

McNeil's travels in 1849, to, through and from the gold regions, in California. By Samuel McNeil, a shoemaker

Mc'NEILS TRAVELS

In 1849,

TO, THROUGH AND FROM

THE

GOLD REGIONS,

IN CALIFORNIA.

BY SAMUEL McNEIL,

A SHOEMAKER.

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1850.

The profusion of narratives of overland journeys to the California gold fields, now easily available, requires some justification for adding another to the list. It might be argued that the rarity of this little book, of which Wagner-Camp locates only five copies, is reason enough for a new edition. McNeil's account, however, is far more than just a bibliographical curiosity. This Lancaster shoemaker was a craggy individualist, and if, as he himself admits, his somewhat rude prose lacks literary polish, the revelation of his own character and his salty comments on the people and scenes

which surrounded him more than compensate for any stylistic deficiencies. Hard-headed, shrewd, and fiercely independent, he made his modest pile, and then had strength of character enough to quit while still winning and head for home. His little book contains more practical advice for prospective gold-seekers than many more elaborate and optimistic guidebooks to the golden shore, though it is doubtful if many heeded. That too would have brought a sardonic smile to the lips of the man who had not only “seen the elephant” but carefully measured both trunk and tail.

A. H.

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Mc'NEILS TRAVELS

THIS is emphatically a reading age, and consequently we are surrounded by an enlightened people, whose prominent desire is the increase of knowledge in every form, and, as curiosity is the companion of genius, it may be considered also the Genius Age, in which books are devoured as fast as they can be issued, although steam power presses are trebling the amount of literature formerly produced by the common mode. Consequently the powers of the author are in unusual demand, and it is no wonder that they are not as frequently forced to starve or beg their bread, as in the days of Goldsmith, Ben Johnson, Chatterton and Homer. A glorious age, indeed, in which the public is as able to pay for literary productions as to read them—an improving public, whose language is— “Write! write! write! Though the eye-balls ache with pain, Write! write! write! For the world *will* read amain: Who recks for scribbler's woes, Though his limbs be bruised and sore, For into his ears wherever he goes His readers are thundering ‘*More!*’”

I am sure the critics will have mercy on my production when I inform “the public” that I am a shoemaker, not ashamed of the occupation by which I have earned my bread for twenty years,

remembering the language of the English poet:— “Honor and shame from no condition rise: Act we'l your part, there all the honor lies!”

Therefore, I am not as well skilled in writing as a Cooper or a Washington Irving; but, somewhat altering the words of one of the apostles, I can say to the public—oratorical and philosophical language and thoughts I have not, but what I have I freely give unto you. In shoemaker style, I will bestow my *awl* of literature, feeling that at the *last* they will find I have done my best to amuse and instruct them, while the critics will not *strap* me for doing my duty!

Being a shoemaker, and ambitious to rise somewhat over the bench, it is no wonder that the discovery of gold in California excited my fancy and hopes; believing that the celebrated *Golden Age* had arrived at last, and counting the cost and measuring the difficulties, I joined a respectable company going to the promised land. The company consisted of Boyle Ewing, a son of the Hon. Thomas Ewing, Secretary of the Interior; James Myers, a capable and honest constable; Rankin, State Attorney; Jesse B. Hart, a shrewd lawyer; 4 Benjamin Fennifrock, a farmer; Samuel Stambaugh, a merchant; Joseph Stambaugh, a druggist; Edward Strode, a potter, from Perry county; John McLaughlin, from the same county; Denman, nephew of the Hon. Thomas Ewing; William F. Legg, from Columbus, and Leverett, from the same.

February 7, 1849, we started by coach, from Lancaster, Ohio, passing through Columbus, to Cincinnati, remaining a week at the latter place, where we obtained the necessary outfit, consisting of two years' provisions and the appropriate weapons of defence. The articles were sea biscuit, side pork, packed in kegs; six tents, knives, forks, and plates; each man a good rifle, a pair of revolvers, a bowie knife, two blankets, and crucibles, supposing that we would be obliged to melt the ore, not knowing that nature had already melted it to our hands.

February 15, started in steamer “South America,” commanded by Capt. Logan, for New Orleans, 1600 miles, costing each \$10 in the cabin. I cannot omit saying that we found Capt. Logan a perfect gentleman, fit for a higher station, and his boat one of the best in the western waters. The trip was made in six days. To amuse the reader, I will notice some things we saw during the passage.

While passing around the Falls at Louisville, Kentucky, we saw Porter, the Kentucky Giant, who is keeping tavern at the locks. He is more than eight feet in height, and he looked down upon us little mortals with the feelings of a Goliath when he gazed on David of old. If he is not a temperance man he cannot flourish in his establishment, for his huge corporocity would speedily oblivionize whole oceans of porter, ale, and brandy. As usual, we found a crowd of gamblers on the steamer, who, like the Devil, are going to and fro on the earth seeking whom they may devour. They reminded me of an expression I have often heard the Methodist Preachers use: "Where the carcass is there will the eagles be gathered together." Considering them turkey buzzards, which is a grade lower than eagles, we avoided them with some difficulty, as they tried hard to get us into their clutches, judging correctly that we had plenty of the silver rocks and gold paving stones at the commencement of our journey. We observed one of them fleece a lieutenant in the army out of \$50; the latter rising calmly from the table observing that he had paid a big sum for a little amusement, when he ought to have had sense enough to know that he had been cheated, and courage enough to have chastised the gambling robber. Those gamblers have certainly forgotten how their comrades were hung at Vicksburg, or they now would not be increasing their numbers, and acting as boldly as their predecessors did. At Paducah, in Kentucky, a gentleman came on board to see the adventurers who were going to California, and observed, with a very long face—much longer than a flour barrel—that we had experienced our last of comfort and civilization, as our difficulties and privations were commencing, and that we had better return and be satisfied with the little which Providence had placed in our hands, which would be a great treasure if enjoyed with a contented mind. I admired him for his philanthropic feeling, but considered his philosophy unsound, for I believed that that same Providence was influencing us to seek the gold regions. The Lord says that the gold and silver are His, and he does not wish them to remain hidden and unemployed in the earth. While philosophers and religionists are constantly crying for gold to extend their respective schemes, it is certainly no sin to dig it out of the earth to spread it. The more gold there is circulating in the world, the more will it fall into the hands of philosophers and christians for the spread of christianity and philosophy. Although much of it will be expended in scenes of dissipation, we have the faith to believe that it will ultimately fall into the right hands. Some preachers have asserted from the pulpit, (one in Lancaster particularly, whose name I do not wish to mention,) that the straightest way to

California is the nearest road to hell; but, as fanaticism never can be right, I must believe that the discovery of California gold will be a general blessing to the earth, aiding in extending religion, philosophy, and commerce—not only benefitting the public generally, but shining gladness into many a private circle. I shall blame Uncle Sam a great deal more than I blame the preachers, if he is too hasty in selling the California gold lands in lots to speculators—to rich speculators, who are too wealthy already, that they may place it beyond the reach of our poorer classes, who, as true republicans, should have the full advantage of a republican government. I move that Uncle Sam keep those lands out of the market for several years, that the bone and sinew of our country may have opportunities to increase their little store. They have not the talent and genius to fill high offices, and thereby fill their pockets, but, as their genius lies in their hands let them employ it in digging for gold. Our government should bless all its constituents, both rich and poor. The rich for many years have had chances for filling their pockets—let the poor now have a chance. That any gloom may not rest in our hearts after hearing the gloomy advice of the gloomy Paducah gentleman, I will here appropriately introduce a song composed for the occasion, by R. E. H. LEVERING, who, as a writer of prose and poetry, is known in some parts:—

CALIFORNIA GOLD SONG.

AIR:—“*Auld Lang Syne.*” Should Lancaster and friends we love Be never brought to mind? No! no! although our bodies rove Our hearts remain behind! CHORUS. For auld lang syne, my friends, For auld lang syne. We'll sing a song of kindness yet For the days of auld lang syne!

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We will remember, too, the while, The partners of our blood, Whose ev'ry look, whose ev'ry smile, Shall come with joy imbrued! CHORUS.—*For auld lang syne, &c. Farewell, farewell ye Fairfield girls, Whose love cannot be told,— Your charms are bright, but brighter still Is California gold!* CHORUS.—*For auld lang syne, &c. Farewell, farewell the jovial crew Who turn'd the night to day, Just wait awhile, till we can get The shining gold to pay!* CHORUS.—*For auld lang syne, &c. Farewell, farewell to Ohio, A gem of modern times,— A mighty State, but mightier yet The California dimes!* CHORUS.—*For auld lang syne, &c. Hurra for California, boys, No matter*

what's before— Our way is mark'd, our minds are bent To reach the golden shore! CHORUS.— For auld lang syne, &c. Hurra! the land of promise lies Just like old Canaan stood, To lure us to the tempting prize o'er many a field and flood! CHORUS.—For auld lang syne, &c. Hurra! for California, then, A glorious song we'll give,— Awhile to toil, awhile to sweat, And then like monarchs live! CHORUS. For auld lang syne, my boys, For auld lang syne, We'll sing a song of kindness yet For the days of auld lang syne!

I must relate an occurrence, proving that the western loafers are as expert in strategy as the loafers of the east—yea, even as the celebrated Beau Hickman who flourished at Washington City, whose 7 exploits in the loafing line would fill a volume. A little below Red River, at what is called the *Cut-off*, about nine o'clock at night, a pistol was fired on an island, and the person who fired it swung a burning brand around his head as a signal that he wished a passage. On rounding to, it proved to be a solitary island, without a living soul except the person wishing a passage, who brought on board what appeared to be a trunk. He was a Frenchman, who could not, or pretended he could not speak English. When pay time arrived he coolly observed that he had not a cent in the world, adding that the Captain of a boat, from that cause, had landed him on the solitary island. On examining what appeared to be his trunk, it was discovered to be a bundle of old blankets and clothes formed into that shape, proving that he could square his trunk if he could not square his account. The circumstance created much laughter and some pity among the cabin passengers. It is well that this loafer fell into the hands of Captain Logan, who, instead of cruelly thrusting him upon another desert island, concluded to give him a free passage to New Orleans, considering it more in the light of a good joke than anything else. So while one captain voluntarily took French leave of the Frenchman, the other would not benevolently permit the Frenchman to take French leave of him. Although at the lowest notch of poverty, the Frenchman was as gay as a lark. Certainly the French and the Irish are the gayest people in the world in misfortune.

About one hundred and sixty miles above New Orleans our California expedition appeared to be brought almost to a close. About 10 o'clock at night a tremendous storm from the south assailed our steamer, forcing the waves over the hurricane deck, exposing us to two fatal dangers, explosion of the boilers and wreck of the vessel in a spot where escape was impossible. When the Captain

became alarmed we thought it time for us to be somewhat uneasy. If the storm had been fatal, the loss would have been great in life and property, as the passengers in the cabin and on deck, and the crew, amounted to about one hundred and seventy-five, and we had a very valuable freight on board. But few had the courage to swear, and many had the wisdom to pray, who afterwards were the foremost in drinking and gambling, like the person in a storm at sea who prayed to the *good Devil* as well as to the *good Lord* that he might be sure of safety. In fact, those storms coming from the Gulf of Mexico are not to be laughed at by the most courageous, as they sometimes extend their ravages almost to the sources of the Mississippi and the Missouri rivers, and then branch off to play a few tricks in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. To preserve our vessel from being broken asunder by the mountain billows, or whelmed beneath the raging waves, the captain caused the steamer to be anchored near a high shore, so that we might be some what shielded from the raging storm, where we remained until morning.

As our steamer was detained five hours at Baton Rouge, a French word which means *Red Stick*, we visited the residence of Gen. Zachary Taylor, or rather President Taylor. Of course, he was absent, but he had left his glorious mark on the place, everything being 8 good and in its place according to regimental rule. The new State House, in the course of erection, commanded our admiration.

During our passage the Mississippi river was unusually high, in some places running over the levees, and occasionally over the highest of them. These levees, or artificial embankments, formed to shield the farms from the water, commence somewhere about eight hundred miles above New Orleans, and are erected and repaired during the winter by gangs of slaves. It is supposed by some authors that the channel of that river is gradually filling from the floating mud and drifting trees conjoining and forming a solid bottom, so that as the descending water is the same in quantity, it must eventually rush over the highest levees that can be formed, and flood all that portion of Louisiana along the river, especially New Orleans. Such may happen in rivers which have a slow current, but we have the faith to believe that the current of the Mississippi, confined by suitable levees, is strong enough to force more than half of the drift mud and trees into the Gulf of Mexico, by which that portion of Louisiana will be preserved from drowning. To know that current in all its

strength one must voyage on it as I did. In some places it has swept whole farms from one side and landed them on the other, in the curves of the river.

On the 20th of February we arrived at New Orleans, and sojourned at the Planter's Hotel, conducted by Chandler, who is the most accommodating and most reasonable host I have met in all my travels, impelling me to say with some poet:— "Whoe'er has travel'd this earth's dull round, Where'er his route has been, May joy to think he always found The warmest welcome at an Inn!"

He not only gives the best that the New Orleans market affords, but he gives his delicacies at the cheapest rates, and by his friendly face and manners makes one feel perfectly at home.

To be a little jovial, we soon found that the inhabitants of New Orleans are the most *patriotic* people in the United States—that is, they have *Fourth of July* every Sunday, closing the stores on the occasion that the people may have a better opportunity for frolicking, frequenting the horse-race ground, the cockpit, the gambling establishments, soldier parades and engine company celebrations, circuses and theatres; carrying on balls, and sending up blazing sky rockets and balloons at night.

Understanding that the steamship "Maria Burt" was about starting for Chagres, we employed one of our comrades, named Stambaugh, to engage passage for us. Finding that he desired to place some of us in the steerage, while himself and a few select friends wished to occupy the cabin, we altered the plan by bringing all together into the cabin, wishing to bring all on a level both as to comforts and privations. Perhaps he thought some of us could not bear the cabin expenses—if so, he is excusable; but if any other motive impelled his movements, he is willing to have a burden on his heart which we would not have on ours for a considerable sum. The steamship "Alabama," belonging to government, was also ready to start for the same point, with Col. Weller and suite, appointed to assist in fixing or running the boundary line between the *extended* United States and Mexico. Some comrades, who joined us at Cincinnati, Ferguson, Chaney, Miller, Effinger, Emmet, and Perkins, by some stroke of shrewd policy, got excellent berths on the "Alabama," which we also would have obtained had not another Stambaugh, with the different name of Ferguson, been rather smarter with the tongue on the occasion.

Feb. 28th, we started from New Orleans in the “Maria Burt,” intending to go to Chagres, but as the reader will shortly see, we were obliged to take a different route. Shortly after passing the Balize in the Gulf, the vessel sprang a leak, and leaked so much that we returned with difficulty to New Orleans. As the “Alabama” had departed, we took passage in the steamship “Globe” going to Brazos in Texas. On that vessel we found Col. Webb's company, consisting of one hundred men, bound for California. They were fine looking intelligent gentlemen, well calculated to be successful in such an expedition. Also, Simons' New Orleans company, comprising forty stalwart adventurers, bound for the same promising land, our own company at that time consisting of twenty persons, all inspired by hope and jovialty. But, in the course of ocean events, this hilarity was doomed to come to an end, when the mountainous billows of the Gulf commenced operating on the susceptible frames of the landsmen, all suffering from sea-sickness except myself and another person, which afflicted them until our vessel arrived at the Brazos.

In this place and at this time, the shoemaker wishes appropriately to offer some remarks respecting the celebrated and mysterious Gulf Stream, which, originating apparently here, flows along the eastern coast of America, and then diverges towards the Mediterranean sea, with a warm current of about four miles per hour. There are two opinions respecting its origin. One is, that the Pacific ocean, which is several feet higher than the surface of the Gulf, flows into the latter through a subterranean passage under the northern part of South America, the volcanoes heating the water in its passage, and the descent mentioned giving it its rapidity. The other opinion is, that the hot winds blowing for months from Africa, forces the waves rapidly into the Gulf, the impetus forming and carrying a stream around the shores of the Gulf, and then northwardly and eastwardly as mentioned. In my judgement, the former opinion seems most probable. All may not be aware of the fact, that this stream induced Columbus to hasten the discovery of America. He had observed that its current brought canoes, trees, and dead bodies of Indians from the westward, and from those circumstances judged correctly that there was an undiscovered country in that quarter.

We arrived March 4th, at Brazos, a small town consisting of about fifty houses at the mouth of the Rio Grande river, from Fort Brown twenty-five miles by land, and sixty by water. Col. Webb's

company proceeded by steamer two hundred miles up the Rio Grande to Davis' ranche, consisting of a store, grocery, and farm. Thinking that it would be dangerous to take about \$11,000, extra, with them, Col. 10 Webb placed it in the hands of a bar-keeper at the ranche, who said that not long afterwards it had been stolen from him. With the loss of their money came the desolating Cholera, which swept off about forty of their number, and the rest returned to New Orleans, the very pictures of despair, without money and without health. I had before frequently advised my companions not to take so much provision and baggage with us, but was constantly opposed; but they found at last that the shoemaker prophet was inspired for the occasion. At the Brazos we purchased a wagon and six mules for the conveyance of our goods, and a horse for each, the horses costing from ten to fifty dollars. At Fort Brown we were obliged to purchase an additional wagon and four mules. I tried there to persuade them to sell the wagons and mules, and proceed on horses, but without effect. The others concluded to elect a captain, which I opposed, stating that if we could not rule ourselves for the good of the whole, and each take care of his own money, we were not fit for the journey to California, but I was not successful in my argument. We then elected for our captain, a Mr. Perkins of Cincinnati, an overbearing ignorant Englishman, who did not suit my strict republican principles. I feel convinced that the spending bump buds so prominent on his head, that he would have foolishly expended more than the \$11,000 Col. Webb lost, if he had possessed entire sway. Six of the mules he was permitted to purchase soon dropped dead, and the company were displeased with me, because I would not permit him to purchase one for myself. I selected and bought one which I rode safely and happily one thousand miles. On 8th of March, we started from Fort Brown for Reynosa 60 miles, on the Rio Grande, experiencing much difficulty in keeping the road, and finding water for ourselves and mules. At Charcoal Lake, about half way, we hired a guide and interpreter, for \$300, to take us through to Mazatlan, on the Pacific ocean, one thousand miles from the Brazos. We remained at this lake three days. Although the water of it was so stagnant that the fish were lying dead upon its shores, we were obliged to cook with and drink it. We then proceeded to Reynosa, at which place we arrived on the 20th. Finding there that our complement of wagons would not conveniently carry our goods, obliging us to drag along at the rate of ten miles per day, we purchased another wagon and four mules, which I also opposed, but with the same want of success. I was actually enraged at the increase of our expenses. We had

then about \$1000 worth of wagons and mules, and were now obliged to pay a duty of \$60 on each wagon on passing from Texas into Mexico, our personal baggage having already cost more than its value. Firmly believing that Perkins would wastefully spend all our money, if permitted to have his own way, we ejected him from his office, electing in his stead, to act as governors, a committee of three persons, viz: Stambaugh, Hart, and Perkins. At this place the cholera appeared in our band, attacking Brown, of Alabama, who joined our company at Brazos, and Stambaugh, from Lancaster, but fortunately both recovered. It, and apprehended difficulties, so frightened Brown, that he left our company and returned. We remained ten days 11 encamped on the bank of the river opposite Reynosa. From our encampment every morning and every evening we heard about three hundred bells ringing in Reynosa, so terrifically that we thought at first the town was on fire, or about to be attacked by some enemy, and felt inclined to cross the river to render our assistance; but found afterwards they were ringing for religious purposes. The Mexicans called them *Joy Bells*, but it was an obstreperous joy to which we were not accustomed. On the second day of our stay there, we were surprised on seeing a Hungarian gentleman ride into our camp, stating that he belonged to a company of traders from Mexico, returning to the United States, with three wagons laden with silver in the bar and coin, which they had received for goods during their expedition, adding that they had smuggled it across the river three miles above Reynosa, and wished to encamp that night with us for protection, which we readily granted, and were glad we did so, for the Hungarian adventurer gave us much valuable information respecting our route. In the morning they proceeded towards the Brazos, intending to go from there to New Orleans.

As we are encamped on the bank of the Rio Grande, the shoemaker must have a little liberty to *shoe* some of its traits. Rio Grande, in English, means the *Great River*, and I can assure our readers that it is the *greatest* river for winding, I ever saw. It rises in the mountains in a country which has not been fully explored. I have understood that its banks among the mountain passes exhibit some of the most romantic scenery in the world. Descending this river the first prominent town is Santa Fe, an old Spanish town. It is a great trading place, the most of the goods sold and stored there being brought overland from St. Louis, in the United States, 1500 miles distant, the traders returning with rich furs, peltry, Mexican silver and gold. But little of the ground along its banks is fit for

cultivation, and so shallow that vessels, drawing 5 feet water, cannot ascend over 120 miles from its mouth. Matamoras, opposite Fort Brown, is another of the principal towns on its banks, 60 miles above its mouth, containing a population of 8,000. One of its principal curiosities is a barberess, a French girl, pretty and smart, who cuts the hair and the beard at the same time.

On the 30th we crossed to Reynosa, in canoes, taking our wagons to pieces and crossing them in the same way, swimming over our mules, which occupied us three days. Of course we were soon saluted by the custom house officers, for their dues. While our committee waited on them to settle that matter, the rest of our company rushed into the Rio Grande to bathe, which proved a delicious treat. Listen what occurred while so doing. Ye gods and goddesses, and ye little Cupids and big Venuses! Some señoritas, married and unmarried, I presume, had been watching us, and came down to bathe and show off their celestial charms, stripping to the skin while talking like so many parrots, and then mingled with us in the nautical amusement. As we had too much modesty to do in Mexico what they do there, we left the watery angels to their sweet selves, and going ashore, dressed, and watched them a considerable time while they 12 scrutinized us critically. There must be much vice where such freedoms are permitted. One cause why we did not stay in the water with them was this:—We were aware of the excessive jealousy existing in the Spanish Mexican character, knowing, that although it would have passed unnoticed had we been Mexicans, that, being Americans, it might have ended fatally had we remained with them in the water, and we should have experienced from their male friends the stiletto or pistol instead of words of friendship. I love to follow the advice of a celebrated traveller, who says, that in order to get along safely with the males in foreign countries he avoided the females as much as possible, knowing that jealousy is accompanied by the same fatality in every land.

Reynosa contains about 3000 inhabitants, who were terribly frightened and scathed by cholera, during our stay of three days in the place. The day we left, sixty persons died in the place from its effects. In fact, every house we passed in our progress from Fort Brown to Saltillo, had one or more persons in it dead from cholera. Eight of our company, who were Romanites, before leaving, fearing that disease, purchased from a Spanish priest a sufficiency of prayers that would last them till we got to Monterey, or to some other place in the other world if they died on the way. While

those Catholics were absent purchasing prayers, a Lancaster lawyer, of our company, asked a splendidly dressed and lovely Senorita, if she would go into another room with him, stating that he wished to have some private conversation with her, I presume, on the state of the nation and of womankind, in particular. She understood enough of his speech to reply, “*Si* Senor.” He thinking that she said that some one would *see* them during their innocent interview, I told him that “*Si*,” did not mean *see* but “Yes,” and that she was perfectly willing that he should have a harmless kiss. On returning from the interview, the lawyer, thinking that her sweet lips might have imparted the cholera or some other awful disease, requested me to give him some No. 6 immediately, with which he rubbed himself all over, but, it smarted his tender flesh so excessively that he howled around the room like an old wolf, caught at last in a baited trap. Oh! these attractive women! whom we find at the *bottom* of every evil prevailing in every land. The lawyer paid dear for his whistle, and he surely whistled with excessive pain for about one long hour, and then had to receive jokes about it forever afterwards!

I witnessed several funerals while in Reynosa, and singular affairs they were surely. The lids of the coffins were kept off until the processions arrived at the grave, the corpse being covered with newly pulled roses, while each procession was led by a drummer and fifer, who discoursed lively music on their respective instruments. What does such funeral philosophy mean? Does it say, that we should weep when a person comes into the world, and rejoice when he or she is going out of it, ascending to a better country, where the storms of life shall never reach us to blast our prospects, and where no deaths shall interrupt the peace of families? Do the roses sprinkled over the corpse speak of the roses of immortality which never fade or die 13 as the roses of earth do? Do the drum and fife speak of the more entrancing melody, which shall greet the sainted spirit wherever it progresses in the other world? Civilized people may laugh at such proceedings, but I was perfectly willing to let the simple villagers enjoy those simple emblems of future joys. And the graveyard, which I visited, was also a curiosity. Although there was plenty of waste ground around it, its limits were very contracted, which they made large enough for their purpose in the following way. Each new corpse is buried in an old grave re-opened, and suffered to remain there until it becomes a skeleton of bones only, and then disinterred to give room for a fresh corpse, the bones and skulls removed

from the different graves, being piled around a cross, which rises proudly above the Golgothan monument, showing by that cross, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the whole world, good and bad; for, no doubt, the bones of the worst as well as those of the best, were piled around it. I asked one of our comrades, a Catholic, why it was done? He said that the people of the place are half-civilized only. I thought it singular that a Catholic would make such a remark of Catholics.

I then asked, why they did not permit Protestants to have churches in the village for their civilization. He said that could not be permitted, as the Catholic is the first and last church on earth. Truly, I thought, that it is the *last* church on earth, and always will be the *first* in superstition and bigotry!

Proceeding we reached, after two days travel, a town called Chenee, on a river pronounced San Whan, one of the tributaries of the Rio Grande, 50 miles from Reynosa. We arrived at 11 o'clock at night, finding the frolicking part of the inhabitants—which means the whole, as the Irishman says—in an awful predicament. They had been enjoying a fandango that Sunday night, which was suddenly interrupted at 9 o'clock by the priest, who would not give them license to dance until twelve o'clock, as they desired, he believing that there is a time to dance as well as a time to sleep. We sympathized with the inhabitants with all our hearts and with all our legs, as we greatly wished to exercise the latter in that innocent and exhilarating amusement. As it is an ill wind that blows nobody good, perhaps it was best that it so happened, as the Lancaster lawyer might have got into another female predicament in which he would have had 100 fists applied to his body instead of that No. 6, I spoke of before. It showed also the power of the priest over the people, whom for a handful of dimes, he can snatch from hell and purgatory, and send to heaven when he pleases. We only stopped long enough to get some hay for our mules, being determined to encamp at a country ranche not far beyond, where we might have our wants supplied more readily. We found the hay stacked in the trees so that the cattle could not reach it; a necessary precaution as they have no fences, and the cattle are herded in droves. Progressing, we lost our way, in attempting to find the ford across the San Whan, so that we were obliged to encamp on this side of it. A singular occurrence happened that night. Baker and myself were on guard. Suddenly we were startled by the screaming of Strode, who, in his fright, declared that he saw a 14 Camanche Indian or Mexica

crawling towards the encampment. Leverett, who had slept in the same tent, took the alarm in a worse form, and, wrapping a blanket around him, rushed into the chapparel, shrieking that the Indians were about massacring the whole band. Of course, we wakened the others, and all who remained prepared in military order for the expected combat.

Looking into the gloom along the ground, we did see and hear something that seemed in a threatening attitude. As it advanced, we marched out to meet it, determined to fight and die in the defence of our rights, although the continued screams of Strode and Leverett, were sufficient to appal the stoutest soul, remembering the heroic conduct of General Zachary Taylor at Monterey and Buena Vista, which inspired our own souls with the same hardihood. Although the conduct of two of our companions plainly said, that “He who fights and runs away May live to fight another day,” we boldly advanced—advanced—advanced—and found the enemy to be—not a Camanche Indian, not a renegade Mexican, or a wild beast—but an expanded umbrella rolling on the ground towards us, moved by a gentle breeze. Before retiring that night, one of our comrades had occasion to use that umbrella, and left it expanded on the ground, which made some of us run away and some of us laugh excessively.

The next morning we forded the San Whan. In doing so, one of our comrades named Course, from Alexandria, in Virginia, came near being drowned. Being on a very small weak mule, the force of the current swept both away into deep water. As he could not swim, his situation was a critical one. Stripping as fast as possible, I leaped in to his rescue, and succeeded, after much difficulty, in bringing him to shore. The mule, after losing the saddle, swam out. On the 10th of April, we arrived at Monterey. As the Cholera was raging badly in the town, we disputed whether we should remain or proceed to a mill five miles farther, where there were many conveniences both for health and comfort. The committee determined that we should remain there, which highly displeased the rest of the company. That night, about 6 o'clock, Course and myself were attacked by Cholera. At 6 o'clock the next morning Course died, but fortunately I recovered to tell the readers my adventures. We buried Course at the Walnut Springs, about eight miles from the city, as we could not be permitted to bury him in a Catholic burial ground in Monterey, the deceased having

been an Episcopahan. O cursed hell-born bigotry, that separates the living, and then separates the holy dead. But, thank all the gods at once, it cannot separate us in the other world, where, washed from all our sins through Jesus Christ, we shall be placed on a glorious equality, where we shall find, as we ought to know here, that God is no respecter of persons. A Mr. Hyde, from the same place in Virginia, and belonging to the same Episcopal Church, after helping to drink or finish three kegs of the best 4th proof French brandy, preached an appropriate funeral discourse over our deceased comrade before starting to the grave, 15 reading in the appropriate places the suitable prayers; Perkins, McLaughlin, and the Lancaster lawyer acted as mourners on the occasion, and for the life of me I could not tell which made their eyes the reddest, the tears or the brandy.

Passing from Monterey to Saltillo, we saw nothing extraordinary except many inviting palmetto and prickly pear trees. Saltillo contains 8000 inhabitants, and has in its place, a magnificent fountain pouring out water towards every point of the compass. We did not linger long at Saltillo, and passed on to the Buena Vista battle ground, 8 miles, where we encamped, employing as much time as we could spare, in viewing its celebrated localities, remembering that there one of the greatest victories was gained by Gen. Zachary Taylor, who with 5000 troops, principally volunteers, conquered Santa Anna, commanding 25,000 lancers and infantry. Buena Vista means in English a *Fine View* or *Grand Sight*, and it was, indeed, a *Grand Sight* for our troops to see the Mexicans scampering away as if fifty-thousand devils were at their heels. In fact, they afterwards called Zachary the *Devil* — consequently his soldiers were the *imps*. Although some poet jocosely said of our volunteers going to Mexico: “The volunteers to the wars have gone, In the ranks of death you'll find them, With their little caps their heads upon, And no coat tails behind them.”

Yet during that triumphant war, they showed as much skill and bravery as the regular troops, and in some cases more, for American troops in the majority of cases fight better when untrammelled by the strictest discipline. We visited the graves in which our heroes, who fell on that glorious occasion, had been interred. They were buried, layer upon layer, in two large pits—of course, covered with uncommon glory as well as with common dirt. As that battle has been described and noticed by thousands of pens, it is needless for me to notice it particularly here. But I must mention one circumstance that happened there, which shows the extraordinary coolness of Gen. Z. Taylor

in battle. He saw a small cannon ball coming directly towards his person. Instead of spurring “*Old Whitey*” out of its way, he coolly rose in his very short stirrups and permitted the ball to pass between his person and the saddle. Col. Wyncoop has mentioned this circumstance in his book, and if he lies wilfully, you may be sure that the shoemaker lies unwilfully.

We proceeded to Paras, finding the road skirted luxuriantly with the palmetto, prickly pear, and a plant called the King's Crown. We stayed three days at Paras, where we got our wagons repaired and the mules shod, and disposed of some of our loading in order to facilitate us on our journey. Thence to Quinquema. At this point the Camanche Indians became numerous. Eight miles from that town before reaching it, nine of those Indians attacked a Mexican train, consisting of mules packed with silver, which thirty Mexicans were taking to Durango. We saw the transaction. The Indians left the silver on the ground and drove off the mules, as the Mexicans ran to us for protection. We tried to save a wounded Mexican, but 16 seeing us hastily approaching, the Indians killed him and rapidly fled. The inhabitants of Quinquema hailed us as if we were delivering angels, and the alcalde offered us \$50 each, if we would lead the citizens against those Camanches, who are the noblest of the Indians in Mexico, but we concluded not to interfere as it might afterwards hinder our journey and endanger our lives, should those Indians hear of our interference. That afternoon, before we started, the Mexicans had a battle with them, in which the former had five killed and twelve wounded. But one Camanche was killed, and he was dragged into town at the end of a lasso, the other end being affixed to the horn of a saddle occupied by a vaunting Mexican. Thence to Durango, where we arrived April 19th. It is one of the largest and oldest cities in Mexico, containing, as I thought, about 125,000 inhabitants. The houses look like prisons, the doors and windows being plentifully supplied with iron bars, as if to prevent the beaux from carrying off the ladies or the Indians from capturing the whole family. The roofs are flat, and may appropriately be used for forts in time of war. The churches are among the most splendid in the Roman Catholic world. On entering one of them I thought that I had prematurely got into California, so valuable and splendid were the ornaments glittering with real gold and silver. On a Sunday I had the curiosity to attend service in the grandest of them. Without a seat, about 1000 persons were kneeling and standing thickly together, each holding a lighted taper in his or her hand, while the priest was

giving some the holy wafer to eat as he drank the wine. He was the bishop attended by twenty understrappers. Hearing that on that Sunday afternoon, a bull-fight would take place in the town, I attended of course, and there saw, among the gayest of the gay, the bishop I mentioned and all his congregation. He had licensed the fight and was determined to see it out, believing that it is as good to act proudly in sin as it is to act humbly in religion, a very accommodating faith to those who worship *God* and *Devil* at the same time. The admission price was 25 cents. About 3000 spectators were present. The enclosure comprised about three acres, surrounded by a wall six feet in height. Each bull was prepared for the sport this way—about fifty wooden spears, saturated with brimstone, were pierced into different parts of his body. Those were ignited, when the bull in a perfect blaze rushed furiously around the enclosure, still further persecuted by three Mexicans on horseback, who occasionally speared his flesh as they rode around and jumped over him, escaping sometimes almost miraculously from the horns of the animal, finally killing him by slow torture. In this way six bulls were killed, but not until three horses had met the same fate, and one Mexican wounded. The bishop, who delighted in such barbarity, and led his congregation to admire the same brutality, professed to be a follower of that Jesus Christ who on earth would not wilfully harm a fly or tread upon a feeble worm. But, perhaps, he did not go so high in his belief, and only believed in the Virgin Mary, and we know that some women are somewhat cruel on occasions less barbarous than a bull fight. The next morning, while passing along the street, we witnessed the following scene. 17 2 Twelve soldiers on horseback, armed with muskets, pistols and Cutlasses, a priest walking in the midst of them, while a musical band, in full operation, brought up the rear. The citizens, wherever the procession went, fell down upon their knees before his Heavenly Majesty. The soldiers motioned to us intimating that we had better pull off our hats in honor of that cunning priest, who was thus showing publicly that the military power could at any time be brought out to sustain their interests. All of us complied except Leverett, who, holding his hat on his head firmly with both hands, swore audibly that he would not take it off for any such purpose. The soldiers threatened to knock it off with their cutlasses, but thought proper to advance without executing their purpose, especially after Leverett observed that he obtained from the Mexican consul at New Orleans permission to travel through Mexico with his hat on and with a sound head!

At this place I determined to use my best efforts to have our wagons and mules sold in order to go the rest of the land journey on pack mules, and also to stop the joint-stock eating business, as I had frequently bought chickens and eggs, which I never saw, much less eat of afterwards. Aided by others, who saw the existing evils we succeeded, and the wagons, mules, and some other articles were sold; \$1000 worth of property brought but \$450. We then hired a train of thirty mules, accompanied by six muleteers, to convey our decreased baggage and goods to Mazatlan, 160 miles distant, on nothing but a mule path. I must here relate a laughable circumstance to relieve the tediousness of the journey. Fennifrock got sick at Durango with diarrhoea. Previously he had purchased some boiled beans, fully peppered and compressed into a small space. As he was sick he could not eat the luscious mess, and gave me permission to eat some of them. I ate a small quantity, but Strode swallowed the rest at a meal. On Fennifrock enquiring who had eaten his stock so voraciously, Strode told him that I had eaten all of them *up* or rather *down*. Fennifrock attacked me for the deed, when I observed that I could soon prove my innocence. As I expected, the huge meal of beans made Strode dreadfully sick. Murder will out, and beans will keep in, and extended Strode's stomach to the size of a small barrel. He applied to me for medicine, but I told him I would give him none, and that he might die of the bean disorder for slandering me. However, on some one's applying a hot stone to his stomach, he vomited out the whole of the beans before the eyes of Fennifrock, who was then convinced that I had spoken the solemn truth. Some have a hell upon earth for their misdeeds, but Strode had a young hell in his belly for his crime! At Durango, finding that my own mule had so sore a back that I could not ride it, I hired one at \$1 per day.

Started from Durango, April 22d. The first night after leaving that city, Strode and Denman lost their mules, either strayed or stolen, so they were obliged to foot it. Denman and myself being on very good terms, I permitted him to ride my mule occasionally while I walked. On the third day I walked considerably ahead, and stopped to rest until the train reached me, when I found Strode riding my 18 mule and Denman walking. On asking Denman how it happened, he answered that Strode's feet were sore, and through compassion he permitted him to ride. I observed that I wished only to oblige Denman, and that Strode might walk to the devil if he pleased, even if he wore away his legs to the knees in so doing. This so much displeased me that I would neither let Denman

nor Strode ride after that. I remembered the bean affair in which Strode slandered me, and, as the Universalists say, every man must suffer in his body and feet for the evil deeds he does on earth.

Stambaugh showed how curiously jealousy can operate on the human heart. In passing over the mountains he exhibited a great deal of timidity, driving his mule before him instead of riding it where there was not the least danger. My courage and skill in riding up and down the precipices, showed his fearfulness in a ridiculous light, so much so that he advised me to do as he did, only riding on the levels on the summits of the mountains. I told him that if he was willing to give \$1 per day for the privilege of driving a mule up hill and down, he might do it, but that for myself I had given \$1 per day for my mule for the privilege of riding whenever it suited my convenience, and that was all the time. I also observed that he had better return to Durango and persuade Gen. Urrea to believe that he was a male angel, unfit for such travel over Mexican mountains, as I had heard through our interpreter, that the Lancaster lawyer, Perkins, Hyde, (the man who preached the sermon,) and himself, had while in Durango palmed themselves off to Gen. Urrea as very wealthy gentlemen, travelling only to see the country, implying that myself and a few others were their escort or servants. While the fact was, I shone the most prominent in that city. All the rest shaved except myself, so that my beard reached almost to my knees, and, consequently, with my long silver mounted rifle and other accoutrements, I presented a truly formidable appearance, and attracted general attention and admiration wherever I went. This, of course, excited the jealousy of Stambaugh and a few others. As Gen. Urrea had been the greatest cut-throat in murdering our straggling soldiers during the war with Mexico, it showed rather a traitorous disposition to visit him, which should cast some discredit on those who honored, or, perhaps, dishonored him by a visit.

At this point we are travelling over very high mountains. At one spot we passed over many acres of lava, which had been thrown out by a neighboring volcano, which proved very troublesome to the feet of our mules. Visited a warm spring, apparently hot enough to scald a chicken or boil an egg, showing that the internal fires were burning beneath. If Father Miller had lived in that neighborhood, he certainly would have fixed the time of the end of the world about a dozen years sooner than he did. But volcanos are great blessings instead of curses, and should excite our

gratitude instead of our fears. If a man has a colic, and applies no physic to remove the cause, he, dies. So has the earth the colic at times, but those volcanos remove the origin of it, or otherwise the globe would burst.

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On the fifth day from Durango, we reached the summit of the highest mountain, where I thought I was nearer to the good world than I would ever be again, from which we enjoyed a glorious prospect of mountains and plains, and, towards the east a glimpse of the Pacific Ocean, which seemed pacifically inviting us to its borders.

As we progressed, we had ice and snow on the mountains, where we encamped at night; and by day in threading the valleys we enjoyed a delicious climate, water-melons, peaches, grapes, cocoa nuts, oranges, lemons, bananas and plantains. This truly romantic and solemn scenery affected us considerably. Previously, we had almost constantly passed through scrubby chapparel, and frequently could not find enough of wood to cook our meals; but here, almost for the first time since leaving the Brazos, we were traversing primeval forests, some of the trees of which had witnessed (if trees have eyes) the exploits of the soldiers of Cortez and Pizarro. I could not help remembering and quoting a portion of Bryant's exquisite poetry:— “The groves were God's first temples. Ere man learned To hew the shaft and lay the architrave, And spread the roof above them—ere he fram'd The lofty vault together and roll'd back The sound of anthems, in the darkling wood Amidst the cool and silence, he knelt down And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks. And supplication. For his simple heart Might not resist the sacred influences, That from the stilly twilight of the place, And from the grey old trunks that high in heaven Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the sound Of the invisible breath, that swayed at once All their green tops, stole over him and bow'd His spirit with the thought of boundless Power, And inaccessible Majesty. Ah! why Should we, in the world's riper years, neglect God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore Only among the crowd, and under roofs That our frail hands have raised! Let me, at least, Here in the shadow of this aged wood Offer one hymn, thrice happy if it find Acceptance in His ear!”

In those mountains we passed silver mines every day, some of which were worked by English companies. At the bottom of the highest mountain I mentioned, was a very singular rock, about two thousand feet high, while its base was only about one hundred feet square. On its summit towered a beautiful pine tree, 60 feet in height. Nothing more of note happened until we arrived at Mazatlan on the Pacific ocean. Here we found a French brig and a Danish schooner, both bound for San Francisco. I was informed that the Lancaster lawyer observed to the French captain that he would induce our company, and two or three other companies which had arrived by way of Mexico city, to prefer his vessel, if he would give him his passage free. As the Lancaster lawyer acted in this way, and as I also knew that while in Durango he borrowed fifty dollars in silver of a negro, on the credit of the company, and which still remained unpaid, telling the negro, (in order to get that sum,) that our gold pieces would not pass for their full value in Durango, but would in Mazatlan, I determined to quit so mean a person, and forsake the company who would countenance him. I at once took passage on the Danish schooner, named "Joanna Analuffa," commanded by a gentlemanly German, paying \$75, the distance from Mazatlan to San Francisco being 1500 miles. Started from Mazatlan May 10th, with 200 passengers on board. I left \$100 worth of articles with the company which went in the French vessel, for which I never received a cent. Mazatlan contains about 10,000 inhabitants. Before leaving, Stambaugh observed to me that I could do nothing without the company, and that I would certainly be murdered in California without its protection, when I observed that I would rather die than travel any further with such a swindling company. This greatly enraged him, and the Lancaster lawyer picked up a gun to shoot me. I then coolly told them that I did not wish wilfully to kill any body or to be killed in an ordinary brawl, but that I was stout and stout-hearted, and either with rifle, pistol, or bowie knife, I was honorably willing to fight either of them on the spot. This latter offer neither of them thought proper to accept. But now to the voyage.

After getting far out into the ocean, we ran a north-east course towards the destined port. When a week from land, we were supplied with wormy bread, putrid jerked beef, musty rice, and miserable tea, there not being enough of tea to color the water, the water was colored previously, to deceive us,) but we were too wide awake for the captain, and, being 200 in number, we determined to have the worth of our money, as the Yankee boys are number one on sea as well as on land. We

threw those articles of food overboard, telling the captain we must have better. This infuriated him, and he swore that if we did not become satisfied with the food he gave us, he would take us back to Mazatlan, and have us tried and imprisoned for mutiny. We as furiously told him that hunger knew no law, and that as soon as he turned the vessel towards Mazatlan we would shoot him, and, moreover, that he must not only keep on his proper course, but give us proper food, or we would take all the ship matters into our own hands. He became as cool as a cowed rooster, kept on his course, and afterwards gave us the best he had. We caught and ate a few sharks on the passage; and I saw for the first time in my life whales every day, and porpoises darting about in every direction, like artful politicians, turning sunsets occasionally to suit their respective views, and show the other fish their superiority.

On the 30th I arrived at San Francisco, not knowing a single person there. The first night there I experienced the first rain since leaving home. On arriving, I went into a tent asking the proprietor what would be his charge for permitting me to sleep on the bare ground that night. He replied fifty cents, to which I instantly agreed. During the rain some of the natives informed me that they had never seen rain nor heard thunder until the d—d Yankees came to that region. In the morning I went to another tent to get breakfast, for which I paid \$2,50. The owner of that tent offered me eight dollars per day if I would aid in erecting a muslin house, besides board, which I thought high wages, as I had 21 never earned over one dollar per day before. But, rejecting his offer, I started for the mines that day. I paid twenty dollars for passage on a schooner up the Sacramento river to Sacramento city, 160 miles from San Francisco, that river emptying into the bay on which the latter is situated. When about fifty miles from San Francisco, the captain got drunk and ran the vessel aground. In a few hours the rising tide took us off. The captain being still intoxicated, and, being fearful that he might delay us to our loss, five or six of the stoutest passengers, (I being one of the number,) attacked the little Irish captain, knocked him down, tied him with ropes, and by our orders the vessel was safely and rapidly steered to our port of destination.

On landing at Sacramento city I entered a tent, kept by Mrs. Moore, the first American woman I had seen since leaving the States, who swore that her brandy was better than any *other man's* in that renowned city. Her price was fifty cents a drink. Sure enough, I soon found that she had a great deal

of the masculine gender about her, and that she permitted other things (more expensive) in her tent than drinking brandy, considering one of her sweetest smiles worth an ounce of gold or \$16.

I then proceeded immediately to the gold mines or diggings on the North Fork of the American river, which empties into the Sacramento river, being 45 miles from Sacramento city. That distance I walked, paying \$20 for the conveyance of my baggage on pack mules. The next day, about 10 o'clock after leaving Sacramento city, I reached the mines. I passed the first day in observing how five hundred persons dug and washed the gold. This place is called Smith's Bar, because a man named Smith has a store there, where he sells provisions and mining implements. There I paid ten dollars for a small pan for washing gold, seven dollars for a pick, and eight dollars for a small crow bar, renting a cradle for six dollars per day, although a person I never saw before, named Hughes, who lives about St. Louis, offered to lend me \$100 for the purchase of a cradle, eight dollars for a shovel, five dollars for a pint of pickles, fifty cents a pound for beef. I had then but seventy-five cents left. I slept at night on a rock, between two high mountains, with a blanket over and one under me, reflecting in wakeful time that I was 3,500 miles from home, my mind running back to my boyhood and my playmates, remembering the delicious seasons I had enjoyed with my father and mother, and particularly with my bosom friend and wife, Ellen, and my children in Lancaster, Ohio.

The next morning I commenced working in earnest, and laboring incessantly for four weeks, finding, after deducting expenses, that I had cleared ten dollars per day, that is \$280. I then sold my mining implements, and returned to San Francisco, expecting to get a letter there from my family. I received one, being the first I had got. After blessing the steamer that brought it, I addressed a letter to my wife, inclosing \$200 and a sample of the gold dust. I then went to the gold mines at another point, on a river called the Stanish Lou, 200 miles south of the mines I had previously visited. 22 From that point I passed over to the mines on the Macallemmy river, and thence to Bear river, from Bear river to the Middle Fork of the American River, and then to Weaver's Creek, thence to the Horse Shoe Bar, on the North Fork of the American river, and to Juba river, thence to Feather river and to Trinity river, these being situated in a barren mountainous country, covered with scrubby pines and poisonous oaks. I found the miners generally making, on an average, \$16 per day. I saw three men dig out \$9000 in seven days, and two men dig \$2500 in two days. But these are rare

circumstances. I saw a Spaniard having a lump of gold he had found weighing one pound and a half. Finding gold digging too hard labor for me, I returned to Sacramento city.

At this point I think proper to offer some remarks respecting the digging and washing of the gold, and the best places for finding it. On the sides and tops of mountains gold is not found in large quantities, nor on the plains. But dig wherever you may think proper in that country, you will find some. When a river is high you cannot work along it to advantage. The explorer, if passing along a river when the water is high, may correctly judge that gold may be found at the foot of a fall or eddy, where he will or may be very successful when the water is low, the swiftness of the eddy having accumulated the gold scales in piles in places called "pockets." In such places the diggers should not be discouraged if at first they find none, but dig on until they get to the rock where they will find it the most, as gold, being the heaviest, passes through the sand and gravel, and settles on the rock. In those eddies, or pockets, or gravel bars, formed by the current of the river, some, not aware of what I said, will dig down one, two, or three feet, and finding none will leave the spot, while an old miner, coming afterwards, will dig deeper in the same hole, and find thousands of dollars safely deposited on the rock. In the slate rock it is only found in the crevices, as if it had been melted and poured into them by the hands of the Almighty. In the white flint rock it is not found so distinct or separate, but is there frequently seen commingled with the rock itself, the gold still being perfectly pure or almost, only losing two cents in the ounce when assayed at the mint, yielding seventeen dollars and sixty cents to the ounce, some say a great deal more, but the gold I gathered, which was the purest of the pure, only afforded that amount in the mint at New Orleans. While I was at the mines the New York and Massachusetts companies arrived, bringing with them patent gold washers, but were compelled to throw them away and use the common simple cradle, reminding me of the old woman who remarked that the old way of getting children is the best in the world. I will now describe the simple cradle. It resembles a common baby cradle, about four feet and a half long, of white pine, having bottom, sides, head board, but none at the foot. On the bottom three cleats, an inch wide and eighteen inches apart, are nailed. A kind of hopper, the bottom of which is sheet iron perforated with half inch holes, having a low raised board round the edge, is fastened across the top of the cradle. The sand, gravel and gold are poured into this hopper, and

then while water is poured on these with one hand, the cradle is rocked with the other, by which motion the gold, sand, and gravel are forced into the body of the cradle, where the gold, being the heaviest, lodges against the wooden cleats, while the sand and gravel pass onward and out by the foot of it. Then the gold along those cleats, and the little sand and gravel still mingled with it, are taken out, put into a pan and washed at the edge of the river as clean as you can get it without wasting any of the gold. Then it is placed on a handkerchief spread in the sun, and when it is dry the remaining sand is blown from it as one blows the dust from beans. This sand is as black as powder. The fact is, gold is only found in black sand. The pure gold is then put into a double sewed buckskin bag or purse, and is then ready for preservation or exportation.

While lying asleep or awake at night I did not think it strange lizzards to run over my body and up the legs of my trowsers, and for wolves, called the *kyota*, to steal my breakfast prepared for the morning.

In my travels through California I saw thousands upon thousands of the finest and fattest cattle I ever saw, perfectly wild;—deer, antelopes, and elk, but I never saw the wild oats, wheat and clover high as a horse's belly, mentioned by Col. Fremont, as published in his travels, and have the strongest reasons for believing that they do not exist in that country.

I caution persons going from this country to California against the traders and speculators found in that country. When those strangers inquire for the best diggings, those traders direct them to the spot where they have provisions and mining implements for sale, whether those places are the best or not. Strangers, after digging with little success in spots to which they have been directed—perhaps in places which have been abandoned, become disgusted, leave the gold region, and return home, believing that the whole is a humbug affair; whereas, if they would travel a little and search for themselves, they would find plenty of gold, return well laden with the precious metal, and publish that it is the greatest or rather only El Dorado in the world.

I will now notice some of the diseases of California, to which the mines are particularly liable. One is the diarrhœ, caused by drinking the water, surcharged with mineral, called *mica*, a substance

which is yellow as gold, which sometimes leads strangers to believing that it is that metal, but gold is hard and this is soft. Strangers wishing to preserve their health, should boil the water, and drink or otherwise use it when cool. Another is produced by the poisonous oak. Then the scurvy, occasioned by eating too much salt meat, and to avoid it vinegar or lime juice should be freely used. The argue and fever, which is very common, as the nights are very cold and the days excessively warm. I saw the thermometer 130 degrees in the shade, and persons sun-struck instantly. To prevent being sun-struck, the miner should constantly wear a wet cloth between his head and the crown of his hat. To avoid the heat the 24 miners work from daylight till 10 o'clock A.M., commencing at 4 in the afternoon and working till dark.

I never saw trees in California fit for making rails, except the red wood tree along the San Francisco Bay. The Bay of San Francisco is entered by a channel two miles in width, when it widens to 40 miles, being by some considered one of the safest and most beautiful in the world. But I have a different opinion of it, as it is assailed by a hurricane every afternoon, coming directly over the city, at which time a woman cannot walk the streets. The banks of this bay are bluff and mountainous. Opposite San Francisco is a strait leading from the larger bay into a smaller one, called Linn Bay into which Napper River empties. Every thirty miles up the latter bay we pass through another strait leading into another bay.

On the strait a town is situated called Vernicia, containing about one hundred good buildings; and I have the opinion that it will become the principal city of California. Near it are a government Fort and Troops, and a Navy Yard. Not a tree is seen in passing from San Francisco to Vernicia, 45 miles, and doubtless never were any in that region. Vessels are anchored from one mile to three miles from San Francisco, being laden and unladen by lighters, but at Vernicia they run up to the shores, and meet with no difficulty, being also perfectly secure from storms. New York is situated at the mouth of the San Wocktine river, twenty miles above Vernicia. From San Francisco to New York the banks are mountainous and barren, without a tree or bush, and covered with wild cattle and elk. The Sacramento river greatly resembles the Mississippi—not as wide, but in width about equal to the Ohio river. I consider it the most beautiful river in the world. The San Wocktine and Sacramento river join at their mouths, forming a bay, about twenty miles long and ten miles broad,

between Vernicia and New York. About three miles below the junction of these rivers, on the bay, is the town of Montezuma. A swamp extends along the south side of the Sacramento river from its mouth to a point one hundred miles above. Between this swamp and the river is a level plain covered with wild grass resembling our meadows at home. On the opposite, or east side of the river is a similar swamp and plain extending only to Sacramento City. In the months of June, July, August and September, persons cannot live near its banks in consequence of the musquitos. They attack one as fiercely as yellow jackets, and in a minute his person is literally covered with them, and they can kill a man in twenty four hours if permitted to have their own malicious way. In Sacramento City I saw several persons who, in passing up, had been so bitten that they could not see or walk, being bloated by the poison of the stings. In voyaging up, on one occasion, I was offered \$15 a cord for chopping wood, but if offered \$100 per cord, I would not have accepted it in that mosquito land. Another instance of their fatality. A stranger voyaging that river to Sacramento City in the "Mary" of New York, was so bitten by them that he became deranged, and in his frenzy jumped overboard and was drowned.

Suter's Fort is two miles directly east of Sacramento City, on the 25 road leading to the gold regions. Suter's saw-mill, where the gold was first discovered, is fifty miles a N.E. course from Sacramento City. In going to that mill, I passed over the most beautiful plains in the world, occasionally meeting with groves of shady oak trees. The mill is situated on the Middle Fork of the American river.—Crossing the Middle Fork the ferriage cost me two dollars, and the same price was required of me for crossing at Child's ferry on the American river. In Sacramento City, a man named St. Clair, offered me \$350 per month for driving a pair of oxen. This I refused as I intended to go into trading. In the same City I saw a gentleman, formerly attached to the Granville college in Ohio, who got for driving two yoke of oxen \$400 per month and boarded. I saw a journeyman blacksmith, who, preferring going to the mines, refused \$500 per month and board. There is no law there, and no need of it at present. Men can gather so much gold at the mines, that they have no need of office—cannot serve, as the ox driver gets more than the Congress man. The government officers do not attend to government business, employing their time in speculation.

I had the honor of erecting and occupying the most beautiful and comfortable tent in Sacramento City. I formed it thus: Half way between the ship landing and the main street was a singular sycamore tree, which, with age and honor, had bent down to the shape of a half circle, while from its curved trunk rose branches, casting a delightful shade around. This curve I made the entrance or front door of my tent, building back of it with muslin until it was sufficiently large for every purpose. Between the two sides of the trunk ran my counter, leaving a small passage on one side for entering and going out. It astonished both natives and foreigners, who saw, that, like the renowned Sam Patch, I could do some things as well as others, on an enterprise which no one thought of before. But I was more fortunate than that here. Sam Patch was drowned in trying his experiments, but I swam head up high in going on with mine. In truth, it was a patriarchal mode of living and trading, and the “*Sycamore Tree Establishment*” became famous far and near.

I will now give some specimens of California life which I witnessed. An Irishman, who lived on the opposite side of the river, came over to the City to have a spree, for the Irishman is the same jovial personage every where. Excited by ardent spirits, &c., he had been swearing that he would kill somebody that day. From my tent, I saw him, with uplifted bowie knife, pursuing an individual. When he had almost reached his expected prey, the latter turned on him and wounded him severely with a pistol. His wife was sent for, who came over in a canoe. With assistance she had her husband placed in the bottom of it, and started for home. As the wound made him restive, she swore that if he did not be still she would throw him overboard. He died about four hours after reaching his dwelling.—Elder, the man who shot the Irishman, was immediately arrested, and tried before a kind of jury court, and acquitted. A few days afterwards a man was arrested for stealing \$50 worth of gold dust. A jury was called and a judge appointed, and he was found guilty, his 26 sentence running thus: that he should have his ears cut off, receive fifty lashes on the bare back, and leave the country. Then lots were drawn to discover who should cut off his ears, and it fell upon a person named Clark. The prisoner prevailed upon a doctor sojourning there, to do the job instead of Clark, knowing that he could do it more skillfully and with less injury; but the difference was that between a little hell and a big hell. The doctor complied with great good nature and willingness, and with a well sharpened glittering razor, cut the scoundrel's ears off close to his

head. With bleeding head and back, and, no doubt, with an agonized heart, if such a villain could feel, he stole a mule the same night, and was never heard of afterwards. A doctor stepped into my tent for refreshment. He was just from the mines with a gloomy countenance and apparently with almost broken heart. He stated that he had left a profitable practice in New Orleans for the life of a gold-seeking wanderer—a splendid carriage, to walk on foot over barren hills and valleys—an ample table, to cook his scanty worm meat and eat his musty bread—a feather bed and lovely wife, to sleep on the hard ground serenaded each night by howling starving wolves. The overland boys commenced arriving. An overland doctor rode up to my tent, asking me if I wished to purchase a horse. He said he was from Illinois. I asked him if he had been to the mines. He answered that he had been to the Mormon Island. He observed that he was going home, as he had only visited that region for his health. I observed that any person who could endure the fatigues consequent on traveling across the plains, must have been very healthy at home. This created great laughter among some spectators, which enraged the doctor. He swore that he would like to give Fremont, and all the letter-writers who had extolled California, a quietus with arsenic, as the intelligence about the gold was designed to humbug the people of the United States. Off rode the doctor, and we saw no more of him. One day two New Yorkers were eating dinner at my tent. In stepped a Massachusetts man, who said that he had just returned from the mines. The New Yorkers, to have a little fun with him, commenced asking him questions, and found that he, like the celebrated doctor, was bound for home. They pretended they had a diving bell, and offered him \$16 per day and board, for working only two hours a day with it, but his station should be during that time, in the diving bell arising or descending. This offer he refused. They then offered him wages for that purpose from \$25 up to \$50. He swore that he would have nothing to do with the *under*-takin, as he believed they wished to drown him. He said that he could live better in a Massachusetts poor house than he could in California; home he would go, and took his hasty departure, followed by the laughter of those who had tried to hook the land gudgeon. A young man named Samuel Anderson, the son of a wealthy gentleman in New York, came to my tent sick and without a cent. I gave him something to eat, medicine and money to pay his way to San Francisco. He was direct from the mines. I never saw him since and never learned whether he lived or died.

Here I would give a little advice. It is a great mistake in wealthy men giving their sons money to go to California. They have not been accustomed to hard labor and privations at home, and hence cannot be expected to endure successfully the hardships and vexations of such a trip. The lawyer, doctor, and clerk, are very good in their places, but the California gold mines is not the place for them. None but the stalwart and gigantic laboring man, who can work from sunrise to sunset and withstand the hot sun, is fit for such an occupation. Men coming to and returning from the mines to their homes, I found to be an every day occurrence. They do not stay long enough to learn how to find the gold and to wash it. They stay there frequently only a few hours and retire in disgust. I asked one where he had been? He said, to Smith's Bar. I observed—it is a pleasure trip from here to Smith's Bar. I asked another, who replied, that he had just returned from the Horse Shoe Bar. Another, and he replied that he was from the Mormon Island. A pleasant trip, I coolly said, with hungry belly and sore feet. Very agreeable, indeed—a remark which I made to such stragglers with every returning sun. I had a conversation one day with the celebrated Capt. Suter at my tent, about Col. Fremont, in relation to his first expedition to California. He said that Col. Fremont come to his Fort, and took by force, horses, cattle, and provisions, for which he had never been paid by government. I then spoke of the great crops of wheat he was raising when the gold excitement commenced. He observed that he only raised it for the use of his own stock, as there was not at that time a mill in that region for grinding wheat. He has not a fence on his farm, the Fort is in ruins, its walls having been formed, (as those of his house in which there is now a tavern,) of adobe brick, or clay bricks not burnt. He lives at Suterville, a town of about one hundred buildings, one mile and a half below Sacramento City. I sold some brandy at my tent at twenty-five cents per drink. I was surrounded by other liquor houses. When a person came to me for brandy, I invariably observed that if he must and would have it, and was determined to die, that I had the stuff that would kill a man as quick as any other liquor in California. This I done fully one hundred times a day, and most of those thus accosted went away without drinking. I saw a fine young gentleman, a surveyor. He came to my tent, and ate his dinner. He went to another tent and got drunk, and fell down dead drunk before that tent. Before sunset he was a corpse, the liquor and the hot sun having killed him. This young man was getting \$50 a day and boarded. O thou cursed brandy, what hast thou done! You have robbed a mother of a son, but you did not stop there, you made many orphans and

widows in Sacramento City while I was there. I am firmly convinced that ardent spirits are the principal cause of deaths in California. On one occasion I saw a pint and a half of brandy sell for \$11 50 at the mines. In Sacramento City every other tent is devoted to gambling, or drinking, and some to both. It is the same in San Francisco, and every other town in that newly acquired territory. I can only compare it to a horse race track on the last day of the races, just before 28 the horses are brought out. Excuse the curious shoemaker for his curious expressions, for he has a good object in view.

I will notice more proceedings at my tent, but I must begin by saying the Lancaster boys are arriving. The vessel I sailed in from Mazatlan arrived at San Francisco two months before the French brig in which they voyaged. The catholics have their hell in purgatory, the universalists theirs on earth, but the Lancaster boys were to have theirs on the Pacific ocean for their conduct towards me. They arrived at Sacramento City without money, and wished to borrow \$50 from me. I readily agreed to let them have it. They wrote a joint note, not with a pen, but with a pencil, that through rubbing in the pocket book it would soon rub out. I observed to them at the time that they need not think I am a fool because some may consider me an ignorant shoemaker, for I had discovered why they wished to have the note written with a flimsy pencil, and would not, in consequence, let them have \$50 on any terms. That was a great revolution in feelings, after wishing to shoot me at Mazatlan, to try to borrow money from me at Sacramento City; but the reader will see that the same principle, or rather want of principle, was exhibited both in the shooting business and the borrowing affair. They then took a pleasure trip to Smith's Bar, and I never heard anything of them afterwards. From the time of my landing in San Francisco, June 1, to the present time, August 20, I had accumulated \$1500, that is, cleared that sum, after paying all expenses. I firmly believe that, if I had not been bothered and delayed through Texas and Mexico by the Lancaster boys—that is, if the wagons had been sold, and we had muled it in 30 days instead of the two months the trip occupied, I might have doubled the \$1500 between the dates I mentioned.

As usual with me, I wish to give a little advice to persons coming from the States to the California mines. Let each person have only 2 good flannel shirts, and the suit of clothes he usually wears, the gold he intends spending in a belt fastened around his body;—1 good six-shooter Colt pistol—good

butcher knife instead of a bowie knife, as with the former, one can eat, but not with the latter—a good rifle. These are all the necessary articles he should have. If a man comes through the Isthmus, with a huge trunk full of clothes and the mining implements, he is obliged to pay to \$16 per 100 lbs. for their conveyance, \$20 per hundred from San Francisco to Sacramento City, and \$20 per hundred from Sacramento City to the mines. Then he has paid more for those articles than the prices at which they may be obtained in California. If a trunk is stored in San Francisco or in Sacramento City, he has to pay \$3 per month. I had twenty trunks stored in my possession at that price, I placed them under a tree outside the tent. People in the States may talk about conveniences, but after a person is obliged to lug a cradle, two blankets, pick, shovel, crowbar, and a week's provision, on his back, walking fifteen miles per day through the hot sun, up and down the mountains, he has no use for a trunk full of clothes and a tent. The person who digs gold lives like the wild man, deprived of every comfort of life and society. I believe that there is enough of gold in California region to supply 29 the world, but the difficulty in obtaining it has never been so great in any other region, and yet has it never been gathered so plentifully in the same length of time. You cannot show me any other spot on earth where a laboring man can make \$16 per day by hard work, yet I would not advise any person to come to this country. But read, judge for yourselves, for I have told you the truth. I am willing that any person who has worked in the mines should read my work, and, he, from personal experience, will discover that I have not varied from the truth.

A gentleman, named Francis Shaeffer, whom I had known from a boy, stepped into my tent. He was born and raised in Lancaster, Fairfield county, Ohio. His father keeps the finest hotel in Lancaster, and, I think, is worth \$100,000. I was considerably glad to see Frank, as he was the first of my acquaintance I had seen in the gold regions. He came the overland route from Fort Independence, one among the first who got through. I asked him, why he had come to that desolate place, as his father had enough at home to sustain him during life without laboring. He answered that he knew that, but he wished to make with his own hands as much as his father possessed. I could not help sincerely pitying him when I saw his fine form and expressive countenance, with an intelligence that might have realized him a fortune in any other place, knowing and feeling that the hardships and privations of that region would be severe on one who had been so delicately raised and liberally

educated, yet feeling confident that by his extraordinary energy and ability he would acquire an independent fortune at the mines, and would go to his home with one of the largest treasures on earth.

A New York lawyer stepped into my tent one day, without the usual haughty swagger he had frequently previously exhibited in Broadway, and without the usual gloves on his hands and umbrella under his arm, which he had displayed there in going to perform some peti-fogging business. I never heard his name, and perhaps he was so ashamed of the mines he wished to conceal it. He said there was no law in that country, and that gold digging was too severe for his delicate hands and body. I observed that the more law there is in any country the more trouble there is among men, he said that he was without money and without hope, showing me a splendid gold watch, saying that he wished me to purchase it from him, asking \$50 for it, observing that it had cost him \$110 in New York. I told him that I would give him \$20 for it. This he took and spent \$5 of it with me, in eating and drinking, before he left. A sailor was at my tent. The captain of a vessel wished to hire him to accompany the former to Oregon. The captain offered him \$250 per month. The sailor asked \$300. The captain observed that that was too much, and he could not give it. The sailor then retorted, that if this captain would accompany and help him at the mines he would give him \$300 per month and board. This is the only country in which I have seen true democracy prevailing. The poor man can give as high wages as the rich man, and the former can hire the latter as readily and as liberally as the latter can hire the former. While I was in 30 Sacramento City, an English vessel was lying at that port of the muslin houses. Although the sailors had been receiving good wages, all of them run away from the ships to the mines. The captain, who was receiving \$50 per month from his employers in England, being an honest man and true to their interests, remained on board. He hired at that port a cook, for his own eating, to whom he gave \$250 per month. This is the first time I ever saw a cook get more wages than the captain of a vessel. No other country can exhibit such a singularity as that. In fact, California has turned the world upside down in every department of life. A New York gentleman walked pompously into my tent, and asked me what I would take for the now universally celebrated and appreciated “*Sycamore Tree Establishment*” and all its appurtenances, the latter consisting of as much as an ordinary man could carry on his

back, and would be worth in the States about \$50. I told him \$500, considering that the credit of the establishment was worth a small fortune. He offered me \$400 in cash. I observed that it was useless to multiply words between gentlemen, and he might count out the \$400 in sterling gold, and he could take the whole concern and possession at the same time.

Now I am ready to start for home. A man, named Walker, living in Covington, opposite Cincinnati, who came with me from Mazatlan to Sacramento City, got drunk at the latter place soon after I arrived there, and went off intoxicated to the mines. When I saw him last he was making a perfect worm fence along his route. I did not hear of him afterwards until the moment I was ready to start towards home. I asked how he had progressed after leaving me. He informed me that he had found a rich spot, and had dug out \$8500. He showed me the dust. Both of us then proceeded to San Francisco, where, getting as beastly drunk, as ever, he gambled and soon lost \$1000. Then he had \$7500 left, which I took care of for him. As to fortune, there was a great disparity between us, as I had only \$2000.

It is now August 20, and Walker and myself are at San Francisco, waiting for a passage to the States. The U.S. Mail steamer "Panama," is anchored in the bay, three miles from the town, appointed to sail Sept. 2d. She is commanded by Capt. Baily. Our tickets for the steerage, in that ship, cost us each \$150. I could have sold my ticket for \$250, as there were about one thousand more than the steamer could take, wishing passage to the States. There I saw several of the Lancaster boys. I call them *boys*, for *men* would not have acted towards me as they did. They had not, as yet, made one dollar. They tried to persuade me to stay longer in that country, but they could not succeed. I told them that I had seen the elephant, which had a longer tail and a bigger snout than the usual elephants. That I was satisfied with the small bucket full of gold I had accumulated, and would not stay to see it running over the sides like milk from a pail, as I was no advocate for wastefulness. Perhaps they had not sense enough in their contracted skulls to understand the homely illustration of the Lancaster shoemaker. If so, they may die with their wisdom, as its loss will be not the least loss to the world.

In walking through the town I saw people from all quarters of the globe, showing that San Francisco had already become the landing of the world, viz:—Americans, Englishmen, Hibernians, Scotch folks, Chinese, Sandwich Islanders, South Americans, New Granadians, Mexicans, Polanders, Sonorians. I saw anchored in the harbor about five hundred vessels belonging to different nations, about one hundred at Vernicia, and two hundred at Sacramento City, making in all 800 vessels, the sailors had all ran off to the mines, averaging at that time but one man to a vessel to take care of them. Some of the vessels were rotting, and I suppose the majority of them would be destroyed by the N.W. hurricanes. I saw Col. Fremont, Col. Weller, and Ex-Governor Shannon there. I conversed with them about the gold and state of the country, as to its soil and political interests. I saw about three hundred gamblers in the city, acting like land sharks, entrapping the foolish gudgeons who were swimming about their establishments. This state of society reminded me of two kinds of ducks I saw at the east, and which I have seen swimming together. One of them is a small duck, having a diving disposition. The other is large and indolent, but always fat, and avoids the trouble of diving. When the small one dives to the bottom, and brings up the luscious grass, the large duck artfully swims to it, and, grasping the grass, eats it at leisure. I compared the gambler to the large duck and the honest hard-working miner to the little one, the gambler being always fat in the pocket, and the miner proportionally poor in the same. This would also apply to many in the United States.

When I was in the Macallemey river, I had the honor of seeing the lordly Mr. Perkins, of Cincinnati, who had acted so aristocratically towards me while passing through Mexico, so poisoned by the poisonous oak that he was bloated and full of sores. Knowing the virulence of the disorder, and seeing how greatly he had been poisoned, I judged that he afterwards died. Should I see him again it will seem like a resurrection from the dead. Dead or alive, his case, first and last, reminds me of the proverb which says, that pride must have a fall—and sometimes even into the grave. I believe in a hell on earth, and it is no matter what I believe about the other world. Perhaps he was *also* a gambler. If so, old Death has shot with his long rifle one of the big ducks I was speaking about.

Before starting in the steamship “Panama,” I wish to offer some appropriate reflections. In the midst of constant excitement I love occasionally to pause and reflect on the consequences of things, and express my views accordingly. It may be called the philosophy of a shoemaker, but what of that. I have heard of shoemakers rising to high stations in jurisprudence, poetry, and philosophy. But shoemakers are like persons of other professions, some being more deep than others on certain subjects. The bird that skims over a clear stream may see as much of the pebbles as the duck that dives to the bottom. I mean that, although I am a shoemaker, I may offer some good reflections on the value of California to the world, and to the United States in particular. In the shop at home in Lancaster I have 32 cobbled the understanding of others: and in many cases have supplied entirely new understandings to the shoes and boots of customers. So, in my reflections, I may improve the understandings of some on Californian matters, and impart to others entirely new understandings of those subjects. Some proverb says, that the shoemaker should not go beyond his last, but this is a free country, and shoemakers have as much right to quit their last, and go to California to dig gold and offer their views, as persons of any other trade or profession have. At this very time there is a shoemaker in Europe who has become quite fashionable among the most fashionable, in consequence of his published travels, he working at his trade as he travels in order to pay expenses, and writing his journal at night after constant travel or work. I know that some—an inglorious few—disdain the literary productions of mechanics as they hate the mechanics themselves; but, thank Heaven and St. Crispin, the god of the shoemakers, we are in a better country than aristocratic Europe, where merit is acknowledged and applauded whether it emanates from the skull of a shoemaker, or the pomatumed pericranium of a lawyer, regular physician, or quack doctor.

As in this volume I am neither whig nor democrat, therefore I shall offer no remarks on the justness or unjustness of the war with Mexico which placed California in our hands. It is enough for me to say that California in time will become the pivot on which our national glory will revolve,—in fact, will become the centre of the world. Here nations will meet and shake hands with each other.—Asia coming from over the Pacific ocean, and Europe from over the Atlantic, grasping the huge paws of Uncle Sam beyond the Rocky Mountains—in our now Great West—and wishing him the highest success, because their own interests will be advanced in our growing prosperity. How we are

spreading as a nation. About three quarters of a century since we had about three millions of people, but now we have extended our dominions from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, with a population numbering more than twenty millions—and many now living, before they die shall see somewhere about a hundred and fifty millions of inhabitants within the borders I have mentioned. Does any one doubt that the states formed west of the Rocky Mountains will survive in unity with those states formed, and to be formed, east of them? If such a doubt exists, let it be instantly banished from *American* minds, although some aristocratic *European* minds may entertain a contrary opinion, forever croaking over the instability of republican institutions in order to show the fancied stability of despotic thrones, notwithstanding they must see that our glorious Union is getting firmer every day, our conflicting party spirit only strengthening its roots as the storm strengthens the roots of the giant oak. The Rocky Mountains, although towering like the Pyrenees separating Spain from France, will not separate the interests of our East and West. When the telegraph, railroad, and other means of conveyance of thought and body, stretching entirely across North America, connect us more closely together, the union of thought, feeling, and person, will be perfect and productive of perfect amity. 33 3 This is a widely known truth, but should be frequently repeated in order to be more deeply impressed upon the mind. The bible is nearly two thousand years old, yet its truths are constantly repeated from the pulpit and elsewhere for public good. So of any other valuable truth—it should be constantly placed in various forms before the intellect, although it may be uttered by a shoemaker. If the only communications with those new acquisitions were across the Isthmus by Chagres to Panama, or around the Horn, or by ox and mule travel from Fort Independence, some slight fears might be entertained for the permanency of the Union, but the establishment of the continental railroad will soon remove such fears. In that case, congressional representatives could travel as speedily from Oregon and California to Washington City, (or to Cincinnati, should it become the seat of government as some suppose,) as they formerly did from our extreme west or north east by mail coaches. It is true that the extending Roman empire was destroyed by home party spirit and foreign invasion, but we are governing our extending dominions with a better religion, a firmer political economy, and a higher mode of civilization, and therefore need not fear such a termination to our rising grandeur. The Almighty destroyed in ancient times the Babel tower government by confusing the prevailing language, and separating the builders into tribes

with different tongues and habits, so that they could not understand each other enough to concoct schemes against His better government, and influenced by their growing quarrels separated still farther apart—but the opposite is happening in our government, affording another proof that it will continue firm. I mean that we will have the same language, laws, and institutions, connecting the far east to the far west, so that each state will be as proud of its own local sovereignty and interests as of the general importance of the general government, like a good father rejoicing in good children, and the children in the father, because their interests as well as their joys are one, their linking affections speaking the same language by which they can understand each other for mutual advantage. Without the shadow of a doubt, when, in the future, we may number fifty states, containing three hundred millions of people, it will be the same!

Let the shoemaker philosophise a little longer on this subject with a practical philosophy, which is far better than fallible mystifications on air balloons, and the imagined philosopher's stone. Uncle Sam has a philosopher's stone in his Californian and Oregonian possessions which turns everything it touches to gold. Let us see what a railroad, by Whitney or any other enterprising individual or company, connecting the two shores, will accomplish. New York, which is within ten days of Europe by steamer, will then be within twenty-five days of China by that railroad and a steamer connecting its terminus with the Celestial Empire. The Chinese themselves will acknowledge that our country, instead of theirs, will be the true Celestial Empire—ah, more,—shedding both terrestrial and celestial happiness and prosperity on every land with which it will be connected. So that the hovering spirit of Columbus himself will 34 rejoice over this short cut to the East Indies, contrasting it favorably with the old weary route through weary oceans, and wish himself again on earth that he might personally enjoy the glorious carrying out of an idea which he tried to have on the same subject. Thus America will become the centre of the world, both in a commercial way and in a moral and intellectual sense. Europe is rising and we are rising higher very appropriately about the same time, as if Providence had some prominent object in producing simultaneously those coincidences. The Genius of Liberty is giving Europe a vomiting dose, and she is about disgorging her surplus population, fleeing for life and liberty, more plentifully than ever upon our inviting shores. We must have more room and more employment for the coming seekers for liberty, in order

to do out part in carrying out the design of the Supreme Disposer of events. The East and West shall meet them with expanded arms, and the wilderness between shall bloom like a rose that they may safely worship the Almighty and secure their own rights. Since the crucifixion, the Star of Empire has westwardly held on its brightening way, crossing the Atlantic ocean, and is now sending down its reviving rays on Oregon and California. It is plain that we are to become the mediator between both sides of the old world. God has given us the political and moral means for doing it, and now he is imparting the Californian gold that we may employ our increased talents with better effect. About one hundred millions of the gold have been gathered by different nations and more than fifty years will be employed in gathering the remainder. What for? We may *guess* in regular yankee style.

Some even say, the object is, that the Jews, concentrating their long separated interests, may get from California the gold wherewith to build the temple of Jerusalem in all its ancient grandeur, in order that they may be reinstated, and prophecy concerning them accredited. But such arguments cannot *jew* me out of the opinion I am holding. It is true, it is thus bestowed for the rebuilding of some temple, but it is the Temple of Liberty, which was erected in Eden before the fall, and great was the fall thereof when Satan entered the garden, destroying the liberty of pure thought and action. Satan is seated on every throne distributing the same chains. But the time has arrived when the Temple of Liberty shall be rebuilt in all of its primitive glory, according to the surest word of ancient and modern prophecy. For that purpose God has placed those golden placers in our way, saying unto us: "Yea, verily I say unto you, ye shall take of the gold I have provided, and therewith build on the sacred mount of republican principles the Temple of Liberty, that the goings out of its glory and the comings in of its praise, may be unto all nations a sweet savor as of incense, where they may come to worship, and take thence the brands which they have lighted at the eternal fire, and with them uplifted go to and fro illuminating the dark places of the earth!"

At the appointed time we started in the "Panama." Raising steam and firing a farewell gun, we were on our glorious way with 300 passengers on board. Among them was the world-renowned Capt. Suter, being a delegate to the convention held at Monterey to form a 35 state government. Him and I conversed considerably together. He again spoke of Col. Fremont. After again relating the grievances I before mentioned, that is, how Fremont stole his property, he angrily said that

Fremont is a tyrant and a blackguard, but spoke very highly of Col. Kearney who superceded Fremont on that military station. Also spoke very highly of commodore Stockton, whose fleet so promptly sustained our interests in California. He told me that, before the discovery of the gold, the inhabitants slaughtered the cattle only for the hide and tallow, but now they slaughter them for the meat and throw the hide and tallow away. He also related to me how he first emigrated to that wild region. Once he kept a store in Louisville, Kentucky. There he foolishly went bail for a friend (or enemy,) and through the imprudence of the person he bailed he was ruined or almost. From there he went to New Orleans. Thence to Fort Independence and across the plains and Rocky Mountains to the Columbia river in Oregon. From there to the Sandwich islands. The government of those islands furnished him with ten servants to act as life guards, and, accompanied by them, he went to Santa Barbara on the Pacific coast. There the government, for the proper settlement of the country, granted him the region in which most of the gold mines are. I then asked him, to tell me the worth of his property at this time. He supposed about \$500,000. He has an amiable son in California, and a wife and two daughters in Germany, adding that he had sent for the latter, and they would soon be in California. The Capt. is a German, sixty years old, and much of a gentleman.

Our steamer stopped at Monterey, and changed the mail. Also at San Diego. At the latter place I saw a person, named Thomas Wilson, who had started from Lancaster with me. He went by the way of the Isthmus. At Panama he went as passenger on board of a vessel called the "*Two Friends*." She had an unskillful captain, and had not enough of casks for the conveyance of water. Provisions getting scarce and having much calm weather, the vessel presented a scene of suffering almost unparalleled. Wilson said he had suffered more than twenty deaths while voyaging in her. The vessel, being in distress, was anchored off the coast, two hundred miles below San Diego. Himself and thirty other passengers landed there, and walked to San Diego without water or provisions except some wild beans they plucked by the way. I asked him if he had money, being determined, if he had none, to give him some to help him to San Francisco. He replied that he had. I understood afterwards that he went in the "Panama" when she returned. Let who will venture in sailing vessels on that route, as for myself, I would not get in one even if offered a free passage. I know some instances in which it occupied them one hundred days going from Panama to San Francisco.

The next port we touched at to change the mail was Santa Barbara. Next Acapulco, and then Mazatlan, where we laid one day getting in provisions. There the passengers went ashore for recreation. I concluded to have a bath in the Pacific Ocean. While bathing alone—how dangerous while ocean sharks and land angels are so numerous—several señoritas came to the same spot to enjoy the same amusement. As I am always bashful in the presence of ladies, and more so 36 when any parts of their bodies are exposed, I retreated to the shore, putting on my clothes before their angelic and wondering eyes, they wishing to guard me as attending mermaids while I bathed. I, however, remained on the shore while they bathed, and when they had concluded and dressed, we walked together to the city, they speaking with their eyes a language which I did not quite understand, but enough to learn that they were pleased with me and wished more of my company, pointing at the same time to the setting sun and closing their eyes as if imitating sleep. Pretending that I did not understand them, I left the angelic company. I saw some half breed boys in the city, called *muchachoes*, or *little Americanoes*, with whom the most respectable señoritas seemed highly delighted.

The next port we reached and stopped at to change the mail was San Blas. We ran from San Francisco to San Blas in sight of the coast all the time. We saw whales of the largest size every day, all kinds of sea birds and fish, and saw on the steamer *an elephant* almost as large as *that* I saw in California. I perceived all the way down a cask of brandy on the wheel house marked “*Captain Baily*.” It had no hoops, but a coat and pantaloons, and wore a Panama hat. Strange to say, I saw that cask of brandy walk from the wheel house to the cabin and back again. Its proper name should have been *a tyrant*. I hate all tyrants, but drunken tyrants the most. It was the opinion of all the passengers that this walking cask of brandy kept a prostitute on board.

I will now describe how the steerage passengers live or almost die on those Pacific steamers. They are fed as hogs are fed at a distillery, only they are fed in pans instead of troughs. They are divided into messes of twelve persons each, a pan full of food to a mess. One day, backed by 100 steerage passengers, I took one of those swine pans, filled with the disgusting food, into the cabin, and holding it before the eyes and nose of this tyrannical and malicious cask of brandy, asked him

whether it was worth the \$150 each of us paid for passage. He replied, that it was good enough for steerage passengers. I then threw the pan and food overboard, telling him that we would go to the cook house and take and eat what had been prepared for the cabin passengers. He threatened to put the patriotic shoemaker—myself I modestly mean—in irons, if I offered him any more impudence. We immediately went to the cook house. The cook raised a hatchet to slay me. One of my comrades, a man named Smith, from Alabama, immediately knocked the understrapping villain down. We then took chickens, bread, puddings, roast beef and eggs, but wasted nothing. After that we fared sublimely well, as a reward for our benevolent heroism, and for the advantage of all steerage passengers who may travel that route after us. Afterwards this cask of brandy regarded Smith and myself as fiends fresh from hell. We often called him the “*Jack of Clubs*,” for he looked more like that than he did like a man. The cabin passengers honorably sided with us. I never heard one of the passengers call him a gentleman; and in my opinion, he is a scoundrel. Travellers can never travel comfortably on this route until there is an opposition line of steamers.

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We arrived at Panama on the 22d of September. It is a very ancient city, and the number of inhabitants about ten thousand. It is built much like the old Spanish style, each house constituting a fort in time of war. The streets are very narrow. It is under the government of New Granada. The natives are principally colored like negroes, sprinkled with a few Spaniards. No religion is allowed there except the Roman Catholic. It was on Sunday morning I arrived. I saw in a house a big buck negro on his knees, confessing his sins to a priest. The sabbath, being their day of amusement as well as worship, I saw, in the afternoon, both the buck negro and the priest at the cockpit. I meddle with no denomination—I belong to none—I think it right for every man to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience. Let the priest act as mediator between God and man to all who choose to believe that way. I will acknowledge none but Christ for my mediator. I will confess my sins to God, in Christ the Lord, and to no other. I will risk my salvation on that basis.

Here I found an American who had hired all the mules in the country, and others wishing them were obliged to hire from him. He asked \$16 for a mule to ride twenty-one miles to Cruces, a town at the head of canoe navigation on the Chagres river. It contains about 1000 inhabitants. The most of us,

about 100, walked to Cruces instead of patronizing this wicked monopolist. We met the U.S. Mail, brought by the Empire City, going from Chagres to Panama. It was on twenty-four mules, each mule having three hundred pounds. We also met fifty of the natives carrying baggage in the same direction, each bearing from one to three hundred weight.

I had heard a great deal of this road, but never saw it before, always hearing that it was the worst in the world. It is a narrow mule path, mostly paved, on rolling ground, but not mountainous, with very excellent water about every twenty rods. Those who think this a bad road have never passed from Durango to Mazatlan. I can point to worse roads in Ohio. I had frequently heard that the weather is very warm at the Isthmus, but I did not find it warmer than at the gold mines. But it rains here every few hours. I experienced here the first rain since that I mentioned which occurred the first night after my arrival in San Francisco. The next morning after arriving at Cruces, twelve of us started in a canoe on the Chagres river for the town of Chagres, which is sixty miles from Cruces. We stopped and breakfasted at Gorgona, eight miles below Cruces. In this distance we passed through a perfect paradise. I had heard of Italian scenery, but this far surpassed it. All who pass through having any taste for the romantic, will agree with my opinion. Gorgona contains about 1000 inhabitants, who look like, if they are not negroes. Sugar cane grows in that country better without cultivation than it does around New Orleans with cultivation. Also, pine apples, cocoa nuts, oranges, lemons, and many others of which I do not know the Spanish names, growing spontaneously throughout the year. I believe it would beat the world for corn, if there were yankees there to cultivate it. Each of us paid \$1 for breakfast at Gorgona. For passage from Cruces to Chagres each paid \$16. We bade that glorious scenery farewell, and proceeded towards Chagres, passing palm and palmetto trees, and the most beautiful timber on the globe, every few rods seeing monkeys, parrots, in innumerable multitudes, and the largest alligators I ever saw. We shot an alligator ten feet long. This trip, helped by the current as well as oars, we made in one day. At Chagres we found the "Empire City," the "Falcon," and "Alabama," and an English steamer. The "Empire City" was bound for New York, by way of Havana. Some went on the "Empire City," some on the "Falcon," but I went on the "Alabama," bound for New Orleans. The "Falcon" was

bound for the same place. Chagres has about one thousand inhabitants. A very large and beautiful battery is situated on a mountain east of the city, to defend the latter in time of war.

Sept. 24, we started from Chagres for New Orleans, the distance being 1700 miles. Walker and myself took berths in the cabin, each paying \$85. I had worn out my boots in walking across the Isthmus, and threw them away. Not having had an opportunity to purchase a pair in Chagres, of course I was barefooted. After being three days in the cabin, the captain noticed me particularly, thinking it strange that a barefooted gentleman should be found among the cabin passengers,—not only barefooted, but with a dirty shirt, and an old coat not worth a single dime, and without a hat, having lost it overboard. The captain stepped up to me observing, that steerage passengers were not permitted to come into the cabin. I made no reply, but walked into the steerage, thinking that as I had had three days of splendid cabin living at steerage price I would afterwards remain in the steerage. This made Walker very angry, who walked into the captain in the following way.—He told him that I was worth \$2000, and had it with me, that I had been in the cabin three days as a cabin passenger, and that in this case he must not judge a man by his looks—that I was as good as himself or any cabin passenger he had. The captain then came into the steerage, and apologized to me, saying that he would gladly welcome me back into the cabin, but I refused to go. I then paid him \$45, which was the price of passage in the steerage. Afterwards the captain treated me very gentlemanly, and I consider him much of a gentleman. The vessel is cleaner and the accommodations better than those of any other vessels in which I have traveled. I can safely recommend this vessel to those wishing to voyage to Chagres. This trip we made in six days. We landed at New Orleans on the 30th of September, after the custom house officers had examined our baggage. We then got into a cab, and went to Hewlett's Hotel. Of course, I was in the condition, as to clothing, I before mentioned. After getting out at the Hotel I soon had a smart crowd around me, gazing at the barefooted gold digger in his scanty wardrobe, with his head exposed to every wind of heaven. I then rigged myself in a suit that cost me \$90. I must say that Hewlett treated me as well in my old clothes as in my new ones. He keeps a splendid house and is a magnificent gentleman. I noticed the next day, in the "Picayune," that the editor had noticed a barefooted man, without a hat, speaking very highly of me, only he was mistaken in the amount of money said 39

to be in my possession, as he stated \$40,000, while I only had about \$2000. Here poor Walker got on a spree and I left him, lamenting the evil consequences arising from drinking ardent spirits, and of French brandy in particular. I took passage for Cincinnati in a steamer singularly named “*No better beyond.*” I commenced and continued traveling to see curiosities, and here was a great one. The water was low, and she could go no farther than Cairo, at the mouth of the Ohio river, eight hundred miles from New Orleans. But I got in a steamer *better beyond*—a great deal better than the “*No better beyond,*”—at Louisville, Kentucky. It was the “*Pike,*” and it was a real *pike* in running swiftly. On the 12th of October I landed in Cincinnati. There I took the cars for Xenia, and from that place the coach to Columbus—and the coach like wise from Columbus to Lancaster. Here I met my Ellen at the gate, the happiest hour I ever experienced, reminding me of the fact that it was my most sorrowful hour when I went out of that gate to start for California. I acquired gold in California, and more than gold was acquired at home in my absence. I presented her plenty of the gold, and in return she presented to me a lovely son.

Robinson Peters, John D. Martin, and James Pratt, furnished me with \$400 to go to California on the halves. I went, acted honorably, gave them the half, and, impelled by gratitude, I honor them, and hope and pray that they, their children, and their children's children, may enjoy every necessary earthly blessing, and die happily, feeling convinced that they had performed their duty towards God and man as their predecessors had done.

The shoemaker is convinced that California in time will become a glorious State, or States, of this glorious Union, and that thousands, in future years, will be emigrating from the States to it. Wishing it and them the greatest prosperity and highest happiness, to present to them the following song, hoping that they will sing it as they are journeying to that land which gives as well as promises, wealth and happiness to the honorable and industrious: THE CALIFORNIA EMIGRANT'S SONG. Far onward towards the setting sun, We are bound upon our way, Nor till each ling'ring day is done Our toilsome march we stay: We're trav'ling on, a pilgrim band, Another home to find, Remote from that dear native land We now have left behind! The clime we seek is rich and fair, As blessed isles of yore, And lovelier prospects open there Than e'er was seen before! Vast plains spread out

on ev'ry side, Stretch to the sloping skies: Broad rivers roll in tranquil pride, And tow'ring forests rise!

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There mines of California gold Their shining treasures show, Which coming years shall yet unfold
To glad the bold and true! That treasure we shall joyful find With labor's sweetest smile, To help
the State, in purse and mind, And bless ourselves the while! There smiling uplands catch the beams
Of pearly morn serene, Gay verdant meadows fringe the streams That silvery wind between! Of
ev'ry hue and sweet perfume, Wild flowers luxuriant spring, While birds, with varied note and
plume, 'Mid bowers of Nature sing! But cherish'd home! 'tis painful still To quit thy much loved
shore, For fears our sorrowing bosoms fill, We ne'er may see thee more! Yet thy green hills and
sunny vales, Those scenes of childhood all, How oft 'till recollection fails, Fond memory shall
recall! For there are faithful ones endear'd By Nature's tend'rest ties, Whose cordial smiles so oft
have cheer'd Life's burdening miseries! Comrades, whom first in youth we knew, In that bright
region dwell: Friends, whom we prov'd in perils true, We bid them all *farewell!* The joy must fade
which most delights The fond enraptur'd heart, And souls, that friendship's chain unites, Must still
be torn apart! From home departing, doom'd by fate, Like wand'rers o'er the main, From dearest
friends we separate, Never to meet again! Farewell! farewell! but not forever: We yet shall meet
again Beyond the reach of absence here, Beyond the reach of pain! There is on high a brighter land
Than California's shore, Where rich and poor, not one behind, Shall meet forevermore!