

**Gerstäcker's travels. Rio de Janeiro--Buenos Ayres--  
Ride through the pampas--Winter journey across the  
Cordilleras--Chili--Valparaiso--California and the gold  
fields. Tr. from the German of Frederick Gerstäcker**

GERSTÄCKER'S TRAVELS.

RIO DE JANEIRO—BUENOS AYRES—RIDE THROUGH THE PAMPAS—

WINTER JOURNEY ACROSS THE CORDILLERAS—CHILI—VALPARAISO—

CALIFORNIA AND THE GOLD FIELDS.

Translated from the German

OF

FREDERICK GERSTÄCKER.

London:

T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;

AND EDINBURGH.

MDCCCLIV.

**CONTENTS.**

Page CHAPTER I. The Passage Out—On Board the Talisman, in the Weser, March 18, 1849, 9  
CHAPTER II. Rio de Janeiro, 16 CHAPTER III. Sail from Rio de Janeiro to Buenos Ayres, 27  
CHAPTER IV. Buenos Ayres and its Environs, 31 CHAPTER V. Ride over the Pampas, 63  
CHAPTER VI. The Pampas, 73 CHAPTER VII. A Winter Journey across the Cordilleras, 96  
CHAPTER VIII. Valparaiso, 116 CHAPTER IX. A Stroll through the Streets of the Town, 120  
CHAPTER X. A Night in the Cemetery at Valparaiso, 130 CHAPTER XI. San Francisco in the  
Autumn of 1849, 138

viii

CHAPTER XII. A Trip to the Californian Diggings during the Rainy Season, 146 CHAPTER  
XIII. Drawbacks, 166 CHAPTER XIV. Return to Sacramento City, 172 CHAPTER XV. Mission  
Dolores, 184 CHAPTER XVI. A Digger's Life, 200 CHAPTER XVII. Murphy's New Diggings,  
222 CHAPTER XVIII. The Mosquito Gulch, 242 CHAPTER XIX. Departure from the Diggings—  
Stockton—San Francisco 261 CHAPTER XX. Conclusion, 277

## CHAPTER I.

THE PASSAGE OUT—ON BOARD THE TALISMAN, IN THE WESER, MARCH 18, 1849.

OUR passengers for California (for the Talisman is bound directly for San Francisco) form together a most remarkable and really interesting group. They are nearly all of them young men, who proceed to that adventurous life of the newly discovered El Dorado, with as bright and golden dreams as ever beguiled any alchymist in his gloomy cell. Not one woman nor child is among them; most of them, especially the steerage passengers, come on board armed to the teeth, many of them in a sufficiently ludicrous manner. Thus, yesterday one came from the steamboat to the Talisman with a gun, a spade, and a cotton umbrella. "I dare-say you intend to get out the gold with this spade?" a sailor asked him. "Well, you do not wish me to scratch it out with my hands?" answered the man quite seriously. Most of them carry spades with them; besides which, lots of old sabres, pistols, daggers, guns, and other arms, make their appearance, as if an arsenal had been plundered, or as if an armoury of military antiquities were to be furnished.

One character I must not pass over in silence, who, not only among us, but in the whole of Bremen, has created considerable sensation. He is a cutler from Magdeburg, called on board only “the giant;” and he is likewise going to emigrate to California. 10 Let the reader imagine to himself an Herculean figure of colossal frame, with a curled beard, ruddy cheeks, and bright good-tempered looking eyes, only a little too portly; a man, therefore, who would have been conspicuous by his size alone, but who attracted still greater notice by his dress and accoutrements: a green blouse, light trousers, and a gray wide-awake; round the body, a white leathern belt five inches broad, from which were dangling a huge broadsword dragging noisily on the pavement, and besides it, a cutlass; and, moreover, a clasp-knife about eighteen inches long; and as if this were not enough, there were sticking in it pistols and a dagger, the handle of which served as a pocket pistol. The wild and ludicrous effect of his appearance was still further heightened by the companions of our hero. These were three diminutive individuals, here called “the satellites,” who sport round their huge leader as the pilot-fish does round the shark. These three little fellows likewise wear green blouses, wide-awakes, and white belts; they look exactly like young giants, only, that instead of the broadsword, very short knives or cutlasses adorned their sides. I have not seen anything half so odd for many years.

Emigration seems this year to go on at a greater rate than ever. Bremen is literally swarming with emigrants from all parts of Germany, and every train brings new masses, for the conveyance of which express trains are often required. The steamboats of the Weser, in their regular journeys, are no longer sufficient to carry all the passengers to their ships and to the other harbours; so that even the steam-tugs are employed for passenger traffic, a thing which had not been necessary in any preceding year.

Our ship, the *Talisman*, is a stout barque of 180 tons, and is said to be a good sailer. The captain, still a young man, sails for the first time as actual commander of a vessel. The supercargo has seen long service at sea; the cabin passengers seem nearly all to belong to the educated classes; there is, therefore, every prospect (wind and weather permitting) of an agreeable and quick passage.

The emigrants to California seem, however, to have crowded 11 in only since this vessel was fitted out for sea; so that part of her cargo is to be left behind. The firm Heydorn & Co., who propose to send several other ships after the *Talisman*, intend to establish a branch business in San Francisco under the name of Pajeken, Frisius, & Co. Mr. Clement Pajeken goes out with the *Talisman*, and Mr. Frisius as supercargo with the *Gesina*.

Last evening the new German war-steamer *Britannia*, anchored not far from us, near Brake. With pride and joy I saw the black, red, and golden flag hoisted on board of her. May it triumph over all its enemies at home and abroad!

At last came the cheerful news that we should set sail, or if not favoured by the wind, at least float down with the ebb towards the mouth of the *Weser*.

On the same evening we scudded down the river. But alas! we had again to cast anchor for the night, and the wind played us the same trick the next day.

Reports of renewed hostilities with Denmark gave us pretty good reason for apprehending an interruption of our journey, unless we should succeed in reaching the channel before the cessation of the truce. As our fleet was at that time only in its cradle (I did not then imagine that on my return I should already find it in its shroud), the Danish cruisers might have caused us a very ugly disappointment.

After our leaving the *Weser*, the wind became fresher and more favourable, and we ran before it at the rate of about seven or eight knots an hour. It was on Thursday, at seven o'clock in the evening, that we entered the German Ocean; on Friday evening at dusk we already saw the lights of Dover, and on the 25th reached the mouth of the British Channel. The same kind breeze carried us to the latitude of the Island of Madeira, which, however, we did not get a sight of. Here we fell in with the north-eastern trade wind, which promised us a quick passage to the nearest place of our destination, or at least was calculated speedily to bring us to the equator. Our voyage offered very little interesting matter. On the 13th of April we came in sight 12 of the rugged, sterile, treeless hills

of one of the Cape de Verde Islands; it was San Nicolao. On the next morning we passed the lofty volcano of the Island of Fogo, the slopes of which were beautifully lit up by the rising sun. It is a bare colossal cone, without the least vegetation; we were able to descry only one human dwelling at the foot of the mountain. We now briskly advanced towards the equator, and on the 15th of April, according to old usage, the visit of the sea-god Neptune was announced by his noble spouse Amphitrite, who came on deck in company of "Neptune's barber," as was written on the back of this worshipful personage. They inquired of the captain at what time Neptune might himself make his appearance, to ask for his due; and they were appointed for that day week, when we expected to be very near the line. On the 22d of April, being pretty nearly under the equator, Neptune, accompanied by his spouse and his barber, made his appearance on deck, and was kindly received by the captain. The god (who, we may remark by the way, looked somewhat shabby) first addressed the captain in the English tongue, as being most familiar to him; and then turned to the passengers who were standing round in somewhat anxious expectation.

The whole ceremony is so well known, that it need not be described, and constitutes a good-humoured joke, in which no one of the passengers should refuse to bear a part, unless he be really ill.

It consists simply in a pail of sea-water being poured over one; dispensation from the application of marine soap, or black tar, is granted in consideration of a voluntary contribution, which in our ship was from two dollars to a third of a dollar downwards, and a moderate addition to this will secure exemption from the whole. In the midst of all the riotous mirth of the passengers, there was one person who would not take the least share in it: he even avoided the spots where merry people were assembled; and generally sat down in some lonely corner, occupied only with his own melancholy thoughts. The man was home-sick. I had 13 noticed him for some time, but I thought that he was perhaps still suffering from the consequences of sea-sickness, which had very severely affected him. One day, however, he came to me with tears in his eyes, and begged me to use my influence to induce the captain to send him back to Germany with the first ship he might fall in with. He said that he had acted like a heedless fool; that he had left behind a wife and three children, whose remembrance now was breaking his heart; that he could weep tears of blood,

thinking of the farewell of his family, when his little ones had clung to his neck, entreating him not to go from them. He now saw that he had been wrong, very wrong; and should his little capital which he had spent for his journey be lost altogether, he would rather spend the last penny to return; and then, in his fatherland among his own, work day and night to repair the loss. I said everything in my power that might console the poor fellow, and he at last got calmer. When, some days after, we fell in with a homeward bound ship, he no longer alluded to his former intention of returning; and even at Rio, on my questioning him about the matter, he answered, that he was determined to carry out his original plan of going to California. But when afterwards, in the same place, he saw more homeward bound ships, and even spoke to people who rejoiced in the expectation of soon being back among their own people; his home-sickness seemed to have returned with double force, and foiled all his other determinations. He took his “traps” from the *Talisman*, and removed them on board of a ship which was chartered for Bremen.

After our having passed the line, a fresh breeze sprung up, and in the afternoon a sail appeared in sight. It was the English frigate *Agincourt*, Captain Nisbett, now used as a packet-boat between Calcutta and London. She sailed close by us, and to the delight of all, sent a boat alongside of us. Happy were those who had letters ready for such an emergency.

The *Agincourt* had sailed from Calcutta on the 27th of January, and was now seven days on her way from St. Helena, under a south-easterly trade wind.

14

She had on board many German passengers from the Cape of Good Hope, who applied to us through a second mate—a very agreeable young man, who came on board of our ship—for German newspapers. Captain Meyer sent to them a whole parcel, and I should like to have witnessed the eager joy with which they pounced upon them on the return of the boat.

Although we had a long calm, during which sharks generally like to show themselves, we caught the first of them only on the 25th. He was a fellow of about five feet long; and so ravenous, that, having once fallen off the hook when already half out of the water, he yet returned to the charge

with perfect frenzy, swallowed the hook, and was hauled on board. He was received by the cheers of all the bystanders; whom, however, he kept at a respectful distance, by furiously lashing about him in all directions. In the evening I had a portion of his tail, as the best part of the fish, fried for supper; and it was really luscious, especially when eaten cold with pepper and vinegar. In the second degree of southern latitude we fell in with the due south-east trade wind, which carried us full sail over to the coast of Brazil. Only in the latitude of Cape Frio the monotony of our sea life was somewhat broken. A very violent pampero, a gale of which I shall have to say more hereafter, generally rages on the Plate River, but had gone a little beyond its usual bounds, blowing here with such terrible fury, that several ships were said to have been wrecked on the coast, and a Portuguese man-of-war lost its three masts close to the harbour of Rio de Janeiro. We got our full share of it, and had several days to struggle against the gale; without, however, any worse havoc than that of being soundly shaken, and experiencing some return of sea-sickness.

On the 11th of May, in the morning, after having during the night looked out in vain for the light which is indicated there on the charts, we descried Cape Frio; and keeping constantly in sight of the picturesque hills of the Brazilian coast, sailed southward towards the harbour of Rio de Janeiro. The wind was favourable, and the hills on the coast are so prominent and sharply delineated, that it is scarcely possible to pass by the harbour, especially in clear weather. Yet our captain, notwithstanding the warning of his old helmsman, contrived to miss the well-known landmark. Before dusk I was aloft with the captain, who pointed out to me a small islet before us, which he described to me as lying just opposite the harbour of Rio. When, however, in the evening, just after dark, we were sitting at tea, the helmsman entered to report that on our starboard, just abreast of us, the fire of Raza, which is placed immediately below the entrance of the harbour, was coming in sight; whereupon our captain, with some consternation, ran on deck.

It was, indeed, as the helmsman had said; and although we at once turned the ship round, we had the current and the wind against us, and we were obliged to cruise until the next evening—full twenty-four hours—before we at last entered the harbour.

On the 12th of May, in the afternoon, the whole of the magnificent panorama which encircles one of the finest harbours in the world, was opening before us, and we were able to distinguish the “sugar loaf,” which forms an excellent landmark on the left bank of the entrance.

After having sailed close by the small islands Baya and Maya (Papa and Mamma), we reached, just after sunset, the spot from which, had it been daylight, we might have surveyed all that surprises and delights the eye in this new world.

In the tropics, however, sunset is almost instantaneously followed by the blackest night; and when we were hailed, or rather—for the voice sounded as if it came from the world below—roared at, from the fort of Santa Cruz, deep darkness lay on the sea, whilst innumerable lights betrayed the neighbourhood of a populous town and of a busy harbour.

After our supercargo—who was conversant with the Portuguese language—had had for some time with the commander of the port an exchange of “unintelligible roars,” as Boz so cleverly calls it;—indeed, I am firmly convinced, that neither understood a word of what the other said;—our vessel glided alongside many other crafts 16 which were anchored there, passing one of the ships so closely that we might have thrown a cap on board of it. A few words which were exchanged between us gave intelligence that it was a countryman of ours—the Hamburg brig Mercks, Captain Valentin; and a thundering cheer saluted our fellow-Germans. Immediately after which, we also dropped our anchor.

Until then an apprehension had been expressed on board, lest the passengers of foreign ships would not be allowed to land without a passport, signed by the Brazilian consul in Germany; but fortunately this fear proved groundless, for when, on the next morning, the so-called visitation-boat came on board, we received permission to land in as great numbers as we liked.

The reader may imagine that we were not long in making use of it. On the morning of the 13th of May, in the most brilliant sunshine, we rowed towards the friendly shore.

## CHAPTER II.

### RIO DE JANEIRO.

THE town itself, like so many other things in this world, loses considerably on closer acquaintance. The streets, with a few exceptions only, are narrow and dirty, and the crowds of slaves, with all the innumerable shades of colours, on whom the eye alights everywhere, make by far too painful an impression on the European, to allow him to enjoy the sublime beauties of the country, which besides, for the most part, are hidden from the view in the close, narrow streets.

In the harbour of Rio de Janeiro, all sorts of vessels were crowding; yet, whatever had been my preconceived ideas of the numbers emigrating to California, I should never have believed that such a multitude of emigrant ships could have been bound for those golden shores, as had touched and continued to touch at this seaport.

17

American vessels especially were mustering very strong, and the inhabitants of the town were so used to find in every stranger a candidate for California, that the niggers would hail every strange-looking man, even from a distance, as a Californian, in which they are very rarely mistaken.

Wherever we went, we were pursued by the shout, Oho! oho! Californians; and I was particularly amused by one of our fellow-passengers, who firmly believed himself to be most unexceptionably dressed in the fashion of the country—a dark dress coat and white trousers—and who therefore thought that he owed that salutation wholly and exclusively to his hat, which was somewhat damaged by the salt water. Determining, therefore, to buy at any rate a new “tile of the true Brazilian fashion,” he soon after left us to carry out his laudable design. The purchase was made indeed, and a first-rate article procured; but what was his dismay when, having scarcely turned the next corner, he was again saluted with the awful words, “Oho! oho! Californian! Oho! Californian.” Since that time, our friend has stoutly stuck to it, that the niggers, who principally indulged in that shout, were a barbarous race, who most richly deserved their bondage. For the same evening a bull-

fight was announced, with a great amount of puff and promise; and as I heard that this sort of sport was more and more falling into disuse, so that it is now of rather rare occurrence, I was determined to go and see it.

A bull-fight in Brazil would at any time have possessed great power of attraction. It was, therefore, with most anxious expectation that, in the company of some fellow-passengers of the *Talisman*, I repaired to the scene of action.

We found a pretty spacious arena, surrounded by a tier of boxes, before which open benches were placed, the whole, however, roughly constructed of timber, and just sufficiently white-washed to have one's coat and trousers soiled.

Large square screens of pasteboard, with rudely-painted figures, were placed in opposite corners of the arena, behind which, as I afterwards found, the bull-fighters, in cases of danger, retired; 18 there was also a broad ledge running along the enclosure, on which the champions might jump when hard pressed by the bull. A couple of rather dull clowns were indispensable here, as elsewhere: one of them, who, as is the fashion in North America, was painted black, amused the public during the intervals by "comic negro dances;" the other afforded great amusement, if not to others, at least to himself, for no one else seemed to laugh at him.

The principal characters of the arena were two persons, a very handsome young man in old Spanish costume, who was mounted on a small spirited horse, and who seemed to have the management of the whole; and by his side another horseman, who, however, was much more like a Prussian cuirassier of the Seven Years' War, than a Spanish bull-fighter.

He wore a three-cornered hat, and at his side a huge broadsword; but his most remarkable feature was his marvellous resemblance to Napoleon ( *the real one*, not the *other* ), which at once struck every one of us. He was the principal antagonist of the baited animal, and earned the greatest share of applause. Besides the champions on foot, who, like German peasant boys, were dressed in yellow breeches and red waistcoats, a character was strutting about the arena who attracted so much the greater attention, as it was announced in the play-bill in "capital letters." This personage (do not

be horrified, gentle reader!) was no less a person than “el Diabo.” The gentleman in question is usually represented to have a decided preference for black; here, however, he was dressed in yellow and red, with long horns, and a still longer draggling tail. To judge from his airs, one might have thought that he was burning with valorous desire to challenge the bull; but when afterwards the signal was given, he modestly slunk behind the bar, where he played the part of a quiet observer.

The Spanish knight at last having given the signal for beginning, a negro opened, from within the arena, “one of the gates;” and then, with the quickness of lightning, retreated to his seat. His haste, however, seemed to have been rather superfluous, for the first bull, who soon after appeared at the entrance, looked 19 harmless enough. After having shown himself, at first, quite bewildered at the unexpected presence of so large a company, he ran as quickly as his legs would carry him, for the opposite gate.

With this, however, the audience were no ways contented: a wild noise of whistling and drumming saluted the poor beast on every side, and a couple of men jumping down into the arena, and approaching it with pieces of red cloth, tried to teaze and goad it. Their first efforts were entirely fruitless; the bull seemed resolved to take offence at nothing: with which view he only offered a most commendable passive resistance. When Napoleon, indeed, charged him with a wooden lance, pricking him in the neck, and leaving behind in it a dart wrapped round with fluttering paper; the temper of the poor beast seemed somewhat ruffled, and he really made some faint attacks. He may have been a very estimable animal in every other respect, but he had no vocation for the arena; and when at last the door was opened for his egress, he was followed by hisses and groans, such as one hears at a first representation of some wretched comedy, and nothing was wanting to make the thing complete but the rotten oranges.

The second bull “was a cow,” but a spirited, bold little thing, who fiercely took her stand against the first foe who opposed her in the arena, and, the very contrary of her quiet predecessor, seemed decidedly bent upon mischief.

I must, however, observe here, that the Brazilian bull-fight does by no means aim at death and bloodshed, like that of “Old Spain.” The bulls, therefore, have their horns encased in large wooden sheaths, and covered by buttons at the tips, so that they are unable to wound a horse or horseman; in return for which civility, it is only fair that the animal should not be killed at the conclusion. It is therefore only driven out of the arena by the champion; or, to heighten the pleasure, caught, and kicked out.

The cow had already got some of the paper-covered darts, and Napoleon now charged against it to finish the combat; but he found here a much more active and clever antagonist than her 20 dull predecessor had been, and one timid movement of his horse brought the latter so near to his horned enemy, that he could not escape from her reach by a sudden side-leap. The cow attacked the horse below, on the belly; and had her horns been in their natural condition, she would have ripped it up: thus, however, the blunt tips, although pushed forward with great spirit and fury, met with too hard an obstacle, at which the right horn of the poor beast broke close to the skull; so that only the bloody inner core remained, with which, however, she undauntedly continued the combat, fiercely making head against her aggressors, who were always renewing the attack, but who never made a fair stand. It was a disgusting sight, and I was right glad when the poor cow was at last taken away to make room for another more vigorous combatant.

An interval which now followed, was filled up by some very insipid dances of the pseudo nigger, until at last the third bull made his appearance. This was a young, fiery, black fellow, with a large hump-back, and a pair of dark savage eyes. Nor did his conduct, which indeed was very brave, give the lie to his looks; but the thing was becoming tedious, as it was all the same “baiting and pursuing;” when suddenly one of the champions on foot gave to the combat quite an unexpected turn. He opposed the bull with paper-covered darts, just as had been done before; but instead of throwing them at the neck of the animal, and at the same time speedily jumping aside, he bravely met the attack, caught with his arms the lowered head of the beast, as it was rushing against him, and tried to press it down by the weight of his body. His comrades of course hastened to his succour, throwing themselves likewise on the common enemy; but the latter, notwithstanding every

opposition, dragged his bold foe with him to the fence of the arena, against which he pressed him with all the might of his huge bulk. But the fighter was so adroit as to keep between the horns; and now the first onset being over, the four champions at last got the upper hand, and dragged the feebly-resisting bull away, amidst the thundering applause of the spectators. The 21 man, indeed, this time got off glibly enough; he only walked a little lame, and soon after left the scene of the fight. But if the horn of the bull had broken, as that of the cow did before, the beast must have crushed him to death against the boards of the enclosure; so that, at any rate, there is some risk in this profession.

The sun was near setting; after which, in the tropics, darkness immediately sets in: the bull-fight, therefore, was at any rate approaching its end, and yet one distinguished personage had not as yet taken the least share in the fight. "O Diabo! O Diabo!" a cry now arose, first from one corner of the amphitheatre, and then, amidst a deafening noise of whistling, stamping with feet, beating with fists and canes against the benches, on all sides: "O Diabo! O Diabo!" The Spanish knight galloped towards the place where Diabo was still sitting in silent contemplation; but the latter, not waiting for his approach, bobbed down behind the boards of the enclosure, and got out of sight, to escape from any unpleasant discussion.

This would not, however, satisfy the excited spectators; the noise grew more outrageous: they would have, and must have Diabo; and thus the Spaniard was obliged to ride to and fro, until at last Diabo, amidst laughter and hissing, made his appearance, and sulkily and slowly descended into the arena, where he reluctantly lounged towards the bull, which in the meanwhile had been goaded into even greater fury.

The beast scarcely got sight of the strange figure clad in such glaring colours, when it entirely neglected its other enemy, and, without further warning, lowering its horns, charged against the (not a little frightened) new comer. Poor Diabo must have had a foreboding of the impending disaster, for he scarcely made any attempt to escape from the threatening danger. In the next moment the bull had taken him up on his horns, flung him to the ground, and was only prevented by the other champions, who now came to the rescue, from doing any further harm to the vanquished Prince of

Darkness. The luckless Diabo lowered his tail and his horns, and amidst the loud railing and cheers of the spectators, 22 limping, and only casting a last, timid look towards his ferocious antagonist, retired to his safe bench outside the enclosing bar. It was now nearly dark; yet the excited public was still asking for a prolongation of the combat, and for new exertions of the already exhausted animal, until at last it most resolutely refused to contribute any longer to the pleasure of the greedy multitude. It rolled down bellowing on the ground; and when, being loath to witness any longer the cruel sport, we left the theatre, there were still five or six men baiting in the dusk the poor tormented creature, which they in vain tried to rouse.

This was a Sunday amusement of the Brazilians, at which a goodly number of ladies also were present.

On the next evening I paid a visit to the theatre, which has for patron St. Januarius. The large and principal theatre of the town is at present unoccupied; that to which I went is a small, comfortable building with two tiers, with the closely curtained Imperial box in the centre. The whole arrangements, however, are in the European fashion; only that, in consideration of the hot climate, the boxes are not furnished with benches, but with cane-bottomed chairs.

There is, however, one peculiarity to be recorded of this Brazilian theatre, which gave occasion to some of our fellow-passengers acting a part in a little “intermezzo” which was performed, not on the stage, but in the house itself. I went to the pit with three of them, two young commercial gentlemen from Bremen, and one of those never-failing travelling wine-merchants. No sooner had we entered the house, than all eyes were fixed upon us. Notwithstanding the strictest scrutiny with which I now surveyed my own attire and that of my companions, I was unable to discover anything extraordinary in myself, or either of them, that might have so suddenly drawn upon us the attention of the whole public. We, therefore, sat ourselves quietly down on the benches, hoping that the audience would find something else to attract their particular notice, when, all at once, a most respectable-looking doorkeeper approached us, and, amidst the grins of all the company 23 around, addressed my three friends, to whom, as they remained quite passive to his Portuguese address, he notified by signs and sundry manipulations, that with their light-coloured coats they might certainly

have been admitted, but that remain they could not in such attire under any circumstances. I now looked round me, and indeed saw that all the natives, without exception, were dressed in dark upper garments. In the meanwhile the gesticulations of the old man became more and more impatient and demonstrative; the public in the tiers seemed highly to relish the scene; and the three poor fellows—I myself quite accidentally wore a dark coat—had no other choice but to leave the house, which they did, with the wine-merchant at their head, the band having all the time continued to play.

The “bill of fare” consisted of detached acts of tragedies and comedies, two of which I endured. It was, however, nothing but dialogue, with which the public seemed rather bored. Every now and then the servant announced a stranger, or brought in a letter, which, generally running through four pages, was read aloud. Applause I heard bestowed only upon one of the actors, who seemed to be a great favourite, and to whom they gave three rounds running.

Next morning I determined to take a trip into the country, for which purpose I rode out with some friends. The Brazilian horses are small, active animals, and, at least as far as my experience went, mostly go at an ambling pace or a gallop. The planters living in the country, and the merchants who come to town in the morning and leave again in the evening, very generally ride mules, likewise of smaller breed than I have found in the United States; and although this mode of travelling is slower than on horseback, yet it is safer and much more comfortable.

The environs of Rio are indeed like Paradise; the calm bay, with its forests of masts, and its multitude of boats gliding to and fro with the swiftness of an arrow; the lovely gardens, with orange, banana, palm, and coffee-trees, and an immense variety of flowering shrubs; the picturesque mountains, and rocky peaks 24 which tower above one another; the peculiar costume and gay dresses of natives and slaves; the negroes going to market; the drovers and salesmen: all this, with its ever changing and fanciful sights, make a singular and scarcely ever to be forgotten impression upon the stranger. The contrast of everything that we see here to what we are used to at home, is too marked to be lost sight of for a moment. One feels that he is in a foreign and a tropical country; and every step, every turn of the road, every person that we meet with, offer new and

interesting matter to the more and more excited mind, as well as to the eye, when with ever renewed eagerness it wanders over the delightful scene.

But unfortunately I was not able to tarry long in this beautiful country; a new plan had only, during the last days on board, dimly risen before my mind, and taken such hold of me, that I determined, cost what it would, to carry it out.

On board the *Talisman* I met with a young Italian, born of English parents, who very likely, more from boast than with serious intention, had laid a wager of one against twenty, that he would execute the overland journey across South America. I had myself frequently pondered before on the same idea; the then existing German Imperial Ministry had granted to me travelling money, on the condition of my visiting certain countries, among which were the states of the Plate River; and although I was quite determined to see them at any rate on my return by the Cape of Good Hope, yet there intervened between this idea and its execution a long period of time, and an interval of space comprising no less than the circuit of the whole world.

I therefore thought it best at least to make, during my stay at Rio, every inquiry concerning this journey overland, and then, as a prudent man, to form my plans accordingly.

At Rio, however, we heard, to our surprise, such dismal news concerning the Argentine Republic, through which my route across the pampas lay; and such horrible tales were told of the then rebelling Indians and of the Cordilleras, which we would have to pass in the midst of winter, that my companion gave up the thing in despair, and paid his forfeit. I, on the contrary, although until then I had been rather wavering in my resolution, was the more urged on by this no way encouraging information. In North America already, I had learned by experience what grossly exaggerated reports were sometimes afloat concerning distant tracts, and that many things look quite commonplace on the spot itself, which at a distance were dressed out with all the fanciful marvels of invention.

At the same time I relied on my lucky star, which had so often helped me on before; and the upshot of all was, that I took my passage in a small German schooner sailing under the Argentine flag,

which happened to lie in the harbour, bound to Buenos Ayres. In this craft I started on the 16th of May for the Argentine republic.

In the states of the Plate River, and the wide pampas of South America, I learned and saw more than I should have done on a ship crammed full of passengers; and as to the dangers, I had too good a stock of recklessness and love of adventure, to think of them before they presented themselves before me. To all those, however, who may be desirous of taking the same route after me, I should give the well-meant advice—to get their papers ready in good time, lest in the critical moment they should be stopped by some paltry trifle.

Not only are you obliged to have your passport signed by the Buenos Ayres consul, and to have the permission of the police recorded in it, for leaving the harbour in a different ship than that in which you have arrived; but you want also a special permit for removing passenger goods from one ship to another; and if a gun happens to be amongst the luggage, delays and costs increase *ad infinitum*; for, unless you find other means to escape from all the trammels of the custom regulations, you are compelled first to land it, then to pay an *ad valorem* duty on it of forty per cent.; after which it only may be removed to the newly engaged ship. Even this, however, is not possible after two o'clock in the afternoon; and the whole of that as well as the following day are lost, as the 26 ship can sail only with the land breeze, which blows until about ten o'clock.

I, for my own part, owe it to the unbounded kindness of the vice-consul at Rio de Janeiro (M. Heymann), that I was at all enabled to fulfil all the required formalities, and to get the necessary papers for leaving the Talisman and embarking on board of the San Martin. Yet a considerable part of my short stay at Rio was most sadly embittered by all these tedious and annoying proceedings. At Rio, our captain of the Talisman had once more a quarrel with his passengers, first about their supplies, and then in consequence of his bullying conduct; besides which, he was soon on bad terms with the captains of all the German ships in the harbour: this, however, merely on account of one of his usual braggadocios.

In order to be able to boast of a somewhat shorter passage, he deducted two days, stating forty-seven instead of forty-nine. But in doing so, he had quite forgotten the Danish blockade; for had his statement been true, we must have sailed on the 26th instead of the 24th of March, and at Rio they knew no better than that, on the former day, the blockade of the Weser and of the Elbe had been put in force again. Captain Meyer, therefore, in his dilemma spun a long yarn, how he had slipped through the Danish cruisers, of course mightily boasting of his own smartness and cunning; but, by this new lie, he unexpectedly stirred up even a worse hornet's nest against him, as in this way he very sorely touched the interests of many captains of vessels, who were anxiously waiting at Rio for freight, and who were kept back by the uncertain news concerning the Danish blockade. But if the thing really was as Captain Meyer represented it to be, the question was settled. The Weser and Elbe were in this case blockaded; and the merchants of Rio could not venture for the moment to send any cargoes to those places.

It could not be expected that, with so many passengers, the exact day of our departure should have been long kept a secret. Old Captain Valentin got it out accidentally of one of the 27 passengers; and now the storm broke out. I had myself too much to do with my own affairs to care about the matter, and only heard that their quarrel ran high.

The Talisman had to remain at least a full week at the harbour; and as the San Martin sailed at once, I had a hope of reaching Buenos Ayres before my old ship even left harbour.

At that town I might then stay for some weeks; and thus hoped to arrive at Valparaiso, on the Pacific, before the Talisman was able to accomplish the tedious voyage round Cape Horn. In case, however, anything happened to me, or that I should be detained on my road, the supercargo, as well as the captain of the Talisman, promised faithfully to deposit my luggage at the house of Messrs. Lampe, Müller, and Fehrmann; and I might then afterwards follow to San Francisco in another ship of Messrs Heydorn.

### **CHAPTER III.**

## SAIL FROM RIO DE JANEIRO TO BUENOS AYRES.

I AT last happily escaped from all the formalities of the police and custom regulations of Rio de Janeiro; as to my musket rifle, I had to smuggle it on board of the San Martin. I embarked on the 16th May in this small schooner to Buenos Ayres; and during the first few days, the wind seemed pretty willing to favour our short passage. The voyage, under propitious circumstances, may easily be made in five days. In this expectation, however, if we ever entertained it, we were sadly disappointed, as the wind very soon veered round against us; and on the 21st, a pampero lashed the sea into mountains of waves, on which our little nutshell of a vessel was most unmercifully tossed about.

The pampero is a gale returning at pretty regular intervals, and also in a regular course. It has its name from the pampas over which it sweeps from the west and south-west. Its first signs generally manifest themselves by a brisk wind from the 28 north, which more and more veers to the west; but it has scarcely got into that quarter, when a splashing rain begins to fall, accompanied by a squall, as the first onset of the pampero. Yet the real pampero sets in so suddenly and violently, and such is its fury, that many a vessel whose captain did not notice these signs, or did not know them, has lost its top-masts before the sails could be taken in; and many have gone down at once.

After having spent its fury in this direction, the gale generally veers round to the south, the south-east, east, and north-east; and then begins to blow less violently. Yet, so suddenly does it change, that sometimes, within five minutes from due north, it turns into a most violent south-wester, in which quarter it is most dangerous to the ships.

An old American, who afterwards became our pilot, told me, that, in his experience, the pampero veered round the compass three times in twenty-four hours. The sea after these gales runs very high, which makes the abode in a small schooner anything but agreeable. On the third day only the waves generally subside.

Such a pampero chased us on the 21st, 22d, and 23d; and we had the comfortable prospect of having the same thing over again in a very short time; as the pampero about this season usually returns with every change of the moon. On the 25th the wind improved; and on the 26th we came in sight of the northern shore of the Plate River.

On the 27th, we entered its mouth, near the Lobos Island, (Seal's Island), which certainly is not misnamed. We saw crowds of seals in the water, which was now perfectly smooth, as the wind had subsided into a dead calm; and our captain assured me, that he would lower the boat if I could hit one of them from on board. The opportunity was very tempting; I loaded my gun, and two seals which, one after the other, approached the schooner within about forty yards, showing their rough astonished faces above the water, had to pay with their lives for their curiosity. The small boat was now speedily lowered; but, before we could reach their carcasses, they had sunk.

29

I shot six more, most of them in the head, without, however, being able to get one of them on board; the seventh at last I hit in the neck, not to kill it outright, because, in that case, they immediately sank; and, whilst our boat slipped close to the wounded and half-stunned animal, which was floundering and splashing in the water, the sailor at the bow threw the harpoon at it at the very moment it was about to sink. But it was just as if he had thrown the weapon against a woollack: it rebounded from the soft, elastic, but tough skin; and had not the seal risen once more to the surface of its own accord, we should have lost it likewise. As it was, however, the steersman luckily caught it by one of its paddles, and we hauled it on board. It was a fine fellow indeed, with a capital skin. During the whole afternoon there had not been the slightest breeze; and the sea, or rather the mouth of the Plate River, which is here so wide as to be like a sea, was as smooth as a mirror. Only towards evening, a very, very gentle breath of air sprung up. The quarter from which it blew, and also the manner in which it so suddenly veered round, seemed so suspicious to our captain, that he immediately roared out to us through the speaking trumpet to come on board. His experience in these treacherous waters had correctly guided him. The storm rose again very high, and we were once more tossed about as before.

During the war between Buenos Ayres and Monte Video, when Rosas kept the town of Monte Video blockaded on the land side, no provisions, and, worst of all, no meat could be conveyed to it from the interior of the country; in consequence of which, numerous vessels had been engaged in carrying cattle from Rio Grande, in Brazil, to Monte Video. The San Martin had likewise been employed for this purpose, before she was sailing under the Argentine flag. Those small schooners, when taken aback by the pampero, were often obliged to throw their cattle overboard; and as, even during their successful journeys, some beasts generally died, the mouth of the river was constantly floating with their carcasses. This now attracted immense flocks of sea-birds, albatrosses, Cape pigeons, and many different sorts of great and small gulls; so that 30 sometimes they swept in thousands over the foaming waves, and continually wheeled screeching round the ship.

On the second day of the gale we met with a very strange spectacle, which I shall never forget as long as I live. The sea ran very high, lashed by a furious western gale; and our small but heavily laden schooner was groaning and toiling along, when the call of a sailor who was standing on the forecastle attracted our attention. The man looked as pale as death, pointing ahead. There we saw floating on the waves a large wooden cross, which must have been washed from the land; and just now the billows had raised it, so that it was standing nearly upright before the bow of the vessel: in the next moment it disappeared. The waves carried it either under the ship or alongside of it, without our perceiving it; and a few seconds after it rose again upright astern.

The superstitious might have been excused for taking this as an ill omen; and besides, the Plate River, of which there are only very imperfect charts, is, with its flat shores and dangerous sandbanks, a very ugly water, which has cost the lives of many a poor crew. We, however, very little heeded the "omen," as the liver of the seal was just served up, and the smell of the fresh meat was too savoury to allow any other thought (and, least of all, melancholy ones) to disturb us.

On the other day the gale, indeed, subsided; but the wind, instead of changing for the south (as is pretty generally the case after a pampero), veered round to the north, casting us into a bay, which, on its north side, was bounded by land, and from which, having wind and current against us, we were not able to get out for several days. At last, on the sixteenth day after we sailed from Rio de

Janeiro, we reached the Punto del Indio, on the right bank of the Plate River, opposite which there is a floating light, having on board pilots for the entering ships. We took one here, an old American, who, if you may believe his assertion, knew the river thoroughly, and promised speedily to take us to Buenos Ayres.

Supported by a brisk south-easter, which sprung up the same 31 afternoon, we sailed before the wind, up the broad river, which even there begins to look yellow and muddy.

As mentioned before, the navigation of the Plate River is more perilous than any other in the world: there is nowhere a landmark to guide the vessel; the current also, owing to the breadth and the many shoals of the river, is uncertain, but not the less strong; and the only possible manner of navigating the vessel is by constantly taking the soundings.

In this way we went on during the whole night; and, in the dark, it was certainly no pleasant feeling to know that there were shoals, to the right and left of us, which, with the least neglect, might cause the destruction of the ship and the crew.

We, however, passed speedily and safely through all these dangers; and, in the morning, at two o'clock, we were off the outer roadstead of Buenos Ayres, and soon after cast anchor in the offing.

## **CHAPTER IV.**

### **BUENOS AYRES AND ITS ENVIRONS.**

THE roadstead of Buenos Ayres is by no means favourably situate; for in the inner, small craft only, which do not draw more than eight feet, can cast anchor; whilst the outer is at least four English miles distant from the shore; so that, in a brisk southeaster, as we unfortunately happened to have, the vessel might as well stay in the deep sea. There is another inconvenience in such a wind: the sea runs likewise against the low rocky shore, with a surf which renders it impossible for most of the boats to land. Even in calm weather, boats of any size must be unloaded by carts, specially kept for the purpose, which drive out to them in the water.

In this way we lay for a whole day in the roadstead, with the distant town in view, and without being able to land; and, on the second day, the gale was blowing just as high. The captain was afraid lest the salt, of which his cargo consisted, should fall in price (which happened on that very morning, whereas the day before he would have earned an excellent freight). He would not, therefore, allow himself to be kept back by any consideration; whilst the pilot, who was regaling himself with a bottle of extraitd-absynthe, which I had brought with me from Rio, and which was not yet much broken into, declared that the captain might, if so disposed, go on land in such a sea—he himself, however, would remain on board. I, of course, made common cause with the captain, as I was heartily tired of being tossed about on board.

When the pilot saw that we were really in earnest, he was ashamed to remain behind alone. The large boat was lowered in the meanwhile, and the things put in it; after which, driven by a favourable wind, we shot as swift as an arrow over the foaming billows, towards the capital of the Argentine republic, Buenos Ayres, where, contrary to expectation, we arrived in tolerably dry condition.

The view of the town had, until now, been kept from me by the broad sail, as I was sitting in the stern of the boat; but when on landing, this screen was withdrawn, it was as if a curtain fell, to let me enjoy with well-calculated effect the view which suddenly burst upon me. It reminded one of those wonderful changes of scene in the “Arabian Nights,” and I looked about me as in a dream. The shore was crowding with strange fanciful figures. Dusky faces, with marked features, stared at us from beneath black hats and red caps; and wherever the eyes turned, they met gay, glaring, and for the most part, bright scarlet hues. The costume of the men, at the same time, was such as to show to best advantage the picturesque combination of the colour. The head was mostly covered by a red cap, boldly stuck on one side. The poncho, or mantle (a square piece of stuff, with a slit in the middle, through which the head is put), drops in picturesque folds all round the body, being generally looped up by a button or a hook above the right arm, which thus is able freely to move. The thighs are encased in white drawers with long fringes, between which a gay-coloured cloth is girded round the loins; the calves and legs are mostly encased in untanned skins of cows and

horses; concerning the dressing of which I shall have more to say hereafter. Thus rigged out, the “gaucho” hangs on to his horse; and supporting himself in the small narrow stirrup, with the two first toes of each foot peeping out in front of his rough boot, and his left hand lazily resting on the lasso, which is fastened behind to the saddle, he looks peevisly with his dark piercing eyes on the stranger, then turns round on his saddle, and races at a furious gallop along the shore.

Innumerable boats sail from the land, or between the small craft anchoring in the roadstead; huge two-wheeled carts are everywhere driving in the shallow water of the coast, to take the cargoes and men from the vessels, which draw too much water to touch the shore, especially with the sea running high. A number of the wildest and oddest-looking soldiers I ever saw in the whole of my life, are lazily lounging about before the residence of the Port Captain. Close to them, a gang of drunken sailors, who came on shore four days ago from a man-of-war in the offing, and whom the repeated entreaties and threats of their officers have not as yet been able to get back on board, are singing and rioting.

Scarcely less interesting is the scenery, which, although wanting in natural beauty, exhibits many striking peculiarities. The country, like all the shore of the Plate River from its mouth up to here, is flat, with only a few hills, and with a most scanty growth of trees; but the architecture of the town, the low houses and flat roofs, the grated windows, and the dark red colour of the bricks, impart to the whole place such a striking character, that no one who has once seen it will ever forget it.

The men also, in the better quarters of the town, who are dressed in the European fashion, have a distinctive mark, which at once strikes the stranger, and attracts his full attention. Bright scarlet takes a prominent place in their dress, and serves to mark them as citizens of the Argentine republic. In obedience to the laws of Governor Rosas, those free republicans *are obliged* to wear 34 a bright scarlet waistcoat—the material, however, being optional—a red band round the hat, and in a button-hole a long ribbon of the same colour, on which is printed, in black letters, the motto of the republic: “Viva la Confederacion Argentina, mueran los salvajos, asquerosos, immundos Unitarios.”\* This motto is met with everywhere: not a document is made out which is not headed by it; no passport is signed, scarcely any advertisement in a newspaper inserted without it, so that

in every copy it occurs in innumerable repetitions; it is found on the sign-boards, even above the stage of the theatre; on the whole, at every place where a public placard or announcement is written, painted, or printed; even the watchman shouts it during the night, and it may certainly be necessary, not to allow a people such as that of the Argentine republic to forget even for one moment under whose power they now are. Formerly they had, in this respect, a very indifferent memory, and it may scarcely be a fiction that, at the time when the revolution was still in its hey-day, the citizens, on awaking in the morning, would ask each other, "I wonder who is governor to-day?" Now this is changed, and the Argentines know for once what is their form of government at least.

"Long live the Argentine Republic;—death to the savage, unclean, cowardly Unitarios."

Yet, notwithstanding the governor of the young republic is for the present strong and securely settled; \* the state itself may be said to be still in its infancy. During the continual wars with the neighbouring state of Monte Video, it was able only slowly to develop itself; the traffic on the river was checked by the blockade of the English and the French; and the citizens, instead of giving themselves up to the useful and remunerative avocations of trade and agriculture, had to follow the profession of arms. The people of the interior, also, were still too fierce and unruly; and submitted only most reluctantly, and after an obstinate 35 resistance, to the severe rule which sets bounds to their lawless state. Even the savage tribes of the Indians of the pampas, by their cruelty and their reckless inroads, deterred the industrious peasants from proceeding or spreading further inland. Now, however, the worst crisis seems past, and the Argentine republic is likely soon to reach that prosperity, which its favourable situation and its healthy climate make it capable of.

I wrote this three years ago, when Rosas still held the helm of the government with a strong hand; and it is my opinion that he would have held it still, if he had contented himself with governing his own republic; but Monte Video first became a thorn in his side, and then a nail for the coffin of his dictatorship.

Everything is as yet only in its infancy: none of all the manufactured articles here in use are produced in the country itself; even the gaucho is dependent on the foreigner for his most simple wants. His ponchos are woven in Europe, where also his large iron spurs are cast; the smallest articles of his clothing, except his boots, are brought from beyond the seas; and even some of his own produce has first to be sent in its raw state to distant lands in order to be converted into articles for his use. To these belong especially wool and horse-hair, which the upholsterers, on account of

the dearness of the work here, cause to be curled in Germany or England before using it in their business.

The progress also of agriculture is impeded by the want of labourers, owing to which wages are high beyond any proportion. Farther inland, the people confine themselves to cattle breeding, not being able to afford the expenses (which in a country of such a scanty growth of wood cannot but be very considerable) for the fences and the drainage of the land to be thrown into cultivation. The exports of the country likewise afford a proof of the low state of its agriculture and home manufacture. Raw produce only—skins, wool, tallow, hair, and such like—are exported from here, just as they are from the west coast of Africa; and yet the country possesses ample resources, that must one day make it one of the most flourishing on the face of the earth.

One may imagine, that in this way much could not have been done as yet for the improvement of the country itself. The harbour is still in want of a good lighthouse, as also of a pier or jetty, that the boats may be enabled to land, and to be lightened, without being endangered by the surf, or, during the prevalence of the 36 south-east wind, being dashed to pieces. Even the river itself, with its frequent and dangerous shoals, requires, in many places, lighthouses, beacons, and buoys. The streets of the town, also, are badly lighted, and worse paved, or rather not paved at all. During rainy weather most of them are mere quagmires, and the uncouth carts from the interior of the country contribute to keep them in this condition.

But a state cannot at once be made perfect; it has to be developed by degrees; and if the Argentine republic only be granted some time for rest, so as to be able to recover from all its wars and toils, it cannot but make rapid progress, with such resources at its command.

Governor Rosas seems to be made to keep under the energetic, unruly, and, it may be said also, bloodthirsty race of the gauchos, from which he himself is sprung, and whose good qualities, as well as vices, are his own. Notwithstanding all the intrigues and open attacks of his antagonists, he has been able until now to maintain himself in his place as governor of the republic. He has several times chastised the Indians, and driven them back within their own boundaries; so that the country

and its traffic, owing to his exertions, enjoyed greater security than they ever did before. Besides this, a truce is now concluded for six months with Monte Video; which, as people here hope and wish, will most likely end in a friendly compromise.\*

Recent events have shown that those hopes and wishes were not to be fulfilled: a new war has disturbed the country; Rosas is driven into exile; and the only question now is, whether the new government, which certainly is not wanting in good will to protect its own interests, will also possess the necessary energy to carry out its own views, and to ensure the obedience of the gauchos.

The name of Buenos Ayres (healthy climate) is a sort of guarantee for the climate of the country. The town itself is by no means insignificant, for it contains upwards of eighty thousand inhabitants; and the houses, although low, are entirely built of stone, so that conflagrations occur very rarely.

All these remarks, of course, are the result of later observations, 37 as, during the first days of my stay in Buenos Ayres, I had scarcely time to think of anything but of finding lodgings, and ascertaining what the people would say of my plan of travelling across the country to Valparaiso.

There was no difficulty as to the former of these two points; for I found, at a reasonable price, bed and board at an English house, which was generally resorted to by German and Danish captains, of whom there were at that time considerable numbers in Buenos Ayres. So much the more melancholy, however, was the aspect of the second point. The people to whom I put the question, whether at the present season I might undertake the journey through the pampas, simply answered, it was impossible; as the Indians of the pampas had just revolted against Rosas, and were in all directions scouring the plains, in gangs of from two to three hundred men. If I were taken by them, which in the present state of affairs was almost inevitable, I might expect no mercy; as it was a fixed law with them, to carry off young girls and women, and to cut off the heads of the men. If, however, contrary to our expectations, I should really arrive at Mendoza, I should at any rate be obliged to stop there, as I should reach the Cordilleras in the midst of winter (July), when they were completely blocked up by snow; any attempt to cross them at such a season, were shere madness: it would, therefore, be much better for me to take a passage in one of the ships which were then sailing for Valparaiso; which would take me, if I remember right, for one hundred dollars.

Had I been told so only by two, or ten, or even twenty people, I might have consoled myself with the chance of others taking a different view in the matter; but as such a wonderful unanimity of opinion was expressed against it, I began to think that I was planning a mad undertaking, from which I should at last be obliged to desist, unless I entertained a wanton wish to have my head cut off.

The American consul (a Mr. J. Graham of Ohio), who was exceedingly kind to me, was at great pains to procure more certain, or rather more cheering information concerning the journey; for I had told him that I required nothing more than to find one man of trustworthy experience in the whole town, who would allow the journey to be barely possible. At last we found out an old Spaniard (I have forgotten his name), who had lived for many years in Mendoza. On being first questioned, he likewise answered in the negative. At last, however, shrugging his shoulders, he gave his opinion, that it might be just possible; but I must indeed be very fortunate if I succeeded.

Very fortunate I always was; the matter, therefore, was settled, and I felt as if a burden was taken off my mind.

I was now anxious, above all things, to make the best use of my short stay in Buenos Ayres, and to ascertain as much as possible all the particulars bearing on the question of emigration to that country. Being commissioned by the then Ministry of the German Empire to obtain the fullest information on this point, I tried to ascertain directly from the President of the Republic, whether he would favour the immigration of Germans; and I made several short excursions in the neighbourhood of the town to see the farms and plantations, and to hear something concerning the manner of their cultivation and their progress.

Buenos Ayres is built along the river in large streets, intersecting each other at right angles. It occupies a considerable surface; and might contain double the number of its inhabitants, but for its being built in the Spanish fashion, with low houses and large court-yards.

The dress of the inhabitants is a strange mixture of French, Spanish, and Indian; the better classes, as also the strangers, wear the French costume—the Argentines with the patriotic addition of the scarlet waistcoat and the red hatband; they, however, use also the poncho.

The gaucho and peon (servant), even most of the soldiers, at least all the cavalry, wear this poncho; and underneath, instead of the trousers, the so-called “cheripa”—a piece of cloth similar to the poncho, which is sewn fast to the girdle behind, and, being 39 drawn round between the loins, is stuck into the girdle in front. The legs of the men of the lower classes are encased in pieces of untanned skin, stripped off the legs of young horses and bullocks just before being transferred to the human limbs. The hair is shaved off with their sharp knives, and the skin kept pliant by means of oil.

The dress of the fair sex is, for the most part, Spanish. The mantilla at least makes them look like Spanish women, although they would, in elegance of dress, be scarcely inferior to the French ladies.

As to the amusements of the town, I am not able to say much about them, as my stay was too short; yet what I know of it shall not be withheld from the reader.

Buenos Ayres has two theatres, which are said to be very well frequented. The Victoria Theatre, as I was told, possessed a very fair opera; at the other, tragedies and comedies are performed, without, however, tricks of sleight of hand and feats of rope-dancing being excluded from its precincts.

But even during the dramatic amusements, the Argentines are not spared the exhibition of the motto of the republic. Before the opening of each piece—opera, tragedy, or comedy—whether its scene be laid in Asia, Africa, or Europe, the curtain is raised previous to the real beginning; the whole of the performers are then discovered standing on the stage, with the principal characters in front, and the chorus behind, all in full costume. The principal characters now call out, with a loud voice: “Viva la Confederacion Argentina.”

Chorus: “Viva.”

Principal characters again: “Mueran los salvajos Unitarios.”

Chorus: “Mueran.”

The curtain then drops; and, after a brief interval, the piece is allowed to begin.

Buenos Ayres boasts (or at least then boasted) of a puppet-show, with the same terrible motto over its coarsely-painted curtain; the puppets also are paraded in the same manner before the beginning of the performance, during which ceremony the managers shout from behind the scene, “Viva la Confederacion Argentina, mueran los salvajos Unitarios.”

There is a reading club in the town, where English, German, and French newspapers are kept. In Buenos Ayres itself four newspapers are published—three Spanish, and one English (the British Packet); yet, strange to say, not one of them is devoted to local matters. The list of German papers is very incomplete. That of the English papers comprises, besides the different magazines and reviews, The Times—Morning Chronicle—Illustrated London News—London Price Current—Lloyd's List—Spectator—Gore's General Advertiser—Examiner—Liverpool Mercury—Liverpool Albion, and Liverpool Times.

During one of the first days after my arrival, I made a short excursion to the neighbourhood of the town, to pay a visit to some Germans who were said to be settled thereabout; as I wished to see with my own eyes those South American farms, of which I had heard so much, and of which I had not as yet been able to form a clear idea.

My companion was a little German peasant. Nothing could be more ludicrous than to see him perched on his colossal horse; and several times, as he was trotting along, I was really afraid lest the action of his steed would shake him to pieces. Yet he fully made up for his comical looks by being thoroughly acquainted with the neighbourhood; and he brought me to some of his acquaintances, with whom, eighteen or twenty years before, he had come across the sea, and who were now, most of them, in excellent circumstances.

The environs of Buenos Ayres, if we except the broad fine river with its forest of masts, have very little that is picturesque about them.

Nature, however, is beautiful even in this form; and there are many peculiarities calculated to rivet the eye of a European. Among these, are the fences of the gardens and small fields near the town, which, on account of the great scarcity on timber, mostly consist of the closely-planted aloe and cactus. The aloes especially present a most beautiful view, with their giant, fleshy leaves, and their flower stalks, rising often to a height of twenty-four feet (unfortunately not in blossom just now); and so closely are they crowded, that a horse or a bullock could scarcely venture to pass through them, and a man would be obliged to cut his way across them by means of a knife or hatchet. Such a forcible entrance, however, would make its perpetrator liable to the punishment of death; and the laws are not to be trifled with here.

We were riding between such gardens and hedges; but the eye in vain sought for a tree of any size which might have broken the monotony of the endless plain; only small shrubs, osiers, and brushwood, presented themselves to the eye—the flower-stalks of the aloes overtopping all the rest.

In the German, whose place we wished to visit before all the others, we found a friendly, obliging man, who readily showed us over his farm.

All that he had cultivated seemed to thrive very well indeed. The fields and plantations of wood were closely fenced in with aloe, and perfectly safe against the inroads of tame and wild animals: he had excellent horses; a very good stock of cattle, which of course were put out to graze in the plain; and the neighbourhood of the town enabled him to turn such property to good account, even by the sale of milk and butter.

The man had become a true American farmer, and would have been quite at home among the agriculturists of the United States. He abused the Germans with might and main, saying: “How much better it would be if they would stay at home, and not come to South America. Work they

would not; and the South Americans did not want any more idle lookers-on, as they had enough of them already.”

He employed a number of Spaniards on his farm; some were clearing ditches, by the side of which the hedges of aloe and cactus are planted here; others pricked out from the close rows of the latter, young suckers, with which to make new fences; others, 42 again, cut down the stems of young peach-trees, tying them up in bundles for sale in the town: for so poor is this part of the world in wood, that the greater part of the fuel is furnished by the peach-trees, which are grown for this purpose. Nowhere, however, did he employ Germans, assuring us that when he did get one of them, he was only the more confirmed in his opinion, that they were not worth their keep; as, in the first place, they were idle; and as, moreover, they asked twice and even three times as great wages as he gave to the most industrious Spaniard.

I could not, of course, decide how far the man was right; at any rate, however, his complaint, although true in some particular cases, must have been exaggerated on the whole. People who never liked work at home, and who emigrate to foreign parts with the most extravagant expectations, will of course be inclined to be idle there also; and even those who are accustomed to work, entertain some lurking hope, that in a foreign country their arms and hands might get an easier task than they had in the old country: they are therefore not very agreeably surprised, when reality teaches them a different lesson. Habitual idlers, of course, will follow their old courses; but the others resume their old habits, and become good workmen and labourers.

We afterwards visited some of the farms, where, however, we did not see the owners themselves, until at last we arrived at a strange-looking antique building; which, as my companion told me, had in times of old been a church and a convent, but which was important and interesting to Germans in another respect, as it had served for some time as a residence for the emigrants whom Rosas had then invited over. These German labourers, as I was told, arrived at a period when the governor, in the midst of political excitement, could not possibly procure a settlement and employment for them; yet my old companion could not sufficiently extol the kindness and consideration with which the governor treated the Germans. Not only was the old convent assigned to them as their abode,

with the requisite allowance of provisions for their wives and children; but the men got, besides, excellent 43 wages paid to them, without their being required to do any work at all.

“Those were times,” the old fellow cried out, reining in his horse, lest he might, by mistake, bite off his own tongue during the hard trot. “Those were times; every day our good dinner, three times as good as we had in Germany; and wages four times as much as we could have had there, and nothing at all to do: this lasted many months, during which we were able thoroughly to recover from the long voyage; and when afterwards we were put to work, it was easy enough to shirk it, but the wages still ran on.”

Rosas seemed to keep just now equally useless tenants in the old building; a number of the empty cells being occupied by a host of the Indians of the pampas, who had been conquered and made prisoners by him, and who now received hospitable quarters and support at his hands.

I will not take upon myself to decide, whether it was his own peaceful temper that prompted him thus kindly to treat those hostile and bloodthirsty tribes, which had ever been his enemies; but it would certainly have been bad policy, unnecessarily to irritate and goad into retaliation those revengeful hordes, to which the whole interior of the country was exposed. Their captivity was, therefore, soothed by every possible clemency and forbearance; and they were moving about apparently quite free, although confined within certain bounds. Another but much more numerous camp of Indians of the same tribe was quite close to the town; and they also were restricted to a prescribed area.

Those whom I saw at the convent were not very tall, but a well-knit and wiry race, not unlike the North American Indians, especially in hair and complexion; the different families waiting for their meals, were squatted round their fires lit in the spacious court-yards. The men would often get up, and, wrapped in their blankets, stalk gravely about in the cloisters; whilst the women were feeding the small scanty fires, in order that the meat, which was hung close to them, might not at least be quite raw.

Their rooms, if a sort of open stables may be so called, likewise exhibited a wild enough appearance. The couches, mostly made of bamboo sticks, were somewhat raised above the ground (a luxury which they did not enjoy in their native homes); a couple of blankets and home-woven ponchos and cheripas formed the whole of the furniture of the room, being used at the same time as tables and chairs. It is true I might have added to the list a few horse skulls, which seemed to do duty as easy-chairs for the heads of the families.

The whole building presented a dismal and wild aspect. Not one window could boast of a whole sash; the doors were some of them hanging only on one hinge, dangling and clattering to and fro with every draught of air; the wood-work of many had been used by the Indians as fuel.

Even the old chapel seemed not to have been spared by the waste of time, and the still more wasteful hands of man. The walls, stripped of their former decoration, stood cold and bare; only here and there, in a corner, were hanging some old dilapidated ornaments, which it may not have been worth while for the people to fetch down from their somewhat inconvenient height. In a broken niche there was a stone statue, so sadly disfigured that one could not have said whether it was that of a saint or an idol. The altar alone had been respected; even its old richly embroidered cover was still hanging down in front, although in rags and weather-beaten.

I was a long time wandering about in the strange old building; so long, that my little companion at last got heartily tired of it, asking me, what in all the world one could see in these wretched holes, through which the wind was blowing now from all quarters? As I had not the least hope of being able to make him understand it, I yielded to his remonstrance and rode off with him.

On our way back, I visited the Quinta, or summer palace of the governor, which is always open to strangers. It is situated about one hour's ride from the town, most pleasantly close to the river; and the eye is there for the first time cheered again by green 45 shady trees, planted in thick masses about the low villa, which is surrounded by colonnades. It must be a delightful residence, especially in summer. Only the background of mountains is wanting; all is flat, and one feels sometimes a

wish to rise high above the plain, and with a freer breath to survey the vast, beautiful, although still wild country.

The place round the Quinta is very well kept, and the care with which the smallest plants are tended, strikes one with so much the greater pleasure on seeing the wild figures of the men, who here with so gentle a hand operate on the trees and flowers.

Among the curiosities of the Quinta, there is an American brig, which, being once driven by a violent south-easter on shore, has been purchased by Rosa. Now she stands high and dry, in the midst of a girdle of willows, above which the two bare masts tower aloft. The inside is, however, very elegantly fitted up as a large saloon, and a convenient staircase leads up to her deck.

The wonders treasured up in this brig formerly comprised among them, as I was told, a barrel organ, which Rosas bought from some itinerant German or Bohemian musician. The Spaniards, however, who visited the brig and played the organ, are said to have first turned it in the correct manner, but afterwards to have tried whether they could not train the instrument to “make music” backwards; which had the effect of making the organ stick fast altogether, moving neither way, so that at last it had to be removed as useless.

This vessel, as well as the Quinta, is most hospitably thrown open to strangers; and even the soldiers on guard there, who act as guides to the visitors, are most strictly enjoined not to accept any present that may be offered to them.

I was particularly pleased to see that the governor, in the establishment of his summer residence, disdaining everything foreign and strange, has gathered here, and is keeping, the native wild animals of his own country. Thus there are, in a large space surrounded by a low iron railing, a number of the South American ostriches or cassowaries. In one of the small buildings there is 46 lying, chained by very slight fetters, a magnificent Argentine spotted leopard, very like the Asiatic, only a little smaller; and in a cage not far off, a jaguar or American tiger. The leopard has his teeth filed off, and his claws closely clipped; so that if he broke from his chain, he would at worst be

able only to hug a man to death. Even the distant Cordilleras have sent their tribute to this small menagerie, in the shape of three lamas and guanacas.

On our ride home, we stopped somewhat longer at the barracks, which are close below the Quinta. They are merely small cabins, built in a cluster, which form a permanent camp, inhabited by the soldiers and their families. The whole, indeed, has much more an Indian than a civilized appearance; and the soldiers who are here encamped, and are living quite in the Indian manner, should certainly be reckoned rather among the savage than among civilized natives. The appearance of a great part of the soldiers is quite in keeping with their character, for they look strange and wild, rough and ragged—rather like a band of robbers than a decent army. I am indeed no admirer of the system of pipeclay, and the plainer the accoutrement of the soldier, the better I like it; but certainly they might have pantaloons with both legs of the same colour; and if they cannot possibly afford a shoe on their left foot, they ought at least to do like their neighbours, leaving the right one also behind. They are, however, said to be brave fellows, and to have fought well in the former wars. I was told that they stand like walls, if you can but keep them from running away.

The regular Argentine cavalry, on the other hand, have a much more picturesque appearance. The dark blue ponchos, edged with white and lined with scarlet; the pointed caps, of equal length, the tops tucked down and fastened in front, look right well. Besides this, they wear a cheripa, also blue, trimmed with white lace and white fringed leggings.

A division of the regular infantry has also rather a striking appearance, being entirely dressed in the national colour, scarlet; pointed caps of that hue, worn in the same manner as by the 47 cavalry; scarlet ponchos, edged all round with white; and cheripas of the same colours, with white fringed leggings.

Speaking of the military, I must mention here a very strange law. In former times, when the militia was not called out in a mass, and had frequently to drill in the town, it often happened that strangers, who were not bound to military service, and were not therefore obliged to take a part

in these military exercises, used to laugh and make fun at the somewhat odd appearance of these untutored defenders of the country.

Whether for this reason, or for the ostensible one, “that strangers, during the time which Argentine citizens were obliged to sacrifice for the benefit of the state, should not alone earn money, whereby the others would incur a double loss,” a law was issued, and remains still in force, that, during the hours of drill, no civilian, under pain of being arrested, shall show himself in the streets.

All the shops are closed, and people are even forbidden to stay during that time on their flat roofs. So strictly is this law enforced, that, when the troops are manœuvring in the country, no one dare intrude. No traveller is permitted at such an hour to proceed on the road which might lead past the troops, and even the herdsmen are obliged to retreat to their homes. The only exception is made in favour of the flocks of sheep, with which a shepherd is always allowed to remain.

On my return from this small trip, which scarcely led me beyond the outlying parts of the town and the hedges of the nearest fields, I received an invitation from the consul of Bremen to visit his estancia, about nine English miles distant from the city.

These estancias cannot be called settlements or farms; they merely comprise a certain number of buildings, with several enclosed fields to keep cattle in, and the inhabitants do not make the slightest attempt to grow breadstuffs or vegetables.

Meat is their staff of life; the South American, indeed, eats “meat with meat,” and he obtains from the animals which he kills the supplies for nearly all the ordinary wants of life.

These places in the interior of the country have not the comfortable and homely appearance of an European farm, whose inhabitants principally live on vegetable produce. Death and decomposition show here and everywhere the rude trade of the cattle-breeder. Wherever the eye turns, especially in the neighbourhood of the houses, there are traces of killed or dead animals—skins, skulls, entrails, horns, hoofs, claws, bones, and stains of blood; thousands of carrion crows, birds of prey, and

rooks, swarm round these places, and the nose has literally first to get accustomed to the loathsome effluvia of fresh and stale meat and blood.

The otherwise peaceful and not properly carnivorous domestic animals likewise learn to accommodate themselves to necessity; they completely change their nature: fowls, geese, and even turkeys, are fed exclusively on meat, and the pigs are fattened on it. Everywhere fresh skins are lying stretched out, or are hung up for drying; and especially in the neighbourhood of the town, where the great saladeros, or slaughter-houses, are, the eye meets on all sides the disgusting spectacle of decomposition. Walls, six or eight feet high, are erected, of skulls of bullocks, the horns being symmetrically dovetailed into each other; even the hollows of the roads are filled up with bones. Thus, for instance, I saw a spot where thousands of innocent sheep's heads are pressed into the service of changing a colossal quagmire into a practicable high road. It is, therefore, no wonder that the inhabitants of this country, living on flesh and nothing but flesh, continually engaged in slaughtering, and everywhere surrounded with blood and decomposition, have themselves grown savage and bloodthirsty; and that too often they give proof that they hold the life of a man in little higher estimation than that of a bullock or a horse. Living exclusively on animal food, must necessarily tend to make man ferocious; and the hand once used to the knife, becomes too familiar with it, not to misuse it sometimes, or at least to play with it "in want of any better occupation."

A much more cheerful aspect is presented by the large meadows, which are bounded only by the horizon, and on which numerous flocks of cattle, sheep, and horses, are grazing, partly in compact masses, and partly scattered over the plain. Every other spot is teeming with wild-fowl; not only birds of prey, but likewise wild ducks, geese, swans, herons, flamingoes, &c., are seen sweeping through the air, or are standing in the marshy pools of the steppe. The chase of the water-fowl here is indeed immensely productive; and I have never seen anything like it, even in Louisiana, where wild ducks and snipes greatly abound. Once only we went out with our guns, rather to see the different sorts of birds than to shoot many of them; but I really found my highest expectations surpassed.

The game which we saw in the course of about half a day, comprised swans, wild geese, many sorts of ducks, and divers; two species of flamingo, one pink, which looked particularly beautiful when rising with outspread wings, and another larger one, of somewhat darker hue, intermingled with pure black; immense numbers of pewits, which are likewise, although very rarely, killed here, as domestic poultry abound; they therefore become very tame. Snipes, in flocks of eighty or ninety head; sandpipers; a sort of water-turkey, as large as the common species, but not eatable; another bird, of the size of a black-cock, or perhaps a little larger, the flesh of which is said to be as tender as that of the pheasant; and, moreover, innumerable tribes of birds of prey, carrion kites, gulls, small owls, herons, and storks, all fly within easy reach of the sportsman.

There is, besides, an animal found in vast numbers, greatly resembling the German marmot, but in size and habit very like the badger. It lives in burrows in the steppes, from which it comes forth in the evening. A young man from Bremen, of the name of Cæsar, who was my kind cicerone through these parts, shot one of these animals, that I might have a nearer inspection of it. There are thousands of them in the large meadows, and I firmly believe that, especially in moonlight nights, one might shoot as many as he had charges of powder and shot.

The waters here swarm with a particular sort of otter, the chase of which is very productive; so much so, that Rosas has issued a law, to reserve it for his soldiers against their return from the war with Monte Video. The killing of ostriches and cassowaries is likewise forbidden under severe penalties, as these birds are in danger of being extirpated quickly.

It was most interesting to me to find in the estancia, a German who managed it, and who was himself the owner of another not very far off. He happened even to be a Saxon, like myself, and he confirmed the truth of many things which I had heard in my former visit to the country; besides giving me much useful and excellent information. His name was Papsdorf; he was perfectly naturalized, had married a native; and his sons, dressed in cheripa and poncho, were, like true gauchos, hanging to their horses, as expert in throwing the lasso as any other of the wild children of the steppes.

What I heard about the state of the country in general, and about these estancias in particular, may be stated as follows:—

Property, as I was assured on all sides, is perfectly safe here, punishment of death being denounced against the offenders, even in cases of trifling trespass; but it would certainly be saying too much, did I assert that the real character of the people themselves was completely kept in check by this stern legislation. The Argentine gaucho is very ready to use his knife; and although he is strictly forbidden to wear it in the town, murders occur with painful frequency, even in the streets. It is, however, to be observed, that, almost in every instance, they originate in quarrels; and besides this, the worst people are said here, as in other countries, to be located in the capital itself. Far inland, the Indians indeed very often threaten detached estancias, attacking and murdering the inhabitants; but as there is still plenty of land to be had in the close vicinity of the town, there is no need for the emigrant to venture out so far; and in the neighbouring provinces, he has nothing to fear from the native Indians of the pampas.

This country, indeed, offers to the German emigrant every advantage to be looked for in any part of the world. The climate leaves nothing to be desired. Maladies certainly occur; but they are said to be by no means of a virulent nature. The soil, unlike most of the North American prairies, is excellent almost everywhere in the pampas, and yields capital crops, even with the very primitive manner of cultivation here in use. The principal pursuit of the people of the country, as is proved also by the export of its produce, as skins, meat, tallow, &c., is cattle-breeding; and one may form a tolerably correct notion of the immense mass of cattle kept here, and of the facility with which it may be reared, from a list of the different prices. The calculation is made in Spanish dollars.

Of cattle, as the staple article, a fat bullock of two and a half years old, costs about two and a half dollars; and one of three years, about two and two-thirds dollars; a heifer, from two to two and three-fourths dollars; for a tame milch-cow, with calf, as much as five dollars are paid.

If, however, you buy a drove of cattle in the lump, as is generally done on first settling, you pay an average price of about from three-fourths to one dollar per head. The purchaser then, according

to the capital he has to expend, rides through a herd to separate a number of beasts from the main herd. These beasts are counted, the calves not being reckoned as heads of cattle, but thrown into the bargain. Of horses, a trained saddle-horse generally costs from five to five and a half dollars; an unbroken gelding only the half of this. The price of a stallion is, at the most, one dollar; of a mare, from three-fourths to one dollar. Mares are, however, not used as saddle-horses. Sheep vary most widely in price; for there are here the so-called fine merino sheep, which fetch as much as six dollars a-piece. This is, however, considered by the agriculturists here as quite an enormous price, paid only for animals of extraordinary beauty. The average price for good sheep is about one-third of a dollar a-head; but if you purchase them far inland, you pay for the common sort in the flock, about one and a half to two pesos a-piece (a pesos is about threepence English). Sheep-skins also cost, the whole dozen, only from one to two dollars. The pig is almost the dearest animal in this country, fetching five, and when fat, as much as ten dollars.

## 52

The price of the skins is, of course, in proportion. Ox hides, the pasado (35 lbs.), from two to two and one-ninth dollars a-head, weighing from 20 lbs. to 26 lbs. (the weights here are lighter by 8 per cent. than those of the Zollverein). Horse hides cost from one to one and a fourth dollars. The price of wool, on the other hand, varies. The "aroba" of 25 lbs. fetches from one to three and a fourth dollars. Good merino wool often costs five dollars the aroba. Indeed, there is not much capital required here to start in business as a cattle-breeder or sheep-farmer. If larger quantities are bought, the animals may be had even cheaper. Thus, for instance, a settler farther inland paid for a flock of 5000 sheep about half a peso, that is to say, about one penny-farthing, a-piece.

The price of land, however, has already risen, at least in comparison to what it was before; yet it is still reasonable enough to offer the greatest advantages to the emigrant. The land is calculated here by varas, the varas being equal to two and seven-tenths feet, Rhenish measure. The government sells the land in strips, of the length of one and a half leguas (a legua being equal to 6000 varas) in length, and of one vara in breadth, at from one to one and three-fourths dollars per strip. In the

neighbourhood of towns, the prices are of course somewhat higher; but it is nowhere lower than one dollar per vara, unless you purchase it from a private owner.

Corn is at present exceedingly cheap here, as are also vegetables, the second potato crop being ripe just now. On the whole, a settler may establish himself with very little difficulty; and all the Germans living here are unanimous in their opinion, that there is no better place for their poor countrymen than South America, where industry and thrift are sure to meet with their reward.

The government, although having very little inclination to favour the English and French, is very well inclined towards German emigration. Foreigners are generally very well protected here, by a special law of the governor; and it certainly speaks well for the people, however unfavourably they have been represented in other respects, that, during the blockade of the Plate River by the English, the latter, as well as the French, were allowed to reside here quite unmolested.

On my return to Buenos Ayres, I heard that, in a short time, the Argentine correo, or courier, was really going to start from Buenos Ayres to Mendoza. He had at first been disposed to put off his journey, on account of the outbreak of an insurrection among the Indians. But he had now determined to attempt it, and I was told that the company of an armed man would certainly be acceptable to him. Through the kind mediation of an American merchant, Mr. Hutton—for I was not then myself sufficiently conversant with the Spanish language—I soon came to terms with the correo, who bound himself to let me have horses and victuals, that is, meat, and to defray every other expense of the road as far as Mendoza, a small town at the foot of the Cordilleras, for four uncias, or sixty-four Spanish dollars; yet he told me, at the same time, quite frankly, that if he saw the Indians coming from the south, he intended to fly as fast as his horse would carry him northward to the mountains; and if I were not able then to follow, or if by any mischance I remained behind on the road, this would be no fault of his, nor would he make himself answerable for it. Having been prepared for all these objections, I struck my bargain with him, and our departure was fixed for the 17th June. In this way, I also gained time to get better acquainted with Buenos Ayres.

I was particularly charged by the Ministry of Commerce of the German Empire, to report, to the best of my ability, concerning the countries which I should find suited for emigration; and also to notice the position and the prospects of the Germans who were already settled in the new country. Now, as to the prospects of the Germans in the estates of the Plate River, it seemed to me the safest plan to apply to Rosas himself, as the governor, or rather dictator, of the country. The American consul, however, assured me that Rosas only very rarely received even an ambassador, and that the audiences were generally given by Donna Manuelita, the daughter of the dreaded gaucho chief.

54

A considerable difficulty now presented itself to me. I had left the Talisman, just as I intended to mount my horse to cross the pampas; the only suit which I had with me consisting of a riding jacket of the coarsest light grey woollen stuff, trousers of the same, large jack-boots, and a black broad-brimmed felt hat. Could I in this guise make my appearance before Donna Manuelita, the first lady of the Argentine republic? The American consul answered the question in the affirmative. Donna Manuelita being a young lady as amiable as sensible, Mr. Graham assured me that I should not only receive, but be *well* received; and, true to his word, he himself introduced me one evening to her.

The gaucho soldiers who were standing sentinel in the gateway and the passages, opened their eyes wide, when, dressed in this fashion, and in light grey, which is otherwise forbidden here, I stepped through the halls of their master; yet they allowed us to pass unmolested, and we soon after entered the audience chamber.

The drawing-room was furnished entirely in the European fashion; the floor covered with a very elegant and gay-coloured carpet; the lofty ceiling alone exhibiting an Argentine badge, the black and red colours (meaning victory or death) of the federation. We had arrived a little too soon; the servants were only just now lighting the candles, and I made use of the interval, closely to scrutinize everything about me, and then to ruminate whether my jack-boots were not the first of their sort which had ever trodden on this costly carpet. Yet I had not much time left for indulging in these meditations, as the door suddenly flew open, and in walked the "Grandeas of the Empire," for anything that I knew of them, all of them being strangers to me. They were, at any rate,

very elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen; the ladies in the most stylish French costume; the gentlemen, without exception, in dark blue dress coats—the bright blue colour being the badge of the Unitarios—with scarlet waistcoats and hat-bands, and all of them wearing in their button-holes the scarlet silk ribbon, with the awful motto, “Mueran los salvajos Unitarios!” printed 55 on it in black. The eyes of all were fixed on me with a curiosity which I could easily pardon; and they seemed, with a scarcely disguise surprise, inclined to ask each other, “What is that fellow doing here in this sanctuary?” But, before the American consul was able to apologize for intrusion, Donna Manuelita herself made her appearance; and, having been apprized in a few words by Mr. Graham of my intention, and not even listening to the excuses which he deemed right to offer concerning my strange toilet, bade me welcome in the most friendly manner.

Donna Manuelita, as Mr. Graham had told me, indeed understood English; yet as she did not, perhaps, speak that language fluently enough, and was, therefore, disinclined to converse in it, and as I was similarly situated with regard to French, there remained no other remedy but to communicate in the Spanish tongue, Mr. Graham kindly acting as interpreter. The Donna promised to speak to her father about the emigration business, as to how far he would favour German settlers, and to let me know the result before my leaving Buenos Ayres.

In the meanwhile, a pretty numerous company had arrived, and I soon was engaged in conversation with two Argentine young ladies, one of whom spoke English very fluently; the other had made some progress in German, so as to be able to understand me, and also to express herself with tolerable distinctness. In this way I passed a couple of very pleasant hours in the most agreeable company; but I could not help several times quietly chuckling within myself at the thought, what the bedizened host of courtiers at home would say, if any one were to conceive the bold idea of making his appearance among them in such a costume.

In Buenos Ayres, there now exists a German Protestant congregation, whose pastor and head is the Reverend A. L. Siegel. This congregation, according to its fundamental statutes, forms a branch of the United Evangelical Church of Prussia, to which it has attached itself since 1845. The Prussian rubric and liturgy is the law for its discipline and rites; and the consistory of the province

of Brandenburg is to decide, in the last instance, every 56 question of doctrine, public worship, and discipline, in as far as they do not come under the jurisdiction of the secular power. The consistory of the province of Brandenburg has the right of appointing the pastors of the congregation. In the case of a vacancy, the congregation is to apply to that consistory for its new pastor; and is not allowed, without the consent of that supreme board, to dismiss the minister after he has once been appointed to it.

Among the Germans in Buenos Ayres, the captains of ships, though only birds of passage, play a very prominent part; and they may be seen especially on afternoons, in all their glory, trotting in company of their English, American, and Danish colleagues, through the streets of the town, and then in full career galloping through the flat country beyond.

Sailors generally have an uncommon liking for horses, a feeling which is by no means reciprocated by the animals themselves, nor by the livery stable-keepers, as sailors and even captains, with of course some exceptions, know just as little how to mount as how to groom a horse. Jack thinks it a very great feat if he has succeeded in keeping "on board." As to a good seat, that is altogether out of the question; poor fellow, he jumps on the saddle like a pea in a drum, jerking the sharp bridle merely to keep his balance, and throwing in the whole weight of his body when he wants the animal to walk slowly or to stop. The horses are thereby galled and jaded; and the stable-keepers here, nearly all of them English and Americans, have such a quick eye in discerning the character of their customers, that people who have the least sailor-like appearance about them, may safely depend upon getting for their money only the most miserable and worn-out steeds.

It therefore often happens that such a poor "horse marine," even without having unfairly used his beast, sees it suddenly fall and breathe its last; after which he has the pleasure, not only of returning to town on foot, but also of carrying back the saddle and bridle.

He is then rather surprised to find, that little, or even nothing 57 at all, is charged for the fallen horse; whence a report seems to have spread, that it is sufficient at Buenos Ayres to bring back, of a hired horse, the bridle and saddle, the rest being of no value. But the fact is, that the captains and

sailors, in most cases, get such villanous hores, that the stable-keepers are truly ashamed of asking money from customers, who have thus saved them the trouble of sending the beasts to the knacker.

Those who hire a good horse, may depend upon it, that they will have to pay dearly enough for any injury that may have happened to the animal; at least according to the standard at Buenos Ayres, where the best horses are very cheap indeed.

During my stay at Buenos Ayres, I had heard so much of the slaughter-houses of that town, which has such an important traffic in meat and skins, that I could not but feel induced to go and see those places for once myself. These slaughter-houses, or rather slaughter-yards, are nearly all of them lying near the so-called Boca, about half a league from the town; and one morning, before breakfast, I rode out, in company with a young German, to witness the slaughtering of the cattle.

Our road led almost entirely along the banks of the river, where I was particularly disgusted with the sight of the carcasses of cattle and horses washed on shore. The stench became so awful in some places, that I was compelled to hold my breath. On one spot we were even obliged to leap over three horses, or rather over their remains, which were lying there in a heap. German horses could never have been brought to pass over such an obstacle; yet the Buenos Ayres horses did not care in the least, and scarcely bestowed a look upon their dead friends. After galloping along for a quarter of an hour, we at last reached the shores of the Boca; where I could not, at first, make out the nature of some white objects, which in many places were lining the banks of the river like a dam. But, on approaching nearer, I perceived, to my utmost astonishment, that those white masses were nothing more nor less than bullocks' skulls, the horns of which everywhere stuck out from the soil which was thrown over 58 them. The flat open buildings of the slaughter-yards were lying on the other side of the Boca; and we had to ride somewhat farther up the small river, and there to cross a wooden bridge, after which we stepped on "bloody soil."

In the nearest slaughter-yards they were not working, but only clearing, so that the premises looked comparatively clean; and whilst slowly riding through them, we saw the heaps of salted hides lying in the different sheds. But I was particularly anxious to see the actual slaughtering itself;

and fortunately we met, in the very first yard, a German, who directed us to a place where the murderous work was just then going on. Even from a distance we heard the shouts and yells of the drovers; and on approaching nearer, we saw three horsemen galloping into an enclosure somewhat removed from the scene of action, to fetch from thence a batch of doomed animals. One of them was a particularly striking figure. A slim-built but vigorous old man, of about fifty-six to sixty years of age, wiry and sun-burnt, but with such a gallows physiognomy as I never saw on any man before or since. He seemed to be the leader of the others, and grown old in blood and murder. Thus the men must have looked, whom Rosas formerly charged with the execution of his orders of blood; and who fetched their victims out from the circle of their families, and then cut their throats. He was dressed entirely in the costume of the gauchos, with a red and blue poncho, and a cheripa of the same colours, and the usual boots of horses' skin. His lasso was tied behind to his saddle, for without the lasso no gaucho ever rides one step; and when his poncho sometimes, during his quick ride, was fluttering in the air, it showed the handle of a long knife, stuck obliquely behind in his girdle. His grey whiskers and beard covered his cheeks and his chin in wild uncombed curls, and his shaggy eyebrows, likewise grey, were dismally beetling over his eyes. I could not at first turn my eyes from the hoary gaucho; and, had I still entertained any doubt concerning his character, the next moment would have dispelled it.

## 59

Three enclosures were placed close to each other, the largest being farthest off from that in which the real slaughtering was performed; the next was only half the size of the first; and after it, followed the third, which was still smaller, and capable of holding only about forty or fifty head of cattle. Into the first the beasts were driven immediately from the pampas; in the second they were sorted, and those intended for the knife set apart; the latter were then driven into the third yard, and there slaughtered.

Those three horsemen now galloped into the second enclosure, where still about thirty beasts were waiting for their doom; and from thence they drove them, with shouts and yells, into the last enclosure, the gates of which had in the meantime been opened by some boys. All this went on very well at first, for the young cattle were frightened by the wild noise, and by the cunningly

uplifted hands of the men, in which they always thought they saw the dreaded lasso: thus they ran speedily before their pursuers; but they were no sooner met by the smell of the reeking blood of their comrades, who had gone before them to the last enclosure, than they tried as quickly to retrace their steps, rushing headlong round against their drivers. But it was too late: the men, pushing against them with the full weight of their horses, pressed them towards the slaughter-yard; so that there was no escape for them; and the small trembling herd, cowed and half stunned, turned round once more with their heads high in the air, to enter the ghastly precincts. Their movement was not, however, quick enough for the drivers, who goaded their own horses, with spur and whip, to charge against the young bullocks, which they punished dreadfully with the heavy iron ring of their revencas;\* and the old gaucho at last, with grievous oaths, drew his knife and plunged it five or six times—in order not to damage the hide—beneath the tail into the entrails of the hindmost oxen. These wounds would, no doubt, have proved fatal; but that did not matter here, as the animals were to be slaughtered immediately after. I am convinced that the ruffian would have stuck his knife, with just as little compunction, into the body of a man.

This term will be explained hereafter.

When the last of the terrified and bleeding animals had entered the slaughter-yard, the fellow, laughing, replaced his long knife under his poncho, and, followed by his mates, galloped outside of the enclosure, round to the other side of the yard. There he alighted, took up from the ground a long thick rope manufactured from raw skin, and tied it to the ring of the girth of his saddle. His example was followed by the two others, who took up the same rope. He then, looking back into the yard, rose high in the stirrups. I soon found out the meaning of all these preparations.

That rope of leather was a long and strong lasso, the loop of which was slung over a pulley. The slaughterer, standing in the enclosure of the yard, held it in his hand; and after having several times brandished it above his head, threw it with nearly unerring aim round the horns of the animals. As soon as the horsemen saw that the lasso was flung, they set spur to their horses, and then began to pull; by means of which movement they brought the captive bullock first on his knees, and then to the ground altogether, dragging him at the same time close to the spot where the man was standing who had thrown the lasso. The latter had, in the meanwhile, grasped a long knife, the sharp blade of

which he stuck into the neck of the animal, close beside the horns, so that it fell dead; after which, again seizing the lasso, he rose to make a new throw.

In the enclosure, close to where the killed animal was lying, a trap-door opened, and a truck, upon which the bullock had been dragged before by the tightening of the lasso, now slipped through underneath and ran along the sheds on iron rails; at the extremity of which, six men stood ready to lift the carcass from the small low carriage, immediately to skin and to dress it. The truck, without stopping ran back to its former place; the lasso, seeking for another victim, flew whizzing through the air; down fell the bullock, and was dragged towards its executioner: again did the truck run to and fro on the blood-stained rails; and the moment after, a third fell; and so on, until the last had been captured and killed.

I now went to the butchers' yard; and the sight which here presented itself was shocking beyond description. The place was kept as clean as was possible under the circumstances. Yet the blood flowed down in streams, into wooden gutters made for that purpose; and some men were especially appointed to scoop out, with broad wooden shovels, the coagulating blood, to keep a free passage for the fresh streams which were always pouring after it. The shed under which the people were working was high and spacious; and the rails ran along it to its farthest extremity. Here, people were engaged in skinning the animals which had been brought in last; others were cutting off the rounds and other joints; and others again carried, or rather threw, the meat to the place where it was to be packed: all of them with bare feet, wading in blood and covered with it all over. Between them lay the skulls and bones, strewed about in wild confusion; the entrails, which were afterwards loaded upon waggons and carried off; and beyond—I am still disgusted only to think of it—the unborn calves were lying, in a heap of perhaps thirty or forty; near which, boys standing up to their shoulders in blood, were engaged in stripping off the skin of the largest and most matured ones, and in dragging all the others, and those which they had done already, by their hind legs to a cart which was placed there for that purpose.

A fellow in a red poncho—and what a villanously blackguard look he had—had been prowling about for some time among the heap of calves, and seemed to examine them with a scrutinizing

glance. At last, he seized one of the largest by the hind legs; pulled forth from under his poncho an old bloody sack; put the thing into it; and then, without any one noticing him, sneaked away from the yard. Could the man have picked out his dinner from such a heap? I really shuddered at the mere idea. The sight was now quite enough for me: had I stayed longer, I think I should have been disgusted with animal food for the remainder of my days.

62

Our horses were tied up close to all the bloodshed and noise; yet they were as quiet as if they had been in a paddock on the fresh turf. We untied their bridles; mounted again; and immediately after, as is the fashion with all the people in the Argentine republic, rode off at a smart gallop, over the narrow bridge of the Boca, and down the banks of the Plate River, towards Buenos Ayres.

It was certainly interesting to me to have seen these slaughter-yards, from which immense supplies of flesh and skins are sent to all parts of the world; but for the whole of two days, I was unable to eat a bit of meat, as I could not help thinking of the man with the red poncho and the calf.

During the last days which I passed at Buenos Ayres, news arrived of new outrages of the Indians. They were said to have murdered a family near the Rio Quarto; and attacked another, who had saved themselves only by speedy flight, until the military were called from a small and not very distant town, to advance against these wild sons of the steppe. Detached troops of soldiers dared not, however, venture far from their strongholds; for the Indians were brave and dreaded warriors, and by no means contemptible foes. Such reports are, however, mostly exaggerated; and, at any rate, they were no longer able to change my resolution.

The time of my departure was approaching, and I was delighted at the prospect of plunging at once into the new mode of life; for here, at Buenos Ayres, everything seemed calculated to depress my spirits. New reports of Indian atrocity were daily pouring in; and even intelligence was said to have been brought from Mendoza, that no such tremendous mass of snow had fallen in the mountains for many years as during this winter.

But a truce to all thoughts which might trouble or annoy me. Just now the correo sends a horse to fetch me for a new journey; and the only feeling uppermost in my mind is, the consciousness of entering upon a new and active, although dangerous life. A ride through the pampas, with a change of horses every four or six leagues, sweeping at a brisk gallop through the wide steppes; thus on to Mendoza, to the foot of the Cordilleras; and then, in the midst of winter, across the snow-covered mountains, through Chili, to my nearest goal, Valparaiso—what should I have cared for the rest!

## **CHAPTER V.**

### **RIDE OVER THE PAMPAS.**

ON the 17th of June, in the morning, the correo, as mentioned before, sent a horse by a couple of young Argentine lads, to convey myself and luggage to his house; so that, in the course of the day, we might start from thence. I had, on the previous day, procured an Argentine saddle (nearly similar to the so-called Spanish saddle), along with a bridle and saddle-bag; and thus, with my arms, poncho, a blanket, and a couple of clean shirts, I was completely outfitted for a ride of—never mind if it made—four weeks.

I was, during all these preparations, highly amused by my host, an Englishman, Mr. Davis, who had taken it into his head that I had decided on the overland journey only to get the more speedily to California; and who, during the whole of my stay at his house, took the utmost pains in representing to me that El Dorado under the most dreadful aspect. Even on the morning of my departure, he could not forbear giving me a little bit of his mind, and telling me that it was “sheer insanity, for the sake of vile gold, to risk my neck in such a mad ride.” He was, however, one of the most capital and funny fellows I had fallen in with for a long time; and we had cracked many a good joke together; only the conversation dared not turn on California, for that was no joke with him. He wished me every blessing at parting; among others, “that the Californian savages might not be long about torturing me, but rather kill me outright at once.”

The correo lived at the extreme end of the town; and Buenos Ayres is built with an immense profusion of space: so we trotted on at a brisk rate; but, whereas I expected to see the old fellow waiting for me full of impatience, and then immediately to set spurs to our horses and to gallop off, I, on the contrary, found him busily engaged—in doing nothing; and instead of loading the sumpter horse with the different packages which were still lying about in wild confusion on the ground, he sat quietly in the midst of them, sipping his “mateh” with an air as if he had no intention to start this week, nor the next either. The whole of his family aided him most faithfully in this laborious task: his wife crouching in one corner by the side of a brasier on which a small iron boiler was placed; and his son, a lad of about eighteen years, leaning on the bed and strumming the guitar.

No sooner had I set my foot on the threshold, than the old lady come to meet me with the favourite mateh tube. I will acquaint the reader at once with this truly national enjoyment of the South Americans; so that it may not, in the sequel, come as unawares on him as it did on me.

The mateh is a sort of tea, said to be prepared from the small branches and leaves of a tree indigenous in Brazil and Paraguay. It looks like greenish powder, with little bits of branches and wood in it, and is drunk in decoction. The manner, however, in which they drink it, is the most characteristic feature of the beverage. The mateh is first put into a calabash, especially kept for the purpose, of about the size of a large apple; the boiling water is then poured on it. But as, by draining a cup, the drinker would get the dust into his throat, they use a small tin tube of sheet-iron called a bombilla, which at its lower extremity ends in a flattened ball pierced with small holes as a strainer. Through this tube, about six or seven inches long, they suck in the boiling draught, the temperature of which, of course, rapidly communicates itself to the iron; so that one who is not used to it, never fails to burn his lips. This happened to me; yet the most unfortunate circumstance connected with this mateh, is the purely democratical principle on which it is drunk. In all the families there is generally only one calabash and one bombilla, which is handed round to all the company; so that each puts the same tube into his mouth, sucks it, and then offers it to his neighbour. I have, in the course of my life, seen a thing or two which I would sooner put to my mouth; but to refuse it would be a breach of hospitality not only displeasing, but even insulting, to the kind host; and the stranger

will accordingly show greater wisdom in repressing his disgust, and sacrificing the skin of his lips on the shrine of politeness, rather than give offence to those who indeed only offer him the best that they themselves enjoy.

The packages were much more speedily arranged than I expected; the animals waiting before the door were saddled, and in about half an hour we at last mounted on their backs. Through the populous streets, which were choked by the large carts of the country, we rode at a moderate trot; but no sooner had we emerged into the open country, than the horses of themselves fell into a smart canter, not even excepting the sumpter, which carried a burden of at least 250 lbs. I thought this at the time a very extraordinary feat.

Our small band consisted of four horses and three persons: first, the so-called postillion, who had buckled a large and heavy valise behind him on his saddle, and who was leading the sumpter horse by a long cord; then the latter animal itself, with four packages carefully sewn up in untanned skins, and tied fast to its back, in a pack-saddled covered with matting; then the correo, in a blue poncho, with unblackened high riding-boots, in which his long knife was sticking, the handle peeping out at the top; with huge spurs, a round felt hat, and a strong whip in his hand, which was exclusively intended for the benefit of the sumpter horse. The rear was brought up by myself, in a grey woollen blouse, black broad-brimmed felt hat, large travelling jack-boots, with a knife, after the Argentine fashion, sticking in one of them; the musket rifle strapped to the side, pistols in my girdle, and colossal spurs on my heels; and the poncho, as also the blanket, tied fast on the horse, behind the saddle.

66

The postillion wore the costume of the country. Poncho and cheripa, with a red cloth round his head, and his legs encased in untanned horses' skin, from which the two first toes of each foot were peeping out, just fitting into the small stirrup, which was scarcely two inches broad. From the wrist of the right hand the revenca was dangling, the whip of these tribes, made of a strap of untanned skin, about one inch and a half broad, but narrowing towards the end, and fastened at the top to a large iron ring. It is a peculiarity of the horsemen of this country, that their spurs, when sitting on

horseback, are hanging downwards nearly at right angles from their heels. These people, therefore, when off their horses, are most awkward walkers, balancing themselves on tiptoe, with the immense irons clattering and dragging behind; but let the gaucho put his hand on the mane of his horse, and he is quite a different being; and, when once in the saddle on the back of the snorting animal, man and horse seem to be united into one creature, with fire in its veins.

There is a very good reason for this mode of wearing the spurs. The gaucho very frequently, and in the pampas almost exclusively, rides wild horses; and to have a firm seat, without being exposed to the danger of unintentionally touching it with the sharp rowels if the animal should shy, or leap sideways, or otherwise indulge in freaks and capers, they are hanging down far enough to leave the heel free: yet they are always ready for use whenever there is an occasion; in which case the rider needs only to bend his foot a little.

In this order of procession, we were pushing on. The first station was seven leagues off,\* and there the horses were changed. Mid-day was in the meanwhile approaching, and we had something to eat. A league is somewhat more than three English miles.

This was the first real native dwelling which I entered; a small, wretched cabin, built of mud and thatched with reeds. A table and a couple of chairs, covered with hides, were all its furniture; the table-cloth had evidently done duty for weeks; the forks were filthy; knives were not offered, as it is quite understood that every one carries his own with him; and the gauchos have them *sixteen* or *eighteen* inches long.

The youngest child had to stand by my side on a stool: we were all eating from one dish; the child was awfully dirty; and his nose—"well, don't mention it," as the Yankees say. I several times was nearly choking with the morsel in my throat; yet, notwithstanding all that, I could not be angry with the child, he was such a dear, chubby, dark-eyed boy. And I again and again remembered my own, whom I had left at home. The little fellow had such bonnie dimples in his cheeks, and such dark curly hair. I only wish he had not kept his spoon so long under his nose!

The repast did not last long; fresh horses were brought; and, soon after, we galloped again briskly and speedily towards the second station. Here we intended to take up our quarters for this night. The correo, I must observe, is the regular post which, in the Argentine republic, circulates through the different provinces. The correo of Buenos Ayres to Mendoza, passing through the provinces of Buenos Ayres, Santa Fé, Cordova, San Luis, and Mendoza, traverses the republic from east to west, waits at Mendoza for the correo from Chili—(which, however, in winter is a very uncertain affair, as that correo very often is not able to cross the snowed Cordilleras; in which case the postal communication remains interrupted often for three or four months)—and then returns to Buenos Ayres.

My European notions had induced me to form a very different idea of these stations from what they really were. The term “station” is indeed applied to them only by courtesy. The traveller finds nothing but the roof, with, according to circumstances, walls of clay or wicker work, and a low frame, with a cow's skin spread over it, on which he may lay down his saddle and horsecloth, and afterwards himself. Farther west, the luxury of such a bed is dispensed with altogether, and the traveller has nothing to lie upon but a raised shelf of clay, or the floor. One luxury, however, remains— *the fleas*.

The saddle is the gaucho's bed, and to this couch, with the addition of our ponchos and blankets, we too were restricted.

The house where we passed the night, was just as filthy as that where we had dined; so also were its inhabitants; and the mateh-tubes, likewise, were equally hot. The small cabin lay quietly and solitarily in the wide desolate steppe, not a field nor garden near it, not even an enclosure to put the horses in; only a couple of pickets stuck in the ground, with straps of ox-hide stretched between them, answered this purpose. I can bear a good deal of inconvenience, and I never grumble at scanty diet or a hard couch; yet this disgusting filth everywhere was loathsome, and, notwithstanding a very healthy and keen appetite, I threw myself down on my blanket, without having tasted a morsel of food.

All these little miseries were forgotten next morning, in the bracing fresh air, with a blue cloudless sky over our heads, and the plain, with its soft green turf, about us, on which numerous flocks were grazing here and there.

It was, indeed, a delightful sight. The horses were brought, the packages and our saddles put on them; and we flew at a gallop, through the midst of the bright landscape, which was changing like a moving panorama. Wherever the eye turned, there was life; and the air, as well as the meadows, was teeming with a crowd of brilliant and blitheful creatures.

Hosts of pewits swept screeching over our heads, or sat close to the road, or by the side of the pools, scarcely turning their heads to look at the passing horsemen; storks were gravely stalking to and fro; a species of small owls, scarcely bigger than starlings, were crouching near their burrows, or started up on the wing with a shrill screech, to come down again ten yards off; long chains of wild ducks were sailing through the air, or swimming on the nearest sheets of water, and large, stately, water-turkeys made themselves heard from the high reeds of the marshy grounds.

69

It was, indeed, a delicious morning, and my heart swelled within me at the sight of such a beautiful and enchanting scene. There is only one drawback to this feeling of pleasure and delight—the many carcasses which are lying about everywhere, often in the middle of the road, or on the meadows themselves; sometimes only skeletons, in other places half-devoured beasts; and now and then fresh bodies, just beginning to be eaten into by the innumerable carrion birds which are swarming about them. The horses themselves are so much used to it, that, without ever shying, they quietly pass by the dead carcasses, and even the cattle graze at a small distance from the remains of their departed friends.

That evening, it was the 18th of June, we reached our quarters rather late; and as I had not had anything the whole day but a little milk, my rebelling stomach forced me to take a share in the general supper. Our soup and meat was served in a wooden basin, which still wore unmistakable traces of former repasts; my old correo had some bread with him, and we consumed our frugal

fare with dirty spoons, which I was not even allowed to wipe, unless I wished to give offence to our host. On subsequent occasions, however, I devised an expedient to get out of this dilemma. Whenever I had a spoon that was too dirty, I dropt it on the floor, as if by mistake: this gave me then an indisputable right to wipe the dirt off; and I thought I might answer before my conscience for taking more from it than I had added to it. The country people of the Argentine republic, live generally, and almost exclusively, on meat; and, for luxury, on a particular sort of pumpkin, which is grown here, and which, indeed, is very pleasant to eat, but might, and indeed ought to be, more extensively cultivated.

As to bread, they scarcely know what it is; and, at any rate, have not got it; and even where Indian corn is grown, they do not bake the nutritious and wholesome “maize bread,” as the North American backwoodsman does in the most wretched shanty. Just as the South Sea Islander lives on his bread-fruit, which he 70 has for the trouble of gathering; the South American lives on flesh, for which he likewise has only to raise his hand, as it abounds in such plenty about him; and, indeed, he scarcely knows or desires anything else.

I was firmly determined, this evening, not to burn my lips again with that confounded mateh. I therefore asked the correo, who had undertaken the whole commissariat, for some tea or coffee, both of which we carried with us. He made tea, and I had, during the last days, been so completely weaned from every sort of enjoyment, that I already began to look forward to that very thin potation as a real feast, until the people about me taught me better.

The tea was just made, and I already felt a sort of malignant pleasure at seeing the others restricted to their mateh; and after having let the cup cool a little, I was going to raise it in a similar manner to my lips, when a general laughter, accompanied by a loud cry of surprise, seemed to intimate that something extraordinary had happened; or that, at the very least, I was on the point of drinking poison.

Frightened out of my wits, I stopped short, looking astonished at the people about me; they, however, gave me to understand, as well as they were able, by words and signs (for my progress in

Spanish was still very imperfect), that I had just been going to commit a horrid deed, drinking my tea with my lips from the cup. They, therefore, categorically offered to me one of those abominable iron tubes, and evidently expected me to sip my tea through it as they did their mateh. I, indeed, wished to protest against it; but was outvoted amidst the most terrific noise and clatter, and at last obliged to give in to the majority—the reader may well imagine with what feelings.

Bodily tired by the unwontedly long ride, and mentally only too much excited, perhaps also with a slight touch of home-sickness, which so readily creeps on the worn-out traveller in the dark and quiet of the evening; I at last threw myself down on my hard couch, and, although I did not fall asleep at once, yet I dreamed, 71 whilst still awake, of so many things that might cheer, but that at such a distance do but sadden, the heart. My reveries were soon dispelled by the natives—I mean the native fleas, real miniature kangaroos—which suddenly pounced with the keenest zest on the luckless stranger. If it could be a comfort for me to know that my old correo likewise tossed himself to and fro on his clay mattress, I certainly enjoyed that comfort. At last I fell asleep, and when I awoke next morning, the sun was already standing high in the heavens; and the horses without were just being driven into a place, enclosed with ropes, which serves instead of a court-yard, where the young people, armed with their lasso, caught those intended for use, and then drove the others back to pasture. After having started at rather a late hour, we made only four short stages on that day, in course of which nothing worth recounting happened.

On the 20th we reached the small town, called, after the river on which it was situated, Arrecifes; where I met with a North American, one of the very few persons on the whole road between Buenos Ayres and Mendoza who spoke English. He had been in the country for many years; was married to a most agreeable young Spanish woman; had settled here; and, if I am not mistaken, was serving in the Argentine militia. He received me most kindly, and I passed a very pleasant hour in his company.

This day I had, for the first time, to make the experience of the utter want of consideration with which the South Americans work their horses, without minding in the least whether the poor beast perishes on the road or not. We had a stage of eight leagues, the whole of which we rode at a full

gallop; the sumpter horse, of course, being obliged to follow at the same rapid pace. I thought this at the time very cruel, and I pitied the poor beast with all my heart; but my compassion availed not, as I was obliged to keep up with the correo, and, therefore, dared not spare my own horse, however willingly I would have done so. At Fonte Zuelas, a small settlement where we changed horses, we scarcely rested for half an hour; and from thence we urged the animals to the same speed again, as the old fellow wished to reach the next station that evening.

We were, therefore, scarcely seated in the saddle, when, as usual, the word of command, “gallop,” was given! The correo cut with his long whip over the buttocks of the sumpter horse; and “fly away over the pampas,” was once more the order of the day.

I had got that evening a most wretched horse, which was always stumbling; so that I was obliged to proceed very cautiously. This availed, however, only for some little time: whilst we were sweeping at a flying pace over a large and somewhat damp and soft meadow, my steed trod into one of those burrows which were to be met with all over the plain, and was not able to regain its legs again. It tumbled down, and I fell with it, but was fortunate enough in being able quickly to draw my leg from under its heavy bulk; luckily, neither of us seemed to have taken any harm: scarcely a minute after, I was again sitting in the saddle; and, if until then I had really spared my beast, henceforth, at least, I was no longer at liberty to be merciful. The correo, who did not even perceive my mishap, or, if he perceived it, did not care a pin for it, had, in the meanwhile, got a considerable start, whilst the day was waning fast; and I had no other choice but to apply my whip and spurs to the jaded animal, in order to get up with our pitiless leader. With nightfall, the fog which had for some time spread over the pampas, became at last so dense, that I could scarcely see the ground before me; yet I now heard, at no great distance before me, the three other horses, which before had been considerably ahead, and which I had almost despaired of reaching again; and ere we arrived at the small cabin in which we were to pass the night, I had again come up with them.

It was already late when we turned in, and I need not say that I slept fast and sound without rocking.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PAMPAS.

ON the 21st we entered the province of Santa Fé; and what in Buenos Ayres had perhaps been scarcely more than a vague report, that “the Indians of the pampas had again risen, and were threatening the settlements of the Argentines,” was here fully confirmed. The people scarcely spoke of ought but the Indians, who were said to have “attacked a troop of soldiers and several people besides, and to have killed them.” It was very unpleasant also to hear that they were roving about, only rarely in small bands of eight and twelve, but mostly in larger ones, of from fifty to a hundred and more; and what could we three men—two being armed only with knives—have done against such superior numbers? The only chance of safety in such a case (as our old leader assured us) was speedy flight towards the north. Flying flocks and startled game, were said to be the first and pretty sure signs of the dreaded arrival of the Indians; and then all would hinge upon the question, Who had the best and quickest horses—the Indians or ourselves?

The Arroyo de Pavon, a small shallow river, forms the boundary between Buenos Ayres and Santa Fé; and, in more than one respect, we should be made aware of the difference between the two districts. In the first place—which, however, was no business of mine, as the correo had to manage all the financial affairs—the Buenos Ayres paper dollars (the so-called pesos), about three pence in value each, were no longer current in Santa Fé; whereas, in Buenos Ayres, they were at that time even preferred to silver. Henceforth, therefore, the correo had to pay for everything in hard cash. Yet, more than this, it was here only that we first reached the really wild country of the steppes, the scene of the most frequent Indian forays; and, indeed, the small rivulet which separated the provinces, was also drawing a line between two 74 different kinds of vegetation. The whole face of the pampas, as if suddenly cut off by the small river, assumed a much more wintry aspect than it had borne up to this point. The country which we left behind us had been a vast uninterrupted plain, nearly as green as our meadows in May, with rich clover and fresh grass, in which the well-fed cattle were pasturing in immense herds. Here, however, the cattle became more rare, the flocks smaller; the green turf was covered with a sort of grey furze; and on the next day, this change

became even more striking, as the face of the country itself was more undulating, and, with its long grey slopes, tired the eyes of the traveller.

This evening we rode until late, in order to get over as much ground as possible in the district which was most threatened by the Indians. Even at nightfall, we once more changed our horses; a thing which seemed quite repugnant to the nature of my old correo, who generally, in the evening, made himself comfortable as soon as it was anywise possible. If there was anything that could startle him from his phlegm, it was the magic word, "Los Indios;" and whenever he heard that, he was sure not to leave until he had heard all about it that might possibly have any reference to his present journey.

It was already quite dark when we arrived at another small river, with muddy banks, through which we were not able, in the dusk, to find the ford. We rode several times to and fro, near a bend of the river, where the correo supposed it to be, until, after some time, I found a spot at which the old tracks of some horses' feet were discernible, leading down to the water. Thither I rode; yet the other two would not follow; so that at last, tired of the long search, I determined to try the passage. Little was wanting but that I should have dearly paid for the attempt; for I had just only time to lift my musket-rifle over my head, to preserve it from wet, so quickly did my horse sink in mud and water; and it was fortunate that I had got such a spirited and vigorous animal; for the one which I had before it would never have been able to extricate itself from the sticky mud. Growing obstinate, I now tried the river a second time, somewhat lower down, where I found the water somewhat deeper, but with a hard bottom; and here I forded, followed by the correo and the postilion.

The rivers of these steppes are not very deep; but their muddy banks very often prove troublesome, and even dangerous, to the traveller: in the wet season, they are said to be swelled to such a height as to render the fording almost impossible. Boats, or any sort of ferry, I have not seen in any of the rivers along the whole course of my route.

On the morning of the 22d, the plain was covered with such a thick fog, that my old correo would not start on any condition. Just about that place, there seemed to be a sort of "change of track" of the much dreaded Indians, who had before that shown themselves in great numbers thereabout;

and not only were we liable to the danger of losing our way and missing the next station, which, in such weather, we could not have seen even at twenty yards distant; but there was, in this case, also a chance of our rushing into the jaws of the lion, if a troop of Indians should here be roaming about in the neighbourhood.

At last the fog dispersed, and the view of the plain was no longer obstructed, a circumstance of which the correo made his very best use, keenly scanning the horizon for several minutes. I, too, made my pocket telescope do the same duty; and we found that, as far as we could see to the south, the few herds still in sight were quietly grazing, without any sign of being startled. Our beasts, which had long been saddled and packed, were now brought out. "Vamos" was the cry; and scarcely touched by the spurs, our nags flew over the steppe.

We had proceeded only a few leagues from the place, when the whole appearance of the plain considerably changed. There was no longer the rich pasture of clover for the cattle, its place being taken by high rye-grass, which was already turning yellow; and when we briskly ascended a small slope, a stag was startled from his lair, and ran away, with his branching antlers high in the air. Yesterday we had not seen one head of larger game, although 76 there were plenty of ducks and other water-fowl; and to-day our eyes everywhere met with grazing or flying stags, which seemed to have chosen the higher country for their pasture-ground. It was a sight to gladden the heart of the sportsman, for whom, however, a new surprise was in store soon after.

We might have ridden for about an hour or less, when I descried before us a crowd of very strangely moving figures. "What is this?" I exclaimed. The postilion laughed, and pointing towards the living mass, answered: "Avestruz" (ostriches). They were the first wild ones which I had seen, though I had found them tame here and there at the settlements. I was almost prompted to put the spurs to my horse, and chase the wild, strange flock; but they flew with the swiftness of an arrow down southward; and my companion cast by far too suspicious glances towards that point of the compass, for me to venture a run in that direction. Besides this, we had lost much time in the morning, which it was necessary, first of all, to make up for. Afterwards, we saw another flock, but at a greater

distance than the first. The game in the steppe are exceedingly shy; let not, therefore, the European sportsman imagine it easy to kill much, notwithstanding the very great quantity.

The gaucho has no fire-arms, but only the lasso and the bolas; and with these he is obliged to catch his game. The bolas, which the Indian of the pampas uses also as a weapon of war, is a very formidable instrument; with it not unfrequently, even the bones of a strong horse are broken. It consists of three stones, of two to two and a half inches in diameter, tightly sewed up in ox-skin (sometimes, also, of smaller pieces of lead) each of which is fastened to a strap of untanned skin, about five feet long. These three straps are fastened together in one centre. In using the bolas, the gaucho seizes one of the balls, flourishes the two others in a circle over his head, and then flings them before him, with a particular bend of the arm. On being thrown, the heavy weights fly asunder, so as to form a triangle of about eight feet in diameter, which is wheeling around its own axis; as soon as one of the stones, or the strap to which it is fastened, hits an object, thereby meeting with resistance, the other two balls, forcibly continuing the rotatory motion, envelope and closely entwine what thus comes in their way, and strike their victim with fatal effect. I have seen horses, hit in this way, fall down as if struck by lightning.

On the 23d, we halted at a small town, Cruz Alta. A town, in the European meaning of the word, we must not certainly expect here. They are mere clusters of mud cabins, which look as if they must necessarily melt away in the first smart shower of rain. As to the inhabitants, I am really at a loss how to correctly pourtray them, without running counter to the good opinion they have of themselves, and yet without flattering them. The young people are, nearly all of them, vigorous, and even interesting figures, who, in the picturesque costume of the country—only that they wear, in too many cases, those abominable European black silk hats, with their ponchos and cheripas—look even more picturesque and striking. But alas! I cannot say so much in praise of the fair sex. I should be sorry to wrong the ladies of the pampas; but what I have hitherto seen of them, with very few exceptions, is little calculated to imbue me with a favourable opinion of them. Uncleaness, and disgusting habits at and after their meals, are certainly not qualities to captivate the heart of a European. I must not, however, leave unmentioned a circumstance which satisfactorily accounted

for the absence of young and pretty women. All the young girls had, on account of the Indian hostilities, been removed for safety to fortresses, or, at least, to places guarded by the military.

Had they been present, the houses would, no doubt, have presented a more cleanly, or, at any rate, a more cheerful aspect. Yet the men and the old women remained the same, and a warm bath and a few cakes of sand-soap would have done all the good in the world to every one of them.

In such small towns, one may enjoy the luxury of a chair and a bench; whereas, in the common cabins of the gaucho, the visitor has to sit on the floor; or, by a lucky chance, on horses' skulls, 78 brought in for the purpose, which then compose the whole furniture of such a dwelling.

Their cookery itself is by no means inviting. The pampas are so destitute of wood, that it is not to be thought of as fuel; the principal material, therefore, used as such, is the cow-dung, round which bones are laid, to keep it together, in a heap. The latter, indeed, do not burn—they only serve to concentrate the heat; but they smell: and on this material, with its loathsome effluvia, another bone, with some flesh on it, is laid, and broiled; and if the gaucho is particularly kindly disposed towards you, he takes the bone for you from the fire, knocks the cinders off on his leg, tears off a morsel with his own teeth, to see whether it is well done; and you, as a polite gentleman, say, with a sickly smile: “Muchas gracias Señor;” and being, indeed, as hungry as the most wretched cur, make your meal of it.

The conversation here, as everywhere, hinged on the Indians and their dreaded attacks; and my somewhat talkative old companion told the attentive and anxiously listening town's-people all the terrible and awful reports which he had heard inland about the savage, bloodthirsty, tribes of the pampas; and every word of which, I am sure, he stoutly believed himself. I found, however, only too soon, that those reports might not be exaggerated altogether; for, at the next place we reached, the women with their children had fled to the nearest small towns, and the men remaining behind kept watch near their flocks, and had horses ready saddled, in order to be able, as soon as the bloodthirsty Indians arrived, to escape, as they said, “from certain death.” We therefore stopped, on account of the thick fog, again until eleven o'clock in the morning, before the correo gave the signal

for starting. When at last, after having made about ten English miles, the sun already standing in the zenith, we were galloping along the steppes; I suddenly descried, with no little astonishment, at a distance, an object, which evidently moved straightway towards us, but which, at first, we could not make out or guess what it was. It might be a small compact troop of Indians; but the nearer the 79 strange object approached, the more it seemed to me as if I had at one time or other seen something like it. From the depths of my memory, rose the vague image of those old yellow stage coaches which used to drive at a snail's pace on the roads in Germany, before the introduction of steam; and here, before me, was the identical lumbering vehicle, in all its yellow beauty, not, however, moving at the old German rate, but drawn by six galloping horses.

The horses, which were all put to the coach by means of straps fastened to the saddle-girth, had no other harness than a bridle and saddle, and each was ridden by a wild gaucho, with his long spurs and the broad heavy revenca. The whole machine was so strange and old-fashioned, that it was quite in character when the wrinkled face of what evidently could not be anything else in the world but a pedagogue, adorned with an immense pair of spectacles, looked out from the coach window, and questioned the correo about the reports concerning the Indians. The old fellow, indeed, was a living gazette of horrors, and told the schoolmaster and the eagerly listening gauchos the most dismal news; after which he turned round and galloped off.

In the meanwhile, I had found out that a young lad, of about fourteen years, was sitting in the coach, who spoke English; and I was, of course, anxious to hear what he might be able to tell me about the snow of the Cordilleras. He at first would not listen to any question of mine; on the contrary, plying me with counter questions, as to whether all those tales of horror were true which the correo just before told to his professor. I at once apprized him that there was not one word of truth in all the story, and that the road was as safe as Buenos Ayres itself. "But how about the Cordilleras?"

"O, the road is quite easy," he answered; "that is to say, in summer, when the snow is melted."

"In summer! but I will and must cross now."

“Now!” The little fellow laughed. “Nonsense,” he said. “Now! I cannot even get a letter from Valparaiso; it is two 80 months since I have heard from my father, who is living there; the Cordilleras are blocked up.”

The gauchos, who, with more curiosity than patience, had listened to our foreign lingo, now put their spurs into the sides of their spirited horses; which at once started off through the whirling sand with their unwieldy castle on wheels. It took me an hour's hard ride to come up again with the correo, during which the blocked-up Cordilleras were constantly before my mind. The cabins at which we now arrived afforded nearly all of them proofs of the neighbourhood of the Indians. In one of them we found a young lad, whose father had, a short time before, been overtaken and murdered by them; only rarely we found an old woman keeping house, that is to say, boiling the mateh. Nearly everywhere, the women had fled to the nearest fortified places; not only for their own safety, but also in order that the anxiety about them might not be a hindrance to the courage of the men, if danger should in reality approach.

Yet not the Indians alone are dangerous to the wayfarer in the vast steppes; the gauchos themselves, according to all accounts, are a very wild and bloodthirsty set; and many a murder in the face of the day, as also many an assassination, is committed in consequence of quarrels, and still oftener in gratification of revenge and covetousness. It makes a very melancholy impression on the travellers, to see near the road-side the many rude crosses (mere pieces of wood tied crossways by means of straps of untanned leather) marking the place at which a stranger or a native was murdered. Not a day passed on which I did not see two, three, or even more of these *memento mori*; and it needed not the additional danger of an inroad of savage hordes—which might, indeed, happen at any moment—to fill the traveller with an uncomfortable feeling of insecurity.

On the 25th, we made twenty-two leagues, and again took up our quarters at a solitary house; which, however, like all the other estancias, had its own particular name. Here filth was again paramount: as our supper was served up in a dirty wooden basin, 81 the woman put under it a rag, not even spread out, but like a crumpled pocket-handkerchief, and bearing the abundant traces of sundry greasy feasts, intermingled with stains of soot. I was so disgusted, as scarcely to be able

to force down a few mouthfuls. The master of the house sat by, dipping every now and then with his fingers—which, for several months at least, had seen no water—into our basin, to fetch out the different morsels of meat; and—but I will not shock the reader with a repetition of all the disgusting details I had to see there. Filth reached its highest pitch just in that province, for the women would pick the vermin from each other's heads, and transfer them to their own mouths; after which they offered to me the mateh-tube, still fresh from their sweet lips. I can indeed bear much, but that was rather too strong for me. It must, however, be said, in justification of the pampas, that this latter abominable custom is said to be peculiar to the province of Santa Fé, whose inhabitants are even nicknamed for it by the other Argentines.

On the 26th, the first mountains came in sight. On the right, in the distant blue horizon, the chain of the Cordova hills was spreading; and we now took our direction to its extreme point. The night we passed in a small town on the banks of the Rio Quarto, and I had looked forward with pleasure to reaching that place, having been told that I should find an Englishman there. This person, however, unfortunately happened to be at Cordova; but, to make up for this disappointment, I had the agreeable surprise of being informed that a German had been living for many years in the place, a hatter, in very good circumstances. They immediately sent some one belonging to the house to him, who had to invite him to come to the “Post Hotel,” as a countryman of his had just arrived from Germany; yet I waited in vain the whole evening, until it was too late for me to go and look out for him myself. Tired as I was by the long ride, I was by no means anxious to stroll about; and as, moreover, the correo had told me that we were not to start too early the next morning, I put off my visit until the following day.

82

At the same time as ourselves, another correo had arrived, coming from Mendoza, and bound for Cordova. Among his other packages, there were four small hampers, containing each a gamecock, which he hoped to dispose of at a very considerable price at Cordova. The gauchos are passionately fond of cock-fighting, a sport in which they seem to delight, because blood is shed at it; and the two

correos, indeed, forgot the Indians in the first moment of meeting, in their eagerness to discuss and extol the different virtues and qualities of the cocks.

After this, the subject of the Indians was of course introduced; when the young correo told my old one, that the “pampas” had only lately surprised Desaguadero, where they had not found any of the men, but only one old woman. They, however, seemed to have conducted themselves tolerably well; or, at least, not to have stolen more than what they just wanted for their own use.

This was by no means cheering news for us, as Desaguadero was lying directly in our way; on the other hand, we had also the example of the coach which had passed us so recently, and which had got safely through all the dangers. Why should not we, too, speculate on our lucky star?

In the evening, I wrote for some time at my diary; after which I threw myself, tired and wearied, on my blanket, to get as much sleep as the few hours and the numerous fleas would allow me. Yet I had to wait for that happy result somewhat longer: the correos had such an immense deal to say to each other, and so many glasses to drink together, that it several times appeared as if they could not get, by any possible chance, to the end of it that evening; and then the cocks had to be put up for the night, in a way that they might recover the fatigues of the journey, without being able to get at each other.

The Cordova correo seemed to have some experience in this matter; for he tied up the four cocks severally in the four different corners of the room, by one leg, leaving them thus to pass the night as well as they were able. One of them was fastened close by the spot where I was lying; or, it should rather be said, that it was impossible to be in the room without being near one of them.

At last it was quiet. I closed my eyes, and fell asleep in a trice. I have not the least idea what o'clock it was then. I only know that I seemed to have just fallen into a doze, when I was awakened by a sound which, startled as I was from my sleep, I at first took for nothing less than the war-whoop of the Indians. It was a minute or so before I remembered that it was only my neighbour, that blessed cock, who, in heralding the dawning morn, developed a strength of voice which would have done honour to the lungs of an ostrich. Before, however, I had time to turn my wrath against him

alone, he was answered, first from the second, then from the third and fourth corners, with shrill, challenging tones, like those of the trumpet; and then the cocks continued executing a quartetto, which could never have been equalled in the annals of music; and there I lay in the midst of it, wanting to sleep.

To get the confounded birds quiet, was not to be thought of; and after some vain attempts, I had to content myself to poke the nearest of the chanticleers, as often as he opened his beak, with my ramrod, which I had drawn for the purpose. This did not, however, prevent him from making a new attempt the very next moment; and I was fully occupied for at least an hour. It must have been a very ludicrous sight, if any one could but have seen it.

Daylight now appeared, and I felt as if all my limbs had been on the rack; yet I scarcely waited for the sun to rise, before I set out with one of the young lads of the inn, to go in search of my countryman; and after having passed through a couple of narrow streets and the market-place, I soon arrived at the house.

Had I had ten miles to march, it would not have been too dear a price paid for seeing this man. He was a shrivelled little fellow, with a thin, melancholy face, and languid light-blue eyes; he wore an old silk hat—a screw, as the sailors call it—and a very dirty red poncho; instead of trousers, he had, like the Argentines, a cheripa, with not even drawers under it, so that his bare, thin legs were peeping out, as with gentle reproach; and his feet, like-wise bare, were sticking in a pair of worn-out shoes of ox-leather. The man, whose name was Hüter, was born near Mentz; having originally been a stone-mason, he was not able to carry on his business in the pampas, where there are no stones, except a few pebbles now and then in the rivers. He had, therefore, taken up the trade of a hat-maker, and, of course, taken a wife unto himself.

The lady presented him with an untold number of children, and brought to him a small chandler's shop, with which he seemed to combine, as a branch business, a sort of eating-house; for whilst I was there, a few soldiers came in, and ate some slices of sausage and bread at the counter. In the course of the seventeen years which he had lived in the country, he had become as dirty as the

natives. His house really looked awful, with every due allowance for the early hour of the morning at which I visited him.

Although, however, after so long a stay on the pampas of South America, he had become quite nationalized, he did not seem so well pleased with the country as might be supposed. To hear him talk, it seemed his fondest wish to return once to Germany. Yet, to do this, money was required, hard cash; and there were immense difficulties here to earn it. Yet, whatever he said on that subject, it did not seem to me that he was really longing to return to Germany in particular; all that he wanted was to leave South America. Unfortunately, I could not chat with him as long as I might have wished, for the correo was already prepared for starting, and so we took leave of each other.

Our ride on the 27th led, during nearly the whole day, through a dismal solitude; the grass of the steppes was everywhere yellow and withered, and winter had evidently set in here. There were not even any wild beasts to be seen in this desolate place, where, indeed, nature seemed as dead; and a dreadfully long stage, besides, jaded our poor animals to such a degree, that they were very near sinking under the fatigue.

At last we reached the first rocky clift; yet the only change 85 seemed to be from a sandy to a stony desert. But when we had got clear of them, we suddenly found ourselves in a valley, thrown as by enchantment into this dreary wilderness; trees in blossom, a soft green turf, and life and animation everywhere; a number of domestic animals, turkeys, fowls, even tame ostriches: it was as lovely a little spot as any in the whole world.

From thence our journey, with fresh horses, led for a considerable distance through shady ravines, overgrown with reed-grass and underwood, and a cool rivulet was following our path. Against this rivulet I have, however, to inform: at the time, I rode beside it without thinking of any harm; but since I have seen the Californian mountains, I am convinced that it contains gold, for even then I was struck with the large, beautiful snow-white blocks of quartz which lay scattered on its banks; and, as I knew afterwards, the Carolina gold mines are not far off. I am perfectly satisfied now, that gold may and will also be washed there as it is in California.

Our way, on the 28th, was through a desolate steppe. The correo, however, had heard, at Achiras, such terrible stories about the Indians, who, a short time before, had really ventured themselves close to the vicinity of that garrison town, that he determined to evade his usual stage. We therefore saw, during the whole day, no trodden path; but pushed on through the sterile, desolate pampas. Only in the background, the El Morro—not a very lofty mountain—rose in sight; and when at last we came near, it lay before us as rugged and barren as all the former ones. No house was to be seen at its foot; no fence; at one point only—and it seemed as if our way was just lying in that direction—there stood a solitary low tree. On our right, in the distant horizon, several mountain summits stood boldly out from the flat country, of which the correo told me that they contained the Carolina gold mines. “If,” he added, “we had got in the way of the Indians, we should have turned off northward through those hills; for they do not dare to go so far in that direction. But it is better as it is: we have a shorter road, and also saved 86 money, as there is no post by that road, and we should have been obliged to buy our horses.”

In the meanwhile, we had approached the mountain, and suddenly found ourselves before a small cabin, which, being built of stones taken from the rock, did not in the least contrast against the background, not even by its thatch, which was composed of weather-bleached reeds. Close before the door, even throwing its shade on the very threshold, there stood a huge old fig-tree; and a small fence, raised half of stone and half of wood and brambles, was the whole complement of this small settlement. Yet the space before the cabin was cleanly swept; and its inside, although containing only the most indispensable furniture, was kept in such a tidy, neat, and comfortable state, that, after all the filth and dirt which I had seen until now, the small space of scarcely five yards square appeared to me like a palace; and that I relished the simple draught of milk, which the people offered me, as heartily as I ever did anything in my life.

A young married couple, with their old mother, were the inmates of this peaceable and cheerful place; and even the matron in this isolated spot was far more neatly dressed than I had ever seen a young girl in this country. This made so much the more pleasing an impression, as the uncleanness of the women especially had, until now, most painfully excited my disgust.

Riding along the foot of the mountain, we reached, after a short stage, one of the usual small towns, which was full of soldiers. They had everywhere built small cabins, in many instances not even protected from rain; and in the midst of these inhospitable rocks, there was much life and bustle. Wherever the eye turned, flocks of spirited pampas ponies were pasturing, attended by small and rather savage-looking boys, as they had always to be kept in readiness for immediate use; and on all sides we saw watch-fires, surrounded with groups which would have done honour to any gipsy encampment, and whole host of girls and women, who either were looking after the household affairs within the cabin, or scouring and washing at the banks of a small brook.

87

We got here three fresh horses, two of which proved good enough; the third, however, which unfortunately fell to my lot, could not be brought to stir after the third league. Had the Indians surprised us that day, I should simply have had to give myself up for lost, for the correo would have cared very little for me indeed. But, as at last the horse came to a dead stand, after the old fellow had been wondering for half an hour at the uncommon activity of my whip, he very likely began to believe that it was not the fault of the horse, but mine; and he came back, gave me his horse, and got into my saddle to try his fortune. Yet, although, what I had not wished to do, he stuck his sharp, terrible spurs deep into the flanks of the poor beast, so that his yellow leather boots were bespattered all over with blood; it was not able to move a step. He therefore sent the postilion, who had before been most innocently assailed with the vilest abuse on the score of the useless animal, about half a mile farther north, to where eight or nine other horses were quietly grazing. As good luck would have it, the lad succeeded in approaching the unsuspecting steeds to within a lasso throw: with his heavy valise, on the croup of his own horse, he would never have been able to pursue them; but when the noose was once whirling round his head, it was too late for the victim to fly. He caught one of the most vigorous of the flock; a splendid small stallion, which, after a struggle of a few moments, submitted to its fate, at least so as to allow the three of us to place the saddle on its back, and then to let me mount it. Yet it scarcely felt at liberty to raise its head, when it again began to rear, and immediately after to plunge; until, keeping my seat, I succeeded, by means of spurs and revencia, in subduing it so far, that it directed its zeal into a better channel,

flying along with me, as if we were to reach Mendoza that very evening. My two companions were left far behind, and for a long time were not able to come up with me. That evening, I was to see also a sample of the Argentine sport of hunting the partridge, of which I certainly had no idea before. A covey of the small birds of the steppes started close before us, and one of them separating from the others, descended about a hundred paces from us, at a spot which was marked by a few short tufts of grass. The old correo made me a sign to follow him at some distance; and brandishing the long but short-handled whip like a lasso round the head, he avoided the place where the partridge had alighted, galloping round it in a wide circle, which he more and more narrowed while continually brandishing the whip, and keeping his eye on the bird; which, deprived of cover, and cowed by the whizzing whip-cord, was crouching on the short grass of the turf, until the horse itself was close to it, and the heavy whip-handle hit the poor little trembling creature with a smart and sure blow. Without alighting, the correo then took up the still fluttering bird from the ground, merely stooping down, but remaining with his right foot in the stirrup; after which, he again raced away over the steppes, at the same furious rate as before.

It was rather late when we reached the Rio Quinto, where we put up for the night at somewhat cleaner quarters than we had had until now. Next morning, at starting, our postilion, as the people had done several times before, took a thin slice of raw beef, and laid it (why should I not tell it to the reader, as I was obliged to eat it?) under his own seat on the saddle: it is true, he first spread over it, *for the sake of cleanliness*, an old untanned sheep-skin, which perhaps had for years served as a saddle-cloth; yet even this gradually shifted; after which, the cheripa of the postilion remained its only somewhat doubtful cover. "I could not have eaten a morsel of this," I hear you exclaim. Well, my dear reader, when one has galloped sixty or eighty English miles, the stomach craves for food in some shape or other; and if you then cannot get anything else, you will be at last reconciled even to such meat.

In the afternoon, we met a Mendoza caravan, which was bound for Buenos Ayres. Some thirty large waggons were lumbering close behind one another, by the side of which the guards and escort were walking, with their long lances on their shoulders; the drivers of the oxen, sometimes with a loaded gun by their side, 89 were seated in the front part of the waggons, looking sleepily at the

cattle. These waggons are poised on two immense wheels, sometimes of the height of ten feet. They are otherwise lightly built; and although the frame is constructed of hard wood, the sides consist of plaited reeds only, and the top is covered with skins. These high wheels may be useful, even indispensable, in the pampas, the soil of which, in many places, is very marshy. Six or eight oxen are generally harnessed to one vehicle, in pairs, each pair having a double yoke, consisting of one piece, fastened to their necks.

The manner in which they drive their cattle is very ingenious, and quite adapted to the general laziness of the southrons. The long whip of the Hottentot would be much too troublesome to them; for which reason they have, in its stead, a very long pole of Brazilian bamboo, measuring, at its root, four inches and upwards in diameter. As this pole would likewise be too troublesome to handle, it is suspended in front by another pole, and, with a dart fastened at its point: the driver is thus able easily to goad the fore most animals of the team; whilst another steel dart is hanging down, just at the spot where, by pressing down the pole, the carter may touch with it the second pair of the team. For the animals nearest to the waggon, there is a weaker and shorter pole lying by his side, which is more conveniently handled.

The waggons carry, in such caravans, the produce of Mendoza, which is the granary of the Argentine republic, to the capital. The principal goods are flour and wine, besides dried fruit, raisins, &c.; underneath the waggon, where the high wheels leave considerable space, they carry through the pampas their firewood; and behind, a tall peculiar jug is fastened, in which they keep their drinking-water, taking it from one river to the other, through the brackish plains, which were now lying before us, and also sometimes even farther. If they are threatened by Indians—for they are sometimes several months on their road—they quickly form a square, into the middle of which they drive their cattle, defending themselves from the cars, as they have always fire-arms 90 with them. This mode of entrenchment, especially with their great number, is almost always sufficient; and before the savages are able to gather in great masses, and to become really dangerous to them, it is easy for the travellers to reach one of the small towns scattered all over the pampas, and to obtain

the assistance of the military. Of course they made very anxious inquiries about the Indians, and my old correo, to comfort them, told the most awful tales.

Our next stage was San Luis, the capital of the province of the same name, where I hoped to find Germans; yet, unfortunately, I was disappointed. We reached the place in the afternoon; and just when we emerged from the low plain, and were galloping on the narrow ridge on which San Luis is situated, I saw afar, in the blue horizon, an immense chain of mountains. It was the Cordilleras, which, however, must have been distant at least a hundred and fifty miles.

San Luis has, of late, suffered much by an earthquake, and a number of houses were rent from top to bottom: yet this seems very nearly the only stir which sometimes occurs in that little town; as otherwise the streets were completely desolate, and the few men whom we chanced to meet, looked quite astonished at the strangers. In San Luis there is neither a German nor Englishman (except one very old Briton, who was said to have lived in the country for upwards of forty years). There are some French and Italians, who, as much as I could gather from them, have very strong intentions to emigrate to California. A lake of not very considerable extent is said to exist in the neighbourhood of San Luis, with such a powerful whirlpool in its centre, that no boat must venture to cross it: so at least I was told; yet, unfortunately, I heard of it too late to be able to visit the lake myself.

The correo received from the governor of San Luis a piece of information, which not a little dismayed, but at the same time astonished him. After having delivered his despatches, and joined us at the small house where we had taken up our quarters, he congratulated me and himself for having luckily escaped from considerable danger. The governor—as the correo told me—had, scarcely an hour before, received intelligence that the savages, at the very hour when we were riding towards the El Morro, crossed the same plain in a troop of about two hundred men, in the direction of the mountains to the north, which the correo had at that time considered as so safe. They were even said to be now scouring those mountains, led by white men. People at San Luis supposed them to be Unitario refugees, who wanted to waylay the correo, as he was known, in times of Indian disturbances, usually to follow the northern road; and they would not have made a

despicable capture, as, in the heavy valise which the postilion had buckled to his saddle, he carried, besides the despatches, a considerable quantity of Spanish gold.

Had we fallen into their hands, they could not, if there were really white men among them, have spared our lives, without exposing themselves to the danger of being betrayed, and of having the whole of the Argentine military force on their heels. We, therefore, owed our escape only to our having kept the nearest and most common road; and I only hope and pray, that they may have spared the small peaceful cabin at the foot of the mountain. From San Luis, however, cavalry were despatched in all haste, if possible to cut them off from their own people, or, at any rate, to drive them away from the neighbourhood of the settlements.

The road of San Luis led through nothing but low brambles, and the country about seemed arid and desolate. It was dreadfully sandy, and we galloped during the whole day enveloped in an immense cloud of dust.

On the following day, the surrounding country became even more dreary and desolate, a real desert of furze, low myrtles, and sand; no cool shady oasis offering to man or beast its refreshing hospitality. During the whole stage of more than twelve leagues, we did not see a living creature, except once a sparrow, and some time after a carrion kite; and the latter swept so quickly and 92 hungrily over the dry shrubs, as if he were seeking the other, and could not find him. In the evening, however, we received, in the shape of a water-melon, at least some sort of compensation for our long and fatiguing ride, and for the incalculable quantities of dust which we had swallowed, not even having the comfort of a hearty draught of water; as all the springs which we found here were brackish, and near the small pools which we met with now and then, there was quite a crust of salt-petre covering the banks. The melon, therefore, was doubly grateful to our inward man; and I slept calmly and sweetly, without once awaking the whole night, the first in the course of which we were not tortured by fleas.

On that day we made two stages, one of thirteen, the other of sixteen leagues; that is to say, more than ten German miles with one horse, almost all the way at a gallop. I was only astonished that

the sumpter horse stood it. On the following day, however, we had to make the experience that all sumpter horses have not such giant strength. We passed through just as desolate a desert as the day before, only that the road lay along the banks of a river, which at least gave us the cheering prospect of water. We wished to make a stage of about ten leagues; but the sumpter horse, whose raw back, covered with blood and suppuration, had, from the first starting, bent under the new burden, was not able long to bear up with the torment. As there is no pasture there, the poor animals are worn out with starvation even without working; it was therefore no wonder that our sumpter horse was completely broken down when we were only half-way on our stage. Indeed, now its burden was taken from it and loaded on one of the stronger beasts; itself was to carry the postilion only; yet it was even too weak for that, and we were obliged to leave it behind, together with its rider, at a spot where it would not even find one blade of grass to feed on. The poor postilion had not a morsel of bread, nor any cover besides his thin poncho, to pass the night in the open air. Yet the correo had not the least compassion either on him or the horse. The one was, indeed, only 93 a beast, and the other only a peon, a serf whom the South American scarcely holds in higher estimation than he does the cattle.

On the 23d of July, we reached, late in the evening, after a long journey, which had been dreadfully fatiguing for the horses, the small town of "Pescara órodeo Chacon," the last stage before Mendoza, from which it is distant about twenty-three leagues. I grew, indeed, more and more curious to see the latter town, as everything that I had until now met with in the country was sure to have been brought from Mendoza. Even the bread came from thence, and a very fine-flavoured and strong wine, grown at Mendoza, was drunk in the country. The road led through a much more cheerful neighbourhood, and the horses were kept in enclosed pastures which afforded them most nutritious food. We might, therefore, rely on getting well-fed and vigorous animals. Next morning, to reach Mendoza in good time, we started two hours before the dawn of day. It was pitch dark, and the road showed very feeble and indistinct traces among the low shrubs; yet the postilion, a peon from the settlement itself, who might have been supposed to know the whereabouts here, was riding ahead to keep the horses in the right track. This went on very glibly for about half an hour; when suddenly I perceived, from the carry of the clouds, which I had been observing in want of better employment,

that we were changing our direction to the north. Immediately after, the postilion declared that he had lost his way; and when, turning to the right, we found it again, he, without further ado, turned his horse round to the east, from whence we had come. Nor would the two men believe me that they had taken a wrong direction, until I got off my horse, struck a light, and proved to them by the compass that we were facing the east. We therefore turned round once more, and followed from thence, with greater attention, the feeble and scarcely distinguishable track, until the sun shone upon our road, bearing me fully out in my assertion.

From the place where we had passed the night, the first ten leagues still led us through a sandy country, overgrown with 94 brambles, low myrtle, and other small shrubs. Soon, however, high avenues of poplar trees, which rose from the distant plain, announced the neighbourhood of numerous settlements; and we now reached a succession of plantations, most pleasantly relieved by orchards, fields, meadows, and vineyards. Whole flights of wild parrots swept screeching from one field to the other; hosts of turtle-doves sat cooing in fig and peach-trees; and well-fed cattle everywhere bore testimony to the bliss of well-regulated industry.

After having changed horses, we rode along a sort of avenue or broad high road, which was leading to a small hill, from which a prospect on the low land must open before us. We had excellent spirited horses, which carried us on at a tremendous pace on the level road. Now we reached the first open spot: a plain, covered with dwellings and plantation, extended before us as far as the eye could reach; and yonder!—I reined in my horse, almost frightened. But how should I attempt to describe with words what, in the first moment, seemed to me rather the vision of a dream than reality—a sight which richly indemnified me for all the toils and troubles I had undergone!

As far as my eye could range the horizon to the right and the left, the blue ridge of hills extended, which I had recognised at a distance as the Cordilleras; but on its top lay that strange cloudy stratum which I had at first mistaken for a mass of fog, and which now stood out as a mass of rocks, with snow-covered cliffs, over which a heavy mist was hovering; and, towering above all this, high above the clouds, glittered the gigantic ice-bound peaks and summits; the heavens resting, as it were, on their battlements.

My companions had, in the meanwhile, gained a considerable start, and I had to think how I should again overtake them. Putting, therefore, the spurs into my horse, I rode along on the gently sloping undulating plain, which extended towards Mendoza. The nearer we approached the town, the more animated became the scenery; and we met with numerous caravans of mules, as also single horsemen, conveying and escorting the produce of 95 their farms to the town, or transporting larger quantities of wine, flour, dried fruit, oranges, spirits, &c., to the interior of the country. Looking on the vast cultivated plain, dotted everywhere with comfortable farm-houses and small villas, one could understand why Mendoza was called the granary and storehouse of the whole Argentine republic; and it might have been fondly hoped that, in such a paradise, man could not but live in happiness and innocence.

“Companero,” my old courier, who now rode close by my side, suddenly said to me, pointing aloft with his right hand, “Just look there!” I looked, and again I reined in my horse—this time, however, not from astonishment, but from a feeling of dismay and horror; for, close by the road was a long thick pole stuck in the ground, slanting somewhat towards the highway, and from its top the bearded blanched face of a human head, with wildly dishevelled black hair, presented itself to our dismayed glance.

“A robber and assassin, who had killed a whole family.” Thus ran the tale of the correo. “It was just on this spot that he and his mates, favoured by the marsh, perpetrated most of the outrages against the travellers. The governor caused his head to be exhibited here, since which time there have not been many similar attacks heard of in this part of the country; his arms, hands, and legs, are likewise gibbeted in other places.” My pleasure was very much spoiled by this ghastly sight. Murder everywhere meets us in the whole of the republic; and those numbers of crosses, the dumb accusers of shed blood, which I had daily fallen in with on my road, now appeared to me like the bloody traces of a deed of horror, which I had pursued as far as here, and the end of which I had now reached.

In the afternoon, about two o'clock, we rode into the broad cheerful streets of Mendoza. The town is entirely built in the old Spanish fashion, with low, flat-roofed houses, but much more cleanly

than Buenos Ayres; and every house seemed to me like that of a friend, after having passed through the pampas and their 96 terrors. Here I might rest from all the toils of the road, and it was even promised that I should find some countrymen in this agreeable little mountain town.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A WINTER JOURNEY ACROSS THE CORDILLERAS.

THE intelligence, which I here gathered on the spot concerning the Cordilleras and the winter journey across them, was almost as discouraging and full of horrors as that given to me at Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Ayres: only that the people here were unanimous in stating that the Cordilleras were by no means closed, and that the passage might be attempted, and even effected, any day; but that, if the traveller were overtaken by a snow-storm on his road, he was lost, and might deem himself fortunate to be only frozen to death, and not starved.

I had tarried eight days at Mendoza, looking out for a guide to conduct me across the Cordilleras; whilst everybody advised me rather to wait until the correo of St. Jago came over, with whom I might go, not only more cheaply, but likewise more safely. Yet I felt as if I could no longer rest in the Argentine republic. I longed to rejoin my vessel; and I had heard so much of the “terrible dangers” of the mountains, of being frozen to death, of being blinded, and killed, that I became at last quite tired of it, and indifferent to the most awful representations.

One thing, indeed, frightened me a little at first—the madly extravagant charge demanded by the first guide whom I met with, namely, three hundred dollars; and then I should have to cross the mountains on foot. Yet he said, that, at the present time, the journey was fraught with so many difficulties and dangers, that he—the good man at once abating one-third of his demand—could not possibly do it for less than two hundred dollars. Even this went sadly beyond the length of my purse, and I had 97 to look out elsewhere. In this way, however, time was lost; and unless I wished to loiter about for a week longer, I was obliged to agree to the somewhat more moderate but still heavy conditions of another guide, who asked only five uncias (about eighty-five Spanish dollars), besides his victuals, which was an affair of about five dollars more, as the traveller has to provide

for the perilous eventuality of a snow-storm. The man, besides, pleaded, that five uncias was a very moderate price, at any rate in this season, when he had to risk his life; and that it was only fair he should be paid for the venture. The price of uncias was very different at Mendoza from what it was at Buenos Ayres, where the Argentine, Chili, and Mexican doubloon were worth sixteen dollars; whilst at Mendoza the Argentine and Mexican were current at seventeen, and the Chili at eighteen dollars.

After having once settle with my guide, I busied myself in procuring the necessary provisions, which consisted principally of dried meat, called *charque*, which the Argentines prepare for the purpose. This dried meat, in itself firm and hard, is beaten with hammers, until it looks like thick pasteboard, and is just as easy to masticate; after which it is screwed into small parcels, forming at last a stone-like and heavy mass, the flakes of which splinter off like those of mica; and there is, indeed, in this manner, a not inconsiderable amount of nutriment compressed into a very small compass. A countryman of mine, a Mr. Rhode, or, as the Spaniards called him, Don Carlos, having kindly procured some flour, we hired a girl who was expert in baking, and who made it into a kind of hard but excellent biscuit. These, with some onions, red pepper, a small box of roasted and ground coffee, and an iron boiler, completed our travelling culinary preparations.

So much had been said of the dazzling snow of the Cordilleras, and of people having become blind by it, that Don Carlos—how Schiller's ideal poetry was changed by the application of this name into prose reality!—insisted upon furnishing me with a pair of green spectacles; even the guide assured me that I should have some use for them, for he had made the journey several times, 98 without being able to accustom himself to the dazzling snow. I shook my head, remembering our German snow-fields; but put the spectacles in my pocket, considering that the natives must know their country better than myself.

Before leaving this really “red republic,” I had to experience the fact, that the Argentine state is ruled by the police. Although my passport was *viséd* at Buenos Ayres for Valparaiso, I was obliged to take here a new one for that town, and—passports being dearer at Mendoza than horses—to pay for it five and a quarter Spanish dollars. When I protested against it, referring to my passport

already *viséd* for Valparaiso, the *employés* of the police coolly remarked, “that they had nothing whatever to do with Buenos Ayres” (the capital of the Argentine republic!); and as I was not able to contest this rather startling assertion, they demanded payment in the current coin of the country.

I was very much amused with the transaction at the police office, which I too was not allowed to enter without a scarlet hat-band, and a ribbon of the same colour in my button-hole. My “permit” at leave the Argentine republic was signed in five different rooms, by five different people; it was like an album, and four times was emblazoned on it the motto of the Argentine republic. “ *Viva la Confederacion Argentina, mueran los salvajos Unitarios.*”

But it is time to start for Valparaiso, otherwise I shall lose my ship, which, perhaps, is there already in the harbour, and which will not wait for me; but after having, with all possible speed, taken in water and provisions, will sail, as fast as wind and tide will carry her, to San Francisco. Off, then, across the Cordilleras!

On Wednesday, 11th July 1849, we at last set out for the next stage, only one league distant, in company with two Germans whose acquaintance I had made at Mendoza. The guides generally do so, in order to be at once clear of the town next morning, and to be able to start by dawn of day. Here we drank a couple of flasks of the delicious wine of the country, as a 99 parting cup; and when my two friends had returned home, I laid myself down on my blanket, to get a couple of hours' rest from the short night. The first halt passed quietly without any incident worth noticing: we slept outside the house without any fire, although it was rather cold; yet I was only too happy at least to have proceeded so far towards my destination, and I enjoyed a sound sleep.

The moon shone bright and clear in the heavens when, on Thursday morning, we sprang into our saddles. Our small caravan was composed of my guide, a native of Chili, in a green poncho, otherwise forbidden in the Argentine republic; two “ *peons,*” or servants, one of whom was to carry my luggage, and the other provisions and some coals; and, lastly, myself. The morning was fresh and delightful; on our left were the noble mountains, behind which, from a distance, the white snowy summits met the eye; and on our right stretched the plain, which, to speak the truth, was not

very picturesque. At last the sun rose in the east, casting its golden rays on the snow-fields of the Cordilleras, which then began to glisten as if on fire, with a rose-coloured halo rising from them into the sky; the birds were chaunting their morning hymn, the dew glittered like diamonds on the leaves, and the delightful morning imparted new vigour to our horses, which were briskly galloping on. Even my companions, whose looks were by no means very gentle and prepossessing, began to sing and to whistle, and seemed likewise to enjoy the enchanting scenery.

On the right hand, close to the road, there stood an isolated cabin, and a tall willow tree before it; thither our guides suddenly turned off, stopped before the tree, and muttered a prayer. I looked at them in surprise; but when they had finished, one of the peons at once grinned at me, and pointed up to the tree, saying, “*una bota*” (a boot). I looked, and saw, nailed on one of the branches, a human leg cut off at the knee, belonging to the same criminal whose skull had before that grinned at me from the pole. With horror I turned away from the 100 half-decomposed and half-dried limb, put my spurs to my horse, and galloped off, followed by the laughter of the others.

Thus my morning was again spoiled, and I was very glad when we approached the mountains, where new objects could not but suggest new thoughts. The most effectual means to direct my mind, was the game which abounded even at a small distance from the town; we saw many guanacas, the lamas of the Cordilleras, and also some ostriches; which, however, were very shy, and used to run off as soon as they got sight of the horses.

Besides this, I found great amusement in observing my companions, especially the two peons who were carrying my luggage.

The Chilene *vaquiano* showed no marked characteristics: he was of sturdy, thick-set frame, wrapped in his green poncho, trimmed with a gay border; his low forehead, covered with a broad-brimmed straw hat, and his rather dull face looking listlessly, now over his right, and then over his left shoulder, whilst he was riding ahead of us. The two peons, on the other hand, reminded me very forcibly of two “stage brigands.” One of them, a dry, droll fellow, but with a gallows physiognomy, if there ever was one, only rarely allowed his face to relax into a smile; whilst the other, a smaller

and younger lad, was constantly on the roar at the stories told by his comrade. The former was an Argentine, and the second a Chilene; both, however, wore the Argentine costume, with the large knife stuck in the girdle, of which, I have not the least doubt, they would, on a fitting occasion, have made very fitting use.

All four of us were mounted; this time, however, not on horses, but on mules. Thirteen leagues from Mendoza, we first met with the last slopes of the Cordilleras; yet no tree cheered the eye: low bushes only were growing in the valleys; and on the declivities, goats, and sometimes also cows and mules, were browsing on the scanty herbage. Water, however, seemed particularly rare in this neighbourhood; and we really had some difficulty in finding, in the evening, a convenient place for encamping. It was already dark when we reached a rather steep wall of rocks, under the shelter of which we were able to light a fire and to broil a piece of guanaco flesh; without, however, a sufficient store of wood for keeping up a fire during the whole night. After having finished our meal, we were obliged to let it go out; and wrapping ourselves up in our blankets, and each using his saddle as a pillow, we betook ourselves to rest, as well as we could under such circumstances. The evening before, it had not been very cold, and I was still used to the warm nights of Mendoza. I therefore took no particular care in arranging my couch according to the strict rules of mountain and forest life; but just threw myself down on one blanket, and covered myself with the other. For this I paid a heavy penalty: I was shivering all night, which I did not know at first how to account for, until next morning I found the water in the tin cup by my side frozen.

The first sign of our having entered the mountain regions made itself observable here, and we soon found more of them. The brook, along the banks of which we had to ascend, was everywhere covered with ice; so that my mule, on several precipitous places, lost its footing, and threatened to fall, but was every time goaded into new exertions by the mere shout of the guides, "O mula! O mula!"

We ascended, or rather climbed, higher and higher, until we reached the summits of the first range of hills, covered with thin snow. These hills are not yet the Cordilleras proper, but are called the

Piojós of the Cordilleras. Here I found, in the snow, the tracks of guanacas, and of the puma, or American lion, which seems to be fond of ranging the mountains.

On the highest crest of these hills, a panorama suddenly opened before us, which I shall never forget as long as I live: at our feet lay the valley, from which the Cordilleras rose in steep, sharply-defined declivity; the colossal heights enveloped in the white glittering raiments of snow, and towering into the clouds with their immoveable peaked crowns. Over this magnificently grand winter-landscape, the sky expanded in a serene blue vault; yet the wind swept with icy coldness over the crest of the hill on 102 which we were standing. We now rode down hill again, and, leaving the first snow behind us, we soon descended into a sunny, smiling valley, where green shrubs of myrtle, for some time at least, replaced the naked, barren rocks. The sun shone here with congenial warmth; and following, during the last hour, the course of a small river, we reached, about evening, a house where the mules, which, during the last days, had to content themselves with very short commons, found excellent pasture, and ourselves a capital glass of Mendoza.

This was the house farthest west in the Argentine republic; and here we supplied ourselves, for a farewell cup, with a couple of horns full of that wine, which we hung over the neck of the horse before the saddle. This way of carrying liquids is as original as it is practical. A pair of common bullock's horns, of course as large as can be procured, are evenly sawed through at the roots; a wooden bottom is firmly set in, and fastened with pitch; then the hard pointed top is perforated, and a stopper put in, and the flask is complete. Two such flasks are tied together with a short strap of undressed skin, which here, to all intents and purposes, supplies the place of string; and in this way they are hung over the saddle. From Buenos Ayres already I had taken a couple of such twin bottles, only smaller ones, filled with canna (the first runnings of rum, and one of the lightest and most pleasant spirits); and the old correo, who likewise seemed not particularly fond of the water of the steppes, was a very frequent customer of the delicious tap. He had bound it—of course merely to oblige me—on his own horse; and he would have liked it even better, had not that stupid cork always made such a squeaking noise whenever he fell a little in the rear to look after his saddle or harness. I found afterwards that he approved of this canna even better than of mateh, which he generally seemed to drink only from politeness. Speaking of mateh, I am thankful to say that I

had taken leave of it, as in these parts wine was the general beverage; and my lips were only now covering with a new skin, after having been sore for several weeks. Next morning, Sunday, the 14th of 1833 July, we set out early, in the direction of the entrance of the Cordilleras, by a small valley which the Tucunjado had broken through the rocks. We kept on the left side of this mountain torrent; and I saw with amazement, that the traces of the river, which at present was so low, rose to a height of thirty, and even forty feet, bearing testimony to the terrible floods with which it had swamped the nearest low lands.

The mountains, indeed, presented here a wonderful sight. The compact mass of the Cordilleras lay before us, rising, as it were, perpendicularly on high, overtopped by peaked snow-covered summits. Yet it did not look as if the snow had fallen down upon these mountains, but the whole of the upper part seemed to consist of snow and ice, glittering and beaming in the bright sunlight; and in some places only, where the precipice was so scarped and smooth that not a flake could have adhered to it, the old mountain showed its bare limbs, marking thereby the immense layers of the snow which had been blown into its peaks, filling ravines within which there would have been room for other mountains.

In the beginning, the road was tolerable; stony and steep enough, but broad and not dangerous. The farther we proceeded, the heavier became our ascent, the mountains more and more closing in on both sides; so that our path, which suddenly became quite narrow, began to wind along the brink of steep precipices; and the mules had no longer any choice of road, but were confined to a very small track. We frequently passed spots where, on our left hand, the valley lay many hundred feet below us; and on our right, the rugged rock hemmed us in with an insurmountable barrier. Yet, so many new objects engaged my attention, that at first I scarcely took any notice of the road.

Here I saw the first condor, and for the first time I formed some idea of the immensity of these mountains, when the colossal bird, which had passed us so close that I could hear the sharp flap of its wings, flew over towards the opposite slope, which I had thought only two hundred yards distant, and gradually looked 104 smaller and smaller, until it dwindled to the size of a young raven, without having reached its goal.

That night we passed on the confines of the snow region; and as we had no fuel to make up a good fire, we found it tolerably cold; but being accustomed to rough it in the open air, I arranged my couch, with the help of my blankets and saddle, so well, that I slept warm and comfortable until the next morning; and the guide, who had so often before passed the Cordilleras, most flatteringly remarked, “that if I did not know anything else, I certainly knew how to make my bed.”

Our animals fared very badly. Not a blade of grass grew here with which they might have refreshed themselves. Only here and there, patches of yellow, straw-like brambles luxuriated, in spots where, perhaps years before, the dung of mules had accumulated. To get a draught of water, they had to scramble down several hundred feet on a slope covered with rolling stones; then quench their thirst, at the risk of their lives, at the bottom of the ravine; and afterwards, tired as they were, climb up again, with not one mouthful for their supper. When I expressed my compassion for them, the guide coolly observed: “O, it is to-day, only the first evening. They do not mind it yet; but if it lasts much longer, they certainly become much distressed. However, they are tough beasts, and will put up with an immense deal of fatigue.”

Having now fairly entered the snow region, we made, on Sunday the 15th of July, only a very short stage; for the peons, instead of completing their preparations at Mendoza, had neglected everything, and now wasted a whole day in making charcoal, and in getting their snow-shoes ready. Let not, however, the reader mistake those for the contrivances in use in North America. Here, on the Cordilleras, the legs are merely wrapt closely round with a soft sheep's skin, to which is added a thick sole of bullock's skin; which, as the result proved, is most admirably adapted to the climate and the circumstances. We had waited a considerable time for our guide at the hill where we were encamped, and where 105 we manufactured our charcoal; yet he had fallen in the rear about an hour ago. At last he came, carrying under his poncho something which seemed rather heavy and bulky. At first I thought it was coals; but he opened his poncho, and showed to me an immense quantity of most excellent raisins. When I inquired where he had got them, he pointed with a laugh to a rock not far distant, and likewise covered with snow. I went to see this wonder of vegetation in the midst of these dreary wastes of snow; but I found no vines, as I had been innocent enough to expect: only

some twenty chests with raisins, which a party of travellers had been obliged to leave behind here, to save the men and mules.

Not far from this spot, as my guide told me, there was a house at the so-called Punta del Vaca, where we were to pass that night. When, however, we reached it, about one hour before sunset, I was sorely disappointed; for we found only a small, low, double cabin, roughly built of stones, and covered with branches and earth, with an opening in front. All round, the deep snow was lying; nor was there any wood to light a fire, the whole amount of available fuel consisting in a few coals, left behind here by former travellers.

On the next morning, we were early prepared for setting out; but, to my great astonishment, the guide did not at all look as if he intended to set his foot on the snow; and, indeed, he had no such intention. He now told me that he would return here with the mules; and that I and the peons were to proceed on our way without him. On the other side of the Cordilleras, I should be supplied by his father, who was living there, with new horses, which would carry me to Valparaiso.

I spoke too little Spanish to make any serious opposition; and, to tell the truth, I did not care much what he did, provided that he fulfilled his engagement on the other side of the Cordilleras. After having, therefore, completed all my precautionary measures against the snow, I started with the two peons, to get as speedily as possible over our difficult, and, in case of a snow-storm, also really dangerous journey.

## 106

For it must be said, that there was no end to the terrible tales of accidents, which were said to have happened during the winter journeys across the Cordilleras, and of numbers of persons blinded by the snow, or frozen to death. One story I heard, of a whole body of conquered troops having fled, during the Argentine wars, into the mountains, in order to escape to Chili; which, in the small scattered stone houses, had miserably perished with hunger and frost. Yet, notwithstanding all these discouraging tales, we pushed on, and soon found that they must have been grossly exaggerated. I was heading the procession, the servants following; for, being loaded with my saddle

and provisions, they found it easier to avail themselves of the path trodden by me. Yet, although the deep snow would not allow any great speed, we advanced briskly enough; and if ever we wished to rest, we sat comfortably down on the snow, or on a rock from which the snow had been drifted. For this purpose, the travellers wear a sheep-skin girded round their waist, and hanging down behind; so that they may sit down on it, without fear of catching cold on the damp and frozen ground.

From morning to evening we had, indeed, made only four leagues, yet we were as much exhausted as if it had been sixteen; and, indeed, wading through the deep snow is exceedingly toilsome, especially where there is no firm footing. In the evening, we turned in at a so-called casucha. These are small, simple cabins, built of bricks, with vaulted roofs, offering to the wayfarer a shelter in case of a snow-storm. For this purpose they are raised on a pediment of about ten or twelve feet high, which is ascended by a flight of steps. This prevents them from being choked up with the drifting snow. The only accommodation which they have to boast of consists in the four bare walls; water is near at hand, but every one is obliged to bring his own fuel, if he wants a fire. It not unfrequently happens that, in a very severe snow-storm, travellers are weather-bound in them for a fortnight, or even a month; and many have thus perished with cold and hunger. Yet without them the traveller would be lost, 107 to a certainty, as the dreadful snow-drifts would soon cover and destroy him. In the territory of Argentine republic, the intervals between these casuchas is rather too great; so that any one who is surprised by a snow-storm between them, may be very thankful if he escapes with his life.

We found some coals in this casucha, so that we had not at once to break into our small store; and we procured some boiling water for tea, and for a charque-soup. The culinary preparations were certainly not very enticing. The charque, or dried meat, was so hard beaten, and so tough, that it had to be pounded between two stones, and then dissolved in hot water, to be eatable at all. At this stage of the preparations, the flesh was put in a cow-horn; some chopped onions, salt, and red pepper put to it; and then the boiling water poured over the mixture, which by this process is instantaneously changed into soup. The reader must, however, bear in mind that these operations were performed by one of the peons; both of whom, as far as they could help it, would never put a drop of water to their hands. This hydrophobia went so far, that they were quite astounded when they saw me

performing my ablutions even in the regions of snow; and when, afterwards, they told their friends that the stranger had washed himself on the road, their story was scarcely credited.

On Wednesday, 18th July, we arrived at the last summit which we had to cross. It was a delightful feeling when the eye could, for the first time, freely range the west; no other mountain intercepting the view, and the horizon being bordered only by the vague and indefinite line drawn by the Pacific Ocean. Close by our left rose the Tupungado, the highest summit of the southern Cordilleras, to a height of 5000 or 6000 feet above us; the pass where we crossed was said to be 13,000, the Tupungado more than 18,000 feet, above the level of the sea.

I wrapt the woollen blanket, which I wore, closer around me, as the wind was blowing very hard from the sea; and I threw myself on a huge piece of rock, my eyes wandering, not over the mountains of Chili, not over the noble panorama of the summits towering around and below me; no, but over the vast desert which stretched east of the mountains towards the Atlantic; for there, far away, I left my home, and left the sea which surrounds it; and now, when should I see all that again?

When I rose again, a stately condor, as if belonging to the place, was hovering above me, at a distance of a stone-throw, lashing the air with his immense wings; but when he saw that the body which he had espied was still alive and stirring, he slowly sailed after the setting sun. It would have seemed like murder to me to have shot him.

The sinking sun also reminded me that I had to think of quarters for the night, down between the peaked snow-covered summits, which were rising from the precipitous ravine. The two lads, with the luggage, had, for some time, disappeared behind the salient rocks of the downward path; and I still stood alone, and had at last forcibly to tear myself away from a spot on which I should have liked to pass a whole day. This spot, however, is very rarely without its perils; and I heard afterwards that I had been very fortunate in hitting on such a calm day. A furious gale is generally blowing here above; and in summer especially, the travellers sometimes bless their stars after having cleared the few steps which lead over this last summit. On the top there is not a flake of

snow, the wind sweeping the place very clean; but a few yards lower down, the snow begins again in such masses, that the next casucha was buried in it to the very threshold.

He who knows what it is to descend, in a state of exhaustion, a steep mountain, may form an idea of what I felt, when, after having, with immense fatigue and difficulty, toiled up the Cordilleras, I had now to toil my way downwards. My limbs, indeed, were nearly paralysed; and I was several times obliged to throw myself down on the snow, only to recruit my strength a little. At the same time, I felt dizzy and sick, and was seriously afraid of being ill. The peons did not care a straw whether I remained lying in the snow, or followed them: if, therefore, I did not wish to pass the night alone, and, to a certainty, be frozen to death, I 109 had to exert my last remaining strength; in which effort I was supported by the hope of soon reaching the casucha, which was only one league distant; and of refreshing myself there with a cup of hot tea.

We reached the casucha about nightfall; but, ye gods, what an abode that was! It looked as if it had been used for shelter by men and beasts indiscriminately, and close before the door there lay the carcass of a mule, half-eaten by the birds of prey, and in a state of advanced putrefaction. Yet there remained no other choice but to put up here, as there was no water near the next casucha, which, besides, was one league distant (and the melted snow is dreadfully unpalatable for making tea); and to go beyond that to the second casucha was quite out of the question.

Thoroughly disgusted, I arranged my couch in the farthest corner, from whence I called out to the peons to light a fire, and to put the boiler on; but the rascals, in order not to be obliged to carry the coal up hill, had burnt it all during the last night; and now we lay here, in the midst of the snow, without one spark of fire. There was nothing for us but the cold bare walls, and the putrid mule close before the door. It was a hard blow; yet it could not be changed on any condition. I therefore chewed a hard crust of bread, crammed a small piece of the dried meat down my throat, took a dram of bitters, which I owed to the care of the Italian apothecary at Mendoza, and which I fortunately had still about me; and then, tired to death, and wrapt up in my blankets, I lay down to sleep, or at least to rest.

We set out, before sunrise, in complete darkness, for to-day I was driven onwards with an impulse which I could not myself quite account for. The loathsome condition of our quarters might have had much to do with this restlessness. But I felt that I should never be at ease until I arrived at Valparaiso, and there, at least, obtained sure intelligence concerning my ship.

For three hours our path lay over the most dangerous spots. Once I had, for the length of a quarter of a mile, to cut, with my heavy cutlass, the crust of the frozen snow; merely to gain, 110 step by step, a footing along a declivity sloping at an angle of about sixty degrees. The peons then followed my tracks, slowly and cautiously; one false step, one slip, would have hurled us down into the blue abyss; and there, hundreds of feet below, buried us in the drifted snow-dust. After three hours, we reached another casucha, in a very picturesque situation; and from thence the road began to improve; at least there were no longer any spots where our lives were endangered.

At the next casucha we found a small drove of mules, with the master of which I immediately closed a bargain for one of the beasts, as far as the place where I might get fresh horses. As I was now mounted, and had no more need of provisions, I took the whole burden from the two peons, so that they were able to keep pace with the mule. We, however, stopped for about half an hour, to have, before starting, at least a cup of hot coffee; and then, following the course of the "Puente," we pushed on for the flat country. The road was still difficult, even for mules, and we had often to alight and to lead our beasts by the bridle.

I was now in Chili, the warmer climate of which already manifested itself in the more luxuriant growth of the shrubs and trees; the scenery, however, was still wintry.

Towards evening we halted, for a short time, at a pleasant spot surrounded and overhung with trees. Here we were once more in a region inhabited by man; and the small house, the owner of which forced from the arid soil only a scanty livelihood, appeared to me as if it were situated in a real paradise. Here I had, for the first time, a truly Chilenese repast. My peon, indeed, offered to me again one of his notable soups, in the cow-horn, which had never once been cleansed. Yet I declined the dainty, with many thanks, preferring the indeed not as luscious, but so much the more cleanly

dish of the Chileneſe, which ſimply conſiſted of wheaten flour and water, made, in a clean cup of horn, into a thin pulp. Whether it was my ravenous appetite, or that my taſte had been ſpoiled in the pampas, I emptied two large cups of this meſs with intense reſiſh. An excellent onion, with ſome red pepper, 111 completed the meal; after which, perfectly ſatisfied, I laid myſelf down on the graſs under a tree, a luxury after which I had not a little longed during the laſt week.

The Chileneſe is much more civilized than the Argentine, which is clearly proved even by his food, which is not purely animal, as on the other ſide of the Cordilleras; and the agriculturiſt, who obtains his own wants from the ſoil, has always the advantage over the mere cattle-breeder.

We were ſtill in the miſt of the wildeſt mountains; for, although we had left the ſnow region, yet we ſaw, cloſe above us, on the ſteep rugged ſlopes, immense maſſes of ſnow, which often, by the avalanches, choked the road even in our path down here. The ſcenery, however, aſſumed quite a peculiar character, owing to the huge cactus plants which luxuriantly grew wherever a patch of fertile ground had gathered; and of which I ſaw, from my reſting-place, ſeveral, which muſt have been at leaſt eighteen feet high, with conſiderable expanſe of leaves.

We ſet out again, at nightfall, over a moſt dangerous road, in complete darkneſs. Yet the exertions of the laſt days had ſo completely blunted me for impreſſions which, under any other circumſtances, would have kept my nerves in a ſtate of feveriſh excitement, that I at laſt began to doze in the ſaddle, and, between waking and dreaming, drowsily looked at the abyſs on one ſide, and the ſteep cliff on the other, without thinking of any danger; and when at laſt, about eleven o'clock, we reached a ſpot where the mules got ſomething to eat, I juſt glided from the ſaddle, ſpread my blankets on the very ſpot where I ſtood, and, in one moment after, began to dream of home, and happineſs, and peace.

On the next morning, we again ſtarted before ſunriſe: the night had been very froſty, and I had ſuffered much from the cold; nor had we any breakfast. The wind ſwept chilling through the ravine, and I wrapt myſelf cloſely up in my poncho. Whiſt the ſtars grew pale in the eaſt, and the freſh breath of morning came down from the mountain ſummits, I again ſat in 112 my ſaddle, with half-

shut eyelids, and tried, as much as possible, to forget the world without; for the dream of last night had been too delicious for me not to wish to prolong it.

Dogs were barking, and children's voices reached my ear; I raised my head, and looked about me in amazement: was I awake, or still dreaming? Yesterday morning I had still been up to my girdle in snow, climbing over icy precipices, where the monotonous waste of snow and rock was not relieved by trees or shrubs; and now?—

Before me, between green bushes, lay a peaceful, cleanly cabin; and close by it, the dark foliage of the orange-trees, with the apples of the Hesperides, in full autumnal magnificence; monthly roses in bud and bloom; and peach-trees up to their tops covered with their delicate blossom: the grim winter had vanished as by enchantment; it dawned like spring in my heart; and, as the congenial rays of the sun rose above the mountains, I shook off weakness and exhaustion, and felt as if new-born.

A wide valley opened before us, in which every inch of fertile ground seemed cultivated; and numerous processions of mules which met us, bore testimony to the active traffic of the country. Everywhere, orange, peach, and apple-trees in blossom, with trim and tidy houses in their shade; the gardens and fields enclosed with walls or hedges; and excellent aqueducts leading the water from the hills for the irrigation of the dry soil.

About noon, we at last reached a small town, Santa Rosa; in which we found out the house where, according to my contract with the guide whom I had engaged at Mendoza, I was to get fresh horses to Valparaiso. I delivered the letter of the guide, fastened, instead of sealing-wax, with *bread-crumbs kneaded*; and it was very good fun to see one-half of the family busying themselves in deciphering it, while the others were standing by, most curiously surveying me from head to foot.

With the help of the verbal statement of my peon, they at last made out what they had to do in the whole affair; and the son of the house, the brother of my former guide, declared himself ready  
113 to accompany me to Valparaiso the next morning. This was not, however, what I wished: we were to start at once, for I did not feel that I could rest until I knew what had become of my ship. I

therefore declared to the man, that, if he did not immediately procure me a horse, as he was bound by the contract to do, I should myself hire another in the town, and ride alone to Valparaiso; after which, he might see when he would get his five uncias. This argument was quite irresistible. Had he had his money, he would have been only too happy to get rid of me; thus, however, the cash was still in my pocket, which put the case on quite a different footing. He at once made preparations to procure a horse for me. In the meanwhile, the dinner was served up, consisting of fresh eggs and a stew of dried peaches, which I relished not a little; and about two o'clock in the afternoon we set out again, the guide promising me that I should arrive at Valparaiso in good time next evening.

On the same evening, we passed through the small, pleasant town of San Felipe, with broad regular streets, and gardens enclosed with stone walls; surrounded everywhere with groves of orange-trees, and with hedges in blossom: there were even, before the door of the Government House, what I should not have expected in this latitude—two stately palms, which gave to the whole scenery a sunny, tropical character.

The people likewise exhibited marked peculiarities, very distinct from the neighbouring Argentine republic. They also wear the poncho; but it is shorter, lighter, and not of the sanguinary hue of the Argentine one: the people mostly ride at a gallop, as the Argentines do; but theirs is not such a neck or nothing pace as on the other side of the Cordilleras, where the horseman does not care a straw whether the horse falls down dead as soon as it has carried him to his journey's end. The Chilene farmers very frequently trot, which, in the Argentine republic, I only saw at the capital itself, where galloping was forbidden.

That night we slept in a small hut close by the road—what a difference! The cabin had every appearance of poverty; but, nevertheless, it was tidily and neatly kept, and its inmates were obliging, and even cordial.

On the next morning we started before daybreak; and after having ridden for a few hours, we entered a valley, where soon a pretty large town came in sight. All around, the fields were

cultivated most carefully, the roads in excellent repair, and the town itself, Guillotea, seemed very busy and stirring.

We stopped before a “pulperia”<sup>\*</sup> to refresh ourselves and the animals; and I revelled in delicious olives, very sweet bread, and excellent grapes and oranges. They also sold a sort of must; but it looked muddy, and tasted villanously: on the whole, the wine of Chili bears no comparison with that of Mendoza; of which, therefore, great quantities are imported. On leaving, I wanted to take with me oranges and grapes for half a real (about 3d.); but I could not carry them all, and had to leave half of my purchase behind, so great was the quantity.

This term will be explained farther on.

My new guide having stinted the forage for his horses, we had to pay for his avarice by our very slow progress. Towards sunset he declared, that it was not possible for us to proceed any farther, and that he intended to pass the night where we now were; I, on the other hand, told him, that in this case I should march on foot on the same evening to the harbour, which was about five leagues distant; and as, according to the contract, he was bound to convey me thither on horseback, he at last gave in, although with a good deal of grumbling.

It seemed as if the journey would never end; it was already nine o'clock, and we had not as yet reached the town. We pushed on over undulating ground, crossing a succession of hills, every one of which, we hoped, was the last; yet, whenever we thought that now we must emerge into the open country, another hill lay before us, exactly resembling the one which we had just been two hours in getting over. At last we reached a windmill, and I could not help thinking, that by day there must be a view here of the sea; but the night was darker than it had been for a long time, and I am also quite satisfied that it was only the instinct of the horses that kept us safe on our road.

Now a very bright light came in sight; it was, as my guide told me, the beacon of the harbour: we must have been, therefore, very near to the sea; but in vain I exerted my eyes: not even the lights of Valparaiso were recognisable; and yet we could have been only a very short distance from them. The never-ending hills intercepted the view; and thick masses of shrubs and trees, of which

we, however, could now distinguish only the dark outlines, screened the town from us, when we descended the last hill, and reached the sandy bed of a shallow river, in which we had to seek a path to cross the opposite side.

My companion himself seemed not to know the ford very well, as he missed it twice; we got into deep water, and the splashing of the stream and the roar of the surf, which we could hear as distinctly as if we were quite close to it, were certainly not calculated to put us in a very cheerful mood.

At last we reached the first houses; but most of the doors were already shut: the people were going to bed. It was night; and as our horses now, even with the best will, could not proceed any farther; and as, moreover, on that evening, I could not possibly transact any more business, I yielded to the urgent advice of my guide, to pass the night at a house which he knew—a “pulperia;” that is to say, a house of call, combining the characters of an inn and of a chandler's shop.

116

## CHAPTER VIII.

### VALPARAISO.

MY first evening at Valparaiso was far from promising to be agreeable. The small pulperia at which we had put up, lay very nearly at the eastern extremity of the town; which, to judge from the mean look of the houses, was evidently one of its poorest quarters. Yet I had not been much pampered during my overland journey; and quietly throwing my saddle down in a corner, and myself and blanket on it, I waited until Donna Beatrice —O! what profanation of a romantic name!—would have completed her preparations for satisfying the cravings of our stomachs. First of all, I asked for some wine; but I got again that horrid must, and put my glass down in despair.

The pulperia was a sort of small chandler's shop, where the neighbors might buy tallow candles, sugar, eggs, soap, wicks, and coals, even in the smallest quantities. In front, however, there was

a table with some benches; and a row of flasks on a shelf, which, on their tickets, announced themselves as containing the most comprehensive variety of *agua ardiente*.

What I, however, cared more for than eating, was to find out if the Talisman had sailed. My first request, therefore, was for a newspaper. Unfortunately, there seemed none to be had in the house; and, at such a time of the night, it was not practicable to rouse the neighbours. I now addressed my questions to the master of the house, and to several of the guests. None had any news to give. One, one only, thought that he heard the name—that the ship was lying in the harbour; but that was all.

Donna Beatrice, in the meantime, busied herself about the fireplace; first producing a whole lot of eggs, and then a frying-pan; which latter she turned towards the light, in order to see in what condition it was. As far as I could judge of it, it was rather a melancholy one; but the Donna dropped the clout—with which, I very likely, she had at first intended to wipe it—saying, “It would be a pity—there is still fat in it;” and then, with a very praiseworthy thriftiness, she broke the eggs which were destined for us, on this antediluvian stratum of grease.

Yet I was as hungry as a wolf; and had, before this, arrived at the fixed resolution, not to be deterred any more by anything: and, at any rate, it could never have been worse than the cow-horn soup of my guide over the Cordilleras.

Next morning, I was up before daylight; and went down to the harbour. There were many vessels there; none of which, however, had their sails up; nor was there a breeze stirring. If the Talisman was still among them, she could not escape me. It was too early an hour; besides, it was Sunday morning. Being therefore unable to meet any one who might give me any information, I had no other resource left, but to walk about on the pier. How I felt, is more than the reader can imagine, as he cannot possibly form an idea of the wretched dilapidation of my dress; a detailed description of which, the dictates of propriety and delicacy forbid me to give here.

A rather long Argentine poncho, of which scarlet was the prevailing colour, covered most of my deficiencies; and, indeed, it looked wild enough. Add to this, the red handkerchief, which the Argentines wear to keep the dust off; the old broad-brimmed, weather-beaten felt hat, and my

own sun-burnt face; with a beard and hair which had not been under the hands of a barber for weeks. What wonder, then, that a few people, who gradually appeared in the streets, stared, with considerable surprise, at the strange figure which stalked about in such guise on a Sunday morning.

But as, fortunately, I could not stare at myself as they did, I soon forgot my very unfashionable appearance, for the anxious desire to get information about my ship. At first, none of the passersby could tell me ought about it; but at last I met the host of the Star Hotel, at which most of the passengers of the Talisman had put up. “And when did she leave?” I asked the man, with breathless anxiety.

118

“Yesterday afternoon, at five o'clock, you might have still been able to get on board,” he answered, scanning me from head to foot; whilst his astonished looks seemed to ask the question, “But where in the world are you come from?” As a sort of consolation, I was told that she had very nearly cast anchor once more; as, until five o'clock in the afternoon, she had had to struggle against a high north wind, and to tack in order to get out of the harbour.

But never mind—it could not be helped; and so nothing was left for me but to fetch my luggage at once.

Yet here was a new difficulty: it was Sunday morning. I had, therefore, to call at the gentlemen of the firm with which my luggage was deposited, at their own private lodgings; and could I go in this attire? and yet, how could I go in another?

Whilst in a fit of despair, and, worse than that, of the most ravenous hunger, I was standing in the street, beating off a number of curs which were barking at my red poncho, my glance fell on a small sign-board which hung over a half-open door; and on which, besides a Spanish inscription, an unmistakeable Deutscher Schuhmacher (German shoemaker) was emblazoned.

This was, indeed, a glimpse of good luck; for, at this early hour, I should not have been allowed to make a polite call anywhere; and the German shoemaker, at any rate, was sufficiently acquainted

with the place to give me the direction of Messrs. Lampe, Müller, and Fehrmann; and, first of all, of some house where I might get a decent meal.

The little shoemaker, who was engaged in making his toilet for the day, was a very droll fellow. He was just trying his cravat; in which weighty occupation he gravely continued, after having kindly bid me to sit down on his three-legged stool. At the same time, I had to tell him my story; and he jumped up with both legs when he heard that I had come direct across the Cordilleras. I thereby won his heart; and he only regretted, as, with the most professional interest, he scrutinized my boots, that, in all probability, he had nothing ready to suit my feet.

119

“If you only had a pair of decent boots,” he patronizingly said, “the rest would matter but little; but certainly yours are in a shocking condition.” It is true, he had not seen the rest.

At first I looked at him with some surprise; as, until then, I had, from reasons of delicacy, forbore mentioning the sad state of my garments; but I forgot that it was Sunday, and that my little shoemaker, if, in going to breakfast, he had to cross the streets with me, would very likely have been ashamed of being seen in such company. But if I had been decently shod, the rest would have been no affair of his.

My new friend now also told me the story of his life; as it would, at least, be half an hour longer before we could get anything to eat. He had come to Chili a few years before, and was very comfortable here, for the town of Valparaiso (Vale of Paradise), indeed, was a paradise for a shoemaker. He who came here a poor journeyman, was set up in business for himself, with plenty of customers. “And,” he said, “when Sunday comes round, I have in my pocket not a few paltry groschen, but a handful of Spanish dollars; and I am dressing as genteelly as any other señor.”

Among these conversations, he had at last completed his toilet; and, the time for breakfast being arrived, we went together to an American boarding-house; where, for a moderate price, we were very well served indeed. To me at least, who had not for a long time tasted anything like it, this simple meal appeared like a Lucullian banquet: the only drawback being, that, in the first place,

I dared not put off my poncho; and secondly, that I was not yet quite at home again as to the use of knives and forks, especially of the latter. Somehow or other, the fingers of my left hand would interfere with the viands, and my little shoemaker several times shook his head most portentously.

After breakfast, the shoemaker showed me the way to Mr. Fehrmann. This gentleman at first looked at me with considerable astonishment, having, at first sight, scarcely expected that I should address him in German; yet his astonishment even 120 increased when I spoke to him about my trunk, which was to have been here deposited for me. He immediately called one of his young men, and inquired of him: none, however, knew anything of it; and the most unpleasant uncertainty was bursting upon me, that the Talisman, contrary to my agreement with the captain and supercargo, had taken with her all my effects—linen, clothes, bed, books; in short, all that I called mine in this world—all that I now needed, not only to cut a decent figure in Valparaiso, but also to be enabled to proceed on a decent sea voyage: all was now under weigh to California; and I sat here, as bare and destitute as any man in the world could wish to be. Yet, although the thing was indeed no joking matter, I could not help laughing on suddenly seeing myself in a scrape of such gigantic dimensions. Mr. Fehrmann, to whom I mentioned my name, and to whom I gave a brief outline of my case, joined in my laughter; but, at the same time, with the frankest hospitality, offered to receive me in his house until the arrival of the next ship of the same owner, the “Reform,” which was daily expected. I accepted the offer in the same spirit as it was made; and was received, not only in the house, but in the family of Mr. Fehrmann, with a cordiality which I shall never forget as long as I live.

## **CHAPTER IX.**

### **A STROLL THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE TOWN.**

WITH the dawn of day, the streets begin to show signs of life; the country people come to the market, partly with their lumbering ox-carts, partly with horses and mules laden with packages and panniers. The costume of the country people is very striking; a short poncho, mostly blue, with embroidered edges, and a low broad-brimmed hat, somewhat turned up at the side. The singularity

of their appearance is increased by the accoutrement of the horses, with high saddles of five or six sheep-skins piled one above the other, with large hanging down spurs, and stirrups like uncouth blocks of wood; to which may be added, the skins of wine lying across the croup of the horse, and the colossal drinking-horns which hang down on both sides.

It is still cool and shady, and the orange-trees, laden with fruit, peep silently over the garden walls, shaking the dew on the pavement. You wonder at the singular laying out of the sides of the streets; stones and bones forming crosses and stars, the whiteness of the bones contrasting very neatly against the grey ground of the pavement. What a singular idea, to pave the streets with bones! Indeed, it is singular: you will, however, be struck with even greater amazement, when you hear that they are human bones. These stars and crosses are the waist and ankle bones of the tyrants and foes who were slain when Chili shook off the Spanish yoke; and such was then their hatred against their former severe masters, that the conquerors would not even content themselves with extirpating them from the face of the earth: no, they wished to keep somewhat of them above ground, which they might trample upon. Would that all too severe rulers might take a warning from it! The exasperation at that time is said to have been terrible indeed; and even now the South Americans do not want to be called Spaniards: “We do not speak Spanish,” they say, “we speak Castilian.”

We emerge from the town in the suburbs, where the gardens begin; and here we have occasion to admire that most graceful of all pine-trees—the Norfolk fir—which was imported from the island of that name on the coast of Australia, the well-known penal settlement for British criminals. This tree seems to be a great favourite here; and a young specimen of it, about ten or twelve feet high, is said to be worth sometimes as much as eight or more uncias of gold. Another plant, which is by no means rare in Europe—the camelia—seems likewise to fetch a great price here: the ladies pay for a single flower, which they generally wear for ornament in their hair, two or three dollars; a fine plant, in bloom, is sold at eighty or ninety dollars.

Where the houses end, a gang of convicts, in chains, sweep the roads: they are fettered, on their hands and feet, with a thin chain, and guarded by soldiers. Many physiognomies may be observed among them, in which the thought of future crimes is most unmistakeably expressed; but, by the side of those hardened ruffians, there is also many a wealthy “guasso” (farmer), who, forgetting, in a quarrel with his neighbour, the new customs, and only remembering the old ones, took up his knife, and who has now to pay the penalty of his bad memory with fourteen days' labour in chains. The law refused to acknowledge any difference; and the rough iron contrasts in a very melancholy manner with the blue poncho, the white linen, and the embroidered sleeve of the prisoner; whose hand now carries the broom to sweep the streets of the town, through which, otherwise, he would have gaily galloped along on his spirited steed. He proudly meets the glance of the passer-by, and laughs when looking at his chain: as he knows that the hour of his release must soon strike, and that he will then be as respected as before; for the punishment will not have disgraced him.

The law seems to be very liberal in awarding this punishment; and even foreigners are not unfrequently to be found amongst the convicts; the Germans alone having, until now, to boast that none of their countrymen have worn those iron bracelets.

The police alone, and the physicians, are allowed to gallop through the streets of the town; any one else, who would attempt it, is immediately stopped by the myrmidons of the law, who are stationed nearly at every corner, and who unceremoniously take him to the magistrate, where he has to pay a fine. This law has been a very great grievance to one class of men at Valparaiso—the “Californians”—who touch here for two or three weeks, and who, in order to stretch their limbs, which have become fidgety after their long passage, immediately get a horse to be off for the mountains. But as they have no fancy whatever for a slow progress, of which they have had enough on board of ship, they are constantly at daggers drawn with the policemen; quarrelling with 123 whom, they, however, always get the worst; besides which, they have to pay fines, or, at any rate, the costs.

However early one may pass through the streets of Valparaiso, one is sure to hear music; the sounds of the guitar, almost in every instance, as an accompaniment of a song. The Chilene are

exceedingly merry and sociable, which accounts for their passionate love of music. I do not think that there is one house in Chili in which there is not at least some one who plays the guitar; and music and dancing are their principal amusements. A novelty delights them just as much as it does mortals in other parts of the world; and thus, some years ago, a poor German tramp, with a barrel organ, found Valparaiso a real gold mine. It was the first instrument of the kind which reached that town, the first perhaps which had ever been heard on the shores of the Pacific; and when, on the first morning, he, in his usual professional way, began to perambulate the streets, grinding off his six tunes, he was most agreeably surprised, on being called into the very first house, to play his sublime music before a very wealthy family; who rewarded the distinguished virtuoso with three or four Spanish dollars, instead of the few pence with which we benighted Europeans would (perhaps) have acknowledged his transcendent merits. The man thought he was in a dream; and yet it was only the beginning of what was in store for him. Wherever he turned the handle of his organ, he was taken into the houses; and he returned home on the first evening with a load of dollars, such as he never before had seen together in one heap. The second day was even more remunerating than the first. The barrel organ was the talk of the whole town; and there was not a man in greater request than *the artist*, who, after some months, had indeed made a “fortune.” His instrument now began to lose the charm of novelty, and his earnings sank from their fabulous height: people began to see that any one might turn the handle. But he had, in the meanwhile, sufficiently feathered his nest; and, soon after, left the organ to a countryman of his, to return to his old home as a “rich man.”

124

The most lively quarter of the town, in its very heart, is the landing-place from the harbour; which is now even more animated than usual, owing to the many emigrant ships touching here. Here is a capital row going on between the sailors of yon English man-of-war, who have had “just a little” too much grog, and the Chilene; but our attention is attracted by a more interesting spectacle—a military band passing by, and marching down the street towards the lighthouse; where, to-day, a sort of prelude, or rather a rehearsal, of the September festivals on the anniversary of the emancipation from the Spanish yoke, is to take place. Everybody crowded there; and the strangers, after having just landed, have, of course, nothing better to do than to follow the general example.

The blue, red, and white flag of Chili, with the two guanacas, is gaily fluttering in the wind; and the militia soldiers, in their white dress, march after the sounds of excellent military music, with their artillery, up the winding paths of the hill, partly accompanied, and partly followed, by a numerous crowd of curious spectators. On the top of the hill, booths and tents are put up, in expectation of the merry guests; beer and wine, *agua ardiente*, lemonade, and also fruit, eatables, and “dolces,” are everywhere offered for sale. In the meanwhile, the militia is manœuvring to the sound of their martial band; and the crowds of spectators partly gather round the tents to refresh themselves after the hot up-hill work, or encamp in gay groups on the green slopes.

Through the thickest of these groups, into the tents and booths, the guassos gallop with their horses: here, laughing and chatting with a picked-up friend; and there, taking from another a glass, and gallantly drinking to the health of the nearest ladies. The horses are used to this sort of thing, and press their intelligent heads, as if in play, between the thickest groups of men, steadily advancing without treading on any one's toes.

Processions of ladies and gentlemen—the latter almost all of them in elegant English riding-habits, but some of them also in the costume of the “guasso señoritas,” with the usual gowns, and a short 125 embroidered poncho, in many cases accompanied by English naval officers—now gallop up the hill, and along the broad, smooth road towards the lighthouse; or stop near the artillery, whose manœuvres are executed with considerable quickness and precision, although the guns are drawn only by men.

One part of Valparaiso, built on the slopes of the ravines of the hills, is particularly frequented by the sailors, who have there their houses for merry-making and dancing. I would not, however, advise any one to go there after dark, as there are not seldom scenes of blood enacted there.

The large French vessel *Edouard*, coming, I think, from Havre, had arrived here a short time before me; and quarrels which had arisen during the journey between the captain and the passengers, seemed likely to lead to a protracted stay at Valparaiso. Among the passengers, was the old blind poet Arago, on his way to California, where the French intended to establish a sort of joint-stock

company. He had written a little vaudeville, which was to be performed that evening. Its scene was laid at Valparaiso, and the principal characters were to be French emigrants going to California. The Edouard carried out, as passengers, some actors who were to make their first appearance in it.

There was one serious drawback: the French did not speak Spanish, and the other Chilene actors did not speak French; and thus the strange plan was devised, of making every one speak his own language, and performing the short piece half in French half in Spanish. Both parties having previously learnt their parts, they perfectly understood what they were saying to each other; and, to me, it was interesting enough to witness such a thing. The French, of whom great numbers are settled at Valparaiso, and of whom several hundreds besides had arrived in the Edouard and some other emigrant ships, seemed to consider the affair as a sort of national triumph; and at the conclusion of the small, one act vaudeville, the plot of which was *very* simple indeed, the old blind poet was called for with rapturous applause.

He was sitting in the corner box on the left hand of the first 126 tier near the stage, between two ladies dressed in white, with whom, at the thundering call, he rose from his seat; holding, from the box, a short harangue to the public, in which he thanked them, in a few kind words, for the cordial reception given him. The whole went off very prettily, but there was a little too much play with the play.

The theatre of Valparaiso is spacious, and a very respectable building; the band was at that time excellent, and some operas which I saw there gave me perfect satisfaction. The first tenor especially, had a very fine voice, and enjoyed great popularity; also the acting of the Chilene ladies and gentlemen was easy and natural.

After the theatre, I walked, with some ships' captains who wished to return on board, towards the pier-head, when we were greeted from a distance by well-known sounds: it was German music, from Flotow's opera Martha, played somewhere in the streets by wind instruments. Taking the next turning, we soon came up with the band of the militia, who were serenading one of the officers. A

great number of gay lanterns surrounded the band, and a crowd had assembled, which followed the musicians as they moved on to the quarters of another of their officers.

The boat which waited for the captains having left with them, I was going to return alone, when, somewhere farther on in the street, where the market was held by day, I again heard loud merry music. As I was once out on the ramble, I sauntered towards the spot, to see what was going on there at so late an hour. But the door was closed, and the curtains drawn before the windows: the house evidently a private dwelling; and thus I was already going away without having gratified my curiosity, when the door opened, and two men came out from the gaily illuminated room, where merry songs mingled with the loud strains of guitars; a third, who had let them out, was just going to close the door again, when, seeing me, he, in the most obliging manner, urged me to enter. No refusal was accepted: I was compelled to follow him, and soon after found myself in a low but well lit room; in which, just coming out of the dark street, I was not at first able to take a survey until my eyes were used to the dazzling light.

It was, on the whole, a rather poor apartment, with whitewashed walls, only decorated in many places with small pictures of saints in glaring colours. The tables and chairs were roughly made of wood, and a large four-post bed, which stood in a corner, and, indeed, nearly filled a fourth part of the whole room, was hung with coarse cotton curtains. These were, however, drawn back, to offer the bed as a seat to the guests; and, indeed, every nook and corner seemed made use of to afford accommodation to the spectators and dancers. The former sat on the window-sills, tables, and chairs; whilst for the latter, only a very small space was left, in which, at least as long as I was present, they executed the Chilenese national dance. Agua ardiente and “dulces” were continually handed round, and the spirits partaken of by men and women; whilst all of them, with scarcely any exception, bating only the dancers, were smoking their cigarillos. Having once got over the first surprise, and lighted my paper cigarette, I cast a glance on an object which, indeed, I had seen on first entering, but which, in the general bustle, I had not noticed so much as it deserved. This was a sort of stage, about seven feet high, round which the musicians were sitting or standing, and which seemed literally covered from top to bottom with flowers, lights, and statuettes of saints. The strangest ornament on it was, however, a waxen doll, of most excellent workmanship, representing

an infant; which, in a little snow-white frock, with closed eyes, and its delicate pale cheeks lightly tinged by a rosy hue, was sitting in a baby chair, completely surrounded by flowers. The doll was, indeed, so like nature, that at first I took it for a real child, from which I was scarcely able to turn my eyes; and the illusion was so much the stronger, as, just below it, a beautiful, pale young woman was standing with tears in her eyes, who might have passed as its mother. In this respect I was likewise mistaken, for, just at this moment, one of the men stepped up to her with a laugh, to invite her for a dance; and 128 she not only followed him, but also, after a few minutes, was the merriest of the whole crowd.

But is it possible that it should not be a real child? No artist could have moulded that form so exactly like nature. Now one of the candles just close by its little head went out, and the cheek turned towards it thereby lost its rosy tinge. My neighbours must have at last noticed the attention with which I observed that child, or figure, whatever it might have been; and one of them told me, as far as I could make it out, that it was the youngest child of that young woman with the pale face, who was dancing so merrily; indeed, the whole festivity was in honour of the *little departed angel*. I incredulously shook my head; but my neighbour, to convince me, took me by the arm, and led me to the stage, by the side of which he made me step on a chair, to touch the tiny hands of the baby.

It *was* a corpse; and the mother, when she saw that I had doubted it, and that I was now convinced of the truth, left the side of her partner, and came up and smiled at me, telling me that this had been her child, but that it was now a little angel in heaven. Here the guitars struck up in wild strains, and she was obliged to return to the dance. I left the house quite bewildered, and wondering whether all that I had seen could be reality; but the riddle was afterwards solved to me.

When, in Chili, a little child of less than four years dies, the people believe that it goes straightway to heaven, there to become an angel; and the mother becomes prouder of it than if it had grown up in health and vigour. The corpse of the infant is then exhibited in the way I had witnessed, and very often the people dance and drink round it until the body shows signs of decomposition. The mother, however intense may be the grief and sing; it would be considered selfish were she to think of her own feelings where the happiness of her child is concerned. Poor mother!

As I got out into the open air again, and slowly walked on through the now desolate and forsaken streets, I passed, at about 129 twenty yards from the house, the dusky figure of a man who was sitting on the threshold of one of the buildings. I did not take any notice of him, for the streets are perfectly safe at Valparaiso; but when I had proceeded some six or eight yards further, he gave a long-drawn shrill whistle, so that I stopped, surprised, and looked round. At the nearest corner a horse stood tied up, yet I did not see any one with it; and when I had passed, the same shrill whistle again was heard behind me. In this way I was signalized through the whole town. Little pleased as I was at the time, I could not but acknowledge, when the thing was explained to me, that the police of Valparaiso is deserving of the very high character which it bears.

Let any one walk the streets at a late hour: as soon as that first signal is given, the police know that some one, who, about this time of night, ought to be in bed, is still roaming abroad. If the rambler then intends no farther mischief, he is only whistled to his own house door, and there the matter rests; but suppose he has had any felonious intention, he would have quietly to abandon it, for the policeman to whom his approach is signalized is on the look-out for him; and if he should not make his appearance at the "beat" where he is expected, he may be sure that the eye of the watchman is fixed on him, and that it will be difficult for him to elude the attention of these guardians of order.

Speaking of the police, I am reminded of the Chilene calebouse, or the public prison, which I had occasion to visit. An acquaintance of mine, a captain of a German ship, who had the whole of his crew put up at that place, invited me one day to drive there with him. The arrangement of this penitentiary was indeed as singular as it was practical. The different prisoners were not confined in a fixed prison, but in a sort of large van, similar to those which are used by travelling menageries. All round the spacious court-yard such carriages were standing: large boxes, strongly secured with iron, and fitted up in front and back with strong iron gratings; the oddest groups being exposed to view in them, lying and squatting in their moveable cells like so many 130 wild beasts. The captain had the whole of his crew, ten heads of cattle (as he called them), confined in such an omnibus, for having refused to go on with him to California, because they could not agree with the first mate. He asked them now if they had changed their minds, and whether they would sail with him; but, after

having a short time consulted together, they simply answered, No. He then gave them to understand that, willing or not willing, sail with him they must: the only difference was, whether they would go with him of their own accord, or be driven by the police to the ship; to which they replied, that a drive would be much more comfortable than a walk, and that they greatly preferred the former.

They were really afterwards conveyed in the police van to the landing-place, and there led by the police on board, as soon as the ship was ready to sail. It is true that, immediately on their arrival at San Francisco, they all ran away; but the captain had known that beforehand, and he at least had his will.

## **CHAPTER X.**

### **A NIGHT IN THE CEMETRY AT VALPARAISO.**

“Have you been up to the pavilion of the cemetery?” one of my Valparaiso friends asked me, as, one morning, whilst we were walking to and fro on the pier head, I alluded to the delightful prospect which we enjoyed even here on the low seashore.

“Not yet?” he replied to my answer, which was in the negative; “well, it will never do to miss that: there are also some monuments there, of Italian workmanship, beautifully carved in Carrara marble.”

The monuments had no attraction for me, but I like to walk among graves. We set out at once, and, after having slowly ascended the steep path, which leads zig-zag up the hill, we at last reached a long and narrow, but pleasing edifice, which contained the quarters of the sexton, and also the chapel and oratories.

From thence we emerged into an open, sweet spot, the burial-ground of the Roman Catholics. My guide had, indeed, told me the truth; the monument of the Waddington family alone would make it worth one's while to visit the place. It is a plain die of Carrara marble, with a sarcophagus on it, against which the figure of a young weeping girl is leaning. So wonderful is the execution, that her

breast seems to heave in the agony of her sorrow, and the delicate folds of her garment to flutter in the wind. There are some monuments of greater pretensions in the centre; but I always returned to this, and was never tired looking at the lovely and affecting figure.

Just behind another splendid mausoleum, there was a strange, tower-like building, with an iron grating vaulting over it, similar to a bird-cage; the whole, however, being very high, and having neither entrance or stairs. My guide explained to me that this was a charnel-house, into which the old bones were thrown. "Do you empty the graves?" I asked.

"The graves, as well as the pit yonder, which we will visit afterwards. Now, however, let us first enjoy the prospect from the pavilion."

Leaving the charnel-house on the right, we passed through a small room to the balcony of the pavilion, which, being built close to the slope, commanded the view of the whole harbour, to the Pacific on one side, and on the other to the snow-capped Cordilleras. The prospect from this point was certainly delightful; and I could not for a long time turn my eyes away from the enchanting panorama.

I do not know how long I should have stood there, had not my guide pointed out to me that we had something else to see here, which I ought by no means to miss—the pit.

"What pit?"

"The pit in which the poor of Valparaiso are put," he answered; and went back with me, through the same ante-room, towards a 132 mound of earth thrown up on the right. I followed him, and soon after stood on the edge of a large hole, about ten feet deep, sixteen or eighteen feet long, and, probably, ten feet broad, which at the first glance seemed empty.

"Here they stow away the poor," my friend said to me.

"I daresay you are admiring the catacombs here, gentlemen," said, in the genuine New England nasal twang, an American, who had joined us unobserved. "Indeed, they have here, at Valparaiso, a

very kind-hearted fashion of getting their dead, I must not say under, but in the ground; for certainly one could not call it putting under ground, whilst the arms and legs are still sticking out.”

“Then these are really corpses which are lying down there, without a coffin, and scarcely covered with a handful of earth?” I asked with an involuntary shudder.

“Just lean over a little here; do you see the elbow in the corner yonder? that's a woman thrown in yesterday.”

“Thrown in?” I called out, “from above?”

“Ha-ha-ha, stranger, you are very green yet,” the Yankee said, evidently amused at my innocence; “they don't use much ceremony here with the cast-off cases of immortal souls.”

“Now let us visit also the Protestant cemetery,” said my friend.

“It is just opposite, and very plain; but if it has not to boast of such beautiful monuments, it will not disgust you either, by a pit like this.”

I followed him, scarcely knowing what I did; for, I must confess, the loathsomeness of the grave which I had just now seen had made an impression upon me which I could not so easily shake off, and I was truly glad when we left the place.

Close to the Roman Catholic Cemetery, and separated from it only by a carriage road, but, like it, enclosed with a high wall, is the Protestant Cemetery of Valparaiso; a proof certainly of most praise-worthy toleration in the present government, if we consider that, not so very long ago, the Inquisition still held sway on the shores of the Pacific. It, indeed, lacked the magnificent prospect of the other 133 churchyard and the gorgeous monuments; but, on the other hand, poor and rich were peacefully lying, side by side, in their quiet graves. Simple stones or crosses were set up at the head of the departed ones, whose surviving friends were able to visit the last resting-place of their beloved dead without shudder or disgust.

Many sailors especially seemed to lie buried there, and their epitaphs seemed to prove that Jack's humour follows him even beyond the grave. Thus the tombstone of Isaac Tickell, of Her Britannic Majesty's ship *President*, bore the following inscription:— “Shipmates all, my cruise is up, My body's moor'd at rest; My soul is—where? aloft, of course, Rejoicing with the blest.”

That of another ran thus:— “The commodore short warning gave, For me to anchor ship; My moorings hard and fast are laid, Till signal's made to trip.”

We at last left the cemetery, to descend again into the town. Yet I could not forget the pit with its corpses, which, thrown about in wild confusion, and scarcely covered with a handful of dust, were lying there exposed to the action of sun and rain; and, notwithstanding the shudder which I felt on seeing it the first time, a strange fascination had taken hold of me, making me repeat my visit on the next day; and again and again, sometimes even twice a-day, so that at last the corpses in the pit appeared to me like old acquaintances, whose faces only I could not quite remember. The boy there in the corner, with his leg protruding from the soil; the black corpse by his side; the brown skull, which so fixedly and gloomily stared up to the blue sky—had got company on the second day; for there lay a pair of feet, which I did not yet know, with red stockings peeping out from split shoes—the man was no longer troubled with corns; and that gown which was shining forth from under the sand, must likewise have been introduced only during the last night, as I had been here late on the previous evening without remarking it.

134

I was sorry for one thing, the corpses lay so cold and lonely in their wretched tomb, without one token of love, without one flower. On the next morning, therefore, I gathered a huge nosegay of wild flowers, and strewed them over the poor, deserted, and forgotten dead in their desolate pit.

I now conceived a real desire to see a funeral, which still increased, when I heard that they buried all their dead at midnight. I was told that I needed only to repair one night to the cemetery, just about twelve o'clock, and I should not have to wait in vain, as there was scarcely one night during

which they did not bury at least one corpse. I went, and was disappointed the first night, sitting, until nearly one o'clock, on the steep slope close to the wall.

The second night I was more successful. When the quarter to twelve struck, I was already sitting in the same spot as yesterday. The moon shed her placid light on the ravine before me, one slope of which is covered by the burial-ground, and the other by the small buildings of the suburb. I heard the watchmen in the town giving their whistle, and crying out the hour and state of the weather, when, almost in the same moment, a boat bore off from one of the ships in the dark bay, and six small but sharply-defined lights were glimmering on the nearly black surface, and quickly glided towards the shore; which they had no sooner touched, than the lights presented themselves in the street, marching through the narrow dark lane that leads directly from the strand to the burial-ground, and is therefore called Cemetery Lane. They soon reached the top of the hill where I was; and I could now distinguish the coffin, which four sailors, alternately relieved by other four, carried, suspended between two oars, to its last resting-place. The gate of the Protestant cemetery was still closed, and a midshipman, who accompanied the corpse, first knocked gently, and then more and more roughly, at the closed gate. The noise sounded most dismally in the still night; yet it awakened the sleepy sexton. He opened the gate, and the sailors entered the Protestant churchyard, through which they slowly stepped to the 135 chapel; and, after having read the service for the burial of the dead over their departed shipmate, they quietly and solemnly committed him to mother earth, his last narrow sleeping-chamber having been prepared for him beforehand.

My attention was soon called off from this scene, as I heard from the valley below a strange confused noise; and, stepping to the edge of the hill, outside the churchyard, I saw a long procession of brilliant lanterns—perhaps several hundreds of them—and a mass of men, who, quickly moving up the hill, approached with snatches of a monotonous hum. I could understand nothing except the words Santa Maria and José the people being nearly out of breath on reaching the top of the hill, so that their utterance had become an unintelligible groan.

Three coffins succeeded each other, surrounded by a crowd and a real sea of light; however, I soon found out that the lanterns attended only in honour of the second coffin, which contained the corpse

of a man of high station. The other two were merely coffin chests; that is to say, shells used for carrying the body to the grave, into which their contents are then emptied. The aristocratical corpse was at once taken to the chapel, and there deposited until to-morrow, when the solemn funeral service could be performed over it. The relations and friends of this man, after having delivered the coffin into the hands of the priest, immediately returned to the town; but the peons or servants, who had followed the procession partly from attachment and partly from curiosity, accompanied also the two other corpses to their last resting-place—the pit.

To get “a good place,” I had preceded them, and taken my position at the extremity of the huge common grave before the lanterns approached. The two coffin chests—one of them covered with black cloth, the other without any covering whatever—were carried to the brink of the pit, and then the cover taken from the first. The corpse, which was enveloped in a black shroud, was taken out by three of the by-standing peons; two others descended by a ladder into the grave, to receive the body below: a sufficient 136 number of men being present, there was no need to fling the corpses down. Yet the regard shown to the new-comers did not extend to the old inhabitants of this dismal dwelling, who were most unmercifully trampled upon by the peons. They had now got one of the bodies down the ladder; it had its arms crossed over the breast, and was already rigid and stiff. The two men who were below laid it down orderly, and with its limbs stretched out close to the side of the ditch; after which, according to custom, they took off the black shroud from his pale face. It was a noble bearded countenance; and the moon shone brightly on the quiet features, which were no longer ruffled by any earthly pain.

The lid was now taken from the second shell, which, as far as I was able to gather from the conversation of my neighbours, contained the corpse of a man who, on that very evening, had been found murdered in one of the dissolute quarters of the town. The body still retained its full pliancy—perhaps even its warmth; and it seemed difficult to get him out of the shell. When the men raised the corpse under its loosely-hanging arms, the corner of the old poncho—which, until then, had covered its head—was put aside; and it ran through me like a stab, when my eyes met the dull stare of the still open eyes of the dead man. The pale blood-stained features were convulsed, as in anguish or anger; and the uncertain light of the moon, penetrating through the changing shades of

a thin mist which was sweeping over the slope, imparted to the physiognomy a strange and awful expression of life. In the same moment, the heavy body slipped from the shifting ground, and fell with arms extended forward, as if trying to guard against the fall, on the unsuspecting peon below; and then lay quiet and motionless on the man with the red stockings. The two peons, however, quickly set him right again, laying him close by the side of the last comer; which being done, they ascended the ladder again, and threw from above some spadeful of earth on the two corpses. The bodies shook at every throw; and the moon now shone full and bright on the two human faces, until at last they were buried in the sand.

137

The funeral was over; the people put by the spades and shells again in the small corner room of the pavilion, whither I followed them. I then stepped out into the balcony. The whole appeared to me a terrible dream; my head burned as in a fever; and I trembled in all my limbs. I have, indeed, no weak nerves, and I have many times looked death in the face; but this ghastly scene—this putting away the dead, for burial you cannot certainly call it—this callousness in the presence of the dead—this monotonous muttering of prayers, as if in mockery of the departed; was indescribably painful to my feelings.

The same strange fascination which had brought me here now led me back once more to the open grave; and I sat down on the mound of earth quietly, as if I were afraid to disturb those who were slumbering there below. I almost felt as if I belonged to them, and as if I must remain with them, and watch over their dismal resting-place. I do not know how long I sat there. At last—it must have been very near morning—I tore myself away, and slowly descended to the town, where, in the short slumbers I was still able to catch, I dreamt that I was lying in the pit, and that I could not get warm among my cold neighbours and bedfellows.

I repeated these visits to the dead, until at last the Reform arrived, in which I embarked for California; and, on the 13th of September, in the afternoon, at two o'clock. we entered the noble bay of San Francisco.

138

## CHAPTER XI.

### SAN FRANCISCO IN THE AUTUMN OF 1849.

WITH the entry into the golden gates of California, a new period of life began for me; the sea lay behind, and the new wonderful land, with its golden dreams, before me.

The “Golden Gate” is indeed a magnificent entrance for such a beautiful bay as that of San Francisco. On both sides, steep rugged cliffs rise high, as if torn asunder by the fury of the sea which is lashing them; and for leagues you pass through a strait lined by precipitously sloping hills, and which, near the bluff point on which the flourishing town of Sausalita is built, turns to the north, where it forms several other bays, and in its last recess receives the two rivers of Sacramento and San Joaquin.

Towards evening, a fresh breeze carried us farther into the bay with tolerable speed, considering our having the tide against us. The farther we advanced, the greater number of tents, often picturesquely enough ensconced in the smaller glens, came in sight. Passing through the rows of bare and stony hills, we approached the town itself, and, on the slope on the right, single small wooden buildings became visible.

“But one does not yet see any one digging,” a voice called down from the forecastle, where most of the steerage, and also many of the cabin passengers had collected. “Zounds! there is still plenty of room on shore.”

“There, behind, some are washing,” another called out in high glee. “They are down in the gully before us; some are really washing.” Others took up the triumphant cry; and the good people, in their joy, seemed to forget the whole surrounding scenery, until we came nearer the place where some had been said to wash; when the bright vision dissolved into bullocks.

And there, on the right, more and more wooden buildings. That was San Francisco; and the masts on the left side of the 139 harbour! But what a little place!—(the hills still concealed from us the

other part of it.) More came in sight with every cable length; and now, now the immense number of ships lying at anchor there, spread before us like a thick impenetrable forest of masts. The eye had, indeed, no time to survey all the new and attractive objects.

Of the greatest interest in the beginning were the ships to me. I could already make out two German flags. Close by lay one of Hamburg; and farther on, two of Bremen, on the foremast of which a small pennon was fluttering with a large H (Heydorn). That was the Talisman, on board of which all my goods and chattels ought to be; and immediately after, Captain Meyer came in his jolly-boat to show us the place where we might find a mooring. Five minutes after, the heavy anchor was fast in the bottom, and we were on Californian soil.

And California?—I really don't know where to begin—as if old fairy tales, with their fabulous treasures, had been called into life again. Thus the whole waved and rolled round us; and nothing was wanting, but that an indefinite number of genii had been walking to and fro on the shore, with golden vessels full of diamonds. The people would speak of gold as if it were but common dust; and the prices asked for everything proved to us only too soon that it was no dream, but dry, prosy reality which surrounded us. Merely for the boat which took us to the shore we had to pay one dollar each; and when we had touched the land, the reality became again fabulous in this town of San Francisco, which seemed to be raised from the ground as by magic.

Fremont Hotel, an insignificant house of two stories, about as large as a modest country parsonage, rose like a palace from amidst the small low wood cabins and tents, which respected those places only where real streets were laid out; and everywhere else were pitched in wild confusion, promiscuously turning their fronts towards any point of the compass, just as the whim of the moment suggested it to the architect. The fine weather—as it rarely or never rains in summer—had encouraged the people to make use of every possible material, caring rather to get an inclosure than to be under a roof; and fearing less to be exposed to the weather than to the eyes of the neighbours and passers-by. Houses, if we may call them by this name, were raised of the thinnest spars, covered with gay thin cotton; but if the piece with blue flowers had not been sufficient, a red chequered strip was patched to it by means of large stitches, to fill up the space; after which a

yellow pattern followed, which, having been procured in a larger quantity, completed the wall, the back, and the roof.

Near many a tent, a sign-board, larger than the dwelling and the store, and perhaps imported from the United States, was sticking in the ground; and cotton and linen-built hotels everywhere invited the stranger to satisfy his hunger “at a fair price.”

Strange as the houses might appear to us on our first entering the town, we almost forgot them for the men, some of whom were loitering about in the streets without any seeming occupation, and others were hard at work, as if they might have gained by it, in a few hours, an independent existence. After having got a nearer insight into their doings, I found that they might be divided into three distinct classes.

The first class consists of the people who are settled here, nearly all of them merchants; for man has not yet time here for manufacturing goods—everything is imported ready made; and who would sit down and work, however well paid, whilst in the mines he finds the lumps of gold quite ready for barter? The merchants go after their business, walking quickly, without conversing with any of the others. They know the life as it is here, and have no need to make inquiries; but their time is gold, and that is the reason of their walking on so quickly and never stopping.

The second class is that of the new arrivals. They have not yet got their things in order, nor appointed day and hour for their departure for the diggings; and now, to make use of the little time that is left them, they roam about the streets of the town, and wonder at what they see, and also laugh at the strange objects they meet with.

141

The third is the working class, although very different from what we at home call by that name; and it might be subdivided into three kinds—voluntary, involuntary, and exceedingly astonished workers.

The voluntary are those who at once made the best of existing circumstances, and who put off their coats, tuck up their sleeves, and briskly set to work, either on their own account or for others.

The involuntary are those who are obliged to work because no one else will do it for them; and they cannot afford the money to pay, for a single errand, a sum which, at home, they would not have earned in a whole month. These people are distinguished by their awkwardness; and, in the midst of their hard toil, you will see them still sporting the dress coat and kid gloves, and wiping the sweat off their brow with fine cambric handkerchiefs.

The third subdivision comprises people having just disembarked with their luggage, and being suddenly thrown into a state of things which they certainly had never dreamed of. There they stand on the shore with their portmanteaus, their trunks, and their hat-boxes by their side, and no one minding them or their luggage; so that at last, to their great surprise, they are obliged to put a hand to it, and drag their heavy things along. They will stop after every twenty yards, and ask every one whom they meet, how much he will take to carry their luggage to a hotel; and if a man who just looks like a workman at home, saucily answers, "Do it yourself, don't you see that we others are also working;" they are quite amazed, and stare at the man in a state of complete bewilderment.

At the diggings, there are said to be now (autumn 1849) about 70,000 men working; the number of the inhabitants of San Francisco amounting to about 25,000. It is, however, exceedingly difficult to guess at the population of a town whose inhabitants are constantly on the move, not the thirtieth part of them having any fixed abode. As far as I could judge—and what I afterwards heard seemed to confirm my opinion—the merchants, who, at that period, sent goods to this place, had made very unsuccessful 142 speculations, unless they happened to hit upon very popular articles, or on such as were in great request for the moment. Heaps of goods were lying, unsold and without any shelter, about the streets; and had not the freight from here been so enormously dear, one might have done brilliant business by buying up goods here and taking them back to Germany. I once went to one of the sales which were held amongst those scattered goods in the open air, and I saw a whole load of Chinese tea, which had been just landed, and which was now sold at about five cents per pound.

Other articles were given away in the same manner; you might have bought there goods at any price.

Timber for building houses brought at that time an enormous price; planks had been sold as high as three hundred dollars per hundred feet; houses were dear in proportion, and scarcely to be got; everybody had sent for them, and were now waiting for their arrival. Rents were, of course, at the same extravagant rate. A single parlour in a good quarter of the town, was paid for with two hundred dollars and upwards per month; the apartments being, in many cases, only four posts with pieces of cotton stretched as walls between; yet it mattered not how the thing looked: the question was, only to get a place where people might sell their goods, and such a place was to be procured at any price.

A new branch of industry was, the taking charge of the luggage of those who were going to the diggings; and who would *not* go there? The average rent for a middle-sized trunk was one dollar; for a larger trunk, or chest, even two dollars per month.

The reckless manner in which goods were in general treated, may be seen from the following example. At first, linen was very scarce; but as every ship brought loads of it, the price of it soon was below even prime cost, work at the same time at an enormous price, and washing consequently very dear. Heaps of shirts and trousers, worn often only one week, but otherwise quite whole, were lying about the streets. People wore a shirt until it was dirty, then threw it away, and bought new ones at eight dollars per dozen.

## 143

The same happened to the merchants, who had brought here fine shirts for their own use, and who now saw that they would do much better to buy cheaper ones, than to pay an extravagant price for washing. Yet they did not wish to cast them away either: when, therefore, they had been able to collect a quantity of foul linen, they sent it off by a ship bound for China, to have it washed at a ridiculously cheap price in the Celestial Empire. For the freight, they had little or nothing to pay,

and they got their shirts back in about seven or eight months. And we civilized Europeans often grumble when our washerwoman lives at the other end of the town—ridiculous!

A sad sight are the many gambling-houses here. There are about five hundred gambling-tables in the town; in some of the larger hells, often six or eight in one room. For the present, they pay a heavy tax to government; but the thing will not end well; and unless the public authorities take the matter in hand to put down this evil, the citizens, as has several times been done in the mines, will club together and form themselves into a Court of Regulators; making short work with the gamblers.

Many interesting scenes may be witnessed in those hells. Thus, a few days ago, a Mexican (the Spaniards, in general, distinguish themselves by their coolness at play) went up to a table, and, without saying a word, staked a rather heavy purse on a card; the keeper of the table cut; the stranger has won; and the “banquier,” who thought to have lost only dollars, became pale as death when, on opening the purse, he found doubloons. He had not even money enough on his table; but his neighbours at once assisted him: the Mexican was paid, took his two money bags with him, (the gain of one minute amounted to about six thousand dollars) and went out as calm and unconcerned as he had entered. All are, however, not so successful; and hundreds and hundreds lose, in these infamous hells, within a few short hours, all that, in the sweat of their brow, they had collected for months.

It is very extraordinary that, notwithstanding the numbers of emigrants who have arrived of late, work is still at such an enormous price; general labour is very readily paid for with six dollars per day; cabinetmakers, carpenters, and blacksmiths, earn ten, twelve, and sixteen dollars daily; waiters receive from a hundred to a hundred and fifty dollars per month: commercial clerks only, are disappointed in their expectations; as the brisk competition and the fabulous house-rents compel the merchants to practise as much economy as possible. Most of the young men, therefore, soon start for the diggings, or carry on business on their own account by buying and selling by retail, with by no means inconsiderable profits.

Most interesting is the medley of nations who have crowded together here; there are, especially, a great number of Chinese, who have established several eating-houses, which belong to the best of the town. They are odd fellows, but very industrious and bustling, and show a good deal of cleverness in everything they apply themselves to. They are dressed in the costume of their own country; their tails, however, they wear laid round their head, and fastened as our women have them; and this, as well as their general dress, makes them appear so much like females, that I have several times looked after their feet. The fair ladies of China, however, seem all to have remained in their own country; until now, at least, I was never able to get sight of any one of them.

As to my own things, they were still all right on board the Talisman; that is to say, as much as remained of them: for all that had not been locked up, seemed to have, in the meanwhile, found favour in the eyes of some kind soul or other. The captain had put, at Valparaiso, another passenger in my place, without taking any care of my loose property which was lying about; so that the stranger (an American gambler, who, as I heard, fleeced the German passengers between Valparaiso and San Francisco in a most unmerciful manner) was at full liberty to help himself as he pleased. Yet I must not complain much, for Captain Meyer afterwards dealt with the whole of the ship in the very same manner.

145

After having deposited the few traps which remained to me, at the place of business of the new firm, Pajeken, Frisius, & Co., I took up my quarters, previous to starting for the diggings, at the house of Dr. Precht, who had established here a small surgery, and who began to exercise the art of healing in good earnest. The only business to which I had to attend for the next day, was to write some letters and to arrange the few things which I should want for my journey.

Many things seem very singular to the stranger who roams about the streets during the night; precaution against theft seems nowhere to be taken, and the security of property is, indeed, very remarkable. The goods, which all of them remain lying unguarded in the streets, are never touched; and the most portable trifles are often for hours exposed on the strand, or before some house door, without any one ever thinking of committing any depredation. The merchants, who, in their

small and expensive tenements, are very badly off for room, leave their merchandise before the houses; and even hampers of wine are scarcely ever in danger of being unlawfully appropriated. It is true that the penalty against theft is very severe, the offenders being flogged; or also, in more serious cases, hanged. At the diggings, where they have lynch law, even the most trifling offence of pilfering is punished with the loss of ears. The Indians are said to be little dangerous now. The safety of the person within the town is likewise perfect; arms are seen in the streets only with new-comers; with this exception, no one wears either pistol or dagger, at least not openly. At the diggings also, murder is said to have become of late quite an unheard of thing. The diggers, unless intending to go far inland, do not even arm themselves. Provisions and implements are likewise said to be as cheap in the mountains as they are here; and the immense traffic between the harbour and the interior country would make us expect as much.

These are, however, only the momentary impressions of the new country, and of the life in it, which I have here once more unfolded before the reader, in order to enable him to follow up the 146 rapid and almost magical development of the country. They are meant only as a sketch of San Francisco, not of California; yet these impressions crowded upon me in quick succession, and it was impossible to me to hit at the truth in the thousand different reports and descriptions with which I was overwhelmed on all sides.

## **CHAPTER XII.**

### **A TRIP TO THE CALIFORNIAN DIGGINGS DURING THE RAINY SEASON.**

ON the 19th of October we started from San Francisco, that is to say, we made our bargain at an office which undertakes to convey travellers to Sacramento city; and after having paid twelve dollars per head for our passage (as deck passengers of course), we were directed to get to the shore about two o'clock, where a boat of the schooner Pomona was to carry us on board. Our small band consisted of two young commercial clerks, a sailor, an apothecary, two Berlin Jews, and myself; most of us, particularly the two sons of Israel, being armed in a very effective style. As to luggage, my advice had been followed, to take as little as possible; only some linen and a woollen blanket for

each, besides the necessary ammunition and the indispensable kitchen utensils. Nor had we omitted a couple of pans for gold washing; pickaxes and mattocks we intended to procure on the spot, as, otherwise, the transport increases the price of such heavy articles beyond any proportion.

As the clock struck two—Germans are generally punctual—we stood waiting for the boat on shore, and had, for two tedious hours, an opportunity to observe the bustle and stir of this port, which had suddenly been converted, as by magic, into the emporium of the world. Everywhere people came up the steep shore, panting under their heavy loads: they were the passengers of several American ships which had just arrived; tired to death, they went to and fro, and I heard some of them calling out to each other, with a wistful shake of the head, Is this California?

A small steamer likewise had just landed, bringing people back from the diggings; two waggons were stopping below, in each of which a couple of invalids were lying, who, supported by their comrades, were conveyed up to the town.

“You are for the diggings?” I was asked, by an old sun-burnt American, who, sauntering past, stopped short and surveyed our little caravan with a sort of half-suppressed sneer, for which, it is true, he had very good reasons. “Yes, we are,” we tartly answered; but the man was not so easily put down. “A wink is as good as a nod to a blind horse,” he continued, in a somewhat off-hand way; “if you will listen to good advice, you will stay during the rainy season, which may begin within a fortnight, at San Francisco; if you go to the mountains to wash, it might very easily happen that you would be washed; do you guess?” The good man, alas, spoke to the wind; indeed, his advice was a little too late. I pointed out to him that we had already struck our bargain for the passage to Sacramento city, and even paid our fare, so that we were now obliged to take our chance. “Paid already?” he said; “and, I dare say, as deck passengers?” I merely nodded; but the old fellow, without making any farther reply, plunged his hands as deeply as possible into his breeches pockets, turned round on his heel, and, whistling with the full power of his lungs, stalked off along the street.

I did not like the manœuvre at all. The smart Yankee had evidently seen a good deal of California; but at this moment the boat arrived which was to take us in, and we had no time to indulge in

reflections. The schooner was mooring between the other ships, and very closely hemmed in by them; but, ye gods! what a sight presented itself to us on board: there was not a spot where to put one's foot; everywhere sacks of flour, casks, boards, and planks, and men, who stood closely packed between this chaos of merchandise, and seemed to look with great disgust at our arrival as a fresh nuisance. There was, however, no time for 148 reflection; we quickly jumped on board, stowed our little luggage away, and tried then to establish ourselves as well as circumstances would admit of. We did not weigh anchor until sunset, and the schooner, one of the largest which navigated the Sacramento, began slowly to move along. Our joy was not destined to be of long duration: owing to bad management, she swerved from her course, and immediately ran foul of a brig. Her sail was completely split; and before she got clear and her canvass could have been mended, the night was so far advanced, that to start before to-morrow was entirely out of the question. A very cheerful beginning of our journey! Night closed in, cold and damp, and the stay on deck was, indeed, truly melancholy. In addition to this, I was very lightly clothed; and after having had to run about from morning to evening, I shivered with cold, deriving little consolation from my blanket, with which I lay covered on a couple of flour sacks and the ledges of some chests.

About noon of the next day, we indeed set sail, but made only little way to the small town of Benitia, which is situated in the bay; and, on the day after, we even stuck fast, as that wretched schooner drew ten feet water, and we were now told that some of the most shallow spots in the Sacramento were only eight feet deep. We were, indeed, in a most lamentable plight. Strong and healthy as I had been until then, the miserable stay on board—very good accommodation for deck passengers had been promised to us on shore, with the most earnest assurances—brought on a very violent dysentery, suffering under which, I was haunted by the idea, which until then I had taken great care to ward off, what a terrible fate it would be to fall ill here in a strange country, out in the distant mountains, surrounded by none but diggers, to whom mammon is everything and man nothing.

On Monday the 22d, we lighted the schooner on a small flat boat, and then sailed towards the small town of New York, opposite Benitia, in order there to cast anchor for the night. The captain of the Pomona, named Peterson, was one of the worst specimens of the low and vulgar Yankee, who

never opened his mouth 149 without uttering some vile and disgusting imprecation, but who was immediately cowed as soon as any one firmly stood up against him. Most of his time he raved about the deck, blaspheming and heaping the filthiest abuse on his mate, who was just as quiet as the captain was brutal and ferocious. Both of them, however, were equally innocent of any knowledge of seamanship: they had accepted the situation merely because they were enormously paid for it; and unless a lucky chance helped them up the Sacramento, there was no possibility of their reaching the end of their voyage. At first we were angry at the uncouth, brutal fellow, but at last we made sport of him; and all his bullying, shouts, and commands were generally accompanied by the derisive laughter of the passengers.

But we found it no longer a laughing matter, when, on casting anchor off New York, five days after our departure from San Francisco, we had made no more way than a boat worked by oars might have done in twelve hours; and when the lighterman, which had before eased us of part of our freight, returned, and wanted to put all the cargo back on board our vessel. The schooner was thereby at all events again brought to draw her ten feet; and how should we get over the other shoals?

We Germans at first refused to allow the goods to be taken on board again; but as we saw that the others did not mind it, and that, at any rate, they would not support us, we determined to let them shift for themselves, and assured the captain that we would not offer the least opposition to his loading the vessel as heavily as he liked, on condition of his releasing us from our contract by paying back part of the passage-money. To this proposal he most readily agreed: five of the twelve dollars which we had paid as our fare to Sacramento city, were refunded to each of us; and we now hired the jolly-boat of the "Sabine," an American vessel, which was idly mooring there, and whose captain himself undertook to convey us to Sacramento for ten dollars per head.

The Sabine was one of that numerous class of American vessels which were considered to have earned their price of purchase by barely reaching San Francisco. All that was made by them 150 besides, would then be as much profit. Nearly in all the towns of the eastern states, companies had been formed, of people, acquaintances and strangers, clubbing together for the purchase of old and

new ships, which were to carry them to San Francisco. Two hundred persons generally formed into one company, each paying his share of the purchase money, which gave him the right of a passage, the company making arrangements, as cheaply as possible, with regard to the provisions. All the other expenses were defrayed by the freight, which sometimes was taken to the general account, and sometimes also let to individuals at current prices. Anything that floated on the water, and had rudder and sail; the most worn-out and weather-beaten craft, were pressed into this service. Many of these fragile barks, unable with their rotten hulks to struggle against the fury of the winds and the waves, went down with their luckless passengers, thousands of whom found a grave in the deep, even before having rounded Cape Horn; but many also, to the amazement of their sellers, reached the end of their voyage, where, abandoned by their owners and their crews, they were lying on the strand, like the bodies of the slain on the battle-field.

The Sabine had been purchased at New York by such a company; and the captain, a jolly, fat little fellow, with good-natured blue eyes and a fine head of blond hair, who worked the boat himself, soon told us the whole of her story. The owners and passengers of the vessel had taken with them the greater part of their provisions, to go on a reconnoitring expedition to the mountains: if they there went on well, or if they should want the remainder, they would come and fetch them; and he had bound himself to remain on board with three of his crew. These, however, having likewise run away, the vessel, during his absence, lay there without a soul to guard her. He was himself most heartily tired of this dull life, and longingly waited for the time when the remainder of the stores would be fetched, as he would then, like the rest, make haste for the diggings.

Before entering the Sacramento river, we had the satisfaction 151 of passing the Pomona, which stuck fast like a tree on the sand of the bar; the passengers standing on the deck, and looking, not without envy, at our small fast boat, as it swiftly glided by. The captain was of course abusing the mate, and the last that we heard from him was a roar to take down “that blessed mainsail,” accompanied by a most comprehensive form of anathema, which he generously addressed to all of us then and there present.

In the evening we encamped on shore, some way up the river, in the neighbourhood of some Indian wigwams; and the following afternoon, about three, we came in sight of Suttersville, probably four miles below Sacramento city. The river has here considerable breadth, and being less endangered by “snags” (trunks of trees thrown into the water) than the great rivers of the Atlantic states, is sure to become, some time or other, a very important highway for the navigation of these parts. Even larger vessels—barks, brigs, and ships—go already as far up as Sacramento city: and we met several small steamers, which, laden with passengers, made the journey from that place to San Francisco in thirty-six hours.

A few snags would, however, now and then rise above the water; and we had just passed one, when another suspicious, dark-looking object in the midst of the river attracted our attention. The captain then said that, of late, several barrels, filled with the best brandy, had been picked up just hereabout; and that the thing in front looked much rather like a brandy keg than a snag. I do not know why, at the first sight of it, I could not help remembering an incident which happened to me on the Rio Roxo, in North America; where, gliding down the river in a canoe, I descried the corpse of a murdered man, which, quietly and dismally, was carried along by the rapid, with its pierced back rising above the surface. Having this thought on my mind, I kept a sharp look-out on what was said to be a brandy keg, and I shuddered as also this time I saw a dead body before me. My cry startled the captain at the helm, who allowed the boat swiftly to run past; but immediately after turned her bow round towards the corpse, and stopped, irresolute as to what he was to do in the case.

152

The law requires every one who finds a dead body, immediately to give information of the fact. If I am not mistaken, a small reward may be claimed by the informant; but as there are a great many irksome formalities to be gone through, and we were not even provided with a rope which we might have slung round the body, we let it float quietly down the river, and resolved to give information in the small town of Suttersville, which is about half a mile English higher up the river; but we

also pointed it out to another boat which we met; and we reached Sacramento city about four in the afternoon.

This thriving place, called a city only by courtesy, cannot be seen at all from the river, notwithstanding the flat banks, as the trees on the shore have been left standing; yet we beheld a great many vessels of every description, exclusively American ones, as no other flag is admitted; and there were also plenty of tents and small wooden dwellings, the former in great majority, scattered over a wide open space which extended before our eyes. Everywhere carriages with newly arrived emigrants were stopping near them, and groups of men lay on the ground; even women were bustling to and fro—a sight very rarely met with in California, and which gave to the scene a domestic, comfortable aspect.

The places under the trees being all of them occupied, we had to choose rather an open spot for our encampment; and I wrapped myself closely up in my blanket, by no means easy concerning the state of my health. My dysentery became more and more violent, and I was so faint as to be scarcely able to keep on my legs; but, on the other hand, I knew too well that this was neither the place nor the time for being sick, and thus, according to the general experience, that, if people must do a thing, they will do it, I got also through this difficulty.

We did not, however, wish by any means to remain longer at Sacramento city than was absolutely necessary in order to procure what was needful for our journey, and, first of all, a mule for carrying the provisions and part of our luggage. I went, therefore, on the next morning, with one of our companions, to that part 153 of the town where, as we had been told, a sale of all sorts of things, but especially of horses and mules, took place every morning after ten. We did not, however, buy a beast on that day, as the prices were too high, and we hoped to meet with a better bargain on the day following. And we really got a very good mule for 75 dollars. Yet it was too late to set out that day: we, therefore, employed the remaining time in making all the other necessary preparations, buying provisions and a pack-saddle, and getting ready as well as we could to start early the next morning.

On Sunday, the 27th, we at last set out, forming a very strange-looking procession, with the rather heavily laden mule in our middle. It was our intention to seek the northernmost diggings; and in choosing our way, we relied, perhaps too incautiously, on the directions of some Germans settled there for several years, who had assured us that, first of all, we should have to go over to "Suttersmill," from which it would be easy for us to reach all the other diggings. Thither, then, we directed our course; and, after a march of scarcely an hour, we passed the famous place, which is so well known to newspaper readers as Sutter's Fort.

It is very different now to what it was only a year ago, when it formed, as it were, a sort of centre of north Californian civilization, and when Indian hordes were encamped round to barter with the "pale faces." Captain Sutter has even entirely given up the place, and let it to other people; only the name has remained, and the centre is formed, as usual in civilized California, by a bar.

Our road, after having passed the fort, led up the banks of the American Fork, a large fine river. Close to the shore only there were trees and shrubs, the rest being a desolate, dusty, and sandy plain, scorched by the fierce rays of the sun, with but a few oaks scattered here and there. Not being in good walking trim, we felt very tired at the end of our first day's march, although it had been a very short one; I, in particular, was completely knocked up, being still very weak. Yet I had pretty well recovered from my attack; having followed the advice of an old American, who prescribed a strong dose of sweet oil and opium for me. The 154 former article I bought at Sacramento, at the rate of three dollars a bottle; the other, I carried with me: and already, after the second dose, I was completely cured. We encamped close to the banks of the river; and slept sweetly among the howl of the numerous small prairie wolves, which, several times during the night, approached very near where we were lying.

On the next morning, rather early, we reached the "Ten Mile House," at a distance of ten miles from Sacramento, whence it has its name; and here, to our not very agreeable surprise, we were told, that, if we were really bound for the northern diggings, we had taken a wrong road. If we adhered to our first plan, of visiting the northern mines, nothing remained for us but to return by the way we had come, and to cross the American Fork about a mile on this side of Sutter's Fort, from whence

we might then take the correct course. Thus we were, on the evening of this day again, within two miles and a half from Sacramento, encamped under a shady oak on the other side of the Fork.

On this day, already one of our companions became faithless to us. He was one of the two young clerks, who at first had made a great boast of his strength and power of endurance; but it seemed that the heat and toil of the day had been too much for him; and as he heard that the next day would even be more fatiguing, owing to the want of water, he deemed it best to take French leave, falling in the rear behind the first bush; after which he was seen no more.

I must, however, give here to the reader a description of our small band—a stranger medley of people than had ever left even San Francisco. There had been seven of us before our friend left us. Of the remaining six, I have, first of all, to mention two brothers, whom I shall call Leopold and Philip Meyer; the former a commercial clerk, and the latter a locksmith—Israelites, from Berlin. The elder Meyer, Leopold, wore a short jacket, rather tight trousers, high jack-boots, and a blueish-grey cap; which costume was completed by a short hanger, which, however, seemed rather intended to be ornamental than useful. Over his right shoulder he had slung a large double bag, stuffed with all sorts of articles of dress and of stores; and as one of the frying-pans on the back of our sumpter had continually knocked, with a disagreeable noise, against the cauldron, he snatched it up, and carried it in his hand; so that, in combination with his hanger, it rather looked like a shield than like a peaceable kitchen utensil.

The younger Meyer wore a sort of grey traveller's cap, with a double peak, folding up in front and behind; a leathern girdle, with a pistol in it; a powder flask; a German single-barrelled rifle; a double bag, of white tick; his trousers were tucked up; his coat he had laid on the mule's back, preferring to walk in his shirt sleeves.

The third was a small apothecary, named Kunitz, with a green square Polish cap trimmed with fur; very red beard; small black knapsack on his back, which contained, besides the kitchen utensils, all that he possessed in this world; a brown short coat, grey summer trousers, boots, and a large cudgel in his hand.

Hühne, the fourth of our companions, was a powerful young fellow, of about twenty years of age; with a green hunter's cap, and yellow woollen blouse; trousers of the same colour, and boots; on his shoulders he carried a white double bag, a rolled-up blanket, and a rifle gun.

The fifth was a young sailor; who, after having run away from the Reform, had joined us at San Francisco; a quiet, good-tempered lad, whom I soon began to like. He was, of course, dressed as a seaman, with white ducks, a woollen shirt, and a blue cap; shoes and stockings; a double-barrelled gun slung over his back, and a powder-flask by his side. Luggage he had none, except one blanket and a couple of shirts; as, in his flight, he had been obliged to leave everything on board.

I myself wore a grey Glengary cap, my old American leathern hunting shirt, grey trousers, and high jack-boots; a game-bag; cutlass, and my rifle gun; as also a small sandwich case, containing some medicines, slung over my shoulder.

Such were our outward men; and, until then, we had marched 156 on, briskly and in good spirits, through the dust and the heat of the road; but, in the course of the last days, the elder of the two brothers Meyer had been attacked by a violent toothache; against which even my creosote was of no avail. It at last ended in a swollen cheek, such as I never saw before or since: it looked like a whole dozen of cheeks laid one upon another, like pancakes; and I should never have thought the human face capable of being expanded to such a degree.

Toothache is a very whimsical complaint; and whoever has suffered with it, especially in several teeth, is well aware how different the remedies are by which it may be cured, or at least mitigated. Some apply cold water to stifle the pain; whilst the same remedy would drive others mad. With most persons salt increases the pain; but I saw, only laterly, a patient filling his hollow tooth with a dose of it, and thereby assuaging the agony. Many are compelled to keep their head upright; whereas others enforce a short respite of their sufferings by stooping forward, or even by standing on their head.

Such a stubborn tooth was that of Meyer; even the most agonizing pain would cease after his having stood for half a minute on his head; and sorry as all of us were for his distress, yet he often exhibited postures and grimaces too ludicrous not to excite our merriment.

We were just marching through one of the Indian villages with which this neighbourhood abounds, when Meyer was suddenly seized with one of his violent attacks. Without thinking where he was, he instinctively resorted to the only remedy which he knew to be of any avail against his insidious foe, by executing the following *tableau vivant*. He at once supported himself with both hands on the ground, lowering his head as much as he could; and, at the same time, partly for the sake of equilibrium and partly to get the upper part of his body lower down to the ground, raising his right leg high aloft. As he performed this attitude, his cap fell from his head, his load glided from his shoulders, and only the hanger, the hilt of which was sticking fast in the folds of his blouse, rose straight and stiff; enhancing thereby the ludicrousness of the whole figure.

The amazement of the Indians may be imagined. In the first moment, a couple of women, who were sitting on the ground not far off, shelling acorns, jumped up and quickly slipped away into their huts; and the men, who gravely and solemnly reposed on the vaulted roofs of their cabins, likewise started up, and looked with wonderment, and even consternation, at the stranger who presented himself to them in such an odd, and, for ought that they knew, hostile position. And, indeed, his red and distended face, which peeped out between his arms, close to the ground, was by no means calculated to dispel their suspicions. Only when we were no longer able, notwithstanding our sympathy with the poor fellow, to suppress our laughter, they seemed to enter into the fun of the thing; and, whether they thought that Meyer was performing these antics solely for their own special amusement, or whether they were really tickled by his attitudes, they burst into a horse-laugh; and the women peeped out in silent astonishment from their cavern-like dwellings. Meyer now, indeed, got up, but by no means in a mood to fall in with any exhibition of humour. He only turned round towards the uproarious savages; and after having darted a wrathful look at them, he sorrowfully continued his journey.

On the same evening we crossed the Feather River by the lower ford, and encamped on the opposite bank. The river was here of considerable breadth, yet we were still able to wade through it. During night it rained again, and the sky began to lower; yet the sun rose bright enough; only the colouring and the shape of the single clouds became more and more suspicious.

We had on that day a march of thirty miles; as we did not find any flowing water, and only very little wood, all the way. At nine o'clock the sky darkened, and at half-past ten it began to rain—at first slightly, and then gradually more and more heavily. To stop for a rest was entirely out of the question; there was not even one tree in the whole wide plain under which we might have found shelter. Forward, was therefore the order of the day; and in the evening, just about dusk, we at last reached the “Bute Creek,” and the Rancho, or, as the Americans call it, the Range, of a certain Niels. Even if our travelling chest had been in a better condition than it really was—the six of us possessing, besides the provisions, which might last about ten days, a joint stock of four dollars—we could not have found quarters within the very limited premises of the people in the Rancho. All had sought shelter from the rain in-doors; only the forepart of an old block-house, with a roof of reeds, was but partly occupied by another set of travellers, just as wet as ourselves. And there we sought refuge; only too happy to have found, for the night at least, some sort of shelter, without being altogether exposed to the torrents of rain lashed by the gusts of wind. At the fire of the Americans we were at least able to boil some coffee, and to cook something for supper. And we slept during the night, although not dry; for our blankets were saturated with the rain, which also now came down through the light roof; yet at least somewhat protected from the weather.

The next morning it looked much more cheerful; but the small river, the so-called Bute Creek, was so much swollen during the night, that, to cross it, we should have been obliged to swim. We were therefore ourselves glad to have an excuse for resting one day, to dry our blankets and clothes.

On Sunday, the 4th of November, we intended to start with the dawn of day; but here our mule played us a trick: when, in the morning, we wanted to harness and pack it, it was gone. We now set out in different directions, and I at last found it about one mile from our encampment; but only when the day was already too much advanced to think of starting. Thus we were obliged to pass

a third night in these by no means agreeable quarters, during which the rain again began to fall in torrents; so that, unless we wished to be soaked at the very outset, we could not think of taking our departure until the next morning.

Our provisions already began to dwindle most alarmingly; our 159 stock of salt was quite exhausted, and we had to buy several pounds of it at half a dollar per pound. On the whole, the diggings price began here, and gave us an idea of the expense which we should be put to in the mountains for our provisions. Flour, when we arrived at Niels', was fifty cents the pound; as on that day the rain made the roads impracticable, the price at once increased by fifty per cent. Fresh beef was fifty, pork seventy-five cents the pound. Besides this, nothing was to be got, except brandy at three dollars the bottle, or fifty cents the glass.

Here we also met a great number of people from the different diggings, who, like us, had been surprised by the rain on their road, and were now waiting for better weather. The information which we gathered from them, concerning the place where we had intended to go, was so discouraging, that we at once gave up the idea of continuing our journey in that direction. On the other hand, the Feather River was very strongly recommended, even by people who were themselves working there, and whose advice, therefore, was thoroughly disinterested: we should be there high enough in the mountains; and yet, if we were not successful, we still remained within reach of the civilized world.

To get to the higher branches of the Feather River—near the main stream, which traverses the flat country, there are no diggings, but only in the mountains—we had to retrace part of our way towards a small settlement, known by the name of Long's Store. From thence we were to ascend along the banks of the river as far as we liked, and might settle wherever we found a place that suited us. Yet the rain continued unabated all Monday and Tuesday, and only on the afternoon of Wednesday the weather sufficiently cleared up for us to think of departure.

But now, first of all, our mule, whose four legs had been tethered before it was turned out to graze, was to be sought and caught; and, lest we might lose too much time in doing it, our party divided

in different directions to look after it. Niels' Range was situated in a small grove of very fine oaks, surrounded by a beautiful glade, on which all the beasts were mostly grazing; so 160 that it was scarcely possible to miss the place. It was not long before I found the mule and brought it back to the camp; some time after, the others also returned; only the younger Meyer was still missing, who, as well as his brother, had always had a particular knack of losing his way in a most extraordinary manner. As, at last, darkness set in without his making his appearance, we several times fired our pistols, and shouted, and gave other noisy signals. Yet all was in vain: he came not; and, notwithstanding the very trifling distance, we could not but surmise that he had found it possible again to go astray.

And such was really the case: next morning, before dawn, he made his appearance, wet through, tired to death, and half-starved with hunger and cold. Yet he had, last night, not gone farther than half a mile; but, unable to find his way back, had got into marshy ground, and passed the whole night running round a tree, as the only dry spot, to keep himself at least a little warm. In the morning, some drovers who chanced to pass there had put him right.

On Wednesday morning, when the rain was still pouring, and the way seemed almost impassable, two waggons with emigrants came along the road, having crossed the Rocky Mountains from the United States. Owing to an accident which had happened to their cattle, these poor people had fallen in the rear of the caravan with which they had started from Missouri, and had evidently suffered great distress on their journey. I particularly pitied the poor children (the mother lay sick in the waggon), who, wet to the skin in their thin worn-out dresses, shivering with cold, had to wade through mud and water behind the vehicle, as the two last remaining bullocks were scarcely able to drag the waggon with its load along.

The man who drove the waggon made the bullocks stop near our encampment, to go to the nearest house, in order there to inquire about the way, but very likely also to get (never mind the price) a glass of brandy, for he looked cold and uncomfortable enough; and the little ones came to our fire to warm themselves. 161 They were a boy of about eleven, a girl of nine, and another of perhaps

seven years; and as, fortunately, we had boiling water at the fire, I in all haste made a cup of coffee for them, from which they seemed to thaw a little.

As I expressed my pity on their distressed state, an American, who had likewise approached the fire, expressed himself, that this was by no means anything unusual for these children, who had scarcely fared better at home, where, in weather just as bad, and over roads not much better, they had often four or five miles to walk to school.

“But in the evening, when we came home, mother put warm and dry clothes on us;” the youngest child, the little girl, suddenly interrupted him; “and near the fireplace was a warm meal and hot coffee for us.”

At the remembrance of the comfort and peace left behind, and perhaps also of the school itself, the poor little thing had a couple of glistening tears starting into its large dark eyes; but they did not fall, as the child bravely swallowed her sorrow, and only hung her little head, whilst stretching out her cold wet hands before the blazing fire.

And for vile gold alone the man had left his home: not a country where he had to toil from day to day for a scanty livelihood, as is the hard lot of the poor workman in the over-populated European states; but a free, happy fatherland, which, if he only chose honestly to exert himself, offered to him everything in abundance; and now he had to bear, with his family, with a wife and children, fatigues under which thousands of men had succumbed. If the mother, who was now lying ill in the waggon, should die, how could he ever again look his children in the face!

On Thursday morning, the weather having in the meanwhile cleared up, we started about ten o'clock. The way from here through the plain, back to the Feather River, was awful: the rain having not only filled all the hollows, so that several times we had to wade up to the girdle in water; but also the places 162 which were not under water, were swamped with a sticky mud, which we could scarcely get off from our boots. We spent the greater part of the day in getting over eight miles, and

reached, in the evening, the so-called “Dry River,” which, however, at present was anything but dry.

Having heard already, at Niel's Range, that, not far from our encampment, there were great numbers of antelopes, I set out before morning, with the young sailor, in the direction of the mountains, as much for the useful purpose of filling our larder, as for the pleasure of the sport. We, indeed, found whole herds of these elegant animals; but neither my companion nor myself got a shot at them, the only game I laid low being a prairie wolf.

As, owing to the deplorable condition of the roads, which made it all but impossible for provision waggons to get up to the mountains, every necessary of life was rapidly rising in price; we looked—not without alarm—on our stock of money, which now, after the purchase of some salt and fresh meat, had been reduced to two dollars and a half for six men; and yet there was every reason to fear that the dearth would still increase, as the rainy season had set in much earlier than usual.

At nightfall we reached Long's Store, or, at least, the Feather River opposite that place. What, until then, I had imagined to be only a single shop, was in reality a little town, built of canvass, on a hill. Wherever the eye wandered, on all the slopes and in all the ravines close to the edge of the river, tents were pitched, from which, right and left, the camp fires were blazing forth. It was a splendid sight, which we enjoyed so much the more, as here for the first time we really approached the Californian diggings, and were near the long yearned-for fountainhead of Mammon's pet metal.

Our companions, who were by no means very expert in gipsying, had picked out the steepest spot on the whole shore. All our provisions were lying at the bottom of a small ravine, which, if any heavy rain fell, could not but be swamped; and, to crown our misfortune, the whole stock of firewood for the night consisted 163 of a couple of green branches. In the meanwhile, it had become pitch dark; and as, in the neighbourhood of such a considerable encampment, the nearest and most handy wood was, of course, already taken away, we made no attempt to search in the dark for any more fuel. Thus, it took us about an hour before we had got our scanty supper ready, but only two minutes to eat it; after which, we rolled ourselves up in our blankets, every one selecting for himself

as level a place as he could find anywhere about the hill; for, as to lying down where the brothers Meyer and Kunitz had first intended to pitch our camp, that was an absolute impossibility. Scarcely had we retired to rest, when the sluices of heaven again opened. The green wood, of course, would not light under such circumstances; we therefore could not, next morning, even think of boiling our coffee. Wet to the skin, with empty stomachs, shivering and peevish, we set out on our road. This was our first night and morning at the diggings.

Our next look-out was how to get over the water; we had heard before that there was a ferry on the Feather River, which we now set out to seek. The ferry-boat, however, consisted, simply and primitively, in the well caulked and pitched body of an old carriage; in which, at the most, four of us, and those only with great danger, could cross: we were therefore obliged to divide our forces. The first batch having crossed, I drove the mule into the water, which, of its own accord, swam over very deftly; after which we others followed; but we were very nearly wrecked, for we had scarcely reached the middle of the river, when our crazy vessel sprung a leak. It filled so quickly, that, with great difficulty, we contrived to return to the shore which we had just left. Here we baled the water out, and after having found the havoc, stopped up the hole; but our Charon assured us that, had our “clipper” been one minute longer in the water, we must have sunk.

Our second attempt to cross having been more successful, we paid our ferryman the very reasonable price of a quarter of a dollar per head, and now, once more in our lives, kept, 164 “*e pluribus unum*,” one dollar as the joint property of six men. A very promising prospect indeed! But we were now at the diggings, and we had provisions for some days more: what reason had we for despairing beforehand of our good luck?

The rain, in the meanwhile, continued to pour down with unabated force; and we climbed—not, indeed, in the very best of humours—up the steep banks of the river, on which several tents were sticking, just as if they had been glued to it. We had not, however, until now, seen any one at work in the river; the rain seemed to have driven all to their tents. At the top of the hill we found an old Pennsylvanian, who at once addressed us as Germans, and gave us some rather interesting information concerning the diggings. Most of the diggers, he said, had left on account of the rainy

season; those only had remained who had sufficient provisions for getting through the winter. Here, on the Feather River, was one of the best places, and he was able quite easily to wash one ounce a day.

He showed us some gold dust which his daughter, a girl of about fourteen years, had washed the day before in about three hours; it might be worth, probably, six or eight dollars. He intended likewise to go somewhat higher up the river, until he found good timber for building a house; but as the roads were completely swamped by the rain, he waited for some better weather. He advised us to do the same. About twelve or sixteen miles higher up, there was a kind of cedar or arbor vitæ, the timber of which was easy to cut and split, and very well adapted for building-purposes. "And gold?" we asked. "Plenty of it, if you only know how to find the right places," was his answer. As, above all things, we longed for the shelter of a roof, under which we might at least sleep dry; and as our pretensions had already sunk considerably, we were not long before we fell in with the views of our experienced adviser.

On that day the rain scarcely ceased, and we had, about midday, to make a fire in the midst of its pelting torrents, only to get some warm morsel. In the evening we reached another place 165 where gold was washed. These places are generally called after the person who has first established near it a shop, or so-called store; and here also there were about fifty tents, scattered in picturesque confusion on the slopes of the hills. Down near the river, on a so-called bar—that is to say, on a spot which the river only reached at high water—a number of men were engaged in gold washing, which I here saw for the first time.

An American here came to us, and what he told us was confirmed by several others: namely, that, on account of the late rains, we should not be able to pass the mountain roads, especially with our heavy-laden mule; and that therefore we had better stop here. He also offered to buy of us our mule, although, as he said, he had no particular use for it. But I had not been so long among Yankees to so little purpose, as not to know what to make of this friendly advice. I thanked the good man for his disinterested sympathy, but, at the same time, took good care to inquire of another, who did *not* wish to buy a mule, for the right way; after which we proceeded, by roads which certainly were

muddy and very slippery, but practicable, towards the upper district of the Feather River. The home of the cedar was the goal of our journey, and, before evening closed in, we saw its high majestic stems covering the slopes of the hills. We encamped on the banks of the Feather River; and on the next morning, marching some miles higher up the river, we looked out for a suitable spot where to build our humble cabin.

166

### **CHAPTER XIII.**

#### **DRAWBACKS.**

I WILL now introduce the reader into the midst of the so-called diggings, and he may then judge for himself whether he would like a life such as that which we led there.

This part of the Feather River, according to all appearances, has been but little rummaged by diggers: there are vast tracts scarcely ever touched by pickaxe or mattock; but, on the other hand, the place being very much out of the way, provisions cannot so easily be conveyed there as to the others. Nor was it long before we became acquainted with the true digging prices of every necessary of life.

Here it soon became evident that we were in a country where there was an abundance of timber. Not one tent was pitched; everywhere the diggers lived in small block houses covered with good planks, or were busily engaged in erecting them. We saw, as yet, no one occupying himself with gold washing. However, we found there a place which seemed to us particularly fitted to settle on, especially as, at a distance of about half a mile, a provision store was said to be in course of erection. Immediately on our getting down into the valley, we inquired after the price of provisions at a small store, which had for some time been established there. The price of wheaten flour was three quarters of a dollar per pound, and one dollar for a pound of salt pork. They had also just killed a bullock; and charged half a dollar per pound for meat with bones, and three quarters of a dollar for steak. Beside this, and salt at one dollar per pound, they had nothing whatever in

their shop, and did not even care much to sell what they had. The nearest store had not yet any provisions, but expected them as soon as the weather would permit their being conveyed.

Our first look-out was to get a so-called cradle for gold 167 washing, for, to do the work with a pan is by far too troublesome and tedious an operation. Chance favoured us in this respect; as, during a short excursion which some of us made up the river, we fell in with a Norwegian and an American, who were returning to Sacramento city, and who expressed themselves willing to exchange their cradle, which was in tolerable condition—as also some provisions, a cauldron, a mattock, a pickaxe, a washing-pail, and a crowbar—for our mule. Now, as we were arrived at our destination, the animal would have only given us the trouble of watching it, and might perhaps after all have run away (a trick which it really played to the Norwegian on the second day): we therefore readily agreed to the bargain, and received for it—reckoning according to diggings prices—about seventy dollars value. The two people had also to teach us the use of the cradle, and therefore washed, in our presence, a small quantity of earth which had been previously collected.

On this day we were full of cheerful hopes, and built the most magnificent castles in the air: we had seen, with our own eyes, gold obtained; we had overcome immense difficulties to reach this place; and there seemed now to be a prospect of arriving, if only a little favoured by fortune, at a happy result. Yet the next day, already, was destined to lower our expectations, and to damp our perhaps somewhat too sanguine hopes; so that some of our plans were considerably shaken.

The first warning of impending calamities was given us, by the reduced state of our stock of provisions: the young man who generally acted as our cook, suddenly intimated to us that a new supply was to be procured without delay, if we did not wish, one fine morning, to be without breakfast; and the prices which we here had to pay, indeed justified such an apprehension. The weather had, during the night, changed considerably for the worse; and at nine o'clock rain began to fall, which at first was but very slight, but which became more and more heavy during the day. What if it were the real beginning of the rainy season?

On our entering this valley, we had spent our last dollar for 168 some fresh meat; the flour which we had got in exchange for the mule, was likewise soon despatched. We had therefore, first of all things, to think of earning money in order to provide for our wants.

We, therefore, lost no time in beginning our operations, at the spot where the people who sold us the machine had already dug up the ground. At the same time, however, it was also necessary that a shelter should be procured, without which, if the weather continued as wretched as it was then, we should have had to look forward to a most miserable existence; even disease must have been the necessary consequence of such a life. Yet I was the only one, of all the six, expert in the use of the hatchet; and therefore the carpenter-work—which was certainly more suited to my taste than digging—fell naturally to my lot.

I have here to mention an incident, which was not particularly calculated to afford me great pleasure. We had, until then, heard so much of the security of property in California, that we never thought of guarding against thieves. But, just about the Feather River, a host of Indians were swarming; and one morning I found, to my dismay, that my rifle gun, which I had missed on the evening before, but which I then thought mislaid in the dark, and besides, one of our small hatchets, were gone, very likely by the agency of one of those copper-coloured rogues. There was no possibility of following his track through the stony hills; yet, for all that, I did not give up the rifle as lost, and I cherished a hope, that I should one day meet the thief in the mountains, when certainly he would have to expect little mercy.

On that evening the gold washers returned from their “placer,” which was but little distant from our camp, wet to the skin and very tired; and they brought home so little gold, that it scarcely sufficed to buy a couple of pounds of meal. With that little, however, one of us had immediately to set out to fetch some wheaten flour, the price of which, in consequence of the rain of to-day, had already risen to one dollar per pound, whilst salt port was now one dollar and a quarter.

On the following day, the 15th of November, the same thing was repeated, only in a worse form. The washers had found nothing, or at least only a few dollars' worth; the gusts of rain had continued with scarcely any interruption, and the price of flour, and also that of salt pork, had again advanced one quarter of a dollar. My carpenter-work was going on just as unsuccessfully; the first tree which I had felled being full of knots within, and, therefore, unfit to be split in planks; so that I had to cut down a second. Yet we were still wanting the most indispensable instrument for splitting thin planks, a so-called "froe;" and although I had wasted two afternoons in looking out for one amongst the neighbours, I had not succeeded, and only got the promise that, on the next day, I should for a short time have the loan of one of those instruments, which was just then in use.

Friday morning, the rain having all the time continued to pour down in torrents, I really got the tool, and had the young sailor to assist me, in order to have the sooner done with it. But we had scarcely split twenty or thirty planks, when an American came up to us and told us that the "froe" was his property, and not that of the people from whom I had borrowed it; and that he wanted it very badly himself, as he was expecting, to-morrow morning, his mother and sister, for whom he had still to prepare a shelter. Against this nothing could be said, and the man, besides, was only claiming his own; but it was a sad blow to us, to remain exposed to the full force of these swamping rains, without one dry spot on which to stretch and warm our weary limbs. Our stock of provisions, likewise, got very low; and, to increase only a little our scanty rations of bread, we mixed the flour with the red and well-flavoured berries growing there. If the gold washers did not bring home to-day a respectable picking, we should be in a very sad plight.

As, without the instrument, which was promised to me only for the second day, I could do no carpenter-work, I determined for once to go and dig myself near the river; possibly I might stumble on a good place, which would put an end to all our difficulties. Yet 170 this hope also remained unfulfilled; in vain I worked for two hours under a pelting shower: my companion and I, indeed, hit upon a layer of boulders at about two and a half feet below the surface; but the gold presented itself here so sparingly, so thinly scattered, and in such tiny scales, that it would never have repaid the trouble of the work, even if the rain had not compelled us to desist. We were just squatting down

near the fire in our wet blankets, when the others also returned, and brought back, as the only fruit of a day's labour, about two dollars worth of gold. In this way we could not live any longer; we could not remain here without provisions. The one of our fellow-diggers whom we had sent to the store, returned with a small quantity of flour, and assured us that the dealer had seemed scarcely inclined to let him have the little which remained to him at one and a half dollar per pound; other provisions could not be procured in the present state of the roads: what should we do?

The answer to the question was soon found, as, for three days already, several Americans had shown us practically what was to be done under such circumstances: They packed up their traps on their backs; took the pickaxe and mattock in their hands, and left, as speedily as they could, a spot where, as they said, a famine must necessarily set in, if all of them were to remain. On the same evening I had a conversation with an old American, who likewise was going to leave the Feather River, and who assured me that there were only two classes of people in this part of the country: those who had a sufficient store of provisions and a good waterproof house to get through the rainy season; and those who had no provisions, and who were obliged to leave, as in a very short time it would be entirely impossible to buy any; and even if any one would give him some on credit, with the condition of paying them again in a certain time in kind, he would not, as an honest man, accept it, as he was quite sure he would not be able to keep his word.

Thus it was clear, that, even with a stock of provisions, a longer stay at the diggings, through the rainy season, would at 171 all events be unprofitable; and who would have led the life of a dog in the mountains for nothing? But the retreat was much more easily to be resolved on than executed: to walk back through all the mire and the swampy grounds, through swollen rivers and inundated plains, was indeed no trifle; and as to building a canoe, in which to follow the course of the river, we had, in the first place, no provisions to live upon during the time of its construction; and, moreover, the stream was so rapid, and the small brook so completely studded with rocks, that, even if we had had a canoe, there was but a very poor chance of our getting on safely.

And should I leave my rifle gun behind? for, if I had once left this neighbourhood, every hope of getting it again was lost! Yet I had troubles enough for the moment, without this additional care;

and I resolved, at last, to spend one day in ranging about the mountains for game. If there was any, we might very well live on it; if there was none, the sooner we were off the better.

I borrowed a rifle of young Meyer, and the very first day when the weather was at all fair, I went out into the mountains. I will not here tire the patience of the reader with a description of a most uninteresting and useless chase, nor are words sufficient to give him an idea of the sublime beauty of the scenery; the only remarkable incident was, a little adventure with some Indians whom I had espied from a distance, and with one of whom I thought I perceived my darling rifle. I waylaid them; but when they were brought to bay, I found out that it was a fowling-piece, which the copper-coloured thief must have stolen from some other luckless digger.

When, after dusk, I arrived, tired and hungry, at the encampment, after having had nothing to eat during the whole day, except the red mountain berries growing in the woods, I met with a very agreeable surprise: against a tree, where I laid down my blanket, I saw my rifle gun leaning; and I now heard that a young American had brought it in that morning. He had taken it from an Indian, who came to sell it at the encampments. The 172 red-skinned rogue had not been able to fire it off, because he did not know how to move the somewhat rusty guard.

My companions were in very low spirits, and, indeed, a more melancholy plight than ours could scarcely be imagined: if we remained here, starvation; if we returned, a most dreadful march; and yet the latter alternative seemed to us preferable. Our determination was therefore speedily taken, and the very next morning appointed for our departure.

## **CHAPTER XIV.**

### **RETURN TO SACRAMENTO CITY.**

ON the 18th of November, the morning being rather fair, we set out, laden with all sorts of washing, cooking, and other utensils; and on the same evening we fell in with a dealer, who bought from us our mattocks, pickaxes, hatchets, pans, and everything else that we could dispense with. He,

indeed, paid us a very small price; but it was at least ready money, and we thus not only filled our exchequer again, but also were relieved of a considerable burden.

That night, however, we had once more to taste the full measure of the joy of a digger's life. At about ten o'clock it began to rain; and as it did not cease once during the whole night, we were of course wet to the skin. On the next morning we had to get up amidst a deluge of rain, and to cook our breakfast, to pack, and start, under the pitiless showers, which continued the whole of the first six miles.

At night we encamped on comparatively dry ground, in the neighbourhood of Long's Store; but a real shelter we did not find until the following evening, in the shape of a sort of mud cabin close to the banks of the Feather River, and inhabited by a German, Charles Röther. Our host had lived for several years in California, and made a considerable fortune during the latter years. Yet he was living in as miserable a hovel as the poorest Spaniard: 173 he was, however, a bachelor, which may be pleaded in his excuse. We made our supper of some ship's biscuit and salt pork, sold to us by Mr. Röther at one dollar per pound; which, just coming from the mountains, we looked upon as a very reasonable price. We also enjoyed, that night, a luxury which we had not known for a very long time; yet the reader must not think of truffles and champagne, nor of a soft couch, or warm comfortable clothing: it was only the happiness, whilst we lay on the floor, wrapped up in our blankets, to hear the rain pattering against the roof, whilst we were ourselves, for once, sheltered from it. This was, indeed, a delightful feeling; but we had to make up for it on the following day.

We set out early in the morning, having been told that we should have to cross over a river very likely swollen at present with the rain; and that the sooner we did it the better it would be, as, of course, the water was continually rising.

After a march of about an hour, we reached the spot, but looked in vain for the trunk of a fallen tree, on which, as we had been told, we might cross dry. There was, indeed, an oak lying in the middle, from one islet of the swollen river to the other; but to reach even that, we had to wade up to the girdle in the cold water, the rain pouring down all the while. Heavily laden as we were, we climbed

with difficulty over the fallen tree, and now we thought we had got over the worst. But it was still to come, as the further branch of the inundation, even deeper and more rapid, was still between us and the higher shore opposite. On the islet we also found some Americans, who, like us, had got over the first part of the crossing, and who were now equally at a loss what to do.

There was no other alternative but to build a raft; we, therefore, in the absence of serviceable trees, dragged old drifted stems to the edge of the water, bound them together by means of thin ropes, for which we ransacked all our pockets; and then tried to pack all our things on the raft. It was dreadful work, to stand for hours up to the middle in the cold water; and the brothers Meyer, who were shivering with cold, stood by without being able to offer us any help. The young sailor, who showed himself particularly active, had complained since morning of headache, and, indeed, looked pale and worn out; we did not, however, take any particular notice of it, as, under our circumstances, a little indisposition seemed by no means an extraordinary occurrence.

Our attempt failed, and we had to return on that evening once more to Charles Röther. Our whole supper consisted of a little piece of bacon and a ship biscuit; and, squatting with eleven other strangers round a smouldering fire, as there was no sort of fuel to be had, we tried in vain to dry our clothes at least a little.

On the next morning, we therefore set out in wet clothes, and passed the Feather River, where an enterprising Yankee had just arrived with a provision boat, and asked two dollars a-head for taking us over. This fare, which he earned in ten minutes, was indeed enormous; yet we had no choice but to pay him twelve dollars for the six of us.

On our reaching the shore, the consequences of our toil and fatigue already manifested themselves: the young sailor had become much worse, his feet were swollen, and he complained of faintness and fever; all of us were likewise more or less affected by the over-exertion. Yet, notwithstanding my own weak state, I was obliged, when, about mid-day, the poor fellow was not able to get on any farther, to ease him of his luggage and to lead him by the arm. Thus we got on a little, although very slowly.

On Friday, the 23d of November, we reached Sutter's Farm, the first really cultivated and farm-like place which, until then, I had met with in California. I had a great wish to speak to Captain Sutter himself, for whom I had brought a chest with books from a friend in Germany; but as I knew that he resided here only on rare occasions, I scarcely hoped to find him here. It was therefore a most agreeable surprise when I heard, from a German who was working there, that the gentleman just happened to be present, but that he was going to leave in the afternoon. The captain received me in the most friendly manner. Unfortunately, I could enjoy his company only a very short time, as we were obliged to push on as speedily as possible; but our invalid got so much worse, as to oblige us to carry him. It being therefore impossible for me to accept the captain's hospitable invitation, he loaded us with provisions for our further journey, and told me that he would soon himself be at San Francisco, where I might meet him again.

In the meanwhile, another of our companions, the younger Meyer, had fallen ill, fainting away in the court-yard of Sutter's Farm; yet he soon recovered, and we set out about two in the afternoon, toiling on, step by step. But we were most fortunately overtaken by a cart belonging to a German, which, as it was returning empty to the little town of Vernon, took in our poor sailor as far as to the place where we intended to encamp that evening.

During half the night we were kept awake by the prairie wolves, who gave us a most magnificent serenade. They are very annoying by their dismal howl, which sometimes sounds like a succession of the most unearthly yells; but there is no instance on record of their having attacked man, even where they are collected in large numbers.

Next morning we proceeded to Vernon. The distance was but very small; but our sailor, with his sore and swollen feet, kept us a long time on the road. We reached the town about noon, and now it became evident that he was utterly unable to march on. We, therefore, gladly availed ourselves of a boat, in which he could travel the short distance from Vernon to Sacramento city for five dollars. The elder Meyer likewise took his passage in that vessel, so that our band was reduced to four persons; but being all of us in tolerably good health, we got on quickly enough.

We reached, with three dollars in our common travelling chest, Sacramento city, on Monday, November 26th. From the bustling place, as which we had known the “city” a few weeks before, it was now changed into a mere shadow of its former self. At that time, any unemployed person had only to show himself, to be applied to by a dozen persons with inquiries as to whether he 176 wanted work, and what business he was fit for? Now, it was just the reverse. When a schooner arrived with provisions, which scarcely happened twice a-week, ten or twenty people would run down, and go on board to ask the captain for work; but they generally returned disappointed: there was nothing for them to do, the captain having already, during the journey, promised his few passengers, to give to them the job of unloading his vessel. Sales were going on everywhere, at which the goods were disposed of at ridiculously low prices—a very melancholy prospect for us, who were compelled, under the present circumstances, to look out for whatever work we could get.

Our invalid we found put up at a German boarding-house. His health was not improved, his gums were swollen, and unmistakable symptoms of scurvy were making their appearance. The host seemed but little inclined to keep a sick guest; and besides paying a very heavy price, we had to beg hard of him not to turn the poor fellow out. The charge for board and lodging per day was three and a half dollars, for which we had to sleep on the ground on our own blankets. Dinner, a very simple meal indeed, was, by itself, one and a fourth dollars.

There was certainly some excuse for the landlord's testiness. The whole of his hotel consisted in a tent divided by a curtain of cotton into two halves, one of which was taken up by the “bar,” and the back part serving as dining-room; where likewise, behind a sort of screen, a number of berths were put up, just as on board ship. Thus it was impossible to separate an invalid from the rest; and the healthy guests had too much to do with their own affairs, to trouble themselves about a person who was nothing to them.

Here, in Sacramento, our company was dissolved. The prospects of being able to do anything in common were too bad; and the majority did not care to work for a sick companion, whom they selfishly looked upon but as a stranger. The two brothers from Berlin, therefore, contracted with the captain of the San Francisco steamer, promising to pay him on their arrival, as they had friends

177 and relations, perhaps also some merchandise, there. Our little apothecary ran about the whole town, looking out for work; and we, Hühne and myself, did the same, as well to keep our invalid in board and lodging, as also to pay the few dollars which he had got in arrear during his short stay. We had ourselves dined several times at the table d'hôte, to feed once more on something besides flour and bacon; and that had cost a heap of money, which had still to be earned. But how to earn it? that was the question. We ran a whole day from schooner to schooner, inquiring at every place where there seemed to be a chance of getting work of any description; we even went down to the neighbouring small town of Suttersville, but all in vain.

Now we had heard already, at Sacramento, that, at a very short distance down the river, a German, or rather a Dutchman, of the name of Schwartz, was living, who owned a considerable tract of land, on which he caused timber to be felled. The people who gave us this information told us that it was very likely we should get work there. Not to lose any chance, Hühne and I set out for this place, which we reached about dusk. Although being possessed of very large property in land and stock, Mr. Schwartz was an oddity such as I had, until then, never met with anywhere. He was living in as miserable a cabin as I had ever seen even in that country, and we found him surrounded with a large array of bottles containing a most villanous "schnaps," which he seemed greatly to relish, and which he hospitably offered to us likewise. The language which he spoke, indeed, belonged to no country exclusively; when I heard him first I was quite bewildered, and only after a little while, when the ear got more accustomed to it, I found out that the man was speaking German; but had I not known English and some Dutch, I should never have guessed it. Hühne thought he was talking Indian. His language was a lingo which Mr. Schwartz had got up for his own use, and which was perfectly adapted to his peculiar circumstances. Living between Americans and Germans, and having, for the most part, one or two Dutchmen in his house, he would have been obliged to 178 speak to each in their particular language; but having now mixed up the three into one, this hotch-potch served him equally well with the natives of the three nations, as the German, the Dutchman, and the Englishman, might each find as many words of his own language in it as would enable him to guess what the old man meant.

On the same evening an Englishman, who had business with Mr. Schwartz, had come down from the diggings; and I was greatly amused hearing the conversation between the two. Schwartz began to speak his usual gibberish, and the Englishman seemed to understand him a little, but soon begged him to speak English, as he himself was not very well up to Dutch. Mr. Schwartz, who, in the meanwhile, had progressed in his cups, stared at him quite amazed, for he thought he had spoken English, and was quite at a loss what the good man meant. At the same time, his head was in such a state of muddle, that his notions began to be indistinct as to whether his guest was English or Dutch, and so he spoke that dialect of his mixture in which Dutch words prevailed, until the Englishman, with perfect resignation, requested him rather to speak “*Dutch*” again, as, after all, he understood that best.

On that evening nothing was to be done with Mr. Schwartz. My companion and I got accommodation for the night, on the floor of a cabin in the course of construction, where at least we lay dry, whilst without the rain poured down in torrents. Next morning we tried to converse with Mr. Schwartz, that is to say, as far as he was himself again, about work; but the result was, an answer in the negative.

After having passed Suttersville, we heard in the woods everywhere the clang of the axe, and now and then the crashing noise of some old oak falling to the ground. This caused us to halt, and, striking into the forest, we soon arrived in the midst of the woodcutters. Strange to say, they were most of them people who were trading on their own account, cutting down as much as they liked of “Uncle Sam's” oaks, which they then sold to any one who would bid for the wood at a price which just paid for their work. Some of them, however, carried on business on a larger scale, hiring others for a certain number of cords, for which they had themselves contracted. These men, of course, paid somewhat less than one might get by cutting the wood and trading at one's own risk.

In the town, which was about two miles off, such a cord of wood (eight feet long, four feet deep, and four feet high) was sold at the pretty nearly fixed price of fifteen dollars; but, as eight dollars were to be paid for the carriage, there remained about seven dollars profit for the cutter—a very remunerating price, when it is considered that any man who is at all up to the work may easily cut

a cord a-day. The contractors, however, used to pay, to those to whom they sub-let the work, only five and a half or six dollars per cord. We also heard that there was an easy sale for the wood; it therefore seemed best to begin at once in good earnest.

We found, on that very day, an Englishman who offered to buy two or three cords from us as soon as we should have cut them; for which purpose he also lent us an axe, a very great help for beginning, as axes, and especially their handles, were very dear; and as we did not possess one farthing beyond what we absolutely needed for our daily subsistence. Even to get the second axe, I had to pledge my rifle gun at an ironmonger's shop, and on Thursday, November 29th, we briskly set out for the forest.

The first day we did not indeed get on very well, as our limbs were still stiff from the long and fatiguing march; and bad and scanty food had certainly not been calculated to make them more pliant and vigorous. Notwithstanding all these drawbacks, we managed already on the second day so well, that my companion and I, within twelve hours, were able to cut and set up a cord and a half of wood; and we now began to earn money instead of running deeper into debt.

But who were the owners of the land on which the wood was cut? No one seemed quite to know that ; but every one tried, in the meanwhile, to get as much out of it as possible. There were, indeed, some people at Sacramento who, asserting a right to the 180 land, caused written placards to be stuck to the trees in the wood; in which the cutters were warned of the consequences. Yet those traders “on their own account” very coolly cut down the trees, putting the placard, as if in derision, on the top of their cords. Everywhere squatters were, besides, settling in the woods, who now intended to make good a claim to the soil itself, by which all prior claims of others would have become null and void.

For this purpose a meeting of the squatters was appointed by placards, against the “unlawful” claims of the landowners; and, on the evening named in the advertisement, an immense crowd of men assembled on the shore of the Sacramento, opposite the City Hotel, round the tribune decorated with the American flag, and a huge camp-fire, which was then nearly ten feet high; where, among

loud cheering and shouts of hurras, the resolution was passed, that the claims of Sutter and other landowners were unjust and void; that every citizen of the United States had a right to settle as a squatter wherever he liked; and that they did not intend to give up one tittle of it. There were some, indeed, who stood up in favour of the landowners; but the squatters were in a majority, and, listening to no reason, carried their resolution—of course only in the meeting.

At these meetings, the immature and unpractical character of such “public excitements” manifests itself in all its perverseness and absurdity. The people had, indeed, not the least claim on the property of their neighbours. Robbery would have been rather an obnoxious term; but, instead of calling the thing by its right name, all the sophistry and humbug of American popular oratory was displayed with which one is regaled *ad nauseam* in the United States, especially at the elections. Boys, still fresh from school, ascended the tribune, where they spouted a wild farrago, with nothing in it but “The glorious flag,” and, “How valorously their fathers had fought for it.” The “glorious flag” got that evening about thirty repetitions of three, and sometimes also, according to circumstances, of three times three cheers; and, of course, all the half-drunken loafers who were loitering about the 181 fire, and who, of the whole speech, did not catch anything but the grand clap-trap phrases, roared, maddened with enthusiasm and whisky, to applaud the ragamuffin who was at such pains to prove the honour of the flag, in order so much the more conveniently to shelter under it his own roguery and theirs. There are, indeed, ragamuffins in every nation!

But whilst we were cutting wood in the forest, it was necessary for us to get a shelter for the night, and protection from the rain. As we could not yet afford to buy a tent, we dug, on the somewhat sloping bank of the Sacramento, some feet deep into the ground; so that, on the back of our little tenement, we left a hearth of about two and a half feet high; before which we pitched our hut by poles covered with faggots, and over them a layer of about six inches of earth. Over the chimney we placed an empty flour barrel—of course without top or bottom. Before the entrance we hung a sheet of oiled cloth; and, spreading our blankets right and left within, on couches of wild thyme, we had excellent warm and dry quarters. Indeed, this miserable hole, which, in Germany, would have been deemed too damp even for a dog, seemed to us a true palace; and I remember very well the moment when one evening, whilst we were sitting over our fire, watching the progress of our

culinary operations, and the rain began to fall without; we brought the whisky bottle out in honour of the occasion, and—so selfish is man—I should have truly rejoiced if it had rained through the whole night; and yet there were so many poor fellows lying outside without shelter!

The provision now we always fetched in certain quantities, getting them cheaper this way; so that our maintenance did not cost us more than about a dollar a-day for each. With this we lived, according to our then notions, quite luxuriously indeed. We had ship biscuits, coffee, bacon, and Chilene dry beans, in abundance; and we could even afford fresh meat once a-day. What more could we wish for?

Our invalid was, in the meanwhile, evidently recovering; owing to the influence of rest and better food. Yet his condition seemed 182 to me still to require great care; and I wished, therefore, to consult a doctor. The first to whom I applied, Dr. Irmeler, a German, declared that he could not do anything for him without being paid; but if the young man, whom he declared to be not so very ill, would assist him in the construction of his dwelling, which he was building of wicker-work, he would give him medicine which otherwise would cost four dollars; “at any rate,” Dr. Irmeler added, “he must come to me, or he goes the way of all flesh.” Very kind of a countryman that! After this, I sent the young fellow with a letter to Dr. White, an American physician; yet I do not know whether he went with it, as he always objected to have anything to do with the Faculty; and at last he declared that it was no longer necessary, and that he felt so much better as not to require any physic at all.

Close to the German Tent-Hotel, which I have described before, three other Germans, fellow-passengers of mine in the Reform, had pitched their own little tent. They were three young fellows, all of them musical, and not used to hard work; so that they had no other means of making a living but by engaging as musicians in one of the hells. One of them was an excellent flute player; the other two played the guitar. But it mattered not whether their style of performance was first-rate or execrable, provided that they made a noise to attract the curious. And as, in many parts of the town, there were whole streets of such hells, the partition walls of which were only formed of thin

planks or curtains of cotton, and in each of them a band was playing; the reader may imagine how deafening the noise must have been at times.

Our invalid, in the meanwhile, again caused us some anxiety. The landlord declared that he would have him no longer on any condition; as he was keeping out the healthy men, who were better customers. Of course, he was not allowed to drink spirits; which yielded a greater profit to the host. I now ran about to all the other taverns of the town, and received everywhere the same answer. One American gambling-house offered to let him have, for twenty-one dollars a-week, a sleeping place on the floor; but 183 there was there such a tremendous row with drums and trumpets, that he would not have stood it for twenty-four hours. The three young German musicians, who knew him, as they had come in his ship, at last agreed to take him into their tent; and as this was close to the hotel, we contracted with the hostess to let him have the most suitable food; as, for instance, stewed fruit and such like. Thus he had at least a shelter; but it is true that, in this wild sort of life, which was scarcely endurable for a man of good health, he was deprived of nearly every one of those comforts which are requisite for an invalid. We were not in a condition to do more for him; and as I intended soon to go down to San Francisco, I hoped to obtain there admission for him into an hospital, where he would have better nursing, and, most important of all, proper medical advice.

Up to Monday, the 10th of September, Hühne and I had paid off all our own debts, and those of our sick companion; and as we had thus provided for him, at least for the moment, I determined to return to San Francisco; whilst Hühne and Kunitz went into partnership as confectioners, and quartered themselves in our hut out in the forest, where Kunitz manufactured the goods, which Hühne hawked about the neighbourhood.

On Tuesday, the 11th of December, I embarked for San Francisco in the "Senator," the largest steamer which, until then, had navigated the Sacramento. To defray the fare of twenty-five dollars, I had to sell my water-boots; a new pair of which, at that time, fetched, at Sacramento, as much as forty-eight dollars.

## CHAPTER XV.

### MISSION DOLORES.

I DID not stay longer at San Francisco than I needed to don clean and warm clothes, and to transact some indispensable business; after which I set out for the Mission Dolores, where I intended, at all events, to pass some weeks.

This mission, which, during the last weeks, had considerably increased in importance, and which may be expected to have grown into a town before a year is over, is situated about three miles from San Francisco. The building, a large square structure of sun-dried bricks, enclosing a wide court-yard, has undergone the most extraordinary change to which any habitation could ever be subjected. If any of the old priests who are buried close to the gray walls, could suddenly rise from his narrow damp grave, and see the change which a few months have effected here, he would wring his skeleton hands in dismay.

One wing of it was formerly taken up by the rather spacious church; and to the priest an unlimited number of rooms were allotted; whilst idle Spaniards and baptized Indians quartered themselves in the other desolate, musty apartments, many of which had neither doors nor windows. Some rooms were also used as stables; and the whole was quite in keeping with the wild character of the inhabitants of this wild country.

At present the church maintains its old place, the Spaniards being still in a majority, and too much attached to their religion not to defend their sanctuary with all the stubbornness of the national character. The priest's habitation, on the other hand, has been considerably curtailed, and more and more encroached upon by Yankee intruders. The mission had now, however, received the addition of a brewery, two taverns, a dancingroom, a saloon for drinking and gambling, a number of private lodgings, an hospital, with quarters for a physician; and also 185 of private apartments, occupied by some young girls, natives of Mexico.

The brewery belonged to friends of mine, the brothers Von Witzleben, who had settled here and taken up the business of another German, who had unsuccessfully made the attempt, in former times, to accustom the Spaniards to beer-drinking. There were now very brisk orders coming in from San Francisco and Sacramento; and the enterprise promised to thrive well, under the superintendence of a real Bavarian brewer from Mildenberg. The brewery, however, sold its beer only in casks, or in bottles by the dozen, which had the effect, that nearly every week new drinking booths and tents, kept partly by French and Spaniards, and partly by Americans and Germans, sprung up near the Mission. Within the building itself, where, in the course of the winter, even two taverns were established, there was very regularly every Saturday evening, and very often also on some other week-day, "Fandango;" whilst on Sundays there was an influx of a gay crowd from San Francisco.

Only a few Indians have remained behind here. They are still loitering about the place, one-half of their time in a state of drunkenness, and the other half basking idly in the sun; and only sometimes, in order to get money for fuddling themselves again, they run errands in search of stray horses, or do a job as cattle drivers.

The costume of the California men is really picturesque. A woollen poncho, much larger than the Argentine, and woven in a very elegantly coloured pattern, is wrapt round their shoulders, in the fashion in which Spanish women wear their shawls, so that one corner of it hangs over the left shoulder. This garment is called *serape*, and has been introduced from Mexico. On their heads they wear a broad-brimmed hat, covered with oil-cloth. The legs are encased in snow-white drawers, over which they put breeches of velvet or cloth, slashed up to the hip-bone, often embroidered and garnished with silver buttons; whilst at the top they are girded by a long scarf of crimson silk. On horseback— 186 and they are nearly always on horseback—they wrap round the lower part of the legs a piece of tanned leather, which is fastened below the knee with small silver buckles, and in which also the long knife is sticking. Large spurs, yet not so colossal as the Argentine, complete their costume.

The harness is something similar to the Mexican; but the Californian horsemen differ from those of the southern countries of America, by carrying no whip: at least I have never seen any with them. The lasso they use with the same skill as the Argentines; only there is this difference between the Argentine gear and the Californian, that the noose of the latter does not run in a metal ring, but in a leathern loop.

On the very first day of my residence at the Mission, I received the intelligence, which, indeed, was to me very saddening, of the death of our companion in the diggings, the poor young sailor, who had died on board a schooner which was to have conveyed him from Sacramento to San Francisco. I was the more deeply grieved at not having been able to be with him in his last moments, as I had really conceived a very great regard for him on account of his quiet, steady conduct. This was another victim of the diggings. Alas! how many have preceded, and how many will follow him.

Messrs. Witzleben's residence was very romantically situated; yet this, and the fact of its having a tolerably good roof, were the only things that might be said in its praise; for although its situation and appearance might have warmed our imagination, our bodies certainly never derived the same advantage from it: the wind whistled everywhere through a number of broken panes, and through the dilapidated doors; and it took some time to plaster the ceiling with pieces of old cotton rags provided for the purpose, and wall up all the unnecessary windows and doors. There was, likewise, no stove in the whole wide and dreary apartment; and the small scanty hearth on which our meals were cooked, gave, even in its most favourable moments, not more heat than was absolutely necessary to get a small iron pot to boil. 187 Against this latter evil, however, we found a remedy: I kindled, on the very first evening, in the midst of the floor (which was nothing more nor less than the bare ground), a large fire, around which all of us comfortably sat down.

The main labours here consisted not only in the brewing of the beer, but also in procuring the wood from the neighbouring bush, and the execution of the town orders, which was generally effected by water, at that time, the most convenient high road. The younger Witzleben and I mostly undertook this part of the business, and it happened very often that, with the ebbing, we stuck fast on the tough mud of the bay, until the rising tide released us from a situation which was anything but agreeable.

The entrance into the creek near the Mission was not particularly interesting, for it consisted in a very narrow channel, without the least landmark on the shore, except a few thin poles, which, of course, could not be seen in a dark foggy night. But I at last grew so familiar even with the indistinct features of the landscape, and the few objects which could guide me, that I have often found my way in the darkest night.

Our dwelling, which was, however, put in somewhat better repair in the course of the winter, lay at a short distance from the Mission, in an old house, likewise built of sun-dried bricks. For myself, I had succeeded in getting, within the Mission, a small room, which had not been used perhaps for many years, and in which I might sometimes write for an hour without being disturbed. It was the oddest study which a man might imagine, gloomy and dismal, like a dungeon of the Inquisition. The window, which, in its old disjointed frame, hung awry on one side, was of course protected by strong iron bars; the walls were covered with a coating of dark grey from the smoke of the small narrow chimney; and a later hand, perhaps that of an Indian, had tried to represent on one of them the outlines of a large ship, in which the artist seems to have had very confused ideas with regard to the number of masts; so that the whole resembled rather a comb turned upside down than a ship, of which it had nothing 188 but the flag. On the opposite wall an old wooden cross was suspended over two gigantic rusty nails; and two old-fashioned, heavy chairs of carved wood, which may at some remote period have boasted leathern-cushioned seats, were standing in different corners, with their broken backs clapped over their front legs. The furniture of the room was completed by a large iron pot, which I was barely and by the fragment of an old iron lance, which in former times seemed to have been used as a poker. The floor was no other but mother earth. In this splendid apartment I established myself, and to make it habitable I got a half-rotten bench from the brewery for a seat, and an empty wine chest for a table; and thus I contrived there to dream many a weary hour away.

In the course of the winter we went several times shooting in the neighbourhood. One evening we lost our way, and were already preparing to pass the night in the open air, when at once a small light broke through the darkness, towards which we determined, without delay, to direct our steps. Even from a distance we heard merry songs and laughter; and when at last we approached the place, it was a small low cabin, from which the ray of a light broke forth, and where the single voice of a

man was alternating with the chorus of three other men's voices. I knocked twice at the door, and at last battered against it, before they heard me; but then everything was at once suddenly quiet and silent. As the people within seemed to expect another challenge, I knocked once more.

“Halloa! who's without?” a gruff voice called from within in the English language.

“Strangers,” was my answer.

“I be blow'd if I ain't of the same purswation,” the voice within grumbled again; but immediately after the door was opened, and an old fellow, who would have been known at first sight as a sailor, even if dressed as a monk, opened the door as far as he could, allowing the rays of the light to fall full upon me, as I was standing there with my gun in my hand and my blanket on my 189 back. But he had scarcely heard that we were three Germans, and in some sort neighbours of his, when he most kindly and hospitably invited us to come in, and introduced us to his companions.

He was an old English sailor, who had long served in a man-of-war, and had now settled here as the farm-steward of a Californian lady, to whom the whole tract of country hereabout belonged, and whose cattle he superintended. He shared his hut for this night with a young Chileneſe, a ſort of under-ſteward of his, who aſſiſted him with his ſuperior ſkill of throwing the laſſo; and, beſides, with two Americans, who had entered the creek in a boat, and who, like us, had been driven by ſtreſs of weather to ſeek ſhelter.

“But, my boys,” ſaid the old fellow, after the firſt exchange of ſalutations in his homely and hoſpitable way, “you ſhould have come a little ſooner, as there is not a morſel or drop left now, and I am confoundedly ſorry not to have any ſupper to offer you; but we will ſee to-morrow morning whether we cannot ſhoot a wild bull, and then we ſhall have plenty of meat.”

Fortunately we were able to ſupply the deficiency ourſelves, for we had a bottle of real cognac, and bread and meat with us; and no ſooner had Jack got ſight of the brandy, than he burſt out into a triumphant ſhout. Already a little excited by another bottle, which had been emptied juſt before,

he was most comfortably set a-going by the new one; so that the whole evening he continued in the highest glee, spinning his yarns, and singing ballads and sailors' ditties.

It might be about midnight that we rolled ourselves up in our blankets, in berths which were, quite in a seaman-like fashion, ranged against the walls.

Next morning, Jack called us at dawn of day, telling us that a wild bull was very near the house, and asking us to shoot the beast if we had any desire for a meat breakfast. If we had?—good heavens! I was as hungry as any man could wish to be; and, besides, burning with eagerness to send a ball through the 190 monster. Whilst I got ready, Jack told us, in the most comical expressions, that he had once got up at night to look after the weather, when, all at once, not three yards behind him, he had heard the deep lowing of a bull, who had come down in the night, near his house. “And now,” he said, “the beast knew him, and did the same thing over and over again, to spite him; and he (Jack) owed it as a duty to his health and constitution to have the brute killed.”

I offered to rid him of his tormentor, with a view to which I, as quickly and quietly as possible, crept up a low slope; and scarcely saw the white back of the bull, when, taking up my rifle, I jumped forward another step, so that the animal offered a fair aim; after which I fired.

At this moment only the bull got sight of me; but although he seemed inclined, at the first glance of the ball, to charge against me, he felt distressed, and turned to flight, in which my second ball overtook him. He was, however, only killed by a third, which entered, through the eye, into the brain; but then he unfortunately fell into a small narrow ravine, where we had hard work for at least half an hour to get the heavy carcass round; so that we were enabled to open it, and take out the liver for our breakfast.

It was about this period, that a Spanish doctor, whom I had known in Buenos Ayres, and who had come some months before me to California, wished to establish an hospital within the building of the Mission. The only room in which there was sufficient space for a number of beds, lay just above the boilers of the brewery, and close by the malt and barley lofts. Here about fifteen or twenty beds, furnished with mattresses and blankets, were placed; and a few days after the first patients arrived,

who were brought out to the Mission on litters. If ever I have seen anything melancholy in my life, it was this hospital; established in a loft, the roof of which was not even able to keep out the rain, and through which the wind swept freely by a hundred holes and chinks. Even clean bed-clothes were more than the patients 191 could hope for; and also the mattresses and blankets, after some time, became disgustingly filthy. Another discomfort of this place, was the smoke and steam from the brewery, which every precaution on our side tried in vain to shut out. Some patients, indeed, left the hospital as convalescent, or at least in a condition to seek for another place where they might try their chance of recovery; but many, alas! very many, were carried down past my study, over the same narrow steep stairs over which they had been carried up, only cold and stiff now, and completely cured of their ailments.

But, whilst in one wing of the old dreary building sickness and misery were reigning, and death looked down through the broken tiles, numbering his victims; there was, in the other, so much the more mirth and gaiety; and once or twice every week the lively tune of the fandango summoned the ever dance-loving sons and daughters of the grave old descendants of the Spanish race to a dance; besides which, however, they had also other parties within their own families; for without dancing they could not live.

This Californian fandango—at least as much as I have seen of it—always exhibits the same rather monotonous and cold, but not the less graceful step; the ladies especially, with downcast eyes, put down their feet so cautiously and carefully, as if they were treading their way between eggs. Just the reverse of our balls, the musicians and spectators only seem to get excited; and especially when some of the young pretty girls were dancing alone within the closed circle, I have seen the young Spaniards quite beyond themselves with delight; when, as a very remarkable, but also very practical token of their uncontrollable enthusiasm, they threw money down before the feet of the young lady, mostly dollars, and not very rarely even gold, especially the rich karcheros (farmers). It is a rule, that the fair young dancer is afterwards bound to gather and pick up the money with her own hands, during which operation the picking up of every piece is accompanied by a separate round of applause.

The music they got sometimes from San Francisco; but at other times it consisted only of guitars, which accompanied the dance, and were relieved by the vocal performance of the players. At these concerts, a Californian—the brother of one of our neighbours, for which reason we generally called him the brother-in-law—was particularly distinguished; for he had, indeed, the shrillest voice I ever heard; and when, after the third or fourth glass of *agua ardiente*, it was once sufficiently primed, its indestructible powers would last for the whole night. These singers, if they can be called so, are, at the same time, improvisadores; and if they combine with their musical powers the talent of singing the praise of the dancing young ladies, and of cleverly mixing up with it some private hints and scandal, they may depend upon earning rich laurels from their hearers.

They have other remarkable customs at this fandango. Thus, for instance, at certain periods—I think between Shrove Tuesday and Easter—the breaking of eggs plays a very prominent part at these gay meetings.

I was standing one evening in the circle round the dancers, looking at the fandango of two young girls, who indeed were executing their movements with much gracefulness and activity; whilst the “brother-in-law” had nearly worn out his iron lungs in singing their praise, and enumerating the host of their admirers; when suddenly a young Spaniard quickly stretched out his hand towards one of the young girls, who was dancing past, and pressed against her head something which I could not see, but which I heard break. The *señorita* seemed by no means put out by it; only when feeling the touch, she, without stopping in her dance, inclined her head slightly on one side, and made the broken something, whatever it may have been, slowly glide down from her smooth, neatly parted hair; then wiped her head with her handkerchief, and skipped, with a sweet smile, over to the other side of the ring. I was, however, not a little surprised, when, on a close inspection of the *corpus delicti*, I found that it was nothing more nor less than a raw egg—a very strange manner of showing one's delicate attention to a lady.

These eggs are more frequently shells, filled with *Eau de Cologne* and other scents; and that young girl took her revenge with one of the latter description. The dance was not yet over, and two other

young ladies were just stepping up for a new fandango, when I felt a slight touch of my arm, and turning round, saw that young señorita, who cautiously motioned to me to let her pass. As I moved gently aside, and she glided along behind me, the young Spaniard suddenly uttered a loud scream; for his fair enemy had already squashed the egg on his head; and as he was quickly turning round towards her, the *Eau de Cologne* ran down in such copious streams into his eyes, that he shrieked, very likely much more from pain than from pleasure; besides which he had the gratification of being heartily laughed at by the bystanders.

Another joke, which is likewise meant as a sort of gallantry to the ladies, and which also brings them in some money, is the so-called cap-stealing. Whilst the young girl is dancing, one of the bystanders will take the cap or hat from the head of some of the gallants, and quickly put it on that of the dancing señorita, who, thus bonneted, quietly finishes her fandango; after which she takes the head gear of the stranger away to her seat, where she keeps it on her lap, until the owner redeems it, and that with hard cash—a dollar being the least coin which may be used on such an occasion.

In the brewery, a young Dutch sailor was engaged; who, on such evenings, used to make merry by likewise going to the fandango, if not as a dancer, at least as a spectator. His cap was one day in this way taken from him; and he had the prospect of paying the usual ransom. Now, Wilhem was by no means stingy, especially when his pleasure was concerned; but when there was nothing to be gained, except to be laughed at, the matter seemed to him past a joke. He besides considered, that the cap was very old, and at the most worth a dollar; for which price he might buy in the town a new Chinese one. He therefore determined, 194 as he privately told me, rather to leave the “old tile” behind. But he would have had to pay for it very dearly, as this would have passed as quite an unpardonable offence to the lady, who then, of course, would have had to remain sitting for the whole evening, with the “old tile” on her lap; and scarcely did the company remark what he seemed to intend, when the young people began so roughly to assail him on all sides, that the poor lad afterwards assured me, he was heartily glad, after paying his dollar, to put on his cap *outside* the door.

Easter was, in the meanwhile, approaching; and all sorts of preparations at the Mission, especially a thorough cleaning and ventilating of the church, seemed to betoken that some extraordinary event was going to happen. Good Friday passed over very quietly, except that the bells were not allowed to be rung, instead of which, small boys, with a sort of castanets, were sent through the streets, to call the faithful to church. But the next morning already changed the aspect of the place. Even at the dawn of day, I heard music and noise; and an old Californian settler, who had just come in, informed me, on my question, that “to-day the resurrection of the Lord was to be celebrated, and Judas Iscariot to be duly chastised.”

The day itself, at all events, seemed to be kept as a great festival. Even the Indians seemed to feel its influence; for—a thing which was certainly very extraordinary—they were for once seen cleanly washed; and wore, all of them, garlands of the blue water lilies, which grow thereabout in great abundance; and which, indeed, became their black, glossy hair, and their copper-coloured faces very well.

Thus ornamented, they formed a sort of procession, and an old Indian preceded them, cruelly ill-using a fiddle. This procession moved towards the church, and as I followed it I heard that there was even more gaiety within than without. A crowd of people thronged about the doors, and from the body of the church the most lively music for dancing was heard. I therefore hastened my steps to arrive there before the procession of the Indians, who would have certainly taken up the whole room; and I entered the church just in time to witness the conclusion of a real fandango, which, to the music of violins and clarionets, was executed by a set of young men and girls within the sacred building itself.

Yet the change from dancing and gaiety to devotion was as quick as lightning. The violins were still playing; the head of the Indian procession was just entering the church; and the grin with which they looked at the extraordinary proceedings betrayed how much they relished this new state of things, when, at a signal from the priest, the music stopped, a small clear bell began to tinkle, and all dropped on their knees in silent prayer.

The service lasted about an hour longer; but whilst there was still prayer and silence within, at once a shot was fired outside, close before the door. I at first thought this was an accident; but I was soon undeceived, by a running fire which immediately followed, and which became the signal for the men quietly to leave the church.

There was great noise and bustle without. Before the church gate, a whole crowd of Californians were blazing away, to the great delight of the Indians; who bobbed their heads at every report with pistols, muskets, fowling-pieces, revolvers, and whatever else in the shape of fire-arms they had been able to get hold of. Their guns were, of course, only loaded with blank cartridge; but I could not at first make out why they were levelling them at the building opposite, which was about sixty yards off, until, on a more accurate survey, I recognised the object against which their harmless artillery had been directed.

On a cart stood a horrible figure, as large as life, and dressed up in ordinary clothes, over which several cloaks and dressing-gowns were fastened. The clothes seemed to me old acquaintances; and when I examined the puppet more attentively, I really found that it was clothed in the trousers of the brewer, and in a dressing-gown of one Von Witzleben. Besides this, the figure wore a very swaggering, but somewhat worn-out black silk hat; a stiff black stock, and, besides, one of my neckerchiefs; an old 196 cloak, which evidently was likewise of European origin; and boots of summer stuff, which, however, must have been rather an uncomfortable wear, as they were both for the right foot.

The thing was meant to represent Judas Iscariot; yet what I was most interested in, was to know what in all the world they had made such a use of our clothes for; and I afterwards heard, that it could not have been an indifferent matter to the Californian youth, if such a traitor had worn the garments of good Catholic Christians on his unholy body; for which reason they had procured apparel belonging to heretics, or at least to foreigners.

There appeared now another personage on the scene, perhaps even more interesting than Judas—namely, the Indian Valentine, the best horse-breaker and thrower of the lasso in the whole country;

who, on that very morning, had set out with a party of his tribe to catch a lot of wild mares for to-day's solemnity. He was one of the handsomest Indians I have ever seen in California, as well of the southern as of the northern tribes. He stands about five feet six inches, and is well-built. His costume exhibited no particular characteristics; it was the usual Californian dress, but suited him remarkably well. The broad-brimmed hat, covered with oil-cloth, was fastened below the chin by means of a dark-coloured ribbon; a short blue jacket, fitted closely round his waist; his legs were encased in blue Mexican trousers, slashed on the side seams, under which he wore white drawers; and he was also rigged out for the day with a pair of fine patent leather boots.

After having first thrown the steed on the ground by means of the lasso, and then blindfolded her, he buckled a strap round her waist, which caused the fiery animal first to bound with a shriek of terror; after which she threw herself down, trying, by rolling herself about and kicking, to get rid of what she mistook for a burden imposed upon her. Yet all her efforts were in vain. Judas Iscariot was cleverly put on her back, notwithstanding all her furious plunging and rearing; and soon the mare, with the new but decently dressed Mazeppa, ran off like an arrow down the street, and in the direction of the mountains, among the triumphant yells of the multitude, and pursued by the Spaniards, who were now nearly all of them mounted.

The puppet hung to the back of the snorting animal like a mad hobgoblin, nodding its head and flinging its arms in the most comical manner, whilst the other horsemen who were racing after it might aptly have been compared to the spectral followers of the wild hunter. The object of this mad pursuit was to cut off the poor animal from its retreat to the mountains, in order that the ladies, watching the sport from the verandah, might not so soon be deprived of their amusement. Valentine distinguished himself here as well by his nimbleness as by the cruelty with which, catching the mare by the tail, he threw her over, and brought her forcibly back to the place from which she had started. At last the poor tortured animal, completely worn out by her fright, as well as by the unwonted exertion, was no longer able to keep up. She fell, and neither blows nor other ill-usage made any impression on her.

This case having been foreseen, the puppet was taken off her back, and placed on that of another animal; which, however, was much less fiery, and therefore afforded less sport; and as the public had already had fun enough with the first, the ladies retired, and the men now drove the mare back into the mountains, very much to their own amusement, but not at all to that of the poor beast. In the evening there was a fandango, and the festival was concluded by a lively Spanish dance.

Valentine also seemed to have made an extraordinary sacrifice in honour of the day, having for once remained sober until evening. As soon, however, as he had finished his part in the public exhibition, he did his best to make up for lost time, and now revelled in the full enjoyment of brandy and its happy consequences. He lay outside the ball-room, on his back, under a waggon, putting both his feet firmly against the axle-tree of the fore wheels, whilst his feet were resting on a bullock's yoke, which had accidentally been stowed away there. By his left side lay an empty brandy bottle, and in his right hand he held another, which was still half full, but from which he seemed to spill more than he drank: "Dice que me quieres, Caramba,"

he was stammering with a heavy tongue, trying at the same time to throw a glance at his bottle, and all the time foaming at the mouth:— "Dice que me quieres, Caramba, Con el corazon— Dice que— huzza! cavallita—huzza! carajo Huzza! huzza!—guardase—huzza!—

and his wild shouts were suddenly ending in an unarticulated yell, followed in its turn by an angry speech, which, with great volubility, he uttered in the Indian language. He then wanted once more to put the bottle to his mouth, but was not able to do so; and whilst the strong brandy was running over his neck and face he closed his glassy eyes, and soon fell into a dead sleep.

Drunkenness, in general, is a vice for which the Indians have to thank the Christians; and one's heart aches sometimes at the sight of the noble vigorous figures who, degraded to a brutal state by the vile liquor, are rolling in the mud, and slowly but surely going to destruction. The few Indians who still lingered about the mission were all professing Christianity, and the women, at least, conducted themselves quite properly, washing and doing needle-work for the Spaniards, in whose families they were sometimes received as inmates. Yet there were still some small bands of them roaming

about, encamping in the open air, and living, as they had done of old, on meat which they either got themselves or begged from the Spaniards. But the more civilized of them were mostly living in houses, and wore decent (and in winter also) warm clothing, and spoke the Spanish language.

One family of them had for some months lived quite in our neighbourhood; and they one day buried a child, behind which they marched in procession to church, to have it interred in the churchyard of the Christians. The little corpse, which was cleanly washed, and dressed in its best clothes, but also decked out with a profusion of tinsel, gay papers, and all sorts of gaudy shreds, looked affecting enough in its little coffin; but the romance was dispelled when one heard that the little boy of eight years old had died from excessive indulgence in brandy. The father, immediately after the burial, tried to derive his consolation from the same source: the mother, on the contrary, sat down by the side of the grave, and began her heart-rending lamentations, which were calculated to make a most painful impression on any one not used to them. These loud wailings at the loss of the dead seem to be peculiar to all the tribes of Indians in the world, only that some of them indulge in these dismal lamentations of their grief with more violence than others, and even with a fanaticism bordering on madness.

In the church I saw also about that time the marriage of a young girl of the Mission with a Californian from Los Angeles. There is here a strange custom, according to which the young couple during the ceremony, and whilst they are still kneeling before the altar, are tied together with ropes, and covered over with a large cloth.

Only a short time ago a wedding took place between a North American and a Californian girl. On the whole, the Californians will not have anything to say to the North Americans, their conquerors, against whom they entertain a well disguised, but so much the more deadly, hatred. Even during my short residence at the mission, several murders were committed on the road from thence to San Francisco. The victims were found pierced with many stabs, as if immolated by the most deadly hatred. At the diggings, also, a great number of unfortunate men were sacrificed to the same national animosity. This feeling was in many cases shared by the fair sex, and in several of the ball-rooms North Americans looked in vain among the beautiful daughters of the land for a partner in

the dance; the ladies turned a deaf ear to every invitation coming from a Yankee, and the cheers of the bystanding Californians of course were not calculated to console 200 the rejected swain for his disappointment. Time will certainly abate somewhat of this animosity, but it will never be entirely extinguished.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### A DIGGER'S LIFE.

I HAD fallen in at San Francisco with an old fellow-traveller from the *Talisman*, a certain Böhm, who told me a great deal of a place where he had himself worked with great success, and to which he intended to return. He urged me to accompany him, and as it was a matter of perfect indifference to me where I should turn my steps, as all depended on the favour of chance, I determined to start with him for “Murphy's New Diggings,” as the place was called.

Here I must not forget to give the reader an account of a certain old acquaintance whom I met again in spring at San Francisco—the giant. He was now, indeed, a very dilapidated specimen of a giant. I scarcely knew him when I met him in the street. Emaciated and haggard, with hollow cheeks, pale face, and sunken eyes, he crawled slowly to and fro on the muddy path, whilst his huge bones seemed to rattle in his skin. He still wore the same dress as of old; but wind and weather had by no means improved it. His old grey felt hat, which formerly had shaded his good-natured face, was now hanging limp and soft round his haggard physiognomy; his green coat had become threadbare and shabby; and of his lower man scarcely anything was distinguishable, owing to the thick crust of mud which covered him. He indeed wore the old broad belt, and as many arms in it as before, even more of them, but quite in a different style: his mighty broadsword was gone, but around his old belt several braces of pistols, knives, and daggers, were dangling by the side of more peaceful implements—fire-tongs, balances, and 201 fire-shovels. The man seemed to have been converted into an ambulating ironmonger's shop, and waylaid all those in whom he expected to find customers. On recognising me he stopped, looked at me with a melancholy face, and said,

“Well, here we are now in California—a very nice place, isn't it?” Had he filled a whole book with complaints he could not have expressed his sorrow more effectively.

The story of his sufferings was soon told. At the diggings he seemed to have been completely unsuccessful: the work there had not been at all to his liking. “If people,” he said, “would dig at this rate at home, in the province of Magdeburg, they would certainly find gold.” He had also a swollen knee, for which he did not wish to consult a physician, as he was afraid of the expense. He, however, confessed to me that he was by no means now in distress, but that he was trying quietly to dispose here, in detail, of the goods he had brought with him; and as soon as he had hoarded as much money as he possessed on his arrival—for he would not be a loser through California—he would immediately return to Magdeburg.

A few days after I saw him at his “home,” a small tent some distance out of the town, which, when sitting in it, he nearly filled. Whilst I was conversing with him, a few Germans came to buy some trifles of him; on which, without moving from his seat, he simply stretched out his arm to the remotest corner of the tent, and produced the required article.

His “satellites,” as he told me, had separated from him, and were in all probability “puddling gold somewhere in the mountains.”

On the 8th of April, it being a truly magnificent morning, we arrived, precisely at ten o'clock, on board of the small steamer William Robinson. I had got enough of a journey in a sailing vessel last time, and took good care not to repeat the attempt. The William Robinson was bound for Stockton, on the San Joaquin.

It is a very remarkable change, which a few years only have brought about in this remote part of the world. Three years ago, scarcely a single sail disturbed the solitude of the quiet bay: now, hundreds of vessels are mooring there on their anchors, and the clear waters are furrowed in all directions by swift steamers and sailing boats. On the banks, towns are springing up, as it were, over night, and the clatter of steam engines is heard already in places where, a few months before, the Indian tracked the stag and the grizzly bear. Indeed, never has a country developed itself

more rapidly and forcibly than California, yet for this very reason its position is as unnatural as exceptional. The American, who loves gain for its own sake, may feel at home in such a continual hurry and bustle, but it is otherwise with the German, whose character is more quiet, and I should say more natural. He cares less for the gain itself than for the enjoyment it would procure; and it is to be foreseen that of all countrymen who flock there, a very few only will ever consider it as their second fatherland.

The William Robinson was a new boat, expressly built for the Stockton line. The fare to that small, but very thriving town, a journey of about sixteen hours, was twenty-five dollars; besides which, you had to pay for your victuals, and no place to sleep upon but the dirty floor of the deck, on which a certain well-known American habit had left only too many unmistakable traces. The journey from Stockton to San Francisco, on the other hand, costs thirty dollars, very likely on the supposition that people coming from the diggings must be possessed of more money than those who go out there. The William Robinson, however, was rather a slow boat, and it took us full twenty-four hours to steam to Stockton; yet she was much better fitted up inside than many others; and we not only found very good eating and drinking, but also very pleasant company, so that after all the journey did not seem to us too long.

On the next morning at about one o'clock, we entered the San Joaquin; but at the break of day, on looking back, we could scarcely believe that we had made more than five miles from the 203 bay, the intricate windings of the river rendering the illusion very excusable. At ten o'clock in the morning we arrived at the small tent-built town of Stockton, after having seen it before us for at least three hours. We at once landed our luggage, and refreshed ourselves at a German hotel, the best in the town, which a certain Mr. Weber kept, under the proud title of "Stockton Restaurant."

My companion now first of all looked out for a carrier to convey his goods to the mountains. Nor had he to search long; for just as difficult to be got and expensive as the freight had been during the rainy season, so abundant and proportionately cheap was it now. He contracted for nine cents a pound as far as Murphy's Diggings, a distance of about eighty to eighty-five miles.

On Wednesday, about evening, we set out with two waggons, each drawn by four yokes of oxen. Some Americans accompanied us, who likewise had goods with them; but we stuck fast in the very first slew (a sort of stagnant pool) near the Joaquin, so-badly that all the eight yokes of oxen were not able to extricate the second waggon from the mud, and we had to unload half of its freight before we got off. This was, however, the worst spot on our road, for after that we encountered no more difficulty the rest of the way to the diggings.

In the evening we encamped at about one mile and a half from Stockton, close to the road; and here I also made myself better acquainted with our travelling companions. They were—a lad of eighteen or nineteen years, who kept a stall at one of the diggings, whither he was returning with new goods; and a very odd old fellow with white hair, who called himself Hillman—which, however, as I afterwards learned, was only a translation of his original German name, “Bergmann.” He had on one of the waggons a quicksilver machine with him, to carry on the gold-washing business on a larger scale; for which purpose he had hired two young Americans, besides whom he had with him Jeremy Livingston, commonly called Jemmy, a very droll little fellow, a native of the Emerald Isle, whom one could not help liking. We were all of us walking on foot by the side of the waggons; only Mr. Hillman had bought for himself at Stockton a mule, on which, with a huge brown silk umbrella spread out, he rode during the greater part of our journey—sometimes only, when he happened to be tired of riding, he made Jemmy relieve him.

Böhm and I had already prepared our sleeping-place under one of the trees. Mr. Hillman, however, who had a very large tent with him, would not allow us to pass the night in the heavy dew, whilst he was lying under cover.

On the second day, nothing happened worthy of record, except that we overtook a party of Americans, likewise sticking in the mud, whom we rescued from their unpleasant position; after which we continued our journey in their company. On Friday the 12th of April, we reached, in the afternoon, the Calaveres, where we were obliged to unload our waggons and to take them to pieces, in order to convey them and their load over the heavy swollen river. After this the country became more hilly and prairie-like. Large undulating plains were rising before us, only thinly interspersed

with knolls of trees; and the back ground was formed by steep woody hills, the lowest spurs of the mountain range which we now approached.

Nature seemed to have adorned herself to-day in her finest garments to receive us; for the gorgeousness of the flowers, which covered the ground as far as the eye could reach, is beyond any description. The ground looked like one gay carpet; and the flowers were growing so close that one could not walk along without crushing twenty or thirty at every step. Some species of them breathed forth the most delicious scents, whose fragrance was wafted towards us by the cool breeze of the evening. I gathered a large nosegay of the sweetest and most beautiful ones, which that night I used for my pillow.

None of us were unmoved at this charming scene; and more than once one or other was heard to exclaim, "What would one give to be able now to send such a nosegay to one's friends at home."

Even old Hillman was moved, but in his own particular fashion. 205 He stopped several times, looking with folded arms at the delightful scene, and at last said: "What a glorious country! what flowers! If I had that garden at three leagues from New York, I would make my twenty dollars from it every day."

He had shown himself in a new character before. When near the ferry, he suddenly came forth with a whole armful of razor strops, the excellence of which he trumpeted forth with such volubility of tongue, that the people generally forgot the strops, and only minded the "funny old man," who made them laugh so much. He then asked one of the bystanders for a pocket-knife, with which he executed the most marvellous evolutions, striking against the iron of the cart-wheel and against the stones, and sticking it into the ground; after which he began to whet it on his "patent strop," telling all the while funny stories and anecdotes; then, without any warning, he seized one of those nearest to him by the hand, and using saliva instead of lather, began to shave the arm of his unfortunate and much astonished victim, after having unceremoniously tucked up his sleeve.

On Saturday the 18th, we journeyed during nearly the whole day through one uninterrupted flower-garden. The country became more and more hilly; and shady groves, intersected by clear bubbling brooks, relieved the monotony of the plains through which we passed.

On the following day we reached the first diggings, and, after dinner, made a trial with our pan at a place which had been worked before. We indeed found some fine gold, in sufficiently rich quantity to make Mr. Hillman think seriously of establishing his quicksilver machine here, and at once going to work. This would not have been so bad for him, but the people whom he had with him did not seem particularly to like it; and so, after a short debate, he marched along with us.

On Monday, I left the waggons, going with my rifle into the mountains, where I found some stags, but they were so shy that I was not able to get a shot at any of them, especially as I was keeping straight on my way without following up their tracks. 206 Only late in the evening I overtook the waggons again at the so-called Angel's Creek or Camp, where, as I learned, old Hillman, after having made the necessary inquiries, had determined to establish himself. It seemed to be, or rather to have been, as the whole surface was said to be worked already, a very important gold field. A number of tents were pitched between the hills; the soil of the broad bed of the river was everywhere turned up; and the many lights shining down from the hills afforded proof of the crowds of diggers who were trying their fortunes here.

Next morning, I walked out alone to roam for some time about the hills; and, keeping on the left, where I was to find again the path to Murphy's Diggings, I reached the small mountain stream, which, at some places between rugged crags, and at others through fruitful valleys, rushes down from Murphy's to Angel's. People were working here everywhere; and even Chinese, of whom we had seen several tents in Angel's Camp, were sitting at their cradles washing gold to their hearts' content.

Following the path, which rose by a steep ascent from the river, I at last arrived about mid-day at the so-called "Murphy's Flat;" but only close to the place itself I was enabled to get a view of it, and now was really astonished at finding, so high up in the mountains, a large woody plain, in the

midst of which a small town arose. A broad street of large store tents extended along the middle of the flat. Not only the necessary provisions and unnecessary drinks might be had in these shops, but also real articles of luxury, at which the natives, who in general felt sorely puzzled at these strange things, were quite bewildered with astonishment. The main street being thus solely occupied by the different stores and shops, a mass of small blockhouses and tents lay behind them, scattered as far as the next range of hills, imparting to the whole landscape a most original and picturesque appearance. The stately pines and leafy oaks—the green underwood, from which the white and blue tops of the tents were peeping forth—the high and finely-wooded mountains, with the pure blue sky above them—the busy life on all sides—with the 207 flag of the United States fluttering from the tents, made an impression upon me which I shall never attempt to describe.

“Here you will remain,” was my first thought, “if anything is to be made in these valleys;” and I could have hardly chosen for my abode a more beautiful spot in the whole world.

Murphy's Flat—on account of its supposed mineral wealth called Rich Murphy—is a sort of plain, through which a river, coming down from the higher mountains, must have flowed perhaps in antediluvian ages, to deposit here its gold. The Rich Flat itself is about two hundred yards broad and four hundred yards long—at least that part of it which had been dug until now; for the whole flat is certainly three leagues in circumference, and the small brook bends now at about that distance towards the ravine which leads down to Angel's. In this plain there is a small knoll of pines and oaks, where, I was told, the first Americans who came up here found a Mexican and his wife in a small hole like a well. This couple had already dug up from between the roots of the pine trees an enormous sum—it is said 18,000 dollars in nuggets; but as soon as the Americans showed an intention of contesting the place with them, the two original successful diggers readily left the place, in order to put their treasure in safety.

The first Americans likewise raised here a great quantity of gold; and now diggers crowded from all sides to the spot which seemed so promising. Yet the rainy season setting in very early, interrupted the work; and nothing could be done at that season but to mark out the “placers” which were to be worked during the summer, or rather autumn. In order, however, to prevent the abuse which

speculators might by chance practise with regard to the marking out the placers, the American diggers who were then on the spot called a meeting, in which it was resolved that no one should have a larger placer—and only one on his name—than sixteen feet long and eight feet broad, with a space of two and a half feet around it for throwing up the soil. It was, moreover, resolved, that such a claim might be registered for a fee of two 208 dollars with the Alcalde, in which case it should be valid until the 8th of August, and no longer.

Not only the flat, but also the small tributaries of the main creek, have had in their time much gold, and partly have it still, but to find it in the beds, which are furrowed everywhere, is a very difficult task, which a new comer must be very successful to perform. Indeed, the banks of the rivulets in some places are entirely untouched, containing rich layers of the precious metal; but the pickaxe and mattock have first to do their work, and ten or twelve feet of soil are sometimes to be removed, without the digger finding one cent worth of gold, so that at last he is obliged to leave the place to try another, and that perhaps with no better luck. Formerly, when the gold-fields were not yet burrowed by the thousands of diggers, the finding of the treasure was, of course, much easier than it is now. Those times, however, are past; and who now comes here in the hope of earning, with little trouble, not merely a living, but at once a fortune, is sure to be soon undeceived.

Notwithstanding all this, it was the current opinion, and, especially at San Francisco, the never-failing answer to questions as to the earning in the diggings, “about an ounce a day;” and the people said this as quietly as if sixteen dollars per diem was nothing extraordinary. But the digger will find only too soon that this ounce was but an ideal vision, even half an ounce being considered a very excellent day's earning. At an average, I am firmly convinced that the gain of the great mass of the diggers falls short of three dollars per day; whilst many have even spent the money they brought with them, and are glad to be able to return to Stockton or San Francisco, there to seek for work, perhaps with just as little success.

Even those who really find gold, and are able to save more or less considerable sums, are heard to say: “As soon as I have made some money, I will make haste to be off, and never shall I then set my foot again on Californian ground.”

I will not, however, deny, that many have made their fortunes 209 here, and that in all likelihood many will again; but it is as if one took a ticket in a large lottery, with this difference only, that in a common raffle one may quietly wait for a blank with one's hands in one's pockets, whilst a man here, to gain a loss, has to toil in the sweat of his brow.

It may be interesting for future times to preserve a list of the prices which were then current in the diggings, where everything is now changing so rapidly that the events of to-day will, in four weeks hence, already belong to the history of the past.

A cradle, from sixteen dollars to thirty-two or forty; second-hand ones may sometimes be bought at eight or ten dollars; mattocks, from three to five dollars; pickaxes, from five to seven dollars; crowbars, according to size, from five to eight dollars; knives with wooden handles, for the use of the diggers, fifty to seventy-five cents; wooden pails, two dollars; tin ditto, four dollars; pans for gold washing, four dollars.

Victuals:—Flour, twenty dollars per hundred pounds; fresh meat, hind quarters, thirty-seven and a half cents; fore quarter, twenty-five cents per pound; salt bacon, forty to fifty cents per pound; dried fruit, fifty to seventy-five cents per pound; potatoes, fifty cents per pound; vermicelli, fifty cents per pound; salt mackerel, thirty cents each; white ship biscuit, twenty-five to thirty cents per pound; fresh bread, a loaf of about one and a half pound, fifty cents; butter, fifteen cents per pound; chocolate, one dollar per pound; pickles, two dollars per quart bottle; tea, one and a half to two dollars per pound; coffee, sixty-two and a half cents per pound; sugar, fifty cents per pound.

Drinks:—Red wine, one and a half to two dollars per bottle; brandy, one to two dollars; whisky, one and a half dollars; arrack, one and a half dollars per bottle; gin, one and a half dollars; Port, two dollars; Madeira, two dollars per bottle.

A single dram, which formerly was everywhere in the diggings sold for fifty cents, is now only twenty-five—a pretty good price yet for one mouthful of brandy or whisky.

All those who do not wish to provide their food themselves, 210 may board here, as at any other town. They get three meals of meat, dried fruit, pickles, butter, cheese, &c.; coffee, and sometimes even potatoes (a certain Frenchman gives, in the evening, instead of tea, half a bottle of red wine): the price for this is sixteen dollars per week. Those who provide their own food may very well do the same with six or seven dollars.

Clothing is by far less expensive than it was formerly; nay, it is even proportionably cheap now. A pair of trousers cost from two to four dollars; a pair of shoes, from three to five; a shirt, one and a half dollars; straw hats, the same. All these articles, however, of course, are only of ordinary and plain material.

As to animals, a very good horse may be bought from eighty-two to a hundred and fifty dollars; mules, at about the same price; donkeys, for carrying loads, from sixty to eighty dollars each.

The first days at Murphy's Diggings we employed in pitching a tent, as well to get shelter during the nights, which were still grim cold, as also to stow away and pile up Böhm's goods. It was not very difficult to effect this, young stems of trees being left in the neighbourhood, which might be used as props. A small tent was sold to us, and another we put together of canvass which we had brought with us; and thus our Californian home was established.

According to our first intentions, my companion, who could not hope to sell anything during the day, was to shut up his shop until evening, and we would work together the whole of the day; but already, after the first day, I found that I could not but be a loser in such an arrangement, as Böhm could not be got to work in the morning, and likewise ceased working early in the evening; whereas, on the other hand, we were to divide the proceeds in equal shares. To remedy this, there was nothing left but that I should likewise become a partner in his store; to which I agreed only very reluctantly, with a sort of presentiment of future calamities. Böhm thenceforward worked only one other half day with me; after which he at one time had a sore foot, at another 211 a sore hand, and at last assured me that he was seriously indisposed. I continued, in the meanwhile, digging, although with very little success, in the ravines; at the same time also, the few goods which Böhm

had brought with him had considerably dwindled, the stock having from the first been a very poor one. One of us, therefore, was to go to San Francisco in order to make new purchases; and as my partner was still ailing, the journey fell to my lot.

On the morning of the 29th of April I set out with rather a small capital, and, taking the nearest way, travelled about thirty or forty miles through the wood; after which I followed the high road again as far as Stockton.

About twelve miles from Murphy's, I reached the famous diggings of San Antonio. Some American companies have undertaken grand works there, turning off, by means of a broad and deep canal, the mountain stream, which is a river of no inconsiderable size, in order to work its bed during summer, which in this manner was laid dry.

Rising from this gulch or ravine, I reached, after about half a mile's walk, a placer which seemed to have been turned to considerable account. Five negroes were at work here, and had dug the deepest hole which I ever saw at the diggings. It was at least thirty-six feet deep, and sunk into the slope like a shaft. They told me that their work had been by no means fruitless: only the day before, the five of them had found four hundred and eighty dollars within a very narrow space, and their daily earnings must, according to what they assured me, have amounted for each to upwards of an ounce per day. But this was the only remunerating placer hereabout; the others were said to be not above the common average.

The night I passed in the open air, and on the next morning, about thirty-four miles from Murphy's, I reached the high road, by which I was able to proceed more quickly. From my night's encampment I had to walk about fifty-three miles to Stockton; but I set out at a very early hour, and being in very good trim, I resolved to try whether I should not be able to reach Stockton on the following morning about seven; the hour at which the steamer generally used to start. To effect this, I had not much time to lose; but as I carried nothing but my blanket and my gun, I speedily got over one mile after the other.

The country near the road between Stockton and the diggings is likewise rapidly covering with settlements; everywhere new tents are rising, hostelries where the traveller may put up for the night. Wells also are sunk, as the water is said to be very scarce there in summer, and everything shows signs of a very considerable future traffic.

At the Calaveres a small tribe of Indians was encamped, among whom, by-the-by, I saw for the first time a crippled savage. When I sat down with them, they crowded round me and asked for presents. They seemed, however, to be very good-natured people, and I readily gave them some trifles which I had brought with me for such emergencies. Yet I thereby only made bad worse, for the more I gave the more they wanted; and at last I resolved to play them a little trick in order to get rid of them without their remarking it. I cautiously strewed a small rope of powder, so thin that it could not by any possibility do harm, and then took out a burning lens which I had with me. At first I threw the burning point upon the brown hands of some of them, which already inspired them with considerable mistrust. They first looked with the utmost astonishment at the lens, and then at their hands, which they most anxiously rubbed; and some of the women, with their children, withdrew to a respectful distance. But when I directed the lens on the powder, and the flash hissed up to the feet of one of the men, it was as if a thunderbolt had suddenly alighted among them. They dispersed in all directions, and no coaxing nor friendly signs could induce them to return to within a distance of less than twenty yards. I had completely forfeited their confidence, and was at last obliged to proceed on my road without having propitiated or even appeased them.

Soon after having crossed the Calaveres, I met upon the road 213 several waggons with new arrivers. The people themselves were mostly dawdling along, ahead of the ox-carts, except one, a young Frenchman, who had placed himself before a tied-up milch cow, and now played, on a cornet-à-piston, the Marseillaise into the ears of the dismayed animal. Such processions are very frequently met with on the road. I was also going quietly to pass by this one, when a man who, on account of the dust, had covered his head with his handkerchief, so that I was not able to descry his features, suddenly stopped and called out after me, "Well, I am sure I have seen you somewhere."

I quickly turned round, and could not help bursting out into loud laughter, when, in the dust-covered, heated, and fatigued figure, I recognised my jolly old landlord of Buenos Ayres, Mr. Davies, who at that time told me all those awful stories about California, and warned me not to rush headlong into the jaws of destruction. And now I met him, panting in the sweat of his brow, after a most dangerous passage round Cape Horn, and entering upon a life of the most dreadful toils and privations. Unfortunately, we had not much time to stop; but I made the best of the few moments to punish him for his former scorn and ridicule, by representing to him, in a rapid sketch, the life at the diggings in such appalling colours, that his face grew longer and longer; and only when I saw him fairly driven into a gentle state of petrified despair, I smilingly wished him good speed, and comfortably proceeded on my road to Stockton.

I walked briskly on until dusk, taking, about noon, some bread and milk—a small tumblerful for twenty-five cents; and just when the stars began to glitter, I arrived at a small blockhouse, where I found the people at their supper. I was now about fifteen miles from Stockton; but I could not, for the moment, proceed much farther, as it grew pitch dark, and the moon did not rise before eleven. I therefore determined to share in the repast (paying one and a half dollars for some tough beefsteak and a cup of thin coffee), to sleep for a few hours, and, as soon as the moon rose, to continue my journey. This plan I carried out so far, as at least to throw myself down on the ground in a corner; but the young fellows of the house had got some bottles of whisky, and kept up such an uproar until midnight, that sleep was out of the question. About midnight, therefore, I arose, rolled up my blanket—my little account I had paid on the evening before—and walked rapidly along the road in the brightest moonshine.

Yet I still met with a small adventure. It might have been about two o'clock, when I turned into a narrow path striking out of the high road. But I soon saw that what I took for a short cut was leading me too far to the left; besides which, the wet grass completely soaked my leggings. I therefore turned again to the right, to regain the high road, when I suddenly saw something moving under a large oak which was standing in my way. Fixing my eyes upon the spot, I descried a man who was suddenly gliding behind the trunk of the tree, whilst another went up to a mule—which was grazing

close by, and whose fore-legs were tethered together—and invited me, in Spanish, to approach and see how strangely the animal had been entangled. I had, in the meanwhile, cocked my rifle; and leaving the oak about thirty yards to the left, I slowly passed with a “*no quiero.*” From their pronunciation, they seemed to me Argentines; and I had already experienced, in their own country, what *they* were capable of. In the broad moonlight, in open field, out of the reach of the lasso, I had nothing to fear from them, especially when they had once seen that I carried fire-arms.

Several murders had of late been committed on this very road; and the boasted honesty of California is sadly at a discount. Tools, which one is obliged to leave at the placers, and horses and mules, are stolen almost every day; and the Indians have to bear the blame of many a thing which white rogues have perpetrated in their name. If they catch a thief, he certainly is treated very roughly; but in this wild country it is very easy to escape.

Those fellows, however, when they saw that I wished to have nothing to do with them, allowed me quietly to pursue my way; and soon after sunrise I arrived at Stockton, after having marched 215 during the last twenty-four hours about fifty-three English miles. When already in sight of the town, I shot a large brown wolf, who, about thirty yards a-head of me, was going to cross the road, but who, as soon as he descried me, had suddenly stopped in the middle of it.

My exertions, however, were doomed to be fruitless, as on that morning no steam-boat left for San Francisco. Yet I did not regret this, as I thus gained time to spend a whole day at Stockton, where I roamed about from morning to evening, now stopping at one of the droves of mules, which were being laden by industrious Mexicans with provisions for the diggings, and then dropping into one of the numerous gambling-houses, where play was nearly always going on, and by which a good deal of money was brought into circulation. Many of these hells having been only just established, were but scantily furnished, their bare wooden walls being merely covered with a sort of coarse cotton, which was intended to give them a somewhat comfortable appearance. Nearly all of them had lots of pictures hung up round the walls; some of them prints of a most lascivious character, others lithographs representing Napoleon's battles or Ferdinand Cortez's conquests, and scenes from Paul and Virginia. There was some sort of music in every one of them.

In one establishment, the walls, covered with blue cotton, were decorated by the tasteful owner with half a dozen coloured prints, every one of them showing the same fascinating object, in the shape of a very slim and angular young lady, with an immensely high *coiffure* and large puffy sleeves, who was turning her body to the right, and her head over her left shoulder, with such a decided twist, that it looked as if she wore her head on her back. Six copies of this model of female beauty in one destitute room made a very singular impression.

On my entering the apartment, the two principals looked round towards me, with some latent hope of finding a customer; and as I could not refrain from the malicious pleasure of confirming the rogues in their illusion, I walked slowly and gravely round the 216 room, stopping before each of the six pictures, and looking at it with an air of the profoundest abstraction. A little negro, whose duty it was to play the accordion in this distinguished saloon, now began unmercifully to torture his instrument; but neither his music, nor the active shuffling of the cards, nor the attractions of the six model ladies, were able to tempt me to play; and when, during my exit, I turned round to have a last view of the gamblers, and of the “darling 'ittle nigger boy,” all the four of us had our heads twisted over our shoulders, just as the lady of the pictures.

I slept that night at the “Stockton Restaurant;” not, however, in a bed, for which there was neither room nor occasion, but in my own blanket in a corner. My things were still lying on a table, when one of the partners of the firm to which the house belonged came up to me, and civilly said: “Would you oblige me by taking your rifle from the table, as this gentleman is to sleep on it.” As I looked about for “the gentleman,” I saw that he slept already standing, even before lying down on the table. He was a tall square figure; and notwithstanding the warm weather, was buttoned up in a blue pilot coat. He carried a blanket under one arm and his boots under the other, and seemed not quite to know whether he would wait until his bed was made, or whether he would rather at once drop down where he stood. The host, misconstruing my surprise as a desire to have the table for myself, stated by way of apology that the gentleman had slept on it for the last seven nights; and I had scarcely time to put my rifle in a corner, and to lay my blanket, powder-flask, and knife on a chair, when the tall gentleman—who must have seen all my preparations *through* his eyelids, as he did not open

them for one moment—lay stretched at his full length, snoring, on the table. As to myself, I passed the night on the floor.

On the next morning, the steamer *El Dorado*, a very good boat, started for San Francisco, where we arrived before dusk. I slept that night at the house of Dr. Precht, my former fellow-traveller, which he had a short time before built for himself. The high 217 prices of California had made his fortune; he was in very good practice, and had splendid prospects before him.

We had sat up in very merry company until late, so that next morning, as the day was scarcely dawning, I was still soundly asleep, when a wild and strange shout reached my ear. I started up, and whilst from my window I was able to recognize the glare of fire—which, blazing and corruscating, forced its terrible path over the buildings—I could not in my first bewilderment recollect where or in what part of the world I was. This did not, however, last long; together with sleep, I shook off my dreams, threw myself into my clothes, and after a few minutes was with Dr. Precht down in the street.

It was but a short distance to the spot where the fire had broken out; and already all the gambling-houses near the public square were burning from top to bottom, whilst the flames, with vehement fury, extended farther and farther. For one moment, I surveyed from the middle of the square the terribly beautiful spectacle, but only for one moment, for I should, indeed, have deemed it wicked to stand idle, where hundreds of men were losing all that they had in the world, whilst I was able to help them in saving at least part of it.

A European, used to our strong stone buildings, can scarcely form an idea of the furious rapidity with which the fire spread in the light wooden houses, which are thoroughly dried by the sun already. In a large booth containing a store, in which I first assisted in removing the goods, I saw the flame striking in with a point like a tongue, of about eight or nine inches long, when the whole ceiling of the dreadfully heated room, as if struck by lightning, at once blazed up, and all the people who were still within rushed with wild haste towards the door. I had myself the upper part of my hands, with which I held a package on my shoulders, singed in a few seconds.

The fire continued raging until about ten or eleven o'clock, before it could be fairly got under, which had at last to be done by demolishing the intervening houses. The loss in goods was 218 enormous, as immense heaps of things had been dragged into the middle of the market-place, where people thought them safe; but the flames sought their prey even beyond, and all those goods were consumed. At four o'clock in the afternoon, the fire was not yet quite subdued; without, however, any farther danger, it was smouldering below the heaps of rubbish, and even during the night it often rose in columns over the ruins of the fallen houses. But on that very afternoon the carpenters already were again busy between the still glowing beams to raise the framework of a new gambling-house, cooling the spot where it was to stand with water; and working on so actively during the night, that next morning a new hell, with an awning of canvass and a boarded floor, and richly provided with gambling and drinking tables, stood ready to receive new victims.

Over against Dr. Precht's house there was a small wooden building belonging to a Frenchman, who had here a shop of Italian wares. It was necessary to pull this house down, in order to check the progress of the fire. The poor Frenchman had only just arrived on the spot; and, after having opened the door, he did not know in his fright what to save first. In the meanwhile, we had already cut through the two corner posts; and a cable, at which three hundred men were pulling, was twined round the little cabin: yet I still heard the poor fellow bustling within. Twice I ran to the door, calling out to him to take care, as other-wise the house would immediately come down on his head. He was not to be moved; rushing frantically to and fro within, with both his arms full of boxes and bottles, he seemed to have entirely lost his head. Then the flame seized also this building; and now there was no help for it—it must come down. It fell with a crash; and the Frenchman, like a stone squeezed from a ripe plum, darted out through the door with such a start that he threw down all those who were standing in his way.

The flames had now no longer any power; and the fire was got under here, as in all the other places. When the small cabin was burnt down to the ground, the poor Frenchman sat melancholy 219 between his tin boxes, full of roasted sardines, and preserved meats and fruits, which were now rather “overdone.”

My purchases had been very much delayed by the fire; notwithstanding which, I succeeded in getting off from San Francisco on the following Wednesday; embarking with my goods on the small steamer, "Captain Sutter," for Stockton. The boat being crammed full of passengers, we had a very disagreeable, although rather quick passage, reaching Stockton on the next morning. The freight, owing to the good weather, and the improved state of the roads, had become so much cheaper, that I was able to contract for sevenpence the pound to Murphy's Diggings.

The roads were now excellent. All the marshy grounds were dry; and the beasts were proceeding at a good pace under their burden; which certainly was not very heavy. Thus we approached again the Calaveres; when, before crossing this river, we met an empty ox-cart, which was slowly rolling on through the clouds of dust. Some people coming from the diggings were perched on it; but only when I was quite close to them, I was able to distinguish, under the really disfiguring mass of dust, my two former fellow-travellers, Mr. Hillman and his faithful hench-man, Jeremy Livingston. Mr. Hillman looked pale and desponding; Jemmy, on the other hand, so much the merrier, as the hard work of the diggings lay now behind him; and he was, as he expressed it, going to live again amongst Christians. Poor Hillman! his rosy visions had not been realized. He had been obliged to sell everything—his quicksilver machine and provisions, his tent and mule; and of all his goods and chattels, at least as far as I could see, nothing had remained to him but his brown umbrella and Jeremy Livingston.

On the following day, May 10, I left the waggon; and, with only a blanket on my back, I struck into the wood, taking a shorter cut to Murphy's. In the evening, I shot two wood pigeons; and encamped before a good fire, near a clear spring. On the morning after, I hit a stag; but he got off, running down one of the steep ravines; and although it was evident, from the heavy 220 track of blood, that he could not get much farther, yet the direction which he took was so much out of my way, that I was obliged to give up the pursuit. One hour later, I met another hunter, to whom I gave accurate directions as to where he might find the bloody track; and, as I heard in the sequel, he recovered the dead game.

I brought to the diggings the news of the last fire at San Francisco, as also that of a law which had, a few days before, been passed by the Californian legislature; a law which not only created the greatest excitement in the whole of the interior of the country; but also, in some places, led to bloody consequences.

According to this enactment, all the foreigners—that is to say, all those who were not citizens of the United States of North America—if they wished to work at the diggings, be it for themselves or for others, had to pay a tax of twenty dollars per month.

At an earlier period, and in a better season, the people might have perhaps been able to pay from their earnings such a heavy tax; but under the present circumstances, at least three-fourths of the diggers would have been utterly unable to raise it; and the excitement caused by this demand was beyond description.

Especially in Murphy's New Diggings, the greater part of the diggers consisted of Frenchmen—the majority of them being Basques. The Germans mustered in less numbers; nor were there many Spaniards; as in former times, already the Mexicans had been driven away from thence. On the other hand, Sonora, about twenty English miles off, was crowded with Mexicans, Chileneese, and other natives of South America; and the whole country, as far as one could hear, was in a state of the most violent fermentation.

“We will pay no taxes,” said the Germans; “and why should we?” “Just let them come and collect them!” cried the Frenchmen; and the Mexicans and Chileneese, who were never very friendly disposed towards the Yankees, purchased everything they could get in the shape of arms, and seemed quite seriously intent upon putting themselves in a state of defence.

221

The Americans themselves considered the tax as too high; but quietly stated their opinion, that the decree, having once passed into a law, was to be kept and enforced, until the legislature would take better advice to reconsider and change it. Thus the sensible Americans talked; but there were other

wild, hairbrained fellows, who did not look beyond the tip of their own nose, and who cared for nothing but their own paltry interest. They were at once all fire and flame; and would brag that the law was not strict enough by far; and that the foreigners, without further ceremony, ought to be expelled the country altogether.

Thus the 20th of May arrived; and the report suddenly spread in the camp, that a revolution had broken out at the diggings of Sonora; that the sheriff was stabbed, some Frenchmen and a German put in prison; in short, everything thrown into the greatest confusion. A letter from that place, addressed to the French at Murphy's, called upon the latter quickly to come to the assistance of their comrades; at the same time assuring them, that similar summonses had been sent to all the other neighbouring places; in fact, that the whole country was rising.

The effect which this letter, combined with the verbal reports of the bearers, had upon the excitable French exceeds belief. From that moment, nothing was seen but warlike preparations. Almost all the French had guns; but a great part of them had still to procure powder, shot, and percussion-caps, pistols, knives, &c.; and among these arrangements the evening closed in.

The Americans remained quiet spectators until the French, after dusk, had collected at a short distance from the camp, to start for the place which they thought to be threatened. When the small, otherwise so bustling, town of tents, seemed completely deserted; and only here and there, one or other of the French, with his gun and his blanket on his back, ran down the broad and only street, soon after to disappear in the dark; some of the younger Americans made the proposition to barricade the place, to declare it an American camp, and not to allow any of those who had left to return to it. The sensible people again carried 222 the day; and it was at last resolved, quietly to wait for the result of this mad step, and then to act as circumstances might require.

Yet the affair turned out to be a mere hoax. The letter, indeed, was genuine; but the writer of it must have been drunk; and afterwards had very nearly to pay for it with his life; as the French, quite seriously, wanted to hang him. Neither the French, nor any foreigner, had had their rights encroached upon; the Spaniards only had had a procession, and hoisted the Chilenese flag, which

had no other consequence but that the North Americans in Sonora, marching out with beat of drum, pulled down the flag again.

The French returned to Murphy's somewhat ashamed of themselves, and singly, at night, in the same manner as they had set out. There the matter rested; the French apologizing in a memorial to the Alcalde, and the Americans censuring the step at a meeting which was held soon after; so that everything seemed forgotten. But it had created a great deal of ill feeling between the foreigners and the Yankees; at the same time, however, it had also taught the latter what they had to expect if they pushed matters too far—a desperate resistance.

It was interesting at that time to see how, in twenty-four hours after, from all the neighbouring diggings, some armed Frenchmen, most of them on foot, were coming in to take a share in the expected contest; whilst the Mexicans ran away in all directions.

## **CHAPTER XVII.**

### **MURPHY'S NEW DIGGINGS.**

THE life of the digger is quite of its own kind: he cannot even be said to lead the life of a nomad; for even the nomad, before wandering any further, will rest for a short while on the spot where he finds food for himself and pasture for his cattle; whereas the digger, at the first news of some rich places found in the 223 neighbourhood, at once packs up his tools and his blanket, and removes through mountains and valleys to the new El Dorado, which, alas! only too often disappoints him just as badly as the one which he has left.

Thus, I had scarcely returned to Murphy's Diggings, when a vague report spread that a fabulously rich place had been found in the neighbourhood; and some diggers, as mostly happens under such circumstances, lest any one might follow their track, left their present diggings under cover of the night, and marched further into the mountains. Such a thing, however, generally remains a secret only for a few days, and every one at our diggings soon knew that the new rich gold field was

distant about ten miles, at Carson's Creek, whither the people now set out in crowds, to have each their share in the rich harvest of treasure.

My partner thought himself too weak to undertake such a march and the work connected with it. I, on the other hand, partly to try my luck, and partly from curiosity, went over with some Germans, and arrived about mid-day.

On our road already we found that report had by no means told false; everywhere small bands were journeying towards the same goal as ourselves. The places where small stores or drinking-tents had stood were now abandoned, and only the bare tent-poles, which were left behind, still marked the spots. Waggons, laden with all sorts of provisions and goods, were covering the roads; and when at last we arrived at our journey's end, the mountains and valleys about us offered one of the most animated and interesting sights which can be imagined.

The place was literally swarming with men; and whilst, from all the hills, partly single wayfarers and partly small caravans were pouring into the principal valley, hundreds of diggers who had arrived there before were most busily engaged in marking out places of from about twelve to sixteen feet; and as the real flat—where alone they had dug until then—was already completely occupied, the placers were now extended to the slopes of the neighbouring hills. The people who claimed such doubtful spots took very good care not to dig at once deep into the ground, being pretty sure that they would have first to work to a depth of twenty or thirty feet, through a soil as hard as stone. They therefore quietly waited to see, before beginning their own task, how the shafts would bear which were really dug here and there in the neighbourhood.

We likewise bespoke for ourselves a place, which, indeed, had been touched before, but which was not, as is customary in the mines, marked with a left-behind tool; and we dug on that very evening about four feet into the hard soil; after which we chose among the neighbouring trees a place for our encampment, settling down as well as we could do in a hurry. There was a very melancholy drawback—the want of good drinking water; and even for cooking, we had to use a muddy slop, which was rising from a couple of small hollows not larger than a pot or cauldron, where not only

all the donkeys and mules quenched their thirst, but also the whole neighbourhood used to scour their kitchen utensils, as well as to perform their own ablutions.

Some of the holes in the river bed had already shown themselves very productive—some even very rich; and as several of them happened to be dug out by “foreigners,” it may easily be imagined how much the covetousness and envy of the Americans was excited by their good luck. Here, therefore, means were to be devised how to obtain possession of these placers in a manner which would at once make the affair an American cause, and, at the same time, protect the individuals from the revenge of those who were to be deprived of their lots.

For this purpose, a meeting was called on the same evening, at which I, of course, was likewise present; and if ever in my life I have seen anything wild—and I have seen many specimens of the kind—it was this assemblage. One fellow especially, with red hair and a freckled face, but, besides, with an unmistakable gallows physiognomy, really reached the climax of what could ever be done in that line. The good people soon agreed, that the next morning they would drive every man jack of the foreigners 225 to the devil. Only a few minor points remained still to be settled. One of them, for instance, moved a resolution in remembrance of the last “Spanish Rising”—the same which we at Murphy's called the “French Revolution”—in which the Chilene were said to have bragged that they would give the Yankees twenty days for leaving the diggings—to give to all the foreigners, by a placard to be stuck up next morning, *twenty minutes* for doing the same. This mad resolution did not certainly pass, owing to some of the more sensible Americans—of whom there seemed, however, but a few to have been present that evening—having objected against it; that indeed they had no power whatever to enforce such a law; and that they would only make themselves ridiculous if afterwards it were not obeyed. The meeting at last resolved to extend the twenty minutes to twenty-four hours. This was finally adhered to; and the placard, written in the English and Spanish languages, was really stuck up next morning at a great many places—without, however, any farther result than that some bands of the always very easily frightened Mexicans really packed up their traps and took their departure. All the other foreigners quietly remained where they were; and the

committee, expressly appointed last evening for the carrying out of the law, were wise enough not to notice it.

Another feature in this meeting was likewise comical, but withal very characteristic. After having agreed that the strangers were to be expelled, and the good placers to be declared American property, people did not quite know what had best to be done with the booty. At first it was proposed to draw lots for the holes; others moved for a simple sale by auction; and still others for a lottery. But what was then to be done with the money which was made by it? Spent it must be. One proposal was to this effect: To elect a committee of five men, who were to lay out the money for charitable purposes in Carson's Flat. But within eight days, perhaps, there would not remain one of all these men in the neighbourhood; and who would then want the charity? Another proposal was even more admirable. An old man, with 226 green spectacles and a dangerously sharp nose, wanted to invest the proceeds in building a court-house and a prison at Carson's in the midst of these wild mountains, a piece of folly which he defended with all that flight of energetic oratory which is only heard in its full beauty where humbug is most transcendent.

But as, after long debate, not one sensible proposal was made as to what should be done with the money, it was at last determined to give up the lottery as well as the auction, and to leave the good placers to those who, after the expulsion of the foreigners, would first jump into them. But as the foreigners remained on the spot, the only result of that "red-hot meeting" was, as mentioned before, the departure of some fifty Mexicans, whose places were again mostly taken by other foreigners.

On the next morning, we briskly applied ourselves to our work, and found in the dry soil some very nice nuggets, among others two of twenty-one and twenty-three dollars' worth; yet the gold lay too scattered to pay for the work which was required to get it out. Besides this, owing to the entire absence of good drinking water in the dreadful heat, and with very severe labour, we led such a miserable life that we at last determined to return to Murphy's, and rather to earn less there than to endure here any longer a thoroughly irksome existence.

The working of the Californian diggings had acquired quite a different character from that which it assumed at the first discovery of the gold. Indeed, the people were still working in the rivers and ravines, but the gold lying on the surface had vanished. Whilst, at the earlier periods, the deepest hole was only about seven feet deep, there were now shafts of twenty or thirty feet, and the people burrowed still deeper into the ground. At that time, indeed, the workmen were able to earn as many ounces as they now with great difficulty collected dollars; for, in the first place, the holes being not yet exhausted, they could begin wherever they liked; when they had once found a productive spot they might follow the vein of the metal as far as they deemed fit, whilst now, at every newly discovered placer, thousands immediately crowded thither, and marked out the adjoining placers for themselves, which the first comers, although they might have been there for months, were not allowed to touch; so that they, in their turn, were to seek anew for some other productive place for weeks, or even for months.

In the small gullies it was, of course, the easiest sort of labour to wash the sand of the brooks, which was also the most expeditious mode; but after a short time, almost all the larger brooks were done with in this manner. Indeed, the least quantity of the metal was lying in the narrow bed, a great part of the rest was still buried in the old beds and banks of the river, dating from ages anterior to those terrible volcanic revolutions, with which this country has been visited. At the first discovery of the gold, this fact had either not been suspected, or the people did not heed it, as at that time the precious metal might be raised by easier means than the tedious operation of digging. Now, however, the diggers were reduced almost exclusively to those banks; and in most cases, they might deem themselves lucky if they only earned their day's wages, although these wages were, indeed, more considerable in California than in our own country.

A new feature at the diggings, were the works in the "Flats," that is to say, in such places where the river, or even smaller brooks, describe a sort of arc round a large flat place, which, in all probability, had formerly been intersected by the river. But the holes to be dug in such places, required to be very deep to be remunerating; and how scanty the results were in most of the places of this description, we had, alas! to experience only too forcibly at Murphy's New Diggings.

This extensive flat, where a hundred and seventy-six men worked for nearly a whole week, to dig an immense canal for draining the water rushing in from the springs, yielded only in one tract, comprising twenty to twenty-five holes out of eight hundred, a rich harvest of gold; the rest were either unproductive altogether, or paid only for part of the work bestowed upon them.

228

The works in the gullies were still the best, also for this reason, that they required the least outlay; so that the diggers had not to risk their money besides their work. Thus we were obliged in the Flat to have a pump that we bought at a sale, quite a common wooden one, for ninety dollars, which everybody considered exceedingly reasonable.

I had, in the meanwhile, separated myself from my partner, after having at least given security to all those who had, on my account, supplied to our firm goods on credit. How right I was in acting thus, he very soon showed by his own conduct; as he ran away from the mines, and, after having paid his debts neither at Stockton, nor at San Francisco, absconded from California altogether. I was myself a considerable loser by his dishonesty, which served me quite right; being taught better by my own experience in North America. I had warned others against entering into such partnerships, and now I fell into the same fault.

Very glad not to have any more to do with the fellow, I joined some other Germans, whom I had known before as steady and honest people; and now went on washing gold like the others. But if I was unsuccessful in this business, I found so much the richer a reward, in the experience which I thus acquired of men and their doings. Instead of those substantial dreams, in which our forefathers pictured to themselves a country where roast pigeons flew into your mouth, and where sucking pigs, done to a nicety, ran about with knife and fork sticking in their backs entreating you to eat them, I had found here a country which was an El Dorado, if for no one else, most assuredly so for the literary man, who is hunting after characters.

Strange to say, I made the richest harvest of that kind amongst the Germans; most of whom might have most felicitously figured in the most effective novel; but the first rank among all, is due to a

small Alsatian tailor, called Johnny, or also Napoleon, who sometimes made me laugh until I cried. The little fellow had some very strong suspicion—a thing which has since then 229 happened to other tailoring gentlemen besides himself—that he bore some resemblance to Napoleon; he even wore his old felt hat turned up in a similar manner, and would sometimes stand for a quarter of an hour together, with his arms akimbo, and with contracted eye-brows. He, at the same time, was the most dissolute good-for-nothing little scamp in the world, as long as he had money enough in his pocket to make merry with; but when it was gone, he would work with pickaxe and mattock with as much briskness and alacrity as if he were handling only his needle and shears; and as long as the fit lasted, he would not even take time to mend his only pair of inexpressibles.

Deserters from the Mexican war mustered very strong on all sides: nearly all the volunteers who, previous to the discovery of the gold, had been sent here from the United States, and who, after the discovery, had volunteered to run away; might certainly have been found at the diggings.

Another class was formed by Germans come over from the United States: a great part of whom, as they had learned to do already on the other side of the Rocky Mountains, took a pride in herding with the Yankee's, after having discarded their own nationality altogether. But having known this rabble in the States themselves, and conceived for them the most heartfelt and sovereign contempt, I took very good care, not to have anything whatever to say to them.

My curiosity was most of all excited by a man whom I met one fine morning between the tents, carrying, like the common workmen, a pickaxe, a mattock, and a pan; but, on the other hand, wearing a black dress coat, kid gloves, a silk hat, and patent leather boots—very unlike the common workmen. I am generally loath to stop in the street, to look after any one, especially on account of his dress; but in this case I could not help looking after the man, as long as I was still able to recognise him between the tents and bushes.

“Such a swallow-tailed coat, indeed, does one's aching eyes good here in the mountains,” at last an old Irishman said; who, 230 during all this while, had stood by my side. “I wonder how that gentlemen will look after eight days?”

My thoughts were about running in the same direction; and I now began to inquire who in the world the man could be, as I, indeed, felt interested in him. On that same evening I learned that he was a lawyer, who had come to the diggings with the firm conviction, that with a common tin pan, and a bread knife, he would be able, in kid gloves, to scoop out from the chinks and clefts of the rocks, as much gold as would suffice to keep him ever afterwards—if not extravagantly, at least decently. After having, for three days, walked about the mountains, in the same attire as he was now, and scratched the dry stones, but, of course, found nothing; and now, being too proud to allow himself to be fed by others; and therefore, unless he wished to starve, being placed in the necessity of earning money, he went to work with pickaxe and mattock.

I lost sight of the man for a fortnight. He had gone a little way down the creek, there to try his luck in company of a friend; but, ye gods! how he looked when he first made his appearance again at Murphy's, being compelled to do so to buy provisions. He seemed to be ashamed of his guise, and yet the poor fellow very likely had no other clothes, for he came to the encampment at the dawn of day when the tents were not yet open. I was myself early that morning, going out shooting, otherwise I should not have seen him. The black dress-coat, not being made to stand such work, was torn everywhere, under the arms, and at the elbows, behind in the back, and at the skirts, where, very likely, he had been caught by the thorny brambles; the gloves were only existing on the back of his hand, yet he had put them on with great nicety, and even tried to blacken his boots, although they were burst at the sides, and the leather, being thoroughly soaked with rain, did not take the blacking. Even his trowsers were, in several places, mended with grey worsted, and the man himself looked pale and miserable.

As I heard afterwards, he earned at the diggings not even 231 money enough to pay for his journey back, and he walked to Stockton, and from thence, by Pueblo San Jose, round the whole bay to San Francisco, where, perhaps, some of his old friends were still living.

Besides him, another individual was walking about in kid gloves but without dress coat, and also with a very rueful face; and just this face seemed so well known to me, that I racked my brains in vain, for a fortnight, to remember where I had seen him before. I heard that he was a Spaniard, or

rather a Chileneſe, who every night would tie thick woollen kerchiefs round his neck. This was all the information I could get for ſome time, until one day I accidentally heard that he was no leſs a perſonage than the firſt tenor of the Valparaiſo theatre, who there ſo much pleaſed me, and who now with regret, and with a terrible cold in his head, looked back to thoſe happy days. He is ſaid afterwards to have expreſſed himſelf, that, at the diggings he had found the worſt engagement he had ever had.

Yet that period was not only rich in characters but alſo in acts; and ſometimes very tragical acts. Thus there happened at Murphy's, at that time, a ſtrange caſe, which created a very ſtrong ſenſation, and which cauſed a great deal of ill-feeling between the white men and the Indians.

An Eaſt Indian, a native of the neighbourhood of Bombay, came one day to Douglas's Flat, cloſe to Murphy's Digging, ruſhing into a tent, and ſummoning, in very broken Engliſh, the Americans to his help, ſaying that the Indians had attacked him, and robbed him of 1900 dollars' worth of gold duſt. The Americans at once ſnatched up their rifles to meet the Indians; the latter took to flight, and the others followed them into the mountains, where the ſavages at laſt made a ſtand, reſponding to the ſhots of their purſuers, with arrows, piſtols, and muſkets. In the meanwhile, ſome of the Americans may have recollected that they had proceeded a little too raſhly in the affair, they, therefore, arreſted the Mohammedan, whom, for more than one reaſon, they began to ſuſpect, and conducted him to Murphy's. Indians then 232 came to our camp, and more and more evidence was brought forth that the Eaſt Indian had told a lie; and that he not only had not poſſeſſed 1900 dollars, but had not even a cent. Indians and white men now guarded the Mohammedan; and a deputation went to the Indian village, there to inquire into the havock that had been done. On reaching the huts, we found them deſerted; part of them burned to the ground; provisions and blankets ſcorched and ſtrewed about; the red faces themſelves had fled to the mountains. Our Indian guides, armed partly with guns, and partly with bows and arrows—we ourſelves not even carrying our knives—ſoon ſet us on the right track; their ſhrill ſhouts were answered on different ſides, down from cliffs and out from ravines; and everywhere armed warriors joined our proceſſion, or ran a-head of us along the ſlopes of the hills.

On the highest summit of the mountain, the remainder of the tribe were assembled, the women with their luggage, and the men with arms in their hands; the former ready every moment to take to flight, the men to cover their retreat. How fiercely and threatening those dark eyes glistened at me, when, as the first white man, after the combat, I stepped before them! And yet they had reason enough to be angry. Supported by two friends, and stretching out one arm against the nearest tree, a poor fellow of an Indian stood; and in his back, on the left side of the dorsal spine, about half-way between the hip and the shoulder, a small hole showed where the deadly ball had entered. We had a surgeon with us, who examined his wound, but the ball was within the body; and even if the poor wretch could have been saved, the skill of our leech was not sufficient to deal with such a critical case. We were obliged to leave the wounded man to his fate; and even whilst we were descending the steep mountain, the lamentation of his mother rose to the blue heaven, calling for revenge against the murderers.

On the next morning, a public assize was held. The East Indian was, or at least shammed to be, quite ignorant of the English language; of Spanish he likewise only spoke a few words; 233 so that it was impossible to make him understand only the charge; and as to French, Dutch, or any other language, they were entirely unknown to him. Thus he merely chattered away in his own native dialect; and in vain did the court look out for an interpreter. The evidence against him was, however, considerably strong; and in compliance with the recently passed laws, which placed the Indians under the protection of the United States, the court felt in duty bound to award punishment to any one who caused the death of an Indian. The Bombay man consequently was, after a very interesting trial, condemned to receive twenty-five lashes.

The following day (the 4th July) was the anniversary of the declaration of independence of the United States, the greatest political festival of the North Americans, yet the sentence was nevertheless executed on that day. The first thirteen lashes were given by the American sheriff—the others by an Indian; and it was a strange but picturesque spectacle, on the fine sunny day, to see, under the waving American flag, the wretched isolated Mohammedan, who, conducted by a gang of white men and Indians to the cattle-yard of the butcher, was there tied to a post and flogged,

surrounded in a wide circle by Yankees, French, Germans, Spaniards, Mexicans, and men of other nations; and whilst the copper-coloured Indians, in their fanciful attire, climbed on the fence, and half-triumphantly and half-anxiously looked at the infliction of chastisement, the Mohammedan in vain invoked his Allah. Even after having received his punishment, and satisfied the behests of the law, the sheriff had to keep him under strong guard, as the Indians threatened that, wherever he might turn, they would waylay and murder him.

But there was at that time other blood shed besides Indian; in fact, never had so many murders been heard of before.

The diggings proved less productive than many had expected in their golden dreams; and a vile rabble of ragamuffins, who had come over with a fixed determination to find gold at whatever price, and wherever it might be, very soon arrived at the conclusion that hard work, which did not even always prove successful, was not the most expeditious, nor even surest road to wealth. To this class belonged, in the first and foremost place, the gamblers who, mounted on a mule, and carrying only a serape and a poncho buckled to the back of the saddle, with a bowie knife and two revolvers in their girdles, galloped from digging to digging, like carrion crows that will assemble wherever there is a carcass.

These people never worked; and wherever they did not succeed in gaining money by false play, for which purpose they all carried with them false cards manufactured in the United States: too often only the knife and the pistol had to do the work; and scarcely any of these gentry left the mines as poor as they had come to them.

Besides these, crowds of Mexicans, driven away from every place, were swarming in the mountains. Many of these hotblooded sons of the south were, by the unmerited ill-treatment of brutal Yankees, goaded into such a pitch of despair and revengefulness, that, even ordinarily only too ready with the knife, they in many cases shed blood for the mere gratification of seeing it flow; not, however, but that they also stripped their victims. All parts of the world had sent their contingent of criminals; and it may easily be imagined that ruffians who had, even in civilized

states, carried on the trade of murder, would not at once be changed into honest men here in the wild mountains, where in every tent they were sure to find an easy and sometimes rich victim. Robbery and murder at last became so frequent about these diggings, and especially in the neighbourhood of Sonora, that the frightened diggers at last could not but imagine that they were surrounded by organized gangs of robbers lurking for their prey.

In all sorts of places, as also in their own tents, diggers were found in the morning killed with their short crow-bars, which were lying about. Thus, one day two Mexicans were found in the morning, close to Murphy's camp, lying in the grass, with broken skulls; and their clothes, being cut open, showed only too plainly that their murderers had looked out for their gold bags 235 and had found them. Others were attacked and murdered on the high roads, or from behind bushes, without the murderers being detected in one single instance.

As among the victims there were also some Americans, the Yankees, always ready to improve on such an occasion, affected to impute the guilt to the foreigners, and especially to the English who came over from Australia. Many even wanted to look upon the matter as a conspiracy of the foreigners against the Americans. Others, again, laid it exclusively on the Mexicans, traces having been found with many of the murdered people of the crime having been perpetrated by individuals of that nation.

But, however that might be, the murderers lived in the midst of the diggings, a fact, bloody proofs of which were found nearly every morning; and in Sonora at last a great meeting was convened to devise means how to prevent these crimes, and how to find out the murderers, or to expel them from the diggings.

The resolutions passed in this meeting were as follows:—

“Whereas it appears that the lives and the property of American citizens are at present endangered by the hands of marauders of every climate, every description, and every creed on the face of the earth, and that scarcely a day passes on which the most shocking murders and robberies are not

coming to light; and as, at the same time, we have the peons (bondsmen or slaves) of Mexico, the renegadoes of South America, and the transports of the British realm, among us, we resolve:

1. "That all strangers in Tuolumne county—except persons carrying on a regular trade, or of well-known respectable character—shall be required to leave, within fifteen days, the confines of the said county, unless receiving within that term a ticket of location from the authorities to be elected.
2. "That these authorities shall consist of a committee of three men, to be elected by the American citizens of each camp or each mine.
3. "That all good citizens of this county shall form a general committee to carry out the object of this meeting.

236

4. "That all strangers of this county shall be required to give up their fire-arms or deadly weapons to the chosen men of each camp or each digging, always excepting those who have received permission to keep them. The chosen men shall then give to the strangers a written receipt; and every good citizen shall have the right of disarming any stranger.
5. "That the chosen men of each camp and each digging shall exactly fulfil the duties intrusted to them.
6. "That five hundred copies of these resolutions shall forthwith be printed in the English and Spanish languages, and circulated all through the country.
7. "That the chosen men of every camp and digging shall receive subscriptions for defraying the expenses of publication, and send in the money thus collected to the proprietors and editors of the Sonora Herald."

As soon as these resolutions were published, crowds left the camp at Sonora to go to other diggings; many of them, proceeding in regular gangs, were disarmed by the Americans, and some individuals were arrested on suspicion and put on their trial; yet, as there was not the least thing brought home

to them—some one or other of the real murderers perhaps sat in judgment on them—they were set at liberty again.

Near Angel's Camp only they caught a murderer, and he was an American. He was hanged, and his accomplice in the murder, a Mexican, was shot whilst trying to escape from his pursuers.

There were strange doings at that time in the diggings, which, of course, did not lose in the telling. If ten murders had been committed, report spoke of thirty; there was no isolated tent in which one victim at least was not said to have been slaughtered. At the same time, numbers of people were seen walking about, bristling with knives and pistols, according to their own version, merely for the protection of their own precious lives; and this was the period when the newspapers especially raised a tremendous outcry about the dangers threatening the lives of American citizens, unless the most expeditious measures were taken against all 237 foreigners of every description. This state of things, however, lasted only a short time; after three weeks, already, murders were heard of only rarely, and the foreigners remained where they had been until now.

About that time, we four Germans, who worked together, were one night quietly and comfortably asleep in our tent; close by us there was another smaller one, likewise belonging to two countrymen of ours, natives of Altona; one of them, a young man of the name of Starke, who had formerly served as a volunteer in Mexico, and the other a cabin-boy, run away from some Hamburg vessel. The latter was likewise lying on his mattress, and we had heard him for some time snoring most lustily, when suddenly a voice was heard outside the tent; and Starke, whose tongue, however, seemed to be rather heavy, called out:

“Wilhem, as sure as you are an honest burgher of Altona, murder is going on down there; they are stabbing and shooting all the Germans.”

“But, Starke,” Wilhem said soothingly, “it must be midnight; go to bed, that's much more sensible than to rouse the people at night when they are tired and worn out.”

“No, Wilhem, as you are a true burgher of Altona, come out and help, or all Germans will be murdered; and now he told in a rather confused style, at the same time addressing his speech likewise to us, that a party of Irish were standing in a tent below, armed with pistols, and keeping the Germans at bay under the table.

“Well, Starke,” Wilhem exclaimed, “it is a very rascally job, and I should be tremendously glad to go with you; but I have sprained my leg this evening, and I can't set my foot on the ground.”

We four in our tent felt quite satisfied that Starke was half drunk, but we also knew that he would not have told a downright lie; and that, at all events, something must be the matter. We, therefore, determined to go down and see what it was. I had put up my rifle in the camp for safety, as we were very often obliged to leave the tent alone; yet I could very easily get it, if I should have any use for it below. There was, at any rate, some row there, as even on our hill we were able to hear a wild noise and volleys of abuse resounding through the night.

In a few minutes we were below, and found that the noise proceeded from an Irishman, a journeyman baker, who was standing in the middle of the street with a large saddle-pistol, vowing, with grievous oaths, that he would not go to bed before he had shot one of the “Dutchmen.” I now first of all went up to him by myself, and as I thought him to be completely drunk, tried to induce him to turn in; but he held, with a very shaky hand, his loaded pistol so close to my nose, and began to inveigh so fiercely against the Germans, that at last my anger also was roused, and fetching my gun from a neighbouring tent, I called out to the Irishman, who was about fifteen paces distant, to make haste to be off, or to shoot, and take his chance of what would follow.

Nor did he wait to be told so a second time. In the bright light of the moon I could see him quickly raise his arm, and in the next minute the shot resounded through the whole camp. At the same moment, I had also levelled my gun, but just when I was going to fire it off, I saw that he was standing before a tent, so that my ball might have struck some innocent person. I therefore sprang across to the other side of the street to get a free aim at him; on seeing which, the ruffian in all haste crept into one of the tents. I remained on the spot for about an hour, with the fixed determination

to shoot the fellow down as soon as he made his appearance again; but he came no more, and next morning he had vanished, without leaving a trace behind him, and was never seen again at Murphy's or at anyother digging. At Carson's Flat only he was said to have presented himself after a few days, and collected money for his principal, with which he absconded.

When, on the next morning, I sought for the place where the ball which he meant for me had taken effect, I found that the fellow's pistol had been loaded with buck-shot, seven of which 239 had penetrated the canvass of Böhm's tent, by the side of which I had stood.

Stoutenburgh, where we had pitched our tent—called after a certain Staudenburg, a German, who had set up the first store there—although consisting only of tents, had, during the course of the summer, been raised to the rank of a real town, where an alcalde, a sheriff, and a constable were duly elected. The whole town comprised about fifty tents, two or three block-houses, and a house built of planks; yet it already boasted nearly as many “bars” as tents, besides three American and four French diningrooms, two doctors' shops, at least twenty gambling-tables and a skittle ground, where you might have three throws for the reasonable price of a quarter dollar.

Among the real improvements of the little place might be reckoned a post-office, newly established at the diggings; a man, appointed for the purpose, going once a month to Francisco to fetch the letters that might be lying there, for which purpose he was instructed with the names of all those individuals at the diggings who expected any. This system was afterwards made still more useful, as, by the same way, gold could be sent to San Francisco. It is true that the respectable character of the carrier was the only security for its due delivery.

The postal administration at San Francisco was, however, at that time, in the saddest confusion; which, of course, also reacted on the post of the diggings. The letter delivery at the post-office of San Francisco was the very paragon of irregularity. There were, indeed, letter-boxes for the several firms, but not in sufficient numbers: and those who were not so fortunate as to obtain one of the first boxes (at four dollars per month) were now obliged to take their stand with the general and very numerous crowd of the public before the two windows of the post-office, and to wait, often for

hours, for their turn. There were only two divisions, one from A to K, and the from L to Z, where the people might inquire for their letters. Now, the reader may imagine how tedious a proceeding the delivery was, when he is told, that for every single 240 name the clerk had to look over at least twenty, but sometimes over forty or fifty letters, the names of which began with the same initial. If every time a list of the letters had been made out, the distribution would have been much more simplified. This was not, however, done; and the authorities of the post-office did not grow tired of provoking the ire of the public.

It was a very interesting sight to behold the waiting crowd in bad weather, arrayed in two rows of the oddest and wildest medley—here a dress coat, next to it a blouse, but all of them soaked to the skin. There they were, slowly, alas! very slowly moving, step by step, towards the windows from which the expected solace was to be dispensed: and fortunate were those who received any letter at all; for how many stood for five or six hours in this way in the mud above their ankles, and exposed to all the stress of the weather, and yet, when they had reached the goal, all their hopes were crushed by the melancholy answer, “None for you, sir.”

As everything else in California, this inconvenience at once became an object of speculation. Idlers, who did not know how to kill their time, would place themselves early in the morning near the post-office, plying for purchasers—that is to say, for persons who were too late, and who would buy their places, in order not to have to wait for hours; and it has happened, especially in very bad weather, that such fellows received two, three, or even four dollars for a place close to the window.

Every individual was allowed only to ask for one name. If there were two hundred persons waiting—and very often there were more of them—and if at last, after long trouble, one had made one's way up to the window, one had, in order to inquire for a second letter, even in the same category, to begin again at the bottom; and all the others were watching with great jealousy that this order was kept.

The abuse which was carried on with regard to the letters for the diggings was even worse. Any man, whether being commissioned for it or not, would go to the post-office, and there give 241

in a list of names which he wished for certain diggings. Among these there were so and so, many different individuals of the name of John Smith, George Miller, Frederic Schultze,<sup>\*</sup> or similar equally comprehensive patronymics; and with the parcel, for which he had to pay the postage, he went back to the mountains. There he got for every letter which he brought one dollar, in addition to the postage, those only remaining in his hand which would not tally with the Christian names. Had these stray letters been returned to San Francisco, they might still have reached their address; but, after having been hawked about for some time in the diggings, they generally suffered the fate of waste paper; whilst those for whom they were intended were perhaps anxiously waiting for news from home.

“At the last census, there were returned in Berlin not less than twenty-four thousand persons bearing this name.  
—TRANSLATOR.

This postal system, especially the transmission of gold, was, in the course of the summer, very sadly disturbed, as the so-called post contractor—a man who was generally considered as most honourable, and who had already conveyed several thousand dollars' worth of gold to San Francisco, one day, when he had a larger amount to carry than usual—I think it was four thousand dollars—absconded, and was never heard of again.

We had now for some time worded on the Flat, not only at a considerable expense, and without any return whatever, but also, besides, spending part of what we had earned before in the ravines. Being fully convinced, therefore, that at Murphy's Rich Diggings there would not be any pickings for us, we determined to move to other gold fields farther to the north.

In this determination we were still more confirmed by some of our neighbours, who had likewise made up their minds to leave Murphy's. They told us, that from reports received of Macalome, they knew a good place, of which they spoke in a very mysterious manner; and, although they invited us to go with them, they strictly enjoined us not to say ought about it to any one. But, as was the case with all those “good places,” every one thought he 242 had hit upon the very best; yet when matters were brought to the test of experience, the result generally clashed with the expectation.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE MOSQUITO GULCH.

OUR next, and for the present, common goal, was the Macalome, a little river flowing north of the Calaveres, into the San Joaquin, which, at any rate, is one of the best spoken of, of all the auriferous rivers of California; as on its banks, and on those of the Stanislaus, are the richest diggings that have, at least until now, been discovered.

The journey offered little novelty to the digger, who was used to such scenes; although the newly arrived European might have found the road wild and picturesque enough. We were, I think, eight or nine of us, all Germans, leaving our old diggings in search of a new El Dorado; and proceeding briskly and merrily through the green shady woods, climbing steep hills, and leisurely winding our way through well watered valleys; where certainly the ruthless hand of the greedy digger had not improved the formerly solitary beauty of nature.

The beasts of burden, laden with our tents, blankets, and tools —provisions are about this season (August) everywhere too cheap to think of encumbering one's self with them—we ourselves loitering after them, with our guns slung on our backs; and only two of us mounted, who had hurt their legs—one of them by the fall of his mule, and the other by I don't know what: thus we travelled along; and laughter, merry songs, and conversation relieved the monotony of the rather fatiguing journey.

The costume of the digger is very simple. A straw hat, a woollen shirt, linen trowsers, rarely stockings, but sometimes on one foot or the other a woollen sock; and shoes, the right of 243 which—the unmistakable characteristic of a digger—is, in every instance, trodden out of shape. When travellers have no beasts of burden with them, the mattock not unfrequently serves as a walking stick; we, however, having loaded all our tools on the mules, were walking quite unencumbered—fortunately for us, as the weather was very hot and sultry.

On the second evening, we found in a valley of the Calaveres, several branches of which we had already crossed, very excellent drinking water, near which we pitched our camp. We were approaching the end of our journey; and our fellow-travellers began to hold secret consultations, very likely being afraid lest we should encroach upon their “good place.” They, therefore, at the last quarters for the night, on the banks of the Calaveres, pretended to stop where they were; and made one of their former companions, a German storekeeper, who had come up with them only the day before, ride in advance. Of course we three immediately saddled our beasts likewise, and rode on; but I felt really provoked that they should have thought us so stupid, as to hope that they should be able to keep secret from us a place towards which they were journeying with mules and sumpter horses; and I allowed my two companions alone to pursue the road which we had, until now, intended to go, whilst myself followed the track of those two mysterious travellers.

Not one of us thought of interfering with their placers,—there was room enough at the diggings for all; but we wished at least to shame them. It was not even difficult to find the tracks of the mules, as one of them had the hoof of one of its forelegs shaped in a very extraordinary way. At noon already I arrived at a place where they had halted; and one of them, on whom I may have come rather unawares, whilst he was standing on a slope before his tent, suddenly rushed back, and showed his face no more.

I knew now all that I wanted to know; but I had in this way been led to a mountain stream, to which we had never intended to go; where, however, I found some of my former 244 fellow-passengers of the “Talisman,” who urged me most pressingly to come to their neighbourhood; as not only many Germans were working there, but also excellent business was being done; and I determined to follow their advice, which I had thus accidentally obtained.

On that day, something happened to me, which I had not had to complain of for some time, and which, indeed, ought not to be expected from my weather-beaten frame—I fainted. When I felt the swoon coming on, I had just time to stagger to the shadow of a tree, after which I lost all

consciousness; and when I recovered again, I was lying in the sun, so that the fit must have lasted for a considerable time.

I have had these fits before, after violent exertion; yet luckily I never suffered any evil consequences from them, nor did they leave the least weakness behind; and when I had recovered my senses, I got up again, as if nothing had happened, and quietly proceeded on my road. That night I went as far as Macalome Hill, another gold field, and slept there. On the next morning, I looked out for my two companions; who, on account of the many stories of murders which were circulating in that neighbourhood, had become rather anxious about me.

The Macalome, as to scenery, is one of the most picturesque mountain streams of California. Its clear waters, in some places between the broad slopes of stately mountains, and in others between steep, craggy banks, and then again through somewhat larger plains, but always rapid and noisy, rush down to the Joaquin; and there only, in the marshy and reedy grounds, it loses its lively and pleasant aspect. Noble pines, firs, cedars, and oaks, cover the slopes on its banks; and deeply cut gullies mark the spots where the diggers, in the shade of yew, wild cherry trees, and the mountain ash, rock their gold cradles, and dig and hack in the sweat of their brow. Near the river itself—which is one of the richest that has, until now, been heard of—the diggers are likewise at full work; the middle Bar especially, is the scene of very great activity.

## 245

It has received its name from being placed between two other Bars, higher up, and lower down; and it will not be out of place here to remark, that a bar, in digger's language, means a bank of sand or gravel in the middle of the river. The Middle Bar is said to have contained, and still to contain, much gold; on account of which, about the end of the summer, when the water is lowest, a great number of people congregate together. Shops of all sorts were established; at the same time, of course, also a drinking tent, besides billiard-tables, and even a piano,—the latter on the premises of a German, who, several years before, had come with the volunteers to California. As a matter of course, there were plenty of gambling tents besides; and with them, all the concomitant evils of drunkenness, murder, and bloodshed. Here and there, also, a señorita might be seen wriggling

about in her silk and finery between the tents, or flirting at the drinking booth with the gamblers and loafers—a most distinguished species of the genus vagabond—and graciously condescending to allow herself to be treated to sweets and champaign.

At all the diggings together, I have seen no place more romantically situated than this Middle Bar. The dwellings consisted, as in all the other diggings, of tents; which formed regular streets, and which reached down very close to the river; but the streets were not open or exposed to the rays of the sun, but all of them closely covered with green foliage, and likewise on the back, and on the sides, the tents were connected with each other by the green walls of overhanging bushes; so that the whole encampment formed one contiguous bower, which, from the neighbourhood of the river, and the breeze—to which, on all sides, free passage is left—afforded a very cool and pleasant residence.

Money, or rather gold—for silver coin is so scarce at the diggings that even quarter or eighth dollars are weighed before changing hands—seemed to circulate rather freely. The store and innkeepers did a good deal of business, and in the evening the gambling-tables were fully occupied. With the exception of some individuals who were rummaging the banks of the river, 246 most of the operations were here carried on by companies, who in several places turned off the waters of the river by dams in order to work its bed. The yield in such case was generally very rich; but such enterprizes also required enormous expense and work, and the risk was out of all proportion to the outlay.

From the Middle Bar we went down the river, and afterwards up its southern arm to the sources of the Rich Gulch, formerly one of the richest mountain streams of California, and beyond it, to the Mosquito Gulch, about seven miles from the Rich Gulch Flat, and one mile at most from the southern arm of the Macalome, into which its gushing waters rush down between steep banks.

The name of the Mosquito Gulch was not very inviting; yet I soon found that, like Schiller's Mary Stuart, it was “better than its fame.” The Germans who so named it had never seen any place really pestered with that plague; and the few buzzing insects, which were flying out here and there

between the shady bushes on the banks of a beautiful mountain stream, appeared to them fully as bad as those myriads of bloodsuckers on the banks of the Mississippi and Orinoco.

The scenery of our camp and of the surrounding country was charming. Our camp was the highest between the low land and the snow region, yet we were certainly far enough from the latter not to think of fetching from thence "ice for cooling our drink," as has been literally stated in the report of Mr. Thomas Butler King, the commissary sent by the government of the United States to California. It is, indeed, quite wonderful what reports have been circulated about this blessed California; catchpenny publications have had a good share in it. Every one who has once set foot in the country undertakes to write long reports about it; for which purpose he, of course, questions the people who come back from the diggings to town, who then, faithful to diggers' fashion, think it excellent sport to give him as many lies for his money as he may wish in a long summer's day. Such tales are then printed, and on their authority thousands leave their country.

On the crest of the ridge of hills, which, at the same time, 247 formed the right bank of the Mosquito Gulch, and their colossal fir trees and shady oaks, four tents were pitched, exclusively inhabited by Germans, who besides, with a few exceptions, were all of them fellow-passengers in the Talisman and the Reform. The bank sloped down in steep descent to the clear mountain stream, which rushed along between a species of wild cherry trees, ashes, yews, and hazel bushes, with gigantic cedars and all sorts of tall pine trees towering above the low underwood. Indeed, the whole green landscape, with the white tents in the middle, formed a most enchanting panorama.

Among the shrubs at the Musquito Gulch, I found a species of wild coffee, with a black fruit like a cherry, and double kernels exactly like that of the coffee. To be quite sure, we afterwards dried a small quantity of them, which we roasted and ground, and the beverage obtained from them certainly resembled in flavour as nearly as possible its Arabian original. The shrub, which occurs also at the other diggings, is very different in leaf from real coffee, the similarity being confined only to the fruit, which grows on the branches just in the same manner as that of the coffee plant, and also in its raw state has the same taste.

The Musquito Gulch had been regularly worked only for a few weeks, and the Germans had already taken out many a fine nugget; but the operations were difficult, inasmuch as you had to hit exactly the place where the gold lay deposited, otherwise you might dig a very deep hole in vain. People generally found, however, either a great deal or nothing at all; and as until then we had been remarkably unlucky in our digging, we were consistent also in this place, finding nothing at all, or at least no more than barely sufficed to pay for our keep. We knew, however, for certain, that the gulch in several places was very rich in gold; and in such a case it is, at any rate, better to hold out, as in the long run one is generally sure to hit once upon some productive place, perseverance doing for one what chance does for others.

It was very strange that just the richest places were discovered by accident, and that fortune has generally favoured the greatest 248 scamps among the diggers, just as if she knew that these worthy favourites of hers would scatter her gifts as speedily as possible to become her slaves again.

Thus the most productive gulch on the Macalome was discovered in the following way:

A son of the Emerald Isle having once been particularly lucky all day, was, of course, very anxious that evening to reduce, by means of sundry whisky toddies, his purse to its original state, in which he completely succeeded; so much so, that about midnight he was most delightfully off his legs, only retaining just consciousness enough to know that the place where he then was was not his own home, and that perchance it might be time now to return. Suiting the action to his thoughts, he set out at once; but if, in doing so, he had any intention to seek for his bed, he very sadly missed his object, as immediately on leaving the drinking booth, he followed a path leading in the opposite direction of his tent, and staggered into the thickest of the wood.

The host saw that the man would not reach his home; but as it was no matter of his where the poor fellow passed his night, he did not interfere with him, being only too glad to have got rid of him. Boniface, therefore, quite unconcerned and comfortably shut himself in, in his tent.

Paddy, in the meanwhile, reeled quite happy and triumphant towards the Steep Gulch, which was not very far off, and where he contrived to lose his footing on one of the most abrupt spots, and to tumble down into the ravine. That he happily reached the bottom of it, was a fact of which he was aware only the next morning, as there is every probability that he fell asleep already during his descent, and that he never awoke before the sun shone into the gulch, which happened about ten o'clock.

The warm rays at last revived him; and as, very naturally, he felt as if all the bones in his body were broken, and his head was even more muddled than usual, he remained lying on the same spot, and, like that countryman of his, put the question to himself, "Where did I leave myself yesterday?" Of course, he had not the least idea of his whereabouts; but the only thing that troubled him was the uncertainty how far he might be from the nearest drinking booth, as his throat was completely parched after having lain dry for so many hours.

Whilst he was thus stretching his limbs and lolling about, he began to beguile his time by scraping and digging with his knife into the soil, as far as he could reach without rising from the ground, and had in this manner scooped out a hole about four or five inches deep, when some shining object met his eye.

"Gold, I declare!" he called out, at once recovering all his activity and his wits; and quite comfortably he got out a nugget of about four ounces.

Perfectly sobered, he knew very well how to make the best of his find. Keeping the place as well as his earnings secret from every one, he raised in a very short time five or six thousand dollars' worth of gold, with which he went to San Francisco; from whence, after having gambled away every cent, he returned to the diggings, where, in the meanwhile, his good place had been discovered and worked by others.

Such a piece of good luck did not, however, fall to our lot, as we had to work hard for every cent which we earned.

After our having settled for good at the Mosquito Gulch, one of us was to return to Murphy's to lead back the horse, which he had only hired for the transport of our luggage. He was, at the same time, also to buy at Murphy's, if an opportunity should present itself, a donkey; these being, at all events, the most suitable beasts for diggers in the mountains, as they will get pasture even on the poorest slopes, and never stray from the places where they are put up, as mules and horses almost always do.

This errand having been entrusted to me, I encamped on the first evening among some fellow Germans, near a small rivulet which flows into the Calaveres. These people had settled here for the purpose of washing gold, but they tried, at the same time, to make money by other means; with which view, they cut now at the favourable season a large quantity of hay, to sell it during the 250 winter. Indeed, this was not very easily done in these wild tracks, and a great part of their stacks were consumed by the fires of the Indians, who, at the very time of haymaking, set fire to the neighbouring wood, to gather their usual harvest of roasted locusts. On the second evening I reached Murphy's, just in the right time for two reasons. In the first place, I was just able to save part of some property belonging to me, as my former partner, who was still in my debt, had already made preparation to leave the diggings, succeeding after all in cheating me, as he had done the others; and secondly, I had an opportunity to witness one of the thousand humbugs which are daily in various ways enacted at the diggings, but of which I had never seen such a mad and yet artful example.

As has been told before, a great many storekeepers, with goods and provisions, had crowded to Murphy's Flat, with the hope of making there a rich harvest. Thus at last a little town was formed, and every day new consignments of drinkables, clothing, provisions, tools, tobacco, &c., arrived. Yet all these hopes were sadly disappointed, owing to the unproductiveness of the Flat; and the diggers themselves—many of them without having touched their “claims”—began to leave a place where they were not even able to make a day's wages, as it was called. The departure was a very easy step for the diggers, who might quite easily carry all their goods and chattels on the back of a horse or mule, or even on their own; but if this “exodus” continued, what would become of the

storekeepers? Who would buy of them their merchandise; which had, with so much trouble and such considerable expense, been conveyed to the mountains? Means had, therefore, to be devised to keep the people here, at least for some time longer, and the most simple and natural expedient was, to send brilliant reports about the diggings to San Francisco.

These flaming accounts did not, indeed, fully answer their purpose, as not only Murphy's, but other mines also were trumpeted forth in a similar manner. Yet they had at least this effect, that the new comers, quite bewildered by this concert of puffing, were induced to believe the lies of one digging merely because they were countenanced by the lies of another.

There was another person besides interested in the longer stay of the diggers at Murphy's—the alcalde, or justice of the peace, at that time a certain Major Wyatt, who at Murphy's, without reckoning other diggings, for the registration of the so-called claims—for each of which he got two dollars—had raised a considerable sum; and who was too much pleased with this happy state of things as that he should have so easily given up such a lucrative sort of business. He had, therefore, himself sent plenty of reports to San Francisco; but, as they would not take any longer, he devised another expedient.

Close behind the tents of Murphy's, there was a large and scarcely explored track of land, of which the inhabitants of Stoutenburgh evidently had but a poor opinion, otherwise they would have a long time ago attacked it themselves. Here, all at once, a couple of deep holes were dug, and, at the same time, vague reports circulated through the town that fabulous wealth had been found in them. Now, all the placers were at once bespoken—that is to say, the “claims” were marked out; only the registering would not so quickly go down with the people. The justice of the peace, therefore, tried a different game, buying from a gambler—at least report said so—a nugget of about sixty dollars' worth, which he begrimed with the red soil of the new flat, and which he at first privately, and at last quite publicly exhibited, telling the bystanders that the people who were working there had only lately found this piece in the gravel, pretty near the surface. He showed me the nugget himself, when we were standing together near the hole, in which the diggers were burrowing below.

Some now took the bait, at least registering the nearest placers; but, on the whole, the people had been too often taken in; and some stronger attraction was to be set at work, if they were not to fall off altogether. The trick had been too transparent. The four men who had worked in the hole from which the sixty dollar 252 nugget was said to have been taken, found nothing whatever, and gave up the place in despair; nor did the man of whom the justice had bought the nugget feel bound to keep the secret.

Some stronger, and, indeed, never before heard of attraction was now brought on the tapis, and in a manner one would hardly think possible in this enlightened age of ours.

When the diggers were leaving the camp in crowds, and the store-keepers were in the greatest danger of being left in the lurch with their goods, and ingenious person, of the name of Fletcher, pretended to have invented a goldometer; that is to say, an instrument with which he said he could discover the vein of gold, even at the surface of the soil. In proof of his being serious, he offered a wager of one hundred dollars that he would find, with this machine, a bagful of gold, which some one might hide in an acre of land.

This Fletcher now pointed out a place between two small and at present dry, rivulets, between which he said the vein of gold was meandering. Here he marked ten or twelve holes, not forgetting to keep one for himself; which, however, very prudently he did not work. Whilst the neighbouring ones were eagerly bespoken by others, he quietly looked on; telling them they should confidently dig here, being sure to find gold, and plenty of it.

The place was the very spot where, in the spring, I had made a little garden for salad, radishes, &c. The dry season, and the straying donkeys had, however, for some time done away with the produce; and nothing was left but the fence of thorns, which the diggers, in their high pitched expectations of wealth, had soon pulled down and burnt. They also asked me not to let so good an opportunity slip; but I bluntly declared to them, that after having lent myself to many foolish tricks before. I found it high time to be wise, at least for once.

Reason, however, was thrown away on these people. Being once attacked with the gold fever, they would not allow themselves to be deterred by anything; and in the whole of my life, I have seen no set of people work more industriously than those 253 preeluded Murphyites; all of whom now thought themselves to have seized fortune by the forelock, and were resolved not to let it go on any condition.

On the same day, after having bought at Murphy's a donkey with pack-saddle, for three and a half ounces of gold, I went over to the Calaveres, there to examine a small brook, which was said to contain plenty of the precious metal; and having found there but very little, returned to Murphy's only after four days. Up to that time, the Fletcherians, as they were now called, had dug to a depth of about sixteen feet, without meeting with a particle of gold. Still this mad piece of folly had not yet reached its highest pitch; six weeks afterwards, I heard the final result of this audacious imposition. After having gone to a depth of twenty-five feet, without any return for their trouble, the workmen at last began to entertain doubts about the wisdom of their undertaking. A new and stronger dose of humbug, therefore, became necessary; and was, indeed, administered to them with a most liberal hand.

It sounds like fable, but it is fact; Fletcher had a man mesmerised, who delivered to the anxious bystanders the oracular decision, that they had to dig to the depth of thirty-five feet; there they would indeed have ten feet of water, but they would find twenty-five pounds troy weight of gold.

They could not have desired any more welcome information. They therefore attacked with new zeal the ditches, which already had been nearly deserted; and they dug not only to thirty-five, but even to forty feet, until they were obliged to give it up on account of the water; yet they had not found the least trace of gold.

Fletcher, of course, did not wait for the end. There is no doubt but that he had been bribed and set on by the storekeepers, to whom this respite afforded a longer sale for their provisions; and before the bubble completely burst, he made off, in order to escape from any unpleasant explanations. But as soon as the deception had been clearly made out, "Murphy's Rich Diggings" 254 were

completely done for. It is true, at that very time, the most magnificent accounts from thence were put in the newspapers, as a forlorn hope of those who were interested in the matter; but the bait took no longer. Although some were really decoyed by these reports, to migrate towards Murphy's, yet they heard on the road what the true state of the affair was; and when I was there for the last time, in the beginning of October, the place looked quite deserted and desolate. The tents of the diggers had, for the most part, disappeared; the booths of the stores and innkeepers were partly emptied, and their canvass hanging in rags about the frame work; the skittle-yard was full of bundles of hay; the flat itself, which a few months ago had been the scene of so much life and activity, now lay dug up and waste; and even the gamblers, those vultures of the diggings, who will immediately assemble where prey is to be found, had dispersed in all directions.

But a truce to Murphy's Diggings: I gained my object, in as far as I procured a capital donkey; whom, in honour of our newchosen gulch, I called Mosquito; and on whose back I very snugly, and also with comparative quickness, returned to the Macalome.

At the Calaveres, I again stopped with the Germans, and there passed the night. There were here also several new arriviers—some of them even having left Germany only recently; and when, in the course of conversation, my name happened to be mentioned, one of the men who sported a long and bushy beard, and whose face I had tried for some time in vain to remember, came up to me, inquiring whether I was Mr. Gerstäcker of Leipzig? I said I was; on which he began to shake his head, and at first resolutely refused to believe it; for I wore the true digger's costume, with which any tailor and shoemaker in this unromantic world would decidedly have found fault. He was not, however, himself in a much better trim; and I was not less astonished when he made himself known to me as the builder and master-bricklayer R—of Leipzig. When, on leaving next morning, I offered to him the usual digger's compliment, “I wish you much luck in the diggings,” he said that he wished something much better—never to have seen California. He had, indeed, got tired of it very soon.

That night the cayotas, or small prairie wolves, were howling round the tents in a really frightful manner; and, the next morning, there was a tremendous row in the camp. The donkeys—that is

to say, Mosquito, with a couple of his grey friends whom he had there fallen in with; Mosquito himself boasting a very fine dark-brown coat-had broken into the tent of one of the Germans, and there appropriated to their own immediate use a small sack of flour; another, with dried apples; and, besides, some trifling matter of sugar. The damage was estimated at about five dollars, and the owner insisted on compensation; but as he had no proof, and as Mosquito persisted in obstinately refusing to criminate himself, nothing could be done in the affair.

On Sunday, the 25th August, I reached the Mosquito Gulch again. My partners had not been very successful in the meanwhile, and we worked the next week likewise without scarcely any return; but, on the other hand, the stay there was, in every other respect, as delightful as it can only be in the mountains' most beautiful scenery; the neighbours, with but few exceptions, being Germans, and among them very nice people (although, in every other respect, the company was promiscuous); the provisions cheap enough, and of good quality, to be had at a distance of about five miles, from whence we fetched it every week with our beasts—what more could we have wished for?

The reader will agree with me that the company was promiscuous, when he hears of what elements it was composed. One tent contained a young commercial clerk, a tinsmith, and an agricultural labourer; the second, an ironmonger and a joiner; the third, a coachman and another German, who had lived for some time in North America as a drover; the fourth, a journeyman mason, a piano-forte-maker, and a literary man. To all these were added afterwards a certain Count B—and another clerk.

During the day all of us were working in different spots, each trying his fortune wherever he hoped to find most; but, in the 25th evening, we settled down in friendly conversation round a large fire, which was kept by each of the tents in turn. Of course, we were obliged here, in the mountains, to bake our own bread, which was done before every tent once or twice a-week, so that a good fire was necessary even for this purpose; and, on returning from our day's work, each of us brought some dry wood to keep up a blaze, which served us in lieu of lights. The evening thus passed gaily

away with playing cards, telling stories, and singing; and there was not a merrier set in all the diggings than our company on the summit of the Macalome Mountains.

Nor was there any want of odd characters, either among ourselves or among the neighbouring tents; and I was particularly amused with a Pole, otherwise a rather disagreeable fellow, who always called himself the “poor man,” and who would never cease lamenting that “a poor man like himself” was once for all destined neither to have nor to find anything in this world. All such speeches he would generally conclude with a rueful face and a melancholy wind-up—“Well, let it be so; the stars have once set their faces against me, hang it!” The agricultural labourer had come likewise in the Reform, without a penny in his pocket. At San Francisco, he was at first obliged to chop and dig with the labourers, paid by the town at five dollars a-day, until he had saved enough to pay his passage to the diggings. After having arrived there, however, he literally fell from one good place into another, and thus having quickly acquired a small capital—a thing, even the idea of which was new to him—he seemed to believe it altogether impossible that he should ever see the end of his gold. Whenever, of an evening, he felt particularly merry, which happened pretty frequently, he would let champagne flow in streams; and yet it was scarcely two months since the time when the lad was only too happy to get meat twice a-week.

One of the commercial clerks, Meyer—of course, there were not less than five of that name in the neighbourhood—must have experienced many vicissitudes of fortune. He had come over from Australia; and relied on the old diggers' saw, that “fortune smiled 257 more sweetly on the scamps.” He threw away his money in the most reckless manner; but, as he always worked in company with the labourer just alluded to, he always found new supplies. Notwithstanding his extravagance he saved a sum of about one thousand dollars, with which, about the middle of September, he left the diggings in order to embark for Chilli. There was one great danger for him—he was fond of play; we, therefore, repeatedly warned him not to allow himself to be enticed into one of those hells at San Francisco; but he laughed, and assured us, that, “if he once made up his mind not to play, they would be no temptation for him; and that, besides, he had once before been fleeced by the gamblers,

and a burnt child, as every one knew, was afraid of the fire.” He carried his gold about him, packed together in small leather bags of two hundred dollars each.

A ridiculous incident was told us about this time, which happened at Macalome Hill, and which is only too characteristic of the majority of our dear countrymen. Three Germans had dug there for several weeks without even making sufficient to live upon. Their clothes were torn; and they did not possess the means of buying new. Borrow they would not, as it was too uncertain whether they would ever be able to repay; and they were too honest to cheat. Whilst being in this plight, they received an offer from an American Company, which worked with several quicksilver machines, and which proposed to engage them, giving them regular work at five dollars per day. Living frugally, they could do with eight or nine dollars a-week, so that a handsome sum remained to them.

One of them spoke a little English, and was therefore to act as negotiator; but it was made an indispensable condition by his friends, that a contract should be drawn up between themselves and their employers. In vain other Germans, who were better acquainted with the country, represented to them that a contract would be of little or no use whatever. But they could not be dissuaded. The old leaven of hereditary pedantry was still too strong in them; and they would have best liked a regular German notary to draw out for them a document in the old approved Chancery style.

258

But as this, of course, could not be done, and as they were not themselves sufficiently conversant with English to write it, they went to the Yankee manager, asking him to draw up such a contract himself. He wished at first to dissuade them from it, telling them that, if they liked, they might have their money every week, or even every day, if they wished. But it was of no avail; a contract they would have; and the American wrote them one, which was couched in about the following terms:—

“The undersigned Bernhardt, Ludwig, and Christoph, engage herewith to work for three months at the quicksilver machine of the American “Rover Company;” for which they will each receive five dollars per day, without board; rainy days excepted.

“MACALOME, *the —th of—* 1850.”

This document the American gave, with a laugh, to the three honest Prussians (for that was the country which they boasted as their fatherland). They perused it with great attention, one translating the contents to the others; after which they called some others who were to sign as witnesses; and then put their own names, in large German characters, at the foot of it. And now, when the American had taken the contract and put it into his own pocket, they were quite happy and satisfied. On the next morning they set out most cheerfully; and one of them gave vent to their common conviction, expressing himself to the effect, “that the work was twice as comfortable and safe when the workman had his security in black and white; it was, indeed, a great thing to have everything in writing.”

There were also some scattered tribes of the Indians in the neighbourhood; but they were perfectly harmless, and only sometimes came to the tents to beg for bread.

In the beginning of September, an accident happened to me which might have crippled me for life, and even as it was proved serious enough. One evening—it was the 9th of September—on coming from the work we found no firewood ready, and whilst my only remaining tent-fellow (the other had left us a few days 259 before) was preparing supper, I, although being thoroughly tired by the hard day's work, took up the axe to cut some. A half-withered tree was standing not far from our tent, and I began to fell it; but, after some strokes, the axe rebounded from a hard knot in the wood, and entered with the sharp edge, and with its full weight, into the instep of my right foot. As there is sometimes luck in ill luck, the cut of the axe, although it touched the bone, had neither separated a tendon nor a vein; but I dared not even think of working, and had, for a whole fortnight, to lie quiet in one place. After that period, I again went down to work in the gulch—it is true, for the first week, on crutches, which were simply cut from the bush; and from that time my foot evidently improved; but it was a long time before the wound was completely healed.

But, under these circumstances, I also found out what it was to have a friend in the mountains, where almost every one selfishly cares for his own interest only. I shall never forget the friendly

care which Haye, my faithful tent-companion, took of me. He cooked, baked, washed, and worked, in the meanwhile, for both of us, never tired, and always cheerful; and even insisted on sharing with me the earnings of all the time during which I was unable to assist. This, indeed, was diggers' custom; and had he been in my situation, I should been quite ready to act in the same manner. But all people do not act similarly; and it has happened more than once, that unprincipled men have most heartlessly deserted even their best friends, just when their help was most required.

From that time it seemed as if the ill luck, which until then had pursued us, was taking a turn. We found at the placers which we now worked a considerable harvest of gold; and we might now calculate, that, after deducting the expense of living, which amounted to about twenty-six dollars per week for both, the weekly earnings of each of us was not less than fifty dollars; and thus at length I had at least a hope to gain, until the 1st of November—which I had fixed as the last term of my stay at the diggings—money enough to go elsewhere; and more than this I did not expect from California.

260

That term, however, was gradually approaching; and I began to make my preparations, when, one fine afternoon, a young Holsteiner, Count B—, whom I have spoken of before, came up to us, bringing friendly remembrances from Meyer, and telling us that the latter had won at San Francisco, at the gambling-table, about one thousand dollars in addition to his gold, and had gone with it to Chili. I answered him, that Meyer rather deserved one thousand lashes for having gambled again, as he might just as well have lost all that he had; but the others would not believe the story at all, and expressed an opinion, that he had not even left California. The Holsteiner now referred to a friend of his, who would follow him in a few minutes, and who would be able to confirm his statement; and whilst he was still speaking, whom should we see before us but Meyer himself, who, in an apple-green pilot coat, with a few wollen blankets of the same colour on his back, stepped, laughing and singing, out of the thicket. He had lost all his money to the last cent, and had even been obliged to borrow the needful to pay for his journey to the diggings. It is true he affected to laugh at what he called his misfortune, and to be anything but sorry for having to work during the winter at the diggings again; but his pensive mood, so different from his former bearing, showed very plainly

the real state of his feelings. But the past could not be undone; and so he was now obliged, at the approach of winter, without money, and without a stock of provisions, to begin work anew. Indeed, he consoled himself, saying, with a laugh, "That fortune had, at the diggings, been most favourable to those who had most recklessly squandered her gifts." But although there was some truth in the remark, it seemed no longer to apply to his case; when I left the diggings, he had not yet been able to earn as much as would pay for his weekly board.

I have not, however, told this instance, as being of rare occurrence; on the contrary, similar cases happen here only too often. Strange to say, they would have fared worst at the gambling-table are generally most eager to return to it, thinking that, in this way, they will be able to force their luck, whereas they have not even a fair chance, owing to the nature of the game itself; whilst, on the other hand, the experience, and almost in every case, the false and fraudulent play of the head keeper of the booth, is against them.

## **CHAPTER XIX.**

### **DEPARTURE FROM THE DIGGINGS—STOCKTON—SAN FRANCISCO.**

ON the last day of October, as I had resolved when removing to the Mosquito Gulch, I ceased working; and made over my not yet finished placer to other Germans. Our donkey we had sold the week before, so that there were only a few things which I still might call my own at the diggings, and these I packed up on the morning of the 1st of November; after which I left the Mosquito Gulch and the gold fields altogether. But it is strange how completely habit is able to take hold of our hearts. For many months I had yearned for this moment of departure. As long as I had been at the diggings, I had had nothing but toil and privation, in the midst of which I was often only kept up by the hope of soon collecting the money which I wanted to leave the country; the last long weeks I had passed on my hard couch—the bare ground, with a blanket on it—sighing for the time when I should be able to follow the setting sun to the west, like a lame bird of passage, which is kept back on a strange shore; and now, when I had attained my object, and when I was preparing at last to leave the mountains, a feeling came over me, as if I was shaking hands with a dear friend whom I

was to see no more. Yet it quickly passed, like a fleecy cloud before the sun; and, no sooner had I the tents behind me, than it fell, like a heavy load, from my heart. One thought was now uppermost in my mind, "I am free, and at liberty again to plunge into the wide, wide world, and across the sea homeward."

Haye, my partner, had left me about a fortnight before, to work during the rainy season for a fellow passenger of the *Talisman*, a Mr. Kohlberg, who had a shop at the Rich Gulch. He got there 262 a hundred dollars per month; and being on very friendly terms with his principal, he had a very pleasant life of it. At all events, a living was secured to him for the winter. But any one who has once tasted the free, and quite independent life of the diggings—a true vagabond existence, barring the hard work—will find it exceedingly difficult again to accommodate himself to any other; and pleasantly situated as Haye was there, he seemed not at all disinclined to return to his work at the diggings. I slept that night at Kohlberg's store; and when, on the next afternoon, the expected mules arrived, I went "on board of one of them," after having taken an affectionate leave of my very good and faithful friend, Haye; and rode, on the broad Mexican pack-saddle, down towards the low country.

Let not the reader imagine that a ride on such a pack-saddle is a pleasure. These saddles only serve to have the baggage strapped on them; they are without stirrups; besides which, they stand out too far on both sides to admit of anything like a firm seat. If to this, you add the amenities of an obstinate mule without a bridle, you may understand, that, under such circumstances, the pleasure of the journey depends much more on the mercy of your long-eared steed, than on your own good temper and horsemanship. The beast which I bestrode threw me twice, to the great amusement of the Mexican drivers, who were sitting quite snugly in their ordinary saddles; but as the animals (with the exception of such little tricks) are patient enough, and of very little height, such a tumble is of little consequence; and the best thing is, to pick one's self up, and to share in the laughter.

My fellow travellers from the mountains, were two Americans and a Hungarian. The two Americans, being brothers, intended to remain at San Francisco, and to look out for work during the

winter; the Hungarian was for going home; and whenever our mules were obliging enough to keep together, we beguiled our time by telling each other the history of our adventures at the gold fields.

At the Calaveres, where we had a short rest, I fell in again 263 with that small tribe of Indians with whom I had had some intercourse before, and distributed among them some trifles, for which I had no longer any use, but which were of value to them.

Men, women, and children, were all the while standing round me, telling to each other, in their own language, some story, which must have been exceedingly interesting to them, as they were nodding and gesticulating in the most animated manner; they also, as I observed with great astonishment, would every now and then point to my right waistcoat pocket. At first, I did not know at all what they meant, and at last fumbled in that pocket, to find out whether there was anything in it that attracted their attention; yet no sooner had I put my hand in it, when suddenly all of them, among screams and laughter, flew away in all directions, as if a thunderbolt had fallen amongst them. Now I remembered that I had formerly carried my burning-glass in that very pocket; and this the poor fellows had not yet forgotten.

Here we heard, however, the very unwelcome news, that the cholera was raging most fiercely at Sacramento and San Francisco, and even at Stockton. It was, indeed, a very uncomfortable feeling, thus to move from the healthy mountains into towns visited by that plague. But there was no help for it; and, trusting to these reports being as exaggerated as such reports generally are, we quietly proceeded on our road.

I was struck with the number of houses and tents which everywhere had sprung up on the roadside. We scarcely now travelled a mile without finding a rancho or a drinking booth. On the crossing of the Calaveres, where formerly only one rather spacious tent had stood, there was now a large two-storeyed house; and at the "Double Springs," the seat of the District Court, a regular little town began to form. Along the banks of the Calaveres, all the land seemed to have been taken possession of; for everywhere the bright roofs of newly-raised blockhouses, or the dazzling white canvass of primitive tents, were shining forth from the autumnal foliage of the trees which lined the shores

of the river. Whether the land will be fit for agricultural purposes, time alone can show. 264 The drought in summer is almost too great; but, at any rate, vegetable produce may be raised; and cattle breeding will, at all events, be profitable enough to yield a high interest on the capital invested here.

On Monday, the 4th of November, we at last reached Stockton, in the evening; and here also I was astonished at the rapid increase of the town, which had really grown to more than twice its former size. Our inquiries about the cholera were answered by the consolatory intelligence, that the epidemic had attacked and carried off only a few Mexicans; and our minds being thus set at ease, we gave ourselves up to the enjoyment—if enjoyment it might be called—of safely rambling through the town.

Improvements were visible on all sides. The town was enlarged by a better sort of buildings; and the marshy pool, in which we had stuck fast on our first journey to the diggings, was now crossed by a broad wooden bridge. Even a theatre was built, at about five hundred yards from the town; a stately, three-storeyed structure. In fact, everything showed the rising prosperity of the place; for, whilst this theatre and a circus were catering for the amusement of the people, trade and commerce seemed by no means less flourishing. And to mention also the dark side, it must be stated, that the hells, likewise, were fitted up in a much more brilliant manner than they had been before. Their bands, above all, had been increased by many new artists; some of whom were very odd specimens of their kind indeed. Yet the more extravagant the description of noise was which they made, and the stranger the musicians themselves looked, the better it was liked by the keepers of these gambling booths; for the very class of people who would allow themselves to be attracted by this sort of music, was the more highly pleased the queerer the execution. Thus it happened, that, just about that time, a certain virtuoso did truly brilliant business, taking gold by ounces, whilst at home he would have been very content with pence—the man “vot plays many hinstruments,” with the half moon and bells on his head, pandean pipes before his mouth, and triangle, cymbals, a drum, and lots of 265 other noisy pieces of wood and metal on his knees, elbows, and heels. He always drew a large audience, consisting especially of American backwoodsmen, who would crowd around him, and burst out into the highest glee as soon as he began to shake with all his limbs. It was, indeed, good fun to watch these uncouth “forest roses,” screaming with joy like children when they

discovered about him a new instrument which they had not noticed before. He must have attracted a good many customers into the gambling-house where he principally stayed.

In other respects, and especially with regard to the administration of the laws, I heard the very worst accounts from the mouths of different people. A certain justice of the peace, by name of Reynolds, seems, with impunity, to have considered the law, to all intents and purposes, as a milch cow, which was bound not only to supply him with his daily ration of milk, butter, and cheese, but which also, during the short time in which he enjoyed her possession, should yield a sufficient stock to keep him for the time of his natural life. He committed the most glaring acts of injustice, extorting money in the most unblushing manner, with no appeal against his decision (except in very important cases); and carrying matters to such outrageous lengths, that the inhabitants of Stockton at last took the law into their own hands, and drove him out. Some very interesting cases occurred, and rather amusing ones, only that they were certainly no joke for those who had to suffer by them.

Thus it happened, that from the Stockton Restaurant which a German kept in partnership with an Alsatian, some garbage was thrown to an open place near their house. This indeed was contrary to police regulations, and as it had been seen by a constable, who reported the case, the States Attorney lodged a complaint against the firm. So far all was quite right, and Mr. Weber, one of the partners, was condemned to pay the fine of twenty-five dollars, and costs, which latter included an item of twenty-five dollars for the States Attorney. Mr. Weber being quite aware that there was no help against it, paid the money down; but soon 266 after he received an additional demand from the States Attorney, who claimed a second payment of twenty-five dollars, alleging that as the business had two owners, each of them was to pay the same sum. Ridiculous as this mode of arguing was, Weber, who had had some experience of the manner in which justice was administered at Stockton, would, by no means, trust the simple merits of his cause. He, therefore, consulted a friend of his, a lawyer, who, although himself laughing at the absurdity of the demand, gave his advice, that he had better pay it, unless he wished to expose himself to further disagreeables. The only thing that he could do, the lawyer said, was once more to apply at the sitting to the judge himself; and to ask him, whether he was bound to pay such an unfair demand, which had been superadded after the decision of the court. Weber did so, and the judge, after a short consideration, answered with great unction,

that he was indeed bound to pay the demand; “but your honour,” Weber retorted, “if a similar case had affected a joint company of, let us say, a thousand members, as ours is one of two partners: would the whole thousand have likewise been liable to pay twenty-five dollars each to the States Attorney?”

“Without the least doubt,” Judge Reynolds replied, knitting his brows, and fixing a stern look on him; and Weber, who saw well that after such a decision he would not be able to do anything against the tribunal, from which there was, in this case, no appeal, and that, perhaps, he would only have to pay tenfold in costs; sent to the States Attorney the additional twenty-five dollars. Had they been fifty, he would have had to pay them just the same.

The administration of justice in California, on the whole, is certainly as yet in a very bad state; at the diggings it is absolutely impossible to keep up the laws. Let the Americans brag in their meetings as much as they like, that they are able, even in the most remote mountains, to make the law respected; it is not true. The alcaldes standing alone without support, are afraid of the herd of abandoned profligates and gamblers, the scum of the 267 United States, who club together like a dung heap; and however strongly the justices may deny it, they allow their judgment to be biassed by that fear. Foreigners will, under such circumstances, always be in disadvantage, and many a sad scene will result from it.

At San Francisco, things may have already been put on a better footing; but money is there also very powerful, and a poor fellow is, in most cases, deterred even by the enormous expense, from vindicating his right. All the men in public offices here, are come to California for the sole purpose of earning money, and most of them, unfortunately, are determined to gain their end at any condition.

The communication of Stockton with San Francisco, seemed considerably improved. Formerly there were not more than three small steamers running between San Francisco and the principal town of the Southern diggings; and now a considerable number of large boats, very comfortably fitted up, had entirely taken the place of the smaller ones, which, therefore, were employed only for

the navigation higher up the rivers. The price also was lowered; for, whereas the spring before, with by far less comfort and no bed, I had paid thirty dollars from Stockton to San Francisco; I now took my passage in the cabin, with a good, or at least, tolerable bed, for fifteen dollars. Indeed, California was turning over a new leaf.

On Wednesday the 16th of November, in the morning, before the break of day, we anchored near one of the newly built wharfs of San Francisco; and at sunrise I walked into the town, followed by a negro who carried my luggage. The blackey, to my great surprise, offered on his own accord his services as porter; but, being made a little distrustful with regard to the high prices, and remembering the anecdote of the man to whom a stranger offered four dollars, if he would carry his trunk to the next hotel, and who coolly took from his own pocket four dollars, which he gave to the stranger with the polite request, that he would do the job himself; I first of all asked the dusky son of Africa what was his 268 fare? "Quarter dollar, sir," was his modest answer, with which demand I readily complied. The price of work, therefore, which formerly was very often not to be got for any money, was now reduced to twenty-five cents; and many a poor fellow, who, before starting from Europe, had calculated, "well, if it won't do in any other way, I shall carry trunks for four dollars a job," might now be sorely disappointed in his expectations!

After having descended from the jetty which ran out to the distance of half a mile into the sea, I could not help stopping, to gaze at the change which a few months had worked in the aspect of San Francisco. I had left a city of tents and wooden houses, with marshy streets, in which men were drowned and mules perished; and after five months, I found a town which might have justly been classed with the larger cities of Europe. The majority were still wooden houses, but they were now built in a better and more elegant style; the tents had disappeared altogether, and a great number of brick houses had been erected. Nay, one front of the public square—unfortunately the seat of those sinks of California iniquity, the gambling-houses—consisted of nothing but substantially built houses with several storeys, and iron balconies, and shutters. But, what more than anything gave to the town a comfortable and cleanly appearance, was the condition of the streets; not only the footpaths but even the carriage-roads, being completely paved with a flooring of strong planks, and lined with gutters, so that, in the heaviest rain, the San Franciscans might now walk from one

end of their city to the other, over comparatively dry and clean ground. It was hoped by many, that these wooden thoroughfares, instead of increasing the danger of fire, would rather diminish it, as, at any rate, they allowed a quick and unimpeded passage to the engines, which formerly, only too frequently, stuck fast in the mud.

The improved feeling of security also had prompted the trades people to bestow greater care on the decoration of their shops, which likewise imparted to the streets a more cheerful aspect. The trading community was, however, composed of too motley elements to have allowed this pleasing change at once to become the general rule. The tastefully decorated shops nearly all of them belonged to Frenchmen; otherwise the town, notwithstanding its odd mixture of nationalities and styles of architecture, exhibited, on the main, a preponderance of North American character; and there was scarcely anything left to remind one that it had once been a Spanish place. Spanish shops had almost entirely disappeared; only very rarely one met with a Spanish inscription, except the "*compra ora*," which, in most of the shops, by the side of "gold dust bought," kept the attention of the stranger alive to the fact of his residing not only in a commercial place but also in a gold land.

Even the Chinese, although many of them were still scattered through the town, were now less to be met with. Some time before, when the reception of California into the Union was celebrated at San Francisco by sundry public dinners and a festive procession, they formed in it a section of their own, which was picturesque enough, as they walked along, preceded by a flag, on which they wished to tell other nations that they were the "China boys." But just in the same way as they hid their long pigtailed beneath the European caps, they also now hid their own selves within their houses, and only rarely showed themselves in public.

Speaking of that festivity, I may mention a very remarkable incident connected with it. The great Californian flag was carried by three men, as it would happen, all three of them from the Mission Dolores. They were two Germans, one of them Hermann, whom I think I have mentioned before, and the other, known at the mission under the single name of Heinrich, and keeping there a public-house half Irish and half German; and, besides them, an American of the name of Laners or

Landers. The festival being over, the trio, of course, made merry for the evening with the others, after which they went home to their several quarters, situated in three different corners of the mission, and, strange to say, all three of them died, on the same night, of the cholera, which just then was raging with the most intense fury.

270

To return, however, to the subject of San Francisco, the French and Germans formed now, after the Americans, the most important part of the population. The French had almost exclusively engrossed the numerous eating and confectionary shops, whilst the German Israelites occupied all the ready-made clothes shops, with scarcely an exception, throughout the whole of San Francisco. It is, indeed, as if our German "old clo's" had covered all the known coasts of the globe with their "emporiums." Wherever I have been, I have found it so; first, there is the sea, then the strand, then some narrow thoroughfare, and then, immediately, an uninterrupted row of clothes shops, with nothing but firms like "Kauffmann, Levi, and Co.;" "Rosenberger and Feigenlaub;" "Herz, Löwenhaupt and Son;" "Meyer, Schwerin, and Gutmuth," &c., &c.

This is, however, only one class by itself, which has little intercourse with the others. But there are, besides, some very important German firms; and among the German merchants, as well as among our countrymen in general, there are a great many very nice and respectable people. I have been received by them in the kindest manner, and certainly, as often as I remember all the difficulties and toils I had to go through in California, I shall always couple with this cheerless remembrance the more pleasing one of the many happy hours passed in the company of my Californian friends and countrymen.

I have also some words to say about the amusements of San Francisco. It will not take up much space, for, with the exception of hells, the town at that time had very few places of public resort. The existing establishments of this description, were by no means called into life by the wants of the public, but they were nearly all of them, ephemeral speculations; the managers of which, merely cared to make by them, in all haste, as much money as they could, without ever caring whether the public were satisfied or disappointed.

Along with other sorts of enthusiasm, the “Jenny Lind” excitement had been imported from the United States to California. 271 Already a small steamer, “Jenny Lind,” was running in the bay; soon after a “Jenny Lind Restaurant” sprang up, and, woe to me, from admiration for the Swedish nightingale I once went to dine there; and it afterwards cost me an additional dollar to recover, at another dining-house, from the consequences of my rash experiment.

Of course there was also the “Jenny Lind Theatre,” and thither I bent my steps one evening, as it would not do to have been in California, without having seen a Californian play-house. After paying, with an heroic contempt of death, my two dollars for admittance, I was ushered into a long hall, lit up by two chandeliers, where I had to take my seat on a wooden form, in front of a red curtain. At the extremity opposite the entrance, the orchestra was placed; on the right and left there were a couple of most hideously painted figures, concerning which I had some vague impression, that the artist had possibly intended them to represent Apollo and the Muse of Tragedy; but I could not, for all the world, make out which was which. The lighting was good, and, as was afterwards proved, only too good.

The bill of fare comprised: “The Merchant of Venice,” four acts; after which Madam Van Gulpen Cersinsky was to sing an air from the *Figlia di Regimento*—“*Salut à la France*;” to be concluded by a one-act farce, “The Spectral Bridegroom.” Managers were a Mr. Stark, and a Mrs. Risby; the former being trumpeted forth in his own playbill—contrary to what we are accustomed to in Germany—as “Mr. Stark, in his great character as Shylock.”

The orchestra played some very nice pieces very cleverly—it was, indeed, composed for the greater part of Germans—and the curtain was at last drawn up. My gentle reader, I have never in my life written an article on actors and acting, nor will I start as a critic here in California; let me only say so much, that two acts of the Merchant of Venice were quite enough for me, and that I was very glad to escape from the infliction of the rest. Oh Magnus, poor old Magnus, of all theatrical managers in this 272 sublunary world, the most ill-treated and knocked about by Fate! how often did I make sport of thy booth of dramatic entertainment at Dresden; and yet, the second seats there

cost only one goat, and here I had to pay two dollars; and, in which of the two establishments did I get most fun for my money?

The whole concern appeared to me like a puppet-show; just such side scenes, and just the same style of dress (except in the case of the ladies); and I was quite glad, when at last I was in the open air again. The door-keeper must have been a man who knew the human heart, or at least, who saw what was going on within mine, for he would not give me a return check. Mr. Stark, as manager, had also the lion's share; for having played Shylock to-day, he figured again on the playbill, for the next evening, as Hamlet.

There was another theatre here, said to be a *little* better, but I gave it up; and against the circus, I was warned by some friends, so that I did not go there either. Besides these expensive theatrical entertainments there were some cheaper ones in the so-called *Cafés Chantants*, which were kept especially by Frenchmen. These café's were common drinking rooms, but they exhibited in the back-part a sort of stage and a piano. In the evening some unfortunate virtuoso, hired for the purpose, sat down and executed, what a clever French writer gives as a general definition of music, "a noise that is not disagreeable;" and noise certainly it must have been, to drown the loud laughter and riotous conversation of the guests in the saloon, who did not in the least care whether their din and clatter interfered with the music or not.

In the *Café Chantant*, where I several times drank a glass of never-to-be-forgotten detestable punch, I saw generally a very stout gentleman, in a black dress coat and white kid gloves, come forth; who, with a very powerful, and rich voice, would sing a French song, in which the man at the piano accompanied him. At least, I must suppose so, for he was continually beating the keys, and seemed at the same time to express very deep feeling by means of shrugging his shoulders; but, alas! hear of it 273 anything I could not. After this, a very thin lady made her appearance, and executed, in all probability, a comic song; for she had a sheet of music in her hand, was smiling all over and continually opening her mouth, and twice or three times she closed her eyes; all of it, however, at least as it appeared to me, without uttering a sound.

The strength of the virtuosos of this café comprised, besides, a young gentleman of about twenty years of age, likewise in a black dress coat and white kid gloves; to which are to be added, a very stiff white handkerchief, with very long and sharply-pointed shirt collar, a very white waistcoat, and very blond hair. I thought at first, that he was intended for some comic person, but he evidently was more for ornament than for use; chiming in with the thin lady for the burden of the Marseillaise, conversing with her during the intervals, and knocking the chairs over as he made his exit.

The Yankees, by-the-by, called these cafés “Shang-tangs,” pretending that their name was Chinese.

The staple places of amusement at San Francisco, are still the gambling-houses, which are most luxuriously fitted up. The largest and the most frequented are situated in the best quarter of the town, in the “Square;” and, although having been burnt down two or three times, they are too remunerating a speculation to be left resting in the ashes for more than one hour; and they will so long fleece greenhorns and reckless scamps, and enrich their false playing keepers, until the people themselves will one day rise and overturn the whole game, with a “check-mate.” At that time they were most flourishing, and all that may be done by the help of art to allure victims, was pressed into the service of these hells.

The most magnificent of all, as well within as without, was the El Dorado; which, before the fire, was still kept in a tent. The ground floor contained the gigantic saloon, with tables for various sort of games: Monte, a Spanish game, at least, being generally played with Spanish cards, but otherwise very like our 274 Lansquenet; Pharo, Vingt un, Roulette, dice; in short, every known contrivance for gaining and losing was to be seen there. Below the saloon in the cellars, there were four elegant alleys of American bowls (generally played as a game of hazard), which were scarcely ever empty during the whole day; and in the first storey there were in front the billiard rooms, and in the back a shooting gallery, where people shoot at a target with percussion pistols and balls; a very nice variety of well-meant devices to get the money out of people's pockets as pleasantly as possible.

In the more refined gambling saloons there were two different buffets, one of them a bar for wine and spirits, the other a counter for coffee, chocolate, tea, and sweetmeats; behind the former there were men, whilst the latter was always kept by a handsome lady, in a black silk gown.

The gambling-tables in these saloons were likewise kept not only by men, but also sometimes by women, who, it is true mostly belong to the lowest class of Spanish females. I, however, chanced one day to enter a house in the lower part of the town, where a very pretty little French woman was sitting behind the dice-table, with a large pile of silver coin before her. She was very briskly engaged in the game; and, chattering away all the while in her funny broken English, she swept in the most agreeable and unconcerned manner the dollars and ounces of the lost stakes.

I was highly amused with a Yankee, who, whilst casting dice with her, would ogle her in the most languishing style, without her taking the least notice of him, beyond sweeping after every throw his stake with a "lost, sir!" At length, after having sacrificed the last ounce, he pulled out his watch—gone! Another watch—gone, like the first! A third watch, same fate as before. Still one more!—the man must have had all his pockets full of watches: for, wherever he put his hand, another came forth;—the little French woman laughed—the last ticker also was lost. He now drew a ring from his finger.

"*Combien?*" was the laconic question.

275

"*Tres ounces?*" replied the scared Yankee.

"*O no! no! no!*" the lady said with a laugh, "*Una watch, pas plus!*" This time the Yankee won, and she pushed towards him one of the watches, without honouring it with a look; but, with the next throw he again got rid of it, and afterwards of the ring also. Whether from his inexhaustible pockets any more trinkets were produced, I cannot say, for I left the house.

A few days before my arrival at San Francisco, California, in order not to be behind-hand with the United States in any branch of their admirable institutions, had opened its list of blown up steamers;

and, indeed, at once, by a most awful explosion. The numerous accidents of that sort, which on the Mississippi serve to keep nervous passengers in a continual state of beneficial excitement, had not, until then, been imitated on the side of the Pacific; until the Sagamore, a boat plying between Stockton and San Francisco, made the beginning, with a terrible catastrophe. How many lives were lost, cannot be computed with anything like exactness; as on these boats there are no lists of passengers kept, except that the names of those persons are marked down, who have paid their fare; but the Sagamore had only just pushed off from the shore, so that scarcely ten passengers, on the whole, had their names taken by the book-keeper. The lacerated bodies floating in the bay, are said to have presented a most ghastly sight, as they were picked up together with the wounded and living, by boats which had hurried to the spot. Several days after the accident, parts of human bodies were washed on shore, and the loss of life must have been appalling.

Some of the passengers of this ill-fated vessel were the victims of a chain of calamitous disasters; such as no writer of novels would venture to introduce into his story, lest he should be accused of the most unnatural exaggeration. A few days before the Sagamore blew up, another steamer whose name I have forgotten, had just left one of the wharfs with passengers for the diggings; but, owing to the bungling management of her helmsman, she, still in the bay, fell foul of another vessel and went down. A few of the 276 passengers only were drowned, nearly all of them being saved by the other steamer, which took them back to San Francisco, from whence they sailed again by the next boat, the Sagamore. At the explosion very few passengers got off quite unhurt; most of them were killed, but many also were severely wounded and conveyed to the town-hospital. But the unfortunate sufferers were not yet at the end of their calamities. In the same night, a fire broke out in that hospital, and the whole building was burned to the ground; the patients lying sick in it, were immediately dragged into the street, and none are said to have perished in the fire; but several of them died from the fright and the excitement; and the remainder became a prey to the cholera, which just at that time was at its height.

The number of steamboats had wonderfully increased. The autumn before, only a few small steamers were running to Sacramento, Stockton, and Pueblo San Josè now, there were twenty-eight

steamers employed for the traffic of the bay alone, and the most magnificent boats carried the mails between Panama and the “Queen of the West.”

In spirit of enterprise the Americans certainly surpass every other people of the world. Many incredulous persons laughed, when, last year, the Yankees paid large sums for places which were lying several hundred feet out in the sea, and which then, were not above water even in the lowest ebb; now, however, at several hundred feet even beyond those very places, large buildings are erected, and near the piers running along them, the largest ships are moored. They are certainly not built in a very substantial manner; and the long piers may suffer serious havoc from any violent gale, especially if some heavy vessels should happen to knock against them.

This want of substantiality is, however, on the whole, the fault of nearly all the American structures. On the other hand, they generally make up their shortcomings by the mass of their enterprise; and where a German would ponder for years, and theoretically calculate the chances and the cost of success, the Yankee at 277 once begins by the execution. He succeeds in most cases, and if he does not, why, it has only been a trial, and the next attempt, very likely more successful, will repay the lost expenses of the first.

## **CHAPTER XX.**

### **CONCLUSION.**

AND what sort of country is California? Is it worth one's while to go there? Will it fulfil even in part the expectations we entertain of it? Should the reader be inclined to ask such questions, whilst the gold fields, in the dazzling light of the setting sun, appear to his eager eye as a lovely paradise; the Californian himself, with a very comprehensive phrase would answer him, “*Quien sabe,*” “Who knows;” yet I will communicate to you my plain opinion on the matter, as briefly and distinctly as possible.

The gold fields of California will remain unexhausted for many, many years to come; for after a short time, when provisions and labour have become cheaper in the mountains, the work will be

resumed at many places, which are now considered as completely finished, and they will then, still yield a considerable profit. Real mining operations have not yet been carried on at all, unless the crushing and grinding of the quartz, which has been begun in some places, and which, in some instances, has yielded considerable profits, be called so. At present the professional miner cannot do more there, than any other; but in future years a wide field will be opened to him, and then we shall also hear of rich mines, discovered in the bowels of the mountains.

The time when, in a few days, weeks, or months, a fortune could be made, is, with a few exceptions, over with the diggings; but I do not know whether they have not thereby rather gained than lost. The people will have to accustom themselves to begin their work with more moderate expectations; besides which, every necessary of life may be procured now at a cheaper rate, of much better quality, and in greater variety. The emigrant should therefore leave all golden dreams behind him, and look upon California, merely as a country, in which, if one wishes to dig for gold, he must be prepared for the very hardest work, when, it is true, a better day's wages may be expected than anywhere else.

He, also, who intends to work, not at the gold fields, but in the towns, may consider that the time is past when there was a regular scramble for workmen; and he should not be at once discouraged, if, on his stepping on shore, no gentlemen in black dress coats come to meet him, begging him as a favour to go and earn in the very first week, so and so many hundred dollars. Such a state of things does not exist any longer: he who now wishes to get on, must not be loath to put a shoulder to the wheel and to be patient; but with industry and perseverance, he may attain his object more speedily in California than anywhere else. Yet, after all, if in such a case I had my choice, California would be the last country of all those I have ever seen, where I should take up my abode, unless I was quite a young man, and had to consider, from the very first, my residence as only temporary.

The settler here misses, above all, those pleasures of society to which he has been accustomed in his old home. Let no one say that this is a point of no importance, and that it would be easy for him to do without those enjoyments: take them away from the life of a man, take from him domestic happiness, and the quiet charms and comforts of a cheerful fireside; and throw him into

a career where money, and money again, is the only object and beacon of his thoughts; and he must necessarily at last become a mere animated machine. An agreeable social life can never be made, but it must grow spontaneously and naturally by the presence of woman. In this respect, alas! California exhibits the most melancholy spectacle; all the other countries have sent there the sweepings of their streets, and the mischief done by the hells, is completed by the reckless profligacy of those abandoned creatures.

There are, indeed, some settlers who have sent for their families <sup>279</sup> after them, yet their number is very small. And why so? because of a thousand now living here, in California, for the sole purpose of earning money, there are not ten who really intend to make California their permanent abode. All of them have come only to make a fortune, and having made it, to return as quickly as possible to the United States, or wherever else they may have come from. Even of the few who, having their wives and children with them, are now forming the most agreeable family circles, not the twentieth part have any thought of ending their days in California.

Farming and horticulture, and especially the latter, promise to be carried on with greater care and activity; and means will here and there be found, by artificial irrigation to make up for the scarcity of rain during summer. But even those who lay out, and cultivate farms, do not intend to keep them; it is not a home which they establish for themselves, but it is merely a temporary place of business for making money; and owing to this cause, that sweet charm will ever be wanting here, which, in every other country, is the blessed attribute of the quiet, humble, self-contented, country life. This may possibly be changed in future years, but it has invariably been so to the present day, and I repeat it, I should never choose California as a permanent abode.

The country is, indeed, of much greater interest to the merchant, and in general to the man of business; and I can quite imagine, that with those who have once formed mercantile connexions and entered into commercial speculations, it must possess a fascination which it is not so easy to resist, and which, not rarely, carries a man to sudden wealth, or to bankruptcy. Yet, this is especially owing to the general tone of the commerce here, and to the manner in which commercial operations are carried on; for, as at the diggings and the hells, thus mercantile speculation also,

is here only a game of hazard, in which the bold gambler stakes his all, to win all, or to lose all. With the impossibility of insurance, everything, indeed, had continually to be risked on one or two cards; business of slow and sure profit was not to be thought of, 280 where money paid from six to seventeen per cent. interest per month, and where the frequent fires, and the very uncertain mode in which business was conducted, put everything like security out of the question. Smartness, therefore, in the Yankee meaning of the word, is much more in its place in California, than those steady qualities and virtues which elsewhere make the mercantile man.

Yet, notwithstanding all these drawbacks, a great number of most respectable firms, of all nations, doing as solid business as anywhere in the world, have settled here; whose possessors, however, will enjoy the fruits of their Californian industry in their own fatherland.

Such is California, at least as much as I have known of it,—a country whose civilization, like its towns and houses, has sprung up in a night, like a mushroom. Later accounts from San Francisco sound as miraculous as the first. A little more than a twelvemonth after my departure, I received from a friend at San Francisco the following letter:—

“The fire, on the night of the 3d of May (1851), literally changed the whole town into a heap of ashes. It broke out about eleven o'clock at night, near the American hotel in the Square, and swept the city from thence down to the water, and up to Dupont Street, on the one side, to Clark's Point on the other. This terrible extent of the conflagration could only be accounted for by the gale which raged during that frightful night, and which changed its direction every hour.

“I never saw anything more awful; and yet four weeks after, there was scarcely a trace to be discovered of the calamity. The houses rose from the ground as by enchantment; so that, on the 22d of June, we were again able to have the regular June fire; which, however, was not so terrible as the first, although two fine churches and the court-house were destroyed by it.

“As to our other improvements,—we have received from New York a very ingeniously contrived steam-engine, which has been at work now for eight or nine months. It clears away all the 281 sand-hills in the direction of the Mission, removing the sand to the sea, on trucks running on rails, which

are laid along the most populous streets and piers, without the traffic being thereby interrupted for one moment. In this way, the whole of Sansome, the whole of Battery, and part of Front Streets (which, until now, had been standing *upon* the bay on piles, and were connected by wooden piers), are filled up; and so are also those which run parallel with Commercial Street; so that we may expect with certainty, within six or eight months, to see the bay filled up from Rincon's to Clark's Point.

“In Sansome Street, where, a few months ago only, large ships used to discharge their cargo, there is now a colossal brick playhouse; which, according to contract, had to be built and fitted up within thirty days from the laying of the foundation-stone. On the thirty-second day, a performance was given in it; and the interior was very tastefully decorated. Such is California.

“About one hundred and four steamers, including the sea boats, are now furrowing our bay. For more than six months, the fare to Sacramento by steamboat—which ten months ago, was still twenty to fifty dollars—has been only one dollar, and for the last month, fifty cents. Yet the most remarkable thing of all, and what, at any rate, will interest you most, is our Vigilance Committee, of which I am a member, and concerning which you may have read an account in the newspapers. I will, however, say something more about it.

“Shortly after the fire in May, the audacity of the ruffians of all nations who were assembled at San Francisco, and the neglectfulness and corruption of our city authorities, had risen to such a pitch, that the better part of the public, and of the citizens, began to find the state of things perfectly intolerable; and at last the question was put—‘Shall the power henceforth be in the hands of a rabble of thieves and incendiaries, or in those of honest people?’

“Under the direction of the first merchants and bankers of the town—such as Brannan, Argenti, James King, Macandray, and 282 others—a Vigilance Committee was formed, the object of which was—

“To support the authorities in keeping up the law; and to condemn and punish the criminals, in cases when the legitimate authorities are too weak, or too negligent to do it themselves.’

“In a short time the Society mustered more than eight hundred members; who every week held two public meetings, at a place hired for the purpose. Members only were admitted. Any respectable man might become a member— *lawyers alone being excluded*. By subscribing the bye-laws of the Society, every member bound himself for the next fifty years; during all this period, no one will be allowed to resign. And likewise every one pledges himself, with his life and property, to stand one for all, and all for one.

“Companies were now established, each of twenty men with a captain. Guards were mounted, patrols sent round, houses searched by day and night, arrests made, trials held, and other acts performed, merely in right of our self-constituted authority, without consulting any tribunal, or giving account to any one. All ill-reputed vagabonds, especially a number of former convicts, who had come over from Sidney, received from us a written notice to leave the town within ten days. Many obeyed; those who did not, were arrested, put in chains, and closely guarded; and as soon as a sufficient number of them were collected, we chartered a ship, with which we sent them, willy nilly, out of the country.

“By means of patrolling, and searching houses, we discovered regular thieves' dens; one, among others, on Angel Island, where we found quantities of stolen goods; nor was it long before we had caught a whole mass of felons, whom we confined at the house where we held our meetings, and where cells were fitted up for the reception of the prisoners, each of them affording accommodation for four or five men. During the day, one company, and during the night, two, were on guard.

“An executive committee superintended the trial of the prisoners; 283 after which a general committee, to whom the protocol of the trial was transmitted, pronounced the prisoners ‘guilty’ or ‘not guilty,’ and fixed the amount of punishment.

“Our first act of carrying the penal law into execution, was in the case of a certain Jenkins, who one evening was caught in the act of robbery and house-breaking. As during the trial, several other crimes were brought home to the prisoner, he was unanimously condemned to the gallows. One hour more was then granted to him, to make his peace with God, after which he was, at one o'clock in the morning, hanged in the large square.

“The police wanted to rescue him from the hands of the Committee, but they were repelled by our revolvers.

“Six weeks after, we hung a certain Stuart; who, after a trial of nearly four weeks, had been found guilty of several murders and robberies, which he himself confessed. This execution took place at two o'clock in the afternoon, in the presence of more than 15,000 people, on Market Street pier.

“About four or five hundred members, walking arm in arm, in files which took up the whole breadth of the pier, and armed with loaded revolvers, accompanied the culprit on his last dismal journey; nor did the public authorities succeed in breaking our ranks, before the prisoner was launched into eternity. Then only we made room for the coroner.

“It ought to be stated, that we had the sympathies of the whole population with us; which went so far, that at the double stroke of the alarm-bell—which was the signal to the members that a trial for life and death was about to be proceeded with—all the carters drove with their waggons, at full gallop, to the office of the Committee, where they formed a strong rampart of waggons; which made a rescue of the prisoner by the authorities completely impossible.

“We had, besides, sent deputations to almost all the other towns of the country there, to organize branch committees, which was of very great service; as in this way the fugitive criminals might, after their escape from San Francisco, be caught at the diggings, and there put out of harm's way.

284

“Stuart's information set us on the track of two other miscreants, Whittaker and Mackenzie. The trial, and the examination of witnesses in their cases again lasted more than four weeks. In the

meanwhile, as had been done before on Stuart's behalf, a *habeas corpus* was presented to us by the sheriff, which an advocate had obtained from the tribunal; and by virtue of which, both culprits were claimed. This injunction had to be respected, unless we intended to come to an open rupture with the public authorities, and mutinously to resist the law; which, until then, we had in every case, scrupulously and successfully avoided. But we had been informed in time of this intended step. We therefore made our prisoners, for a whole day, take an airing, under a strong guard, in the country about San Francisco.

“When the sheriff came, he was by no means refused admittance; but no one professed to know anything about the prisoners. After having searched the cells, he therefore took his departure, with his *habeas corpus*, without being able to effect anything.

“At last, after a long trial, in which very ugly things came to light, both prisoners were condemned to the gallows; when, just on the day before that appointed for the execution, the Governor, Mr. M'Dougall, asked for permission to see the committee-rooms. Having been shown over them, he spoke in high terms of the institution, observing that he fully acknowledged its usefulness; and that, in his private capacity, he would do everything to further its objects. But at two o'clock in the morning, the single hearted old man sent the sheriff, with an armed troop, to surprise the guard in the committee-rooms, which, as the service had of late been exceedingly arduous, unfortunately happened to consist only of six or eight men; and the two prisoners were conducted to the new district prison, which was strongly built of stone-

“In that very night, the alarm-bell summoned the Committee; and the excitement running very high, they were very near passing the resolution of storming the district prison at once, and by force of arms; but fortunately the cool heads were in the majority, and the meeting was adjourned.

285

“This happened on a Thursday; but, in the meanwhile, quite quietly, a company of volunteers was formed, consisting exclusively of members of the Committee, with a view to get hold of the

prisoners again, by any means, whether by stratagem or by force. Stratagem was to be employed first, and that in such a manner that, in case of a failure, nothing might transpire of it.

“On Sunday, in the forenoon, between ten and eleven, whilst divine service was going on in the district prison, those twenty volunteers, all of them secretly but strongly armed, gathered, according to previous appointment, at intervals, in groups of three and four, round the prison; placing themselves in such a way, that they were able to observe each others secret signals. The principal difficulty was the attempt of the leader to get, with four or five of his men, into the chapel; if this succeeded, the first were to keep the door open, and give the others a signal to approach. If the entrance was not effected, nothing remained but quietly to depart again.

“The leader now knocked at the door, which was opened a very little way. They would allow him to enter, but not his companions. During this short parley, carried on in an undertone, the others pushed the door a little more open; after which they suddenly pointed their pistols at the breast of the man who kept the door, and summoned the rest of the conspirators.

“The two culprits were luckily seized—Mackenzie by a German, Von K., who had a severe struggle with the strong fellow; after which they were conveyed to the committee-rooms in a carriage, which had been kept ready for the purpose. Only two shots were fired, by which, however, no one was wounded.

“As soon as the prisoners were forced into the carriage, the alarm-bell summoned all the members together. These hastened to the spot from all sides; and an hour after, the two culprits were hung before the committee-rooms in Battery Street, in the presence of a vast concourse of people. Thereupon the assembled crowd gave us three times three cheers, and then asked to see the 286 splendid banner presented to us a few weeks before, by the ladies of Trinity parish; after which they quietly dispersed.

“Since that time, we have had almost perfect tranquility and security. The worst of the judges, being afraid of the Committee, voluntarily laid down their offices, and have been replaced by better ones.

“We were all of us well aware of the illegal character of our proceedings, which, indeed, rendered us liable to severe punishment; yet what we did was prompted by necessity, and approved of by seven-eighths of the whole population of the country.”

But a truce to California. I was delighted that at last the time was come when I should continue my journey; for which purpose I had but to look out for a ship bound westward. As this could not be a very difficult matter, I was enabled to bestow, first of all, some attention on my outward man.

My appearance was wild enough to frighten any one. Coming direct from the diggings to San Francisco, I still sported the “original costume” of the mountains, which I had worn while at work,—an old straw hat, which, as it were from sheer obliging disposition, still kept together in two places; a grey woollen blouse, patched and torn all over; and shoes, so completely trodden out of shape, that for the last fortnight I had walked on the side of the soles. In no other country in the world would an individual, thus attired, have been allowed to sit down to dinner in the cabin of a steamboat, with elegantly dressed gentlemen, and even some ladies; but here, every day, numbers of such figures come from the mountains; and, not only is there no notice taken of their dilapidated appearance, but on the contrary, people generally treat them with marked respect; as one cannot know whether they have not some very decent bags of gold hidden under their rough digger's blouse. These savage figures were the more frequently to be met with on board the steamboats, as the prices of articles of clothing, at Stockton and Sacramento, were nearly as high as at the diggings; so that people going direct to San Francisco, preferred making their purchases in the capital, where 287 everything was sold much cheaper. I had also my trunk and a chest, with part of my wardrobe, still waiting for me at the Mission.

But the Mission Dolores had, in the meanwhile, undergone very considerable changes. The brewery existed no longer, and the firm had dispersed in different directions. What formerly was the dwelling-house, was now divided in two halves, one of them being converted into a tavern, the other into a baker's shop, and both of them kept by Germans. My trunk and chest were, it is true, safe in the former, yet they were all that I should find again of my luggage. In the chest there were left an old rusty harpoon, one of my Argentine spurs, and a couple of Spanish and French books.

The trunk contained an old coat, a pair of braces; a pair of socks, and a few more trifles of the same description.

After this agreeable surprise, I went back to San Francisco, where I bought clothes, linen, and boots and shoes, with which I filled my trunk; and then I looked out for a ship, which would touch at one of the South Sea Islands. I should have preferred Otaheite, but not one was ready to start for that place; on the other hand, there were plenty of vessels advertised for the Sandwich Islands, with cabin fare from fifty to seventy-five dollars.

I contracted for my passage at the former rate in the barque Magnolia, sent my trunk on board, despatched my letters to Germany, as the mail steamer was to start the next day, and then went once more to the ship agent to pay for my passage, and to ascertain the exact time for going on board, when I received the pleasing intelligence that the captain of the ship had changed his mind, and, being bound for Manilla, would touch neither at the Sandwich Islands nor at any other group in the Pacific. As to my luggage, the owners promised to have it brought back on shore.

This was true Californian fashion. The ship had been regularly advertised during a whole week for freight and passage, and now it changed its course. The promise with regard to my trunk did not appear to me so safe and comfortable either. What did the captain care whether I had it or not? And if he did not 288 himself come to town again on other business, he would certainly never lower a boat merely for the sake of my luggage.

An old captain, to whom I spoke about it, gave me the friendly advice to take a boat myself, and sail out as quick as possible, if ever I wished to see my trunk again. I accordingly went down on the same evening to the Strand, took a boat, and told the waterman to take me to the place where I knew the Magnolia was moored. On arriving there—and I had marked the place well enough, it being near an American war corvette—the reader may imagine my astonishment, as I found not a vestige of the Magnolia. I lost no time in rowing alongside one of the nearest vessels; and, inquiring after her, was answered that she had set sail in the course of the afternoon.

I had now to promise the boatman five dollars if he would overtake her; for, when we had proceeded a little farther, we really saw far a-head a barque, which was slowly running down the bay before a slight but favourable breeze. The man now plied the oars with might and main. The evening was fast closing in, and we had but little time to spare. After three quarters of an hour, we at last overtook the ship, whence I, without ceremony, took my trunk away with me; but, on our reaching the shore again, it was pitch dark, and now, as I could not find a porter, and had no wish to pay three dollars for a conveyance, I had the pleasure of carrying my luggage on my own shoulders for the distance of about an English mile, to the store of Messrs. Esche and Wapler, by whom I was very kindly received.

As a little diversion, and to have a sample of everything, I got some little business with the worshipful Californian police. It concerned a debt of thirty-nine dollars which Böhm, my former partner, had bound himself in writing as well as by word of honour to discharge, whilst the credit had been allowed to him for my sake. But as the fellow had neither shown his face at Stockton nor at San Francisco, but had very likely absconded on board a ship bound for Europe or North America, I had no choice but to pay the sum from my own pocket.

289

In the meanwhile I had looked out for another ship, and at last took my passage on board the Jane Remorino, a barque bound for Manilla, which intended to touch for water and provisions at Honolulu, in Oahu, one of the Sandwich Islands. My fare as far as Honolulu was fifty dollars.

On Sunday the 17th of November, I went on board with the supercargo of the vessel, a very agreeable old gentleman, Mr. Landerer, a native of Switzerland, and already in my thoughts bade farewell to California. This was, however, rather premature, for, on the 19th, in the morning, a gale arose, which even in our moorings exposed us to the danger of falling foul of the ships near us. As, however, the wind abated in the evening, the captain determined to avail himself of the tide, which was favourable to us, and to try to get clear of the ships.

The barque was all but new, only two years old, and built at Malta; the captain, a native of Spain, from Gibraltar, of the name of Remorino, the ship being called after a sister of his. The vessel was built of excellent timber, and very nicely fitted up inside; only the rigging was somewhat seedy, and she had a good many ropes and cables of untanned leather, which are frequently used on Spanish vessels.

In sailing down the bay, we ran close by an old English brig, whose captain, with his cook and a large Newfoundland dog, formed the whole crew for the time being. He was standing on the forecastle, to catch the cable which was thrown from our ship to the vessels on both sides, in order to steer clear of them; yet he had no sooner touched it when he held it up in surprise, examined it for a moment, and then called out with truly comical astonishment, "leather, by Jove."

At last we dropt anchor pretty safely just below the small island Yerba Buena. The gale lasted until the 21st; and whilst it was at its height, the mail steamer from the United States entered by the "Golden Gate," and ran past us.

As the captain had now once more to go on shore for letters and newspapers, I accompanied him. We got the New York 290 papers up to the 12th of October: letters, however, were not yet delivered; and as the weather was clearing up, and the captain had resolved to sail under any condition at the dawn of next morning, I had to leave California with the stanch conviction that behind those implacable windows of the post-office there were letters for me from home which I was not to receive now.

On the next evening a slight and favourable breeze sprang up. On the given signal, the pilot came on board; the anchors were heaved, and in company with five other vessels, which, having been quicker in availing themselves of the ebbing tide, had got a little a-head of us, we approached the "Golden Gate" of California, which we passed an hour after.

Farewell, California! The rough singing shouts of the sailors in the rigging sounded to me like the bells of my distant home. Farewell, California! In the gathering night, the rugged scraggy cliffs of

the coast had soon vanished from our sight, and only the white spray of the sea, as it dashed against the shore, still sparkled through the darkness, half threatening and half greeting.

THE END.

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY T. NELSON AND SONS.