

**Ramblings in California; containing a description
of the country, life at the mines, state of society,
&c. Interspersed with characteristic anecdotes, and
sketches from life, being the five years' experience of a
gold digger. By Pringle Shaw**

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CHARACTERISTIC ANECDOTES,

AND SKETCHES FROM LIFE,

BEING THE FIVE YEARS EXPERIENCE OF A GOLD DIGGER.

BY

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PREFACE.

IN the good old times, that is before a voyage round the world was a mere trip of pleasure, the adventurous traveller who then gave his experience of foreign lands, was a rarity, and his work might well serve as good authority for half a century to come; and indeed, in such sleepy times, when a hundred years performed but little change on a country or its people, the audacious scribbler who added another volume of travels, on the same ground, might well be punished by neglect, for his impertinent repetition of the threadbare theme. But now, great portion of the world are in a "fast" age, and in them more changes occur in twelve months, than in others in twice the number of years; but in none that ever existed, has the hand of civilised man performed so much, in as short a space of time, as it has within the bounds of this mysterious land.

This must be my best excuse, for attempting to add a new leaf to the many already published on California vi history, and I flatter myself that a long residence, coupled with a roving spirit, and particular advantages for prying into the strength and weakness of the country, has produced ground already untrodden by my predecessors, for the information of the inquisitive.

The three first parts contain within a small space, I trust, an accurate description of the face of the country, its resources, capital, and labor, with sketches of its people, their manners, customs, and politics. The last part is devoted exclusively to illustrations of character, for which no country offers a better field.

My business in California, was a gold speculation; and there, on the banks of the Yellow Yuba, and many other streams, I dug deep holes, and made—not exactly my *pile*—but my observations on men and things, and if the relation of them, as they attracted my attention, in succession, require perusal, I shall not so much regret that I prospected as faithfully for dry jokes, as wiser men did for dry diggings.

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RAMBLINGS IN CALIFORNIA. PART I. THE COUNTRY AND HER SOVEREIGNS.

IT comes not, properly, within the limits of these sketches, to dwell upon the wonders of that half-way land—the Isthmus of Panama—whose torrid scenes, so startling, novel, and gorgeous, so utterly at variance with the panorama of his native land, enchain at once the imagination of the fresh voyager from the temperate zone, and leave an impression that after years can hardly erase. These have long since been delineated by able and truthful pens; though much still remains unsaid of Chagres, its harbor, and its people, its densely wooded hills, and dismal feverish vallies, the grim dismantled fortress of San Lorenzo, rising in solemn, though burlesque majesty, as the protector of the mongrel native population at its base,—of the white man's shelly camp right opposite, sustained

in those by-gone days by the Californian emigration, and the indiscriminate abode or shelter of speculators, blacklegs and boatmen,—of native beggars, with leprous skins and jiggery feet,—of the long, tedious row, up the 10 dark and sluggish stream, propelled reluctantly by republican negroes, howling a monotonous, heart-breaking ditty,—and that an established one—varied only by uncouth *carrajos* when impeded in their progress by the acres of empty claret and porter bottles, left as monuments of our thirsty predecessors,—of parrots and parroquettes, screaming at each other from their leafy screens, varied by the unearthly howl of the baboon, and the chattering of legions of man's smaller imitators,—of the red sun blazing in the zenith, while not a zephyr's pinion stirs amidst the grossly green vegetation of the impenetrable forest,—of the scrubby minor villages, and the palpable air of inertia visible in all things; the visible proof of imbecile precocity in a people, the victims of a caricature commonwealth, totally unadapted to their antecedents, or their present ability, and indeed we might safely add, their race, which is just now a disagreeable medley of red, black, and dirty white,—of the hasty stay amid the bamboo huts of Gorgona, where a “five” could scarcely procure a meagre lunch of mouldy biscuit and jerked beef,—of the various disasters liable to novices on mule-back, on the primitive mountain track leading to the western ocean, and at last the long looked for walled city of Panama, where the people sport broad sombreros and lounge the livelong day on hammocks of painted grass,—where doors and windows are dispensed with and ventilation is a desideratum,—where the strictured streets are crowded by Yankees and Europeans, eager to obtain an exodus,—where church bells ring all day and mosquitos sing all night,—where soldiers walk barefooted and sentries stand guard with lockless muskets,—where beef is retailed by the yard, and calico by the pound,—where tables are of 11 stone and canoes of mahogany, and where clean water is worth sixpence a glass.

These sights and sounds are even now fast fading before another, I may not say a better era; and many an interesting relic of Panama's acadian days must die unnoted through the continued stream of strangers, and the unwelcome innovation of the iron horse. I too must bid adieu to it, and transport my reader at once through the peaceful waves of the Pacific, and safely land him on the shores of California, where a new panorama, unexampled in history, soon obliterates all the minor incidents of the journey.

Perhaps no country, in her dawning efforts of existence, ever more suddenly or successfully leaped into life, or started on a more propitious career, than California; predestined, as she certainly seems to be, with her twin sister Australia, to wake to life and develop the long slumbering energies of a hemisphere, every way capable of supporting their millions of intelligent and taught beings. The full blaze of the nineteenth century has shed its clear light upon her primary exertions; the lustre of improved science is able and willing to guide her every power of invention or appropriation, while no antiquated prejudice of political or religious bigotry, or ancient animosity of local classes need be any obstacle in her onward course. Every nation, not only of Christendom, but we may say the universe, has tendered its quota of youth, determination and talent; her mineral, agricultural and commercial attributes stand unrivalled, and her prominent position on the map as an invincible operator for good or evil on the Pacific's countless legions of barbaric tribes, gives her an influence, which if rightly appropriated, may allow her supremacy for centuries to come. All these have, of themselves, contributed to lay the foundation of a model state, sufficient to realize the day-dream of many a speculating philosopher, and her present greatness equally fulfils the desire of the man of fact.

How far her adopted sons have profited by the mother's gifts, or how far her future career is likely to accord with the first stimulus, is a problem difficult of solution, and one which I have neither the means or the patience to analyse, having quite sufficient facts to produce for inspection, and shall leave the elucidations of causes and effects to the occupation of those who delight to rove in the subtler fields of metaphysical uncertainty. Certain it is her present possession of every thing that voluptuaries term life's luxuries, already place her years in the van of states and colonies quadruple her age, and long pointed to as wonders of success. Works of great magnitude are here undertaken, performed, and in successful operation, in less time than the preliminaries would have been entered into, in almost any other land. Without hyperbole, to say, is here, to do; and great indeed must be the obstacle that prevents completion, when once entered upon. But little useless ornament adorns anything, be it a public work or a mere private venture, utility being the grand and real object, universally; for money, labor and time are of too essential value, to be expended for mere freaks of fancy, or in pleasing the eye of the connoisseur.

This latter circumstance will partly account for the railroad speed with which towns and villages have sprung up in heretofore solitary places, hoary rivers turned aside from their channels, and serviceable waggon roads graded through the wilderness, almost within sound of the echoing footsteps of the pioneers.

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The state of the Press may serve as a valuable criterion to typify the prosperity and general tastes of the people in most countries—where such a thing exists—and as the California newspapers, in numerical value, in comparison to the population, are far ahead of all other States, so are they in advance of the chief part in taste, dignity and judgment. Many, to be sure, are puerile and time-serving trash, made up of slang and childish bravado, or with profuse selections from the “yaller kivered” books of the Ned Buntline school, originally manufactured to suit the tastes and capacities of the factory girls, or the “able to read folks” that form such an important item in the New England census. But as many incubi of the same genus have long disgraced the older States—elbow room becoming scarce—some have no doubt, to the superlative delight of their more intelligent readers, moved their location to the Pacific shore, and inflicted the curse of their presence on the unfortunate gold seekers. But it is a cross they are bound to endure, and it will no doubt be mitigated in Heaven's own good time. San Francisco, at the present time, issues more than thirty; most of them too, are conducted by talented and discerning men, and more than one, indeed, resemble in their editorials, the calm dignity and unflinching independence of such a paper as the *London Times*, than could be expected in an American journal, devoted, as they too commonly are, to the vilest purposes of party, and bound in all things to the beck of the highest bidder. But here, taste and education exist in a very large proportion, and as often are the property of moleskin as of broadcloth; in consequence a proper reward has before been given editors of a superior tone, who could thus live by the legitimate proceeds of their intellectual labor, without descending to the despicable tricks of toadying and puffing individuals, and lying to the public at large.

One great feeder to the boasting habit, so ridiculously prevalent even among the most intelligent and unprejudiced Americans, and which sadly tarnishes the lustre of their most respectable

achievements, is the dangerous system in which writers of every political hue seem to accord, in flattering the national vanity, already developed quite sufficiently for a proper attachment to the fatherland, without this disgusting artificial stimulus. It seems, indeed, an incontrovertible axiom, with these caterers of the mind, that the citizens of this great republic, as a body politic—like an autocrat—can do no wrong; overlooking the fact, that should the amiable majority unhappily believe this conceded point, the much greater convenience of decapitating a solitary monster, to that of a multitude. Fenimore Cooper, to whom Americans are so much indebted for proving to the world that an American book could be readable, was often execrated by their critics, and forced to run a perfect literary gauntlet, besides being debarred from filling offices commensurate with his learning and pure patriotism, because in his works of fiction he could afford to be just to the motives and actions of a noble enemy, without deteriorating from the honor of his native land, and even, at rare intervals, seemed to throw a shadow of a doubt on the immaculacy of the one and indivisible republic.

This unsafe system of flattering self-esteem, is, to be sure, prominently observable in the Pacific Press, and is not to be wondered at, when we know that the elements of society are still strongly tinctured with the ancient leaven; but if any human means, in accordance with their 15 franchise system, can raise a barrier against the gross frauds and outrages openly professed and practiced by her time-serving and iniquitous government, the Press will most assuredly be prominent, provided it retain the superiority it has already obtained in advance of the sister States. It has not been without a powerful struggle, that those papers have maintained their independence and freedom. More than one has paid his life for his principles, and several have undergone the unpleasant process of being cowhided in their sanctums for telling the truth unpolitely, and thus lacerating the feelings of certain thin skinned gentlemen, too chivalrous to trust the redress of their grievances to an impartial jury of their countrymen.

The total population of the State, has been estimated to range at the present time in the neighborhood of 300,000, allowing for the average increase since the census of '52; the increase mostly accruing from the plains—as the difference between departures and arrivals by the ocean steamers is but trifling, though leaving a small balance—mostly of the fair sex—in favor of the

country. The figures in the census, were, probably, as near the truth as could be expected; but, however, no great dependence can be placed in the official returns, when we consider the extremely free and easy manner, in which a large portion of the people fancy to exist. Thousands are literally homeless. Large bodies of miners keep in perpetual motion from bar to gulch, and gulch to canon, in pursuit of variety, or paying dirt. Others are out careering on the boundless prairies, in pursuit of game, leaving no better half at home, to provide the applicant with the requisite information. Others, too, are squatted on ranches, far off in secluded vallies, their whereabouts a 16 mystery to all, save themselves, or a chance wayfarer who may journey on their track. Then, again, are the hoards of ungregarious miners, who dig in solitary mountain gorges, seldom seeing the face of man, except in their semi-monthly visits to some store, in pursuit of “grub.”

Together with this, the proverbial venality and carelessness of the irresponsible, characterless officials, render their report an indifferent foundation, on which to form a judgment; since speculators have often got government reports hashed up for their own peculiar benefit, by means of a timely and liberal bribe. Foreigners, forming the greater half in the census, were accounted for in a separate column, but were not classified according to their respective nations; such a task would have been far from an easy one, when it is considered the heterogeneous elements to be selected from. After the citizens, Indians and gentlemen of African origin have alone been honored with separate columns, probably from the extreme facility with which their ancestry can be traced, without impertinent interrogation, from their peculiar features and complexion.

Of the foreigners, British subjects, Germans, Chinese, and Spanish Americans from the different republics, predominate. The French, also, form an important item in the whole. The latter adhere much to their own habits and society, and seem stoutly determined against acquiring the English tongue; the chief portion of them seem to have a religious horror to all laborious avocations. The bulk of them, in consequence, choose towns for their dwelling places, where an existence may be picked up, by ministering to the luxuriant or dissipated habits of others. At one period the *canaille* had totally monopolized the 17 boot-blackening profession, but now it appears about equally divided with the negroes, they are generally found in crowds round the principal hotels in San Francisco, brush in hand, asking employment. They likewise cry all the fish—manufacture hot

doughnuts, with a portable cooking apparatus, at the street corners—grind knives, and peddle cheap cigars, cakes and fruit. The monied classes generally invest their capital in restaurants, gambling saloons, and drinking shops, which are extensively patronised by all nations, from their great skill in culinary affairs, and the universal taste they manifest in adorning and “getting up,” coupled with a great spirit of politeness, and inclination to excel in the art of pleasing.

The Spanish Americans are held in sovereign contempt by citizens, and are stigmatized with being filthy, ignorant, lazy and vicious. But this report must be received with great caution on account of the antipathy between the races, engendered by the American war, and constantly fed by little acts of aggression by both parties, and, in truth, it must be owned that the poor Spaniard has been more sinned against than sinning. Hundreds have been murdered, or ruthlessly driven from their homes, for acts of depredation committed by Americans. No sooner is a crime committed, than suspicion falls immediately on some unfortunate Mexican or Chileno, and as is often the case, where the people become the executive, the accusers are by no means expected to prove the victim guilty, but he is commanded to establish his innocence, and but little time is allowed for the operation. They have, in many cases, suffered more persecutions, even than the Chinaman, from the simple cause that his natural haughtiness leads him to resent oppression, and his heart burns for revenge, which is often fearfully obtained. They have apparently come, not for the purpose of accumulating wealth, but to live easily and enjoy life. But when compelled to work, no more skilful or industrious miner can be found than the *gambusino* of Sonora. When the exchequer is flourishing they dress like hidalgos, and puff their *cigaritoes*, interminably, and are found with tastefully adjusted *mantos* around their darling monte table, a matter of necessity to them at such times; as a people they are extremely generous and polite, though very reserved, and seem happy and contented when supplied with melons and cards, with something to play for.

The Germans, as is usual with them in other countries, are industrious, orderly and contented, and appear to be, with the Anglo-Saxon, the only people well adapted to be the progenitors of new nations. They are, in the main, very unpopular with American and Irish laborers, because no reduction of wages, will tempt them to pluck up a spirit and strike for a higher remuneration. They seem satisfied also, when in business for themselves, with slow, but constant returns, which,

together with the essential gifts of economy and sobriety—except, perhaps, a strong penchant for *lager pier*—in most cases, even here, are surely conducive to prosperity. The extreme facility with which they acquire the English tongue, and the habits of the ruling people, conspire to hopeful success in localities, where mendicancy would alone present itself to the thriftless minds of many others, who look with contempt upon German thrift.

As for the Italians—who are fortunately not very numerous, they are chiefly of the lowest class, and manage to slide through, in the round of existence, as that classic 19 people are wont to do, in their own sunny land. That is, they beg, sleep, or grind hurdy-gurdys. It has often been a query with inquisitive persons, and those fond of the marvellous, by what stroke of fortune the dark-eyed signors were conveyed hither, and what could be their object? The most reasonable solution to the problem, seems to be, that they had some shadowy idea of lazzaroni, white mice, and tambourines, being up in the market, and essential to the well-being of California society.

But the most striking feature in all this varied crowd—at least to a freshly arrived stranger—are the Chinese residents. Every spot where their presence is tolerated seems occupied, and they appear particularly attached to their own select society, for it is an extreme rarity when a solitary specimen is discovered straying from the fold of his brethren. The emigration was a perfect rush during the years of '51 and '52; for the next two years, most probably from the evil eye with which they were regarded, it sensibly declined, but has again commenced as briskly as ever. The pictures on the tea-boxes, grotesque as they may appear, are in many respects good resemblances of the original, but it must be owned by their greatest admirers, that the fancy sketches have most wickedly flattered the undeviating coarseness of the celestial countenance. A dreary sameness exists throughout, both in form and feature, and both experience and perspicacity are requisite in order to point out one *John* from another, with any degree of accuracy. They have all the same angular features, almond shaped eyes, comical cues and ridiculous inexpressibles or petticoats; the article in question having about an equal claim to either the masculine or feminine tegument. They don't walk, but contrive to scuttle along 20 somewhat after the fashion of an alarmed turtle making for water, dragging the feet

along in the most uncouth manner, without raising them; their clumsy, thick-soled shoes, however, may partially tend to give them this ridiculous appearance.

Miners and other parties who have expelled them from various places have received strong censure from some philanthropists for the contempt and often worse usage which “John”—as the Chinaman is familiarly termed—has received at their hands. Without attempting to justify these parties in their unwarrantable proceedings, still, if we impartially glance at the subject, we shall find some cause for this apparently cruel animosity. In the first place, every thing in connection with them, so emphatically marks them out as a *peculiar people*, that they might possibly be imposed upon a novice for specimens of humanity from the Georgium Sidus, had the powers of locomotion already obtained access to that remote planet. This circumstance is quite sufficient to excite the prejudice of many, for it is a recognized fact, the antagonism almost sure to exist, among the vulgar of any people, to parvenus, and all foreign innovations. But a more logical and serious objection, was urged by the opponents to Asiatic emigration. It was publicly known that many of these emigrants—coolies, they were termed—differed in all respects from ordinary arrivals from other countries, who came to enrich themselves individually, and very often to make a permanent settlement, tending to the wealth and power of the state, and in the end, perhaps, to become beneficial citizens. Such a reciprocity, they contended, could never be hoped for from the Chinese, for—to say nothing of mutual scorn between the two races—the 21 principal arrivals in those days, consisted of nominal freemen, but absolute *pcons* in reality, attended by keen-witted masters, who kept them carefully aloof, and assiduously endeavored to prevent all communication with whites, *a la Carolina South*.

It was asserted that they were originally engaged in their own country for a certain small sum paid in advance, the said sum to be liquidated by a few dollars paid monthly, which was barely sufficient to furnish their wardrobe. The proceeds of their labor meanwhile being deposited in the hands of the officer in charge. The disbursements also were light in the extreme, as a cargo of rice generally accompanied them, sufficient for their consumption during their sojourn in the uncongenial land of the “outside barbarians,” as they rather unpolitely designate all poor fellows not natives of the celestial empire. This state of affairs was not merely an evil, but an outrage of serious import,

calling loudly for redress, both from its inconsistency with the institutions of a free country, and the profitless drainage of treasure to enrich the coffers of a foreign and barbarous despotism. As this trade in Coolies has now ceased, together with importing for themselves, merchants are now their best friends, and miners treat them with much less active hostility than formerly—but not less contemptuously—and John has learnt to take all scurrilous jests on his anatomical structure, and all opprobrious epithets, with grinning affability, as the surest method of preserving a sound Chinaman. In the towns their main occupation consists in washing for the public, and trading with each other, and many of their merchants, short as their residence has been, have already accumulated handsome fortunes. In the different mining sections, 22 where they are found in the greatest numbers, they generally work earth which has been considered unpayable by white men, and seldom reject it, while it produces a daily average of one dollar per man. Often, too, when they accidentally stumble on a spot where the prospects are favorable, they are summarily ejected, by any lucky individual who fancies to claim the ground, or else pay a handsome price for the privilege of non-interference. In large camps where laws exist, a right of purchase is generally respected, but in obscure diggings, it is not so, and too often the new-comers succeed each other so fast, that the actual discoverer, is at last obliged to give up his ground in despair. This is most likely a reason why a contempt for veracity is imputed to them, for on questioning a Chinaman as to the paying properties of his claim, the invariable reply is “No good, John—two pans, hap cent—no hab got—no make licey,”—(Rice.) They rarely attempt a legal action, even with each other, which is no small sign of sagacity and prudence, for although the law would very willingly go through the form of dealing the commodity out to them, it would, very aptly, be the monkey system—and they generally excuse the court the trouble of stripping them.

They have striven hard, at various intervals, to be allowed the practice of jurisdiction among themselves; but as bad precedent has occurred in Java, and other places, where this privilege was conceded to them by the Dutch, and afterwards retracted, from the abuse of the power thus granted to them, it has been concluded, here, to deal them out law, when required, after the fashion of barbarians. Expensive as the most frugal fare has always been in this country, the Chinaman contrives to subsist 23 on a very trifling outlay of the circulating medium. Their diet chiefly consists

of pig and vegetables, the latter, with the exception of rice, being greatly aided by the spontaneous productions of the country, for they are excellent herbalists. These they cook with great skill and complexity, and handle their slender chop-sticks with dexterity and despatch, keeping up a constant colloquy with each other during the busiest and most interesting periods of the feeding process. Every thing possibly edible, however, is acceptable to the Oriental palate; the coarsest of offal and small fish, lizards, rats, fat puppies, and all such abominable contributions, are gratefully accepted by John's capacious, and ostrich-like stomach. But rough as the raw material may have been, there is nothing disgusting in the appearance when served; indeed, nothing can exceed the neatness and cleanliness of their cooking arrangements. But much as others may condemn, there are doubtless many good points, worthy of imitation, that act as a heavy counterbalance, to the more disagreeable phases of this extraordinary compound of civilization and barbarism. They are, without exception, the most law-abiding class in the community; it is a great rarity when one of them cuts up a freak worthy of the recorder's notice, and even then he is seldom the aggressor, but merely acting in a becoming manner of self-defence. But even this latter becomes a crime in the eyes of the law, as a Chinaman's evidence is worthless against a citizen. They are temperate in the use of alcoholic liquors, extremely economical, and industrious as bees. Although well satisfied with a small compensation for their labors, there is no injury to other operatives, on the score of competition, as they mostly keep aloof, and live and trade with each other in avocations and localities that would be utterly deserted but for their untiring patience and perseverance.

It is to be deeply regretted that the right hand of fellowship and Christian charity has not been more freely tendered to this grateful and deeply thinking people. Who can tell the astounding effect such a course might have ultimately had on the destinies of the world, and the march of the only true civilizer, the Christian religion. Let it be remembered that this ingenious race, embracing as they do such a huge proportion of earth's inhabitants, still remain steeped in the darkest night of idolatry, and notwithstanding the cloud of missionaries who have nobly given their talents, fortunes and lives, for the God-like motive of heathen conversion, their efforts have almost been as naught, and treasures of worldly wealth, and, what is worse still, treasures of human intellect and virtue, have been hopelessly squandered as worthless things. But it would actually appear as if the Deity himself

had bided his own good time, and here, on the shores of the once lonely Pacific—where the oldest race may embrace and fraternise with the newest—had placed his holy standard, and marked it out as a grand rallying ground and university, to provide the whole heathen world with instructors, of potent and lasting influence—preachers of the gospel and men of their own language and kindred. Yes, this is of all others the most effective field in the world to make converts, whose future efforts might well be crowned with success on their return to the land of their nativity; but, alas! such a consummation can scarcely be looked for by the most enthusiastic, where brutality and contempt are exercised, instead of Christian forbearance and brotherly love.

25

Of the last, though not least, the famous Anglo-Saxon, a title now monopolised by all who claim the English for their native tongue. He is here, as he appears determined to be in all places eventually, the head, heart, and tongue of all; and if he has somewhat misapplied his genius, and degenerated in the observance of the moral code, and in some of the nobler applications of his intellectual nature—by comparative estrangement from the society of virtuous females—exertions for the accumulation of wealth have been proportionably stimulated, and his native daring and internal strength have been multiplied four-fold.

The most numerous and important of this section of the *genus homo*, are, of course, the citizens of the United States. The native American presents himself to the foreigner visiting the Atlantic States, according to the provincialism of his birth place, and some of the most sublime blunders have been perpetrated by European travellers, by setting down the peculiarities of an individual, or even of a State, as a national sample of the whole, seeming to overlook the fact that Connecticut, for example, may not in all instances set the fashions to commonwealths having the most trifling connection with her, scarcely an idea in common, and more than a thousand miles off! They might, indeed, almost with the same show of reason, exhibit a “broth of a boy” from the wilds of Connemara, for a staid citizen of Whitechapel—or a Cossack of the Don, for a Baltic fisherman.

But here we may speculate on the characteristics of an individual representative, from what portion we please, and shall thus obtain a juster criterion of them, as a total, than we could by the

minutest inspection from Maine to Texas. The genuine Yankee, from the land of “fixins,” 26 is easily detected by his bustling habits, nasal intonation, and eccentric speculations; they will often manufacture the means of a livelihood, and lay even the foundation of a fortune, from the most incomprehensible, unthought of, and ridiculous materials, and although their experiments in wooing the fickle goddess are frequent failures, like the dauntless spider, they return again to the charge, until their indomitable assiduity is finally crowned with success. They are in most cases the instigators of every thing permanent and good. Churches and Schools, Hospitals and Asylums, and numberless institutions of benefit, are deeply indebted to their exertions in the cause of humanity, while the low grogeries already manifest disgust and uneasiness at their presence. Though extremely public spirited in their gifts, they are tremendously attached to dollars and smartness—for while petty thefts are viewed with superlative contumely, gigantic frauds are looked on too often with unqualified approbation.

Your b'hoy of New York, is a gay rollicking fellow—half of them are dentists—dressy if he can afford it, and much adicted to heavy betting, and sherry coblers, He is in favor of doing many things *a la mode de Paris*, and if nature vouchsafes the material, will most certainly sport an imperial or Henri-Quatre, and the last quarter goes free as the wind, to the boot-black and washman. He has much less originality than his eastern brother, in language and physiognomy, but is far in advance of him in his ideas of manifest destiny, braggadocia and filibusterism. He is a liberal patronizer of the theatrical corps, spouts, “Now is the winter of our discontent,” and *au fait* to the profoundest mystery of the green room, quotes Tom Paine, and calls himself a free-thinker, and calculates when he 27 bids adieu to this sublunary sphere, to go somewhere, and fall into the arms of Munroe, the great originator of his political opinions, and the most remarkable man the world ever produced.

The Kentuckians, Pennsylvanians and Buck-eyes, are a thriving prudent race, and approach the Yankee model much in their ideas of thrift and persistence. But their spheres of action differ widely; for while the latter eschews bone and sinew practice, and develops his perceptive faculties to the most ample stretch, in the mysterious doctrine of speculative chances, the former plod

industriously at established avocations, and are among the most industrious and well-doing of American citizens.

The South and S. West—to judge from that large portion here, amply displayed for perusal—are far—very far, in the rearward, in comparison with those named, in almost all the essentials that constitute refinement and enlightenment. The curse of slavery with both, and the semi-barbarous, unrestrained frontier life of the latter, have left an indelible and unpleasant mark upon the present generation of the working classes of whites, and despite the bootless boast of free citizenship, and much as they may vaunt their sympathy for the down trodden masses of Europe, the Russian peasant is fully their equal in knowledge, and their superior in integrity.

The F. F's of the South, seem to possess all the haughtiness of the little German Prince, minus urbanity and respect to the laws of their country; and it is a sad truth, that even in this country, most of the tragedies enacted, have taken their origin in Southern principles, said principles consisting in the highwayman's coat of arms,—“might (or money) makes right.”

28

Constant communication with slaves has done incredible evil with the laboring class of southerners; having it constantly before their eyes, that their employment is precisely similar to that of an inferior race, and extremely unremunerative besides, it can hardly be supposed, in a country where the moral rein is held so loosely, that virtue and industry can long hold out in the struggle—he resigns in despair, and the sole desire remaining is to calmly loaf his days away.

The most poverty-stricken, know-nothing gangs of the South, I have met with, are the Georgian miners, and dirt eaters from Carolina. A large number of the Georgians originally found their way here on the Coolie system. But on one point they differed materially from the Asiatics—that is, they invariably repudiated all indebtedness on their arrival, and after thus whitewashing themselves, commenced geological excavations on their own hook, independent as the fourth of July. They are extremely dissipated, and slovenly in their apparel, but good-natured and communicative, while all of them seem to have an inveterate *penchant* for toeless boots, and crownless hats. The Carolinians

are only distinguished from the Georgians, by the great delight they manifest in masticating earth, but as this is an article of consumption, free to all parties, I don't see that we have any particular right to interfere, provided the ground be not auriferous. From this odd propensity they have been nicknamed Dirteaters or Dirtikins.

The Louisianians from the Crescent City have ideas of the largest dimensions, and boast that the banks of their “Father of Waters.” caves in more dirt, annually, than would manufacture a better island than Great Britain. 29 They are brimful of pity and contempt for Niggers, Northerners, and Abolitionists from everywhere, are full of strange oaths, carry long knives, and patronize brandy-smash and mintjuleps to any extent, toasting confusion, with all the honors, to Sunday laws and Sons of Temperance.

The Sharp-shooters, or *pikes*, from the mighty Missouri and its tributaries, are often made the butts of their better provided fellow-citizens, and they are, in sooth, commonly speaking, rough and unpolished as their own western land. They have an instinctive antipathy to salt water, and in consequence, the major portion of them who have refreshed California by their attendance, are pilgrims by the land route. They are extremely loquacious on the earliest acquaintanceship, and woe betide the luckless “stranger” upon whom they inflict, with their barbarous dialect, the lights and shadows of life on the plains, for as this solitary journey in the wilderness—which they term travelling—has been the first from the paternal roof tree, their memories are most disagreeably green, and tenacious of the smallest circumstance of adventure. During the summer of '50, a certain county—far away in the wilds of Missouri—yelept Pike, was taken—without any premonitory symptoms whatever—with a wholesale emetic, and fairly inundated the desert—thick as Pharaoh's frogs—with shoals of youthful, long-legged, hungry Pikes. To the common query of returners—who met them on their march—of “Whence come ye?” the invariable countersign was Pike county, and as they brought for their sole heritage, a profounder shade of verdure even than their predecessors from the same State, their brethren got incongruously classed with them, and the brief cognomen 30 of *Pike* is now familiarly applied to all. They are a fine-looking, corn-fed, hardy set of varlets, straight as Indians, and have the aboriginal distaste to aught that savors of drudgery; but when he snuffs the tainted gale, the puke is “thar,” and ten cent dirt, pick and shovel are dropped

in disgust, when the track of a grizzly or antelope is near, for they are all “lost monsters” that come within sight of his unerring rifle.

They are a whiskey-loving lot, adepts at the fashionable games of *poker* and *seven-up*, but are otherwise intensely ignorant, and are easily directed in their votes by any small politician from their own state, for they are clannish in the extreme, and faithfully attached to their own section of the republic.

All these varieties are only to be found collected together in the wonderful menagerie of San Francisco, from whence proceed the different streams of fortune hunters, big with high hope, and again receives them on their backward route, with spirits exultant or crestfallen, as their varied fates may be.

The city occupies the north-eastern extremity of the peninsula, formed by the bay bearing its name on the one side, and by the Pacific on the other. The harbor has been materially injured by what has been termed the extension policy, or sale of water lots by the government to private individuals, for the professed object of forming a sinking fund—an appropriate name, by the way—in order to meet the liabilities of the State. But the real use of these lots has been to form palatable tit-bits from his obese Excellency to his parasites. So well satisfied did the rulers become with their former experiments in this plan of land making, that a fresh Bill was formed for the purpose of 31 rescuing another mile from the clutches of old Neptune. But the former recipients of the bread and fishes being rather impolitically excluded from the next meal, were indignant that their rivals should obtain peaceful possession of the city front, while their own wharves and warehouses already existent were contemptuously thrown in the rear—they became in consequence horribly patriotic, denounced the schemers and their nefarious machinations, and openly acknowledged their own delinquencies in times gone by; the press also joined in the crusade against the proceedings, and the city delegation resigned their seats, but were immediately re-elected—a democratic principle said to test the will of the majority. The plan was therefore reluctantly abandoned for a season, but will doubtless be again agitated on the first propitious opportunity. The poor expectants had to

weep over departed hopes, and seek for drier diggings, after making the disagreeable discovery that government patronage and water lots are both fleeting and unstable things.

Much mischief has been already done, for the great business portion is, even now, outside the high water mark, and nearly fills up the crescent which originally existed between the protecting points of the harbor. In a southeast gale, the position of the residents in many places is much more romantic than comfortable, for the houses undulate gracefully to the howl of the tempest, and the surging billows down in the cellar, and form no bad emblem of republican “institutions” in general.

Many a reverend old tub of a ship, that has been crowded off to make way for the splendid race of clippers that now swarm upon the ocean, is here laid up high and dry, with a mile of street between her and her native element.— 32 They have been used for various purposes, such as stores, dwelling houses, and even churches; and excellent tenements they made, in comparison with the flimsy structures of '49 and '50, many of which still disgrace the finest streets. Some of these veterans, in marshy spots, two stories high, continue to lift their heads and shelter families, with their foundations confidently reposing on flour barrels set on end—their whole salvation resting on the doubtful tenacity of a flimsy wooden hoop.

The amount of business performed on these planked piles in the course of one day, is beyond belief. Crowds of all races, all languages, and all colors, jostle each other, all on their own interest bound, and heedless of their passing neighbors. Here is the sharp-sighted trade-loving Yankee, with starched collar, and glossy stove-pipe, endeavoring to make a small per centage with the solemn Asiatic merchant, Sing Ho, rejoicing in scarlet stockings, a mushroom hat, and pigtail measurable by fathoms. A veritable counterpart of his ancestor Sing Ho, who flourished during the Chun dynasty, thousands of years ago. There is the swarthy Mexican, bedizened in high colored, tawdry finery, puffing a cigar of paper, and happily gallanting a dark-eyed greaser signorita. Then comes the effervescent fidgetty Frenchman, his limbs in continued motion for emphasis to his hurried utterance. Here, too, may be heard on all sides the children of Israel, lifting up their voices—from dark vistas of slop clothes—in solicitations to “valk in and shee te kootsh.” On moves the

motley human tide, Kanakas and Cossacks, Britons and Brazilians, Indians, Irishmen, Icelanders, Germans, and gentlemen of color, literally every nation under heaven—but Anglo-Saxon manners and customs maintain their due preponderance, and others must gradually adopt them, even for the motives of self-defence and comfortable existence.

Whole cargoes, of two or three thousand tons, are discharged and placed upon the wharf with a celerity and punctuality elsewhere incomprehensible. Drays loaded with rich freight from every climate, and pulled by sleek and powerful horses, frequently blockade the ill-conditioned streets, to the dismay and choler of hurried pedestrians, notwithstanding the praiseworthy exertions of their profane drivers, every epithet, holy and unholy, often failing to extricate them. One good reason for this every-day chaos in the wholesale streets, is the common liberty enjoyed by the merchants of depositing their wares where they may think best, and as all are, of course, emulous of exhibiting their stock in the most alluring position to the public eye, it is not unusual to discover a respectable stock-in-trade, nearly midway of the street, while the capacious brick store to which it appertains, is merely garnished with a beggarly account of empty boxes.

When we have tired our eyes with the teeming streets and wharves, and evening compels reluctant traders to adjourn, we may step aside and survey at a respectful distance, the worshippers at the shrine of chance—at least as it was a year since, for, alas! its palmiest days are over. In '52, a broken down old *roue* —who had won and lost within a week \$50,000—in lamenting the degeneracy of the present times, informed me, with tears in his eyes, that the then doings were but childish tricks in comparison with the dashing days of old. It might be so, but faith the work seemed to go bravely on still, and if a judgment might be hazarded, from the immense numbers who nightly 34 crowded these hells, a thriving trade was still conducted by the handsome, clerically-dressed scoundrels and painted *dames de Paris*, who united their ingenuity to make the callow-young. Some of the saloons applied for this unhallowed purpose, were here almost unequalled in splendour, and might be called in any place magnificent affairs. Uniting two streets, with a lordly entrance on each, daylight, which was not in much request, by the way, was supplied from the lofty transparent roof, and numerous chandeliers of exquisite workmanship united their radiance and assimilated the depths of midnight with noon day. The lover of harmony might here revel in sweet

sounds to the top of his bent, for a capacious orchestra was there filled with moustachied professors of the art divine. The polished rosewood bar runs the whole length of the ample building, backed by obliging tapsters, with collars of the starchiest, and hair of the greasiest, where the fastidious toper might soak his thirsty clay with that beverage which seemeth best unto him, from a plain ‘brandy straight’ to the most complicated ‘fancy,’ for the uniform equivalent of two bits a glass. Voluptuous pictures of female beauty—all of the French school and mostly indelicate—were set in rich frames, and alternately with costly mirrors, hung closely around the walls; and the real stages of action—the ruling motive for all this costly frippery, the *roulette* and *monte tables*—were of course in all respects consistent with the *tout ensemble*.

Order is said to be Heaven's first law, and as a consequence, man's necessity; and the sentence will seem to hold good in its application, even to these sinks of iniquity: for they too have their grades like all things else under the sun, and some of these resorts even bore the name of 35 witness on the murderer's trial, who pronounced the prisoner respectable, for the very satisfactory reason that he kept a gig. The gambling houses demonstrated as such, use only the time-honored and substantial games of Monte, Rouge et Noir, Faro, &c.; but in the lower regions, where the spicy pastimes of Roulette, French Monte, and the Little Joker flourished, not a shadow of a chance existed in favor of the deluded pilgarlie who dared to test the hazards of the game. Each table had its adequate number of *cappers*—a mongrel race of bankrupt gamblers and pickpockets. These bank employees would win or lose large sums nightly, trimming their sails to suit the tastes of the uninitiated—more especially the fresh youths who were emulous of amassing a little pile on the spot, from the balance of the home supply, minus the disagreeable concomitants of the pick and shovel. So glaring, even at that time, did the legalized robberies and outrages become, that the paternal law makers condescended to frame and enact a bill for the suppression of the smaller species of swindling; but as saving appearance was its only object, it was easily evaded, and the light amusements were almost immediately renewed, with a trifling change in externals, but in all respects coinciding in substance. As an illustration of human gullability, I will endeavor to describe one trick which was played in the houses on the most public streets, night after night, for three or four years.

A fresh importation from the Atlantic States, or a successful miner determinedly bound for *Bosting*, is immediately detected by these experienced physiognomists, the moment he crosses the threshold. As soon as pricked, the tyro is gradually trustled up to the tempting precincts of 36 being *respectable*, though this word it is now well known may be admissable to much qualification, illustrated by the the A B C table—the name of the game—where the banker, in an easy chair, reposes in all the majesty of wealth, in rear of a table on which is a great display of nuggets, slugs, and dollars. The table has an ornamental covering—a space in front of which, enclosed by a crescent, is marked by the famous introduction to all book learning.

An animated scene now commences between the jolly banker and his auxiliaries, who occupy his right and left wing, with a reserve in front for emergencies. He of the slugs and specimens has, to all appearance, liquored over-much—his fine shining hat has received a dinge, and topples groggily from his brows—he brags of his bank, and much witty repartee passes between him and his amiable colleagues, who with shirts of fanciful patterns, pistols, and beard, are excellent fac-similes of miners, well to do, on a visit to the metropolis. They are sharp-looking miners too, exceedingly wide-awake, and apparently resolved on stripping the inebriated gambler of his entire capital. After much amusing dialogue, the banker in a bungling sort of style, rattles the die and inverts his box on the table, he then removes his hand from it and solicits bets—at the same time, the troublesome miner on his left apparently endeavors to divert his attention, by handing him some awkward coin to exchange. While the banker's eye is turned off, the deed is accomplished. The confederate on the right perceives his advantage, and, with a catlike motion, slightly raises the box, which plainly discloses the winning letter to all the spectators, his associate then ceases his annoyance, and down they plump their heavy bags on the similar table letter.

37

Now, all this little by-play has been acted expressly to arouse Bosting's acquisitiveness, and has been attentively watched, both by that verdant one and the other by-standers—the greater portion of whom are aware of its object, but even if they were so inclined, they dare not utter a syllable of warning to the dupe, for summary and unpleasant ejection from the premises surely follows such

an offence.—As this is most probably Bosting's first introduction to such a scene, he has naturally enough some conscientious scruples, touching the propriety of thus defrauding the good-natured gambler. But he argues to himself, that others will do it, and why should not he have his share; besides to double his finances in a moment is a splendid idea, so he concludes to repent at leisure, and with a nervous jerk he stakes the buckskin bag which contains his all, exclaiming, in a voice shaky with the excitement, “The Mines or Bosting.” The die is instantly exposed to the view of all present, when lo! his favorite letter has inconceivably disappeared from the top, having indeed been dexterously capsized, previous to uncovering.

If the plucked keep frigid, he is kindly permitted to depart in peace, and perhaps invited to imbibe; but if he exhibit intractability to his fate, he instantaneously discovers himself bewildered in the gutter, from whence he is seen slowly to emerge on a prospecting tour to “murderer's bar” or “Sears's diggings,” as the case may be, while the old formula begins anew as a fresh goose is led to the table.

Contemptible as these resorts may seem, large sums were daily realized by these authorized rogues, and the bankers were far from being thought lightly of, even among the highest society the city could afford, for many of the tables 38 were owned by Judges and Generals, who thus profitably lightened the labors of law and warfare—and one victim followed another in quick succession, earning his experience dearly to be sure, but in the end perhaps safer to him than would be a temporary success, which might delude him on to a life of infamy and perhaps a disgraceful death; but these unfortunates, smarting under a first severe castigation, are apt to look with continued horror on gambling, and mentally determine to abjure it forever.

Public opinion has however turned against the knaves. Sunday play was first prohibited, and finally all were declared unlawful; and although much of it is still carried on, they are at least prohibited from exhibiting their enormities to the public gaze, which saves many from falling into their clutches.

Many other callings were, and are even now, followed in the Bay City, not a whit more honest than those above-mentioned; such as mock auctions, watch stuffings, and other swindling tricks, incidental to a much larger city.—One reason may be that operative labor is here certain wealth, and money is comparatively speaking, easily earned, and in most cases is apt to be valued in proportion. This circumstance, in conjunction with the miserable police department, holds out a strong inducement to black-legs of every grade, to say nothing of the political dishonesty of those to whom has been entrusted the protection of life and property. It has heretofore been an inviolable rule—cheat on the grandest scale, cow hide the servant of God at the altar, or pistol your opponent for injured honor; the invincible dollar will vindicate you, and carry you scatheless through the ordeal against a cloud of witnesses, backed by all existing statutes. As a proof we may cite in account, 39 the hundreds of murders committed within the city, and how many underwent the last penalty of the law? Just three, one of whom was an unfortunate insane Spaniard, and the other two were poor, unknown, penniless vagrants. But no other result could possibly accrue, where beardless boys, and unprincipled shoulder-strikers sat in high places, owing their elevation which was but temporary, and therefore the more abused, not to their rectitude or to their genius, but to the insane cry of party and the grossest humbugging of the great unwashed democracy.

But there are many sights and sounds both pleasing and instructive to the lover of his kind, which are already taking deep root in this great mart of heterogeneous and conflicting items. The Sabbath bells calling to the house of prayer, the work in most instances of the persevering sons of New England; the happy, noisy urchins, loosed from school restraint; the hosts of news-boys vending the latest papers from the east; the tearing, ranting red republican steam paddy, scooping a ton of sand at each inspiration of its mighty lungs, he is your true and impartial leveller, and gives to the valleys the superfluity of the hills; already have its efforts graded dozens of streets, and performed of itself the labor of an army of spadesmen. But the great manufacturing district of the city, occupies the southern portion, which bears the pleasing chimerical name of “Happy Valley.”

But few branches of mechanical industry are now, or are ever likely to be of equal importance with iron manufacturers, in this State. The inconvenience of importing clumsy machinery, which

was until recently a matter of necessity, was undoubtedly a dead weight to such investments 40 as required them for their thorough development. In many cases a slight misunderstanding on the part of the manufacturer, with regard to the proportion of the article, or injury received in the long voyage, has cost thousands of dollars, besides the immense loss of time resulting from such a casualty. Practical men shortly perceived this imperfection, and an early encouragement was in consequence given to the pioneer foundries in Happy Valley, their numbers have under this fostering influence vastly increased, and at the present time, the tall chimneys, puffing off bellows, and discordant clang of hammers, make up a pandemonium worthy of Brummagem herself, and constant employment is thus given to numbers of skilful workmen, at wages unprecedented perhaps in the world.

The trade to be sure is yet in its infancy, but the brat is a lusty one, and a glorious manhood is before it. Many ocean steamers of vast magnitude already disturb the peaceful bosom of the Pacific. Every lonely bay will ere long be ruffled by the restless paddle, which will require existence or at least constant aid from the busy cyclops. Commerce also will most surely pry into each navigable stream, but San Francisco must still be as she is now, the great force-pump. Her commercial advantages must still continue imperative, both from her central position, and from the fact, that it is almost the only harbor worthy of the name on the Western coast of habitable North America. Already indeed there is an export of machinery to the home ports, the islands and western Mexico, the quartz, grist and saw mills, are also supplied with their gear, with more convenience, and in the end much cheaper, than they possibly could by the best system 41 of importation. A uniform increase and success is the inevitable result, and despite the bleak and uncomfortable aspect of the region apportioned to the sons of Vulcan, the adjective of Happy, is not so *mal apropos* as might be superficially imagined.

43

PART II. THE MINES.

For the reason that the mines were the great acquisitive principle that led to the permanent occupation of California, they are too apt to be considered by the new comers, as well as the “old

folks at home,” the leading feature, and, indeed, only powerful point of attraction worthy of a separate notice. Without pretending to deny that their influence is now, and long will be the most potent of any one, in directing the destinies of the state, it must still be acknowledged that their material importance has been much overrated, and all must allow that every ounce exported tends to exhaust their superiority over other less pretentious, but more solid and lasting fields of investment and labor.

It is somewhat surprising too, that the richest Placers, as well here as in Australia, were the earliest discoveries; in fact, what at the present day would be trumpeted forth as valuable diggings, would scarcely have sufficed to defray running expenses, during the never-to-be-forgotten years 44 of '48 and '49. Mining has now settled down in the old localities—not yet exhausted—to a regular and legitimate employment, requiring skill and experience as well as strength; and a fresh hand, even accustomed to laborious employment, cannot expect wages with the experienced drifter, any more than to ship as an able seaman, ignorant of the stern or stem of a ship. Although proverbially an uncertain employment, gold is still disseminated in the soil with a strange system of regularity; and while we admit it to be more fluctuating than most honorable employments, the price of labor is mostly affected by the average success at the mines.

To give a synopsis or history of every mining camp would prove neither useful nor interesting to the general reader, even if it were possible, which it is not, both from the vast territory to be explored, and the difficulty of procuring correct statistics, from the boasting propensities of the over sanguine, and the doleful complaints of the despondent and homesick. Neither can we place absolute dependence on the editor's “Facts of the day,” or their correspondents lengthy epistles containing the latest “News from the Mountains.” Such stuff is mostly treated with sovereign contempt by the veterans, and well may it be so, for it is often a mere ruse of stage or steamboat proprietors as an inducement for tyros to patronize their favorite line; but as carriers on other rivers and roads are well posted on these tricks of the trade, their covert advertisements are equally stuffed with “astounding discoveries” and “big lumps,” so much so, that a balance of attraction is perfectly established, and the would-be nabob is only puzzled—like the donkey between the bundles of provender—as to which of the El Dorados he had best 45 patronize. Nor can we trust

much to the hoards of unsuccessful geologists, always to be found in the larger cities. Their views are most likely to be tinged with the bleak retrospect of their disappointment, stupidity, or shameful prodigality, and the thoughts of their varied afflictions, induce them to look on the mining districts with other than rose-colored spectacles, and fervently to dispatch them with all their *et ceteras* to his Satanic majesty, forgetting that whatever their occupation may be, its essential support originates in the stalwart arms of the gold-hunter. The truth is—the adventurer's wisest plan is to jump in, haphazard, wherever fortune may please to guide his footsteps and should his acquirements fall below par, he may watch the flight of birds like the soothsayers of old, and pitch his tent by the guidance of their wing. Such a proceeding may prove equally propitious, as the best directed scheme derived from the wisdom of his predecessors. He may rest assured, however, that in every undeserted mining locality, capable of supporting a store or liquor shop, gold is still in the soil, and if all claims be not already occupied, his prospects are probably as good as any other, that is, in surface diggings, where a short probation is sufficient to acquire the requisite skill; for experience has proved, in spite of modern geology, that no amount of skill or sagacity can at all times point out a gold lead, be its hue, consistency, or position as it may.

Mining at the present time may be classed under four great heads, each differing from the other in many important features. They are, the surface diggings, deep diggings, river and quartz mining. The surface diggings, where the deposits have been large, are of course nearly 46 exhausted, and even those that have paid moderate wages, are becoming every day more difficult to find, in those places where water has been procurable by natural or artificial means. There are vast tracks still, however, that have only been discovered during the dry seasons past, that would support—and most probably will yet—thousands of miners, when water can be conveyed to them at reasonable rates; this cannot possibly be until the value of labor is depreciated, and a more moderate income expected on original outlay, or until richer ground commanded by a ditch already existing is impoverished, when the water not demanded elsewhere may be turned, rather than wasted, into a more moderately paying channel. There are many districts too, where it will always be an impossibility to convey water on account of their altitude, that have been worked during several years whenever there is rain water sufficient for the purpose. It is needless to say such are not very

desirable, for they cannot be worked except in a rain storm, and of course must—under common circumstances—be idle nine-tenths of the year. Diggings of this description to be held or valued at any thing must, when in operation, pay exceedingly well.

Where the strata is rich and the field extensive, water can generally be conveyed, from some of the mountain streams or rivers, by means of a ditch or flume, and in such cases, an ample supply may be provided for the greater part of the year. But as water is very expensive when delivered by those means, the inferior places as before said, must lie fallow, until the winter rains supply the necessary fluid without money, but not without price. Indispensable it is, as the existence of the ore itself within the soil, to prosecute the business of mining, for there is 47 absolutely, no other method than washing, by which the few shining specks can be extracted, from the vast proportion of sand and gravel with which it is enveloped. Large lumps to be sure are often picked up, and there are coarse gold diggings where much has been found by picking slate ledge, and depending on the eye, but such are rare exceptions—for they are diggings of the most desirable kind, where the gold can be detected *in the soil* after the most minute ocular test.

The deep diggings, which are now fast becoming the sole dependence of the miner, are worked in two different ways, according to the soil or the natural position, and may very properly be subdivided into flats and hills. It is obvious that the only way to prospect the ledge or bedrock of a flat, is by sinking a shaft in the first instance, and if payable, to penetrate the ground from the shaft, sending everything to the surface of the earth in tubs, except where the ground is not of a great depth, or of a very loose description, that would make it unsafe to undermine. Ground of this nature is got at, merely, by taking the worthless portion off and laying the pay dirt bare, which is then picked up and washed. This is denominated *stripping*, but it is rarely that ground will pay to strip more than from twenty to thirty feet.

To penetrate a hill it is not generally requisite to sink a hole at all. It is usual to commence at a point supposed to be at least sufficiently low to drain off all the water, and open a tunnel. Sometimes it is essential to cut through what is termed the *rim* ledge, and follow through with just sufficient rise to drain off any springs that may be struck. For it is often the case that the bed-rock will rise

up, coinciding with the hill for some distance, and 48 again decline or *pitch* towards its centre. The ledge most commonly lies in such a shape in the best tunnels. Sometimes the tunnels have been commenced at a point too high for drainage, as it is found on crossing the rim ledge that it still continues descending; and no resource remains but to retreat and commence anew at a point sufficiently low. But when the tunnel has been started and followed too low for the paying gravel in the hill, it can be obviated by penetrating upwards to the proper distance, and going on with another one above, the old one still answering the purpose of a drain and as a means of entrance and exit. When the excavation is made through the solid rock or very compact ground, it is not necessary to protect the top or sides, but when unsafely loose, it is indispensable to line both with timber to prevent them tumbling in. Many lives and immense labor have been sacrificed from carelessness in this particular. When the distance is much, it is frequently necessary to sink a shaft in the interior to cause a current of air; but when this is impracticable from the rapid rise of the hill or the composition of the soil, it can be ventilated by means of fans. Even after auriferous earth is found, the tunnel is continued straight ahead until the lead is crossed or discontinues sufficiently paying. A series of cross drifts then commenced at right angles with the main one, the breadth of the claim, or if not claimed, *a la discretion*. All the empty space behind is then filled up with stones or waste dirt to keep the roof solid, and cross drifts cut parallel to the others, and as close as safety will warrant. In this way an expert drifter will strip almost every inch of the ledge, and work himself gradually backwards until the lead is exhausted, leaving the ground above as solid as when he first commenced operations.

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Not the most distant approximation can be made to the wealth of the hills in California, for every month teems with fresh discoveries in this system of mining, but it is it that will gradually bring the calling completely under the control of capitalists, or at least of large companies; both from the heavy risk that attends prospecting, and the expense of working after the gold is found; the thousands of prospects holes and deserted tunnels scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land, tell a sad tale of many a small fortune's wreck, and may well act as beacons to deter others from venturing their little all in an adventure so hazardous.

The river or wet diggings occupy the channels of rivers, and those portions called bars, which have undoubtedly been formed by the earth washed from the mountains by winter freshets. At those bars the river often appears to have been turned from its original course, by the accumulation of deposit in its bed, and forms a species of flat peninsula, and sometimes even an island that divides the river into two channels. The gold on these places is mostly fine, which circumstance will aid to verify the theory of its being a deposit—the growth of centuries. It is also more thoroughly mixed with the soil than in the mountains, or in professional parlance less “spotted,” for it will mostly pay a percentage from the surface to the bed rock, a depth varying in different places from a hundred feet downwards. When the bed rock is found bare, it is mostly worthless, unless perhaps it has occupied the bed of a stream where large deposits have often been found secreted in the crevices or “pockets,” after the water has been taken off.

Soon after the first discoveries of the precious metal, the 50 mountain rivers were suspected to contain the largest quantities, and some of the earliest formed companies were organized, for the grand object of giving another direction to the river, and to lay its unknown and long concealed treasures open to the light of day. The very formation of the bars themselves, offers a powerful inducement to such a project, and renders the undertaking comparatively an easy one. Where the river is suspected to have swerved, a “sink” mostly exists near the neck of the peninsula, where the ancient stream took its course centuries ago, before it was blocked up and compelled to seek another outlet. This sink is deepened sufficiently to form a race—and often the earth taken from the race has proved much richer, than that afterwards acquired from the actual river bed. At its upper end a dam is thrown across the stream, which is thus drawn through the artificial channel, leaving its bed completely dry for a distance often of two or three miles, or whatever length the race may be. River mining is always a costly work, and the risk a heavy one. Some, indeed, after an outlay of more than a million of dollars, have not paid wages even afterwards, and even where the prospects were favorable, one night in an early winter has suddenly swept away dam and all. Many of them have however paid their enterprising companies a thousand times over, and those who once engage in it seem to prefer it to all other mining.

This wholesale drainage is likewise of vast benefit to those who hold what are termed bar or bank claims, that is from the low water mark back to the hills, and varying in breadth in different districts, but thirty or forty feet may be a general average. By the removal of the water, they are enabled to sink their shafts below what before constituted the water level. This could not be managed formerly, with any degree of success unless the pay was exceedingly good, from the great labor required in pumping out the water, that constantly filtered through the gravelly banks of the river.

The quartz leads form an entirely independent feature in the art of mining, totally distinct from the others. They can only be worked advantageously by monied men, from the great quantities of machinery requisite to separate the gold from the rock. This can only be accomplished thoroughly, by crushing it to a powder, although very rich quartz has repaid individual effort, sometimes very handsomely, merely by burning and then pounding it with a pestle and mortar. The greater part of the quartz companies for so far, have been failures, arising in part from want of thorough prospecting in the first instance, and in the second from inexperience, imperfect management, and irresponsible defaulters. But no doubt can exist of its ultimately becoming a permanent and profitable branch of mining, when expectations are moderated, and when men of integrity and skill are permitted to guide their management.

The existence of these quartz leads is very singular; and their contiguity to almost all hill diggings, and the immensity of gold actually contained in many of them, hold out confirmation strong to many, that quartz is the original *mother* of the precious metal. And that flats and bans are frequently found rich, at great distances from any quartz lead, but contain quantities of quartz gravel, only shows that these places have been formed by the passage of water from the hills, and even the gold in the rivers is frequently found with small particles of that rock attached to it.

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Main quartz leads generally run parallel to each other, although they have spurs or branches in every direction. The lead can often be traced for many miles, through hill and valley, and even across large rivers. Sometime it totally disappears from the surface and again emerges clear and

distinct as ever, looking at a distance like flocks of snow white sheep, and adds great variety and interest to many an otherwise monotonous landscape.

Mining machinery has undergone great changes and improvements since the early days, and just in proportion as the gold became more difficult to procure, so have the means for facilitating its extraction increased. During the period of the early discoveries—a knife to scrape the crevices and a tin cup to receive the proceeds, were considered sufficient implements; when it began to be found mixed with the earth, a flaring tin or iron pan began to be used, and is used still for prospecting and cleansing purposes by the whites, and even as a means of livelihood by Greasers and Indians; many a snug fortune, too, has been made by the simple process of “panning out.” The operation is performed by inserting the pan (which contains about a common pail-full of earth,) in the water and keeping it constantly in motion, at the same time picking out the large stones. As the pan flaps backwards and forwards, the light sand gradually works off, and the gold naturally settles to the bottom and by continuing the process the gold is left completely by itself; the fiftieth part of a cent can thus be saved, and is perfectly visible. A Mexican can pan from fifty to a hundred pans per day, and make small wages out of earth paying two or three cents to the bucketful. After the pan came the rocker, and finally the long tom, sluice and hydraulic, together with the process of ground sluicing and the necessary accompaniments of ditches and flumes.

The rocker as its name implies, consists of a box somewhat in the form of a child's cradle with the rockers attached, but shallower, and sometimes without a footboard. At the upper end, when in operation, is a piece of canvas on a slight wooden frame, moveable at pleasure. This is inserted, angularly from the top nearly midway to the bottom at the head of the rocker. Over this rests a box about two feet square and four inches deep, with an iron bottom punched with holes a quarter of an inch in diameter, it too is moveable as well as the canvas or “apron.” When a bucket of “pay-dirt” is deposited in this box, the machine is set in motion backwards and forwards by means of a handle attached to the body, and water poured on by a dipper holding about half a gallon. This carries through all substances of less diameter than the holes, and when this is accomplished, the box is lifted or swung off on a kind of hinge, to dispose of the gravel that remains. In the meantime all the light earth, gravel and sand, have washed completely through the rocker—which is so placed

as to have a small declination from head to foot—leaving the gold and heavy sand on the canvas. The apron is not removed until what is called a run had gone through, which consists of 25, 50, or 100 buckets, according to the richness of the earth or the judgment of the operator. When this is done, the apron is carefully scraped into the head and taken out, while water is again applied and the rocker shaken smartly. The gold, from its superior specific gravity, is thus left behind, mixed most commonly with heavy black sand, which is separated by panning or blowing, if tolerably coarse, but the very 54 fine can only be thoroughly saved, by mixing with quicksilver, which amalgamates soon with the gold by rolling the pan round. The sand is then easily washed off, and the quicksilver containing the gold is deposited on a piece of buckskin, and tightly squeezed so as to let the quicksilver run through. The volatile metal is driven off in fumes, by exposing the amalgam to a strong heat; when the quantity is large it can be saved for future use by means of a retort, which condenses the fumes like the worm of a still. In light sandy soil, two good hands may sometimes wash six hundred buckets per day, when close to the water; but generally speaking, three or four hundred is a good days work.

The long tom was a great improvement on the rocker, and although differing much in appearance, acts precisely on the same principle, but with much greater despatch and economy, and the reason it has not completely superseded the rocker, is, that it requires a smart running stream of at least six cubic inches, and a fall of one foot in twenty to work successfully. Its principal advantage is, that the running water performs the work of rocking itself, and while two hands keep busy in feeding the machine, one can, by working industriously, keep it clear of the refuse gravel, simply by shovelling it out, and no interruption is requisite in the matter of cleaning up, before the conclusion of the days' work; when one or two thousand buckets of earth is found in the “riffle box,” concentrated into one panful.

The sluice was the next improvement in the art of labor-saving, but it is often impossible to apply it, in ground where either the rocker or tom may be advantageously used. It wants a much heavier stream than the tom, 55 requiring the same fall for a much longer distance. A “string” of sluices, generally consist of a succession of boxes, like a trough twelve feet in length, having two sides and a bottom, and tapering at one end so as to fit snugly into each other. The length of the “string”

varies, according to the tenacity of the wash-dirt, from fifty feet to a thousand. The gold is saved in these boxes after the earth is shovelled in, in a variety of ways. As the water rushes through, it carries all the light earth off, and also the gold for a short distance, until it meets with a “riffle,” which is some sort of an obstruction in the boxes below, where the precious metal may have the means of settling down to the bottom.

Sometimes, the riffle consists of light slats of wood or iron, running crosswise or longitudinally, and sometimes of a board full of auger holes. But the varieties are legion, for there is not one essential in the whole mining craft, upon which exists so much diversity of opinion; and indeed it is a favorite method among the mischievous boys, who wish to set a pair of cranky old fellows by the ears, to introduce and compare the respective favorite of each. It is, no doubt, from this that the California proverb is derived, wherein we illustrate a man's success in some favorite project, by saying “He has made the riffle.”

The hydraulic hose is perhaps the most wholesale system of all, but so many natural advantages require to be united for its profitable use, that many may be resident in the mines for years, without ever having the opportunity of seeing it tested. It requires, in the first instance, a very steep bank of earth, either to be stripped off for a substrata, or to be auriferous in itself. This field must also be of considerable extent, for the various items used become very expensive, and unless the claim holds out for a long time, it would not be prudent to attempt the operation.

The work is performed by turning the water on the face of the bank, through a nozzle attached to very strong hose—generally No. 1 canvas doubled—similar to the way water is forced from a fire engine, only, that instead of being forced out by hand, it is done by the pressure or weight of the water itself, which is of course powerful in proportion to the height it falls. With a fall of forty or fifty feet the effect on a bank is tremendous, for no strata of earth is so compact as to resist it. It will even tear up the common sandstone ledge, and lava melts before it, like snow. I have seen dogs intentionally killed by it, in a few seconds, and accidents have occurred, where men have lost their lives in a similar way. I knew of an instance where a drifter—in close contiguity to a hydraulic—was accidentally buried, by a cave of more than forty tons of earth, and before his three companions

could return from a distance of three hundred yards, whither they had gone in pursuit of shovellers, the hydraulic had released him, and although he looked quite damp and uncomfortable at first, he returned to his labor quite philosophically in a few minutes.

Ground sluicing is never a finishing work of itself. It simply reduces the quantity of dirt, to be afterwards sluiced by the usual means. It is done by allowing a very heavy stream to rush over the ground, which requires to be very steep in consequence, and thus carries off a very large percentage of the refuse soil without any shovelling at all, but the constant application of the pick tends materially to expedite the matter, more especially if the quantity of gravel is material.

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The capital invested in ditches would appear almost fabulous. More than one has cost a million of dollars, and some of them in their various ramifications are over a hundred miles in length. In many places a single mile has cost twenty thousand dollars, and there is now scarcely a camp of any importance in all the northern or southern mines, where water is not procurable by artificial means, for a greater or less portion of the year. Although embracing such an enormous portion of the capital of the country, there is not probably a more uncertain investment in the whole range of this uncertain country. It is next to impossible to put a valuation on your stock even after a year's experience. And instances are not rare where a dividend of a hundred per cent has been paid at the end of six months, and at the very same time the stock a drug in the market at fifty per cent below par.—Instances of this kind occur where the strata has been completely superficial, and paying well while they lasted, were of course soon exhausted. But again the stock may take an upward tendency—after being almost abandoned—from the discovery of deep diggings commanded by its waters.

The speedy exhaustion of the mines was early foretold, and even so lately as '52, the erector of a brick building in a mining town, was generally ridiculed as a visionary. But at the present day there is not a town worthy of the name, that has not several substantial fire-proof buildings of brick or stone, and notwithstanding that the diggings in the immediate vicinity are for the most part worked out, new habitations are constantly in the course of erection—for concentration is now more fashionable than of yore—and the large camps have chiefly swallowed up the 58 small ones. And

the practical miner in spite of the constant improvements, has actually to go farther for supplies, than he had in the earlier times.

What a contrast do these funny little villages present, to the eye of one habituated to the sleepy agricultural towns of other countries; built of all kinds of possible materials, shapes and sizes, and in any spot, no matter how inconvenient, where the first store-keeper choose to pitch himself. Sometimes they are found on a broad flat with no suburb visible, squeezed together as though they had originally been purchased by the inch, the little streets so crooked and confined, a wheelbarrow could scarcely be made to go through them; sometimes again, they are made up of detached buildings, forming an extended village two or three miles long, a great inconvenience to every one, and to politicians and gossipers in particular. Some, too, are quite invisible until you discover them at your feet buried in a deep chasm, and unapproachable, unless you be pleased to make your *entree* like an otter. Many of them placed on an apparently sheer hill side, resemble in the distance some native excrescence, and on a nearer approach, appear to have been thrown promiscuously from some gigantic hand, and stuck—like bird lime to the naked rock—forever beyond all reach of humanity in general.

But for all the forlorn appearance that many of them present, they are to all intents and purposes “towns as are towns”—real go-a-head marts for traffic, living on trade, and the constant turmoil of demand and supply. They were never intended by their founders for aught else, and business men, not pleasure seekers are the owners. Independent citizens enjoying life on patrimonies, 59 or annuities are not to be seen, and but rarely, old men, women, or children. The chief ingredient is vigorous and sturdy manhood, brimfull of life and expectation, always excepting the eternal lounge of the hotels and billiard saloons, that indigenous plant of American soil.

I do verily believe if the whole catalogue of the free institutions—from independence day down to stuffing a ballot box—were exposed to the inspection of an unprejudiced judge, with the view of obtaining his opinion as to what constitutes the most original native invention—the pure unadulterated ‘dead-head’ would most assuredly bear the palm. Yes! Envious foreigners may strive, and that successfully, to snatch the honors of steamboats and forced servitude, telegraphs,

piracy and mint juleps—but the loafer is incomparably—an established United States fixture—in short, an institution. He has no sectionalism about him. He is a federalist, a part and parcel of Uncle Sam himself. Kansas may be gained by Sharpe's rifles, or ruffian guns—foreign citizens may be stripped of their franchise—chewing tobacco may become unpopular—but the loafer is a permanence. As he is at the Astor House, so is he in El Dorada, his means of livelihood the queerest problem of the day. But there he is, in lank dyspeptic flesh and blood—day after day, and year after year; in salubrious weather on the piazza of the best hotel—or in bad, at the box stove, picking his teeth or lazily puffing a fragrant Havana, his heels uplifted, his upper lip negligently curled, and the very cut of his hat betraying a languid contempt for the whole race of the uninitiated. He has no fellowship with the European sot of a gin shop or wine cellar—no sympathy with such, for a gulf is between them. *They* are humility's self in pursuit of an invitation—he drinks at your request with the solemn dignity of a Pacha. *They* are dirty—his linen is faultless. *They* get drunk when they can—he is never inebriated—his appreciation of the glorious exhilaration of alcohols is much too profound, to be rashly sacrificed for the unpleasant consequences of over indulgence. Once a year, however, they awake from their torpor, and during the whole turmoil of an election, appear gifted with astonishing powers of ubiquity, as well as ability and inclination to treat their fellow-townsmen indiscriminately, on the smallest pretext. But after the excitement, their unwonted exertion and munificence instantly collapse like the baseless fabric of a vision, and they calmly betake themselves to the natural and orderly functions of a dead-head, until again resuscitated by the cries of their country.

Too many tyros get discouraged on their first introduction to hard knocks and indifferent placers, and desert at at once, indignant and disgusted. Such persons, if possible, return home by the first steamer, and of course relate to sympathizing friends, the doleful catalogue of their wrongs and misfortunes while in the mines, interspersed with shrewd guesses, as to the ultimate fate of the unfortunates who remain; and all this elaborate knowledge has perhaps been acquired in the experience of twenty-four hours. The unfortunates whose finances will not permit an immediate exodus from the country, must seek employment in cities for bread, and a reconstruction of their wardrobe, they will therefore be obliged to labor for a trifling remuneration—often, indeed, merely

for their board. Such has been the fate of thousands, who with the diseased fancy of becoming immediate nabobs, have 61 in the first revulsion of feeling, been hurried into the opposite extreme, and their crushed spirits have submitted, and bowed to the lowest depths of degradation and vice, where a moderate independence might have been acquired, in three or four years, by the use of a moderate share of industry and thrift.

There is another class worthy of mention, from their great numbers and the powerful influence they wield.—These good natured people take things as they come with the stoicism of a Turk, but are not in the end in any more affluent circumstances than those just mentioned.—They are, nevertheless, as independent and perhaps to the full as happy as lords. As they erect their own shanties—rent, fuel, and water are free—and their only remaining difficulty is to liquidate the weekly store-bill, which they manage by working their ground one, two, or more days, according to its productive powers. Those who are not fortunate enough to be proprietors, perform the same object by working for others. Another half day, or day—according to the individual's imbibing qualities—will pay the tavern bill, and the ‘balance’ of the seven days is at the gentleman's own disposal. This is expended according to varied tastes, the free and easies in drinking, sleeping, and euere, while those of a literary turn spend theirs in the questionable improvement of their minds, to be derived from translations of obscene French books, and the odd novels that chance throws in their way.

It must not be supposed that the hard laborer—even in the mines—is always the most successful, although it certainly is the place, of all others, where the prudent exercise of bone and muscle meets with its surest and 62 most adequate reward. There are numbers of persons, however, who manage by various ingenious plans, and adroit management, to elude labor, while at the same time they contrive to scrape the dust together in a wonderful manner. Besides the legitimate offices of stores and boarding houses, there are many whose sole occupation consists in *jumping* or locating claims, and then disposing of them in the most advantageous way possible by sale or barter. As a body their respectability is more than doubtful.—They are obliged to prevaricate and double in every conceivable way, to carry out their plans with success, which are, for the most part, executed on fresh arrivals from the agricultural districts, and foreigners, more especially the Chinaman, who is

commonly considered lawful game, even by the wild but cunning aborigines, who have actually had the aptness, to palm themselves on the unsuspecting Asiatics as foreign tax collectors, and thus swindle them out of their dear bought earnings. One of the most successful tricks heretofore in vogue among the mining speculators, was happily denominated *salting*. This consisted in shooting small portions of gold dust into a bank from a shot gun, where it was likely to pass through the ordeal of prospecting in the pan of the intending purchaser, who discovers when too late the *charge* to be his sole remuneration.

From the vast influx of foreigners into the mines, they were early deemed by the lords of the soil, as excellent sources for revenue, and a law was soon in operation, entitled “An Act for the protection of foreigners,” but “An Act for the spoilation of foreigners” would have been a much more applicable title to its spirit and intention.—From many causes, it has not worked so glibly as hoped for, not the least of which is the unjust principle of making the taxes themselves a reality, while the so-called protection, in the way of compensation, is quite inadequate and visionary. Besides, the law was a copious bungle of itself, and although a large sum was, and still is raised monthly, it does little more than enrich the persons employed in its collection. A great animosity prevails against it by all foreigners, and in diggings where they are the prevailing population, it is a dangerous and often impracticable feat, to raise a dollar. As the only alternative in case of non-compliance, is to take the body, as the law enacts, the tax at the present day is rarely enforced, except on the inexhaustible Celestials.

Even so late as '51, when the fiats of the legislature were more respected than they have ever been since, the collector could often make a per centage, even from speakers of the English language. But from that date it has got gradually into disuse—principally from the risk of collection—although the attempt is sometimes made, even at the present day.

In the Summer of 1853, there was a company consisting of three persons, on a bar of the main Yubea, called Ousley's, of which I was a member in reputable standing. Like all diggings in the foot-hills, the gold was extremely fine and very sparingly sown besides, and for more than a month, our industry had barely sufficed to extort civility from the dirty little Dutch storekeeper,

who for some time previous had stuck up in his den some badly executed and worse spelt placards, purporting that “Trust has just vamosed the ranch, to look for new diggings,” or perhaps containing a pleasant little fiction—that if we paid to-day we would be quite welcome to trust to-morrow—the unkindest 64 cut of the jest being in the surprising fact, that to-morrow never comes. But as we never pretended to see the prints at all, things had not yet reached a climax, and pork and slap-jacks still continued to smoke upon our hospitable board.

I was one noontide endeavouring to doze in the hot blast beneath a spreading live oak, after an unsuccessful morning's hard labor, and in a humor quite the reverse to agreeable, with no safety valve by which to expend it, for my companions were at the same time—if possible—more disagreeable than myself. I was suddenly startled by the apparition of a little sallow Mississippian, with a bald head and two revolvers and a rifle as long as himself.

“Friend,” said he quietly, “jidgin from your overalls, your a miner I reckon.”

“Yes,” I exclaimed fiercely, in spite of the formidable array of my questioner. “Poverty must bear its uniform, I suppose, but I have yet to learn that we must endure the gibes of bummers and blacklegs in consequence.”

“Darn your overalls,” he replied, in so bland a tone I could not for the life of me penetrate whether it was a malediction, or sage advice, touching a very unseemly rent that existed in my garment. However, as his remark called for no direct reply, I merely cocked the tattered rim of my hat more proudly than before, and relapsed into as dignified a silence as I could possibly assume.

“Stranger,” he resumed at length, “can't you disciver who I be?”

“I have no curiosity sir, to penetrate into your private affairs.”

“Wal I've jest got you now whar I want you. I ain't private you see, nor never was private, nor none of our 65 folks, since the time my uncle shot the schoolmaster in old Kentuck, we couldn't sweat in private, we was allers boun to do something for this free country of ourn. My brother Bob, he's a

judge, and the youngest—that's Caractacus—he's his constable, we all go snucks, and I'm for'n tax c'lector at your sarvice. And now, whose your pardners? for I won't insult you by axin if you be a citizen, you talk too good Amer'kin for that. But whose your pardners? Air they Amer'kins or air they for'ners?'

As I felt at the moment in a misanthropical mood, I was seized with the idea of annoying my companions, and knowing well that there was not a grain of dust, or the President's face in the cabin, I promptly informed him where he could find two, one Irishman and one Canadian. The little man pondered the subject for a few minutes, patting his head with a flaming bandana, and then observed with the aspect of a Solon,

“I reckon I'll put down to the Chinese camp, I kin 'elect thar, any how, and it mightned be much keount to try that thar cabin of yourn, for I've found in my experience, an Irishman is allers a citizen and a good democrat, and as for the Canue—why the unfortunite critters, they want to be bad enough, and mayhap bymby when they larn something, we'll allow 'em to annex—so I'll jest travel down whar it will pay on the ledge.’”

For miles down the Western slope, below the highest peaks of the Sierra Nevada, gold is rarely to be found. About one-third of the whole distance down, the first placers begin to make themselves visible. Loose pieces of quartz interspersed with slate, and a loose red loamy soil, are the first sure indications, and there are but few ravines—containing compact gravel in their beds—in which the colour of gold may not be detected, by the use of the pan. The prospect gradually improves for another third, and then they decrease proportionably, until finally lost in the great valleys of the Sacramento in the Northern, and the San Joaquin in the Southern mines.

A few placers have been discovered in the coast range, but so meagre, that in few localities have they defrayed the expense of collection, although, in the very important article of quicksilver, portions of this range have proved exceedingly productive; and where it exists, the ground is valued at immense sums, but from the great outlay required in the commencement, the mines are only worked by chartered companies.

The main lead of the gold fields appears to run midway on the Western slope, and parallel with the range, from the interior of Oregon to the State of Sonora in Mexico; although vast tracts intervene of small value, and for the remainder of the mountains, south of the river Mariposa—although containing small leads—few of the placers are of sufficient importance, to induce parties to form any important settlements.

A great excitement was raised a few years back, by the announcement, that an extensive mining country was discovered in these regions, at a place called Kern River, and some thousand miners deserted the Northern district in the pursuit. But after incredible fatigue and expense, in a journey of four or five hundred miles, they made the withering discovery, that the river was nearly dry, and the diggings, except in a few spots, already occupied by the first adventurers—of the most inferior description. Many died of inanition and exhaustion, and those that did survive found themselves bankrupt in 67 pocket with no prospect of renewal. Indignant at their delusion, enquiries were set on foot, with the view of ferreting out the deceiver, and it was finally saddled on the principal storekeeper of the district, who had already absorbed the entire funds of the community, by selling them provisions at an exorbitant rate, and was just then on the eve of taking his final leave.

An indignation meeting was the result of this enquiry, which ended in the arraignment of the accused before the bar of the injured prospectors, and after an impartial trial the unfortunate merchant was condemned to the gallows, and his ill-gotten gain confiscated for the purpose of assisting the people to return. Justice was promptly executed on the delinquent, and the camp became almost deserted; and from that date to the present, no explorations of any importance have ever been made south of the so-called Southern Mines.

Even in that wide auriferous region containing the Fremont patent, in the Mariposa district, mining is very far from being a prosperous occupation, owing in part to the scarcity of water, because the chief part of the rivers south of the Tuolumne are dry at least half of the year, and their isolation makes it a costly and profitless journey to go off and return during the dry season; and all persons at all intimate with the mines, the manners, habits, and acquired propensities of those who follow the avocation, will own that a permanent settlement in some place that will afford constant if even

slow returns, is the only way—with isolated exceptions—by which the work can be advantageously prosecuted and money eventually saved. But the majority of gold-hunters are either men of strong sanguine temperaments or reckless adventurers, and many 68 of the former class will toil in the most industrious way for a year at a time, sustaining life on the coarsest edibles, and at the end be as far from the consummation of their dearest hopes, as they were at the commencement; the cause of this is easily explained.

Two men probably locate a claim in a ravine that will produce three or four dollars per day to the hand; they then erect their cabin, work a few days to lay up a stock of provisions, and then commence prospecting by digging holes in the hills contiguous, with the view of discovering a richer lead. Shaft after shaft is sunk without success, until beans and the usual savory accompaniment have disappeared from their habitation. Necessity again compels them to apply themselves in their despised gulch. They are again resuscitated, and the prospecting commences afresh, until the year expires and finds them head and cars in the ledger of the merchant, and their despised claim confiscated to liquidate the debt. But had they used the same amount of industry in working their gulch, as they did in excavating the hills in fruitless searches for a fortune, they would both have acquired a thousand dollars each.

This mode of working makes the average amount annually earned—to the man—but trifling, although the semi-monthly exports by the steamer, make the aggregate appear large. But the truth is—between this speculative system of applying their labor, and travelling from place to place, together with much idleness, intemperance, and reckless waste—at least two-thirds of the mining operatives live in a state of constant poverty, although a hope of final success supports the one class, and a firm resolve to amend at some indefinite period, the other. And so they drudge 69 along, much happier than might be imagined, under such disastrous circumstances.

Many persons in reading over the various casualties to life and limb—to be found in California newspapers—and observing that the people, in the majority of cases, revenge their own wrongs in open defiance of the legal tribunals, are apt to imagine the country in a position of complete disorganization and lawlessness; but essentially bad, as the state of society undoubtedly is, in no

other country within the universe, could the rights of property and human life be equally respected under a system of government nominally invincible—but in reality incapable of executing its smallest mandate without an extreme physical majority. Republicanism, here, may be literally said to have run mad, so ridiculously incapable is it of exercising control over the masses; for even among the most enthusiastic admirers of the so called popular principles of government—the law, its makers, and all its complicated machinery are laughed at, and treated, not only with derision but often with marked hostility.

It is undoubtedly the good sense and natural love of order and of justice, inherent in the Anglo-Saxon and his descendants, that makes the country habitable at all, and safer than many that have their laws respected and enforced; and the popular outbreaks that in France or Italy would lead to wholesale murder, debauchery and robbery, merely repair the social fabric, and are in truth but the enforcement of the law itself, which in the letter at least is founded on just principles, and respect for the rights of all.

The San Francisco Vigilance Committee in 1856, may serve as a striking illustration of this. For although 70 nearly ten thousand able-bodied men (a force that in an old country would represent a population of a quarter of a million), were in arms against the government itself—and that of their own creation—the rights of good citizens were uniformly respected; and their worst enemies must own, that the whole turmoil had the desired effect of purging the State of a nest of desperadoes, who levied blackmail on all outside their clique, with the keys of office and the treasury under their control. It was not the existence of the thing itself, merely, that created for it such a great amount of local attention and world-wide notoriety, for such risings had been long familiar not only in the metropolis, but were, and still are, matters of daily occurrence throughout the length and breadth of the land, and rarely excited more than a momentary attention. It was simply the extent of the rising, its monied influence, together with its grand conceptions, vitality, and political bearing that won it notice, not only from the local authority but even from the general government, although the latter even, would have been perfectly imbecile in quelling the outbreak, with the whole of the standing army; for noble-looking and effective as the volunteer companies of the United States undoubtedly are, when pleased to act on the outside enemies of their country, it would take much

patriotism indeed, to imagine the shadow of gallantry or bravery, to hover around the scrubby looking blue-coated gentry, who promenaded with the U. S. upon their knapsacks. The greenest company of supes, in a provincial theatre, acting as “guards,” look like veterans in comparison with these parodies of soldiers. Many of them walk literally wide between the legs like Falstaff's —“as if they had gyves on;” and there is little doubt but they 71 have been mostly intimate with such appendages. So difficult is it to find professional food for powder, in every part of the Republic, that neither physical nor moral blemishes, need be any damper to the ambition of the military candidate. The truth must be told, however, that the native Americans to be found among this motley rabble, are extremely few, and the “reglars” are here held in as sovereign scorn, as in despotic countries they are looked on with hatred and dread.

The authority given to a miner's meeting, looks like a tacit understanding between the government and people, that while the former is allowed to swallow the revenues without question, the latter may govern themselves, in their own small communities, as they may think best, without fear or favor from the higher powers. Without granting the philosophy of paying for nothing, still the miners themselves have shown themselves much more capable than their representatives. They are authorized as a corporation, with the power of forming their own bye laws, but so much is the commission stretched, that in many camps the whole code—from stealing a shovel to a premeditated murder, is administered promptly, without consulting other courts than their own; and so simple is their method, that the variation of punishment between the two crimes, is of small moment, when characters are both bad, for a high gallows and short shrift are the usual satisfaction of the law. Their proper power, however, does not extend beyond making laws to govern the tenure of property, and they are not allowed any power of administration; but a decision from a miner's meeting is merely appealed from, and would nearly always be useless, for the verdict of a jury from the county town would be little respected when the physical 72 power of the community would be in direct opposition. In the summer of 1856, while residing on the Stanislaus River, in the Southern mines, a new ditch—which commanded the diggings and provided a good supply of water—caused a great influx of strangers, hardy laborers, gamblers, salters and Chinamen. So large did the community become, that our old laws became incapable of managing us, and a new code

—the work of an eminent member of the bar, from Philadelphia—was passed for our future good behavior. According to the provisos of the document, a standing committee and recorder were the only officers, and the recorder the only allowed recipient of a fee. I was the fortunate candidate for the latter office, and really, the pocket money came in very pleasantly for a good little time, and so light were the duties, that they did not materially encroach upon my other occupations. They consisted merely in making a record of each site, occupation, or transfer of claims, at a fee of one dollar, and none were considered legal without this formula, which had the effect of making the occupiers of the ground all known, and vacant ground could thus always be found, by consulting the books of the recorder.

In many camps Chinese and Spaniards are excluded, but as our bar had many from the free states and many foreign citizens, charity for color triumphed, and a Hottentot was admitted to equal rights with a born citizen of Washington itself.

Shortly after the recognition of the new laws, one of the miners disposed of his claim to a Chinese company, and a bill of sale was given, and the whole formula of the laws rigidly complied with. The Chinese went diligently to work, and all went smoothly until the forenoon of the 73 next day, when I was disturbed at my work by a sound like the roaring of many waters, and looking up, I perceived on the bank about fifty pigtailed streaming in the wind, and fifty guttural accents, and a hundred tawny arms in violent motion. I waited patiently until weariness caused a dead silence, and the interpreter stepped forth and commenced an explanation.

“Some Melican men good—some no good, some bad—Chinaman likey good Melican—likey licey, no likey fighty—Chinaman buy claim—he pay money—he go workey—by and by, tree bad Melican men come and say to Chinaman, vamos! clear! or trow in river. All tree go work China claim; Chinaman no likey, he come see you. You go fighty tree bad Melican men, Chinaman likey you vely much, good! You go fightey—he pay you ten dollar.”

There was a death-like stillness during the interpretation, out of which I picked sufficient to inform, me that three men had taken possession of the claim which had been sold the previous day, and had won a bloodless victory by routing the fifty rightful owners.

Feeling it my duty to interfere, I posted down to the disputed territory, the Chinamen following in Indian file, but at a most respectful distance. I found three gaunt long-haired fellows, each with a pistol in his belt and shovelling away in the most commendable style. They paid no attention as I approached, and I was obliged to open the business myself, by informing the lankest of the party that he had committed a blunder, by going to work on ground, the property of another party. He stopped his shovel slowly, and measured me leisurely from head to foot for a full minute before he condescended to reply.

“Whar's the party?” said he

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I replied by pointing towards the distant Celestials. He looked attentively where I pointed for a moment, and turned his gaze on me more inquiringly than before, then with a face of the blankest surprise, he loudly addressed his nearest partner,—

“Oh, Andrew J. Pearn, come here, will you; here's a Yankee says them dratted little yaller chaps is a party, but ef I ever hearn any thing 'cept a corn-huskin go by that name afore, may I never be lost in the streets of Littlerock agin, and that's in blessed Arkansaw.’”

As Andrew J., found just the same difficulty in explaining, I was obliged to make them understand as well as I was able, the necessity of their giving possession again, immediately, to the expelled ones. But when my object was really made known to their muddy intellects, their indignation arose to its height, and I almost quailed at my own temerity, in venturing alone among such savages. They berated me soundly for “hanging up with colored fellers agin white folks,” and concluded by telling me,—

‘‘We'll skin you like a 'possum, and fat our har with your taller, ef you don't clar in a bee line whar you b'long.’’

Not having any peculiar desire to experience the sylvan sport of Arkansas, performed upon my delicate frame, I withdrew a little faster perhaps than was commensurate with dignity, but not half so fast as my copper-colored friends. As I had now undertaken the affair and had received much insult, I was determined to push the case to the utmost limit, and with this resolve proceeded to the chairman of the committee, who sent round a messenger, and at noon the whole white population were met in solemn conclave—except the filibusters.

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A committee of three was then dispatched, bearing orders from the meeting for the jumpers to withdraw, but they returned also at a rate if possible more accelerated than the recorder, bearing a refusal, coupled with an impertinent challenge to any Freemonter, to go down if they pleased, and have a free fight at rough and tumble. This was the signal for a general turmoil, and in twenty minutes upwards of a hundred men were armed and equipped, and proceeded in regular military array to the scene of conflict.

The men of Arkansas received them with cool disdain, and it was not until they were summoned twice by the burly voice of the chairman, that they condescended to cease their labor. He commenced by reading the article from the code, having a direct bearing on their case, and informed them of the resolution passed at the meeting. He then pulled out his watch, and told them, that if one of their party remained on the claim at the conclusion of five minutes, he would assuredly be shot down, and advised them to collect their traps at once, and leave in peace. Minute after minute was called out by the chairman as they expired, and still the desperate fellows continued to stand their ground, without an eye quailing, amidst a profound and deathlike stillness, only broken at intervals by the loud voice of the leader as he called out the minutes of life. My heart beat wildly as the fourth was solemnly called out, without a motion on the part of the victims—for I knew as surely as that powder would blaze—they were dead men at the conclusion of the call, if they still retained their stubborn position. A part of the last minute had passed, when my first

antagonist coolly addressed his compeers, thus: “Tottenham Peach 76 and yeou, Andrew J. Pearn, we have stud our ground like free Amerkins, but fortin's agin us—three times six is eighteen shots, in our shootin irons, and there's ten times ten of the sneakin nigger-worshippers; we can't come it respectable, let's travel!” and gracefully hoisting their picks and shovels, they left the ground just as the last moment expired, with the air of men that had achieved a victory rather than a defeat. The Chinamen were then put into possession, and held and worked their ground without interruption.

A theft rarely occurs in the mines themselves. The great numbers that usually occur throughout the whole State, are perpetrated in the larger cities, and on travellers in unsettled districts. A lock is seldom used at all on a miner's cabin, for a burglar could penetrate the chief part of them as easily as a carpet bag. Petty larceny is committed by squaws, who trusting on the great privilege always allowed to the wearers of the petticoats in this country, sometimes take extreme liberties with flour, sugar, and provisions in the owner's absence. Their husbands are very cautious about such things, for the same indulgence is rarely accorded to them as to their wives, and indeed did not fear prevent them from such a venture, laziness would of itself, be every way sufficient to keep them passably honest. Many philosophers contend, that the reason for the superior energy of people in Northern climes, over those of the tropics lies in the circumstance, that spontaneous productions engender indolence, and that the very necessity for industry, in an unproductive soil, for the simple requirements of existence, stimulates to increased exertion and taste for the superfluities of life. But the theory is at fault, sadly, among the natives of California, both with the aborigines 77 themselves, and the superior descendant of the Don. The natural growths of the country for man's food—in the mining countries in particular—are extremely limited, although in almost all places where irrigation is practicable, the soil will yield moderately, nearly every variety of production. The sustenance of the Indians appears to be now, as it always has been, principally grasshoppers, clover, acorns and the nut of the sugar pine, varied with fish when in season. Wild animals have, of course, been plentier before mining commenced, but their miserably constructed bows and arrows, plainly show, that they could never have materially depended on the chase for support.

Their method of trapping and cooking grasshoppers at the same time, shows much ingenuity; and is, to them at least, a pleasing and exciting pastime, and very amusing for an outsider to look at. Half

a dozen holes are dug in a clover flat—where the game abound—as close to each other as possible, and about the shape and size of an inverted beehive. They then place closely around the holes, a ring of dried brush, which they set fire to, and then commences the hunt—the oldest patriarch of the tribe, condescending to work with the squaws, and “fights his battles o'er again” with all the enthusiasm of sixteen. They commence by forming a circle round the fire, at a distance of some hundred feet. Each is armed with a bush, with which they drive their victims before them, as they gradually contract the circle and approach the fire. One hop through the fire, and the wings, horns and claws, are stripped off, and they drop into the holes, unable to escape from their pursuers, who then clear away the circle of flame and have a luscious banquet on the crispy crickets. In the thick of the season, they dry the superabundance for winter use 78 and these, together with flour manufactured from acorns—pounded in a huge mortar scooped out of a solid granite ledge—are the staple articles of the lodge, during the unproductive seasons of the year.

The squaws are often despatched with their pans, and a large horn spoon, called a *cuchara*, to find gold dust; but the proceeds of their success in this employment are never wasted—except on feast days—for eatables, but are expended in adorning the persons of their lords, and moistening their interior, with the rankest description of cheap whiskey. It is not considered safe generally, to leave much gold in the sluices at night, in the district where Indians are plenty, for it is said that the ladies prefer prospecting in a riffle box, to trying their chances on a natural bank; but they are often blamed for such little tricks, when, if the truth were known, the real perpetrator resides at the best hotel, wears kid gloves, and carries a six ounce gold chain on his vest of French velvet.

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PART III. FACE OF THE COUNTRY, AGRICULTURE AND LABOR.

The history of California has of late years become familiar to most readers, through the American newspapers, and it would be in exceeding bad taste, for me to make a repetition of the infliction upon my patient readers, by giving them State extracts, from narratives founded on fact at best, after deluding the gentle creatures with the idea of hearing an interesting retrospect of wanderings, through the length and breadth of this romantic land. Deeming, nevertheless, that a little statistical

and descriptive information, concerning the principal localities and towns, individually—places heretofore unknown almost, except in name—may prove interesting and probably more instructive than a general topographical sketch of the whole—always, and necessarily, vague and contradictory; I will endeavor to do so with as little prolixity as possible, and those who deem the subject dry or unprofitable, may either skip Part the Third, or devoutly ask for patience.

It will be observed by any one who takes the trouble of consulting a map, and comparing the statistics of agriculture, in the various counties north and south, together with the number of inhabitants in each—that the southern portion of Alta California, possesses an overwhelming advantage, in the production of every description of vegetables and domestic animals, as well as, in the important item of females and children. This criterion, though, of itself, will not be sufficient to form a solid judgment upon their respective merits—for the reason that the people of the south, with few exceptions, are employed in farming occupations, the other resources being but of secondary consequence, while the vilages are wide apart and unimportant in size. In the north—on the contrary—at least one half are residents of towns, and the chief portion of the other half are miners; so that the proportion employed on farms—or ranches as they are termed—is but trifling, and the proportion of productions to the individual, with its high value, will show an exceedingly satisfactory reward to the tiller of the soil. It would thus seem, that the upper portion of the State was thrice blessed, with a fruitful soil, mineral and commercial advantages, together with an ample supply of timber, both for home consumption and foreign supply.

But, if we examine more minutely into detail, we shall become fully convinced, that the North can never rival the South as an agricultural producer, and that the latter is especially, and providentially intended, to become the feeder of the former. It may appear a matter of no importance in a general sense, as to which portion has the advantage in this respect, the whole territory being consolidated under one government. But I have been thus 81 induced to touch upon the relative powers of the two portions, on account of the dissatisfaction and angry discussion formerly raised between them, and sure to be resumed on every possible occasion, pending the policy of a separation. And when it is considered, the different—not to say contradictory—legislation required for each, and the great territory, separated so much by wastes, there is but little doubt that such a course will finally be

adopted, and become mutually advantageous in the end; at least it will be much more satisfactory to the population south of a line running east of San Francisco. For as the majority are emigrants from the Slave States, their great desire could then be accomplished, of introducing slavery into the new State, a desideratum, which, however devoutly wished for by them, at the present time is a moral impossibility, on account of the enormous number of opponents to the “peculiar institution,” to be found in the mines and cities of the north.

The mining counties are never likely, indeed, to support themselves with their present inhabitants, because that, in the aggregate, the amount of arable land is very scarce—and the consumers bear a very disproportionate majority to the producers—and as the farming land is principally confined to river flats, where the air is rank with miasma, and liable to flood each winter, the process of settling goes on but slowly, and it is not considered by the wise ones, as a very safe or profitable investment for capital or labor. Vast tracts of land still remain available to operative farmers, and the market is mostly a fair one, while but little difficulty is likely to exist on the score of title, for the Spanish grants are but few, and present possession is almost certain to secure an undisturbed title— 82 when the land is in the market—by the occupant taking it at government valuation.

But on the whole, however, the lower portion of the State offers by far the greater inducements to families intending to settle, when the Mexican grants are confirmed, or rejected; for good land is abundant still, at nominal prices, and although produce ranges much lower in value than in the mineral country, the market is generally good, and the labor of tilling the rich virgin valleys, is comparatively light. On account of the large compact tracts, settlements and society are fast improving, and communication by rapid means of transport, will grow apace on these rich level plains.

The climate of the main portion of California, may be reckoned, at least, as among the most delightful on the globe. For, except on a few overflowed grounds—where bilious diseases are prevalent—consumptions, rheumatism, fevers, and every sort of epidemic, are almost unknown, except through undue exposure. Bright sunshine in a sky like Italy's, and healthy breezes, are sureties for three-fourths of the year. The remainder of the season is variable, but since the heavy

freshets of '52, it has never rained in one winter, more than sufficient to moderately moisten the soil and supply the miners with water for sluicing. Early in March, the bleak summits of the hills begin to clothe themselves with the richest verdure, and the cattle hie to their tops, where the first fresh grass begins to spring. They then gradually descend towards the plains, as the sun makes hay on the high grounds, and at last are driven to the swails and *tules*. But they in their turn scorch and wither, beneath the uninterrupted glare of the sun, and the continued months of unmoistened 83 winds. For a quarter of a year this natural hay is the only provender to be found; but crisp, dry, and tasteless as it appears, it is, in reality, nourishing and palatable, for flocks of all kinds eat it with much apparent relish, and keep nearly in equal condition as when it is fresh, for it still retains much of its juices, in consequence of never being wet by a single shower of rain.

A large party of us once arrived at a lonely valley, in the county of Los Angeles, at which we intended to remain some days. The horses were tired and hungry; so, after watering them, we made each fast to a picket, stuck in the ground—with a rope twelve feet in length—and supplied them with a small quantity of barley, for the ground looked bare, and black as a freshly ploughed field—offering I thought one of the most discouraging prospects imaginable to a famished horse. In the morning, I proceeded to my steed, with his breakfast, but was extremely surprised at the manner in which he kicked up his heels, and the ineffable scorn with which he treated my hospitable advances. The ground was covered with something that looked like coarse black dust, and as I watched the inclination of my companion's nose, I saw him move his lips, as though he was going through the form of eating, in actual mockery. Surprised at his actions, I seized a handful of the dust, and after an examination of its nature, found it to be a very superior description of clover seed, and for many miles in every direction, the ground was literally covered—to the depth of nearly an inch—with this excellent provender, the straw having completely crumbled into powder, under the influence of the long dry summer. A herd of Spanish cattle, that I saw immediately after, proved their good cheer, by their sleek hides and ruminations, 84 and we found it unnecessary to remove the pickets but twice during the week of our stay. I saw the same valley in the ensuing spring, and so rank and tall was the clover—all then in blossom—that it was a matter of extreme difficulty to pass through it on foot.

There is great similarity in the regular variations of the seasons throughout the State, and the great apparent differences to be found, owe their origin much more to local causes than to latitude. The southern valleys have of course the least changes in temperature, and preserve an extraordinary degree of mildness the major portion of the year. The coldest season is in March, about the first cessation of the rains.

The lands lying west of the coast range, and those bordering on the extensive bay of San Francisco, are greatly subjected to cold N. W. winds throughout the summer season, and strangely enough, the winter is generally pleasanter throughout. Many portions of the north have great extremes of heat and cold, occasioned by the great and sudden elevation of the hills; and it is not uncommon, to see the herbage springing up in the valleys, green and fresh, while twenty miles up in the mountains, ditches are frozen, and all mining operations brought to a stand, with snow ten feet deep.

I append to these short remarks—touching the climate—a few meteorological observations I made at San Luis Obispo, during part of the months of January and February, 1854; and as this place is nearly midway of the State, the table may give some idea of a California winter—although, as a general thing, the climate inland is more liable to sudden changes, and greater extremes of heat and cold.

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As to the quantity and quality of horticultural productions to the acre, they are seldom equalled, and probably never excelled elsewhere; and most descriptions of fruit—where a trial has been made—grow with all the luxuriance of a tropical climate; amongst the vegetables that grow with peculiar excellence, may be mentioned particularly—barley, potatoes, onions, cabbage, melons, cucumbers, tomatoes, &c., and indeed, almost every description of garden vegetables. But a regular and complete system of irrigation, is imperatively required to conduct horticulture with success, except on the low unhealthy intervals of the Sacramento river.

Santa Clara is perhaps the most important agricultural county in the country, for great progress had already been made, under the surveillance of the old Mexican priests, prior to its annexation to the

American Republic. Its productions are already extensive, but a serious drawback to its prosperity exists in the large Mexican grants that 86 cover much of its surface. These wide ranches—often covering many leagues—will continue to be no man's land, until a final decision has been made by the U. S. Court. For even among those confirmed by the board of commissioners, the chief part have been appealed from by the squatters; and when the final decision is made, the next job will be the act of dispossession. This will be the most difficult feat of all; for, assuredly they will not move an inch for the Sheriff—they are the militia themselves,—and as for the regular troops, why, if they unite—and they certainly would—they are better soldiers, and more numerous, than the whole standing army existing in the State. Some of the shrewdest of the Mexicans are gradually granting deeds to the residents at low prices, and this is the only plan, possible, for them to escape complete robbery, for they have already discovered in more ways than one, the inefficiency of the government to protect the weak against the encroachments of the strong.

It must be acknowledged, though, that many of the people have conscientious scruples touching the propriety of taking possession of that which is not theirs, and in consequence, great tracts of the richest alluvial deposit, continue to be a wilderness, except at intervals where some hardy Ishmael has dared to pitch his tent, and shelter his household gods, in defiance of all prohibition, with his stout heart and brawny arms his only title.

In those portions where the titles are indisputable, by coming into the possession of Americans, whether by purchase or matrimony—the latter seems in most favor—the amount of improvement is wondrous and beautiful. The tillable land—like most in the State—consists of a valley, 87 sometimes gently undulating, but in general, level almost as a billiard table, between two ranges of mountains, and studded with oak trees, like an English park. The valley varies in breadth from twenty miles to a few yards, where the two chains contract, and again expand it; and these valleys of variable breadth, running in length nearly north and south, and extending to the Mexican line, constitute nearly the whole of the farming land of the country.

A mission was early made in Santa Clara by the first settlers, and as whites as well as Indians began to occupy the attention of the worthy fathers, two chapels of ease were soon erected for the

accommodation of distant worshippers, during the severities of the winter season. There are now two bustling little towns at these chapels, and the chief part of the settlements are in their immediate neighborhood. The road from the little town of Santa Clara, to the city—or *Puebla* of San Jose, a distance of four miles—is one of the most delightful imaginable. The ground is hard and smooth, and shaded through its whole extent by large trees on each side. They have been planted at regular intervals of five or six feet, and meeting above, they totally exclude the sun. The planters of these veterans, have long since mouldered into dust, for these kindly monuments of their benevolent labor, already bend to the march of time, and have the full appearance and bulk of centenarians.

There are many vineyards in this county producing grapes of delicious flavor; pears and peaches, too, are plentiful, but there are other places much excelling it in this branch of agriculture. Its population exceeds 10,000, and its greatest productions in 1855, were the following: 88 —onions in pounds, 800,000; cabbage, 600,000; grape vines, 25,000; barley in bushels, 700,000; wheat, 160,000; potatoes, 500,000. I have seen melons from this place, weighing over 60 pounds, and cabbages 30 pounds.

Santa Cruz county is divided from Santa Clara, by a long spur of the coast range, about ten miles in breadth. This ridge provides excellent pasture, and supplies in profusion, building and fencing material for both counties. The principal timber consists of pine, and a gigantic species of cedar, called red wood. It is extremely light when dry, takes a very smooth finish, and scarcely shrinks at all, but it is rather soft, and too easily split, to make very good floors or furniture.

Santa Cruz has probably the most uniform climate in the State, and although in close proximity to San Francisco, might almost seem in another State. It is very small, and consists merely of a narrow strip upon the coast, from three to ten miles wide, and above 30 in length, but contains more arable ground than others of ten times its extent. It has been styled by all admirers of California scenery, the garden of the world, and it really does appear to bear upon its youthful face, the world's first fresh fragrance, as it came from its creator's hand. Flowers, blue sky, and sunshine, continue almost in an endless cycle, and the mild breezes of the Pacific, temper the harshness of every season.

This circumstance gives it a great pre-eminence over all the other great agricultural valleys, the principal of which are—Suisun, Napa, San Jose, Los Angeles, and the long reaching flats of the Sacramento and San Joaquin. A frost is rarely seen at any season, and snow is unknown, 89 except when seen on the distant hills of the coast range, at rare periods. Thousands of acres in this valley are covered with luxuriant crops of wild oats, and large herds of half wild cattle are to be seen revelling on the luxury. Although owned and branded with the name of their proprietor, they are wild as deer, and frequently dangerous to solitary footmen, who have often been gored to death by them, when without arms, or a tree in reach to escape to. Nearly every plant that is good for the food of man, the earth appears to bring forth kindly, and with the most trifling degree of cultivation, and things that in other less fortunate lands, would seem in the strongest contrast with each other, here grow amicably side by side, like a happy family; grapes, and potatoes, currants, strawberries, and raspberries, with peaches, apricots and oranges, all flourishing as though indigenous to the soil. Art has done but little yet for this lovely valley, but nature has prepared it for much, and few who have labored in its generous soil, would willingly leave it for the sterile and harsher climate of the Atlantic seaboard. Santa Cruz, the county town, was a populous mission, but the coarsely built old church is now almost in ruins, and a great porportion of the simple inhabitants, scattered or destroyed, through the unceasing persecutions of the American squatters.

The county of San Joaquin, occupies a portion of the great valley of the same name, which lies between the mountains of the Sierra Nevada, and the Cast Range proper, running in length nearly N.W. and S.E., and averaging in breadth, about 40 miles. The soil for a mile or two back from the rivers, is extremely fertile, but the intermediate spaces are gravelly, and chiefly unfit for 90 cultivation. Dry Creek, a small branch of the Moqulumne, divides this valley from that of the Sacramento, and the important San Joaquin river runs for a long distance nearly in the centre of the valley, after its efflux from the mountains. The contiguity of the agricultural lands to the richest portion of the Calaveras and Tuolumne, secures an unfailing market to every species of its varied productions; all articles bearing nearly double the price that they would in Santa Cruz, or Santa Clara; but the prevalence of fever and ague on the best lands, deteriorates much from their value. The carrying trade to the main portion of the southern mines, is of vast importance to this county,

and the roads and bridges are the best in the State, the gravelly nature of the soil being a great advantage in the heavy rains of winter. Teaming is carried on in the grandest system, some of the waggons will hold upwards of eight tons, and are drawn by twenty mules, and the proprietor of even one team and waggon requires to be a man of some capital, for large team mules are worth 300 dollars each, and a waggon, about \$1,500. The mules used are of a very superior breed, and are much preferred to horses, from the fact that they require less attention to their wants, and their powers of endurance beneath a hot sun.

Barley, for feed, is the staple production on the river flats, and eighty bushels to the acre is by no means an uncommon crop. Potatoes weighing 8lb, floury and sound, are plentiful; and cabbages and onions are grown in profusion, and sold at moderate prices, but the teamsters' and retailers' profits more than treble their value before they come into the hands of the consumers in the mines. Salmon and other fish are caught in abundance in all the 91 rivers, and the plains are covered with wild horses, elk, deer, antelope, and numberless varieties of feathered game. And although hunters are numerous, they have not materially decreased their numbers; but so wild are they, that it requires great skill and experience to prosecute the calling with success. Many native Californians and Mexicans, employ themselves in catching wild horses, or *Mustangs*, by driving them into traps or *corrals* —a sort of pound—where they *lasso* them, and then dispose of them to farmers and others, for \$40 or \$50 each. They can be broken to harness in a few weeks, but they are generally light, and apt to be treacherous for the whole of their existence.

The principal streams are the San Joaquin, Moquelumne, Calaveras, and Stanislaus. The San Joaquin is navigable to Stockton, and much higher, during freshets, and is the grand trunk that receives nearly all the rivers of the country, south of San Francisco bay. The Stanislaus, which separates this county from Tuolumne, has been very rich in its upper portion, and contains much profitable mining, even ten miles from its mouth; paying regularly in fine gold, so low as the foot hills, from \$2 to \$4 per day, to the hand.

Stockton, Castoria, and Knight's Ferry are the only towns. Stockton was at one time the third in the State, but now contains only about 4000 inhabitants. It was at one time a depot of a fur company,

and then occupied by a Mr. Webber, but was not permanently settled until the first year of the gold discoveries. It has been a great sufferer from fires and freshets, and it is most likely from this cause that few importing merchants reside in it; and goods from the interior pass through from San Francisco, 92 without profit to any except the carriers. It is situated one mile from the San Joaquin, on a sluggish but deep stream, called Stockton Slough, and possesses the public Lunatic Asylum, which is one of the finest buildings in the State.

Castoria—sometimes called French Camp—is also on a slough, and was an old post of the Hudson Bay Company. It is a small but very lively town, particularly during the rainy season, from the great superiority of its roads. The whole population of this county is about 8000.

The County of Napa is convenient to San Francisco, and contains the most beautiful and healthy valleys of the northern counties. It is fast settling up, though the Indians as yet form the greater moiety of the population.—They are, however, principally domesticated, by employing them on ranches, and very useful they prove as herds.—Their remuneration is not very much, for as none of them are troubled with the luxuriant ideas of their brethren in the gold fields, they have never had the opportunity of making themselves useful at other employments.

Napa supplies the markets in San Francisco bay, with large quantities of produce—barley, wheat, and beef are the most important. About \$40,000 are invested in quicksilver mining, but the gold placers are not very profitable. There is a mountain of very strange appearance near the coast, standing quite aloof from any range—it is visible more than 50 miles off. There are great numbers of hot sulphur springs in Napa, many of which are said to possess extraordinary medicinal powers, and are much resorted to, by invalids, from all parts of the country.

The Napa river, after running in a southerly course through the centre of the valley bearing its name, empties 93 into Pablo bay. It is navigable nearly 12 miles. Putas takes its source in the North, and after watering the delightful little valley Berryesa, courses its way rapidly through a narrow mountain gorge, all trace of it is finally lost in the vast tule marshes of the Sacramento. There are great numbers of romantic looking caverns; but the most interesting curiosities, by far, are

the geysers, or hot sulphur springs, situated a few miles north of Napa city, in the interior of the mountains. Their diameter varies from nine inches to twelve feet. They are perpetually boiling, and the water frequently spouts upwards more than twenty-five feet. Powerful streams of burning gas issue from great fissures in the rocks, and the sound it makes in its exit, is louder than the escape of steam from the largest boiler. The water is all strongly impregnated with sulphur, and the smell of the gas is extremely pungent. Napa city and Suscol are the chief towns, and the whole population, ranges near 3000—1600 of whom are Indians.

Sacramento, which contains the second city in the State, is bounded on its Western side by the river of the same name, which is second in importance to but one on the entire western coast of North or South America. Its resources are completely agricultural, for there are no mines within its boundaries that will defray the cost of working. It has 10,000 head of horned cattle, and 5000 mules. Horticulture is carried on much more extensively than elsewhere, and its productions of onions, cabbage, carrots, parsnips and turnips, are nearly equal to all the rest of the State. Even so early as 1854, there were 307 acres in melons alone, and their value, together with the other productions in the market, amounted to more than 94 half a million of dollars. The arable land is low and rich, requiring no irrigation; but the air is extremely unwholesome. The city of Sacramento, to which the river is navigable for large ships, is intended for a perfect checkerboard, as the streets have been surveyed, but in consequence of the dilatoriness of the people in building, when compared with the expertness of the engineers, the whole board was completed before the former had filled up a decent double corner. The city as now existing forms a T; a few streets parallel with the river and levee, forming the top, and these, bisected by two main streets of great length, complete the figure. The streets are all numbered eastwardly from the levee, 1, 2, 3, &c., but although laid out to nearly a hundred, they exist only in a fertile imagination after 12th street, which consists of a pig-sty and hay stack placed *tete-a-tete*. North and South they are named alphabetically, and although they are all particularly short, they already nearly consume the twenty-six letters. J, is a noble street, a mile and a half long; both it and the levee, or 1st street, were at one time decorated with live oak trees through their whole extent, but during the universal license enjoyed about the periods of flood and fire, some of the free and enlightened ones took the liberty

of appropriating them all for culinary purposes. There was something very refreshing in their appearance, particularly in summer, as they dotted and cooled the surface of the thirsty prairie. Greenly, and luxuriantly, they spread their gnarled and scraggy branches over the fevered citizens that hurried past. Each whispering zephyr that faintly winged its flight along the thirsty soil, seemed revived and rustled once more into life by the hardy old veterans. The city seems to have almost owed 95 its existence to these trees.. The weary pioneer from the far off banks of the Mississippi, rested and refreshed himself, his family, and his cattle, beneath their kindly shelter. A sense of home grew up in his bosom, and an attachment to the spot was engendered. He pitched his tent on the flower-covered banks of the noble river, and other rough but sympathizing hearts, that clung instinctively to nature's loveliness, followed in his train, and soon, each tree sheltered a canvas hut, and smiling faces. Trade gradually pushed itself in, and during the first year of the gold mania, the fairy city arose like a fungus. It is still progressing in spite of its disasters; and the number of its fire-proof buildings, is only equalled by the neighboring city on the bay.

The original Contra Costa, lies immediately opposite the city of San Francisco, on the north side of the bay. It has more than doubled its population in the last three years. It has been lately divided into three counties, and their fruitful soil, together with their admirable position to a good market, hold out great expectations for its future advancement. The arable land all lies on the slope, between the coast range and the bay, and is of a very superior description. Settlers keep pouring in, probably faster than in any other of the agricultural counties, and villages are springing up on every point of advantage on the bay open to steam navigation. The hills on the background are filled with redwood, where shingle makers and rail splitters have heretofore found lucrative employment, but they are now thinning it out very fast. The land, although good, is not adapted to fruit, or the more delicate species of vegetables, on account of the harsh winds that blow constantly from the bay during the summer. The principal 96 streams are the Jacento, San Ramon, San Pablo, and San Leandro, but they are all unimportant. The towns are Martinez—the seat of justice—Squatter Town, and Oakland. Oakland is delightfully situated on a little harbor of the bay, and in hourly communication by steam, with the metropolis, a dwelling and watering place for the wealthier citizens, as Brooklyn is to New York. It is by no means uncommon to see several hundred acres in

one *potatoe-patch*, and forty or fifty men employed in extracting from the soil the dry, and bulky excrescences.

Monterey, which joins Santa Clara on the South, is altogether agricultural and pastoral, but it is much covered by old Spanish grants. It has about 4000 inhabitants, two thirds of whom are white, and its surface covers about 400 square miles. It is naturally divided into three districts—separated from each other by ridges of mountains, but they all communicate by passes, and constitute portions of the main valley, that extends the whole length of the State. Salinas and Carmel extend to the coast, San Juan is in the interior. Each of these contained a mission for many years, orchards of pear trees were planted, and much land brought into a state of cultivation by domesticated Indians. The towns are San Juan and Monterey. The former is a very sleepy little place in the midst of plenty. Monterey, 80 miles south of San Francisco, was at one time the capital of both the Californias, and the largest town, but has made very little progress since annexation; and its *adobe* houses and muffled nuns, seem not yet fully aware of the fact, that they have the supreme felicity of being an actual portion of the free and universal nation.

The bay and scenery of Monterey is the prettiest on 97 the coast. The harbor, though small, has tolerable shelter, and is a port of entry. But the grass grows in the bonded stores of the custom house; the collector's time is consumed amidst the click of billiard balls; the doctor's, in prescribing cogniac—to himself; the Nantucket harbor-master's in watching the *sparm* spout in the offing; the lawyer's, in creating dog fights; and the commander of the fort sits on a rotten gun-carriage, watching with a placid and gratified eye, the process of incubation performed in the rusty bombs, by his Shanghai hens.

San Louis Obispo, lies south of the county of Monterey, and borders on the Pacific; it has no mines, and agriculture is in a very backward state. Of a surface of nearly 600,000 acres, only 50,000 are unclaimed, and the white inhabitants number but 400. The ground is held in 37 Ranches under Mexican titles, and is fit for little except pasturage, to which it is best adapted. It is so inconvenient to market, that the rightful owners have not been much annoyed by squatters, and the name of American is much less detested by the native Californians, than in other counties, where they have

experienced a greater share of persecution. It contains 50,000 head of cattle and horses, and has a port or rather a roadstead on the coast, but no harbor. The heavy sea that continually thunders in from the wide reach of the ocean, even in the calmest weather, makes the calls of the steamer rare, on account of the extreme danger of landing freight through the rolling surf. There was a mission formed here at an early period, nine miles from the coast in a very pretty locality. The lands pertaining thereto, have, of course, been confiscated, but a small village—the only one in the county—has sprung up around the ruins of the ancient chapel.

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Santa Barbara—containing, chiefly, portions of the coast range—extends to the coast, and is extremely mountainous. It has a pretty little town bearing its name, on a small roadstead, at which steamers touch in their weekly trips between San Francisco and San Diego. The soil is not generally well suited to cultivation, nor even susceptible of irrigation, from its extremely rough and uneven surface. It is called, however, one of the best grazing counties, and supports enormous herds of cattle, but it is capable of feeding, naturally, five times its present amount. It has several streams emptying into the ocean from the mountains, but so near does the range run to the coast, that none of them has length or volume, sufficient to dignify it by the name of river. The Santa Barbara is the largest, which, after running a length of forty-five miles from its source, discharges itself into the ocean. San Buenaventura has a course of thirty-two miles, and enters the Sea, not far from the ancient mission of San Buenaventura. Santa Inez is upwards of sixty miles in length, its mouth is within a few miles of Point Concepcion, the principal land mark and light house on the whole coast. The mountains in this country, frequently attain the height of 4500 feet, and one of them contains a small volcano, which smokes at long intervals. The sea in this neighborhood abounds with many varieties of excellent fish, among which may be enumerated corvinas, blackfish, mackarel, crawfish, sardines, clams, and oysters.

But little improvement can be hoped for in this region. The Spanish grants cover a great surface, and their old habits and customs predominate over all others. Even the settlers from the land of enlightenment have retrograded 99 in their ideas of morality, and descended to the barbarous

amusements of bull baiting and cock fighting—a favorite Sunday recreation—where whiskey, profanity, and fighting abound, as a natural result.

It is really astonishing to witness the extreme interest taken by every class in the community, and the money that changes purses, on the result of an engagement between two mean looking speckled fowls. From the richest Ranchero to the humblest peon—the priest, and his hearers, all throng to the soul exciting combat. The *padre* has most commonly a notorious sporting taste, and great celebrity for his judgment, in the cut of a comb, or the curve of a spur; and on those sweet Sabbath evenings his rusty cassock may invariably be seen, surrounded by a knot of sporting men, whose dark eyes gleam with fierce delight as he details his experience and opinions of the gentle craft of cock fighting. The inhabitants of this county number 4000, more than one half being native Californians.

San Diego, although of small mineral or agricultural value, is nevertheless possessed of many interesting and important points of attraction. Embracing, as it does, within its boundaries, the southern extremity of the State, and in absolute contact with the lower peninsula—it is therefore the most thoroughly Mexican, of all the counties in Alta California.

The face of the country may be set down as three-fourths barren, sandhills in the front, reaching to the coast, interspersed with some fertile valleys of no great extent; and in the rear of a great sandy desert, many miles in length, reaching to the river Colorado, which empties itself into the Gulf of California, at its extreme northern terminus. The bleak hills in the front, have not a single tree upon their slopes to give variety or break the universal sameness of the landscape. The only appearance of vegetable life, are two or three varieties of dwarf bushes, or *chapparel*, that grow around their bases, forming in some places an impassable thicket, and make very desirable covers for Grizzlys and California lions. There are only about 500 acres of land in cultivation, and yet it supports quite a respectable number of beeves and other domestic animals.

The town of San Diego—contemptible as it now appears, was at one time the second in importance, and although possessing a fine little harbor for the reception of small craft, it has received less

accession by emigration, than any other of the small towns on the coast, between it and San Francisco, a distance of 500 miles.

On examining the town, the increase makes itself plainly visible, the light airy Yankee style of architecture, contrasting strongly with the heavy jail-like *adobes* of the natives. An air of primitive simplicity still hovers around the old town, and the good folks of the place still seem to retain, that easy comfortable way of letting the morrow look out for itself, so refreshing for a lazy person to contemplate, and so strongly characteristic of the Spaniard, be it in the old world or the new.

By the way—although in possession of all the less prepossessing attributes of their ancestors, as far as haughtiness, idleness, and bigotry, are concerned—they possess but little of the heroic disposition and fine features of the old Castilian. And, indeed, they approach so much nearer, in manners, features, and complexion, to the aborigines themselves, as will lead to the conclusion that 101 but little of the unadulterated Spanish stock remains among them, and the same may be said of nearly all the Spanish settlements, both in North and South America, particularly among the lower classes; and this hypothesis may serve as a very excellent and sufficient reason for the semi-barbarism, into which the chief part of all the Spanish Americas have fallen, since their separation from the mother country.

The old town of San Diego, with a population of not more than 1500, can still boast of its *plaza*, and its priest. The latter, when I saw him, was a fine looking old specimen of a race now nearly extinct. His broad, bow-window figure, showed a strong partiality for the good things of this life; but the kindly and reverend expression of his handsome countenance, bespoke the man with conscience unsullied, and mind at peace with his maker and fellow men. It was quite a pleasing and interesting sight, when the *padre* chose the great square of the town for his lecture room, and gathered around him his bare-legged and youthful disciples. Wild, and uncouth, as they were, his gentle, though perhaps superstitious teachings, seemed to exercise a strong and humanizing influence over their half savage natures, no way improved, I must say, by their recent intercourse with the pink of progress, in the person of Uncle Sam; for bad and false as their tenets may be, which enthrall them,

they are infinitely to be preferred, to the broad Atheism, openly acknowledged by the chief part of the intelligent strangers who have cast their lot in the midst of this simple people.

San Diego is a favorite resort for horse stealers and suspicious looking *greasers*, or half-breeds, chiefly from its remoteness and the uncertain communication with the 102 more civilized districts, besides its convenience to the wilds of the neighboring republic. It is also a depot for cattle and sheep, which are purchased in small droves in Mexico, and collected here to be driven or taken by steam to San Francisco or the mines. The climate is delightful and regular, and bears a strong and favorable resemblance to the balmiest portions of Italy, or Sicily, but it is even less oppressive and much more uniform, the thermometer ranging at summer-heat with little variation through the entire season. In '54 but one physician existed in the place, and he died of a broken-heart, occasioned, it was said, by a want of practice. He complained to me in the most affecting way, of the citizens' obstinacy in adhering to robust health.

“And,” said he, “old age itself, will not procure me a solitary patient; for in place of expiring in a christian-like manner, in the respectable bosom of pills and phials, I believe the unconscionable heathens gradually contract themselves into a dry rattle box, and take wing on a southeaster.”

There are plenty of shrivelled up Indians to be seen tottering along, who have forgotten their age, but who were men and women, and took instruction under the Mission priests, more than seventy years ago, and look like the dried corpses, from the Capuchins of Palermo, revived to rebuke and warn the people of this wicked little town.

But emigrants—however delighted at the salubrity of the climate—are mostly in search of something more, even though the Heavens were laughing gas; and as there is little else to offer here, the mushroom settlement, made during the '49 excitement, has remained with little increase, 103 and a dullness that lasts the whole year is rarely or never disturbed. The main prop of the place has been the quarter-master's station, which maintains a large number of people and mules. They are constantly employed in transporting provisions and military stores across the desert, to the fort on the Colorado—a distance of more than 200 miles. This, together with the Texian

emigration, through New Mexico, and the trade of Los Angeles and Monterey, is sufficient to support two large-sized steamers, that call here weekly and proceed North to San Francisco. The whole population of the county is about 4000—only one-fifth of whom, under the most liberal construction, may be called white.

Los Angeles— *Anglice*, The Angels—is about the oldest settled mission in California, and possesses ground in the highest state of cultivation of any in the State. Still, the amount of American improvement has been but trivial, for the same cause which has been such a bug-bear in nearly all the southern counties, viz: the Spanish grants, which cover more than three-fourths of the whole surface; and as the leagues of land have been doled out with no unsparing hand, by the Mexican government, the number of proprietors is comparatively small—except in the immediate neighborhood of the city of Los Angeles, where land is laid out in the smallest possible lots, like a patchwork quilt, for the purpose of forming vineyards.

It is fully expected that land will soon be purchased at moderate rates; for to effect this object, the legislature will—it is though—lay on a heavy tax. This will most likely compel the *Rancharos* to dispose of their property, from their inability to pay high rates, on vast tracts which are used only for pasture. It is generally the extremity of foolishness for people to place any dependence, or make any calculations, founded on the good intentions of the people's representatives, in California. But men of experience believe this, from the nature of the obligation itself—arguing from precedent—that the government had never been known, since its formation, to shirk the promise of a tax, and indeed, in some instances graciously doubled it—without even receiving a vote of thanks from the favored people.

Nearly the whole of the country is applicable to agriculture, and much of it is extremely rich, and it will doubtless become in time, of great importance as a producer. At the present time, vast herds of stock roam at large over the great treeless and undulating plains. The soil is deep, and free from stone, and produces an excellent and unlimited supply of wild clover of an exceedingly nutritious nature. But the vineyards and orchards in and around the city, are the main support, and their productions are the staple exports of the region. The city of Los Angeles contains a population in

the neighborhood of 6000—more than half the people of the county—and is at the present time, the most respectable and flourishing of all the Spanish towns in the State. It has—like all the rest—a large plaza or square, from whence runs the main street, which finally forks and becomes two—leaving a block of buildings between, ending in a point like the delta of a river. The remainder of the streets look as though they followed the sinuosities of cattle tracks, and are often concluded by a dead wall, or the impenetrable leafy screens of a vineyard.

The houses are, with few exceptions, built of mud-brick, roofed with asphaltum, and are extremely cool and comfortable 105 during the heats of summer. There is a small mount in rear of the town, a few hundred feet high, and as there is no other elevation to interrupt the view to the coast—a distance of twenty-seven miles—the prospect is extraordinary, and possess much both of interest and beauty.

Far away to the west may be seen the distant ocean, constantly covered in the dry season by a thin white haze, that gives distant objects an indistinct and spectral appearance. The broad open plain between, is dotted with countless cattle, but no habitation of man is visible for miles on miles, save a small mound like a molehill, from whence issues a thin column of smoke, near a fringe of wood that borders on the far off river. A long ‘‘bull team’’ guided by some strapping hoosier, flounders along, with freight from the port of San Pedro, half hid at intervals by the clouds of dust raised by the hoofs of his wearied cattle. The smart stage passes him like a whirlwind, rattles through the town in slashing style and deposits its occupants at the door of the hotel; the miserable wretches unrecognizable by their nearest and dearest, beneath the thick coating of red dust they have acquired in their transit, which settles impartially on every thread, and fills each pore of their tender cuticles.

But the change from the shrivelled country to the fresh greenness and sparkling brooks of the vineyards contiguous to the city, is like the spell of an enchanter. Every sylvan scene of rural felicity would appear realized, when first entering the green and shady lanes, that commence to show themselves within a radius of four miles. These lanes intersect each other in every possible direction, like a Rosamond's bower, and experience is essential 106 to thread their mazes with success. They are delightfully shaded by the close willow fences on each side, so thickly matted

that a bird could scarcely find ingress, and the sight over the gate, after fifty dogs are pacified, is a perfect wilderness of every description of luscious fruit; grapes of every variety, figs, peaches of mammoth dimensions and downy softness, apricots, pineapples and oranges, and great bell-like pears show themselves by thousands in every corner. Little streams glide through and lave the sides of enormous melons, that topple with their weight and crush the defenceless pomegranate; while birds of pretty plumage and musical throats, keep flitting from branch to branch. And this is not one scene, but a sample of hundreds, nor hardly of a season, for it may be found nine months in succession; and even in the bleakest of the winter season, the hardier vegetables of a northern latitude flourish in the greatest luxuriance.

The number of vines in Los Angeles and its suburbs is 750,000, and the average yield is 5lbs. of grapes to each vine. About two million pounds are annually shipped to San Francisco, from the port of San Pedro. The remainder are partly consumed in the neighborhood, and partly in the manufacture of wine and brandy; large quantities of which are made annually, but are as yet principally kept in store to acquire age. The Champagne is famous for its effervescence, fruity flavor, and elevating properties.

Beef cattle are worth from \$20 to \$30 per head, and pay well for driving in large droves to the northern markets. Hemp and tobacco were formerly raised to some extent, and shipped to Mazatlan and San Blas in Mexico; but of late years their chief attention has been turned to articles of home consumption. There is a very extraordinary 107 spring of Asphaltum within a few miles of the city, where the pitch boils up incessantly, the whole covering two acres of land. It is much used for making roofs for the houses. The roof is flat and excludes the rain sufficiently well, but has a very dirty and slovenly appearance, during the hot weather of July and August; for it runs down during the warm portion of the day, and congealing at night, each house is adorned with black icicles hanging from the eaves, more than three feet long. There are many salt and sulphur mines; the latter chiefly exist on a tract of country owned and occupied by a Mormon settlement. It is called San Bernardino, and has lately been set apart to form another county. Monte and San Gabriel are two

thriving little towns in fertile districts, and are fast filling up with emigrants from the old western States.

There is a little island twenty miles from the coast, in a south-westerly direction from San Pedro, named Catalina. It is very barren except in a few scattered valleys, and its productions little more than a coarse stunted grass, and its general uninviting surface would seem to mark it out as afflicted with perpetual sterility. Yet some experimentalist unknown, but supposed to be Captain Cook, landed a few goats on the stony and inhospitable island. For many a long year they existed and increased their numbers, free and unharrassed by dogs, and the knives of butchers. But, alas, for them! A speculating son of Esculapius, finding time hang heavily on his hands, took a trip from the neighboring coast to see if something would “turn up,” and as his eye fell upon the bearded fathers of the flock, the desire of dominion grew up in his breast, and he at once constituted himself sole “monarch of all he surveyed.” He resided sufficiently long to establish some color of a claim, though his friends regarded the project with ridicule, as the evident proof of deranged intellect. But subsequently, events in the shape of a comfortable independence, proved the adventurer's sanity, as well as sealed the fate of the whole goat fraternity; for, in a few months he made a transfer of his interest in them, to a San Francisco house, at the rate of \$4 per head, and as they numbered 20,000, he was soon enabled to abdicate his throne, and retire to the calm enjoyment of private life.

Tulare is a large territory in the south, extending from the coast countries to the eastern limits of the State. It is, generally speaking, a vast and dreary wilderness, covered with a thick coarse rush called *Tule*, from whence the county derived its name. It is the grand rendezvous for wild horses, cattle, and game in every variety; and the white inhabitants—who only number about 300—principally occupy themselves in the chase. Grizzlies have been caught alive in this region weighing 2,600 lbs.; and wild cats, lions, and cayotas, abound. Tulare lake is the largest in the State, and receives the tribute of many mountain streams, but has no apparent exit.

The county of Marin is agricultural, and contains about 1500 persons, 1000 of whom are white. The amount of its productions and invested capital, will compare favorably with many containing a much greater population. The amount of capital invested in brick-making and lumber alone, may

be estimated at \$300,000. About 3000 acres are in cultivation, and the climate proves very kind to yams and various species of fruit, of which latter it will soon be an extensive producer. There are no minerals, 109 but more than two thirds of the soil may be cultivated, and immense quantities of wild oats are cut for hay, and exported.

San Francisco county, although of medium extent, consists mainly of the Metropolis itself, there being but 2000 inhabitants in the county, outside the city limits. It is but proper to observe though, that the fathers have had no cramped idea concerning the future dimensions of the infant city. The map to be found in the various land agent's offices, may well challenge comparison with the proudest of antiquity. It might not, however, eventually be injurious to the interests of a purchaser, to take a look at the premises in question, before he ratify the bargain—that is, if he can find it—for lots at moderate rates, are, not improbably, outside the anchorage ground, or perhaps three or four miles back in the sand hills of the interior.

Mission Ward, which consists of the old Mission Dolores, contains 70 or 80 houses, with the usual quantum of hotels. It is a neat little village and is mainly supported by the rich gardens in the neighborhood. In reality, it is nearly three miles from the city, although contained within the corporation limits; and its old church, green glades, flowery hedges, and prattling brooks, form an enchanting contrast to the dusty jammed up streets of the city, and the bleak sand hills that intervene. With these advantages, and an excellent plank road, it is, of course a great resort of pleasure seekers; and on Sunday, in particular, the road is a perfect stream of omnibusses, gigs and horsemen. The latter are chiefly supplied by livery stables; and the gallant greys are taxed to their utmost, in order to make the conscience of the rider perfectly clear that good value has been received for his cash. 110 It is the only leading road into the country, and is on the direct line to San Jose and the southern countries. The bridging and filling to San Francisquita creek, on the county line—a distance of 30 miles—cost more than \$50,000, but three-fourths of it was swallowed by the managers.

The range of mountains, commonly called the coast range, runs lengthways of this county. The Mexicans gave it the more poetical name of *Sierra Morino*, or Brown Mountains. The highest

portion of this range commences at a point about twelve miles to the southward of San Francisco, and they retain their identity to the very southern extremity of the State. In many places they rise upwards of 2000 feet above the level of the ocean, and form a noble shield to ward off the raw N. W. winds from the rich farming lands that line their eastern slope, on the great bay of San Francisco. There have been large quantities of redwood in different parts of this county, but it is now much used up for rails and shingles. There are about 3000 acres employed in cultivation, and the taxable property has been estimated at thirty millions of dollars; but value of real estate fluctuates so strangely, it is very difficult to form a correct standard.

Solano is a noble agricultural county; and its convenience to the bay gives it advantages of no mean importance, in the matter of shipping to the most advantageous markets, with good despatch. More than 10,000 acres are in cultivation, and farming pays well; stock of various kinds is plentiful, and more than \$50,000 are employed in quartz and placer mining, in the coast range. The principal towns are Vallejo and Benicia. The former was at one time the capital of the State. The legislature first sold their presence to the lord of the soil, for a large sum; but the lord not finding their honorable presence so lucrative as he had fondly anticipated, begged to be released from his engagement, and his prayer was humanely granted by them, as soon as they became fully aware that the miserable village lots comprised the chief of the General's possessions; and had they been brought into the market, under the happiest circumstances, would not have produced one-tenth of the stipulated sum. Benicia was then made head-quarters, and finally Sacramento, where a good State House is built, which will most probably have the effect of making it the permanent seat of government.

Benicia is a half dead little town at the mouth of the Sacramento, where there are dry docks; and the large ocean steamships coaling, and refitting, aid materially in keeping it in existence. There are four very rich valleys in this county, that contain the chief portion of the arable land, viz:—Suscol, Sulphur Springs, Green, and Suisun. Suscol lies west of a range of hills, bearing the same name, and extends to the northern boundary of the county; from Vallejo it is rich, and contains more than thirty square miles; it is washed by Napa bay, and wild oats at present cover a great reach of its surface. Sulphur Spring, running from Suisun bay through the Suscol hills, is both well

watered and fertile. Green Valley, as its name implies, is covered much of the year with verdure; it contains ten square miles, and is a rich clover pasture. Suisun, the richest and most extensive, contains forty square miles, but is completely covered by a Spanish grant. It opens out on the east into the Sacramento valley, and has the most salubrious climate on that unwholesome river.

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Mariposa covers an immense extent of territory, containing within its boundaries the present limit of the southern mines, as well as a great surface of tillable land. Its resources as yet, however, have been but sparingly developed, principally because its streams are small, and are quite dry for a large portion of the year. And besides, its mines are not of so rich a description as to counterbalance the expense and loss of time incurred by travelling from place to place. It probably contains the greatest number of quartz leads of any other county, and great numbers of wealthy companies, have lately engaged in the enterprise, which to all appearance is very flattering. Mariposa is the county town.

Siskiyou is both an agricultural and mining county, but neither are of any great importance. It is awkwardly situated, and its resources but little known. Its population may be estimated at 3000.

Mendochino has a population of 500, but only 300 are white. It has little good land unoccupied, but has great resources in lumbering, and possesses many excellent saw mills.

Yolo is separated from Sacramento county, by the river Sacramento, and extends along its banks a distance of forty miles. Its northern boundary extends to ten miles above its junction with the Feather River. It consists mostly of tule land back from the river, and very difficult of being reclaimed. The land along the river bank consists of intervalles, and is a very rich deposit. It has great advantages for raising stock; but the large freshets that occur annually, and sweep away houses, cattle, and all descriptions of property, hinder greatly the development of its resources. But the baneful misama which pervades 113 every portion of its surface, during the summer, is its worst enemy. A great portion of the people are constantly prostrated with fever and ague, and the residents of a year or two, have a very enervated and dejected appearance. And what spell enchains the large population to this noxious region, it is difficult to conceive; for whatever the wealth may

be that is concealed in the soil, a lusty arm can alone develop it; but these poor ghosts can barely crawl, and the luxuriance of the vegetation only conduces to distil for them a rank and loathsome poison.

Several little towns have been laid out, but they have all fallen short of the projectors' ideas; the only one having the least appearance of prosperity, is Washington, immediately opposite to Sacramento city, to which it communicates by a steam ferry. Cache Creek, in the north, is on a small river of the same name. Fremont, Cottonwood, Merrit, and Putah, never were of any importance, and are now almost deserted: and the great barnlike hotel, with which each is graced, calls up no romantic sympathy for its decay, for these horrid little towns are withered before they ripened, and antiquity alone can give sublimity to a ruin.

The population of this county is mostly native American, from the Western States—a class, that are, perhaps, the best adapted of any, to endure the trials and vexations of a dismal swamp. The population was three years ago 1500, but will now scarcely number 1000, ten per cent of whom are females. About 5000 acres of land are cultivated, and the capital employed in gardening, boating, and other purposes, exceed \$100,000. The mountains are the coast range; and there are three romantic little lakes, named Washington, Clear, and Tule Lakes; Clear Lake has a surface of thirteen square miles.

Calaveras, in the heart of the southern mines, has not more than \$20,000 invested in agriculture; but is so well timbered, the saw mills alone have cost \$100,000. On account of the large mining population which it contains, coupled with its own non-productive powers, merchandize is a heavy and lucrative business; no less a sum than one million and a quarter of dollars being invested in this channel. About half a million is employed in quartz; and the money invested in other descriptions of mining is very great, for it possesses within its boundaries, perhaps the richest portion of what are called the southern mines. Moquelumne Hill is the county town, and issues a rabid little democratic newspaper, that has been the means of inspiring the people more than once, to destroy water ditches and flumes, when rates were not sufficiently moderate to meet their views.

The town lies one mile south of the river, whose name it bears, and divides it from the neighboring county of Amador. It is built on a hill, at the head of a ravine, which extends to the south many miles, and has proved very rich. But the most important diggings, have been the bed of the river, and the hills in the immediate neighborhood. On one in particular—overhanging the town—the shafts have been sunk so close to each other, it strongly resembles an enormous grave yard; and is completely drifted out on the ledge, a depth in many places of more than a hundred feet. Ten miles south of Moquelumne Hill, is the pretty village of San Andreas, on the main road leading past the Big Tree, to Utah and the Mormons. The diggings in the immediate vicinity of this place, have been worked out chiefly, as they were originally shallow; 115 but its central locality, between the branches of the Calaveras, helps to support the town, which contains 20 stores, 42 liquor shops, and 3 places of worship, together with a little blue journal of Conservative principles, named the *Independent*. A deadly feud of course exists between it and its rival of the hill, touching the County Seat; but the democrat has the advantage of present possession, and belabors the other with the all prevailing argument, that its tendencies are monarchical.

The town consists of a triangle, formed by its three streets; one is occupied by French, Spanish, and other natives of Continental Europe—one by the Chinese—and the main one by Americans, Jews, and Britishers; and the stores and saloons in each, are chiefly patronized by their own people.

Vallecito, south of San Andreas, is well supplied with water, and produces much gold during the summer season. Murphy's Camp is a thriving business little place, and is situated nine miles north of Vallecito. Angel's Camp has taken a great start lately, on account of tremendous quartz discoveries, which have been the means of drawing in much capital from other places, and it bids fair, from present appearances, to totally eclipse all the other camps in the county. Want of water has been a great drawback to the resources of this county, but the ditches are now numerous and good. The principal one is named the Table Mountain Ditch, which commands all the camps just mentioned, and gives a plentiful supply for eight months in the year, at the rate of \$6 per day to the sluice stream. As the diggings are now principally quartz and tunnels, the miners can employ themselves advantageously in piling up earth, in readiness for the rising of the stream.

There are many good ditches around Moquelumne hill, but their most profitable days are over.

There is another large ditch which takes its source from the Stanislaus, and gives a plentiful stream for the whole year. It supplies all the miners on the lower portion of the river, and is calculated to irrigate the plains of the San Joaquin, as soon as the mines along its course are exhausted; but this cannot occur for many years to come.

The principal bars on this river are, Byrne's Ferry, Six Mile Bar, Two Mile Bar, and Knights' Ferry, and indeed the banks of this stream pay small wages, the whole way through the foot hills, and even far into the plains.

Some of the trees in this country are supposed to be the largest in the world. A bark section of one veteran was packed and despatched to the New York Crystal Palace. Its dimensions are as follows:—circumference at the ground 96 feet—4 feet above the ground, 84 feet—14 feet above the ground, 64 feet—height 307 feet, and the bark 13 inches thick, and its age estimated by the number of rings, 3000 years.

The county of Amador on the north, originally a portion of Calaveras, contains some excellent farming valleys, as well as good mines, but as yet they have not been much worked, from the extreme scarcity of water. Jackson, Drytown, Volcano, and Butte—situated at the foot of a remarkable conical hill—are quite lively places, during the rush of the winter season.

Tuolumne county, lying south of Calaveras, is divided from it by the large river Stanislaus, and is bounded on the south by the Tuolumne river, which rivals the Stanislaus in size and richness. It is next to Calaveras in importance, and contains the two largest towns in the 117 southern mines. It has a population verging on 30,000, and 2000 acres in cultivation, but agriculture is of very secondary importance, and never likely to be very profitable. The annual value of its agricultural productions do not exceed \$100,000, while the money invested in mining, cannot be less than three millions. The principal towns are Sonora—the county town—Columbia, Springfield, Jamestown,

Shaw's Flat, and Chinese Camp—all of them included within a radius of five miles. Sonora is a large, straggling, ugly place, on the bank of Wood's creek, which was, at an early period, very rich, but it is now exhausted, and the chief of the ravines are too high in the mountains to pay well. It is, nevertheless, rather a flourishing place, earning its success partly by being the seat of justice, and partly by its convenience to numerous groves of excellent timber; and the saw mills of Sonora and its neighborhood, supply the chief portion of the people throughout the country. Columbia, four miles from Sonora, is a large, well built, flourishing place, and the deep diggings in its district will make it important for years to come. Springfield, two miles from Columbia, is a small but very prosperous village. Shaw's Flat is an extended village, nearly two miles long—all deep diggings, and pay well. Jamestown, on Wood's creek, was at one time of some importance, but has rather retrograded in the last three years. Chinese Camp is the head quarters for natives of the Celestial Empire, but has also many white inhabitants. The mining laws of this camp, are the most peculiar in the State, and are the glory of all monopolists. The paying ground consists of surface diggings of many hundred acres, varying in depth from one foot to ten, and the size of a claim is only 20 feet square, or 400 square feet—a space that in 118 many cases could be worked out in a day. But the beauty of the law lies in the proviso, that you are not necessarily confined to the dimensions of one claim, but may *locate* as many as you please, simply by digging a small trench round each, and this duty performed, your title is recognizable to all eternity. By this means, there are several holding more than a thousand claims each, which they let lie, from year to year, either for the purpose of speculation, or to work them at some future time, when the price of labor will be more moderate.

The table mountain is the greatest natural curiosity in this country, and has excited much attention for the two last years, both from miners and scientific men, from some rich discoveries of placers in its interior.

It first commences to show itself at a point above Columbia, and retains its name and natural characteristics, clearly and distinctly, to its termination, in a steep bluff at the foot hills which border the valley of the San Joaquin. The length of the mountain is about 40 miles, running nearly due east and west, and it varies in breadth from five miles to a hundred yards. Its surface is a perfect plain, chiefly elevated above the surrounding hills, through which it takes its course, meandering

like a river. The top is strewed over with loose rock, extremely hard, and strongly resembling sea coal cinder, and the strata or crust surface is a solid mass of the same material, more than fifty feet thick, at many points. In many places it crosses the river, and again returns, leaving great chasms many hundred feet deep, through which the river hurries in its fury. Its face, whether to the river on the north, or the low hills on the south, presents a perpendicular wall, often from five to seven hundred feet high, excepting at a few well 119 known points, where its surface is sufficiently inclined for the passage of an empty waggon. Every conceivable form of architecture may be traced in imagination on its sheer sides—high tower, balcony, and pillar, and turned with all the regularity and precision of a structure, formed on the nicest rules of geometry, yet varied in its excellence to every conceivable form of a crystal, and its agreeable transformations throw at defiance the faintest idea of monotony. It is most particularly its contrasts that stamp it so with wonder and sublimity—so tame upon its green top—so wild upon its grim sides—its surface flat as a lake—and its pitch the sternest of precipices, destitute of one kindly branch or bough, to break the fall on the relentless boulders of the distant current.

But our interest in Table Mountain, ends not here—a theme of greater wonder lies buried in the donjons deep of this mighty tumulus—what imagination could have conceived, that at the foundation of this tremendous mass, there rolls a silent yet rapid river—cool and clear, unmolested by aught that breathes? No fishes glide amid its pearly depths, nor on its ripple does wild bird dip its wing, nor look its food. For ages has the still stream pursued its course, hundreds of feet beneath the ken of living thing, and fed the ocean secretly from its unknown source. But a prospecting miner broke the spell by making rich discoveries in a tunnel. Great excitement followed; and in a short time many hundred tunnels were in operation, and large sums were expended; but as yet, little has been achieved, though the chief portion of them continue sanguine, and claims are valued at large sums.

Stanislaus county, south of Tuolumne, is small and unimportant, but some new ditches lately introduced, have 120 greatly added to its consequence. The most important camp is low in the foot hills, and bears the name of *La Grange*, or French Bar, on the Tuolumne river. It is now the seat of justice, which was originally fixed at Empire City, and was, two years ago, a portion of Tuolumne.

It is situated on the south fork, and has a population of 1500, in a distance of one mile. The upper or new town, the smallest but now most prosperous portion, has two respectable hotels, twenty stores, and a shoal of lawyers and doctors, who appear a mild and subdued race, and easily approachable, even by the vulgar, through the prevailing medium of a fancy drink. The town is built on a broad level shelf that projects into the river, and altogether presents a most eligible position. There are very rich diggings on the second table from the river; in some places it actually has paid 25 cents to the pan, from the surface to the bedrock, a distance of 50 feet. A man with a hydraulic power and sluices properly placed, could in such ground, wash out \$2000 per day; but diggings so rich, rarely hold out for any length of time. Tunneling is going on very extensively. The *dirt* is procured from a lead more than two hundred feet in the interior of the hill. It is all a river gravel, mixed with white cement, and contains heavy deposits.

There is a petrified tree at La Grange, with a trunk 14 feet in diameter. It makes its appearance in the mouth of a tunnel, and grain, growth, and outlines, are unmistakably and distinctly visible. The remainder of this county is only adapted for farming and grazing, and much good soil borders on the main river.

Merced is the county south of Stanislaus, and containing some placers, but they are not generally considered valuable. 121 The principal river is the Merced, which empties into the San Joaquin, and the point of their confluence is called the best Salmon fishing in California. Indian Gulch and Merced Falls, are the principal camps. The latter place is remarkable for its sublimity and beauty. Remoteness from market makes agriculture rather an unprofitable business, for the miners are mostly poor and sparse.

Sutter county, on the Feather river, is all a plain; much of it is unreclaimable tule, but the banks of the river are a rich bottom, and produces a large return; I have seen peaches brought from Hock farm, weighing half a pound, grown on trees only three years old. The population is only about 700; more than half of whom are Indians, in a state of semi-civilization, that is, they wear white men's old breeches, and drink firewater whenever it comes in their way.

Placer county, in the northern mines, has a population of more than 20,000, and contains some of the oldest mining camps in the country. Although some have of late years “caved in.” fresh discoveries have been made, even faster than the old ones have become exhausted. Illinois Town and Michigan Bluffs, are the most important new towns. They are constantly increasing, and the deep diggings will support a further increase for many years. Coon Creek, Auburn, Ophirville, and Rattlesnake, have been among the richest camps in all the mines; but they are now like dozens of the old towns, gradually dying a natural death. The county lies on the American river, which joins the Sacramento; some attempt at farming has been made, but it is extremely trifling, and never can be of any material importance.

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Yuba is another northern county, and possessed at one time, the greatest amount of bar diggings of any in the State. It is watered throughout by the river Yuba, emptying into the Feather. The red soil of the former river, for its whole extent through the mountains, contains gold, and the river is yellow as the classic Tiber itself. Many too, like Caesar have crossed its waters, and achieved the object of their search in plenty; but too many, alas! have closed their eyes forever, in the hardships of the early seasons; and many a breaking heart at home, still weeps and watches in solitude, for those who will ever sleep soundly, to the rude river's requiem. There is little attempt at agriculture, except some barley and melons, but the good prices—from the expense of packing—make the most indifferent crops, tolerably remunerative. The river in its upper portion is formed by numberless small tributaries, but the three principal ones are termed, the north, south, and middle forks; they all contain gold, and the very minutest of them, at one period swarmed with busy miners.

The most important districts are Mill Creek, Hampshire Creek, Deadwood Creek, Slate Creek, Canon Creek, Ousley's Bar, Long's and Park's Bar. The gold on Mill Creek is fine and in moderate quantities, the lumber is excellent. Hampshire Creek abounds with excellent lumber, and supplies a large country with boards for sluices. The soil of Deadwood Creek, was at one time thickly impregnated with gold, and still contains good diggings; there is plenty of good pine and an excellent saw mill. Slate Creek approaches close to the Sierra Nevada range, and contains much

coarse gold, but it lies very deep, and the labor of extracting it is very great, as 123 it is mostly deposited in deep fissures of the bed rock. Canon Creek has very coarse gold and has been considered at one time, the most profitable diggings in the northern mines, the best portion of it however, extends into Sierra county. Ousley's Bar is quite an extensive village, and has a picturesque appearance; as the walls of all the cabins are constructed of logs or boards, with white cotton roofs, it appears from the summits of the adjoining mountains, like a flock of sheep in a poor pasture field, while the busy miners, burrowing in the banks, might well be mistaken for industrious moles. The gold on this bar is so very fine, that quicksilver is always required in its perfect preservation, and great quantities have been extracted, paying with extraordinary regularity. It lies on the main Yuba, 13 miles from the city of Marysville, and has about 750 inhabitants. Park's Bar is the next in size, and there are upwards of fifty more of a similar size, which are still more or less worked.

The City of Marysville is in a very flourishing condition, and its central position for convenience to the mines, and being the head of navigation, unite to increase its importance. It is built on the Yuba, one mile above its influx with the Feather River, and although a good business locality, the climate is weakening and unwholesome.

The smaller streams are Bear River, which is the county line on the south, and empties into the Feather River 31 miles below Marysville. Dry Creek, No. 2, empties into the same river, 6 miles above the mouth of Bear. There are excellent farming and grazing lands on both of these rivers, with fine grass at all seasons. Dry Creek No. 3 empties into the Yuba, and receives many small streams of itself, it is 40 miles long, has nine saw 124 mills upon it, and gold in small quantities. Indian Creek empties into it 22 miles from its mouth; has a good steam saw mill, and gold in paying quantities. Clark's Run empties into the Yuba, 20 miles above Marysville and employs upwards of 700 miners. The highest point of the middle Yuba to the mountains, has been estimated at about 3000 feet.

Sierra county, joining Yuba, is a small mining county. It has a population of 6000, and nearly a million dollars invested in various ways, of which placer mining takes one half. It contains

five bustling little towns, Downieville, Pinegrove, Windsor, Coxe's Bar and Goodyear's Bar. Downieville on the Yuba is the largest, containing 1500 inhabitants, and the mines in the vicinity are deep and pay handsomely.

Nevada is a large and populous county, containing about 25,000 inhabitants, one-third of whom are citizens, one-third Chinese, and the remainder specimens from almost every race. Mining and grazing are the chief occupation of the people, and it contains 700,000 head of horses and horned cattle. The amount employed in mining amounts to five million of dollars, and in merchandize half a million. Nevada is the principal city.

Butte, so called from the mountains of the same name, has a population of 15,000, and possess extensive resources, both in agriculture and mines. Although farming has not been much attended to, there are upwards of 5000 acres in cultivation, but the system is bad in the extreme, and the productions, as a consequence, form but a poor criterion of the land's capabilities. Half a million dollars are employed in quartz mining, but for so far they have not been very remunerative. There is much placer 125 mining, and the returns are very satisfactory. Great quantities of lumber of an excellent description are produced—the united work of fifteen powerful saw mills. The mines are of gold, silver, lead, platina and quicksilver, but gold and quicksilver are by far the most abundant. There is much sublime and beautiful scenery in the Butte mountains. Table Mountain near the Feather River—or *Rio de los plumas*, as the Spaniards beautifully term it—strongly resembles a work of art, and a close inspection will alone convince one that it is not a counterpart of some ancient Rhenish Castle. Mount Hood, with its head covered over with perpetual snow, towers far above its surrounding fellows, and is visible in clear weather more than a hundred miles. Between the mountains are many extensive valleys of surpassing loveliness, as yet no more than casually looked at by the eyes of civilized men. The principal camps are Oroville, the county seat—Bidwell's Bar, and Forbes Town. Bidwell's Bar on the Feather River, was at one time the county town, and a very flourishing place, but after the exhaustion of the river bed, judge, archives, lawyers and newspaper, all removed to the younger and more thriving town, and the Cayotas will soon play hide and seek, through the streets of this deserted village.

Colusi has no mines, and has only about 1000 inhabitants, the chief portion of whom are congregated in, and around the little towns of Colusi and Munroeville. Colusi is at the head of summer navigation on the Sacramento, and forms a depot for goods, from whence they are packed on mules to Shasta, Pitt River and other mines in the north. Tehama bluffs, higher up, answers a similar purpose during the freshets. Munroeville is the county seat. Very little is known of this region yet, for the interior is almost a pathless wilderness, but it is likely to become a good country, having more late and early rains than the counties farther south.

Humbolt, enclosing the bay of the same name, lies on the Pacific coast, north of San Francisco Bay. It supplies a great part of the country with lumber, and is slowly but surely progressing.

Klamath, north of Humbolt, is a small country, with about 1500 of a population. It has but little land under cultivation, and the amount of capital employed is not large. It all consists of a narrow strip on the coast five miles wide and twenty long, which is of a very superior description. The rivers are, the Klamath, Trinity and Salmon, all of them contain gold in paying quantities, and are extensively worked. The Klamath empties into the Pacific and is next to the Sacramento in size. The principal mountains are called Salmon and Prospect, they are of great height, and are crowned with snow more than eight months in the year. Timber is plentiful and of magnificent growth, plenty of redwood measuring upwards of 20 feet in diameter.

Trinity in the extreme north, has a population, supposed, of 3000 whites and Indians. Its mines and other resources are but little known, they are extensive and rich, at least on the river bearing its name. The native Indians are the most fierce and warlike of any in the State, and have given great trouble and expense to the general government.

El Dorado was the great theatre of operations during the first gold excitement, and although still possessing a large population, its palmyest days are over. The surface has been all exhausted, where payable, and the deep diggings—which are all nearly claimed—are now the only ones worked. The principal camps are Placerville, El Dorado, Auburn, Colonia, Fiddletown, Grizzly Flat, and Indian Diggings. Placerville is an old town, and one of the largest in all the mines.

Shasta, the last of the list, is far north, and attained much notoriety for some time, on account of the Indian hostilities. They were, indeed, almost the only red men who showed a martial spirit, in opposition to the march of the invaders, though their pigmy resistance was much overrated and magnified, by the hireling press, in the service of the self-dubbed heroes; who won gold and even a species of glory, for the feat of driving a few half starved breechless savages, from their hunting and fishing grounds, to perish among the snowy hills of the interior. The climate is the severest in the State, and much destitution has occurred, during the first three winters after its first occupation, from the extreme difficulty of conveying provisions at that season. Large deposits of gold were found in the region around the town; but of late years the quantity has greatly decreased. Mining in summer is much retarded by scarcity of water, and in winter from a superfluity of snow, but for so far, little has been done to obviate the inconvenience, by ditches or flumes.

Shasta is much too high in the mountains to make farming very successful; only about 1500 acres are under cultivation, and the proceeds are very small. Shasta City has a population rising near 3000, and the whole population of the country may be estimated in the neighborhood of 5000.

The principal live stock consists in mules, of which there are upwards of 1200. They are chiefly employed in packing provisions through the mines, and conveying freight to Oregon for passengers; for the great northern 128 road—or rather trail—runs directly through this district. Shasta has four or five quartz mills, which employ a capital of \$200,000, and in other descriptions of mining, about \$300,000. Many springs, impregnated with sulphur, abound in the mountains, together with various other chemicals. The soda and saltpetre are the most abundant, and are probably capable of supplying the whole State with those articles, at a much cheaper rate than by importation. The names of the various mining camps are very unique, and chiefly apropos to some local circumstance attending their first occupation. The following are the most important: French Gulch, Mad Mule Canon, Mad Ox Canon, Whiskey Creek, One Horse Town, and One Mule Town.

We have now taken a passing glance, at every great natural or artificial locality, within the bounds of the golden State; and if I have dwelt too little, on some of the deepest interest, and been too prolix on the more insignificant, it has been because I have had more ample opportunity, and

spent much more time in some localities than in others. Enough has been said, however, to give a general skeleton of the country and its face, together with the peculiar features, climate, and natural qualities, of its wide and diversified surface. It may be well though, before concluding this part, to add a few observations, that may answer the purpose of advice, to those who contemplate a visit to the country.

Although California undoubtedly contains a greater proportion of active and vigorous bone and muscle, than any other country of the same population, there is perhaps no other people, to whom sweating the brow is more distasteful or inconvenient. There is but little mystery involved in the explanation. The class to whom the original extravagant 129 visions of the gold fields, would naturally hold out the strongest inducements, were the highly sanguine, the despiser of drudgery, the lover of danger and adventure, together with the gambler, the bully, and the professional prig. Such a class exists in the smallest numbers, among the hard working, plodding community; and to them, as a whole, California presents herself, in preference to any other, as their proper and sure field, to acquire within the shortest time, the means of independence and a comfortable home.

Among the first emigrants, this uncongenial element most abounded; for, besides natural inclination, they possessed the most money, and were best able to overcome the great expense incidental to such a voyage, when the means of transport were so meagre and imperfect. The most respectable class consisted of patientless doctors, briefless barristers, book-keepers, superior mechanics, and the whole host of the shabby genteel; runaway soldiers and sailors, formed another large portion; and the rascals filled up the rear. Very soon the pick and shovel handles, irritated the tender palm of the *elegante*, and he sighed for his lighter and more familiar occupation. The blacklegs, too, got disgusted with the degradation, and sought the more congenial occupations of office holders or gamblers. In consequence, every possible channel that demanded skill, education or light labor, was rapidly filled to overflowing, and were soon depreciated far below the calling they despised; while the community was burthened with a host of non-producers, who fattened on the exertions of the industrious miner. Resources for mechanical skill, have of late years somewhat developed themselves, as well as fields for the professional and literary, and the 130 present settlers are better adapted to their occupations, than the forty-niner; but the self same forty-niner still

remains, more abhorrent to toil than ever, and willing to give his services to any easy occupation, at the most nominal value, provided that he can escape the infliction of labor.

Such being the case, the robust and persevering, can alone make a visit to California, a profitable one; for to all others it is most miserably adapted to their condition, whether as a temporary or permanent home. The crowds of lawyers, small tradesmen, mechanics, and others, who swarm in every little camp, even of the most humble description, soliciting the patronage of the public—of whom they often form at least one half—is truly astonishing, when every one of them can, if he choose, find plenty and independent employment for himself, and thus earn three or four dollars per day. But they prefer to waste their existence, in useless and hopeless competition, almost deprived of the necessaries of life, despised by each other, and even by those whom they dare to consider inferiors—for the paltry privilege of idleness, and a white shirt.

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PART IV. ANECDOTES AND SKETCHES FROM LIFE. HOW I JUMPED A CLAIM.

Never shall I forget my introduction to the mysterious and exciting occupation of a gold-seeker. With what lofty aspirations did I don the red shirt and inexpressibles of dongaree! The glorious scheme of my childish years; those fruitless, untold hopes of rivalling Aladin, or that experienced mariner Sinbad; all those fleeting, and ridiculous, but not less blissful thoughts, that brightened my onward path to the world of life and action—thoughts, alas! long since smothered by unpleasant contact with a rough and jostling world, and the deep gulf of manhood's dull decay—all those lovely chimeras of my boyhood's verdant fancy, when I religiously believed in Santa Claus, and the vegetation of penny pieces, were again revived in my mind's eye—not as fleeting goblins of the past, 132 raised to lacerate my heart with the remembrance of disappointed hopes and sorrows, long since mellowed to a pleasing sadness—but as true tangible facts of bright-eyed promise, leading through a flowery trail, and even now on the eve of fruition.

The glorious panorama of flood, field and mountain, that greeted our every step on that bright summer morning, might almost awake a glimmer of romance, in the bosom of a railroad director;

for even my stalwart, matter of fact friend, Buckeye, who marshalled my presence to the promised Sesame, seemed moved by its influence, to the spirit of song, and made the very old hills rejoice in their echo to “Californy, that's the land for me.” But, humbly do I confess, that much as I felt and appreciated the influence of the beauteous scene, I can only now repeat, that beautiful it was; for, not a hill, nor rock, nor waterfall, nor tree—not one of nature's innocent devices, to lull the heart from care to peace, retains a definite position in my memory—all remains merely as a bright hued chaos of views, but seldom seen, and hard to be forgotten. But my thoughts and conceptions were other than for landscapes. They were grovelling in the dust, aye, in the very gravel that lay wet and closely packed in the crevices of the bedrock; for on that never to be forgotten morning, I was to be ushered at once, without apprenticeship, into the full mysteries of the mining art, and all its responsibilities. Buckeye, my bosom friend, of two days acquaintanceship, volunteered his assistance in the act of initiation; and sturdily we proceeded with shovel, pick, and pan, to *jump*, or take possession of the claim of the redoubtable Cincinnatus Baggs. Baggs, we knew to be absent from the ground—a great desideratum, by the way, 133 in such cases, for possession is generally a knock down argument—and as he was well known to hold three or four claims in the same district, we had great hopes of establishing a right; for miners and mining laws, are in most instances in radical opposition to all monopoly.

The task was one requiring a due proportion of nerve; for Cincinnatus was a reputed buffer of six feet three, a Pike county man besides, and of course an adept in all the innocent recreations, of biting, gouging, and playing horse, so much delighted in by the primitive people of the “Setting Sun.” We picked and shovelled faithfully for two or three hours, until we had removed all the light deposits of the surface, on a space six feet square, and on this made a smaller hole in the compact sand and gravel, as low as the Yuba river would permit us, without bailing. A pan was then filled with the deepest earth we could procure, and placed in the hands of my skillful and experienced companion, to “prospect” or test the value of the ground underneath, from the sample already in our possession. We descended to the river which was close at hand, and peeping over the shoulder of the operator, I watched his manipulations with impatient but intense interest. Slowly did he move the pan, and gradually the lighter portions wore away in the tiny waves made by the agitation of the

pan. He then carefully picked out the coarser gravel with his fingers, and commenced the motion afresh, the heavier particles slowly descending, and the lighter going off, until at last the filthy lucre was plainly discernible in shining specks, mixed with a small quantity of fine black sand.

“Well,” said I endeavoring to look wise, and to speak professionally, “what's the prospect?”

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He whirled it round the pan for a minute, without paying any regard to my keen inquiry, and after coming to an apparent conclusion he observed,—

“If this prospect was on the north fork of the Feather, or even in the Columby diggings, I would reckon on twenty-two cents; but this gold ain't right familiar to me yet, and I kind o' think it looks thin and flaky, and if so be, there ain't more than from eighteen to twenty cents; but it is easy dirt to get out, and we can make two ounces a piece, to the day, like smoke, if the streak only holds out.”

Here was a windfall for a penniless purse! Thirty-five dollars a day, in regular pay; why it was an independent fortune, an inexhaustible bank, of which I was cashier and director. To be sure the money was locked up in the vaults, and there was no key, but then I possessed the means of *picking* the lock; and again we commenced with renewed vigor to throw up the earth, and bail out water. Pleasantly the work went on, for another half hour, when I was suddenly aroused from my day dream of bliss, by the low deep voice of Buckeye, as he rolled out the short but emphatic sentence:

—

“He's a comin' the puke; mind your eye; you be spokesman, he knows I've got a claim; show your claws and bluff him off.”

And before I could thoroughly comprehend the tenor of this hurried advice, I found myself face to face with the notorious puke. I am free to confess, that I almost wished myself comfortably away “in some lone cot among the distant hills,” for his appearance fully verified the reports I had received of his powerful well knit frame. He had certainly been well described as a “roarer,” and 135 sadly did my mind misgive me, while I mentally conned over the results of a hand to hand

struggle with this herculean production of the mighty west. But the time for repentance had expired; I thought scorn to beat a cowardly retreat, and an honorable one had now become impossible. I therefore, agreeably to previous advice, shovelled away with more diligence than ever, apparently quite unconscious of the new comer's gigantic presence. But as the old song says, "My eye was upon him," and I have little doubt that the beat of my pulse betokened excitement, and no little fever. Our visitor soon seated himself on a boulder, and after an awful pause of a few seconds, he gave a snort to attract attention, and then opened his mouth and spoke.

"Stranger," said he in a voice of great solemnity, "is a soger a man o' war, or is he not?"

The pulse beat faster still, on hearing such a belligerent interrogative, and I feebly observed:

"War, my dear sir, does certainly strike me, of all others, as being the occupation best adapted to the wants and natural propensities of a military man, and the one too, in which he could have the opportunity of spreading himself to the greatest advantage."

"Wal, stranger, I knowed it all the time myself, but I kind o' wanted a majority in my favor, like a hull-souled Republican, as I be, for you see, the way of it was this," (pulse on the decline)—"You see, Dick the Whaler, and Whiskey Tom and me, had been playin' a civil game of poker, and I lost the whiskies, and jest as I began to box the cards, for I'd won the deal, you know—some newspaper man in stud-horse clothes, from 'Frisco, cum in and begun to read the news—and he could read like thunder—and 136 sez the news, sez it, 'The man-o'-war fired six shots at the merchantman without injurin' him,' and sez I—'The soger must have a darned poor machine of a revolver, or else the pedlar handled his pins right smart, anyhow.' And that little fiste of a whalin' Dick ups an' sez he—'Reckon, Pike, you never see a man-o'-war.' Now, stranger, I'm a modest feller; 'taint easy to raise my combat, but this was a rubbin' it in too strong, for I have travelled some, myself, *I* have; *I* have been to St. Louis; I have crossed the plains; I should judge I know a painter from a parrary hen, or a beegum from a horned toad. Didn't I see droves of men-o'-war in Missury, when we licked the cussed Injens and Mexicans? Didn't they axe me to be a man-o'-war, and hadn't I half a mine to jine 'em, only that dodger in them parts was skeerce, and another young Baggs was shortly

expected. So I ups and pounds Dick a smart chance, and before I'd concluded, thinks I, 'there may be some mistake,' and I starts right off to you; but I'll tote myself back now, and finish the job—for he's too used up to travel!'”

Having thus soothed my nerves, our unpleasant visitor posted off rapidly for a few paces; he then stopped short, and turning on his heel, again hailed me:

“Oh, mister!—you've told me suthin', and now I'll tell you suthin'— *them diggings is grub diggings you're at, they are!* I tried it myself last winter, and they prospected at first mor'n considerable, but they gin out so quick they made my head swim; but try your chance for a turn-up-Jack, and when you can't, come to me and I'll trade you a howler for cash—ginoine five cent stuff—a big bank, and no water to make you swear. If you hunt for me when the weather's moderate, I *may* be at work, and agin, I *137 mayer* be at the grocery; but for a gin'ral rule, when its warm, look in the shade, for I'm allers bound to be thar!'”

When he had concluded his harangue, I hypocritically tendered my acknowledgments, muttering at the same time something about sour grapes, which Cincinnatus heard or regarded not, for with an unwieldy motion of his big hand, he departed on his mission, singing “Barbara Allan,” with a voice like a Stentor. But if the illustrious traveller judged not wisely in the first instance, he did but too well in the second. The thin strata would not defray the expense of stripping, and we were forced to abandon the claim, as our predecessor had done. And thus ended my first jump.

A FIELD OFFICER

His name was Breeze, and if true, what some persistently affirm is the case, that names were originally given to point out some peculiar characteristic of the individual, then was my general a worthy descendant; for he inherited in all purity the gifts of his ancestor in one respect at least; for a more “gassy” individual—as the Americans term it—it never was my lot to be put in communication with. He was one of the great men of the country in '52, at which period he had probably risen to the highest pinnacle of his fame, for from that time to the present, his star has been on the decline, chiefly from the long cessation of hostilities, with the dark nations of the north.

But my connection with him was a peaceful one. No proud prancers insulted the slain, nor ghastly wounds upbraided us in our labor. The weapon wielded was the pen—the blood shed was the ink—and the field, a neatly bound volume 138 of foolscap—and the subject, the hard fought battles of his generalship.

I frankly avow, that it was a feeling nearly akin to awe, which I experienced, when I heard my name announced, and was ushered into the presence of this august personage. I had often read and heard about generals; nay, I had often read and heard about generals; nay, I had often seen them at a distance, while reviewing troops, seated on splendid chargers; their aids-de-camp galloping towards them like the wind, and spattering the mud in spectators' faces. But I had never even seen one afoot, much less in a room eight by twelve, with a large bed in it; and—although I knew it to be impossible—like the ancient Peruvians, I could scarcely divest myself of the idea, that a general and a horse were inseparable. There was a deep solemnity, I imagined, attendant on my introduction, a corporeal reality extremely trying to a nervous, bashful nature. Had it been a major, or even a colonel, my trepidation would have been much less, but a real live general of brigade was astounding; for the very name itself, called up pictures of Boney and *his* generals—feathers dancing—spurs jingling, and all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war. But my military patron was quiet and courteous as I could wish, and—to use a homely phrase—I soon found myself as easy as an old shoe.

The general had three friends with him in his study—I might say bedroom and parlor too, for it answered all three purposes. The first was only a judge, and the second a major, but as neither had seen more than twenty summers yet, they bid very fair, if they kept on *progressing* in proportion, to the age of three score and ten, of attaining quite dignified titles. The third was the county surveyor; and a middle-aged man who entered with me, and whom 139 they saluted as “colonel,” was the surveyor's assistant. This was the way of it—Mr. A_____, a merchant doing a flourishing inland trade, was elected to the office of county surveyor, on the regular democratic ticket. But, unfortunately, the successful candidate, if he attended to the duties of his office, would have been obliged to neglect his own private business, in a way most detrimental to his interests. And besides, although he received the enthusiastic voices of his constituents, it unluckily happened, that

mathematics had been quite overlooked, in the extreme haste with which Mr. A had been educated for the drama of life. But such little casualties will occur sometimes, where every office is in the hands of the rabble; and he appointed a deputy in his stead—the youth above mentioned—receiving half the fees, as a sleeping partner with his nephew. But the nephew, although in possession of a superfluity of time, didn't know a square from a triangle, and was obliged to farm his office out again to the colonel, on the halves, who was making a fortune then, though performing the whole duties, and receiving but twenty-five per cent, on the original fees charged to the dear people.

Next day I entered on my duties—which consisted in recording in a good plain hand, the incidents of flood and field, in which the brigadier and his allies were engaged, during the memorable battles of '50 and '51, with the Digger Indians. Part of the copy from which I formed my records, were in the general's own hand, and the various officers under his command; part were editorials, clipped from newspapers favorable to the prosecution of the war; but by far the largest ingredient, was the oral narrative of the fight, from the lips of the general himself. These records were all to be deposited in the archives of the State, 140 and future Young Americas will no doubt be inspired to deeds of valor, by reading those heroics of their ancestors. They must have had a tremendous time of it, such marching and counter-marching, charging and falling back—there was no retreating—blowing up of mines, and wholesale massacres of red skins. If half of it was true, the battle of Austerlitz was but a bar-room row in comparison. Orders from the general, transmitted by his aids, seemed to fly like crackers on the fourth of July, and were obeyed as if they were the wand of a magician, and thirteen consecutive victories were achieved, in as many days.

There was none of that military brevity, nevertheless, so much admired in the hook-nosed fellow of Rome, about the orders, bulletins, or despatches. On the contrary, they were all voluminous documents, not a title of etiquette or title was forgotten, and notwithstanding a vast amount of bad penmanship and orthography, and magnanimous contempt for old Murray, some of them must at least have taken a day to indite. No particular mention was made in the plunder account, of the acorns and crickets captured in the camp of the foe; these luxuries being the staple articles of

consumption, in most request by the martial enemy. But that might be, because the articles would not command a market, even in the mines, during the severest season.

I have my old employer now, in my mind's eye, as he deposited his burly person on a low camp stool, his ambitious heels resting on the balcony; calmly surveying the passing crowds on the street. There he sat, discoursing his war stories, ruminating the “Jeems” river weed, and discharging its virtues on the heads of the citizens beneath. His little pig's eyes, half hid in folds of unwholesome fat, 141 and his flabby hands, supported by his thumbs in the arm holes of his waistcoat. His heavy blue cloak was always attached to his large neck, by massive clasps of brass, on which was developed in large letters “Excelsior.” Whether this clasp was the gift of a grateful country, or a purchase from his own privy purse, I am sorry I cannot state, but I am certain at least, that it had some mythological bearing on the connection of the land with its gallant defender.

For hours have I listened to his dull monotonous drawl—spiced at intervals, during periods of excitement—with huge south-western oaths, which, however, he bashfully commanded me to suppress in the copy. I followed him in his details, sometimes thrice over, and copied much of his manuscript besides, but the subject to me is still wrapped in the deepest obscurity. I merely know that Brigadier General Breeze saved the country, and to use his own literal words, “gave the diggers particular, and infernal fits.” The situation at ten dollars per day, and a free lunch, was a good one; and I was visibly affected and grieved, that illness compelled me to resign, but I have no doubt, he had not long to wait, to find a candidate for my vacant chair.

How much these victories have cost the public, has never yet been fully made known, but the aggregate must be enormous; and the wily field officer, despite his thirst for military renown, has been by no means forgetful of indirect “spulzie;” but has feathered his military couch so warmly, that he can calmly recline, in a green old age, and expound to his loving family, how fields and feathers were won in the early good old days of California.

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THE SPECULATOR.

Seth Brown was a born speculator, he could not exist without it. Though he professed to be a member of the Baptist Church, yet the church was but secondary to him, for trade was his religion and his life. He was a thin, wiry, little red haired man, extremely nervous and bustling, with a sharp, kindly grey eye, and a person always punctiliously neat and clean. He had three little sandy haired children, and a wife who was a regular tartar; for although burthened continually, with a complicated out of door business, the unfortunate Seth had to perform three-fourths of the domestic duties, legitimately attached to woman's sphere; and when he failed to perform the smallest trifle of his allotted task, the pointed method in which that injured gentlewoman would enlarge upon her wrongs, must have made him believe himself the most wicked and black-hearted monster in the universe.

In his usual routine, he was out of bed at daylight to prepare the morning meal, (for \$100 per month, for a hired girl, was more than his circumstances could afford,) and when this was accomplished, and the children washed and dressed, he aroused his better half, who came out looking bilious and cross enough, but at the same time prepared to do ample justice to the excellent cookery of her husband. When he had arranged the crockery, and made all things tidy, he posted down town to his office, and his lady to her gossiping acquaintances; and when he returned to dinner it was sometimes cooked for him, but these were exceptions, for he had generally that operation to perform 143 himself, and also the conclusion of the household arrangements for the day.

Yet did not his heart become discouraged, nor his ambition flag, for although burthened with the whole care of such a family, still as prop after prop gave way, of his airy castles in the city, his inventive genius soon erected another; and if he could not manage to lay up funds, he still contrived to keep his head above water, and his wife and little ones respectable and decent. He had command of a small down-east schooner, in '49, and during that year had conveyed his family hither, and left off the sea, for the purpose of pursuing his favorite inclinations in the city of San Francisco. His acquirements in literature were but meagre, and yet his first attempt was the management of a newspaper; how he got through with it Heaven knows, for he never read a book, and his

language was the concentrated essence of provincial Yankee; but most likely he received assistance from some of the shoals of unemployed lawyers who then infested the city. But people would not read his paper, and so he published a book for them—a Directory for the city—which contained a large amount of useful Statistical information, correctly and neatly drawn up. This was well patronized, and he made well by it at \$5 per copy, exclusive of advertisements. But when his edition was disposed of, he was again at leisure, and started an advertising agency, that is, he kept up a correspondence with all the principal journals, and procured the insertion of advertisements by canvassing, charging a per centage upon each. This at length became his fixed occupation, for he adhered to it for several years, and kept it always as a stand-by when other resources failed.

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His next operation was to take a contract from the corporation, to number each door within the city limits, at which he made \$40 per day until the work was completed; but he was obliged to collect it himself from the tax-payers, and when he went round for that purpose, the tax-payers refused to comply, alleging that the edict was unconstitutional, and against their consent; for they all knew their own houses well enough, and some were no way solicitous for the public to know their whereabouts. Brown, justly indignant at such treatment, attempted to reason on the matter with them, saying that it was a great injustice for them to receive the benefit of his labor, without any remuneration for him; but they ingeniously combatted this argument by granting him the privilege of rubbing the numbers out again, if he pleased; such reasoning as that, was of course conclusive, so he calmly put the speculation down to profit and loss, and forthwith entered the ham-washing business. Previous to the year '54, California imported all her salted provisions, and the amount of bacon and hams, annually landed in San Francisco was very large. In the long voyage round Cape Horn—some six months—many of the hams lost much of their pristine freshness of appearance, which much deteriorated from their value in the market, when placed in competition with handsome ones, even if equally sound, for good looks are objects of importance even to hams as well as to young ladies. The observant Seth soon perceived what was required; so he collected his cash and built him a tall smoke-house, and took contracts from the merchants to repair the damaged articles at three cents per pound. He first stripped off and threw away the greasy cover; he

then scraped them with a knife, and scrubbed them thoroughly with soda and hot 145 water; they were then smoked, inserted in new bags, and packed in barrels with fresh salt, the barrel was then headed up and sent off to the storehouse, where they became A No. 1, and brought 50 cents per pound. “Ah,” said he, in recording the transaction, “that ham-washing was a sweet business, and I cleared \$33 a day at it, for four months in a streak; but there was too many neighbors from my own State for any good, and for all I had a board wall all round the yard, and a locked door with “No Admittance” on it besides, the 'tarnal critters found me out; for in two weeks after they saw what I was at, the business wasn't worth a rotten gasperaux, and vulgar at that; for there was no less than thirteen smoke-houses all in a bunch, and I cleared out, for you couldn't see the sun once a week for smoke.”

His next vocations were to invent a machine for catching craw-fish, and to plant a bed of oysters, both of which failed, and then he tried the tin business in roofing houses; raising chickens; making tomato catsup, and other callings too numerous for detail, with various degrees of success; and when I last saw him he was busily at work on an iron riffle for sluices, which he intended to get patented, though he never had visited the mines in his life.

Although so much addicted to trading and quaint speculations, which rarely succeeded, poor Brown had a hand “open as day to melting charity,” and that, too often, most indiscreetly expended; so much so, that I was at last obliged to take him severely to task for his improvident conduct, urging that, although it was a very commendable virtue in its place, it was scarcely just, or even generous—in his then precarious circumstances—to himself or his family.

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“Well,” said he, you've maybe hit it, for all my own townsmen, here, hint that way, though their 'pinions don't hurt me bad, for I guess I know *them* pretty well. They're Quampiackers!”

“Quampiackers! What is that?”

“Is it possible you never heard of Quampiac? Well, p'raps you ha'nt, and if not, you needn't want to, for it has, and no mistake, a leetle the meanest location, and has some on the closest fisted folks,

on this side the herrin' pond. It's away down East so far, they can never make a raise, and they will freeze to a copper cent till their joints are stiff. Indeed, it's a slim chance to get along anyway, and mayhap it's the natur' of the poor fellers! But, strange enough, father was as free and open handed a chap—in his riper years—as you could scare up in a prospecting tower from Maine to the Colorado; and signs on it, the Brown family were allers poor as No. 3 mackerel. And the strangest of it was, he got turned to that way of thinking in one night. You see, Dad, till he succeeded at last, was the most inveterate office-seeker known in them parts. He cared nothin' about politics—it was the office he wanted; and he always contrived to get a nomination on some ticket or 'nother. Sometimes on the hard-shell, sometimes on the soft, or the locofoco, or the independent, and often on no ticket but his own. At it he went, tooth and nail, year after year, till his head grew frosty in the unsuccessful battle. I kind of wonder, too, sometimes, at his bad luck, for a smart man was Dad, and his views were not onreasonably aspirin' nuther, for he gen'rally run for constable, or hogreeve, or something of that natur', that he was competent enough to fill.

“Well, there was a bleary-eyed, hypocritical old deacon 147 there, by the name of Zeb Skinker, that allers held the office of cordwood inspector, for he suited the citizens to a hair, on account of his skinflint dealins. So this precious son of the church keeled over dead one day, and by some mistake or onforseen accident, the revered author of my bein' got 'pinted in his stead; and if ever there was a middle-aged gentleman sprouted two inches higher, straight off the reel, that man was Dad! There was quite a considerable jollification to hum that night, and next mornin' the old man was up, bright and airly, to attend to his dooties, While he was a drawin' on his boots, a neighbor came in to borrow fire—for they don't even buy matches there—and the neighbor asked him how does he do? observing at the same time, that he looked a kind of scaly about the gills. And says Dad, ‘I estimate you'd do the same if you'd had such an allfired dream as I had last night!’ ‘Du tell!’ says the neighbor. Says Dad—‘Yes, I do, and what's more, I'll never disremember it, nor the moril it has learnt me, nuther!’ It appears that the clambake the night before was orful nice, and the old gentleman, as was by no means oncommon, had rather a leetle overfed himself, and in consequence, feelin' drowsy, turned into bed putty quick arter supper, and the first thing he knew he made the disagreeable discov'ry that he was in the infarnal regions of Beelzebub!

‘‘There was a promiscus monotony of great roaring brimstone fires, and all sorts and any quantity of ingenious fixins for tortur'. There was lots of folks from our way, and some of 'em communicants at that, all a workin' and industrious as their boss in a gale of wind, and among the rest, who should be there, apperiently quite at hum, but the *seedy vong* cordwood inspector, Zeb Skinker, follerin' 148 jest the 'dential same calling as on airth, only it was brimstone 'stead of rock maple.

‘‘So, while Dad was observin' minootly the varieties in this onpleasant landscape, a feller comes in a drivin' a whalin' big bull team, and Skinker he goes at it, as usual, with his measurin' rod, and says to the feller he won't pass it on account of its bein' two inches short. And the other feller, who appeared to be from Pike, commenced a cussin, quite leisurely, but rather boisterous, and Skinner follerin' suit, cussed too, and they swore away at each other durin' several hours in a most onchristian manner, until they were interrupted in their pastime by the old sinner of all sinners himself, who was rigged out in a Shanghai coat and a great pair of sideboards, with a pen stuck behind his ear; and, great king! his tail loomed out astarn like the Cape Cod sea serpent. His face was onvisible to Dad from his position, but he could hear him plain enough, when he axed, quite mild like, what they meant by disturbin' him when he was a settlin' his 'counts? And Skinker ups and explains about the short measure, and says the teamster—‘Look here boss! I've been a haulin' brimstone to you nigh on a thousand year, and was allers allowed for a hull cord, more or less, and now the fust day this chap's in office he commences chaffin' and findin' fault!' Well, with that, Satan turns slap round, and stares the inspector full in the face, so mad that his tail bristled out jest like a cat's when she's got her Ebenezer up, and he roars out, in a voice like a thousand airthquakes —‘Skinker! pay the man for a cord! None of your Quampiac tricks *in this place!*’

‘‘The noise 'woke father up, but he believed in that dream, and his last word to me, on the joyful occasion 149 of my leaving them parts forever, was—‘Seth, don't be mean!’’’

A TRIP TO THE SOUTHERN MINES.

Some years ago I collected all the funds at my disposal, with the intention of making an investment in fruit, and hearing from those persons most experienced in the trade, that the city of Los Angeles,

in the southern country, was the most desirable mart for purchasers; I forthwith determined to patronize the city of the Angels. But as I had often heard it repeated, that "It is a poor rule that won't work both ways," I concluded to make a little venture downwards also. After pondering the matter over, carefully, for some time, my disturbed mind gradually concentrated itself upon fish, and, by my friend Seth Brown's advice, I bought from him, a good many barrels of smoked salmon; and shrewdly guessing that the absorption of so much salt in the system, would cause a longing for effervescent drinks, I procured an antidote in the shape of many bottles of champagne cider, manufactured on a new system, without apples, by a famous chemist of San Francisco.

Every thing being prepared, I and my precious cargo were shortly on board of the coasting steamer, that, according to advertisement, made a weekly trip to the port of my destination. During the rushing, crowding and general excitement, always incidental on the departure of the steamer, I observed two sporting chips of the law, whom I had known slightly, a year previous, in the Northern mines; but fortune not being so propitious as they desired, were southward bound, as I was afterwards given to understand, with the intention of inflicting a newspaper on the benighted native Californians. Both were in an exceedingly lively humor, and had, to all appearances, been dining out, for they were amusing themselves at the expense of their fellow creatures, wherever chance favored their designs. When hausers were being cast loose, the fuss became ten times more fast and furious, oranges were flying thick as hail, and good-byes were shouted in every imaginable civilized language. "Adieu, Mon Cher;" "Good-bye, Jake;" "Frank, my boy, take care of yourself," were all mingled in discord with the wicked curses of the captain, and the roaring of the imprisoned monster in the hold. One of the observant editors elect, at this time, sneered at his companion, and threw out some caustic insinuation, touching the other's apparently friendless condition; and the accused indignantly placed himself in the most prominent position, for the purpose of proving to his opponent, his large possession of that much coveted article, and bawled at the top of his lungs—"Good luck to you, R. Smith, my dear fellow," but an attenuated shabby man, with a cotton umbrella for a parasol, was the sole response to this christian wish, and the discomfited friendless man, retired from the charge in disgrace. The other now mounted in his stead, and taking his hat gracefully in his hand, exclaimed—"Allons General—

Bye-bye, Judge,’’ when instantly, at least a dozen shining stovepipes were raised aloft, dazzling the speaker with the reflection from their polished surface. He then retired in calm dignity from the scene, and rejoined his humiliated companion, who adjourned with him to the bar, and stood the juleps in token of defeat.

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My cider was all stowed on the forward deck, on account of its airy situation, for I was fearful that the closeness of the hold, might have an injurious effect on its exploding powers. But, alas! I never committed a more fatal error, for next morning we were clear from the fresh breezes of the bay, and the sun cast his rays fiercely down on the windless waves of the Pacific. Towards noon the first gun was fired from the central hamper, and from that time until the sun fell behind the waves of the Pacific, pop, pop, went the bottles, every half minute, as loud as revolvers. If ever there was a literal application of the term “paying the shot,’’ it certainly was then, and I was the victim, for every report cost a dollar, and I was forced to endure the heartless jests of the passengers, on the unknown proprietor, with that “infernally fire’’ still ringing in my ears.

Well, the champagne was a dead loss; and perhaps the constitutions of the Los Angelites, might be grateful for the mishap; but the fish were a failure also, for in hot weather, people do not hanker much after smoked Salmon, salt as brine; and so I was obliged to force them on the market at a very depreciated value. With the wreck of my fortune, I purchased an assortment of fruit, consisting of pears, figs, peaches, and apricots, conveyed them to the coast in barrels, and had them just ready for shipment on the day of the steamer's expected arrival—a very important point, for despatch is peremptorily required to make the fruit trade profitable at all. But—begging Miss Edgeworth's pardon—there is such a thing as bad luck; for what human forethought could tell, that precisely on that eventful occasion, when my whole life's earnings were at stake, the refractory steamer would break down, 152 and delay me for another ten days? Let us draw a veil over the melancholy conclusion, for the remembrance harrows my feelings, even to this late day. Suffice it to say, that my whole cargo was ruined, and I found myself once more on the streets of San Francisco, almost in that position so fashionable in California, and aptly denominated “strapped.’’

So much did my loss prey upon my spirits, that I prescribed change of scene for myself, and having a friend resident in the valley of Santa Cruz, from whom I had been long divided; I came to the conclusion to pay him a visit, and try the experiment of rustication for a few weeks, to soothe my shattered nerves. I therefore proceeded to the place, paid my visit, got tired of my own idleness, and the Hoosiers besides, and again my ambition was stimulated with the desire of “making a raise.” So, without having any very definite idea, with regard to my future proceedings; I shouldered my pack, and journeyed eastward. A long spur of the coast range, nine miles in width, divides this valley from the neighboring one of Santa Clara, and towards evening I had made the transit, and was entering on the broad plains of that fertile valley.

Santa Clara is at present one of the most productive counties in the State, but much of it was, at the time I speak of, an almost unbroken wilderness, more especially, in the central portion where I now was. Trudging along in the bright moonlight, my eye was already scanning the plain, in search of the softest couch, when the loud clear notes of a bugle almost close at hand, startled me exceedingly. When my first intense surprise had partially subsided, at hearing such unwonted sounds in that vast 153 solitude, I turned off sharp to the right, with the intention of allaying my curiosity upon the subject. A small mound containing a level surface of nearly an acre, and apparently of volcanic origin, lay between me and the sounds, and on gaining the summit, my surprise was yet intensified at the strange sights exposed to view. The place was one of the little oak groves, so peculiar to the region, made bright as day by numbers of torches, and congregated in one mass, within the space, there could not be less than five or six hundred persons, who instantaneously dispelled all supernatural illusions I may have formed, by all uniting in chorus, to the good old hymn entitled “I am going to the land of Canaan.” This convinced me at once, of my propinquity to a camp meeting, most probably held in this lonely spot, both from its romantic beauty, and its central position with regard to the three large settlements of San Jose, San Juan, and Pajaro.

Nothing could be more perfect and tasteful, than the arrangements for comfort and convenience, under the circumstances. Seats and sheds were formed of slats, brought from the neighboring

redwoods, while the central place of worship was shaded by an immense sail, which had been procured for the purpose, by some industrious Christian from the wreck of a clipper ship, on the neighboring coast. The sleeping apartments surrounded this, and in the rear, the long tables of redwood, together with the smoking stoves, and savory steam of beef, pork, venison, and game, plainly informed the nose, of the extensive refectory. At the conclusion of the benediction, all retired to the well covered tables, where the hospitality was unbounded; visitors were invited to partake of the good cheer, not only for the present, but to remain and receive 154 a continuation of the same favors for the whole week during which the meeting was expected to continue.

As my readers—from the confession of my circumstances—are no doubt aware, that I had no peculiarly pressing engagement just at that time, I was induced to remain for a few days; and although I have witnessed many meetings of this description, and in various places, I can positively aver, that for order and decorum I have never seen this exceeded. The affair was carried out at the sole expense of about a dozen individuals, and if obtaining converts was their object, they were most certainly amply remunerated for their trouble and expense, for more than a hundred persons, were induced to enroll themselves on the books of the church.

The society was the Methodist Church South, completely divided from, and in direct hostility to the Church North, on that one grand subject of surpassing interest, over all others—the slavery question—a subject that bids fair, not only to separate the people on religious grounds, but eventually, to break up, politically, the whole confederation of the States. The Northern church has an express article in its discipline against slavery, while the other, not only expunges the offensive article, but allows slavery both to preacher and people, and even openly recommends it from the pulpit.

That the people of this State, however, which is nominally free, should so strenuously harp upon the *patriarchal* institution—as they call it—may appear strange; but one reason is, the continuation of their old habits, and the other, the hope of forming a new State, of sound Southern principles. Indeed, the preacher, although to appearances, a conscientious and sincere man, could not even in his 155 homilies, control himself from expressing his opinion on the all-absorbing topic. He was one afternoon calling on the people loudly, to repentance, with the energy and fervor of a Jonah,

and to illustrate the horror of death in sin, more especially, he described the last moments of a victim to the fury of a mob, in one of the wild South-Western States.

“My dear hearers,” he exclaimed, “my right arm would have been freely given, to rescue that wretched victim to the power of the evil one, from the fearful judgment of an abused and insulted people. He was not fit to grapple with death, or to face his God, and with the sin that bears an express curse upon the perpetrator, by the Deity Himself, he dies, accepting not of any ministry, hard and impenitent to the fearful crime, yet with the consoling words of the blessed Saviour upon his polluted lips. Ah! my friends, there is a devilish fortitude, as well as there is a Godly fortitude, and the evil one sometimes deserts not his ablest supporters, even to the last; for that worse than murderer—that violator of the express command of God, and our ever-to-be remembered constitution, that man-stealer, in short—that deadliest foe to the dear rights of a free people—that veriest enemy to heathen conversion, died with a front of brass, and an eye that quailed not before the insulted majesty of his fellow-creatures—he died as he had lived, cursed by God and man—a deluded, hardened abolitionist!”

These prophetic remarks were received with much unction and many groans by the sympathizing congregation, and I was mentally conning over its matter, together—I confess—with some quite irrelevant thoughts, regarding my own position and future movements, when a heavy 156 slap upon the shoulder, brought me to my feet, and face to face with mine ancient chum, the prince of all good fellows, and companion in many a previous scene—the stalwart Mac.

Times had flourished with my friend, during the early part of the year of our separation. He had become the proprietor of a store, and did a flourishing trade, until collection day came round, when there being no assets in the hands of his customers, and his stock thoroughly exhausted, he had made up his mind to try his fate once more in the mines, with his head clerk and junior partner. And as our circumstances bore a striking similarity to each other, to say nothing of former friendship, I was easily induced to form one of the party, which was to commence its journey—by the land route—on the succeeding day. And now, I trust, I have made it sufficiently clear to my readers, the various causes which induced me to take this trip. So I shall proceed and relate, as they occurred,

the most exciting sights and adventures, on this—to me at least—interesting “trip to the southern mines.”

The same evening I was introduced in due form to the third individual of our triumvirate.

My first impressions—and they continued for some time—were of a confused assemblage, and undue proportion of legs and arms, with no body or face, worth speaking of. He hailed from the land of Boone, and the long rifle which he affectionately clasped, at once attested the votary of Nimrod. A brief consultation was now held upon the spot, as touching our several resources, and the various requisites for the long tramp—a distance of 200 miles. We found ourselves amply able to provide the simple necessaries, with a balance in the exchequer 157 together with a good supply of camp cooking utensils, blankets, and an aged California horse, that would probably go his twenty-five miles a day, carrying our traps and provisions. Boone contributed nothing to the general fund, barring his elaborate limbs and his rifle, contending however, on the right to all the privileges of a full partnership, from the vast utility he was to be of, in providing the larder, through the great game country we had to cross.

With regard to the victualling department, a sack of wheat flour was passed *nem. con.* I then modestly proposed bacon, as an agreeable accompaniment to farinaceous food, but was indignantly frowned down by the hunter; who proposed that the words powder and shot be inserted in lieu of the swine flesh, which was passed, I being in the negative. Our negotiations were then brought to a close; and the next morning shone brightly and cheerfully upon us, as we took a bird's flight course across the plain, for the Pacheco pass, in the main coast range. The blue hills, shrouded in a thin vapor, stretched along our front, and the peak of Pacheco soaring far above the rest, at a distance of twelve or fourteen miles, formed an excellent landmark to find the entrance to the pass.

A more beautiful reality of a farming country, does not exist, than the valley we crossed to attain the pass. Level as a board, and with a rich loamy soil, on which not a drop of rain had pattered for six months at least; it was still covered with rich clover, other grasses, and wild oats in profusion, and although dry as powder, was still sweet and nutritive in the highest degree, as the large herds of

Spanish cattle we passed, fully attested by their shining coats. Thousands of geese, sandbill cranes, 158 plover, and curlew darkened the air at intervals, and the sharp report of the rifle far a-head, told that our pioneer was busily stocking the game bag, preparatory to our meridian bivouac.

Noon found us all at the entrance of the pass; our horse was released from his burden, and we set to work, with all the skill, bought by long experience, to prepare the noontide meal. A turnover was soon crisping in the frying pan, and I made a desperate onslaught at once upon the game bag, beside which the long slight figure of the owner was listlessly extended. I shook out the contents with all the energy of appetite, and out dropped the most attenuated specimen of a woodpecker, I ever beheld! Comment was unnecessary, for although the wretch had the impertinence, to correct me in the name I gave the thing, by blandly terming it a “Peckerwood,” if he had called it a goose it would not have made it one, so we had to dispense with animal food, and poor Boone received nothing but vinegar looks, as seasoning to his dry cake.

Having despatched our frugal meal, we were soon once more upon the road, and slowly pursued our course through this wild and sublime region. The range at this point averages about twenty-five miles in latitude, and completely severs this valley from the neighboring one of the San Joaquin. The pass is a singular freak of nature. For the first five or six miles, the ascent is imperceptible, and it varies in breadth, from a hundred feet to a quarter of a mile, the soil rich and the vegetation luxuriant; in fact, in all respects, a perfect spur of the valley—if we may use the expression—flanked by hills of great height, and most forbidding exterior. The very genius of want, seems to reign supreme upon their surface; some consisting of 159 mere revolving sand, and some of naked sandstone, that form frightful precipices, hundreds of feet in depth, and some straggling dwarf oaks, that cling tenaciously in the moist nooks, are in many places the only appearance of vegetation.

From the beginning of the first rise, the road becomes irksome, and tiresome in the extreme, though the hills are depressed, in comparison with those that flank it; so much so, that even an empty waggon, has with great care and constant attention been conveyed through, but it is an operation requiring great skill and considerable risk. On we toiled, until the shades of evening began to throw a gloom over surrounding objects, when we began to look around for a spring of water, for

ourselves as well as the horse, and by which we intended to encamp for the night. At last we arrived at a point where two trails united—both equally distinct—and we settled it that I should take one which slightly diverged to the left, and lead the tired beast, who now moved at a snail's pace—my companions to take the other, for we judged by the apparently small angle at which the paths closed, that they would again meet at a short distance ahead.

I acknowledge that as I parted from my associates, my feelings were none of the most pleasurable nature; and retrospect, calling up scenes of distant home and pleasing recollections of the past, in no respect gave me consolation, in the unpleasant predicament I now found myself. I was alone and almost unarmed in the heart of a dreary wilderness, said to be full of grizzly bears, tired, hungry, and parched with thirst. This was sufficient to induce despondency, but had I had a foresight of the night of terror I was doomed to endure, my unpleasant feelings would have been much more acute.

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I judged I had accomplished somewhat more than a mile on my solitary course, when darkness completely enveloped me. According to our compact I halloed until I was completely hoarse, without receiving any answering signal, and the path had for the last half mile, become so very indistinct, I became much of the opinion that it only existed in imagination. To increase my difficulties, I soon knew that I was skirting the side of a remarkably abrupt hill, so very great indeed, was the inclination, that the weary beast, though an old packer, could only be persuaded to proceed, by constant tugging at the halter, and often I was brought to my knees, to prevent myself from rolling down the hill, which from its resemblance to those I had passed in the afternoon, I rightly guessed terminated in a precipice. I was nevertheless peremptorily obliged to proceed forward, for the slope effectually prevented the possibility of turning the horse, with the object of retreating.

After a wearisome half-hour, spent in this way, I struck into a small blind ravine, where the winter rains had scooped out a little basin, in the sandstone ledge, about ten feet square, the rock to the right and front rising up in a perfect dead wall, while away to the left the prospect was completely lost in a yawning gulf of darkness. As no alternative remained, I formed the prudent resolve of

remaining all night on that solitary spot, and forthwith proceeded to unpack the tired animal. A scrubby little oak contrived to eke out an existence on each side of the channel, to one of which I fastened the horse, and with the dry sticks that lay plentifully strewed in the ravine, I soon had a roaring fire, for the night was chilly and dark as pitch. I spread my blanket before the cheerful blaze — 161 for I was too thirsty to care for food—and as the graceful wreathes of smoke, softly arose from my fragrant pipe, the soothing influence of the weed was gradually imparted to my mental vision, and I soon began to moralize and consider of the number of earth's inhabitants, who at that moment would gladly barter their fates for mine.

I was slightly aroused from my reverie, by perceiving a little animal crawl forth from the decayed end of the back log, and run directly under the blankets upon which I was seated. I sprang up at once, and despatched it, and examination proved it to be a very vicious species of scorpion, the sting of which frequently proves fatal. In hunting for the scorpion, I also caught a tarantula, a gigantic species of poisonous spider, about the size and form of a common door knob. Here was a delightful locality for a bedroom—in the midst of a den of scorpions, and without the possibility of changing it for a better before daylight, which was nine hours off, at least!

So nervous did this circumstance make me—for I had always an instinctive horror of vermin—that I kept my feet for two or three hours, at least, walking three paces forward and three back, such being the utmost stretch of my prison. Tired nature by this time, could endure it no longer, and after throwing a large quantity of fresh wood upon the fire, lay down to rest, but with the firm resolve not to sleep; and so much were my hearing powers stretched, for the smallest rustle in the dry leaves, the feeling became absolutely painful. At last, in spite of my resolve, I fell asleep. How long I slumbered, it is difficult to say, but at length I awoke, with a cold chill and horrible shuddering sensations. I opened my eyes, but without the smallest movement of my person, and the first object 162 my glance fell upon—within about nine inches of my face—were the glittering eyes, flattened jaws, and arched neck of the largest rattlesnake I ever beheld. The fire blazed up clearly and brightly at the time, enabling me to see, with the greatest distinctness, every shining scale and each particular fold of the motionless venomous monster. My eyes gazed into his, with

a species of stupid fascination, and although I realized my imminent peril to its utmost extent, instinctive fear prevented me from moving a single muscle.

I was fully aware, that should the reptile strike me, in the position I then was, my case was utterly without hope, and a few hours of excruciating agony would leave me a lifeless clod, on that desolate hillside, without one kind hand to minister, or one ear to receive my last sigh. How long this fearful stare continued, it is impossible to say, for I took no note of time. It seemed like hours, but most probably it did not extend to many minutes, when I could perceive an almost imperceptible retrograde motion of the head, and my ear detected a faint whirring of the rattle. This token, which I knew foreboded an immediate attack, appeared instantaneously to endow me with all my heretofore powers of self-preservation.

With all the energy of despair, I threw myself vigorously backward—the snake striking the next instant—my first spring was plump into the fire; from thence I made a complete summerset over the recumbent horse, and then I rolled away down the hill at an angle of forty-five degrees, but was fortunately saved from utter annihilation, by clinging fast to a small bush within a few feet of the precipice, experiencing no greater loss than the skin of my hands, and a large part of my pantaloons. With great labor I again ascended to the scene of conflict, and having armed myself with a club, met my antagonist in nearly the same position as when I took my departure. He had followed me into the fire, and was now writhing in agony on the blankets, but I soon put an end to his sufferings by some well directed blows on the head. His length was five feet two inches, and he had thirteen rattles and a button suspended to his tail.

It now became necessary for me to hold another consultation with myself, as to the manner in which I should pass the remainder of the night, for I judged that it still wanted some hours of day dawn, and some kind angel inspired me with a simple idea, that afterwards caused me to reprove myself severely, for not sooner taking advantage of. I was in possession of several fathoms of rope, with which the pack had been lashed; this I apportioned into what sailors call clews and lanyards, to which I attached the head and foot of the coverlet respectively, and fastening the end of each rope to the little oaks, I had an excellent hammock at once, suspended four feet from the ground. I turned

in gratefully, to my swinging bed, and although my head and feet were a trifle more elevated than a nautical man would consider quite ship shape, I was, two minutes after, utterly unconscious of all sublunary things.

At daylight, I was aroused from my deep trance, by the sound of a human voice, within a few feet of me, which I soon decided to be the Kentuckian. He was in a gloomy soliloquy, every syllable of which I could clearly distinguish, but so close was my hanging bed to the side of the steep bluff, that he was quite unaware of my contiguity.

“Wal,” said he, “‘ef this here aint a a pretty considerable mess of hot homminy, I aint Jeems Pettibone, nor 164 nobody else! Here am I at last, come to years of destruction—and six feet three in my mocassins at that—with ne'er a bit of hoecake, fomarty, or dodger to stick in my blessed head, this Chuesday mornin', A.D. one thousing, eight hundred, and fifty odd. Dirty water for supper, repeat for breakfast, and a white frost for a bed kiver. Wough! I could chaw this minute a chunk of a dead nigger; and there's that punkin-headed Mac, a snoarin' away, like Sent Antn'y's falls, and has no feelinx for a young growin' feller. An that other darned ignor'nt for'ner, must ampersan hisself an' his crow meat hoss, clean over the bluff, jest to spite a feller, I du believe. Wal! we mought have spared him and the hoss, wall enough, but what did the mean cuss take the grub over with him for? He wont want that whar he's gone, sure, the nincompoop! Sarve him right, what business had he to be snickerin' at a free Amer'kin's legs, or a pokin' fun at his nose? Cuss em! I'm a know-northin' from this day out, if I only get rid of this snarl.’”

During the outpourings of this troubled spirit, I was busily engaged in arranging the traps, and when my well-wisher had relieved himself of the burthen on his mind, I apprised him of my existence and propinquity. I then proceeded to retrace the fanciful path I had taken on the preceding evening; and if it seemed bad at night, it was absolutely fearful by daylight, running as it did, along by the brow of the precipice, to which we had unwittingly approached, nearer than six feet, several times, and one false step would have sent us thundering down the horrible gulf at our feet.

When I rounded the hill, I met Jeems, who greeted me with every evidence of pleasure, that gradually heightened 165 into a broad grin of exultation, as his longing eye fell upon the mess bag, safe and sound. We aroused Mac, who was sleeping comfortably by a rather indifferent spring, and after partaking of some hot coffee and bread, we supplied our faithful Jim with some water and barley, and proceeded onward, inspirited and refreshed. This day was a momentous and wearisome one. It was up one hill and down another, constantly, in the early part of the day; and in the afternoon we found ourselves in the level portion of the pass, which extends into the mountains from the San Joaquin valley, somewhat resembling the opposite side, but shorter and wider. At dark we arrived at the western side of the valley, and finding a good spring, we took up our quarters and spent a very comfortable night.

It must not be imagined that Jeems was idle all this time, far from it, for although he had provided nothing for so far, excepting that ghost of a woodpecker, he had already blazed away the chief portion of the powder, and I verily believe, that he considered himself a very useful personage, and that we could make but a very indifferent fist without him. On the first day's walk in the plains of the San Joaquin, he, as was usual with him, preceded us a mile or two on the path, with the design, no doubt, of intercepting hares or antelopes, that might otherwise be alarmed at the presence of so large a party.

The land, for this whole day's march, was slightly undulating, like a rolling prairie, and too light and gravelly, for successful cultivation. No human habitation was visible; and in the distance could be seen immense herds of antelopes and wild horses; the latter chiefly led on by some patriarchal stallion, would sometimes approach within a 166 few hundred yards of us to reconnoitre, and then, evidently not relishing our appearance, would dash away towards the wide tules, with a pace like a whirlwind. Seventy miles off in our front, and at right angles to our course, rose the dim blue mountains of the Sierra Nevada; and a long fringe of oaks half way between, marked the serpentine course of the San Joaquin. The remainder of the plain was treeless, and destitute of grass, except in some low spots, few and far between, like an oasis in the desert. The wild things, though, seemed

to enjoy it much, and our steed cropped the fragrant bushes that chiefly covered the surface, with every appearance of satisfaction.

We had been moving on very quietly for two or three hours, and had seen, nor heard any thing of our pioneer; we were getting slightly uneasy in consequence, when on gaining the summit of a small swell in the land, we perceived almost close to the road, the illustrious Pettibone himself, up to his elbows in blood and grease, disembowelling a fat antelope—a regular “heart of grease.”

“Ah, ha!” he crowed, “I don't savy plugging antelopes, don't I? Oh, no! I ain't a dead shot, nother, ain't I? No, sir-r! I waste powder, too, do I? In course I do. Fotch along that frame of a hoss, will you? right smart, and tote off this here venison.”

“Look at that,” he continued, pointing to a bullet hole in the hide, “thar's a wownd for you; I sighted right for that white spot, onder the fore shoulder, and plumped him clean, whar he lived—aighty rod by Jackson—never kicked.”

“Be off, now;” he concluded, with the air of a monarch, “pack off your meat, while I load sweet Nancy agin.”

We started once more, taking with us some of the 167 choicest pieces, and left the remnant for the cayotas or prairie wolves, and made as many calculations about our prospective dinner, as ever did poor Oliver Goldsmith, over his famous haunch. We had not proceeded more than two hundred yards in the van, when we perceived a horseman to our left, riding at a full lope, and approaching us at an angle, evidently with the intention of cutting us off. He closed on us rapidly, and his first salutation was a brusque inquiry, as to what might be our particular business with his meat. Surprised at the question, we indignantly informed him that it was our own property, and was shot by our other partner, who was now approaching us with his rifle reloaded. When he arrived, the stranger firmly persisted in his demands; affirming, that he had shot the animal out of a large herd, an hour previous, and he had merely alighted to cut his throat, as he wished another shot at the herd. He also described to an inch, the locality where it lay, and added, that the bullet entered a white spot immediately beneath the left fore shoulder. This was proof positive to me, and I forthwith advised

Jeems, to deliver up, with as good a grace as possible. He seemed no way inclined to comply with this advice—most probably from shame—but as he evidently feared the de-determined front of the stranger, he reluctantly complied, exclaiming:—

“Wal, stranger, I reckon you can have it, but as sure as Old Hickory's in Heaven, I though I shot it, squar in its tracks.”

This little incident, however, ended the hunter's occupation; his title became for the remainder of the way merely honorary, and the honor consisted in lugging along his clumsy twenty pound rifle, himself.

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This night we remained on the plains, and arrived the succeeding day on the banks of the river, close to the influx of the Mercedes. It was very low at this time, yet still a noble stream, and seemed fairly alive with small fish, principally bass, perch, and suckers. There was a hog and cattle ranch at the place, to which was attached a small store, for the accommodation of the few farmers scattered along the interval of the river. The land, for a mile or two on each side of the river, is very fertile, and not very inconvenient to market—but fever and ague are very prevalent, in August and September.

While hunting up some drift wood, for the purpose of cooking coffee, I observed an old superannuated seine, lying on the bank, that most probably had been thrown aside by some fishermen, during the preceding summer, as unseaworthy; and proposed that we should borrow the punt, belonging to the ranch, and try our own fortune for a dinner. With the assistance of two travellers, whom we met at the ferry, we acted on the hint. Leaving two of the party with one line, we rowed out towards the mouth of the tributary; we then paid out the net, made a sweep, and commenced hauling in. As the net gradually collapsed by our united efforts, the stir in the water increased, until it actually seemed to boil, and it was only by dint of great exertion, that we succeeded in hauling to land. The little fishes swarmed in thousands, but chiefly managed to escape, through the large meshes and rents. But the larger fry were not so fortunate, for we contrived to

capture eighty-two splendid salmon, many of them more than thirty-five pounds in weight, and none less than ten. We threw them up on the bank behind us, which was probably five feet in height, perpendicular from the water's edge. 169 And after the fatiguing exercise—that had only occupied about twenty minutes however—we sat down on the beach to rest, and congratulated each other on our good fortune.

The Kentuckian proposed that we should go into the curing business at once, by drying the fish in the sun, and then sending them to the mines in Tuolumne or Stanislaus; and the able way that he footed the sum total up, reckoning 246 per hour—12 hours to the day, and 25 cents per pound—showed that he knew something of the primary rules of arithmetic at least. But we were suddenly interrupted, in the midst of our castle building, by the mangled remains of a fish, that tumbled over the bank, on our heads, accompanied by a squeak, and the sound of a scuffle.

We were soon on the bank, and such a scene of carnage, it never was my fortune to witness. More than three hundred hogs had scented their prey, from afar, and pounced on the salmon like a hurricane. Hungry as death, they tore the fish asunder, while still wriggling in their jaws, and bit and mangled each other savagely, in the madness of their excitement. All attempts to drive them off, were ridiculous and unavailing, and it was only by much exertion and strong fighting, that we succeeded in rescuing four from their clutches, for our own consumption; these we cleaned and hung up in the sun, for future use, reserving one for present purposes, and with the assistance of some butter and potatoes, that we procured at the ranch, we made a most appetising meal.

Next day, we struck out for the Tuolumne river, which still lay between us and the mountains. This is a much more fertile country, than that we passed through on the preceding day; the interval or bottom land as it is termed in the West, extends to a much greater width on 170 the banks of the streams, and the intermediate portion, has a heavier soil, and produces spontaneously in greater abundance. We reached the river before nightfall, encountering nothing worthy of record; and the succeeding afternoon, commenced the ascent of the foot hills of the Sierra Nevada; the increased number of roads and trails in every direction, plainly informing us of our neighborhood to the land, “Out of whose hills, thou mayst dig brass.”

This evening, we were much puzzled at one point, to find the right road leading to the place we had intended for our destination; and we consequently diverged slightly towards a ranch house we saw, for the purpose of making the necessary inquiries. The building itself, attested the nationality of its owner. Two substantial log houses under one roof, with the intermediate space, floored, but not closed in at the sides; with a more unpretending structure, about twenty paces off, proclaimed the dwelling house of the Texian, together with the pen for his “servants.” A very corpulent negro wench, of matronly appearance, sat at the door plucking a goose; and beside her—with his hands stuck firmly in his pockets—was her woolly pated son, I presume, aged probably eighteen years. He was watching, at the moment, with a very enthusiastic eye, a cat fight; the animals being attached to each other by the tails, and then thrown over a clothes line, suspended a few feet from the ground. He was making a violent effort to appear unconcerned, by striving to pucker his thick lips into a whistle, but it would not do, for the young Sambo's eyes exhibited unequivocal signs of satisfaction, despite his demure face; although he had only been the instrument in getting up this pretty pastime, for the express amusement of young massa—a red haired, freckle faced imp of eight or ten—whose happiness appeared complete.

I propounded the necessary interrogatories to the young negro, respecting our dilemma, and while he was endeavoring to enlighten me, making confusion more confounded, with one saucer eye on me, and one on the feline combat, a huge burly personage, some fifty years old—with his short sandy hair combed straight over his eye brows, making his forehead villainously low—emerged from the middle porch, and strutting right up to where I stood, opened the conversation himself.

“Oh, stranger! yeour from the east, I reckon.”

I made him a polite negative to this inquiry—though I knew well what he meant—by informing him, that I was last from Santa Cruz.

“Oh! blast Santa Cruz!” said he, “I s'pose yeou was raised somewhar, warn't you?”

“Yes,” I replied, “born to the eastward of this, most certainly.”

“Wal,” he exclaimed, “yeou have, mayhap, heern tell, that Scriptur' says, the wise men come from tharaway, and ef so be, the folks raised thar, air so darned wise, why they've got gumption tu, an ef they've got gumption, they mought, sartin, be coaxed to take a hint; an' ef they will take a hint, yeou'll oblege me, by tellin all the blue bellies yeou can skear up, not to meddle no how with a free Texian, or say one sylable to his property, anyhows or anywhere's; for by *Jee* -hosaphat, I'd a leetle raither let daylight into a whinin, cantin, paper-faced abolitionist, than kick a cussed, lazy, wooly-headed nigger!”

And suiting the action to the word, he applied his 172 ample cowhide boot to the property in question, *a posteriori*, and landed him most suddenly and unexpectedly, on the tub of feathers, which his mammy had just carefully filled, this he inverted along with his maternal parent, and amidst the bellowing of both, the curses of the incensed owner, and the cloud of down scattered by the wind, I made my escape, without acquiring the information I sought.

We found the road ourselves, without much difficulty, and in two days more, were busy in prospecting a bar on the Stanislaus; but as that opens new scenes and associations, not properly belonging to the objects of this sketch, I shall here conclude my “Trip to the Southern Mines.”

AN ORATION.

For a few months prior to the election of President Pierce, the sole occupation of a large portion of the people was electioneering. Money and time were squandered in profusion by both parties; and no stone was left unturned to encourage the vacillating, or to intimidate them as the case might be. Paid, and unpaid orators, harraugued each night in the streets of the cities, and even in the smallest villages, to attentive crowds. Transparencies, with patriotic sentiments, paraded every thoroughfare. Ephemeral newspapers, of Lilliputian dimensions but high sounding titles, such as “The Banner of Liberty,” “The Bulwark of the Brave,” “Freedom's Savior,” &c., rained over the country, and were perhaps paid for by some one; and the established press, thundered out denunciations 173 against the one, and proportionate eulogies on the other.

Every trifling action in the life of either, private or public, from the cradle to their present platform, was animadverted upon, in the strongest of terms; and if one tenth part of what was printed of either, was correct, they were both better fitted for the tender mercies of Jack Ketch, than to grace the most exalted position, within the gift of a powerful nation. It was certainly a great puzzle, to penetrate the cause, which induced people to neglect their private affairs so much, for the election of the President, particularly in California. The idea of them all being office-seekers, was simply ridiculous, for independent of their great numbers, some of the most enthusiastic busy-bodies in the campaign were men to whom office was worthless and inconvenient. Patriotism might perhaps serve for a reason, but the hottest of these same politicians would openly acknowledge, the inefficiency and uselessness of their State government, as well as the general, to control the people of this State, either in punishing the guilty, or protecting the innocent. But perhaps they acted on the maxim of "Try, try again," and it may be, a shadowy outline of some responsible system, already glared before their excited fancies.

But be the cause as it may, all fought like heroes in the service; and it was really interesting to observe, that, in spite of the lengthened apprenticeship to republicanism, the ancient veneration for hereditary honors, has yet far from become extinct, even here. Scott's ancestors, had each a little biography of his own, for two hundred years back, as giving him a sort of venerable right on the suffrages of the worthy people, who were earnestly implored 174 to "throw up their greasy caps," for this illustrious scion of a long line of glorious ancestors. But the Scottites slightly overreached themselves in this point, for the Piercites, following in their train, showed themselves more skilled in genealogy, and carried us rearward to the days of the wizard Glendowen, tracing back from son to sire, until concentrated at last, in that mirror of ancient English chivalry, the ill-fated, gallant Hotspur.

There was a great gathering of the Scott clans, held in Sacramento one evening, outside a fancy saloon, gilded like a parrot's cage, and bearing the Spanish cognomen of the *Adobe*; from the fact of its being built on the remains of an old mud edifice, supposed to be the oldest in the city. It has long since evaporated, with hundreds of its neighbors, in the great fires to which the place has been

so subject; but was, at the time I speak of, in all its pristine freshness and glory. When I approached, an orator was already on his legs, vexing the placid air of night, with a voice like a pair of bagpipes, his auditors filling up the street on either side, within hearing of his nasal phillipics. I knew he must have been a remarkable man, for the crowd applauded vastly, when he came to such words as —“Lone Star,” “Our Flag,” “American Eagle,” &c.; but I had lost much of the address by my late arrival, and in fact, only arrived in good time for the peroration, and here it is,—

“And now, to conclude, fellow citizens, I want yeou nothen more nor less, but to come up like what yeou are, and what yeou'r knowed, and feered to be, over the whole 'varsal creation— *the* spryest, *the* cutest, and far most peowful, and freest people on this everlastin almighty globe; I want yeou, I say, to come up like what I've pictur'd 175 yeou to be, and vote for the great presarver of this blessed union—the hero of Churubusco, the conqueror of Chihuahua, the keeper of the keys of Montezuma, the great, the might General Scott. Of heroes, my friends, he is the lone star of all, in fact the very top notch, and ef yeou blind yeour eyes, and won't know it, why the Europeans will, for they know it well, and kalkilate thar motions by yeour'n. Don't yeou know that the nurses in Rooshay, try to still thar squallin brats, with repeatin his name in full? Doesn't Boney even, found his hopes of enslavin the French people, on yeour rejection of your great general? And doesn't the Britishers have no interest in this all-powerful o'er-masterin subject? Think yeou gentlemen, that they have not thar eye on this great country, now? Aye! and her emissaries are even now in our midst. They envy us; they hate us, but most perticerly they fear us; for she already begins tu know that we are the phoenix that are to soar aloft upon her ashes; she begins tu feel, that her measure of iniquity is full, and that our great Scott, if elected—and most sartin he will—will be the means of dashin' the pisened chalice from her polluted hands, so that in the emphatic words of Holy Writ —‘she shant rule over the nations no more.’

“Yes; even that small, but proud female, *Victory*, is a watchin' operations, is a watchin' the times from her teower in London, an' a shakin' in her white satin shoes, for fear that you will not vote for Pierce, and why, I ask, should she not? Was it not Scott that humbled the proud Lion in a hundred conflicts? Was it not him that stopped their encroachments, in Mexico, and gained to the Union this country, whose sands are gold. And was it not Scott that 176 sent the British bull back a roarin,

with his tail atwixt his legs, from the bloody battle fields of New York? Let ancient and modern history be hauled over, and what will it present? Why, it will tell yeou of a Cesar, a Alexander, and a Boney, that would have thrashed Wellington like a sack, only for Blucher and his Prooshians—but where will you find a Scott? Whar's his equals among the slaves of earth's despots? Nor, turnin' to the long catalogue of heroes, that fout, and bled, and died, in a buildin' up the fabric of this tremendous confederation, can we find a fit companion to this, our present nation's pride and glory. To the rally, and the rescue then, Whigs! and support, to a man, this greatest of the great, who alone of all the proud names yeou can muster, is able, durin' one tarm of office, to bring the hull might of combined Europe, a erouchin' at your indignant feet.

“ *He* never got sick upon the field of battle, and keeled over from his horse, when Santy Anny was a comin' down upon him, with his murderin' niggers. But it *was* him, that sent them and their paper cigars a flyin', like cornstalks and umbrellars in a lively hurricane. And I'll tell yeou what, my friends, a namin' no names, but he was *not* the man that presented the boy with a cent, to purchase a stick of 'lasses candy. I say once more to yeou, shove up the man that will make the haughty, antiquated aristocrats of Europe, cut thar very jug'lars for spite, when they see the sun of liberty a mountin' in the west, and a spreadin' his alkillin' rays over thar benighted lands. For the time is a sure comin', when, if we have this great conqueror at our head, the broad folds of the stars and stripes shall float gracefully over the Kramlin of Moscow, and an Amer'kin army shall march in good order over London bridge, to the soul inspirin' notes of Yankee Doodle.”

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Just as this delightful vision was pictured so gracefully to the admiring patriots, the fire-bells clanged from every engine-house, and scattered them pell-mell, each to his own location, or, I do verily believe, he would soon have had the meek-eyed moon herself, branded with the U. S. It afterwards transpired, that the alarm was merely a ruse, got up by the loco focos for the purpose, who dreaded the sledge-hammer effects of the orator's eloquence, on the sympathising hearts of the people.

THE SURGEON'S RIDE.

He was a prominent member of our company (which was denominated the “Eureka,” *par excellence*, although we rarely found aught but good appetites and lame backs about sundown.) His name was unknown, but we called him Sawbones; for he was an M. D., and held a paper which he often showed, and called a diploma. He was one of those vast shoals of doctors, annually manufactured in some of the States, and then thrown helplessly upon an un pitying world; half educated, but thoroughly licensed to kill or be killed. Although a tender fledgling, he was constitutionally fond of his ease, and heavy potatoes were his weakness. The latter he gave as his reason for rarely volunteering his services to procure provisions from the nearest grocery, which was six or seven miles from our camp; and as this road was a particular dreary walk, being unfortunately neither planked nor macadamized, a foot journey was equally distasteful to all of the party. The purchase of a stalwart horse was, therefore, the result of 178 our cogitations on this important subject, who was large enough, to be sure, although his price appeared very suspiciously small. His name was “Boney,” but whether this title was an abbreviation, commemorative of the little corporal of Marengo, or from its bearing a direct allusion to the quantity of ossified matter contained in his system, must forever remain a mystery. Certain it is, that bones might correctly be said to represent his leading feature, so prominent they were, and so gigantic. This framework was tightly covered with an uncomfortable looking hide and the capacious regions encased by it had been the bourne of innumerable barley-fields, at ten cents per pound. But no doubt existing about his being “all horse,” and as he was not procured for the sake of beauty, or for any particular benevolent designs cherished for him by his buyers, his capacity as a bearer of our burthens was shortly tested, without ceremony or respect for his gray hairs.

Mr. Sawbones discovered immediately, by intuition, that some tom-iron was indispensably requisite, in order to develop more fully the resources of the Eureka company, and he handsomely tendered his services to procure it from the aforesaid grocery, with the assistance of Boney. His gracious offer was of course accepted, and a great many other important commissions were entrusted to his charge. Among the heterogeneous items to be procured were the following, to wit: one cwt. of flour, a quantity of red paint molasses, butter, coffee, &c., with six pounds of nails, and

a tea kettle; the whole of which would comprise a heavy pack of itself, and the courier departed amidst general good wishes, with a clean shirt and a smiling countenance.

Alas! much may be comprised in the journey of a day. The sun—as he always does—mounted to the meridian, 179 and his declining rays lit the weary miners to their lowly cots. But a gap was in the circle—Sawbones, where was he? Echo nor anything else made reply, while darkness, coupled with a heavy rain storm, closed over flood and field. In our dismal, leaky cabin, dark forebodings began to be hazarded—not only concerning our own fate, but of the unfortunate messenger, and the ugly beast that bore him company; and I shame to say it, and blush while I write, nearly all our sympathy was expended on the latter.

Just at dawn the riderless steed was found at the door in a very unenviable pickle. Nature, I had thought in one of her quaintest freaks, had done her worst for him long since, but the illustrious mare of Quixotte might as well ape Bucephalus, as the present shapeless thing attempt to vie with the sprightly animal that cocked his tail so jocosely on the previous morning. Still, it was he; there was no forgetting that Roman nose, and those great anatomical corners for which he was so famous. His limping legs were encrusted with mud, and the ensanguined sign of despair was on his bridle; his whole body was parti-colored as the map of Europe, and he hung his classical head and drooped his tail with shame and agony. After a careful analysis of the various rainbow tints with which he was adorned, the groundwork was decided to consist of superfine flour, at ninety cents per pound, and the remainder a medley compound of unknown proportions of red paint, molasses, butter, ground coffee, &c., the whole forming quite an expensive picture, though a very coarse daub. The lidless and pipeless kettle, which contained a few nails, still clung to the saddle's apology, its battered sides mutely eloquent of the fearful ordeal it had passed; 180 but, worthless as it was, it formed the silken clew by which we hoped to track the courser's flight, and trusted to find at least the last sad relics of the luckless practitioner. Nail following nail, as they had bounded from their receptacle, guided our search, and fragments of the wreck strewed along, gradually prepared us for the horrible tragedy; and on entering an abrupt defile, about three miles from camp, we were at once put in possession of all the circumstances relative to the disaster. Sawbones was discovered in a recumbent position, and still breathed; indeed, after a hearty shake, he slowly arose,

when we discovered to our amazement that he was quite sound, and on being begged to explain, he ingenuously unbosomed himself.

On his arrival at the store, he met with many congenial spirits—for members of the faculty were at that time much plentier than patients—and had, as was usual with him, imbibed an unlimited number of whiskey cocktails, and then proceeded to get his order filled, which was promptly done. It then occurred to his frugal mind that wood was also required in the construction of a tom, and he procured one hundred feet of boards, which he lashed on the back of the already loaded beast, and then commenced his homeward journey. But the Monongahela sadly bothered him, and the road was soon lost; he then determined, as a *dernier resort*, to mount Boney, trusting to his sagacity and propensity for barley as the surest method of finding his mountain home. Now, be it known, that Boney's appearance was a precise index to his character, which had always been as wormwood, from colthood; and old age, joined to the vicissitudes of a mining career, had by no means tended to sweeten his temper. He had 181 already manifested his disgust to the general proceedings by sundry kicks and attempted bites, but this climax of injury was unendurable, and the “Little Corporal” at once proceeded to resist the Allies. The last reminiscence of the disciple of Galen were: in the first place an extremely elevated position, succeeded by the reverse, and a sound nap, from which we were the first to arouse him.

This was the *finale* to our medical friend's gold seeking career. No persuasions could induce him to return, and he bequeathed his claim to the company, as an equivalent for \$200 consumed by his “little spree.”

I have not since heard of him, unless my suspicions be correct, that I encountered him lately on the wharf in San Francisco, in the capacity of a hotel runner. He was at the moment employed in enlarging on the delicacies of his employer's larder, and depreciating that of his rival by dark insinuations of cold dry-hash being served up twenty-one times per week.

JOE.

And shall I banish thee from the recollection of those memorable days, my honest, gentle, little Joe? Should I so far do injustice to thy memory, well might my nights of slumber in after years, be disturbed by a reproachful vision of thy quaint four-feet-nine figure, snugly appareled in butternut-dyed garments, from the loom of the thrifty helpmate, on the banks of the distant Ohio; and thy half sad, half comical features, anxious and energetic, would recall me to a portion of my duty yet unfulfilled.

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My first acquaintance with him, occurred in a small mining camp in the county Tuolumne, of which locality he had been a resident for more than nine months, prior to my own arrival. He had not yet attained his majority, but was already the protector of a wife and son, in one of the western states; and his features displayed that subdued and care worn expression, so often set down by the enemies of the sex, as the unfailing type of henpecking; and, to say the truth, a daguerreotype which he much treasured, displaying the ample bust and commanding features of his buxom better half, served in no way to disprove the reports, of his submission to a protracted system of petticoat government. Be this as it might, his search for gold—like thousands of others—had been a vain one, and his bad luck, united to his eccentric system of labor, was a standing jest to each lazy loungee of the grocery; and harsh witticisms, touching his mortgaged corn patch at home, and the iron rule of his gigantic partner, were broken unfeelingly, in the presence of the inoffensive little man.

Joe, however, appeared to pay no attention to their impertinent inuendoes; he persevered industriously in his avocation as a digger, injured no one, and calmly sank his shafts. His plan of labor, which he had strictly attached himself to, during his whole residence in the camp, was the most exciting, yet risky, of any to which a miner can possibly apply himself. He could always, by working in the ravines, make small but constant wages, and thus, by frugality and industry, eventually save money—but he had much ambition, and he well knew, that the deep diggings, although on the average presenting a dangerous lottery, were the ones in which the largest

strikes were 183 chiefly made; and he had, reasoning therefrom, come to the determination, of consecrating a year to the speculative fortunes of a prospector.

Each day, regularly, as the sun first gilded the massive eastern brow of the Table mountain, might his unobtrusive form be seen, treading his way amid the huge bolders of scoria, that lay thickly over the whole district, as they had rolled down in the march of time, from the mountain summit—stooping beneath the weight of his pick and shovel on one shoulder, and his pan supported beneath the opposite arm; his meek eyes bent upon the path, beaten by his own constant footsteps, and his mind no doubt recalling past scenes of his distant home. At the time I saw him, more than thirty holes had been sunk to the ledge, but as yet the proceeds had barely sufficed, to purchase for him life's necessaries. But still he toiled, through wind and rain, or scorching sun, as the seasons rolled on in their relentless course, and gradually the well worn butternuts exhibited unequivocal symptoms of decay; for dark patches of a foreign color and material, already defaced the original well-grounded dye.

The last shovelful of the forty-fifth shaft, left him some dollars in arrears at the store, on a Saturday evening, and another three weeks would complete his term of probation. With astonishing pertinacity, he commenced a new one on the succeeding Monday, and on the same day at noon was master of \$500. The long wished for lead had been at length found, and in four weeks more he departed for his home, with a purse of \$12,000—leaving, with characteristic generosity, \$50 with a surgeon, to set the broken leg of a good-for-nothing scamp, who had unceasingly made him the subject of his coarse wit. Fare thee well, Joseph! 184 And may thy bulky spouse deal kindly by thee, and have charity to all thy failings, for much did you endure and much accomplish, that you might give the lips you loved, unborrowed bread.

THE AUCTIONEER.

Six Hundred and Forty Rod Bar, on the lower portion of a worn out river, had an evil reputation; the place was, besides, very unprepossessing in exterior, and not a whit better than its looks would seem to imply. The gold was so very fine, that it was scarcely perceptible, and its proudest boast—

for every camp has certain private annals of its own—was of a famous individual yeleft Hardbread, who had, on one solitary occasion, according to tradition, fallen foul of a pocket on the ledge, and had he not been attacked with an unnatural fantasy to wash his shirt while in the very spring-tide of good fortune, would actually have acquired five dollars, between sun and sun. But the story is wrapped in much myth, for, though I shame to write it, the Six Hundred and Forty Rod Barrites were much given to lying.

A generally unerring guide to judge the prosperity of a mining camp is the store, and probably few scurvier depots for merchandize ever existed, than the one that graced the most commanding position on our bar. For a hundred feet of a radius it was completely blocked up by a perfect *chevaux de frize* of empty boxes and barrels, superannuated mining tools, and the leavings of every broken miner who had shaken off the dust of his feet against the place, 185 besides dirty hogs and dirtier, squalling, half naked children, with bleached hair and projecting eyes. Now, as all these trifling fixings were the reverse of nice, no visitor in his rational senses, would be prepared to find a boudoir in the main edifice itself, but here it was worse, if possible. The hole was about twelve feet square and accommodated the patriarch himself, his lean freckled-faced wife, and the aforesaid pledges of their mutual affection. It contained also a full supply of digging utensils, sour flour, beechnut pork and new whiskey, all jumbled together on the most methodical system of filthy confusion.

When I first met the lord and master of all this delectable property, I made an effort to rouse myself, feeling almost persuaded that I labored under a hideous attack of nightmare. I thought it might be a vision of Elshender the recluse, or maybe the old man of the sea, but it was actual bone and muscle, and that of the most substantial description, as I was often convinced of afterwards, by witnessing its effect, in chastising various delinquent debtors. He had followed the occupation of mining for nearly half a century, yet were his great square proportions still well developed, and his gigantic strength unimpaired. The bow-like form of his nether extremities, was occasioned by four or five breaks, both arms had been disjointed and permitted to set themselves, and finally, a blow-up of gunpowder had disarranged his features—if I may use the term—promiscuously.

But all these personal defects did not appear to disturb old Tom an atom; he was remarkably industrious himself and strange as it may appear, he was the means of inducing others to follow his example, often under a penalty of personal punishment. The reasons were obvious, we all owed him money nearly, for hardly one in a dozen could more than settle his weekly dues. Tom's usual course of proceeding was this—when an unlucky wretch fell much into debt, he was apt to be attacked with bashfulness, and a disinclination to show himself at the store; and in such cases, the freckled faced fair one was despatched with the bill and orders to the victim, either to settle up on the spot or to come and labor for his creditor. Non-compliance with this ultimatum was surely followed by summary ejection from the camp, while Tom coolly possessed himself of tent, tools, claim and all things appertaining thereto, without the smallest consultation of either Blackstone or Lynch.

For some weeks' time had gone on with me in monotonous poverty, and gradually the dreaded ultimatum lowered blacker and blacker in the horizon. One evening about sundown, while plodding homeward tired and disconsolate, carrying the proceeds of a day's labour, comprised in the space of a spoonful of sand, I was attracted by a crowd in the grand plaza of our town and the tones of a speaker, who with eloquent gesticulation and bell-like lungs, appeared—in his own opinion at least—to be pounding upon some subject of overwhelming import, to his whole clay-covered audience, if not to the entire family of man. Now I had often heard of conventions and caucuses, and indignation meetings, and squatter riots, and all such little ebullitions of popular feeling, characteristic of liberty and this free country in particular; but as yet, I was only one of the benighted, though burning with laudable thirst for knowledge, so I also approached, and aided to enlarge the number of attentive listeners.

He was an Eastern man, Connecticut was on his tongue 187 and in every twinkle of his sharp grey eye; he was wrinkled, attenuated and dyspeptic, and to judge from his exteriors, the world had gone hard with Jonathan. His coat and nether garments of a snuff color, were ancient and tender, his shoes were razee'd boots of an old pattern, and the breezes whispered lovingly through various apertures in his venerable castor, which looked like a fossil reminiscence of some pious pilgrim

forefather. I thought at first, as I approached, that he was some devoted street preacher, and feared much for his apostolical success, but on a closer survey of his intense shabbiness I partly settled it in my mind, that he was exposing his wretched person and seedy attire that he might attract the charity of the weak. But all my surmises were at fault, he was an Auctioneer! The agent and representative of a powerful company, that only required—as he expressed it—“the sinners of war,” to be launched with, that they might become Crœsuses themselves, and the manufacturers of any desired number of Rothschilds; provided the candidates for the company's favor, only received his disinterested advice, and hand out ungrudgingly.

He had, literally, a pocket full of rocks, that he extracted so delicately from their capacious receptacle, they might have been eggs, but we knew better for such an edible had never yet made its appearance on the bar. They were all *bona fide* pieces of quartz rock, brought from the ground for samples, and labelled to distinguish the representative of each particular lead. The chairman—as he called himself—of “The Grand Ophir Quartz Mining Company,” then arranged these tastefully on the head of a flour barrel, and with the aid of a cracked eye glass, that had long since done service on the plains, in igniting 188 pipes—he commenced a keen scrutiny on their respective merits, that always concluded with an unlimited panegyric on the untold wealth, contained in the rock bound bosom, from whence they had been taken.

“And,” said he, “only for these sinners, which we must imper'tively procure, sich a sacrifice would be even beyond the philanthropy of the Grand Ophir Quartz Mining Company. Now, gentle *men*, I will expose to your inspection, this here most lovely individual of the quartz family; it is number nineteen, from the Franklin Purse lead; and if ever there was a ginooine no mistake article, kalkilated *tu* replenish *the* purse, and *tu* rejoice *the* bosoms of our free people, *it* is here. You can't but observe, gentle *men*, by the assistance of this magnifying glass, how deeply it *is* coated, encrusted and thoroughly impregnated, with the precious stuff. Du look, and jidge for yourselves; and how much du you bid, fur the sale is a parmtory one, by express bye-law.”

There being no response to his most earnest solicitations, even after three-fourths of the poverty-stricken crowd, had vainly examined the geological specimen, he offered another, which he said

had been a peculiar pet to the company, and been dedicated on its first discovery to a famous California character.

“It is called the Long Mary Lead, and long will the lead endure to the spirited purchaser—who will find in its deep recesses, a plentiful supply of that which we all came here for.”

This failing also to receive any bids, he tried others. He had them in profusion, named from all the great men in the country, from Washington to Walker, but still his toil was useless, and his lungs began to fail him.

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Just at this time, a voice in the rear of the crowd, exclaimed—“Hallo! old Hardbread!” And the name of Hardbread was resounded from fifty different throats, for he had become well known as an absconder, in the former year, from the clutches of the relentless storekeeper. The extreme diffidence and restraint of the recognized auctioneer, was summarily relieved, by the powerful grasp of the injured Thomas himself, who approached and seized him in his grasp of iron, the victim's coat parting like a cobweb in the first rough salute.

“Ah! ha!” said he, with the chuckle of a Quilp, “How's your health *Mister* Hardbread? You've gambled off your pocket on the ledge, have you? And after swindling me, you come back to suck in my customers, do you, with stones you have picked up on the road, eh? I've a notion to hang them round your neck, when I put you in the dam. Ye atomy! ye abortion! Where's my beautiful flour, and my pork, my overalls, my picks, and my pans? Oh! If ye were worth your beans, wouldn't I strap a hundred pound boulder to your leg, and work you like a mule for a year? But it wouldn't pay, for there's nothing of ye, so I'll just chastise ye, and let ye go.

A handsaw was produced at his command, and applied vigorously and relentlessly, with it flat side, on the stooping person of the culprit, on the system so much in vogue among mariners, as a punishment to slovenly cooks. When the cobbing process was through with, Tom twisted him as though it was a kitten, on his shoulders, and waddled off to the river, where he plunged him, hissing hot as he was, with the advice, to make for the opposite shore direct, on pain of another application

of the Sheffield manufacture. “And,” concluded Tom, adding wanton insult to injury, 190 “ye needn't particularly hurry yerself in crossing the riffle, for there isn't the water in the ocean that could drown ye.” He was right this time, for the old proprietor of the pocket on the ledge crossed in safety, after which he breathed out a few vain threats, and disappeared down the ravine, for parts unknown. Next day I was relieved from all present inconvenience, and Six hundred and forty rod bar besides, by the fortunate arrival of Hong Kong emigrants, who purchased my right for a small sum, and thus enabled me to square accounts, and proceed in the search of more profitable diggings.

TOBIN.

Tobin was a fat lymphatic young man of twenty summers, with a large head, very unruly hair, and gifted with an extraordinary appetite. He was a judge when I first made his acquaintance, and practised law in the city of San Francisco. As the manner in which he originally obtained this high sounding title, was the same as that by which numbers of others obtained it, and as it may perhaps prove useful to those who thirst for the bubble honor, at a moderate outlay of capital, I will recount it, for their benefit, as I received it from the lips of the lucky aspirant himself.

For all that this county contains the largest amount of wealth and population, of any in the State, the settlements in the townships, outside the limits of the city, are, in general, extremely limited, containing neither gold nor a fruitful soil. A few days prior to the election of 191 county officers, the candidate proceeds to one of these wild townships, where a few Crusoes vegetate precariously, on the sale of firewood and shingles; but being allowed by the Constitution, the privilege of electing a magistrate, the gentleman makes himself gracious, and by his persuasive eloquence, combined with a few gallons of liquor, so wins upon the hearts and sympathies of the free and independent electors, that he is appointed unanimously to the vacant post. He then ungratefully deserts his shingle-weaving constituents, returns to his chamber in the city, and ever after is respectfully addressed as Judge So-and-so. Formerly indeed, they stretched their commission so much, as to try cases on their return from this species of wildcat election; but the plan has been discontinued for some time, chiefly through the envy of the magistrates within the bounds of the corporation, so that

at the present time, the only advantage accruing from the outlay of so much spirits, merely consists in a lasting title, par courtesy.

Tobin, it appeared, eventually got disgusted with red tape, and when I next met him, he was, with myself, employing his talents in surveying the California coast, in the service of government. This survey has occupied the attention of the United States, ever since the acquisition of the territory; and surveyors, under the direction of officers from the engineer corps, have been constantly placed at the most important points; but what they have achieved, as an equivalent for their heavy demands on the public treasury, I have never yet been able to find out. Our governor was amply provided with all the requisite means and appliances. Provisions, wines, mathematical and scientific instruments enough to pry into the most hidden recesses of nature, tents, tools, teams, assistants, 192 and ready money; all of which comprised the cargo of a small government vessel, employed for the purpose of ministering to the necessities of our commander and his followers.

The captain belonged to that time-honored class, known throughout the length and breadth of the Union, and irreverently denominated Old Fogeys, in contradistinction to the spryer party, called Young America, and however much they may be admired, by those under their immediate control, it must still be allowed that they are rather unprofitable nephews, to their illustrious uncle. He had achieved laurels in Mexico by some means, but how they pitched on him, for this present duty, it would be hard to say; for although sufficiently slow in discharge of his duty, he failed much in the proverbial accompaniment of sureness. All opinions with regard to his age, amounted to mere conjecture, for his funny little black eyes, and turn up nose, were alone visible of his features; all else was a mystery, a dreary wilderness of coarse black hair, indignantly defying all impertinent interrogation. He was short in stature, very ignorant and self opinionated, and without more than the elements of mathematical knowledge, his headstrong conceit, and unscientific manoeuvring, effectually precluded the least glimmering of light, to shine through the impenetrable fog of his reports, even with the hopeless exertions of his assistants.

But, in sooth, the time wore on pleasantly enough, for the cooks and California wages, were good; and in dry weather, we mostly waited for rain to clear the atmosphere; and when wet, we

had to postpone our work until it dried. So that the time was generally filled up both ways in shooting, fishing, and an inordinate quantity of sleep. A 193 peculiar characteristic of our fogley captain, was the tenacity with which he contended for his own views, even after nature herself, had unmistakeably proved his hobby to be a glaring absurdity. We had an excellent whale boat for our use, in which we made various aquatic excursions around the beautifully sheltered, but shallow bay, upon whose smiling banks, our lazy canvas village reposed; and many a comical accident occurred from our soldier officer's innocence, not only of nautical tactics, but of the simplest natural results, familiar to most people from childhood. For instance, one fine breezy morning, our boat close hauled, and without ballast, we were dashing along in magnificent style, our lee gunwale slightly dipping in the water, receiving it at intervals in bucketfuls, and giving a bailer sufficient exercise to keep her free; the captain beginning to feel rather nervous, and doubtless imagining some nautical expedient requisite, in what he considered a serious emergency, yet, too self-satisfied in his own resources, to solicit advice, he proceeded to act in consonance with his peculiar ideas in relation to matter and motion.

I, at this crisis, was snugly ensconced in the weather stern sheets, and in that dreamy forgetful mood, which the monotonous pipe of the sea breeze is so apt to engender; when I was aroused, by a polite request from him, to remove my person to the lee side, in order, as he said, to adjust the specific gravity of the boat. One glance at his eyes informed me that he was serious, and another to leeward told me what would be the inevitable result; but a clear pebbly bottom four or five feet deep, on a summer morning was no way distasteful to me, particularly when fun was attached to it, so I promptly obeyed, with as 194 heavy a sway as possible. As I expected, the boat filled at once, and we soon found ourselves nearly to the neck in the little billows. Our hero bellowed most lustily for help, as his short stature gave the briny element rather unpleasant access to his stomach. The assistance was given, and we safely landed him, after an hour's thorough soaking; yet, strange enough, on the very next day, he gave a still more ridiculous order; for having discovered, when about a league from land, some water remaining in the bottom of the boat, he solemnly commanded one of the rowers to withdraw the bottom plug, for the purpose of draining her! The man's refusal

to comply, nearly caused a mutiny, but we were all obliged to side with him, for this would most probably have been attended with more disastrous consequences, than the former proceeding.

What a higglety pigglety mess of *triangulation*, did we make upon that coast? Bluffs substituted for sand spits, and pretty little islands with trees on them, placed in suitable positions, in order to fill up the landscape agreeably. But then the climate is not subject to tempests, and should a vessel get ashore—as she surely must, if she depend upon our charts—she may, with some expense, be extricated, without having her brains knocked out, but a little premium on insurance, would undoubtedly be a safe investment to traders in these waters.

Tobin and I shortly united ourselves to another party further up the coast, where we employed ourselves in the lazy occupation of watching the tides rise and fall, by a graded staff. Many an hour we passed in the little building, like a sentry box, which was erected on two strong sticks of timber, that projected from the steep rock, eternally beat by the long rollers of the ocean. The staff 195 was attached to a float, and enclosed in a long box, like a spout, with a small hole in the bottom, that admitted the tide as it rose, without being affected by the rush of the sea; and our duty was to note in a small book, hourly, the height of the water as delineated on the staff. Tobin was extremely awkward and incorrect in his observations; and, only that no substitute could be procured within two hundred miles, the commanding officer would undoubtedly have dispensed with his services at short notice. He would take to his retreat a Spanish grammar, and when deep in the mysteries of the verbs, would altogether forget his present duty, and allow the period for noting the figures to pass, thus bringing confusion on the whole table. But it was found better to allow him his book, for when deprived of it, he comfortably betook himself to slumber, during the whole six hours of his watch.

A few days previous to our departure for another district, we had all our tents removed to a point on the beach, about two miles from the staff, where it was accessible by the boats of the steamer, that made transient calls, at rare intervals; and the watching process was a particularly dreary affair, particularly at night time, for there was no habitation nearer then ten miles off, excepting our one little camp upon the beach. I arrived one morning about six o'clock, from the camp, for the purpose of relieving my co-worker, who had kept the watch from the previous midnight, and who generally

at this time was quite ready for his breakfast; for eating was the only occupation he preferred to studying Castilian. A small platform of plank, had been placed among the rocks in front of the sentry box, for the purpose of a promenade, when our cramped limbs required relief, and upon placing 196 my foot upon it this morning, I was horrified to notice it smeared from end to end, with gouts of blood and brains, the door closed, and the stillness of death on everything. Breathless with the fear of some dreadful catastrophe, I cautiously pushed the door ajar, and perceived Tobin squatted in the corner, his face, arms, and chest, crusted over with blood, and perfectly naked from the waist upward. To my first hurried questions he merely replied, by pointing with his finger to the opposite corner, where, stark and stiff lay the massive proportions of a California lion, with its head completely beaten to a jelly, and nearly filling up the half of the house. Tobin was unable to move, and hardly able to speak; I was therefore obliged to return to camp for assistance, and we soon had him home, his wounds examined—which were all superficial—and the story of his prowess related, as soon as he was capable of speaking with fluency.

About an hour previous to my arrival, and while day had just dawned, he was sitting on the bench reading by a lamplight, when he thought he heard a step upon the platform. Surprised at such an early visit, he incautiously opened the door, and found himself close, and face to face with the lion. Now, Tobin, although as arrant a coward as ever breathed, was remarkably gifted with clumsy strength; and like many others of his calibre, would fight like a hero, when retreat was impossible, as in the present instance. The savage beast bounded on him as soon as it perceived him, and he had just sufficient time to drop his grammar, and grapple it by the throat in the first embrace. For a quarter of an hour the deadly fight continued, and for all the agile body of the wild animal, threw him round in every possible direction, breaking the staff to pieces, a 197 barometer, and various other meteorological instruments, besides dragging him more than once to the very brow of the cliff, and ripping his flesh with its long sharp claws; he still contrived to maintain his desperate gripe upon its windpipe, and fairly managed to strangle it, eventually, with no other arms than the extremely awkward ones, that nature had gifted him with. Not contented with his victory, when it lay a corpse at his feet, and wishing, probably, to make assurance doubly sure, he proceeded to make it *deader*, by pounding the head to a mummy with a large rock; for which needless labor he

received some censure, to season the great praise his prowess had called forth; for the mutilation effectually prevented the stuffing of the skin, and its exportation to the Smithsonian Institute at Washington.

A few months after this battle he was cashiered for incompetence. The commanding officer in giving him advice for his future guidance, told him he could not think of retaining him in a service totally unsuited to his talents.

“For,” said he, “I am a faithful believer in bumps, and the doctrine that ‘nothing is made in vain,’ and many a night have I lost my golden sleep, in vain speculations as to the cause of your creation; but, *Eureka!* I have got it, at last. Go my boy, with my blessing, exercise your gifts in that calling, for which nature has emphatically marked you out. You are a lion-slayer! go on, and prosper in your career—and you will, doubtless, yet attain an honorable corner in the niche of fame.”

Tobin bade us a melancholy adieu, carrying his wardrobe under his arm, which consisted of his grammar and a tooth brush, rolled carefully up in a seedy shooting jacket, 198 and notwithstanding the confidence with which the captain had expressed himself touching his sure success as a hunter, I had much fear that he would yet encounter distress; for like the Italian beggar, laziness was a chronic disease with him, and his clumsy unbusiness-like exterior, was extremely detrimental to his probable success, in any mercantile or literary employment.

Just one year from this, I again encountered my old friend, in the cabin of a coasting steamer; and if ever a man might be said to have shed the old hair, in the completest style, that man was Tobin! He was attired in faultless black, his thick fingers clogged with precious rings, and his front adorned with gold chains and brooches innumerable. Hanging affectionately upon his arm, was the loveliest little pet of a Spanish woman imaginable, to whom with a proud and well satisfied air, he introduced me. She was his wife, aye, actually Mrs. Tobin, was that sweet little Signora. In a country like this, where the coarsest of Eve's daughters, may make her choice among the greatest in the land, and superciliously reject the very flower of the lords of the creation, this humpbacked,

useless creature, had won one of the fairest and richest heiresses, among the landed proprietors of the State.

He had quietly marked out the beautiful Isabella long before, during a temporary halt at a rich ranchero's *casa*, in one of our surveying excursions, and mentally resolved to acquire her musical language, that he might woo and win her, and it was for this object alone that he had consumed so much midnight oil in the lonely tide-house. "But," concluded he, "my knowledge of the language would have been insufficient of itself, to bring matters to 199 a successful issue, had I not gently intimated by reputable witnesses, that I was a judge; for, one of the greatest weaknesses of this people is their respect for titles; and besides the worthy *padre* of the young lady, no doubt calculated on my connection with his family, as a sure preventative to the encroachments of 'El squatteros des los Americanos,' which I guess will be the case. It only now remained to convert me to the true faith, and this was happily accomplished in a twelve hour's sitting, with a very good-natured, and accommodating priest. So, that, I am now the sole proprietor of an excellent wife, nine square leagues of a fat soil, and some thousand heads of cattle and horses, branded with a capital T.'"

THE VOYAGE.

Six or seven years ago, a trip to California, was a very different affair in expense, consumption of time, and risk of life and limb, to what the performance of the same feat is at the present time. Of the three great routes, viz:—the overland, directly across the continent, the long ocean voyage around Cape Horn, and the way by the isthmus of Darien or Panama; the latter, although originally the most dangerous of the three, has gradually gained ground in the confidence of the public, and is just now immeasurably in advance of any, for speed, comfort, economy, and safety. The way across the plains at first, and even now, presents itself in the brightest colors, to the settlers along the banks of the Mississippi, and the vast regions watered by the tributaries of that gigantic river. They possessed 200 the advantage of more than one-third of the continent in the first instance over the eastern emigrant, and besides a land journey would be by no means so distasteful to people

acquainted with no other means of transport, and possessing by tradition a chronic horror of salt water.

The western, and more especially, the south-western, farmer, collected together his flocks and his herds, his wagons, his wife, his little ones, and even his slaves, if he possessed any, and calmly commenced a journey principally through a barren wilderness, peopled by hostile tribes of savages, warlike and cruel. Month after month, would he pursue his way, often until six or eight had expired; his weary cattle worn to skin and bone, and perhaps the whole of his family fallen victims to the relentless hate of the aborigines, or the deadlier effects of fatigue and disease. Numbers of such instances have occurred annually, yet still it is preferred by many to the visionary terrors of a sea voyage; but it is not much patronized now, except by the proprietors of cattle and horses, who often make the trade lucrative, and many indeed follow it, as a regular employment, making annual trips, to purchase stock in the cheap markets of Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas, and finally dispose of them in the higher marts of California and Oregon.

This is the only course upon which no improvement has been made; for excepting at a few scattering posts, where bad provisions are sold almost for their weight in gold, the road is a natural one, and the main portion of the country still in the possession of the wild Camanches, Pawnees, and Sioux. Yet for all it has received so little improvement by the great trade between the Atlantic and the Pacific, it is destined, eventually,—far above the 201 others—to receive the most; both from its directness, and its forming a portion of the common territory. It is highly probable that even during the late democratic administration—antagonistic as the platform usually is to internal improvement—assistance would have been granted from the federal government, for the construction of a railroad through this region, had not local jealousies between the different rival states, in expectation of benefits to be derived therefrom, effectually prevented such a desirable consummation. It can hardly be expected though, that such a proverbially energetic people as the Americans, will long permit party politics, and the thunderings of office-seeking demagogues, to divert the rich traffic—still yearly on the increase—from their own native, through a foreign soil, and three times the distance, including a transfer of passengers and merchandise, from ship to ship.

The great labor and expense of stowing and discharging a cargo twice over, has, despite the desirable acquisition of the Panama railroad, made the ocean way around the southern extremity of the American continent, the favorite one still, to the shippers of heavy merchandise; and the great improvements in naval architecture, as exemplified in the graceful and light proportions of the new style of clipper ships, aid materially in continuing it as the most practical means of transport. And notwithstanding that the distance is in the close neighborhood of 15,000 miles, from New York to San Francisco, the passage has been made in a less period than ninety days, little more than one third of the average time consumed in the transit by way of the desert and the territory of Utah. Six or seven years ago a large portion of the California 202 emigrants were conveyed in clippers, and they principally arrived in the country safe, and in good health, but the quicker passage by the Isthmus, though more exposed to danger and sickness, has gradually monopolized the entire passenger trade.

At the time I formed the determination of adding myself to the countless and motley crowd of gold-seekers who were pouring in, not only from civilized and enlightened, but also from the barbarous nations of the earth, the Chagres river was the main thoroughfare to the Pacific, and on my arrival in New York, I found that the berths in the expected steamers were monopolized for at least two months to come. Now, as backing out of a project on the first rebuff, is not precisely my nature, I hunted diligently around the wharves for some days, with the hope of finding among the forest of masts some means of conveyance to the promised land, and at length succeeded in making an arrangement with the master of a fine little Yankee bark, who was bound on a voyage to the port of Chagres, to convey our company—four in all—to the port of his destination. We were soon comfortably domiciled in the cabin of the vessel, and after a pleasant run of a month, through the sunny Carribbean, and obtaining a splendid view of the black empire of Saint Domingo, and the much coveted “gem of the Antilles,” we hove in sight of the bamboo houses of Chagres.

A New York steamer had just arrived with passengers, and the rush for the river boats was tremendous; but we, along with some twenty others fortunately succeeded in securing a boat to convey us as far as the river was navigable, by paying a very exorbitant price. The first night we

encamped upon the beach, some fifteen miles up, where 203 we spent a rather sleepless night annoyed by the fear of snakes and centipedes, and the heavy splashing of the crocodiles in the river, hard by. The next day we accomplished another twenty miles, walking the entire way through thick brambles, for so shallow was the river, that our luggage alone was sufficient cargo for the boat; and at the conclusion of the third day, arrived at the terminus of our river travel. The next day we made our *entree* into Panama, and although New York and Chagres were sufficiently crowded with anxious enquirers for a passage, the excitement here was ten times more intense. Thousands like ourselves failing in their object of obtaining through tickets originally, had ventured thus far in the vain hope that a vacancy would occur somewhere, and that, perhaps, fortune might be more propitious to them than to their neighbors, but instead of any such means of progress presenting itself, thousands even of those who actually covenanted for the through trip, were obliged by scarcity of room, to remain for more than two months, giving precedence to the early purchasers. More than ten thousand strangers it was supposed were congregated at this period, within the walls of this small and unwholesome city, crowds of them too, were sick and utterly penniless, foolishly depending on the chances of working their passages, when hundreds of men familiar to the sea from childhood were begging in the streets. Some wild and adventurous sailors after laying in a small stock of necessaries, proceeded on this long voyage through the pathless ocean in open whale boats, and some of them actually reached California by this fragile means of conveyance, but the greater number of those who attempted it, either perished or were forced on the Mexican coast, 204 though the latter alternative would be much preferable to any, than a lengthened sojourn in this den of horrors, with food only obtainable, at famine prices, and pestilential as the black hole at Calcutta. Just at this time an extremely bold trick was executed by a piratical craft, and the only sailing vessel in the harbor. She was advertised to take passengers to San Francisco, and soon had engaged more than three hundred at a high rate. But the night previous to her expected departure, the anchor was weighed and next morning the dim tracery of her proportions was just visible in the distant horizon as she took her course seaward without a solitary pre-paid passenger on board. At last a schooner arrived from Valparaiso, bearing the high sounding title of a Baltimore clipper. She was called “*The Isabella Hermosa*,” anglice, Beautiful Isabella, but except in the name itself, it must have been a sharper eye than mine to perceive the least particle of beauty about the graceless little hulk.

At what period the lovely Isabel left the stocks might have been a query worthy the attention of an antiquary, for the form of her hull had the peculiarity of no precise age, nor did her present rig correspond to any recognized system of the present. She was nearly flat-bottomed, registering about ninety tons and a small poop at one extremity, was the best guide by which to discriminate the stem from the stern. She was owned, manned and commanded by Italians, and a more awkward boat, managed by a clumsier crew, I trust never attempted to make an ocean passage. If she had been a New Zealander's war canoe, however, she could have no difficulty there in filling up with twice the passengers to which she was legally authorized, and in just three days from the time of her arrival she was ready for sea, with a complement 205 in precisely that ratio, viz: 130 men and 7 women. Great delay and confusion were experienced in conveying us on board the vessel which lay about two miles away in the offing, for the small boats with native rowers were the only means, and the heavy breakers from the bay made it a hazardous undertaking. We had made an arrangement with one boatman, but on our arrival at the beach we found ourselves superseded by a party bound for the steamer, which was also with ourselves just on the point of sailing. Chafing with the disappointment our only resource was patiently to await her return, but alas! we had to wait in vain. A spit of sand extending beneath the water from a point had to be crossed with the object of shortening the distance, and as the water was extremely shallow, three heavy swells in succession broke over it at intervals with extreme violence. Whether by neglect or wrong calculation the boat passed the point precisely at the most dangerous time. She lifted her stern gallantly to the two first breakers, but the third, and by far the heaviest one, made a complete pall for the boat and her ill-fated passengers, every one of whom were swept into eternity. What made the scene appear with additional horror—at least in my eyes—was the cold-blooded indifference shown by the surrounding crowds to the catastrophe, for although two boats were within at least one hundred yards of the spot where the disaster occurred, scarcely a look was cast in the direction of the drowning men, and not the smallest effort at assistance, attempted by any one. The waves rolled on relentlessly as before, the other rowers continued at their occupations, and a few scattered hats that floated on the disturbed water were the last mementos of that life-freighted boat.

She was quite a Republican ship, was the *Isabel Hermosa*, every one did nearly as he pleased on board, and privilege was at a discount, but the worst feature in this system was, that one gentleman's pleasure did not in all instances correspond with his neighbor's precisely, and as a consequence, several little fights occurred each day, either with fire arms or nature's arms. And unfortunately for the cessation of hostilities, the principal weapons on board were the Allan revolver, or pepper box; this instrument was then comparatively a new invention, and few people were aware of the dreadful power it possessed of continuing a row for a month at a time, for although it would sometimes go off, sounding revolverish enough, I never yet knew of an accident to occur from its use, even when the shot was flying about like peas. It was most likely this peculiar feature in the weapon that made our adventurers so partial to sharp practice, no doubt wishing to habituate themselves to stand fire, preparatory to the more serious business with Colt's pistol, on their arrival in the El Dorado; few were unprovided with two or three of these articles, with a bowie knife in reserve, but the latter was rarely applied to, except when the engagement became really serious.

Our 130 men were divided into ten equal portions, each forming precisely a baker's dozen, the odd man holding the office of captain of the mess, and was elected daily. Each individual was provided with a plate and a half pint cup, made of tin, together with an iron spoon; but as many lost these useful utensils, through carelessness, and had no delicacy in helping themselves from their neighbors, whenever opportunity occurred for the perpetration of the theft, great numbers had very shortly to perform the nourishing process by the natural use of teeth and claws. The eatables were of the simplest kind, and I must do the chief manager the justice to say, that although he was a native of Paris, and *sacre'd* with all the volubility of a Frenchman, the cookery was by no means complicated, for, to the best of my knowledge, he never inflicted a ragout or a kickshaw upon us, during the entire passage. Our staple food consisted of yams and jerked beef, procured at Panama. The yam is a root, somewhat resembling a coarse grained potato, and is familiar to most persons—at least by repute—but the “jerky,” as we contemptuously termed it at first, may require some little explanation. The Spanish cattle are remarkably lank, rawboned creatures, wild as deer. They are invariably captured for the butcher, by *lassoing*, and the calling of a *vaquero*, as the cowhunter is termed, requires great skill and experience both in horsemanship and the use of the *rietta* or rope.

He proceeds upon a horse trained for the purpose, and after selecting his animal from the herd, he commences to run it down. After being exhausted by the chase, the creature at length stands at bay, and the *vaquero* cautiously approaching, throws a noose with great precision over its ample horns, often at a distance of twenty yards. The end of the rietta is attached to the high horn of the saddle, and the fatigued beast is submissively led to the shambles, where it is soon butchered in the coarsest fashion, blood rarely flowing to any extent, from the extreme heat of its system engendered by its arduous hunt.

The flesh is cut from the bones, in thin narrow strips; it is then thrown over a pale to dry in the sun, and finally packed away in its own hide with some salt sprinkled among it, the whole carcase thus forming a moderate load for one man. In all the Spanish American towns, this is the only description of cured meat manufactured, and a yard stick is used in the retailers' shops, for precisely the same purpose as we use scales and weights.

Now, I have no prejudice against the Spaniards. In fact, I rather admire them, for their politeness, their hospitality, and their enjoyment of the luxury of ease, but candor compels me to admit, that the institution of jerked beef adds little to their favor in my eyes, for the recollection of its mastication gives me the toothache to the present hour. It is not at all too palatable when taken fresh from the pole, but sweltering in its leather case, beneath a tropical sun, for months, sadly deteriorates from the original flavor, even without the usual accompaniment of worms. However, as we had nothing else particularly to occupy our attention, we had plenty of time to chew, and the exercise was perhaps rather salutary than otherwise, taking up such an important portion of the day; for the intermediate time was chiefly spent in quarreling with each other in words, or the eternal exercise of the patent pistol.

Water and provisions had been laid in, on the estimate that the passage would be performed in six weeks, but at the end of a month we found ourselves just four hundred miles on our course, which left the remaining twenty-eight hundred miles to be performed in two weeks. It had been almost a dead calm for the whole period, and we knew not how long it might continue, yet at a council called by the master, for the purpose of learning our wish, it was agreed by the majority,

that we should persevere in the attempt to reach California without putting back, and lengthen our time by reducing our rations one half. Then was the time to try men's stomachs! The black putrid 209 water which had previously been despised, was now sought after with avidity, and became sweet and palatable, while even the formerly despised *jerky*, rose vastly in public estimation, and its unsightly tripelike appearance gazed on with admiration and respect. But the scarcity of water was the greatest discomfort; even whiskey was at a discount with the toppers, when unaccompanied with the simpler element, and many a quart of Otard's best brandy was reluctantly spilled overboard, accompanied by many a sigh at the uncongenial dilution, for the purpose of securing the bottle to hold the daily pint ration of water.

The bottle was suspended around the neck of each, by a cord, and remained there night and day, for should it be left a moment in any other position, unwatched by the proprietor, the contents would be unscrupulously swallowed by the first thirsty soul who got his eye upon the treasure. Our tempers, none of the sweetest previous to the scarcity, became if possible more crabbed than ever, and a spirit of contradiction and combativeness appeared to be nourished in every breast. The hold was so very shallow and close, that no one attempted to rest below, and in consequence, the entire deck fore and aft, was covered with sleepers each night, and so predominant is habit in the nature of man, under any circumstances, that each one was to the full as persistent in retaining his usual position on the dirty deck, as he would formerly have been with regard to his chair at the family table. The right of first discovery was chiefly allowed, although many a bloody nose was the effect of a struggle for a coil of rope, or the greasy bilge of a pork barrel; for from the contumaciousness of some, who persisted in lying in what form they pleased, many were obliged to take their nightly slumbers in a sitting posture, 210 there not being room for all to recline, unless willing to do the agreeable, by trying it spoon fashion. Oh, they were a sweet set of savages, the Hermosaites! And I have often thought since, that the rotten old boat was only saved from the winds and waves, on account of the number on board, who were certainly born to be hanged.

For more than a week after the allowance system had been established, we had fair fresh breezes from the south, and made good progress during that time, for even a hay stack would sail before the wind, and our vessel was fully a match for that. But as we neared the gulf of California, the raw

north-west breeze so peculiar to that latitude, forced us to sail on a wind for another week, beating backwards and forwards, without gaining an inch, until finally the dissatisfaction became so great, it was determined to bear up and make a fair wind for the harbor of Acapulco in Mexico, twelve hundred miles north-west from Panama, at which place we arrived in fifty-two days from the time of our departure.

Acapulco is a beautiful, well sheltered little harbor, easy of entrance, and in an excellent position for a flourishing trade, but the indolent inhabitants make but little use of the advantages they possess. Its intermediate position on the California route, together with its convenience to a rich inland country for supplies, have made it a great coal depot for all the steamers on the coast, that call regularly both ways. When we arrived in port, we found three more vessels, precisely in a similar position to our own, filled with passengers, half starved, and nearly destitute. To our amazement and concern, we were here given to understand by these unfortunates, that the vessels were to proceed no further, the captains declaring, they had no 211 funds to lay in fresh supplies for the remainder of the passage, and that the passengers must shift for themselves as they best could. Our American friends laughed long and loudly, at the idea of the Hermosa's captain attempting such a trick under the very nose, as they said, of the stars and stripes, as they floated broadly from the United States consul's window. But the impartial Italian captain treated the free Americans as though they were no better clay than Britishers or Dutchmen, for the first night he spirited himself off, with all his valuables, and next morning we received a note, implying his intention, with the other captains, of repudiating all indebtedness; granting his permission, if we pleased, to sit out the last of the jerked beef, but accompanied by the significant hint, that if we attempted the capture of the vessel, or to injure her in any shape during our stay on board, we would be fired at by the guns of the fort, which commanded our position beautifully.

The indignant citizens of the great republic posted at once to their Consul with the story of their wrongs, and when they were at last brought face to face with that official, after he had dodged them successfully until late in the afternoon, they received a flat refusal of any assistance from him, accompanied with an insulting command to leave his presence. And this I have found to be the general character of these gentlemen in all unimportant ports, for their salary from government

being quite insufficient for their support, men of talent and respectability rarely accept of the office, and those who do, are only approachable by a bribe, which is their real wages.

There was a poor young lad on board of the vessel a native of Indiana, lying very sick with the Chagres 212 fever, which he had contracted on the Isthmus, and a friend of mine who took a great interest in his case, endeavoured to persuade some of the Americans to intercede with their Consul for his removal to the hospital, for he was at the time dying by inches from unwholesome food and impure air, but they were much too irritated at their rebuff to attempt facing his highness once more. He then proposed to me that we should make the attempt of softening the heart of the United States representative, for the sake of the dying youth, to which I consented, and we proceeded at once to the great man's door. A smart negro wench responded to our summons, who left us to apprise her lord, of our request to see him, saying—“Law Massa, ef here aint two more starved Yankees a-wanting summat.” The inside door was then opened with a bang, and the fiery Consul strode into the hall to meet us, looking red as a steamboat light, from the combined effects of *agua dente* and indignation. “Hallo” said he, “more on you? Didn't I tell the others to show their ugly faces no more, or I'd put them on board a man-of-war, as sure as there's niggers in Baton Rouge? Why don't you speak?” continued he in a voice like thunder, “What do you want? Air you citizens?” The fervent “No thank God,” in reply, appeared to mollify our fierce questioner so much, that he heard our simple request patiently without interruption, and then replied, much calmer—“Now ain't you a pretty considerable pair of green gawneys, I mought have known you were none of our folks. Du you know what you are, sure? I'll tell you and no offence,” then fixing his hand up to resemble an ear trumpet he applied it to his mouth, saying in a loud confidential whisper, “Yer f-fools! What on airth is it 213 *your* business if all our folks dies? Uncle Sam is able to get them a coffin I guess, without applyin' to onnateralized forniers. Good day,” and saying which, he presented a wooden wall between us, by slamming the door in our faces, just as my companion was doubling his fist up in a very significant manner.

An iron hook on each side of the Consul's door inspired my partner with a bright idea, and our resolution was formed upon the instant. We proceeded back to our dirty craft and after informing the invalid of our intention we conveyed him ashore, hammock and all, as gently as possible to the

house whose door had been shut in our faces. We then suspended each end of it to the iron hooks leaving the body to hang directly across the door, at a height of three feet. The poor boy was visibly improved by the change of quarters, for the air was pure and refreshing to his emaciated frame, and the flaunting flag of his native land, as it waved proudly over him, served one very useful purpose at least, by sheltering his person from the fierce rays of the sun.

A crowd soon collected in the street opposite to the mansion, all gazing in wonder at the novel spectacle, and his Excellency, as he watched from the window, opened the door to find the cause of so many enquiring looks. One glance at the obstruction informed him of the cause, and our presence in the front ranks confirmed it. In speechless rage at the disgrace we put him to, he shook his clenched claws savagely, and fiercely shut out the horrible vision. A few minutes after, however, the wench was seen dodging beneath the hammock and posting rapidly towards the hospital, from whence she was soon followed by two stout men bearing a litter, who shortly after conveyed the invalid to comfortable quarters.

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We then made our application to the British Consul, who received us kindly, and advised us to retain our hold on the vessel for the present, promising to use his best endeavours to make the Captain forward us to the desired port. The Captain had already sent us a supply of such provisions as the market afforded, enough for a few days, and living partly on board and partly ashore, we contrived to pass a week or two in anxious expectation. The time though passed pleasantly enough, for the novelty of everything surrounding us possessed deep interest to those having a particle of observation or curiosity. The sombre piercing eyed natives, their sultry brows shaded by their broad grass hats, every movement rife with natural grace, even to the set of the tattered blanket on their shoulders—the sylphlike forms of the females poising great baskets of fruit on their heads, tripping to the market, laughing and talking to each other in their own musical tongue—the broad fringe of cocoa nut and orange trees in perpetual verdure skirting the bases of the bleak rocky hills, that surround the haven—the never-exhausted cock and bull fights, and the ever-changing interest called forth in the features of the looker on—the waters of the bay sparkling in the sunshine clear as crystal, filled with strange and uncouth formed fishes—and tiny children of six years old, floating in

luxurious ease upon its surface close to the vessels, watching the descent of a picayune from some kind hand, and ready to seize it e'er its descent to the flashing coral beneath.

But the craving desire of reaching the land of gold, soon overwhelmed every other in my eyes, and tired of tiring out our Italian commander, I again took passage in an upward bound steamer, with a complement of 1500. The crowd was equally oppressive with the smaller vessel 215 I had just left, the few berths were of course all occupied, and as before I had to take my rest on the open deck. It of course offered great attractions to an astronomer, to study the wonders of the starry Heavens, in the deep blue sky of the Pacific, or even to the lover who wished to make sonnets to his mistress' eye-brows; but I blush to own, a crib of straw in the dark hold had much more attraction for me, and had I been able to procure it, I will venture to say that my projecting bones would have been no way injured by the exchange. The time consumed on board of this boat was only a week, but to me it seemed an age of horrors, Panama fever and cholera were raging on board, and every hour found a victim. The obsequies were of the simplest nature—the valuables of the deceased and the name were deposited with the Captain, and the body committed to the deep, five minutes after dissolution, and the shoals of sharks that followed in our wake told significantly their unerring fate; more than once I was aroused in the night by the grumbling sailors as they dragged corpses over my recumbent person, on their road to the gangway, and many a man on rousing himself found his bedfellow of the preceeding night to be a stiffened corpse.

But Cape St. Lucas and the long low sandhills of the lower peninsula are passed, the long looked for Farallone Islands, and the deep fissure of the golden gate present themselves to our longing eyes, the cannon belches forth its flame as we round Clark's Point, and the queen city of the Western world shines brightly on the slopes of Yerba Buena. In two weeks more all the British and French subjects of the wretched *Isabel Hermosa* —at least the living portion—arrived in San Francisco, for more than 216 one half fell victims to the pestilence. What became of the unfortunate Americans and others destitute of funds, whose governments were unable or unwilling to protect them, I never learnt. Some ingenious fellows no doubt, contrived to make good their through trip,

but undoubtedly the greater portion of them met with miserable deaths in a foreign and inhospitable land.

THE SALTER.

I have alluded once the process termed “salting,” and the usual method by which it is performed by a shot gun, but various other ingenious plans are resorted to for the perpetration, all tending to the same object, viz: the change of funds, from the pockets of the green to those of the “smart.” But a great degree of acuteness is necessary at the present day, to cheat any the least suspicious and possessing a moderate degree of experience.

Alick Ross, a tall raw-boned North Briton, had long been in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and was a resident of California for several years prior to the discoveries at Sutter's Mill. He had constantly adhered to mining, and being naturally a shrewd fellow, had of course acquired much skill, as well as a correct judgment of the quality of ground from its consistence, and the value of gold in various districts, particularly as he had tried his hand in nearly every camp of the entire region. Our camp, which was on a branch of the Calaveras, contained very spotted diggings, and as a consequence, large strikes had been made at various times, that had the effect of obtaining 217 for it some favorable notoriety in the eyes of the public. We had some very skilful salters, who had plied their trade profitably for some time, resting on the reputation of the diggings, and so ably did they manage it, that they were not obliged even to abscond, the bad luck of the purchaser being always attributed to the irregularity of the deposits.

Alick arrived one day, and soon had it gossiped round, that he was in search of a good claim to purchase, but as we afterwards discovered, he had not one week's board ahead, for although he had made money, he took care, like many cautious ones, to dispatch it home as fast as he acquired it. He put up at the hotel, however, “showed out” handsomely at the bar, and in an extremely short space of time, had many tenders of great bargains. The fraternity tried him with several, but none prospected sufficiently well to meet his views until he was at last handed over to the guardianship of the most famous salter in the whole neighborhood, that he might try his experience upon him.

This man was well acquainted with all the principal leads, and at this time was the owner of the best claim in the camp, but he only performed sufficient labor upon it, as maintained his right according to the mining laws, trusting rather to his aptitude for swindling, than the exercise of his animal strength. It happened, unfortunately for him, that this really good claim was the only one over which he had control at that period, having just disposed of a worthless one a few days before, at a high price; but his cupidity could not withstand the temptation of plundering the reputedly wealthy Scotchman, and he formed the resolution of making it in the end a worse purchase than he had previously sold. He seeded it down very thick, with the 218 gold dust which had been given to him for his other claim, and then introduced the wily Alick to the ground. A pick, pan, and shovel were presented to him, that he might try for himself, and he commenced to prospect in every spot where the proprietor recommended him to test. Nothing could be more satisfactory than the returns. The pay dirt was a strata six feet deep, lying on the ledge, over which was a sand bank of twice the thickness. Part of this had been stripped off, and the whole presented a face in an excellent position and good order for successful working.

Every pan that was tried, produced four or five dollars, and in the course of three hours he had extracted more than a hundred dollars, which he deposited in a tin tobacco box of his own.

“Well,” said the impatient seller, at last, “I guess you've given it a pretty good sifting now, How d'ye like it?”

“Vera weel, vera weel,” answered Alick, rolling his quid around leisurely, and examining with the eye of a connoisseur, the sample in the tin box, “An' what may be your price now, clear cash in your lif?”

“Six thousand scads, ne'er a red less,” said the hopeful salter.

“It's a purty penny, a vera purty penny, but I'll no gainsay't, the prospect's guid, though ane wee bit o' a phenomenon I canna get through my auld pate, and that's this—How in the name o' Auld Reekie, did Tuolumne gold get stuck in here?”

The operator perceived at once that he was sold, and that instead of a victim, he had fallen in with a shark. All hope of a sale died away at once, and he indignantly demanded the contents of the tobacco box, but was foiled even in this.

“Dinna try that, dinna try that,” exclaimed Alick, “you will never handle a pickle of it, and what's more, I'll advise you as a freen, to pick up your duds and tramp, for in twa hours from now, the boys will all know't, and you'll have a hempen cravat on your scrag of a neck before sundown, if they can lay their cloots on you.”

The foiled scoundrel knew this well, and left on the instant, before his last attempt became public, and Alick at once installed himself on the deserted premises, where by hard labor and frugality, he soon accumulated a handsome sum.

There was another deep old tactician in our immediate vicinity, who was familiarly named the “mariner.” He spake little to any one, and appeared so little cognizant of surrounding affairs, that it was said, his long aquatic experience had caused his very brains to be encrusted with barnacles. To another old man of the sea, was he alone at all communicative, and from him were afterwards gleaned facts, to prove the mariner rather a smart man than the reverse. He had worked long in solitude, and a very large hole was the result of many months of uninterrupted labor. It was known that little had resulted yet from it, not even expenses, for he was slightly in debt at two or three places.

One morning, confused rumors were afloat, that the mariner had found a rich lead. It was said that he had washed out on the preceding evening, fifteen ounces of gold, from dirt he had thrown up on the bank. Some showed joy, and some envy, at his success, and next morning a great crowd of inquisitive persons, idlers, and creditors surrounded him, as he plied his rocker assiduously. 220 His expressionless parchment countenance betrayed no symptoms of triumph or thankfulness at his success. It seemed indeed, as though fortune's gifts were fairly squandered on such an unimaginative senseless lump of clay, and I dare say many of the lookers on thought within themselves, that had fate showered such a blessing upon *their* shoulders, the boon would have been

more worthily appreciated. A large quantity of pay dirt had already been thrown out on the bank on the previous evening, and the smooth small gravel of a blue color, mixed with a tenacious lava, somewhat resembling gritty pipeclay, had a very flattering appearance. But a trifling casualty had occurred during the preceding night, from an embankment breaking in, which had the effect of filling the hole with water, though the disaster could be remedied by the use of a rotary pump, and the consumption of three or four days' labor. But it had the effect of preventing any one from trying the ground, till the water was removed. Still the old sailor plied his rocker, fast diminishing his pile of earth, and averaged three or four dollars at every bucketful. His merchant creditor was there with the rest, who handed him a letter which had just arrived by the mail, for he was also postmaster of the district.

The old man stopped his labor, and after looking vacantly at the superscription of the epistle, requested the storekeeper to decipher the contents for him, as he was unable to perform that object for himself, having no acquaintance with book learning. The merchant complied, and they retired a few feet to one side, where he read the letter in a loud whisper, perfectly audible to a large portion of the bystanders. It was a short one, but it was full of bitter words to the tempest tossed veteran. It purported to be from a clergyman in San Francisco, who implored his immediate presence there, on matters of life and death. His wife and child, that he had long expected, had at last arrived—as too many did at that period—destitute, and prostrated with Panama fever. The hospital was the only resource, to which place they had been removed, and there in three days the child had expired. His wife was on her deathbed, and urgently desired him to come with speed, and cheer her dying hours. The unfortunate man stood as if turned to stone for an instant, then suddenly striking his forehead with his clenched hand, he fell heavily to the earth. Immediate assistance was rendered by the compassionate crowd, and he soon recovered, looking calm and collected, but with a deep conviction of his hopeless bereavement. He told those present that he must depart for the bay that very afternoon, and his only resource under present circumstances, was to dispose of his claim to the highest bidder, reserving a share to himself. By this means, he could thus retain a hold on the ground, but should he leave it entire, it would of course be jumped at the end of three days, according to the mining laws.

Bidders were numerous and competition strong, for everything looked propitious. A company bid \$7000 for it, and were declared the purchasers, after a very animated sale. The old man left for the city that very afternoon with the cash in his pocket, to comfort her whom in his youthful days he had sworn to protect and cherish, and the pump was busily at work next morning in emptying the shaft. It took more than two days to perform this, and get rid of the waste earth that had caved in, but when this was accomplished their labor was at an end, for a cent prospect was the best they could procure. The mystery as to how he procured the dust to salt the pile on the bank was also shortly explained to the dissatisfaction of his cabin mate, who on making search found that the contents of his buckskin bag had taken wings, like the albatros with the ancient mariner. A deputation went in pursuit, but were just in season to be too late, for the steamer had already sailed, and on making enquiries for the reverend gentlemen who had written so pathetically of the sick woman, he was found to be a mere allegory got up for the occasion in the brain of the salter.

SEBASTOPOL IS TAKEN.

The old proverb which says “Extremes in nature equal ends produce” never appeared more fully exemplified than in the sympathy shown, particularly by the democratic press and people, for Russia in its late struggle with the Allies, and in no portion of the world not directly interested in the engagement, was the news more eagerly read and commented upon. The British and French residents of San Francisco are a very important item in the wealth and population of the place, and unlike the same people in other States but few of them calculate on a life residence in the country, and in consequence rarely acquire the rights of citizens, but retain still a due affection for the land of their nativity, where they eventually intend to make their permanent homes. Now the native citizens can't understand how it is possible for people who have once tasted the sweets of liberty in such a happy land, to sigh for monarchy. They will at first mildly expostulate upon the subject, and tell from the depths of their school-boy lore, of how badly Henry VIII. treated his wives, of the iniquity of the Star Chamber, but their greatest fields are the enormities of that dreadful old tyrant George III., with which they are most familiar, for the first lesson in the school primer most likely contains a map of the spot where so many thousand “scarlet minions of despotism” got

cut into mince-meat by a handful of revolutionary heroes, or a review of the characters of Newton and Franklin, wherein, although much credit is given to the talents of the former, it is nevertheless made sufficiently evident to any, having a spark of patriotism, that the pedlar was a little ahead of anything ever produced in the olden world.

But this hatred to anything savoring of a crown, will hardly be sufficient to account for the morbid fancy felt by the people, to see England thoroughly smashed by the Russians, and France also, like dog Tray, for being in such questionable company, for Russia was unfortunate enough to possess the same hateful emblem. Undoubtedly the dislike to anything British, so grounded in their first school lessons, would account for the side taken, even by a portion of the conservatives, but a far deeper vein even than this, won the sympathies of the Loco Focos for the Panslavist. It was the well defined similarity that existed between the worst features of Russian policy and the present prominent essence of democracy, namely slavery and filibusterism, and the movement of mighty power uncontrolled by conscientious judgment.

The feeling so prevalent in the metropolis, was equally rife in the little mountain towns, and many an ounce of dust and bottle of brandy exchanged owners, when the fall of the Malakoff became known in the mountains, and many 224 a pound of powder was lavishly blazed away, by enthusiastic French and English, to commemorate the event, to the extreme disgust of Americans in general. To say the truth, however, economy was consulted even in the ebullitions of joy at the triumph, for the salutes were in our camp, chiefly performed by blasting large rocks that required removal from the diggings anyway, and many had as much as thirty holes drilled a month ahead, in anticipation of the event.

Nathan Suggs was a fat good-natured old Southerner, reasonable in most things, excepting slavery and the Russian war, with their collaterals. He owned a good claim, and his nearest neighbor who held the adjoining ground, was his direct antipodes both in body and in politics, His name was Louis, and his nation Canada East; he was a mass of bone and muscle, clumsily put together, but possessing in his constitution the elements of uncommon agility and endurance, although slightly beyond the middle term of life. Louis's feelings were doubly enlisted in the great struggle that was

convulsing Europe, he was both a clear descendant of one of the illustrious allies, and a subject of the other, yet his chief pride was in the latter, for once a person while toasting Napoleon, with a view of pleasing the supposed Frenchman, was rudely interrupted by the Canadian exclaiming, ‘‘Peesh for Napolyaw! me no care for France, me Anglicehomme.’’

Each evening after work did the excited Canadian and Southerner fight their windy battle, without a hope of mutual agreement, until they finally made a bet of six gallons of whiskey, the Canadian affirming that the City of Sebastopol would be stormed within a month, which Nathan Suggs persistently denied. A cessation of hostilities 225 followed the six dollar bet, but great anxiety was evinced for the arrival of the next mail, and one morning, Louis, who had his eyes constantly open for the arrival of news, saw a courier with a bundle of newspapers on the road approaching the camp. He met him before he arrived, and on learning the consummation of his dearest hopes, gallantly purchased the whole stock, and sent the news-vender back rejoicing, to procure a fresh supply. His first visit was to his old opponent, to whom making a low bow, he handed a paper, saying, ‘‘Sar Monsieur Suggs, allow me de extreme felicity of being de first to present you with de latest and de greatest news from the Crimea, De walls you said were inveincible have crumbled into de leetle grains, by de powder of de great allies, and the Tri-colour and Union Jack fly from the Malakoff and Redan.’’

Nathan took the paper very sulkily from him and very soon convinced himself of the loss of his whiskey, and at once proposed to adjourn to his cabin for the purpose of extracting the precious fluid from the barrel, but Louis managed to commute it for a promise from Suggs, that he would treat the crowd at the bar of the hotel in the evening, where a miner's meeting was to be held for the adjustment of a claim. When the business of the evening was concluded, Louis who had retained all the papers and thus prevented the circulation of the news, solemnly arose and informed the meeting—which numbered more than a hundred—of the great victory achieved, in a confused speech of French, Spanish and English, ‘‘And now Messieurs,’’ said he, ‘‘as this is the greatest achievement of modern times, my mooch respected amigo, Monfrere Signor Suggs, has kindly consented to treat

all de gentlemen here 226 to celebrate de great prosperity of de grand nations of John Bull and La Belle France. So let us all now adjourn to de bar and liquor up.’’

For all that, the news stunk in the nostrils of many and a hiss had been with great difficulty suppressed, thirst finally triumphed, and the conclusion of the Canadian's address was received with three times three and a tiger. The discomfitted Nathan had no opportunity of denying the sentiments imputed to him by his political antagonist, but his honour being pledged, he was obliged to disburse for the refreshment of the whole, to the unpleasant little sum of \$25.

But the joy of the allies in San Francisco was to be celebrated in a more substantial manner. A banquet on a truly magnificent scale was prepared at their expense, to which not only the corporation was invited, but also all the principal Americans in the place, and indeed so large were the supplies and so general the welcome, that the whole city was privileged to partake of the repast, which consisted of all the delicacies the bounteous market afforded. A level space in a new park was chosen for the scene, and the day was ushered in by cannon, music and flags, in gorgeous profusion. The English and French vessels in the harbor were adorned with the flags of their respective nations blended together, but no American flag was visible except on the banquet ground, where it floated at an equal height with the others. All went on smoothly until the dinner was half concluded, when the suppressed feelings of the sons of liberty could no longer endure the desecration. The allied flags were first depressed a few feet lower than the stars and stripes, but, even this failing to soothe their feelings, they finally hauled France and England 227 down by the run. Some foolish policeman, who attempted to dispute the will of the people by arresting the perpetrators, was knocked down for his presumption and a general row was the result. The patriots won the day for they were prepared previously, and they made short work of the crockery and glass. The full bottles were spared however, and as soon as the ground was thoroughly cleared of the impertinent foreigners, they sat down and enjoyed themselves in the camp of the foe, singing Hall Columbia and the Star Spangled Banner, until daylight coming in with empty bottles, compelled them to adjourn. The law never even dared to notice the affair, and foreigners have no doubt learnt the lesson, that although Fourth of July may be celebrated in other countries and responded to by

their authorities, the rule won't work both ways, as it is now a maxim that America is only for the Americans.

WAR IN CHINA.

In the same district where I held the office of Recorder of Claims, the rights of the Asiatics were well respected; for as the new ditch did not make fortunes for people, quite so fast as it was originally supposed, it was found particularly handy to dispose of their claims for a consideration; and as the Chinese are the easiest satisfied, with regard to paying ground, they were always the best customers for these indifferent claims, and by these means rose vastly in public estimation. As is customary with them in all the other places, they are perfectly submissive to white authority, and scarcely ever attempt to resist even 228 oppression, except in expostulation, and their eloquence is sometimes very touching and effectual in this line of oratory. But for all so submissive to the "red haired barbarians," the case is quite the reverse with each other, for people from different sections of their own wide spread empire, sometimes keep up an eternal feud with each other.

Two rival districts were the candidates for public favor in this camp; one party was from Canton, the other from Hong Kong, and really their undying rancour towards each other, could hardly find a parallel, unless perhaps between the Far-downs and Corkonians, or the Yankees and Border Ruffians in the Kansas Territory. Although they originally kept as far divided as possible, so fast did they purchase, that they touched at last on each other, and then commenced that bickering between them that finally led to most disastrous consequences on the whole. Their numbers were about 150 in each, and generally once or twice a week they had a turn out to fight. When the fortunes of the day had turned, a runner from the defeated party would invariably proceed to me, and implore my assistance to quell the riot, with a five dollar piece in his hand. As this operation rarely consumed more than five minutes, I usually complied, unless very particularly engaged, as I seldom fell in with a more profitable and safe investment of time, for so afraid were they of general expulsion on account of their pugnacious spirit, that a truce invariably followed my presence on the battle field.

There was a sort of mandarin on the weaker side, whom we called *captain*, on account of the power he seemed to wield. He was rather a gentlemanly good looking fellow, for one of his race, and did little besides smoke opium, which luxury cost him, he said, three dollars per day. 229 The captain lived by advancing money to his countrymen, on interest, for the purchase of claims, and was, as all capitalists generally are, a man of peace, and much opposed to anarchy. Seeing the troubled spirit of his people, he consulted me upon the subject, for he spoke English pretty well, and wanted to know if a policeman could be supplied to them, as they were quite willing to pay fifteen dollars a day for the use of such a functionary, armed with all the terrors of the law to the violators of the public peace. Pondering upon the subject, I recollected that our nearest magistrate, who lived ten miles off, had just resigned, and was preparing to turn his attention to piracy in Nicaragua. I informed a youthful friend of mine from the Eastern States, of the Chinaman's proposal, together of the vacancy requiring to be filled, for I knew Zaddock Green abhorred labor, most religiously, and a well timed application to the Board of Supervisors at the county town, would in all probability secure him an appointment to the vacant office, for the unexpired time of his predecessor.

A week had expired, and I had almost forgotten the circumstance, when one morning I was handed a billet by Zaddock, bearing an official look, which on opening, I found to my extreme surprise and humiliation, contained an appointment for me to the judgeship. Shades of my ancestors, blush for your unworthy descendant! I who had always valued a good reputation, and conducted myself orderly and peacefully, to be thus disgraced. In what unguarded moment had I left myself open to such an insult, I could not recall. But I determined to decline, and returned an answer to that effect to the board, urging in palliation, that I was not qualified for the office, there being no prospect that I should ever acquire the honors of citizenship.

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Poor Zaddock was much offended at my resolve, for he had taken the trouble, unknown to me, of carrying round the petition that finally led to the appointment, and he built his hopes on being made a special constable; for as the judge and constable are invariably partners, it would have been a good speculation, between the daily allowance of the mandarin, together with absorption of all

finances and the profits resulting from transient business. I left this place a few days after, and did not return again for more than five months, but great doings had occurred during the first month of my absence.

The Hong Kong and Canton riots burned with exceeding fury at first, and so deadly did the animosity finally become, that a challenge to mortal combat was given and accepted. Couriers were dispatched to all adjacent camps for the respective friends of the belligerents, to make their appearance on a certain day of a certain moon, “armed and equipped as the law directs,” and some thousands were shortly in motion carrying their rations of boiled rice to the Chinese stamping ground. The following is something near a literal translation of the challenge from the one Chieftain to the other.

“The high and mighty man of power, Sam Yap, condescends to speak to the woman-hearted spotted dog, Ah Whop, to tell him that his people are nothing but as dung beneath the feet of Sam Yap's men of war; you think you can fight us, and you are welcome to try. We will use our weapons to punish you, but we will not load all our muskets, for our bare hands would be quite enough if we liked, to chase such yelping curs. Your puny efforts will no more affect us than the ocean waves do a rock bound coast. You will smash as an egg, thrown from the 231 hand of a strong man against the walls of a fortress. You may fight us if you please, but we will exterminate you; and, if like cowards as you are, you will not fight us, we will cut off your hair and make you work for us; we will also take your claims, and your tools, and your large footed women, and feed you on snakes and the refuse of our tables,—so you see we are generous, for we give you a choice, but we would rather destroy you, for you consume meat that should be applied for the nourishment of better men, and we want to be benefactors to the world.”

Such a billet as that, was enough to irritate the people of Ques, to whom it was dispatched, and soon the rival armies met in desperate combat with all the panoply and imposing sound peculiar to eastern warfare. During the height of the preparations, an observant citizen got himself quietly installed into the magistracy, but bided his time to make it profitable. He made no attempt to interfere with the coming struggle, but along with some neighbouring brethren of the bench,

secretly encouraged it; and then with a few mounted constables, he and the others soon divided the armies and commenced to capture. This occasioned the most serious riot of the day, for, although the Chinese attempted no resistance, the different magistrates fell out about the prisoners, one imagining the other had more than his rightful share; but as they had several hundreds each, they shortly came to an understanding after a few pistol shots and a broken arm or two. Each conqueror then led his prisoners to his own home for trial, and fined them from \$100 down to a dollar, according to their several resources, keeping the whole amount to themselves, and my honorable successor made the comfortable little thing of \$15,000 for his services in preserving the public peace.

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CONCLUSION.

Gentle Reader, who has followed me thus far in my wanderings, I will now release you, for my pleasant task is ended. No more shall we breathe together the life-giving atmosphere of El Dorado's shores, or pry into the deep mines, where the coarse gold lies imbedded in the cool crevices of the slaty bed-rock. No more shall we tread with each other o'er the far reaching flower covered prairies, and smile at national characteristics or quaint individual peculiarities. You will soon forget both these and me. The grim mountain, the water-fall and the brawling river, with the careless lives of the generally happy gold hunters, which I have endeavoured to picture for our mutual amusement, will soon fade from your mind like an artificial panorama. More courtly drawings will soon obliterate the coarse daub from your recollection; but long must be my life before the scenes that called forth these Ramblings will be forgotten. But in truth, much as there is of the romantic in the wild vagaries of nature, I acknowledge that with me, the recollections of the ludicrous will long outlive the sublime, and the eccentric motions of animated nature, chiefly overshadow the 234 beautiful though solemn scenes of the inanimate. I must still laugh when I think of the way my poor friend D_____ sprained his ankle, and was lame for a month in consequence. He was a boarder with a farmer in Santa Cruz, who had a ranch close to the foothills of the Coast Range, which at this point was a great resort of grizzly bears. The house was built near the brow of an elevated flat, from whence the ground gently descended to a broad bottom land; the wheat had just been taken

off, and the cattle were feeding in plenty on the rich refuse of the stubble field, close to the fence of the garden which occupied a portion of the slope. One evening after the whole household had for some time retired to rest, the family were aroused by the agonized bellowing of an unfortunate ‘‘critter’’ in the flat. So constant and severe were the sounds, that all were soon convinced a grizzly had made the milky mother Kate, his prey, who was last seen quietly chewing the cud and surveying the good things within the garden fence. The farmer not being a sporting character, handed D_____. the venerable flint-lock musket, which had been loaded but not discharged for three months previous, and accompanied him to the field to dispute possession with Bruin, who by the weaker complaints still growing fainter through the pitchy darkness, was evidently coming to the tender steaks. D_____. cautiously approached the bloody ground, stealing along by the fence, his companion *backing* him, but a good way off, and on seeing the outlines of the struggling animals he boldly presented and blazed away at the centre of the heap. The chief mischief was probably done by the rebound, for it knocked the musketeer flat, who on gaining his feet saw his backer making great progress up the hill towards the bosom of his family, D_____. 235 emulated his example as well as he was able, still clinging tenaciously to the clumsy weapon, and the muscles of his legs were further strained to their utmost capability by the sound of feet in pursuit. At length he reached the house and tumbled in through the doorway, just in time to shut out his grim follower, who fairly roared with the disappointment, and kept his head close to the door, as they could see through a chink in the temporary walls of the building. The farmer's nerves were so shaken, he was utterly unable to make the smallest exertion, and D_____. determined in spite of his disjointed ankle to try another shot at the bloodthirsty beast. He took as accurate aim as the outward gloom would permit, and this time a loud roar, falling to a gurgling, sound, told that the last shot was more successful than the first. Another bullet was fired at the body to make all sure, and then he ventured along with his nervous companion, to limp out and examine the proportions of their spoil. At this moment the pain was unfelt, and the state of his feelings might be envied by the proudest monarch, for the objects of many a heartfelt wish was gratified on that eventful night, and he might now take his place among his fellows, to boast that he too had slain a grizzly. Keenly did he approach and turn the lamp upon the prostrate monster to gloat upon the conquest, but alas! the light but revealed a meek granivorous beast, being neither more nor less than the sucking calf of the murdered Kate,

that had fled for protection to the very hand that slew her at the threshold. The cow and calf made fair veal and beef, the grizzly still roams in his native hills, and the wounded limb recovered, but the adventures of that night form an unpleasant theme for conversation to the would-be-bear slayer, even unto this day.

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Nor can I easily forget that Sunday morning, that we lost all our rockers and tools, on the banks of Little John Creek, by the rapid rising of this mountain torrent. The large creek had declined to a rivulet during a long dry spell, and although a heavy rain had fallen on Saturday night, the rise was so imperceptible in the morning, we did not deem it essential to remove our implements any further from the waters edge, than we had left them the night before. It had been noised around for a few days, that a young lady had made her appearance at a neighbouring ranch, and as such commodities were rare in our parts, the greatest ladies' man in our company made up his mind to pay her a visit. He consumed four dollars in the purchase of a complete new suit at the store, consisting of a pair of cow-hide shoes and cotton pants, a shirt and a fifty cent straw hat, and being rather a good looking fellow when his hair and beard were oiled with some pork drippings, it was generally supposed that the sucker girl's heart would be carried by storm. While the gallant was away, time hung rather heavy upon our hands, particularly as there were no shirts worth mending, and Uncle Ben—a funny little fisherman from some region contiguous to Cape Cod—was deputed to cross the river on horseback, in pursuit of a bottle containing something to cheer the drooping spirits of the party.

The bed of the river, although so nearly dry, was upwards of a hundred yards across, and Uncle Ben—who was rather deaf, by the way—had just entered it, successful in his mission, and on his return. While watching his progress, I detected the roaring of waters, and looking higher up, saw a body of water looking more than five feet deep, rushing furiously down towards the old man, and 237 already within fifty yards of him. I halloed to him as loud as I was able, but although my voice was drowned by the rushing of the cataract, his infirmity prevented him from hearing either, and horse and rider were soon battling with the fierce element. Ben nobly retained his seat for some time, but was finally unhorsed, and we feared his career was ended. Little John was not to master him, however, who, he said, had been once within the jaws of a living whale, and he reached land safe

and sound, not only with his own little person, but the bottle of whiskey also, quite uninjured. The horse escaped, by grounding on a high sandbar, but our implements, which embraced nearly all the capital we possessed, were caught by the current, and were soon rapidly journeying on their road to San Francisco bay.

The whiskey suffered severely by the disaster, but failed to comfort, and the lover who returned at night with a very sour visage, contributed but little to restore the usual cheerfulness of the party. “It was a most confounded bad road,” said he, “for it took me above the ankles several times, and filled my shoes with mud, and as the pants were short, and I had no socks, it sadly deteriorated from my general good appearance, but I stuck to it till I reached the cabin, which was nothing but an old patched mainsail of a fore and after, with the reef points still fast to it, thrown over a line attached to a couple of trees. As the place had no door, I rattled my stick on an old cracker tin, and a sharp voice sung out—‘Stop that, you!’ So I stopped, lifted up the rotten duck, and exposed myself and the occupant to each other at the same time. She was all alone, and rigged out in the yellowest furniture cotton dress you ever set your eyes on, which hung loose on her 238 large person, like a Mexican's serappa, but not half so graceful. Her hair was done up a la Imperaise, I think they call it, which exposed her pimpled forehead, and a pair of great brass carbobs that hung down below her chin most unbecomingly. She was seated on an old liquor barrel, with two feet like bricks resting on a tall oak stump in the very middle of the tent. In her left hand she held a little five cent circular shaving-glass, and in her right was a bowie knife, a good fourteen inches long, with which she was picking her delicate teeth. I bowed and bid her good day, but she wouldn't look me in the face, my dirty feet had alone attraction for her, for she stared at them for a couple of minutes before she would speak a word, then says she ‘‘Clar! We haint got nothin' for ourselves, and ef you don't clar right smart, I'll loose Tag on you.’’ So I ‘‘clared’’ as the angel commanded me, and I'm right sorry now that I laid out so much money on dress, for it was only wasted on the meal-fed baggage, and besides it will all be wanted now to help in procuring a new lot of tools.

But it is too late to become loquacious now, for I am, as I said, at the conclusion of these my recollections. I drop the pen with regret; but I fear to weary in recounting scenes, that however

amusing in their origin, with local circumstances attached, may fail to interest in the repetition, with no such accompaniments to give zest.

My tale is told, of California and the vicissitudes of its people, and much as I have endured of the unpleasant in my experience, I can truthfully say, that pleasing remembrances most predominate; and whatever my after fate may be, in the great game of life at which we are all playing—some staking golden nuggets, and some copper 239 pence, and some mere cappers, bucking for show at the end of the table—I for one, shall look not back with regret, on my voyage to the healthy shores of the North Pacific.

THE END

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