Sun in Kaleyfornia,’ but yours.”

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“D'ye hear me, you strate-haired scamp,” retorted Pat; “there's never a pair of pistol-shinned Yankees, wayned on traycle an' Indaay mail, that the same ould chap and I wouldn't knock saucepans out of;” (and, moving off with his epistle) “so, hooray for ould Ireland, and the sky over it! barrin the praty rot; and where's the dirty, snufflin' spalpeen that daar say black's the white o' my eye, for” (in the distance) “I'm a rantin', rovin' blade, Of the devil a thing was I ever afraid!”

It may be supposed by some of my readers that I am drawing a long bow about this department; but I beg solemnly to assure the incredulous that I am far within the actual limits, and positively deficient in many of the strange and eccentric details. The crush continues for two days, and very often occupies a spell of the third, the clumsiness and delay arising from one of the boasted usages of the “great enlightened republic;” according to which, every new president turns all public departments inside out, displacing men just long enough in harness to know their business, to make

room for his own partisans, green hands, who assume office without any aptitude, and proceed to learn their duties without a preceptor.*

On my return from the Sandwich Islands, some approach to despatch had been made by having a wing of the office with numbered boxes, one of which every permanent resident rented.

There are numerous houses of worship in the city, but none of them externally distinguishable as such save the Roman Catholic chapel—a new frame building of capacious dimensions—erected on an eminence, which makes it quite a feature of the city. It is to be regretted, 256 however, that their influence is exceedingly circumscribed, if any inference can be deduced from the limited attendance; for while their congregations are so lamentably thin, the dens of iniquity, the gaming-houses, are crammed to suffocation; the sacrilegious din of their crashing bands rending the solemn stillness of the Sabbath, penetrating to the shrine of worship even during the hour of prayer—the rampant bleatings of the golden calf drowning the mild tones of Christian piety.

The world's progress furnishes no parallel for the precocious depravity of San Francisco. The virgin soil of a new settlement did not use to be a garden for vice and evil. There it was the kindly philanthropist looked to find the ruddy virtues blooming in a kindred clay in an uncontaminated atmosphere, fading and sickening only in the tedious revolution of time, as moral culture degenerated into voluptuous lethargy, accumulated wealth morbidly craving the incentives of luxury, and enervating enjoyments supplanting the healthy exercise of enterprise, when, with drooping heads and shrivelled stems, they shrank into decay, choked by the rank weeds of artificial society. But in Francisco a new and anomalous phase has arisen; the infant phenomenon exhibiting the tokens of senility in its cradle, with the gangrene of vicious indulgence staining its soft cheek before it is well emancipated from its swaddling-clothes—symptoms altogether incompatible with the sanguine anticipations which predicate for it the proudest position amongst all the cities within the vast bay of oceans between the Capes of Horn and Good Hope.

In Francisco nothing is natural—everything is forced; 257 it is a hotbed where all pursuits are stimulated by the fierce fire of one predominant lust. Trade or business is not embarked in there to be the honourable occupation of a lifetime; professions are not solely followed to secure a

permanent practice and social elevation; men engage in both the one and the other to build up fortunes in a hurry with whatever materials they can grasp, to win a large stake by any means and then withdraw, confounding the tactics of the gambler with the zealous integrity of the merchant, until conscience is left without a corner to hide in, and even common decency is obliged to pick her steps through the mire. I was furnished with a good illustrative instance in the case of a gentleman of my acquaintance from Adelaide, South Australia, who came up from the colonies with a large venture, and an introduction to a *first-rate* house, to whom he handed his invoices, to have them arranged according to a certain form prescribed by the customs authorities.

As one of the firm ran his eye over them, he exclaimed, “Why, as I live, you have put down the several articles at their full cost prices!” “Certainly,” replied Mr. B—d; “you could not suppose me capable of swearing to a lie to save a few dollars' duty?” “Well, Sir,” said this *respectable* merchant, “if that's your style of doing business, I guess you'll never dig a fortune amongst us.” In like manner, houses claiming the appellation of respectability, put out their characters to fructify by patronising any scheme or project that promises to lead to profit, duping poor emigrants, who were wont to regard reputation as a guarantee, by selling them, with every solemnity of asseveration, lots in their flourishing 258 newspaper cities; the poor pigeon going his way rejoicing, on the strength of their assurances, in quest of his property, eyes on inquiring, after a toilsome journey, at some tattered tents, “How far off is the city?” when he is informed to his dismay that he is standing in the centre of the capital.

Lot property, in and about Francisco, is, and will continue for some time, to be valuable and in demand, from the unceasing stream of emigration, both by sea and land, one-fourth of whom either stay in or return to the city; and as there are no such things as empty houses or untenanted stores, those who come with an intention of starting in business have no alternative but to purchase a lot and erect a tenement; so that, I repeat, lot property contiguous to the city is for the present an improving investment; but I wish to emphasize contiguous, because surveys and allotments have been made out to ridiculously remote points, that cannot possibly come into occupation if ever, for a number of years; for you will meet, as you travel towards the city, miles from its turmoil, posts surmounted with boards, that wayfarers approach to learn the distance, but find them headed

with the names of streets, and notifications “that the adjoining valuable lots are for sale”—causing the bewildered stranger to strain his optics in search of the outlines of a town, impressed, as he proceeds, with amazement, and vague notions of earthquakes and such like vagaries of nature.

But I cannot refrain from expressing my opinion—the question of title apart—that the present extravagant value of property in Francisco cannot continue to be long sustained, because commerce and business, which are its life 259 and soul, are on an unsound and fictitious basis, that must be revolutionised to become stable and permanent. The standard of property is relatively regulated by the profits of trade, and as those profits become necessarily depressed as the vast appliances of steam open fresh facilities for intercourse and transit, its value must subside in a like ratio. No sane man could put faith in the continuance of a system having to bear up against the feverish pulse of a money-market beating at an average of eight per cent. per month, against rents five hundred per cent. above those of New York or London, against wages and salaries equally exorbitant, with an exhausting domestic expenditure, despite of the most self-denying economy, and without the guarantee of insurance to cover the ruinous risks of the place from fire.

Besides, regarding it in another light, how is it possible that a city, claiming to contain 50,000 inhabitants, can be supported in its present career by so scant a population as that California is said to contain, which, according to an average of the very best estimates, does not exceed 200,000, cities, diggings, ranches, and all; an amount, too, that is gradually on the decrease, as the placer diggings—which alone can be worked by individual energy and labour—are giving evidences of exhaustion; results that will steadily progress until the mining operations of the country are concentrated in a few large associated companies, constrainedly employing machinery instead of manual labour in stamping and grinding the quartz, amalgamations, &c., &c., to the consequent diminution of the population, who have not the attraction of agricultural resource to induce them to settle in the country; for it 260 is a notorious fact, borne out by experience, that not one out of every hundred emigrants either start with the intention of permanent settlement, or see reason to change their minds after a season's residence in the country.

There is a constantly shifting population, the one coming with the determination of working hard, and saving rapidly for home enjoyment, the other returning with the fruits of their labour and economy. At first the flood was the stronger, but latterly the ebb tide is the more impetuous, carrying along with each receding wave a portion of the sandy foundation on which this marvellous city has been built.

San Francisco, to be upheld in its present overweening pretensions, would require a thriving population of at least a couple of million at its back.

The steady influx of emigrants has assisted the sale of property in another way, by bringing down labourers and mechanics' wages to somewhat of a rational standard, enabling the smaller class of capitalists to make efforts that before would have been impracticable. Smiths and carpenters, who six months previously would have grumbled at one ounce per day, came to be contented with eight dollars; good labourers, being anxious to secure steady employment, at four dollars; the only branches of labour that remained unabated when I left were washing and fine needlework. Owing to the disproportionate number of female settlers, you rarely see a gentleman using a hemmed kerchief, and when you do, you may set it down as a sign that he has some "friends in heaven" who have provided him with a helpmate; nor is it an unfrequent habit for persons to throw away their shirts and stockings when they become soiled, bad washing costing six dollars per dozen, taking the big pieces with the small, while good new shirts, ready made up, can be bought at ten dollars per dozen, and stockings at four dollars; a figure low for such a market, but consequent upon the amazing stocks of such goods with which it was glutted in the first burst of speculation. However, I am inclined to suspect, like the cards in fashionable clubs, those articles, after a little manipulation, find their way back to the shelves of the shopmen, which tends to keep up the stock and depress the price. But the number of the fair sex is sensibly on the increase, perhaps from this state of things (which I do not assign from any feelings of disrespect to the ladies, but as the natural result of cause and effect), that, up to this, seven-eighths of the emigrants were unmarried men, generally about the age when ideas of connubial felicity obtrude themselves on the imagination; so that I do not conceive it beyond the range of legitimate conjecture to suppose that the diminishing

numbers of young men at home would encourage family emigration on a large scale, by stimulating that very laudable ambition, so universal amongst prudent mammas, of having their daughters comfortably provided for.

The wholesale trade in Francisco appears to rest upon a very unsound foundation; for though there are several extensive establishments of the kind, shippers—who, in very many cases, come out as their own supercargoes—rather than encounter the awful charges and drawbacks of consignment, take their goods from the ship's side to one of the numerous auction marts with which the city 262 abounds, where all the retailers supply themselves, unless in immediate want of an article which does not appear in any of the auction catalogues of the day, when alone they resort to the store of the regular wholesale merchant.

“Auction watching” there is quite a business in itself, a large class of men exclusively devoting their time to attending those sales, and generally standing well with the man who wields the hammer, and helps them to the lion's share of good bargains, which are for the most part to be had, with periodical certainty, after the monthly remittances, when dust is not overabundant, and money sometimes raises to the startling rate of ten and twelve per cent. per month on the best bills. During my stay in California, I have never known discounts lower than seven per cent. per month on bills and notes of hand, while on mortgage I have known as high as twenty-five per cent. to be obtained; and as much as fifteen per cent. can always be easily had, most amply secured on the best property in the place; so that business profits and professional emoluments may be permitted to reach a very lofty range without exciting “our especial wonder.”

There are two great objections to Francisco as a mere place of residence; one of which may be removed in course of time, but the other, and most serious one, must abide for ever—I allude to the offensive and disgusting odours which pervade the atmosphere, owing to the surface drainage, as all the impurities of the city are carried off by gutters, only partially covered where they cross a thoroughfare; but this, no doubt, will be better arranged when the municipal government is thoroughly established 263 and organised.* But the quick daily transitions of temperature in the climate is above human control or amendment, and must evermore render it disagreeable to the

An excursion to California over the prairie, Rocky mountains, and great Sierra Nevada. With a stroll through the diggings and ranches of that country. By William Kelly <http://www.loc.gov/resource/calbk.054>

more robust, and excessively unhealthy to those of delicate constitutions; for even during the warmest of the summer months, while up to twelve and one o'clock the heat is so oppressive that the lightest possible garments are an incumbrance, you will be obliged for the remainder of the day to muffle up in Kamschatcan attire, and belay your hat with a stout rope, if you care for its safety, as a regular gale sets in, continuing till night, carrying with it a drift of sand from the surrounding hills and from off the streets, which inflames the eyes, pangs the ears, grits down the back; but, worst of all, finds its way into the lungs, forming granulations there that produce irritating coughs, and most generally ripen into tubercles, ending in pulmonary consumption. Fever and ague, of a very virulent type, also prevail to a great extent, and acute rheumatic ailments, growing out of the habit of living in those pile tenements, which are so carelessly constructed that the exhalations from the damp underneath can permeate through the ill-joined floors, and imbue the air of the whole establishment. The dreary winter season, which pours down its deluge of sleets and rains, is the healthier of all; because the weather, not being so subject to sudden daily caprice, enables the people to clothe in the morning in a costume that suits throughout the day; whereas in other seasons, though a change is necessary, business or indifference prevent its being made, thus laying a foundation for ill health.

At my late visit I found regular sewers in process of formation, several having been already opened, perfectly sufficient to drain all the nuisances; besides which improvements, brick houses had become more numerous since the destructive fires, and plank roads laid down in all the leading streets.

Good water is abundant, and, though there are no regular markets, all the necessaries of life can be conveniently obtained. Excellent bread is made throughout the city, and prime beef can always be had at moderate rates; but the mutton is wretched, only fit to be used in harricoes or pies. Fish is a rarity, although the bay and rivers abound with an extensive variety of the best description. Venison is quite a cheap and ordinary dish, and even bear meat frequently figures on the *role* of the tavern's *carte*. I have been more than once amused on entering a *restaurant*, to hear a waiter communicating his order to the kitchen, shouting, in double bass, "One roast bear for No. 9;" next moment, "Two *rare* roast bears for No. 6; an *outside* roast bear for No. 3;" giving one the idea there were a drove of those animals in a huge bakehouse, ready to be trotted out on the shortest notice.

There are five daily papers in Francisco, all seemingly well supported and cleverly conducted, each labouring strenuously to establish their various creeds of American politics; in which they have so far succeeded that at every pettifogging election, even of the lowest official, every party spell is evoked, and all the rancour of polical spleen is stirred up into full ferment.

About two miles westward of the city, beyond the hills, is rather a fertile strip of land, stretching along the coast of the bay; towards the entrance, at the end next the city, there is a small fresh-water lake, round which a little colony of washerwomen have planted themselves, 265 and a right good location it is for the business, as the water is soft and detergent, and the margin is girthed with a thorny scrubwood, which answers admirably for drying. When first seen from the hill-top it forms a unique feature in the landscape, sufficiently imposing to confer a name on the cove of the bay adjoining it, which is laid down in the map as Washerwoman's Bay. There has been some garden cultivation commenced in the same locality; the little streams that trickle down towards the lake affording means of irrigation, and giving promise of crops, at the time of my visit, that would lead, I should think, to the occupation of all the available land about for green vegetables, which were then a perfect treat, and commanded a most arbitrary price.

At the other end of the narrow plain stands the old Spanish presidio and landing, which is occupied by a few American soldiers, and used as a depôt for military stores. The landing is a bad one, situated on a flat unprotected beach, and long since altogether abandoned as such. About a mile further seaward is the old fort, standing on a bold projecting point, which, with Punto Diablo on the opposite shore, forms the throat of the harbour Chrysopylæ as it is called—a short mile in width, with deep water close into each shore, and no hidden danger or obstacle to obstruct navigation, almost superseding the necessity of pilotage. There were a few paltry remains of Spanish fortification about the fort, on which the Americans have improved, and planted some guns, round the inside of the headland, on the northern side of the entrance, of which Punto Diablo is the extreme tongue. There is a nice sheltered little harbour, called Sausolito, 266 where ships come to, when there is not sufficient wind to enable them to stem the ebb tide; and vessels outward-bound frequently call for water, as it is particularly good; and if the voyage is a long

one, a considerable saving can be effected, ships' water at the city being four cents per gallon. A settlement has been long since formed here by a Captain Richardson, who owns the entire saddle of good land that rides betwixt the high hips of the coast range there. He is so jealous of neighbourhood or encroachment, that he cannot be induced to let or sell any portion of his possessions, although he does not nearly use or occupy the extent of his territory, which is called Plaza de los Carallos.

Opposite the Bay of Sansolito, in a north-easterly direction, lies the island of De los Angelos, much the largest in the Bay of San Francisco. Its shores are bold around, but on the south and west rise abruptly to a giddy height. It is covered with fine pasture, possesses good water, and a sufficiency of firewood; but as yet has not tempted a wooer to its angelic embrace. Were I to remain in California, I should choose it as my head-quarters, for, over and above the properties I have mentioned, its picturesque situation is pre-eminently attractive, reposing under the shelter of the coast range, and commanding a most expansive view of the bay; from its south-east cliffs you see through the gullet of the harbour the undulating bosom of the broad Pacific; immediately opposite, the more elevated terraces of the city sweetly challenges the view; and beyond its jutting extremes the southern section of the bay stretches beyond the limits of vision, to receive the waters of the Santa Clara, on 267 which stands the embarcadero of the capital of San José; while towards the northward is discernible the great entrance to the Strait of Carquines, with the city of Benicio on its shores—a sort of aquatic Temple-bar, where vessels, boats, and barges are jostling against each other as they pass and repass in crowded throngs through this narrow thoroughfare.

Before leaving Francisco, I would give a word of advice to emigrants—advice founded on my own personal experience, observation and inquiry, especially intended for tradesmen and mechanics, who, in the chagrin of disappointment at finding a somewhat abated scale of wages, spurn excellent offers, and start off to the mines, where they find matters still more vexatiously at variance with the gilded narratives that wheedled them from their comfortable homes. Before yielding to hasty impulse, let them collate and compare remuneration and expenditure with those items at home, and they will be constrained to admit that industry and skill are still splendidly rewarded in San Francisco, notwithstanding the diminution of wages. If wages have become more moderate, so also

has the cost of living, each still bearing their relative proportions; when one was excessively high, the other was similarly exorbitant; now both have subsided, yet income and expenditure have not approximated uncomfortably. There is still an ample margin, for a man not addicted to gaming and drinking, to augment a reserve fund, should he be disposed to found one, without abandoning his accustomed pursuits or rushing blindly to shatter his constitution, and return bowed down by sickness, without gains enough to defray the expenses that 268 must accrue before restored health enables him to seek employment.

The labourer, who all his life has been accustomed to hard toil and exposure, whose frame has been case-hardened by snows and sunshine, whose constitution will not shrink under the vicissitudes of diet and climate, is the proper manner of man for a miner. He has shivered the rock in the quarry at home,—he can do the same in California; he has worked in mud and water digging the canal in his native state, and can endure wet feet in the vocation of a gold-digger. He was never over-daintily ministered to in food, nor does he pine at the rough fare of the mines. But take the carpenter from behind his dry bench, the smith from his warm forge, or the spruce clerk from his high stool, and place them in cold water, with a red-hot sun glaring down upon them,—let them strain every muscle in this novel sphere of labour, rough it on hard bread and salt junk, seeking repose on the damp earth, and, believe me, they will soon exhibit the sad effects of so radical a change.

Besides, steady employment about the different cities will enable a man to enjoy more comforts, and save more money than he can as a general thing by the precarious income of the diggings. The average daily income of miners, embracing all the diggings, has been computed, by persons in a position to make the calculation, at eight dollars; which, from my own observation, taking good mines and bad, energetic men and slothful, good workmen and those unused to toil, I consider tolerably near the mark. Let me next see the number of days this income can be reckoned on: we first subtract fifty-two Sundays, 269 and at least ninety-one days for the winter and high-water season, making together one hundred and forty-three days; those from three hundred and sixty-five leave two hundred and twenty-two days, or within a fraction of thirty-two weeks; then all miners allow at the rate of one day in the week for prospecting, seeking new ground, which leaves a residue of one hundred and ninety working days; from which I might, and should, deduct largely for

sickness and other contingencies; but admitting one hundred and ninety days as the yearly average at 8 dollars per day, it yields a total of 1520 dollars, showing that something over 4 dollars per day for the year round is the miner's income. Let the mechanic or clerk, in following this calculation, also bear in mind, that while he in Francisco or Sacramento lays in his necessaries at reasonable rates, the miner has to submit to the most usurious exactions; and, after a little sober reflection, I conceive he will come into my view of the matter.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Change my Mind about visiting the San Joaquin Valley—Reasons for so doing—Prevailing Character of the Country—Rice growing there profitable or not—Wild Horses in the Valley—Rare pictures of Animated Nature—Colonel Fremont's Description of the Valley—Quartz stratifications about the Mariposas District—Dr. Marsh's Opinion of the Valley.

I ORIGINALLY intended proceeding from San Francisco down the Valley of the San Joaquin, and visiting the southern as well as the northern mines; but from the various descriptions I received from several intelligent parties, who worked in and travelled through them, there was so perfect a similarity in the character of the diggings, the returns, the *habitans*, and goings on there, I thought there would be nothing of novelty or interest to repay me for the journey; nor was there any variety in the aspect of the country or scenery to attract the tourist who had already travelled through the Valley of the Sacramento.

The San Joaquin valley is largely composed of tule marshes and low sedgy swamps, so subject to overflow and lodgment they cannot well be turned to profitable account, except it be in the cultivation of rice, in which employment, I understand, there are some parties at present engaged; and though I have no doubt as to its growing freely, and yielding large crops of good quality, yet, from the very low rates at which it is imported from several of 271 the islands of the Eastern Archipelago, where land and labour are to be had for a mere song, I cannot be brought to believe it will ever become a remunerative species of husbandry, even though “*gone into*” by sheer Yankees.

Three cents per pound is the price at the time I write, and I find the averages of the markets have been fully as low as in South Carolina, where it is one of the prime products.

In the higher, or more rolling districts as they are termed, the soil is good—not to be excelled for richness by the most favoured portions of the Sacramento valley—and some of the best locations have been settled; but, beyond stock raising, the only cultivation that has been attempted is that of the vine, which, from many samples of the grape I have seen, bids fair to be rewarded with success, in so far as the character of the fruit is concerned. But though the juice may be peculiarly vinous, I apprehend a generation must pass away before any profit can be extracted from the purple clusters; lacking which, in these degenerate days, the most delightful or utilitarian avocations speedily languish and cease to interest.

The herds of wild horses is a feature peculiar to this valley. They are of a splendid breed, and up to this period have been suffered to increase and multiply without interference or molestation, as the rancheros raise their own stock, and prefer the trouble of rearing and training them to the bother and danger of catching and taming the fiery quadruped of nature's nurturing. I have heard several glowing descriptions of them, as they come proudly careering about a band of travellers, with flowing manes and streaming tails, sweeping over the plain with inconceivable fleetness, and gradually diminishing the circle, as, 272 subsiding into their stately trot, they approximate the strangers, snorting wildly, devouring them with their brilliant distended eyes, manoeuvring around them in graceful curves, until, after having satiated their curiosity, as if actuated by a simultaneous impulse, they rush off with the rapidity and noise of the whirlwind. There is no animal in animated nature to compare for beauty, symmetry, or spirit, with the horse; nor can I conceive any spectacle of moving life so magnificent, so imposing, as the grand, proud *abandon* of a band of those noble animals.

I will endeavour to compensate the reader for my meagreness of description by a few brief transcripts, which, for reasons before adverted to in these pages, may, perhaps, be regarded as over-warmly coloured, though in the main correct. Colonel Fremont, who has become a permanent settler in the valley, thus describes it: “The Valley of the San Joaquin is about 300 miles long

and 60 broad, between the slopes of the coast mountains and the Sierra Nevada, with a general elevation of only a few hundred feet above the level of the sea; it presents a variety of soil, from dry and unproductive to well-watered and luxuriantly fertile. The eastern (which is the fertile) side of the valley is intersected with numerous streams, forming large and beautiful bottoms of fertile land, wooded principally with white oaks (*Quercus longgilanda*), in open groves of handsome trees, often five and six feet in diameter and sixty to eighty feet high; only the larger streams, which are from fifty to one hundred and fifty feet wide, and drain the upper parts of the mountains, pass entirely across the valley, forming the 'Tularè Lakes' and San Joaquin River, which, in the rainy season, make a 273 continuous stream from the head of the valley to the bay. The foot-hills of the Sierra Nevada, which limit the valley, make a woodland country, diversified with undulating grounds and pretty valleys, and watered with numerous small streams, which reach only a few miles beyond the hills, the springs which supply them not being copious enough to carry them across the plains. These afford some advantageous spots for farms, making sometimes large bottoms of rich moist land. The rolling surface of the hills presents sunny exposures, sheltered from the winds, and having a highly favourable climate and suitable soil, are considered to be well adapted to the cultivation of the grape, and will probably become the principal vine-growing region of California. The uplands bordering the valleys of the large streams are usually wooded with evergreen oaks, and the intervening plains are timbered with groves or belts of evergreen and white oaks. Among the prairie, or open land, the surface of the valley consists of *low* level plains, along the Tularè Lakes and San Joaquin River, changing into undulating rolling ground nearer the foot-hills of the mountains.”

Colonel Fremont's location in the valley is called the Mariposas, being situated on a small creek of that name, between the Sierra Nevada and the San Joaquin; it comprises ten sitios, or leagues square, purchased from a Spanish grantee, and said to contain quartz stratafications, both rich and extensive; so much so, that a sanguine public have placed the colonel in the ever-to-be-desired niche of the richest man in the world. I have seen many specimens of the amalgamations from the Mariposas, in which the golden particles are so very minute, they 274 cannot be well detected with the naked eye; but the colonel affirms that, on stamping and retorting, it yields three ounces of pure

metal to the pound of quartz—a percentage that would certainly justify the enviable position his friends have assigned him, but one that will not, in my mind, be realised by experiment. However, the matter will soon be tested, as he has let off some portions to companies, who are now engaged in erecting the necessary machinery.

As a general thing, there are much larger districts of quartz stratafications, appurtenant to the valley of San Joaquin, than that of Sacramento; and in some of those the gold is not only combined in minute granular amalgamations, but runs in rich, thick cords and bunches, averaging to the full as much metal as stone. Those regions have not as yet been fully explored or investigated, but sufficient is known to warrant a belief that they are vastly extensive, and will constitute the gold mines of California long after all the present surface-picking is exhausted.

Dr. Marsh, a gentleman of enterprise and intelligence, who settled in a fertile and romantic district near the base of Mount Diablo, before there was any idea entertained of the hidden wealth of the country, thus describes the valley of his adoption in a descriptive pamphlet: “It forms a fine *pastoral* region, with a good proportion of fine land, and a very inviting field for emigration. The whole of this region has been but imperfectly explored; enough, however, is known to make it certain that it is a fertile country. In the valleys of the rivers, which come down from the great Sierra Nevada, are vast bodies of pine, cedar, and red wood. The whole country east of the San Joaquin, and the waters of the Tularè Lakes, is considered by the best judges to be peculiarly adapted to the culture of the vine, which must *necessarily* become one of the *principal agricultural resources of California.*” This latter sentence is one to which I would respectfully call the attention of Colonel Fremont, and those other writers and talkers, who stick out for California's being essentially a corn-growing country, because it emanates from the pen of a gentleman of a high order of attainments, and a practical experimentalist, long living in the country, who, after trying a large variety of crops, affirms that vine-growing “must necessarily become one of the principal agricultural resources of California,” the inference being evident that it is unsuitable for most other productions.

CHAPTER XIX.

Prefaratory Observations—California first Discovered—The first Colonisation Expedition—Establishment of the early Missions—Their total Number—An Outline of their System—Their Success in teaching Trades and Husbandry, and in securing the Friendship of the Indians—Fraternisation of the Spaniards and Indians—Leads to Intermarriages—The Period from which the Missions began to Decline—Date of their complete Subversion—Flagitious Conduct of the Government of the Day—Those promising Establishments hasten to Decay—Extracts—Form of Government in Upper California in 1822—Presidios, Description of—Their Strength and Duties—The Missions—Dates of Foundation—Detailed Account of their Appearance and Construction—Indian Rancherias—Authority and Duties of the Reverend Fathers—Extent of the Missions—Number of Indians attached to them—Natural Habits of the Indians—The General Production of the Missions—They Establish a Commerce in the Exportation of Hides—Inland Towns, their Number and Social Distinctions—Amusements—Fecundity of the Whites in California—Ports and Commerce—Value of their Exports.

As the next branch of my rambles take a southerly direction through the Valleys of San José and San Juan, where the native Californian is still to be found following his peaceful pastoral avocations amidst the wreck of his early institutions, I think a few prefaratory remarks will not be out of place, together with a short extract from an observant and accomplished Spanish writer, showing the state and condition of the country in 1822, when Mexican independence was thoroughly established.

Alta California was discovered in 1548 by Cabrillo, an adventurous Spanish navigator, who effected a landing on the coast somewhere about where San Diego now stands, 277 and first held intercourse with the wild aboriginal inhabitants of the country, planting the standard of Christianity on its remote and lonely shores; but it was not until the close of the last century, in 1769, that it was regularly colonised by Spaniards, the first properly organised expedition being got up in 1768, under the auspices of Father Junipera Serra, Prefect of the College of San Fernando, in Mexico, and commanded by Don Gaspar de Portala, which arrived in the following June, in two divisions, contiguous to the point of original discovery; and from that period may be dated its connexion

with Spain and Mexico, who afterwards held it, in a state of intermittent subjection, until the late conquest by the United States.

At the above juncture commenced the systematic conversion and enlightenment of the natives, a Mission being immediately founded, about two leagues from San Diego, called San Diego de Alcalá, and others, in quick succession, at other favourable points, under the protection of *presidios* (armed posts), until, as appears by a report from the Viceroy to the King, dated at Mexico, 27th December, 1793, there were thirteen in active, useful operation, which number was subsequently augmented to twenty-one. Inducements were held out to the natives to come in and settle closely around them, those that remained fractious and troublesome being chastised and kept under by the military. But the great majority, without much persuasion, came to reside in rancherías (villages) prepared for their reception, where they were initiated into the truths of revealed religion, trained to labour in the Mission lands, and educated and instructed in many of the most useful practical trades and sciences; amongst which that of agriculture was pursued with such skill and industry, that its products amazed the enterprising Vancouver and the scientific Humboldt. Grain sufficient for their wants was extracted from the soil with the aid of irrigation; vegetable husbandry, by the same means, yielded a superabundance; fruitful orchards, crowded with every variety of tropical fruit, teeming vineyards, reeling with profuse clusters of the finest-flavoured grapes, and large, thriving herds of imported breeds surrounding the establishments of those holy fathers, who, by their suavity and benevolence, so attached those children of nature to them, that they ruled and controlled them without the exercise of any irksome restraints, gradually extending the sphere of their influence until the whole length and breadth of the country came within their gentle sway, inducing the natives in the most remote fastnesses to forsake their savage haunts and habits, in order to participate in the benefits of the new order of things, who conformed so readily to Spanish customs, and became so socially amalgamated, that the new lay-settlers did not hesitate to strengthen the chain of connexion by frequent intermarriages, the more especially as, at the commencement, there was little, if any, of a female emigration from the old country.

The march of progressive civilisation and improvement received its first check on the declaration of Mexican independence, when, with the officious zeal peculiar to most revolutionary governments,

they called in question the nature and extent of Mission grants, arrogating a power and temper of interference at once inconsistent with their original rights and immunities, and the continuous 279 prosperity of those institutions. The reverend fathers bore up against those usurpations and injuries with truly Christian fortitude and forbearance, submitting with uncomplaining resignation to the most wanton acts of spoliation, which alienated from them the fairest portions of their reclaimed domains. Nor did they abate in the slightest their philanthropic labours until 1836, when one of the many internal revolutions and political changes of government occurred, bringing in its train a series of fresh changes and innovations, which sanctioned the destruction of the Mission establishments, by the arbitrary secularisation of their lands and tenements, and even the peremptory distribution of their cattle and stores, a corrupt and degenerate government pensioning its local minions and rapacious partisans by countenancing and enforcing this system of wholesale plunder and devastation, as unjust as it was impolitic; for the reverend fathers, seeing they could make no head against the nefarious current, for the most part retired from the country or abandoned their smiling establishments, which, from being model hives of industry and order, soon began to crumble and relapse into their immemorial state of barrenness, the Indian neophytes returning to primitive barbarism, and even the very temples of God participating in the universal and deplorable decay.

The following are the extracts alluded to in the early part of the chapter, which will be found to blend illustratively with the experiences of my short tour in the pastoral regions of California, and convey as full an historical summary of the country as may satisfy the general reader; for its earliest historical epoch may be strictly said 280 to date from the founding of the first Mission, unless we go back amidst barbaric traditions and superstitions:

“Upper California, on account of its small population, not being able to become a State of the great Mexican Republic, takes the character of a territory, the government of which is under the charge of a commandant-general, who exercises the charge of a superior political chief, whose attributes depend entirely upon the President of the Republic and the General Congress; but to amplify the legislation of its centre, it has a deputation made up of seven vocals, the half of these individuals

being removed every two years; the superior political chief presides at their sessions; the inhabitants of the territory are divided amongst the presidios, missions, and towns.

“The necessity of protecting the apostolic predication was the obligatory reason for forming the presidios, which were established according to circumstances; that of San Diego was the first—Santa Barbara, Monterey, and San Francisco afterwards; the form of all of them are nearly the same—and that is, a square containing about two hundred yards on each point, formed of a weak wall made of mud bricks; its height may be four yards in the interior of the square, and built on to some wall; in its entire circumference are a chapel, storehouses, and houses for the commandant, officers, and troops, having at the entrance of the presidio quarters for a *corps de garde*.

“These buildings in the presidios, at the first idea, appear to have been sufficient, the only object being for a defence against a surprise from the Gentiles, or wild Indians, in the immediate vicinity; but this cause having ceased, I believe they ought to be demolished, as they are 281 daily threatening a complete ruin, and, from the very limited spaces of habitation, must be very incommodious to those who inhabit them. As to the exterior of the presidios, several private individuals have built some very decent houses, and having evinced great emulation in this branch of business, I have no doubt but in a short time we shall see very considerable towns in California.

“At the distance of one, or at most, two miles from the presidio, and near to the anchoring-ground, is a fort, which has a few pieces of artillery of small calibre; the situation of the most of them is very advantageous for the defence of the port, though the form of the walls, esplanades, and other imperfections which may be seen, make them very insignificant.

“The battalion of each presidio is made up of eighty or more horse-soldiers, called *cuera*; besides these, it has a number of auxiliary troops, and a detachment of artillery; the commandant of each presidio is the captain of its respective company, and besides the intervention—military and political—he has charge of all things relating to the marine department.

“The Missions, contained in the territory, are twenty-one; they were built at different epochs; that of San Diego, being the first, was built in 1769, its distance from the presidio of the same name is two

leagues; the rest were built successively, according to circumstances and necessities; the last one was founded in the year 1822, under the name of San Francisco Dolores, and is the most northern of them all.

“The edifices in some of the Missions are more extensive than in others, but in form they are nearly all equal; 282 they are fabricated of mud-bricks, and the divisions are according to necessity. In all of them may be found commodious habitations for the ministers, storehouses to keep their goods in, proportional granaries, offices for soapmakers, weavers, blacksmiths, and large parterres, and horse and cattle pens, independent apartments for Indian youth of each sex, and all such offices as were necessary at the time of its institution; contiguous to, and communicating with the former, is a church, forming a part of the edifices of each Mission; they are all very proportionable, and ornamented with profusion.

“The Indians reside about 200 yards distant from the above-mentioned edifice; this place is called the ‘Rancheria.’ Most of the Missions are made up of very reduced quarters, built with mud-bricks, forming streets; while in others the Indians have been allowed to follow their primitive customs, their dwellings being a sort of hut in a conical shape, which, at the most, do not exceed four yards in diameter, and the top of the cone may be elevated three yards. They are built of rough sticks, covered with bulrushes or grass in such a manner as to completely protect the inhabitants from all the inclemencies of the weather. In my opinion, these rancherias are the most adequate to the natural uncleanliness of the Indians, as the families often renew them, burning the old ones, and immediately building others with the greatest facility. Opposite the rancherias, and near to the Missions, is to be found a small garrison, with proportionate rooms for a corporal and five soldiers, with their families. This small garrison is quite sufficient to prevent any attempt of the Indians from taking effect, there 283 having been some examples made which causes the Indians to respect this small force. One of these piquets in a Mission has a double object besides keeping the Indians in subjection; they run post with a monthly correspondence, or with any extraordinaries that may be necessary for government.

“All the Missions in this California are under the charge of religious men, of the order of San Francisco; at the present time their number is twenty-seven, all of an advanced age. Each Mission has one of these fathers for its administrator, and he holds absolute authority. The tilling of the ground, the gathering of the harvest, the slaughtering of cattle, the weaving, and everything that concerns the Mission, is under the direction of the fathers, without any other person interfering in any way whatever; so that if one Mission has the good fortune to be superintended by an industrious and discreet padre, the Indians disfrute in abundance all the real necessities of life; at the same time the nakedness and misery of any one Mission are a palpable proof of the inactivity of its director. The Missions extend their possession from one extremity of the territory to the other, and have made the limits of one Mission from those of another. Though they do not require all this land for agriculture and the maintenance of their stock, they have appropriated the whole, always strongly opposing any individual who may wish to settle himself or his family on any piece of land between them; but it is to be hoped that the new system of illustration, and the necessity of augmenting private property, that the people of reason will cause the government to take such adequate measures as will conciliate the 284 interests of all. Amongst all the Missions, there are from 21,000 to 22,000 Catholic Indians; but each Mission has not an equal or proportionate share in its congregation; some have 3000 or 4000, while others have scarcely 400; and at this difference may be computed the riches of the Missions in proportion. Besides the number of Indians already spoken of, each Mission has a number of Gentiles, who live chiefly on the farms annexed to the Missions; the number of them is undetermined.

“The Indians are naturally filthy and careless, and their understanding is very limited in the small arts; they are not deficient in ideas of imitation, but they never will be inventors. Their true character is that of being revengeful and timid; consequently they are very much addicted to treachery. They have no knowledge of benefits received, and ingratitude is common amongst them. The education they receive in their infancy is not the proper one to develop their reason, and if it were, I do not believe them capable of any good impression. All these Indians, whether from the continual use of the sweat-house, or from their filthiness, or the little ventilation in their habitations, are weak and unvigorous. Spasms and rheumatics, to which they are so much subject,

are the consequences of their customs; but what most injures them, and prevents propagation, is the venereal disease, which most of them have very strongly, clearly proving that their humours are analogous to receiving the impressions of that contagion. From this reason may be deduced the enormous differences between the births and deaths, which, without doubt, is one-tenth per year in favour of the latter; but the missionaries do 285 all in their power to prevent this, with respect to the catechumens situated near them.

“The general productions of the Missions are the breed of the larger class of cattle, sheep, and horses; wheat, maize, or Indian corn; beans, peas, and other vegetables; though the productions of the Missions situated more to the southward, are more extensive, these producing the grape and olive in great abundance. Of all these articles of production, the most lucrative is the large cattle, their hides and tallow affording an active commerce with foreign vessels on this coast, this being the only means the inhabitants, missionaries, and private individuals have of supplying their actual necessities; for this reason they give this branch all the impulse they possibly can, and on it generally place all their attention.

“It is now six years since they began to gather in hides and tallow for commerce. Formerly they merely took care of as many, or as much, as they required for their own private use, and the rest was thrown away as useless; but at this time, the actual number of hides sold annually, on board of foreign vessels, amount to 30,000 or 40,000, and about the same amount of arrobas (twenty-five pounds) of tallow; and in pursuing their present method, there is no doubt but in three or four years the amount of the exportation of each of these articles will be doubled. Flax, linen, wine, olive-oil, grain, and other agricultural productions, would be more extensive, if there were stimulants to excite industry; but this not being the case, there is just grain enough sown and reaped for the consumption of the inhabitants in the territory.

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“The towns contained in the district are three, the most populous being that of Angeles, which has about 1200 souls; that of St. Joseph's, of Guadaloupe, may contain 600; and the village of Branciforte, 200. They are all formed imperfectly, and without order, each person having built

his own house on the spot he thought most convenient for himself. The first of these pueblos is governed by its corresponding body of magistrates, composed of an alcalde, or judge, four regidores, or municipal officers, a syndic, and secretary; the second, of an alcalde, two regidores, a syndic, and secretary; and the third, on account of the smallness of its population, is subject to the commandancia of Monterey.

“The inhabitants of the towns are white, and, to distinguish them from the Indians, are vulgarly called *people of reason*. The number of these contained in the territory may be nearly 5000. These families are divided amongst the pueblos and presidios; they are nearly all the descendants of a small number of individuals who came from the Mexican country—some as settlers, others in the service of the army—accompanied by their wives, and some few foreigners. In the limited space of little more than fifty years the present generation has been formed.

“The whites are in general a robust race, healthy and well made. Some of them are occupied in breeding and raising cattle, and cultivating small quantities of wheat and beans; but for want of sufficient land, for which they cannot obtain a rightful ownership, and the difficulties of irrigation, their labours are very limited; others dedicate themselves to the service of arms. All the presidial companies are composed of natives of the country, but the most 287 of them are entirely indolent, it being very rare for any individual to strive to augment his fortune. Dancing, horse-riding, and gambling, occupy all their time. The arts are entirely unknown, and I am doubtful if there is any one individual who exercises any trade, very few who understand letters, and only the simple sciences are practised amongst them.

“The fecundity of the *people of reason* is extreme; it is very rare to find a married couple with less than five or six children, while there are hundreds who have from twelve to fifteen; very few of them die in their youth, and on reaching the age of puberty, are sure to see their grandchildren. The age of eighty and one hundred has always been common in this climate; most infirmities are unknown amongst them, and the freshness and robustness of the people show the beneficial influences of the climate; the women, in particular, have always the roses stamped on their cheeks. This beautiful species is, without doubt, the most active and laborious, exercising all their

vigilance in the duties of the house, the cleanliness of their children, and attention to their husbands, dedicating all their leisure moments to some kind of occupation that may be useful towards their maintenance; their clothing is always clean and decent, nakedness being entirely unknown in either sex.

“There are four ports, principal bays in this territory, which take the names of the corresponding presidios. The best guarded is that of San Diego; that of San Francisco has many advantages; Santa Barbara is but middling in the best parts, at other times always bad. Besides the above-mentioned places, vessels sometimes anchor at Santa Cruz, 288 San Luis Obispo, El Refugio, San Pedro, and San Juan, that they may obtain the productions of the Missions nearest these last-mentioned places; but, from an order sent by the Minister of War, and circulated by the commandant-general, we are given to understand that no foreign vessel is permitted to anchor at any of these places, Monterey only excepted. The commandant-general has allowed the first three principal ports to remain open provisionally; were it not so, there would undoubtedly be an end to all commerce with California, as I will quickly show.

“The only motive that induces foreign vessels to visit this coast, is for the hides and tallow, which they barter for in the territory. It is well known that in any of these ports there is no possibility of realising any money, for here it does not circulate; the goods imported by the foreign vessels are intended to facilitate the purchase of the aforesaid articles, well knowing the Missions have no interest in money, but rather such goods as are necessary for the Indians; so that several persons who have brought goods to sell for nothing but money, have not been able to sell them. It will appear very extraordinary that money should not be appreciated in a country where its value is so well known; but the reason may be easily perceived by attending to the circumstances of the territory.

“The quantity of hides gathered annually is about 30,000 or 40,000, and the arrobas of tallow, with very little difference, will be about the same. Averaging the price of each article at two dollars, we shall see that the intrinsic value in annual circulation in California is 140,000 dollars; this sum divided between twenty-one 289 Missions, will give each one 6666 dols. Supposing the

only production of the country converted into money, with what would the Indians be clothed, and by what means would they be able to cover a thousand other necessities? Money is useful in amplifying speculations, but in California, as yet, there are no speculations, and its productions are barely sufficient for the absolute necessary consumption. The same comparison may be made with respect to private individuals, who are able to gather a few hides and a few arrobas of tallow, these being in small quantities.”

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CHAPTER XX.

Start for San José—Description of the Steamer—Uncomfortable *Fix*—The Passage—Appearance of the Passengers in the Morning—Aspect of the Country—The Embarcadero—A Yankee Version of the Navigation Laws—The Plains to the Pueblo—Outskirts of the Capital—The Capital itself—The Catholic Chapel—The Easter Festival—How it is celebrated—Easter Sunday Morning—The Spanish Carreta—Spanish Fashion, Customs, and Costumes—The Congregation—Beauty of the Females—The Men look a Mixed Breed—Introduced to an Irish Gentleman—Meet some old Acquaintances—Number of Irish Settlers in the Valley—Their great and uniform Prosperity—Curious Enigma—English and Scotch Settlers.

I ORIGINALLY intended travelling by land to San José, as I expected the company of an agreeable friend, familiar with the route; but as he was detained by a sudden call of business, I chose the water, as the more preferable mode of reaching it, there being a small steamer on the station; not, indeed, very attractive in appearance or accommodation, for she was shaped more like a vat than a boat, propelled by a wheel aft the rudder, the machinery, boiler and all, standing right in the centre of the only apartment she contained, where the whole of the passengers were all huddled together, broiling with their own animal heat and that of the furnace, breathing an atmosphere of escaped steam and grease, and in constant bodily danger of being lugged in amongst the wheels, cranks, and pistons. Thirty dollars was the fare; and after filling her 291 until there was no more standing room, we found she was so fast aground that we should be compelled to wait till next tide. As we could not land, the water being so shoal about us that no boats could approach, and no one seemed

disposed for a bout at mud-larking, there was nothing therefore for it but patience, resignation, and the pastime of relieving legs for six hours, which was not very agreeable, as might be conjectured, from the fact that the vessel took a list, which made our footing somewhat precarious. The few seats on board were occupied by a few ladies, who constituted *tableaux vivans* of a series of individual satires on the lady who “sat on the monument.”

Had we been enabled to start in the morning, we would have carried daylight with us to our destination; but as it was, the shades of evening enveloped us in their sombre veil before we got half-way down the bay; the lower part of which is so studded with shoals, we had to grope our way slowly, with the lead over each bow, until we got to the mouth of the river—a narrow, tortuous stream, where the current with the ebb was nearly a match for our horse power; so that the nine miles to the embarcadero occupied us nearly as many hours in accomplishing it. I never before endured so much fatigue, of so unusual a nature; standing twenty hours without room to sneeze, or draw a full inhalation; and as the morning's sun revealed the aspect of the group, I think I never within the same compass saw so many woe-begone visages, grimy and greasy, to an extent that almost puzzled identification. I sincerely felt for the embarrassment of the ladies, who were evidently suffering in the throes of 292 exposure, rightly conjecturing that the delicate tints of their velvet cheeks had contracted the hue of the filthy varnish, which was nowise improved by the nervous application of cambric. I have remarked ladies as they emerged from the gaseous glare of the ball-room into the clear critical light of day; but the complexional transfusion on board the steamer outruns all comparison.

The country on each side of the river (the Santa Clara) up to the embarcadero is low, and covered with tule, scarcely furnishing a patch of pasture the entire way; nevertheless, its dreariness was relieved by the scenery in the background, where the green verdure of wild oats and barley decked the mountains to their summits, and dark ravines, wooded with fine timber, intersected their sides, marking the course of the waters that hurry down them in the rainy season. At the point of debarcation the river, at low water, is barely wide enough for two ships to lie alongside each other; and, as usual, there is a town laid out there, with its lines of embryo streets and squares ostentatiously indicated. But speculation had not taken root in building, beyond some half-dozen

houses; the principal trade of the place in storage-vending, boarding and lodging being vexatiously engrossed by an old British ship belonging to Belfast, which was towed up, dismantled; and though not exactly fitted up in the style of Trajan's Palace, on the Lake of Nemi, still so far excelled the establishments on shore in comfort and accommodation, that she left them without a customer—a piece of monopoly so provoking to Yankee cupidity, that they applied to the authorities for an injunction to restrain her proprietors from carrying on 293 business on board her, on the score that it was an infraction of the Navigation Laws; and it would not surprise me one whit if the Executive ban were placed on this “sheer hulk,” embedded in the mud, without either mast or rudder, as British subjects are sure to have a free interpretation of this restrictive code when it jars with the interest of native Americans. There will be no difficulty in making her out a “foreign bottom,” and it can be easily construed into a “coasting trade,” her doing a business by gangway with either bank of the river.

From the embarcardero to the pueblo (town) of San José is eight miles, commencing the fertile portion of the lovely valley of that name, which is chiefly settled by natives of the sea-girt isles. The plain is devoid of timber, except along the several arroyos (rivulets) that meander through it, whose courses are indicated by handsome belts of oak and sycamore, but along the base of the mountains by which it is bounded, deep groves of pine, oak, and red wood, of immense magnitude, are to be found. On each hand, as you travel towards the pueblo, may be seen handsome, comfortable ranchos in picturesque situations, and large herds of the finest cattle feeding over the finest pasture. More closely approaching the town, you meet some neat modern villas, with handsome enclosures and well-cultivated gardens; suburbs that would lead you to expect a place of corresponding taste and regularity; but in this I was completely disappointed, for it is a scattered, incongruous collection of poor houses, having for its nucleus, like most Spanish towns, a plaza or square, the other buildings and dwellings being erected at the caprice of the proprietors, without any idea or desire of order or 294 regularity; and if I were to subtract all those of recent construction, evidently the work of the late settlers, it would be a place of utter insignificance. The majority of the old Spanish houses are of the rudest and simplest construction, the walls being composed of stout hurdles, which constitute the standards of a rough wicker-work, that is plastered coarsely over with

adhesive clay, covered in with tule thatch, or hides, an apron of which answers for a window-shut, for in that class they do not aspire to the use of glass; a hide, also, is generally substituted for a door. There are some few houses that can boast a second story, built of adobe bricks, and roofed with tiles, supplied in the palmy days of the Missions, in which the better order reside; but although they are comfortable and commodious, they scarcely look respectable, bearing those marks of sloth and negligence which appertain to everything that falls within the province of the male population in that country; for the only thing the Mexican cares to take any trouble about are the trappings and accoutrements of his saddle-horse.

The Catholic chapel, occupying the centre of the plaza, is the principal feature of the city—if not for beauty at least for dimensions—and so slight is its affinity to the ecclesiastical order of architecture, that, were it not for the religious emblem of Christianity that stands conspicuously on the apex of its gable, a stranger would be more likely to set it down as a great unsightly barrack or barn. It is built of adobe bricks, with walls about four feet thick; it is one hundred and fifty long, and only twenty-four feet wide, about the proportionate width of a single aisle, with two transepts, like arms broken off at the elbows, which 295 are, if possible, still more awkwardly disproportionate, while the vast space of dead-wall on each side is only relieved by four apertures, intended for windows, about four feet by two; so that it neither requires a woodcut, nor a laborious effort of imagination, to conjure up an idea of the clumsy figure it cuts in its conspicuous position. There is no attempt at internal decoration; it is roughly white-washed, and the walls hung here and there with scriptural prints, executed in the coarsest style of art, daubed over in the most slovenly manner; the flooring being so badly joined, a walking-cane might drop down betwixt the slits, while even the altar and railings around it look more like temporary make-shifts than the deliberate efforts of a tradesman.

I happened to be in San José during Easter, which great Christian festival is celebrated there in a twofold manner, the rural inhabitants flocking in to take part in the religious ceremonies and enjoy themselves in dancing, horse-racing, and bull-fighting; but this latter pastime has been lately discontinued in Upper California, having receded within the limits of Sonora and Mexico. The pueblo, on Easter Sunday morning, was thronged with a gay and motley crowd. Carretas,^{*} driven

An excursion to California over the prairie, Rocky mountains, and great Sierra Nevada. With a stroll through the diggings and ranches of that country. By William Kelly <http://www.loc.gov/resource/calbk.054>

by Indian vaqueros 296 (herds), momentarily arriving with family groups, who immediately retired, either to the house of an acquaintance or to the rear of some garden, to change their travelling attire for splendid dresses of the richest Chinese silks, which fitted their fine forms with the greatest accuracy; members of the wealthier class dashed in at intervals in light curricles, whisked along by spirited horses; young caballeros galloping at full speed, and those blessed with señoras adopting a more sober pace, the fair dame sitting in front, reclining in the bend of her partner's arm, with which he holds a parasol, while with the other he manages the horse. The mongrel costume, which has lately been gaining favour amongst them, was, on this occasion, altogether discarded, and the pure unmixed Spanish fashions adopted by the natives; caballeros using their steeple-crowned sombreros, bright-coloured ponchos and serapes, velvet calzoneras, thickly studded with small silver buttons, loose white cambric calzoncillas, and buff boots of undressed leather, to which were attached the enormous spurs peculiar to the country, with rowels as large as a cockade trailing along the ground, and dangling on each side of them two little pendant drops of steel, that produced a perpetual tinkle, tinkle.

The carreta is the olden Spanish cart, and certainly the most ill-contrived vehicle it is possible to imagine; it is constructed by a long heavy piece of timber, reaching in the centre from the end all the way out to the oxen's heads, answering the purpose of a pole, and is roughly morticed into a strong, clumsy, transverse beam, placed exactly in the centre of the body, which constitutes the axle; side and end beams being rudely affixed to sustain the frame, all of a scantling so heavy that they make a load of themselves without any freight. The wheels are about two feet in diameter, made by cross cutting two slices, eight inches thick, off the butt of a log; the hole in which the axle works being one foot in circumference, and not made to fit with any approach to exactitude, a huge oaken lynch-pin, with a big nob-head, keeping them in their place. The carreta is made to balance, and is drawn by means of a cross-bar at the end of the pole, which is attached by strong raw hide-thongs to the horns of the oxen.

It was quite easy to distinguish between the foreign and native ladies, independently of feature and complexion, as the Spanish dames cover their heads with fine crape or silken scarfs of considerable length, which fall gracefully on their shoulders, the ends coming to the front, and gathered loosely in the hand, while the others wore the stiff bonnet, which looked prim and prudish in comparison. In the dresses there did not appear to be 297 any predominant or prevailing fashion, so far as colour was concerned, for they were of every hue and shade—from the light and lively pink, sky-blue and green, to the more sombre maroon and deep dark black. There were no veils used, nor were the scarfs drawn so invidiously close as to conceal the lovely countenances which realised all my

preconceived notions of Spanish beauty; some radiant with an excess of loveliness, retaining the pure Castilian contour and complexion, shrouded in redundant tresses of darkest sheen, and lit up with dark lustrous soul-searching eyes, too dazzling to be encountered longer than a glance. The figures of all were of the most faultless symmetry, bearing the impress of nature's moulding, and harmonising most enchantingly with an unschooled dignity of mien and freedom of carriage, the birthright of the Spanish lady, which, associated with a *naïve*, easy graciousness, and warmth of manner, renders her the most fascinating creature of her sex.

Few of the men can boast of being True hidalgos, free from every stain Of Moor or *Indian* blood, for they are dark almost to ebony, with a tendency to that style of compressed physiognomy and distended nostrils that form an attribute of the Indian, with whom, in the early settlement, they intermarried and cohabited; but why that sex alone should have lost their physical characteristics, while the women so remarkably retain them, is a question whose solution lies too deep in natural economy for my comprehension.

Long before service commenced, the congregation assembled in front and around the chapel, where there were 298 refreshment-booths erected, resorted to by those who felt the appetising influence of a morning's drive. There was a good deal of promenading amongst the gayer portion, and conversation amongst the more grave; some *outré* Yankee fops crushing amongst the groups, to stare and ogle the charming señorittas, who seemed to regard them with a haughty disdain. However, the arrival of the padre put an end to the scene, all following him closely into the chapel; the gentlemen taking one side, the ladies the other, where they spread out rugs, that were used in lieu of seats, the more respectable portion having very rich ones carried by pages.

After mass I delivered some letters of introduction to Mr. White, a gentleman from the west of Ireland, who came through from Canada in 1846, and has acquired a large fortune and the esteem of all classes. He was alcalde two years in succession, and could continue in the office, which is both influential and lucrative, but from the new tone of politics, and the envious spirit concomitant with American settlement, he has declined the re-election. He owns large tracts of property in

the neighbourhood, and has built a fine mansion a mile out of town, surrounded with a highly-cultivated garden, where, with his amiable lady and interesting family, he seems seated in a little terrestrial paradise.

I was made acquainted by Mr. White with several families from the south and west of Ireland, amongst whom I was agreeably surprised to find two, Messrs. Murray and Hart, who came from my own neighbourhood, and knew all about my family and connexions. They kindly invited me to take up my abode at their ranchos, 299 volunteering to furnish me with horses *ad libitum* to pursue my rambles. I also became acquainted with Mr. Murphy, who, with Mr. Martin, from the county Wexford, have accumulated great wealth there, and become leviathan landed proprietors. Mr. Murphy's sons have five independent establishments and extensive ranchos in the most favoured portions; and there are many other Irish settlers scattered through it, all of whom, without an exception, are not merely comfortable, but extremely affluent; yet at home they were, according to their own acknowledgment, miserable strugglers on the confines of destitution, and some of them the victims of the barbarous system of exterminating eviction, driven from their hovels and patches of land as if they were vermin that marred fertility, loathsome objects that pained the delicate eye of the landlord, relentlessly persecuted on the pretext that their ignorance and sloth was innate, unconquerable, and their dispositions prone to savage cruelty, devoid of any ambition to improve their circumstances, and shameless recipients of parochial relief.

Well, those exiles of Erin, once settled in a country exempt from the infatuation and pettifogging tyranny of autocratic landlords and hostile magistrates, soon became inspired with natural aspirations of independence, which quickly dispelled the torpor of indifferentism, stimulating industry with the assurance of its just requital into continuous and prosperous exertions. Where the late inmate of a workhouse, seeing before him his reward, sets zealously to work to earn it, bringing to bear a cheerful energy, all the more active from its long course of un-natural repression, and an intelligence sufficiently quick 300 and comprehensive to direct it into profitable pursuits—this new era in his life giving a contradiction to the calumny on his self-respect; for the man who at home, under the constraint of circumstances, sought the aid of the relieving-officer, was there transformed

into the generous dispenser of hospitality, and being interested in the peace and progress of society, became a voluntary promoter of law and order, instead of a wild and reckless disciple of rebellion.

How is it that those results cannot be brought about in the land of his nativity? Surely change of climate has not any influence in developing those desirable attributes. There is no natural element peculiar to Ireland adverse to their growth and propagation. No; we must seek in the human laws of the country, and the vicious social relations, especially those of landlord and tenant, for the germ of those evils which make a useless and discontented citizen of the bold peasant, and in banishing him from the home of his heart, convert him into a foreign enemy.

There are also many English and Scotch settlers in the valley, some dating their settlement so far back as twenty-five years, all of them wealthy and large landowners, Mr. Forbes, in addition to his other possessions, being proprietor of the quicksilver mines, the richest in the world. In fact, what between the old Spanish residents, and the claims purchased by and granted to natives of Great Britain, there is very little room for any fresh emigrants—a state of things that has set the Yankees grumbling above their breath, grudging the fairest section of their newly-acquired country to “strangers and interlopers,” while some of them, taking advantage of the suspensory 301 situation of the country, and the questionable nature of title, audaciously squatted themselves on the most improved portions of the old settlers' property, trusting to time, chance, and the assistance of their brother Yankees—should need be—to confirm them in their possessions. However, a summary eviction by one of the Mr. Murphys, assisted by a *posse comitatus* of his friends, nipped the squatting movement in the bud, and sent those lawless vagabonds to the rightabout.

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CHAPTER XXI.

The Mansion House Hotel—Civic Propensities of San José Squirrels—Senor Don Antonio Sunol—His Garden—Vineyard and Home-made Wines—Meet other noble Spaniards there—Horse-racing in California—Electioneering and Sporting on Easter Monday—The Course—Spanish Amenity *v.* American Rudeness—The Race—The Victors and the Vanquished—A Yankee Drinking Match—

Monte Dealing—A Californian Ball—The Senate and the Assembly—Legislative Furniture and *Fixins* —“Wait for a Pause”—Mode of Discussion—Dinner Hour—Clerks and Messengers.

DURING my stay in the pueblo I took up my abode at the Mansion House, a new hotel, built on the speculation of its being the stopping-place of the members of the senate and assembly, and those officials whom the affairs of government necessarily draw to the capital; it is immeasurably the best hotel in California, fully equal to those in the States, and was quite full during my sojourn, as both houses were in session; but after their adjournment its business must be very limited, as is the general trade of the town, which may be readily conceived when noticing the fact that ground squirrels (an animal nearly as timid as our rabbit) burrow in the plaza, and gambol about without any fear or apprehension.

I had the honour of introduction to Señor Don Antonio Suñol, a Spaniard of the highest family, whose household establishment is becomingly regulated; his garden, though not adjusted in the trim English style, contains a great 303 variety and abundance of choice fruits, amongst which I observed a profusion of figs, peaches, and vines, clustered with their luscious burdens. He took pride in showing me through it, and afterwards politely invited me to partake of lunch, when he produced a red wine of domestic manufacture, which, though rather heavy and fruity for my taste, possessed a very agreeable flavour; and I have no doubt, when the process comes to be more thoroughly understood, a very good beverage will be produced, as the Californian grape, when carefully cultivated, is of a superior quality, not of great size, but exceeding in taste and richness; there was also another liquor of Californian distillation on the table, of which I tasted, called “aguardiente;” it is an extract of the grape, very palatable and potent, and improves very much, I understand, by age.

I met here again General Vallejo and Señor Don Emanuel Pico, a relative of the general's, and a thoroughbred hidalgo; very wealthy and exceedingly popular, from being passionately addicted to the sports and amusements in favour with his countrymen. In the course of the preceding fall, at Sonoma, he matched a horse of his against an American nag, belonging to a Mr. Hudspeth, to run three hundred varas (a measure somewhat short of a yard), for 5000 dollars, and was beaten by a

head, as he supposed, in consequence of a slip at the finish; which led to a new match, for 10,000 dollars, over an increased distance of five hundred varas, to come off on Easter Monday at the pueblo of San José.

As the time was now at hand, the interest became intense, and the betting both brisk and large; the Americans, to a man, backing their horse, and the Spaniards, 304 on the other hand, being just as unanimous in upholding that of Señor Pico, all bets, according to the custom of the country, being staked when made. Easter Monday was, therefore, a great gala day at the pueblo; and, in addition to its being a holiday, and having the attraction of the race, it was the day appointed for holding the election of all the officials of high and low degree under the new Californian constitution; so that we had beaux and belles tricked out in all their finery, sporting characters clamorously wagering, and politicians zealously canvassing for their various friends,—making up a medley of excitement, bustle, and interest, that never before had a parallel in this simple city.

It was arranged the race should take precedence, the start to be punctual at ten o'clock; shortly previous to which the whole population and visitors in procession with the horses moved off to the course, quite close to the town, amidst a hum of betting and conversation. Neither of the nags showed much breeding, but exhibited a striking contrast in condition; Mr. Hudspeth's looking like a pampered sire, while the other appeared as if after a severe attack of influenza. The jockeys were much of a size—mere children—clad with only a thin pair of drawers, bootless and spurless, carrying only a whip made like a top-scurge. The course was perfectly straight, over two beaten tracks, about two feet wide, and four feet apart, running parallel; it was not staked or roped, but the spectators arranged themselves in two lines,—the foot people forming the inner rank, the horsemen the second, those in vehicles constituting the rear.

While the ground was being measured, hundreds of 305 speculators, carrying about their dollars and dubbloons in shawls and handkerchiefs, kept up a stormy vociferation, in which it was apparent the American horse had the call; and after all the money was staked, horses, mules, and accoutrements were betted one against the other, until four-fifths of those on the ground were implicated in the issue. During the excitement the lines were somewhat broken, and the

principals, with some special friends, rode along to have them readjusted, affording an opportunity of contrasting the demeanour of the Spaniard and the Yankee; the one all courtesy and urbanity, politely motioning the people back; the other, in a tone of vulgar insolence, using the most frightful imprecations, and plunging their horses amongst them whenever they came to a Spanish group. I never remember to have been more deeply impressed with ineffable disgust than while witnessing this exhibition of arrogant brutality. Talk of Americans “going ahead;” but in order to be unincumbered in the strife, they cast aside every figment of olden civilisation, not even retaining the fig-leaf of decency or decorum,—at least, so far as the Californian emigrants are concerned.

As soon as the lines were again formed, the jockeys were put up, bare backed, the horses being only girthed with a narrow surcingle, inside which they thrust their knees at an acute angle. As they were led to the post, a nervous, breathless silence ensued, hearts beat quick, and the strained sight began to ache—they are turned; you might hear a pin fall; another throbbing moment—they are off—yes, they get off at the first attempt, going at scores from the jump, the thongs at work from the start. 306 The pace was rather good, but the race was not in doubt for an instant, as Senor Pico's horse, evidently labouring under a shoulder strain, never extended himself, so that even in so short a distance he was beaten fifty yards.

The Yankee uproar was terrific, and the inherent bad taste and underbreeding evinced at the triumph, was the more repugnant from the placid and good-humoured temper in which the Spaniards bore their defeat. “I knowed we would whip them damned tawneys,” and such like expressions, met your ears at every turn, and as they led off the Spanish horses past their late master's, who were returning on foot to the town, they let slip no opportunity of venting their obscene and ribald buffoonery.

I was induced, by an indescribable feeling of attraction, as if to fill up the measure of my loathing at their day's conduct, to look on at a Yankee drinking-match, perfectly in character and keeping with the tenor of their other goings on. It took place at one of the open booths on the course, attracting a great crowd, and giving rise to fresh bettings. The man who won the toss for choice of fluids selected port wine, each tumbler having a raw egg broken into it—a potion that appeared to take

his opponent by surprise; however, they went to work, and with the short necessary pauses, got up as high as the ninth glass each, when one betrayed symptoms of distress and, to make use of Lord Norbury's pun, could not "be egged on" any further, for, in attempting to raise the tenth to his mouth, the stomach rebelled, after a fashion that communicated a spasm of nausea to me, which it required all the muscular power in my throat to subdue. 307 I afterwards heard the victor vauntingly proceeded to the baker's dozen, and wound up by drinking the spectators' health in a bumper of brandy-and-water. There were other private racing matches, but the great bulk of the crowd returned to the town, where all the fondays (tarems) and gaming-houses were filled to excess. It was observable in the Spanish houses that ladies set down to monte, betting, and smoking their tiny cigarettes with a most *nonchalant* air.

There was boisterous political excitement, ministered too freely with strong drinks; but the Spaniards, although possessing votes, did not take any interest or concern in the proceedings. In order to see their method of conducting these establishments, I went to dine at one of the fondays, the apartment in which was a dingy one, and the implements not of the most burnished order, but the table-cloths were as white as virgin snow, and of fine fabric. The fare was altogether confined to frigoles tortillas (half omelet, half pancake) and hashed beef, stewed in lard, and so highly seasoned with chile colorado, as to cause me to suck in cool air to sooth the palate. They are wonderfully addicted to the use of pepper, and still more so in the Mexican country, where I have it on authority, that bandits who have been hung and left to swing in chains, as a terror to evil doers, are never touched by birds of prey, their flesh is so impregnated with this pimiénto.

There was a public ball in the evening, in a large room over one of the principal tiendas, which was well attended by the Spaniards, but the gaieties were disturbed in the early part of the evening by the 308 unauthorised intrusion of some tipsy Americans; order, however, was quickly restored by their summary ejection, when everything went on smoothly and delightfully. I looked on in an ecstasy of admiration, as the lovely señoretas whirled past me in the giddy waltz, and gracefully glided through the mazes of the cotillon, skimming through the figures with a lithe dignity and easy elegance of style, that constituted the very "poetry of motion;" added to which, the irresistible magic of their manners, free from the slightest leaven of coquetry, not only led captive the outer

senses, but suggested tenderer thoughts. I felt this the more sensibly as the fair Francisco graciously assisted my limping Spanish, in its efforts to utter the feelings of the moment, archly smiling as they took the form of compliment to herself.

Next day I visited the houses of the Senate and Assembly, both of which august bodies are accommodated under the same roof, one down stairs the other above; but, by a sort of solecism in the arrangement, the Senate, or Upper House, occupy the lower apartment, which is a large, ill-lit, badly ventilated room, with a low ceiling, and a rough railing a little inside the door, beyond which none but the elect may pass. Each member had a rush-bottomed arm-chair, and a small desk with stationery, that was not in much requisition. At the further end, the Speaker was perched in a species of pulpit; the floor was covered with a number of little carpets, of various shapes and patterns, looking as if every member contributed a patch to make up the robe, which had quite a mosaic appearance, the idea of antiquity being assisted by the threadbare state of the whole. A slip of paper was stuck with wafers on 309 the door as you entered, labelled “wait for a pause,” reminding me of the familiar inscriptions on those of the billiard-rooms at home, “wait for the stroke,” which, from the tumult inside, would be the more opposite of the two, from the great probability of its ending in blows. The other apartment is precisely the same size, but has the advantage of greater loftiness, and exhibits at once the difference of grade betwixt the two bodies in the style of the furniture—plain common chairs, flat deal tables, and a strip of matting thrown where the feet are erroneously supposed to rest, being the extent of accommodation, a paltry difference, at best, and as it appeared to me, at variance with the republican doctrine of equality, and the “genius of free institutions.” A similar notice was stuck on this door; but were I to wait at the threshold of either house for a pause, I should wait for the daily adjournment, for the noise and jabbering was as incessant as the twittering of a flock of swallows chatting over their intended migration.

Nothing can be more remote from the regularity, decency, or decorum of deliberative assemblies, than the proceedings of these bodies; there was no order of debate or system of discussion, but a turbulent dinning colloquy, made up of motions, interruptions, assertions, and contradictions; several members generally on their legs at the same time, and those with legs on the tables, adding

to the tumult by the music of their heels. I never could catch the faintest idea of the subject under consideration, nor is it possible that the merits of any measure can be sifted under such a species of discussion. They meet about ten o'clock, A.M., and are let loose for dinner at one o'clock, 310 when they come out with a rush, like so many overgrown schoolboys. It is unnecessary to add, that smoking, chewing, and whittling, do not constitute an infraction of the rules of either house, privileges that are accorded also to a squad of slip-shod clerks or messengers who loll about the stores, making a *tout ensemble* really unique, and entirely characteristic.

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CHAPTER XXII.

Remove into Country Quarters—Enchanting Appearances of the Valley—Delightful Climate—Agriculture in the Valley—The Breed of Cattle—Comparative Qualities of Native and Foreign Beef—Instinct of Birds of Prey—Bringing Cattle over the Plains a bad Speculation—Californian Horses—Their Powers of endurance—Often cruelly Taxed—System of Travelling—Their quick Sagacity in avoiding Squirrel Holes—Danger of Riding a Strange Horse over the Plains—Probable Cause of their Stunted Stature—Lassoing and Ox-throwing—Nice Palates of the Cattle—Domestic Fowls and Animals—Few Varieties of Game—Visit the Quicksilver Mines—Take a turn through the Ranches—No Butter, no Cheese in the Spanish Houses, owing to the Indolence of the Males—Other Evidences of their unconquerable Sloth—Fastidiousness of the Women in Washing—The Process—The Duties of the Men—Hospitality of the Spaniards—No expense in Travelling through the Valley—A charming Senoretta—The Incident of the handsome Trunk—Mode of Californian Courtship—Invited to a Wedding—Continue my Rambles—The Mustard-weed Nuisance.

I SHIFTED my quarters from the pueblo to the residence of Mr. Kell, a gentleman of English descent, settled in a lovely quarter of the valley; and as the distance was not very great, and being a good pedestrian, I sent on my luggage by waggon, and set out on foot, in company with a shillelah, proceeding leisurely, sitting in the shade at various points, to gloat over the gorgeous views that unfolded themselves in my progress. My path lay for a good distance along the Rio Santa Clara, which waters the pueblo, and then receives the little tributes of the several arroyos that meander

murmuringly through those fertile plains, all melted with glorious timber, contributing enough 312 of woodland scenery to adorn the enchanting landscape, and so pleasingly distributed, that officious art could scarce devise an improving charm; animated nature, too, contributed its quota to the effect on the numerous herds of fine cattle dotting the rich pasturage, resting in groups beneath the wide spreading trees, or standing in the cool purling currents, together with herds of horses, backed in for shelter under the umbrageous foliage, with here and there a snug rancho, disclosed by a slanting ray of sunshine, finished this transcendent picture, which, reposing in its grand natural frame of bold and handsome mountains, exhibited in reality a scene as rich and lovely as ever arose in the warm imagination of Berghem, or was portrayed by the delightful pencil of Claude Lorraine, under the influence of his happiest inspirations; and when added to its unapproachable pastoral charms, are its voluptuous and salubrious climate, for which it has been long justly celebrated, we have a location for settlement scarcely equalled, not to be surpassed, and extending over a space of nearly ninety miles long, and fully averaging five miles in width.

Mr. Kell has tried field and garden cultivation, the former on a very limited scale, but the latter with complete success, raising potatoes, onions, melons, pumpkins, and cabbages of the finest description; and Mr. Walker, a friend of his, told me, that at his ranch, near the Mission of Santa Clara, he, last season, secured two excellent crops of potatoes, putting in his second one early in August. I did not see any grain, but it has been raised in particular localities susceptible of irrigation, which is indispensable in most seasons, confirming me in my opinion of the 313 general unfitness of California for extensive agricultural operations; great varieties of rich clover and indigenous grasses coat the plains in dense fleeces, exhibiting a succulent luxuriance, corroborative of my previous observations regarding portions of the Sacramento Valley, and proving that the moisture and genial temperature of the earth, essential to vegetation, is preserved by being sheltered from the exhaling rays of a scorching sun, by the thick close growth of herbage that is consequent on pasturage.

The breed of cattle are not to be excelled for milk or beef; and there is a peculiarity about them as contradistinguished from those that come across the plains, or those in our own country, that is strikingly remarkable; for their flesh can be used immediately after slaughter, eating as tenderly as

if kept in the best ventilated meat-cellar, under the superintendence of the most watchful epicure for the prescribed time. This I had a good opportunity of testing, as Mr. Murphy, a brother-in-law of Mr. Kell's, came up to the corral the evening after my arrival, with a *caballada* (a band of horses) and a large drove of cattle for the Stockton market, and, as he was accompanied by a number of Indian vacqueros, he killed a beef to supply them with rations. I did not much approve of the method in which this operation was carried into effect, as, in my mind, the mode in vogue amongst the miners, that of shooting them, is much the speediest and most tidy plan. The animal, in this instance, was first lassoed, then tripped up with ropes, and while kicking and struggling violently, was bestrode by one of the men, who plunged a long knife into his throat, taking fully two minutes to accomplish a deed that might have been achieved in as many seconds.

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I dined on a steak cut off this beast before the process of skinning was completed, and never, either in Dolly's or José's, have I eaten a more tender morsel. The extraordinary instinct of the carrion crow and turkey-buzzard on those occasions is somewhat wonderful; for, although you rarely if ever see them in your rambles, the lasso is not well around the victim, ere you observe numbers of those gloomy birds of prey moodily perched on the neighbouring trees, waiting for their repast on the entrails, without your being aware of their stealthy approach.

The speculation of bringing cattle across the plains, in anticipation of a scarcity from an increased consumption, has proved rather disastrous, as I learned from Mr. Murphy—a competent authority on the subject—that one tithe of the number is not now slaughtered for food, that used to be formerly, when a trade was carried on in hides and tallow.

The horses are under-sized and light limbed, but otherwise well-proportioned, and capable of enduring fatigue, and fasting to a marvellous degree; qualities that I frequently saw cruelly taxed by their owners, who set no value on the noble animal, riding one always on the full loup till he is used up, then turning him loose, and mounting a fresh one. A late tourist in California, thus describes the manner of equestrian travelling there: “To account for fast travelling in California on horseback, it is necessary to explain the mode by which it is accomplished. A gentleman who starts upon a

journey of one hundred miles, and wishes to perform the trip in a day, will take with him ten fresh horses and a vacquero; the eight loose horses are placed under the charge of the vacquero, and are driven in front at the rate of ten or twelve miles an hour, according to the speed that is required for the journey. At the end of twenty miles, the horses which have been rode are discharged, and turned into the caballada, and horses which have not been rode, but driven along without weight, are saddled, mounted, and rode at the same speed, and so on to the end of the journey. If a horse gives out from inability to proceed at this rate, he is left on the wayside, the owner's brand is upon him, and if of any value, can be recovered without difficulty. But in California, no one thinks of stopping on the road on account of the loss of a horse, or his inability to travel at the rate of ten or twelve miles an hour; horseflesh is cheap, and the animal must go on as long as he can, and when he cannot travel longer, he is left and another substituted.”

The watchful caution and sagacity of the Californian horse in avoiding the squirrel-holes, with which the plains abound, is rather surprising, as one would imagine it would be impossible to discern them when going at top speed; yet a horse bred and reared in the country, rarely ever makes a *faux faux*. Nor does the native rider ever bestow a thought on them as he races along, riata in hand, in pursuit of a wily mule or a wild steer, though, for my part I would rather ride a steeple-chase over the stiffest sections of our Connaught country, than cross those plains at a three-foot canter. The American horse cannot even walk safely amidst those burrows, as was lamentably proved during my stay in the valley, in the death of Captain Fisher, resulting from a severe fall from a horse purchased from an incoming emigrant.

I conceive the stunted stature of the Californian horse is ascribable to breeding in and in; for rancheros pay no attention whatever to the changing of the blood, or obtaining fresh stallions, leaving the old stud-horses amongst their mares until they become impotent, and then selecting a young sire from the herd of the self-same stock. It is curious enough, that notwithstanding the consanguinity of the Mexican and Californian, and their versimilitude of tastes and customs, the latter never thinks of breeding mules, which animal is such a general favourite with their southern

neighbours. All those to be found in Alta California were either brought over the plains, by the American emigrants, or by the Sonorians or Mexicans coming up to the mines.

I have already noticed the expertness and precision of the Spaniards in throwing the riata, and their skill as horsemen; but in the valley of San José I saw both acquirements carried to still higher perfection, and a new mode of dealing with an obstinate ox, who, after breaking the riata, was still followed up by the rider, and, when making a short turn, as the pursuer reached his quarters, got a sudden jerk by the grasped tail in the opposite direction, which brought him to the ground with a concussion that stunned him beyond further resistance. I have been also assured, on respectable authority, that it is not an unusual feat to catch a wild-goose on the lasso, which I can readily believe, from having seen the proximity into which they will permit you to approach; so that a noose, thrown dexterously amongst the flock, is likely to catch either a neck, leg, or pinion.

The water in the arroyos is clear and limpid in the extreme, free, too, from any peculiarity of taste to the 317 human palate. Not so, however, with the brute creation, who may be seen daily coming of their own accord, in vast elongated strings, single file, crossing several of those streams, until they reach the particular one they relish, and, after slaking their thirst, returning to their own beat in the same order, never stopping to brouse or commingle with the other herds through which they pass.

Pigs of an improved breed are plentiful in the valley, and propagated largely by the settlers from the old country; but the Spaniards eschew them alive, and decline the use of porcine diet, not from any qualms of conscience, but from scruples of stomach, arising from the unclean habits of the animals—an arrogance of palatial taste that, I believe, is not indulged in by the proudest nobles of Old Spain, and one that is supremely ridiculous in a people who are culpably lax in many of their tastes and customs. Sheep are not bred or fed in the valley, from the quantity of coyotes that abound there, but are brought up, through it, to the Francisco market, from the Monterey district. They are of a gaunt and miserable description, light in carcase, making dry and flavourless mutton; but as fine poultry as are to be met with in any country may be seen around every rancho. The only game of any description is the grizzly bear and blacktailed deer, the varieties of the feathered tribe being confined to those I have already enumerated as resorting to the Valley of the Sacramento.

I made an excursion to the quicksilver-mines of Mr. Forbes, accomplishing a distance of thirteen miles under forty minutes. They are situated on a hip of the western range of mountains by which the valley is bounded, and 318 abound in ore of the very richest description. They are easily wrought, but have never been worked on a systematic or profitable scale. Now, however, from the enormous demand for the article as a subsidiary agent in the neighbouring gold mines, the proprietor, in conjunction with a company of scientific capitalists, are making very extensive preparations for working them. There are said to be other quicksilver, and rich silver mines in the valley, but their whereabouts is kept a profound secret, pending the settlement of the disputed title question.

I made my billet for the night at the rancho of M. Nairzes, a gentleman of good Spanish family, that came to settle at the original colonisation of the country, obtaining a grant of the largest magnitude. The residence is of adobe bricks, and must, at its first erection, have been a goodly-looking country residence, but, from want of repair, its exterior has contracted an appearance of decay that, however, does not extend to the interior, which is still commodious and comfortable. I was most hospitably received, and regaled on the usual fare of stewed beef, served up somewhat in the shape of currie, with tutillas and coffee. There was plenty of rich milk, but no butter; and, to my surprise, I found that neither it or cheese are generally made by the natives, who, on particular occasions, purchase it from the other settlers. This unprecedented and disgraceful state of things arises from the incorrigible lethargy and indolence of the men, who rest satisfied with the single article of milk, declining to enlarge their domestic comforts at the slight trouble it would cost them of catching and taming to the habit of hand-milking a few more of the fine animals by which they are surrounded. 319 Thus, the women are exempt from any blame in the matter; and, from two instances that came within my observation, where Irish settlers took Spanish wives, I am convinced, if they were afforded the opportunity, they would not only supply their household demand, but extend their dairy operations to meet the vast and profitable demand which has latterly sprung up in California for fresh butter.

But the inborn sloth of the male Spaniard is so deeply rooted, it appears hopeless to think of extirpating it, either by stimulus or example, of which no further proof need be sought than their continuing to use the old abominable carreta, while they see their new neighbours bringing loads on their commodious waggons, with a single yoke of oxen, that it would require three yoke even to move in their ponderous, ill-contrived vehicles. They have not a spark of ambition in their nature, save that which is akin to the lust of savage pageantry, in adorning their persons with gaudy attire, and arraying their steeds with glittering caparisons. The limited duties which are indispensably forced upon them of keeping their herd together, occasionally driving some to market, killing one for consumption, and cutting firewood, are only discharged under the compulsion of circumstances; for I really believe, if they could eke out existence on the suction of their thumbs, they would never be roused into action, unless it were by the excitement of a bull-fight or the attractions of the gaming-table. It is not, therefore, to be deplored that such a country as California is passing away from the occupation of such a race, nor do I conceive it uncharitable to desire that the 320 finer region of Sonora may soon come into the possession of some more energetic nation, that will make its mineral and other resources subservient to the increasing wants of mankind. The females, as I before observed, are worthy of a far better order of helpmates, for all that comes within their province is tended with a care, taste, and assiduity that is in strange contrast with what I have already noticed. Even in their washing they are so scrupulously particular; they think nothing of going from eight to twelve miles to find water of good detergent properties. In this they may be truly said to excel, obtaining a purity of colour, and putting it out of hands with an artistic finish that leaves nothing to be desired. The first part of the process is gone through with the soap-root, which abounds in the valley; the next with an excellent homemade soap, resembling that we call Castilian; that both cleanses to perfection, and imparts a bouquet to the linen which is palpable and agreeable.

There is one virtue that must not be denied the Spaniard of California, and that is, hospitality, which they exercise with a hearty graciousness that wins upon your partiality, notwithstanding all their other shortcomings; it also prevails amongst the foreign settlers, in its most genuine guise; so that, unlike the valleys of the Sacramento and the San Joaquin, where the worldly mania has superseded that domestic virtue, a man may travel where he lists without incurring any expense whatsoever,

even were he inclined to be extravagant. I never spent a night in any ranch in that district without finding other strangers who were attended with a degree of kindly solicitude, that could not be purchased at a house of entertainment.

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In recording the hospitality of M. Navizes, I cannot neglect noticing, nor shall I readily forget, the queenly manner in which his lovely daughter done the honours of the establishment, though a young girl, scarce seventeen, and rarely moving beyond the sphere of her paternal hearth. She was not only free from any embarrassing shyness, but deported herself with a modest self-possession and *naïvete* of manner, that would arrest admiration in the most refined society. In the course of the evening I observed a handsome, highly-ornamented trunk at one end of the apartment, and in noticing its decorative finish, I thought I detected a transient blush suffusing the delicate cheek of the maiden, and a slight hesitation of expression, that made me apprehensive I had broached an unpleasant subject, until, on looking round, I was reassured by the happy chuckle of Señor N., who playfully pressed the fair girl to gratify my curiosity regarding it; but she evaded the paternal request, and hurried into an adjoining room, casting back a soft, mild frown, that appeared on very intimate terms with good humour.

The history of maleta (trunk) was then narrated to me by the old man. In California, it is the custom, when a young gentleman conceives an attachment for a fair lady, instead of avowing his passion in stammering sentences, to send a handsome maleta to his sweetheart, containing various articles of female apparel of the finest and most fashionable description; if she accepts and retains the present, it is considered tantamount to a recognition of the swain's pretension; but if returned, he must bow to his hard fate: a primitive sort of proceeding, that tends to supersede all the painful hemming, hawing, and that-is-to-saying 322 inseparable from a *vive-voce* popping of the question; while, at the same time, in adverse circumstances, it relieves the señoritta from the harsh necessity of pronouncing the cruel decree, and withstanding the pitiable sighs of the lovelorn aspirant while receiving his future doom. Señoritta N., her father told me, had, with his consent, decided on

retaining her maleta, and an early day was fixed for the marriage, at which I was pressed to be a guest during the usual festivities, but my other arrangements compelled me to forego the pleasure.

I continued my delightful rambles through the valley for several days, exploring its most secluded retreats, penetrating to its most retired beauties, and visiting most of the native and foreign ranches, those of my country-men amongst the number, where the true Milesian “cead mille faltagh” awaited me, which I enjoyed with the greater satisfaction and delight, as I felt assured that the easy, affluent circumstances of my friends warranted them in indulging their natural disposition to a most liberal extent, without, in the slightest way, trenching upon their resources; and, in some of the happy evenings I spent amongst them, it afforded me a tearful pleasure—appreciating another fine trait of national character—as I witnessed the strong feelings of sympathy and sorrow they evinced, in adverting to the miseries of their suffering brethren at home, “starving and dying,” as they said, “on the green fields of poor Erin, while they had enough and to spare in a foreign land.”

Amongst all the settlements I did not see any amount of cultivation worth noticing, not that there are not many districts where corn could be successfully raised, but the 323 unaccustomed trouble of irrigation, the scarcity and dearness of labour, coupled with the moderate price of imported flour, caused agriculture to be neglected. There is one national nuisance the valley is subject to, which it is found next thing to impossible to abate—I mean the wild mustard, which invades the richest pasturage, covering large tracts of the choicest land, to the annihilation of all other vegetation; for it is of such rank growth, it attains a height of nine and ten feet, and its small imponderous seed is carried about by the slightest current of air. From experiments, it has been ascertained that it could be destroyed by repeated cuttings down during the season; but as the germs are found to be carried about, and deposited with the ordure of the cattle, all attempts, unless unanimously adopted throughout, must prove useless, where, in absence of all fences, the cattle of the indifferent man may wander over the grounds of his more painstaking neighbour. When sprouting in the early spring, the young sprouts of the mustard make a most tender and delicious greens, superior to our early York or spinach; and in the fall, the tall stems, that are quite as large as the sugar cane, rot and wither into the earth, barely leaving a trace of their existence.

During all my wanderings in the valley, I saw only one snake, and that of very diminutive dimensions, not thicker than a large worm. The rattlesnake was said to exist there, but none have been seen for years.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

Vexations of Authorship—Indian Imitativeness—Start for San Francisco—Find the Steamer withdrawn—A Bull F-r-ight—Fatal Termination—Arrive at Mr. Martin's Ranch—The Accident of his Settlement—Senora Martin and Family—The House and Furniture—Arrangements for Travelling—Attend Divine Service at the Mission of Santa Clara—Appearance of the Mission—Devotional *Alameda*—Buttresses or Pillars of the Church—Carved and Painted Parables—State of Affairs at the Mission—Abortive Attempts of the Jesuits to found Schools in the Valley—Predicament of the Settlers on Church Property—Scene of Leavetaking—Presents, Emotions, and Reflections—Scenery along the Bay—The Rancho of Don Antonio Sanchez—The Mission of St. Francis Dolores—Francisco Cockneys—The remainder of the Road—My Farewell and Peroration.

ON my return to Mr. Kell's, I found some letters awaiting me, that called me back to Francisco—rather a provoking thing, as I laid out my accounts to visit Monterey, San Diego, and the coast countries in that direction. I also found other food for vexation, in the scrawled and blotted state of a large note-book, which I left in my room, containing memoranda of my rambles, which, as I transcribed and amplified, I scratched over, that I might the more readily refer to the remainder; but an Indian muchaca (young girl), who acted in the capacities of chamber and kitchen-maid, got hold of the book, and amused herself in manufacturing hieroglyphics, in imitation of mine, rendering several pages completely illegible, which entailed considerable bother on me, and afforded me the 325 satisfaction of getting laughed at, as I took the unsophisticated creature to task for the mischief.

I set out next day on my return, packing my kit on a second horse, and taking a vacquero with me to bring back the animals; but on reaching the embarcadero, I had the mortification to find that the little steamer had been withdrawn from the station, and as at that season the winds prevail from

the north and north-west, causing sailing craft to make tedious passages, I determined on sending my luggage by water, and going overland myself; but to accomplish this, it was necessary either to buy or hire a horse, as I could not take Mr. Kell's nag any further. I ascertained on inquiry I might suit myself at a Mr. Martin's, whose ranch was a few miles off, in the direction my route lay. As I was proceeding towards it, walking leisurely, in a meditative mood, through a herd of cattle, a jealous bull broke in upon my reverie, and made me retreat precipitately into some trees, that very fortunately were close at hand, amongst which I evaded him, and by means of a riven limb, got into a fork about eight feet from the ground. He came right under me, bellowing and tearing up the earth, and pertinaciously remained, though I waited over half an hour, hoping to tire him out; but as no reprieve appeared likely to arrive, and seeing my only means of escape was by shooting him, I drew my pistol from my belt, and stretched my arm down, he at the same time raising his head up until the muzzle almost came in contact with it, thus enabling me to make a certain and speedy job of it, for he fell with the report, and scarcely even quivered.

Mr. Martin is a gentleman well advanced in years, and 326 nearly transmuted into a Spaniard, from his long residence in the country, not even speaking his own language with perfect fluency. He is a native of Scotland, and was cast away on the coast some twenty-five years ago, leading for some time an erratic and strangely chequered life, until he became the inmate of a Spanish family, amongst which he found his present wife, with whom he received as a portion his present rancho—one of great extent and fertility.

Señora M. reminded me of Dr. Parr's pedantic designation of the late Lady Blessington, being really a “gorgeous” personage—tall, finely moulded, of that voluptuous style of beauty that comes within George the Fourth's category of “fat, *brown*, and forty.” Her three daughters are about the most faultlessly beautiful girls I ever saw; and in that country, where personal charms are so warmly appreciated, and marriages take place at so early an age, I expected to have discovered several maletas in the house.

I did not meet so well furnished and regulated a house-hold in all my peregrinations as Señor M.'s; every article being of a good and handsome description, all in their proper places, and scrupulously

neat. The house—a spacious one—containing several rooms, all distinct from each other, entered from a long piazza extending along the entire front of the building. I here revelled in the luxury of a regularly furnished bed and chamber, expanding myself betwixt sheets of snowy whiteness, and nestling my head on a tastefully fringed pillow, secure from the shafts of the sleepless musquito, within gauze curtains, 327 arranged in the stead of other drapery, with a Yankee clock to mislead me into a long morning's nap.

I could not induce Señor M. to sell me a horse or mule under any consideration; but I had the option of choosing any one from amongst his entire stock, selling it when I reached my destination, and sending him the proceeds by a trading captain he named—a kindness for which I suppose I was indebted to my being a brother Briton. But notwithstanding the urgency of my business, he would not hear of my leaving next day, which, being Sunday, I accompanied Señora M. and her interesting family to prayers, at the Mission Church of Santa Clara. Our drive was a sweet one of nearly four miles, principally over Señor M.'s lands, partly in the direction of the pueblo of San José.

The Mission is built in unison with the prevailing designs of those ecclesiastical establishments—the rectories and church—of adobe, and in a better state of repair and preservation than most of the other Missions, owing, I conceive, to its contiguity to the pueblo, as several of the inhabitants make it a practice of frequenting it on church-going days, in preference to hearing mass at home; for they can combine recreation with piety in strolling along the noble alameda (shady avenue) which extends the greater part of the way, in whose delicious shade devout reflections, and inspirations of sanctity, are wont to be invoked by pious pilgrims as they saunter along to the shrine of their religious duties, who, on the day in question, as indeed on all occasions of the sort, were principally composed of the softer sex, the others contenting themselves with a bare profession of faith, being rather 328 *buttresses* than *pillars* of the church, as some wag remarked of a great stickler for his creed, who never entered the precincts of such an edifice, or subjected himself to any of its self-denying ordinations.

The interior of the church is spacious, but plain even to coarseness, hung round with prints and figures, parables in painting and carving, in which the design is so obscure that, like the signboard

where the identity of the animal was doubtful, they require a key to arrive at elucidation. There is only one padre now attached to the Mission, whose labours are altogether confined to his clerical duties; for there, as well as in all the others, the schools of trade and education have been abandoned, and the Indians permitted to relapse into their primitive barbarity.

A body of French Jesuits lately visited the valley, with a view to promote secular education; but the jealousy of the Spanish clergy was so inveterate, they would not be allowed any footing, much to the chagrin and disappointment of the numerous settlers, one of whose most perplexing difficulties is the education of their children.

The lands around Santa Clara are about the finest in the valley, and are principally in the possession of old country settlers, who bought their interests from the different incumbents—purchases, I have my fears, will be disturbed, from the tenor of Carey Jones's report respecting church property, already quoted, and from the fact that the present occupiers, for the most part, are emigrants from the “Sea-girth Isle.” There are the remains of extensive orchards, gardens, and vineyards adjoining the church and residence of the padre, but the walls ³²⁹ have crumbled down, and the unpruned trees have run into a tangled mass of wild shoots, looped together with the tendrils of various parasites, bearing only an abortive fruit, that conveys a very faint resemblance of the delicious varieties that cumbered their branches in the palmy days of Mission management.

Next morning, through the kindness of my excellent host, I was saved the trouble of selecting a horse; for after breakfast I saw a spicy nag, fully caparisoned, paraded in front of the house by a vacquero, which Señor M. informed me was intended for my use, at the same time giving me a superb pair of Mexican spurs as a souvenir; after which I went to say my adios to the ladies, who were in a group under the verandah, constituting a family picture, the very personification of domestic felicity and personal loveliness. I felt an affecting tingle pervade my nerves as I went through the ceremony of leave-taking, which was augmented in no small degree as Señorita Julia, gently pushed forward by her mamma, presented me with a pretty silken purse, the joint production of the fair sisterhood—a compliment so gracious, so wholly unexpected, and tendered by a young and lovely girl, with such an artless but enchanting sincerity of manner, impressed me

with emotions of the most tender gratitude, which, I fear, I failed to convey with becoming feeling in the few thankful expressions of acknowledgment I managed to utter. I cantered off amidst the kindly adios of this charming family; and as I rapidly skirted round the extremity of the beautiful bay, I resigned my horse to his own impulses, carried away in a current of ruminations on the subject of maletas, and that pantomimic 330 mode of eliciting reciprocity of sentiment on the most important and eventful condition of society, while I also indulged in interjectionary conjectures as to whether or not Señoritta Julia ever had one sent her.

The scenery along the bay-shore is of a quiet but pleasing character; the mountain-sides and skirts serrated with deep ravines, densely timbered, and opening into numerous vistas, across which the deer bounded, startled by the unusual echoes of my progress. At times I emerged into wide tracts of open country, subsiding into hanging slopes from the ridge of mountains that run parallel between the bay and the ocean, covered to their summits with a luxurious growth of wild oats and barley.

Being alone, and wishing to reach Francisco before dark, I pushed along at a pace that would keep me in a good place with a pack of harriers; and after four hours, arrived at the ranch of Don Antonio Sanchez, a distance of over forty miles, just as the family dinner was being served up, to which I was hospitably invited, and felt just in the vein for the meal after my appetising canter. I got there a sample of aguadiente of a most excellent quality, that made as agreeable a potion as poteen or cognac, a proof that, with proper care, a capital spirit may be produced. I rested two hours, and procured a good feed of barley for my horse, who resumed his journey with as much pluck and spirit as he commenced it.

I got to the Mission of St. Francis Dolores sufficiently early in the evening to give time for a stroll round its precincts. The olden bounds of the Mission are about the same extent of Santa Clara, and like it, too, they are in a somewhat better state of repair and preservation than 331 the general run of those establishments; but there is quite a town springing up about it, subject to the prevailing epidemic of lot speculation. It is a favourite place of resort on Sundays for the Francisco cockneys, who may be seen pic-nicking on the hill sides, paddling about the bay-shores, and scrambling over the heights, with fully the industry and enterprising inquisitiveness of their Bow-bell brethren on

their rural expeditions. The lands are of the finest description, and fully cropped with preemption squatters, elbowing each other in territorial anticipations.

The road thence to Francisco is over and around sand-hills, partially covered with a scrubby evergreen oak, wild gooseberry-bushes, and other shrubs and brambles, that have not as yet been baptised in the botanical font; but it is surveyed most of the way, and laid out in streets and squares, which, as I before remarked, bewilder the traveller, who, in vainly looking for the outlines of the city, calls to mind dreadful legends of quicksands and earthquakes of immemorial voracity. I, however, succeeded in reaching the real city before dark, and next day, by the aid of a little judicious puffing, found a customer for the game little horse, at a price that must have pleased, if not astonished, my good friend Mr. Martin.

And now, gentle reader, it comes to our turn to part, after having travelled some thousands of miles good-humouredly together, for rambles, like every other sublunary undertaking, must have an end at some point or period; but in saying farewell, permit me to express a hope that we may meet again, travelling “in search of 332 the picturesque” or marvellous; for I do not intend sitting down the remainder of my days, kicking my heels against the chair rung. Like most ramblers, I have contracted quite a fancy for change of scene, and if I can only muster change enough to gratify the propensity, you will very probably hear of me on some dissolute island, dressed like Brian o'Lynn, “who had no coat to put on,” waiting for some stray ship to restore me to my sorrowing friends.

Perhaps, too, in recounting my erratic movements, I may be enabled to weave a moral into the narrative, which I vainly endeavoured to in the present case, though, mayhap, one may lie ensconced in a corner without my ever dreaming of it—a circumstance, I am told, not of unfrequent occurrence in the literature of the day, the majority of authors being such a marvellously proper order of men, that their most fugitive pieces, their most random records, may become unconsciously imbued with the delectable tone of their minds, and a fine ethic lesson silently break the shell, becoming full-fledged before the author of its being even bestows a thought on the hatching of it.

Between ourselves and the wall, however, I will candidly admit, that neither the journey nor my book were undertaken under any philanthropic impulse; the truth is, that having no potatoes to dig at home, I set out with a view of keeping my hand in practice, by digging in the bountiful fields of California. But though there was no rot in the crop there, nor greedy landlords to watch me, I found the produce was most jealously guarded by agues, and fevers, and scurvies, and rheumatisms, ever ready to pounce upon the avaricious intruder; and I saw some, who 333 dared to brave the terror of those sleepless guardians, worried to death in their relentless fangs, and others, scarcely more fortunate, crawling away from the encounter, maimed and shaken to the inmost sources of vitality. Permit me to ask you, can “life be sweet” whose every pulsation inflicts a sting, that throbs to the agony of some gnawing malady, that is dragged out in sighs and moans, and the torturings of regret and remorse, tantalised by luxuries it durst not taste, though within reach of the gold, whose acquisition entailed those irremediable miseries?

Wretched victim of cupidity, your riches are vile trash, your repinings are unavailing, your sufferings are ineradicable. Gold cannot avert your premature fate—induce one ray of consolation—nor propitiate the serene smiles or blessings of health which you bartered with the demon of avarice. Life is only sweet when conscience sits calmly on its throne, when its sources are unpolluted with disease, even though it be spent on the bare necessities required for its sustentation. It is seldom the sweeter for gold. No; gold more frequently embitters its relations; yet to become possessed of it, we toil, and work, and go to law, and fight—nations as well as individuals—and when possessed, is it not squandered in health-destroying pursuits and sinful occupations, producing enervating excitement for the minute, while the hour is eked out in morbid cravings and maddening reflections. On the other hand, placid, unalloyed happiness fixes its abode in the more humble dwelling, where gold is a stranger, where the wages of healthful exertion are appetite and sweet repose, and where true pleasure and enjoyment are spontaneous visitors to gladden the pauses of vocation. I imagine I hear your 334 reply, “That's all mighty fine, and though true in the main, few would accept happiness on the terms, if they had the option of gilding their career”—an observation in which I cannot help coinciding. Nay, I will go further, and candidly admit, even

after elaborating those opinions with considerable effort, that one of the strongest stimulants in my scribbling, was the desire of gaining gold.

THE END.

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